

In our world today, communication is a very valued component of living. However, a lot of people are challenged because of lack of appropriate skills for effective communication. These are the skills needed in areas of speaking, reading, writing and even listening. All these, put together, facilitate fluent research writing. This well articulated book is

designed to make the acquisition of these skills a lot easier.

In this book, the author carefully presents the essentials of communication, reading, writing and research which are very beneficial to different categories of tertiary education students. Students in the Polytechnic, particularly, will benefit more from the contents which cover almost all parts of their General Studies English syllabus. Other categories of office workers who have to do with correspondence will also find this book useful. For every other person who desires to upgrade his or her competence in writing, this book is invaluable. A conscientious reading and application of knowledge in this all-revealing book will expose what those things are, that can make your English language communication skills admirably different.



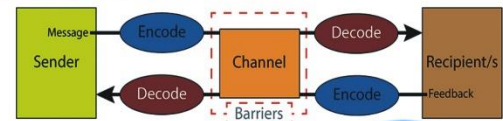
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The Basics of Communication, Writing and Research

Chibuogwu Felicia Chike-Okoli

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The Basics of **Communication, Writing and Research**

CHIBUOGWU FELICIA CHIKE-OKOLI

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Dedication

To Mrs. Philomena Mgboye Chikwendu (Nee Uchegbusi)
(1916 – 2000)

To Eze, Kemi and Deborah

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Foreword

It is my delight to write a foreword to this well-articulated work. With the publication of this book, *The Basics of Communication, Writing and Research*, the author has taken a giant stride toward the alleviation of communication difficulties in modern day writing and speaking.

The mission of this book is to proffer solution to the communication problems that beset many correspondences and even newspaper articles today. Its focus on students of polytechnics, colleges of education and universities, who are going through the General Studies English programme is welcome.

I am particularly impressed by the technical approach adopted in the treatment of the topics presented. This exposition of the topics presented will undoubtedly commend this book to English language learners in polytechnics, universities and colleges of education as well as those who are already in the field of work in offices or for various companies, governments and organizations in our public and private sectors. The topics on report writing are enriching enough to guide report writers both for business and academic report purposes, especially as it concerns sourcing and presentation of research materials.

Particularly, I see this book which so widely addresses communication technicalities as an invaluable addition to the already existing texts in this area. I, therefore, earnestly recommend it to all tertiary institutions and the working class people as well as all others who wish to overcome their communication difficulties.

Obiageli C. Okoye
Federal Polytechnic, Oko

Preface

The mainstay of every progressive society is effective communication. The ability to communicate in English is a very valuable asset to everyone who has it. It is, indeed, a very urgent need especially in a society like ours where English language is the adopted official language. However, there seems to be a worrisome downward trend in communication effectiveness in the society. The acute communicative incompetence demonstrated by many students not only in Polytechnics but also in Universities and Colleges of Education has necessitated the writing of this book. The working class is not left out of this communication malaise.

In my experience of teaching and examining in the tertiary institution, I found out that while students enroll in and pass through the General Studies English language programme, many of them still lack the basic communicative skills. An ordinary mind may say on reading this, 'But of course, that is obvious. English is a foreign language'. This may not be completely correct. Only the uneducated will consider it so but the literate people go about speaking and writing English as well as their own native languages. Oral communication in English is also a problem area to many language learners. An average student in time past spoke English language fluently and also demonstrated competence in writing it. However, today, incompetence in speech and writing is a peculiar characteristic of students especially in the higher institutions of learning. Even in correspondences and newspapers, such errors are common. I dare equally say that many graduating students dread research project writing which is a basic requirement for graduation. This is also a consequence of communicative incompetence as a result of poor language skills.

The aim of this book, therefore, is to help students of higher institutions and the working class alike, who intend to improve their English language communicative competence, to upgrade to a level they can function more effectively. The techniques and intricacies of fluent presentation for effective communication are also explored. I hope that all who desire to improve their communicative ability will find this book helpful.

Chike-Okoli, F. C.

Chapter One

Issues in Communication

Language in Communication

Language has been described as a *vehicle of thought*. It is almost the only means of communicating thoughts and feelings available to man. There are other means of course, like the paralinguistic form (signs and symbols). Even so, in its spoken and written forms, language remains by far the commonest means of communication. By definition, language can be said to be a method by which a person expresses his thoughts and feelings in such a way that they can be understood by others. The essence of language is to convey messages. Linguistic studies have discovered that the emergence and development of language has contributed more than any other factor in bridging the wide silence that would have characterized the existence of the early man. It still plays the same role today. It is the sole and life-blood of communication.

Without the emergence and use of language, there can be no communication at all, whether written or oral. Life, Itself, would have been paralyzed. For business purpose of every kind or for individual purpose, efficiency is liable to turn from time to time on communication in speech and writing. Language as a means of communication cannot be eliminated. Rather, the need for higher standards of clear, precise and purposeful expression grows constantly with the increasing complexity of life and society.

The Concept of Communication

Communication is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic rules. It is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas, opinions and feelings but also create meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people or places. In the opinion of Chapel and Reed (1984) communication is any means by which a thought is transferred from one person to another. Udall and Udall (1979) defined communication as the process by which one person (or a group) shares and imparts information to another person (or group) so that, either people (or groups) clearly understand one another.

The definitions above summarize the concept of communication - a process of giving and receiving information through previously familiar symbols and signs. It involves a transfer of opinions, attitudes, beliefs, ideas, thoughts,

and feelings from one person or group to another. Communication is the essence of life. No society or individual or firm can exist meaningfully without proficiently fulfilling communication roles relevant to it. Through meaningful interaction between persons and groups, better understanding is achieved. When there is understanding through communication, there is harmony, oneness and peace.

The Process of Communication

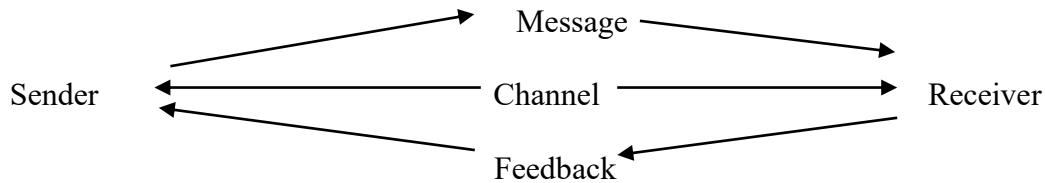
A process is a phenomenon that is on-going, continuous and ever-changing. If communication is a process of transferring information, ideas, thoughts and feelings, it then follows that communication is a continuous action. It is a two-way affair involving a sender and a receiver. For the process to be effective there are basic elements that should be present. The elements are the sender, the receiver, a message, a medium (language that is understood by the sender and the receiver), and a feedback.

Communication can only be said to have taken place when the message sent by a transmitter is duly received and correctly interpreted by the receiver who also send a feedback to the transmitter. The feedback will reflect how well a message has been understood because an incorrectly interpreted message will give a wrong feedback. Usually, a wrong feedback has no relationship with the subject-matter of a message. It clearly manifests misunderstanding of a message. As a process, encoding and decoding messages and sending feedback could generate further encoding, and decoding and feedback between the communicants.

The *elements* of communication process and their meanings are presented below:

- (a) **The Sender:** This is the initiator of the communication also called the encoder, the transmitter or the source. He receives stimulus and selects codes, which decoder must be able to understand. He then sends the message using appropriate language.
- (b) **The Receiver:** This is the decoder of the message, the target audience who receives, gives appropriate interpretation to the message and sends a feedback.
- (c) **The Message:** This comprises the thoughts, ideas, attitudes, opinions, feeling which a sender sends to his receiver. As long as people exist and have need, there will be need for sending and receiving messages.
- (d) **The medium:** This refers to the form in which the message transmitted is sent. It could be oral, written or paralinguistic.

- (e) **The Feedback:** When the message sent by the sender has been decoded and understood, the receiver will send a response called feedback to the sender. If the message is not properly given, the receiver may have a problem understanding and interpreting it.
- (f) **The Channel:** Some people use channel and medium to mean the same thing. In this book, much difference may not be made between them, as their interpretations may be similar. While medium refers to the form, which a sender uses in sending a message, channel refers to any course or way along which information travels. Oral delivery channels include face-to-face, telephone, radio, television, etc., while written channels include letters, memos, reports, telex, etc.



The Process of Communication

The Importance of Communication

The importance of communication both to individuals and organizations are obvious.

For business purposes of every kind and for every level of performance, whether routine or administrative, the success of it lies on communication in speech and writing. In some activities as in religion, law, politics, in education and in administration, communication is the essence of their activity.

Communication is useful in establishing and keeping relationships (formal or informal). In mass communication, some of the functions of communication are education, information and entertainment. Through organized and systematic dissemination of information, these purposes are achieved. In business, effective communication not only creates awareness of goods and services available but also uses appropriate language of campaign to draw the appetite of the audience to the services.

Effective communication brings harmony and understanding between human beings and societies because individuals and communities understand each other better and express mutual trust on each other.

In written communication, information can be stored and preserved since its form is very durable.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Generally, communication falls into two basic categories, namely, verbal and non-verbal.

Verbal Communication

This is the type of communication done through the use of spoken words. It is used in intra-personal, interpersonal and group situations.

Intrapersonal Communication

This type of communication goes on within an individual. The thought processes that go on in human minds during the consideration and weighing of situations in the mind may become verbalized with no definite receiver in mind. This often is the case when people soliloquise.

Interpersonal Communication

This is the type where face-to-face contact is involved. It involves exchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings and information between two persons on personal contact basis. This is the commonest type of communication among human beings. It helps to break the barrier of formal relationship and draws communicants together in an atmosphere of warmth and harmony.

Group Communication

This involves the exchange of ideas and information among members of a group – at home, in the club or association, political party, in the office. It is a within-group enabled communication. Group may vary in size, intent, and composition. Members in the same group share ideas and information with one another in their meetings in pursuance of their common objective. Thus, they concern themselves with their group affairs.

Advantages of Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is important in a number of ways:

Immediate feedback

In a person-to-person communication situation, feedback is immediate. There is no delay in responding, as both persons are present on the spot. This will enable immediate scheduling or rescheduling or adjustments.

Reinforcement

The use of gestures, facial expressions and other body languages will help to reinforce a message because a speaker's feelings may be better expressed in these terms.

Message Clarification

In face-to-face contact, issues are clarified as a message is given. This reduces misunderstanding and misinterpretation as all misconceptions are settled on the spot.

Interpersonal Rapport

A very sure method of establishing and maintaining interpersonal rapport is by face-to-face 'talking it over'. This reduces mistrust and tension in offices, homes and organizations.

Participation

It allows for participation and contribution of everyone present during a discussion.

Disadvantages of Verbal Communication

Temporary

Verbal communication has no permanence since it is not recorded in any form. As a result of this, a speaker can be misquoted. In fact, oral information can be forgotten or denied anywhere, anytime.

Inconvenient

It is often not convenient to reach a large number of people on a face-to-face and individual basis. Similarly, highly placed persons may not be easily reached in this form.

Imprecision

During the course of an utterance, it may not be easy to reason and eliminate errors before an utterance is given. There are, therefore, more errors in spoken messages, which are often corrected after utterance has been given.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication includes all other forms of communication other than the verbal form. It can be broadly grouped into *written communication* and *sign language*.

Written Communication

This involves the use of written words as an outgrowth of oral language. Alphabetic symbols are organized in a manner to convey ideas, messages between communicants. Learning to write is a process that begins from childhood to adulthood. We have to be able to write what we want to say and read what others have written. Examples of written communication are letters, reports, memos, books, bulletins, circulars, minutes, articles, etc.

Advantages of Written Communication

It is a permanent means of giving and storing messages. Materials written by people and organisations can be preserved for a very long time without losing the message.

More time is spent composing written communication, thus ensuring accuracy. In law, written agreement forms the basis of contract.

It can be read again and again by the receiver to clarify doubts. It is, therefore, ideal for sending long distance and complex communication.

Written communication can be duplicated into several other copies that can be circulated to distant places to get a wider readership. The risk of distortion is greatly reduced since the material can circulate to various places in the same form and shape.

In official matters, only written communication carries a weight of authority acceptable in such situations. In business matters, it interprets, clarifies, confirms and preserves oral communication.

Disadvantages of Written Communication

It is tasking producing a written material. Much time, talent, energy and money is spent putting one together.

On the part of communication, the writer must be literate enough to write and the receiver must be able to read and interpret before communication can take place.

In written communication, on-the-spot feedback is not possible since the receiver may not be at the same place of the writer.

Written material may be too bulky or complex for the reader who may, on this ground, not be willing to read, e.g. reports.

Written materials may also derail in transit and end in unwanted hands.

Sign Language

This involves the use of *gestures*, *paralanguage* and *distance* to convey ideas, thoughts and feelings as we discuss them below.

Gestures

This represents the way or manner we move some parts of the body or even the whole of it. This phenomenon is also called body language. Sometimes, such gestures are understood without any words going with them. If, for instance, one gives a hug or offers a handshake to a visitor, that visitor will understand that he is welcome. Supposing, one signals to another with bare hands to come, the person so motioned can understand even when no words accompany the gesture. Similarly, a grimace (wrinkling the nose to show distaste) sends a message to the listener. Some gestures have had definite meanings associated with them. Thus, the deaf and dumb now have well-developed sign language with which they communicate.

Paralanguage

Information, attitudes and feelings can be conveyed by the manner a thing is said rather than what is said. A hiss at someone is a sign of scorn or dissatisfaction with that one. Similarly, things like volume or tone of voice may say a lot about the speaker's feelings, attitude or his status. In paralanguage, information is conveyed by tone of voice of the speaker and his countenance rather than any specific word used.

Distance

This is the gap maintained between people. Keeping a distance from a person can say a number of things. It may be that the person distanced is unwanted or that an individual wanted to disconnect himself from a particular situation. Distance totally cuts off possibility of communication. However, distance can be broken by friends and colleagues but strangers cannot penetrate it.

Advantages of Non-Verbal Communication

It can give additional information to communication by the use of gestures, actions, tone of the voice.

It gives visible actions.

It enhances oral communication by the provision of visible movements.

Disadvantages of Non-Verbal Communication

Interpretation of non-verbal codes may lead to contradiction and misinformation.

It may take additional skills to be able to understand and interpret non-verbal codes.

Interference In Communication

Interference is said to occur in communication when there is a hindrance or obstruction in the channel. The chief source of this hindrance or barrier is *NOISE*. Noise in communication is anything that reduces the effectiveness of a message. In linguistic parlance, the source of noise could be semantic, grammatical or phonological.

Semantic barrier

Sometimes, there is disparity in the level of language usage of different individuals at various points. As a result of this, there is misunderstanding arising from meanings attached to certain expressions. This is often so in a second language situation. Sometimes, this problem occurs because of variation in the educational levels of the individuals. For instance, to an ordinary taxi or bus driver, to 'see' a policeman may mean a different thing to him as it will mean to a company chief executive. In the same way, the word, 'business' may connote different things to different people. Some people may interpret 'business' as some sort of dubious activity, while others would interpret it as pure commercial business transaction. People who operate at different semantic levels may have problems communicating effectively.

Code Switching

This is a situation in which a single speaker uses varieties of codes from different languages in a single utterance. He may start with one language code and end with another, e.g.

Kedu maka your people?
Nye m my money.
Odikwa terrible!

Code Mixing

This involves a mix of varieties of codes from two languages in a single utterance. The codes are mixed as opposed to switching. In a second language situation, it may arise many times in an utterance. A mix of such type involving the native Igbo language and English language may give rise to what may be called *Engligbo*. For instance, these constructions:

Just bia here .
Bia representia office gi my friend.
Pua here nwoke m.

are such cases in review. Unless the two people involved understand the codes, code-mixing can be a barrier to effective communication and understanding.

Grammatical barrier

Grammatical noise occurs when a bilingual individual imposes the grammatical features of his primary language on the secondary situation. This however varies according to the educational level of the speaker. For instance, when somebody's attention is needed when he is busy somewhere else, a native speaker's response could be 'I will soon be with you'. But an Igbo man will say *Ana m abia* meaning 'I am coming'. He may even be going away while saying this. This is mother tongue interference.

Phonological Barrier

Phonology deals with the speech sounds of language and the way in which they are produced. Therefore, in trying to produce the sound of the words we use every day, we ought to be cautious. Mispronunciation of words can constitute a barrier to effective communication because a receiver may mistake a wrongly pronounced word for another. Sound contrasts as in *seat* /si:t/ and *sit* /sit/, *boarder* /bɔ:ðə/ and *bother* /bɒðə/ must be distinctly made. Similarly, homonyms like *bail* and *bale*, *flaw* and *floor*, *sale* and *sail*, *sight* and *site*, *wrong* and *rung*, and so on, can constitute barriers to effective communication if their meanings are not clarified in the contexts which a message is given. Mispronounced words are likely to lose their meanings both as individual words and also in contexts. In many cases where a speaker substitutes a mother tongue for an English sound, especially where such a sound does not exist in English, mother tongue interference will be said to have occurred. On the other hand, there could be English phonemes, which do not occur in the learner's native language. The learner would substitute such sounds with a nearest sound in the mother tongue e.g. substituting the native /f/ for English /tʃ/ in Yoruba and the native Igbo /g/ for English /ŋ/. Igbo language has no '-ing' progressive form, so, the nearest /g/ sound is substituted in words like 'longing' /lɔŋɪŋ/, ringing /rɪŋɪŋ/. A Yoruba person will say /ʃɜ:ʃ/ instead of /tʃɜ:ʃ/ for *church* and /sæl/ instead of /ʃæl/ for *shall*.

Lexical Level Barrier

Hindrance at this level involves direct translation from mother tongue and imposition of the patterns of the native language on the secondary language.

Consider these translations:

- (i) Obinna was *chasing* Adaora yesterday (wooing).
- (ii) My mother is *cooking* soup (preparing).

- (iii) The government should *take* qualified teachers (employ).
- (iv) He *used* four years to study (spent).
- (v) My sister *born* a baby (gave birth).
- (vi) Our class representative *ate* our money (embezzled)

Communication in Organisations

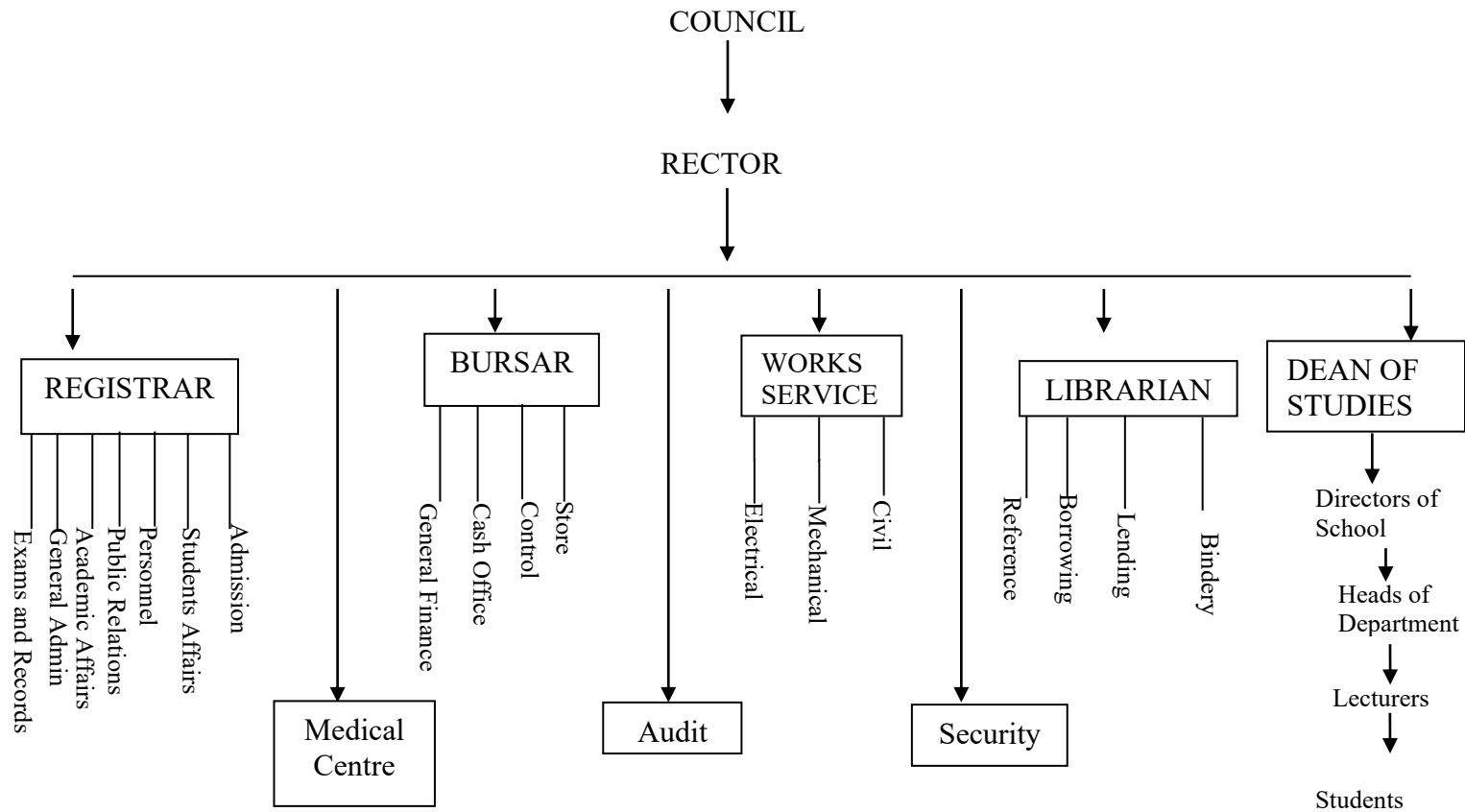
What is an Organisation?

An organisation is made up of a group of people who come together for a special purpose. When such people gather, they constitute themselves into hierarchies and ranks and assign special duties to different hierarchies. These hierarchies work cooperatively to achieve the goals of the group. Sometimes, functions are specialised and specifically assigned to members in the group who may also be specialists in those areas. Within an organisation, activities which involve information dissemination are carried out. Messages are sent out and received. Information is shared, analysed, interpreted and action taken upon it. Directives are given and received, all aimed at achieving organisational goals.

Educational institutions, churches, industries, hospitals, public and private companies are instances of organisations that have clearly defined positions for persons and groups with clearly defined roles or duties. There are levels of ranks and every level has responsibility to a higher level and also reports to it.

Authority Flow

Within an organisation, official information flow follows well-laid down lines of authority. Messages are routed from hierarchy to hierarchy, from level to level. Underneath is a chart showing the hierarchy of relationships within a Polytechnic.



Hierarchy of Authority of a Polytechnic

Systems of Communication in an Organization

There are systems of communication available to every organisation. The popular and established systems are the formal and the informal. While the formal system carries formal and official information, the informal system carries unofficial information.

Formal Systems

In an organisation, information can flow from the higher level to the lower level, from the lower level to the higher level, from left to right or from right to left. This is referred to as either *vertical* flow or *horizontal* flow depending on the direction of the flow. There is also the modern semi-vertical flow, which is currently gaining ground in the communication world.

Vertical Flow of Communication

This is the flow of communication from the top of the ranks to the people at the bottom and from the most senior officers to the most junior employees. It also refers to the message flow from the junior employees and those at the bottom to the senior officers and those at the top of the ranks. In vertical communication flow, there is upward and downward flow of message.

Downward communication flow goes from the highest hierarchy in the organization to the lowest hierarchy. It may flow through some or all the strata of the organization. Such communication usually conveys management decisions or activities, which would usually dominate other information in the organisation.

Upward communication flow refers to communication sent from the bottom of the hierarchies to the executives and the entire officers in the organization. Information is thus supplied on how employees react to messages passed to them by management. As a result of this, such information seeking clarification on directives or decisions or policies, suggestions on how to carry out directives, comments, and objections by employees are sent to the higher levels of authority. This enables the higher authorities to know the feelings and views of the employees and guides them on future actions to take.

However, whether communication goes upward or downward, it must be sent through officially recognized channels.

Horizontal Flow of Communication

This is the flow of information, ideas, and messages between colleagues or employees on the same level or rank about duties or activities they carry out within their organization. In this way, people from various sections can co-ordinate their activities and roles within the organization. For instance, heads of department, heads of non-academic section, directors of school, supervisors, can

involve their colleagues on similar levels in this kind of communication, to work co-operatively towards the goal of the organization. They exchange information pertaining to inter-departmental or inter-sectional activities. This type of communication is usually through face-to-face, through memos, during meetings and committee gatherings and also during informal situations like in canteens and clubs.

Semi-Vertical Flow of Communication

This method emerged as a unique official communication system between management and employees. Trade Unions, which are worker's mouthpieces, take up matters concerning workers and their welfare with management after consultation with workers. They take actions on behalf of union members on all issues pertaining to their union members. They also report back management decisions and agreements on such issues to their members. Trade unions often ignore the official ranks and strata of communication flow. They deal directly with management and also with workers on the other hand. It can be said to be a direct link between all categories of employees and management of the organisation.

Informal Systems

Informal systems of communication carry unofficial information about organisational matters. Different categories of people who belong to the same organisation can discuss a number of issues concerning the organisation whenever they are together in informal groups. It may involve those who worship in the same church or mosque or those who attend the same local government meeting or even town union meeting. Such communication ignores official strata and may filter its way through to management. Such unofficial information goes through *rumour* and *grapevine*.

Rumour is unofficial and unconfirmed information. Even though it is sent through interpersonal channels, there is no evidence to buttress a rumour message. The origin of the message is not clear but somebody always tells somebody who tells another person who tells the last person. So, the rumour spreads like wild fire. Sometime, the rumour may be a fabrication, which may be malicious and yet circulated by antagonists and sadists. *Rumormongers* always arise in times of discontent in organisations. Such rumour has targets it wants to ruin or affect. Opportunities for rumour are given when employees are locked out of decisions and activities of management.

The *grapevine*, unlike rumour, has a well-founded origin but the originator of the information is not always found and nobody would be ready to own up.

Such information may relate to policies, promotions, resignations or personnel transfers. It may also relate to social issues as marriages, childbirth, etc. Grapevine information is usually fairly accurate though often incomplete. It spreads horizontally from where it starts to the up and down strata. The grapevine can help to control unpopular decisions. It can also help to give management an idea of employee's feelings on issues affecting them. Management may therefore allow information to 'leak' to enable it watch and know employee's reaction before decisions are made.

Chapter Two

Oral Communication

When we speak, we produce a succession of sounds arranged in groups, which we call words and each word has a definite meaning in the mind of its user. Just as each language has its own set of words different from those of other languages, so each language has its own set of sounds different from that of other languages. In this chapter, we shall study the way in which we speak and in particular the way English is spoken. This is because, to learn a language, we must learn the words that make up that language and to speak the language well, we must use those words properly. We must not mix the words up with words from our mother tongue.

A list of all the words in a language constitutes the vocabulary of that language and a list of all the different sounds used in that language constitutes its *sound system*. It should be clearly understood that the sound system of a language is peculiar to that language and no other language has exactly the same system. Very often too we find that one language has more sounds than another. For instance, a comparative study of Igbo and English sounds would reveal this. English has twelve vowel sounds but many African languages have seven vowels and others have five and yet others have nine or more.

Many people who newly begin to study new languages are discouraged by the number of strange sounds they have to learn. They may think they can never be perfect in the new language. They may, therefore, not be able to produce accurate sounds but they believe they should be understood. They may truly be understood but not so readily. Many Africans do not differentiate between ‘leave’ and ‘live’, between ‘bird’ and ‘bed’ and between ‘heart’ and ‘hat’. So, “He lost his heart” would sound like “He lost his hat”. An English language learner must aim at perfection to a degree that an Englishman who does not know him cannot tell that English is his second language. A learner who perseveres can learn to speak English with a very good accent and obtain perfect pronunciation with maximum concentration. The best way to learn the pronunciation of another language is by the phonetic method, that is, by a systematic study of the sounds of the language and the way in which they are produced. The secret of all language learning is imitation. Every student of English must realize that English spelling is not always a reliable guide to pronunciation because one sound can represent different spellings.

English has a number of dialect accents spoken by different English speaking countries. The existence of dialects raises a problem for the student who

wishes to learn English because he wouldn't know which one to imitate. No type of English is better than any other nor can any type be termed Standard English. Everyone is free to speak as he likes but definitely certain type of English is more widely accepted as a model than any other. This is the type of English known as Received Pronunciation or 'R.P' as in phonetics. This is the type often spoken by the educated people in southern England and mostly used by the elite Londoners and commonly heard in Oxford and Cambridge. In fact, educated speech in the entire Britain approximates to 'R.P' and is now chosen as a model in many places. In this chapter we also approximate correct pronunciation to 'R.P'.

The Speech Organs

In speech production, we employ the actions of the tongue and lips but that does not give us the actual sound. Something else needs to be done. When we speak, a stream of air is released from the lungs and as the stream of air passes through the narrow spaces in the throat and mouth, it makes a rushing sound. When wind blows through a narrow opening, it does not produce the same sound as when it blows through a wider crack. Similarly, by modifying the shape and size of the air passage when we speak, we can make a number of different sounds. There are a number of such points where the course of the air stream may be varied to produce variety of sounds. The organs located at these points constitute the *speech organs* as we can see in Fig A.

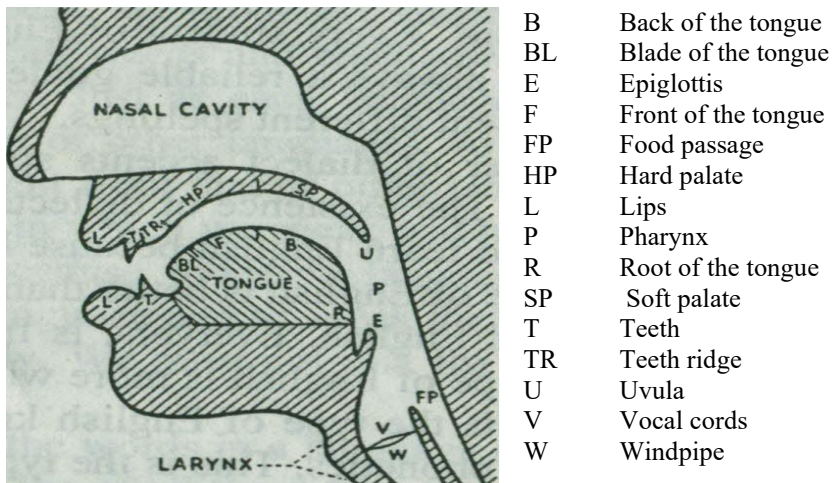


Fig A: The Speech Organs

The Lungs

When we breathe in, air is drawn into the two bag-like organs and they enlarge. When we breathe out, air is forced out of the bags and they compress. These bag-like organs are the lungs, which are enlarged and compressed by the muscles of the chest as we breathe. It is this stream of air that is used when we speak. Only the air leaving the lungs is used in speech.

The Larynx (Voice-Box)

The first possible point where air stream can be modified is at the top of the windpipe, which ends in the larynx. The protruding front part of the larynx is called the *Adam's apple*. Inside the larynx are the vocal cords with elastic ligament opening called the *glottis*. When the vocal cords are drawn apart, the air from the lungs can freely pass through the glottis to produce a faint sound which becomes audible to other people if we breathe through the mouth rather than through the nose. The vocal cords are more like two lips held together so that while the air escapes, the force makes them vibrate like piano strings. All the sounds produced with the vocal cords vibrating are called *voiced* sounds.

The Pharynx

When air passes through the glottis, it enters the cavity located between the root of the tongue and the rear of the soft palate. The shape and size of this cavity can be modified or altered by the movement of the back of the tongue, the raising of the larynx and the movement of the muscles enclosing the pharynx itself. Projecting into the pharynx from the base of the tongue is the epiglottis which function is to prevent food from falling into the larynx when we swallow, otherwise, food may go “the wrong way”.

The Palate

This is one of the organs of the oral cavity. The palate is divisible into two parts, namely, the hard and the soft palate. The hard palate is fixed while the soft palate is mobile. At the top of the throat cavity, there is a forking of the air passage. If air stream is to pass out only through the mouth, the back of the roof of the mouth (the soft palate) moves upwards and backwards until it presses against the back wall of the throat. By this, the entrance of air into the nasal cavity is blocked.

In front of the soft palate is the hard palate, which is underlined by hard

bone. On the hard palate, behind the teeth, is the teeth ridge or alveolar ridge, which covers the roots of the teeth. Despite this, the whole of the palate including the soft palate is used by the tongue to interfere with the air stream. We can touch the whole of the alveolar ridge and the hard palate with the tongue tip. The alveolar ridge is the point of articulation of many English consonant sounds like /t d n l r s z ʃ ʒ ʤ/ which are produced when the tongue is touching or close to the alveolar ridge.

The Tongue

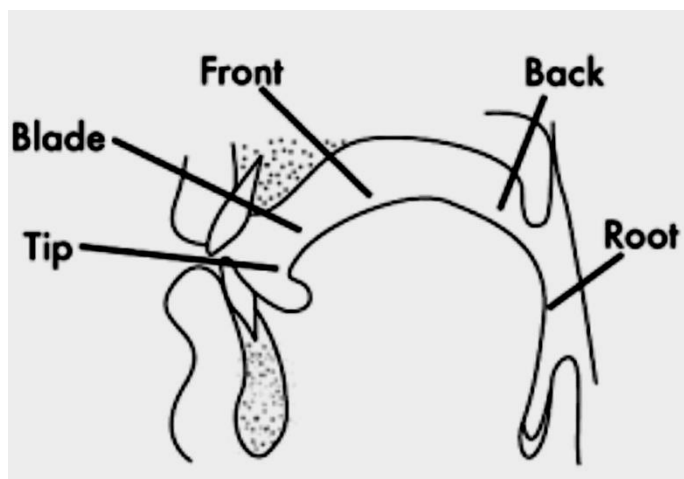


Fig B: Parts of the Tongue

The tongue is the most mobile of all the movable organs in the mouth and is capable of assuming the greatest variety of shapes and positions. It is, in fact, the most important of the organs of speech. This compact mass of muscular tissue can be thought of as divided into two parts, the *front* and the *back* which lie opposite the hard and soft palates respectively when the tongue is at rest. The front of the tongue includes the *blade*, which lies opposite the teeth ridge and the *tip*, which is the front edge of the tongue. The tongue is capable of taking different shapes, by bunching up or flattening out and by raising or lowering different parts of it to modify the space through which air has to pass. By this, we can produce a variety of sounds. Let us say the vowel /a:/ as in *cart*: the front is flat in the mouth. Now let us say /æ/ as in *pat*: the front rises a little; now let us say /e/ as in *men*: the front rises again. If we go on and say /i:/ as in *bee*, we will

see that the front rises to a very high position very close to the hard palate. Some of these positions are illustrated in Fig. C.



A: Tongue positions for /i:/, e, æ, a:/ as in mean, men, man, mark.



B: Tongue positions for /a:/, k / as in ark and kite



C: Tongue positions for /U:/, U, ɔ:/ as in pool, pull, Paul, poll

Fig. C: Different Tongue Positions

In producing the sounds /U:/, U, ɔ:/, ɒ/, the back of the tongue also assumes various positions. It can be flat in the mouth as in producing /ɒ/ 'pot' or be raised to touch the soft palate as in saying /U:/ in 'boot'. It can be raised to any position between these two extremes to produce the sounds /ɔ:/ and /U/ as in *cord* and *put* respectively. The tongue can also take other shapes. Let us produce the sounds /s/ and /l/. In producing the sound /s/, the sides of the tongue press against the sides of the palate so that air is forced out of the oral cavity through the narrow passage at the center between the blade of the tongue and the alveolar ridge. In /l/ the mouth is blocked at the centre by the tip and blade of the tongue pressing against the alveolar ridge. Air is then forced out from sides of the palate. Now, let us say these words, *side*, *set*, *like*, *late*.

The Lips

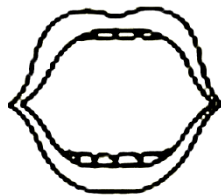
The lips form the outermost front boundary of the mouth. They provide the alternative air passage for the air stream whenever the nasal cavity is blocked by the uvula. They can be completely shut or left open in a variety of ways. They can be spread as when saying /i:/ in *seen, mean, lean*, or they can be *rounded (close lip- rounding)* as in / U:/ in *soon, moon, rule*. They can also be *neutral* as in /ɑ:/ in *card, yard, guard* or they can be rounded (*open lip-rounding*) as in /O/ in *pot, lot, dot*. The lips can be brought firmly together to completely block the mouth as in /p/ or /b/ or /m/. The lower lip can be drawn inward and slightly upward, touching the upper front teeth as in the sounds /f/ and /v/. Now, let us say these: *pan, ban, man, fan, van*.



(a) spread



(b) neutral



(c) rounded (open)



(d) rounded (closed)

Fig. D: Different lip positions

Classification of Sounds

Speech sounds are classified according to how they are produced and the organs involved in the production. There are two broad divisions of English sounds. They are **vowels** and **consonants**.

Vowels

Vowel sounds are those voice sounds produced without partial or complete closure of the air passage. The air passage is open as air from the lungs

passes into the oral cavity where articulation of various sounds is done by the action of the tongue with different parts of the oral cavity. The vowel sounds are subdivided into *pure vowels* and *diphthongs*.

Pure Vowels: There are altogether *twelve* pure vowels in English. Among them, **five** are long vowels, indicated by two dots (:), and **seven** are short vowels. Listed below are the twelve pure vowels, adopted from Longman transcription. The sounds are numbered to make it easier to refer to them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
i:	ɪ	e	æ	ɑ:	ɔ	ɔ:	ʊ	u:	ʌ	ɜ:	ə

Any one of these vowels may be referred to either by its number or by its phonetic symbol. The long vowels sounds are numbers **1, 5, 7, 9** and **11** while the short vowel sounds are numbers **2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10,** and **12**. We shall deal with these vowels in practice.

Vowels Nos. 1 /i:/ and 2 /ɪ/

These are vowels used in the words *bee* and *bit*. Practice saying these pairs:

/i:/ bleed, deal, eat, see, cheap, feed, leave, heap, beat, feet, neat, meat,
 each

/ɪ/ bit, fit, lip, hit, kid, pick, give, live, miss, wish, rich, kiss, sick, mill, fix

Vowel Nos. 3 /e/ and 4 /æ/

These vowels are used in words like *pen* and *pan*. Other examples where these sounds appear are:

/e/ ten, set, net, yet, wet, bed, egg, red, best, help, felt, dress, except, leg, get, jet

/æ/ back, cat, am, map, bad, had, jam, an, gas, land, tax, marry, anxious, actual

Vowel Nos. 5 /ɑ:/and 6 /ɔ/

These are sounds found in words like *farm* and *box*. The tongue position for number 5 sound is similar to the tongue position for number 6 (See Fig. D). The tongue position for No5 is neutral and for No 6 it is rounded. These are respectively found in words like these:

/ɑ:/ far, calm, dark, barb, sharp, card, part, yard, laugh, clerk, ask,
 mark, heart, larger, market, parcel, depart, card

/ɔ/ on, shop, lot, what, hot, God, shock, rock, loss, gone, was, clock,
 crop, drop, lost, spot, wash, mock, dock, cod, dot, mosque

Vowel Nos. 7 /ɔ:/ and 8 /ʊ/

These vowels are pronounced with rounded lips and occur in words like *lord* and *good*. Other examples include:

- /ɔ:/ gored, sword, ward, court, naught, cork, fork, born, short,
bought, horse, laws, off, draw, dawn, fortly, August, report, north
/ʊ/ put, could, would, wood, book, shook, cook, push, full, pull, stood,
football, Luke, pool, look, woman, sugar, bushel

Vowel Nos. 9 /U:/ and 10 /ʌ/

The lip position for No 9 sound is close rounded and for No 10, it is neutral. They occur in words like *soon* and *sun* respectively. Other examples of words with these sounds are:

- /U:/ food, too, group, blue, shoe, two, rude, do, true, juice, blew, view, due,
few, you, new, choose, June, school, noon, youth, move
/ʌ/ son, one, done, love, ton, bun, cud, cut, hut, luck, musk, cup, us, rough,
sun, some, gun, come, dull, won, dunce, rung, shut, other, cousin

Vowels No 11 /ɜ:/ and 12 /ə/

These are sounds used in words like *herb* and *about*. To produce No. 11, the lip position is neutral and No. 12 is considered the short form of No. 11. These occur in words like:

- /ɜ:/ bird, church, swirl, urge, curve, birn, curb, her, search, fern,
perk, firm, burn, purse, heard, were, worn, serve, nurse, first,
earry, return
/ə/ banana, again, contain, condemn, apex, above, account, observe,
attempt, obey, allow, attend, agree, annoy, attack, occure, teacher

Diphthongs

The word ‘diphthong’ is a Latin word, which means ‘double sound’. In phonetics, it is used to describe a vowel made up of double pure vowels, which glide from one to the other in the course of its production. It begins with one pure vowel and ends with another. In this process, the first part of the diphthong is pronounced more energetically but the diphthong gradually ‘peters out’ as the effort or energy is relaxed. An example is the vowel sound in *bye or joy*. There are three groups of diphthongs in English. There are those which end in /ʊ/, /əʊ, aʊ/ and those which end in /ɪ/, /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ/ and also those which end in /ə/, /iə, eə, ʊə/. Altogether, there are eight diphthongs in English Language.

To produce a diphthong sound, we begin with the first vowel and glide away to the second. In trying to pronounce the word ‘so’, we begin with /sə/ and

then glide to /U/. To produce the word 'boy' we begin with /b/ and glide away to /I/. We can then have /Səʊ/ and /bɔɪ/. Let us consider these pairs, /əʊ/ and /aʊ/ in the words below:

/əʊ/ low, snow, close, load, phoned, note, choke, goes, home, soap, show, hope, coat, note, local, broken, smoke, clothes, old

/aʊ/ now, loud, found, doubt, towns, bow, mouth, house, down, count, pound, sound, cloud, crown, round, thousand, outside, how, tower, our, flour, power

Diphthongs /eɪ, aɪ, ɔɪ/

These diphthongs end in /I/. Each one of them begins with a different pure vowel but they all glide to a common one /I/. Consider these examples:

/eɪ/ late, rake, fail, trade, sail, laid, raise, wait, race, lake, aid, aim, bay, they, name, shame, face, gain, way, lady, paper, nature

/aɪ/ I, eye, tie, buy, my, life, pipe, type, ripe, fight, wife, hide, side, write, size, shine, line, mine, while, mind, prize, dry, strike, silent, either

/ɔɪ/ oil, choice, noise, join, voice, toy, soil, toil, boil, coil, avoid, poison, employ, appoint, moist, hoist, foil, rejoice, loiter, point, annoy

Diphthongs /ɪə, eə, uə/

These diphthongs all glide to the /ə/ sound, often found in final positions as in words like *ear, air, pure*. More examples include:

/ɪə/ hear, fear, really, year, beer, pear, clear, near, rear, fierce, beard, idea, clear, here, realise, appear, serious, sincere

/eə/ hair, air, chair, there, share, dare, fair, fare, where, spare, repair, affair, square, rarely, scare, care, stare, bare, compare, declare

/uə/ poor, surely, cure, rural, fury, tour, lure, plural

Consonants

A consonant can be defined as a sound produced when there is partial or total blockage of the air stream from the lungs. Consonants get their characteristic quality of sound from the blockage of the air passage which when released allows air to rush out. Air blockage occurs at various places of articulation. The type of sound produced is determined by the place of air blockage and release. There are three broad categorizations of consonant sound. They are *plosives, fricatives and nasals*.

Plosives: These are sounds produced when the air stream is completely blocked. When the blockage is released, there is an ‘explosion’ as air bursts forth. Such sounds produced thus are /**p, t, k**/ and /**b, d, g**/. The sounds, /**p, t, k**/, are voiceless plosives while /**b, d, g**/ are voiced plosives. They occur in words like:

/p/ pipe, pew, pole, paper, map, lap, lap, heap, step, pay, pride, port, put, pat, play, pan

/b/ bake, bark, but, bund, boil, bought, bills, bean, buy, robe, rib, baby, banner

The sounds /**p**/, /**b**/are labial plosives in which production, there is total air blockage at the lips. /**t**/ and /**d**/ are alveolar plosive sounds formed at the teeth ridge with the tip of the tongue. They occur in words like:

/t/ team, tar, two, ten, ton, tie, town, twin, cut, at, wait, hate, tear, bet, mate, tame

/d/ do, den, done, dip, deck, dark, doom, date, add, rod, bed, hard, made, reader

Velar plosives, /**k**/and /**g**/, are produced at the soft palate when the back of the tongue presses against it. (See fig C). They occur in words like come and go. Other examples are:

/k/ king, kind, cold, care, kilo, common, court, lok, pick, lick, keep, can, kettle, cry, carry, crime

/g/ god, gate, gather, girl, game, glass, grow, give, get, gun, guard, goat, log, big, game, mug

Fricatives: Fricatives are sounds produced by a partial closure of the air passage. They include sounds like voiceless /**f**/, /**θ**/, /**s**/, /**ʃ**/ and /**h**/. Others are the voiced /**v**/, /**ð**/, /**z**/, /**l**/, /**r**/, /**ʒ**/, /**j**/ and /**w**/.

The labiodental fricatives /**f**/ and /**v**/ are produced when the lower lip is placed lightly against the upper teeth. Sounds like the following would be produced:

/f/ fit, fat, farm, fond, fear, firm, foil, four, leaf, safe, serf, fail, fee, fan, feud, fine

/v/ village, vest, view, vote, vary, van, veer, leave, serve, veil, save, never, vow, value, marvel, shovel, heave, leave

The sounds used in words *thin* /θin/ and *then* /ðen/ are /θ/ and /ð/. They are produced by placing the tip of the tongue behind the upper teeth and breathing

out. Let us practice saying these words, placing the back of the left fingers on the larynx (voice box). You will notice voice vibration for /ð/ but not for /θ/.

/θ/ thin, three, thank, think, threw, tooth, both, mouth, faith, myth, death,
author
 /ð/ then, they, there, booth, them, third, thumb, clothe, other, worthy, mother,
brother, father

The alveolar fricatives, /s/ and /z/, are produced with relative ease. They are articulated at the alveolar ridge by the action of the blade of the tongue. The vocal cords vibrate in the production of /z/ but not in /s/, as in these words:

/s/ see, sit, set, sat, sea, soft, saw, side, so, same, peace, rest, gas, cost, maps,
locks, ass, mess
 /z/ zero, zeal, zip, zed, zinc, zoo, peas, his, says, has, was, pause, dose, vows,
gaze, rise, maize, laws, base, close, please, goes

The palato-alveolar fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are produced almost the same way as /s/ and /z/. ‘sh’ in show and wash is represented by /ʃ/. They are produced by placing the blade of the tongue on the alveolar ridge. They can be seen in words as:

/ʃ/ shake, shrine, shop, ship, shower, sure, show, fish, rash, push, ocean,
shout, shame, nation, examination
 /ʒ/ evasion, measure, confusion, erosion, usual, mirage, seizure, treasure,
vision, leisure

The alveolar fricatives /l/ and /r/ resemble each other in their place and method of production. The tip of the tongue is placed against the teeth ridge to produce /l/ sound and against the hard palate to produce /r/ sound and the tongue is contracted sideways so that the sides of the tongue are drawn away from the molars of the upper jaw. Air escapes at the sides of the tongue to produce sounds like:

/l/ leave, love, lame, line, little, late, long, mill, hell, bell, call, rule, fail,
chapel
 /r/ reap, ring, ran, room, rude, raw, rest, tree, try, drop, brave, preach, brown,
crown

The palatal fricative, /j/, is the initial sound in *yard* and *you*. It is often written ‘y’ as in:

/j/ yoke, youth, yarn, yacht, young, yes, year, yawn, you, yearn, yellow

Here, the tongue is raised so that there is very little space between it and the roof of the mouth.

The glottal fricative, /h/, is the initial sound in *hen* and *horse*. It is produced by opening the closed glottis and pushing air out. It is found in words like:

/h/ he, head, hurry, husband, hope, have, has, harm, hot, hall, hoe, heat, hire

The labial fricative, /w/, is produced with rounded lips and tongue raised high at the back close to the soft palate. It shares a common name ‘semi-vowel’ with /j/ because they are like the vowels /U:/ and /i:/ in some areas.

/w/ This sound occurs in words like: wweak, work, wait, wide, wear, warm, water, wheat, while, where, who

The non-conventional affricates, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, consist of plosives /t/ and /d/ followed by fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. They occur in words like *chance* /tʃæns/ and *jet* /dʒet/. They are produced by placing the blade of the tongue on the alveolar ridge and pushing out air. Other examples are:

/tʃ/ child, church, chin, choice, choke, chest, charge, watch, fetch, cheat, coach, touch

/dʒ/ jar, June, ridge, judge, joke, germ, jewel, jeer, edge, magic, logic, forge, age, badge

Nasal consonants: There are three nasal consonant sounds in English, namely, /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/. They are all voiced as the soft palate lowers, allowing air passage through the nasal cavity. In producing the labial /m/sound, the lips form a complete blockage of the air stream and air is released through the nose. Similarly, the tip of the tongue presses against the teeth ridge forming complete air blockage in the mouth. Air, then, passes through the nose to produce the alveolar sound /n/. English language has no one character to represent the velar sound /ŋ/. It is often sounded ‘ng’ as in *zinc*, *bank*, and *ring*. The back of the tongue presses against the soft palate in saying /ŋ/. Let us try to reproduce these sounds.

/m/ man, mate, team, made, home, lame, mean, same, move, might, rim, fume

/n/ net, name, nine, new, nurse, noun, night, nut, next, pain, tune, bone

/ŋ/ sing, ring, thing, hung, strong, finger, thank, wink, ankle, link, bang, monger

Points of Articulation

The production or articulation of a consonant sound usually involves a mobile organ of speech articulating against or with a stationary one. The stationary organ of speech towards which the mobile organ moves and where the sound is produced is called the *point of articulation*.

The terms used in describing sounds in relation to their points of articulation are presented in the table below:

Mode of Formation	Voiceless	Voiced	Place of Articulation
PLOSIVE	p t k	b d g	labial alveolar velar
FRICATIVES	f θ	v ð	labiodental dental
FRICATIVES	s	z l r	alveolar alveolar alveolar
NASALS	ʃ h	ʒ w j m n ŋ	palato-alveolar labial palatal glottal labial alveolar velar
AFFRICATIVES	dʒ	tʃ	palato-alveolar

Sound Clusters

By definition, a cluster is a number of things of the same kind growing or being close together in a group. For instance, one could talk about a cluster of birds or a cluster of rose flower. Similarly, in English language, there are word clusters. There are words, which have their consonant sound clusters where there are closely positioned consonant sounds rather than conventional words. In English phonetics, clustering of consonant sounds can occur at the initial position of words or in the middle position or in the final position. A language learner may not find it easy to pronounce some consonant clusters because many African languages do not have such clusters. Some English language consonant clusters are listed below:

Initial Position	Middle Position	Final Position
<u>s</u> trong	frustr <u>a</u> te	gen <u>u</u> fl <u>e</u> ct
<u>s</u> pray	yest <u>e</u> rday	prom <u>p</u> t
<u>s</u> cript	entr <u>u</u> sted	slum <u>p</u>
<u>d</u> windle	ret <u>r</u> ench	cost <u>t</u>
<u>c</u> rash	prostr <u>a</u> te	henc <u>e</u>
<u>s</u> windle	sumpt <u>u</u> ous	lift <u>t</u>
<u>b</u> reach	embryo	dusk
<u>n</u> ymph	mist <u>a</u> ke	gambl <u>e</u>
<u>th</u> rong	intrig <u>u</u> e	tempt <u>t</u>
<u>s</u> kill	hindr <u>a</u> nce	bank <u>e</u> d

Sound Contrasts in Vowel System

The English language vowel system has two main sound contrasts, namely, the long vowel sound and the short vowel sound. The following is a list of some words containing sound contrasts:

/i:/	/ɪ/	/ɜ:/	/e/	/ɑ:/	/æ/
bee	b <u>e</u>	lear <u>n</u> t	l <u>e</u> nt	b <u>a</u> rk	b <u>a</u> ck
seek	s <u>i</u> ck	year <u>n</u>	y <u>e</u> n	par <u>a</u> ch	pat <u>a</u> ch
peak	pick	dir <u>t</u>	de <u>b</u> t	he <u>a</u> rt	h <u>a</u> t
leak	l <u>i</u> ck	bur <u>n</u> t	b <u>e</u> nt	car <u>a</u> t	cat
feet	f <u>i</u> t	bir <u>d</u>	b <u>e</u> d	bar <u>a</u> n	had
leave	l <u>i</u> ve	ger <u>m</u>	g <u>e</u> m	har <u>d</u>	ban
heat	h <u>i</u> t	turn	ten`	par <u>t</u>	pat

/ɔ:/	/ɒ/	/ʊ:/	/U/
p <u>o</u> rt	p <u>o</u> t	w <u>oo</u> ed	w <u>oo</u> d
na <u>u</u> ght	no <u>t</u>	co <u>o</u> led	co <u>u</u> ld
h <u>u</u> rt	h <u>o</u> t	l <u>o</u> se	l <u>oo</u> se
co <u>o</u> d	co <u>o</u> d	p <u>oo</u> l	p <u>u</u> ll
So <u>o</u> rt	so <u>t</u>	r <u>u</u> de	r <u>oo</u> t
gou <u>o</u> d	go <u>d</u>	fr <u>u</u> it	fo <u>o</u> t
co <u>u</u> rt	co <u>t</u>	to <u>o</u>	to <u>o</u>

Intonation

Precisely, intonation refers to the continually changing variations in the pitch of the voice when a person is speaking. In our daily interactions and discussions, we say a word or a group of words with certainty or we say it hesitantly. We can say it angrily or kindly; we can say it with interest or without interest. Tone could be satirical, detached, mocking, and condemnatory. These variations are largely made by the speaker as the voice goes up and down and the different notes of voice combine to make tunes. The speaker's emotional state at the time of the speech is added to the words to achieve any of the effects mentioned above. It is this way of using tunes that we call *intonation*.

Although intonation is used in all languages to add special significance to what is said, it is not used in the same way in all languages. Certain speech situations or contexts require the speaker to add something to his utterance to give it a special colouring or meaning. This *something* added may be to a whole sentence or maybe merely a single word by itself.

The relation between the pitches on which the various parts of the utterance are said is of utmost importance in intonation. A speaker may have to pitch his voice more deeply in order to express solemnity.

Tunes

The rise and fall of the pitch of voice (tune) is an inevitable requirement for an animated and meaningful utterance or speech. Tunes are vital in English and in every other language. They convey meanings of utterances to the listener. They distinguish between utterances with the same sequence of words. For instance, if the utterance, '*You were home*' is said with a High-Fall (HF), it is a statement but if said with High-Rise (HR) it is a question, e.g.

You were home. \searrow (statement)

You were home? \nearrow (question)

Tunes also convey the attitude of a speaker about a topic or object to the listener. The use of a Fall-Rise (FR) in an utterance shows some reservation or doubt e.g. 'That's no good', while a low-fall (LF) denotes indifference. For example, "You can say what you like. That is your business". Although particular tunes are not mandatorily meant for particular utterances, there is what is called favourite tunes, which are more likely to go with certain utterances. For instance, HF is more likely to go with declarative statements as in

It is raining now. ∇

My name is Kufre. ∇

Tunes point out the important words in utterances because they are only indicated on the nuclear syllables of such words, e.g., 'He came.' In this example, the word 'came' is the syllable bearing the tune. Thus, it is the important word in the utterance.

Types of Tunes

According to Christopherson, most English utterances are said with one of two intonations: Tune I (Falling Tune) or Tune II (Rising Tune). He does not, however, say that there are only two tunes in English.

TUNE I

Tune I or the falling pattern usually starts with a high pitch and ends with a comparatively low pitch. It is normally used for statements, commands, wh-questions, dual questions.

Statements

Abuja is the capital of ∇Nigeria.

She is visiting her ∇friends.

The price of petroleum has ∇appreciated.

Commands

Open the ∇door, please.

Come ∇here.

Sit up, all of ∇ you.

Wh-questions

What is your ∇ problem?

Where does he ∇ live?

Why don't you ∇ like it?

Who stole my ∇purse?

Dual questions

Do you want rice or ↘beans?
Would you prefer orange or ↘ banana?
Did you board a coaster or a ↘*combi* bus?

TUNE II

Tune II or the rising pattern usually starts with a very low pitch and rises gradually to the climax at the end. It is used in the following situations:

General Questions (requiring 'Yes' or 'No' answers)

Is this ↗ right?
Do you like the ↗ game?
Has Edozie gone to the ↗ market?

Polite Requests

Pass the ↗ ball, please.
Cover me with ↗ blanket, please.
Have faith in ↗ God.

Protests or Doubts and Surprises

I never said ↗ that (protest statement).
I never imagined he would be that ↗ stupid (statement of doubt and surprise).
His behaviour was ↗ bad (surprise).

The above rules should, however, not be applied too mechanically. It is not the grammatical form but the implied meaning that determines the intonation.

Relationship between Tune and Stress

Tune and stress are greatly interrelated, not only in English, but also in other intonation Languages. A combination of stress and tune gives rise to *prominence*. Prominence, according to Hartman and Stork (1972) is 'the relative degree to which a sound stands out from its environment'. For instance, in 'he came', the syllable bearing the tune is the most prominent i.e. 'came'. In English, stress can occur on any syllable of an utterance depending on the syllable's prominence.

Stress

When we speak naturally, we exert some force or energy on the production of certain -sounds more than we do on others. It may involve a whole lot of the word(s) or it may be with regards to the production of syllables i.e. units into which words are divided. Such syllables are uttered louder and longer and so

we say that they are stressed, indicated by placing a sort vertical stroke (ˈ) at the beginning of the stressed syllable. Stress, therefore, means the force with which a syllable of a word is spoken. Whenever Englishmen speak, there is a noticeable difference between strong and weak stresses in their pronunciation. Stress is very relevant in English because by changing the stress pattern of an utterance one can change its meaning completely. We will notice that by changing the stress pattern in the following words we have changed their meanings completely:

Noun	Verb	Noun	Verb
ˈtransport	transˈport	ˈretail	reˈtail
ˈsuspect	susˈpect	ˈattribute	atrriˈbute
ˈconduct	conˈduct	ˈpermit	perˈmit
ˈexport	exˈport	ˈexploit	exˈploit
ˈcontact	conˈtact	ˈimpact	imˈpact
ˈpresent	pre ˈsent	ˈconvert	conˈvert
ˈconsent	conˈsent	ˈprogress	proˈgress
ˈoutlaw	outˈlaw	ˈrecord	reˈcord
ˈincrease	inˈcrease	ˈrebel	reˈbel
ˈproject	proˈject	ˈaddict	adˈdict

Simply put, the words listed above are nouns if the stress is on the first syllable but verbs if the stress is on the second syllable. However, in discussing stress in English, it is always very important to distinguish between words-stress and sentence-stress.

Word stress

English words, which consist of more than one syllable, have their fixed stress pattern. As a rule, one of the syllables must have a stronger stress than the rest.

In most English words of two syllables, the first syllable is stressed and the other is not. Examples are:

ˈcarry	ˈdamage	ˈdoctor	ˈhostel
ˈwrestle	ˈcastle	ˈtable	ˈeven
ˈpeople	ˈjustice	ˈjungle	ˈminute

If the two-syllable word is such that the first syllable is a prefix, the stress is placed on the second syllable.

re nounce	un tie	a way	de ny
re buke	ex ceed	for see	be gin
re play	in deed	a ccuse	e ject
re joice	be get	mi grate	a ttack

If a word has three syllables or more, we often get an extra degree of stress intermediate between strong and weak stress, i.e. the secondary stress. In the word *caravan*, for example the main stress is often on the last syllable but the first syllable is almost as strongly stressed.

Three- syllable words with primary stress on the first syllable

gratify	implicate
understand	redefine
exhibit	interfere
dramatise	notify
modify	verbalize
supplicate	

Three-syllable words with stress on the second syllable

im portant	re shuffle
re lation	a ttention
o ccasion	pro cessing
do mestic	be longing
con dition	pers pective
ma jestic	pho netics
a bortion	a llowance
fa llacious	ack nowledge
leu kemia	in vasion
re cover	o mission

The secondary stress is marked by a low vertical stroke at the beginning of the syllable, may be, three syllables or it may precede the primary stress by two syllables as in the examples of these words with secondary stress.

economic /i:kə|nɒmɪk/

anatomic /ˌænə|tɒmɪk/

vulnerability /ˌvʌ|lnərə|bɪlɪti/

caravan /ˌkærəˈvæn/
civilization /ˌsɪvɪlaɪˈzeɪʃn/
examination /ˌɪgzæmɪˈneɪʃn/
anaerobic /ˌænəˈrəʊbɪk/

Sentence Stress

When several words are put together in a sentence, they can never be of equal importance, and so some are given more stress than others. It may be convenient to say that all content words are given more stress than grammatical words but this is only to the extent that those grammatical words are less important. Provided that the speaker does not intend to emphasize any of the grammatical words in the sentence, it would be needless to give it stress.

Normally, each word preserves its word-stress, its individual stress pattern, but it may happen that the stressed syllable of a particular word is relatively weak in relation to the stressed syllables of other words in the sentence.

Since there is an uncountable variety of possible sentences in English, and since in most cases a sentence can be stressed in different ways according to the special meaning or emphasis implied, then, there is no simple rule for determining where the sentence stress falls. Wherever it does fall, it will normally fall on a syllable, which also has word-stress. But the question to decide always is: which words are important enough to receive sentence stress? The emphatic stress in the different utterances of the following sentences brings out some difference in meaning.

1. The **TEXTBOOK** is on the table (not the dictionary)
2. **HE** brought the children (not some other person).
3. You **MUST** write the assignment (whether you like it or not).
4. You require a credit pass in English **AND** Mathematics (not either of them).
5. The money is **ON** the cupboard (not in it or under it).
6. You should all stand up **ONCE** the lecturer enters the class (not before he does so or sometime after he has done so).

Chapter Three

Writing for Mass Media Publication

Mass media refers to a diverse array of media technologies that is intended to reach a large audience via mass communication. It is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. The general public typically relies on the mass media to provide information regarding political issues, social issues, entertainment, and cultural affairs. The technologies through which this communication takes place include a variety of outlets. The most common platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet.

A newspaper is a publication containing news and information and advertising, usually printed on low-cost paper called newsprint. It may be general or special interest publication, most often published daily or weekly. The most important function of newspapers is to inform the public of significant events. Local newspapers inform local communities and include advertisements from local businesses and services, while national newspapers tend to focus on national themes which can also offer news on finance and business-related topics. Recent developments on the Internet are posing major threats to local newspapers' business model because of the immediacy of online information dissemination.

A major transformation that the mass media has brought to the world is ease of communication with a small or large number of people all around the world in a very short period of time. It plays an important role in our everyday lives. Mass media influences our likes and dislikes, opinions regarding many important issues, views, behaviour, our values and our style. A *magazine* is a periodical publication containing a variety of articles, typically published weekly, biweekly, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly, with a date on the cover that is in advance of the date it is actually published. They are often printed in color on coated paper, and are bound with a soft cover. In practice, magazines are a subset of periodicals, distinct from those periodicals produced by scientific, artistic, academic or special interest publishers which are subscription-only, more expensive, narrowly limited in circulation, and often have little or no advertising. Magazines can be classified as General interest magazines and Special interest magazines (women's, sports, business, etc.). *Radio* and *television* media are outstanding modes of information transmission because their broadcasts are electronically disseminated and accompanied by voice. While radio broadcasts can only be heard, television broadcasts are accompanied by both voice and images to authenticate the messages.

Classifications of Mass Media

This section focuses on five major classes of mass media.

Broadcast media: The term 'broadcast media' covers a wide range of different communication methods that transmit information electronically via media such as television, radio, podcasts, blogs, advertising, websites, films, radio, recorded music, online streaming and digital journalism.

Digital media: Digital media can be described as digitised content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks. This can include text, audio, video, and graphics. It also means that news from a TV network, newspaper, magazine, etc. that is presented on an Internet Web site, mobile mass communication or blog can fall into this category.

Internet media: Internet, also known as "the Net," is a worldwide system of computer networks - a network of networks in which users at any one computer point possibly get information from another computer and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers. It comprises such services as email, social media sites, websites, and Internet-based radio and television.

Outdoor media is focused to reach the people who are on the road, in public places or specific commercial locations. Outdoor advertising units are placed at strategic open locations especially by business outfits to attract the attention of consumers. Information is transmitted via such media as billboards; blimps; flying billboards (signs in tow of airplanes); placards, inside and outside buses, commercial buildings, shops, sports stadiums, cars, or highways and streets.

Print media is one of the oldest and basic forms of mass communication. Print media transmit information using physical objects, such as books, comics, dailies, weeklies, monthlies, pamphlets and other forms of printed journals. Event organizing and public speaking can also be considered forms of mass media and the organizations that control these technologies, such as movie studios, publishing companies, and radio and television stations, are also known as the mass media.

Writing for Media Publication

Writing for media publication is a more exposed form of essay writing. It is not the type of essay consumed only by the writer and perhaps his examiner but entails an extended readership. Such essays written for a large audience in a widely read medium are in form of features. While an essay written for examination purpose considers the examiner audience, the essay for publication considers the various categories of readers. Different people read published articles for various purposes. A published article must, therefore, be able to

convince the reader that he has not wasted his money and time buying and reading it.

WHAT TO WRITE

The Facts

Writing for publication is an inventive and creative form of journalism. The writer uses his imagination and creativity to explore issues, events, movements, trends and processes in great depth and sensitivity in an interesting and lively manner. It is primarily designed to entertain and -to inform readers of an event, a situation or an aspect of life. A writer for publication has the freedom to add flavour to his article. He can embellish the facts, give their background, comment on them and interpret them. He uses anecdotes, description and humour, fanciful and imaginative language. In fact, good writing technique employed by a writer can make the dulllest and most prosaic subject interesting and indeed engrossing.

Categories of Articles

There are many categories of articles that can be written depending on the style and subject matter. Some categorizations in the area include the following:

1. **The Narrative:** This is where narration is given of an adventure or experience of the writer or someone else often told in the first or third person in the past tense.
2. **The interview:** This is a survey of the views of a person, usually in position of power or authority or influence. It can be in question-and-answer form or in form of a journalistic report.
3. **The Exposé:** This is often an investigative piece, making revelations on issues (usually scandalous) that are not for the public.
4. **The Anthology:** This is a collection of a series of statements or comments on a single theme. For instance, what Nigerian writers have said on copyright can make up an anthology.

5. **The Essay:** This is a composition, which often gives a reflection of the writer's personality. It is a treatise on an interesting subject. It could be an opinion piece, humour, interpretation, information, and so on.

6. **The Personality Sketch:** This is the profile of a man or woman. It can be called a biography when in expanded form. This type of article gives the life and career of a person — his achievements, what he thinks or believes, his hopes, aspirations, lapses, etc. Often, a personality sketch is filled with a person's praise. This should not be so but should rather expose weaknesses and failures of the subject too. The subject may not be a famous person but should be interesting.

7. **The How-to-do-it Piece:** This type of writing usually advises or instructs on how to do or achieve something, e.g., how to start a small business, lose weight, rear chickens in the backyard, keep a stray husband at home, process and preserve ginger, etc. It takes the form of how-it-was-done, what-to-do, where-to-do-it, when-to-do-it or why-do-it.

8. **The Column:** This is an opinion piece or a piece of advice given by a knowledgeable and accomplished writer which usually appears in a magazine or newspaper. This form of writing could be addressed to an individual or a group.

9. **The Review:** This is a report, description, analysis or interpretation of a book, play, film, music, and other literary, audio-visual and performing arts. The list of categories given above is not exhaustive but these are very common ones. An article may combine elements of several categories.

Skills in Generating Topics

Before a writer embarks on writing an article for publication, he must take into consideration the techniques involved in the area and be sure to follow it effectively. He must be able to find a topic and collect materials for it. Many beginning writers often lack what to write even though they can write well. They wonder where to find a good idea for an article. It should be noted that if what a writer writes is not worth writing on, then he hasn't gone anywhere. Good article ideas are everywhere, in daily conversations, in nature, in life around, in the news on radio and television, in the newspapers, in magazines, in books, in letters, in films, in plays, in music. The sky is the limit! An essay writer can find a suitable topic idea from practically any subject or object. Let's try. Think of anything - anything. If you are holding a pen right now, think about it as a source of a suitable article idea. You could, for example, reflect on why some people chew

pens, or the importance of pens in the economy of our country, if any. It may be a good topic to write on! Another still, take a letter 'G'. Think of 'goats'. The goat is found everywhere in village and towns. Think of folklore attached to the goat. It is accused of being smelly, lecherous, mean and stupid. It creates deserts by ravaging the reserves. What of lovers of goat meat? Goats are ceremonial animals. Hides from goats are used for rites and traditional attire in some areas. Traditional healers use the marrow to cure diseases. Scientists say they breed faster and are easier to feed and produce more milk than ruminants. What is the goat population in your environment or even country? What economic and social importance has the goat? This is just on the goat! Let's try again. Think of a word. Start with the letter 'A', if you like. Take the word 'accident'. Think about it, play around with it and expand it. You may think of accidents you have seen — traffic or domestic. Can you think of the causes, age groups involved, sex, where? — at home or outside. Think of domestic accidents — drugs, chemicals, pesticides, cleansing agents, toxic substances, fertilizer? Do traffic accidents cause more deaths? Can accidents be prevented? Lots and lots of other things to find out about accidents abound.

Feature ideas could come from news events, their significance or simply fresh angles or forgotten aspects of them. A writer can take advantage of an on-going important project - delays, new developments, unforeseen problems. Issues like certificate forgery in high places or cultism can be focused. Feature ideas could also come from history e.g. independence anniversary.

Researching the Article

Every article represents a research problem. Generally, all good writings benefit from some degree of researching — reading, questioning, note taking and checking of facts, be they fictional or factual. The writer may draw heavily from personal experience or first-hand information. For some other articles, he may draw from observations or personal experiences as well as from other people — experts, or may require library research. An article is as good as the research that has gone into it. The first step in research is to define as specifically as possible the nature of the writing. For instance, a plan to write on the Nigerian prisons should be narrowed down to a specific theme. Is it interested in overcrowding, diet, treatment by prison officials, rehabilitation of prisoners, sex of prisoners or general condition of prison or prisoners? From which basic view-point is the writer approaching the topic? From the prisoners? The prison officials, or from various angles of both? Information could be got in various topics from all quarters capable of giving such information.

Writing the Article

After all research has been done and all needed information got, then the writer has something to put down on paper. Before this, he must have at the back of his mind what he wants to write and why (purpose). When he writes, he must adhere to the purpose of the writing and leave out all materials not relevant to that purpose. Materials should be planned. The writer should work out some form of an outline for the article showing how the different parts will fit into the whole. The classified materials, which are grouped according to the similarity of their items, are arranged in the order in which they are to appear in the article.

The writing process should be flexible — able to shift and move sentences, paragraphs and whole sections from beginning to middle or end, as the case may be.

The Introduction

The first opportunity to hook the reader is the introduction along with the title. It is the show-window in which to display the article for sale. Few readers will continue to read an article begun in an uninteresting or clumsy note. Even then, they may read only a few paragraphs. The first few words should be the writer's most supreme writing effort. A good beginning should:

- (a) Catch the reader's eyes;
- (b) Arouse his interest;
- (c) Entice him to read further into the article;
- (d) Set the stage for the materials to follow.

Use of contrast, irony, paradox or contradiction can enhance the effectiveness of the opening. Consider the following:

Though Onitsha, the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria, is cited by the great River Niger, its residents do not enjoy good drinking water.

For articles that need a moral judgment, the beginning can be the conclusion or summary of the author's judgment on the issue. Quotation introductions which use colourful language, dramatize a situation to arrest the attention of the reader. In writing the introduction:

- (a) Do not waste words as verbiage can only make an introduction less effective.
- (b) Write paragraphs, at most 70 words or four lines, as short paragraphs are more readable. Write short sentences, at most 18 words, since short sentences are more effective.
- (c) Use 'action words' in the active sense. It is more exciting. Avoid passive verb tenses.
- (d) Hook the reader in the first few words.

The body

With a good introduction, the body of the article should flow in naturally as an elaboration and expansion of the ideas in the introduction. The body gives details, additional information and ideas, examples, anecdotes, quotations, arguments, facts, and so on, to support the introduction in neatly presented paragraphs.

In presenting the body:

- (a) The information and ideas should be presented logically and, where necessary, chronologically too.
- (b) Materials should be relevant to the purpose or theme of the article.
- (c) Materials should naturally and effortlessly flow and the entire article should read like one organic whole, and not a patchwork of sentences and paragraphs.
- (d) There should be variations in sentence and paragraph structures. A mixture of not very long and short of them is acceptable. One idea should be confined to one paragraph.

The Ending

Ending an article is as important as beginning it. When a reader comes to the end of an article he must feel satisfied that the article was worth reading. Sometimes the ending is a summary or a conclusion of the beginning, an echo of a

point or points earlier made in the story. It may even be a new twist in the theme of the story, a teaser, new challenge, a mystery, a puzzle, a question mark, a new mood, a hope, a promise. There are many types of endings but the summary ending is most commonly used. It ties up the loose ends and summarizes the whole points of the story. There is no such thing as a perfect article. Every good article can be improved. It is only important to do this by revising the article as many times as possible. Some writers even recommend that after an article is written, it should be kept aside for a few days, then a revisit and reappraisal of the work is done. There is no such thing as the right or wrong length for an article except in reference to the requirements of a particular examiner and the intensity of the reader's interest in the subject matter. But lengthiness is not any measure of how erudite a writer is. The best articles are between 500 and 600 words. However, the length is always determined by the writer and his subject.

An Example of a News Journal Publication

When The Nest Becomes Empty

We may run into difficulty in trying to define what a family is. A man and his wife only? The two parents with a child or children? Either parent alone or with the children? What of a polygamous home? What of a homosexual or lesbian couple? What of a commune, where every matured male is married, to every matured female? Well, society has its own definition of the family. In Nigeria today, a couple with or without children can be accepted as a family. Also, a polygamous arrangement qualifies as one. The others mentioned above are yet, perverse forms of the Nigerian family.

From the premise that a couple with or without children constitutes the family and that a polygamous arrangement also is one, we can go ahead in our discourse. Except in a situation whereby the man is sterile or the woman is barren and so no child comes from this union, the population of the family increases soon after the couple is married. Especially with us, Africans, it is the older the marriage, the greater the population of the family. However, a time comes when, the woman reaches menopause and ceases to bear children that is, if the couple had not stopped producing children earlier on. Human life being a progressive event, the children born into the family grows up, matures and leaves the home in their bid to find his OWN NEST. Normally, this process of graduation from the home is gradual for the children. The first shock of the parents (especially the mother) is the time their (her) son goes to live in the boarding house at school. For many a family, who always stays together, this instance, may be eventful and

traumatic. The young man, who is going to live outside his family for the first time may not be disquieted or sorrowful because of the enthusiasm of his academic success and novel experience. He wants to go and wonders why his younger siblings and mother are crying. However, he may shed some tears in reciprocation or sympathy. More girls than boys cry on such an occasion.

Be that as it may, many parents do not have a full understanding of this first outing by the first child. In fact, such is the breaking of the ice in the history of separation not only between the son and them but also, between them and their other children. Also, the separation of the siblings formally begins here. Before the parents recover fully from the initial shock of sending out the first child in the home, the second one is ready to go. The story continues along that line until the last child in the home is ready to go too. Today, the matter is worsened by the fact that the children grow up quickly. This speed is extended to every aspect of their lives too so that, it is common-place to see an undergraduate of 15, an age at which two decades ago, people were yet to register into primary one. Not only children who attend school are affected in leaving the home quickly. Those who learn various trades or other occupations are also involved in this race. In fact, in some occasions (like children who become housemaids or house boys) leaving the home to seek greener pastures outside the home is even faster. A time comes in the home, when the couple is left alone to themselves. Of course, age quickly takes its toll on them. I remember my mother usually said that the aged and sickness have had many encounters. With dim eyes, receding foreheads, falling hair, emaciated bodies, limping legs; dropping hands or sagging body, and often dulled senses, the couple face their new world, where new experiences and circumstances await them. Of course, the situation need not be as the above. However, we must not rule out the issue of a greater probability of regression and retrogression in nearly every aspect of such a couple's life. Their marriage has summered and wintered, and it should give them a sense of self-worth and pride.

Most parents tend to consciously or unconsciously frustrate their children's effort to leave the nest. That is why, even when their child gets married, they now leave their home and follow the young people from one city to another or always want them at home. It is also true that many a young man or woman may like to found his or her own home earlier than society would expect. Parents should know that the right thing is to allow their children to leave the nest, when they have become matured men and women. Also, young people should not engage themselves in the serious matter of founding a home, when they are not capable. Their deficiency may be financial, emotional mental, social or physical. Parents must not only make sure their children do not lack any of these essentials of founding a home but also make efforts to help them acquire them. Parents

should also bear in mind that the leaving of the nest by the children is a natural and normal consequence of human existence. Nature is only taking its course.

A lively and splendid thing to do at this point in time in the life of this couple is to begin internal reordering, reorganization and reorientation. They should concentrate on each other. Let the outside world play lesser roles in their lives. Such should be the ideal pattern of living in any family no matter what stage of life it is in. The couple should make time to do things together. Let the man begin to court his bride once more. It can be romantic again. They should make effort to work even when retirement has come. Both of them should pool their resources together and begin a new economic venture, which will bring in money, adventure, pleasure, exercise and sense of worth. Poultry farming or any other kind of farming, opening a supermarket, retail or wholesale shop, working on contract, beginning a nursery school or a recreational centre, or home for the disabled, helping their church or mosque and a lot more, are examples of adventures that would 'oil' your home with blessings and bliss when the nest becomes empty. However, the educational and socio-economic levels of the couples and their personal interests, opportunities and idiosyncrasies are factors that determine this choice of later occupation. They should develop a healthy attitude about themselves by reading good books. Their religion would play a role in this matter too. Even where their achievements in life are not satisfactory to them, they should not indulge in self-pity and condemnation. They should make the best of what they have and not over-labour themselves. Old age has set in. They should accept their health but not become a hypochondriac. They should visit old friends and make new ones. They should visit their children let the children visit them too, but they should allow them to manage their lives and those of their new homes. Yes, but parents should not steal away the love these little ones have for the parents' wishes.

WOMAN'S WORLD, May, 2008. (Pg.29)

EXERCISES

Write a good article for publication on each of the following topics:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) Village life | (iv) Should women vote? |
| (ii) The value of advertising | (v) Hobbies |
| (iii) Correspondence courses | (vi) Co-education |

Chapter Four

Logic

The word *logic* is a Greek word meaning reason. Hulton Willis (1975) defined logic as the science of reasoning. He also defined *reasoning* as the process of drawing a conclusion from evidence or what one takes to be evidence. He also defined *conclusion* as the fact, judgment or opinion produced by reasoning. For instance, when we see a man in black suit carrying a wig and gown, we will conclude that he is a lawyer. This is reasoning from, evidence. Again, if we see a black lady wearing long curly and blond hair, we will conclude that she wears imported hair. Studies by psychologists revealed that an average human being begins to reason at the age of nine and continues to do so for life. It is only natural to reason that things will happen the way they have happened in a similar circumstance in the past. For instance, if somebody takes a cup of chilled water, we expect him to feel refreshed because it has been so in the past. But supposing somebody takes chilled water and rather than being refreshed begins to stool does it imply that chilled water also upsets the stomach? We may then reason that something might be wrong with the second person. It should be noted that it is only when things are really alike that we can expect them to behave alike. Identical causes have identical effects. We must therefore ascertain when the causes are the same by careful reasoning.

Assumption

This is a judgment or opinion, which a person considers true without any certainty. He may not be certain of the truth in what he considers true. For instance, a person might just assume that students who wear expensive clothes come from wealthy families. Again, a person might assume that people from a particular family are very rich because their grandfathers were. Unless these assumptions are investigated, there might be no truth in them. Some assumptions are not based on evidence. For instance, a statement like, 'The just shall live by faith' is not based on evidence but on belief.

Premise

This is a statement or idea on which reasoning is based. This statement is designed in such a manner to affirm or deny that something is true or false. It may be in form of an assumption or a fact. Basically, it is the basis for argument or for drawing conclusion. 'English language is interesting' is a premise and somebody can reason from this and conclude to *like* English language. If somebody says

‘English language is hateful’ a listener might reason from this premise and conclude to *dislike* English language. It may not always be easy to know whether a premise is true or false unless there is reasoning with evidence. A premise could be major or minor.

Specific

A specific refers to just one case or instance. For instance, rather than generalize thus: ‘young people refuse to do domestic works’ we can specify thus: ‘Buddy refused to set the table for dinner yesterday’. The following words will help us achieve specifics: many, a few, sometimes, a number of, a certain percentage of, and so on.

Generalization

This refers to a statement that covers many specific cases. For example, ‘young people are disobedient’. This refers to many countless instances. A sound logic will have qualified generalization, which only includes the specifics that it could cover. For instance, the above generalization may be recast thus: ‘many young people are disobedient’. It is possible to, sometimes, reason and make conclusions that are, maybe, generalizations or specifics. In making generalizations, conclusions are drawn about a class from just a study of its members. For example, ‘Wealthy people are pompous.’ This term has a lot to do with stereotyping. There is not much evidence on which the generalization is based. Take this example. The fashion these days is to be born again. It may, then be said ‘Those who are born again are honest’. This may be based on the fact that Mr. C is born again and is honest. Mrs. F. is born again and is honest. Miss X is born again and is honest and so is it with Mr. R. They are all born again and are honest. This statement is subject to verification and proof. Supposing in the event of verification it was discovered that Mr. Y and Mr. Z respectively are born again but are filled with lying and cheating, it will be wrong then to assert that all those who are born again are honest. This assertion should be qualified with such words or phrases such as many, often, sometimes, always, some, at times, most, etc’ Many people who are born again are honest.’

Examples of generalizations

1. Nankarians are academics.
2. Fruits taken before meals are appetizers.
3. Taxi drivers are reckless.

Qualification

Many a time generalizations are too sweeping that they become even unhealthy. A generalization like 'Tobacco smokers will die young' is too broad and needs to be trimmed down or qualified. This means that it needs to be stated in such a way that not every smoker will die young. It is not all specifics it could cover that are included. This can be achieved with such words that exclude some specifics, as already stated under generalization. The qualified generalization of the above assertion 'Some tobacco smokers will die young' is more acceptable.

Refutation

This, in the Words of Hulon Willis, is the process of destroying the logical basis of someone else's argument. It is, therefore, necessary to know what premises the other person is basing his argument on. For instance, a premise like, 'Democracy has come to stay in Nigeria' can be refuted by insisting that if democracy cannot save Nigeria, then let the military intervene.

Induction

There are two major types of reasoning. They are *induction* and *deduction*. Inductive logic is a way of reasoning from evidence about a group or a single matter to form a conclusion about the entire group. This is reasoning from the specific to the general. As far as induction is concerned, the conclusion arrived at is always generalization. When few or many similar cases or occurrences end with the same result, an observer will believe that a similar occurrence in future will also end with the same result. On the basis of observed specifics, one makes a generalization that one thinks, will apply to all similar specifics in the future. Consider these statements.

Ifeanyi is wealthy, he does not respond to greetings.

Ahmadu is wealthy; he is full of himself.

Zuby is wealthy; he does not associate with the poor.

Ben is wealthy; he takes no notice of his neighbours.

We can conclude that wealthy people are pompous.

Lola and Ojo are barristers and their marriage broke up after one year.

Ify and Obi are doctors and they parted ways eighteen months after wedding.

Ama and Ada are engineers and they separated after six months of marriage.

Therefore, it is concluded that professional colleagues are incompatible. The number of specifics needed to establish a sound, unqualified inductive-generalization varies. It can be even one specific or just a few or a large number or even all specifics before reaching a true inductive generalization.

Deduction

This term refers to the logical process by which we arrive at a specific conclusion rather than a general one. It is the opposite of induction, which reasons from the specific to the general. With deductive kind of logic, we start from the general and end with the specific conclusion. For example:

All teachers are wise and intelligent.
Mr. Okeke is a teacher and argues with wisdom.
Mr. Akpu is a teacher and produces alpha student grades.
Mr. Abite is a teacher and won a state intellectual award.

Therefore, all teachers are wise and intelligent.

In deductive arguments, if the premises are true, the conclusion must be true. This is not true of inductive reasoning where all samples may need to be exhausted before any conclusion.

Nankarians are very industrious.
Nnanna is a Nankarian in Lagos.
Nnanna is very industrious.
Nkemfulu is a Nankarian in Enugu and very industrious.
Onyeka is a Nankarian in Jos and workaholic.
Ifeoma is a Nankarian at Nanka and works hard.
Therefore, Nankarians are hardworking.

An important distinction between inductive and deductive reasoning is that in inductive reasoning, we infer general from particular but in deductive reasoning, we infer particular from general.

E.g.	All food is nourishing.	(general)
	Rice is food.	(general)
	Rice is nourishing	(particular)

This is deductive generalization.

Yam is food and nourishing. (particular)
Banana is food and nourishing. (particular)
Beans is food and nourishing. (particular)
Therefore, probably, all food is nourishing. (general)
This is inductive generalization inferring general from particular.

Argument

An argument is the process of drawing conclusion from premises. It comprises a group of propositions of which one is claimed to follow from the rest which are regarded as providing the basis for the truth of the issue in question. It involves constructing a chain of reasoning. It is found in both deductive and inductive forms.

Examples: In arguing an assertion, 'Boys are better than girls in the home', there should be logical propositions to follow to arrive at the conclusion.

Proposition

This is an unproved statement in which an opinion or judgment is expressed. It makes a claim about something. It can be an assertion that can be proved true or denied, e.g.

1. Tall boys play football better.
2. Flashy girls are flirts.
3. Big towns have big markets.

Reasoning

This is a situation where a normal mind thinks logically and draws conclusions, judgments or inferences from given facts or premises. It also refers to the ability of someone to use good sense. This enables one to decide on an action. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines this word as an individual's power to think, understand and form opinions or judgments. Mr. X and Miss. Y are always seen together. They are both seen either in Mr. X's house or in Miss Y's house. They are seen in Mr. X's car together in the evenings on a stroll. There is *reason* to conclude that they are lovers or betrothed.

Conclusion

Conclusion is the fact, judgment or opinion reached through argument or reasoning. Conclusions are based on reasoning from facts and evidences. For

instance, if we see somebody walking uncontrollably and picking tins, bottles and even uprooting grass along the road, we might conclude that such a one is insane.

Fact

A fact is something that has actual existence or an event that has actually happened or is happening, according to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. It also refers to information regarded as being true and having reality. For instance, 'My handbag is made of leather.' In this case, if investigation is carried out, it will actually be discovered that the handbag is made of leather. That is the truth.

Opinion

An opinion is a mental estimate. It is that which a person believes in, convinces himself of based on what seems true. Whatever a person believes about something is his opinion of it. Let us consider these sentences:

1. In his opinion, she was wild.
2. Are their opinions based on facts?
3. I believe that this crisis would have been averted.

Syllogism

Syllogism is a reasoned argument in which there are two statements leading to a third statement or conclusion. It is, therefore, a three-part logical process. To make this concept clearer, we will mention again the term *premise*, which is a statement affirming or denying that something is true or false. It is on the basis of the premises that we draw *conclusions* or make *deductions*. In syllogism, we use two premises rather than one to arrive at conclusions. The first one called the *major premise* is a generalization covering all or some members of a category. The second premise, called the *minor premise* is the identification of an object, idea, and event as a member of the category covered by the major premise. From these premises, *conclusion* is drawn, which usually is the deduction that results from the application of the generalization of the major premise to the specific of the minor premise. If both the major and minor premises are valid, the conclusion should be valid too, that is, if the inferences correctly follow from the premises.

Examples:	All tables are made of wood.	(major)
	This is a table.	(minor)
	This is made of wood.	(conclusion)

Women are childish.	(major)
Ify is a woman.	(minor)
Ify is childish.	(conclusion)
All medical doctors are wealthy.	(major)
Nkem is a medical doctor.	(minor)
Nkem is wealthy.	(conclusion)
All accountants love statistics.	(major)
Some nurses do not love statistics.	(minor)
Some nurses are not accountants.	(conclusion)

Logical Fallacies

A fallacy is an erroneous, misleading or unsound idea, belief or argument as a result of some misuse of the reasoning processes. We use the word fallacy to apply to some sort of conclusion that has been reached on the basis of unsound logic. The idea that all Nigerians should want to live in America because America has a higher standard of living than Nigeria could be a fallacy. Fallacy does not apply to simple error such as that *Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe died in 1940*. Well-informed, highly intelligent human beings are often guilty of fallacious reasoning, though the more one knows how the mind uses logic the less likely he is to be illogical. Some of the common logical fallacies are discussed below.

The Sweeping Generalization

This fallacy is just a faulty induction based on insufficient sampling of specifics or lack of qualification of the generalization. For example, some people - and probably, a great many - have said, "The news journal 'Newswatch' often has credible stories". Since 'Newswatch' writes a fourth night-circulating journal and often has credible stories, it is not immune to occasionally slipping into faulty reporting. Seeing two or more of such slips, a person who strongly opposes what he-thinks are 'Newswatch's' political beliefs may jump to the sweeping generalization that 'Newswatch' magazine never tells the truth. A sufficient sampling of 'Newswatch's' stories would result in the qualified generalization that 'Newswatch' occasionally reports untrue stories as true. Another example is this: A well-to-do family might have two house helps from the same town who stole a few objects. The family might then make a sweeping generalization that "they all

from that town will steal”. Such faulty induction is unfair to other people of that town. Other sweeping generalizations are:

1. Policemen work off their aggressions by bullying citizens.
2. Teachers are unaware of the students’ most pressing problems.
3. Students resent the attempt of older people to guide their lives.

Adding the little words *some* or *many* to the statements can change these sweeping generalizations into acceptable statements. Beware of sweeping generalizations that lack sound inductive bases. An essay writer should learn to qualify generalizations with such qualifiers as *some*, *many*, *a few*, *majority*, etc.

Use of Faulty Premises

This may be called faulty deduction when one uses a faulty premise in drawing a deductive conclusion. The conclusion so drawn is very likely to be false. For example, one might hear a comment, “My mother is a good woman.” The major premise from which the comment derives may be that “any woman who cooks regularly and cleans the house is a good woman.” This is a premise that most certainly cannot be depended upon. Someone might also say, “Valentine is certainly a good Christian.” The premise for this conclusion might be, “Anyone who carries the Bible to church regularly is a good Christian.” This premise cannot be depended upon because many that carry Bible to church regularly do not behave as good Christians outside of church. Other examples of the use of faulty premises are:

1. It’s perfectly safe for me to drive. I have not drunk a great deal.
2. Rabiun started on alcohol and is now on marijuana. He will be on addictive drug soon.
3. Mrs. Lola is a devout Christian. You can depend on her to treat you right in business dealing.

Non Sequiturs

This is a Latin phrase which means ‘it does not follow’. It represents a fallacy related to the misuse of premises. It derives from a sort of wild jump from a premise to a conclusion that has little if anything to do with the premise. There almost always seems to be a relationship between the premise and the conclusion but a real relationship is lacking. Here are examples of non sequiturs:

1. Chief Okpudo drinks. How could he be a good senator?
- 2: Danjuma is always cheating on his wife. He probably treats her very badly at home.

The non sequitur differs from a faulty deduction only in that there is less of a relationship between it and its premise than there is between the faulty deduction and its premises. None of the above conclusions follows from the premise given. Can you give your own examples of ‘non sequiturs?’

Polarized Thinking

This simply means thoughts that are poles apart - completely opposite each other. Some people when dealing with complex ideas illogically indulge in polarized thinking, maintaining that a person must be either for or against an idea, either on this side or on that side - either at the North Pole or at the South Pole and not somewhere in-between. For instance, some people believe that if a person does not believe in God (or, more narrowly, is not a Christian) he must be an immoral, untrustworthy, person. This sort of thinking is also sometimes called *either-or thinking* since its practitioners are continually saying, “Either you are for me or you are against me”. Examples of polarized thinking are:

1. Either every student earns an ‘A’ or the teacher has failed in his job.
2. No one can use profane language and be a good, right-thinking person.

Begging the Question

This is a logical fallacy in which a ‘*reasoner*’ puts his conclusion into his premise and then tries to use that premise to prove his conclusion. There is no demonstration that because one idea is true, another must be true as a consequence. For instance, a person may argue that we are sure to have eternal life because the immortality of the soul guarantees that we will. The conclusion is that we will have eternal life based on the premise that assumes that the soul is immortal. The conclusion and premise are the same. Examples of begging the question are:

1. Education is desirable because educated people are desirable.
Educated people are desirable because education is desirable.
2. Your conscience forbids you to commit a certain act because it is wrong.
A certain act is wrong because your conscience forbids it.

False Analogy

An analogy is a comparison used to try to make an idea believable or to make a difficult concept clear. A false analogy is one that tries to make one idea seem true by comparing it with another idea that really has no relationship to the first. For example, if a person compares the Federal Government to a family to show that a huge national debt means financial disaster, he has used a false analogy for the Federal Government is not like an individual family. Again, if somebody compares a small, agrarian country of the late eighteenth century to a giant industrial nation of the twentieth century, it is a false analogy. Analogies and comparisons of all kinds can be very useful in making essays clearer and more interesting.

Chapter Five

Essay Writing

One of the most important aims of language study is effective communication. This can be achieved through speech and writing. In speech, people talk to and, with one another: people discuss, direct, instruct, inform, convince, describe, etc. through speech. In like manner, we can perform all the above mentioned activities and more through writing. Effective writing is one of the fundamental skills of an educated person.

Often people express their feelings on some particular topic or circumstance revealing their opinions and imaginative writing qualities. The essay is a form of reflective thinking and writing devoted to the, expression of the writer's views, rather than to an account of some external reality as does the composition. Composition is undertaken as an academic exercise in grammatically acceptable writing which is merely an act of putting together or making up by combining parts to construct a meaningful whole. An essay involves feeling as well as thinking and permits considerable freedom of style. It is essentially individual and no two people would write on the same topic in quite the same way. An essay consists of ideas, which are arranged in paragraphs, which in turn are made up of sentences built up of words.

Salient Features of the Essay

The features of a good essay include a rich content, its orderly presentation, correct style of the language, and avoidance of mechanical errors.

Content

This is the material, which a writer presents. Before a writer starts to write, he must re-visit his topic and note very carefully not only what is expected of the topic (subject-matter) but also for whom he is writing (the reader) and why (purpose). Writers always write with particular person(s) and aim in mind and this affects the presentation. While writing for an examination, a question may demand an answer in two or three parts. For example, the following question is in three parts:

Discuss possible ways in which you think the moral, academic and healthy development of the youth can be encouraged in Nigeria. The question relates to three areas: the moral, academic and healthy development of the youth. The candidate must treat the three parts in properly arranged manner. An essay is a

demonstration of a candidate's ability to present best what he knows to a particular reader for a particular purpose. Before writing, a writer arranges his points in the most suitable order. Each paragraph follows naturally from the one before it to the one after. This ensures clear continuity of thought through the whole essay. The original work plan can always be adjusted to include new ones or to cancel unwanted ones to the writers' advantage. But the original plan should be followed as closely as possible.

Writing of the Essay

While planning the note version, the student will have decided upon most of what he needs to say, and the most suitable order in which to say it. Therefore, the student should, when writing, concentrate primarily on the style and mechanical accuracy of the language through which he expresses his ideas, of course, in legible writing.

Style

The style of the language will depend on the particular sentence constructions and lexical items chosen. These have to be appropriate to the subject- matter, reader and purpose of the writing.

(a) Sentence Construction

Students should not rush into writing, just to fill their papers with ideas in long and clumsy sentences without pausing for a break. When this happens, the sentences made become long and rambling and are often difficult to follow. Let us consider this sentence:

The mass transit bus which I was to have taken to Lagos had already left when I arrived at the station, where the ticket office was shut because the booking clerk had gone home although it was only 6.00pm.

On the other hand, students should not write only very short simple sentences because they are afraid of making mistakes. Such sentences will invariably produce monotonous and 'babyish' style of writing.

Let us consider this:

I arrived at the school compound. The teacher had already left. I was to have read my essay to him. His office was locked. His secretary had gone home. It was only 3.00 p.m.

A good writer should avoid either writing in over-involved or over-simple style whether his sentences are grammatically correct or not. Great care should be taken in sentence construction. He should begin a fresh sentence whenever a new idea is to be expressed and place related clauses in subordinate clauses or phrases but not in separate sentences. The following sentences may make a difference.

The mass transit bus which I was to have taken to
Lagos had already left when I arrived at the station.
The ticket office was shut because the booking clerk
had gone home although it was only 6.00 p.m.

(b) Lexical items

As a writer, you should always try to select those words and phrases which express most exactly what you want to say. Do not use long, serious-sounding words in an attempt to impress your readers when a simpler word (or words) would be more appropriate in the particular context. If you are not sure of the meaning of a word, don't use it. Some students would think that what they say twice is more impressive than what they say just once. Repetition — either of the same word(s) or the same idea can sometimes add emphasis to a point, e.g. '*All we could perceive was stink, stink, nothing but stink*'. But often in students' essays, the only effect is that of monotony, e.g. '*When the teacher finally left the class and the lesson was over, the students dispersed and went their various ways*'. While avoiding unnecessary repetition, avoid circumlocution (i.e. saying something in an unnecessary round-about manner), e.g. '*I hope that your conditions of service continue to be satisfactory*' instead of '*I hope you are enjoying your conditions of service*'.

Many students also have acquired a stock of *clichés*, which they randomly use in their essays. Only expert writers can appropriately apply some old English words in essays. Similarly, *colloquialism* and *slang* should be left for informal letters or conversations between friends. Care should be taken with words and phrases, which are peculiar to the type of English spoken in the writer's area, but are not current in other English-speaking areas of the world.

There are certain words or expressions, which are called '*register*' for a particular area of study. It is expected that writers show familiarity with the basic registers used in the fields of technology, the sciences, education, health, culture, and so on. For instance, the following are some of the words and expressions used in connection with '**rain**': *breeze, wind, thunder, lightning, showers, drizzle, puddles, condensation, rainbow, rain-drops, gutters, flood, bridges, rain cats and dogs, rainfall*.

Mechanical Accuracy

The following aspects come under this heading:

- i. careless handwriting
- ii. careless omission of words
- iii. use of incorrect tense
- iv. wrong use of number
- v. wrong spelling
- vi. wrong use of parts of speech
- vii. wrong use of or omission of punctuation marks

It is not possible to list all possible mechanical errors. We will, here, consider grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Grammar

Errors mostly occur here when students use words, which they are not sure of their correctness. Every sentence used should have a subject and a main verb (unless a special effect is desired). Students' should avoid ambiguity, which often occurs through the vague use of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives, e.g. Mary told Pat that she had agreed with her teacher. He was caught by a policeman hiding in the bushes. (When he means, *He was caught in the bushes by a policeman*). Sometimes, a wrongly placed participle may produce, not just ambiguity but even absurdity, e.g. "Riding on my bicycle, a bee stung me".

Punctuation

Punctuation has been a major challenge to beginning writers. In the rush of an examination, candidates often omit punctuation marks, which they do not really consider important. Many of them find it difficult to distinguish between the punctuation marks and where or when to use them. Quite a number of them use comma in place of full stop, making their writing awkward. Every writer needs to know that punctuation is extremely important in helping to make clear what you wish to say. So, whenever you come to a pause in a sentence, decide whether a punctuation mark is required and, if so, what kind. When you arrive at the end of a sentence, decide what punctuation mark is required there.

A few of the often confused punctuation marks have been mentioned here to guide writers on their appropriate application. Similar grammatical problems arise from lack of understanding of the following aspects and their proper usage in various grammatical constructions: 1) Active and Passive Verb forms. 2) Direct and Indirect Speech forms. 3) Verb Forms and Usage in sentences. Details of these grammatical elements can be accessed from credible grammar books in

many bookshops. The punctuation marks mentioned here are: Full Stop, Comma, Colon and Semi-colon.

Full Stop (.): A full stop marks the end of a complete thought (sentence). It does not however mean that a group of words that has a full stop but does not convey a complete thought is a sentence.

Comma (,): The comma is used to mark a brief pause in a sentence. It serves as an indicator that points the reader where to pause and nowhere else. A comma is never used to mark the end of a sentence and should never be used to join two complete sentences.

Colon (:): The colon is chiefly used, these days, to introduce a list of items or ideas, or statements arising from earlier statements. For instance,

The following are the major items: biro pen, marker pen, cardboard sheet, pencil, eraser, exercise book, ruler and sharpener.

Semi-colon (;): The semi-colon is used to indicate a longer pause than the comma. It is used instead of a full stop when the coordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but* and *or*) are omitted in a compound sentence to separate multiple independent clauses. The semi-colon is used to join statements that are related to one another and are themselves complete sentences. For example, *Deployment and dismissal of military personnel will vary from country to country; details may be found in the world gazette.*

Spelling

Some students are often careless about spelling words correctly. Spelling errors can mar a well-written essay. Therefore, whenever a student is not sure of the correct spelling of a word, he should look it up in the dictionary or use another suitable one instead.

How to Generate and Develop Essay Ideas

If a writer has to choose an essay topic, he should not have much difficulty in finding something to write. There could be a variety of subjects to consider relating to life, history, news, politics, etc. Sometimes, however, ideas do not come very readily. If this is the case, he should ask himself the following question, what? Where? When? Why? How? For instance, let us apply this method to the essay titled, "Markets". What is a market? It is a place where things are bought and sold, such as food, clothing and household goods, etc.

Where do we find markets? - towns, villages, crossroads, etc.

Why do people go to market? - to buy and sell.

When are markets held? - daily, weekly, etc.?

How do markets benefit the community?

By encouraging farmers to produce more than they need themselves, by promoting trade, by promoting inter-communal relationships, etc. As ideas are sorted out this way, it will be discovered that one will lead to another until there are more ideas than required. Then the writer will select the best ones. The ideas selected will then be sorted out into a plan. The writer must decide on his line of approach to his topic and must ensure that a consecutive and comprehensive line of thought is adhered to.

Let us take an example. The essay title is **‘Fishing’** and the following ideas are jotted down: sea fishing, river fishing, fishing for pleasure, fishing to make a living, fishing boots, fishing nets, fishermen, fish. A writer must think these ideas over and decide what line of approach is suitable for him. Supposing he decides to describe a day he spent with some fishermen, he may decide to approach it in the following detail: how he went fishing, companions, canoe, time, place, difficulties, the catch, etc. There are plenty of ideas here, but still not planned.

This could be planned and set out in paragraph headings thus:

- (i) Introduction — why I decided to go fishing
- (ii) Companions, equipment, canoe, etc.
- (iii) The departure — sailing to the fishing ground
- (iv) Casting the nets — the type of fish caught, difficulties and discomforts, e.g. rain and wind.
- (v) The total catch, the return home.
- (vi) Conclusion — the enjoyment of the expedition and what gave rise to it.
Decision to go again or never to go again and why

Thus the essays are built up and ready to be written out. The purpose of planning an essay is to guide the writer to reproduce a planned work. Any deviation from the plan may, therefore, destroy the whole essay. In all, the whole plan must be relevant to the topic.

In this chapter, four basic types of essay are discussed: Narrative, Descriptive, Argumentative and Expository.

Narrative

Narrative essays are about activities or actions that have already taken place. When writing a narrative, you must decide which events should be included and which excluded, depending on whom you are addressing and why. In a long narrative, you should first decide which main episodes it is appropriate to include. Next, decide which particular events, out of all those in each episode, is appropriate to include. Finally, decide in how much detail you will describe each of these events. In a narrative, it is usually a good idea to follow a strict

chronological order, unless some special effect of uncertainty or suspense is required. Place each episode in the order in which it actually occurred, and then describe each event within an episode in chronological order.

It is often necessary to have a separate introduction and conclusion, since the first and last events will themselves form a suitable beginning and ending. This is especially so when you are giving a purely factual and objective account of events. If, however, you wish to stress a particular impression which the events have made on you, you may state this impression in a brief introduction and reemphasize it at the end of your essay in an equally brief conclusion e.g. how much you enjoyed an excursion or celebration or how successful you feel the past year's activities of your town union have been. Always be sure, though, that such personal impressions are relevant to your reader and purpose. One of the good features of a narrative essay is the correct use of the verb tenses. In a narrative, the usual tense is the simple past, while any continuous actions forming the background against which the simple past tense action took place will be described in the past progressive tense. An action, which is described as being completed before another past action took place, requires the past perfect tense. You should also have to use reported speech in some kinds of narrative. You need to be absolutely sure of the tense sequences employed when reporting speech.

Descriptive

A descriptive essay presents a person, place or thing in a way that readers feel as if it is in front of them or that they taste it or that they can hear or smell it. There may be occasions when a student is required to describe an object, a person or animal, a place or a scene. To make a good description, he must start by visualising very clearly what he is going to describe and decide which details to include and which to exclude. If, for instance, a person has to describe a missing friend to the police, he would include only those details by which they could identify him. If a student is describing his school hall to a theatre manager somewhere, who wishes to perform there, he would naturally concentrate on the inside of the hall - especially the stage, dressing room, lighting and seating capacity. Description of the external features of the building might be unnecessary in this case.

Once decision is taken on which details to include in the description, the details must be arranged in an order which will enable the reader to grasp their relationships and thus have a clear overall picture of what is being described. A well written descriptive essay should be made up of five paragraphs: the introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion, unless otherwise stated.

(a) To describe an object

Start with the basic part and afterwards describe the other parts that are attached to it. For instance, in describing a particular type of tree to a person who has never seen it, begin with the trunk and then continue in turn with the branches, leaves and flowers or fruit (mentioning, when appropriate, the size, shape, colour and arrangement of each part). When you need to describe both the inside and outside of an object, begin with the outside. In the case of a lost suitcase, describe its external appearance e.g. shape, colour, size, make, inscriptions, before listing its contents. It may also be important to describe the uses of the object and its importance to you and your community. Does it have any economic or social importance? How?

(b) To describe a person or animal

Begin with the general features such as size, age, facial looks and colour. For a person, describe general characteristics and particular features e.g. height, hair, build, identification marks (if any) and finally dressing habit. For an animal, describe the head, neck, body, smell, feed, legs and finally the tail stating shape and size of each part. Also describe the animal behavior, the type of noise/sound it makes and habitat.

(c) To describe a place

Start from the outside and describe the various parts in the order in which a visitor entering the place might see them. Mention any special features, which will aid recognition- colour, size, and shape. However, it may not be out of place to start from the inside and describe the most central or important parts first before describing the surrounding parts in each direction. For instance, a description of a town could begin with the *Igwe's* palace and continue with the quarters lying to the north, south, east and west of it.

(d) To describe a scene

Begin with what can be seen in the foreground, middle ground and background in that order. In a purely '*objective*' kind of description, no introduction or conclusion is usually required. The writer's impression is not needed at all. In a '*subjective*' description, however, it is often a good idea to state briefly at the beginning one's personal impressions of whatever one is describing and re-emphasize them at the end.

Argumentative

In an argumentative situation a student may be required to argue in support of or against some idea, with the aim of persuading his reader or listener to agree with his point of view. The first step to take is to ensure that the side taken is most likely to convert to the writer's point of view the particular person being addressed. The writer has to think, probably, of other points, which an opponent might put forward in support of his opposing point of view. It is usually a good idea to introduce some of these arguments if the writer can refute them satisfactorily, since this will show the reader that the writer had considered them but felt he must reject them. Sometimes, a writer may be able not only to refute an argument but also to show that the reverse is in fact the case, e.g., if one is arguing in favour of co-education, one might show, not only that the argument that boys and girls in the same class distract each other from their studies is groundless, but that rather each group does, in fact, work harder so as to win approbation of members of the opposite sex. Remember that you should never dismiss an opponent's arguments with scorn and ridicule but instead with valid reasons.

If a writer decides to refute some of the arguments, which an opponent might put forward, it is usually better to begin with them and the refutations of them before stating those arguments in support of the writer's view point. In this way, the writer would have left in the mind of the reader a strong final impression in favour of his own case. For the same reason, it is often advisable to present the weakest arguments first and end with the strongest.

In arguing a topic, the writer will need a suitable introduction and conclusion. The introduction should state briefly, the writer's own point of view, while the conclusion should re-emphasize its excellence. The writer should not repeat what has earlier been said.

We have considered the kind of argumentative writing where a writer argues either in support of, or against a particular idea. There are however, cases where a writer may be required to present arguments both for and against an idea without necessarily taking sides. In this case, the writer can list all the advantages first, followed by the disadvantages (all in the order of their importance). Or he can sort the advantages and disadvantages into pairs, which more or less balance each other. It is often helpful to introduce a paragraph containing a new argument with one of the 'linking' words or phrase e.g., *Moreover*, *Similarly*, *Secondly*, *In addition*, and *Another problem* (or reason, use, advantage, etc.) to indicate continuity of thought. We can also use words like *Consequently*, *Thus*, and *As a result* to indicate a consequence. Linking words like *However*, *Nevertheless* and *On the other hand*, can be used to indicate a contrast. After the 'linking' word or

phrase, it is often a good idea to state clearly the main point of the new paragraph, i.e. the ‘topic’ sentence.

Expository

This is the genre of writing which purpose is to explain, illustrate, clarify, interpret or explicate an idea or a process in a way that it becomes clear for readers. To expose means to uncover or lay something bare in a way that others know what it is. It could be an investigation, evaluation, or even argumentation about an idea for clarification. Each time a writer is engaged in analysis, criticism or evaluation, he tends to explain something to the reader. This is the type for term papers and examinations in schools, in letters, memoranda and professional reports in the work place. Expository essays are based on factual information about things that exist rather than on imaginative ideas. An expository essay aims at clarifying and exposing things, ideas, persons, and places through descriptions, process, comparison/contrast, or through problem/solution. The objective is to make readers aware of things given in the essay by full and detailed information in a way that readers become knowledgeable about the topic. An expository essay is usually made up of five paragraphs: an introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion, unless otherwise required.

An essay on *Armed Robbery* or *Drug Trafficking in Nigeria* might be expository. Similarly, to explain how a jet engine works might be expository because an analysis of the engine mechanics would be given before explaining the operation of the engine as a whole. The following subjects are likely to give rise to expository essays: *The Post Office*, *The Health Service*, *Education*, *Discipline*, *Christmas*, *Adventure*, *Home-making*, etc. Essays on ‘garri’ processing, soap or basket making, cake or bread baking are expository, giving insight into the processes with procedural details of the operations.

EXERCISES

1. Write an essay on the following topics:
 - (a) Women in politics
 - (b) A day when history was made
 - (c) Features of my prospective spouse
 - (d) Adult delinquency in Nigeria
 - (e) Is NYSC a success or a failure?
2. Describe your house in the village
3. What do you consider the future of civil service in Nigeria? Do you think civil service is doing any good to Nigeria?

4. Write an essay on the following titles:
- (a) The most important feature of good education
 - (b) The finest city I have ever seen
 - (c) People who would never be missed
 - (d) Holidays at home

The Paragraph

A paragraph is a group of closely related sentences that develop a central idea about a specific topic. It is a sub-division in a long written passage. In a more specific term, a paragraph can be described as *an essay in miniature*. A paragraph requires much the same process of composition as a whole essay because just like an essay, a paragraph must have a purpose. Thus, it can be noted that a paragraph is a vital structure of any good piece of written communication. It is often made of several sentences – between three and eight sentences closely related to one another and to the thought expressed by the whole composition. A good paragraph has a beginning, a body or development, and a conclusion. No credit would be awarded to a poorly paragraphed piece of work.

The purpose of paragraphing, like that of punctuation, is to help the writer to convey his message more clearly and thus, make things easier for the reader. A paragraph may consist of a single sentence, but it will more usually consist of a collection of sentences closely related to one another because they deal with the same subject matter — the same topic or theme, or at least a new aspect of the topic under consideration.

Each paragraph is a unit, since it deals with only one topic and should deal with only one concern. Every sentence in the paragraph should have a distinct bearing upon the sentences that precede and follow it. As soon as the idea dealt with is exhausted, another paragraph should be begun. It follows, therefore, that there is a greater break of thought between paragraphs than between sentences.

If the paragraph deals with a new aspect of the topic in the preceding paragraph, it will often be introduced by a connective or link word or phrase, such as *Again, Besides, However, Nevertheless, In short, On the other hand, In addition, Furthermore*, etc. While such connectives are often useful, and sometimes necessary, it is better to avoid using them to excess. Since a paragraph operates as a chain, consisting of a number of separate links and each link *is a* complete unit in itself, it can also serve to connect the links immediately before and immediately after it. At the same time, it can serve to carry the reader forward to the next stage in the development of the writer's theme.

Essential Qualities of a Paragraph

The essential qualities of a good paragraph are unity and coherence.

Unity

Here, the paragraph deals with only one main idea or topic. Every sentence in the paragraph should bear upon this topic. Any sentence that does not should be excluded. This concentration of the paragraph upon a single idea helps the reader to follow the writer's trend of thought, one step at a time.

Coherence

Despite the proposition that all the sentences forming a paragraph should relate to the same idea, they should also develop the idea naturally and logically. One sentence should lead naturally to the next so as not to keep the reader in doubt about the idea expressed.

The Topic Sentence

As we have seen, a good paragraph will deal with only one point or idea. This idea will usually be announced in one of the sentences, the other sentences serving to elaborate the point made in the topic sentence by the addition of explanatory or supplementary information relating to it.

The topic sentence gives meaning to the whole paragraph and accordingly, calls for emphasis. Attention must, therefore, be given to its position in the paragraph. As with the sentence, the emphatic positions in a paragraph are at the beginning and the end. When a topic sentence appears at the end of the paragraph it makes use of an inductive method of organization or periodic construction in contrast with the deductive type or loose construction in which the topic sentence is at the beginning of the paragraph. Beginning writers are, however, generally advised to use the deductive method in which the topic sentence is thus expanded until the idea is fully developed. This method brings the purpose of writing into focus at the initial time. Let us consider this paragraph below:

Writing is a very important communicative skill without which contact with people far away from us in terms of full exchange of ideas would be impossible. It is a very important skill for study in that it helps to strength what we have gained from reading. We cannot write properly what we do not understand. Writing, therefore, helps us to confirm the level of understanding we have attained on a particular item or subject of discourse. It helps us to document what we regard as important.

(Adapted from *Understanding and Using English*, P.A.I. Obanya et al, Onitsha; Leadway Books 1987:251)

In the passage above, the issue discussed is the importance of writing. It opened with stating the importance of writing in people's lives. Then, follows the details of criteria necessary to acquire good writing skill. It is further detailed out by subsequent sentences until we get to the last sentence.

EXERCISE

- (1) Identify the topic sentence in this paragraph:

He searched through his pockets and his wardrobe. He was getting anxious as it contained a large amount of money. What would he tell his client? He could not hope to pay back such amount of money. He was relieved to find the wallet trapped amongst a pile of old magazines.

Write down as many ideas as you can about each of the following subjects:

1. Holidays
2. Wrong roads to wealth
3. Rain
4. Respect for elders
5. Parliamentary government

Chapter Six

Correspondence

Simply put, correspondence is the act of exchanging letters. It includes all kinds of communication, which involves, giving and receiving of information through letters, postcards, telegrams, memos, reports and the like. Thus, letter writing is very useful and probably the most needed means of contact between human beings, and more so, by people in the less developed parts of the world, where technological development has not reached such an advanced stage where everybody can have access to the telephone. Letter writing is as vital to a company or a department as it is to an individual. There is always the need for an interchange of information and pleasantries between friends and relatives. For firms, departments and offices, the bulk of their business lies in reading and writing letters. All official transactions are conducted and sealed through written and signed agreements. Without mastering the art of letter writing, one will be unable to discharge one's duties to oneself and to the society at large. Letters are broadly divided into two, namely, *formal* and *informal*. What determines the formality or informality of a letter includes the following:

- (a) The purpose of writing and/or the subject-matter (topic) for discussion.
- (b) The relationship between the correspondents.
- (c) The age difference between the correspondents.

The purpose of a letter could be to solicit, to inform, to educate, to entertain, to impress, to complain, etc. A letter meant to entertain the receiver would adopt a chatty, colloquial and informal pattern while a letter meant to treat an issue on a non-personal note would take a more serious or formal form. The former would be more likely between relatives and friends while the later would likely be found between strangers, business associates and official correspondents. The subject-matter is derived from the purpose of writing and is put down as the heading in formal letters.

Formal Letters

Formal letters can be categorized into official and business letter types. Official letters are day to day letters between individuals and government offices while business letters are letters between individuals or business organisations in the promotion of their business. Official letters include letters of application, commendation, protest, attestation, etc., while business letters include letters of

enquiry, order, goodwill, complaint, delivery, etc.

Formal letters are usually written to people who are not previously well known to the writer or people who may have never been met and are, therefore, purely non-personal in style and content. The format for both official and business letter types are the same but official letters tend to be lengthier and detailed than business letters. Formal letters unlike informal letters can be read by many other people other than the persons addressed. In firms and offices, a letter can be read by as many people as are copied. For instance, a letter can be written to a director of a school and copied to all heads of departments and lecturers, and even students, as the case may be. The essence of this is to make the people copied aware of the development discussed in such letter. They are, however, not expected to give any response to the issue since the letter is not addressed to them. They are only copied to notify them of the issues raised in the letter.

Business Letters

A firm's letters are its ambassadors that carry the prestige of the firm. The general public would base its impression of a firm on its letters because such letters would mirror the firm. A standard business letter should be sincerely presented, in clear and eloquent style. The grammar and presentation including the choice of words should be distinct and precise. There should be no cosmetic or irrelevant words and expressions. No time is wasted greeting and giving pleasantries but the writer should go straight to the topic and make his point. He is motivated by an issue at stake which he also goes ahead to address. Such issues more often have related material or financial gains or losses which also influence their presentation e.g. a letter concerning damage of dispatched goods will be influenced by the pains of the loss sustained. Generally, the business letter serves three main functions:

- (i) It conveys a message, maybe, to seek or give information, to place order or acknowledge an order, to book an appointment, to forward documents, to create awareness of a firm's services, and so on.
- (ii) It provides permanent record of transactions for future reference and also provides evidence in case of legal action.
- (iii) It creates opportunities for expressing goodwill, by creating favourable impression on the reader's mind about a firm and its management.

Language Use

When we write an official or business letter, we are addressing someone we may never have met. Even if we have met him, we certainly do not know him well, and our only aim is to give him information as concisely as possible, making our meaning clear. In doing so, our language does not express our own private individual personalities and feelings. It is purely formal. Below are some words, phrases and clauses that are appropriate in official or business letters:

Formal

receive, obtain
request
inform
ensure
thank you
thank you very much
require
employer
permit

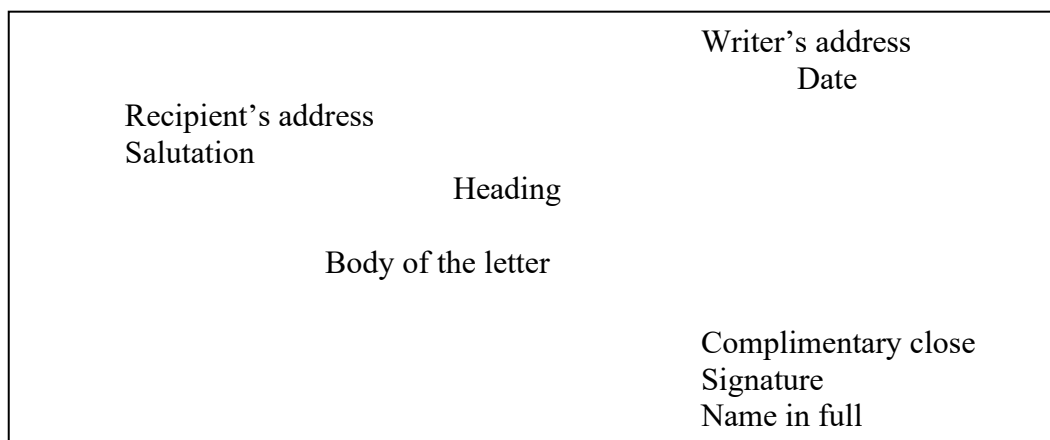
Friendly

get
ask
tell, let know
make sure
thanks
thanks a lot
need
boss
allow, let

In official or business letter situations, contracted forms or colloquial language should never be used. The use of *Thanks* is informal and should never be used in formal letters and other formal writings. *Thank you* should be used instead. The tone of this letter type should be clear, polite but formal, aimed at establishing a fact. The tone should suit the occasion and purpose, being persuasive, apologetic, conciliatory, firm and so on as circumstances require.

The Format

The official or business letter format is as follows:



The Address and Date

In a formal letter, the address of the writer is placed at the upper right hand corner. A writer should never write his own name above it. The address should be punctuated carefully, with a comma at the end of each line except the last where there should be a full stop. A writer should remember to begin each proper name with a capital letter, and to place full stop after abbreviations. If the abbreviation includes the last letter of the word, the writer will be at liberty to place full stop or not. For instance, *Road* can be shortened to *Rd.* (with a stop) or *Rd* (without a stop). Street can be shortened to *St.* (with a stop) or *St* (without a stop). The address can be ***blocked*** or ***indented***. If blocked, every line of the address begins immediately below the lines above it. If indented, each line begins further in, from the line above it. In indenting, however, care must be taken to ensure evenness in the spaces in the right corner. Consider the following addresses:

Blocked Address

10, Nnamdi Azikiwe Way,
Industrial Layout,
Ikate.

Indented Address

10, Nnamdi Azikiwe Way,
Industrial Layout,
Ikate.

A writer has the option not to punctuate his address at all. In that case, he avoids any possible punctuation errors. Let us examine the following examples:

Office of the Accountant General
Federal Ministry of Education
Abuja

Girls' High School
P.O. Box 14
Agulu

The date comes on the next line below the address. It is not indented with the address but begins directly underneath the first line of the writer's address.

The date may be punctuated or left unpunctuated. British style is to write day before the month while American style presents the month before the day:

British style

1 October 1960
1 October, 1960
12th June 1998
12 June, 1998

American style

October 1, 1960
October 1st 1960
June 12th, 1998
June 12, 1998

There are different formats of writing the date thus:

- (a) 10th March, 1999.
- (b) 10th Mar., 1999.
- (c) 10/3/99.
- (d) 10-3-99.
- (e) 10.3.99.

It is always better to write out the date in full as in (a) above, especially in formal letters. It should be noted that the endings: st, nd, rd, th, which are ordinal numbers never take a full stop after them. They are not abbreviations.

In formal letters, the receiver's address is written at the left-hand corner of the letter. Both of the addresses may be indented, both may be blocked or the writer's address may be indented and the receiver's blocked. Unlike the writer's address, the receiver's address should be written exactly as it will be written on the envelope. If the letter is to be sent outside the state, the address indicates the state and if being sent outside the country, the address indicates the country.

Receiver's Address

The receiver's address gives the full and exact title, name of the person, firm or organization written to. It is usually placed at the left corner of the first page on the next line after the writer's address. This address is not usually followed by a date.

Salutation

In a formal letter, there is not such large choice of greetings. The commonest salutation is 'Dear Sir' best suited for a formal letter addressed to a single person. A letter to a company or a number of individuals (i.e. partnerships) would take the salutation 'Dear Sirs' (i.e. to Messrs. F.B.K. & Co.). 'Messrs.' is not used for limited companies and incorporated bodies that should be addressed through the secretary. If we know that the receiver is a woman, 'Dear Madam' is

adopted whether the woman is married or unmarried. Esq. (for Esquire) is legally restricted to certain classes of persons (e.g. judges, magistrates and barristers) and must be used with the initials of the addressee (J.K.J. Yusuf, Esq.). No other titles (Mr., Mrs., Sir, Chief, Dr. etc.) are attached before the initials of the addressee where Esq. is attached. There are other special forms of salutations for special designations. Some of them are:

Designation	Official salutation
President	Your Excellency or Mr. President
Governor	Your Excellency
Bishop	Your Lordship
Archbishop	Your Grace
Pope	Your Grace/Your Holiness
Clergyman	Reverend Sir
Professor/Vice Chancellor	Dear Sir
Army/Navy/Air Force Chief	Dear Sir

In British English, the comma is widely used after salutation. However, there is a modern tendency to dispense with punctuation entirely throughout the date and name and address, after the salutation and after the complimentary close. Only those punctuation marks that are necessary for proper understanding of the communication are used in the body of the letter.

Heading

It is always helpful to give an official letter a heading. The heading is a brief statement of the purpose of writing. It points to the content of the letter and helps the recipient know at once what the letter is dealing with. The heading given to a letter is determined by the subject-matter of the letter. The heading of a letter saves the time of the receiver in sorting the letter and also enables him to attend to such a letter accordingly. In offices, files are opened according to subject matters as expressed in the heading. A wrongly headed letter may be denied the attention it needs. The heading may be written in small letters, in which case, it will be underlined or in capital letters, which is not underlined. Some headings are preceded with the word '*re*'. This is a Latin word meaning '*in the matter of*'. It is not an abbreviation and should not take a full stop after it. Its use is traditional, and a heading without it is perfectly in order.

Body

The body of the letter carries the message of the letter. It could be purely business or official. The body of the letter begins with an introductory paragraph making reference to previous letters or replies or advertisements stating dates of writing. Thereafter, the message of the letter should be stated in clear logical terms. Ambiguous and needless elaboration should be avoided. A writer should be clear in his mind what he wants to say and should simply say it in straight forward language, preferring short words and phrases to long ones. Short paragraphs should be preferred and each one with a clear-cut message.

The use of incomplete sentences, contractions, slang, clichés, and all other forms of colloquialism must be avoided. All rules of grammar must be carefully observed - punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, tenses, etc.

Closing

The subscription, 'Yours faithfully', in formal letters is correct for all occasions and there is little point bothering too much about other forms of closure that may be right in particular circumstances. If the letter begins with 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam', it must end with '*Yours faithfully*'. The era of 'Yours obediently' or 'Yours obedient servant' is gone. If a letter begins formally, it must also end formally. There is always a comma after the subscription (closing).

Signature and Name

A writer's signature is his own private mark, which identifies him. It should always be written in longhand not printed or typed. Indeed, if it is printed or typed, it is no longer a signature. The full names (not initials) come after the signature on the next line. The surname may come first, in which case, it is separated from the rest of the names with a comma. The surname may also come last but no comma separates it from the rest of the names. The writer's names are written in full because the receiver will not usually know the writer personally. The writer should also write his title (Miss, Dr., Mr., Chief, Rev., etc.) in bracket after his names. If a formal letter is signed for someone else, it should be signed '*for*'. In business letters, the name of the company is typed preceded by '*for*' below the close as in:

(1)

Yours faithfully,
ضام
Adeleke Omoluabi Oke (Mr.)

(2)

Yours faithfully,
For Fortune Enterprises Ltd.,
گنیے ضک
Ifeanyi Obi Obieze
Public Relations Officer.

Letter of Enquiry

This is an information-seeking letter. It seeks information on issues like range of services available in an establishment, e.g., raw materials, finished goods, prices of commodities, mode of delivery, and so on. To an applicant, an enquiry letter may seek information on conditions of employment and range of salary offered. In this instance, a stamped, self-addressed envelope may accompany such letter for reply. An applicant may also want to find out the minimum qualification required for a particular position he desires, the possibility of in-service training or prospect of promotion. The reply to the enquiry should also come in form of a formal letter giving details of information sought. Where the information is not available, the enquirer should be directed to possible sources of help. A reply like this could also draw the attention of the enquirer to other issues that might interest him, which he did not mention in his letter.

Order

An order letter is written to a firm to place order for goods or services from them. A letter to a renowned bookshop or publisher ordering certain stock of books from them is also an order letter. It is usually sent in response to a quotation earlier received and in reply to customers who have indicated interest in the wide range of goods and services earlier advertised. An order placed on the basis of a quotation must be linked to the quotation by reference number and date.

Quotation

Letters of quotation are responses to letters of enquiry. They provide information on the range of goods and services requested. An essential quality of a quotation is that it should be explicit and state clearly and fully the nature and quality of goods quoted for.

Sample Formal Business Letter

Mascot Associates Ltd.,
100 Kuta Road,
Minna,
Niger State.
08 March, 2016.

The Chairman,
Ogale Engineering Works,
Sauka Kahuta.

Dear Sir,

MAINTENANCE OF OUR OFFICIAL VEHICLES

This is the blocked letter style and is in constant use in business communication. Its outstanding feature is the commencement of all typing lines including those of the subject heading and complimentary close at the left-hand margin. Some people who use this style prefer to place the writer's address and the date in its usual position on the right, because it helps to give the letter more balanced appearance. It also enables the date to be easily and readily identified in filing.

For this letter, full punctuation is adopted. Both addresses and date and salutation are punctuated and the paragraphs are blocked. The complimentary close is also punctuated.

Yours faithfully,

جڻ ڀڳ

Johnson Ade Ibeji (Chief)
Chief Executive.

APPLICATION LETTER

A good letter of application should:

- a.(i) State the source of information on the existence of vacancy
- (ii) State the type of job applied for
- b. Arouse the interest of the employer by stating:
 - (i) Personal data: name, age, place of birth, marital status, sex, state of origin, contact address
 - (ii) Educational qualifications obtained with dates
- c. Work experience (if any). Why does the applicant want a new job, if he is

- on the job already?
- d. Convince the employer of the applicant's suitability for the job by
 - (i) describing special abilities/skills/contributions;
 - (ii) stating publications (if any);
 - (iii) stating awards or recommendations;
 - (iv) stating membership of professional bodies (if any).
 - e. Provide personal referees.

Note that the referees must agree to serve as referees before their names are given.

An application letter can be presented in two ways: in *Essay Form* or by the use of *Curriculum Vitae (CV)*.

An example of application letter in the essay form is presented as follows:

12, Ibom close
Warri Estate
Warri
20th April, 2019.

The Vice Chancellor
University College
Ibadan
Nigeria

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF A CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

I would like to apply for the post of a chief accountant as advertised in the *Daily Tempo* of 11th April, 2019.

I am twenty-eight years old and single. I am a male from Obigbo town in Ikate Local Government Area of Edo State. I live in Warri with my uncle.

I attended Uzubi High School from 1999 to 2005 where I obtained my West African School Certificate in 2006. I also attended Federal Polytechnic, Kaduna, where I obtained ND and HND in Accountancy in 2007 and 2010 respectively. I

also hold a Bachelor of Science Degree of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, in Entrepreneurship. I graduated in 2015.

After my National Youths Service Corps exercise in 2016, I was employed as an accounts officer in the State Security Agency where I still hold the same post. I want to be employed in your institution to enable me have a wider range of opportunities to contribute my quota in the educational development process of the nation.

During my National Youths Service Programme, I led the team that exposed the embezzlement of one billion naira (N1b) in my place of primary assignment. Because of this and other activities I engaged in, I was awarded the corps member of the year. I also won a sports gold medal for the State of my primary assignment in 2016, as a sprinter.

The following people have accepted to be my referees:

1. Engr. Aliyu Baba Mohammed
National Orientation Agency
Yobe State Secretariat.
2. Rev. Ayola Babatunde
Bible Training Centre
Ipaja.
3. Dr. Chris Obidi Okere
Department of Marketing
Federal Polytechnic
Kaduna.

Enclosed are the photo start copies of my credentials and certificates. I look forward to an invitation to interview.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

قوڑ ضبېگ

Audu, Bulus Ningi

An Application Letter by Curriculum Vitae (CV)

In using the Curriculum Vitae (CV) form, the applicant uses only an introductory or covering letter, which introduces the Curriculum Vitae. The CV is attached to the introductory letter which provides information on the source of information on the existence of vacancy. It also states that the CV and other credentials are attached to it and then seeks for an interview with the prospective employer. It is then closed like every other formal letter.

Example of a covering letter:

12, Ibom Close,
Warn Estate,
Warri.
20th May, 2018.

The Registrar,
Federal University of Technology,
Minna,
Niger State.

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF A CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

I hereby apply for the post of a Chief Accountant as advertised in the *Daily Tempo* of 11th April, 2019.

Attached to this letter are my Curriculum Vitae (CV), certificates and testimonials which contain detailed information about me.

I look forward to an invitation to interview.
Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

ƆpƆts ڤتگنڤوڤتڤ
Wadatta, Nuhu Baba.

Writing a Curriculum Vitae

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a written overview of someone's work life and often intends to present a complete record of someone's career. Writing curriculum vitae (CV) is an important activity of every job seeker. CVs are used for a wide range of purposes and across a wide range of situations. There are different types of engagement opportunity that people seek. While some seek for fresh employment, others seek for career change; others yet seek to expose themselves for various other types of opportunities, like political appointments or positions. Some other people write CV for scholarships, grants or for societal recognition. Whatever the purpose, CVs are meant to single people out of the crowd.

The stiff competition in almost all spheres of life has generated the need to put more effort into the way people should present themselves to prospective employers and society too. This has resulted in the correctly held view that a good CV is what can make a difference when it comes to opening of doors. Thus, "send a copy of your CV..." has become the standard practice for almost every job advertisement. Your CV will give the impression of you to someone who could play an important part in your future. One special thing about first impression is that – good or bad – it tends to stick because, once formed, it is very hard to shift.

The first task in writing a CV is to determine what you want your CV to do for you. Your job-seeking CV should fit the task to make it work because its suitability could cause employers to take a positive look on you. You could make your CV stand out from the rest by presenting relevant details that could give you advantage over other competitors in the task you want the CV to perform. Your uncommon background details could be advantageous to your efforts. There are ground rules to take note of while writing your CV.

The ground rules for CV writing are:

1. Your CV needs to fit the task for which you intend to use it.
2. Your CV has to convey a good impression of you.
3. There needs to be enough in your CV to make readers want to engage further with you.
4. Your CV has to be concise and relevant to what you apply for.
5. Your CV has to make it clear to everyone where you are coming from (present status) and what you are seeking to achieve.

Good jobs attract large numbers of applicants. So, when facing a competitive job opportunity, something special is needed, something that will grab the reader's

attention and make him sit up and take notice of you. What you offer should come in one quick read of your CV because it might not get another chance. What you have to offer must match up with what the employer wants. Every CV that aims at engaging and overcoming competition holds on to the strong points of the applicant. The strong point of the applicant is the point where there is a match between what the employer is seeking for (selection criteria) and what the applicant has to offer. Strong points could include the following:

1. The right qualification
2. The right experience
3. The particular required type of training
4. The kind of personal qualities desired by the employer

Unsolicited CV

There is this CV that is not solicited or advertised, but which applicants also send out to prospective employers. The CV could, however, connect with a vacancy that has already been advertised or yet to be advertised. Before sending out this CV, the applicant first considers:

1. Who will I send my CV to?
2. What will make them interested in me?
3. What am I looking for?

Applying for career change

When applying for career change, certain things are necessary.

1. You need to make it clear that you are seeking career change.
2. You should make it clear why you have made the decision to change careers and explain your reasons to show that you are serious.
3. You need to say why you think you are suitable for the new career you are choosing and also identify any transferable areas of skill, experience, job know-how, new academic qualifications, etc.
4. You may also address your salary expectations.

Note that you need to specify your reasons for wishing to change career in a positive light and do not project yourself as a misfit or as perpetually discontented or marginalised. Also, do not dwell on the negative points about the career or the employer you intend to leave.

Sample of a Job-seeking CV

Personal Data

Name:	Adebayo Johnson Magaji
Date of birth:	15th May, 1970
Place of birth:	Nanka, Orumba North Local Govt. Area
Marital Status:	Single
Sex:	Male
State of origin:	Edo state
Nationality:	Nigerian
Contact address:	12, Ibom Close Warri Estate, Warri.

Educational Attainment

Ibru Close Primary School	1975 - 1981
Uzubi High School, Uzubi	1983 - 1989
Federal Polytechnic, Oko	1990 - 1992
Federal Polytechnic, Oko	1993 - 1995
Federal University of Technology, Minna	1997 - 1999

Certificates Obtained

First School Leaving Certificate	1981
West African School Certificate	1989
Ordinary National Diploma	1992
Higher National Diploma	1995
N.Y.S.C Discharge Certificate	1996
B. Sc. Entrepreneurship	1999

Job Experience

Accounts Clerk - State Security Agency, 2005 till date

Reason for Leaving:

To gain wider exposure and offer better services to mankind

Special Abilities/Publications/Awards

Corps member of the year award	(2016)
Gold medalist	(Long Jump, Nigeria '05)
Member, Operation Sweep Squad, Anambra State Command.	(2009 —2018)
Governor's Meritorious Service Award	(2018)

Referees

1. Engr. Aliyu Baba Mohammed
National Youths Service Corps
Yobe State Secretariat.
2. Rev. Ayola Babatunde
Bible Training Centre
Ipaja.
3. Dr. Chris Obidi Okere
Department of Marketing
Federal Polytechnic
Bida.

Letter of Recommendation

A letter of recommendation may be written by a referee in recommendation of a candidate seeking for a job or an admission into an institution or for special appointment. It may be referred to as a confidential report on the candidate. Usually, the candidate should not know the content of the letter. A good letter of recommendation will have the following features:

- (1) Writer's authority - what qualifies him to attest for that person. In what capacity and for how long is the person known to the writer?
- (2) Applicants character and usual appearance
- (3) Candidates qualifications, experience and special abilities
- (4) Candidates suitability or otherwise for the job. Statement of the degree of recommendation, e.g. highly, very highly or not recommending him at all should be clearly made.

Here is a **sample letter of recommendation** written on request.

District Office
P. O. Box 2224, Bida
9th July, 1999.

The Chairman
Government Council
Federal Secretariat
Abuja

Dear Sir,

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT ON JAMES EZE

I refer to your letter DME/EA80/1460 on the above topic and say that I am pleased to respond to the request.

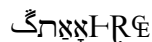
I have known James since his childhood as a neighbour because we live in the same compound.

He is well behaved and is well known for his humility, hard work and diligence. He is smart and discreet, intelligent and industrious.

He holds a master degree in Engineering of the University of Lagos and has worked for Nkalu construction firm for five years with tremendous commendations.

I highly recommend him for any responsible appointment in the civil service.

Yours faithfully,


G. N. Gwom (Esq.)

The second type of recommendation letter is usually written without any employer in mind. It is usually captioned **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**. It

has the same content as the one written on request except that it has only the writer's address.

Protest Letter

This is a letter written in case of overt or covert denial of a writer's rights. If an employee is denied due promotion or if a student's examination score is unjustly withheld by a lecturer, he has reasons to present his case before the appropriate authority for rectification. Such protest should contain enough evidence that the petitioner has been denied rights. The writer's anger and bitterness must not be allowed to influence the writing. Objectivity should be maintained. If a student wrote an examination and his result was not released, the likely content of his letter will include:

- (a) reason for petition
- (b) evidence of participation in the exam.
 - (i) mention the date, time and venue of the examination;
 - (ii) any attendance register signed;
 - (iii) names of lecturers who invigilated the examination;
 - (iv) names of fellow students who sat close to the petitioner in the examination hall.
- (c) call for the rectification of the problem;
- (d) demand for an apology for the embarrassment;
- (e) end formally with 'Yours faithfully'.

Invitations

Invitations are formal notices giving information concerning particular occasions, events or celebrations and which also request the presence of the person invited to the programme. Invitations could be printed or written by hand.

Printed invitation cards are used for very formal and important occasions to which a large number of people are invited. It should be noted that such invitation cards are always written in the third person. This means that instead of "we are happy to invite you" (i.e. 1st person 'we' and 2nd person 'you') we must write 'The staff and students invite Chief and Lolo', (i.e. 3rd person).

Invitations written by hand are usually friendlier, as the writer may know the invitee personally. They are written the same way as any other kind of formal letter.

The order of information in a printed card is usually presented as follows:

Person inviting has pleasure to invite person invited	
to.....(event).....	
at..... (place).....	
on..... (date)..... at..... (time).....	
RSVP Regrets only (Address).....	Dress Formal Informal

R.S.V.P. is the abbreviation for “Repondez s’ilvous plait”. This is a French expression for “please reply”. It does not mean *Rice and Stew Very Plenty* as people often insinuate. If this is on the card, it means that you are expected to reply whether you intend to attend or not. If “Regrets only” is on the card, it means that you only need to reply if you are **not able** to attend (to express regret).

In replying to invitations, you should begin with an expression of gratitude for the invitation. This is important when declining the invitation as it would seem rude to begin immediately with a refusal. While writing to refuse, cogent reason should be given.

Here are two possible replies to the invitation above, one accepting, and one politely declining.

- (a) Chief and Lolo Ikedinobi thank the staff and students of Federal Polytechnic, Bida, for their kind invitation to their gala night dinner on Saturday, 12th July, 2009, and have great pleasure in accepting.

P. O. Box 104,
Zaria.

- (b) Chief and Lolo Ikedinobi thank the staff and students of Federal Polytechnic, Bida, for their kind invitation to their gala night

dinner on Saturday, 24th June, 2000, but regret that they will be unable to attend because of a previous engagement.

P.O. Box 104,
Zaria.

Notice that there are no addresses at the top, no greeting, no close and no signature. The writer's address is put in the bottom left hand corner. The whole letter is written in the third person.

Memo

A memorandum is a short written message sent by one person to another, usually within the same establishment. It is unsolicited and written on the initiative of the person who presents it. The memorandum is an official form of communication, but it is less formal than an official report and may be written in the first person and also in note form and may be signed by the writer.

Salutation and complimentary close are both omitted, but the body of the memorandum should be headed to define the subject. A short statement at the beginning should explain the circumstances prompting the writing. A memorandum may be headed as follows:

Name and Logo of establishment	
Memo	
From.....	To.....
Ref.....	Date.....

There are varieties of memo settings and it varies from organization to organization. There is no watertight rule as to how a memo must appear.

Informal Letters

Informal letters are usually written to people we know well, such as members of our family or close friends and are about personal matters. Such letters are free from inhibitions as a writer is not limited in his discussion. In fact, an informal letter may not mean anything to any other person for who it is not

meant because of the close familiarity expressed in the letter. There is the opportunity to share feelings, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, jokes and such private information in detailed forms. Informal letters are grouped into two: **semi-formal** and **informal**. Both of these have the same format except that semi-formal letters are written to older people whose relationship with the writer may not be intimate. Nevertheless, informal letters aim at arousing feelings between the writer and the recipient.

Language of Informal Letters

The language of informal letters is free and intimate. The familiarity between the correspondents enforces the use of slang, contractions and colloquialisms. It has a lot in common with conversational language. The language of an informal letter may be obscure or incomprehensible to others but since the recipient understands it, it has served the purpose of communication.

An informal letter written for examination purposes should avoid the use of slang and colloquial forms while caution should be maintained in the use of contractions e.g. I'm, I've, we're, etc. Wild and illiterate expressions must be avoided since the candidate is expected to demonstrate his ability to write good logical and readable expression.

The informal letter has these parts:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|----|-----------|
| a. | The address | d. | The body |
| b. | The date | e. | The close |
| c. | The salutation | | |

The Address

The address of the writer is written at the top right hand corner of the writing paper. The writer's name should never be written above it. The writer has the option of punctuating the address or not. A comma should be used at the end of each line except the last where there should be a full stop. Full stops are also used after abbreviations except where the abbreviation includes the last letter of the word in which case the writer has an option of not punctuating. The address can be blocked or indented as already discussed under 'The Address and Date' in Business Letters.

The Date

The date in an informal letter may take any of the forms given in the formal letter.

The Salutation

The form adopted here depends largely on the level of familiarity between the correspondents. A safe rule is to use the name that would be used if the receiver were present and listening to the writer. When writing to younger people or people of the same age group, it would be appropriate to use the first name and for older relations and friends, a title and name. There could still be other very intimate forms as in the examples below:

For parents	Dear Dad, Daddy, Father, Dear Mum, Mummy, Mother
Mother	My Dear Dad, Papa, My Dear Mum, Mama,
For equals and younger people	Dear Iman, My dear Oby,
For elders and superiors	Dear Mr Eket, My dear Miss Vicky, Dear Barrister,
For brothers and sisters	Dear Aisha, My dearest Lola, Dear Ify, My darling sister, My dear Isa, Dear brother,

Body of the letter

A writer would write an informal letter as he would talk while speaking. The message to be carried here depends entirely on the writer's purpose of writing. Here, the message is conveyed according to the writer's interest: entertaining, informing, advising, warning, etc. The tone should be cordial and intimate. The warmth of familiarity would be expressed. Appropriate use of words should be observed to be able to drive home the issues discussed. Slang, jargon and colloquial forms can be extensively used provided the reader can interpret such expressions. The rule of grammar in spelling, punctuation and paragraphing should be observed. The length of the letter is determined by the subject-matter and the writer himself.

The Close

The close is related to the salutation. There are a number of possibilities, depending on how friendly the letter is. Here are a few of them.

Very friendly and informal

So long, Cheers,
Bye for now,
Cheerio for now,

Friendly

With love, Yours ever,
Lots of love,
Love and best wishes,
Affectionately yours,

More formal

Yours sincerely,
Yours truly,
Your son, daughter,

Note that the first word of the close is begun with a capital letter. Below the close should be written clearly the first name of the writer or any other name by which he is known. The informal letter is not usually signed by the writer. It is closed thus:

Yours affectionately,
Ogenna

OR

Yours sincerely,
Ahmed

The format of an informal letter is presented as follows:

	Writer's address Date
Salutation	
Body of the letter	
	Closing First Name

Chapter Seven

Technical Report Writing

The word 'report' is used (in accordance with general business usage) to refer to a document providing an account of something witnessed or examined, of work carried out or of an investigation conducted. It must include the methods of investigation made, their significance, conclusions arrived at and recommendations (if needed). The information or knowledge so provided forms a basis for action. Many times in our lives we find ourselves faced with the task of making a report even if it is only a report of a telephone conversation, or an interview, or a meeting we have attended. Reports of this kind will usually be short and straightforward calling for an orderly arrangement of relevant facts. Such reports, like those at minor meetings of clubs and societies and in business generally, on matters of routine, are often made verbally.

In business, reports frequently call for very much more. They may involve lengthy investigation and research and run into many pages or even assume the proportions of a small book. But whatever the nature of the report, the objective is the same always - to present in adequate form relevant factual information, and sometimes conclusions and recommendations, as a guide to action to be taken. The form taken by a report will vary with length and subject matter.

Kinds of Report

There are two types of reports, namely, **written** and **verbal**. Written reports fall into two classes. They may be either *routine* reports or *special* reports.

Routine Reports

Many of the reports made in business are routine and deal with matters that periodically recur. They include the following types:

- (a) Reports of travelers to their sales manager.
- (b) Periodic reports of departmental managers on the work of their departments.
- (c) Reports made at committee meetings.
- (d) The annual or biannual or quarterly report presented by the chairman at shareholders' meeting.

The presentation of reports of this kind creates no special problem because many routine reports are in fact made on predesigned formats.

Special reports

Special reports are once-only ‘ad hoc’ reports called for to provide information on matters of particular interest and concern. They may cover every situation in which those asking for the report may be interested and on which information is sought. Special reports include those which involve prolonged investigation undertaken for the purpose of helping to shape policies. They may be in summary form and consist of only a single sheet or they may be detailed and extend over many pages. They may be made by committees specially appointed to investigate issues of wide-ranging significance. They may be made by individuals or by groups, by lay members of staff as the case may be. Most government reports run into hundreds of pages and are compiled on the same general principles as other special reports.

For special reports presented by committees or other bodies, first person pronoun (I or We) should not be used but should be replaced by the third person impersonal pronoun e.g.

“The panel found out that -----” instead of “I found out that...”

“The committee investigated-----“

“The council decided that-----“etc.

At the end of the report, the chairman signs first, followed by all other members, in alphabetical order of surnames. The secretary signs last.

Classification by Content

Eye Witness Report

This is the type of report made by an eye-witness who is usually present at the scene of the event or occasion witnessed about. Such cases as road accident, theft, fighting, fire and ceremonies are examples. This is usually a first-hand narrative given in chronological sequence of events. It can be written or given orally.

Management Report

This is the type needed by management on a regular basis to enable it take appropriate actions or decisions. Those in managerial positions may be required to prepare a report for consideration by the administration before important decisions are made. The scope of the report (terms of reference) must be clearly set out and understood by those responsible for making the report. Such report gives reliable details of activities on aspects of the organization like training,

human relations, sales, etc. It enables management assess the progress or lack of progress of the organization. This type of report is usually given by the head or chief executive of an organization, department, club, etc. The report can also be made on activities of an individual employee or on day-to-day affairs of the organization.

Work Report

This is a periodic presentation of the progress of work assigned to a person in an organization. Such reports are given only during the duration of work. It may be a daily, weekly or monthly presentation depending on the nature of work. It can cover activities from the beginning to the end of an assignment. A researcher in a laboratory may present the progress of work as it concerns his experiments to his head or coordinator.

Investigation Report

This is the type that involves detailed study to achieve. Investigation reports are called for by superiors under special circumstances. This involves collecting data and analyzing and interpreting facts and opinions, events and incidents to arrive at conclusions.

Academic project reports written by students are investigative. Police also take investigative approach to detect crimes. Investigative reports are usually lengthy and most special reports are investigative.

A good investigation report follows the following stages of, presentation:

- (a) Statement of the subject of investigation
- (b) Statement of terms of reference
- (c) Explanation of the working procedure
- (d) Findings
- (e) Conclusions drawn
- (f) Recommendations
- (g) Date, signature, name(s) in full, status (only for schematic report)

Importance of Reports

Reports are very important in the life of organizations or even human beings.

- (a) Reports help the parties concerned to get at the truth of the matter.
- (b) Good reports bring relief to the minds of the parties concerned.
- (c) Reports keep management informed of work done or not done, progress made or situation examined.

- (d) Good reports inform the public of the consequences of the issues studied.
- (e) Good reports serve as guide to future actions.
- (f) Good reports serve as objective assessment of situations examined.

Qualities of a Good Report

Objectivity

A good report must first and foremost be objectively handled. The writers' personal views or interests should not influence or override the set goals of the commissioning body.

Completeness

A good report should be complete and accurate. Facts should be carefully gathered, honestly interpreted and factually presented. Everything in the terms of reference should be investigated. The evidence on which the conclusions rest must be adequate, reliable and authentic.

Clarity

Clear writing is a product of clear thinking. Clear reports are presented as orderly procession of facts and ideas. The report must be written in good English — flawless and easily understandable. Special registers are permissible in reports only if they make the writing clearer and more understandable.

Conciseness

A good report must be concise. This means using as few words as possible to express what has to be said. It must be written to the point, worked to the plan and not be longer than it need be. Wordiness does not mean excellence.

Readability

A good report must be readable. Nothing written will get the attention expected by the writer if it is presented in terms that are pedestrian. The use of bright and colourful language adds interest to a report and makes it more readable. A report must be attractive, language wise. No report is of any use unless it is attractive enough to at least gain a reading.

Stages or Parts of a Report (Presentation Format)

There are mainly six parts to any investigation report, which are also the stages or steps of writing a scientific research report.

(1) **Heading**

This is the statement of the subject matter. A heading to a report should be short, but describe and not merely identify the subject matter. E.g. *Revision of the Syllabus in General Studies English*, though longer, is a better heading than *Syllabus in General Studies English*.

(2) **Terms of Reference**

This is the mandate for the report. It includes the areas a report is commissioned to investigate on. Information concerning the reason for the report, the identity, data and perhaps the means are provided in this section. Essentially, this is the scope of coverage of a report.

(3) **Procedure or Methods of Investigation.**

This is the part, which itemises the steps taken to get information. There are different methods of gathering information while writing a report. The method chosen will depend on the type of study carried out. It could be through:

- (a) documented records - books, articles in journals, and the earlier reports of others, documents and memoranda.
- (b) observation — researcher's own observation, tests and experiments conducted by him or under his supervision.
- (c) interview — this involves face-to-face discussion between the writer and his informant. How many people are interviewed and why? Can they stand for everybody in the group being studied?
- (d) questionnaire — questions are tactically arranged on paper to elicit information related to the subject matter. The papers are distributed to the target audience for response which are later collated and analyzed for results.

(4) **Findings**

This is where the report writer enumerates what he discovered during the course of his investigation. To arrive at a credible finding, data collected must be carefully organized, studied and interpreted without bias.

(5) **Conclusions**

Conclusions are usually drawn based on results of analysis and interpretation of data collected.

(6) Recommendations

Recommendations are often made on the basis of findings and conclusions. The writer suggests how best to handle the situation to avert future occurrence of the issue or to make future conditions more favourable. Thus, recommendations serve as guide to future actions.

Forms of Presentation of Reports

Reports could be presented in any of the following forms:

Reports in Letter Form

Short reports will usually be written in the form of a letter addressed to the person or persons at whose requests or on whose instructions the reports are made. The format will not differ from that of the ordinary formal letter. Usually, only one subject matter is treated in this form of report. It has a simple order - beginning, middle and ending.

Reports in Schematic Form

This is the arrangement in which the materials are classified and grouped under headings and sub-headings. This greatly simplifies the reader's task. They can see at a glance what the different sections are about; pass quickly over those that do not concern them and concentrate on those that do. This form is ideal for lengthy and complex reports. The format of schematic presentation is as presented later in this chapter:

Reports in Mixed Form

This is the blend of the letter form and the schematic form. The report begins like every formal letter with a heading. The body of the report now transforms to the schematic form. The report is formally closed like a formal letter, well signed with full names of the writer(s).

A REPORT WRITTEN IN LETTER FORM

11 Ifitedunu Street
Omagba Layout II
Onitsha
13th February, 1996.

The Registrar
Federal Polytechnic
Bida

Dear Sir,

Revision of the Syllabus in General Studies English

On 26th December 1991, our committee was appointed to investigate and make recommendations on how to review the General Studies English Syllabus to suit the needs of the students. The syllabus should emphasize functional and contemporary English usage.

The committee covered the following areas in conducting enquiries: the approved syllabus by the NBTE, the current university syllabus for General Studies English, an examination of several books published recently in the area, a scrutiny of past examination papers of a number of professional bodies conducted in English Language.

As a result of these inquiries, the committee found that the syllabus is not entirely suited to the needs of students for the following reasons:


(i.) The syllabus is too widely drawn and cannot be satisfactorily covered in one session by students on part-time.

(ii.) The syllabus failed to cover areas related to specific disciplines specified for students.

The committee, therefore, decries the inefficiency in structuring the syllabus and declares the syllabus wanting.

The committee hereby recommends that the sections of the syllabus dealing with grammar be revisited to suit the needs of the students. Also, the specific disciplines covered by the students should be reflected. ‘

Yours faithfully,


Obinwa, E. C. (Esq.)
(Chairman)

A REPORT WRITTEN IN SCHEMATIC FORM

A Report on how to introduce a comfortable feeding system for students of Nanka University, Orumba North Local Government Area

Terms of Reference

The Committee was set up by the registrar on 15th July, 1990, to explore ways of improving the university feeding system and make recommendations.

The committee visited the central cafeteria as well as the Alfred cafeteria behind the library to assess the situation.

- (a) The committee also gave out, questionnaires to randomly selected students, which solicited responses on ways of improving the feeding systems.
- (b) The committee interviewed the students' affairs officer and also the students' welfare officer.
- (c) The cost of food in the cafeteria was also considered.

Findings

From the written and oral responses received, it was discovered that the students are fed up with the feeding system in the cafeteria and that most of them now resort to feeding in nearby restaurants.

Complaints were made that:

- (a) The school cafeteria is always dirty.
- (b) The quality of food served in the cafeteria is below the acceptable level.
- (c) Students often stand while eating because of lack of seats.
- (d) Drinking water served in the cafeteria is full of dirt and germs.
- (e) Despite the small quality of food served it is still more expensive than in the restaurants.
- (f) The result is that students are unhappy and hostile to management.

Conclusion

There is evidence that all the complaints made by the students are well

founded. The committee declares the school cafeteria non conducive for any kind of feeding.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the committee makes the following recommendations:

- (a) That regular meeting is convened between the school authorities and the kitchen authorities to fashion out ways of improving kitchen services.
- (b) That the authorities should direct immediate provision of seats in all cafeteria in the campus.
- (c) That cleanliness must be cultivated around the kitchen.
- (d) That regular and clean water supply be ensured in the cafeteria.
- (e) That there should be control price per-plate of food in the cafeteria.
- (f) That the dilapidated and leaking roof of the cafeteria be repaired.

Date: 15th October, 1990

عزیز شو بڑگ
Evans, J. E. *PhD*
(Chairman).

A REPORT WRITTEN IN MIXED FORM

Division of General Studies
Federal Polytechnic
Okoko
Orumba North Local Govt. Area
Anambra State.
12th April 2019

The Registrar
Federal Polytechnic
Okoko

Dear Sir,

REPORT ON STAFF UNREST AT THE WORKS SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF THE POLYTECHNIC

Terms of Reference

Report on the instruction of the Works Services Director on 5th February, 1999, to investigate and report on staff unrest at the Works Services Department of the institution which occurred on 22nd December, 1998. The Committee is also to ascertain causes of the unrest during which the workshop was burnt down and then make recommendations.

Procedure

To verify this matter, information was sought from the following sources:

- (i) The works services director was interviewed
- (ii) The three heads of section in works services were interviewed.
- (iii) Fifteen works services staff were randomly selected and interviewed.
- (iv) Questionnaire was administered on leaders of non-academic staff union.

Findings

Based on information sought from respondents, the following findings were made:

A. Causes of Unrest

Resentment was felt by workers of the Works Services Department and complaints were laid that:

- (i) There was general breakdown of machines and equipment in the department.
- (ii) Workers were kept redundant and neglected.
- (iii) Senior officers ran the department as private businesses.
- (iv) Sack threats were issued to redundant staff.
- (v) There was general misappropriation of power and funds in the department.

B. Extent of Unrest

The responses of staff and heads of sections revealed a widespread

discontentment and resentment among staff members. Responses also expressed fear that the situation might deteriorate resulting in disorder and violence.

C. Conclusion

The committee views this situation with seriousness and unequivocally sues for peace. The committee is of the opinion that this situation will not augur well for the institution as a whole and for Works Services Department in particular.

D. Recommendation

In view of the findings made, the committee recommends as follows:

- (i) That the repair of the broken down machines and equipment at the Works Services Department be affected without further delay.
- (ii) That junior workers in the department should be fully engaged in the operations of machines and equipment in the department.
- (iii) That official protocols should be observed by senior officers in running the department.
- (iv) That rights and privileges of staff should be duly granted them.

If the recommendations are pursued, the committee believes that such unrest would be averted in future.

Yours faithfully,

شش لکھن

Olaoye, Ibenne Sota
(Chairman)

Note that all members of the committee will sign the report after the chairman has appended his signature and date but the secretary of the committee signs last. The date of signing is written close to the signature, in the space provided.

Chapter Eight

Reading Comprehension

Reading

Reading, in addition to other language skills: listening, speaking and writing, forms part of the information system. It is the complex cognition process of decoding symbols to derive meaning. Every reading involves information acquisition. This is because every writer has a message to deliver in his writing which in turn is acquired by the reader. Thus, reading is a veritable source of knowledge. Reading is a more important source of most people's command of language than is sometimes realized, and it is probably true that standards of expression and spelling, about which employers continue to complain have suffered because of the shift away from reading as a leisure-time activity to attractions of another kind. Reading plays a vital role in comprehension and serves as a good channel of cultural transmission. It is believed that where the power to get enjoyment and information from books is lacking, the development of a satisfactory personal life is unlikely to be realized.

However, various people read for various reasons. Some people read for relaxation and entertainment and others read in search of specific information. Besides serving as a source of information, reading is an instrument of thought and has an important bearing on our ability to think. Through reading, we understand what others are thinking, what they are feeling and what they aspire to do or be. We also understand what we, within ourselves, are thinking and feeling. One of the major purposes of reading is to connect ideas on the page to what the reader already knows. If a reader does not know anything about a subject, then pouring words of texts into that reader will be like pouring water inside a basket. Many books have been published in the recent years in many disciplines. Some are published in history, languages, science, biography, travel, business, etc., all of which provide excellent reading for those who seek wider information and knowledge beyond popular circulars and fiction. As such reading progresses, the reader recognizes words, which he also associates with particular meanings. He now interprets them and gains the experiences and ideas, which the writer invites him to share. A reader should, indeed appreciate reading as an activity that can bring him great pleasure and ease.

Efficiency in Reading

Reading requires a measure of efficiency, which can be achieved only when the reader is familiar with the words he reads. Familiarity with the words and their contextual meanings will quicken the reader's speed. A regular reader of diverse books will tend to show familiarity with a wider range of vocabulary. Reading efficiency can be hindered by a number of factors. The commonest one, noticeable among many second language learners is word-by-word reading. Rather than read word clusters, such reader picks words one-by-one. This can create other reading problems like vocalization where a reader pronounces each word silently to himself as he reads along. This reduces the eye span of the reader because he sees one word at a time. A reader might point to each word as reading progresses or even move his head from word to word thereby reducing his reading speed. Regression can also hinder efficiency when a reader moves his eyes backward to re-read words already read. One other hindrance is a situation where a learner restricts himself only to books recommended in class, or which directly or indirectly relate to his study. A reader can overcome any of the problems above if only he is conscious of whichever one is impeding his reading efficiency. Then he can make efforts to correct his shortcomings to the benefit of reading standards in speed and comprehension.

Slow reading is not efficient reading and to a point it hinders comprehension. Comprehension improves as reading speed increases.

Improving Efficiency in Reading

Reading speeds vary a great deal from individual to individual and from subject-matter to subject-matter. There are techniques which can contribute greatly to improve the reading speed of readers. These are skimming, scanning and extensive reading

Skimming

This technique uses selective reading of the text to suit a particular purpose where selective reading becomes necessary. It is mainly used in fishing out main ideas from details. It is also useful in determining which materials or texts deserve a reading out of the lot.

In skimming, the reader is interested in finding out major issues and so reads through the introductory material first before selectively reading through the text. The idea of reading the introductory materials is necessary since that portion normally carries the gist of the writing. The reader can then begin to run his eyes through the lines of the writing in search of the desired materials. He stops to slow

down whenever a point seems relevant to enable him pick the fact and resumes rapid reading thereafter. Any section or portion deemed not relevant to the idea being sought is skipped and only the key points in the reading materials are noted. In this way, a written material can be read faster than when the whole material is to be read.

Scanning

Scanning is a technique used in search of particular information, which is supposed to be located in a written material. In applying the scanning method, the reader first of all determines the place where the desired information is likely to be located in the work and goes on straight to the place and picks the information. In scanning, the words of the passages are not read but particular information are located and picked out unlike in skimming where the reader reads through the passage fast to get desired information. Comprehension is a basic language skill of extracting meaning from either speech or written language. It is the ability to process text, understand its meaning and then integrate it with what the reader already knows. Comprehension of a text simply means understanding it. Comprehension and interpretation then mean understanding and explaining, that is, making explicitly clear, the contents of a given text. The term comprehension suggests some understanding that follows a thoughtful process about an event or occasion or idea. Ability to process information conveyed by the text makes it easier to understand and interpret. This ability to distinguish clearly what is important and what is not is a matter of perception and commonsense - qualities for which comprehension texts provide regular and systematic training. Of course, without understanding there can be no interpretation because one cannot interpret an unknown situation or event.

This is not always an easy matter because basic ideas must often be sifted from masses of illustrative and explanatory material. If this is not so, writers may have allowed themselves to become engaged in digressions, only remotely connected with the main theme. Nevertheless, a firm grasp of the subject matter to be interpreted and summarized is essential. It is practically impossible to present ideas in summarized or any other form unless it is thoroughly understood. There are fundamental skills required in reading for comprehension to be achieved. These include:

- a. recognizing and knowing the meaning of words
- b. ability to follow the organization of text/passage
- c. ability to draw inferences from a text about its content
- d. ability to identify the main thoughts of a passage

- e. ability to answer questions asked in a passage
- f. ability to recognize literary devices used in a passage
- g. ability to determine writer's purpose, intent and point of view and draw inferences about the writer.

Reading for a purpose

It is important to determine what we read if we must understand and interpret our reading material. It will also determine how we read. There are many ways of reading and the more flexible we are the more efficient we will be. Flexibility here refers to flexibility in reading speed. Reading speeds vary from passage to passage as the nature of the material varies or the reading purpose changes. For instance, if a reader is searching for specific facts, he may need to skim rapidly through books or articles till he finds what he is looking for. If, on the other hand, he must master details, maybe for examination purposes, then it would be advisable to read through the material at least twice at a much slower speed.

A reader's rate of reading may vary within a single text. If the material seems difficult because of new concepts or complex language, he may begin to read slowly the opening sections. As soon as he grasped the concept involved, he can speed up his reading, slowing down only if he encounters more difficulty.

Establishing a purpose before reading - entertainment, examination, information, and so on - help a reader recognize what he is looking for when he sees materials not relevant to his purpose and concentrate more firmly on the developing issue. Above all, establishing a purpose will help a reader know when all the points are in, in other words, when reading is finished.

Fishing out Main Ideas

The most important task of a reader is to understand the writer's main ideas and thoughts. The writer conveys information to the reader by way of statements, arguments, illustrations and explanations among others. Usually, within the paragraph, there is a sentence that contains the primary message that the writer wishes to convey. Other sentences in the paragraph develop and support this primary one. Read the group of sentences below:

Public officers who took up political appointments during the last civilian administration can now smile as they may be considered for re-deployment in the public service. The re-deployment would be based on individual merit provided he (the public officer) has been satisfactorily screened and cleared. This was contained in a circular from the office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Ikoyi, Lagos.

(Sunday Times' 20th April, 1986).

Which sentence do you think contains the writer's primary message? It is the first sentence. Of course, ideas are contained in the other two sentences but they are not as important as the first one. They add to our understanding of the idea in the first sentence. We, therefore, conclude that the idea contained in the first sentence is the main idea' of the passage.

Constant practice will make it possible for a reader to recognize main ideas. It will thus be easy to fish out the main points of a passage, which may sometimes spread across the passage through the whole paragraphs.

Pre-reading

We cannot assimilate the ideas in a passage we have read until we have interpreted them, that is, until we express clearly and correctly, and in our own words, the underlying meaning of what have read. As a first step we must read and re-read the subject matter until its main theme has been grasped with certainty and assurance. Identifying the topic sentence is the first step towards arriving at the main idea. The technique of taking a quick glance content and organization of the material will be adopted before thorough reading commences.

Pre-reading steps

In pre-reading we look at the title, and read one and two of the opening paragraphs. We may then read the first sentence or first two sentences of each paragraph down to the mid-way point in the passage. We finally read the concluding paragraph(s) thoroughly.

Levels of Comprehension

When we read to extract details, a close retention of facts and careful study should be the main characteristics of our reading. Often, we require a more critical evaluation than we need when we read for main ideas. Comprehension itself proceeds in at least three stages:

- (i) We comprehend at the factual level where we comprehend the words and sentences on the page.
- (ii) At the inferential level we comprehend relationships and ideas implied rather than explicitly stated-figurative use of words or idiomatic expressions.
- (iii) We comprehend at the conjectural level where we use the writer's ideas as a basis for projecting new ideas. We may continue where he left off and explore other possibilities left open by the discussion. We may explore seeming problems inherent in the presentation and set the ideas in the reading into some

perspective. Some questions that we may arise at these levels include: Why? What? How? When? Where? Who?

- (a) What are the most significant ideas and details in the passage?
- (b) Are they presented in significant order?
- (c) What relationships exist between the facts or ideas?
- (d) Are there unrelated or even contradictory facts or ideas?

The reader can also ask:

- (a) Who is speaking?
- (b) What is he saying?
- (c) How does he say it?
- (d) Who is the writer talking to?

This implies that we should pay attention to the text as it relates to the writer, the subject and the message, the diction, tone and style, the implied reader and the implications of the aim of the writer. How the message is presented poses question on the writer's diction, that is, his choice and use of words. He may use specialized vocabulary-specific registers. He may use words connotatively or denotatively. Whatever question may be asked; it must be remembered that every writer has a motive. He may be writing to explain, to persuade, to narrate, to argue or to describe. It could be a mixture of these but, in most cases, one mode is dominant. Grasping the writer's motive means comprehension and making comments on it could mean interpretation.

The Five-Step Reading Comprehension Strategy

Research studies on reading and comprehension have shown that highly proficient readers utilize a number of different strategies to comprehend various types of texts, strategies that can also be used by less proficient readers in order to improve their comprehension. This strategy is based on *The High 5 Reading Strategy*, a simple and effective approach, propounded by Block and Pressley to enhance the comprehensive abilities of students. If the mind of a reader just goes blank when he is asked what the article or chapter he is reading is all about, or when he writes notes about an article or book chapter but cannot boil it down to four or five significant major points; when a reader keeps asking for some easy strategy on how to summarize texts, the High 5 strategy can offer immense assistance to the struggling reader as well as to the beginning readers in enhancing reading comprehension. By using this technique, students are able to understand

the material and direct their attention to the details. It also enhances students learning and helps them prepare for essay writing or even for a test.

There are FIVE separate strategies that together form the five-step reading strategy.

1. Activating background knowledge

Research has shown that better comprehension occurs when students are engaged in activities that bridge their old knowledge with the new. Making connections between what a reader knows and what he is reading helps improve the overall understanding of text. Prior Knowledge refers to understanding that stems from previous experience either through “hands on” involvement or earlier formal learning, from books or classroom instruction. For example, a simple question like, *what do you know about a particular topic?* will stimulate students’ previous knowledge of that topic. This will help them connect the current reading to their already existing knowledge and make the new reading more stimulating and engaging. The strategy allows students to work their way up from an already existing schema, instead of starting a new one.

2. Questioning

Encourage students to frame questions before and after reading to increase their comprehension. Good readers continually ask and answer questions while they read. Before the reading of the text, ask questions to activate prior knowledge. To solidify one’s understanding of passages of texts, readers inquire and develop their own opinion of the author’s writing, character motivations, relationships, etc. This strategy involves allowing oneself to be completely objective in order to find various meanings within the text. During the reading, the reader should ask himself these three types of questions: (1) factual ‘right now’ questions, such as, what are the facts being explained in the text? (2) search questions like analytical and inference questions, such as, what does the writer want me to figure out based on the facts? (3) beyond-the-text questions, that is, assumptive and critical questions, such as, what is not being said here that should be checked by doing some background research? Each good reader should be able to reflect on these three main questions. A ‘right now question’ focuses on the material presented. What is the essence of the material read? *What are the facts that are being mentioned?* An ‘analytical question’ requires students to ponder over what they have learnt. *What does the author want me to understand from this material?* A

‘research question’ or ‘beyond-the-text question’ encourages students to look for information beyond what is in the text. This allows for more comprehensive active learning to occur.

3. Analyzing text structure

This requires students to learn how to analyze or comprehend the structure of a text. This activity involves knowing how writers organize information and how the ideas in a text are interrelated to convey a message to a reader. The reader’s ability to see the pattern or the direction the writer is taking in a piece of text has an influence on effective and efficient comprehension. The various types of structure fall under these main categories: (1) Fiction structures – these focus on relating an imagined story, generally, using the features of setting, characters, and various plot elements. Fiction structures are generally categorized into genres, such as, fantasy, science fiction, historic realistic fiction, etc. (2) Expository structures – these focus on informing, describing, explaining, or defining the author’s subject matter to his or her reader. Expository text can be made up of at least six different structures. These structures are: cause and effect; compare and contrast, time sequence, problem/solution, definition/description, and enumeration or steps to accomplish something. (3) Argument structures – these focus on presenting the writer’s view on a particular subject and persuading the reader to hold that same view by presenting evidence or giving reasons. The categories of argument are defined by the type of appeal the writer is using: Ethos, Pathos, or Logos and the form of the argument: inductive, deductive, etc. Readers should identify the patterns by which writers organize their materials. This may be in the form of cause-effect pattern, problem-solution pattern, or a descriptive pattern, like a list or a matrix pattern. Understanding the pattern in which the material is presented allows the students to comprehend the information better. It is important that learners get familiar with all the patterns of a text structure, as each structure is different and takes time to learn. They should also learn to make use of subheadings, labels, captions, tables, graphs, etc. as these help students to understand the material better.

4. Creating Mental Images

The fourth strategy stresses on the importance of visualizing the material. Good readers form a picture in their mind of what they are reading. Great readers move beyond just pictures of content to structural images as well. They visualize how the text is structured. In this wise, analysing text and visualization of text

reinforce each other. The structure of a text is the key to comprehension. It gets at the writer's purpose, whether it is to simply inform the audience, analyze a complex topic, or argue an interesting or controversial issue. Purpose shapes the content of a text and also shapes the mental images the reader creates. With this sensory-driven strategy, readers form mental and visual images of the contents of text. Being able to connect visually allows for a better understanding with the text through emotional responses. Students should be encouraged to form visual images in their head as they read the text, which will help in better comprehension. Research suggests that students should visualize them as structural images or diagrams instead of mere pictures, as pictures have a tendency to fade.

5. Summarizing

The last technique is to summarize the material read. Research has indicated that the ability to summarize enhances comprehension. To summarize is to demonstrate ability to delete irrelevant details, combine similar ideas, condense main ideas, and connect major themes into concise statements that capture the writer's thought in a reading material. A summary using the High 5 Strategies follows this methodology: **1.** Read the text. **2.** Identify the text structure. **3.** Make a diagram of the structure. **4.** Discard redundant information and leave only the key ideas. **5.** Circle only the critical ideas that you need for the summary. Such material can be summarized in the form of diagrams, either visually or in writing.

EXERCISES

Read the following passage and answer the questions below it.

PASSAGE A

If there is one fundamental insight underlying all business sciences it is that business enterprise is a system of the highest order; a system the "parts" of which are human beings contributing voluntarily of their knowledge, skill and dedication to a joint venture. And one thing characterizes all genuine systems, whether they are mechanical like the control of a missile, biological like a tree, or social the business enterprise; it is interdependence. The whole of a system is not necessarily improved if one particular function or part is improved. What matters in any system is the performance of the whole; this is the result of growth and of dynamic balance, adjustment, and integration rather than that of mere technical efficiency.

- (i) What do you understand by the phrases: fundamental insight, dedication to a joint venture; interdependence, dynamic balance?
- (ii) Explain the argument contained in the last two sentences of the passage.
- (iii) Explain the meaning of 'social' as it is used in the above passage. Then show by using them in sentences, the meanings of 'sociable'; 'sociology'; 'sociality'.
- (iv) What is the meaning of the prefix 'inter-'? Give three words, which have that prefix and state their meaning.

Read the following passage and answer the questions below it:

PASSAGE B

After a lifetime of some 250,000 years on earth, only the last 6,000 of which are a matter of *approximate historic record*, has man conquered earth gravity and stands poised on the era of *universal exploration*. It is, however, imperative that the significance of the earth satellite be measured in terms of man's new capacity to *extend his citizenship to the universe*. The principal need today is to tap our *intelligence* and moral imagination to the fullest in creating a working design for a better tomorrow in which the entire world's people can share. We have to *accept a complete commitment to a pooling of authority* and a *sharing of human knowledge for the human good*.

- (i) Explain the meaning of the phrases in italics
- (ii) Give words of similar meaning to *conquered, significance, capacity, principal*.
- (iii) Write a paragraph of three sentences in which you state qualities you would like in a "better tomorrow".
- (iv) Add three sentences that make a logical continuation of the above passage.

Chapter Nine

Précis and Summary Writing

What is a 'précis' and what is the use of précis writing?

The dictionary tells us that this strange-looking word is a French word and means 'a brief form of a piece of composition'. It would be erroneous to look upon précis writing as a tiresome exercise invented by pedagogues for the annoyance of students. It is on the contrary a very useful process needed in everyday life. A précis does not mean a plan/outline of the original passage or article. It does not also mean an abstract of the text or the most prominent phrases and sentences, or chain of facts and sentences that are not connected. A précis is a text summary which has to reflect the key points of the original text of the author with its tone, and mood. A précis is like a miniature portrait of the passage; it retains the absolute essential points reflecting the mood and tone of the author of the passage. The aspect that one must be careful about is that one should not add one's subjective interpretation or comments to the précis but should try to retain the original author's voice and opinions. As far as the writing style is concerned, the writer must ensure that he or she writes clear and effective sentences (no rambling) with flawless expression. Ultimately, it is the coherence of the views presented in the précis that matter, and this can be achieved by making sure that one is precise and to the point in one's approach. At the end of the day, the précis should make sense and be logical in its presentation.

While précis writing mostly involves the reduction of a passage or text to about one third of its original length without guiding the candidate to the areas of relevance, a summary is in the form of continuous narrative with connected thoughts linked together. Summary writing involves questions which direct the candidate to specific aspects of the passage or text. In précis, there are no directions to the areas of importance of a piece of work but a summary will really direct to bring out the main points in the piece of work. Therefore, a précis compresses works to at least one third of the original length while a summary compresses the ideas or thoughts presented in a work. However, both of them involve the reduction of the size of a work to a minimum.

We make a précis or summary every time we tell a friend the gist of what we have read in a book or newspaper or heard on the wireless. Newspaper reporters have to make summaries of what they see and hear when writing up a 'story'; the secretary to a commercial firm will be called upon to provide a summary of important documents or correspondence; the university student in

making notes of a lecture will be obliged to make a summary of what he has heard. If a writer has had no training in the art of making a summary, he will find it hard to pick out the essentials and record them briefly and accurately. The educated man or woman of our time has constant need of the power to make a good summary, which, in fact, is a practical skill.

Characteristics of a Well Written Précis

A well written précis

- a. is marked by clarity, brevity and precision.
- b. is not just lifting of the sentences from the original. It should be written in the précis writer's own words.
- c. is a miniature version of the original passage.
- d. must have a logical order and be well-knit and well connected.
- e. must have coherence and must use linking devices such as *so, therefore, and, because, further*, etc. and must follow the order of ideas of the original.
- f. must have a title.
- g. is written in reported speech and must not contain any details not found in the original
- h. does not have questions inserted in it. Its significance, if essential, may be expressed by a statement.
- i. does not admit abbreviations or contractions, e.g. don't, won't, &, e.t.c.

Rules Guiding Précis Writing

When one is writing a précis, one should take care of a few essential points. The first thing is that one needs to convey the general idea of the argument with absolute clarity. The second thing is to make sure that all the important points of the original passage are included in the précis. Lastly, the language of the précis should be clear, crisp and concise, and follow the rule for correct diction.

The following rules are general guidelines for writing a précis:

1. Closely read the passage, and identify the central idea of the passage. It is vital to identify the general idea of the passage and incorporate it in one's précis.
2. Look-out for the total number of words. If the number is not provided, quickly calculate the number using approximations.
3. In order to understand the passage clearly, make sure that you read the passage closely, and give it a couple of reads before you start writing the précis.

4. Highlight the most important points in the passage, and make notes. Leave out all non-essential information from the précis.
5. Provide an apt heading to your précis.
6. Note making is an essential task for writing précis. You should try to arrange the points in most logical order, and ensure the order of thought is the same as the original.
7. The three grammatical rules you need to follow while writing a précis are: write it in third person, indirect form and appropriate past tense.
8. It is advisable to provide designations of officials rather than names and titles. In case the official designation is not provided, you can use the personal name. You should be consistent with the pattern you adopt.
9. Make sure you review your rough draft, remove the chinks and ensure that you have made no language related errors.
10. Before writing your précis, make sure you have a glance over the original to make sure you have not missed anything.
11. Finally, a wise policy would be a count of the words of your précis and putting them down in a bracket at the end.

Writing a Précis of a Given Passage

The literary side of précis writing will consist in the making of a clear, well-written and connected summary of a speech, a poem, or an article. Practice in extracting the essential and re-writing the main points of such passages cannot fail to improve the student's power to grasp ideas quickly and accurately and so helps him to acquire a clear, concise style of his own.

The major requirement in making a précis or summary is the exercise of common sense, but for the beginner, the following general hints may be helpful:

- (a) Read the passage carefully two or three times, so as to make sure it is fully understood.
- (b) Note down a good title that will give the main topic.
- (c) Condense wherever possible, that is, turn clauses into single words but do not give phrases and clauses when sentences are required.

- (d) Examine the passage carefully so as to discover what is essential and what is subsidiary that may be left out.
- (e) Add nothing of your own and make no corrections. Do not write more than the required number of sentences.
- (f) Leave out illustrations and repetitions used for emphasis.
- (g) It is not necessary to change all the original expressions. If a word or phrase in the original is the best possible, it should be retained. But the précis must contain all the important points in the original. However, do not copy out whole sentences from the passage in answer to questions.
- (h) Speeches and letters should be turned into the 'third person' and put in the past tense.

The finished précis should be a piece of clear, concise, good English and it should faithfully reproduce the spirit of the original.

Writing a Précis

Sample Passage:

There is an enemy beneath our feet - an enemy deadlier for his complete impartiality. He recognizes no national boundaries, no political parties. Everyone in the world is threatened by him. The enemy is the earth itself. When an earthquake strikes, the world trembles. The power of a quake is greater than anything man himself can produce. But today scientists are directing a great deal of their effort into finding some way of combating earthquakes, and it is possible that at some time in the near future mankind will have discovered a means of protecting itself from earthquakes. 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. Buildings collapse, bridges fall, dams burst, and 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 valley. Consider the terrifying statistics from the past 1755: Lisbon, capital of Portugal - the city destroyed entirely and 450 killed. 1970: Peru: 50,000 killed. In 1968 an earthquake struck Alaska. As this is a relatively unpopulated part, only a few people were killed. But it is likely that this was one of the most powerful quakes ever to have hit the world. Geologists estimate that during the tremors, the whole of the state moved over 80 feet farther west into the Pacific Ocean. Imagine the power of something that can move an

entire subcontinent! This is the problem that the scientists face. They are dealing with forces so immense that man cannot hope to resist them. All that can be done is to try to pinpoint just where the earthquake will strike and work from there. At least some precautionary measures can then be taken to save lives and some of the property. (330 Words)

Based on the above paragraph, we arrive at the following theme sentences of four paragraphs:

- Earthquake - the deadly enemy of mankind
- Damage caused by an earthquake, in general
- Damage caused by an earthquake, in particular
- What can the scientists do?

The above four theme sentences can be developed into the following outline:

Earthquake - the deadly enemy of mankind:

- a) Earthquake strikes all without a distinction of national boundary or political affiliation.
- b) The power of a quake is greater than that of a man-made weapon of destruction.
- c) Scientists are trying to find out means to combat earthquakes; they will find some way to protect themselves from earthquakes.

Damage caused by an earthquake in general:

- 1) Strikes without warning.
- 2) Modern city when struck reduced to a primitive village.

Damage caused by an earthquake in particular:

- Quake strikes plains, seas and mountains causing all round destruction.
- In 1755, Lisbon destroyed, 450 people killed.
- In 1970, Peru struck, 50,000 people killed.

What can the scientists do?

- In 1968, Alaska hit, subcontinent moved 80 feet into the Pacific Ocean.
- Scientists cannot resist the powerful earthquake.

- They can predict the place of origin of the quake so that precaution can be taken to save man & property.

Based on the above outline, we can make the following rough draft:

Earthquake - The Great Destroyer

Earthquake is the deadly enemy of mankind. Earthquake strikes all without a distinction of nationality or political affiliation. The power of a quake is greater than that of any man-made weapon of destruction. An earthquake strikes mankind without a warning. A modern city when struck is reduced to rubble. A quake strikes plains, seas and mountains causing all round destruction. The quake struck Lisbon in 1755 killing 450; Peru in 1970 killing 50,000; Alaska in 1968 moving it 80 feet into the Pacific Ocean. Scientists are trying to find out means to combat earthquakes and they are able to predict at least where the earthquake will hit so that precaution can be taken to save man and property from destruction. As the number of words in the rough draft is more than required we shall have to reduce it further without reducing the ideas.

The final draft would look as follows:

Earthquake - The Great Destroyer

Earthquake is the mankind's deadly enemy. Earthquake strikes all without a distinction of nationality or political affiliation. The power of a quake is greater than that of any man-made weapon of destruction. An earthquake strikes mankind without a warning. A modern city when struck is reduced -to a nibble. A quake strikes plains, seas and mountains causing all round destruction. The quake struck Lisbon in 1755 killing 450; Peru in 1970 killing 50,000; Alaska in 1968 moving it 80 feet into the Pacific Ocean. Scientists are trying to find out means to combat earthquakes, to predict the origin of the quake so that precaution can be taken to save man and property from destruction. (115 words)

It is, for example, often possible, to shorten a long sentence by cutting out unnecessary words or roundabout expressions, and stating the idea in a more direct way,

Examine the following example:

When he had disappeared, I began to feel some doubts in my mind as to whether I had been altogether wise in refusing to accept what he had proposed.

The same idea can be stated equally well but more briefly thus:

After his disappearance I began to doubt
my wisdom in refusing his proposal.

The full meaning of the original was retained, but the number of words used has been reduced from 29 to 13. This has been made possible by using a noun instead of a verb in the first clause, a verb in the place of the expression “feel some doubts”, and the nouns “wisdom” and “proposal” instead of the last two clauses.

Practical Questions

1. What effects will the practice of précis writing have upon the students' own style?
2. Why is the ability to write a good précis a useful accomplishment in everyday life?
3. Mention some occasions when it is necessary to make a précis.
4. Is there any difference between a précis and a summary?
5. Give some examples of how phrases may be condensed.
6. Why should figures of speech be omitted or curtailed?

Completed Précis

It is generally agreed that corruption is evil, but to the writer's mind, intimidation is a greater evil. Both are intended to procure the perversion of a trust committed to the citizen, but where corruption, in some slight measure, partakes of the nature of charity and gives pleasure to the recipient of the bribe, intimidation has no redeeming features. It is a cruel act to threaten a man with the loss of his livelihood, and where the threat is effective, it produces ill-will and hatred. A man would rather not vote at all, than vote under intimidation. (100 words).

Now make a précis of the following passages, reducing each one to about one-third of its length.

PASSAGE A

The life of a well-established, middle-aged professor in the Arts Faculty of a modern university can, if he likes to make it so, be one of the softest jobs to be found on the earth's surface.

What does his essential work consist of? Assuming that he has students, he may have to give anything from two or three to nine or ten lectures weekly. If he is conscientious, he will alternate his courses scrupulously with those of his lecturers from year to year, and, by reading and research, keep each set strictly up to date. If he is not, he will deliver the same lectures, prepared twenty years previously, every session, pulling the notes of each out of a drawer just in time to give them a dust over before delivery.

Besides lecturing, he has a number of duties which will be precisely as substantial as he cares to make them. Apart from the moral obligation to engage in research himself, which, once he has been appointed for life, he can disregard, if he likes, for his entire career, he is expected to supervise the research of graduate students; but unless he is the kind of man to inspire research, very few graduate students will come near him, so that falls to the ground. He can hardly escape having to set and mark a few examination papers, but these, like Christmas, come only once a year - or very rarely twice.

From REDBRICK UNIVERSITY, By Bruce Truscot: Faber & Faber.

PASSAGE B

Throughout the world, the bite of a poisonous snake is terribly feared. Even the bite of non-poisonous snake has been known to cause collapse of the patient through shock and fear of what might happen. Much of this fear is due to ignorance, and perhaps it would be useful to consider carefully why a snake bites and what happens in a case of snake-bite. Except for some of the small insect-eating snakes known as the glass snakes, the worm snakes and the egg-eating snakes, all snakes have fairly obvious teeth. In most kinds, these teeth are all solid and are used for catching hold of the prey and helping to swallow it. A number of others also have poison teeth or fangs (hollow or deeply grooved teeth) through which poison or venom, as it is often called, can be injected into the snake's prey to kill it. That is the true purpose of the snake's poison — to catch its prey, which is normally much smaller than the snake; in total bulk it seldom approaches the snake itself, even though it may be much thicker.

Why then does a human being or a domestic animal get bitten? In the great majority of cases it is purely by accident. At night a child goes out of doors without shoes and steps on a night adder, which promptly strikes. A hunter steps over a log and puts his foot on a large viper, and is bitten as the snake reacts in surprise and self-defense. Perhaps, a cobra finds itself in a small room or shed and the door is opened suddenly, the cobra may well strike the intruder in its fright

and panic. Or, if the person attacks it and tries to kill it, who can blame the cobra for striking in self-defense? Or who can condemn a snake which bites somebody that is trying to catch it?

From REPTILES OF WEST AFRICA
By George Cansdale. Penguin Books Pub.

The following is a sample précis, with explanations. Read the passage.

There is, perhaps, no point on which good men of all parties are more completely agreed than on the necessity of restraining and punishing corruption in members of parliament. The evils of corruption are doubtless very great, but it appears to me that those evils which are attributed to corruption may, with equal justice, be attributed to intimidation, and that intimidation produces also some monstrous evils with which corruption cannot be reproached. In both cases alike, the elector commits a breach of trust. In both cases alike, he employs for his own advantage an important power which was confided to him, that it might be used, to the best of his judgment, for the general good of the community. Thus far corruption and intimidation operate in the same manner. But there is this difference between the two systems; corruption operates by giving pleasure, intimidation by giving pain. To give a poor man five thousand naira causes me pain; on the contrary, it produces pleasure. It is, in itself no bad act, indeed, if the five thousand naira were given on another occasion, without a corrupt motive, it might pass for a benevolent act. But to tell a man that you will reduce him to a situation in which he will miss his former comforts, and in which his family will be forced to beg their bread, is a cruel act.

Corruption has a sort of illegitimate relationship to benevolence, and engenders some feelings of a cordial and friendly nature. There is a notion of charity connected with the distribution of the money of the rich among the needy, even in a corrupt manner. But in intimidation, the whole process is an odious one. The whole feeling on the part of the elector is that of shame and degradation, and hatred of the person to whom he has given his vote. The elector is indeed placed in a worse situation than if he had no vote at all; for there is not one of us who would not rather be without a vote than be compelled to give it to the person whom he dislikes above all others.

Now, make a list of what you consider to be the important points which should be included in a précis or summary and compare your own points with the ones below.

List of Points:

1. Corruption is generally agreed to be a great evil
2. Intimidation is a greater evil
3. Both intended to procure the perversion of a trust committed to the citizen
4. Corruption in some slight measure partakes of the nature of charity
5. Corruption gives some pleasure to the recipient of the bribe
6. Intimidation has no redeeming features
7. A cruel act is to threaten a man with the loss of his livelihood
8. Where it is successful, it produces ill-will and hatred
9. A man would rather not have to vote at all
10. A man should not be forced to vote under intimidation.

These are the important points. How do they compare with the ones you have written down? As they are written, these points present a very scrappy and disconnected piece of writing. Now, try to form the points above into a well-connected and readable piece of prose. Compare what you have written with the one below.

What is a Summary?

The ability to make a clear, readable summary of a lengthy article is an asset to any learner. A summary is where you take what is written or said, and condense it down to its main points. We often tell the gist of a conversation we have had with a friend, or describe some unusual sights we have seen. We will find it difficult or impossible to reproduce every tiny detail. If we have to narrate every tiny detail, it would be a very lengthy narrative. Some details may actually be unnecessary. It may therefore, become more convenient to give a summary of the details of every lengthy article or of conversation by mentioning the important points and leaving out the unimportant. It is also possible to summarize something that you have heard, such as a lecture, or something that you have seen and heard, such as a movie. A summary gives the main gist of the passage, and conveys the message in a much more concise way, often simplifying it to make it more understandable. To summarize is to demonstrate ability to delete irrelevant details in a given text, combine similar ideas, condense main ideas, and connect major themes into concise statements that capture the purpose of reading for the reader (Block & Pressley, 2007).

A summary is a record in a reader's own words that gives the main points of a piece of writing such as a newspaper article, the chapter of a book, or even a whole book. A summary does not include the reader's interpretation of the original.

Summarising starts with comprehension. If one cannot understand what an article is all about, one cannot possibly make an intelligent summary of it. A good summary should give an objective outline of the whole piece of writing. It should answer basic questions about the original text such as "who did what, where, and when?", or "what is the main idea of the text?", "what are the main supporting points?", "what are the major pieces of evidence?" It should not be a paraphrase of the whole text using your own words. A reference should be made to the original piece either in the title ("A summary of..."), in the first sentence, or in a footnote or endnote. Summaries tend to be about one-third the length of the original material. For example, if you have three paragraphs describing the pros and cons of technology in today's schools, your summary would be about one paragraph – that is, one third of the original work.

The Importance of Summary Writing

In general terms, writing summaries is a good way of improving one's ability to read because it forces the reader to focus on understanding the whole of reading material rather than on just following each word or sentence. In academic terms, if you are reading something that is very important for your studies and/or difficult to understand, writing a summary helps you to make sure that you have understood it. You can also refer to it later to refresh your memory, for example, when you are revising for an examination, or when you are talking about it in class. It is also a good idea to turn lecture notes into summaries. When writing academic papers, people often need to insert summaries of some things that they have read or heard. In such cases, it is extremely important to use your own words or quotation marks if you are actually quoting.

How to Write a Summary

1. Read the article to be summarized and be sure you understand it. As you read, underline all the important points and all the important evidences. For example, you could look for all the topic sentences. Words that are repeated several times are likely to be keywords. Transition words can help understanding of the overall structure of a passage. You could look out for the 5Ws - What?, Which?, Who?, Where?, When?, Why? , and the 1H - How?
2. Outline the article. Note the major points. List or cluster the main idea of the whole piece, the main supporting ideas, and the main evidence for each idea. Use of the same keywords or technical expressions is probably unavoidable. However, be careful to express the ideas in your own way, using your own vocabulary and expressions as much as possible, rather than copying or just rearranging.

3. Write a first draft of the summary without looking at the article. Start with a sentence that (a) identifies the writer and the piece of writing, for example by giving the writer's name, the title of the piece and where/when it appeared, and (b) gives the main idea. Use transition words to join sentences and ideas together. Target your first draft for approximately 1/3 the length of the original.

4. A good summary may use key words from the original text but should not contain whole phrases or sentences from the original unless quotation marks are used. If you do copy a phrase from the original, be sure it is a very important phrase that is necessary and cannot be paraphrased. In this case put "quotation marks" around the phrase. Quotations should only be made if there is a reason for using the original words, for example, because the choice of words is significant, or because the original is so well expressed.

5. Rearranging the words used in the original, or keeping the same structure but just substituting different words is not enough. You must express the sense of the original using your own words and structures. If the original uses 'I', replace this with the writer's actual surname, 'the writer', or 's/he'. If the original uses 'you', substitute 'people' or 'they'.

Features of a Summary

There are different shades of opinion about types of reading but a good summary can only emerge out of focused and conscious reading effort to comprehend a text. To this end, the following steps could be helpful:

a) Start your summary with a clear identification of the type of work, title, author, and main point in the present tense.

b) Check with your outline and your original to make sure you have covered the important points.

c) Write using *summarizing language*. Periodically, remind your reader that this is a summary by using phrases such as *the article claims*, *the author suggests*, etc.

d) Write a complete bibliographic citation at the beginning of your summary. A complete bibliographic citation includes as a minimum, the title of the work, the author, the source.

EXERCISES

Summarize the following sentences, using the minimum of words, without omitting any of the facts (if necessary, the order of the words may be altered).

1. Many of the drivers of the taxis, which are found at the airports, often demand exorbitant fares.
2. As a result of much hard work extending over a period of seven weeks, the engineers were successful in their efforts to repair the bridges.
3. Although the farmer felt very tired after his long day's work, he was, nevertheless, pleased with the result of his day's toil.
4. By unremitting attention to his studies, the student may become proficient in the English language.
5. There are a great many different opinions on the question as to whether external examinations should be abolished or not.
6. It is unfortunate that a good deal of the land which lies in the town is not suitable for gardening on account of its rocky nature.

Summary Passages

Carefully read the following passages and answer the questions that follow them.

PASSAGE A

However simply we live, we all need food, clothing and some sort of shelter in order to survive, and most of us find out that we must depend on others for the satisfaction of these basic needs. We may succeed in growing our own food, weaving cloth for our clothes, even building our own houses, but it is virtually impossible to be entirely self-sufficient, unless we are prepared to grow our own corn and grind it to make our bread, shear the wool from our own sheep to obtain yarn, and fell the trees and quarry the stone ourselves to obtain materials to build with. We all rely to some extent on other people to provide us with the things we need in return for money. Those who satisfy our needs are called producers: those who buy from the producers are called consumers.

We are all consumers and, almost without exception, we are also producers. We may be farmers, miners, manufacturers, teachers, nurses, clerks, lorry drivers, and shop-keepers – human occupations are multifarious – but if we offer goods or services that others buy from us, we are producers.

Many producers are employed in industry. These industrial workers convert the raw materials obtained from nature into other products. The extractive industrial workers are those who obtain the materials in the first place - farmers,

fishermen, lumbermen, miners and quarry workers come into this category. They may supply their raw materials to manufacturers to be turned into furniture, fabrics and other manufactured goods by the manufacturing industrial workers, or their materials may be used for building or for work such as road and bridge construction by the constructive industrial workers. These three groups of industrial workers, however, could not function without the assistance of the commercial workers. This very large group of producers provides services which enable the industrial workers to obtain their materials, carry out their industrial processes and market their products. They provide such services as transport, insurance, warehousing and banking, and involve themselves in office organizations of various kinds that enable the work of the industrial to proceed effectively and smoothly. So, two large classes of producers come under the headings Industrial workers and Commercial workers. The third group of producers is also vital to the daily life of a civilized community. These are the people who give their services directly to consumers: the Direct Service workers – doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers, for example. They deal directly with those who employ their services, with no interventions from a third party.

It is all very well to classify people's occupations in this way and by doing so we get a clear idea of the interdependence of the groups, but it is easy to discover examples of people who do more than one kind of work and can therefore be placed in more than one group. Hairdressers, for example, in addition to giving a direct service to their customers, also sell hairdressing products in their shops. A fisherman might supply the bulk of his fish to a fish processing concern, but he might sell the other to part to the public through a retail outlet; he might also give a direct service to other fishermen by servicing their equipment for them.

1. Quote two groups of words from the extract that clearly tell us what producers and consumers are. What are the three categories of producers called and what sort of work is done by each?
2. Three types of industrial workers are mentioned. What are they? What kind of work does each group do?
3. Explain: virtually (Paragraph 1); self-sufficient (Paragraph 1); multifarious (Paragraph 1); interdependence (Paragraph 1).
4. Write a summary of the extract in not more than 120 words.

PASSAGE B

By the 1840s, it seemed that the system of international treaties and British naval patrols was not going to be sufficient by itself to stop the export of slaves from West Africa. From 1808 until 1870, a sizeable proportion of the strength of the

Royal Navy was stationed in West African waters for the sole purpose of catching slave ships. In the 1840s, when the patrol was at its most active, there were normally about twenty warships and well over a thousand men employed in it. But even then, it is to be doubted whether the patrol succeeded in capturing more than about one in every four of the slave ships visiting West Africa. Quite apart from the loopholes in the treaty system, even a very much larger naval force could not have guaranteed to catch every slaver in West African waters. It was quite impossible to have a ship watching every mile of the coastline all the time, and the difficulties facing the patrol were considerable. The only British possession which possessed a base at all suitable for the ships patrolling the coast was Sierra Leone, at its northern extremity. Any slave ship invested had to be taken to Freetown to be condemned, even if this meant a long and arduous voyage of 1500 miles or more against the prevailing wind and current. The long periods of continual sailing in the tropics and of boat-work close to an unhealthy coast, with few opportunities for shore leave, place a heavy burden on the crew employed. In more than one year, more than one out of every ten men serving in West African waters died there; the average death rate between 1825 and 1845 was about one in twenty, about three times as high as that on any other foreign station of the Royal Navy. J. D. Fage. *An Introduction to the History of West Africa*

In the passage above, the writer gives *four* reasons why it was difficult to stop the West African slave trade. State these reasons as briefly and clearly as you can.

PASSAGE C

By and large, all the societies using English as a second language have certain common features. Compared with Western societies, they have been, in recent centuries, under-developed technologically and economically. Such countries generally desire to catch up with countries of higher economic development. For economic advancement, technology and science are necessary. The training of the indigenous manpower, if it is to be done through mother tongues, must await textbooks in these languages and well-trained teachers who can teach in them. Even if this were feasible, it would take a longer time than the people in general are prepared to wait with their present desire to catch up with the industrial West. There is yet another consideration. The need of English for the purposes of science and technology tends to obscure the equally urgent need of English for the study and application of the social sciences. The spread of knowledge, urgently needed for the administration and application of modern social improvement, calls for the stable, viable language communication, which English often provides in

such situations. To catch up economically and to advance socially call not only for scientific and technological knowledge and skill. Thriving commerce is also necessary; this implies a commercial network of modern transportation, banking and a complexity of exchange, buying and selling, with all the accompanying book-keeping, correspondence administration, organization and time-tabling closely inter-related. It is not only that speedy and immediate training for this is most frequently available through English; it is that the commercial and industrial network of new relations cannot operate on a language communication system based on a diversity of languages. It must operate by means of a common language. One would doubt the safety and efficiency of a railway system where the instructions of management, technical and commercial were passed on in many languages. But it is not only economics that exert such language pressure, so also does the accompanying social change. Concentration of the population and urbanization, without regard for language grouping, give rise to major communication problems. In these complex urbanized societies, series of 'pidgin' languages are evolving. Communication in these languages, outside the narrowest of individual needs, takes place vaguely and by chance. The urgent social needs of such units clamour for a satisfactory lingua franca. For many, this is inevitably English.

John Wilson. *The Teacher of English*

In the above passage the writer gives *four* uses of English in developing countries. State briefly each of these uses and the reasons (or reasons) behind each one.

*English Language for the Certificate Year.*__Revised Edition.

John and Frances Stoddart. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Chapter Ten

Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development is a process by which people acquire words. The word *vocabulary* simply means words used in a particular language while a person's vocabulary is the set of familiar words within the person's language. A vocabulary usually develops with age and serves as a fundamental tool for communication and knowledge acquisition. From infancy to adulthood, human beings acquire new words as they get involved in communication contexts and social interactions. When an individual acquires new words, he is increasing his vocabulary and word power. On the other hand, those new words could help the individual to better understand the root of similar words or synonyms in contexts, thus expanding the vocabulary of language usage. Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading and improves when an individual knows what the words he comes across mean. Thus, vocabulary development is very vital in building a robust store of words to improve all areas of communication – listening, speaking, reading and writing. *Listening* and *speaking* constitute spoken vocabulary and *reading* and *writing*, written vocabulary.

Children begin to acquire listening and speaking vocabularies many years before they start to build reading and writing vocabularies. In the order of language vocabulary development, speaking language vocabulary forms the basis for written language vocabulary. Listening vocabulary constitutes the words that are heard and understood while speaking vocabulary constitutes the words that are used when speaking. Reading vocabulary is made up of words that are understood when reading texts while writing vocabulary constitutes the words that can be retrieved when we write to express ourselves. Each type of vocabulary has a different purpose and for the benefit of learners, vocabulary development in one type of language skill facilitates growth in another. It is important to note that our writing vocabulary is strongly influenced by the words we can spell or sound out. This means that if we have difficulty in speaking especially in sounding out words, it is likely going to transfer to our spelling and writing because what we pronounce is what we will likely write.

Reading comprehension and vocabulary are inextricably linked together. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. It has been shown that students with a smaller vocabulary range than other students comprehend less of what they read. It has also been suggested that to improve comprehension, improving word groups,

complex vocabularies such as homonyms or words that have multiple meanings, and those with figurative meanings like idioms, similes, collocations and metaphors are a good practice.

Importance of Vocabulary Development

Being familiar with a good number of vocabularies is key to breakthrough in reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. A robust vocabulary improves all the skills of communication which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. A large vocabulary can improve the public speaking skills of an individual. When a public speaker begins to use the same vocabulary words over and over, the speech will get very boring but when a large repertoire of vocabulary words is available, the audience retains interest throughout the speech period because of the usage of variety of words. A good vocabulary enhances and emboldens public speaking by causing fluent and coherent articulation of words. Eloquence in speech and writing are products of good vocabulary as an individual is enabled to express himself easily and articulately.

How to Build Your Vocabulary

Building vocabulary is one of the easiest ways to improve reading efficiency and word power to make any writing task much easier. A good reservoir of vocabulary is an essential tool in a writer's toolbox that enables the writer to say exactly what he wants to say and avoid vague words that do not give the reader any sense of the meaning. If there are abundant synonyms in the learner's repertoire to pull from every time, reading and writing will become a pleasant experience. Developing one's vocabulary need not be difficult or painful. Here are some suggestions on how to improve reading and writing vocabulary every day.

Use New Words: Use a word immediately after you learn it. Try to make a game out of a new word and build it into a conversation or writing. Do this as often as possible, and repeat the word to yourself.

Read Every Day: Try to read a well-written and edited essay, magazine article, book or news article every day. Nonfiction and technical books will quickly teach you new ways to think and speak with words you may be unfamiliar with, but any type of reading will help you along.

Learn Roots: Learn the roots of words. Most words in the English language are built from a common root, prefix, and suffix, usually with an origin in the Greek or Latin language. Once you learn a root, you'll begin to understand more words

that use the same root. For example, *un-* (Latin root word) means *not*, such as in words like, untruth, unripe, unwise, untold, unravel, etc.

Use a Dictionary: As you read or write, keep a dictionary handy and use it when you encounter a strange word during reading or when you are writing a word that you know does not quite convey the right meaning. As you make this clarification, you will also learn a new word in the process.

Develop Practical Vocabulary: This means you should start learning words that express what is important to you for the task at hand. A good example of this is learning trade language or words you use often in a hobby or vocation. Rather than immediately relying on clichés or jargon, look for clearer words to express yourself.

Learn New Words Every Day: To improve your vocabulary, make an effort to learn at least one new word every single day. There are many ways you can do this, such as, a Word of the Day calendar, or simply picking a word from a dictionary. To make the word settle into your mind and memory, write it down (both the definition and in a sentence you make up using the word). Use it in conversation and include it in any other way you can think of.

Diversify Your Reading List: If you tend to read the same sort of things every time you read, you may not be exposing yourself to a range of vocabulary wide enough. Diversify the topics you read to include natural science, features articles, contemporary literature, politics, history, philosophy or any other topic you think you may enjoy.

Do Word Puzzles: Word puzzles in the newspaper or a magazine are not just a fun way to fill time. They are also perfect for boosting your working vocabulary. Crossword puzzles are a challenge that gets your brain working hard to search your memory for words you may know but do not use and this can help you move words from your memory bank into your working set of vocabulary.

Try Word Board Games: There are lots of word games in the market designed to improve vocabulary and language skills without being a bore. If you have a friend with a great vocabulary who you think could challenge you, invite him/her over for a game night. Some games are designed to build vocabulary skills, but there are plenty of others that will help you practice spelling and phonics.

Use Mnemonics: Mnemonic techniques are memory tricks you can use to remember new words. You may remember a word by sounding it out, developing abbreviated forms of it, or thinking of a funny sentence that matches the meaning.

Carry a Dictionary with You: Sometimes, you may find yourself with free time and nothing to do. Carry a pocket dictionary with you and you will find time to beef up your vocabulary while you are waiting for an appointment, commuting to work or standing in a queue. Whenever you have a few minutes to spare read a

page or two and learn a new word to add to your vocabulary. It is also a great idea to look up obscure words you do not quite understand that come to you on the fly as you go about your day. You can also use the dictionary to look up unfamiliar words you come across in your daily life. Hopefully, this list has provided excellent steps to build a large vocabulary. This shows that there are opportunities all around every one to develop this important skill. So, learners should spend quality time every day, reading and listening, to take in new words and then develop a system to incorporate these new words in writing and speech. Before long, it will be discovered that vocabulary has grown to a new level and that writing has gained the needed clarity with an unimaginable ease.

Extensive Reading

Interest in reading is one of the factors enhancing vocabulary development and growth. Apart from acquainting with new words, extensive reading exposes the reader to other language elements like punctuation, grammar, and many others. Extensive reading involves wide and varied reading in various areas of human activity. It advocates reading as much material in the target language as humanly possible in order to be exposed to the widest range of vocabulary and grammatical structure. It is great for those who enjoy reading. Many people whose extracurricular activities include reading are generally good readers. Leisure reading, especially when read aloud, can enhance reading efficiency. This type of self-imposed reading extends the intellectual horizon of the reader and gives pleasure, enjoyment and recreation, as the reader shares the writer's views on issues and episodes about life generally: He also shares in the beauty and elegance of expression of the writer. Apart from keeping the reader abreast of events in the world, extensive reading contributes in no small way in the war against ignorance, which is widely addressed today. It is not an overstatement to say that time spent reading, especially a variety of materials on different disciplines, is not wasted but rather wisely invested. To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for oneself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life. A good book can be hugely satisfying, can teach you about things beyond your daily horizons, and can create characters so vivid that you feel as if you really know them.

If reading is a habit you would like to get into, there are a number of ways to cultivate it.

First, realize that reading is highly enjoyable, if you have a good book. If you have a lousy book (or an extremely difficult one) and you are forcing yourself

through it, it will seem like a chore. If this happens for several days in a row, consider abandoning the book and finding one that you'll really love. You could also try applying these tips to cultivate a lifetime reading habit:

Set times. You should have a few set times during every day when you'll read for at least 5-10 minutes. These are times that you will read no matter what — triggers that happen each day. For example, make it a habit to read during breakfast and lunch (and even dinner if you eat alone). And if you also read every time you are sitting on the chair, and when you go to bed, you now have four times a day when you read for 10 minutes each, or 40 minutes a day. That's a great start, and by itself would be an excellent daily reading habit. But there's more you can do.

Always carry a book. Wherever you go, cultivate the habit of taking a book with you. Let the book stay with you in the car, in the office, in your bag and take it to appointments and pretty much everywhere you go, unless you know you definitely won't be reading (like at a religious worship). If there is a time when you have to wait (like at a doctor's office), whip out your book and read. Great way to pass the time!

Make a list. Keep a list of all the great books you want to read. You can keep this in your diary, in a pocket notebook, on your personal home calendar, wherever. Be sure to add to it whenever you hear about a good book. Keep a running list, and cross out the ones you read. **Find a quiet place.** Find a place in your home where you can sit in a comfortable chair (do not lie down unless you are going to sleep) and curl up with a good book without interruptions. There should be no television or computer near the chair to minimize distractions, and no music or noisy family members/roommates. If you don't have a place like this, create one.

Reduce television/Internet. If you really want to read more, try cutting back on TV or Internet consumption. This may be difficult for many people. Still, every minute you look away from Internet/TV, you could use for reading. This could create hours of book reading time.

Read to your kid. If you have children, you must, must read to them. Creating the reading habit in your kids is the best way to ensure they'll be readers when they grow up, and it will help them to be successful in life as well. Find some great children's books, and read to them. At the same time, you're developing the reading habit in yourself and spending some quality time with your child as well.

Keep a log. Similar to the reading list, this log should have not only the title and author of the books you read, but the dates you start and finish them if possible. Better still; put a note next to each with your thoughts about the book. It is extremely satisfying to go back over the log after a couple of months to see all the great books you've read.

Have a library day. You can patronise used book shops and get some discount on book purchase. You can also drop off all your old books and get even bigger discount on used books you may want to purchase in the store. In this way, you will not spend too much of your earnings on books. Even cheaper than a used book shop is a library, of course. Make it a weekly trip!

Read fun and compelling books. Find books that really grip you and keep you going. Even if they are not literary masterpieces, they make you want to read — and that's the goal here. After you have cultivated the reading habit, you can move on to more difficult stuff, but for now, go for the fun, gripping stuff. Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Festus Iyayi, John Pepper Clark, Wale Soyinka, Flora Nwapa, and all other popular authors are popular for a reason — they tell great stories. Others like William Shakespeare, Vonnegut, William Gibson, Douglas Adams, Nick Hornby, Ann Patchett, Terry Pratchett, Terry McMillan, F. Scott Fitzgerald are also popular for a reason. They are all excellent storytellers.

Make it pleasurable. Make your reading time your favorite time of day. Have some good tea or other drink while you read, or another kind of treat. Get into a comfortable chair with a soft underlay. You can also make it in a cool outdoor location. Read during sunrise or sunset, or at the park.

Set a high goal. Tell yourself that you want to read 50 books this year (or some other number like that). Then set about trying to accomplish it. Just be sure you're still enjoying the reading though — do not make it a rushed chore.

Have a reading hour or reading day. If you turn off the Television or Internet in the evening, you could have a set hour (perhaps just after dinner) when you and maybe all the members of your family read each night. Or you could do a reading day, when you (and again, your other family members if you can get them to join you) read for practically the whole day. It's super fun.

Intensive Reading

As the name suggests, intensive reading refers to reading short texts thoroughly and with clear goals, such as to answer reading comprehension questions or to identify how sentences are linked. Unlike extensive reading, the goal of intensive reading is not to read many texts for fluency, but rather to read a shorter piece of text to gain a deeper understanding of that text. Intensive reading focuses on closely following a shorter text, doing exercises with it, and learning it in detail. This helps language learners really understand the languages' grammar and syntax. The reader translates every word that is not clearly understood and thinks about the meaning of what was written and really engages with the text and author. A reader can take comprehension texts, deconstruct the more complicated grammar and gain valuable skills that will help him in learning the target language. Thus, one can engage with a short text and walk away with a great sense of achievement. It is like a one-by-one autopsy of the text. In all, both intensive and extensive reading celebrate reading as an integral part of language learning.

The four learning goals for intensive reading as outlined by Macalister (2011) are:

1. Focusing on new **language** such as vocabulary and grammar;
2. Focusing on **ideas** such as themes and topics;
3. Learning new **skills** such as making inferences and identifying main ideas;
4. Paying attention to **text features** such as genre structure and cohesion.

Notes

Notes are symbols, which are put down on paper as reminders of things that are yet to be done. Effective speaking, reading and writing all depend on well taken and well-made notes. In business transactions, there is much reliance on notes and ability to make notes. In official transactions like telephone conversations, oral interviews business letters, essays, reports, etc., ability to make notes help in recollection and provision of reliable information. At conferences and meetings, notes are important reminders of agreements reached and matters to be discussed. In the classroom, notes are of inestimable importance in effective learning as they provide basic information on issues that have been discussed. Note making and note taking are essential undertakings in the process of acquiring knowledge especially where students are expected to listen and put down important points on paper.

Note Making

Note making is the process of making series of disconnected jottings, which, more often than not are not in sentence form. Note-making skill is an essential activity in all subject areas in which the aim is to acquire knowledge rather than develop skill, especially in lecturing. Listening is a very vital aspect of note-making skill. Note-making combines the art of selection with that of arrangement because disconnected points must be properly arranged and made into notes, possibly sifted, classified and combined with notes from reading and other sources. A student is expected to make conscious effort to follow what is said, recognize the main points discussed and understand them critically. Inability of a student to make notes is a clear demonstration of ignorance of the topic at hand. Much of the information that a student needs are found in books, magazines and the press and one of the characteristics of a serious student is the practice of making notes. He must note down the essentials of what he reads. However, the purpose for which note is made determines the form the note takes. Since notes are meant to record and store information for the future, the writer can choose non-verbal forms like maps, diagrams, models, drawings, tables, graphs, photographs, films, etc. Notes made as reminders for immediate use in a composition can be so fragmentary as to be incomprehensible a year later. Notes made to use in revision for an examination will be much more formal. Notes made for a research essay will be different again, including, for example, quotations with detailed references.

Making notes, therefore, demands concentration and focus in compiling information that aid comprehension, apart from providing a record for future reference. It may, however, not be possible in a lecture hall to arrange notes taken in the order most suitable for future reference. It becomes necessary to provide a rough notebook for classroom jotting and a permanent notebook for notes written after selecting, arranging and classifying materials which may also be combined with notes from other sources. Therefore, the practice of note making is an essential skill, which every student must acquire. Students must be able to recall facts after class sessions and note making is the surest way of ensuring that facts are not forgotten.

Note Taking

Note taking entails taking down jottings often not in sentence form. These may be points jotted down as they are given. They can later be expanded. This is where the major difference between note making and note taking lies. The essential art in note taking is selection. There is time to note only the lecturer's main points. This is possible only when a student has carefully listened and

closely paid attention to what is said. Notes, essentially, are meant to provide the key points of leading facts and principles. A student who is familiar with the subject matter of a lecture will recognize the main points more readily than one who is not. The restriction to selection of essential materials may not always be possible in a lecture situation neither is it easy to arrange selected materials in suitable order for easy reference.

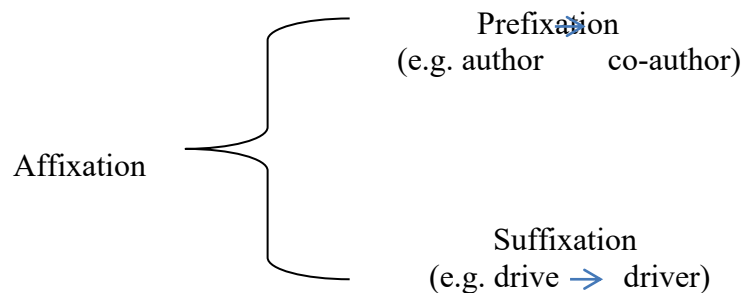
The essential things to note about note taking are:

- (i) Notes need not be in sentence form. Simple or even single words are sometimes enough.
- (ii) Pick out the essential points and note them briefly. Details from other sources can later be made.
- (iii) If possible, use numbered, tabulated headings and sub-headings
- (iv) Use abbreviations or shortened forms, if they will help.
- (v) Underline particularly important notes which you may wish to remember
- (vi) Note the source of the information collected, i.e., the reference.

Word Formation

Affixation

Affixation is the process through which new words are formed by the addition of 'affixes'. Affixes are attachments or additions made to a base word. There are two basic types of affixes, namely, prefixes and suffixes.



Prefixation

Prefixation involves the addition of a prefix to a base. The result may or may not entail change of word class. The morpheme that is added **before** the base of the word is called *a prefix*.

Prefix	Base	New word
in-	active	inactive
un-	mask	unmask
dis-	like	dislike
out-	weigh	outweigh

Some prefixes commonly used in English are:

- a- (meaning *of, up, from*): abroad, along, among, ashamed, again.
- by- (*on the side*): bystander, bypath, byword.
- arch- (*chief*): arch-bishop, arch-villain, arch-enemy, arch-angel.
- ex- (*former*): ex-king, ex-wife, ex-teacher, ex-member.
- fore- (*before*): forecast, foretell, foresee, forestall, fore-knowledge
- mis- (*wrongly*): mistake, mislay, mislead, misdeed, misconceive, mismanage
- non- (*not*): non-existence, non-English, non-alphabetical, non-issue, nonsense
- over- (*to excess*): over-ripe, over-step, over-speed, over-stay, overnight
- semi- (*half*): semi-colon, semi-circle
- re- (*again*): restate, resume, resettle, rebuild, retake, rewind, renew
- sun- (*not*): untruth, unripe unreal, unwise, untold, undo, unlock, unknown, unfair, unhappy
- anti- (*against*): antidote, antitoxin, antagonist.

Suffixation

Suffixation involves the addition of a suffix **after** a base word. Unlike prefixes, suffixes frequently alter the word class of the base, for example, the adjective, *kind*, by the addition of the suffix, *-ness*, is changed into an abstract noun *kindness*.

Classification of suffixes

- (i.) Suffixes are classified from the view point of the class of words formed.

- (ii.) Suffixes are classified by the class of base they are typically added to
(*Denominal*, i.e. from nouns, *Deadjectival*, *Deverbal* suffixes, etc.).

Noun → Noun suffixes.

Suffix	Base	New word
-let	book	booklet
-er	London	Londoner
-hood	boy	boyhood
-dom	king	kingdom

Noun/Adjective → Noun/Adjective suffixes

Suffix	Base	New word
-ite	Israel	Israelite
-ist	social	socialist
-ism	commune	communism

Verb → Noun suffixes

Verb base words turned denominals

Suffix	Base	New word
-or	act	actor
-ee	employ	employee
-al	refuse	refusal
-age	drain	drainage

Adjective → Noun suffixes

Suffix	Base	New word
-ness	sad	sadness
-ity	sane	sanity

The adjective base words lose their adjective quality and change to nouns, i.e. they are de-adjectivised.

Verb suffixes

Suffix	Base	New word
-ify	simple	simplify
-ize	popular	popularize
-en	deaf	deafen

Noun → Adjective suffixes (Denominal Adjectives)

Suffix	Base	New word
-ful	use	useful
-less	child	childless
-y	cream	creamy
-ish	fool	foolish

Register

Register is a term used to refer to special form of language peculiar to people in specific occupations and disciplines. It also refers to expressions used frequently in particular circumstances and contexts. In a more general sense, register refers to the language used by a group of people who share similar work or interests, such as engineers, lawyers, doctors, and other specialized professions.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines it as ‘the words, style and grammar used by speakers and writers in a particular situation or in a particular type of writing. Hence, one can talk about the ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ register for a formal social situation, the correct or incorrect register for law, medicine, commerce, photography, music, engineering, religion, languages and so on. Indeed, registers are as numerous as there are disciplines. Here are some of the expressions in some disciplines which an ‘educated’ person should be able to minimally master and use.

Register of Law Courts:

Jurisdiction:	the official power held by a court of law to try cases and the right to use such power
Sedition:	a publication having a seditious intention
Copyright:	right of an author to prevent others from publishing or reproducing his work without his consent
Injunction:	an order of a court restraining the furtherance of a wrongful act or omission
Defamation (libel):	any publication of a defamatory matter in a permanent form (which damages a person’s good image or reputation)
Contempt of court:	tampering with an issue which is still pending in court or refusal to abide by decisions or proceedings of a court of law
Plaintiff:	a complainant at court
Defendant:	a person standing trial of an offence in a court of law
Criminal offence:	offence committed which is punishable by law

Court of civil jurisdiction:	a court that tries civil cases between individuals seeking legal rights. Disputes are normally settled there
Court of limited jurisdiction:	a court that has limited sentencing powers. It tries only certain types of cases
Court of appeal:	a court that hears appeals from higher or lower courts
Supreme Court:	highest court of law in a state or country

Health and Hospital

Immunization:	putting substances into the body (usually by injection) to prevent an illness
Drip:	fluid given intravenously
Blood transfusion:	a process of giving a patient additional blood
Fracture:	a broken bone
Coma:	a state of unconsciousness
Chronic disease:	disease lasting a long time
Terminal disease:	disease that will cause death
Infectious disease:	disease that can pass on from one person to another
General Practitioner:	a doctor who has not specialized in an area. He refers patients to Specialists

Specialists

Area of specialization

Pediatrician	-	children's diseases
Dermatologist	-	skin diseases
Gynecologist	-	women's diseases
Orthopedic	-	bones
Psychiatrist	-	mental illness
Cardiologist	-	heart diseases
Ophthalmologist	-	eye diseases
Urologist	-	urinary problems
Surgeon	-	surgical operation on patients

Specialists

Area of specialization

Neurosurgeon	-	disease of the nerves
Plastic surgeon	-	artificial rather than natural ailments

Dental surgeon	-	disease of the teeth
Wards	-	rooms with beds for patients
Theatre	-	a room where surgical operations are performed
Laboratory:	-	a room where specimens are analyzed
Specimen:	-	samples of blood, urine, feces, etc.
Intravenous injection:	-	injection given through the vein

Register of other areas

Electricity

transformer
energy
circuit breaker
thermal expansion
thermodynamics
waves
conductors
magnetism
density
gravitation
radiation
voltage

Library

serials
acquisition
archives
classification
cataloguing
reference
engraving
retrieval
lending
periodicals
conservation
binding

Photography

flash exposure
camera
full range
contrast
negative
processing film
screen
yellow printer
silhouette
impression
lens diaphragm
cropping

Building

elevation
arch
terrace
beam
concrete floor
eaves
precast pile
insulation panel
lintel
sand screed
overhang
rafters

Music

accent mark
bass line
piano
keys
rhythms
duplets
flute
keyboard
pitch
signature
clefs
cadences
meters

Commerce

home trade
imported goods
stock exchange
trade boom
packaging
balance of trade
inventory control
sales promotion
quotation
demand and supply
free on board
local purchase order
insolvency
inflation
disequilibrium

Textile

fiber
yarn
burlap
spinning
polyester
dyeing

Banking

savings account
accountant
teller
cheque
balance of account
cash flow
counterfeit
counterfoil
interest
excess depreciation
overdraft
double entry
bank draft

Food and Technology

carbohydrate
saccharine
oxidation
contamination
enzymes
coagulation
fermentation
pasteurization
indigestion
cereal
balance diet
fumigate
bacteria
nutrition
acids

Mass Communication

electronic media
print journalism
news coverage
telecast
censorship
reporter

mercerization
knitting
wool
silk
shrinkage
cotton

investigative journalism
proof read
lead
editorial matter
copy
press release
morgue
soft news

Denotation and Connotation

Words vary greatly in the roles they play as language is used to express ideas and feelings. Many of the content words in many languages (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) may be said to have denotative and connotative meanings.

Denotation is the thing pointed to by a word rather than the feelings or ideas connected with the word. It is the literal, surface dictionary meaning, that is, the meaning which a word holds for everyone who knows the word. So, one denotative meaning of *table* is 'a piece of furniture with a flat top supported by one or more upright legs.' The word *lion* denotes a certain type of animal. The sign of equality is denoted with '='. A smile often denotes pleasure. Also the word *liberal* denotes 'a person favouring political change and reform.' One denotative meaning of *justice* is 'fair handling and equal treatment'. But when used in various contexts, many words carry more than one denotative meaning. They may also carry connotative meanings.

Connotation is a meaning or idea suggested by a word or thing in addition to the formal meaning or nature of the word or thing. It also implies the associative implications that words may have for individuals or groups because of their experiences with the things the words denote. For instance, the bad connotations of the word 'skinny' are quite different from the good connotations of the word 'slim' even though they are two words for the same thing. Equally, to a person with inherited wealth and conservative background, the word *liberal* might carry the connotation of an undesired person who would lead a person to ruin. Consider the word *justice*. What thought might run through the mind of a poor, rural man who has been arrested and charged to court or even imprisoned for the simple act of street-fighting and who perhaps was mistreated by the authorities during the ordeal he underwent for what to him seemed no good reason? To him, justice might connote favouritism to the rich and distortion rather than fair or equal treatment. Connotations are sometimes called **implicit** meanings as contrasted with **explicit** meanings of denotations because these imply or

suggest attitudes they do not state outright. For instance, these sentences imply different attitudes toward similar events.

The difference between a *boyish prank*
and an *act of vandalism* depends on whose
child does the mischief.

Our troops *routed* the enemy
from the hill. The next day they
made a *strategic withdrawal* from
the same position.

Boyish prank is just as connotative as *act of vandalism* but implies a different attitude toward the act. A *boyish prank*, a *strategic withdrawal*, conveys more tolerant or approving attitude than the more disapproved act of *vandalism* or *routed* which have unfavourable connotations.

Connotation is sometimes entirely private because of an individual's personal and non-shared experiences. Supposing there is an individual who can never for any reason allow native medicine go down his throat. To that person, native medicine has an unfavourable connotation. To him, it is a bad word whereas to millions who go after it, it is no doubt a good word. Or consider the word *Dean*, as in the dean of a college or university. To most people, it connotes learning, benevolent authority, and gentle accomplishment. But, perhaps, there is one person who almost goes into a rage whenever he hears the word because he had some unfortunate experiences with an autocratic, ignorant Dean. Experience greatly affects our reactions or perceptions of individual words.

There is also public connotation which is the meaning which a word presents to a large population. By this, we mean exactly the same suggestive meaning which a word gives to everyone who knows it. It is in the areas of politics, religion, social behaviour, economics, and so on, that many words have public connotations. In addressing a political or religious crowd, care is taken to ensure that only words with positive connotation which are not likely to anger the audience would be preferred. It will be more preferred to use objective language which is free from personal feelings, opinion, prejudices, emotions, self-interest, and bigotry. This is unbiased language in which the writer or speaker detaches himself from his subject-matter. He uses more of words with denotative meanings even though, it may be difficult to avoid connotative words altogether in a piece of writing.

Informal Expressions

Cliché

A cliché is an overused worn-out expression that has become stereotyped. The use of cliché indicates poverty of language and an unwillingness to think for oneself. Since most clichés have become so commonplace because of their frequent use, it becomes easy for mentally lazy writers to use them. Documents packed with cliché can never be fresh and original since by its nature, a cliché is an overused expression and secondhand. A cliché that falls below the standard of acceptable English can be regarded as slang. If, however, it is constantly and consistently used as part of the vocabulary of a particular area of writing, for instance, report writing, it can be looked at as jargon. The following are some common clichés found in many modern writing:

be that as it may	last but not the least
by and large	needless to say
for the time being	leave no stone unturned
inclined to think	on the contrary
in the first place	over and above
need hardly say	the man in street
in view of the fact	to all intent and purposes

Slang

The Oxford Dictionary defines slang as “language of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech”. **Slang** is language (sometimes rude words, phrases, and usages) of an informal register that members of particular in-groups favour (over a standard language) in order to establish group identity, exclude outsiders, or both. At its earliest attested use (1756), the word *slang* referred to the vocabulary of "low" or "disreputable" people. By the early nineteenth century, it was no longer exclusively associated with disreputable people, but continued to be applied to usages below the level of standard educated speech. Slang is considered inappropriate in formal writing, and tends to be considered unacceptable in many contexts. It is often difficult to differentiate slang from colloquialisms and even more standard language, because slang generally becomes accepted into the standard lexicon over time. Nevertheless, a general test for whether a word is a slang word or not is whether it would be acceptable in an academic or legal setting, as both are arenas in which standard language is considered necessary and/or whether the term has been entered in the Oxford English Dictionary, which some scholars claim changes its

status as slang.- Slang is an aspect of our vocabulary very dear to the hearts of young people. Such slang languages, though not at all disreputable or reprehensible, are unacceptable as Standard English. Slang is often used in familiar and informal speech quite harmlessly. Words such as 'spurious' and 'strenuous' were once slang, though they are now accepted as standard, even high register words. Mostly, oral slang words enliven the casual conversation of users irrespective of their educational levels. Slang is a language of informal expression and must remain confined there. On no account must it be given a place in a formal writing. The dictionary contains many words classified as slangs, a few of which include the ones below

outa sight	meaning	out of sight
guys and gals	”	boys and girls
real cool	“	attractive
posh	“	class
do the needful	“	do what is necessary
to fall for it	”	to have been deceived

Some slang words prove so useful that they pass into the popular vocabulary but are mostly a thing of the moment and soon thin out.

Language experts argue that an expression should be considered "true slang" if it meets at least two of the following criteria:

1. It lowers, even temporarily, "the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing". In other words, it is likely to be considered in those contexts a "glaring misuse of register".
2. Its use implies that the user is familiar with whatever is referred to, or with a group of people who are familiar with it and use the term.
3. It is a taboo term in ordinary discourse with people of a higher social status or greater responsibility.
4. It replaces a well-known conventional synonym. This is done primarily to avoid discomfort caused by the conventional synonym or discomfort or annoyance caused by having to elaborate further.

Jargon

Jargon is specialized terminology used to define specific activity, words and phrases used in a particular profession, trade, or group. It is usually characterized by abstractions and difficult phrasing that would sound like gibberish to ordinary, reasonably well-educated people. Jargon is thus, "the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group". This is the term often used to refer to technical or specialized terminology of some profession, trade or occupation. Most jargon is technical terminology or technical terms, involving *terms of art or industry terms*, with particular meaning within a specific industry. The term refers to the language used by people who work in a particular area or who have a common interest. Much like slang, it is a kind of shorthand used to express ideas that are frequently discussed between members of a group, though it can also be developed deliberately using chosen terms. While a standard term may be given a more precise or unique usage amongst practitioners of relevant disciplines, it is often reported that jargon is a barrier to communication for those people unfamiliar with the jargon discipline register.

Thus, in the popular sense, jargon has come to be applied to a style of writing that is pompous, obscure, and verbose, full of clichés and hackneyed expressions that add little or nothing to the meaning of what is written and sometimes hard to understand by the ordinary person. It is however understandable that those groups of specialists use a special language among themselves to help them in their work. Thus, one may refer to engineering jargon, medical jargon, journalism jargon, marketing jargon, jargon of art, criticism and so on. So, *sales promotion* in marketing, *budgetary control* in accounting, *inferiority complex* in psychology, *retro-rocket* in space travel, *syntactic*, *semantics*, *phonetics* and *phonology* in language are terms that cannot be avoided but which may be strange to those outside these areas. In fact, some scholars become so learned that they lose the ability to write with simple and direct simplicity and they also train young ones to use jargon. A side-effect of jargon is that, sometimes, like slang, it is used as a means of social exclusion (reinforcing in-group-out-group barriers) or social aspiration when intended as a way of showing off. It is also speculated that pride in professional learning may also lead some writers into composing jargon in different disciplines. This, notwithstanding, some academics encourage fellow academics to use jargon-free language because it pervades disciplines, history, and different research strategies.

Colloquialism

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defined 'colloquialism' as an expression used in or suitable for ordinary, familiar or

informal conversation in any locality. It also described it as informal in diction and style of expression. These explanations above suggest that colloquialism has more to do with speech rather than with writing. All informal types of language are colloquial. Colloquial language is used by both the educated and uneducated when they speak together informally. In linguistics, **colloquialism** is vernacular language including everyday language, everyday speech, common parlance, informal language, general parlance, and common expressions. It is the most used linguistic variety of a language, the language normally used in conversation and other informal communication.

The most common term used in dictionaries to label such an expression is **colloquial**. It is the variety of language that speakers typically use when they are relaxed and not especially self-conscious. An expression is labeled *colloq.* for ‘colloquial’ in dictionaries when a different expression is more common in formal speech, but this does not mean that the colloquial expression is inappropriate in formal speech or writing or that it is necessarily slang. Some colloquial expressions contain a great deal of slang, but some contain no slang at all. Slang is permitted in colloquial language, but it is not a necessary element. Other examples of colloquial usage in English include contractions or profanity. A *colloquial name* or *familiar name* is a name or term commonly used to identify a person or thing, in informal language, in place of another usually more formal or technical name. Colloquialisms are distinct from slang or jargon. Slang refers to words and coinages used only by specific social groups, such as teenagers or soldiers. Jargon is a type of language that is used in a particular context and may not be well understood outside that context. Colloquial language may include slang, but consists mostly of contractions or other informal words and phrases known to most native speakers of the language. While colloquialisms and jargon may seem like slang because they reference a particular group, they do not fit the same definition, because they do not represent a particular effort to replace standard language. Colloquialisms are considered more standard than slang, and jargon is often created to talk about aspects of a particular field that are not accounted for in the standard lexicon. Though many forms of language may be considered “sub-standard”, slang remains distinct from colloquial and jargon terms because of its specific social contexts. While considered informal, colloquial terms are typically considered acceptable in speech across a wide range of contexts, while Jargon refers to language used by personnel in a particular field, or language used to represent specific terms within a field to those with a particular interest. The intention of jargon is to optimize conversation using terms that imply technical understanding. ‘**Pidgin**’, as it is spoken by people in Africa, could be classified as ‘*colloquialism*’ because it cannot be used in formal writing.

Note that a regular user of colloquial language makes it a habit that may be difficult to break. This habit might affect formal writing. In writing, generally, colloquial language does not convey much seriousness. It merely gives the impression of talking directly and intimately with the reader on a personal note. **Contractions** are also colloquial. There are such contractions as *don't*, *wasn't*, *hasn't*, *isn't*, *aren't* and so on. Also **clipped words** like taxi, phone, fax, mike (microphone), photo, flu, are shortened forms of longer words. All these must be avoided in formal writing.

Chapter Eleven

Writing Academic Research Project

Many students expect research to be an excruciating ordeal but it need not be so. However, it could be an ordeal to those who do not know what they are doing and why. Research is nothing more than finding out what you need to know. You may have been skilled in certain type of research, for example, if you want to find out a topic in a textbook, you could easily do so even though the textbook contains numerous topics.

Research can take any number of forms, from looking up the meaning of a word to conducting an opinion poll. Depending on what you want to find out, you might need to ask the opinion of experts, undertake fieldwork or laboratory experiments, interview eyewitnesses, analyze photographs, or observe the behaviour of people who do not know they are being watched.

In this chapter, we are interested in research that has a more public purpose rather than the one that can be used for your private purpose like researching for job opportunities or holiday resort centers. Public purpose research benefits the public because you share your findings with other scholars. In order to expose what you have learnt as a result of your research, you will engage in *research writing*. Specifically, any organized investigation can be called research and any writing you do as a result of the investigation, from arts to science or technology, can be called research writing. Writing a research project may seem complicated and difficult but a beginner can learn to do so if it is taken one step at a time.

A research report is the most formal and complex method of documentation. It is also, probably, the most demanding of all writings because of the many sources that must be consulted, evaluated and built into the unified report. Because of the skills involved in research writing, it is different from every other good writing which is not research. You owe it to your readers to produce writing that is informed and accurate as a researcher.

What is Research?

There are differences among research experts regarding what research really is. However, a partial list of definitions is given here:

- A curiosity-driven activity that has the purpose of discovery and advancement of knowledge.
- A systematic and objective investigation designed to develop or contribute to general reliable knowledge.

- A form of inquiry that involves seeking of evidence to increase knowledge. This involves a systematic process for recognizing a need for information, acquiring and validating that information and deriving conclusions from it.
- A formalized and systematized approach of enquiry into the unknown in our environment.
- A methodology used for acquiring dependable and useful information about the process of education.

Going through the above listed definitions from different fields of study, it can be noted that:

- Research is systematic.
- Research is designed to obtain knowledge/information.
- Research is problem solving.

Varieties of Research

The research process varies from discipline to discipline, from area to area. In some disciplines, laboratory experiments are a significant part of the research, while some others do a lot of construction works. Some other disciplines require observation of habits of people or animals. Other disciplines require survey while some evaluate information according to theories or standards. Broadly considered, research ranges from basic research right through applied research and to experimental development. However, only a few of the varieties will be discussed in this chapter.

Basic Research

This variety of research aims at the advancement of knowledge. This is also known as *fundamental research* and is interested in producing results/findings which will lead to the development of theories. It is interested in building theories which will lead to the advancement of knowledge in practical situations and disciplines. Basic research is purely for advancement of knowledge rather than for social or long-term economic benefit.

Applied Research

This variety is concerned with the usefulness of theories or ideas to practical situations. Applied research does not lead to theory building but rather seeks to establish the applications of a given theory to practical situations. Thus, while basic research establishes a theory, applied research tests the usefulness or applicability of that theory in practical situations and sends feedback to the basic researcher. The feedback, so sent, helps the basic researcher in modifying and

refining the theory. In this respect, basic research and applied research are complementary.

Skills in Research Writing

Writing a research report affords you the opportunity to demonstrate these very important skills:

- (i) Use of library: The library stands as the centre of knowledge in education. The researcher needs academic resources from the library and thus consults the materials stacked in the library for information.
- (ii) Accurate reading and appropriate judgment of sources: The researcher needs to read accurately and assign meanings appropriately to materials read. Sources should also be judged objectively to achieve the objective of the research.
- (iii) Organization and clarity in writing: Ideas should be presented in a logical and readable manner. The use of figures and tables should give desired information. Such information should be able to give new knowledge and understanding concerning the topic of research.
- (iv) Critical thinking skill: This is a necessity in research. The researcher should be able to weigh and sift information to ensure its' suitability for use in research.

Essential Features of a Research Project

The scientific research process which has also been embraced in social science and educational research encompasses these major sequential features which must be accounted for:

1. Identification of problem: This involves identifying a burning issue which the researcher is interested in finding solution to. This problem needs to be of interest to the researcher. At first, the problem may not be very clear to the researcher but as questions arise about the problem, the researcher's focus gets more directed and sharper. As the writing progresses, the problem becomes more precise.
2. Formulating research questions or hypotheses that will guide information gathering: Data are collected based on the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. There will also be need to review literature especially previous research studies related to the problem.
3. Appropriating research design suitable for providing solution to the problem: Such design will be employed to collect necessary data for the research. The research design could be experiment (treatment and control), observation or questionnaire, in case of descriptive research.

4. Analyzing the data collected with appropriate statistical tools: Results arising from the analysis of data provide answers to the research questions and hypotheses formulated. Statistical analysis chosen must be in consonance with the research questions and hypotheses.
5. Making appropriate inferences and conclusions: This will be done in relation to research questions and hypotheses based on the results of analysis. Recommendations made could be the basis for future actions.

Scientific Approach in Research

Research, especially in education and social sciences, is typically divided into two broad categories: *qualitative* and *quantitative* research. However, both qualitative researchers and quantitative researchers go about scientific inquiry in different ways. Each approach has its own terminology, methods and techniques. Qualitative and quantitative research stem from different philosophical foundations that shape the ways the researchers approach problems, collect and analyse data.

Qualitative Research: Qualitative approach to research concerns itself with collection of narrative data through observations, interviews and focus group discussions in order to understand social phenomena from the perspective of human participants. Qualitative research approach is rooted in *Phenomenology*, which sees the individual and his world as so interconnected that essentially the one has no existence without the other. Thus, the researcher can only understand human behavior by focusing on the meaning that events have for the people involved. Qualitative researchers often interact closely with those involved in their study. Research data arise out of these interactions in the form of what people reveal to the researcher and the researchers' impressions. Thus, qualitative researchers rely on their judgments, feelings and impressions in collecting data. They also rely heavily on their own interpretations in understanding the meaning of their data. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predicting future situations, i.e., they are reported in form of narratives or verbal descriptions.

Research types that come under qualitative approach include ethnography, case studies, document analysis, focused interviews, historical studies, naturalistic observations and phenomenological studies.

Quantitative Research: Quantitative approach to research concerns itself with gathering information in numeric form to understand and explain phenomena. It does not focus on details of behavior, attitudes and motivation. Quantitative

research is usually based on large sample sizes that are representative of the population and can also be replicated or repeated. Quantitative research approach originated from *Positivism philosophy* which emphasizes measurement and gathering data with objective techniques as the best way to answer and to explain and predict behavior. Thus, the researcher must be as objective as possible, keeping aside his/her own feelings and impressions and values. The analysis of result is objective because of the numeric form of information gathering. It uses objective measurement and statistical analysis of numeric data to understand and explain phenomena. The result of this is research that is systematic and open to replication by other researchers. It is important to note that quantitative research requires a well-controlled setting which enables other necessary conditions to be put in place for dependable data to be collected. Quantitative research may be further classified as either experimental or non-experimental. Non-experimental research does not manipulate variables but may look for relationships among them. On the other hand, experimental research involves manipulation of variables. Major forms of non-experimental research are causal comparative research (Ex post facto research), co-relational research and survey research while the experimental research has such major forms as true experimental research, quasi-experimental and factorial research designs.

Descriptive Research: Descriptive research is a classification under quantitative research. In descriptive research there is no attempt to manipulate variables. Rather, the research focuses on descriptions of variables and their relationships as they naturally occur. Descriptive research asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of variables. It involves descriptive research answers to questions like “*What do fresh architects know about computerized design?*” Usually, hypotheses are not tested since descriptive studies are concerned with description of phenomenon as they are. For instance, a topic like “*The rate of maternal mortality in Anambra State in 2010*” will be interested in describing the incidence of mortality in Anambra State in 2010 with no interest in testing any hypothesis about the cause of maternal mortality in the area in 2010.

Characteristics of Scientific Research

All scientific research could be classified under the following headings based on their peculiar characteristics:

(a) ***Empirical:*** This involves collection of data that provides the bases for drawing inferences and conclusions. Findings in research are based on results gotten from situations being investigated.

- (b) **Theoretical:** Scientific research aims at coming out with propositions which can explain certain situations or events. These propositions can also form the bases on which similar studies can be conducted.
- (c) **Cumulative:** Every scientific investigation tries to establish itself on previously established and existing principles and theories. The investigation provides an extension of these principles and theories.
- (d) **Non-ethical:** Scientific research studies do not consider ethical biases. They do not consider the correctness or incorrectness, morality or immorality for actions or events investigated.
- (e) **Verifiable:** Scientific research produces verifiable results. The research process adopted in scientific research will be so presented that the same study could be replicated, i.e., carried out by other researchers elsewhere or even in the same place with similar or approximately same results, using the same procedure.

Criteria for Classifying Types of Research

Research types can be classified according to the nature of investigation adopted. All research does not adopt the same methodology or approach. Thus, research works could fall under any of the following classes.

Survey research: This is a distinct research methodology which involves conducting research on specific groups or populations. In survey studies, questionnaire is the major method of data collection. Structured interviews and observations could also be used for data collection using data recording sheets.

Co-relational research: This is the type of research that determines whether a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables and to what degree.

Experimental research: This involves a study of the effects of the systematic manipulation of one variable on another variable. The manipulated variable is called the experimental treatment or the independent variable. The observed and measured variable is called the dependent variable.

Causal-comparative research: In this type of research, a researcher cannot test a hypothesis by manipulating a variable. Rather, this type of research allows a researcher to investigate relationships in which variables cannot be manipulated. For example, suppose you wanted to test the hypothesis that students who live in hostels obtain higher scores in mathematics as compared to those who live inside villages, you would use causal-comparative research because you cannot group students to a particular village.

Action research: This is a method which involves the researcher joining in the activities of the group being studied. It is often used when people see a problem in a situation and by becoming involved in the activities of the group or the phenomenon are able to experience the problem and work out solutions.

Intervention study: This type of study is conducted to evaluate the impact of specific intervention programmes often in community-based trials, e.g. interventions on provision of portable water in rural communities or in provision of basic education facilities. It could also be employed to assess whether or not an intervention is effective in bringing about the desired changes or not.

Case Study: The case study, in its simplest form, involves an investigator who makes a detailed examination of a single subject or a group or a phenomenon. This, usually, in-depth study involves collecting very extensive data of a person or a group of persons, an organization, a program, a document, a report, a record through observation, questionnaire, interview and documentary evidence (archives). It uses multiple data collection methods to arrive at detailed perceptions and opinions that can lead to better understanding of the entity.

Pilot Study: This is largely a preliminary trial to a major study. In a pilot study, the entire research procedure is carried out, including analysis of the data collected, following closely the procedures planned for the main study. Pilot studies are carried out with fewer subjects and materials that will be employed in the main study. Pilot studies serve all the purposes of the usual tryout, such as improving data-collecting routines, trying scoring techniques, revising locally developed measures, and checking the appropriateness of standard measures. Pilot study also provides additional knowledge that leads to improved research:

1. It permits a preliminary testing of the hypotheses that may lead to changing some hypotheses, dropping some and developing new hypotheses when called for.
2. It often provides ideas, approaches, and clues not foreseen prior to the pilot study.
3. It may save a major expenditure of time and money on a research project that will yield nothing. Unfortunately, many research ideas that seem to show great promise are unproductive when carried out in the field or laboratory.

The Essential Steps of Academic Research Writing

All researchers engage in a number of activities regardless of the particular methodology chosen for the research. The activities are made up of sequential steps which guide researchers in executing their studies. They are:

1. Problem Title: The first step is to select the research problem which will be captured in the topic. The problem should be consequential enough to warrant investigation. Good titles contain key words that indicate their problems precisely and in clear terms. The problem title or topic is followed by the introduction in chapter one of the study. The introduction is made up of the following sections:

The Background, Statement of Problem, Purpose of study, Research Question/Hypothesis, Scope of Study, Significance of study and Definition of Terms (if needed). However, it should be noted here that the form and arrangement of sections to be used by the researcher depends on the format approved by the department or institution requiring the research.

Hypothesis/Research Question: The essence of any research is to find solution to an identified problem. A hypothesis is an informed guess of possible or likely solutions to the problem. It is a powerful tool in scientific studies and in seeking for knowledge. They are merely tools in research and not end in themselves. They are informed guesses of possible solutions but they should be tested to confirm or refute them as possible solutions. In the course of investigation into a problem, a hypothesis may be retained or rejected tentatively. It will also be noted here that hypotheses may not be absolutely essential in all research studies especially in preliminary or investigative studies. Similarly, research questions can be posed by the researcher, answers to which would lead to possible solution to the problem.

2. Review of Literature:

Having identified and stated the research problem, the researcher now embarks on a review of pertinent literature. The literature review (review of literature) is a very vital part of any scientific research study whether in the physical, natural or social studies. The main aim of a literature review is to locate, read, evaluates reports of research as well as reports of observations and opinions that are related to the individual's planned research project. Although the review has the general purpose of helping the researcher to develop a thorough understanding and insight into previous work and the trends that have emerged, the review can also help the researcher in reaching a number of important specific goals:

- i. The review of literature can help in both limiting and more clearly defining the research problem. Many studies are doomed because of the failure of the researcher to limit the problem to an area small enough and sufficiently *specific* to work with satisfactorily. Selecting a limited problem and treating it well is far better than attempting the study of a broad general problem and doing it poorly.
- ii. In the process of reviewing the literature, the researcher learns what work has been done in that area and is also alerted on research possibilities that have been overlooked. Such new viewpoints are likely to occur most frequently in areas where little research has been done. But even in well-researched areas, someone occasionally thinks of an approach that is unique and creative.

- iii. The review of literature can provide insight into the methods, measures, subjects, and approaches used by other research workers and can thus lead to significant improvement of the researcher's design. For example, discussions of the various measures used can help the researcher decide which of these measures would be best suited for his/her own research. A sampling pattern discussed by one researcher can help another researcher in the field to avoid the same difficulties.
- iv. Research studies often include specific suggestions and recommendations for further research. These suggestions also represent insights gained by researchers after experience in the area of study. The specific research topics suggested may be particularly useful in helping the researcher to delimit the research problem.
- v. Apart from research reports, the researcher may also need to study newspaper accounts, nontechnical articles, and opinion articles related to his/her topic. Such articles occasionally contain unique ideas that can be tested through research and also help the researcher gain insight into those aspects of the problem area that are considered critical or controversial.

The information presented in the review of literature should be organised using appropriate sub-titles which closely relate to the topic of the research. This helps the researcher to choose what to include and what not to include in the review. Of course, the researcher should read all those studies that are closely related to the research problem. The studies that are only partially related to the problem topic or that are related to only one phase of the problem topic should also be cautiously handled.

There are various sources of information available to a researcher. There are primary and secondary sources of information. The primary source gives a direct description of a phenomenon by an individual who actually observed or witnessed the occurrence. In educational or social sciences studies, it implies the description of the study by the individual who carried it out. It is always safer to use much of primary sources of information in literature. The secondary source of information includes any publication written by an author who was not a direct observer or participant in the events described. Most of the content of text books are secondary source materials.

In using primary and secondary sources of information, the researcher should ensure that all sources of information are appropriately referenced and documented. All citations should be recorded according to standard formats to serve as acknowledgement to the original source of information as well as provide information that will be helpful in identifying and retrieving the sources of information. The reference should contain such information as:

- i. Name(s) of the author(s) with the surnames first, followed by the initials.
 - ii. Date of publication of the material.
 - iii. Title of the referenced article
 - iv. Title of journal: This should be written in full followed by the volume number and the issue number. Page numbers may also apply.
- In writing a reference for a textbook, the place of publishing and the name of publisher come after the title of the book.

3. Methodology/Materials and Methods:

The methodology provides the procedural outline for the conduct of a given research study. It is a plan that specifies how information relating to an identified problem should be collected and analyzed. It provides a procedure-by-procedure guide of the conduct of an investigation. In the research methodology, information about the design, target population, sample size (what portion of the target population) and sampling technique is provided. The step-by-step procedure involved in data collection, measurement instruments and also the statistical method of data analysis are clearly spelt out. A research *design* refers to the conceptual framework within which the study is conducted. It is the researcher's plan for carrying out the research. There are different types of research design and each of them is applied in accordance with the type of research being carried out.

Population: In research design, the *population* of study is very significant. The term population refers to all members of any well-defined class of people, event, or objects. It also includes all members of a group (whether they are animate or inanimate elements, e.g. people, trees, houses, birds, cars, etc.). A population can be classified into two: target and accessible. The *target population* refers to all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the result of the research. A target population may be defined to include all two story buildings in a particular area or all commercial bus drivers in a particular bus terminal. It may be defined as all 200 level polytechnic undergraduates, in a particular state or political zone. Because it is not always possible to deal with the whole population, the researcher must identify and define that portion of the target population to which he/she can have access. The portion of that population within the reach of the researcher is referred to as the *accessible population*. From the accessible population, the researcher selects a *sample* in such a way that it is representative of that population. The larger the sample size the more likely it will truly represent the population from which it was drawn.

Sample: A sample is a portion of a population that is actually studied. While the larger group that the researcher wishes to learn about is called a population, the smaller group of elements drawn through a definite procedure from that population known as a sample. Based on the data obtained from the sample, generalizations or inferences can be made about the population represented by the sample. When a sample fails to represent the population from which it was drawn it signifies some degree of error in the sampling. This is known as sampling error because the characteristic of the sample is not truly representing the characteristics of the population.

Sampling Techniques:

The two major types of sampling procedures available to researchers are:

- a) Probability Sampling
- b) Non-probability sampling

Probability Sampling involves sample selection in which elements are drawn by chance procedures. The main characteristic of probability sampling is that every member of the population has a known probability and equal chance of being chosen in the sample. Examples of probability sampling procedures are simple random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and systematic sampling.

Non-probability sampling is adopted in research when it is difficult or impossible to enumerate the population elements. It involves non-random procedures for selecting the members of the sample. Elements are not chosen by chance procedures. The success of this procedure depends on the knowledge, expertise and judgment of the researcher. Non-probability sample procedures include Accidental Sampling, Purposive Sampling, Quota Sampling and Systematic sampling procedures.

Data Collection in Research

Data collection is a very crucial step in the research process. Every scientific research involves the collection of data necessary for arriving at the solution(s) of the research problem. First, the researcher makes a deliberate plan on how to go about collecting data. Decision is taken on what data to collect and from where. The next decision to be taken is on choosing an appropriate technique and instrument or method of collecting the data. Every instrument to be used for research must be validated to ensure credibility before being used.

The instruments or methods of data collection discussed in this chapter are:

- Questionnaire
- Interview
- Observation

- Historical/Archival records
- Internet

Questionnaire: A questionnaire is an instrument in which respondents provide written responses to questions or mark items that indicate their responses. The first step in carrying out a satisfactory questionnaire study is to define the problem and list specific objectives to be achieved or hypotheses to be tested by the questionnaire. Unless a researcher is able to state specifically and in detail what information he/she needs, what he/she will do with this information after he/she gets it, and how each item on the questionnaire contributes to meeting the specific objectives of the study, the researcher has not thought through the research problem sufficiently.

The questionnaire could serve to provide information on a number of issues, for instance, on a distribution of a group of elements in such factors as age, gender, state of origin, academic qualification, work experience, type of employment, etc. It could be used to gather information to assess certain situations such as the extent of availability of drawing boards in the environmental studies drawing room in a polytechnic or the extent of availability and use of mass communication audio studio for students' practical lesson and so on. With questionnaire, the researcher can obtain data on the feelings and perceptions of students towards the establishment of off-campus system of schooling or their perception of the problems associated with polytechnic education in the country.

Types of Questionnaire

There are two major types of the questionnaire:

1. Close-ended or fixed response questionnaire
 2. Unstructured or open-ended questionnaire
1. *Close-ended or fixed response questionnaire* is framed to permit only certain responses (such as in multiple-choice questions). A question is asked and a number of response options are provided. Respondents are restricted to the response options provided. For example, in a survey of environmental undergraduates, a question about age or gender would be close ended. Thus, in a question like this: *As a second year undergraduate, how old are you?*
 - A. 18 – 20 years
 - B. 21 – 23 years
 - C. 24 – 26 years
 - D. 27 years and above

Another example: *How happy are you as a fresh graduate about to register for NYSC programme?*

- A. Very happy
- B. Moderately happy
- C. Cannot say
- D. Unhappy

Attitude Scale Questionnaire

Attitude scales, which are also close-ended, are often employed to measure an individual's attitude toward a particular thing or group. Attitude is a predisposition to behave in a particular way toward a person, place or thing, including objects, events, ideas, or phenomenon. Attitude is usually taught of as having three components:

- a) *an affective component*, which consists of an individual's feelings about a particular thing or group
- b) *a cognitive component*, which is an individual's beliefs or knowledge about a particular thing or group
- c) *a behavioural component*, which is an individual's predisposition to act toward a particular thing or group in a particular way.

Among close-ended attitude scales used in research are the *Likert-type* scale, the *Thurstone-type* scale and the *Semantic Differential* scale.

In the **Likert-type** scale, an individual checks one of four or five possible responses to each statement: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Undecided*, *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree*.

In the **Thurstone-type** scale, the individual expresses *Agreement* or *Disagreement* with a series of statements about a particular thing or group.

In the **Semantic Differential** scale, an individual gives a quantitative rating of a particular thing or group using bipolar adjectives such as *fair-unfair*, *valuable-worthless*, *good-bad* and so on.

Close-ended questions are popular in research because they provide a greater uniformity of responses and are also easily processed. Close-ended format also makes the task of the respondent easier as well as researcher's analysis of results.

2. Open-ended or unstructured questionnaire

The Open-ended format constitutes the unrestricted and sometimes endless views or opinions of a respondent expressed in the space provided in the questionnaire. Respondents are free to respond in their own words. Open-ended questions are used when there are a great number of possible answers or when the researcher cannot predict all the possible answers or what the subjects' responses are likely to be. For example, a question about a student's reasons for selecting a particular higher institution would probably be open-ended. Consider this example:

- 1) How would you describe your attitude to lecture attendance in GST 101 course?
.....
- 2) What is your opinion of the last students' union election that produced the current president?
.....

Constructing the Questionnaire

The two formats or types of questionnaire previously discussed can be used to structure questions for scientific studies. Such questions can be in form of:

- 1) Completion or fill-in items (supply your own answers in your own words)
- 2) Checklists (check as many as apply from the list provided)
- 3) Scaled items (Thurstone rating of concept, event or situation on a given dimension, e.g. Very poor, Less than adequate, Adequate, Excellent)
- 4) Likert-type items (rating of statement on a continuum from Strongly Agree, Agree, Don't know, Disagree, Strongly, Disagree).

Successfully constructed questionnaire must be tested for validity and reliability to ensure that it is capable of measuring what it is intended to measure. By so doing, results arrived at using such questionnaire can be relied on as true. It is when validity and reliability are certified that such questionnaire can be used to conduct research that can yield reliable result.

Interview: Interview is the act seeking to get information from the respondent through some verbal interaction between the interviewer and his/her respondent. The main job of the interviewer is to ask the questions in such a way as to obtain valid responses and to record the responses accurately and completely. The researcher must, therefore, be skilled in communication and language use. To ensure a successful interview, the interviewers must:

- 1) Establish rapport with the respondent to ensure a friendly atmosphere. This can be done by using a few minutes for a short conversation and also by assuring the respondent of confidentiality of his response. The respondent should be told the purpose of the interview but not too much of it as to make him/her biased.
- 2) Avoid the use of technical jargons in framing questions so as not to confuse the respondent. The respondent should be made to understand every technical language used in the questions.
- 3) Of course, the interviewer must refrain from expressing approval, surprise, or shock at any of the respondent's answers.
- 4) The interviewer should avoid the use of leading questions – questions which tend to suggest or point at a particular form of response. For example: "Do

you think that regular attendance to lectures will increase the chances of better scores in examinations?” The answer to this question is already suggested. The question could be better framed as, “What is your view on students’ regular attendance to lectures in your department?”

- 5) Be specific in terms of what information you want to get from your respondent. Avoid questions that could be misinterpreted in diverse ways. Consider these questions:
- (a) What do you feel about your new Registrar?
 - (b) What do you feel about the administrative competence of your new Rector?
 - (c) What do you feel about the mode of dressing of your new Head of Department?
 - (d) What do you feel about the inter-relationship pattern of your new Vice Chancellor?

Each of these questions will generate a different answer. However, Question (a) will not be able to produce a specific answer as the other questions because it was not specifically directed to any area of the operations of the registrar.

- 6) Ask probing questions when necessary. This should be used to clarify a response or to push a little further into the topic. For instance, if the respondent starts to hedge, digress or give irrelevant response or if he/she has misinterpreted the question, then the interviewer may use probe as: “Could you explain a little further” or “Could you tell me more about that?” Interview could be done face-to-face or through telephone.

Disadvantages of using interviews for research purpose:

- (a) Interviews are time consuming.
- (b) They are highly subjective and, thus, there is danger of bias.
- (c) Analyzing response can present problems.
- (d) Wording the questions is demanding.

Observation: This is a method of data collection by which data are collected through visual monitoring and recording. The researcher determines at the beginning of the research what behaviour or signs or developments are to be observed and typically uses a tested and accepted checklist to record the frequency with which those events are observed over a period of time that has been specified. The researcher has no predetermined plan about what will be observed but only takes record of events that occur and the frequency of occurrence. Such records could be taken as notes on paper, photographs, making maps or any other appropriate means to record the observations.

Where a high degree of precision is required, especially in experimental studies, the item being studied will have to be determined in such a way as

observing, weighing and measuring. In this way, characteristics which are impossible to discover by other means are revealed. Calibrated measures are checked for accuracy before the measuring procedures begin. Observation will allow the researcher to record what is actually happening, but it will not necessarily reveal why it happens.

Historical/Archival Records: Any written record that anyone can imagine is a potential source of information about the past. Historical records could be classified into *primary* and *secondary* records. *Primary* records are original documents, relics, remains, or artifacts that a researcher can lay hands on. These are direct outcomes of events or the records of eye witnesses as in research reports manuscripts. Examples of primary records are minutes of students' union executive meeting, diaries, manuscripts, unedited videotape of a football match, a collection of artwork completed by a graduating student, structural design submitted by a student. Secondary records include information acquired from primary records by researchers. *Secondary* records depend on descriptions by someone else that may or may not have been involved directly in the event but may also have depended on other primary and secondary sources of information. Common examples of secondary records are history books, articles in encyclopedias, journals reviews. These historical records are often stored in libraries or repositories as archival materials for research reference purposes.

The *library* is a rich source of information for carrying out a research study. The indexes, bibliographies and catalogues will provide the researcher with information about what is available. The researcher can then obtain the books and articles that relate to the area of research study.

4. Results

All the results of findings including the tables make up the presentation of the data that have been analyzed. The results are organized and presented, directly connected to the research questions and hypotheses. Tables, figures, graphs, etc. should be used for illustration purposes. Such presentations and illustrations must be clear, simple and informative, bringing out significant data set values, patterns, relationships, differences, similarities, and so on, where they exist.

5. Discussion of Results

In the discussion of results, the researcher makes comments on the findings of the study and compares findings with results of similar works earlier done in the area. Based on results, recommendations are made and then conclusions arrived at. Suggestions for further studies that follow the conclusion precede the references.

Referencing

This comprises a listing of all previous works cited in the body of the research study. Different institutions have different approved referencing formats for use by researchers. References are not to be separated as books, journals, newspaper or unpublished articles. Referencing format for American Psychological Association (APA) given in the publication manual of 2005 is surname of author first, then a comma, followed by initial, date of publication, title of published work, journal title (if it is a journal) underlined, and volume of journal. For books, it is surname, followed by a comma, then initials, date of publication, name of book (underlined), place of publication, publisher, edition and so on. All names of authors must be arranged in alphabetical order. Examples of references, one a journal and one, a book are shown as follows:

Anya, N. O. (1989). The role of sculptor art works in the aesthetic assessment of major cities in Eastern Nigeria. *Arts Review Journal*, Vol.3, No.4.pp 35-40.

Chikwendu, J. N. (2013). *Conducting Research in Food and Nutrition*. Enugu: Esani Publishers Ltd.

Summary of Procedural Components of a Research Project.

Professional research reports and scholarly articles often include features and components in the order they are arranged below according to chapters. This arrangement may, however, vary from institution to institution and from discipline to discipline. Also, sub-titles arrangement may vary from institution to institution or from discipline to discipline.

Chapter 1:

Introduction: The introduction is made up of the Background to the study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the study, Significance of the study, Research Questions/Hypotheses, Scope of the study and Definition of Terms (if any).

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

Chapter 3:

Research Methodology: This includes the Design, Population, Sample and Sampling Technique, Instruments for Data Collection, Validity and Reliability, Method of Data Collection, Method of Data Analysis.

Chapter 4:

Results: This chapter presents findings in the form of charts, tables and graphs. However, the statistical procedure of presenting results will depend on the type of research being conducted.

Chapter 5:

Discussion of Result, Recommendations and Conclusion: This chapter is an important aspect of every research report. It presents comments on the results/findings obtained and also explains unexpected results. This section also comments on findings compared with other works. Apart from discussing results obtained, this chapter also presents the implications of findings, recommendations and conclusion as well as suggestions for further research. It may also comment on the suitability of the method used in the study.

The Abstract: The abstract is a very short summary of the entire research study. It gives a brief presentation of the background, the methodology and the major findings of the study. The abstract does not usually take more than one typed page of content. A standard abstract of a complete thesis takes a maximum of about five hundred words. This means that the abstract is usually written when research work is completed. The abstract is usually presented just before the first chapter of the research work.

Chapter Twelve

Literature

Literature can be said to be as old as man himself since it started with man. The tales of the olden days of remarkable events, places, persons, and things constituted great literature of those days. In Nigeria of old, and precisely in Igbo land, people usually gathered in places of convenience in the evenings and tales were told of animals and great hunters, of the origin of the sun or moon, of life and death, of mankind generally and other earthly features. The essence of such tales was to portray the intrigues, frailty, intricacies and complexity of life to guide man in his conducts through life. Literature became possible today not only because of man's love for story-telling but also because of his ability to arrange words in pleasing patterns. Since the early days of man literature has developed and has grown with age in history. This may probably explain why literature has been considered a complement to history, philosophy and life.

Particularly, no definition has been assigned to literature. Scholars have only tried to present different concepts and explanations of literature. While some scholars see literature as a study of great literary works of great men, others see it as the study of the skill by which a writer executes his works. As a matter-of-fact, there are as many descriptions and explanations of literature as there are scholars.

Broadly speaking, literature can be looked at as the considerations of the realities of life in which human experiences are so re-enacted to affect the real life of the reader or audience in a particular manner. In this wise, literature uses a voracious range of language to drive home its message. A good literature piece should, therefore, have a definite message to deliver. Whether literature is written or given orally, it uses words to reach the audience. The basic difference between oral and written literature is that written literature can be preserved on paper while oral literature is immediate and there are visible gestures, signs and symbolic movements.

Why Study Literature?

The study of literature is of inestimable importance in the development of the "educated person". An educated person needs not only acquire skills and knowledge but also develop qualities of character and intellect. An educated person needs to be more broadminded, perceptive, and capable of constructive reasoning and criticism. Lord Russell said of literature, "there is not the slightest use, either for young or old, in being well informed about literature, knowing the

dates of the poets, the names of their works and so on. Everything that can be put in a handbook is worthless. What is valuable is great familiarity with certain examples of good literature – such familiarity as will influence the style, not only of writing, but of thought.”

There could be various reasons why the study of literature is important.

- (a) Through the treatment of some specific aspects of human experiences, literature entertains. In the portrayal of realities of human conditions, problems, attitudes, adventures, relationships, it informs and educates the mind of the reader.
- (b) The study of literature gives pleasure and delight to the human mind by the use of language. It creates an awareness of the possibilities of language technique and usage. The language of literature is usually more connotative, more figurative and more ambiguous.
- (c) By its prophetic insights into human life, literature provides vicarious experiences of other cultures, philosophies and attitudes and thereby increases in the reader the knowledge and understanding of life, nature and potentials of man.
- (d) Literature exercises a civilizing effect on the reader by making him capable of understanding himself, his neighbours and the society at large. He can then compare his society with that of other people and become more aware of the virtues and limitations of his own inherited attitudes and values. He could thus, become more tolerant of the world outside his own environment.
- (e) Literature encourages the development of creative writing in the reader by stimulating constructive thoughts about important issues and ideas.
- (f) Good literature arouses in the reader emotions of pity, fear, joy, anger and sorrow. It may even be hopelessness, faith, victory, disappointment, etc.

Whichever it is, the reader is made aware of such possibilities and learns how to cope with such situations in real life. The gains of literature are as numerous and vast as human experiences. Suffice it to say that good literary work can help the reader to relax his mind and overcome his worries, anxieties, loneliness and boredom.

Literary Genres

This term merely refers to a kind or particular type of literature. Basically, there are three genres of literature: *Prose, Poetry and Drama*. There is no clear cut distinction made with regard to the features of each of these genres because elements from one could flow into another and so on.

Prose

This is an imaginary but usually plausible and ultimately truthful, prose narrative, which dramatises changes in human relationships. Prose, usually in form of fiction, draws materials from human experiences and observations of life, selected and shaped to the purpose of the writer. Such purpose could be informative or educative, entertainment or mere illumination on human experiences. Fiction originates from actual reality of life, which has moved from the ordinary to the legendary.

Poetry

William Wordsworth defined poetry as a spontaneous overflow of emotion. He also defined it as emotion recollected in tranquillity. Poetry can also refer to poem in general. In a profound sense, poetry is the outpouring of emotions and feeling expressed in strong emotional terms on specific matters. It is an artistic writing that attempts to stir the reader's imagination or emotion. It is a physical manifestation of the internal human creative impulse aimed at stirring the reader's imagination or emotion through the use of carefully chosen and arranged language. However, it remains the creation of an individual's intellectual imagination and sensitivity.

Usually written in verse and arranged in stanzas, poetry selects materials from human experiences but the choice of diction is the writer's. Poetry uses indirect language more than other genres as lots of expressions are made in words and phrases that are disorderly arranged. In other words, the language or grammatical arrangement of words is mostly reversed. Of all the literary genres, poetry uses imagery, figurative and metaphorical language the most in aesthetically pleasing and rewarding manner. It can, therefore, be said to be the most intense and elevated of the genres.

Drama

The term 'drama' refers to any literary work that can be acted or read as a play. Drama, like all literature, can be seen as 'imitation' of life as the author perceived it. Of all the literary forms, drama's own imitation of action appears to be the most direct because the story which a play enacts is acted out by human beings in front of other human beings with the result that drama is the most public form of literature. Modern technology has given a boost to drama performances through home videos that people can now acquire and watch in the comfort of their homes at their convenience. In such videos, real life stories are mostly presented to portray the good and ugly sides of life. There is dialogue and action mainly manifested in different forms including physical conflicts like fights,

quarrels or even killings. The story is best given by the actor's presentation on stage, which gives a life-like reproduction of it. The two basic types of drama are *Tragedy and Comedy*. In tragedy, there is usually a hero who sets out to do what is good but is hindered or destroyed by forces he cannot control. He sets out to do exploit for the good of the community, but along the line, he is destroyed by strong forces that capitalize on his weaknesses. The hero is destroyed, not because he does not have what it takes to triumph, but the contending forces use his weakness to bring him down and destroy him. In tragedy, events gradually build up and normally lead to serious consequences like the death of the protagonist, his suffering or defeat. That is the tragedy. In comedy, the atmosphere and the characters are lighter and more comic. Events usually end happily but there could be a reversal of fortune, which is capable of leading to an unhappy end. Comedy is more of satire and criticism of reality but is definitely more pleasant and less serious than tragedy.

Elements of Literary Works

Setting and Background

The importance of setting and background cannot be overemphasized in the analysis or discussion of any literary work. The term 'setting' refers to the place and time when the activities given in a literary piece took place. It is the summation of the environmental values and forces prevalent at the place and time of the activities given in a story. If, for instance, a story is set in a tertiary institution environment, one would expect to find an x-ray of features and activities usually found in tertiary institutions. It may not, therefore, be out of place to meet such cases like examination malpractice, sexual immorality, students' unrest, cult and drug related activities.

On the other hand, a story set in a commercial city like Onitsha would portray a business and money-minded, or perhaps, disordered society. The 'background' of the work will consist of the circumstances leading to the events given in a story. For instance, there could have been circumstances leading to student's involvement in particular activities or factors responsible for money-mindedness.

The setting of any work helps the reader to understand and appreciate the daily actions, experiences, thought patterns and the potentials of the characters portrayed in a story. It should be noted that characters are influenced by the prevailing societal characteristics and values at any given time and place. They, therefore, behave typical of their very environment. Studies have shown that a given character would not remain the same in different environmental settings.

Thus, an author would often set his story in a setting and background that would most adequately suit his subject matter and also be locatable in time and place. For instance, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was set in a traditional Igbo society before the arrival of the white man in the village of Umuofia. It truly presented the outlook of the environment and the culture of the people at that time including their beliefs and values.

Theme

The theme, of any literary work is the subject matter of that work. It is the ultimate purpose or meaning which an author has in mind. It could roughly be called the morale or message of the story. Every piece of work has its controlling or central idea, which pervades the entire work to give it unity. To identify a theme, a reader ought to ask this question, "What does this story reveal?" A reader should be able to identify how many issues are dealt with and which ones are dominant in the story. This is because some works contain more than just the central theme. Any other theme other than the main theme in a story is called the sub-theme. Any social, economic, political, moral or psychological issues presented should also be identified. It is, however, worthy of note that the theme of any literary work should be seen as the writer's own perspective.

Setting

Setting means the environment in which a story or event takes place. It refers to the time and place of the story's action and can include specific information about that place, like ideas, customs, values, beliefs that characterize the environment. The setting of a story determines to a large extent the characteristics of activities and events that take place in it. Thus, events that run counter to the setting of the story mostly trigger off conflicts.

Plot

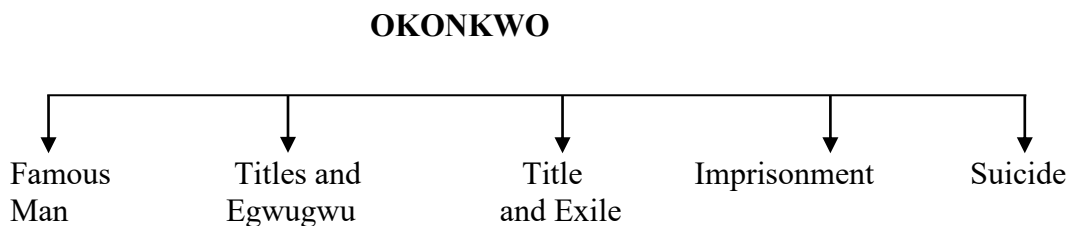
The plot of any literary work is the structure, arrangement and sequence of visible physical happenings that the characters in a story undergo. Each event causes or leads to the next event. Plot is often created through conflict, a struggle between opposing forces. Literature as an account of human life must involve conflicts; what to do and what not to do. Plot, therefore, refers to the graph of changes in human relationships occasioned by and manifested in the events of the action. It is the barometer of the significance of the action - how it started in the beginning, reached what is called the climax and then went on to a resolution and conclusion.

Plot can also refer to the selection and arrangement of events in a story. It

is the retelling of the broad outlines of a story arranged chronologically (time sequence). In a broad sense, it is the manner in which events and activities in a story are arranged from the beginning to the end. Most plots develop in five stages:

1. Exposition which introduces the story's characters, settings, and conflict.
2. Rising action which occurs as complications, twists, or intensifications of the conflict that occurred.
3. Climax which is the emotional high point of the story.
4. Falling action which is the logical results of the climax.
5. Resolution which presents the final outcome of the story.

In the traditional plot pattern, the climax is the turning point of the text. In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for example, Okonkwo can be seen in this scale, where title taking marked the climax of his fame and accomplishment:



It was not long after his title taking that his decline set in which culminated in his imprisonment and finally suicide. It was a tragic end of fame and renown.

The most common and simplest arrangement of plot is the chronological order. However, stories may not always be chronologically arranged. They can be *causally* arranged where one event is used to show the cause of another event. There is also the *associative* arrangement where through the occurrence of events, other events are told or one event leads to its logical association with another.

Flash back

One of the devices which writers use to arrange events in their works is the flashback. Flashback is the recreation of past events in order to give a fuller understanding of the present. It is a journey down the memory lane, deep into the past to recall what happened over a period of time that probably is affecting the present. It is through these various recapitulations of past episodes and incidents that the story gradually begins to unfold and make more meaning. Basically, flashback device is used to shed more light on the present by linking it to the past.

Suspense

This is a device used by a writer to hold on the reader in expectation. A story that makes the reader ask, “what is going to happen next” or “how will it turn out” employs suspense technique. The zeal to find answers to these questions compels the reader to read on. Suspense is basically used to sustain a reader’s interest, develop plot and form the structure of the work.

Conflict

Conflict involves a clash of actions, ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes, wills and desires. It is a struggle between opposing forces. Conflict may arise in the form of man against man, man against himself, man against environment and man against society. Conflict may be physical, mental, emotional, social or moral. Man against man conflict occurs, when man arises against another but when man rises against environmental forces, it becomes man against environment. When man rises against societal institutions or values, it is man against society but when man has to battle with his own inner conflict, he has risen against himself, torn between opposing feelings or between different courses of action.

Physical conflict occurs when there is physical contact between contenders while mental conflict involves intra-personal dilemma suffered as a result of either action taken or not taken or a situation considered uncontrollable or insurmountable. Emotional conflict involves a clash of emotions, feelings, dispositions and the like. Social conflict concerns disagreements and intolerance involving social values, culture and norms while moral conflict concerns a clash of moral’ convictions and beliefs. Conflict can also be religious.

Point of View

Point of view or focus of narration is the position, or angle from which events are observed and told. It portrays the relationship of the narrator or story teller to the story. This position can be that of a participant or an observer and what we are told will depend on how much the narrator or story teller knows or is willing to tell.

To determine the point of view of a story we have to ask: Who tells the story?

- (a) How much is he allowed to know?
- (b) To what extent does the writer look inside his characters to report their feelings?

Third Person Omniscient Point of View

In this case, the story is told by the author in the third person point of view. The narrator in this stance is presumed to know everything about the story including what goes on in the lives and minds of characters and to some extent the present, the past and the future. He is also able to report what goes on even behind closed doors.

Third Person Limited Point of View

Here the author tells the story in the third person but his outlook on the story is consistently limited to that of a single character or to a succession of characters, referring to such character as 'he' or 'she'. He does not go beyond the central consciousness of the character through who he sees. At any given stage in the story, the events would be told only as they relate to that particular character and only his reflections will be recorded. This kind of focus is mostly on the central character.

First Person Point of View

In this case, the story is told by one of the characters who may be the chief character or protagonist or any of the other major or minor characters referred to as 'I'. Often he recounts the story as a personal experience but cannot know or tell what goes on in the minds of other characters. It is difficult, however, to find a work in which only one point of view is strictly used. Usually, there is a combination of two or more perspectives

Language

Here, the reader would consider tone, diction, sentence structure and every other form of word arrangement in the story. A writer's language may be formal or colloquial, figurative, literal or metaphorical but in all, it has to be 'untarnishingly' appealing to the mind of the reader. He may make extensive use of proverbs as the prolific *Achebe* often does in his novels. A writer's language expresses the style employed while elevating his story to significant or non-significant literature.

In the choice of language, characters are assigned appropriate language to suit their status, professions and locations. A market woman uses the language typical of market women, while a lawyer uses the language of the legal world. In a good literary work, we can get clues to the author's unstated attitudes and moral judgments from his manipulation of language. In all, the appeal of language makes a work.

Characterisation

Character portrayal in literature has been a controversial element in writing. The question of how much prominence, what kind of status, privileges and limitations can be given characters has remained an issue for debate. Yet, characters remain indispensable in literary presentations. In its simple usage the term 'character' refers to one or the other of the persons or animals about whom the story has been written. By this, a character in a story as an individual or animal is different from others and possesses certain traits and qualities, which distinguish him from others. Characterization is an authors' manner of representing life-like characters in his work. In other words, it is the skill by which an author creates characters and places them in situations and roles that are true to their types. Characterization plays an immeasurable role in determining the artistic success of a literary work. Literary excellence requires that each character be developed fully enough to justify his role in the story for reader's conviction.

To achieve convincing characterisation there must be

- (a) Consistent credible dispositions in a character. This means that character should be what he ought to be. A character acting the part of a policeman must be seen to display the characteristic features of a policeman, including his dressing. His behaviour must be logically and psychologically consistent with the traits of the model character.
- (b) Sufficient motivation in a character. It implies that there should be convincing psychological pattern in his actions. His actions ought to be justifiably motivated, for instance, a character is not supposed to be a hero and a villain at the same time. If, for any reason, a villain suddenly becomes a hero, there should be reasons justifying this change. On the other hand, if a hero decides to turn to a less dignifying person, his motivations should be justifiable. A character must, therefore, have a reason for acting the way he does.
- (c) Individualization in a character. This means that a character should be distinctive. He should be distinguishable from others by his traits, motivations and attitudes or special needs.

A character can be portrayed good or bad depending on what the artist wants to make of him. The important aspect is that the reader or audience should be made to feel that the characters in a story have been satisfactorily and

convincingly portrayed. In characterization, there are *flat* and *round* characters. The flat character is superficial, lacks complexity and depth and is mostly what many works resign to. A round character is a complex, deep and consistently dynamic one. He is the type that tenaciously holds on to his principles and beliefs. He studies a situation, interprets it and then adapts himself to what is best for him. A round character is highly motivated in his actions and possesses the fullness of a complete human being. He is somewhat unpredictable and pragmatic but grows with experience.

How to Assess Characters

A character is an actor in a story's plot. It can be a person, an animal, or whatever the writer chooses to present. A character can be assessed through the following ways:

- (a) Expository or Direct method
In this case, the author or another character tells straight out by exposition or analysis what the character is like. By this, the reader perceives other's opinion about a character and this helps the reader to determine what a character is.
- (b) Dramatic or Indirect method
Here, a character reveals itself through dialogue and actions he engages in. Thus, his social, psychological, intellectual and moral learning would be unraveled. Sometimes, a character goes straight to tell the audience what he is, what he thinks and does.
- (c) The reader may also give his personal assessment of a character, which may or may not conform to others' own assessment. From what others have said about a character and what a character has said about itself, a reader can sum his own opinion. For a more encompassing presentation of a character, it is often necessary to consider and apply all the methods mentioned above. This will give a well-rounded assessment and avoid a one-sided opinion of a character.

Facts about Literary Criticism and Appreciation

Literary criticism is the study, evaluation and interpretation of literature or any literary work with respect to the goal of the writer of that literary work. It is the practice of judging and commenting on the content and style of works of literature. It is essentially based on the opinion of the reader. Literary criticism starts from simple questions:

1. What is the writer trying to do? Tell a story, describe this, that or the other, prove that R is G, and persuade us to join his political party, sell opinion or make fun of us?

2. Who is he writing for?
3. What means has he used? This is a matter of facts. The *means* include techniques, language style, background and organization of events.
4. Is what the writer sets out to do worth doing? Again, this is a matter of opinion.
5. Is the writer successful in doing what he sets out to do? If so, how; if not, why not?

Some Literary Terms

Protagonist: This is the chief character in a play or story. If the main plot centers about the career of a hero who overcomes a villain who tries to thwart his efforts, the hero would be called, the protagonist. The protagonist could also face opposition from natural forces, which threaten his environment.

Antagonist: This is the character that opposes the protagonist in a play or story. All his efforts are geared towards thwarting the ideals and interests of the protagonist.

Denouement: This is the final unraveling of the plot of a literary work. Also referred to as resolution, it implies an untying of loose ends or intrigues. It brings about the termination of dramatic tension leading to cathartic feeling and experience on the part of the audience\reader. This is when the conflict is resolved either in a comic or tragic manner. Denouement also refers to the explanation at the end of a story or play to justify the conclusion arrived at.

Tragic Flaw: This refers to a weakness in the character of the protagonist that causes serious misfortune for him and leads to his tragic death. The flaw usually inspires pity and fear in the audience.

Playwright: A playwright is someone who writes plays. A playwright can also be an actor in a play but the important thing is that he is a play writer.

Soliloquy: This is a speech situation in a play in where a character talks to himself when there is no other character on the stage. It is a device which enables the audience to know the inner most thoughts of a character.

Prologue: A prologue is a formal introduction to a play, poem or novel. It is usually made up of acts and events that lead to the main events in main literary work. The prologue could be written in prose or in verse.

Epilogue: The epilogue is the opposite of the prologue. It is a speech or a piece of writing added at the end of a book, film or play. It contains the things that happened at the end of a series of events in a literary work.

Cast: The cast is made up of all the people who act in a play or film. The composition of the cast is determined by the director who assigns characters to different actors.

Biography: This is the story of a person's life, written by someone else. An individual who admires another individual or who wishes to immortalize that individual because of his heroic deeds could write that individual's biography. A biography could be in form of prose, drama or poem.

Autobiography: This is a text that tells the story of a person's life written by the person himself. When an individual wants to let the public know how he lived, his experiences, successes and failures, and the lessons that other people may learn from such life he lived, that individual could write such text. It could be in form of prose, drama, or poetry.

Fiction: Fiction is any work of imagination, written in prose, describing imaginary events and people. In fiction, characters do not exist in real life but are only imagined by the writer. It was not long after his title taking that his decline set in which culminated in his imprisonment and finally suicide. It was a tragic end of fame and renown. The most common and simplest arrangement of plot is the chronological order. However, stories may not always be chronologically arranged. They can be *causally* arranged where one event is used to show the cause of another event. There is also the *associative* arrangement where through the occurrence of events, other events are told or one event leads to its logical association with another.

Flash back

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Chapter Thirteen

Writing Examinations Successfully

Tips for acquiring academic knowledge

In every examination situation, two categories of students could be identified. There is the category of students who have prepared well for the examination and are also familiar with challenges associated with handling of examination questions. Such students equip themselves to overcome such challenges and succeed in examinations. The second category of students found in the examination situation are those who are not prepared for the challenges of examination questions and so encounter problems in handling such questions.

Examination questions are meant to test students' knowledge and understanding of previous academic exercises engaged in within the period of study. Many students encounter problems in handling examination questions. Among them are students without the knowledge required by the examination questions. These are the ones that have been poorly prepared and lack sufficient content knowledge and understanding of the subjects or courses being examined. The second group of students who encounter problems in their examinations are those who possess adequate content knowledge and understanding of the subjects and courses being examined but lack the right approach to handling examination questions. This section of this chapter considers these two areas as they affect students' performance in examinations. There are students who do not have the required content knowledge and understanding to tackle examination questions. This is a big challenge because when a student lacks the basic content knowledge, then that student knows nothing to write about in the examination. Such a student must, therefore, resolve this problem by sufficiently equipping himself or herself with necessary academic information before sitting for examinations. Academic sources of information can provide maximum benefit for students who are hardworking and focused, who desire to do well in examinations. Academic sources of information that can be utilized by such students include:

- Textbooks
- Lectures
- Journals/Magazines/Newspapers
- Electronic Media
- Excursions and Visits/Field Trips
- Seminars, Conferences, Symposia, Workshops, Debates, Public lectures

- Internet Communication Systems
- Discussion Groups and Individual Consultations

Textbooks

Textbooks are meant to impart necessary academic knowledge through their contents. Textbooks are the commonest sources of information for students. Every discipline has textbooks that provide relevant information that students need to excel in that discipline. Such textbooks contain specialized information much of which is specific and distinct so as to educate students on what they should know in those fields. When students consult such textbooks, their content knowledge will be enriched and their understanding widened. It is also important that while consulting textbooks, students should take note of the authors' approach to treatment of topics or subject matters. Some authors are simple and direct in their approach while others are technical and complex. Thus, students should pay attention to the style of writing of different authors to be able to extract meaning out of the contents of textbooks. The type of language used in any textbook determines to a great extent how much students can learn from it. For difficult textbooks that contain technical language, students must consult their dictionaries to break down the language for easy flow of communication.

Lectures

Class lecture is the most important activity in any academic environment. It is the main source of information for students. During class lectures, students receive detailed information on lecture topics because lectures are presented after the lecturer must have consulted different sources in order to present balanced information that may not easily be faulted. One of the advantages of class lectures to students is that they at liberty to ask questions on areas that are not understood during the lecture. The possibility of students participating actively in class is high. Hence, they can be engaged in asking and answering questions orally or in writing exercises and tests in the class. In order to understand the course content, students must discover and adjust to the lecture style of the lecturer because no good student can do without lectures. There is no better alternative to lectures for students who want to do well in their examinations.

Journals/Magazines/Newspapers/Newsletters

Journals are publications where intellectual ideas are exchanged among experts. Different professions float their respective journals to discuss issues related to their disciplines. Most of the topics published in journals are well researched topics that contribute to knowledge in the relevant profession. They

contain the most current discoveries, inventions and innovations that usually open new avenues of knowledge, sometimes subjected to criticisms from the learned members of the same discipline or field. It is, in fact, a convergence of intellectual minds aimed at examining critical issues from which new ideas and concepts could emerge for the benefit of the larger society. Journals are published at intervals ranging from bi-monthly, monthly bi-annually to annually. There are also local and international journals publishing on a wide range of issues in different subject areas. Journal articles are highly objective having been subjected to scientific examination through research. The *magazine* is a publication of issues of importance but not of a general serious content as journal publications. The magazine publishes general interest matters like sports, entertainment, news, fiction and factual stories, features and topics of academic value. Educational columns are created in some magazines covering a wide range of topics. Some magazines have columns that are very specific like Engineering, Technology, Education, Arts, Medicine, Agriculture, Social Sciences and so on. Students should be able to make reasonable selection of columns or sections that serve their academic purpose. They can acquire academic information from relevant topics to enrich their intellectual knowledge and thus improve their academic achievement. The language used in magazines is usually simple and easy to understand by students at various levels of education. Some magazines are published weekly, monthly or bi-monthly. *Newspapers* and *Newsletters* vary slightly from journals and magazines in terms of content, patterns and styles of presentation. While journals and magazines are published periodically, newspapers and newsletters are often printed daily. Newspapers are large sheets of papers containing news, articles, pictures, advertisements; etc. printed and sold daily or weekly to the public while newsletters are several sheets of printed news sent regularly to a particular group of people. Newspapers and letters also feature educational columns where education interest matters are raised and discussed according to the discipline featured in the publication. Some newspapers/letters dedicate pages to specific school subjects on daily basis. These academic issues could be a source of information for students who desire to excel in their examinations. However, this would be for students who will key into the academic provisions of such publications.

Electronic Media

The electronic media comprises the radio and television. These mass media outlets broadcast very important educational programmes that can benefit students of all ages. They air programmes that cover a variety of areas, from arts to science and technology. The television has the advantage of airing audio

programmes accompanied by visual images which have attracted a higher audience appeal unlike the radio which transmits only audio programmes. Students must ensure that only programmes that can promote their academic achievement are pursued; otherwise, they could be distracted by other irrelevant shows.

Excursions/Visits/Field Trips

These are organized outings meant to enable students to come into contact with the outside environment for the purpose of witnessing or practicing all they have learnt in theory at school. This is an opportunity that students should not allow to pass them by because of inherent advantages. The school system is witnessing a situation where most equipment, instruments, processes and so on taught in theory are no longer available for students to see or use. This outing forum, therefore, provides students with the rare opportunity of coming into contact with most of the things talked about at school. Practical experience facilitates learning and improves memory retention. Outings also promote social interactions as students come into contact with people on the field who will be able to clear their minds on areas of doubt and confusion encountered during class lectures. This also proves to the students that knowledge is not limited to the four walls of the school and that they can also look beyond the classroom for sound and complete education. To be able to derive the maximum benefit inherent in outings, there must be carefully organized and planned programme of activities to be conducted during the outing.

Seminars, Conferences, Symposia, Workshops, Debates, and Public Lectures

Seminars and *conferences* are academic meetings where academic papers are presented and discussed. The papers are usually reports from researchers, literature reviews, technical reports and intellectual expositions and new ideas or theories are revealed to enrich the academic or intellectual world. Intellectual discoveries or challenges are thrown to the participating audience for discussion, criticism or approval. For the presenter, the feedback is immediate and this affords him/her the opportunity of benefiting from the audience who are made up of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The members of the audience who are interested in academics and research also enjoy the benefits of such conference/seminar as instruments for the realization of their objectives. Similarly, students can acquire a great deal of knowledge through these meetings by keeping themselves abreast of latest developments in their various fields of specialization. The major difference between a seminar and a conference is that a seminar involves a small group of students who meet to study or talk about a

particular subject while a conference is a large formal meeting involving a lot of people who discuss important matters such as education, politics, technology, business, especially for several days. Conferences usually bring like-minds together but seminars are mostly short academic meetings.

Symposia are organized talks meant for experts and professionals in a particular subject to address the audience and stimulate healthy debate among them. Topics could vary from discipline to discipline addressing current issues of interest to stimulate action. At such occasions, the student benefits directly from the exchange and has the opportunity of contributing to the discussion and asking questions to correct wrong impressions created. Students who desire excellence in examination performance usually avail themselves of such opportunities that symposia create to improve their academic knowledge.

Workshops are public gatherings organized to train participants on chosen themes that would be of benefit to them based on current discoveries, theories, methodologies and practices. The participants are trained on up-to-date innovations or skills in their areas to be able to impact the same unto others. Experts from relevant fields gather to give intense training to the participants who are usually invited from relevant sections of various societies or countries. At the end, each of them goes back to his/her base to train others and also apply the knowledge gained at the workshop to the benefit of society. Students can also attend workshops to improve their knowledge in order to enhance their academic and professional chances. During workshops, social interactions prosper among participants and through such interactions, new contacts are established.

Schools debates are a popular programme in the Nigerian environment. It is a situation where contemporary topical issues are argumentatively presented by two opposing teams. Debates perform some important functions in the learning process. They are very beneficial to students especially at the secondary and primary school levels by making them active participants in the field of knowledge through critical and creative thinking. Apart from gaining additional knowledge, students' oral language skills and emotional control are greatly improved. It also instills discipline in students as the rules of debate are adhered to. Debates help in students' socialization habits by helping them develop confidence in the use of target language, promote their academic development and increase their intellectual capability. At the tertiary level of education, involvement of students in debates on contemporary or specialized topics is an avenue to enhance knowledge for better academic performance, apart from other benefits that can accrue from participating in debates.

Public Lectures are occasions where distinguished intellectuals, professionals, experts and prominent members of the society deliver special talks

to the public on issues or topics of relevance to the general public or a selected group or section of the society. Such lectures usually centre on contemporary and general interest areas like health, environment, education, economy, social issues, wealth creation, and so on. Public lectures provide opportunities for students to benefit from the wealth of experience of experts, professionals and intellectuals in their respective disciplines. From the knowledge gained directly from the experts in the field, students have the opportunity of interacting with the expert through questions to clarify areas of difficulty encountered during class lecture or from textbooks. Students who desire to do better than others in examinations seek to attend public lectures for improved academic knowledge.

Internet Communication System

Technological breakthrough has brought about the internet communication system which has broken long distance boundaries and reduced the world to a global village. The immediacy of communication has made it possible for anybody, who is connected, to reach the world within a minute. The computer can be used to access information worldwide. The advent of GSM has even made the internet domesticated, as people can now seek information from their bedrooms. Hence, information search can be done through telephone, Fax/Telex/E-mail, ipads, and so on. Information seekers can assess information from any part of the world and store it for retrieval through technological gadgets. Any information that any student may need concerning any discipline can now be accessed through the internet system. Academic papers on different disciplines are also available now on the internet. So, students who desire to acquire academic knowledge must recognize the importance of the internet to their academic advancement. Despite some challenges associated with the use of internet system like poor electric power supply, these gadgets fill some gaps in the system to promote teaching, learning and research.

Discussion Groups and Individual Consultations

Discussion groups and individuals offer students the opportunity to benefit from talented colleagues and staff through the exchange of ideas in group or individual consultations, as the case may be. The outstanding qualities of discussants place them in better positions to assist students based on their wealth of experience or intellectual ability. One of the advantages of group discussion is that it makes learners compare versions, weigh one against another and generally attend critically to problems. Students who desire to do well in examinations should take advantage of the discussion forum to advance knowledge for better achievement. Having considered these very important activities which students

must engage in to acquire the content knowledge required by the examination questions, we will now consider the second group of students who encounter problems in their examinations even though they possess adequate content knowledge and understanding of the subjects and courses being examined. Their problem could be improper handling of examination questions.

Why Students Fail Examinations

The second group of students who encounter problems in their examinations are those who possess adequate content knowledge and understanding of subjects or courses examined but lack the right approach and techniques required to answer such examination questions. This group of students performs poorly not because they are poor in content knowledge but because they fail to apply the appropriate techniques of answering such examination questions. Experience shows that the problems of those students who do not apply the appropriate techniques in handling examination questions revolve around the following areas:

1. Inappropriate interpretation of the question asked
2. Writing outside the scope of the answer
3. Failure to select appropriate language and style of communication during presentation
4. Improper allocation of time to question items
5. Psychological conditions

1. Inappropriate interpretation of the question asked

One of the mistakes students often make in the examination is failure to make a thorough analysis of questions before attempting to answer them. Many a time, they make wrong assumptions about examination questions and, therefore, fail to see what actually exists. For example, a student who sees a question similar to what he/she has once read may be dragged into wrong interpretation of the question. Certain questions can be deceptive or confusing particularly when affixes like “dis-“, “non-“, “un-“ or words like “However”, “Though”, “Invariably”, “Notwithstanding”, “All ... but one“, and so on, are used. In situations like this, students must be aware of wrong interpretations arising from unexpected semantic and structural changes in question patterns. The action vocabulary of the questions must be appropriately interpreted to ensure that the required answer is supplied. Every word used in the examination question must be fully interpreted in the context of the question asked. In a situation where a question demands “drawing and labeling”, it will be an error for any student to

“describe” instead of “drawing and labeling”. Every word used in a question has been carefully selected to request the student to perform a stated action. Students must identify what action is demanded of them and act accordingly so as to do well in examinations.

2. Writing outside the scope of the answer

Sometimes, students find it difficult to determine how much information is required by a particular question. Some questions demand for in-depth analysis of a few points from a group of many points on a particular topic while some others demand for outlines only. Problem arises when students do not pay adequate attention to the *action vocabulary* of the questions and thus write too much about too little and too little about too much. Every examination question states clearly what it wants and how it wants it. Students must find out what is expected from them to satisfy the demands of examination questions. Students must pay particular attention to the general instructions that govern every examination paper as well as to instructions attached to specific question items. It is a violation of instruction to answer FOUR questions when the instruction is to answer THREE questions. Students who desire to do well in examinations must operate within the scope of the examination questions.

3. Failure to select appropriate language and style of communication during presentation

One of the important decisions every student must take in the examination is to write responses in comprehensible language. Employing high sounding and verbose language that will not provide answers to questions does not attract any mark. Some students believe in the use of difficult words. Examiners are not impressed by candidates’ use of confusing or complex language to convey ideas in the examination. In fact, using incoherent, “round about” language is capable of infuriating the examiner who sometimes could be under pressure most probably because of time constraint. The best approach is simplicity, clarity, precision, coherence in every response. When simple and clear expressions are used by students, the examiner will have no problem in understanding and assessing such communications. It can also be irritating and tiring to read works that are written in very bad handwriting. Experience has shown that students who write illegible letters or figures weary the examiner who must spend extra time reading to co-ordinate and interpret such writing. Impatient examiners may not spend extra time scrutinizing bad writing and may score such writing poorly.

4. Improper allocation of time to question items

There is joy in the heart of any student who comes out of the examination hall satisfied that he/she has done all that are required of him/her within the time allocated for the examination. Every examination paper has specific time duration allocated to it. It means that right from the beginning, each student is aware of the maximum time each of them can spend on any paper. Problems always arise when the student is unable to manage this time given as contained in the instructions on the paper. This is where “time budgeting” comes in. The student should be able to allocate time to every question item to be answered. Of course, there must be strict adherence to the time allocated to every question. The student should clearly answer such questions as:

1. How many questions am I expected to answer in this examination?
2. How many minutes can I spend on each question?
3. How many points am I expected to elaborate for each question, and how many do I just mention?
4. Can I justify the minutes allocated to each question?

Sometimes, some examination questions are more demanding than others because of the type of details required. For such questions, extra minutes may need to be added to ensure that the question item is adequately treated. The greatest injustice a student can do to himself/herself is to leave an examination question unanswered. A student who answers *three* questions in an examination paper that demands *four* questions to be answered because of shortage of time will score no marks, at all, for the question that is left unanswered. It is, therefore, wise for every student to allocate time to every question and for the time allocated to be strictly adhered to. In case the time allocated is not sufficient to complete any one question, the student should abandon that question temporarily and finish other questions. If there is any time left when all other questions have been answered, the student can then revisit the abandoned item. If there is no time left, the question item should be left that way. The time allocated to any question should not be spent on another question so as not to lose marks unnecessarily.

5. Psychological Conditions

Emotional stability of students is a necessary factor for excellent performance in examinations. When students are emotionally tensed up, they may not be favourably disposed towards academic activities. Social and economic problems like death of loved ones, family related problems, all manner of unrests, poverty, pregnancy, sickness, are some of the problems that can destabilise

students and affect their academic lives, including examinations. Adequate attention should be paid to psychological situations to prevent them from interfering with and hindering students' performance in examinations. On the other hand, students should compose themselves in a manner that such conditions would have minimal effect on their academic activities and examination success.

Having discussed some of the problems encountered by students in examinations despite the fact that they possess adequate content knowledge and understanding required for successful handling of examination questions, we will now look at how these challenges can be overcome. Our attention will be focused on the "vocabulary of questions" for proper understanding and interpretation of examination questions.

Acquainting with Vocabulary of Questions

In this section entitled "Acquainting with Vocabulary of Questions", you will be exposed to some terminologies used in asking examination questions. However, these terminologies are not limited to examination questions but are also used in official and unofficial daily activities in different places of human activities. It is, therefore, important that you know what exactly you are expected to do when they confront you in academic and non-academic situations.

In the examination situation, students are confronted with questions which they are required to understand thoroughly before attempting to answer them. The first challenge is to understand the vocabulary used in the construction of the question. Once the first problem of understanding the question is solved, the battle is half won. To this end, you will acquaint yourself with the vocabulary of questions, i.e., vocabulary required for accurate understanding of most examination questions. Investigations reveal that most disciplines employ certain common vocabulary in the construction of examination questions. However, there are some items that are peculiar to certain fields of study.

List of some vocabulary of question items

We mentioned earlier that some academic disciplines employ peculiar vocabulary items in asking examination questions. However, there are vocabulary words commonly used in most fields in asking examination questions. You will find below, a list of some common action words used in examinations across disciplines:

Explain	Compute	Enumerate	Integrate	What
Illustrate	Classify	Sketch	Interpret	Where

List	Why	Prove	Identify	Comment
Very	Summarize	Deduce	Justify	Discuss
Distinguish	Establish	Evaluate	Outline	Compare & Contrast
Elaborate	Differentiate	Describe	Express	Calculate
Expatiate	Define	Tabulate	How	Isolate
Examine	Criticise	Draw	Which	Simplify
Factorise	Mention	Analyse	Design	Assume
Construct	Fabricate	Plot	Specify	Assess

Definition of some of the vocabulary items

A thorough understanding of the vocabulary of question is important for a comprehensive handling of examination questions. Some of these question items listed are explained below. Note that some of the words have similar meanings and may not be interpreted differently.

WORD	DEFINITION
Explain	Give the meaning of something or make clear.
Analyse	Divide into parts and describe each. It also means to discuss a problem, concept, situation or idea.
Assess	Decide how great, valuable, important or unimportant something is and give your reason.
Evaluate	Decide and explain how great, valuable or important something is.
Assume	First, accept that the following is the truth or correct.
Comment	Explain why something is important or give your opinion on a point.
Classify	Arrange into groups or classes according to a guideline.
Compare and Contrast	Describe the way in which two things are alike and different.
Criticise	Discuss, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, faults, disadvantages of something.
Deduce	Make a conclusion or generalization after looking carefully at all

	the factors.
Discuss	Give both sides of an argument and then your own opinion.
Distinguish between	Describe the differences between two things or opinions.
Elaborate	Answer fully with reasons and examples.
Indicate	Show and explain.
Summarize	Present the main points of a very wide subject.
Mention	Just give the name of something.
List	Name many items in succession.
Describe	State or give the major characteristics of a given element.
Define	Give meaning(s) of a word or an idea.
Outline	This means to show the major points or summary points.
Sketch	Give a brief account of.
Verify	This means to show that something is true, accurate or justified.
Identify	Recognise as being the specified thing.

There are some other action vocabulary words used in asking examination questions, which determine the demands of the question. You must thoroughly understand and be able to clarify the meaning of such words to be able to answer the questions correctly. The vocabulary items are not exhaustive but the choice of vocabulary word by the examiner depends on what he wants you to do. You must endeavour to answer questions in line with the examiners' demand which is expressed by the vocabulary item used in the question. This is very important if you must get it right.

Explanation of question terminologies

This section is an extension of “vocabulary of questions” and contains detailed explanation of some of the question terminologies earlier mentioned. It contains the commonest terminologies found in examination questions across disciplines. It is, therefore, very important that you get acquainted with these terms not only for examination purposes but also for effective communication after school. In daily out-of-school activities, you will discover that these terms are also used regularly in interactions involving different classes of people. So, you will pay attention to learn them for your use.

Further explanation of the term *Definition*

There are two major categories of definition. They are simple or basic definition and the complex or expanded definition.

(a) Simple/Basic definition

A simple definition is the type in which a sentence or less is used. For instance, a simple definition of an anemometer is “*An anemometer is a meteorological instrument used to measure the speed of wind*”. This is completed in just a sentence.

Characteristics of a Simple Definition: Every simple definition has the following characteristics:

1. The term to be defined must be identified or identifiable.
2. The family to which it belongs should be identified or identifiable.
3. The characteristics or qualities that distinguish the term from other members of that family must be identified or identifiable.

In the definition of anemometer given above, you can identify these characteristics:

1. The term defined is identified as “anemometer”
2. The family to which it belongs is “meteorological instrument”
3. The distinguishing characteristic is that it measures the “speed of wind” and not the direction or volume of wind. If you now want to give the same definition like this, “It is a meteorological instrument used to measure the speed of wind”, it becomes an incomplete definition because the term defined was not identified.

(b) Complex/Expanded Definition

An expanded definition is longer than one sentence. It could be made in several sentences with explanations and analogies. It also possesses the characteristic of a simple definition but it is developed in paragraph units. The developed paragraph units could contain descriptions with reference to time, space, order, cause and effects or contrasts. An example of complex/expanded definition is:

Distillation: Distillation is a process which is used to separate substances from a mixture. It consists of two operations: boiling and condensation. During the process of distillation, the liquid is changed into vapour and the vapour is collected back as liquid. An example of industrial use of distillation is in the

purification of seawater. In this case the volatile substance is separated from the non-volatile substance i.e., the salts which are dissolved in seawater.

Description Questions

Description questions are popular in examination question papers. Description questions demand statement of details of the major characteristic or aspects of a given element. To answer description questions, you must begin with visualizing very clearly what you are going to describe and decide which details to include and which to exclude. In order to write descriptions effectively, you must learn and use the appropriate lexical and grammatical elements associated with the description mode of written communication. You must also acquaint yourself with the different types of description as well as apply the techniques of descriptive type of writing. You should be able to identify the following grammatical elements from a description passage.

- i. Verb voice – active and passive
- ii. Verb tense – present, past and future
- iii. The use of articles: a, the, an.
- iv. The use of appropriate lexical items or register

Features of “Description” Questions

Questions that require description expect the following features in the description:

- (a) Major characteristics of the thing being described, especially the ones that make it different from others of its kind should be stated. Such descriptions must not be influenced by personal opinions. Such features should make the things described easily identifiable or cognizable.
- (b) Minor aspects of the thing described may not be required in most cases especially those that may not significantly distinguish the object described from others of its kind. Features that do not apply to the element being described should not be included in the description. The structure of descriptive writing could take any of the following forms:

Paragraph 1: Introduction – a very brief account of the major aspects of the thing being described, e.g. aspects “A”, “B”, “C”

Paragraph 2: A description of aspect “A”

Paragraph 3: A description of aspect “B”

Paragraph 4: A description of aspect “C”

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

Example of description question: *Describe the different types of mineral resources found in the ocean.*

The structure of the answer to the question above could be:

Paragraph 1: A very brief account of the major areas of the ocean in which mineral resources are found (sea water continental shelf/slope and ocean floor).

Paragraph 2: Mineral resources in the sea water.

Paragraph 3: Mineral resources in the continental shelf and slope

Paragraph 4: Mineral resources on the deep ocean floor

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

Types of Description

The three types of description presented here are *physical* description, *process* description and *function* description.

(a) Physical Description

This gives you the physical characteristic of an object and the spatial relationship of the parts of the object concerned, if any. The physical characteristics described could be dimensions or physical objects like shoe, bag, house, etc.

(b) Process Description

A process involves series of steps that are inter-related. Each step is dependent on the preceding step and each new step moves towards a definite goal. Often, it is series of instructions. For example,

1. Describe the life cycle of a fly (egg, larva, pupa and fly).
2. How is water separated from salt by filtration?
3. Describe grain processing.

In describing a process, separate makers, e.g. first, the next, finally, e.t.c. are often used in linking information.

(c) Function Description

This description gives you the information relating, as a rule, to a device of some kind. This, in order words, means the use or purpose of a device. You can give a function description of the following devices:

1. Copper wire
2. Wheel spanner
3. Acid
4. A microscope
5. A barber's clipper
6. A triode

Example of function description: A simple triode.

We will describe a simple triode as a vacuum tube with three electrodes inside an evacuated flask envelope. Right in the centre will be one electrode, the cathode. It is a serially treated tungsten wire and is referred to as the filament. This filament is an electric lamp and like the lamp filament, it becomes hot when electric current flows through the wire. Surrounding the cathode and well-spaced from it is the anode or plate. The plate is usually in the form of a hollow cylinder and it collects the electrons that are supplied by the cathode in a wire screen or cage that completely surround and enclose the cathode. This third electron is called the grid. Electrons that flow from the cathode to the anode must pass through the holes in the grid.

Discussion Questions

“Discussion” question demands talking about something from several points of view. This often has to begin with the definition of the subject of the term given. Discussions always demand some independence of thought and the ability to look at a situation from different viewpoints. It is a debate where both sides have to be heard and a judgment has to be made. Consider these examples of discussion questions.

- (a) It is costlier or expensive in Nigeria to erect a modern structure in an urban setting than it is in a typical rural set-up. Discuss.

- (b) The last price hike of petroleum products by the government has completely solved our fuel shortage problems in Nigeria. Discuss.
- (c) The internet that has brought the world together as one village is causing more harm than good to the world. Discuss.

You will discover that in each of these questions above, the examiner is trying to provoke your knowledge of the subject matter that he is trying to make you critically examine in order to come up with concrete conclusions based on sound arguments. So, your conclusion should be a review of the evidence of your arguments as to the validity or otherwise of the statement given in the question. Some vocabulary of questions that would demand similar answers with discussion questions are:

- i. Assess...
- ii. Comment...
- iii. Consider...
- iv. Examine...
- v. Evaluate...
- vi. To what extent...
- vii. Do you agree...?
- viii. Critically examine...
- ix. The statement that...

Outline Questions

An “Outline” question wants a summary. It means to show the major points or features or essential parts of something. When a question says “Outline” or “Indicate”, it shows that the subject matter of the question is very lengthy or complicated. So, only an outline is needed out of the lot. Therefore, you are not expected to go deeply into the subject matter. You are not expected to write in detail about any one of the many points. Instead, write separate summary paragraph on essential or major parts of the question.

For example, *Outline the energy sources currently being developed as alternatives to fossil fuel.* The structure of an answer to this question could be as shown below:

Paragraph 1: This may be made up of only one sentence indicating the energy alternatives.

Paragraph 2: Nuclear energy

Paragraph 3: Solar power

Paragraph 4: Wind power

Paragraph 5: Geothermal power

Paragraph 6: Wave power

Classify Questions

“Classify” questions demand you to arrange or sort into groups/classes or categories. Classifying entails ordering or organizing components, methods, events or ideas by grouping together those that share similar characteristics. Classification is done according to certain criterion or criteria given.

Examples of “classify” questions are

- i. Classify and discuss
- ii. Classify and analyse
- iii. Classify and explain
- iv. Classify and tabulate.

Items could be classified according to their function, make, size, colour, name, sound, shape, methodology, utility value, intensity, durability, length, etc.

Compare and Contrast Questions

“Compare and Contrast” questions demand you to show similarities and differences between two objects which may be people, organisms, methods or functions. It could even be events, ideas, cultures or locations. In attempting a comparison question, the following points must be considered about the items being compared and contrasted.

1. Item A
2. Item B
3. Similarities
4. Differences

This means that you have four factors to consider when writing comparison. First of all, you will write all you want to write on the two items separately. Then you write on their similarities and finally on their differences. There are two ways of planning a “compare and contrast” answer.

I. By Tabulation

Item A	Item B
Part 1	Part 1
Part 2	Part 2
Part 3	Part 3
Part 4	Part 4

Part 5: A long conclusion explaining differences and similarities, either paragraph by paragraph or item by item.

II. By Matching

1. Part I of A & B compared
2. Part II of A & B compared
3. Part III of A & B compared
4. Part IV of A & B compared

Conclusion: A short summary of the main issues of all the parts.

Possible Vocabulary for Comparison Questions

The following vocabulary can be used in “compare and contrast” questions to link one idea to another. Let us consider the following words:

Secondly, ... The next point is, ... For example, ... On the other hand, ... However, ... Similarly, ... Both of them are, ... In contrast..., Again, ... In addition, ... Finally.

In this chapter, we considered a very fundamental issue that has hindered students’ good performance in examinations. Lack of understanding examination question terminologies causes misunderstanding of questions and consequently, mishandling of such questions. Examination terminologies that are common to most disciplines have been presented and explained. Students must acquaint themselves with terminologies that are related to their disciplines to be able to handle questions adequately in examinations.

Practical Exercises

1. Use the following terms to construct standard examination questions for your class. The questions must be relevant to your course of study.
- 2.

- i. Describe
 - ii. Define
 - iii. Discuss
 - iv. Compare
3. Provide answers to the questions you have just constructed in 1. Above
 4. Analyse the following questions specifying what you are expected to do in each of them.
 - i. The best technique of problem solving through computer programming involves certain stages. Discuss.
 - ii. List three sources of error that is likely to affect the result of your analysis in a research.
 - iii. The cost of building materials is influenced by a number of factors. Give a detailed analysis of such factors.
 - iv. Describe the main pre-processing operations in a fish processing industry.
 - v. Explain the role of management of organizations in the construction industry. How is the role changing?
 - vi. Account for the uniqueness of Real Estate investment as distinct from other investment sectors in Nigeria.
 - vii. What are the advantages and disadvantages of cavity wall construction?
 - viii. Account for the observation that an individual deficient in glucose -6-phosphate dehydrogenate may show symptoms of drug induced harmonic anemia.
 - ix. Who is more important to society? A doctor or a farmer?
 - x. Distinguish between a surveyor and an architect.

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