



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: GST 102

COURSE TITLE: USE OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION
SKILLS II

**COURSE
GUIDE**

**GST102
USE OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS II**

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INTRODUCTION

Let me again welcome you to the course titled GST102 – Use of English and Communication Skills II. I hope you enjoyed studying the first course GST101. Surely you must have learnt quite a lot in the course. I promise greater enjoyment and reward as you study the second component of the Use of English and Communication Skills.

This guide gives you an overview of this course. It provides vital information regarding the structure and the demand of the course.

GST102 – Use of English and Communication Skills II is a two-credit unit course. GST101 is a pre-requisite to taking GST102. The course is for all 100 level students across programmes. This course is to be offered in the second semester for another fifteen weeks.

COURSE AIMS

GST102 – Use of English and Communication Skills has aims similar to GST101. The aims are to expose you to the functions and rules of English in order that you may be able to communicate effectively using the language in diverse social and academic settings. To achieve these broad aims, GST102 will:

- (i) introduce you to diverse writing skills in English;
- (ii) give you broad-based knowledge of the phonological forms of the language;
- (iii) expose you to diverse speaking enabling skills relevant to the language; and
- (iv) give you the grammatical rules and usage of English.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- (i) write topic sentences and attain coherence in written English;
- (ii) develop paragraphs in a logical manner using English;
- (iii) recognize and produce cause and effect types of paragraphs in English;
- (iv) write accurate formal letters;
- (v) present written reports in a coherent and accurate manner;
- (vi) produce summaries of passages in a concise and effective manner;
- (vii) recognize and produce as accurately as possible, the English vowels and consonants;
- (viii) conduct interviews using the English medium;

- (ix) present seminar and conference papers;
- (x) deliver an effective public speech; and
- (xi) recognize and operate the grammatical rules of English accurately.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To complete the course, you are required to read the study units and read the sets of books available for the course. You will also need to go through the exercises in each of the units. Remember, the exercises are not to test you but to make you learn and be able to use the English concepts being taught. At the end of each unit, you will be required to submit written assignments for continuous assessment purposes. Also, at the end of the course, you will be required to write a final examination.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major course materials you will need for the course apart from the usual pens, pencil and note-books are listed below:

- (i) Course Guide
- (ii) Study units broken down into 20 units: ten units per credit
- (iii) Tape recorder of your own
- (iv) Audio and video cassettes of the spoken component of the course
- (v) Assessment file
- (vi) Relevant textbooks, including the ones listed at the end of each unit.

STUDY UNITS

There are twenty (20) units divided into four modules of five units per module in this course. The units are divided according to the relevant language skills of writing, speaking, grammar and usage. The units and modules are listed below:

Module 1

- Unit 1 Writing Paragraphs: Topic Sentence and Coherence
- Unit 2 Development of Paragraphs: Illustration and Description
- Unit 3 Development of Paragraphs: Cause and Effect and Definitions
- Unit 4 Formal Letters: Stylistic Forms and Essential Parts
- Unit 5 Formal Letters: Complaints and Request

Module 2

- Unit 1 Formal Letters: Letters about Jobs, Ordering Goods and Letters to Government and other Organizations
- Unit 2 Writing Reports I: Reporting Events
- Unit 3 Writing Reports II: Reporting Experiments
- Unit 4 Writing Summaries I: Techniques of Summarizing
- Unit 5 Writing Summaries II: More on Techniques of Summarizing

Module 3

- Unit 1 Letters and Sounds in English
- Unit 2 English Vowels and Consonants
- Unit 3 Interviews
- Unit 4 Seminar Presentation
- Unit 5 Public Speech Making

Module 4

- Unit 1 Articles, Concord and Sentences
- Unit 2 Tenses
- Unit 3 Gerunds and Particles
- Unit 4 The Active, Passive and the Infinitive
- Unit 5 Modal Auxiliaries

ASSESSMENT FILE

Assessment file for the course will be made available to you. In this file, you will find details of work that you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain in the continuous assessment will count towards your final marks. You are expected to pass both the continuous assessment and the final examinations.

STRATEGIES FOR STUDYING THE COURSE

Although you will be required to study the units on your own, arrangements have been made for regular interactions with your tutor at the study centre. The tutor is expected to conduct tutorials and useful discussion sessions with you and the other members at the study centre. Also, the video cassettes of some sections of the course, especially the spoken English part, are available for viewing at the study centre.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The dates to finish the course and to present each assignment will be announced to you later. You must keep strictly to all deadlines.

SUMMARY

This course guide is an overview of the course GST102: Use of English and Communication Skills II. My wish is that you have a very highly rewarding studies through the course.



**MAIN
COURSE**

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MODULE 1

| | |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Writing Paragraphs: Topic Sentence and Coherence |
| Unit 2 | Development of Paragraphs: Illustration and Description |
| Unit 3 | Development of Paragraphs: Cause and Effect and Definitions |
| Unit 4 | Formal Letters: Stylistic Forms and Essential Parts |
| Unit 5 | Formal Letters: Complaints and Request |

UNIT 1 WRITING PARAGRAPHS: TOPIC SENTENCE AND COHERENCE**CONTENTS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most pieces of writing require more than one paragraph. Mastering the art of writing a paragraph is essential to success in any form of writing, whether it is a letter, a report, or a newspaper article, since all longer pieces contain a series of related paragraphs. In these longer pieces of writing, paragraphs generally introduce new ideas to develop the central theme. The division into paragraphs also prevents boredom as it provides a physical break on the page.

In units 1 and 2, we shall offer you some guidance in writing single paragraphs. In unit 1, we shall discuss the organization of paragraphs and the elements that make a good paragraph. After you have developed your skills in paragraphs writing, you will be able to use paragraphs successfully in order to write a longer composition.

To help you understand the paragraph given as examples, we have provided a glossary at the end of each paragraph, as well as questions on

reading comprehension and vocabulary. You should try to answer all these questions, as they will help you understand the paragraphs.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to help you in a systematic manner to write good paragraphs. We shall introduce you to the elements that go into the organization of a good paragraph, such as:

- (i) the topic sentence
- (ii) the development of the topic
- (iii) connection between the sentences
- (iv) the use of transitional devices.

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write well-organized paragraphs of your own.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Topic Sentence

You already know that any longer piece of writing is divided into a number of paragraphs. Have you ever considered what a paragraph is? A paragraph is a piece of writing which is unified by a central, controlling idea or theme. This idea or theme is called the topic of the paragraph. It is sometimes expressed at some place in the paragraph by one sentence which is usually called the topic sentence. This topic sentence may be a statement, a generalization or a problem. This sentence is most frequently found at the beginning of the paragraph, but can sometimes come at the end or even in the middle of the paragraph. Very often there may not be a topic sentence at all, but it may be implied within the paragraph. However at this stage, it may be useful for you to develop your paragraph by writing out your topic sentence.

Example 1: Topic Sentence at the Beginning

The vast majority of people, wherever they live and whatever their occupation come in contact with animals in one way or another and have to deal with them.

It is obvious that the hunter has to know the ways of his quarry, the farmer must be aware of the habits of his farmyard animals and of creatures that damage his crops; the fisherman must know when and where to find his fish and how to outwit them. Even the modern city dweller meets animals. He may want to ward off the roaches in his

kitchen or he may keep a dog or a bird and grow familiar with the way his pet behaves. All over the world, among primitive tribes as well as in the modern society, there are those who delight in the observation of animals, and there is a growing awareness of the fact that sharing our world with our fellow creatures is like traveling together – we enjoy being surrounded by other beings who, like ourselves, are deeply absorbed in the adventure of living. There is a growing sense of marvel and affinity.

(From Niko Tinbergen (ed). 'An infant science' in Animal Behaviour Time-life Books.)

Glossary

- contact (n):* the condition of meeting or coming together
quarry (n): an animal or bird which is being hunted
outwit: win by being cleverer.
city dweller: one who lives in the city.
roaches: informal word for 'cockroaches'.
absorbed: interested.
marvel (n): wonder.
affinity: close connection.

Beginning a paragraph with a topic sentence helps both the writer and the reader. As a writer, you will have less difficulty in constructing a unified paragraph because you will relate every sentence to the topic sentence and the central idea it expresses. Your reader will know immediately what the paragraph is about because the opening sentence states the central idea.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Read example 1 again and answer the following questions:

1. What title would you like to give this paragraph?
2. Why does the hunter need to know 'the way of his quarry'?
- 3a) Give two examples of how a modern city dweller comes in contact with animals.
- 3) Are animals always a source of pleasure for him? Which words tell you that sometimes they are not?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Find two verbs meaning more or less the same as ‘take pleasure (in)’
2. Find an adjective which is equivalent to ‘belonging to the earliest stage of development’.
3. Find equivalents of the nouns:
wonder relationship

Example 2: Topic Sentence at the End

In the year 1830, a French official unearthed, in the valley of the Somme, strange implements of flint now recognized as weapons with which the men of the Old Stone Age made war. With these modest tools of death, it seems, Neanderthal men from what is now Germany, and Cro-Magnon men from what is now France, fought fifty thousand years ago for the mastery of the continent, and after a day of lusty battle, left perhaps a score of the dead on the field. Twenty years ago modern Germans and modern Frenchmen fought again in that same valley for that same price, with magnificent tools of death that killed ten thousand men in a day. *One art alone has made indisputable progress in history and that is the art of war.*

(Adapted from Will Durant: ‘why Men Fight’)

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>unearthed:</i> | dug up. |
| <i>implements:</i> | tools. |
| <i>flint:</i> | very hard gray stone. |
| <i>Stone Age:</i> | the earliest known time in the history of man, when only the stone was used for making tools, weapons, etc. |
| <i>modest:</i> | simple. |
| <i>Neanderthal man:</i> | a type of early human creature who lived in Europe during the early Stone Age. |
| <i>Cro-Magnon man:</i> | prehistoric man, who lived in South-Western Europe and used bone and stone implements. |
| <i>the continent:</i> | (here) Europe. |
| <i>lusty battle:</i> | energetic fighting. |
| <i>score:</i> | twenty. |
| <i>magnificent:</i> | grand and powerful. |
| <i>indisputable (adj.):</i> | when is too certain to be questioned. |

Placing the topic sentence at the end or in the middle is a more difficult skill. The advantage in having it at the end is that all the

sentences build up to this topic sentence and the conclusion becomes more effective.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- (1a) In the context of example 2, what are the points of similarity between the events that took place in ancient and modern times? Give two instances.
- (b) What are the points of difference? Give two instances.
- (i) Ancient (ii) Modern
- 2(a) Was ancient man less violent than modern man?
- (b) Why is a modern battle more dangerous?
- 3(a) What does the phrase 'for that same prize' refer to?
- (b) Give some examples of what you think are 'modest tools of death' and 'magnificent tools of death.'

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

The topic sentence of the paragraph below is hidden somewhere within the paragraph. Find it and place it in the correct position. After you have completed the exercise, you should check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

In Mother's Shadow

During its early weeks, it depends almost completely upon her, and she, in turn, fastens her attentions upon it, although from time to time she will allow the other females to hold and fondle it. Sheltered by its mother, the growing infant gradually widens its contact with the outside world. Though its first week is spent sleeping and nursing, by its second, it is already stumbling about and being restrained by a yank of the tail or leg. Nothing could be more important to the development of an infant Indian langur than its relationship with its mother. At four weeks, on unsteady feet, it ventures forth and discovers the world or at least that part of it within a save three or four feet of its mother.

Glossary

- fasten her attentions upon it:* fixes her mind on it by watching it or listening to it.
- fondle (v):* sucking milk from the mother's breast.
- stumbling:* walking on unsteady feet.
- restrained:* held back.
- yank (n):* a sudden, sharp pull.
- infant:* a very young creature.
- ventures forth:* takes the risk of going forward.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Is there a topic sentence in the following paragraph? Underline it, if it is there. If you don't find a topic sentence, state the main idea of the paragraph in your own words.

Men have cleared away forests to make fields for growing crops. They have moved mountains to make room for roads and cities. They have built huge dams across rivers to turn valleys into lakes, and they have built dykes to push back the sea and create more dry land to live on. Once everyone cheered at the progress that man made in changing his environment like this, but now many people are worried by the problems that such changes can bring. When the Aswan Dam was built across the River Nile in Egypt, it was meant to help the farmers by giving them water when they needed it. Unfortunately, people did not realize that much of the nourishing food for plants in the river would be trapped by the dam, so the farmers' crop would suffer. Also, hundreds of kilometres away at the mouth of the River Nile, less fresh water pours into the Mediterranean Sea. This means that the sea will become more salty and fewer fish will be able to live in it. When this happens, people who catch fish for their living will suffer.

(From Govil, M. and Subramaniam V. (eds.) Explorations, Madhuban Educational Books.)

Glossary

dykes (n): thick banks or walls built to control water.

nourishing: causing to stay alive or grow.

trapped: held back, blocked.

3.2 Developing the Topic

In order to develop the central theme of a paragraph, you have to expand the idea contained in the topic sentence. This can be done by adding more information, explanation, examples, illustrations, etc. to the idea expressed in the topic sentence. We shall discuss different ways of developing a paragraph in greater detail in unit 2.

If you read the paragraph given under example 1 again, you will notice that this paragraph is developed mainly by adding examples.

Analysis of the Paragraph

1. **Topic Sentence:** “The vast majority of people, wherever they live and whatever their occupation, come in contact with animals in one way or another and have to deal with them.”
2. **Examples Given to Develop the Paragraph:**
 - (i) the hunter
 - (ii) the farmer
 - (iii) the fisherman
 - (iv) the city dweller.
3. **Summing up:** This is done by stating that there is a common bond between man and other creatures.

Now read example 3 below. You will notice that this paragraph is developed slightly.

Example 3

Two main circumstances govern the relationship of living things in the sea: the unbelievably lavish fruitfulness of marine life forms, and the utter ruthlessness with which the large creatures eat the smaller ones.

Somebody has calculated, for instance, that if all the eggs laid by codfish were hatched and grew to maturity, the Atlantic would be packed solid with codfish within six years. But nature does not let this happen. Only an infinitesimal fraction of all codfish eggs ever become full-sized cod, and wastage among other fish is as great. One sea creature in about 10 million escapes the usual violent death inside another sea creature.

(From Leonard Engels (ed.) ‘The Great Pyramid of Life’ in the Sea, Time-Life Books.)

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>circumstances:</i> | conditions; the state of affairs. |
| <i>govern (v):</i> | control or guide. |
| <i>lavish:</i> | plentiful. |
| <i>fruitful:</i> | very productive; producing many young ones. |
| <i>marine:</i> | of the sea. |
| <i>ruthlessness:</i> | cruelty, absence of pity. |
| <i>codfish:</i> | a large sea fish found in the North Atlantic Sea. |
| <i>hatched:</i> | broken, letting the young ones out. |
| <i>maturity:</i> | the state of being fully grown or developed. |
| <i>infinitesimal:</i> | very small. |

Analysis of the Paragraph

1. **Topic Statement:** ‘Two main circumstances govern the relationship of living things in the sea.’
2. **Elaboration of the Topic Sentence:** The fruitfulness of marine life and the ruthlessness with which the larger creatures eat the smaller ones.
3. **Illustration:** The example of the codfish.
4. **Summing up:** Only one sea creature in about ten million survives.

When you write a paragraph of your own, choose the topic and write down all that you know about the topic. As you make your list, don't stop to question whether a detail fits or not; any that doesn't can be left out later. This will help you generate new ideas, and also give you something concrete to work on.

However, when you start writing, ensure that every sentence contributes to the central idea which may be contained in the topic sentence. Only then will your paragraph have unity.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Read example 3 again and answer the following questions. This exercise will help you understand the paragraph better.

1. What are the two circumstances that govern the relationship of living things in the sea?
- 2a. Under what circumstances would the Atlantic be packed with codfish within six years?
- b. How does nature prevent this from happening?
3. Suggest a title for this paragraph.
4. Find the opposites of:
 - (i) barrenness:
 - (ii) terrestrial:
 - (iii) very large:

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

In the following exercise, we have given you a topic sentence, the title, as well as some notes which might help you develop a paragraph. As you develop your paragraph, use only those points which will support the topic sentence and leave out the rest. Your paragraph should not be more than 100 words.

The secret of the Cockroach's Survival

Topic Sentence: The cockroach is one of the earth's oldest creatures, older than even the dinosaurs.

- (i) survived because it can live anywhere
- (ii) from coldest to warmest climate
- (iii) city as well as forest
- (iv) cockroach is a clean insect
- (v) can eat anything, including flower buds, paint, soap, wood
- (vi) some species are large, others are small
- (vii) can even live without food and water for months
- (viii) usually black or brown in colour
- (ix) keeps off predatory animals because of dirty smell from the scent glands.

3.3 Coherence

An effective paragraph requires more than a topic sentence and supporting details: it must also be coherent. In a coherent paragraph, the writer takes the reader logically and smoothly from one idea to the next.

The reader must clearly recognize that one sentence logically leads to the next.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 8

The following sentences go together to form a complete paragraph but they are in the wrong order. Keeping in mind the idea of coherence, put them in the right order.

After you have done the exercise, you may check your answer with that given by us at the end of the unit.

- (a) When the box is removed, the ant will not continue on its former course, but will start off rapidly in a new direction.
- (b) This can easily be demonstrated by a simple experiment.
- (c) Place a light-tight box over an ant carrying food back to its nest, and keep it imprisoned for a few hours.
- (d) This new route will differ from the old by exactly the angle that the sun has shifted across the sky during the time the ant was imprisoned.
- (e) Many insects rely upon the direction of the sun's rays as a sort of compass.

Glossary

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>former:</i> | earlier, previous. |
| <i>rapidly:</i> | very quickly. |
| <i>light-tight:</i> | where the light cannot enter. |
| <i>imprison:</i> | shut up in prison. |
| <i>rely:</i> | depend. |

3.4 Transitional Devices

Another technique which brings coherence in a paragraph is the use of transitional devices between sentences. These are words/phrases that help a writer move smoothly from one sentence to the next and show the logical relationship between sentences. We shall give you an example of what these transitional devices are and how they can be used. The transitional devices in example 4 are printed in *bold type*.

Example 4

Man has been able to spread across the earth so widely for four main reasons. **Firstly**, he is a terrestrial animal not restricted to the forest. **Secondly**, he can cross any natural barriers such as deserts, oceans and mountains. **Moreover**, he can live on a very wide variety of food. **Most important of all**, he has developed culture; he has learned to make clothes and build fires which allow him to live in climates where he would otherwise perish. To a large extent, he shares some of these advantages with the monkeys. They **too** can move over unforested land. They, **too** can cross some natural barriers as they have the ability to swim. And they, **too**, can digest many kinds of food. Thus, a single species of baboon has spread across Africa from Dakar in the west to Ethiopia in the east, and south all the way to the Cape of Good Hope. **Similarly**, Macaques have done at least as well. One species, the rhesus macaque, is equally at home in the forest, in open cultivated fields, and inside heavily populated cities.

(From Elmerl S. and De Vors. I. (eds.) The 'Monkey's Success in the Trees' in The Primates. Time-Life Books.)

Glossary

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>terrestrial:</i> | living on land. |
| <i>barrier:</i> | something placed in the way to prevent further movement. |
| <i>perish:</i> | die; be completely destroyed. |
| <i>species:</i> | a group of plants or animals that are of the same kind. |
| <i>baboon:</i> | a large dog-like monkey found in Africa and South Asia. |
| <i>Macaque:</i> | a monkey of African origin found mainly in Asia, having cheek pouch and a short tail. |

As you have seen, transitional devices are like signposts in a paragraph. They enable us to follow the writer's line of thought by showing us how one sentence relates to another. In example 4, the words/phrases *firstly*, *secondly*, *moreover*, *most important of all* indicate the four main reasons why man has been able to spread so widely across the earth. *Most important of all* also shows that some reasons are more important than others. *Too* indicates that monkeys also share man's characteristics. *Similarly* shows the relationship between the macaques and the baboons.

The following list includes other words and phrases that function as transitional devices. To:

- (i) **Express result:** *therefore, as a result, consequently, thus, hence.*
- (ii) **Give examples:** *for examples, for instance, specifically, as an illustration.*
- (iii) **Express comparison:** *similarly, likewise.*
- (iv) **Express contrast:** *but, yet, still, however, nevertheless, on the other hand.*
- (v) **Express addition:** *moreover, furthermore, also, too, besides, in addition.*
- (vi) **Indicate time:** *now, later, meanwhile, since then, after that, before that time.*
- (vii) **Express sequence:** *first, second, third, then, next, finally.*

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 9

Read example 4 again and answer the following questions:

1. What is the most important reason making man to range so widely across the earth?
2. What are the three characteristics that the monkey shares with man?
3. Monkeys cross natural barriers like rivers by swimming. What are some of the devices that man uses to cross natural barriers?
4. In the context of this passage, find a word:
 - (i) with the same meaning as 'limited'
 - (ii) which is the opposite of 'thrive'

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 10

In the following paragraph, the transitional words and phrases are missing. Fill in the gaps by choosing the most appropriate words/phrases from the list given below:

| | | |
|---------|------|---------------|
| despite | also | but |
| however | yet | in the future |

Of all the sea's possibilities for man's future, the greatest may be its promise of an important increase in the world's food supply. Square mile for square mile, the sea is estimated to be more productive than the land ...*(i)* ... at present, the oceans supply only one or two per cent of man's food ...*(ii)* ... all that he is learning about the sea, man's relationship to it is still primitive; he is a hunter rather than a harvester ...*(iii)* ..., along some coasts, oyster growers set out beds of oysters and fence out the oyster's enemies to increase the yield ...*(iv)* ..., in the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan and China, people already grow fish and prawns in fresh water ponds ...*(v)* ... this is just a beginning ...*(vi)* ..., to meet the great needs of a rapidly expanding world population, man will have to farm the sea as he has for so long farmed the land.

Glossary

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>productive (adj.):</i> | that produces much. |
| <i>primitive:</i> | at the earliest stage of development. |
| <i>harvester:</i> | a person who gathers the crops. |
| <i>oyster:</i> | a type of shell-fish. |
| <i>fence out:</i> | keep out by building a fence. |
| <i>prawn:</i> | any of various types of small ten-legged sea animals. |
| <i>rapidly expanding:</i> | fast increasing. |

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been exposed to topic sentences, how they are identified and developed as well as the positions they take within a paragraph. You are expected to keep on practising how to write topic sentences. They give directions to your writing.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the elements that go into the organisation of a good paragraph: the topic sentence, the development of the topic, connection between the sentences, and the use of transitional or linking devices. You will learn more about how to develop paragraphs in the next unit.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write the Topic Sentence for the following essay topics:

- (i) Education should be free for all.
- (ii) Life in the Town is better than Life in the City.
- (iii) The Food I like Best.

- (iv) Why must I Fail.
- (v) To Err is Human.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 DEVELOPMENT OF PARAGRAPHS: ILLUSTRATION AND DESCRIPTION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Illustration
 - 3.2 Description
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 1, we discussed the elements that made a good paragraph – the topic sentence, development of the topic, thematic coherence, and the use of transitional devices. In other words, you learned how to organize your paragraphs.

In this unit, we shall help you to develop different kinds of paragraphs. Paragraphs can be developed in a number of ways, depending on your purpose, the topic, and the kind of reader you have in view. The different methods of paragraph development can be considered in terms of two broad categories:

- (i) those which stay strictly within the scope of the topic: e.g. illustration, descriptions, definition, as well as cause and effect, and
- (ii) techniques which involve a second topic: e.g. comparison and contrast.

The method of development that you choose should be the one that will most effectively put across the point that you want to make: the point you have stated in your topic sentence. There are no rules about the kind of development to be adopted in any writing situation, although some topics lend themselves more readily to certain kinds of development than they do to others. It must be realized, however, that you can combine more than one technique in composing a paragraph.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss different techniques of developing paragraphs
- apply the techniques to writing some paragraphs
- identify different kinds of paragraphs using the techniques discussed.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Illustration

Giving examples is one of the easiest ways of developing a topic. When a writer gives examples, he helps the reader to understand a rather difficult and abstract generalization which may be contained in the topic sentence. He is also able to persuade the reader that the generalization is correct because there are examples to support it. Examples also add to the readers interest.

We often introduce examples or illustrations by using expressions like: for example, for instance, an example, etc.

Example 1: Development of a Paragraph by Illustration

All warm-blooded animals are incredibly helpless at first. Young birds and young bats must be taught to fly. Thousands of young seals and young sea lions are drowned every year. They never learn to swim 'naturally', the mother has to take them out under her flipper and show them how. Birds sing without instruction, but they do not sing well unless they have had an opportunity of hearing older and more adept members of their species. Older harvest mice build better nests than beginners. It is said that the young elephant does not seem to know at first what his trunk is for; it gets in his way and seems more of a hindrance than a help until his parents show him what to do with it. Insects, indeed, seem to start life completely equipped with all necessary reflexes, but even then the concept of 'instinct' seems to require some modification, for they improve their talents with practice. Young spiders, for example, "begin by making quite primitive little webs, and only attain perfection in their art in course of time;" and older spiders, if deprived of their spinnerets, will take to hunting.

[From Evens, B. (ed.) The Natural History of Nonsense. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.]

Glossary

- warm-blooded* (adj.): able to keep the temperature of the body rather high whether the outside temperature is high or low.
- incredible*: to a degree that is difficult to believe.
- seal*: a large fish-eating animal living mostly on cool seacoasts and floating ice.
- sea lion*: a type of seal found in the Pacific Ocean and having large ears.
- flipper*: a limb of certain large sea animals, with a flat edge used for swimming.
- adept* (adj.): highly skilled.
- hindrance* (n): something that prevents an activity.
- equipped*: provided with what is necessary.
- reflex*: an action or movement of the body which happens by itself when one sees, hears or touches something. For example, you remove your finger on touching something hot.
- instinct*: ways of behaviour which are not based on learning or thinking, but are there from birth; e.g. a bird flies by instinct.
- modification*: change.
- web*: a net of thin threads spun by the spider.
- spinneret*: an organ of certain spiders which produces a silky thread used in spinning a web.

When giving examples to support your topic sentence, keep in mind that:

- (i) there should be enough examples to support your point;
- (ii) each example should be logically related to your main idea;
- (iii) each example should be developed with interesting details. (Note that the writer of the paragraph above does not merely list the examples, but tells us in what way each of these animals is helpless, the results of their helplessness and how they become self-sufficient.)
- (iv) the examples should represent a reasonable cross-section of the group you are dealing with.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

This exercise will help you to understand how the paragraph has been developed.

- a) What is the topic sentence in this paragraph?
- b) Read the paragraph again and fill in the following columns in the manner shown here:

| Name of Animals | Skills to be Developed |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (i) Young birds and bats | Learn to fly |
| (ii) | |
| (iii) | |
| (iv) | |
| (v) | |
| (vi) | |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

You have already come across the following words in example 1. Use these words to fill in the blanks in the sentences given below:

Drowned adept incredibly hindrance deprived

- (i) Human babies are helpless at birth.
- (ii) Ram was at playing the sitar.
- (iii) The black South Africans are being..... of their rights by the white minority government.
- (iv) A number of people get every year because they don't know how to swim.
- (v) Lack of money is a real..... to Rita's plans for travelling.

All these are illustrations used in the passage to develop the paragraphs.

3.2 Description

You may never have to write descriptions which are complete in themselves, but you may need to include descriptions in other pieces of writing, e.g. personal letters, narratives, reports and travelogues. You may like to describe people, places, objects, habits and conditions, as well as scenes such as accidents.

Since descriptions are concerned with detail, the larger and more precise your vocabulary, the better your descriptive writing will be. The following items are usually included in descriptive writing:

- (i) place and position; direction;
- (ii) measurements: weight, size, volume, distance;
- (iii) shapes and patterns;
- (iv) colours and textures;
- (v) materials and substance.

Example 2: Development of a Paragraph by Description

Of the more than 20 species of small whales, our 300-pound playboy is identified by his gunmetal hide, his 8 to 12 foot length and his laughing face. The porpoise has no teeth at birth; they begin to appear (from 44 to 50 in each jaw) a few weeks later. Though he suckles for about a year and half, he begins to munch small squid at four months. He breathes through a single nostril, a crescent-shaped blowhole in his head that closes upon contact with water. This is also the source of his 'voice', and he can vibrate it like a human lip. His eyes, set just back from the mouth, are like a human being's capable of ranging. He hears through a cushioned inner ear and periotic bone, and has the keenest auditory sense of any animal. His brain weights about 3.7 pounds, which in cell count per cutic centimetre is the same as man's. Some marine biologists believe that porpoises may have a higher potential IQ than man, but have never had to develop it because they are so perfectly adapted to their environment.

[Adapted from Scott, J.D. 'Pranksters of the Sea' in *Marvels and Mysteries of the Animal World*. New York: Reader's Digest Association.]

Glossary

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>playboy:</i> | wealthy young man who lives mainly for pleasure (there it refers to the porpoise). |
| <i>gunmetal:</i> | a metal which is a mixture of copper, tin, lead and zinc (the animal's hide is compared to gunmetal). |
| <i>porpoise:</i> | a large sea animal that swims about in groups. |
| <i>munch:</i> | eat with a strong movement of the jaw, making a noise. |
| <i>squid:</i> | a small sea creature. |
| <i>crescent-shaped (adj.):</i> | curved like the shape of the moon when it forms less than half a circle. |
| <i>blowhole:</i> | a breathing hole at the top of the head of a whale which controls or regulates the flow of air in and out. |
| <i>vibrate:</i> | cause to shake continuously and rapidly with slight movement that may often be felt or heard rather than seen. |
| <i>ranging:</i> | stretching or reaching from one limit to another. |
| <i>cushioned:</i> | provided with soft inner lining. |
| <i>periotic:</i> | surrounding the ear. |
| <i>auditory:</i> | of hearing. |
| <i>biologist:</i> | a scientist who studies living things. |
| <i>potential: (Adj.):</i> | capable of developing. |
| <i>IQ:</i> | intelligence quotient. It is a measure of a person's intelligence. (100 represents the average.) |
| <i>adapted:</i> | suited. |
| <i>environment:</i> | surroundings. |

This description of the porpoise is a good example of the type of writing that seeks to create a clear and accurate word picture of a subject without specifically mentioning the author's feelings about it. Notice the way in which the writer has built up a picture of the porpoise. The first sentence gives the general characteristics of the porpoise. The rest of the sentences add details to develop the subject. These details are concerned with the physical appearance of the subject, such as its teeth, nose, eyes, ears and brain. Most good descriptions follow this progression from the general to the more specific.

When you write a description, keep in mind that you must:

- (i) begin with the general appearance;
- (ii) select such physical details as will support the description of general appearance you have given in your first sentence;
- (iii) describe each object by giving characteristics such as size, colour, design, weight, and materials;
- iv. in some descriptions, especially of scenes and landscapes, arrange your details in a definite order, such as near to far, high to low, left to right, etc. Some of the words used to indicate position are:

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| to the right | above | beyond |
| to the left | below | under |
| in the centre | opposite | over |
| next to | between | on the eastern end |
| along the | right side | alongside |
| across | | beneath |
| to the east/west/north/south | | surrounding |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

We have already shown you in example 2 how a live object may be described. Now, we would like to describe a familiar scene, let's say your room. Keeping in mind the points we have discussed, write a description in about hundred words of the room you live in. Before you write your paragraph, fill in the details in the following columns which may help you arrange your points.

| Object | Physical characteristics | Location |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

After you have completed the paragraph, compare it with the specimen paragraph given by us at the end of the unit.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Reading Comprehension

Let's read example 2 again. The questions below will help you understand it better.

- (i) What phrases indicate that the writer has a positive attitude towards the porpoise?
- (ii) The porpoise suckles for about:
 - (a) 4 months.
 - (b) 1 year.
 - (c) 1½ years.
 - (d) A few weeks.

Tick the right answer.

- (iii) The source of the porpoise's voice is its
(Fill in the blank).
- (iv) The porpoise can hear:
 - (a) better than any other animal.
 - (b) as well as any other animal.
 - (c) as well as human beings.

Tick the right answer.

- (v) Marine biologists believe that porpoises:
 - (a) are more intelligent than man.
 - (b) may be capable of being more intelligent than man.
 - (c) can never be more intelligent than man.
 - (d) are less intelligent than man.

Tick the right answer.

In description, you should be conversant with the appropriate words to use. The words must be such that what is being described is vivid, clear and well presented. Again, your description must follow some logical

order. You may want to start with the north down to the south or from left to right or from the important to the least important. Indeed, the work of a descriptive writing is to paint a picture of what to be described in words. A picture must emerge in the reader's mind after a description.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt how to use illustration and description to develop paragraphs. You need to practise this way of developing paragraphs in your day-to-day writing. Remember, the more vivid your description, the better your writing.

5.0 SUMMARY

In the unit, we have devoted some time to the discussion of how we can use illustration and description to develop paragraphs. This is just the beginning of paragraph development. In the next unit, you will learn many other ways by which paragraphs can be developed. The overall aim of this exercise is to make you an effective writer.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write a description of one major town or village you have ever lived in or visited.

Your description should include:

- (i) its location;
- (ii) its system of government;
- (iii) how to get there;
- (iv) why you like the place;
- (v) what you hate in the place.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 DEVELOPMENT OF PARAGRAPHS: CAUSE AND EFFECT AND DEFINITIONS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Cause and Effect
 - 3.2 Definition
 - 3.3 Comparison and Contrast
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 2, you learnt about the development of paragraphs using illustration and description. I hope you have started developing paragraphs in your academic studies, using this way of developing paragraphs. In this unit, paragraph development is extended further. You will learn how to develop paragraphs using cause and effect and definitions. Almost every academic field engages in writing that demands cause and effect as well as definitions. This stresses the importance of this unit to you.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- use cause and effect technique to develop paragraphs
- analyse paragraphs containing cause and effect sentences
- analyse paragraphs with definitions
- apply the definition technique to the development of paragraphs
- use comparison and contrast to develop paragraphs.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Cause and Effect

Besides using illustration and description to develop the topic of your paragraph, you may in some cases need to use the technique of cause and effect.

We often have occasions in our lives to ask “Why did it happen?” or “What will happen if ...?” and then try to find the cause and effect of an event. You may, for instance, want to know the cause of your poor grades, or of a bus accident, or the effect or consequence of taking drugs, deforestation, etc.

(a) Cause

Analysing the cause can be quite a complex task. For example, a daughter rebelling against her father and leaving home may have an apparent immediate cause, but there may also be a chain of causes going back into the past. Thus, there are likely to be many causes, not just one.

When you write, you can follow any of these patterns. You may discuss one or more casual connections between events. You may trace a chain of events in which A is the cause of B, which is the cause C, which causes D, and so on. The choice between one cause and several causes is often not a free option. Usually your topic will determine it.

When you work with several causes or reasons, you face the problem of arranging them in a significant order. If the reasons follow a logical pattern i.e., if the main event is caused by A, and A in turn by B, and B by C, the organization is predetermined. But sometimes, the reasons or causes may be parallel, all contributing to the same result. Then, a good strategy is to begin with the least important cause and conclude with the most important.

When developing a topic which is supported by reasons or causes, remember to:

- (i) make it clear whether you are dealing with an immediate cause or an earlier cause, a direct cause or an indirect cause;
- (ii) consider multiple causes;
- (iii) account for all the links in the sequence of causes;
- (iv) write about all the causes or reasons with details.

Example 1: Development of a Paragraph by Listing the Causes

Hills and mountains are slowly worn away over thousands of years by the process of erosion. Erosion takes place everywhere on Earth. There are several forces of erosion: glaciers which carry rocks weighing thousands of tons; frost which causes small cracks on rock sides; strong winds which wear away exposed rocks in deserts. By far the greatest cause of erosion, however, is the action of water on rocks. Water carries chemicals dissolved in it that soften rocks. This softening is the first stage of erosion called weathering. Rainwater falling on hills runs onto

streams and rivers and these carry the weathered rock away. Millions of years in the future, your favourite hills will have been worn completely away by erosion.

(Adapted from Geography by Dougal Dixon, Franklin Watts Science World)

Glossary

- worn away:* caused to disappear.
erosion: the action of wearing away.
glaciers: masses of ice which move very slowly down on mountain valley.
frost: a white powdery substance formed on outside surfaces from very small drops of water when the temperature of air is below freezing point.

Analysis of the Paragraph

- (i) Topic sentence: "Hills and mountains are slowly worn away over thousands of years by the process of erosion."
 (ii) (a) Causes of Erosion:
 glaciers
 frost
 strong winds.
 (b) Process of erosion by water.
 (iii) Summing up: In a million years, even your favourite hills will be worn away by erosion.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

You have just read an analysis a paragraph which lists the causes of erosion. It follows a sequence where the less important causes are mentioned first, followed by the most important cause. Now, think of your own life. For instance, what were the reasons which led you to join the Open University. Jot down your reasons.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Read example 1 again and answer the following questions:

1. What are the various forces of erosion?
2. Fill in the gaps:
 Water softens rocks because it carries certain(i) This softening is called (ii)

(iii) falls on hills and runs into(iv)
and (v), which carry the (vi) Rock away.

(b) Effects

Effects or consequences can be handled in the same way as reasons or causes. But now the main idea is regarded as causing the consequences discussed in the rest of the paragraph. The paragraph may deal with only a single effect or refer to several effects. If several consequences are listed one must be careful to distinguish between the major and the minor ones.

Example 2: Developing a Paragraph by Listing Effects

An earthquake strikes without warning. When it does, its power is immense. If it strikes a modern city, the damage it causes is as great as if it has struck a primitive village. Gas mains burst, explosions are caused and fires are started. Underground railways are wrecked. Whole buildings collapse. Dams burst. Bridges fall. Gaping crevices appear in busy streets. If the quake strikes at sea, huge tidal waves sweep inland. If it strikes in mountain regions, avalanches roar down into the valleys. Consider the terrifying statistics from the past. In the year 1755: Lisbon, capital of Portugal – the city destroyed entirely and 450 killed; 1970: Peru – 50,000 killed.

(From “Can We Stop Earthquakes”? in World of Wonder)

Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>warning:</i> | the act of giving earlier information of danger. |
| <i>immense:</i> | very great. |
| <i>gas mains:</i> | pipes bringing gas from the source of supply to the houses and buildings. |
| <i>gaping crevices:</i> | wide opening or cracks. |
| <i>tidal waves:</i> | very large ocean waves. |
| <i>avalanches:</i> | large masses of snow and ice, sliding down a mountain side. |
| <i>terrifying:</i> | filling with terror. |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

In earlier sections, we analysed some of the paragraphs for you. The following exercise will help you understand the organization of the paragraph above.

Cause: The power of (i)

Main Effect: The great(ii)

Details of the Effect:

| On Land | At Sea | In Mountain Region |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|
| (i) Gas mains burst (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) (vii) (viii) | | |

Summing up: Reinforce the idea of the damage caused by an earthquake by quoting statistics from the past and the present.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

In Exercise 1, you noted the reasons for joining the Open University. Now write down what you think will be the results or consequences of your joining this programme.

(b) Cause and Effect

We have discussed a paragraph which gives reasons to support a topic, and a paragraph which deals with effects. Often, however, cause and effect are more closely related, forming a chain where A gives rise to B, B to C and so on. In such a link, B is both a consequence of A and the cause of C. The paragraph below illustrates such a chain.

Example 3: Paragraph Developed by Stating Cause and Effect

Without sunlight, there can be no form of life as we know it and all man's basic needs can be ultimately traced back to the sun. In the first place, by its light and warmth, the sun directly provides man with water, for the heat of the sun causes the damp air over the seas to rise and form clouds which cool at a high altitude and consequently fall as rain. One result of rainfall is the formation of lakes and rivers from which man takes his water supply and which can be used for hydroelectric power. At the same time, rain together with sunlight, enables plants to grow, and plants provide food for man and also for animals which are themselves another source of food for man.

(From Anita Debska: Upgrade your English, Oxford University Press.)

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>ultimately:</i> | in the end. |
| <i>survival:</i> | the fact of continuing to live. |
| <i>high altitude:</i> | great height. |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

In example 3, the paragraph has been developed by stating the cause and effect. By filling in the gaps below, you will be able to understand the organization of the paragraph.

Main Cause: the sun.

Main Effect: Man's

(i)

Indirect Effect : rainfall

ii..... : rainfall

Effect: formation ofiii..... andiv
.....

Cause: lakes and riversv..... :water and
..... viCause:
rain+ vii

.....Effect: plants.....viii

..... ix:x

.....Effect:.....xi.....

for man and
.....xii.....

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

You have already noted the reasons for your joining the Open University and the effect it will have on your future career. Now write a paragraph of about 150 words combining both the reasons and the consequences of joining the Open University.

You may find some of the following words/phrases useful in developing your paragraph:

because (of)
since
on account of
thanks to

resulting in
leading to
causing
consequently
with the result that

3.2 Definition

Often when we write, we need to explain what something is or means, especially if we feel that our readers may not be familiar with it. This generally happens when we use technical terms or when we want to give our own meaning to an ordinary word.

The simplest way to define a term is by giving a synonym or by placing the word in a general class and then distinguishing it from others in that class. For example:

| Term | Class | Differentiation |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Nurse sick. | a woman or man | helps take care of the |
| Surgeon operations. | a doctor | who performs medical |

Such definitions are rather formal in style and are generally found in dictionaries.

Some concepts or ideas cannot be defined in such a manner, and for this purpose extended definitions are useful. Topic sentences which relate to abstract concepts such as 'freedom', 'democracy,' etc. need the support of specific examples. In fact, both in our thinking and writing, we often require extended definitions. This is done by adding details like uses, component parts, examples, being similar to something else, being different from something else, and stating what it is not.

Sometimes, a definition is used in the midst of other forms of writing, and sometimes, the definition itself becomes the focus of a piece of writing.

Example 4: Paragraph Developed by Definition

A map is a representation of an area of land, sea, or sky. Maps have been used since the earliest civilizations, and explorers find that they are used in rather primitive societies at the present time by people who are accustomed to travelling. For example, Arctic explorers have obtained considerable help from maps of the coast lines showing settlements drawn by Eskimo people. Occasionally, maps show not only the roads, but pictures of other features. One of the earliest such maps dates from about 1400 B.C. It shows not only roads, but also lakes with fish, and a canal with crocodiles and a bridge over the canal. This is somewhat

similar to the modern maps of a state which show for each large town, some features of interest or the chief products of that town.

C. C. Wylie

Glossary

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>representation:</i> | a picture. |
| <i>civilization:</i> | stage of human social development. |
| <i>accustomed to:</i> | use to. |
| <i>explorer:</i> | one who travels in unknown lands for the purpose of discovery. |

Analysis of the Paragraph

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Definitions:</i> | ‘A map is a representation of an area of land, sea or sky.’ |
| <i>Generalization:</i> | ‘Maps have been used Who are accustomed to travelling.’ |
| <i>Example:</i> | Arctic explorers. |
| <i>Generalization:</i> | Occasionally, maps show not only the roads, but pictures of other features. |
| <i>Example:</i> | Maps of both ancient and modern times. |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Use the sentences given below to write a paragraph on Mammals. The paragraph should be arranged in the following order:

- (i) Definition
- (ii) Generalisation by differentiation
- (iii) Example (2 examples)
- (iv) Generalisation.

You may make any changes in the language and introduce any connectives you feel are required to write a smoothly flowing passage. You will need, for example, to replace some of the nouns with pronouns and avoid unnecessary repetitions.

- (i) Mammals differ from the other vertebrates in their system of reproduction.
- (ii) The young mammals are protected with the mother’s body.
- (iii) After birth, the young mammals are nourished with milk secreted by the milk glands of the mother.
- (iv) A mammal is a warm-blooded vertebrate that has four limbs and a hairy skin.

- (v) Mammals are an extremely varied group, ranging in size from the largest mammal, the blue whale which is 150 tons, to shrews which weigh only a few grams.

Glossary

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>vertebrates (n):</i> | animals which have a backbone. |
| <i>secreted:</i> | produced. |
| <i>varied:</i> | of different kinds. |
| <i>shrew:</i> | a very small mouse-like animal with a long pointed nose. |

When we define an object or a concept, we often need to describe its characteristics. For instance, look at some of the sentences in exercise 7.

A mammal is a warm-blooded vertebrate that has four limbs and a hairy skin the blue whale which is 150 tones

Relative clauses in the examples given, behave like adjectives because they qualify nouns: vertebrate and whale.

Relative clauses are of two types: defining and non-defining according to their function in the sentences in which they occur. Here, we shall discuss the defining relative clauses. They are called defining relative clauses because they define or specify the noun which they qualify. They form an essential part of a sentence, as it remains logically incomplete if this additional information is not provided. A defining relative clause is never separated from the noun it qualifies by the use of commas.

A defining relative clause begins with a relative pronoun: *that*, *which*, *who*, *whom*, *whose*. *That* may refer to persons or things., *which* is used only for things, and *who* for persons. The possessive and objective forms of *who* are *whose* and *whom*. *Whom* and *which* may be preceded by a preposition: about whom, of which.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 8

Complete the definitions below with appropriate relative pronouns:

1. Biology is a Sciencestudies living beings.
2. Darwin was the personwrote The origin of Species.
3. Mammals are a class of animalsyoung are fed on the mother's milk.

4. An animal has a large brain is called an anthropoid.
5. The house intoI went belongs to a friend of mine.

3.3 Comparison and Contrast

So far, we have been discussing ways of developing paragraphs which deal with only one topic. Sometimes a topic can be developed by showing how two things are alike or how they are different. In fact, comparison and contrast are common devices in writing mainly because we tend to think that way. Our decisions are often based on comparison and contrast. For instance, comparison and contrast dominate our thoughts when we decide to join a particular college or university, when we choose a career or a job, and even when we buy a particular brand of tooth paste. We often compare our teachers, our neighbours, the cities we have been to, the food served at different restaurants, and so on. Hence, comparison and contrast are a continuous process in our lives.

We generally compare or contrast two items for three basic purposes:

- (i) We wish to point out distinctions in order to give information about two things.
- (ii) We wish to clarify the unfamiliar by comparing it with the familiar.
- (iii) We wish to show the superiority of one thing over another when we compare two cars, for example.

There are two ways of arranging information when comparing or contrasting things. One is to write down all the main points about one of the things to be compared or contrasted and then to take all the main points about the other.

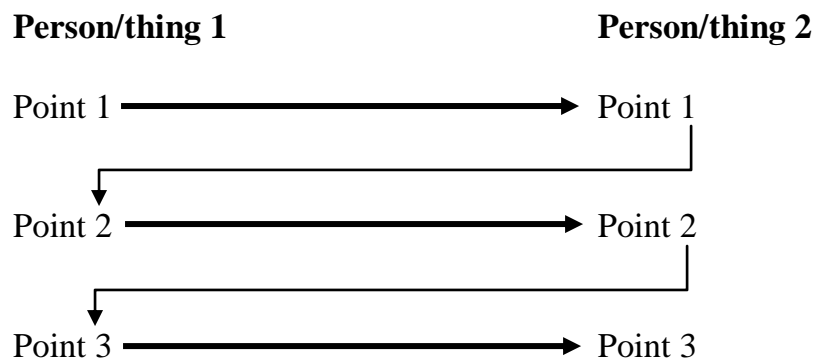
Person/thing 1

| |
|---------|
| Point 1 |
| Point 2 |
| Point 3 |

Person/thing 2

| |
|---------|
| Point 1 |
| Point 2 |
| Point 3 |

The other way is to take each point in turn and to compare the two things in respect of each point like this:



Example 5: Paragraph Developed by Comparison

The existence of a hierarchy helps to assure order and discipline, and these things are important among monkeys just as they are among humans. They permit, first the making of quick decisions. Whenever people are brought together, they will only be able to reach decisions quickly if some kind of hierarchy is established. Every jury needs its foreman; every cricket team needs a captain. The same is true of monkeys, some animals in the group have to decide when the group shall move, which direction it shall follow and what action it shall take to avoid predators. Some form of leadership is essential if action is to be taken quickly, and hierarchy has come into existence to avoid continual infighting which could be the consequence of total equality.

(Adapted from The Primates by Eimerl. S. and De Vors, I. Time-Life Series)

Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>hierarchy (n):</i> | the organization of a system into higher and lower rank. |
| <i>foreman:</i> | the leader of the 12 people (jury) appointed to decide whether a person on trial is guilty or not. |
| <i>predators:</i> | animals that live by killing and eating other animals. |
| <i>infighting:</i> | fighting or disagreement within the group. |

Analysis of the Paragraph

Topic sentence: ‘The existence of hierarchy helps to assure order and discipline, and these things are important among monkeys just as they are among humans.’

Comparison

Subject 1: People.

Subject 2: Monkeys.

Summing up: ‘Some form of leadership is essential consequence of total quality.’

Reading Comprehension

The paragraph given above is organized by first discussing one subject and then comparing it with another. Let’s try and understand the paragraph better.

Fill in the gaps.

- (a) Having a hierarchy is essential for both men and monkeys because
- (b) It is particularly important for man because
- (c) Give three reasons why it is particularly important for monkeys to have a form of hierarchy.
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
- (d) The writers of this paragraph:
 - (i) believes in dictatorship;
 - (ii) are being practical;
 - (iii) do not believe in equality.

(Tick the correct answer).

Example 6: Developing a Paragraph by Contrast

We live on the planet Earth, a ball of rock 12,750km in diameter. Like all the planets, the Earth rotates on its axis and orbits the sun. But the Earth is not alone. It has a companion on its travels – the moon which orbits the Earth once a month. But the two worlds are very different. The

Moon is a dead planet. It has no volcanoes or geological activity, it is airless, waterless and lifeless. The Earth, on the other hand, is lush and fertile. It supports million of living things – planets, insects, birds, animals and human beings. It has fascinating erupting volcanoes. Since the moon has no atmosphere to protect it, its surface is heated to 105°C during its day, and cools to 155°C at night. In contrast, the Earth is covered by an atmosphere which we can breathe, and which also keeps the temperature quite constant.

Glossary

- rotates:* turns round a fixed point.
- axis:* an imaginary line around which a spinning body moves.
- orbits:* goes round.
- volcanoes:* mountains with large opening at the top through which melting rock, steam, gases, etc., escape from time to time with great force from inside the Earth.
- geological activity:* activity which relates to the physical changes in the structure of the Earth, especially relating to rock, soil, etc.
- lush:* thickly and healthily growing (especially plants).
- erupting:* exploding and pouring out fire.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 9

Unlike example 5, the paragraph in example 6 has been organized by talking about the Earth and contrasting it with the moon. This exercise is to help you analyse the paragraph.

Analysis of the Paragraph:

1. What is the topic sentence?
2. Fill in the gaps in the following table to show the contrast between the Moon and the Earth.

| The Moon | The Earth |
|---|----------------------|
| (i) | (i) lush and fertile |
| (ii) | (ii) has volcanoes |
| (iii) | (iii) |
| (iv) | (iv) has atmosphere |
| (v) very hot during the day, very cold during the night | (v) |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 10

Write a paragraph of your own contrasting the Arctic and the Antarctic regions. The first sentence and some points describing the two regions are given below. The expressions of contrast listed here may also help you in developing the paragraph.

First Sentence: The northern and southern polar regions are different in many ways.

Northern (Arctic) Region

ice-covered sea-surrounded by land.

varied climate.

more rainfall.

much plant life.

exploited for trade.

Southern (Antarctic) region

huge continent surrounded by Ocean.

climate less varied; cold throughout the year.

less rain fall.

empty desert.

no trade at all.

Expressions of contrast

Is different from, can be distinguished from, but, yet, while, although, whereas, despite the fact that, on the other hand are examples of contrast expressions.

(Adapted from K. Johnson: Communicate in writing.)

4.0 CONCLUSION

In unit 2, we introduced you to the use of illustration and description to develop paragraphs. In this unit, we extended the paragraph development procedures to the use of cause and effect, definitions and compare and contrast. You will agree with me that these techniques are extremely useful in writing. They are the techniques you should use often in your day-to-day writing. More importantly, they are useful in academic writing activities.

5.0 SUMMARY

We have discussed different techniques of developing paragraphs in this unit. These techniques include the use of:

- (i) cause and effect
- (ii) definition
- (iii) comparison and contrast.

You should now be able to use these techniques in writing paragraphs on different topics.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write an essay on this topic. Your essay should be roughly 350 words: “What are the Causes of Economic Decline in Nigeria?” “What are the Effects of the Economic Decline on the Country?”

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 FORMAL LETTERS: STYLISTIC FORMS AND ESSENTIAL PARTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Formal Style of Communication
 - 3.2 Formal and Informal Letters
 - 3.3 Essentials of a Formal Letter
 - 3.4 Mechanics of Writing a Formal Letter
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units (1, 2 and 3), we learned how to write paragraphs. In this unit and the next two, we will concentrate on how to write different kinds of formal letters.

By ‘formal’ behaviour we mean that our behaviour is in accordance with certain rules, customs and conventions that are observed in our society. For example, people holding important positions in the government may have to observe certain formalities in the discharge of their duties. The Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs may, for instance, be required to pay a ‘formal’ call on the Ambassador of an important country when he arrives in the capital and takes up his new assignment. On certain occasions, we may have to wear a ‘formal’ dress because it is required by the custom.

In the same way, there are occasions when we have to use formal communication. For example, when we receive money from somebody, we are required to give a formal receipt, that is, a receipt according to the commercial custom and having a revenue stamp on it so that it is considered regular and in good order even for legal purposes.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the formal style of communication
- distinguish between formal and informal letters
- describe the essentials of formal letters
- apply the essentials of formal letters to writing such letters.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Formal Style of Communication

In spoken or written communication, we can be formal or informal depending on the situation and our relationship with the person to whom we are speaking or writing.

For example, the language that we use at home with our family or with intimate friends is the most informal. By contrast, the language that we use outside the home becomes progressively more formal. We are likely to use formal language with strangers, business associates, people of a higher status than us, and so on. Formal language is often written generally in the form of official reports, business letters, legal documents, etc. Certain fields of human activities are usually associated with formal language, for example, business, law, government.

What are the linguistic indicators of a formal style especially in written language? You must have noticed that certain items of vocabulary are never used except in formal situations.

Examples

Formal

commence
conclude
deteriorate
aperture

Many phrasal verbs are characteristic of informal style.

Informal

begin
end
get worse
opening

Formal

encounter (verb) (= meet unexpectedly)
(a friend)
inflate/enlarge
investigate
extract (verb)
deceive

Informal

come across/run across
blow up
look into
take out
take in

Similarly, certain grammatical structures are more common in formal writing, for example, the use of the passive voice and the use of it as an impersonal subject. Thus, in the instructions given to candidates at an examination we may find:

‘It is suggested that candidates spend thirty minutes on each question.’
 ‘Full marks can be obtained by showing all the steps in the solution of the problems.’

Less formal ways of saying the same things would be:

‘We suggest that you spend thirty minutes on each question.’
 ‘You can get full marks if you show all the steps in the solution of the problems.’

You must have noticed from the examples given above that in formal written language the speaker does not refer directly to himself or his readers and avoids the pronouns, *I, you, we*.

The use of contracted forms of words is generally absent in formal writing. You will not normally find a sentence like:

The *meeting 'll* commence at 4 p.m.
 Instead, you may come across:

The meeting *will* commence at 4 p.m.

The placing of a preposition at the beginning or at the end of a relative clause or an interrogative sentence can also distinguish formal and informal styles:

Examples

She longed for a friend in whom she could confide. (formal)

She wanted a friend she could talk to freely. (informal)

In which street do you live? (formal)

Which street d’you live in? (informal)

There are various degrees of formality as the examples below show:

When his father died, Ramesh had to look for a job.

After his father’s death, Ramesh had to find a job.

On his father’s demise, Mr. Ramesh Chandra was obliged to seek employment.

At the outset, we may tell you that it is not always necessary to use a very formal style even in rather formal situations. In your formal letters as well, while you may retain the form of such a letter, you should as far as possible avoid sounding too stilted or pompous. It is always a good idea to appear natural and friendly.

3.2 Formal and Informal Letters

In the course of our life, we all have to write both formal and informal letters. Let's first discuss the difference between the two.

As you are aware, informal letters are likely to be in the form of extended long-distance private conversation. But, at the same time, they are not really different from other kinds of writing. For instance, in a letter to a relative or a friend, you may wish to describe a place or a person, tell a story, or even have an argument. In these private letters, you may use whatever serves you best. These letters are, therefore, rather varied in their styles and contents.

Formal letters, on the other hand, are generally more 'set' in their styles and phraseology, although the conventions change from time to time. They are usually written, for example, when you want to request an organization to do something for you, or when the decisions of the government have to be conveyed to the people concerned and records have to be kept.

What are these formal letters? These include, for example, letters of enquiry, applications for jobs, letters to newspapers editors, orders for goods, letters asking for travel and hotel reservations, etc. They may be semi-formal (also called semi-official) letters written to business/professional colleagues and addressed by name.

You will no doubt realize the importance of formal letters, and how often you may have to write them in the course of your life.

3.3 Essentials of a Formal Letter

A formal letter has to observe the form usually adopted for such communication. There are certain things that one should keep in mind when writing a formal letter.

- (i) Keep your letters as brief as possible. Remember that the person you are writing to, hasn't the time to go through a long rambling letter. If he receives such a letter, he is likely to slip it in at the

bottom of his pile of incoming mail with the thought ‘that he’ll look at it when he has more time.’

- (ii) In fact, most formal letters are restricted to one or two main points. Most of them do not exceed one page of single-space typing and very few are longer than two pages. Topics that are too complex to be treated within the space of the usual formal letters are generally made the subject of reports. If the situation requires a letter as well, you can send a covering letter with your report and state the main points and the conclusion.
- (iii) Your letters should be clear, precise and complete. This suggests that all the information should be given, but unnecessary details should be avoided. Care should be taken to highlight the main points. These points should be arranged in a logical sequence.
- (iv) Read this in the light of the suggestions.

Dear Mr. Abdullahi,

We are today in receipt of your letter of 6 October in which you have asked for the catalogue and prices of our watches. We often receive such enquiries particularly at this time of the year when we know most dealers order fresh stocks from Dadin Kowa Stores.

In accordance with your request, we have enclosed our latest illustrated and descriptive catalogue showing the range of watches we manufacture. Separately, we have also enclosed a copy of our price-list-cum-discount schedule. As you will notice, our watches range from the traditional types to the latest in quartz, with prices that would suit all sections of society.

You must be aware that we are Nigeria’s largest manufacturers of watches, and this position has been established after years of hard work. We assure you that you will be fully satisfied with our products, and you can place your orders with us unhesitatingly.

We might add that our watches carry a two-year guarantee against manufacturing defects. A copy of our standard guarantee terms is also enclosed.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

You will probably agree that it is not a well-organized letter. Why do we say that? First, let us consider what it is that the writer wants to say

in the letter. Obviously, he wants to tell the addressee that he is sending the catalogue, the price list, and information about the guarantee terms, and also wants to persuade him to buy the watches from him.

These points are all included in the letter, but are not properly organized. There are too many details which are unnecessary and rather distracting. For instance, if we look at the first paragraph of the letter, is there any need for a sentence such as “We often receive such enquiries particularly ...stocks for Dadin Kowa Store” Also, is there any need for the entire paragraph beginning with ‘You must be aware that we are Nigeria’s largest manufacturers of watches...?’

Now, how can we make this letter more pointed and precise? Look at the letter given below:

Dear Mr. Abdullahi,

Thank you for your enquiry of 6 October.

As requested by you, we have enclosed our catalogue and price list. All our products carry a two-year guarantee from the date of sale.

You will notice that we offer a wide selection of watches, but may we draw your attention to the models described on pp. 6-7 of the catalogue, which we think might best suit your market?

If there is any further information you require, please contact us. Meanwhile, we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

You will agree that this letter is clearer and more precise. Let us see how the writer of the letter proceeds. First, he thanks the reader for showing interest in his product. He then informs him that he is enclosing information about his products i.e. catalogues, price list, and guarantee terms. After that, in paragraph 3, instead of giving a general description of the items in the catalogue, he pin-points specifically what would interest this particular customer, thus further motivating him to buy his products.

Your letters should always present the facts accurately. Figures, dates and explanations that are incorrect or misleading may cost time, money and good-will. Therefore, check your facts before you state them. Remember that when you sign a letter, you are responsible for what it says, and sometimes it may even be legally binding on you. Therefore, allow yourself time to review a letter before mailing it, and make the changes you believe are necessary.

The tone of your letter should always be courteous and considerate. Even though you may not know your reader, you must take into account what he/she may feel on receiving the letter. Always ask yourself, 'How might I feel, if I were to receive such a letter?'

Suppose, for example, you are the manager of a store selling electrical appliances, and you receive a letter from a customer who wants free replacement of a defective part, but does not give the cash memo number. You could reply to him as follows:

'The cash memo number must be given in the letter of complaint; otherwise the replacement cannot be arranged.'

or

'Please let us know the cash memo number so that we can process the replacement immediately.'

Which reply do you think is better?

Obviously, the second one. Notice that the second version uses the active voice while the first version is written in the passive voice. In general, the active voice has a friendlier, more courteous tone; the passive, on the other hand, tends to sound impersonal and unfriendly.

Instead of writing in a stilted, official language, use a more personal, down-to-earth style. There is a tendency in many of us whenever we have to write official or business letters to use words or phrases that we would never use in any other situation. These are generally legal phrases, or the jargon of a particular trade or profession. It is true that there are certain conventions that we have to follow in official/business correspondence. But, if these are carried too far, it makes our language stylized and pompous.

Also, many of us tend to write business letters in the phraseology used fifty years ago. The overuse of 'set phrases' is likely to produce wrong results in that they may sound like polite formulas without any meaning.

Look at the following letters:

Dear Mr. Adebayo,

Letter of Thanks

Thank you for your gracious letter of the 7th instant. In response to your query, I wish to state that we no longer sell the equipment you enquired about. Be advised that Yusuf and Company could be of some help to you. You may address further correspondence to that firm for assistance in the matter.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely,
Ade Odusote
Store Manager

What are the words/phrases that you might omit? Perhaps we could replace or omit words/phrases like the following: ‘gracious,’ of the 7th instant’, ‘query’, ‘I wish to state that ...’, ‘be advised that,’ ‘You may address further correspondence to ...’, ‘thanking you.’

As you must have noticed, the writing is full of out-of-date business jargon. Let’s try and avoid this, and we rewrite the letter:

Dear Mr. Adebayo,

Thank you for your letter of 7th May.

We no longer sell the equipment you have asked for. However, we are aware that Yusuf and Company now deal with that line. You may like to write to them for assistance.

Sincerely yours,
Ade Odusote
Store Manager

Given below are words/phrases which are often used in official/business letters, but which you must avoid in your own writing.

Avoid:

query

I beg to state that...

After a dialogue with you...

causative factors

optimum advantage

benefit/advantage

answer in the affirmative

In (accordance/compliance) with your request... as you asked for/requested...

I enclose herewith the papers...

Pursuant to our agreement...

Making an indepth survey...

in view of

in the event of

Instead, try to use:

request, enquiry

I wish to say

After talking to you...

causes

greatest

yes

I enclose the papers

As we agreed

studying

because of

if

in the majority of instances
notwithstanding the fact that...

usually
although, even though

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Given below are extracts from letters. Rewrite them, making the tone more courteous.

- (i) 'We hope that you have taken care of your return air/train booking. As we have already informed you, we do not undertake to do this for you.'
- (ii) 'We've just received the goods we ordered four months ago. We are sending them back as we are unable to use them.'
- (iii) 'Your request was unclear, so we cannot fulfill your requirements.'
- (iv) Dear Mr. Chukwu,

Your account with us is overdue. We must have your payment by the beginning of next week or we will be forced to initiate recovery proceedings.

2. Given below are extracts from letters. Rewrite them, omitting or replacing all the words and phrases that you consider incorrect or inappropriate.

- (i) 'We are herewith sending you the final circular with information regarding accommodation, travel, etc.'
- (ii) '..... However, it may not be possible to supply free of cost, so, I may kindly be intimated with the rate of Annual Subscription of 'Student's Bulletin' especially for year 1988.....'
- (iii) Dear Mr. Joseph,

We have received your gracious letter of the 13th instant in which you request information about the Personal Computer 'Future 300.'

Pursuant to your inquiry we are pleased to be able to inform you that 'Future 300' is available with us.

Please be advised that we have every assurance that the newly designed 'Future 300' will best fulfill your needs.....

- (iv)Since the work is confidential and urgent, I have been directed to request you to kindly spare your valuable services on Saturday.....
- (v) Dear Parents,

As you are aware, our constant endeavour has been to make steady improvement in the academic standards and achievements of our students.

In order to accelerate the pace of progress, especially in the academic sphere, we have introduced a new system of exams, after considerable deliberations, in which I am happy to state some of the parents took active interest.

3.4 Mechanics of Writing a Formal Letter

In this section, we shall discuss the steps we have to take in the writing of a formal letter. We shall talk about the lay-out of the letter as well as the equipment used.

Drafting the Letter

We follow the same steps in composing a formal letter as we do for any other kind of letter or for other kinds of writing. We offer you some hints which you may find useful in composing your letter.

- (i) It is always a good idea to prepare an outline. This may involve jotting down on a notepad the points you wish to make, and the order in which you wish to say them.
- (ii) Second, write a rough draft, based on the outline you have sketched. In this draft, try to limit your writing to the focus you have chosen, weeding out unnecessary ideas, words and phrases. As a general rule, you can organize your letter into three parts:
 - (a) say why you're writing;
 - (b) highlight the important facts;
 - (c) describe what you would want the reader to do for you.
- (iii) Then, go over the rough draft carefully, checking for mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

a. Some Basic Equipment

The appearance of an official or business letter may have a lot of influence on the recipient who has never seen you. To make the appearance of your letter attractive, you may follow these suggestions:

- (i) Try as far as possible to type your letters.
- (ii) Type on an unruled white paper of A4 size, and use envelopes of good quality.
- (iii) Be sure that the typewriter keys are clean and the ribbon is fresh.

b. The Format

A formal letter generally follows a set format.

Sometimes your company/office may have its own format or style. In that case, you have to follow it. Otherwise you may follow the guidelines given below.

Given below is an example of how people generally set out their letters to commercial companies and officials. Look at it carefully, and study the notes that go with it.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <i>Modern School</i> |
| | <i>R-58, DCM School Marg</i> |
| | <i>1. New Park Road</i> |
| | <i>Zaria. 069-337654</i> |
| | <i>2. 6th May, 1988</i> |
| <i>3. Your Ref. No. RLJ/246</i> | |
| <i>4. The Manager</i> | |
| <i>5. Arewa Tourism</i> | |
| | <i>Ibrahim Taiwo Road</i> |
| | <i>Kano</i> |
| <i>6. Dear Sir,</i> | |
| | <i>Formal issue or discussed topic</i> |
| | <i>Re: Vacation Hours</i> |
| <i>7. Thank you for your letter of 2 May sending us information about your special vacation tours to Yaukari Game Reserve.</i> | |
| <i>8. (Body of the letter)</i> | |
| | <i>9. Yours sincerely,</i> |
| | <i>Sheu Muazu.</i> |

Remember all formal letters should have a title specifying what the letter is about. *Re-* is put if the letter is a reply to a former letter or former discussion or issue.

Notes

- (i) Your personal address should go in the top right-hand corner. Do not put your name above your address. Take care not to put your address at the bottom of the letter.
- (ii) The date should go under your address. It can be written in a number of acceptable ways: 6th May, 1988; 6/5/88; 6.5.88; May 6, 1988.
- (iii) If the company or the official you are addressing your letter to has written to you before, there may be a reference number on their previous letter. It is better to quote this back to the writer on the left hand side as shown.
- (iv) Write down the name or the designation of the person you are writing to. It is better to write both if you know them. In case you write both, you need to remove 'The' from before the designation.

Example

*Mr. J. Baba,
Manager,
Arewa Tourism,
Ibrahim Taiwo Road,
Kano.*

- (v) Write down the name of the office or institution that you are writing to, and then the official address.
- (vi) Place the salutation or greeting two spaces below the recipient's address in line with the left margin. In most official/commercial correspondence, the normal ways of addressing the person you are writing to, are as follows:
 - (a) If you know the name of the person: Dear Mr./Ms/Dr. Surname
With women who do not have a professional title, use Ms. (for both married and unmarried women). If the woman has expressed a preference for Miss or Mrs., honour her preference.

Titles like Professor and Captain are not usually abbreviated.

Example

Dear Professor Hassan,

- (b) If you don't know the name of the person Dear Sir/Madam/Sirs
- (c) In some cases, you may use a word describing the position held by the addressee.

The choice will depend on the subject of the letter.

Dear Parent/Guardian, (in a letter from the school)

Dear Principal, (in a letter to the university)

- (d) These days, writers who do not know the name or the designation of the recipient often address the letter to the appropriate department. Alternatively, the name of the department may either appear in an 'attention' line, or it may be indicated in the 'subject' line.

Example 1

*National Electronics,
64, Park Road,
Zaria
Attention: Public Relations Department*

Dear Sir,

I am returning the three transistor radios we purchased from you, as their sound quality is very poor....

Example 2

Subject: Repair of Defective Parts

Dear Sirs,

I am returning the three transistor radios we purchased from you, as their sound quality is very poor.....

- (vii) The first line of the letter may begin immediately below the salutation as shown in the specimen letter. It is perfectly acceptable to indent it, i.e. start below the end of the salutation.

Example

Dear Sir,

Could you please send me some information.....

- (viii) For the body of the letter, use single space between lines and double-space between paragraphs. Again, it is perfectly acceptable to indent or not to indent the first line of each paragraph.
- (ix) Start the complimentary: close two spaces below the body of the letter either towards the right (as shown in the specimen letter) or towards the left. You can use standard expressions like ‘Sincerely,’ or ‘Sincerely yours’. If the recipient is a friend as well as a business associate, you can close your letter in a less formal way: ‘Best wishes’ ‘Warm regards’, etc. All these expressions are always followed by a comma. Four spaces below the complimentary close of the letter, and aligned on the left with the close, type your full name. On the next line, you may type your business title. Then sign your name in the space between the complimentary close and your typed name.

Additional Information: Commercial/official letters sometimes require additional information – an enclosure notation, or an indication that a copy of the letter is being sent to more than one person. Place any such information on the left, two spaces below the last line of the complimentary close in a letter.

Example

Sincerely,

Shehu Muazu
Regional Director

Enclosure: Report of Projections for the year 1988
cc: Mr. R. M. Paul
Mr. S. M. Alhassan

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

We have given below the lay-out of a letter. As you will notice, the format is not absolutely correct. On a separate piece of paper, re-do this format correctly. You may then look at the specimen format given by us.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit begins the series on formal letter writing. So far, the formal style as distinct from the informal ones has been exposed to you. You have also learnt the essentials and mechanics of formal letters. You may have been writing formal letters wrongly before. This is an opportunity for you to put into practice what you have learned in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to:

- (i) formal style of communication;
- (ii) distinction between formal and informal letters;
- (iii) essentials of formal letters; and
- (iv) mechanics of writing formal letters.

All these form the background to the other two units (units 5 and 1 of module 2) which treat more specific aspects of formal letter writing.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write a formal letter to the coordinator of the Open University and Distance Learning Programme informing him of your intention to:

- (a) enrol for more courses;
- (b) pay for the courses whose payment is still outstanding; and
- (c) solicit for help in equipping your study centre.

Your letter should not be more than 250 words.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 FORMAL LETTERS: COMPLAINTS AND REQUEST

CONTENTS

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Letters of Complaint
 - 3.2 Replying to Letters of Complaint
 - 3.3 Letters of Request
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about formal style of communication, essentials of formal letters and mechanics of formal letters. In this unit which is a continuation of our series on formal letters, you will learn about formal letters of request, letters of complaint and how to give a reply to a letter of complaint. Your attention to this unit will do you a lot of good. This is because you will learn how to write formal letters that address specific issues better.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write letters of request
- produce a formal letter of complaint
- give a reply to a letter of complaint.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Letters of Complaint

There are often things in our daily life which bother us, or cause us some inconvenience, or which need to be changed. It then becomes necessary to write a letter of complaint to the appropriate person, organization or department. If we want a larger audience to read it, we can get it published in a newspaper.

Here are some suggestions about letters of complaint:

- (i) Take care that your facts are accurate. To complain without reasons will annoy the recipient of the letter.
- (ii) Avoid sounding rude or nasty in the letter. Remember that the person who receives the letter may not be directly responsible for the situation you are complaining about. Getting angry with someone who was not at fault is neither fair nor useful.
- (iii) If you have a complaint to make, do not delay. Delay not only weakens your case, but can complicate matters for you, as the people you're dealing with may forget the details.
- (iv) There is no need to apologize if you are complaining. You need not begin in any of the following ways:
I am very sorry to bring this up
We regret to inform you

This merely weakens your case.
It is better to come directly to the point.

Example:

... unless you can give us better service, we shall be forced to consider other suppliers in the future.
... we are far from satisfied with the service you offer.
... please make sure that problems like these do not arise again.

Now look at the specimen letter given below. Notice that the tone is polite but firm.

Elektra Televisions Private Limited
14, Mayfair Road, Lagos, Nigeria

May 14, 1988

Okda Industrial Enterprises,
P/27A Okda Industrial Area,

Lagos.

Dear Sir,

Letter of Complaint

On 14th April, 1988, we placed an order for 50 pieces of 20" colour TV Picture Tubes.

On 27th April, we received a consignment of 50 pieces of 16" colour Picture Tubes in place of our order for 20" colour Picture Tubes. We immediately returned these 16" picture tubes with a note indicating the mistake that had been made. However, not only have we failed to receive the Picture Tubes we ordered, but we have also been billed repeatedly.

Would you please send the Picture Tubes we ordered? If you are unable to do so, please inform us immediately, so that we can make other arrangements.

Enclose a copy of the original order letter and the most recent bills.

*Sincerely,
P.K. Akuse
Sales Manager*

*Enclosures: (i) original Order
(ii) Recent bill*

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

The first paragraph of the following letter of complaint is missing. Fill in the gap with the most appropriate of the three options given below the letter.

*R-47 Nigerian Airways,
P.O. Box 50, Ikeja, Lagos,*

6 April, 1988.

*Fair Price Clothes,
16, Marina Street,
Lagos.*

Dear Sir,

T-Shirt Supplied

.....

.....

I am sure that this particular T-shirt is not representative of your products, and that you will immediately replace it.

As a regular customer of Fair Price Clothes, I'm generally pleased with your garments and hope to continue shopping at your store.

*Sincerely,
 G. Ibileye*

Choices for the First Paragraph

- (i) I must bring it to your attention that the T-shirt I bought from your shop just last week has faded and lost its shape after the very first wash. This has shocked me very much indeed.
- (ii) With great reluctance I bring it to your notice that the T-shirt I bought from your shop last week has lost its colour and shape after the very first wash.
- (iii) I bought a T-shirt from your shop last week. The cash memo no. is 6234. I find that after the very first wash, the colour faded and it is out of shape.

3.2 Replying to Letters of Complaint

You may sometimes be in a position where you have to answer a letter of complaint. The technical term for a letter of this kind is an adjustment letter. To prepare an adjustment letter you must first investigate what happened, and what you can do to satisfy the person who has made the complaint. After you have obtained the facts, you can organize your letter in the following ways:

- (i) Acknowledge that you received the complaint, thank the person for writing to you, and apologize immediately.

Example

‘Thank you for your letter about the order for 50 pieces of 20” colour TV picture Tubes. Please accept our apologies for not sending the proper size of picture tubes, and for incorrectly billing you.’

- (ii) Sometimes it is not possible to deal with the complaint immediately. It is better not to keep the customer waiting, but tell him at once what you are doing to help him.

Example

‘We are sorry we cannot give you an immediate explanation. However, we assure you that we are looking into the matter, and will write to you again shortly.’

If the complaint is justified, explain clearly why the error occurred.

Example

‘It was a mistake on the part of our dispatch department....’

‘We have rechecked your account and find that we have indeed been sending you the wrong statement due to a confusion in names and addresses. The computer has been reprogrammed and there will be no more difficulties...’

- (iii) You must state specifically what you intend to do or have done to solve the problem.

Example

‘We have already sent the correct size of Picture Tubes by road transport. You should receive them shortly after you receive this letter....’

‘We have returned the T-shirt to the manufacturer. Meanwhile we request you to visit our store and choose another one....’

- (iv) Sometimes you may have to deal with complaint which is unjustified. Even then you must be firm but polite in your answer.

Example

‘Our technical department has examined the two-in-one, and found that there were cracks on the body, as well as in the circuit. This could have happened only if a heavy object had fallen on the two-in-one, or if it had been dropped from a height. We can repair the machine for you, but I am afraid we shall have to ask you to pay for the repairs, as this kind of damage is not included in our guarantee. As a gesture of good-will, we shall only charge you for the parts and not include labour charges.’

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

You are a manager of a company dealing in Air Coolers. Given below is a letter of complaint from a customer. Write an answer to the letter. Be careful about the lay-out of the letter as well. After you have completed the letter, you may compare it with the specimen letter given at the end of the unit.

Shanti Building 2/15,
19, Airport Road,
Kano.

30th November, 1987

The Manager,
Quick Electrical Goods,
14, Bazar Street,
Kano.

Dear Sir,

Complaint on the Air Cooler Bought

I bought a 'Cool Home' air cooler from your shop on October 14 this year. The cash memo number is 457. The machine is, therefore, still under guarantee.

This morning, the water pump did not work. We would be grateful if you could send an engineer and get the fault rectified. Since both my wife and I work, please ask the engineer to come after 6 p.m.

Yours sincerely,
D. Abdullahi

3.3 Letters of Request

Now that we have discussed the important features of letter of complaint, let's take up letters of request in our next discussion.

Writing to commercial organizations and to official bodies for things you want to be done is probably the most common form of formal letters. There are two kinds of requests you may make:

- (i) requests for goods and services;

(ii) requests for information of various sorts.

Look at the specimen letter below. It is a letter from a teacher to the manager of Yankari Tourism. This teacher would like to take her students on a trip to Yankari Game Reserve making preliminary enquiries. Notice, especially, the language used in the letter.

*Ahmadu Bello University,
Zaria.*

6 August, 1987

*The Manager,
Yankari Tourism,
P.O. box 997,
Bauchi.*

Dear Sir,

Could you please send me some information about the tours to the Yankari Game Reserve? We are particularly interested in visiting this interesting place.

I would like to know the days when your buses run, their timings, and whether they are air-conditioned. Could you also tell us the fare for thirty students?

I would be grateful if you could also enclose a list of all the accommodation there with their tariffs.

Yours sincerely,

M. Ibrahim

You must have noticed that there are three ways in which the teacher has requested the manager of Yankari Tourism for information. What are these three ways? They are as follows:

Could you please send me some.....

I would like to know the days.....

I would be grateful if you could also enclose.....

There are other options that you have in making a request:

Would it be possible for you to send.....

Could you (possibly) send me.....

I would like to inquire about.....

I am writing to inquire about.....

When you make a second request or require more information you could use the word 'also', as in the letter above.

I would be grateful if you could *also* enclose.....

I would *also* like some help on.....

or

Another point I am not certain about is.....

Another matter I need information on is.....

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

1. You would like to take a certificate course in Food and Nutrition. Complete the letter given below asking for information about the course.

Dear Sir,

.....(i) *like to have some information about your certificate course in Food and Nutrition beginning this September.*

..... (i) *the prospectus for the course indicating its duration and the fees to be paid.*

..... (iii) *like to know if you have any plans for developing this into a degree course.*

2. Write a letter to the Manager of a hotel in Abuja. In your letter, specify how many rooms you require, for how many people, for how long, your arrival and departure time, and finally, the meals you will require. Besides the content, be careful about the lay-out of the letter.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Writing to complain and request is very common in our daily life. You can thus not overlook the suggestions given in this unit about writing formal letters of complaint and request. You will always be requested to lodge a complaint and request for something from somebody in an official manner. This is why this unit is of great importance to you.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you are exposed to:

- (i) how to write letters of complaints;
- (ii) how to write letters of request; and
- (iii) the language that goes along with these writing activities.

The unit has been able to establish the importance of formal letters. The next unit will also expose you to more of these letters.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. You bought a TV set from Jim Harrison Electronics but got home to realize that the set was not functioning at all. Write a letter to the Manager of the Company lodging your complaint.
2. Request a change of TV set or a refund of your money.
3. Give him the particulars of the TV set bought and the receipt number. Do not send the original receipts.
4. Present the complaint in such a way that a reply will be sent to you without delay.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 2

| | |
|--------|--|
| Unit 1 | Formal Letters: Letters about Jobs, Ordering Goods and Letters to Government and Other Organizations |
| Unit 2 | Writing Reports 1: Reporting Events |
| Unit 3 | Writing Reports II: Reporting Experiments |
| Unit 4 | Writing Summaries I: Techniques of Summarizing |
| Unit 5 | Writing Summaries II: More on Techniques of Summarizing |

UNIT 1 **FORMAL LETTERS: LETTERS ABOUT JOBS, ORDERING GOODS AND LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

In units 4 to 5 of module 1, we talked about some of the special features of the formal style of communication. We told you in some details about the essential elements of a formal letter. Two types of formal letters were discussed to illustrate the points that we made, namely:

- (i) letters of request.
- (ii) letters of complaint.

In this unit, we shall concentrate on three other types of formal letters. These are:

- (i) applications for jobs;
- (ii) letters ordering goods;
- (iii) letters to government and other organizations.

While the first two types of letters are written mainly to, or on behalf of commercial organizations, the third type relates to day-to-day affairs in our lives.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- write an accurate application for jobs
- accept and decline offers of job through a formal letter
- write a letter to order for goods
- write a formal letter to government organizations.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Letters about Jobs

If you are looking for a job, or wish to change your job, you will probably have to write a number of letters, particularly the letters of application that you will send along with your curriculum vitae. This is a short written account of your education and past employment. In this section, we shall discuss some of these letters but shall pay the most attention to the letter of application. This letter requires a special effort, as you have to convince your reader that you deserve to be called for an interview.

(a) Applications

Whenever you send a copy of your curriculum vitae to an organization where you are looking for a job, you should also send a personal covering letter which is known as the letter of application. The two are sent together, and you should consider them inseparable, even if you are answering an advertisement that asks for only the curriculum vitae. This letter supplements your curriculum vitae in that it provides information that is not usually included in the curriculum vitae, or cannot be fitted in it for lack of space. A letter of application, therefore, is an elaboration and an explanation of the facts that you list in your curriculum vitae.

There is an important difference between a letter of application and the curriculum vitae. The curriculum vitae is a straightforward, factual presentation of the facts relating to your education, work experience and other qualifications. These facts may qualify you for a number of jobs in different organizations. In the covering letter, you have a chance to interpret these facts, and show how they are particularly relevant to the position you are applying for. So your letter goes beyond merely saying that you have certain qualifications; it shows that your qualifications are

appropriate to a specific job and organization. And your aim in the letter should be to offer your reader several convincing reasons why he should talk to you in person in connection with your application. Therefore, your letter and curriculum vitae together explain your qualifications. They also provide an evidence of your ability to select appropriate information and organize it for the reader. An effective presentation can easily make even average qualifications appear quite impressive. A poor presentation can make excellent qualifications look ordinary.

Your letter of application must attempt to do three things:

- (i) catch your reader's attention favourably;
- (ii) convince your reader that you are qualified for the position;
- (iii) ask for an interview.

You should try to achieve the three objectives in a one-page letter.

If you are applying for a *specific* job which has been advertised, identify the job by title, and state where you came to know about it. Remember that an organization may have advertised for several jobs on the same day in the same newspaper or professional journal. If you do not specify which job it is that you are applying for, it will confuse your reader, and give her/him sufficient reason to move on to the next application.

Some of the ways you could begin are:

I am interested in applying for the post of which was advertised in *The New Nigerian* on 21 June, 1988.

In answer to your advertisement in *The Daily Times* of 21 June, 1988, I wish to apply for the post of..... in your organization.

Your advertisement in *The Guardian* of 21 June, 1988 for a production manager interested me because your requirements closely parallel my work experience.

There may be occasions when you may be exploring the possibility of a suitable job in different organizations. Then, you should explain that you are seeking a particular kind of job and are writing to inquire whether the organisation has any openings for such a job.

Example

I am looking for a responsible position in the sales department, where my training in marketing and experience in selling consumer goods may

prove useful. I would be interested in exploring the possibility of obtaining such a position in your firm.

Once you begin your letter (i.e. stated the title of the job and indicated where you came to know of it), your aim should be to convince your reader that you are suitable for the job. You, therefore, need to explain how your experience and skills qualify you for the job.

In your curriculum vitae, you should have listed the basic facts relating to your education, experience and special skills. In your letter, you will have to show your reader what these facts mean by placing them in the specific context of the job you are applying for. For instance, if you are applying for a sales job, indicate that your previous job has taught you to present a product line effectively. If you are applying for a job as an office manager, indicate any supervisory experience you may have had. However, if you are applying for your first job, highlight how your education matches the job and show your capacity for hard work and taking initiative.

Examples

1. (In response to an advertisement for the post of Private Secretary to the Chairman in a commercial organization.)
*I have been employed as a stenographer with University of Abuja for the past four years, and thus have the experience of secretarial work. In this post I have had to assume a certain amount of responsibility. I have been in-charge of the typists' pool, and have for the last three months been acting as personal secretary to the managing director. I enjoy this type of work, but with the return of the director's secretary from maternity leave, I shall have to go back to my earlier responsibilities.
If I am found suitable for the post advertised, I feel that my experience and talents will contribute not only to the growth of your organization, but also to my personal growth.*
2. (In answer to an advertisement for the job of T.V. service mechanic in a private organization.)
I have the experience of precisely the kind of work that the post you advertised entails. I have a diploma in T.V repair from I.T.I. After taking this diploma, I was an apprentice with Alfa Radios for six months where I repaired both Black-and-White and Colour T.V. sets. During this period I also repaired many video sets....

You may want to enter into an entirely new field in which you lack experience. In that case you should frankly admit that you are inexperienced. At the same time you should give persuasive reasons why you wish to change your job, and show your keen interest in the new area that you wish to enter.

Example

At the moment I am working as a clerk in a government office. I do not find this work particularly interesting, and wish to make a career in sales.

Although I lack previous experience, I think I have the necessary personal qualities to be successful in this field. I enjoy travelling and meeting people. My academic record is good, and the officer under whom I work at present will be able to testify to my willingness to learn and work hard. In order to make myself more efficient in this field, I have registered for a correspondence course in marketing....

The final stage of your letter is to ask your reader to do something for you. In a letter of application, this is the place to request for an interview. Now, it is obvious that the aim of your letter *is* to ask for an interview. Therefore, the important thing is not *what* you ask for, but *how* you do it. The point is to do it tactfully without appearing to beg or demand.

Don't write in any of the following ways:

I hope that my letter receives your kind favour and you will give me a chance to appear for an interview.

I am sure that when you have reviewed all the applications for this position, you will see that I am best qualified for this job.

Try to be polite but directly ask for what you want like this:

I will appreciate an opportunity to talk to you in person about the position ofin your company and will be available for an interview at your convenience.

If my application is considered, I shall be available at any time to suit your convenience, though I would need a little notice in order to make travel arrangements.

The last paragraph of your letter is also the place to state any restrictions on when you will be available for an interview, or special instructions about how to contact you.

Examples

- (i) I will be happy to meet you at your convenience and provide any additional information you may need. You can contact me either at my home address or at 342643 during regular business hours.
- (ii) Could you fix an interview to discuss my qualifications in more detail? With a week's notice I can arrange to travel to Abuja at your convenience.

You must make sure that you type your letter and avoid all errors.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Given below are sentences taken from an application for the post of a sales officer. Rearrange the sentences in the correct order, and organize them into separate paragraphs.
 - (i) My present job requires me not only to sell goods but also to keep an account of the sales, and do a bit of typing.
 - (ii) I am twenty-seven years old and have a diploma in marketing.
 - (iii) I am interested in applying for the post of a Sales Officer which was advertised in *New Nigerian* on 21 June, 1988.
 - (iv) I enclose my curriculum vitae, and will be happy to give you any further information that you require.
 - (v) You can contact me either at my home address or at 623029 during regular business hours.
 - (vi) The reason I wish to leave this job is that I find the office routine too monotonous.
 - (vii) I have been working in a department store for the last three years where I have often been in sole charge of the shop.
 - (viii) Since the job advertised involves travelling and meeting people, it would suit my abilities and temperament better.
2. Given below is a letter of application for the post of a stenographer in a commercial organization. The beginning and the end of the letter are missing. Complete the letter by filling in the gaps.

16, Wuff Street
P.O. Box 63
Zaria

16/7/88

The Personnel Manager
Cabo Airlines
P.O. Box 779, Kaduna

Dear Sir,

.....
.....
.....

I am twenty-three years of age, and have recently graduated from Ahmadu Bello University with 2nd Class Upper. I have also completed a two-year secretarial course at the Institute of Vocational Studies where I studied commercial subjects and shorthand and typing. I may add that I also took a special course in Computer Science offered by the Institute, and am quite proficient in the use of the word processor.

.....
.....
.....

Yours sincerely,
Agnes Otaru

- 3. Here is an advertisement that appeared in *New Nigerian Times* on 7 July, 1988. Keeping in mind the format discussed in this unit, write an answer to the advertisement.

Marketing Manager Pharmaceuticals

A new pharmaceutical unit requires a dynamic marketing manager. The incumbent shall have full responsibility for sales promotion and will be required to formulate and implement marketing strategies.

Applicants should have 3 – 5 years relevant experience.

Attractive salary and perks will be offered. Applications giving full bio-data and past record may be sent within 10 days to:

Dhana Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd.
47/G-5, Haudala Way
Kaduna

.....

(b) Accepting an Offer

If you are offered a job that you would like to take up, you must write a brief letter of acceptance as soon as possible, certainly within a week. The format of the letter is simple.

- (i) Begin by thanking the person for giving you the job. Then, accept the job that you have been offered. Take care to identify the job by title.
- (ii) In the second paragraph, you would specify when you would like to take up the post.
- (iii) Conclude the letter with a statement that you look forward to working for your new employer.

Some of the ways in which you could begin a letter of acceptance are:

- (i) Thank you for your letter of 6 May, 1988 offering me the post of Storekeeper in your company which I am glad to accept.
- (ii) May I thank you for the kindness and courtesy shown to me when I came for interview on the 16th. I am glad to accept the post of Accounts Assistant in your organisation on the terms stated in your letter of yesterday.
- (iii) Thank you for your offer of the post of in your I have great pleasure in accepting the offer.

Some of the ways in which you could conclude your letter are:

- (i) I look forward to what I am sure will be a rewarding future with Exact Time Watches.
- (ii) I am looking forward to working for your company.
- (iii) I feel very happy to have obtained this appointment and assure you that I shall do my best to make a success of my work.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Imagine that you have received a letter from General Television saying that you have been selected for the job you applied for. Given is the main part of the letter. Write a letter accepting the offer.

*General Television PVT. Ltd.
64, Ali Road, Kaduna*

May 16,1988

Dear Mr. Hussain,

I am pleased to be able to offer you the post of Technical Supervisor in our company.

As we discussed during our talk with you, your initial salary will be in the scale SS-04. You will also be entitled to the regular allowances that we provide for our employees.

*If you accept this offer, please let us know how soon you can join our office.
With best wishes.*

*Sincerely yours,
R. N. Sanni
Personnel Manager*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

(c) Declining an Offer

While searching for a job, you may have applied to several organisations and may as a result receive more than one offer. You will then have to select the job which is most attractive to you, and write your letter of acceptance. To the other employers, you must write a letter of refusal *immediately*.

When writing such a letter, begin by giving a thought to your readers. Remember that they have invested some time and effort in you,

compared you with other applicants, and found you the best person for the job. They may have counted on your accepting the job. If you refuse the offer, they will have to do some of their work over again.

Therefore, in your letter of refusal, you must be tactful and courteous. Try to give honest and sincere reasons for your refusal. If you have accepted another offer, say so, and explain why. Do everything to ensure that you and your readers part company as friends.

You may begin the letter by first thanking them for offering you the post. Then make a reasonable excuse for not accepting the offer.

Examples

Thank you for your letter of..... offering me the post of in your organisation. I am sorry I am unable to accept this offer as.....

Thank you for your offer of post of..... in your I am afraid I am unable to accept your offer as.....

A more unconventional but equally polite way of rejecting an offer is as follows:

I enjoyed talking with you about your opening for a.... and was gratified to receive your offer. Although I have given the offer serious thought, I have decided.....

One of the ways in which you can conclude your letter is:

I appreciate your consideration, and I am sure I would have enjoyed working for your company.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Read the letter given in exercise 1.2 offering you the job of a Technical Supervisor. Write a letter in reply, refusing the offer.

3.2 Letters Ordering Goods

If you are employed in an organisation or are self-employed, you may often have to order supplies of goods or equipment. Letters ordering goods have the format of any other formal letter, but there are certain points which you need to emphasise in such a letter.

- (i) An order letter must be *specific* and *complete* if you are to receive the exact items that you want. For instance, you must give the exact name and part number (if necessary) of the item. You must

give a detailed description of the size, style, colour and so on. You must specify the quantity needed of each item.

- (ii) Do not clutter the letter with unnecessary details such as why you need the items and who will use them.
- (iii) Be accurate. Sometimes even a misplaced decimal point could cause a serious error. Therefore re-read your letter carefully and check all price calculations.

Format

Given below are some points which might help you to organise your letter. You may, of course, change the organisation to suit your situation:

- (a) Probably the best way to begin a letter ordering goods is by coming straight to the point.

Examples

- (i) Attention: Sales Department

Please send us the following books listed in your catalogue:

| <i>No of copies</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Author</i> | <i>Published Price</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 15 | Writing Tasks | D. Jolly | ₦750 |
| 20 | A textbook of Economics | R. Hanson | ₦1,500 |
| 25 | Modern Office Practice | S. Kumar | ₦150 |

- (ii) Confirming the order we placed with you by telephone this morning, we request you to supply the following items:
- (iii) We thank you for your quotation of 4th June and shall be glad if you will supply the following items:
- (iv) Please register our requirements for the month of May and arrange to supply the following flavours of Top Chef Soft Drink Concentrate:

| Flavours | No. of Crates |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Mirinda | 100 |
| Maltina | 120 |
| Cocacola | 100 |
| Fanta | 150 |
| Pineapple Juice | 130 |
| Total | 600 |

In some companies, the orders are written on the official order form. Such an order form should always be sent with a covering letter. A covering letter allows you the opportunity to make any necessary points as well as confirm the terms that have been agreed on. You could begin such a letter in the following ways:

- (i) Thank you for your letter of 7 June regarding the..... we wrote to you about. You will find enclosed our official order (No. 3842) for.....
 - (ii) Please find enclosed our order No. 39645 for 200 sets of different models of transistor radios.
 - (iii) We thank you for your letter of 5th June and enclose our Order No. 328 for the four items we require.
- (b) You should confirm the terms and the method of payment.

Examples

- (i) As agreed, we shall send our remittance in full settlement of your invoice by a bank draft thirty days after receipt of goods ordered.
 - (ii) You may draw on us for the cost of the goods through Union Bank, Mohammed Murtala Way, Ilorin. Please rest assured that your documents will be honoured on presentation by the bank.
 - (iii) Once we have received your advice, we shall send a banker's draft to.....
 - (iv) The enclosed cheque for ₦25,000 covers the price of goods and postage charges.
- (c) You must also confirm the discount (if any) agreed upon.

Examples

- (i) We had agreed that if we sent the payment along with our order, we would be entitled to a prompt payment discount of 5%. We have, therefore, deducted this while making the payment.
- (ii) You will notice from the size of our order that we are entitled to a 15% discount. Please ensure that the discount is allowed in the invoice, otherwise it will be difficult for us to settle your bill.
- (iii) We would like to thank you for the 10% 'quantity discount' you have allowed us.
- (iv) We would like to take advantage of the generous cash discount you have offered for prompt settlement.
- (v) Although the low rate of discount –5% – has disappointed us, we are placing an order with you and hope that you will review the position in the near future.

4. It is very important to advise your supplier about how you want the goods packed and sent to you. Then, if the consignment does arrive late, or in a damaged state, your letter is the evidence of the instructions you gave.

Some Examples

- (i) The goods may be dispatched through a reliable Road Transport Service, if possible through NITCO Roadways.
- (ii) We suggest delivery by road to avoid constant handling of this fragile consignment.
- (iii) Please send the goods by air freight, as we need them urgently.

If the goods are fragile, it is better to advise your supplier on how you want them packed.

Example

The 50 sets of crockery ordered by us should be packed in five crates; 10 sets per crate. Each piece of crockery should be individually wrapped in thick paper and stuffed with straws. The crates should be clearly marked 'crockery', 'fragile'.

- (d) Always indicate the date by which you need the items. If you need them urgently for some reason, specify the reason as well as the mode of transport which you think will enable the goods to arrive faster.

Examples

- (i) Please complete the above order positively before 25th September because of the impending rainy season.
- ii) All these items are urgently required by our customers. We hope you will send them immediately by air freight.
- iii) We note that you can supply these items from stock and look forward to delivery within the next few days.

The following letter is an example of an order letter:

*People's Watch Store
15, Palika Bazar
Maiduguri*

3rd May, 1988

*Exact Time Watches
25/B Marina
Lagos*

Attention: *Sales Department*

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of May 1, giving us information about the new range of watches manufactured by you. We wish you to supply us with the following items:

*150 "Popular" watches @ ₦2,500 each
200 "Regent" watches @ ₦3,00 each
100 "Aristocrat" watches @ ₦6,000 each.*

As agreed, we shall send the payment by bank draft immediately on receiving the goods.

We note that you can supply these items from stock and look forward to delivery in the next few days.

*Sincerely,
Alfred King
Proprietor*

You have already placed your order over the telephone. Now write a letter confirming your order.

3.3 Letters to Government and other Organizations

So far we have mainly dealt with letters you may need to write if you are applying for jobs in various organisations and have to order goods. There may, however, be situations, when you as an ordinary citizen need to write to various governments or other organisations about the problems that you may be facing in your daily life. These are also formal letters and include letters of complaint, letters of request, and

letters making enquiries or suggestions. We often avoid writing these letters because we don't know how to. In this section, we shall give you some examples of these letters and provide you with practice in writing them yourself.

(a) Letters of Complaint

A letter we have to write frequently is a letter of complaint or protest. You may find that the Electricity Undertaking or the Telephone NITEL overcharged you. Your telephone may be out of order for days or even months without the authorities bothering to repair it. The bus conductors may be rude to you. The sanitary conditions in your area may be deplorable. You should then write to the department dealing with your specific problem. Given below is the main part of a letter written by a resident of Mayapuri complaining about the unhygienic conditions in the area.

I want to bring to your notice that the sanitary conditions around the Block of Nine Flats and many adjoining flats in Area G., A.B.U, are deplorable. The sewer lines are faulty and stinking water is stagnating in almost every open drain. The cleaners turn up once in a fortnight and the garbage is rarely removed. It remains lying in heaps till it finds its way to the open drains.

With the onset of the rainy season, things have worsened. The whole area has become a breeding place for mosquitoes and flies, and the residents open the doors and windows of their homes at their own risk. Human excreta from the three houses of the Block are overflowing from the septic tank to the open drain, as the line to the main sewer is blocked with concrete which got into it when the road was built.

Kindly take some action immediately before the situation becomes worse and there is an outbreak of infectious diseases.

What are the points that you should keep in mind while writing such a letter?

- (i) Don't make the complaint too general, give details of what is bothering you. In the letter given above, for example, notice how specific the writer is. He gives the precise details of the area he is writing about: "..... around the Block of nine Flats and many adjoining flats in the Area G of ABU....", "..... the three houses of the Block". You must include facts that your reader cannot possibly ignore.
- (ii) Ask for satisfaction firmly but politely. If you can suggest a solution, do so.

- (iii) End your letter forcefully. Make clear what you expect of your reader.
- (iv) Address your letter of protest to the appropriate person. For instance, if you want to complain about a bill, send your complaint to the Accounts Officer, not the Chairman of the organisation.
- (v) If you have made the same complaint before, say so in your letter.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

There is probably something that you want to complain about to the local authorities. Write a letter of complaint giving details of your problem. Take care to adopt the format of a formal letter.

(b) Letters Giving Instructions

We sometimes write letters in which we convey our instructions to various organisations in order to have something done for us. For instance, you may change your address and will then have to ask the circulation manager of the magazine you have subscribed to, to send the magazine to the new address; or you may have to instruct the post office to re-direct your letters.

What are the points that you must keep in mind in writing such a letter?

- (i) Give the essential information you want your reader to have clearly and completely.
- (ii) Leave your reader with a clear understanding of what you expect him to do.

The letter given below is from a woman who is writing to the circulation manager of the magazine she subscribes to, informing him of her change of residence and instructing him to send the magazine to the new address.

*No 57, South Extension
Airport Road, Kano*

June 10, 1988

*The Circulation Manager
Vanguard Newspaper
P.O. Box 68, Kano*

Subject: Change of Residence

Dear Sir,

I am a subscriber to Vanguard Newspaper. My subscription number is: D2/478. I am writing to inform you that I shall be moving to a new house on 2nd July.

My new address will be 642, Civil Lines, Kano.

Please send the future issues of the magazine to my new address. I hope we shall continue to receive them as regularly as we used to.

*Sincerely,
Danda Mohammed*

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

You've lost a bearer cheque. Write a letter to the manager of the bank instructing him to stop payment. After you've written your letter, refer to the specimen letter given at the end of the unit.

(c) Letters of Request

We often have to request official bodies for various things; this is probably the most common type of official letter. It includes letters to various organisations requesting for the provision of services. For instance, you may request the public transport organisation in your town to run more buses in your area. If you wish to meet an official, you often have to write a letter asking for an appointment. Letters have to be written to universities asking for application forms or duplicate copies of certificates.

The letter below is a request to Emeniwa Transport Corporation for a better bus service in an area.

*D.B. 49
No Man's Land
Kano*

17 June, 1987

*The General Manager
Emeruwa Transport Corporation
Kano*

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of No Man's Land, an area rather poorly connected to the rest of the city by buses. The people most affected by the lack of bus service are school children and teachers who find it difficult to reach a convenient bus stop in time to catch the bus to their schools.

I request the ETC to improve the bus service from this area. Specifically, could you start a direct bus service from No man's Land (touching sectors A & D) to Ahmadu Bello Way. It would benefit at least 150 school children and teachers.

I hope you will take immediate action to solve our problem.

*Sincerely,
Shehu Yaardua.*

This is one type of a letter of request where you have a problem and request a certain organisation to solve it for you. How is this letter organised?

- (i) First, you state the problem.
- (ii) Then, you request the organisation to solve your problem, and give details of how you would want it solved.
- (iii) Conclude by asking for immediate action.

Other types of letter of request will have a different organisation. When you do the next exercise, you will discover it for yourself.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

You want to become a 'postal' member of a library. Write to the library asking for information regarding the rules for such membership. Also ask for the application form.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has exposed you to different types of formal letters. You should start to use suggestions provided in writing official letters. Remember, the way you write an official letter will determine whether you are serious or not.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we discussed some more types of formal letters. These are:

- (i) Applications for jobs; accepting and declining offers.
- (ii) Letters ordering goods.
- (iii) Letters to government and other organisations.

You should now be able to write the different types of formal letters required for various purposes.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Read this advertisement and apply

A lecturer is wanted in Biology and Physics. The lecturer must have a good University degree and three-year working experience. The applicant should be of good behaviour and must have an appreciable number of research papers and publications and learned journals. Graduated with 2nd class upper, the applicant must have at least a Master's degree. Doctorate degree will be an advantage.

Signed

The Registrar
University of Abuja
FCT
Abuja, Nigeria

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 WRITING REPORTS 1: REPORTING EVENTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Different Stages of Report Writing
 - 3.2 Types of Reports
 - 3.3 Reporting an Event
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What is a report? Though we use the term to refer to a number of different kinds of written communication, we usually define it as an organised, factual and objective presentation of information. By 'organised', we mean that its parts should form a whole and by 'objective' we mean that it should not be influenced by your personal feelings. When you write a report, you try to convey some information to others. You may wish to give an account of some event that you have come to know of. You may like to describe your personal experiences or state the results of your investigation. A report may contain opinions, but these opinions should be supported by factual evidence. News stories are typical reports, but so are scientific articles, research paper, survey reports and business reports. In order words, any composition based on factual information is a report. Let's start this unit by allowing you to have a trial on reporting what pertains to your school life.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Write a letter to your father or some other near relative, giving a brief report of your studies, your hostel life, and your friends (about 100 words).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state clearly what a report is
- describe different types of report
- write different types of report
- report an event very vividly in a written form.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Different Stages of Report Writing

How does one write a report? As in the case with any other serious task, you have to plan your report also. The way a report is planned is suggested to you in this section in stages.

Stage 1 You have to ask yourself a number of relevant questions. For example: What information is to be conveyed? What is its purpose? Who is it for?

Stage 2 At the next stage, you gather relevant material from different sources. While doing so, you will have to take down notes. The advantage of taking notes is that you will not have to depend on your memory to recall every detail whenever you require it.

Stage 3 Now you have to write an outline of the report. The outline makes the writing of your report easier and more effective, as it enables you to attend to one part of the report at a time. Most reports contain three main parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. In the introduction, you should state the subject and the purpose of the report. You may also give the background information, if necessary. In the body of the report, you should present a detailed and organised account of the subject of the report. You may also include figures, tables, graphs, and charts as supporting evidence. In the conclusion, you should summarise your observations, and give your suggestions or recommendations.

Example

The outline of a report on a fire accident can be written as follows:

(The actual report is given later in this unit.)

Introduction: A major fire accident took place in Lokoja

Body: Exact time and place at which the fire started – cause of the accident – casualties – loss of property, etc.

Conclusion: The reason for the continuation of the fire for a long time. Precautions to be taken to prevent such accidents.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

As the Cultural Secretary of the Students' Union at your college give an outline of your annual report.

Stage 4 – Having prepared your outline, you must think of the language to be used. Of course, it will depend on the kind of topic and the kind of reader you have in mind. Remember that you are writing to communicate with others, not to impress or mystify them. The following rules will be useful:

1. **Be Clear:** To be clear, your writing must be definite and not vague. You must also avoid ambiguity. By ‘ambiguity’ we mean that a word or a sentence may be understood in more than one way and even the context does not make the meaning clear.

Example

An Ambiguous Sentence: The neighbours avoided the Johnsons because they were snobs.

A Clear Sentence: Because the neighbours were snobs, they avoided the Johnsons. (Or because the Johnsons were snobs, the neighbours avoided them).

2. **Be Simple and Brief:** Try to say one thing at a time and say it briefly and directly. Do not overload your sentence by trying to say too much. Use short sentences as far as possible. In a sentence do not use more words than are necessary.

Example 1

Overloaded Sentence: I prefer a large university because you can meet many kinds of people with different interests from parts of the country where there are different ideas, and a wide experience with many kinds of people is an important part of education.

Improved Version: Experience with many kinds of people is an important part of education. In a large university, you can meet people from many parts of the country and people with different interests. I prefer a large university because it provides this important part of education.

Example 2

A Sentence with Unnecessary Words: We thought we had an adequate supply of food with enough for everyone to eat.

Improved Version: We thought we had an adequate supply of food for everyone.

3. **Avoid Repetition:** A word may not sound well if it is repeated too often. In such cases you should replace it by a synonym or a substitute word. Sometimes awkward repetition can be corrected by rewriting the sentence.

Example 1

Awkward Repetition: I have chosen a topic that is a frequent topic of conversation today. My topic is: developing our own natural resources.

Improved Version: I have chosen a topic frequently heard in conversation today – developing our own natural resources.

Example 2

Awkward Repetition: My point is that too much emphasis is placed on college education, and this emphasis on college education makes many people go to college who don't need or want a college education.

Improved Version: My point is that too much emphasis on college education makes many people go to college for education they don't need or want.

4. **Avoid Jargon:** Jargon is a language that is hard to understand because it is full of special words known only to the members of a certain group. If your report is for circulation only among fellow experts, you can use this kind of technical language, but if the report is for a non-specialised group, avoid the use of technical language.

Example

Jargon: In non-exceptional structures, the coordinates that constitute multiple units exhibit essential similitude in grammatical functioning and usually in parallelism of semantic qualities in addition.

Improved Version: Ordinarily, elements in a series in a sentence are alike in grammatical form and usually have some similarity of meaning too.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Point out the faults in the following sentences:

1. Children often anger parents; they don't talk to them.
2. This narration is narrated by a narrator who we cannot completely believe.
3. I want to go to college because going to college will satisfy my long felt desire.

3.2 Types of Reports

Though it is difficult to give a rigid classification of reports, we can say that some of the common types of reports are: (i) reports on events (ii) reports on meetings and speeches (iii) reports on interviews (iv) reports on tests and experiments (v) reports on surveys.

In this unit, we shall discuss the reporting of events. Reporting experiments will be taken up in the next unit.

3.3 Reporting an Event

You come to know of various incidents in your day-to-day life. For example, whatever kind of work you do, accidents and equipment failures may occur in your place of work. You may have to write reports on such accidents so that the causes can be determined and necessary steps taken to prevent their taking place again. The report on an accident can even be used by the police or a court of law inquiring into the matter. So the report – an accident report as it is usually called – should be prepared as promptly, objectively and accurately as possible.

In the beginning of the accident report, state briefly the nature of the accident you are reporting on. Describe any physical injury or property damage caused by it. Be sure to include the precise details of the time, the date, and the place of the accident, the names of witnesses or the sources of information, and any other important detail. Try to indicate the cause of the accident, if known. Finally, give your suggestions or recommendations for the prevention of the recurrence of the accident. While writing the report, be exact and objective and support your opinions with facts. Of course, all accident reports need not follow the same pattern.

Example of a Report

Here is a report on a fire incident that took place in Lokoja recently.

Major Fire in Multi-storeyed Building

A major fire broke out in the Bypass, a multi-storeyed building on the Bypass, Lokoja on the morning of 29th June. The fire was noticed at 10.45 a.m. on the fifth floor and in no time the fifth, sixth, seventh and eight floors were gutted and thick smoke covered the entire building. While a large number of office workers rushed out of the building as the fire raged, nearly three hundred persons were left on the terrace of the building.

Tenders from the Lokoja Fire Service and the Defence Fire Service for Fire Research helped the Bypass Fire Service to rescue the stranded people. The Army and the Navy personnel were also summoned to the building during the five-hour fire fighting operation. Lokoja Air Force helicopters were also flown to the building to rescue people, but the operation had to be called off as it was found they were in fact fanning the flames.

Some workers on another building managed to build a causeway between the two buildings by using ropes and wooden poles.

The fire was fully extinguished around 3.30 p.m. Three persons were killed in the blaze and about fifty-five persons were taken to a nearby hospital as they were overcome by smoke.

An electrical short-circuit on the fifth floor of the building was reported to be the cause of the trouble. Due to neglect of safety precautions and inadequacy of fire fighting equipment, the building became a veritable death-trap for hundreds of people. So the Lokoja Fire Force Officials have decided to issue statutory notices to the owners of about 200 high-rise buildings in the city asking them to provide the necessary fire safety measures.

(Adapted from Functional English, Indira Gandhi Open University, 2001.)

Glossary

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| <i>causeway:</i> | a raised path. |
| <i>extinguished:</i> | put out. |
| <i>veritable:</i> | real. |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Read the report given above and answer the following questions:

1. What is the subject of the report?
2. When and where was the fire first noticed?
3. Were many people stranded on the terrace of the building?
4. How were they rescued? Who rescued them?
5. What was the cause of the fire?
6. What is your suggestion for preventing the recurrence of such accidents?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Write a brief report on the Independence Day Celebrations in your town or village.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Do you know what? Going through this unit should be an eye-opener to you. To know how to report events will assist you, not only in your studies, but also in day-to-day life. If you find yourself working as a journalist tomorrow, this unit will be an asset to you. To be able to report events as accurately as possible is a skill that you should always cherish.

5.0 SUMMARY

A report is an account of events, experiences, etc. We have shown in this unit how a report should be planned. An outline has to be prepared first. The introduction, the body, and the conclusion are the three main parts of a report. Your language should be clear, concrete, and precise. Avoid jargon and roundabout ways of expression. Try to be simple.

There are many types of reports. In your report on accident, you should give the precise time and place of the accident, and information about any people killed or injured, the damage caused to property, and the cause of the accident.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

You have just witnessed a motor accident. The Road Marshals took you to their office to write a report of the accident as the one who saw the accident really happening. Write a detail report for the police. Show clearly in your report the guilty. Be objective.

Your report should be in 350 words only.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 WRITING REPORTS II: REPORTING EXPERIMENTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Various Steps in Conducting an Experiment
 - 3.2 Reporting an Experiment
 - 3.3 Examples of Reports
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Laboratory tests or experiments are not limited to any particular field. They can be carried out in a number of fields: from Physics to Medical Technology, and from Bio-sciences to Fire Science. If you are a student of Science, you will have to perform a number of experiments in laboratories. These experiments will demand from you the ability to choose suitable equipment, to arrange various instruments appropriately, to observe and record the readings and reactions, and to arrive at the right conclusions. Finally you will be required to write a report on the various steps you take while conducting an experiment, your findings, and your conclusions. All these activities you will practise in this unit. I wish you success as you go through the unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the various steps in conducting an experiment
- report experiments in a systematic manner
- analyse an examples of experimental reports.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Various Steps in Conducting an Experiment

- (i) Before planning the actual experiment, you should have an understanding of the nature of the problem and any theory associated with it. The theory explains the problem. The theory or

explanation has, of course, to be proved; but it helps in formulating a hypothesis. Do not conduct an experiment without having a clear idea of what is to be tested. You should ask yourself: Why am I carrying out this experiment? Will it be of use to me in finding an answer to my problem? Moreover, you should analyse the problem and put it in simple words. You may divide your problem into parts which can more easily be answered separately than together.

- (ii) Experimentation is observation carried out in specific conditions. In an experiment, an event is seen to occur under known conditions. So you should eliminate as many outside influences as possible. In this situation, you can carefully observe the interrelationship between facts.
Remember that observation implies selection. It is important to decide whether you will use selective sampling or cover the entire field.
- (iii) You should arrange the apparatus carefully to suit your purpose and follow the procedure you have in mind for conducting the experiment.
- (iv) In your notebook, you should record, carefully and accurately, the details about the purpose of the experiment, how the equipment was set up, the procedure, the results and the conclusions. It is important to record what is actually seen including the things not fully understood by you at the time of conducting the experiment. You should avoid carelessness or dishonesty in recording the facts related to the experiment.
- (v) You may use illustrations like diagrams, drawings, graphs, maps, or tables. The purpose of an illustration is to clarify, or give a visual explanation of the text. With the help of an illustration, you can present a large number of details in a limited space. Further, suitable illustrations catch the reader's eyes quickly and convey your message effectively.

Different illustrations serve different purposes. Diagrams or drawings form an essential part of a report on scientific experiments. You will have to use the drawings of the apparatus, e.g. electrical circuit diagrams, in your report.

Graphs present mathematical data and trade statistics pictorially. They are very effective in indicating trends, distribution, and comparisons of two or more items.

Maps are used to show geographical distribution of data.

Tables are used for displaying mathematical data in a compact form.

3.1 Reporting an Experiment

Your report should have the following contents:

- (i) Subject
- (ii) Apparatus and other materials used
- (iii) Procedure
- (iv) Observations
- (v) Conclusions
- (vi) Drawings, diagrams, or graphs.

You should identify the experiment you are reporting on and indicate the apparatus and other materials you used.

If the purpose of the experiment is not obvious to your reader, you should explain it in the body of the report and give a detailed explanation of how you performed the experiment. Include your observations also.

In the concluding part of your report, you should give the results of your experiment. If an interpretation of the results is going to be useful to the reader, provide such an analysis in your conclusion. You may include your recommendations as well.

When you write your report, state your findings in clear sentences. Avoid the use of jargon as far as possible. Be objective and accurate. In experiment reports, the passive voice is more suitable than the active voice. So use the passive voice and include illustrations like diagrams, drawings or graphs to make your report clear.

3.2 Examples of Reports

Example 1

Here we shall show you how to report an experiment conducted in a chemistry laboratory:

Aim

To prepare hydrogen gas and to study its properties.

Apparatus

Woulfe bottle; thistle funnel; glass jars; with discs as covers; delivery tube bent at three places; two corks, each with a single hole; trough with water; and beehive shelf.

Materials

Granulated zinc, dilute sulphuric acid, matches.

Theory

Hydrogen gas is prepared in the laboratory by the action of dilute sulphuric acid on granulated zinc.

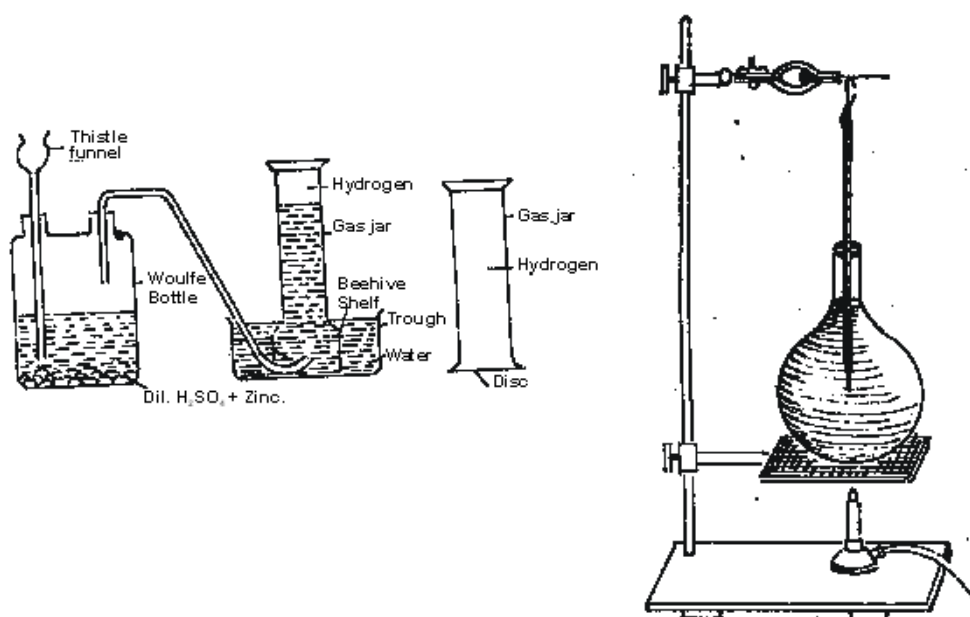


Figure 1 – Preparation of hydrogen gas.

Procedure

- (i) The apparatus is set up as shown in figure. 1
- (ii) 5 grams of granulated zinc are put into the bottle.
- (iii) We make sure that the lower end of the thistle funnel is very near the bottom of the Woulfe bottle.
- (iv) Dilute sulphuric acid is poured down the thistle funnel to cover zinc.
- (v) It is observed that as soon as the acid comes in contact with zinc, a gas is produced.

- (vi) The gas is collected in the jar by the displacement of water. The mouth of the gas jar is closed with a glass disc. The jar is removed and put in the same position, that is, upside down, with the disc cover on the table.

Observations

- (i) The colour of the gas jar is observed. The gas is colourless.
- (ii) The gas is odourless also.
- (iii) A lighted splinter is introduced into the gas jar. The gas begins to burn at the mouth of the jar. From this we infer that the gas inside the jar is hydrogen.
- (iv) To test whether the gas inside the jar is lighter than air, the gas jar is covered with a glass disc and placed in an upright position on the table. An empty jar is placed with its mouth downward on the gas jar. The glass disc between the two jars is removed. After two minutes, a burning splinter is introduced into each jar. The gas in the upper jar starts burning, but the gas in the lower jar does not burn. This indicates that the gas is lighter than air and has moved from the lower jar to the upper jar.

Conclusion

The gas collected into the jar is colourless, odourless, combustible and lighter than air. As it has all properties of hydrogen, the gas must be hydrogen. What then are the features of the experiment report just presented. Can you suggest some? Put some of these points down on a piece of paper and compare them with the ones I'm going to give here.

- (i) The language is impersonal: there is no use of I, we, they – experimental reports are devoid of the feeling of the person carrying out the experiment.
- (ii) The language is objective: subjectivity is not part of the language of experiments. What is observed is stated in plain language. No ambiguity. The language is a straightforward one.
- (iii) The report is systematic: It is not written anyhow. The pattern must be clear and logical.
- (iv) The diagrams are well presented and labelling clearly done.
- (v) The language is formal in style: no abbreviations, contraction of words (e.g. don't, I'm isn't). All sentences are written in full and fully developed.
- (vi) Words are not wasted in experimental reports: the goal of writing is not to impress but to express real facts as observed.

Let's study another example of experimental report.

Example 2

Here is an example of a report on a scientific experiment conducted in a Physics Laboratory.

Aim

To study the rate of cooling of a given mass of heated water.

Apparatus used

A flask of 1 litre capacity, a thermometer (0-100°C), a stop-watch, a stand to fix the thermometer.

Procedure

The apparatus is set up as shown in figure 2.

The flask is filled up to its neck with water and the water is heated to 80°C. Then the water is allowed to cool. The temperature of the water is noted every minute for the first five minutes; the temperature of the water is noted after every two minutes for the next ten minutes.

The experiment is repeated by heating the water to 70°C and 90°C and allowing it to cool.

A graph is drawn showing the temperatures at different times and the rate of cooling of the water is determined.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Answer the following questions:

- (i) What is the role of observation in conducting an experiment?
- (ii) What do you record in your laboratory notebook?
- (iii) What are the contents of a report on a scientific experiment?

Writing experiments is an important task that science students must perform. If you are a science student, you will agree with me that constant practice in experiment writing should be your concern. You should make sure you follow the steps suggested in this unit. You should also make sure that you read as many experimental reports as possible. These are ways you can be an experts in writing experimental reports.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We conclude that writing of experiments should follow a logical order. You should be systematic in your presentation. You should be clear, brief and to the point, while writing experiments. Scientific language should avoid ambiguous statements. Personal style involving pronouns such as *I, we, us, they, she, he*, etc are not used in writing experiments.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you, learnt how to write experimental reports. Briefly, you should follow these steps in conducting an experiment:

- (i) Plan the experiment.
- (ii) Arrange the apparatus.
- (iii) Observe what happens during the experiment.
- (iv) Record your observations
- (v) Write a report.

Your report should include the aim of the experiment, details of the apparatus and other materials used, the procedure adopted, the observations made, and the conclusions arrived at. It may also include drawings, diagrams and graphs related to the experiment and the findings.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Write brief report on an experiment you have performed recently in your laboratory.
2. What type of language do you use in reporting an experiment?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 WRITING SUMMARIES I: TECHNIQUES OF SUMMARIZING

CONTENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Summarisation is a skill that you will be called upon to do from time to time in your academic work. You need to summarise all lectures and notes. You need to summarise all points given during lectures and private reading activities when preparing for examination. Even when writing an essay, you need to summarise your points at the end of the essay. Summary is a day-to-day activity. You definitely must know how to do it.

In this unit, you will learn the techniques of summarizing. At the end of the unit, you should be able to summarise passages in precise and concise manner.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- separate essential from non-essential ideas
- distinguish between details and ideas
- remove repetition and re-statement from passages
- apply the summarisation techniques learned to summarise passages of varying lengths.

It is my hope that you will be able to perform all the tasks above after going through this unit.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Techniques of Summarizing

Let's start to familiarise you with the techniques of writing summary by going through a real life reading passage.

3.2 Example 1: The Nile

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

You are now going to read a passage about the river Nile. As you know, the Nile is a great river in Africa which flow through and gives life to the plains of Egypt. Now, go ahead and read the passage, trying to grasp its meaning.

The Nile

The great river Nile flows gently in its course through the hot plains in the first half of the year, but later on, when the melting snows and the rains on the mountains far to the south swell its tributaries, the Nile overflows. It spreads rich, muddy soil from Ethiopia over its valley and forms deep stretches of green, fertile lands along its banks. The settlers found, in the soft rich earth, barley and wheat and other crops could be planted, even without the use of the plough, and they began to make many settlements of farmers. They used more implements for tilling the soil, and flint for their weapons; and as time passed they learnt the use of copper.

Glossary

Settlers: the first people who began to live there.
flint: a very hard kind of stone used to produce fire.

Now you will read the passage a second time, sentence by sentence. After reading each sentence you will state which words you think you can remove from that sentence without destroying its meaning in the passage. Then, we shall discuss the reasons for including/deleting certain words, before proceeding with the next sentence in the same way. We can then put together, in paragraph form, the new sentences that we have created by means of these deletions or removal of words. These will form a summary of the passage.

Now read the opening sentence:

1. *'The great river Nile flows gently in its course through the hot plains in the first half of the year but later on, when the melting snows and the rains on the mountains far to the south swell its tributaries, the Nile overflows.'*

Notice that the main statement here is "The great river Nile flows gently in its course through the hot plains in the first half of the year, but later on the Nile overflows." The clause that has just been removed, namely, 'when the melting snows and the rains on the mountains far to the south swell its tributaries,' is a less important part of the statement as it only gives further information relating to the words. 'Later on.' It is for this reason that it can be removed without damaging the basic meaning of the sentence. Notice also that this is a subordinate clause; hence, it contains less important information than the main clause. What we have retained so far is the entire main clause. It is important to learn to separate the main clause from its subordinate clauses in order to understand where the basic meaning of the sentence and the details lie.

Notice also that in the main clause stated above, other phrases can be cut down to remove some details which are not absolutely essential. Remember that we are trying to summarise, and in summaries, there is bound to be loss of detail and richness of information. Details are necessary in full-scale writing but not in summaries. Now, try and see which phrases you feel can be removed from the main clause above without destroying its basic meaning. In the blank space below, note down the words you wish to remove.

Have you chosen to remove any of the following:

- (i) through the hot plains
- (ii) in the first half of the year
- (iii) gently in its course.

You cannot, obviously, remove "The great river Nile flows" without damaging the basic meaning of the sentence, so that has not been considered a possibility. Let us, then, consider which of the three word groups given above you can possibly remove without much harm. Notice that 'through the hot plains' is a contrast to 'the melting snows,' but the line in which 'the melting snows' occurs has already been found to be a detail and has been removed. So, the contrast with 'the hot plains' is not required here. Let us read the sentence without this phrase.

- 1(a) *'The great river Nile flows gently in its course in the first half of the year but later on the Nile overflows.'*

Do you agree that the sentence still conveys the basic sense of the original?

Can the other two word groups (ii, iii) be removed as well? What will happen if 'in the first half of the year' is removed from Ia? If this is done, the contrast with 'but later on,' which is necessary for the sentence, will be lost and the sentence as a whole will not remain meaningful. Hence (ii) has to be kept even in the summary.

Can 'gently in its course' be removed? No, because it is being contrasted with 'but later on the Nile overflows'. The phrase is required in order to show the behaviour of the Nile at certain times with its behaviour at other times. So you cannot cut down the sentence any further.

Now read the next sentence:

2. *'It spreads rich, muddy soil from Ethiopia over its valley and forms deep stretches of green, fertile lands along its banks.'*

You notice that what is being described here is the action of the river. Is there anything in this sentence which is not absolutely essential for its meaning?

Consider which words you can remove and write these words in the blank spaces below.

Both single words and phrases can be cut out.

Once you have written something down, look at the following words/phrases. Have you removed any of these? (i) rich (ii) muddy (iii) from Ethiopia (iv) deep (v) stretches of green (vi) fertile.

Let us consider which words can in fact be deleted. In doing this, you have first to be careful to retain the most important words, from the point of view of the meaning. The sentence states that during its course, the Nile spreads rich soil over its valley and form fertile lands along its bank. So, if you delete the word 'rich' or 'fertile' from your version of the sentences, the meaning will be lost. But you can, in order to shorten the sentence remove (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) above, because these words relate to the sub-ideas and not to the main idea of the sentence.

You may now ask: how can one distinguish whether the words referred to contain the main idea or merely details of the main idea? Let us try analysing the sentence in order to answer such a question. The sentence states what the function of the Nile is. The richness of the soil and that the fact that this makes the ground fertile is seen as the main function of

the river. Notice that ‘muddy’ is a detail of ‘rich soil’ and ‘green’ is a detail of ‘fertile’. Again, the phrase ‘from Ethiopia,’ while providing useful information about the course of the river, is not essential for describing the action of the river. Thus, we can summarise (2) to read:

2.(a) *‘It spreads rich soil over its valley and forms fertile lands along its banks.’*

3. ‘The settlers found that in the soft rich earth, barley and wheat and other crops could be planted, even without the use of the plough, and they began to make many settlements of farmers.’

What can you remove from this sentence without damaging its basic meaning? In the blank space given below, write down what you think can be deleted.

Now that you have chosen to remove some words, check if you have deleted any of the following:

(i) soft (ii) rich (iii) barley and wheat (iv) even without the use of the plough.

If you read the sentences carefully, you will find that not only the richness but also the softness of the soil is important here because of the statement that crops can be planted without the use of the plough. So, (i) and (ii) cannot be removed without damage to the sense. Notice that (iv) is required because it indicates an amazing softness of soil, something that normal fertile soil doesn’t possess. So it needs to be retained. Examples of crops as in (iii) on the other hand, can perhaps be removed. It is possible to condense this part of the sentence to ‘a number of crops could be planted.’

Another kind of change is also possible. You will notice a similarity between the words ‘settlers’ and ‘settlements of farmers.’ Can we cut down some of the common words? In order to do this, the sentence will have to be written in a shortened form. The condensed sentence can then read:

3(a) *‘Many settlements of farmers were formed there because of the soft, rich earth on which a number of crops could be planted even without the use of the plough.’*

Now read the last line of this paragraph.

4. ‘They used stone implements for tilling the soil, and flint for their weapons; and as time passed they learnt the use of copper.’

Do you think any words can be removed from here? If so, write down these words in the blank space below.

You may find it difficult to select the words which can be removed from here. Remember that it is not always possible to do so. In this case, it may, instead, be possible to reduce the length of the sentence by writing a generalisation to cover the examples listed here. The examples given are:

- (i) making stone implements for tilling the soil
- (ii) using flint for their weapons
- (iii) using copper.

What general statement can you make to cover these examples? Write this down in the blank space given below before reading further.

Perhaps it is possible to say:

4(a) 'They learnt the art of tool-making with the use of stone, flint and copper.'

'Tool-making can cover the making of tools and weapons. It is possible to remove 'with the use of stone, flint and copper' from (4a) if you consider this a detail. But the kind of materials used is historically so important that it seems desirable to retain, that is, not to remove the mention of stone, flint and copper. The condensed sentence then reads as given above in (4a)

Summary

The great river Nile flows gently in its course in the first half of the year, but later on it overflows. It spreads rich soil over its valley and form fertile lands along its banks. Many settlements of farmers were formed there because of the soft, rich earth on which a number of crops could be planted even without the use of the plough. They learnt the art of tool-making with the use of stone, flint and copper.

Compare this with the original passage. As it contains all the essential points of the original, it can be considered a summary of it. Notice that the task of separating these points was made easy because you had to shorten only one sentence at a time. So, now you are not required to write new sentences of your own or to combine sentences from the passage. All you have to do is to remove those points that are not absolutely essentials to the meaning.

Please remember that this is only one form of summary. We shall deal with other ways of summarising later.

3.3 Example 2: Plants

Now are you ready to work through another passage using the same method?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

This passage deals with the importance of plants in human life and the uses to which they have been put. It goes on to deal particularly with the *Jojoba* plant. Now read the passage through, trying to understand its meaning.

Plants

People depend on plants for their existence. Plants in the form of seeds, especially grains, are important to people because they are the principal ingredients in most people's diets. Yet most of the plants that are important to people were domesticated, or tamed, in prehistoric times. For example, before history was written, corn and wheat became part of people's diets. People have grown these grains as crops in small fields for thousands of years.

Scientists have only recently begun to keep records of the domestication of plants. Because of their records, scientists can predict some of the problems in domesticating a plant. On the other hand, there are three reasons why scientists cannot guess all of the problems or all of the solutions. The first reason is that they have never been successful in taming a wild plant. The second reason is that scientists have kept records for a relatively short time. The third reason is that each plant species is unique, different from other plants. The *Jojoba* is an example of a plant that scientists are trying to domesticate.

The *Jojoba* is a desert plant that grows wild in the dry regions of the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. It is a bush that grows to be about two metres high. On its many woody branches, the *jojoba* produces a fruit that is 40 per cent to 60 per cent liquid wax. This liquid substance, called jojoba oil, is valuable. It can be used as a base for all kinds of cosmetics. It works well as an ingredient in high-quality machine oils. By domesticating the jojoba, scientists hope to change unproductive desert land into productive agricultural land.

(From Zukowski-Faust, J. Johnston, S. S and Atkinson, C. S. between the Lines. Copyright (c) 1983 by Holt, Rinchart and Winston, Inc. reprinted by permission of the publisher.)

Glossary

predict: say in advance what will happen

domestication of plants: use of plants for man's purposes

Now you will read the passage sentence by sentence.

Let us begin by reading the first two sentences:

1. *'People depend on plants for their existence.*
2. *Plants in the form of seeds, especially grains, are important to people because they are the principal ingredients in most people's diet.'*

There are perhaps some words here which repeat the meaning that is being stated in different words. They can, therefore, be removed from a summary. Which are these words? In the space below, write down the words you can remove.

Did you decide to remove the whole of the first sentence or some parts of both sentence 1 and 2? One way of shortening the sentence is to say:

'People depend on plants, in the form of seeds, especially grains, for their existence because these are the principal ingredients of human diet.'

By doing this, you have removed the repetition of the words 'Plants ...are important to people' because this idea is already contained in (1). You have also shortened 'most people's diet' to 'human diet.'

Notice also that 'they' in 'they are the principal ingredients' changes to 'these' in the reduced form. In the original sentence, 'plants' is the subject of the sentence to which 'they' refers. In the rewritten sentence, however, there can be some confusion about whether 'they' refers to 'people' or 'plants. Grammatically speaking, in the rewritten sentence, 'they' should refer to 'people' because that is the subject of the sentence, but that will not make any sense. 'These,' on the other hand, indicates very clearly that it is plants which are being referred to.

By following this process, you remove obvious repetition. They may be some repetition that remains and so, after going through the whole passage, you may decide to cut out some more words. But that can be

considered later. Let us go through the passage sentence by sentence first. Read the next three sentences.

3. 'Yet most of the plants that are important to people were domesticated, or tamed, in pre-historic times.
4. For example, before history was written, corn and wheat became part of people's diet.
5. People have grown these grains as crops in small fields for thousand of years.'

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Underline or write down the words in the above sentences which say the same thing. Once you have done this, read ahead.

Did you underline any of the following?

- (i) in pre-historic times
before history was written
for thousand of years.
- (ii) domesticated
tamed
became part of people's diets
have grown these grains as crops in small fields.

Notice that the three phrases in (i) very clearly mean the same thing. In (ii), the words/phrases are not identical in meaning, in themselves. But, in the context of these sentences, they are very similar. So perhaps it is possible to keep only one phrase/word from (i) and (ii) each in order to summarise the sentences. Rewrite (3), (4) and (5) as one sentence, cutting out repetition of words and ideas, in the space given.

One way of doing this will be:

'Yet most of the plants that are important to people, for example, corn and wheat, were domesticated in pre-historic times.'

In producing this summary, most of (3) has been kept, but (except for the example) (4) and (5) have been cut out. This is because the same ideas were being repeated. By now you must have begun to understand when ideas are being repeated.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Now read the next two sentences

6. *'Scientists have only recently begun to keep records of the domestication of plants.'*
7. *'Because of their records, scientists can predict some of the problems in domesticating a plant.'*

Underline the words/phrases that are identical or similar in the two sentences. Now try and combine the two sentences removing the words that are similar. Try to do this in the space given below and also check whether it is necessary to substitute some other words for those that are removed.

It is clear that three things are being repeated in the two sentences 'scientists', 'records' and 'domestication of plants'. If possible, these words should occur only once in a summary. Bearing this in mind, perhaps the sentences can be rewritten as:

'Scientists have only recently begun to keep records of the domestication of plants because through these they can predict some of the problems in domesticating a plant.'

Notice the substitutions used:

'scientists' they
'records of the domestication of plants' these

The substitution for similar words here consists of pronouns.

Another way to reduce the sentences is to cut out any references to the scientists who are performing this task. This makes the statement sound more technical and it also becomes much briefer:

'Records of the domestication of plants are very recent and they can help predict some problems areas in this field.'

Notice that the following phrases have been reduced.

'have only recently begun' (6) ..are very recent
'the domestication of plants' (6)
'problems in domesticating a plant' (7) Problems areas in this field.

Now look at the next few sentences.

8. *'On the other hand, there are three reasons why scientists cannot guess all of the problems or all of the solutions.*
9. *The first reason is that they have never been successful in taming a wild plant.*
10. *The second reason is that scientists have kept records for a relatively short time.*
11. *The third reason is that each plant species is unique, different from all other plants.*
12. *The Jojoba is an example of a plant that scientists are trying to domesticate.'*

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

In what way can you reduce the size of these sentences? Think about this a little before looking ahead. You may jot down your points here.

Notice that 'On the other hand' seems to be required because it signals that a different viewpoint is being presented from the one in the earlier sentence. But, nevertheless, this phrase can be shortened. Can you suggest a word you can use instead?

What words are being repeated in the four sentences above (8-12)? Underline these.

Can some of them be removed? Can some of them be shortened? Write your shortened version here on the basis of the changes you have made above.

Here is one way in which the sentences can be reduced.

Check this with your version and compare the differences.

'However, all the problems/solutions cannot be guessed in advance because:

- (i) scientists have never been successful in taming a wild plant;
- (ii) records have been kept for a relatively short time;
- (iii) each plant is unique. The *Jojoba* is an example of a plant that scientists are trying to domesticate.'

Note down the points of difference between your version and this one.

Notice that sentence 12 has been retained without any change, partly because it is required to be a bridge to paragraph 3.

Now read sentences 13-19 which make up the whole of paragraph 3.

13. 'The jojoba is a desert plant that grows wild in the dry regions of the south western United States and northern Mexico.
14. It is a bush that grows to be about two metres high.
15. On its many woody branches, the jojoba produces a fruit that is 40 per cent to 60 percent liquid wax.
16. This liquid substance, called jojoba oil is valuable.
17. It can be used as a base for all kinds of cosmetics.
18. It works well as an ingredient in high quality machine oils.
19. By domesticating the jojoba, scientists hope to change unproductive desert land into productive agricultural land.'

First, think of ways in which you can shorten this. You can jot down your points here or underline in the paragraph the words that you wish to remove.

In what way can you combine some of the sentences? Let us start with (13) and (14). It is possible to reduce these to the following:

'The jojoba, a wild desert bush that grows in some parts of the United States and Mexico, is about 2 metres high.'

What has been done here?

First, is 'a desert plant that grows wild' and 'it is a bush' have been combined to form 'a wild desert bush.'

Second, notice that we don't state that the jojoba is a wild desert bush: we don't make this a separate sentence. After 'jojoba' we place 'a wild desert bush' separately by a comma, in order to show that the jojoba and the wild desert bush refer to exactly the same thing. In your grammar books you will find an explanation for this relationship, namely that 'a wild desert bush' is a noun phrase in apposition to 'jojoba'. This is a useful way of condensing sentences provided that the two nouns (or nouns phrases) in apposition refer to identical things.

Third, it is not necessary to include in your summary all the details that occur in a passage. Passages can, of course be summarised for various reasons, and certain details will be required for certain particular purposes. However, in a general summary, such as we are attempting here, detail of any kind which is not needed for the development of the main point can be deleted. So, we have left out mention of 'the dry regions' in which the jojoba grows, and the fact that it grows in the 'south-western' parts of the United States and 'northern Mexico'.

Fourth, notice that because sentences 13 and 14 have been combined, the main clause is ‘the jojoba is about two metres high.’ The other parts of the sentence are a noun phrase in apposition: ‘a wild desert bush,’ and a subordinate relative clause: ‘that grows in some parts of the United States and Mexico.’

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Let us now look at sentences 15-19. These contain a number of sentences dealing with the jojoba fruit, its contents and use. How can we combine these into fewer and shorter sentences?

First, underline the parts of the sentence that deal with detail which is not necessary for the main argument.

Have you done that? Next, find the common elements in these sentences. State these here.

Once you have done that, you can proceed to combine sentences 15-18 (not 19) into two sentences. Write your combined sentences here.

Read your sentences again to check whether you can improve them. Now compare your work with this version. This is, of course, only one way of condensing the sentences. There can be other ways as well:

‘Its fruit is 40-60 per cent liquid wax, called jojoba oil, which is valuable. This can be used in making cosmetics and high quality machine oils.’

Let us analyse what steps have been taken to produce these sentences.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Details removed: | (15) ‘many woody branches’ |
| Common elements: | (15) ‘liquid wax’; (16) ‘liquid substances’; |
| | (16) ‘jojoba oil’; (17) ‘it’, (18) ‘it’; |
| | (17) ‘can be used as a base for’ (18) ‘works well as an ingredients in’ |

Sentence 15 can be condensed to ‘Its fruit is 40-60 per cent liquid wax,’ but we don’t end the sentence there. We draw on sentence 16, removing the common element ‘liquid substance’ and add ‘called jojoba oil, which is valuable.’ Notice that we have added the word ‘which’ which refers to liquid wax. The main clause of this new sentence now reads: ‘Its fruit is 40-60 per cent liquid wax. This sentence has two subordinate clauses: (i) ‘called jojoba oil’ (short for ‘which is called jojoba oil’) and (ii) ‘which is valuable.’ Remember that the process of condensing sentences requires you very often to combine sentences in such a way that one or more sentences become subordinate clauses in the new sentences. You

must therefore learn how to distinguish main and subordinate clauses and also how to produce these different clauses.

Sentences 17 and 18 have been combined to give rise to ‘This can be used in making cosmetic and high quality machine oils’; the common element in ‘it can be used as a base for’ and ‘it works well as an ingredient in’ is expressed in ‘this can be used in .’ This applies to both cosmetics (17) and high-quality machine oils (18), so the two when joined by an ‘and’ can complete the sentence.

What about sentence 19? It appears difficult to condense this without removing the essential point of the passage, so we can just leave it as it is.

Now read the summary as a whole. Compare it with the original text.

Summary A

1. (1) People depend on plants, especially in the form of seeds, or grains, for their existence because these are the principal ingredients of human diet. (2) Yet most of the plants that are important to people; for example corn and wheat, were domesticated in pre-historic times. (3) Records of the domestication of plants are very recent and can help predict some problem areas in domesticating a plant. (4) However, all the problems/solutions cannot be guessed in advance because (i) scientists have never been successful in taming a wild plant; (ii) records have been kept for a relatively short time; and (iii) each plant is unique.
2. (1) The jojoba is an example of a plant that scientists are trying to domesticate. (2) The jojoba, a wild desert bush that grows in some parts of the United states and Mexico, is about 2 metres high. (3) Its fruit is 40-60 per cent liquid wax, called jojoba oil, which is valuable. (4) This can be used in making cosmetics and high quality machine oils. (5) By domesticating the jojoba, scientists hope to change unproductive desert land into productive agricultural land.

Now let us go over the summary and consider whether each sentence is probably linked to the following one.

Look at sentence 2 of Paragraph 1 of the summary. Sentences 1 and 2 are connected by means of the word ‘Yet’. This word suggests that something different from what is stated in sentence 1 is going to be presented. Is that, however the case? The fact that most plants were domesticated in pre-historic times (sentence 2) is not being stated in

contrast to people's dependence on plants (sentence 1). So the use of 'Yet' is confusing. What is being contrasted occurs in sentences 2 and 3, namely the fact that though plants were domesticated in pre-historic times (sentence 2), yet records of this domestication are very recent (sentence 3). So the placement of 'Yet' in the sentence has to be changed. Sentences 2 and 3 can now read:

'Most of the plants that are important to people, for example corn and wheat, were domesticated in pre-historic times, yet records of the domestication of plants are very recent. They can help predict some problems areas in domesticating a plant.'

Notice that sentence 2 is made to carry the contrast mentioned above with the help of part of sentence 3. Sentence 2 now becomes quite long. So the second part of sentence 3 (Summary A) is made to stand alone here.

Are the other sentences linked? Look at the connection between sentences 3 and 4. The linking word 'however' appears at the beginning of sentence 4. This indicates that only some problem areas in domesticating plants can be predicted, but all problems cannot be predicted/guessed in advance. This would seem to be a suitable way of joining the two sentences. Sentence 4 goes on to outline the reasons why all problems cannot be predicted in advance.

A new paragraph is started at this point. Why is it necessary to separate the passage into two paragraphs? The reason is that the passage moves from a general statement of the issues to a short case study of the jojoba plant. A new paragraph is needed to indicate this change in focus. What is the point of connection between the paragraphs? Paragraph 2, sentence 1 states that the jojoba is an example of plants that scientists are trying to domesticate. This word 'example' very clearly indicates the nature of the relationship between the jojoba tree and the rest of the discussion that has taken place earlier.

How is sentence 2 of paragraph 2 linked to sentence 1? It repeats the word 'jojoba', indicating that it is going to make a statement about it. So sentence 2 merely says something more about sentence 1.

Sentence 3 is connected to sentence 2 by means of the pronouns 'its'. This also makes a statement about the jojoba tree. Sentence 4 is connected to sentence 3 by means of the word 'this' (sentence 4) which refers to jojoba oil (sentence 3). Sentence 5 makes a general statement about the effect that domesticating the jojoba plant will have on the productivity of the land. It is therefore connected to the whole of paragraph 2 and is also linked to the word 'solutions' in paragraph 1.

Write the new version of the summary here. (Only sentences 2 and 3 have changed).

Summary B

If you wish to shorten this summary further, what can you do?

Different statements are being made in paragraph 1, namely the ones given below. *Which of these are absolutely essential for you to retain? Your decision about what to retain in paragraph 1 should be guided by the nature of the information presented in paragraph 2, so choose only those ideas which are required to connect paragraphs 1 and 2.*

- (i) People's dependence on plants.
- (ii) The domestication of plants in pre-historic times.
- (iii) The fact that records of the domestication of plants are very recent.
- (iv) Problems areas in domesticating plants can be predicted by studying records of the domestication of plants.

Perhaps the points that can be removed are (iii) and (iv) because these are not absolutely essential. If the first two are removed, the whole meaning of the passage will collapse.

The next thing to learn in order to condense a passage further is to be able to combine two or even three sentences into one by creating complex sentences with subordinate clauses. Notice the way in which statements i-iv have been written. *What changes have been made to the form in which these statements occurred in Summary A/B?*

'People depends on plants' People's dependence on plants
'plantswere domesticated in pre-historic times' – The domestication of plants in pre-historic times.

The verb 'depend' has been turned into 'dependence' – a noun'; the verb 'were domesticated' has been turned into a noun – 'domestication'; As nouns, these become the subjects of new sentences and can take other verbs in order to combine two sentences/clauses. Consider the following sentence as an opening sentence for Summary C:

'People's dependence on plants has led to the domestication of plants and grains that are important for man's existence.'

This is based mainly on sentence 1 of summary A/B, though 'the domestication of plants in pre-historic times' is drawn from sentence 2. The change of verb into noun has enabled us to produce this shorter

version because the main parts of the two sentences, namely, ‘People depend on plants’ and ‘plants.... were domesticated’ can be combined into one sentence: ‘People’s dependence on plants has led to the domestication of ...’, ‘the principal ingredients of human diet’ – ‘important for man’s existence.’

The second sentence of Summary C can read:

‘Most of the important plants, e.g., corn and wheat, were domesticated in pre-historic times, but scientists are still trying to domesticate more plants.’

What changes have been introduced here to make it different from Summary B? Note them down here before reading further.

The changes that have been made are:

- (i) for example – e.g.
- (ii) ‘but scientists are still trying to domesticate more plants’ (Summary C) is taken chiefly from paragraph 2, sentence 1 (Summary B), namely, ‘The jojoba is an example of a plant that scientists are trying to domesticate.’ It is stated here as a generalisation which links it to the description of the jojoba plant in the second paragraph.

The first sentence of paragraph 2 can read:

‘The jojoba is one example of successful domestication in recent years.’

The first part of this is drawn mainly from sentence 1 quoted above. However, this also contains the words ‘successful’ domestication and ‘in recent years’. Both these words/phrases are drawn from the sense of the passage from those parts of Summary A/B that have been left out of Summary C so far:

The second sentence of paragraph 2 can read:

‘It is a wild desert bush found in some parts of the United States and Mexico which has fruit consisting largely of liquid wax.’

‘What are the changes that are made here? Note them down in the space given below.’

Notice that the following changes are made:

The jojoba – It.

That grows in – (which is) found in.

Its fruits is 40-60 per cent liquid wax – consisting largely of liquid wax.

Two sentences from the previous summaries are combined to form a complex sentence with two subordinate clause. The subordinate clauses are:

- (i) found in some parts of the U.S. and Mexico
- (ii) which has fruit consisting largely to liquid wax.

The third sentence of paragraph 2 can read:

'This can be used to produce oil for making cosmetics and high quality machine oils.'

In what ways has Summary A/B been changed to produce this sentence? Write down your answer here.

In order to get this sentence, two sentences from Summary A/B have been combined namely, 'called jojoba oil' and 'This can be used in making cosmetics and high quality machine oils.'

The last sentence of paragraph 2 can read:

'In addition, by domesticating the jojoba, unproductive desert land can be changed into productive agricultural land.'

What changes have been made in Summary A/B in order to produce this sentence?

Note down your ideas here.

The main change consists in bringing in the words 'In addition.' This indicates that there are two advantages in cultivating the jojoba: (i) it can be used to produce oil, and (ii) unproductive desert land can be changed into productive agricultural land.

Now read Summary C as a whole.

Summary C

People's dependence on plants has led to the domestication of plants and grains that are important for man's existence. Most of the important plants, e.g. corn and wheat, were domesticated in pre-historic times, but scientists are still trying to domesticate more plants.

The jojoba is one example of successful domestication in recent years. It is a wild desert bush found in some parts of the U. S. and Mexico which has fruit consisting largely of liquid wax. This can be used to produce

oil for making cosmetics and high-quality machine oils. In addition, by domesticating the jojoba, unproductive desert land can be changed into productive agricultural land.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Do you think this is better than Summary B? Why/why not?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Summarisation is an important skill that you must possess as a student. You need to be able to summarise what you have learnt in readiness for examination. You need to be able to summarise all the points you have mastered during examination. Summarisation shows how well organised and focused a writer and a speaker is. That's why you must take the techniques of summarising taught in this unit seriously.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to:

- (i) how to separate essential from the non-essential ideas
- (ii) how to separate details from ideas
- (iii) how to remove repetition or re-statement from major points or ideas
- (iv) giving importance to words which link sentences and ideas; and
- (v) becoming aware of how ideas in a passage are systematically linked to one another.

All of these tasks are regarded as techniques of summarisation. The next unit will expose you to more techniques of summarising. If you want to be well-focused in writing, learn how to summarise, using the techniques suggested in this unit.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Fill in the blanks.

1. What is the first thing you do in summarisation?
2. In summarisation you delete
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)

3. In summarisation you reduce the size of a sentence by
4. The following steps are to be taken in actual summarisation:

Firstly you
Secondly you
Thirdly you
Fourthly you

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 WRITING SUMMARIES II: MORE ON TECHNIQUES OF SUMMARIZING

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Techniques of Summarizing
 - 3.2 Integrated Pest Management
 - 3.3 Earthworms Back in the Garden
 - 3.4 How a Volcano Affects the Earth
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- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 4, we discuss some techniques of summarising. Examples were given on how essentials can be retained in summary writing and non-essentials, redundancies and repetitions removed. In this unit, we shall take up three passages and show practically how they can be summarised.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- summarise any passage you read
- recognise factors that make summaries effective.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Techniques of Summarising

The only way you can learn how to summarise is for you to do it practically. In this section you are going to be taken through the processes of summarising the passage on *Integrated Pest Management*. Example 1 is used to illustrate these steps.

Example 1

You are now going to read a passage on how agriculturists are learning to deal with creatures who harm crops. In recent years, there has been a growing use of insecticides, but the passage given below suggests that other ways of dealing with the harmful creatures or pests are being developed and successfully used. Now read the passage.

3.2 Integrated Pest Management

1. (1) Agricultural pests are winning the battle against the poisonous chemicals in pesticides. (2) As each new chemical pesticide is used, the insects or rodents gradually become used to it. (3) The pests change themselves so that they are not killed by the poison. (4) Therefore, farmers, scientists, and food planners are trying a new method to control the pests that attack their crops. (5) This method is called Integrated Pest Management, or *IPM*.
2. Integrated pest management is a plan that combines several different methods to destroy insects and rodents. These methods are specifically developed for individual areas and crops. The control methods include using the pests' natural enemies, controlling the pests' breeding environment and developing stronger strains of seeds. Chemical poisons are used only when necessary. The *IPM* method accepts the fact that it is useless to try to destroy pests completely with chemical poisons. Its aim is to control pest population so that crops can still grow well.
3. Cotton farmers in Texas have been using the *IPM* method. The farmers find this the best combination of control methods for their needs. In 1977, three-quarters of the cotton fields in Texas received no insecticides at all. That year's cotton crop was better than average. The *IPM* methods showed the farmers a better way to control the pests in their fields.
4. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been studying agricultural pests and chemicals. It has found that 223 pests are resistant to, or not affected by, insecticides. Rodents, including rats, are also gaining resistance to poisons. In 1965, another UN organisation, the UN food and Agricultural organisation, listed 182 resistant types of pests. Three years later, there were 228 species on the resistant list. The 1977 survey raised the number to 364 species. Because so many pests are becoming resistant to chemical poisons, it is necessary to find another method of control. By using Integrated Pests

management, farmers can still control and limit pests without depending on chemical poisons.

(From Zukowski-Faust, J. Johnston, S.S. and Atkinson, C.S. *between the Lines*. Copyright ©1983 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., reprinted by permission of the publisher.)

Glossary

Pesticides: substances used to destroy troublesome or destructive creatures like insects, mice, etc.

rodents: animals like rats, rabbits, squirrels, which bite at things with their strong teeth.

strains: varieties.

resistant to: offering resistance to; opposing; not being affected by.

We are now going to make a summary of the passage by looking for the important ideas in each paragraph.

Let us start with paragraph 1. Re-read this paragraph and find a line that states the main idea. Write down that line here. It is not always possible to find the main idea stated in a single sentence. Quite often it is to be put together from many different sentences. If the main idea can be found in one sentence, that sentence is called a topic sentence.

Did you choose sentence 1 as your topic sentence?

‘Agricultural pests are winning the battle against the poisonous chemicals in pesticides.’

Notice that sentence 2 merely explains the meaning of sentence 1. Sentence 3 gives a little more information about the same point. What about sentences 4 and 5? You can see that these provide a new point. The two sentences (4 and 5) can be combined to form:

‘Therefore, farmers, scientists and food planners are trying a new method to control the pests that attack their crops, namely, Integrated Pest Management (*IPM*)’

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is the relationship between sentences 1 on the one hand and sentences 4 and 5 on the other hand? Write down the answer here, before looking ahead.

Sentence 1 states the general position-the problem. Sentences 4 and 5 state the solution to this problem. Note that both the problem and the solution make up the topic of paragraph 1.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What is the relationship of the rest of the passage to these sentences? Rapidly look over paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 and state the nature of that relationship here, before looking ahead.

The rest of the passage contains a development of the idea of Integrated Pest Management, what it consists of, how it is used, and its effect. It is therefore an expansion of the solution to the problem stated in paragraph 1.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Now, look for the important sentences in paragraph 2 which develop the main idea. Write them down here:

Have you written down the following?

‘Integrated Pest Management is a plan that combines several different methods to destroy insects and rodents. Its aim is to control pest population so that crops can still grow well.

As you can see, the first and the last sentence of this paragraph have been chosen because these contain the main idea. However, is this information enough to summarise paragraph 2? If you look again, you will find that crucial items are left out. What are these? Go back to paragraph 2 and find out what other information is required to be stated. Write this down here:

The points to be taken from paragraph 2 read thus:

‘Integrated pest management is a plan that combines several different methods to destroy insects and rodents. Its aim is to control populations so that crops can still grow well, by using the pests’ natural enemies, controlling the pests’ breeding environment, and developing stronger strains of seeds.’

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Can you cut out any words from here? Write down what you can remove?

Now check your answer.

- (i) ‘Integrated Pest Management’ has already been mentioned in full in the sentence we have retained from paragraph 1. The same sentence also states its short form ‘IPM’ in brackets. Therefore, the next sentence to be included in the summary, i.e. from paragraph 2, needs not repeat ‘Integrated Pest Management’ in full. It can be referred to simply as ‘*IPM*’.
- (ii) The word ‘pests’ is repeated in the summary of paragraph 2. We can therefore, change the second use of ‘the pests’ to ‘their’. The sentences will then read:

‘... by using the pests’ natural enemies, controlling *their* breeding environment.’

Now condense paragraph 3. Bear in mind what has already been stated in the summaries of paragraphs 1 and 2 above and choose only what seems to be necessary from paragraph 3 to continue the argument.

Here is a hint: a specific example has been given here. This is too long to repeat. Choose only one aspect of the example to make the required point that the *IPM* method is successful. Write this down here if you have not already written it in the blank given above.

Perhaps the most important part of the example is ‘The cotton crop in Texas in 1977 was better than average’. To produce this, parts of two sentences have been combined. The other details are not required in a summary.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Now read paragraph 4 and note down the main idea expressed in it. Don’t get confused by the details. Try and find the general point. State it here.

Have you noted down the following:

‘The U.N. Environmental Programme has found that a large number of pests are resistant to insecticides, so it is necessary to find another method of control.’

Notice that this sentence is drawn from different parts of the paragraph. ‘The United Nations’ has been shortened to ‘The U.N.’ but not ‘U.N.E.P’. The U.N. is a well-known organisation, so it will be recognised by its initials, but the Environmental Programme run by the

U.N. is not generally so well-known, so it needs to be stated in full. A number of figures are given about the pests that have been studied and found to be resistant to insecticides. These cannot be stated separately but have to be contained within a generalisation: ‘a large number of pests.’ The last sentence but one of the paragraph is the main sentence for the summary.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Now rewrite all the main points that have pout down separately together here:

Let’s now read this summary.

‘agricultural pests are winning the battle against the poisonous chemicals in pesticides. Therefore farmers, scientists and food planners are trying a new method to control the pests that attack their crops, namely Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is a plan that combines several different methods to destroy insects and rodents. Its aim is to control pests populations so that crops can still grow well, by using the pests’ natural enemies, controlling the pests’ breeding environment, and developing stronger strains of seeds. The cotton crop in Texas in 1977 was better than average. The U.N. Environmental Programme has found that a large number of pests are resistant to insecticides, so it is necessary to find another method of control.’

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Now consider this summary carefully.

- (i) Are all the points connected to form a single argument? And are all the sentences properly linked? If you read carefully you will find that one of the sentences has no proper linking word to connect it to the previous sentence. Which sentence is this? What linking words would you add? Answer these questions here before reading ahead.

The last sentence but one is not related to the previous one. It is necessary to add something else such as: ‘*As a result of using the IPM, the cotton crop in Texas in 1977 was better than average*’. By the addition of these words a reason is given for the improvement of the cotton crop.

- (ii) Is there any repetition of ideas anywhere in this summary? Write down the sentences that repeat the same information.

You will have noticed that the first and the last lines of this summary repeat the same points in different words. So, perhaps, it is possible to cut out one of the lines. The last sentence can very easily be removed because mention of the U.N. Environmental Programme is not particularly important to the development of the argument. So the summary is complete without the last summary.

Let us go over the steps we took to write this summary.

- (i) We isolated the main point or points in each paragraph:
- (ii) We then put them all together as a summary.
- (iii) Finally, we looked at the summary to check for repetition of ideas and removed the repetition. The summary also checked connection between one of the examples and the main idea. In that case, linking or connecting words were required in order to make it read properly. You must follow these steps when writing a summary.

Example 2

You will now read another passage. This deals with a related topic. It talks about natural ways of fertilising the soil. The method suggested here is the use of earthworms to freshen the soil. Now read the passage.

3.3 Earthworms Back in the Garden

1. 'Earthworms are the answer for every garden problem, according to Harold John Weigel. They can increase crop production, turn and freshen soil, and produce faster growth. Simply take care of the earthworms, and the earthworms will take care of the garden. Weigel is extremely enthusiastic about earthworms. They are tremendous creatures, "the intestines of the Earth." Weigel says, quoting Charles Darwin.
2. Weigel is so excited about the benefits of worms that he is writing a book about them. He gardens using thousands of earthworms. He has persuaded his wife to put worms in her houseplant pots. He even suggests eating worms which he claims are 70 per cent protein. He has dreams of armies of earthworms helping to replace topsoil in the country. It is a fact, he says, that topsoil is disappearing every year through erosion. Wind and water carry away the soil, and nature needs centuries to replace it.
3. Within one year, one thousand earthworms and their descendants can change approximately one ton of organic matter into one of the highest-yield growing materials known, according to Weigel.

Worms eat organic materials and produce what is known as worm castings. If 1,000 pounds of earthworms are working one acre of land every twenty-four hours, then will produce 1,000 pounds of castings that function as a high-grade topsoil. They produce the same amount of topsoil in one day that nature could produce in 700 years through decomposition and erosive forces such as wind and rain.

4. Planting gardens in worm castings offers plants more than just all the necessary nutrients. For example, castings are very porous, and water flows easily through them. They are very absorbent, being able to hold water easily. In addition, worms tend to be happiest around the roots of plants. Water can then flow directly to roots through the worm channels. The worms' create a planting area of even consistency. Thus, the earthworms act as natural ploughs.
5. Worms offer all these benefits, yet they make few demands. They need only moisture, darkness and food from the soil. Weigel gets his information on the benefits of earthworms from books and from the Wormgrowers Association. That little known group which is active in many states, suggests that commercial farmers reintroduce earthworms in places where they have been killed through the use of synthetic fertilisers and other gardening chemicals.'

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SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 8

Check Your Progress 1

Re-read paragraph 1 and draw out the main idea from it. You can begin in this way: 'Earthworms are the answer for every garden problem.'

Check your answer with that given by us at the end of the unit.

You were expected to complete the above sentence by given examples of the problems earthworms can solve, as listed in paragraph 1. Notice that the punctuation marks and the colon, in the answer given by us, indicates that an explanation, or details regarding something are going to follow.

Now re-read paragraph 2 and draw out the main ideas from it. You will find that it contains two ideas. Write them down here.

Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit. The paragraph is about the benefits of worms and the two benefits mentioned here should be selected for the summary. If you have chosen anything else, it can only be about Weigel's excitement and the usefulness of worms in general. In a summary we are not much concerned with the view of an individual such as Weigel, but with the facts themselves. The usefulness of worms in general has already been stated in the summary of paragraph 1, so that doesn't need to be repeated.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 9

Now re-read 3 and note down the main points. Choose the most general statements. Specific examples should not be included unless they also express a general idea which has not already been stated. Write down your points here.

Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit. You will find that a large part of the first and the last sentence expresses the main points. All references to Weigel are left out. The point regarding worm castings, though important, is not really necessary for the main argument that runs through the whole piece.

Now read paragraph 4. Just select those points that have not already been stated. Choose adjectives and adjective-like phrases that are used to describe the effect of worms on the soil. You can begin your sentence this way;

'Worms make the soil

It is not necessary to give all the details even though they are interesting. In a summary you need basically to provide the main points that are important for the whole passage. Check your answer with that given by us.

Now read paragraph 5 and note down the main points. You will notice that this paragraph deals with the needs of worms. So, first state the three things that they need, starting with the words:

'Worms need only

Another point is also being made here regarding a Worm Growers' Association which is of interest in the context. This could also be mentioned. Put in a line about this.

Check your answer with that given by us.

Now, if the whole summary we have produced is written up, it will read like this:

‘Earthworms are the answer for every garden problem: they can increase crop production, turn and freshen soil and produce faster growth. Earthworms, it is claimed, are 70 per cent protein, so they can replace the topsoil which is disappearing every year through erosion. Within one year, 1,000 earthworms and their descendants can change approximately 1 ton of organic matter into one of the highest-yield growing materials known. They produce the same amount of topsoil in one day that nature could produce in 700 years through decomposition and erosive forces. Worms make the soil porous, absorbent and of even consistency. Worms need only moisture, darkness and food from the soil. A Worm Growers’ Association is active in many states.’

Let us look at the summary carefully now to see if any changes are required in order to make it read like a connected passage. The first part all the way up to ‘... and of even consistency’, is concerned with the function of earthworms. Each point that is being made up to this stage consists of a statement of yet another function of the earthworms, so no further connecting words are required.

However, the sentence ‘Worms need only moisture, darkness and food from the soil’ is concerned not with the function of worms but with the need of these worms. It is, therefore, necessary to indicate that a different kind of idea is being brought in. A line from the original passage can be used in order to connect this sentence with the rest of the summary. Let us see how the summary will read with this addition:

‘.... Worms make the soil porous, absorbent and of even consistency. Worms offer all these benefits, yet they make few demands: they need only moisture, darkness and food from the soil.’

Notice that the addition of this line indicates very clearly what the passage has dealt with so far and the contrast with what it is going to deal with next.

What about the last sentence of the summary? Does it fit in at that point in the summary? There is actually no connection between that and the sentence before it. It may perhaps be preferable to drop the mention of the Worm Growers’ Association.

Notice that the summary does not necessarily follow the sequence of ideas of the original passage. It may follow the same sequence or it may

not. What is important is that a clear line of argument develops, even though in the original passage the line of argument is not so clear.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 10

Now rewrite the final version of the summary here. Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

Example 3

You are now going to read a passage about volcanoes and how the fiery substance they throw out with such force can effect large parts of the earth. It deals with certain specific examples of volcanoes and their general effect. Now read the passage.

3.4 How a Volcano Affects the Earth

1. (1) The Northern Hemisphere is experiencing a time period of increased volcanic activity. (2) The eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980 is evidence of this activity. (3) It was a major eruption because the amount of volcanic matter was so great. (4) Experts estimated that two cubic kilometers of earth was thrown into the atmosphere. (5) They can make a guess like this based on evidence. (6) The smoke and volcanic matter were forced straight up 60,000 feet into a high part of the atmosphere, the stratosphere. (7) This is where that great winds that circle the Earth are found. (8) Eruptions of this size might take place only once every decade.
2. Eruptions of this type are influencing the Earth's climate. Because of the particles that are added to the Earth's stratosphere, the air itself becomes cloudy. This means that the transparency of the atmosphere decreases because less light can pass through. This decrease in light is connected to a drop in the surface temperature of the Earth. It reduces approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ °F, about a quarter of a degree Celsius. This drop in temperature affects the weather patterns for the year.
3. Volcanic eruptions seem to come in cycles. For example, in North America there was a series of eruptions in the early 1900's. There were few volcanic eruptions in the time period between 1925 and 1945. Then from 1945 to 1970 the number of annual eruptions doubled from about approximately 16 to 18 a year to 37 to 40 a year. Beginning in the late 1970's, the volcanic activity again increased.

4. Scientists do not know what causes volcanic activity to increase. They believe that volcanoes occur where there is a weakness or thin spot in the Earth's crust. This weak spot, a part of a fault, allows the hot liquid rock, molten rock, deep under the surface to come through, to break the surface. These weak spots occur where the enormous plates of crust rock under the continents meet. There is a meeting of plates all around the Pacific Ocean. This is what creates the "ring of fire", the circle of volcanoes around the Pacific.
5. There is probably a relationship between the volcanoes and earthquakes. Usually a volcanic eruption follows an earthquake some distance away. For instance, after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Mount Lassen in Northern California erupted in 1914. In Chile a major earthquake in 1960 was followed by a major volcanic eruption. The goal of the scientists is to be able to predict earthquakes, volcanoes, and the weather by studying these physical conditions.

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Glossary

- Volcano:* a hill or mountain with openings through which gases, lava, ashes, etc. come up from below the earth's crust and bury everything around in a thick layer of this hot, molten substance.
- eruption:* outbreak; bursting forth.
- molten:* melted.
- fault:* (here) place where there is a break in the continuity of layers of rock.

It is better to avoid repetition. 'Volcanic eruptions' can be replaced by 'they'. The first two sentences have been very brief. If the third also is equally brief, the effect is very 'cut and dried,' the writing doesn't flow. In order to introduce a little change, the third and the fourth sentences can be joined by 'and.' It is possible to change 'volcanic activity' in the fourth sentence to 'this,' but perhaps if we did this, the sentence might not remain so clear. So we can't remove *all* repetition. The first four sentences do not need any connecting words because each is an expansion of the same idea. But the fifth sentence stands out alone and requires a linking word. The kind of word we add will depend on the nature of the connection between the last two sentences. Scientists are mentioned in sentence 4 and the relationship referred to, 'between

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 12

Check Your Progress 2

Now pick out the topic sentence in each paragraph of this passage and write it down here:

Paragraph 1:

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

Paragraph 4:

Paragraph 5:

Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit. Do you notice a pattern in the placement of the topic sentences? State the pattern you perceive.

It seems as if the topic sentence in this passage occurs in the first line of every paragraph. This is a common pattern in descriptive passages of a factual kind. However, it must be borne in mind that you cannot always expect topic sentences to occur at the beginning of paragraphs.

If we link together these topic sentences we can achieve a fairly accurate summary of the passage.

Short Summary

1. 'The Northern Hemisphere is experiencing a period of increased volcanic activity.
2. Eruptions of this type are influencing the Earth's climate.
3. Volcanic eruptions seem to come in cycles.
4. Scientists do not know what causes volcanic activity to increase.
5. There is probably a relationship between the volcanoes and earthquakes.'

Supposing we were content with the bare bones of the information given here and did not wish to pack in any more information from the passage for our summary, can we leave the above paragraph as it is? What changes in language do you find necessary to introduce, such as the linking of sentences and the removal of repetition? State the changes you would make.

The changes we would suggest are the following: the first and second sentences can remain unchanged. In the third sentence, however, we have the words 'volcanic eruptions.' It is necessary to bring in this example, for it is the example which is of interest. Having introduced the example, you then have to bring in something about what happened,

but not too much. So, only one detail is introduced namely. 'The smoke and volcanic matter were forced straight up 60,000 feet into the stratosphere.' Notice that 'the high part of the atmosphere' is removed because it means the same things as 'stratosphere' and the latter is shorter.

Now find the other important points from paragraph 2 which you feel should be added to the summary.

Paragraph 2

This paragraph deals with the fact that the earth's climate is affected by volcanoes and the way it is affected. If we want to introduce some of the details, they must be mentioned very briefly. The language must also be suitably condensed. We can state the following:

'Volcanic eruptions influence the Earth's climate. It is affected by the particles that are added to the earth's stratosphere. This makes the air cloudy so that less light passes through, leading to a drop in the surface temperature of the Earth.

Only the main line of argument regarding the drop in the temperature of the earth is brought in. Other details, which seem a little less important, are left out. Notice how parts of different sentences are combined in the last sentence of the summary of paragraph 2 given above. Separate sentences from the original text are joined together (i) with 'so that' indicating that the cloudiness of the air allows less light to pass through, and (ii) with 'leading to' indicating again, a further result, namely the drop in the temperature that is caused.

Next, find the important points in paragraph 3. State them here.

Paragraph 3

In this paragraph there are a number of examples and we have to find a way of putting them under a generalised statement. The first line can be retained as it is, with another part which generalises and condenses the rest of the paragraph added on. This would then read thus:

Volcanic eruptions seem to come in cycles, occurring with greater regularity at certain intervals of time.'

Now find the important points in paragraph 4 which you might wish to add to your summary. State them here.

Paragraph 4

A number of details are given in this paragraph and we have to decide which ones are important. Perhaps we can summarise the paragraph thus:

‘Scientists do not know what causes volcanic activity to increase. They believe that volcanoes occur where there is a weakness or thin spot in the Earth’s crust which allows the hot liquid rock deep under the surface to come out.’

The first sentence is kept as it is and also the second. Parts of the third sentence are added on to the second, making it a complex sentence. It is also possible to put a full stop after ‘Earth’s crust’ thus ending the second sentence and beginning the next sentence with ‘This allows the hot liquid rock ... to come out.’

Now find the important points in paragraph 5 to your summary. State them here.

Paragraph 5

This paragraph contains two examples, of which one might be selected. The last line states a generalised goal which is not so relevant to the way the passage has developed, so it can be omitted. The summary could then read:

‘There is probably a relationship between the volcanoes and earthquakes. Usually a volcanic eruption follows an earthquake some distance away. For example, in Chile, a major earthquake in 1960 was followed by a major volcanic eruption.’

Notice that now, as we are expanding the summary, we have not bothered about the connecting words we had used in the short summary. We will consider what is required after we have put these paragraphs together.

Now let us write the summary as it stands. Read it through carefully to see if all the parts connect with each other. What improvements can you suggest?

Summary

1. ‘The Northern Hemisphere is experiencing a period of increased volcanic activity.
2. One of the examples of this was a major eruption at Mt. St. Helens in 1980.

3. The smoke and volcanic matter were forced straight up 60,000 feet into the stratosphere.
 4. Eruption of this size might take place only once every decade.
 5. Volcanic eruptions influence the earth's climate.
 6. It is affected by the particles that are added to the earth's stratosphere.
 7. This makes the air cloudy so that less light passes through, leading to a drop in the surface temperature of the earth.
 8. Volcanic eruptions seem to come in cycles, occurring with greater regularity at certain intervals of time.
 9. Scientists do not know what causes volcanic activity to increase.
 10. They believe that volcanoes occur where there is a weakness or thin spot in the Earth's crust which allows the hot liquid rock deep under the surface to come out.
 11. There is probably a relationship between the volcanoes and earthquakes.
 12. Usually a volcanic eruption follows an earthquake some distance away: for example, in Chile a major earthquake in 1960 was followed by a major volcanic eruption.'
- Consider the summary as it stands, carefully.

1. Do you think that it should be written as one paragraph or two or more?
2. Do all the ideas as stated here follow proper sequence or should they be reworded?
3. Do any connecting words need to be added?
4. Are there any instances of a noun previously mentioned which needs to be written as a pronoun?

State your views here.

We are now going to write a revised summary, making some of the changes referred to above. Read this carefully.

Revised Summary

1. 'The Northern Hemisphere is experiencing a period of increased volcanic activity. One of the examples of this was a major eruption at Mt. St. Helens in 1980 when the smoke and volcanic matter were forced straight up 60,000 feet into the stratosphere. Eruptions of this size, however, might take place only once every decade.
2. Volcanic eruptions seem to come in cycles, occurring with greater regularity at certain intervals of time. Scientists as yet do not know what causes volcanic activity to increase. However,

they believe the volcanoes occur where there is a weakness or thin spot in the Earth's crust which allows the hot liquid rock deep under the surface to come out.

3. It is found that volcanic eruptions influence the Earth's climate, which is affected by the particles that added to the earth's stratosphere. This makes the air cloudy so that less light passes through, leading to a drop in the surface temperature of the earth. There is probably also a relationship between volcanoes and earthquakes. Usually, a volcanic eruption follows an earthquake some distance away. For example, in Chile, a major earthquake in 1960 was followed by major volcanic eruption.'

4.0 CONCLUSION

Every summary has a purpose. We have been attempting general summaries when passages have been condensed according to the purpose of the passage itself. But they can be summarised from the reader's point of view as well. In that case, details not so important to the passage might be selected because you happen to be particularly interested in them. We will deal with this kind of summary later. For the time being, we are left with a choice between the short summary and the revised summary. Here it is mainly a question of how much detail is required.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have shown you we can write summaries of the passages we have read by:

- (i) looking for the important ideas in each passage and the relationship between them; and
- (ii) adopting a proper arrangement for the main points in the summary and linking the various sentences in it with the use of connectives.

You should, from now on, practise summary writing on daily basis.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Read the passage on Integrated Pest Management which is example 1 of unit 4 once again. Summarise that passage in just four sentences only.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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MODULE 3

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Letters and Sounds in English |
| Unit 2 | English Vowels and Consonants |
| Unit 3 | Interviews |
| Unit 4 | Seminar Presentation |
| Unit 5 | Public Speech Making |

UNIT 1 LETTERS AND SOUNDS IN ENGLISH

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are starting this module with another broad aspect of use of English and communication skills. In the next five units, we will be studying speaking skills. Indeed you will agree with me that speaking is very important. We spend at least two thirds of a day speaking to one another. In a mixed community like Nigeria, spoken English that all can understand is very important. That's why we devote this module to the art of speaking English intelligently and in a way that people can understand.

In this unit you will learn something about English letters and sound as well as stress and intonational patterns. To speak English well, you have to learn correct pronunciation.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- make distinctions between the English letters and sounds
- describe the English stress patterns
- produce the correct English sounds and stress patterns
- produce the correct English informative pattern.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Letters and Sounds

One of the difficulties about English pronunciation is that there is no perfect correspondence between letters and sounds, as we have in Indian languages.

Look at the following words:

even, these, green, read, field, size, machine, key, people. The spellings, e, e...e, ee, ea, ie, ei, i, ey, eo in these words represent the same vowel sound, which also occurs in the usually spelt word *suite* (meaning a connected series of rooms to be used together, and pronounced exactly like *sweet*).

Now look at the following words, which have similar spellings:

bough (meaning a branch of a tree), **cough**, **though**, **rough** and **through**. These words are all spelt with **-ough**, but this spelling gives a number of different pronunciations: **bough** has the same vowel sound as in **cow**; **cough** has the same vowel sounds as in **cot** and has the sound /f/ at the end (We shall use symbols to represent sounds and place them between slant bars to distinguish them from the letters of the English alphabet); **though** has the same vowel sound as in **go**; **rough** has the same vowel sound as in **rush**; and **through** has the same vowel sound as in **too**. In **bough**, **though** and **through**, the letters **gh** are silent, but in **cough** and **rough** they are pronounced /f/.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

List 5 words each (with, as far as possible, different spellings for the vowels sound) having

- (i) the same vowel sound as in *see*.
(*Example*; extreme, priest, receive, seat, police)
- (ii) the same vowel sound as in *sit*,
- (iii) the same vowel sound as in *late*,
- (iv) the same vowel sound as in *set*,
- (v) the same vowel sound as in *sat*,
- (vi) the same vowel sound as in *shut*,
- (vii) the same vowel sound as in *cart*,
- (viii) the same vowel sound as in *hot*,
- (ix) the same vowel sound as in *shoot*,
- (x) the same vowel sound as in *note*.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

List 5 words each to show how the following vowel letters can have different sounds, different words:

a, e, i, o, u.

(*Examples:* able, any, bag, basket, village)

You have seen that in English there is no one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. There are, in fact, more sounds in the language than there are letters in the alphabet. It is, therefore, necessary to learn to produce all the vowel and consonant sounds in English and not to confuse them with the letters of the English alphabet. Each sound is distinct, and the substitution of one of these sounds for another may either bring about a change in meaning or lead to the production of a word that does not sound like an English word at all. In order to avoid this confusion you must be able to distinguish between one sound and another.

For example, you should be able to distinguish between pairs of words like:

- (i) **peak** and **pick**,
- (ii) **date** and **debt**,
- (iii) **set** and **sat**,
- (iv) **cut** and **cart**,
- (v) **heard** and **hard**,
- (vi) **cut** and **cot**,
- (vii) **last** and **lost**,
- (viii) **full** and **fool**,
- (ix) **here** and **hair**,
- (x) **pull** and **full**,
- (xi) **ledger** and **leisure**,
- (xii) **seat** and **sheet**.

Thus, to speak English well, you have to maintain the meaningful distinctions in the language. For the correct pronunciation of words, you must learn to refer to the dictionary all the time. In the dictionary symbols are used to represent sounds and one symbol stands for one sound only. It is important to learn these symbols and the sound each symbol stands for. In later units we shall introduce you to the vowel and consonant sounds of English and the symbols used for them in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Indian edition, and Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, third edition (revised).

3.2 Word Stress

Another thing that you need to learn is what is called word stress in English. Stress is extra force used in speaking, on a particular word or syllable. Syllable is a minimal rhythmic unit of a spoken language. Words are made up of one or more separately pronounced parts, called syllables.

Examples: (All these words have been recorded for you on the cassette.)

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| One syllable | : | course, part, one, block, two. |
| Two syllables | : | open o.pen (syllable division shown by a dot) |
| | | English En.glish |
| | | unit u.nit |
| | | listen lis.ten |
| | | speaking speak.ing |
| Three syllables | : | foundation foun.da.tion |
| | | understand un.de.stand |
| | | whenever when.ev.er |
| Four syllables | : | conversation con.ver.sa.tion |
| | | television tel.e.vis.ion |
| Five syllables | : | pronunciation pro.nun.ci.a.tion |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

How many syllables do the following words have?

- (i) this (ii) section (iii) spoken (iv) better (v) prepare (vi) improve
 (vii) broadcast (viii) discussion (ix) composition (x) before

In English words of two or more syllables, at least one syllable stands out from the rest and we say it has greater stress.

The mark ^I is placed before the syllable that carries the main stress of the word.

For example: ^IEnglish, ^Ispeaking, im^Iprove.

Some words also have secondary stress (weaker than the main stress) on another syllable.

The mark ^I is placed before such a syllable. For example:

^Iunder^Istand, ^Iconver^Isation

Here are some more examples taken from the text of this unit. All these words have been recorded for you on the cassette.

Words of two syllables; stress on the first syllable:

| | |
|-----------|------------|
| ˈunit | ˈsection |
| ˈpractice | ˈletter |
| ˈquestion | ˈfeature |
| ˈstudy | ˈafter |
| ˈdealer | ˈbroadcast |

Words of two syllables; stress on the second syllable:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| preˈsent (verb) | corˈrect | beˈlow |
| reˈcord (verb) | casˈsette | yourˈself |
| beˈtween | disˈcuss | |
| comˈplete | reˈcall | |

Words of three syllables; stress on the first syllable:

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| ˈbulletin | ˈradio |
| ˈbicycle | ˈexercise |
| ˈcustomer | ˈpossible |
| ˈsimilar | ˈafterwards |
| ˈcarefully | ˈspecimen |

Words of three syllables; stress on the second syllable:

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| obˈjective | comˈplete |
| reˈcording | aˈmendment |
| imˈportant | conˈdition |
| disˈcussion | aˈnother |
| whenˈever | conˈtinue |

Words of three syllables; main stress on the third syllable and secondary stress on the first syllable:

ˈintroˈduce, ˈunderˈstand, ˈmagaˈzine

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Say all the words given above with the correct stress pattern.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Make the stress syllables in the following words and say them with the correct stress pattern. You may consult the dictionary, if you like.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. comprehension | 6. accompany |
| 2. conversation | 7. available |
| 3. pronunciation | 8. university |
| 4. correspondence | 9. television |
| 5. shopkeeper | 10. constitution |

Why then do you need to know about stress in English? You need this knowledge because wrongly stressing a word in English may lead to misunderstanding.

For example:

¹export (verb) means to send a good out of the country
ex¹port (noun) are the goods sent out.

In a sentence:

¹**Export** the goods and let me have the **ex¹port** tariff.

Unless you put the correct stress, you will clearly be misunderstood.

Also in the two sets of commands

¹Turn on the red light
and

Turn ¹On the red light. The stress pattern makes a lot of difference in meaning. The first meaning is you should **switch on the red** light, while the second meaning for the second sentence is make a turn whenever you get to the red light.

Thus, to use the correct stress patterns means a lot in spoken English. In many of the Nigerian languages, speakers speak with a strong stress on every word. (E.g. the Ibo and the Yoruba people) If you transfer this strong stress pattern on every word into English, it may be difficult for you to be heard and understood. Start to learn the English stress patterns today.

3.3 Intonation

We shall now introduce you to intonation patterns in English.

(a) Tone Groups

A longer sentence is usually divided into what may be called breath groups, or sense groups. We also call them tone groups.

Example

When I went to see him/he was still in bed.
(The tone group division is shown by the oblique bar /).

Listen to the following sentences in the cassette and divide them into tone groups:

1. by the time we got home, it was already dark.
2. I'll send him an answer, as soon as I can.
3. If you need anything else, just ask me.
4. By refusing to answer you'll only make matters worse.
5. Going through your papers, I was surprised to find that you'd studied journalism.

(b) The Nucleus

The last important word in each group has what is called the nucleus. On the stressed syllable of this word there is a movement of the pitch of the speaker's voice from high to low or low to high.

(c) Tones

The change in pitch from high to low is known as the falling tone, and the change in pitch from low to high is known as the rising tone.

The Falling Tone

We shall show the falling tone with a slanting mark pointing downward, placed before the nucleus.

The falling tone is generally used in

(a) Statements; for example:

1. I haven't the ^Itime.
2. I'm ^Igoing `home.
3. There's ^Ino re^Ireply.

(b) Questions beginning with a question-word such as *what, how, when, etc.*; for example:

1. What's the time?
2. Where's he gone?
3. When will they come?
4. Why are they late?
5. How many have you got?
6. How much do you need?

(c) Commands; for example:

1. Close the door.
2. Bring it back at once.

(d) Exclamation; for example:

1. What an excellent idea!
2. How extraordinary!

(e) Question tags, when agreement is expected; for example:

1. It's rather hot today, isn't it?
2. This is a difficult question, isn't it?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Now look at the following words and sentences which have a falling tone on the nucleus, and listen to them on the cassette. Then say each word and sentence with a falling tone. Make sure that the pitch of your voice moves from a higher level to a lower level on the nucleus.

1. tomorrow
They're coming tomorrow.
2. light
Switch on the light.
3. time
Don't waste my time.

4. Ipapers
IWhere are the Ipapers?
5. Ifinish
IWhen d'you exIpect to Ifinish it?
6. Icoffe
Let's Igo and have some Icoffee.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Now here are some short dialogues for you to practise. Listen to them on the cassette and then read them aloud yourself.

1. A : IWhy don't you Ibuy a Icar?
B : I Ihaven't got the Imoney.
2. A : IHave some Icoffee.
B : I'd Irather have some Ijuice.
3. A : IOpen the Idoor.
B : But it's Ijammed.
A : Well Iget the Icarpenter to Iopen it.
(A stressed syllable after the nucleus is marked at the bottom.)
4. A : IWhat's the Imatter with you?
B : I've had a Isleepless Inight.
5. A : IWho is that `man?
B : He's a repIorter.
A : IIdon't like his Ilooks.
B : I'll Isend him aIway, then.
6. A : I'd Ilike to have a Iword with you.
B : Just Ileave me aIone.
A : IGive me a I chance to exIplain things.
B : I'm Inot interested. IGo aIway.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 8

Listen to the following dialogues recorded on the cassette and mark stress and intonation. After you have checked your answer, read each dialogue aloud.

1. A : I'm leaving tonight.
B : When will you return?
2. A : It's rather dark in here.
B : Switch on the light then.
3. A : You must complete it by Wednesday.
B : I don't think I can.
4. A : We're going to the zoo tomorrow.
B : That's splendid!
5. A : Which one d'you want?
B : I'll have this one.
A : This one's taken already.
B : Then I don't want any.

(d) The Rising Tone

When we use a rising tone on the nucleus, the pitch starts at a low level and keeps on rising till the end of the group. We shall indicate this tone with a slanting mark pointing upward, placed at the bottom of the line before the nucleus.

This tone is generally used in:

- (a) questions that demand the answer *yes* or *no*;
for example:
 1. ^IHave they ^Igone?
 2. ^IWill he a^Igree?
 3. D'you ^Iknow them?
- (b) 'Incomplete' utterances which form part of sentence, quite often subordinate clauses. For example:
 1. ^IIf it ^Irains / we'll ^Igo by ^Itaxi.
 2. Al^Ithough she was ^Iill, / she ^Itook her e^Ixam.
 3. It's ^Itime for the ^Ilecture / but ^Ino one has ^Icome.
 4. By the ^Itime I ^Igot there / it was al^Iready ^Idark.
 5. I'd ^Itake you ^Isightseeing / if I ^Ihad the ^Itime.

(c) *Wh-* questions which are said in a warm friendly way:
for example:

1. *I*What's your *I*name? (to a small child)
2. *I*How's your *I*mother?

(d) Polite requests or encouraging invitations:
for example:

1. *I*Could I *I*borrow your *I*pen?
2. *I*Please, *I*pour me some *I*water?
3. *I*Do come *I*in.

(e) Alternative questions; for example:

1. Would you like *I*tea, / *I*coffee, / or a *I*soft drink?
2. Shall we *I*walk / or *I*go by *I*bus?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The importance of the English sound systems is shown in this unit. The unit has emphasized the differences between the English letters and sounds. It has also been able to establish the importance of stress and intonational patterns. You will agree with me that without the proper pronunciation of the English sounds, you may not be heard and understood. This is why you have to take all the suggestions and the practice exercises in this unit very seriously.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- (i) the distinction between the English letters and English sounds;
- (ii) that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the English letters and English sounds;
- (iii) the stress patterns of English words which can make you to be understood or not understood;
- (iv) the English intonational patterns.

The next unit will expose you more to the English sounds.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss with specific examples, the distinction between letters and sounds as well as the stress and intonational patterns of English.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

© Materials are adapted from: Indira Gandhi Open University. School of Health Sciences and School of Humanities. February 2001 (reprint) and July 1997 (reprint), HSTIT Functional English, FEG-1 Foundation Course in English 1.

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Audio and Video Cassettes of all exercises.

(All exercises are to be recorded in a cassette and videos).

UNIT 2 ENGLISH VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 English Vowels
 - 3.2 English Consonants
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have seen in unit 1 that one of the important features that we need to learn to speak English well is to notice the difference between sounds and the letters of the alphabet. In English, there is no perfect relationship, between spelling and sound. To learn the correct pronunciation of words, therefore, we need to look words up in the dictionary all the time. In some dictionaries, the pronunciation of words is shown by the use of, symbols. Each symbol stands for only one sound. If we learn to recognize the sound that each symbol stands for, we can learn to pronounce all the new words we come across correctly.

In this unit, we are going to discuss another very important aspects of spoken English. These are the English vowels and consonants sounds. Indeed, the two sound systems form the bedrock of spoken English. Your knowledge of them is very important. Without the correct pronunciation of the English vowel and consonant sounds, your spoken English will become impossible to understand. To study this unit, you need the cassette on spoken English in your study.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- recognise the English vowel and consonant sounds
- produce these sounds accurately in isolation and in context.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 English Vowels

In this lesson, we shall present the symbols for the vowel sounds in English, as used in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and

in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 3rd edition (revised). These vowels are used by most educated people in English, and this kind of pronunciation is generally known as 'Received Pronunciation' or 'Standard Southern British'.

Here is a list of the vowels of British Received Pronunciation. The symbol for each vowel sound is given and also a key word in which the sound occurs.

All the vowel sounds and the key words have been recorded for you on the cassette.

| | Symbol | Key word |
|-----|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | / i: / | sheep |
| 2. | / ɪ / | ship |
| 3. | / e / | bed |
| 4. | / æ / | bad |
| 5. | / a: / | calm |
| 6. | / ɒ / | pot |
| 7. | / ɔ: / | caught |
| 8. | / u / | put |
| 9. | / u: / | boot |
| 10. | / ʌ / | cut |
| 11. | / ɪ: / | bird |
| 12. | / ʊ: / | cupboard (second syllable) |
| 13. | / eɪ / | make |
| 14. | / ɛu / | note |
| 15. | / aɪ / | bite |
| 16. | / au / | new |
| 17. | / ɔɪ / | boy |
| 18. | / ɪu / | here |
| 19. | / eɹ / | there |
| 20. | / uɹ / | poor |

The slanting bars (/ /) indicate that the symbol between them represents a sound and not a letter of the alphabet.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Here is a list of words. You can listen to them on the cassette. Write down the symbol for the vowel sound used in each word and say each word with the correct vowel sound. You may check your answers with those given by us at the end of the unit.

1. foot
2. neat
3. said
4. ned
5. late
6. pan
7. boot
8. cow
9. sight
10. knit

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Given below are ten pairs of words. They have been recorded for you on the cassette. The words in each pair are distinguished by the vowel sounds. Write down the symbol for the vowel sound used in each word, and say each pair bringing out the distinction clearly.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. (a) read | (b) raid |
| 2. (a) heart | (b) hot |
| 3. (a) cut | (b) cart |
| 4. (a) wrist | (b) rest |
| 5. (a) match | (b) much |
| 6. (a) pull | (b) pool |
| 7. (a) lend | (b) land |
| 8. (a) bought | (b) boat |
| 9. (a) vice | (b) voice |
| 10. (a) such | (b) search |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Now look at the list of words given below. Some vowel letters in these words have been underlined. Write down the symbols for the vowel sounds these letters stand for. Say all these words with the correct vowel sounds.

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. about | 6. exact | 11. journey |
| 2. become | 7. floor | 12. librarian |
| 3. cottage | 8. geese | 13. museum |
| 4. dreaded | 9. hesitate | 14. photograph |
| 5. envelop | 10. item | 15. pure |

When you look up new words in the *Longman Dictionary* for pronunciation, you will notice that for some words, the symbol / / is printed in italic, that is, it is slanting. This means that the speaker may choose to pronounce it or not in that part of the word. Notice also that in

some places / / is placed above / /. This means that the speaker has a choice between the vowel / / and the vowel / /. Either of these vowel sounds can be used.

You will also notice that one syllable of every word has an upright mark above and before it, for example, ^ˈpurify. The upright mark placed above and before 'purify' indicates that this syllable of the word stands out from the rest and has greater stress. It is important to place the stress on the correct syllable of each English word.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Here are some words from the text of this unit. Write down the symbols for the vowel sounds used in these words according to British Received Pronunciation. You may consult the dictionary, if you like. After checking your answers, try to say the words with the correct vowel sounds and the correct stress patterns.

1. objective
2. cassette
3. comprehension
4. conversation
5. pronunciation
6. father
7. practice
8. talk
9. suggestion
10. question

It should be noted that there are acceptable Nigeria variants of British R.P. vowels. These are not acceptable as far as we are concerned presently in the country. The major vowel sounds and symbols cited here are the acceptable ones. No other variations of the sounds is acceptable in Nigeria at the moment.

Key word

caught
corn
course
cut
bird
make
note

Vowel in British Received Pronunciation

/ • : /
/ • : /
/ • : /
/ ˜ /
/ ˆ : /
/ eɪ /
/ «U /

Vowel Contrasts

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Listen to the following pairs of words on the cassette and then read them aloud yourself, making a clear distinction between the words in each pair. Add three more pairs to illustrate each contrast.

- (a) / i: / / I /
 seek sick
 sleep slip
 reach rich
 leave live
 deed did
- (b) / e / / æ /
 pen pan
 bet bat
 men man
 lend land
 letter latter
- (c) / e / / e / (or Indian / e: /)
 sent saint
 tell tale
 get gate
 bell bale
 chest chaste
- (d) / ɒ / / o: / (or Indian / o: /)
 odd ode
 not note
 got goat
 cost coast
 cot coat

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Say the following words correctly as shown. You can also listen to them on the cassette.

comprehension /k • mprihens<n/
 secrets/ I si:krrts /
 mystery / I mist ri /
 centuries / I sent z /
 recent / I ri:s nt /
 times / I tarmz /

scientists / ˈsaɪ ntrɪsts /
 careful / ˈkeəfəl /
 observation / ˌɒbzə'veɪʃən /
 experiment (n.) / ˌkɛspɪrɪmənt /

3.2 English Consonants

In the first part of this unit, you learnt the vowel sounds in English and the symbols used for them. In this unit, you will learn the consonant sounds and the symbols used for them in dictionaries. After learning these symbols, you will be able to find out the pronunciation of English words from *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*.

English has twenty-four consonant sounds. These are listed below and have been recorded for you on the cassette. Listen to each sound and a key word in which it occurs.

| | Symbol | key word |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. | / p / | pen |
| 2. | / b / | back |
| 3. | / t / | tea |
| 4. | / d / | day |
| 5. | / k / | key |
| 6. | / g / | gay |
| 7. | / tʃ / | cheer |
| 8. | / dʒ / | jump |
| 9. | / f / | few |
| 10. | / v / | view |
| 11. | / θ / | thing |
| 12. | / ð / | then |
| 13. | / s / | soon |
| 14. | / z / | zero |
| 15. | / ɪʃ / | fishing |
| 16. | / zʃ / | pleasure |
| 17. | / h / | hot |
| 18. | / m / | sum |
| 19. | / n / | sun |
| 20. | / ŋ / | sung |
| 21. | / l / | led |
| 22. | / r / | red |
| 23. | / j / | yet |
| 24. | / w / | wet |

Notice that the symbols for the consonants 1-6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, and 24 are the same as the letters of the alphabet. Only eight symbols are new and have to be learnt.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Here are ten words. You can listen to them on the cassette. Write down the symbols for the consonant sounds in these words. After you have checked your answers with those given by us at the end of the unit, say the words with the correct vowel and consonant sounds.

- | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|
| 1. thief | 2. catch | 3. yard |
| 4. there | 5. lamp | 6. measure |
| 7. zoo | 8. share | 9. song |
| 10. joy | | |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 8

Given below are eight pairs of words, and the words in each pair differ in only one consonant sound. You can listen to these words on the cassette.

Write down the symbols for the consonant sounds that bring about the difference.

1. peas, peace
2. jew, zoo
3. sew, show
4. pact, fact
5. vine, wine
6. go, know
7. harm, charm
8. ledger, leisure

After you have checked your answers with those given by us, say each pair, bringing out the difference clearly.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 9

Underline the letters in the following words which represent the consonant sound shown in brackets. Mark X under the words in which this consonant does not occur.

Example: / θ / that, think.

X

- (a) / θ θ / – ocean, dictionary, scissors, pressure, decision
- (b) / w / – quality, crown, language, whether, whose, question, blow.
- (c) / T / – think, this, other, theft, thought, then, therefore.
- (d) / f / – shepherd, conference, geography, afraid, stuff, although, of.
- (e) / j / – ear, few, lower, year, day, cure, toy, future.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 10

Each of the following words contains one of the two consonants shown in brackets. Arrange the words in two separate lists according to the sound used.

Example: /w, v / – west, vest

/ w / / v /

- (a) / s, z / – raise, dice, as, reverse, loose, ass, laws, rivers, loss, lose
- b) / / – promotion, shore, pleasure, special, assure, fresh, garage
- c) / / – link, finger, tenth, listen, known, hang, uncle, knob, song, knock

4.0 CONCLUSION

You will agree with me after going through this unit that the English vowel and consonant sounds are important to effective spoken English. Without these basic sounds, English is not spoken. It means that you must master these sounds very well before you can be a good speaker of English. You should aim at pronouncing the English words as accurately as possible. This is the only way you can be heard and understood.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to the following:

- (i) the English vowel sounds and vowel contrasts;
 - (ii) the English consonant sounds; and
 - (iii) how these sounds are recognised and produced.
- Constant practice of these sounds makes you a good speaker of English.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Kindly record this passage and play it back to the students to write in form of dictation. Unless they hear and recognise the sounds produced, they will be unable to write the passage correctly.

Instruction

Your cassette will play this passage to you. You are expected to listen and write down the word you heard. Unless you listen very carefully you may not hear the words.

1. Peter piper picked the tooth pick to pick his teeth. I see the sea that seems to be shallow through the thorough twinkle eye of the binoculars.
2. Think those through that man thought could not think straight will ever hear through their ears?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

© Materials are adapted from: Indira Ghandi Open University. School of Health Sciences and School of Humanities, February 2001 (reprint) and July 1997 (reprint) HSTIT Functional English. FEG-1 Foundation Course in English I.

Bausal, R.K. (ed.). (1997). *Foundation Course in English 1. Foundation Course in English 2. Foundation Course in English 3.* New Delhi: Indira Ghandi Open University.

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Audio and video recordings of all the exercises and examples in this unit.

UNIT 3 INTERVIEWS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Preparing for an Interview
 - 3.2 Unfolding Personality: Specimen Interviews
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The interview is often called a personality test because it helps the interview board to get an insight into your personality. While a written test shows your grasp of a subject, an interview is meant to bring out your capacity to think and *act responsibly* in the job you have applied for. Through a purposefully directed, yet relaxed conversation, the members of an interview board examine your mental make-up. They try to judge whether you will be able to get on with colleagues and subordinates. Some of the qualities they try to judge are *imagination, reasoning, adjustability, tact, and perseverance*, i.e. the ability to carry on doing a job despite setbacks and difficulties. In short, the board wants to see if a candidate is well-suited for the job he has applied for or not.

English is generally used for most interviews conducted in Nigeria because it is the language generally used in administration and is also a link language among educated people from different parts of the country who may not share a common Nigerian language. It is, therefore, necessary to improve your communicative skills in English for an interview. You cannot express your ideas effectively or leave the stamp of your personality without using the right English words and sentences at the right moment.

We shall consider the interviews for jobs in sales, and in professions like medicine, engineering, teaching, management, etc., and shall deal mainly with the candidate's side of the interview.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- prepare yourself well for an interview
- express your ideas effectively at an interview
- impress the interview board with your personality.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Preparing for an Interview

Preparation is the first step towards success at an interview. Even if you are confident and experienced, you can improve your chances or score higher by being mentally ready before stepping into the interview room and taking a seat.

First, if you are a candidate, you must do your home-work on the subject matter well. For instance, if you are a candidate for a salesman's post, read a good book on salesmanship and try to understand the salient points well in advance. In fact, the best time to begin preparing is the day you finish your written test and there's chance of your being called for an interview. Last minute preparation will put an unnecessary strain on you and make you a bit nervous. Secondly, try to relate what you have learnt from *books to your own previous experience* in the line, if possible. For instance, if you have worked as a salesman, imagine how you could have improved upon your performance or how you would work on the same job in a bigger firm. If you are applying for your first job, you must think of the situations that may arise on this job. You can think of how you will do your best as a salesman in the light of what you have read in books. Remember that at the interview, you may be given a practical problem to solve. You will impress the board if you answer directly.

Besides preparing on the specific subject itself, you must give some attention to your dress and appearance, because these reflect a man's personality. In fact, it is said that the first impression is sometimes the last impression, and if you fail to make the right impact in the beginning, you are less likely to impress the Interview Board later. The man who is dressed in a slovenly way with ill-fitting clothes and buttons missing from shirt sleeves gives the impression that he is careless about work in general. Nobody would like a prospective employee to do his work in a slovenly fashion! At the same time, you shouldn't be so colourfully dressed as to draw too much attention to your clothes.

Your preparation is incomplete without a general overview of current affairs. It is customary to ask candidates questions on events that are happening around them. At some interviews, the interview board would like to know if the candidate is fully aware of trends in culture, politics, economy, etc. Therefore, you must show that, besides a thorough knowledge of your own field, you also have wider interests.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Say which of these suggestions for the preparation for an interview are helpful and useful.

- (i) The well-prepared candidate is one who wears the best suit for an interview.
- (ii) The candidate who reads the newspapers and periodical magazines and keeps abreast of the times impresses the board more than the one who is only well-versed in his own subject.
- (iii) Before the interview, one should make a list of situations that are likely to arise in the job one has applied for and be mentally prepared to tackle them.
- (iv) One does not have to worry too much about one's general appearance.
- (v) The best time to begin preparation for an interview is a day or two before, so that everything one reads is fresh for the interview.

3.2 Unfolding Personality: Specimen Interviews

Here is part of an interview for a Sales Officer's job. Read it carefully.

David, aged 28, enters the interview room dressed in a pleasant light blue suit with a matching blue striped tie. His shoes are polished and his general appearances are neat and proper. He walks without affectation, addresses the Chairman and says, Good morning, Sir.

- Chairman:** Good morning. Please sit down.
(Skimming, through the biodata sheet in front of him)
Mr. David, where are you working at present?
- David:** At Levers' Brothers Nigerian Limited, Zaria.
- Chairman:** What is the nature of your work there?
- David:** I have to do everything to promote sales, from advertising through mass media to obtaining orders from retailers.
- Chairman:** What are the products you deal in?
- David:** Mainly detergents, tooth pastes, creams, etc.
- Chairman:** How long have you been working there?

- David** Ever since the firm branch was founded. This is my third year going, Sir.
- Another member:** Why do you wish to change your job?
- David:** Sir, there are better job prospects in this company. You have now entered the field of computers, too. And my first love was really computers.
- Second member:** What immediate applications do you foresee for computers in our country?
- David:** At present, the government is careful about not being over-ambitious in the use of computers. This is quite natural when we already have the problem of unemployment. But a good computer climate is being built up, especially where repetitive work is involved in factories, and where an instant retrieval system is required to maintain records in offices.
- Third member:** From your experience of sales, what do you think counts most in gaining success in this line?
- David:** First and foremost, it's good advertising. The wider the coverage, the greater the chances of getting orders. Secondly, assurance of quality. The reputation of the company is, in fact, established in its first few years.
- Chairman:** But what about personal contacts? An officer in a high position can through personal influence secure a large order for the company.
- David:** Yes. That is an important factor, too. But an entrepreneur who depends entirely on this stands the chance of losing his credibility when the patron is removed from his position of power.

Vocabulary

- affectation:* behaviour which is not one's natural manner.
- promote:* increase (sales)
- mass media:* the means of giving news and opinions to large numbers of people; for example, radio and television.
- retailers:* those who sell things to customers for their own use and not for resale.
- VCRs* Video Cassette Recorders.
- VCPs* Video Cassette Players.
- founded* established.
- prospects* chances (of success).
- foresee* see ahead of time.
- climate* the general temper of people.
- repetitive* done again and again.
- retrieval system* a method of finding stored information when it is needed.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>entrepreneur</i> | one who plans for a business and gets it going. |
| <i>credibility</i> | being trustworthy. |
| <i>patron</i> | one who supports and encourages a company. |

Let's analyse the part of the interview you have read above. The following facts show the candidate's suitability for the post of Sales Officer.

- (i) His dress and appearance are neat and proper and this gives the first impression of a man who is careful about his dress and appearance. Such a man will be methodical in most things he does.
- (ii) He greets the chairman of the board and sits down only when he is asked.
- (iii) He describes his present job specifically: to 'promote sales through mass media' and 'obtaining orders from retailers'.
- (iv) His reason for wanting to leave the present job is candid. His first love is computers and he has better job prospects here.
- (v) He knows the salient facts about computer applications in India but is probably over-enthusiastic to display his knowledge. He was not asked about the government's attitude towards computers.
- (vi) His ideas about success in sales are convincing and based on long-term values. He thinks advertising and 'promise of good quality' will ensure success on a long-term basis, individual contacts and patronage will only safeguard the interests of the company for a short time.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Give the meanings of these words used in the conversation:
'promote'
'prospects'
2. Explain the metaphorical use of 'climate' in 'computer climate'.
3. 'The wider the coverage, the greater the chances of winning orders. Another sentence like this would be 'The greater the demand for goods, the higher the prices.'
Can you write another sentence with this structure?

Here's a conversation at an interview for the post of a doctor at a village hospital. Read it carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Rinde Olaofe is a fresh MBBS and is seeking a job. He is a young man of 29.

‘May I come in, Sir?’

‘Yes, please?’

‘Good morning. Sit down, Mr. Olaofe. Where did you do your MBBS?’

‘At ABU Teaching Hospital, Sir.’

‘Do you have any experience in the medical line?’

‘None, except as a houseman.’

‘You know this is a post for a doctor at a Government village hospital.’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘You know conditions in a village may not be quite favourable for a young city-bred person like you. No entertainment, except your T.V. set and the incessant lowing of cows...?’

‘Yes, sir. I’m aware of all the drawbacks there. I’d like to take up the challenge, anyway.’

‘You call it a challenge. Why?’

‘Because it is difficult to explain things to illiterate villagers and convince them that a certain way of living is good for them.’

‘Give us some concrete examples of these difficulties in communication you may encounter.’

‘Well, for instance, villagers constantly ignore advice about the need for personal hygiene. Also, as a doctor, it will be my duty to propagate family planning. Here, I would inevitably face resistance. The illiterate villagers just don’t want to give up their traditional ways of thinking.’

‘What about the salary being offered?’

‘It is a bit on the lower side, but I think I can manage.’

‘There won’t be much scope of additional private earnings.’

‘I am quite aware of that, Sir.’

‘Do you know some of the common diseases prevalent in the village where you’re going?’

‘Sir, I haven’t yet had time to acquaint myself with these details. But I assure you...’

‘They’ll do. You may go.’

Vocabulary

MBBS: Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

houseman: a junior doctor completing hospital training and living in the hospital.

citybred: brought up in a city.

incessant: never stopping.

lowing: the noise made by cows.

illiterate: unable to read and write.

encounter: meet; be faced by (a difficulty).

hygiene: cleanliness, generally.

propagate: to spread and influence a great number of people

inevitably: adv. from inevitable: which cannot be prevented from happening.

resistance: opposition.

prevalent: existing commonly.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- 1(i) A doctor's job at a village is more difficult than in a town because:
- there are few conveniences and comforts of life in a village.
 - villagers suffer from more complex types of diseases.
 - villagers are generally illiterate and it is difficult to get them to follow any advice.
- (ii) Randhir Patel wants to work in a village hospital because:
- he has no other job at present.
 - he likes to do something challenging.
 - he is fond of a quiet, peaceful life.
2. Tick the qualities listed here which apply to Randhir Patel. Then judging from the score say whether you would consider him suitable for the job, if you were on the interview board.
- Courteous
 - Well-informed about the people he is going to work for.
 - Understands the mental make-up of the villagers in general.
 - Honest about his shortcomings.
 - Shows he will be understanding and patient with the village folk and will be able to win them over.
 - Doesn't want any financial benefits at all.
- 3(a) Conditions in a village may not be quite favourable for a young city-bred person.' What meaning would the sentence have if someone said: 'Conditions in a village will be quite unfavourable...?'
- (b) 'The salary is a bit on the lower side, but I think I can manage.' How would the meaning change if he said 'The salary is very low. But I'll have to manage somehow.'

Here's a conversation at an interview for the post of an engineer. It's an example of how one should not behave at an interview. Read carefully and notice the points about appearance, dress and manner.

Mr. Nwafor, a tall man in his thirties, with unkempt hair, is dressed in a three-piece suit of dazzling colour. A red-spotted tie dangles from his neck. Unbecoming horn-rimmed spectacles are perched on the bridge of his nose. There is an unmistakable limp in his gait. Without greeting the members of the board, he draws a chair to himself and seats himself with the air of a man who is meeting his equals. He peers over his spectacles at the members as if to say ‘Well, What have you to ask?’

Chairman

(smiles to himself): Mr. Nwafor where are you working at present?

Nwafor: Johnball Engineering Co. I’m the Executive Engineer there. My work is to look after the making of bridges on rivers. The bridge over River Niger was built by me.

Chairman: Yes. Why do you wish to leave the Company?

Nwafor: The present Chief Engineer there is a stick-in- the mud. He won’t listen to all the wonderful ideas I’ve got.

Chairman: Don’t you think he might have better ideas as the Chief Engineer?

Nwafor: No. How can he? After all he’s not as qualified as I am. He got to the top by getting the support of some influential people. I have a degree in engineering from America.

Second member: Mr. Nwafor, notice you have some difficulty in walking. Any accident or?

Nwafor (visibly): That is there from birth. But why do you ask personal questions?

Embarrassed: That is not the purpose of this interview.

Chairman: We know exactly what we should ask.

Nwafor: Well! (Throws his hands out in disgust.)

Third member: Mr. Nwafor, suppose you have a hand in signing the construction of a bridge to a contractor. It has to be built within a very short period because an important minister will shortly be passing that way. Only one contractor is ready to do the job that soon. You know he is unreliable. He is notorious for not using the right proportion of sand and cement in concrete. Will you give him the contract?

Nwafor: Yes. Why not? What is there in it? After all the work will be done. The end justifies the means.

Chairman: They’ll do. You can go now.

Nwafor get, up abruptly without so much smiling, and limps awkwardly out of the room. He carries away a pencil which he had picked from the table (to fiddle with).

Vocabulary

stick-in-the-mud: a person who will not change or accept new thing.

The end justifies the means: a bad action can be allowed if the result is good.

It is obvious that for various reasons Mr. Nwafor is the last choice for the post. But now let's present Mr. Nwafor in a different light. After reading the conversation at this second interview you should be in a position to compare the two.

Mr. Nwafor is dressed in a simple, yet clean and well pressed suit and a striped tie. He wears spectacles which make him look somewhat scholarly. With unassuming manner and gait, he walks up to the members.

Nwafor: Good morning, sir (smiles)

Chairman: Good morning, Please sit down. Er.... Where are you working. Mr. Nwafor.

Nwafor: At Johnball Engineering Co. Sir.

Chairman: what is your designation and the nature of your work there?

Nwafor: I'm the Superintending Engineer there. I supervise the construction of bridges.

Chairman: Which bridges have you built?

Nwafor: I've helped in the construction of the River Niger Bridge.

Chairman: You seem to be doing rather well there. Why do you want to leave?

Nwafor: Er. The present Chief Engineer is a good old man, but he won't accept new ideas in bridge building. He belongs to the old tradition, but in fact so much research has gone into this field. So I thought I'd take a break.

Second member: We notice you have difficulty in walking. Was it an accident?

Nwafor: No. It's a manufacturing defect, sir. (The members of the board have a laugh at this quip!)

Third member: Suppose you are incharge of a bridge which has to be built in a very short span of time because a minister will shortly be passing that way. There's only one contractor who's ready to undertake the task, but you know he's dishonest and does not use the right proportion of sand and cement in concrete. Will you give him the contract?

Nwafor: Certainly not. I would rather give up my job instead.

Vocabulary

tradition: the body of principles, beliefs, practices, etc. passed down from the past to the present.

Break: a chance (to make things better.)

quip: a remark meant to sound clever.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

1. Compare the candidates in the two interviews given above and give examples from the texts to show how they create quite different impression on the interviewers.

| Features | Candidate in Interview 1 | Candidate in Interview 2 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Appearance dress, manner, etc. | | |
| Attitude to work | | |
| Attitude to others | | |
| Self-estimate | | |

2. The extracts given below are from an interview for the post of a Personal Assistant. Make the statements more polite. (Example: 'Mr. present boss has got no common sense, really.')
Improved Version: (I find it difficult to understand my present employer. He just can't decide about the right thing to do.)
(i) The old man, my father, wants me to aim at higher things, some of which are impossible to achieve. (ii) Do you think I'm a fool? I understand that a P. A. has to keep office matters confidential.
3. Convey the following information in a modest way:
(Example: My present job is far below my real competence.
Improved version: I feel I can take up greater challenges than are offered in my present job.
My present pay is ridiculous! The company doesn't recognise my real worth.
4. Write a short conversation that may take place at an interview for the post of a Personal Assistant (about 100 words).
5. Write a short conversation that may take place at an interview for the job of a medical representative (about 75 words).

A candidate for an interview may have some wrong notions. One of them is that he is going to a battle where his wits will be matched against others. That is, he fears the five or six members of the Board will be waiting to prove he is a big fool. Another wrong idea is that the interview will be the turning point in his career; it will make or mar him. All these fears are bound to unnerve a candidate unnecessarily and force him to adopt a defensive stance. He may thus lose his chance without showing his real competence. A lesson may be learnt from the lives of many successful men in history. In fact you might use their attitude as an auto-suggestion to calm yourself. First, the members of the board are human beings just like you and are prone to emotional changes. Even the most hostile among them can be won over by patience and convincing talk.

Secondly, success at an interview is certainly important, because it means a job with a salary, but one does not have to be nervous and anxious about it.

Let's study this interview for the post of a school teacher.

Mrs. Zeba Imam, in her early thirties, is dressed in a sober saree. A bag hangs easily from her shoulder. She looks studious with her thick-rimmed spectacles on. She enters with a jaunty yet respectful gait.

'Good afternoon, sir.'

'Please sit down. Mrs. Imam.'

'Thank you. Sir.'

'Er. Where did you do your B. Ed.?'

'At the Faculty of Education, ABU, Zaria'

'And you have an M. A. in English.'

'That's right, sir.'

'Where are you teaching at present?'

'At University of Ibadan.'

'What classes?'

'I teach English to all the classes from 4 to 5.'

'Now why do you wish to change your present job?'

'I've taught at the junior and middle levels for ten years now. Last year I got my M. A. degree in English. Since then I have felt I should teach higher classes which would be more challenging.'

'Do you mean to say you find teaching in the lower classes is beneath your dignity?'

'It's not that, sir. I mean I want a change now. Something more challenging.'

'But I thought teaching pupils in the lower classes was the more challenging task.'

'It's true. But I feel a change will do me good.'

‘What are some of the ways in which you can make the teaching of grammar interesting to your pupils?’

‘I usually have them play various games and tell them stories. The grammar points are then drawn out from the sentences used. I also believe in using pictures a lot. If possible, I show them some English films?’

‘What’s your attitude to the weak students?’

‘Well, I believe in being as patient as possible with them. I give them an extra class once in a while to bring them up to the level of the class.’

‘Whjat was your special paper at the M.A.?’

‘Fiction.’

‘And what fiction have you been reading recently?’

‘The Mayor of Casterbridge.’

‘Is Hardy your favourite?’

‘He is. I’ve read his book four times already. Every time I read his books some new reality becomes apparent.’

‘But I thought Hardy was a very pessimistic writer.’

‘Even pessimism can have an appeal. It reflects our own inner disappointments in life.’

‘Well, I suppose everyone has his likes and dislikes.’

Vocabulary

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>studious:</i> | eager to study. |
| <i>jaunty:</i> | showing that one feels satisfied with oneself. |
| <i>junior and middle levels:</i> | Classes 1 to 8 |
| <i>beneath your dignity:</i> | below your standard of social behaviour. |
| <i>fiction:</i> | stories or novels about things that did not really happen. |
| <i>apparent:</i> | easily seen. |

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

1. It is possible that the Interview Board already has Mrs. Imam’s bio-data and work experience in front of them. Yet they ask her questions on these. Why is it so?
2. Why do you think Mrs. Imam wants to teach the higher classes after getting her M. A. degree in English?
3. Mrs. Imam seems to be an imaginative teacher. What gives us this impression?
4. The members of the Interview Board generally like to find out a candidate’s views on life. How do they do that here?

5. Notice the structure of the sentence; 'I usually have them play various games...' It means she gets them to, that is, makes them do something. Another example would be:
'I usually have them water the plants before they go.'
Make another sentence of your own of this type.
6. 'I also believe in using pictures a lot.'
'I believe in being patient with them.'
In the sentences above 'believe' is used in a sense different from what it is in 'believe in God, in communism, etc.'
It means that she considers certain things to be of worth.
Make another sentence using 'believe' in the same sense.
7. Sometimes members of the Interview Board put questions in such a way as to hurt the self-respect of a candidate. This is not unusual if the member concerned happens to be a bad-tempered person. It is also possible that the board wishes to see how you react to such a question. It is, therefore, wise to respond by giving a balanced and logical answer. That is what Mrs. Imam does when she is asked 'Do you mean to say you find teaching in the lower classes beneath your dignity?'

Now here is a provoking statement made at an interview. Give an answer that shows calm and tact on the part of the candidate.

'As an air-hostess you have to tolerate some rude remarks by passengers. Your being too sensitive is not going to help here.'

4.0 CONCLUSION

You will agree with me that this unit is very important for your today and tomorrow in this programme. One day you may need to appear before an interview panel. Your personality, language and the way you bring out your points are very important in an interview situation. You need to read this unit again in order to be sure that you are a master of all that have been discussed.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt about how to interact during an interview situation. More specifically, the unit informs you that:

- (i) An interview Board tests whether you have the proper qualities for the job.
- (ii) In order to perform well in an interview, you should know your subject matter well, be mentally prepared and be in control of the English medium.
- (iii) In order to make good impression in the very beginning, you should be properly dressed when you appear before an interview panel.
- (iv) Your answers to the questions should be in good English and to the point. They should be said in a convincing manner.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Imagine you are conducting a mini study on the prevalence of HIV-AIDS in Nigeria. You are to interview some people in your town or village. Write out the interview you will have with a school girl.

Start your interview this way:

- Interviewer:** Hello young girl.
Girl: Hello Sir.
Interviewer: How are you?
Girl: Fine.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

©Materials are adapted from: Indira Gandhi Open University. School of Health Sciences and School of Humanities, February 2001 (reprint) and July 1997 (reprint). HSTIT *Functional English*. FEG – 1 *Foundation Course in English – I*.

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Audio and Video Recordings of all the examples and exercises in this unit.

UNIT 4 SEMINAR PRESENTATION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Inauguration of the Seminar
 - 3.2 How a Seminar is Conducted
 - 3.3 The Beginning of a Seminar Talk or Paper
 - 3.4 Logical Development of the Talk or Paper
 - 3.5 Concluding the Talk
 - 3.6 Discussion
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In a seminar talk, the speaker who has made a special study of the subject, gives his exposition of it and presents his views on it. Conferences and seminars help to bring experts in a particular subject together to present their experiences and views. There is a meaningful discussion on the papers that are used, and summaries of these papers and the recommendations, if any, are published in the form of a report for wider circulation.

Thus a seminar may be held on any important aspect of national life like pollution of the environment or the declining state of education.

In this unit, we shall be studying excerpts from a few papers presented at a seminar on Distance Education. It is not possible to give examples from more than one seminar, but the aspects studied here are useful in general for preparing papers for most seminars.

On the basis of the papers reproduced in this unit, we shall discuss features like the method of presentation, the language and style, and the discussion that follows the reading of a paper. One important aspect of a seminar talk is proper delivery. This involves careful articulation, stress on important words, and effective modulation of the voice.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- begin a seminar talk by focusing attention to the main points you are going to discuss
- develop the main points step by step
- reinforce your arguments with reliable evidence
- present your data through charts and diagrams
- recapitulate the main ideas in each section of your talk
- conclude effectively by reiterating your views
- contribute meaningfully and constructively to a discussion following a seminar talk.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Inauguration of the Seminar

The seminar is usually opened by a distinguished person invited by the organisers of the seminar.

A specimen inaugural speech is given below:

“I welcome you all to this seminar on ‘The problems of pollution in the Cities.’ Your expertise in the field of environmental studies will contribute to the finding of a solution to the great problem which threatens city life today. The keynote address, I notice, is to be given by Dr. N. Kumara Swamy, who has been associated with environmental studies in our country for the last four decades. His studies in recycling of chemical waste in urban industries has earned him a name all over the world.

“A number of distinguished scholars are going to take part in the seminar. I have great pleasure in inaugurating this seminar and wish you success in your deliberations.”

3.2 How a Seminar is Conducted

A seminar may continue for two or three days, and be divided into a number of different sessions. Each session covers a broad aspect of the topic, and related papers are presented at the same session. Each session is presided over by someone distinguished in the field. He invites the participants to present their papers. After each paper he invites questions and comments and thus a discussion follows. He also moderates the

discussion and prevents it from becoming a mere verbal duel or heated argument.

If you are giving a seminar talk or reading a paper, you must think of your main points, the order in which you will present them and the time at your disposal. You must avoid being monotonous and tiresome. You may, if you like, project the main points of your paper onto a screen by using an overhead projector, if one is available. Use charts or diagrams where needed. Use any audio-visual aids that you consider useful.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Say which of the following are correct statements:

- (i) Seminars are held to give experts in a subject an opportunity to discuss personal problems.
- (ii) One of the aims of a seminar is to arrive at a solution to a problem in a particular field.
- (iii) One of the aims of a seminar is to make recommendations for the improvement of a system.
- (iv) Discussions following a seminar talk must be heated and forceful.
- (v) The paper must be read objectively in a cold, dispassionate voice.

3.3 The Beginning of a Seminar Talk or Paper

‘Here’s the beginning of a paper at a seminar on Distance Education in India by Prof. G. Ram Reddy, Ex. Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University. The paper is entitled ‘Distance Education: What, Why and How?’ Notice the way in which the paper begins.

Example

Distance Education: What, Why and How?

Introduction

In this paper, I would like to deal with three aspects of distance education:

- (a) What is Distance Education?
- (b) Why Distance Education in a country like India? and
- (c) How of it? i.e. the forms of Distance Education in this country.

Though Distance Education has been catching up very fast in all countries developed and developing, socialist and capitalist, western and non-western, it is still ‘little known and little studied.’ As Keegan points

out: “Even a cursory reading of educational literature shows that distance systems are usually ignored. It merits not a paragraph in most volumes of educational philosophy, in guides to administrative process or in analyses of didactic strategy.” However, its importance is being realised all over the world and certainly in developing countries, more by the policy makers than by the educationists.

What is Distance Education?

What, then, is distance education? There is no one meaning of the term ‘Distance Education.’ It is known by a variety of names, viz., ‘Correspondence Education,’ ‘Home Study,’ ‘Independent Study,’ ‘External Study,’ ‘Off-campus Study,’ ‘Open Learning,’ ‘Open Education,’ etc. There is, what Fred Jevons calls; “a bewildering nomenclature”. In Australia, its official name is External System. “This description is not very much appreciated because it carries vibes of old London external system which usually provides examination but not teaching.” This system is very prevalent in India also. In some countries, the term, ‘Correspondence Education’ is widely used. But it has increasingly been replaced by the term ‘Independent Study’ in North America. ‘Home Study’ is sometimes used to describe correspondence programmes of private schools both in North America and Europe. This is also disliked by many mainly because some of the correspondence institutions have only the profit motive, particularly the private ones. No doubt, some of them enjoy very good reputation, but several of them are far from it. Further, several correspondence institutions depend only on one medium, viz the print material. The Distance Education today lays emphasis not only on print medium but also on other media. In fact, multi-media approach is the corner stone of the Distance Education system.

(From Studies in Distance Education, edited by B. N. Koul and others A. I. O./IGNOU 1988).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Why according to the speaker, is it important to discuss Distance Education?
2. What is difference between correspondence education and Distance Education?
3. Write a beginning in 100 words for a paper on “Prevention of Deforestation”.

3.4 Logical Development of the Talk or Paper

As pointed out in section 3.3 in the introduction the speaker has drawn our attention to the main concerns of his paper and defined Distance Education. He then goes on to discuss why Distance Education is important for India – the second major concern of his paper.

Why Distance Education?

Now let me turn to the second question: the need for Distance Education in India. If we look at the educational scene in this country during the last four decades, certain trends are clearly visible and the need for Distance Education arises as a result of the consequence of these trends. Broadly, the trends are:

- (a) inequalities in education, i.e. the question of access to education;
- (b) quality of education; and
- (c) relevance.

Access to Education

Let us examine the issue of access to education first. It is true that during the last 40 years there has been a remarkable expansion in education, particularly at the tertiary levels. I do not think that in any other walk of life such a large scale expansion has taken place. For instance, in 1951, there were only 22 universities in this country; today, there are about 160. Similarly, the number of colleges has gone up from 695 to 5,482 and the number of students has increased from 1,74,000 to 35,38,000. The expenditure on education has risen from Rs 114 scores in 1950-51 to over 6000 scores in 1948-85.

Despite this increase, the proportion of tertiary level student population in relative age groups, i.e. 17-23 years, is only 4.8% which compress very unfavourably with some of the countries like Philippines (25), South Korea (18), Japan (30) U.S.S.R. (18) and U.S.A. (55). These figures show that higher education in India lags far behind the above countries.

With the expansion of the school system the number of students going to higher education is likely to increase. Even a conservative estimate for 2000 A.D. indicates that the likely enrolment in higher education is expected to double, i.e. roughly, there will be 61/2 million students. There are also estimates, strongly reasoned, that the enrolment will quadruple in the next 20 years as it did in the last 20 years. It is clear that we will face a crisis of growing intensity unless the present problems are tackled.

I have quoted these figures to impress upon you the nature and types of inequalities in higher education in this country. This certainly is not a happy state of affairs. It is not in the interest of the development of the country, nor is it possible to live with this unjust system. It is certainly not possible in a society which is democratic and wants to improve the standard of life of its people. As a result, the pressure for expansion of educational opportunities will grow. If we look at the situation in the states, we find that tremendous pressures are exercised on the governments to open more and more institutions of higher learning, whether colleges or universities, and very few democratic governments can afford to resist such pressures even assuming that such a resistance is desirable. Experience shows that even strong governments which are democratic have yielded and expanded the system. Therefore, the expansion of educational facilities becomes necessary.

Assuming that more educational facilities have to be provided in the country, what should be the approach to meet such demands? Obviously, one approach is to start more and more institutions of higher learning and that is how the governments have been responding to this demand during the last four decades in this country. Now we see that even this phenomenal expansion has not met the demands, and inequalities continue to exist. This is mainly because of our approach to education. All along, expansion meant increasing the number of formal educational institutions, which suffer from certain rigidities. For instance, formal systems have the following four characteristics:

- (a) Teachers – full time teachers to teach;
- (b) Students – full time learners to learn;
- (c) Place – class rooms where learning can take place; and
- (d) Interaction – face-to-face interaction between the teacher and the taught.

All these are considered essential attributes for imparting education and if these attributes are not there, education cannot take place. There are many in the population who cannot afford to be full-time learners. At the same time, there are governments which cannot afford to employ full-time teachers all the time and provide costly infrastructure in the form of buildings.

Formal education is very costly. As a result, expansion on a large scale becomes very difficult. Even if the society is prepared to provide these, there are sections in the population who cannot take advantage of it. The inevitable conclusion one draws from this is that, if large and varied sections of population are to have access to education, our approach to it must change. We have to think of alternative systems which can supplement the existing system. Distance education is one such

alternative and it has the potential to transcend the barriers of time and space.

(From Studies in Distance Education)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

- 1(i) What focal points does the speaker draw our attention to in this section of his paper?
 - (ii) Give two figures to prove that there has been an increase in educational facilities since 1951.
 - (iii) How can a democratic government deal with inequalities in higher education?
 - (iv) Why is it not possible to have a large scale expansion of educational facilities through the formal education system?
2. Draw up a table to show the increase in educational facilities and student enrolment from 1951 to the present time (that is, the time when the talk was given).
 3. Here's an excerpts from the next section of the paper. It discusses a particular feature of the formal system of education. Read it carefully and answer the questions which follows:

Relevance

Another criticism of our educational system concerns its relevance. That universities and other institutions of higher education are not only elitist but also irrelevant to the social needs is the often repeated comment. This may be an exaggerated picture, but the fact remains that there is some substance in such a criticism. Where we need more technical education, we are providing for more arts courses; where we need more intermediate level technologies, we are producing more engineers and doctors, and where we need more continuing education to update the skills and knowledge of the working people, we are providing more of general education. In a changing society, more opportunities need to be provided for continuing and extension education. Very few institutions today provide opportunities for such education.

In the proceeding paragraphs, I have explained some of the problems in our present day educational system. To recapitulate, there are problems of access, quality and relevance. Unless we reorganise and reorient our educational system, we would not be able to overcome them. We have, therefore, to think of alternative and different strategies. One such strategy which is catching up all over the world is that of Distance Education. Thanks to the availability of modern communication technologies, it is possible for us to provide access to education to a

large number of people, improve the quality of education and provide relevant courses.

(From Studies in Distance Education)

- (i) Name three courses which can help to update the skills and knowledge of the working people.
 - (ii) Each major section in a talk must be followed by a summary of the main points discussed. What sentences above do this?
4. In the next section of the talk the speaker discusses which sections of society will benefit from Distance Education. Read this excerpt carefully.

The University Grants Commission also encouraged the starting of correspondence courses and said that these courses were expected to cater for the following categories of students:

- (i) Students who have to discontinue their formal education owing to pecuniary and other circumstances.
- (ii) Students in geographical remote areas.
- (iii) Students who have to discontinue their education because of lack of aptitude and motivation but who might later on become motivated.
- (iv) Students who could not find a seat or do not wish to join a regular college or university department although they had the necessary qualification to pursue higher education.
- (v) Individuals who look upon education as a life-long activity and might like to improve their knowledge in an existing discipline or acquire knowledge in new areas.
- (vi) In-service persons.

(From Studies in Distance Education)

Now say what features of the Open University system listed below will be especially helpful to the categories of people listed above.

The main features of open universities are:

- (i) They are, like their conventional counterparts autonomous bodies and are free to take their own decisions and formulate their courses.
- (ii) They use multi-media for instructional purposes and electronic media as important components.
- (iii) There is a strong student support service.
- (iv) The material is prepared by teams of experts.
- (v) Entry qualifications are flexible and relaxed.

- (vi) One can study according to one's own pace and convenience.
- (vii) There is uniformity in the quality of education i.e. the students have access to the same quality of education. E.g., students living in geographically remote areas will especially benefit by the use of electronic media. Lessons and instructions can be broadcast to them on T.V. or Radio.

3.5 Concluding the Talk

The conclusion brings all the different sections of the talk to gather and the main points are brought into proper relationship. An anecdote, a story or a quotation helps to clinch the talk effectively. This is how Prof. G. Rama Reddy concludes the talk. He draws inspiration from mythology.

To conclude: I have described the concept, the need, arrangements and the organisational form of Distance Education in the country. The origin of Distance Education lies basically in the philosophy that the society has a responsibility to provide educational opportunities to those who for some reason or the other cannot go to the conventional system. There is the case of Ekalavya in mythology, who wanted to learn under the guru, Dronacharya, who as we all know, refused to take him as a student because he was neither a Brahman nor a Kshtriya. However, Ekalavya was determined to learn and what happened subsequently is known to all of us. The legend goes that Ekalavya built a figure in the image of Dronacharya and started practising archery. Subsequently, his skills in archery surpassed those of the best pupil of Dronacharya. What happened subsequently is not relevant here. The point, however, that needs to be made is that today a motivated learner cannot be and must not be ignored for any reason whatsoever. In those days a Dronacharya could refuse to take an Ekalavya as a student and the society would tolerate it. Today's democratic society cannot afford to overlook the interest of Ekalavyas nor can Dronacharyas say 'no' to them. Distance Education and the Open Universities facilitate this. Open Universities are universities for the modern Ekalavyas. Availability of communication technologies make this possible today. It is said that there was a time when, if a student wanted to learn, he had to go the Aristotle. Today we have the means to take the Aristotle to the student. Therefore, let us take full advantage of the technologies available for extending educational opportunities to all those who want to have access to it.

(From Studies in Distance Education)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Here is an extract from a newspaper about a proposed seminar on ‘Child Bonded Labour’.

Write a suitable conclusion to a talk on the subject based on the points in this extract. (100 words)

Seminar on Child Bonded Labour

HT Correspondent

New Delhi, June 2. About 50 per cent of the 70 million children working in different industries in India today may come under the definition of child bonded labour, said the general secretary of Bandhua Mukti Morcha here today.

Addressing a Press conference, he said it is a sad comment on the sensibilities of our society that the phenomenon of child bonded labour has attracted very little attention. This most heinous crime against childhood and humanity is yet to be recognised as a desperate problem at all levels of our society, he added.

The South Asian region accounts for the higher incidence of child labour of the world and India has the “lion’s share”. Majority of these poor children are engaged in unorganised agricultural sector, followed by the carpet industry spread in the Mirzpur. Bhadoi belt of Uttar Pradesh, which accounts for more than one lakh child workers.

The concentration of child labour can also be seen in the glass or bangle making industry of Firozabad, UP, stone quarries and brick kilns, lock industry of Aligarh (UP), match and fireworks industry of Sivakasi (Tamil Nadu) and diamond industry of Jaipur and Surat. Besides it is a common sight to find child workers engaged in hotels and dhabas throughout the country, he added.

The Bandhua Mukti Morcha has decided to organise a five-day international seminar on ‘Child Servitude in South Asia’ here from June 30.

(From The Hindustan Times, 3 June ‘89)

3.6 Discussion

The discussion on a seminar talk might bring up a disagreement in views or take the form of a question seeking clarification. Since copies of the paper to be presented at the seminar are distributed to the participants

ahead of the session, you should read it and note where you need a clarification or where you disagree. These points may then be raised at the time of discussion. Criticism must always be constructive and offered as a contribution to the study of the topic discussed.

Here is an excerpt from another paper entitled 'support Services in Distance Education' presented by Prof. Bakhshish Singh at the same seminar. Read this excerpt carefully and see what questions might arise in your mind about the use of support services like audio, video, T.V. and radio, library facilities and counselling (giving advice and tutorial help to the student). Ask yourself whether the recommendations made by the speaker are feasible in India.

Support Services in Distance Education

Audio cassettes and video tapes are also very effective teaching media. They have an advantage over the radio and TV in that they enable the learner to have control over the learning material he can listen to or view the programmes at any time convenient to him. He can stop the cassette or video tape at any stage, go over any section of the cassette or tape as often as he needs and use it again and again for revision or recall. Phonograph records and Flexi discs are also good devices which are cheaper and more easily accessible. Educational film strips and films too could be very useful as effective media in the teaching-learning processes.

Telephone has great potential for providing two-way interaction between the learner and the teacher, and also among the learners themselves. It is particularly useful when an institution has to deal with students scattered over vast areas and in countries where there is shortage of specialists. Some of the latest innovations of telephone are Tele-tutoring and Tele-confessing. Tele-tutoring can be developed into a very useful student support service in the Distance Education system. The institutions which have adopted these innovations allocate learners to telephone tutors and the learners can discuss their problems with the tutor on telephone. The learners and the tutors do not have to travel for interaction, seminars, etc.

Distance Education institutes in the developing countries may not be in a position to make use of all the innovations of modern communication technology, but they should chalk out a phased programme of the integration of these devices into their teaching-learning system to make it more effective. In the first phase we should take immediate steps to adopt such devices as are easily available and within the reach of our learners, e.g. Radio, Television, Telephone, Audio-Cassettes and Video Tapes. In the second phase we should try to develop the various

adaptations of Radio, Television and Telephone. In the third phase we should keep an eye on the future and try to develop the latest and sophisticated communication technologies in collaboration with the developed countries.

Study Centres

A network of study centres is of vital importance to a distance education institute for providing useful support to the students in their learning pursuits. Each study centre should have a counsellor who should be competent enough to give general counselling, advice, and guidance to the students on methodology of learning through the Distance Education system and general aspects of the various courses. He should also be able to provide to the public in that area detailed information and guidance regarding courses study available in the institute which may be relevant to their needs. The centre should also have subject tutors who may be available to the students for consultation and guidance. These tutors could also handle evaluation of students' assignments, and teach at the face-to-face contact programmes. Tutorial support is of crucial importance to the learners and serves as a great morale booster for them. It helps them to overcome the feeling of isolation.

The study centre should also have a good library, audio and video equipment, telephone and listening laboratory facilities. It should have suitable working hours according to the convenience of students and must remain open on Sundays and holidays too.

The study centres can also organise distribution of course materials.

Some of the variations of study centres and face-to-face contact programmes tried by some Distance Education institutes in different countries are:

(a) Mobile Learning Centres

Mobile Learning Centres as devised by North Island College in Vancouver Island, Canada are smaller and more compact editions of the static conventional Study Centres. Each mobile unit has study carrels for about 4 students, a tutor's cabin, radio telephone storage for files, library books, audio visual viewing equipment for multiple viewing of different programmes by different students, a micro computer station and space for laboratory work. It is manned by a single tutor who performs multiple roles to guide varied learners studying independently as possible. However, he has the support of two other tutors – the subject tutor for evaluating students' assignments and the local telephone tutor for sorting out the learners' problems that cannot be resolved by him.

Students can avail themselves of the services of mobile learning centre by prior appointment. They are free to spend any length of time talking to the tutor individually or as a group, using resources materials, writing assignments, etc. These mobile units serve the purpose of publicity vans also and enthuse a number of persons in the areas visited, to enroll for various courses. The mobile learning centre could form a very useful support services for Distance Learners, and should be specially suitable for developing countries.

(From Studies in Distance Education)

Did some questions arise in your mind on reading the excerpt above. Here is one that might have arisen:

‘In our country, not many students have telephones at home. Also, the telephone service is not reliable because telephones are often out of order. As a number of people need to use the telephone for important business activities and emergencies, it would be improper to use the phone for a long time to discuss academic problem.’

The speaker can refute the points by saying:

‘In my talk I did say ‘Distance Education institutes in the developing countries may not be in a position to make use of all the innovations of modern communication technology...’

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

1. State some other objections to the use of technology discussed in the excerpt above and give possible refutations. Put this in the form of a discussion.
2. If you were the person who gave the talk above, how would you answer this question: “How can people living in remote mountain and desert areas of India where there are very poor transport facilities make use of the study centres?” You may base your answer on the case of North Island College in Canada cited later in the paper. (100 words)

4.0 CONCLUSION

Seminar presentations are some of the academic activities that you may be called upon to undertake in your academic life. Even when you graduate from the college, you can be invited to a series of seminars where presentation are required of you. The suggestions in this unit are appropriate and relevant. You should make sure you practise them as you move through your programme.

5.0 SUMMARY

- (i) A seminar is a gathering of experts who read papers on some important national or international affairs.
- (ii) The seminar is sometimes inaugurated by a distinguished person who says a few words about the theme of the seminar and welcomes all the participants.
- (iii) The seminar is organized into a number of different sessions. A particular aspect of the main theme or topic is dealt with at each session.
- (iv) Begin your papers by outlining the major concerns.
- (v) Link the different aspects of your paper properly and logically.
- (vi) Conclude by summarising the main points you have made.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Fill in the blanks

1. In seminar presentation, the speaker makes
 - (a) of the subject, gives the
 - (b) of it and presents his
 - (c) on it.

2. Conferences and Seminars bring
 - (d) of a particular subject together to present
 - (e) of their views.

3. The methods of presentation of seminars are:
 - (f).....
 - (g).....
 - (h).....
 - (i).....
 - (j).....

4. The parts of a seminar paper include
 - (k).....
 - (l).....
 - (m).....
 - (n).....

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

© Materials are adapted from: Indira Gandhi Open University. School of Health Sciences and School of Humanities. February 2001 (reprint) and July 1997 (reprint), HSTIT Functional English. FEG – 1 Foundation Course in English I

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Handa, U. (ed.). 2001: *Functional Skills. Conversation – Speaking Skills.* New Delhi: Indira Gandhi Open University.

Rubdy, R. (ed.). 1997. *Foundation Course in English 4.* New Delhi: Indira Gandhi Open University.

At least 3 seminar presentations are on audio and video cassettes.

UNIT 5 PUBLIC SPEECH MAKING

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Beginning a Public Speech
 - 3.2 Body of the Speech
 - 3.3 Concluding a Public Speech
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, (unit 4) we discussed seminar presentation. We said in a seminar talk, the speaker makes presentation in his special subject area. Seminars and conferences help to bring experts in a particular subject area together.

In this unit, you will learn how to make a public speech. In a public speech, you may not necessarily be speaking on a topic in your subject area. What is central to a public speech is that people of different subject areas and people of varying degrees of educational experiences are gathered together and you are expected to talk to them.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- begin a public speech
- develop the main points of a public speech
- carry the public along as you make the speech
- conclude effectively the public speech.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Beginning a Public Speech

Making a public speech in Nigeria is quite different from making a public speech in another country. In the previous unit, we used the example of seminar presentation in India. We dare not use such

examples in public speech in Nigeria. The socio-cultural situation of a country determines the way a speech is presented.

In Nigeria, protocol (official recognition and respect) is very important. In order to illustrate public speech in Nigeria, we are going to use a special address presented by the National Coordinator of National Open University of Nigeria at the opening ceremony of the course materials development meeting held in Lokoja on 4th March, 2002.

**Welcome Address by the National Coordinator,
National Open University of Nigeria (NOU) at the NOU Opening
Ceremony of the Course Materials Development Meeting
held at the Banquet Hall of Kogi State, Lokoja, on 4 March, 2002**

Protocols

The Executive Governor of Kogi State, His Excellency Prince Abubakar Audu

The Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Babalola Borishade

The Honourable Minister of State for Education, Alhaji Bello Usman, Tafidan Gusau

The Chairman, Senate Committee on Education, who is also the Chairman of the Occasion, Senator Dr. Alex Kadiri,

The Chairman of the House Committee on Education, Dr. Garba Matazu

The Deputy Governor of Kogi State, His Excellency Chief Patric Adaba

The Special Adviser to Mr President on Education, Chief S.K. Babalola, Distinguished Senators and Members of the National Assembly, and especially those who are from this state and have found time to come to their grassroots to support this occasion

Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education

Members of the Kogi State Executive Council

Members of the Kogi State House of Assembly

Chairpersons and Chief Executives of Federal Parastatals

Directors of the Federal Ministry of Education and other Ministries

International Development Partners, especially our Experts from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Vancouver BC Canada

Distinguished Participants

Friends, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As the Executive Governor has the singular privilege to welcome you to his State, my brief is a relatively simple one. I warmly welcome you all to this historic occasion that has brought over 125 top-rate academics from Nigeria's institutions of higher learning and 3 International Experts from the Commonwealth of Learning to Lokoja, the Capital of Kogi State, for a one-month long Course Materials and Instructional Development of the National Open University of Nigeria.

Some questions that might agitate people's minds in relation to why we are here include three significant ones such as 'What is open and distance learning?' 'Why Open University?', 'Why Lokoja out of the 36 state capitals?'

It is often said that if one thought that education is very expensive, try ignorance. This seems to epitomise the situation that Nigeria has found itself since the opening in July 22, 1983 of the first National Open University which was suspended by means of a budgetary pronouncement made by General Buhari on April 25, 1984. For a country the size and population of Nigeria, mass education has to take firm roots in the effort to implement the various aspects of the National Policy on Education. To fulfil the promise of providing Education for All, it will be difficult and perhaps absolutely impossible to provide classroom-based and time dependent education. The cost is simply prohibitive just as its logistics are daunting and horrendous. The only viable solution is to consider a cost-effective, efficient and quality oriented alternative which allows as many as would wish to undertake learning without any hassle whatsoever. It is almost 19 years since the first National Open University. The Nation has now realised how much we have lost and continue to lose if we have to thread on the path that keeps a large segment of our population illiterate. Imagine the cost to this nation of the 19 years we have lost and how expensive the ignorance which those years have brought to individuals and the nation. Nigeria today can only provide tertiary education to less than 20 per cent of those who require it, while over 60 million Nigerians are still illiterates. No nation can claim to be responsive to the needs of its citizens without building upon education as the most important foundation towards national, corporate and personal development. Education is the key to becoming a clever country, and the guide towards becoming a Knowledge-based Society. However, we know that no nation can afford to provide education to all its citizens through the traditional classroom-based face-to-face mode.

As a result, all nations of the world, especially the developing countries, desirous of a cost-effective, convenient, conducive, efficient and comprehensive way to educate all its citizens have embraced open and distance learning. ODL has become mainstream activity and Nigeria has no choice but to embrace it, considering our population, socio-economic, needs, and all current development indicators. It is in this regard that President Olusegun Obasanjo has told the nation, 'Enough of our groping in the dark and wallowing in ignorance and illiteracy, and that it is time to face very squarely the issue of enhanced access to and equitable provision of educational facilities to all Nigerians'. The current administration, through the dedication of our indefatigable

Honourable Minister of Education has continued to pursue Education for All and taking elitism out of education.

The only way to do this is for the country to embark upon open and distance learning. This is a time-tested mode of teaching in which learners are removed in time and space from the teacher. It uses a variety of media and technologies to provide and/or improve access to good quality education for large numbers of learners wherever they may be. Open and distance learning accomplishes a number of goals including: access and equity in educational opportunities, meeting special needs of workplace training; moving people to where the jobs are; internationalisation of tertiary education curricula; and ameliorating the effect of internal and external brain drain in tertiary institutions.

It is therefore not difficult to see the need for restarting the National Open University at a time when the number of those who need to be educated continues to increase beyond bounds, just as it is becoming extremely expensive for Government both State and Federal to fund education through the traditional mode of instructional delivery. With an Open University, thousands of Nigerians will realise their dreams of tertiary education in a system that remains open 24 hours a day and 365 days in a year and never threatened by either ASUU/NASU or other strikes, has no student demonstration, has no cultism, takes off the anxiety from parents of how to educate their children without breaking a bank; and maintains the family ties because learners are not necessarily required to relocate.

What has Lokoja got to do therefore with open and distance learning to warrant our assembling here today? For those who might not have considered it, there are very many reasons why Lokoja is central to the national movement to re-establish Open University in Nigeria. I will mention only three due to time constraints, to illustrate the genesis and journey so far in open and distance education in Nigeria. First, Lokoja occupies a historic place in the making of a nation called Nigeria today. Lokoja was the first administrative and commercial capital of Nigeria when Lord Lugard became the Governor General of Nigeria after Mungo Park and Richard and John Landers explored the River Niger in 1830s. It opened up the city to all Nigerians and allowed all and sundry to draw from the fountain of the Niger with insatiable quest for knowledge of discovery. Second, Lokoja was a prominent centre for slave trade in the 18th and 19th centuries due to its strategic location and later served as a centre for freedom. The late Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther spearheaded antislavery crusade in Nigeria and erected the Iron of Liberty at a spot where slaves were set free in Lokoja. Around the same spot he erected the first primary school in Northern Nigeria for all Nigerians who wanted to seek freedom from ignorance. The third and

also significant place of Lokoja was the crucial role it served as a practice ground for distance education by many Northern Nigeria Emirs in the 1800s. During the colonial era, a number of Northern feudal lords who vehemently opposed colonial rule and domination of their territories by the European imperialists were banished to Lokoja as punishment by the Colonialists. What the Colonialists did not realise was that these Emirs used distance education method to keep in constant touch with their subjects and were continually a step ahead of the colonialists who never ceased to be amazed at how informed and intelligent the people they sought to colonise were. Notable among the deposed Emirs who perfected the traditional form of distance learning included the late Emirs of Bida Mallam Mohammed Bashir deposed in 1901, the late Emir of Zaria Mallam Aliyu Dansidi, and the late Emir of Kano, Mallam Aliyu Abdullahi deposed in 1903. These forerunners of the Nigeria style of open and distance learning have their graves in Lokoja and should constitute an interesting tourist attraction.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, when The Honourable Minister approved that we hold the first Course Writing and Instructional Material Development Meeting in Lokoja he must have realised that we would be bringing open and distance learning home to its origin in Nigeria.

And here we are in Lokoja defying the intense heat at this time of the year to write 183 courses and adapt 235 others in 54 programmes carefully chosen to kick-start the re-establishment of the National Open University in Lagos. This time around we are committed to make the National Open University second to none in Africa and will rival the best in the world through the courses we shall develop in this town. Our one-month workshop is only three days old and we have already started to see the signs of success, commitment, excitement and enthusiasm by all.

I would therefore like to use this opportunity to thank all of you for coming to witness history in the making. I thank all those who have helped with all the arrangements for this workshop especially my small core of staff who have found it difficult to work with a Nigerian who has adapted the Chinese way of working round the clock. Many organisations and International Development Partners have supported this Workshop. Notable amongst them are The Commonwealth of Learning, who sent us three world experts, and UNESCO that has promised us lots of support. Permit me to thank the Education Tax Fund (ETF) who boldly decided to sponsor this Workshop at a time when all lights seemed dim in the search for funding. Let me thank all our distinguished members of the House of Assembly who have come to demonstrate their support to the course of educating the ordinary

Nigerians who constitute the bulk of their electorate. I must not fail to thank the President of Nigeria for his visionary leadership to pursue at all cost, education for all especially through distance learning. The Honourable Minister of Education, Professor Borishade, has spent sleepless nights with a lot of groups and committees set up to work out the restarting of the National Open University so tirelessly that he can now recite any thing connected with ODL by heart even though he is a nuclear engineer. To demonstrate his unflinching interest in the project he has decided to spend three days with us at this Workshop. I cannot quantify the enormous support and unreserved enthusiasm with which Kogi state government has showered on us since we began planning this Workshop. Both the Deputy Governor and the Governor at different times personally drove themselves to the Confluence Beach Hotel to make sure we are comfortable. Yesterday, on a visit to our Hotel, the Governor placed all the facilities of the state at our disposal and insisted that he would only allow us function in the best atmosphere possible. He therefore democratically insisted that we must be his guests at the Opening Ceremony by flinging open the doors to this Banquet Hall. Finally, I must thank the Almighty God for making today a reality in the journey we have embarked upon in taking the distance out of education.

Today, a major educational milestone has been reached and, irrevocable as well as irreversible steps are being taken to make education openly accessible, affordable and equitable to all Nigerians.

With the support of all of you here, and the goodwill of all Nigerians, we will continue to march ahead towards the goals of Education For All anywhere, anytime and through any appropriate and convenient communication means.

God bless Nigeria.

Thank you very much.

Professor Olugbemi Jege

(Source: National Open University and Distance Learning, 2002)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Read the beginning of this welcome address and provide your observations regarding the way the speech started. Use the space below. You may listen to the speech in your cassette provided in the study package.

Have you completed the exercise. Then go to the discussion that follows. Compare your responses with the ones I give below:

- (i) The speech started with a long list of people to recognise before the speech actually begins. This is called protocol list. In an important public speech in Nigeria, you must observe these protocols, if not you may be regarded as impolite, uncultured and undiplomatic. The protocols are in order of importance of the people you expect to be present at the gathering. How many people were listed in that speech? About 16 of them in all were given special recognition.
- (ii) You must always end with Ladies and Gentlemen. This is to give prominence to the gathering and to show that those who gathered are responsible people.
- (iii) You give the background of what the speech is about. This background must be captivating e.g.

As the Executive Governor has the singular privilege to welcome you to the State, my brief is a relatively simple one.

The background component of the speech should include a word of welcome, the reason for the gathering, some questions or issues to be discussed in the speech and the premise on which the speech will be based.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- (a) What were the words of welcome in the National Coordinator's Speech?
- (b) What are the questions raised?
- (c) On what premise will the speech be based?
- (d) What are the reasons for gathering?

If you have provided answers to these questions, then turn to my discussion.

Let's discuss the questions.

- (i) *Words of welcome*
I warmly welcome you to this historic occasion.
- (ii) *Reason for gathering*
.... for one month long course materials and instructional development of the Open University of Nigeria.
- (iii) *Questions for thought*
 - (a) What is Open and distance learning?
 - (b) Why Open University?
 - (c) Why Lokoja out of all the 36 state capitals?

The searching questions prepare the minds of the listeners for what to expect in the speech.

On what premise will the speech be based:

- (i) If education is very expensive, try ignorance.
- (ii) For a country the size and the population of Nigeria, mass education has to take firm roots...
- (iii) To fulfil the promise of education for all...

3.2 Body of the Speech

In speech, quite different from essay writing, the body of what to be said should be presented as if it is to be spoken. It should have personal pronoun such as *I, we, he, they*, etc. It should also be linked together by *spoken expressions* such as *As I'm going to start the lecture, My first point, The first thing we will be considering in this speech or talk is...* But like any other writings, a speech meant to be presented orally should be sequential. The order must be logical, it must not be full of jargons that majority in the audience may not understand, it should capture the attention of the listener and be easy to follow.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Let's turn to the speech, the welcome address by the National Coordinator of Open University of Nigeria, once again to search for the following qualities of speech written to be presented orally:

- (a) spoken expression
- (b) logical presentation of ideas
- (c) absence of jargons
- (d) attention getting
- (e) easy to follow.

List examples of all of these in the speech.

Use the space below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Turn to the discussion that follows this exercise once you have completed the exercise.

Do you find some of the characteristic features of public speech in the body of the welcome address? Let's find out.

(a) Spoken expressions

1. However, *we know that* no nation can afford to provide education to all its citizens through the traditional classroom – based face-to-face mode.
2. What has Lokoja got to do therefore with open and distance learning to warrant our assembling here today...? *I will mention* only three due to time constraints...
3. *Your excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*, when the Honourable Minister approved that we hold the first course Writing and Instructional Materials Development Meeting in Lokoja, he must have realised that we would be bringing open and distance learning home to its origin in Nigeria.
4. *And here we are in Lokoja*, defying the intense heat at this time of the year...
5. *I would therefore like* to use this opportunity to thank all of you for coming to witness history in the making.
6. *I thank all those who have* helped with all arrangements... especially my small core of staff...
7. *Permit me to thank* the Education Tax Fund (ETF) who boldly decided to sponsor this workshop.
8. *I must not fail to thank* the President of Nigeria for his visionary leadership...
9. *I cannot quantify* the enormous support and unreserved enthusiasm with which Kogi State government has showered...
10. Yesterday on a visit to *our Hotel*, the Governor placed all facilities of the state at *our disposal*...
11. Finally, *I must thank* the Almighty God for making today a reality...

All the use of spoken expressions are cycled in the examples above. Cross check them with the ones you identified. The spoken expressions cycled made the welcome address to be written like a public speech.

Logical Presentation of Ideas

The welcome address was presented in a logical manner. It systematically answered the questions raised at beginning of the speech all throughout the subsequent paragraphs. The second paragraph is used to illustrate the internal cohesion of the idea presented in 2nd paragraph: if one thought Education is very expensive, try ignorance.

- (i) National Open University was suspended
- (ii) mass education has to take firm roots
- (iii) cost of classroom-based and time-dependent education prohibitive
- (iv) the only viable solution is to consider a cost-effective alternative
- (v) loss in keeping the part of a large segment of our population illiterate – tertiary education to less than 20%.

The second paragraph as analysed above starts with a topic sentence. The points raised by the speaker under the topic sentence are used to support the very expensive nature of lack of mass education. No doubt this is a very logical presentation of ideas.

Absence of Jargons

The speaker was aware of the fact that he was speaking to a mixed bag audience. Thus, he selected his words very carefully to avoid the jargons typical of the field of Distance Education.

Attention Getters

The speaker used many expressions in the welcome address to get and keep the attention of his audience. These include:

The only way to do this is for the country to.....

It is therefore *not difficult to see*...

What has Lokoja got to do therefore with open and distance learning...

For those who might not considered it

First, Lokoja occupies...

Second, Lokoja was a prominent...

The third and also significant place of Lokoja...

Your excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.....

And here *we are in Lokoja*...

Today, a major educational milestone

In speech situations anytime a speaker draws attention to a particular thing or to his audience, he is trying to wake the audience up and assist them to follow his speech. For example, the mere mention of *the only way to do this* calls attention to an important way or fact. *Not difficult to see* makes the audience to try to find out why it is not difficult to see. The repetition of *Lokoja* draws the attention of the audience to the importance of *Lokoja*. Anytime the words like *first*, *second* and *third* are mentioned, the audience is anxious to get the point that will follow. The words are meant to draw attention to the fact that an important point is about to be mentioned.

Easy to follow

By drawing attention to major points, asking an important question and answering it and giving a point and supporting it with proofs, the speaker is able to make his speech easy to follow. The voice, the rising and falling tones, use of voice to signal emphasis are desirable in making a speech easy to follow.

3.3 Concluding a Public Speech

A public speech is not successful until it is concluded well.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Read the concluding part of the speech or listen to it on your audio-recorder and bring out the ways the speaker concluded the speech.

Do not turn to the discussion of this exercise until you have attempted it.

Now that you have completed the exercise, let's discuss the concluding parts of the speech of the National Coordinator, National Open University of Nigeria.

As you would have noticed, the concluding parts of the speech were in steps or stages.

- Stage 1:** thanking those who had made the occasion and the event possible.
- State 2:** establishing the irrevocable as well as irreversible steps taken to make education accessible to all.
- Stage 3:** soliciting the support of all to march ahead towards the goals of Education for all...
- Stage 4:** final concluding salutation and prayer that God bless Nigeria. Thank you very much.

What do you learn from the way this speech is concluded? Concluding parts of public speech should have:

- (i) appreciation component which recognises the contributions of various people
- (ii) the major focus that the speaker wants the audience to take home
- (iii) valedictory statement in form of final salutation and prayer.

Public speeches should never end abruptly. It must not leave the audience in a confused state. The final thing to be take home must be emphasised. It should motivate the listeners to want to hear more. It must have a lasting impression on the audience.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Have you gained anything in this unit? I think you should gain something. You should at least be conscious of the characteristics of a public speech. The sample speech of the National Coordinator of the National Open University of Nigeria should be a challenge to you to want to try your hands at writing interesting public speech.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- (i) how to begin a public speech;
- (ii) how to present the body of the public speech; and
- (iii) how to conclude a public speech.

Our hope is that you will continue to put into practice all that you have learnt in this unit.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

You are invited to the launching of a book written by one of your colleagues. Your assignment at that launching is to make a speech titled "*The Review of a book well-written.*" Present your speech. Be sure you put all the characteristics of a speech meant to be real.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

The Audio and Video Recording of the Welcome Address of the National Coordinator, National Open University and Distance Education, Professor Olu Jegede.

MODULE 4

| | |
|--------|--|
| Unit 1 | Articles, Concord and Sentences |
| Unit 2 | Tenses |
| Unit 3 | Gerunds and Participles |
| Unit 4 | The Active, Passive and the Infinitive |
| Unit 5 | Modal Auxiliaries |

UNIT 1 ARTICLES, CONCORD AND SENTENCES**CONTENTS**

| | |
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| 1.0 | Introduction |
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| 3.2 | Concord of Number and Person |
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| 4.0 | Conclusion |
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this last module (module 4) of this course, we shall be treating another very wide topic on grammar and usage. Grammar relates to the rules and the structure of English. Usage denotes the way the structure of the language affects our use of English.

In this unit, you will learn about the smallest unit in an English sentence which is the article. This is followed by concord and the English sentence itself. The attempt in the unit is to briefly introduce you to these grammatical concepts, if you want to learn more about these grammatical items, you should consult some of the grammar books available in many libraries in Nigeria.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify and use the English articles in sentences
- recognise and use the concord in English correctly
- recognise parts and types of English sentence.

Getting Started!

English is a language that is structured in its own peculiar way. The language has many parts. These include *nouns* (boy, girl, life etc.) *verbs* (e.g. go, come, see, stand, etc.) *adjectives* (e.g. tall, short, beautiful, ugly, etc.) *adverbs* (quickly, slowly, hurriedly, etc) and so on. A small but very important component of an English sentence is the article.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Articles

In this section, you will learn the use of articles.

a and *an* are called indefinite articles, and *the* is called the definite article.

Look at the following sentences:

1. Yesterday I met an old man in Lagos.
An *old man* here does not refer to any particular person, it is preceded by the indefinite article *an* (*An* is used before a vowel sound and *a* before a consonant sound).
2. The man standing there is a friend of mine.
Here, I am referring to a particular man, one who is 'standing there'. So I use the definite article *the*. As I have a number of friends and this man is one of them, I have used the indefinite article *a* before *friend*.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Fill the gaps with appropriate articles.

1. people standing there are on strike.
2. Are you going to post office?
3. When I was coming to school, bus came from behind and hit my bicycle.
4. Please, close door. It is rather cold today.
5. I had to stand for long time.
6. What beautiful shirt!
7. He belongs to rich family.
8. One of our neighbours is teacher.
9. I thought you were honest man.
10. I am not good judge of poetry.
11. arrest of our leaders caused the riot.

12. Swaraj Bhaman was occupied by soldiers.
13. There was warrant for Shastriji's arrest.
14. news spread quickly throughout city.
15. I was awakened by loud cry.

The common errors of the Nigerian users of English are to omit articles where they should be used and to use them where they should not be used. Always use the articles correctly.

3.2 Concord of Number and Person

This section will give you practice in what is called 'concord', that is, agreement in grammar, and the use of the verbs:

- (i) *be* and its various forms
am, is, are, was, were,
- (ii) *do, does,*
- (iii) *have, has.*

Let's see how these verbs are used.

(a) **be**

Look at the following sentences.

1. I *am* afraid I shall not be able to help you.
2. It *is* about this that I wish to speak.
3. What *is* the nature of this life of ours?
4. *Is* this simply part of the order of nature?
5. Man *is* the only creature that consumes without producing.
6. Our lives *are* miserable.
7. We *are* born, we *are* given just so much food.
8. Mr. Jones *was* too drunk to remember to shut the door.
9. Mrs. Jones *was* already snoring.
10. All the animals *were* now present.

Notice that verb **be** has the forms *am, is, are, was, were*, depending on the tense (present or past), the person (first second, or third), and the number (singular or plural) of the subject.

be

| Present Tense | | | | | Past Tense | | | | |
|---------------|--------|---------------------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------|---------------------|--------------|--------|
| First Person | | Second Person | Third Person | | First Person | | Second Person | Third Person | |
| Singular | Plural | Singular and Plural | Singular | Plural | Singular | Plural | Singular and Plural | Singular | Plural |
| am | are | are | is | are | was | were | were | was | were |

Here are some more examples:

1. am (used with I in the present tense)

Examples

I am a Nigerian. I am writing a book on Nigeria.
(I am is written as I'm in an informal style.)

2. is (used with he, she, it and singular nouns, in the present tense.)

Examples

- (i) Chief Obasanjo is the President of Nigeria.
- (ii) My friend Ramesh is working hard these days.
- (iii) It is very cold today.
- (iv) English is spoken in a large number of countries.

(*is*, is often combined with the subject and written as 's in an informal style. Example: He's, she's it's)

3. are [used with plurals and with you (2nd person singular) in the present tense].

Examples

- (i) You are very good at Mathematics.
- (ii) My friends are at the Zoo today. We are also going there.
- (iii) Children below five are allowed to travel free on Indian Railways.

(are is often combined with the subject and written as 're in an informal style Examples: You're, we're, they're)

4. was (used with i, he, she, it and with singular nouns, in the past tense.)

Examples

- (i) I was in Zaria yesterday.
- (ii) Einstein was a famous scientist.
- (iii) Mohan was writing a letter when I went to see him.
- (iv) The hall was decorated for yesterday's meeting.

5. were [used with plurals, and with you (2nd person singular in the past tense)]

- (i) We were expecting you yesterday.
- (ii) You were not at home when I rang you up.
- (iii) A lot of people were present at the meeting.
- (iv) Ten people were killed in a bus accident yesterday.

6. When the grammatical subject is there, we use *is* or *are*, *was* or *were*, depending on the number of the true subject following the verb.

Examples

- (i) There is a girl in that room.
- (ii) There is a man hiding behind the bushes.
- (iii) There are fifty students in this class.
- (iv) There was an interesting programme on television yesterday evening.
- (v) There were hundreds of people at the meeting this morning.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verb be (am, is, are, was, or were).

1. A dozen people injured in yesterday's accident.
2. you busy now?
3. I going to the cinema tonight.
4. There many people in India even now who cannot read and write.
5. I surprised to meet Raj yesterday evening.
6. I think this the most interesting of Hardy's novels.

(b) do

The present tense forms are *do* and *does*.

Of these, *do* is used with plurals and with *I* and *you*; *does* is used with the third person singular.

Examples

- (i) I do not smoke cigarettes.
- (ii) Do you play tennis?
- (iii) We do not wish to hurt you in any way.
- (iv) Shyam does not speak Bengali.
- (v) Does your father know that you are here?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Fill in the blanks with *do* or *does*.

1. you know how to make a cup of tea?
2. I not think I can come with you.
3. your father work at the bank?
4. he comes to office by bus?
5. How we get there?

(c) have

The present tense forms are *have* and *has*.

Of these, *have* is used with plurals and with *I* and *you*. *Has* is used with the third person singular.

Examples

- (i) My friends Sunil has dark hair.
- (ii) I have bad cold.
- (iii) Have you read *Animal Farm*?
- (iv) I have not seen many English films.
- (v) We have not been able to help him in any way.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Fill in the blanks with *have* or *has*.

- (i) they got a school in their village?
- (ii) Now, you learnt the secret of happiness.

- (iii) I my breakfast at a restaurant.
- (iv) The teacher advised me to improve my spelling.
- (v) he arrived already?

3.3 Types of Sentences

Sentences in English belong to four main types according to grammatical structure.

(a) Statements (assertive sentences)

Examples

- (i) Work is necessary to keep the world going. (affirmative)
- (ii) We do not generally speak to farmers 'growing' animals. (negative)

(b) Questions (interrogative sentences)

Examples

- (i) Why do people work?
- (ii) Does everyone do the same kind of work?

(c) Commands and Requests (imperative sentences)

Examples

- (i) Think about these questions.
- (ii) Look round the room you are in.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

To which of the grammatical types do the following sentences belong?

- (i) They are all busy growing things.
- (ii) Which set shall we put them in?
- (iii) Think of all the different kinds of workers.
.....
- (iv) Do not forget the last point.
- (v) Why are there so many different kinds of workers?
.....
- (vi) Each man built his own house made what furniture he needed.
.....
- (vii) Are some kinds of work more important than some others?
.....

(d) Exclamatory Sentences

This is a sentence that ends with an exclamation mark (!)

Example

You will see a surprise!

Life is short!

Hey! Who goes there?

English sentences are also looked at from another perspective. This is in terms of their complexities: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound complex sentences.

Examples**(a) Simple Sentences**

- (i) Susan is a girl.
- (ii) Mathew is a man.
- (iii) Abdullahi is intelligent.

All these sentences have only one subject (Susan, Mathew and Abdullahi) and only one predicate *is a girl*, *is a man* and *is intelligent*.

(b) Compound Sentences

- (i) Ngozi and her husband went home.
- (ii) John came home and Mary saw him.

All these sentences have more than one subject (Ngozi and her husband) and more than one predicate, in some cases (*came home* and *saw him*).

(c) Complex Sentences

- (i) The man that *you saw yesterday* was the former President of Nigeria.
- (ii) This is the dress *which my first son bought for me*.

All these sentences have clauses (*that you saw yesterday* and *which my son bought for me*) embedded or put inside the subject of the sentences.

(d) Compound Complex Sentences

- (i) John and Mary whom you have lift and some food items have finally taken us to court.
- (ii) Without any doubt, the agreement and the violation of it, take us to the condition that we find ourselves now.

In all these sentences, we have compound subjects (*John and Mary*) and *the agreement and the violation*) and complex embeddings (e.g. *to the condition that we find ourselves.*).

4.0 CONCLUSION

As you can see in this unit, the English sentence cannot be spoken or written anyhow. It follows particular rules and regulations. The articles and the concord are to be used appropriately in all sentences. Again, combination of simple, compound, complex and compound complex sentences makes communication in English flows smoothly. The statement, interrogative command and exclamatory sentences all combine to make communication in English meaningful.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- (i) the form and use of the articles in English;
- (ii) the form and the use of concord in English; and
- (iii) the types of sentences in English.

You should see this unit as the beginning of our attempt to expose you to the grammar and usage in English. Other units will discuss many other English grammatical items that play significant role in communication.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Insert the articles in their proper places in the paragraph. Rewrite the passage with the correct placement of the articles.

This is day that Lord has made. That's why we are rejoicing. Things have not been so good in country like Nigeria as it is nowadays. Many people are buying cars. Houses built by many are uncountable. Life of the ordinary man has changed tremendously. Glory be to Almighty God.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 TENSES

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Simple Present Tense and the Present Continuous Tense
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to an important aspect of English. These are the tenses. Tenses are so important in written and spoken English that a whole unit has to be devoted to it. Tenses regulate time and the aspectual forms of English. Aspectual forms suggest whether an event is going on, is completed or will be completed. The common problem of a Nigerian user of English is to break the rule of tense sequence. That is, the rule that says if any event is in the past, the tense must be in the past and if the event is happening at the present, all the tenses must be in the present.

In this unit, you will be briefly introduced to tenses in English. The field of tenses is so wide that no single unit can do justice to it. What is done in this unit is to expose you to the major aspect of tenses in English. You will surely need to read many English grammar books to be able to capture the details pertaining to tenses in English.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify and use simple present and present continuous tenses
- identify and use correctly the simple past tenses
- identify and use the past perfect tenses
- identify and produce the present and past perfect tenses
- identify and produce the present perfect continuous tenses.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Simple Present Tense and the Present Continuous Tense

In this section, you will learn to distinguish between the simple present tense and the present continuous tense.

The simple present tense has the simple form of the verb (called plain infinitive), with -s or -es added when there is a third person singular subject.

Example: He speaks English with an Indian accent.

The present continuous tense has a form of the verb *be* (agreeing with the subject in number and person) and the *-ing* form of the verb (called the present participle).

Example: I am painting a picture.

The simple present tense is generally used to refer to:

(i) a habit

Example: I go for a walk every morning.

(ii) something which is always true

Example: The sun rises in the east.

The present continuous is generally used to refer to an action going on at the moment of speaking.

Examples: The child is crying.

Look! He is coming now.

Some verbs are generally not used in the present continuous even when they refer to the real present.

Examples

I hear a strange noise.

I like some of the television serials.

I know the Principal very well.

We have no stamps in stock.

He wants to be a teacher.

This bag contains all my books.
I remember your friends Susan.

Common Errors in Nigeria

- (i) I am hearing a strange noise.
 - (ii) I am liking some of the television serials.
 - (iii) I am knowing the principal very well.
 - (iv) We are having no stamps in stock.
 - (v) He is wanting to be a teacher.
 - (vi) This bag is containing all my books.
 - (vii) I am remembering your friends Susan.
- All these are wrong.*

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Fill in the blanks with the simple present or the present continuous forms of the verbs given in brackets.

1. She (have) a small shop in the market.
2. I (do) my home work now. My brother (play) in the garden.
3. I (go) to the doctor. My father (suffer) from pain in the stomach.
4. Every time you (visit) him, he (think) you (want) some help.
5. He (seem) to be very busy.
6. You cannot go now. It (rain)

3.2 Ways of Expressing the Future

You will now learn various ways of expressing the future. Here are some examples:

1. I shall see you in the evening. (simple future)
2. We are going to spend the vacation in Delhi. (intention)
3. It is going to rain. (likelihood)
4. The train is going to start. (action about to take place)
5. My father is going to Bombay next month. (planned programme)
6. I'll be staying here for a week. (planned programme)
7. The President arrives here next Monday. (official schedule)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets to indicate the future.

- (i) I (leave) for Calcutta tonight.
- (ii) I doubt if I (be) able to come to the meeting.
- (iii) I (go) the station this evening to meet my friend Gopal.
- (iv) I think you should take an umbrella. It (rain)
- (v) I not (work) in this office any longer.

3.3 The Past Indefinite or the Simple Past Tense**Examples**

- (i) The Nightingale heard him, and she looked through the leaves and wondered.
- (ii) His eyes filled with tears.

Notice

- (a) that these events took place in the past and are not related to the narrator's (speaker's) present;
- (b) that we form the simple past tense:
 - (i) by adding - *d* or - *ed* to the regular verbs
 - look – looked
 - fill – filled
 - narrate – narrated
 - or (ii) by adding *t*
 - dream – dreamt
 - learn – learnt
 - or (iii) by changing some letters of the word
 - eat – ate
 - teach – taught
 - or (iv) by not changing the verb at all
 - cut – cut
 - hit – hit
 - shut – shut;
- (c) that with most verbs we indicate or interrogate by using *did* as a helping verb. The point to remember is that with *did*, we use the simple present form of the main verb.

Examples

The Student **did** not **dance** with the girl.
Did the Nightingale **sacrifice** her life in vain?

3.4 The Past Continuous Tense

This tense emphasises the continuity of events in the past.
It is formed by using *was* or *were* with the *-ing* form of the verb.

Examples

The butterfly **was running** after a sunbeam.
The student **was** still **lying** on the grass where the Nightingale had left him.

3.5 The Present Perfect Tense

This tense is used

- (a) to describe past event and
- (b) to emphasize their effect on the speaker's present.

It is formed by using *has* or *have* with the past participle form (sometimes called the third form) of the verb.

Examples

I **have read** all the novels written by Hardy. (And **I still** remember them).

The winter **has chilled** my veins. (And at the moment of speaking, I am **still** cold).

As the present perfect is linked to the speaker's present, we never use it with past time expressions.

It would be incorrect to say:

- I have written a letter an hour ago. (the sign *before an example indicates an unacceptable form.)

The correct form would be:

either

I have written a letter.

or

I have just written a letter.

The present perfect tense is often used with expression like *just, since, for, etc.*

3.6 The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

This tense is used to describe an action that started in the past and is still continuing. It is formed by using *have* (or *has*) with *been* and the *-ing* form of the verb.

Examples

- (i) The farmers **have been ploughing** their fields for two hours now. (They are still ploughing them.)
- (ii) My friend **has been studying** English since 10 o'clock. (She is still studying.)

Notice the difference between these two sentences:

- (i) The farmers **were ploughing** their fields when it started raining. (The action continued for some time in the past.)
- (ii) The farmers **have been ploughing** their fields for some time now. (The action began in the past and is still continuing.)

Sometimes, the present perfect continuous is also used for an action that has just finished after it has continued for some time.

Example

I am very tired. **I have been playing** cricket.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Put the verbs given in brackets in the simple past tense.

One morning, Akbar (go) for a walk with Prince Salim and Birbal. After some time, they (come) to the bank of a river. It (be) a hot morning and they (sit) down in the shade of a tree. A few minutes later, Akbar (say), "Shall we go and bathe in the river?" Birbal put his hand into the water and..... (say), "I wouldn't like to bathe."

Akbar and Prince Salim..... (take) off their clothes and (give) them to Birbal. Then they..... (get) into the water and (bathe) in it.

Akbar..... (say) to Prince Salim, "Birbal is standing in the sun and holding our clothes. He looks like a washerman's donkey," Akbar..... (call) out to Birbal and (say), 'You're carrying a donkey's load.' Birbal (bow) and very respectfully (say), "No, sir I'm carrying the loads of two donkeys."

Use the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.

A famous Irish barrister, who..... (be) a very witty person, (appear), before a judge who (not like) him and (not try) to hide the fact.

While the barrister..... (argue) his case, the judge (not seem) to be paying any attention to him. He..... (pat) his huge dog, which (sit) beside him, and (say) something to it. The barrister..... (stop) and (look) at the judge and the dog. "Go on," (say) the judge. "I beg your pardon," (answer) the barrister, "I (think) your lordship (be) in consultation."

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Put the verbs given in brackets in the present perfect or the present continuous tense:

- (i) I not (see) a film since December.....
- (ii) Which book you (read) since this morning?.....
- (iii) I (try) to swim for years but I not (succeed) yet
- (iv) The judge (examine) three witnesses since morning
- (v) The servant (wait) for an hour now. Your mother not (give) him any work yet.
- (vi) I (read) this essays five times but I can't understand it.....
- (vii) The old man (sleep) in the garden all day.....
- (viii) You (eat) for ice creams already.
- (xi) What you (do) since I saw you last?
- (x) The lions in the zoo (roar) for a quarter of an hour; they will soon be given food.

3.7 The Past Perfect Tense

In this section we shall discuss the essential uses of the past perfect tense. There are several examples of this tense. The past perfect tense is used:

- (i) to show that one action took place in the past before another action:
Karrim's wife *had* already *fallen* into the river when he got there.
- (ii) to express the continuation of an action up to a certain time in the past:
Gajpat *had looked after* the baby on several occasions by the time the encounter with the hyenas took place.
- (iii) to express a hypothetical (=supposed) condition:
If Karim *had looked* for his wife during the day, he would not have got lost.
- (iv) after *wish* to express what is impossible:
Karim said to his wife, "I wish you *have not fallen* into the river."
- (v) in Reported Speech, to talk about things that had already happened at the time when we were talking.
She said that she *had* accidentally *fallen* into the river.

In the following exercises we shall concern ourselves only with the first two uses of the Past Perfect.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Match the questions in Column A with the appropriate reply in Column B. Also, fill in the blanks with the past perfect forms of the verbs in brackets.

- | A | B |
|---|---|
| 1. Did you put the milk in the fridge? | a. She realized that she (already read) all the books. |
| 2. Did you have a good dinner at Sheela's wedding home? | b. No, Mother had already put..... (already put) it in before I got |
| 3. Why didn't you go to the movie with Aviansh? | c. No, they..... (already finish) eating by the time I got there. |
| 4. Why did Anita drop out of the class? | d. Because I..... (already see) it. |
| 5. Did you register the letter? | e. He..... (just pass) his driving test. |
| 6. Why was Hamid so happy yesterday? | f. No, the post office..... (already closed) when I got there. |

The sequences (or order) of two past actions are illustrated with the following examples:

Examples

- (a) Before Morrison put Manning's head on the oven he **had taken off** his shoes.
- (b) He **had put** a cushion under Manning's head, but it did not look natural.

Let's examine the sequence (the order) of the two past actions/activities/events referred to in each of the above sentences:

- | | 1st action/activity/event | 2nd action/activity/event |
|-----|--|--|
| (a) | had taken off (his shoes) on the oven) | (then) put (Manning's head |
| (b) | has put (a cushion under Manning's head) | (then he realized it) did not look (natural) |

Notice that for the earlier action/event the past perfect is used; for the later action/event the simple past is used; The past perfect is thus used to describe an earlier event looked at from a point of time in the past. It is formed by using *had* with the past participle form (the third form) of the verb.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Use the past perfect forms of the verbs given in brackets in these sentences:

1. The farmers sowed the seeds after they..... (plough) their fields. It started raining before they..... (finish) sowing the seeds.
2. We return home later at night and were very hungry. My mother..... (already) (cook) rice and vegetables. After we..... (wash) our hands we had our dinner. Mother also..... (make) some sweets. We had the sweets and then went to bed.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Complete the following paragraph using the correct simple past or the past perfect forms of the verbs given in brackets.

Early in the morning Jim Corbett and his dog Robin went to the forest. The previous evening Corbett..... (wound) a leopard. They went to the spot Corbett..... (fire) from. Robin..... (examine) the ground where the leopard (stand).

He..... (come) to the bushes where the leopard
 (leave) a lot of blood. Corbett..... (fire) at the leopard at short
 range. He. (see) the bullet enter the leopard's body.
 He..... (know) the leopard was dangerous as he
 (have) fifteen hours to nurse his anger against men. Robin.....
 (lead) Corbett into the thick jungle. Suddenly the dog.....
 (stop). Corbett saw what..... (attract) the dog's attention.
 He..... (see) the leopard's tail. He..... (see) the tip of
 the tail moving. He knew the leopard would attack him. Corbett
 just..... (get) the rifle on the shoulder when the leopard sprang
 at him.

(Adapted from Jim Corbett: Man-Eaters of Kumaon).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Tenses in English are very important. No sentences can be correct in English without proper sequence of tenses. You need to use the correct tenses when speaking or writing. When you mix up tenses, you look ridiculous, unintelligent and illiterate. Indeed you must learn the English tenses and use them accurately all the time.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to different kinds of tenses in English. You have also carried out many practice activities on tenses. We hope you will mind your tenses as from now on.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Question A

Use the correct form of the verb out of those given in brackets.

1. "I (have/has) no money. I (am/is/are) hungry, thirsty and tired," murmured David to himself.
2. He made an effort and went to a small shop in Dover. A young girl (was/were) coming out of the shop with a basket of rice on her arm. "What (do/does) you want? I (have/has) no money," she said.
3. "I (do/does) not want any money. Please tell me the address of Miss Betssey Trotwood."
4. "I (am/is/are) her domestic help. Come along with me," she said. David followed her. He looked at himself. His shoes (was/were) torn, his hat (was/were) crushed, and from head to toes he (was/were) powdered with chalk and dust.

5. Soon they came to the house of Miss Trotwood. She (was/were) there in the garden.
6. “Who (are/is/am) you?” she cried, “I (do/does) not like boys. Go away.”
7. “I (are/is/am) your nephew, Aunt,” David said. “I am (are/is/am) David Coperfield.”
8. She sat down with thump on the grass, looked at David up and down and said, “So you (are/is/am) my brother’s son.”
9. David (was/were) so miserable that he started crying. She caught him by the collar of his torn shirt and took him inside.
10. Mr. Dick (was/were) inside. She told him, “This boy (is/am/are) my brother’s son. You (are/is/am) a man of the world. Tell me what I should do with him.”
11. Mr. Dick (look/looked) at David, smiled and said, “Give him a bath.”
12. The bath (was/were) a great comfort. After the bath David (was/were) wrapped up in shawls and (was/were) taken to bed.
(Adapted from Charles Dickens: David Copperfield)

Questions B

Fill in the blanks with the present perfect or the present continuous forms of the verbs in brackets. The first two have been done for you.

Dr. Singh’s class does not seem to be getting anywhere at all today. The students have been working (work) at different things since 9 o’clock but none of them has finished (finish) his work. Dr. Singh asked Sheela to write a poem for the college magazine but she..... (just/write) the title of the poem. Abid..... (paint) a picture for a long time; nobody knows that it is because he (not do) even half of it. Murali..... (write) an essay about the college since the morning but he (complete) only the first paragraph. Vasudevan and Gurucharan..... (work) on the science project for three hours but (not finish) it yet. Poor Singh! He..... (walk) up and down the class trying to get the work completed soon.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 GERUNDS AND PARTICIPLES

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Gerunds
 - 3.2 Participles
 - 3.3 Why is a Participle Important?
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit continues with the broad section of this module which is grammar and usage in English. The grammatical items that you will learn in the unit are *gerunds* and *participle*. *Gerunds* are *verbal nouns* which can play the role of a noun in some positions in an English sentence. Their characteristic feature is that they are a combination of a *verb* and *-ing*. Some of these are: *flying, dancing, stealing*, etc. *Participles* are verb forms which can be used as a present or past tense. They are very important in the day-to-day English usage. As you go through this unit, you should pay particular attention to how these verbs forms are used. You should also use them correctly in your day-to-day usage of English.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- recognise gerunds in English
- use gerunds accurately in English
- recognise participles in English
- use participles accurately in English.

Getting Started!

The first grammatical form to treat in this unit is the gerund. The next section defines it and provides you with many examples of gerunds. At the end of the section, the major importance of gerunds is made known to you.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Gerunds

A gerund is a verbal noun, that is, a noun which describes an action or experience and has the form of a present participle (the *ing* form). It is interesting to note that gerunds can stay in different positions in a sentence to perform different functions.

Example

‘building’ in the sentence:

The building of the bridge was slow work.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Rewrite the following by adding *-ing* to the verbs in brackets.

1. He gave me (smoke) a long time ago.
2. I don't feel like (work) after lunch; I prefer (sleep).
3. Who enjoys (go) to hospital?
4. Is it worth (bother) about?
5. (See) is (believe).
6. Why did he go to prison?
He was accused of (pass) secret information to the enemy.
7. (Smoke) is not allowed inside the hall.
8. You can't make an omelet without (break) eggs.
9. Try to avoid (make) a noise.
10. Aren't you looking forward to (meet) your family after so many months?

The different positions that gerunds take are illustrated here:

Flying can be dangerous. (beginning of a sentence)

I like flying planes (used as complement).

I saw him when he was flying. (used as a verb complement).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Change the verbs in brackets by adding *-ing* or inserting *to*, as appropriate in the examples:

Examples

- (i) You still have a lot (learn), if you'll forgive my (say) so.
You still have a lot to *learn*, if you'll forgive my *saying so*.
- (ii) Would you mind (come) with me to Mohan's house; I wish (congratulate) him on his (win) an award in the Quiz Contest..
Would you mind *coming* with me to Mohan's house; I wish to *congratulate* him on his *winning* an award in the Quiz Contest.
1. You'll never regret (help) a friend in need.
 2. The doctor asked him (leave) the room without (give) him a chance (say) what his problem was.
 3. Your hair wants (cut) why don't you find time (go) to the barber?
 4. Fancy (have) (work) for a crazy person like him; I'd rather be without a job.
 5. The doctor advised him (stop) (drink).
 6. He gave a beard (avoid) (be) recognised by the police.
 7. Don't (switch) off the light before (go) to bed.
 8. Yesterday I was fined for (exceed) the speed limit; the constable said it was (make) me remember the rule for ever.

Gerunds are very important in English usage. They are used to make writings compacted with few words. By the use of gerunds, you can reduce *I saw the plane that was flying to London* to *I saw the plane flying to London*.

3.2 Participles

Participles are the two forms of a verb called *present participle* and *past participle* which may be used in compound forms of the verb or as adjectives.

Example

Why *are we going there*?

(present participle used to form present continuous tense)

The problem *can also be considered*.

(past participle used to form the passive voice).

A *loving* mother (present participle used as an adjective).

He had a *worried* look.

(past participle used as an adjective)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences using the verbs given below. Add *-ing* to each verb before using it.

revolve, smile, slide, nag, move

1. We need a _____ door here.
2. He had a serious accident while getting off a _____ bus.
3. A _____ chair is better than an ordinary one, but it is much more expensive.
4. It is as uncommon for a peevish person to have a _____ face as it is for a cheerful person to have a peevish one.
5. His wife is always complaining about something. No wonder people call him 'the husband of _____ wife'.

A distinction must be made between a participle (or perfect tense) and a past tense. This distinction is illustrated in the table below.

| Present | Past | Participle |
|----------|------------|------------|
| go | went | gone |
| see | saw | seen |
| do | did | done |
| consider | considered | considered |
| write | wrote | written |
| read | read | read |
| cut | cut | cut |
| say | said | said |
| play | played | played |

As you can see from all of the examples on the table, it is possible for the past tense to be the same as the participle as in '*considered*'. But in some other occasions, the past and the participle are different (e.g. *wrote* and *written*). In some others, they are the same e.g. *cut -cut* and *read-read* (although the pronunciation is different).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Write five phrases each for the types verb: + *-ing* + noun (e.g. *a pressing problem, a moving train*) and verb + *-ed* + noun. (e.g. *a tired man, caged birds*)

3.3 Why is a Participle Important?

As a user of English, you must always get your participle correctly. The common errors linked to the use of participle in Nigeria is the omission

of the participle in spoken or written English and the confusion between the participle and the past tense.

It is very common to hear Nigerians saying:

1. Your case will be *consider*. (considered)
2. You have been *inform* about the case. (informed)
3. He felt *unconcern* about the issue. (unconcerned)
4. Life without women can be a *defeat* life. (defeated)
5. He interrogated me and got me *confuse*. (confused)

In all the situations above, the participle has been wrongly used. You become unintelligent and illiterate if you speak or write English like this. People laugh at you. They cannot count you among the educated.

Note the correction of the five sentences:

1. Your case will be *considered*.
2. You have been *informed* about the case.
3. He felt *unconcerned* about the issue.
4. Life without women can be a *defeated* life.
5. He interrogated me and got me *confused*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The two grammatical items treated in this unit are very important. They are areas of common errors of Nigerian users of English. You should be sure you use these grammatical forms correctly in your day-to-day spoken and written English.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt about:

- (i) the gerunds
- (ii) the participles
- (iii) the importance and the usefulness of these grammatical items.

The need to master these forms and use them correctly has been stressed in the unit.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Fill in the blanks with the correct verb forms.

May I request you 1 _____ in your materials for 2 _____.
 3 _____ them from the typist for 4 _____ will not be a problem.
 We found it necessary to 5 _____ traffic to the secretariat to 6
 _____ the computer operators 7 _____ without distractions and
 interruption. Request for 8 _____ may however be brought up to 10
 a.m. For the past few days the hotel had 9 _____ to the times of
 meals, especially 10 _____ the _____ of meals on time. Some
 great improvement in the variety and quality of food served has also 12
 _____. Could you assist by 13 _____ to the time scheduled for
 means?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 THE ACTIVE, PASSIVE AND THE INFINITIVE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Active Voice
 - 3.2 The Passive Voice
 - 3.3 To + Infinitive
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The active and the passive voice, as well as the infinitive are the concern of this unit. They are grammatical elements that play a great role in the use of English. If you use them well in spoken and written English, you are heard properly and well understood. If you use these forms wrongly you become ridiculous, not heard or misunderstood. That is why you should study this unit very carefully and pay special attention to the use of these forms in English.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the active, and passive forms
- write correct sentences using active and passive forms
- define the infinitive verbs
- write correct sentences using the infinitive verbs
- state the importance of these forms to accurate use of English.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Active Voice

Active voice is a form of direct statement whereby the subject of a sentence takes an object without any inversion. In an active voice the subject and the object of the sentence are not interchanged. Let's illustrate this.

| | | |
|------|-----|---------|
| S | V | O |
| John | ate | the yam |

In this simple sentence, John is the subject represented by *S*, ate is the verb represented by *V* and the yam is object of the sentence represented by *O*. In the sentence, there is no inversion or interchange of *the yam* and *John*. Thus we will say the sentence *John ate the yam* is in the active voice.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Can you make at least five more sentences that are in the active voice. Try and do this. Use the space provided below:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Have you done this exercise? Compare your sentences with the ones below:

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>S</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>O</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|

(a) He cleared his throat.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>S</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>O</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|

(b) Everybody needs a girl.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>S</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>O</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|

(c) She grabbed his hand.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>S</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>O</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|

(d) She saw Steven on the road.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>S</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>O</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|

(e) He noticed the girl.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>S</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>O</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|

(f) Silas and others made secret exits.

All of the sentences written above are in the active voice. Active voice patterns of a sentence are useful if you want to present any point directly without going round about. Active voice is the most direct way of presenting any idea.

Note that there are some sentences that are not in the active voice despite the fact that they have a subject, a verb and an object. If the object is what we call *complement object*, that is, an object that says

something further about the verb. Such objects are not in the active voice because they cannot be reversed or inverted to form the passive voice. For example all of these sentences are not in the active voice. They all carry complement objects and thus are better called sentences with complement objects. (CO)

S *V* *Oo*
The boy is in the garden.

S *V* *Oo*
Life is not all bed of roses.

S *V* *Co*
She is a beautiful girl.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Try to change all the sentences a – f above round by placing the objects in the subject position and the subject in the object position. That is, you should change the sentences round.

Let's do it after you have attempted it. Can you do it? Cross-check your answer with mine below.

- (a) *He cleared his throat*
changed to
His throat was cleared by him.
- (b) *Everybody needs a girl*
changed to
A girl is needed by everybody.
- (c) *She grabbed his hand*
changed to
His hand was grabbed by her.
- (d) *She saw Steven on the road*
changed to
Steven was seen on the road.
- (e) *He noticed the girl*
changed to
The girl was noticed by him.
- (f) *Silas and others made secret exists*
changed to
Secret exists were made by Silas and others.

Note: in changing these sentences, the following alterations were made:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| she | her |
| (she changed to her) | |
| he | him |
| needs | is needed (present) |
| needed | was needed (past) |
| noticed | was noticed (past) |
| made | was made (past) |

There is also the addition of *by* as in *by her, by me, by Silas, by Steven*, etc.

All these illustrations bring us to what is called the passive voice. All the interchange of the subject to object and object to subject position done above make the new sentence *passive sentences*: *by* is used for the passive sentences. We have:

- (a) His throat was cleared by him.
- (b) A girl is needed by everybody.
- (c) His hand was grabbed by her.
- (d) Steven was seen on the road.
- (e) The girl was noticed by him.
- (f) Secret exists were made by Silas and others.

3.2 The Passive Voice

In addition to the examples of passive sentences given above, look at the following examples of the passive voice:

1. with the simple present and simple past-tenses,
(*am/is/are/were* + past participle)

Energy accumulated as fast as it was used.
If scientific skill is allowed free scope.

2. with the present continuous tense
(*is/are* + *being* + past participle)
changes that *are being wrought*...
3. with the present perfect tense
(*has* + *been* + past participle)
...beyond what *has* so far *been realised*.

This subject *has been* much *discussed*.
The great conqueror *has been* *admired*.

4. with the future tense
(*will + be + past participle*)

The answer *will be known some day*.

The human race *will be exterminated*.

5. with modal verbs
(*can/must + be + past participle*)

Food production *can be increased*

You *must be restrained*.

Notice that in all passive constructions we have the past participle form of the main verb preceded by the appropriate tense form of the verb be.

The passive voice is used when we are more interested in the action than in the 'doer' of the action.

Example

He *was killed* in a fight.

(We have not said who killed him).

When the 'doer' is to be mentioned, we use a phrase beginning with by.

Example

The meeting *was addressed* by the Prime Minister.

The passive voice is used very often to describe scientific experiments because there the doer is not important. Similarly, we use the passive in the description of processes and the narration of historical events.

Examples

Glass *is made* from sand which *is melted* under great heat.

The First Battle of Panipat *was fought* in 1526.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Fill in the blanks with passive forms of the verbs given in brackets:

- (a) Great quantities of animal oil come from whales. To protect the whale from the cold of the Arctic seas, nature has provided it with a thick covering of fat called blubber. When the whale ——— (kill), the blubber ——— (strip) off and

boiled down. It produces a great quantity of oil which _____ (can make) into food. Vegetable oil _____ (know) from very old times. No household can get on without it, for it _____ (use) in cooking. Perfumes _____ (may make) from the oils of certain flowers. Soaps _____ (make) from vegetable and animal oil. Scientists think that the oil under the surface of the earth originated from living things in the seas. For these creatures to become oil, it was necessary that they _____ (should imprison) between layers of rock for an enormous length of time. The statement that oil originated in the sea _____ (confirm) by a glance at the map showing the chief oil fields of the world; very few of them are far distant from the oceans of today. The rocks in which oil _____ (find) are of sea origin too. Almost always the remains of shells and other proofs of sea life _____ (find) close to the oil.

(From G. C. Thornley: Easier Scientific English Practice, Longman)

- (b) The sense of doom in us today is not a fear of science; it is a fear of war. And the causes of war _____ not _____ (create) by science. Science has obviously multiplied the power of the warmakers. The weapons of today can kill more people more secretly and more unpleasantly than those of the past and for some time it _____ (say) of each new weapon that it is so destructive that it will force nations to give up war for lack of cannon fodder. This hope _____ never _____ (fulfil). The acts of men and women _____ not _____ (dictate) by such simple compulsions.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Select suitable verbs from those given below and use their 'passive' forms in the following advertisement:

quote, print, invite, open, complete

Tender Notice

Printing of Annual Report

Sealed tenders _____ from reputed printing houses for the printing of the Annual Report of the Corporation.

The Annual Report _____ to be _____ in about 100 pages. The rates of printing should _____

The tender papers _____ by a committee in the presence of the tenderers on 16.5.87.

The printing work _____ to be _____ within 15 days of our handing over the materials.

Managing Director.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

As you can see from all the examples you have produced in the various exercises above, the passive voice is very useful for focusing on a particular thing. The passive is used for explaining the procedure for carrying out a particular thing. The passive is very useful when we do not want to be personal but impersonal.

e.g. He saw John (personal) If you want to remove he you will use the passive.

John was seen (impersonal)

Now that we have completed the active and the passive forms, let's go to another area very important in the use of English. That is the non-finite Verbals.

Non-finite Verbals

A finite verb changes its form according to tense and subject. For example, the verb *be* has the finite forms *am, is, are, was, were* and the non-finite forms *being* and *been*.

3.3 To + Infinitive

The forms of the verb that can be used after other verbs and with *to* before it (such as *go in I can go, I want to go, and it is important to go*) is called the infinitive.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Insert *to*, where necessary before the verbs in brackets.

1. Do you know how (repair) a watch?
Yes, I do, but my mother wouldn't let me (touch) hers.
2. Why did you make us (wait) for so long outside?
3. I am sorry (inform) you that the company finds itself unable (let) you (file) your claim before the end of the year.
4. If you are not attentive, I'll make you (do) it all over again.
5. Would you like (join) the army?
6. He seems (know) the whole area.
7. He tries very hard (make) me (believe) that he sincerely wanted me (learn) how (swim).

8. Please tell me where (keep) this vase in the drawing room.
9. Is it necessary for me (attend) the meeting? I'd much rather (stay) at home.
10. It is up to you (accept) or (reject) this offer, unless you want me (tell) you why you should keep it.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6

Combine each of the following pairs of sentences into one sentence using the pattern 'too to infinitive', as in the examples.

Examples: It is very cold. We can't go out.
 It is *too cold to go out*.
 He is very tired. He can't work
 He is *too tired to work*.

Remember 'too tired to work' means 'so tired that he can't work'.

1. He is very young. He won't understand this study.
2. He was quite angry. He couldn't speak.
3. It was very dark. I didn't see the signpost clearly.
4. He is very timid. He can't get married.
5. He is very busy. He won't see you now.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 7

Replace the *italicised* words by a phrase with *to*-infinitive.

Examples

It is necessary *that we should do* something.
 It is necessary for us to do something.
 He was the first person *who congratulated me* on my birthday.
 He was _____ to congratulate me _____

1. There was no place where we could hide.
2. It is necessary that people should know the truth.
3. It is better that he should receive it from his father.
4. I was surprised when I heard that he had left the party.
5. I was the only one who recognised him in the dark.

The Infinitive of Purpose

Read the following sentences:

People dig up clay to make bricks, and another sort of clay to make earthenware and china.

- (a) We use 'to + infinitive' to talk about the purpose of doing something (that is, why someone does something):
- (i) Badrinath went out to *buy* stamps (because he wanted to buy stamps).
 - (ii) My friend shouted 'Look out!' to *warn* me of the speeding bus.
- (b) We also use 'to + infinitive' to talk about the purpose of something, or why someone has/wants/needs something:
- (i) This fence is to *keep* stray animals out of the garden.
 - (ii) The Prime Minister has a number of body guards to *protect* him.
 - (iii) We need a match to *light* this stove.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 8

Answer these questions in complete sentences using the words given in brackets.

Example

Why did Kusum phone you? (invite me to her birthday party)
She phoned to invite me to her birthday party.

1. Why did Azhar go to the bank? (cash a cheque)
2. Why are you going to Paris? (learn French)
3. Why does Srinivas need a bag? (put these vegetables in)
4. Why has Jayant gone to the police station? (report that his bicycle has been stolen)
5. Why do the Reddys want a bank loan? (buy a house)
6. Why are you going to the post office? (send a money order)
7. Why did Susheela go to the chemist? (get some medicine)
8. Why does Mr. Sharma have a Secretary? (type his letters)
9. Why did the Minister want an aircraft? (take him to the site of the accident)
10. Why are you going to the hospital? (have an operation)

Do you know what? The common errors that the Nigerian users of English make when using the infinitive is to use the infinitive with the past tense. Please note that the infinitive (to) does not take the past tense or past participle.

Do not say:

I did not see him to *told* him

Say

I did not see him to tell him.

If you use the infinitive wrongly, people will laugh at you. Again, you will look intelligent and illiterate. Thus, always try to get your infinitive correctly in spoken and written English.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been exposed to three major grammatical items. These are the active, the passive and the infinitive. We can conclude that you need these grammatical forms. As tiny as they are, they can spoil you English and make you unintelligent. Therefore always use them correctly.

5.0 SUMMARY

You have successfully learnt the following aspects in this unit:

- (a) the use of the active voice to make a direct, well focused statement in English;
- (b) the use of the passive to show focus on the object and for impersonal style; and
- (c) the use of the infinitive in different positions in a sentence.

You can use all of these grammatical items correctly while speaking or writing English. If you use them well, they will make you use English in an elegant manner.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Fill in the blanks with the correct passive and infinitive forms

1. Assign the computer operator and let the writer know who 1. —
_____ 2. _____
— the work.
2. All works must 3. _____ and 4. _____
— from the computer operator.
3. The name of the computer operator 5. (a) _____ (b) —
_____ in the form be submitted.

4. Ensure that the appointment time 6. _____ as this 7. _____ as a contract.
5. When the job 8. _____ inform the writer or the school coordinator 9. _____ and collect it.
6. Writer 10. _____ access _____ the soft copy of their materials.
7. Visiting the computer terminals 11. _____ strictly 12. _____ 8. a.m daily.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 MODAL AUXILIARIES

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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 - 3.3 The Importance of Modal Auxiliaries to Users of English
- 4.0 Conclusion
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- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this last unit for this course, you will be exposed to some aspects of grammar and usage in English. This is the use of modal auxiliaries. Modal auxiliaries are some aspects of helping verbs which can vary the tense of the verb. That is, they can be expressed as present and past tenses, depending on the usage. You need modal auxiliaries to be able to state possibility (*may*), probability (*might*), obligation (*ought to*) and the rest. Many Nigerian speakers of English use the modal auxiliaries wrongly because such distinctions that auxiliaries make are not made in their respective Nigerian languages. As you study the auxiliaries in this unit, you should pay special attention to the ways they are used. Be sure you use them correctly in your day-to-day speech and writing.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify modal auxiliaries of English
- determine the way they are used
- use them correctly in different situations.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Modal Auxiliaries

There are some special verbs in English which are called modal auxiliaries. Some of these are:

can, may, must, ought to, should, would.

They can be used in the present and past tenses i.e. *can/could, will/would, may/might*.

(a) can

Can has a number of uses.

(i) It means, 'know how to', 'be able to'.

Examples:

I can swim well.

I couldn't do that new job; it was too difficult.

(meaning 'I wasn't able to do it')

I can see you easily from here.

Let's go where we can have some freedom.

Money cannot buy everything.

(ii) It can also mean 'be allowed to' (by rules).
e.g., You can't pick the ball up in football game.
(The rules do not allow this).

(iii) It is also used in the sense of 'have permission to'; e.g., Can we go to the shops for sweets?
It is wrong to say *can be able* e.g. *I can be able to go*.
This is because *can* means *be able*.

(b) May

May is used in the following senses:

(i) It can mean 'be likely to' (possibility).

Example

He may come or he may not.

He may have been hurt.

(ii) It can also mean 'have permission to, be allowed to'.

May I come in?

In fact, this is the kind of polite way of coming in to somebody's office or house.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Fill in the blanks with *may* or *can* in the following sentences:

1. You _____ not think so, but dirty streets _____ cause epidemics.
2. With a little effort you and your wife _____ keep the house clean.
3. Rubbish should be put in the dustbin so that it _____ be removed by cleaners every day.
4. Look at the dark clouds; it _____ rain tonight.
5. “_____ you stand on your head?”
“How _____ I? I haven’t learnt yoga.”

(c) Must; have to

Study the use of *must* and *have to* in the following sentences:

You *must* clean your own boots. (Those are my orders.)

You *have to* clean your own boots when you join the army. (The rules oblige you to do that.)

Both *must* and *have to* are used to express an obligation. The main difference between the two is that *must* expresses an obligation imposed by the speaker, while *have to* expresses an obligation imposed by external circumstances. The other important point to bear in mind is that *have to* is preferred for habits and *must* for an obligation that is urgent.

I *have to* water the plants myself.

I *must* inform him at once; he has got the job.

Note: *must* has no past or future form. Therefore, *had to* is used for the past, and *will have to* for the future. Look at the following:

I *had to* stop the car; there was a bus in the middle of the road.

John is retiring in 1990; he *will have to* look for a new job if he wants to continue his son’s education.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Fill in the blanks with *must* or *have to* in the following sentences:

1. I _____ leave now; it is getting late.
2. I can never remember people’s phone numbers; I always _____ look them up.
3. You _____ try to be a little more tactful.
4. It isn’t fair; I always _____ do the dirty work.
5. If there is a problem, you _____ report it to me at once.

6. I _____ do all the drafting at my office; my colleagues are too lazy.
7. Tell him he _____ be here by five; I insist on it.
8. My cook is old and blind. Whenever he wants to eat, I _____ get up and cook for him.
9. Notice in a department store: bags and umbrellas _____ be left at the desk.
10. You _____ visit us again some time.

3.2 Ought to, Should, and Would

Study the use of *ought to*, *should* and *would* in the following sentences:

You *ought to* send more money to your old parents.

(It's your duty).

You *ought to* have worked harder; I advised you to.

(But you didn't, and now it is too late.)

I think you *should* wear your glasses regularly.

(It's my suggestion/advice.)

Should I go there by taxi? (asking for advice)

Would you please tell me the way to India Gate? (a request)

I *would* like to see the manager. (more polite than 'I want to...')

Ought to is very often used when we wish to refer to the duty of the person referred to by the subject. The speaker is reminding this person of the duty, or giving him advice. *Ought to* does not carry a speaker's authority as (*must*, does) nor does it indicate an outside authority as (*have to*, does). *Ought to* is usually said without much emphasis. *Should* can also be used in the same way as *ought to*.

Compare the following:

You *have to* take this injection. (The doctor insists on it.)

You *musn't* drink this; it is poison.

You *ought not to* smoke so much; you are wasting your money.

You *have to* obey Mr. Gill. (Mr. Gill insists on it.)

You *must* obey Mr. Gill. (The speaker insists on, or approves of Mr. Gill's authority.)

You *ought to* obey Mr. Gill. (Neither the speaker's authority nor Mr. Gill's is involved here, but the speaker thinks that obeying Mr. Gill is advisable or part of the duty of the person addressed.)

Note: *ought to* with the perfect infinitive (e.g., *ought to have done*, *ought to have gone*) expresses a duty or a course of action that was neglected.

Example

You *ought to have applied* for the job last month; now it is too late.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Fill in the blanks with *ought to*, *have to* or *must* in the following paragraph:

I _____ have gone to see Mr. Sharma last week. He passed away this morning in the hospital; they _____ bring the body home. I _____ go to the funeral; that will be making some amends. His three sons _____ be present before they removed the body to the cremation ground. His wife _____ (negative) stay in the house all by herself.

Should can be used in same way as *ought to*, but it is less forceful than *must* or *have to* because no authority is involved.

Should is generally used to express duty and to indicate a correct or sensible action. It is a usual way of giving advice. Look at the following:

You *should* pay your debts. (duty)

You *shouldn't* tell lies. (correct action)

You *should* eat better to keep fit. (advice)

You have written it wrongly. There *should* be one more line at the end. (correct again)

They *shouldn't* allow parking in this street; it is too narrow. (advice)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Rewrite the italicized parts of the following sentences, using *should* as in the example.

Example: *He insisted on my selling the house.*

He insisted that I *should* sell the house.

1. He suggested *our postponing the trip.*
2. He was anxious *for everyone to have a chance to work.*
3. He recommended *my buying a new car.*
4. He agreed *to the two winners sharing the prize money.*
5. He arranged *for me to receive higher education.*

Study the use of *would* in the following sentences. Compare *would* with *want*.

- (i) I *want* some bananas.
- (ii) I *would like* some bananas.

- (iii) I *want* to see the manager.
- (iv) I *would like to* see the manager, please.
- (v) *Would like* is more polite than *want*.
- (vi) *Rather/sooner* is used after *would* to express preference.
- (vii) He *would rather/sooner* talk himself than listen to others.

Would is also used for habits and insistence, and can be replaced by *used to*.

They *would* wait for us in the market everyday. (used to wait) She *would* visit her aunt though we warned her that she wasn't expected to. (insisted on visiting)

“Why don't you get your visa extended?”

“I've requested the officer several times to do it, but he wouldn't” (insisted on not doing).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Fill in the blanks with *would* in the following sentences:

1. _____ you mind opening the window? It is too hot in here.
2. This jacket doesn't suit you; you _____ buy another.
3. “The manager isn't in”. Then, I _____ like to see the assistant manager.
4. perhaps you _____ be good enough to inform me of any change of programme before hand.
5. Why _____ women be paid less than men for doing the same work?
6. I _____ sooner die than compromise with a rogue like you.
7. He said he _____ be sorry to see the end of such lovely weather.
8. “Raj has failed the examination”.
“He _____ have worked harder.”

3.3 The Importance of Modal Auxiliaries to Users of English

The following are the usefulness of modal auxiliaries to users of English:

1. Modal auxiliaries enable you to express probability. When you are not sure of anything you use *may/might*.
2. Modal auxiliaries enable you to express ability. When you want to express ability you use *can/could*.

3. Modal auxiliaries enable you to express *obligation, compulsion* and give orders. You use *must, ought to shall/should* for all these.
4. Modal auxiliaries are useful for signalling politeness e.g. *would like, may I, could I* etc.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You will agree with me that modal auxiliaries are useful in the use of English. You must learn them. You must also use them appropriately.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt how to use modal auxiliaries. You have also practised using these auxiliaries in different contexts. As an important component of English, modal auxiliaries should be used in your day-to-day communication in English. They should also be used in appropriate academic situations.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate modal auxiliaries.

1. We _____ strive to make you much more comfortable.
2. You _____ want to consult a doctor, if need be.
3. _____ I ask you a question please?
4. You _____ have seen the man without recognising him.
5. If you wish you _____ submit your work.
6. _____ please adhere strictly to the time?
7. I _____ like you to see the man yourself.
8. Please consult the secretariat _____ require to see a doctor.
9. No writer _____ be given his scripts to take home.
10. If you _____ make it try and check me up.

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