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Online Programmes

Under Graduate

I - Semester

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**COMMUNICATION SKILLS-I
(PART-I)**

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Communication Skills-I

Syllabi	Mapping in Book
BLOCK I: COMMUNICATION: AN INTRODUCTION	Unit 1: Communication: An Overview (Pages 2-20)
Unit - I: Communication - Meaning - Types - Importance	
Unit - II: Barriers to Effective Communication - Principles - Principles of Effective Communication	Unit 2: Making Communication Effective (Pages 21-34)
BLOCK II: ORAL COMMUNICATION	Unit 3: Oral Communication (Pages 35-46)
Unit - III: Oral Communication - Meaning - Importance - Forms of Oral Communication	Unit 4: Intonation (Pages 47-62)
Unit - IV: Intonation - Meaning Function - Types Preparation of Speech - Steps Involved	Unit 5: Principles of Effective Oral Communication (Pages 63-74)
Unit - V: Principles of Effective Oral Communication	
BLOCK III: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	Unit 6: Written Communication: An Overview (Pages 75-114)
Unit - VI: Written Communication - Meaning - Steps - Importance - Advantages Use of words and Phrases	Unit 7: Sentence Construction (Pages 115-136)
Unit - VII: Sentence - Meaning - Sentence formation - Characteristics of an Effective Sentence	Unit 8: Paragraph Writing (Pages 137-152)
Unit - VIII: Paragraph Writing - Essay Writing - Steps Involved - Outline - Layout - Contents - Drafting - Correction - Final Draft	
BLOCK IV: OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION	Unit 9: Application for Employment and Curriculum Vitae (Pages 153-176)
Unit - IX: Application for Employment and Curriculum Vitae - Steps involved	Unit 10: Non-Verbal Communication (Pages 177-189)
Unit - X: Non - Verbal Communication - Meaning - Types - Body Language Postures - Gestures - Facial Expressions - Eye Contact	Unit 11: Report Writing-I (Pages 190-198)
Unit - XI: Report Writing - Report - Types of Reports - Format of a Report	Unit 12: Report Writing-II (Pages 199-206)
Unit - XII: Essentials of a Good Report - Preparation of Report - Procedure Involved	Unit 13: Meetings (Pages 207-224)
Unit - XIII: Meetings - Purpose of the Meeting - Procedure	Unit 14: Group Discussion (Pages 225-240)
Unit - XIV: Group Discussion - Quality of Content - Participation - Logical Presentation - Behavioural Skills	

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

BLOCK I: COMMUNICATION : AN INTRODUCTION

UNIT 1 COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW 1-20

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Meaning of Communication
- 1.3 Types of Communication
- 1.4 Importance of Communication
- 1.5 Need, Evolution Process and Methods of Communication
- 1.6 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 1.7 Summary
- 1.8 Key Words
- 1.9 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 1.10 Further Readings

UNIT 2 MAKING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE 21-34

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Barriers to Effective Communication
- 2.3 Principles of Effective Communication
 - 2.3.1 Factors Affecting Communication
- 2.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Readings

BLOCK II: ORAL COMMUNICATION

UNIT 3 ORAL COMMUNICATION 35-46

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Oral Communication: Meaning and Importance
 - 3.2.1 Importance of Oral Communication
- 3.3 Forms of Oral Communication
 - 3.3.1 Meetings
 - 3.3.2 Conferences
 - 3.3.3 Seminars, Workshops and Symposia
- 3.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Readings

UNIT 4 INTONATION 47-62

- 4.0 Introduction

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Meaning, Function and Types of Intonation
- 4.3 Types of Speeches
 - 4.3.1 Preparation of Speech
- 4.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Readings

UNIT 5 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION

63-74

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Principles of Effective Oral Communication
- 5.3 Ten Commandments of Good Speaking
- 5.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Words
- 5.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.8 Further Readings

BLOCK III: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

UNIT 6 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW

75-114

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Written Communication: Meaning and Steps
 - 6.2.1 Steps
- 6.3 Written Communication: Importance and Advantages
- 6.4 Use of words and phrases
 - 6.4.1 Use of phrases
- 6.5 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.6 Summary
- 6.7 Key Words
- 6.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 6.9 Further Readings

UNIT 7 SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

115-136

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Sentence: Meaning
- 7.3 Sentence Formation
 - 7.3.1 Types of Sentences
 - 7.3.2 Conditional Sentences
 - 7.3.3 Characteristics of an Effective Sentence
- 7.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Key Words
- 7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 7.8 Further Readings

UNIT 8 PARAGRAPH WRITING

137-152

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Paragraph writing
- 8.3 An Introduction to Essay Writing
 - 8.3.1 Essay writing: Steps Involved
- 8.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Key Words
- 8.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 8.8 Further Readings

BLOCK IV: OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

UNIT 9 APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CURRICULUM VITAE 153-176

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Sending an application for Employment
- 9.3 Steps involved in preparing Curriculum Vitae
 - 9.3.1 Types of Resumes
- 9.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 9.5 Summary
- 9.6 Key Words
- 9.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 9.8 Further Readings

UNIT 10 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

177-189

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Meaning
- 10.3 Non-Verbal Communication: Types
 - 10.3.1 Body language-Facial expressions and Eye contact
 - 10.3.2 Postures and Gestures
 - 10.3.3 Attire, Appearances and Handshake
- 10.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 10.5 Summary
- 10.6 Key Words
- 10.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 10.8 Further Readings

UNIT 11 REPORT WRITING-I

190-198

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 An Introduction to Report
- 11.3 Types of Report
 - 11.3.1 Format of a Report
- 11.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Key Words
- 11.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 11.8 Further Readings

UNIT 12 Report Writing-II

199-206

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Essentials of a Good Report
 - 12.2.1 Procedure Involved in Preparation of Report
- 12.3 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 12.4 Summary
- 12.5 Key Words
- 12.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 12.7 Further Readings

UNIT 13 MEETINGS

207-224

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Meetings
 - 13.2.1 What is a Meeting?
 - 13.2.2 Objectives of a Meeting
- 13.3 Conducting Meetings
 - 13.3.1 Planning a Meeting
 - 13.3.2 Drawing the Agenda
 - 13.3.3 Running the Meeting
 - 13.3.4 Minutes of the Meeting
- 13.4 Guidelines for Effective Meetings
- 13.5 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 13.6 Summary
- 13.7 Key Words
- 13.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 13.9 Further Readings

UNIT 14 GROUP DISCUSSION

225-240

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 An Introduction to Group Discussion
- 14.3 Conducting a Group discussion
 - 14.3.1 Quality of Content, Participation, Logical Presentation and Behavioural Skills
- 14.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 14.5 Summary
- 14.6 Key Words
- 14.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 14.8 Further Readings

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a pervasive activity which encompasses almost all facets of our lives. Much of our lives is spent communicating with others – be it at our work place or in our family life. Communication skills play an important role in the execution of different types of day-to-day activities of human beings. Communication provides the means for sharing of information and intelligence. Communication can be referred to as a process or mechanism, whose main components include a sender, message, channel, receiver and a response. How well the message is communicated by the sender to the receiver is the yardstick for judging communication skills.

Humans are a part of the society, so developing good communication skills will help an individual in not just their personal life but also their professional life. One not also gets better at building strong professional relationships but also finds an upward graph in their productivity. Communication skills also improves decision making and problem-solving skills. While communication as a field of study can be broadly divided into many different areas, in this book *Communication Skills-I*, our main focus will be oral, written, nonverbal and official communication.

This *Communication Skills-I* has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Self Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary, Key Words and Further Reading further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

NOTES

BLOCK - I

COMMUNICATION: AN INTRODUCTION

NOTES

UNIT 1 COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Meaning of Communication
- 1.3 Types of Communication
- 1.4 Importance of Communication
- 1.5 Need, Evolution Process and Methods of Communication
- 1.6 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 1.7 Summary
- 1.8 Key Words
- 1.9 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 1.10 Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Communication is the modus operandi of social and commercial intercourse. It is communication which gets the world going. The communication process encompasses men, women and children as individuals and also members of a group, society, community or organization. One cannot visualize a world where men and women do not communicate. Communication keeps the world going. The definitions of communication by various renowned authors have been mentioned in this unit.

Communication is relevant not only to human beings, but also to other living beings. It is the most important link that connects all living organisms. Communication takes place not only among people, but also between people and animals. The dog owner, the horse rider, the ringmaster in the circus and the fortune-teller communicate with their animals and birds.

It is the ability of mankind to communicate across barriers and beyond boundaries that has ushered the progress of mankind. It is the ability of fostering speedy and effective communication around the world that has shrunk the world and made 'globalization' a reality. Communication has played an important role in ensuring that people belonging to a particular country or a cultural or linguistic group interact with and relate to people belonging to other countries or cultural and linguistic groups.

NOTES

Communication is at once the cause and consequence of a powerful world order. Development of varied and sophisticated means of communication over a period of time has brought human beings across the globe closer and has facilitated speedy and effective transmission of thoughts and ideas. The expanse or reach of communication, therefore, is worldwide and truly encompasses human life in all its facets and endeavours. It galvanizes action among individuals, organizations, societies and the world community at large. There are several types of communication which takes place in personal and professional sphere which have been discussed in the unit.

Communication adds meaning to human life. It helps build relationships and fosters love and understanding. It enriches our knowledge of the universe and makes living worthwhile. One cannot imagine their life without various tools of communication such as newspapers, books, letters, television, telephones and cell phones. Thus, the expanse and significance of communication become crystal clear. The power of understanding communication is therefore, imperative for the success of any human endeavour. The role of a good communicator in any organization has been highlighted in the unit.

In this unit, you will thus, be able to understand the meaning, characteristics and various types of communication. The importance of communication in business organizations have also been discussed in the unit.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Interpret the meaning of communication
- Assess the main characteristics of communication
- Identify and analyse the various types of communication
- Discuss the significance of communication in business organizations

1.2 MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is central to the success of any business organization. Communication is a pervasive activity which encompasses almost all facets of our lives. Much of our life is spent communicating with each other, be it at our work place or in our family life.

The term ‘communication’ is derived from the Latin word ‘communis’ which means common. Thus, communication involves rendering common ideas, opinions or information, that is, the sharing of ideas opinions or information.

Communication is defined as the interchange of thought or information between two or more persons to bring about mutual understanding.

A renowned author, Robert Anderson has defined communication as the interchange of thoughts, opinions or information by speech writing or signs.

According to an American management consultant, Allen Louis, 'Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another; it involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.'

Keith Davis, a professor of management has defined communication as the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others with facts, ideas, thoughts and values.

In the words of an esteemed author, Peter Little, 'Communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding and response develops.'

They said...

Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.

—W.H. Newman and C.F. Summer Jr

When communication is referred to in an organizational context it is known as organizational communication. According to an author, William Scott: 'Administrative communication is a process which involves the transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of eliciting actions which will accomplish organisational goals.'

Characteristics of Communication

Based on the mentioned definitions there are certain characteristics of communication. These are as follows:

- Communication involves at least two persons—the sender and the receiver.
- It involves the transfer of ideas, facts, emotions, gestures, symbols and action from sender to receiver.
- Understanding is an essential component of communication, that is, the ideas, opinions, emotions, and so on, conveyed should be accurately replicated in the receivers' mind.
- Communication may be intentional or unintentional.
- The purpose of communication is to elicit action, inform or to express a certain point of view.
- Communication is a two-way process, that is, a feedback from the receiver to the sender is an essential component of communication.
- Communication is a dynamic process, that is, it grows and develops.
- Communication is systemic, that is, every component of the process is affected by every other component. For example, if there is a fault in the telephone (channel of communication), it will affect the message received by the receiver.

NOTES

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. How has Keith Davis defined communication?
2. State the purpose of communication.

1.3 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Apart from the different methods and channels of communication, one can also look at various types of communication. Communication can be categorized into different types depending upon the level at which it takes place, the direction it takes or by its very nature. Some of the commonly referred to types of communication are:

1. Personal and business communication
2. Internal and external communication
3. Upward and downward communication
4. Formal and informal communication
5. Lateral communication
6. Interactive communication
7. Mass communication
8. Global communication
9. Supportive communication
10. Social communication
11. Grapevine communication

The relevance and importance of each of these types of communication is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Personal Communication

Personal communication concerns communication that takes place between any two individuals, be it in a family, group, community or even an organization. It takes place in an individual capacity and is characterized by its informality. There is an element of privacy in all such communications. It can take the form of personal letters, personal telephone calls, conversations, one-to-one meetings or e-mail messages. It is private in nature and there is nothing official about it. Private and confidential conversation between two individuals is also referred to as *tete-a-tete*.

Business Communication

Business communication takes place to further the goals of a business. It takes place among business entities, in markets and market places, within organizations

and between various groups of employees, owners and employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and customers, sales persons and prospects and also between people within the organization and press persons. All such communication impacts business and can enhance the growth opportunities of the business. If communication is not carried out properly, it may adversely affect the business interest. It also helps the person concerned in moving up in the organizational hierarchy. Communication is the vehicle on which the business moves. The ability of the communicator to communicate effectively—verbally, non-verbally and in writing—is a prerequisite for organizational and business-related success.

Internal Communication

Internal communication takes place within the organization or group—among people within, among different groups of employees and between employers and employees. It could be oral or written, visual or audio-visual, formal or informal and upward or downward. Internal communication serves to inform, instruct, educate, develop, motivate, persuade, entertain, direct, control and caution people in the organization. When a personal letter is written at an official address, besides writing the name of the addressee, the envelope is superscribed ‘private’ or ‘confidential’ to convey the nature of communication. Knowledge, skills, goal orientation, sharing of corporate concerns, review and monitoring, performance appraisal, counselling and training are among the issues that internal communication addresses.

External Communication

Unlike internal communication, external communication flows outward. It addresses people outside the organization, like the prospective customers, competitors, public, press, media and the government. External communication can take place in various ways and through different channels. Letters, notices, brochures, demonstrations, telephone calls, business meetings, press releases, press conferences, audio-visual presentations, publicity films, product launch events and advertisements are all examples of external communication. It is important to observe the fact that the external agency or person targeted through such communication quite often forms an image or impression based on such communication and it is, therefore, necessary that adequate care is taken in making it clear, intelligible and appealing.

Upward Communication

Large organizations have different hierarchical levels or tiers. Banks, finance companies, insurance businesses, railways and such other people-oriented organizations have typically a three-tier or a four-tier structure. It is necessary that in order to complete the process of communication, it should encompass all these levels and tiers. Upward communication is one which moves upward, i.e., from the bottom to top levels in the hierarchy.

*Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

Any communication that moves from employees to supervisors, supervisors to managers, managers to executives and regional manager to general manager may be categorized as upward communication. Similarly, communication from branches to regional offices, regional offices to zonal offices, and zonal offices to the head office is referred to as upward communication. Employee suggestions, market reports, performance reports, feedback on new products and requests for facilities or instructions are all examples of upward communication in the organizational context. Figure 1.1 shows the various forms of upward communication.



Fig. 1.1 Upward Communication

Downward Communication

Downward communication moves from top to the bottom, i.e., from the CEO downwards. It travels through senior executives to junior-level functionaries, from the controlling office to the branch, from the head of the division to the head of the unit. Corporate goals, business priorities, motivational letters, work-related instructions, newsletters, letters from the CEO/General Manager's desk are all typical examples of downward communication.

There may be some communication which would move both upward and downward. A typical example of this is performance budgeting, which is a two-way process. It is a top-to-bottom as well as bottom-to-top exercise. Figure 1.2 shows the forms of downward communication.

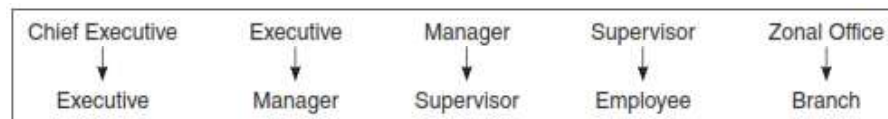


Fig. 1.2 Downward Communication

Formal Communication

To ensure communication on an ongoing basis, organizations develop formal systems. Staff meetings, union-management meetings, branch manager's conferences, periodical sales review meetings and customer meets are examples of forums that facilitate formal communication. Formal communication generally follows a well-defined hierarchical pattern and periodicity. Memos, circulars, instructions, guidelines, clarifications, agreements and reports are some of the channels that facilitate the flow of formal communication in business organizations.

Informal Communication

Informal communication is a type of communication that takes place in an unstructured manner and outside the formal structure. There is an element of spontaneity in this communication. Informal communication works well in smaller and loosely knit organizations. It is used more often in situations where there are no rigid hierarchical tiers. While formal structure of communication is a must in large organizations, it is the informality that helps sustain goal orientation in small well-knit units. Informal communication takes place through chats, conversations and informal talks and the like.

Lateral Communication

Lateral communication generally takes place in an organization and is neither upward nor downward. It proceeds in a horizontal manner and takes place among equals and at peer level.

It may also be described as peer-level communication. Any communication that takes place, orally or in writing, from one branch head to the other, from one division head to the other, from one group head to the other, may be described as lateral communication. An important point to consider in any such lateral communication is that there is not much difference in terms of the hierarchical levels or positions of the sender and the receiver. Figure 1.3 shows the forms of lateral communication.



Fig. 1.3 Lateral Communication

Interactive Communication

Interactive communication is essentially a two-way process. It takes place through meetings, conferences, teleconferencing, multimedia presentations, group discussions and other such active two-way exchanges. Interactive communication is the most appropriate form of communication when the message or subject is to be presented at length, e.g., in practical sessions, case study discussions and strategy formulation. When many speakers are involved, there may be a need for a moderator who will facilitate effective flow of communication from different speakers.

Mass Communication

Mass communication is distinctive in view of its scale. Essentially, it addresses a large mass of people. Public speaking, newspapers, magazines and journals, radio, television and dotcoms are channels of mass communication. Mass communication has developed into a specialized area of study. Each of these areas or channels

NOTES

NOTES

calls for distinct skills. By its very nature, mass communication addresses a vast, well spread-out and heterogeneous group of people and, as such, special efforts will have to be made to sustain their interest and achieve the desired response. At the government level too, there is often a separate ministry or department of mass communication to deal with this functional area. The main branches of study relating to mass communication are public relations, advertising and publicity, journalism and digital media.

Global Communication

Global communication relates to communication that takes place beyond the national boundaries. In the existing times, businesses are characterized by their global nature. Most of them operate beyond the local or even national boundaries and are influenced by global trends. Businesses are known to operate in what is known as a 'global village'. They often deal with customers, buyers, suppliers, service providers and even employees who are located in countries abroad. That is how global communication comes into play. Global communication has its own characteristics in terms of language, culture, etiquette and time factor, which have to be reckoned within the process of communication.

Supportive Communication

Supportive communication is a form of communication in which people are encouraged to speak freely and come out with their feelings and concerns. This happens when managers take time to listen, do not interrupt or pass judgments, make efforts to understand, and do not criticize and snub the other party. This type of communication calls for abundant patience and empathy, or the ability to understand the other person's feelings and experiences on the part of the manager or superior. Any person will freely share his or her inner feelings and concerns only when he or she feels that the listener is empathetic and interested. The supportive communicator has to create an environment where a person will feel encouraged to speak up without restraint.

Social Communication

As members of society, people everywhere will have to interact with others on a regular basis. Social communication takes place when people meet each other outside business and workplace situations. Social skills refer to the ability to talk easily to other people and do things in a group. Social communication often takes place at an informal and friendly level. However, there are some social etiquettes which have to be taken care of even when people from the corporate world meet at social events.

Grapevine Communication

Grapevine communication is a kind of informal communication that prevails in organizations and businesses. The source of such communication may not be clear.

It spreads by way of gossip and rumours. It travels through informal networks and quite often travels faster than the formal messages. Sometimes, it gets more powerful and becomes more receptive as compared to formal communication. The prevalence of this type of communication in an organization has to be recognized and accepted. A skilled communicator can derive benefits from such a communication as well. It may not always be possible to control the grapevine communication, but, nevertheless, an able communicator knows how to influence it. Like any other type of communication, it has its merits and demerits.

*Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. How is internal communication different from external communication?
4. Why is lateral communication described as peer-level communication?

1.4 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

The importance of business communication in today's inter-linked global economy is widely appreciated. Effective communication plays a crucial role in any organization. Businesses deal with people and communication serves as a vital link in connecting people. Business organizations that underestimate the crucial role of communication do so at their peril. It is also well recognized that every communication is not necessarily effective. In real-life business situations, there are everyday instances of communication failure. The messages delivered are not what are intended. The messages understood are not what are conveyed. Messages often get distorted, diluted or misunderstood. Every organization, therefore, not only needs to recognize the importance of communication, but also should put in place adequate efforts and proper systems to make communication, both internal and external, effective and result oriented. Successful business communication is not automatic or mere happenstance. It needs time, effort and constant attention across all organizations to ensure that communication becomes effective.

Effective communication skills are among the most essential competencies in any aspiring manager's skill set. It is well understood in modern day business organizations that in the long run, soft skills are more important than technical skills. Soft skills include communication, time management, team work, negotiation and conflict resolution, assertiveness and business etiquette. Communication, however, tops the list of soft skills that managers need to possess. Important as they are, communication and other soft skills are also the hardest to acquire and the most difficult to practice. Nevertheless, like other skills, communication skills too can be mastered and practiced with ease through constant learning and application.

Given the importance of communication for any business, business organizations are always on the lookout for good communicators. The need for

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good communicators is particularly strong in business organizations in the service industry where services are delivered through people-to-people interactions. These organizations also put in place their own systems for improving the communication skills of their employees.

The nature of communication in business is quite diverse. In large organizations, the flow of communication is both internal and external and encompasses numerous stakeholders. Such communications could be personal or professional, formal or informal, written or oral, upward or downward or lateral or one-way or interactive. Communication involves the act of sharing ideas, opinions, thoughts, strategies, findings, concepts, attitudes, perceptions, perspectives and a wide array of communication needs. It could be individual-to-individual, individual-to-group or even group-to-group communication. The method of business communication could again take varied forms-written or verbal or non-verbal. Letters and memos, reports and notices, speeches and presentations, signals and gestures and a host of such means are used in business communication. Depending on the nature of communication, its transmission takes place through e-mail, fax, courier, telephone, teleconferencing, video conferencing and even films and other audio visual aids.

Given this diversity, a good communicator should have a clear understanding of the alternative types and methods of communication and the circumstances under which each one of them or a combination of them can be used. The communicator should also master the technical aspects of different methods of communication so that the breakdowns and barriers, if any are eliminated. A considerable time of people working in an organization is also invested while carrying out any meetings, seminars, workshops, discussions, presentations, negotiations, strategy sessions and such other interactive forms. Hence, every effort should be made to ensure that smooth flow of communication is facilitated through proper planning and organization. The nature and expanse of communication would depend on the nature of business and its reach across various stakeholders. In real-life situations, the needs and complexity of communication are quite diverse, depending on the type of industry, number of employees, geographical spread of the organization, level of sophistication and technology adoption, hierarchical structures, cross-cultural dimensions and such other relevant factors. Business communication is about sending and receiving messages and sharing information. Information is the key input for decision making and action taking. People in business organizations need to constantly gather information and take business-related decisions. Owners need to know about business growth and profitability. Managers need to know about market trends and organizational strengths. Employees need to know about production schedules. Customers need to know about product features. Almost everyone in business irrespective of his/her functional or geographical or hierarchical position needs to communicate. Those who can communicate effectively stand to gain, achieve better results and win over others.

Unlike what it used to be in the olden days, communication in modern day business organizations relies heavily on technology. The advent of mobiles, computers, networking systems, teleconferencing and video conferencing tools, fax machines and power point sets have added a new dimension to the world of communication. As businesses grow, expand and reach out, they need to rely more and more on such instruments and people well versed in operating such machines. Technology powers business communication. A good communicator, therefore, needs to not only master the varied business communication skills, but also needs to develop adequate knowledge of technology and its use in business communication.

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1.5 NEED, EVOLUTION PROCESS AND METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Sociologists describe human beings as social animals. As members of society, they have to constantly interact with their fellow beings. They have feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes—all of which they have to convey. In other words, whatever the environment in which they are placed, they have to build links and establish relationships. The need for communication arises from their desire to express themselves in a meaningful manner. As stated earlier, communication is the modus operandi of social intercourse. As a member of the family, a social group and as part of a work-team, they need to communicate with others.

Just as they are social beings, human beings are also emotional beings. They have certain thoughts and emotions. Human heart generates feelings. Further, just as human beings are social beings and emotional beings, they are equally importantly, rational beings. They are endowed with the faculty of thinking. They have intelligence and brainpower. The human mind is a very potent force. There is always a constant urge to give expression to what the mind generates. In order to give a meaningful expression to thoughts, ideas, reasoning, creativity and intelligence, human beings resort to communication.

The need for communication arises from the need to emote, to interact, and to express one's ideas and thoughts and the need to relate and connect. The need or the desire to communicate, however, varies from person to person, depending on time and context. There are times and occasions when a person is extremely communicative. There are also times and occasions when he or she prefers to remain silent. Be that as it may, most of our waking hours are spent in communication. Such communication may take place in several ways—listening, speaking, reading and writing.

EXHIBIT 1.1

Speaking with Figures

According to researchers, we spend 50–80 per cent of our waking hours in communicating. Of this,

- About 45 per cent is spent in listening
- About 30 per cent is spent in speaking
- About 15 per cent is spent in reading
- About 10 per cent is spent in writing

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Evolution of Communication

The art of communication is as old as mankind itself. It is, in fact, older than the written word or even the spoken word. Human beings learnt to communicate much before they learnt to speak, read or write. That is why communication is not unique to human beings. Communication encompasses all living beings and pervades the animal world as well. Birds and animals also communicate. The sounds they make carry meaning. The chirping of the birds, the roaring of the lions, the hissing of the snakes and the whining of the dogs are often meant to be expressive.

Much before they learnt to speak, human beings had learnt to express themselves through sounds, gestures and actions. If we observe closely, we can notice that we continue to use these methods to communicate even to this day. It is not that those who cannot speak, read or write cannot communicate. A visually challenged person or an illiterate person, resorts to oral and non-verbal communication; while a person with a speech or hearing disability resorts to gesticulations and lip reading.

The art of communication has evolved over the years. It goes back in time to the biblical era, mythological times and even to the prehistoric period. People learnt to express themselves even before they evolved fully into their present form. From sounds, grunts, actions, signs, gestures and gesticulations to the spoken word and thereafter to the world of reading, writing and modern and sophisticated methods of communication, it has been a long yet fascinating and rewarding journey through time. As they progressed on this fascinating journey, human beings learnt to interpret sounds, understand actions and use signs and gesticulations. Messages were conveyed through sounds, cries and drumbeats. The spoken word added a new dimension to the world of learning. Sages and saints of yore learnt to pass on sacred verses and holy texts through word of mouth. Thereafter, human beings learnt to use symbols and pictures to convey messages. Early writings were on stones and leaves. As human beings progressed, communication evolved further. The invention of printing, as we all know, revolutionized the process of communication. In terms of its reach, the written word signified a quantum leap. Side by side, various inventions made possible the recording of the spoken word and its transmission, irrespective of time and distance. Gradually, the emergence of new media added new dimensions to the world of communication.

Advancements in technology further enabled storage and retrieval of oral and written records in an effective, time-saving and cost-efficient manner.

*Communication:
An Overview*

Objectives of Communication

The objectives and functions of communication are inter-related. Communication could have many objectives depending upon the group and context. Communication within the family, in a classroom, in a theatre, in a church, in a war field, in a seminar and in the boardroom has different objectives. The objectives are defined depending upon the group and the purpose to be achieved. Each of these groups has a different set of goals and objectives.

Communication aims at subserving those goals. In each of these groups, the dominant objective of communication would be to inform, connect, educate, entertain, motivate, provoke, integrate, reassure and persuade, as the case may be. Communication is thus the means to an end. Communication is largely goal-oriented and the objective of any personal communication would depend upon the person or the group one is addressing and the purpose or object one has in mind.

Let us now look at the objectives of communication in business organizations. It is a process common to every business, whatever be its primary function. Business organizations exist for the purpose of meeting specific needs of the community in which they operate. Every business organization sets its goals and objectives in relation to the specific need it aims to fulfil. Every organization uses resources, including human resources to function effectively, and also targets specific clients and markets. Businesses are often associations of people coming together for specific purposes. It has people within and it also addresses people outside the organization. The activities of any organization require both people within and people outside to act, interact, reach, share, exchange and get across to each other so that specific objectives are accomplished in an effective manner. The word 'business' connotes a commercial motive. As distinct from a charitable or religious organization, any business organization is driven by a profit motive. This implies that the organization would like to ensure that its objectives are achieved with the optimum utilization of resources like time, money and effort. The communication system that is put in place within the organization should, therefore, address and meet these objectives.

Since business organizations are multi-disciplinary in nature, communication encompasses wide areas and is inter-disciplinary in approach. Large organizations are described as networks of interdependent relationships. The objectives, activities and inter-relationships of a business organization necessitate communication to subserve its many diverse objectives.

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EXHIBIT 1.2

Objectives of Communication

- Inform
- Educate
- Train
- Motivate
- Integrate
- Relate and Connect
- Promote
- Entertain
- Facilitate Decision Making

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Let us discuss the objectives of business communication.

The first and foremost objective of any communication is to inform. In today's world, information is power. Communication brings power through information. The dissemination of information covers a wide range of areas, both internal and external. People within the organization have to be kept informed about the organizational goals, objectives, procedures, processes, systems, plans, priorities and strategies. Equally important is the objective of ensuring effective external communication—with customers, prospects, competitors, suppliers and the public, about products, services, plans, happenings, events and achievements. The information needs within the organization take on different nomenclatures—market-related information, product-related information, client-related information, employee information, executive information and management information.

Another objective of communication in an organization is to educate, i.e., to disseminate knowledge and develop skills and attitudes among the people working in the organization. There is also a need to familiarize them with the systems, procedures and processes. This process of education may extend to customers as well. This may be done through product literature, publicity, presentations and demonstrations.

Communication is an integral component of any training program. Business organizations need to train people to achieve proficiency in specific skills. They have to provide working knowledge and attitudinal inputs through training programs to employees at various hierarchical levels. Training sessions involve teaching, instruction, demonstration, practice and discussion. The process of communication is integral to each of these.

People in any business organization have to be motivated to pursue goals and achieve higher levels of performance. High levels of morale and motivation are a must to ensure high levels of productivity and efficiency on a sustainable basis. Communication provides the means to keep the motivation levels high. Talks, lectures, films, meetings, workshops and non-verbal messages are among the means used to motivate people.

Large business organizations have different business units, departments and territorial divisions. Each of them pursues different goals, sub-goals and target sections. Communication provides the means for an integrated approach in pursuing organizational goals. Effective communication is a must to ensure that people

working in different functional and geographical areas are integrated into well-knit teams that eschew working at cross- purposes and continue to achieve organizational goals as envisaged. Communication binds together people working for a common objective and helps team building.

Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know.

—DANIEL J BOORSTIN

Good business relationships are a must for the continued success of any business organization. It is communication that provides the means for building and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships. These relationships are both internal and external. They may be among and/or between employees, supervisory staff, top management, customers, suppliers, other players, press and other media. As part of the larger community, progressive organizations make it a point to relate themselves with the community at large. It demonstrates that they are a sharing and caring organization. All this is achieved through well-organized communication strategies.

Promotional efforts are a must for any organization to fully achieve its objectives. One of the Ps of marketing (the others being Product, Price and Placement), promotion relates to various activities such as advertising, publicity, public relations and communication, which aim at customer information, customer education, customer communication and customer retention. In the marketing concept, the customer is said to move from stage to stage till the transaction is completed. They move progressively from the state of awareness of the need for a product to the knowledge of the product and thereafter to a state of product preference. The needs of the customers develop into effective demand for products, resulting in the purchase of the product or availing of the service. Promotional aspects of the service are particularly relevant in a service industry like banking or insurance, where the product, i.e., the service, cannot be readily 'seen'. Financial service providers essentially sell benefits. For this, they have to organize effective promotional measures, which seek to inform, educate, persuade and actualize the clients/markets. Communication constitutes the basic plank on which promotional strategies are built.

Every business is not necessarily a serious business. Even serious businesses are not 'serious' all the time. Whatever may be the nature of business, there is a time for entertainment. Communication facilitates entertainment. It facilitates social bonding and brings in lighter moments that help in releasing tension, fostering camaraderie and getting rid of negative feelings. Humour, when used effectively, can play a vital role in fostering positive behaviour in business organizations. In the entertainment industry, communication has a much bigger role to play. Communication can serve to achieve the objective of purposeful entertainment.

Facilitate Decision Making

Decision making constitutes an important function for any business organization. Well thought out decisions, quickly taken, lead to better results. Such decision

*Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

making is spread across all the functional areas—personnel, marketing, accounts, production and maintenance. Day in and day out, people in organizations keep taking decisions at various hierarchical levels. People at higher levels in the organization command respect depending upon their decision-making abilities. Any such decision making, however, depends on the availability of adequate and timely inputs. It calls for facts, figures, analysis, deliberation, clarification, confirmation and evaluation. Communication—both oral and written—facilitates decision making in any business organization.

The objectives of communication, it must be emphasized, are dynamic and ever-changing. Depending upon the nature and functions of the organization, the range of people it deals with, and the sensitivities involved, the process of communication assumes new dimensions. In order to caution, counsel, persuade, clarify, elicit support, reprimand, organize, apprise, evaluate and achieve numerous other objectives, people in organizations resort to communication. Business organizations today function in an extremely dynamic context. Nothing ever remains the same for long. There are mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, high employee turnover, low customer loyalty, move towards corporate governance, outsourcing, paperless offices and flexible work hours. All these developments have had their impact on the conventional methods of organizational communication.

Inasmuch as organizations themselves are adapting to changes in their operating environment and are facing new challenges, the contours of business communication will have to undergo a change. Communication systems, concepts and approaches will have to cope with new demands on business and there is a constant need to review the adequacy of existing methods and practices. Communication is essentially a support system for any business. With every change in the profile of business, the process of communication has to see refinements. Let us take an illustration. Till recently, a supervisor in an organization would consider having a 'long chat' with an employee whose productivity had declined or had started showing indifference to work. The typical scene has undergone a noteworthy change. Today, there may not be much of an opportunity to have a long, focused person-to-person 'chat.' With flexible working, outsourcing and limitations of time, new approaches will have to be found. Although internet 'chatting' facility may be available in some places, the advantages of person-to-person verbal communication are certainly not there. Every new situation translates into a need for new approach to communication. To cope with new situations and emerging challenges in business, people associated with the process of communication will have to be necessarily creative and innovative.

The objectives of communication, both internal and external, thus cover multifarious facets of organizational functioning. Within the organization, it covers varied functions such as planning, directing, controlling, coordinating, reviewing, monitoring and staffing. It facilitates appropriate feedback so vital for decision making and relationship building. Marketing, selling, goal-setting, employee

counselling, team-building, performance highlighting, image-building, morale-building and community orientation are all valid objectives which communication seeks to achieve in an organizational context. Communication supports every business function.

*Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

Check Your Progress

5. What are the various types of soft skills in an organization?
6. State any two characteristics of a good communicator.

1.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Keith Davis, a professor of management has defined communication as the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others with facts, ideas, thoughts and values.
2. The purpose of communication is to elicit action, inform or to express a certain point of view.
3. Internal communication takes place within the organization or group—among people within, among different groups of employees and between employers and employees. On the other hand, external communication flows outward. It addresses people outside the organization, like the prospective customers, competitors, public, press, media and the government.
4. Lateral communication is described as peer-level communication as it is a communication which takes place orally or in writing, from one branch head to the other, from one division head to the other, from one group head to the other. It thus, proceeds in a horizontal manner and takes place among equals and at peer level.
5. The various types of soft skills in an organization are communication, time management, team work, negotiation and conflict resolution, assertiveness and business etiquette.
6. The following are the characteristics of a good communicator:
 - a) The communicator should have a clear understanding of the alternative types and methods of communication and the circumstances under which each one of them or a combination of them can be used.
 - b) The communicator should also master the technical aspects of different methods of communication so that the breakdowns and barriers, if any are eliminated.

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1.7 SUMMARY

- Communication is the modus operandi of social and commercial intercourse. It is communication which gets the world going.
- Communication is the modus operandi of social and commercial intercourse. It is communication which gets the world going.
- Effective communication is central to the success of any business organization. Communication is a pervasive activity which encompasses almost all facets of our lives.
- Communication is defined as the interchange of thought or information between two or more persons to bring about mutual understanding.
- Understanding is an essential component of communication, that is, the ideas, opinions, emotions, and so on, conveyed should be accurately replicated in the receivers' mind.
- The purpose of communication is to elicit action, inform or to express a certain point of view.
- Communication is a two-way process, that is, a feedback from the receiver to the sender is an essential component of communication.
- Personal communication concerns communication that takes place between any two individuals, be it in a family, group, community or even an organization.
- Communication is the vehicle on which the business moves. The ability of the communicator to communicate effectively—verbally, non-verbally and in writing—is a prerequisite for organizational and business-related success.
- Internal communication takes place within the organization or group—among people within, among different groups of employees and between employers and employees.
- Unlike internal communication, external communication flows outward. It addresses people outside the organization, like the prospective customers, competitors, public, press, media and the government.
- Any communication that moves from employees to supervisors, supervisors to managers, managers to executives and regional manager to general manager may be categorized as upward communication.
- Downward communication moves from top to the bottom, i.e., from the CEO downwards. It travels through senior executives to junior-level functionaries, from the controlling office to the branch, from the head of the division to the head of the unit.
- Memos, circulars, instructions, guidelines, clarifications, agreements and reports are some of the channels that facilitate the flow of formal communication in business organizations.

- Informal communication is a type of communication that takes place in an unstructured manner and outside the formal structure. There is an element of spontaneity in this communication.
- Lateral communication generally takes place in an organization and is neither upward nor downward.
- Interactive communication is essentially a two-way process. It takes place through meetings, conferences, teleconferencing, multimedia presentations, group discussions and other such active two-way exchanges.
- Mass communication is distinctive in view of its scale. Essentially, it addresses a large mass of people.
- Global communication relates to communication that takes place beyond the national boundaries.
- Supportive communication is a form of communication in which people are encouraged to speak freely and come out with their feelings and concerns.
- Social communication takes place when people meet each other outside business and workplace situations.
- Grapevine communication is a kind of informal communication that prevails in organizations and businesses.
- Effective communication plays a crucial role in any organization. Businesses deal with people and communication serves as a vital link in connecting people.
- The nature and expanse of communication would depend on the nature of business and its reach across various stakeholders.

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1.8 KEY WORDS

- **Communication:** It is defined as the interchange of thought or information between two or more persons to bring about mutual understanding.
- **Informal communication:** It is defined as a type of communication that takes place in an unstructured manner and outside the formal structure.
- **Lateral communication:** It is defined as a type of communication that takes place in an organization and is neither upward nor downward.
- **Supportive communication:** It is defined as a type of communication in which people are encouraged to speak freely and come out with their feelings and concerns.

1.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short Answer Questions

1. How has Allen Louis defined communication?
2. Write a short note on mass communication.
3. How can you say that communication is a two-way process?
4. Differentiate between upward and downward communication?
5. What are the various forms of formal communication?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the main characteristics of communication.
2. Explain any four main types of communication.
3. Analyse the importance of communication in the existing times.
4. 'Effective communication skills are among the most essential competencies in any aspiring manager's skill set'. Discuss the statement.

1.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 MAKING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVE

*Making Communication
Effective*

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Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Barriers to Effective Communication
- 2.3 Principles of Effective Communication
 - 2.3.1 Factors Affecting Communication
- 2.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

A good communication in personal or professional aspect means that a person has achieved something by properly explaining his or her ideas and suggestions. If a communication is effective, it means that it will be prosperous for the business. However, it is not necessary that a communication is effective. Most of the time, the recipient of the communication does not get the message as meaningfully and as a result, the message may get distorted. Thus, it is necessary that a good communicator should first analyse the barriers which hampers the process of communication. The unit will discuss the barriers which affect communication in detail.

A good, meaningful and effective communication can take place when there is a clear understanding of the various factors which affect communication, the essentials of effective communication, the significance of language and the manner in which people read meanings behind the messages. There are certain principles related to the concept of effective communication which results in successfully conveying a message to the concerned person.

In this unit, the barriers to effective communication and the factors which affect communication have been discussed in depth. The unit will also analyse the principles related to effective communication.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of communication barriers
- Identify the barriers related to effective communication

*Self-Instructional
Material*

- Analyse the principles of effective communication
- Assess the factors which affect communication

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2.2 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication has been defined as a process in which information is shared between the sender and the receiver. It is essentially a two-way process and it therefore, becomes necessary that the message is explained clearly. For ensuring effective communication, all the parties and instruments will have to play their part as envisaged. At every stage of the communication process, however, there are barriers, which hinder or dilute the flow of communication.

The barriers to communication in an organizational context may arise out of authority structure, status difference, reporting relationships, culture and background of individuals. The barriers to communication may arise out of behavioural differences, differences in skills and understanding as well as physical factors. While some kinds of barriers like behavioural differences and differences in skills may be commonly applicable to all methods of communication, barriers arising out of physical factors may be specific to the method of communication adopted. Some barriers, which are specific to the written communication, are handwriting, spellings and legibility. Similarly, barriers to oral communication would include absence of felicity of expression, accent, and speed of delivery and appropriateness of the language. In the following section, some of the important barriers to the process of communication have been highlighted.

Poor Expression

The power of expression of the communicator determines the quality of communication. To be effective, the message has to be properly developed from an idea. Barriers relating to expression result in poorly expressed messages. Lack of conceptual skills results in inadequate or incomplete shaping of the idea. Ambiguity as well as lack of clarity arises due to limited word power, improper organization of ideas and lack of coherence. If the words and thoughts are not organized properly, the communication would suffer for want of structural balance or a sense of proportion. Obviously, such poor expression of thoughts and ideas leads to incorrect, incomplete and incoherent messages. All this would eventually result in avoidable errors and seeking of further clarifications, adding to costs and delays in communication. Encoding and decoding of messages require skill to ensure clarity and precision. Poor expression is likely to occur under the following circumstances:

- When a person is ill.
- When a person is fatigued.

- When a person is under severe stress.
- When a person's thoughts are not clear and vocabulary is limited.

These circumstances must be considered even if the communication is either in oral or written form.

Faulty Transmissions

The process of transmission, essential for any communication, is susceptible to errors of omission and commission. In the organizational context, the person transmitting the message may be different from the person who conceived the idea. The intent and purpose of the message may not remain the same as it moves from the originator to the transmitter. It is also possible that the person transmitting the message may bring in his or her own bias, feelings and perceptions, which the originator of the message would not have intended. Or else, there may be occasions when the originator of the idea expects the transmitter to detail, illustrate and elucidate the idea, which the latter may fail to do.

Indifference and Lack of Interest

Indifference or lack of interest in a communication is the most important barrier in the process of communication. Organizations have to make considerable effort to ensure that indifference to organizational communication is brought down to the minimum. Communication, to be effective, presupposes that the receiver of the message is also attentive or receptive. Attentive listening in oral communication, careful reading in written communication and keen observation in non-verbal communication are a must. Indifference or lack of interest on the part of the recipient, in turn, adversely impacts the enthusiasm of the communicator. When the students are not attentive, the teacher is likely to lose interest. Similarly, if the speaker lacks expertise or credibility, the receptivity of the listener also subsides. Indifference and lack of interest creates barriers to communication, as a result of which the quality of communication suffers. The intended message is either not received at all or is incomplete and the worst will be that it is understood incorrectly.

Noise

Noise is yet another barrier which is especially relevant to verbal communication. It disturbs the flow of communication. The recipient fails to receive the oral messages sent by the communicator, as a result of which the message gets diluted. While noise certainly affects oral communication, it may also affect written communication to the extent that the person writing a letter or a report may lose his concentration and consequently his flow of thoughts may suffer.

Physical Factors

The process of communication, especially transmission of messages, makes use of numerous channels, instruments and gadgets such as telephone, microphone,

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projector, printing, photocopying, telex, fax, radio, film, cassette and of late, the floppy, compact disc and the pen drive. All these channels are quite useful if they function smoothly. On the other hand, they can act as barriers too if they fail to perform their functions efficiently. As a result, communication fails to reach the target audience. Snapping of telephone lines, non-availability of meeting rooms, failure of multimedia equipment and disturbances of power supply may lead to delays in transmitting the messages to the intended recipients.

People Related Factors

The process of communication essentially involves human beings. Like democracy, we may describe communication as of the people, for the people and by the people. Yet, people do not think, understand and interpret alike. In other words, meanings are in people. In any large organization, especially in multinational ones, there are differences among the employees in terms of language group, cultural background, rural-urban origin and hierarchical levels which in turn create psychological, linguistic and cultural barriers. Differences in hierarchical positions have their implications in terms of work structure, authority, status and relationship. In such situations, people may have bias, fear and reticence, which act as barriers to the free flow of communication. All these factors lead to different expectations among people within the organization, as to who should communicate with whom and in what manner. Apart from this, the organizational climate has its impact on communication. It is conducive when people are encouraged to speak out and there is free flow of communication. On the other hand, when the organizational climate is disturbed, and when dissenting voices are stifled, barriers emerge.

We have seen in the foregoing paragraph that there are often numerous barriers to the free flow of communication. Such barriers disturb or dilute or hinder the process of communication. These barriers may be classified as physical, psychological, linguistic and cultural. It is worth emphasizing, however, that most barriers are surmountable. It is possible to anticipate, recognize and foresee the prevalence of barriers and take appropriate corrective action. With conscious effort, it should be possible to overcome these barriers and ensure free flow of communication on an ongoing basis.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the factors that result in communication barriers?
2. Why is it said that most of the barriers to communication are surmountable?

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication calls for coordinated effort. Good communication like any other high-quality output is very much the result of hard work. Good

communication does not occur accidentally. It calls for proper planning, understanding of human behaviour, choice of physical facilities and mechanical or electronic devices and the organizational context. It is necessary to understand the essentials of good communication and work towards achieving them. Let us discuss some of the principles related to effective communication.

NOTES

Be Clear About the Purpose

The first essential for effective communication is to be clear about the purpose of communication. Every communication has an objective. It is a means to an end. One should be clear about what one wants to achieve through the process of communication. The objective of any communication is not just to receive or convey a message. The communicator has to ensure that the message reaches the receiver. Any message that is not backed by a clear and well-developed idea becomes a purposeless communication entailing wastage of time and effort. The urge to communicate should be preceded by clarity of purpose. Ask yourself what you want to achieve or accomplish by the communication: is it to impart information, express concern, enlist support, express displeasure or imbibe skills? The objective may not be one but a combination of these purposes.

Understand the Process of Communication

Another essential for effective communication is the need to understand how the process of communication works, i.e., the principles and tools of communication. To appreciate the various steps involved in communication in terms of encoding, decoding, transmission, comprehension and feedback, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the mode, channels, types, instruments, methods and barriers relating to communication and the factors affecting it. Good communicators, like good artists, use their tools effectively.

Be Clear About Your Target Audience

The intended message cannot bring about the desired result unless it reaches the right person or group of persons. The message should address a specific group. For communication to be effective, it should be properly focused. Be it a letter, a speech, a film or a presentation, it is important to keep in mind that the receiver is connected with or is relevant to the purpose of communication. Quite often, communication loses its effectiveness because it reaches an unintended audience. Good ideas and messages reaching the wrong persons will end up as an exercise in futility. The next essential step is to develop good communication skills. Effective communication presupposes the ability to communicate under varied circumstances. The skills of communication that need mastering are reading, writing, listening, speaking, body language and presentation. One must be clear about the merits and demerits of various types of communication and which of them is to be used under a given set of circumstances. Each of them is a different skill and requires a conscious effort to develop it.

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Be Well Informed

Communication quite often relates to providing information. The initiator of the communication should, therefore, be well informed about the message he or she wants to pass on. The initiator should also have the right perspective about the message and be in a position to appreciate the context in which the message is being communicated. Limited information or limited understanding by the sender naturally limits the sender's ability to communicate. This happens in an organizational context when the sender of the message is doing so based on incomplete information. People receiving the message often have their expectations about it and the person giving the message should take cognizance of it.

Plan Your Communication

In order to be effective, communication should be well planned. The messages to be conveyed, the words to be chosen, the action to be sought, the feedback to be obtained, are all the areas that need to be carefully considered. These aspects will have to be evolved properly before deciding on the right choices. While some routine messages can be communicated without advance planning, all important communication in organizations/ businesses need an organized effort. Inadequate planning can, and often does, result in ineffective communication. Good planning should take note of the target audience and pay attention to their attitudes and expectations, as well as timings.

Be Positive in Approach

Yet another requirement for effective communication is a positive approach and the right mental attitude. The communicator should have faith in the process. A communicator should develop confidence through learning and practice. He or she should take responsibility for making the communication work. The communicator should learn to overcome barriers and look for positive signals. It is necessary that a communicator should not bring any sort of biasness while communicating with any individual or a group. He or she should recognize the power of communication and strive to achieve results through the process. A communicator should not underestimate the reader or listener and develop the skill of dealing with every receiver of communication with respect and understanding. A positive approach begets a positive outcome and contributes to the success of the communication process.

Avoid Extreme Feelings

Extreme and strong feelings are not conducive to effective communication. Anger, depression and frustration adversely impact the thought process and thereby distort what is intended to be conveyed or what needs to be conveyed. A disturbed mind brings out disturbed thoughts and thus, distorts communication. While addressing important communications, and reacting to provocative remarks, it is essential to wait till the mind regains its balance and the severity of feelings subsides. It is

absolutely essential to realize that often the process of communication is irreversible. A word spoken or a letter written in a fit of anger can do considerable damage. This is particularly true in work situations, market places, organizations and business. It is better to restrain oneself rather than hurt someone.

*Making Communication
Effective*

Be Sincere

Effective communication demands a certain degree of honesty and sincerity on the part of the parties involved in the communication. It is necessary that the messages are given sincerely and truthfully. There should not be a deliberate attempt to mislead or manipulate the recipient of the message. If the receiver of the message loses faith in the communicator, the process of communication suffers in terms of credibility. Effective communication therefore, presupposes sincerity and humility.

Communication Clue

It is well recognized that magic words like, 'Please', 'Thank You', and 'I am sorry' can do wonders in communication. Using them in our everyday written and spoken communication underlines sincerity of an individual.

Be Consistent

Communication is mostly a regular process rather than a one-time affair. In personal dealings, in organizational settings and business places, communication takes place almost all the time. The parties involved in the communication quite often are the same. When communication takes place on a regular basis, it is necessary to be consistent. It is necessary not to contradict opinion of others. There may be scope for modification or correction, but not for contradiction. Further, when different methods of communication are used in conveying a particular message, contradictions have to be consciously avoided. The spoken message should be in tandem with the body language. Non-verbal communication should supplement oral messages.

Appreciate the Time Factor

In any communication, especially in business communication, time is of prime importance. Speed and timeliness contribute significantly to the effectiveness of communication. In the existing times, the value of time is well recognized. Organizations and businesses set goals which have to be achieved within a given time frame. Tasks have to be completed before the allotted deadlines. All communications concerning such goals and tasks will have to appreciate the time factor. Quite often the message that is delayed is wasted. Thus, it becomes necessary that proper amount of consideration should be given in order to decide the channel of communication. The channels selected should be such that the message is delivered well in time.

There is another dimension to the time factor in communication. The process of communication should take just the right time. Long speeches that stretch well

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beyond the allotted time, lengthy written communication and unusually long films and documents not only test the patience of the listener or reader or viewer, but also tend to lose their force and get diluted in the process. Communication should be in measured doses, since an overdose of even useful and relevant communication may be received without enthusiasm. The time and the receiver of the communication allocates for the purpose has to be borne in mind to ensure effective communication. This factor is therefore, particularly relevant in today's context of communication overload.

Use Proper Modes and Channels

We have already discussed the various types of communication. However, the method or type of communication to be used will vary from situation to situation. Effectiveness of the communication will depend on the choice of methods and instruments. There are times when written communication cannot convey as forcefully as oral communication. There are occasions when a telephone call would be more appropriate than a letter. There may be messages which are important enough to be conveyed through fax rather than by regular mail. Similarly, some messages can go by ordinary mail, some by telex and some others by fax or even e-mail. Make the right choice and repeat the message, when essential. The choice of the wrong channel may delay or dilute the message and hamper its effectiveness.

Be Cost Conscious

The process of communication quite often entails costs. There are direct and indirect costs involved in sending messages. These costs vary depending upon the method of communication and the means of transmission. Since communication in an organization is ongoing, such costs can add up to a substantial amount. The results achieved by the communicator should justify the costs incurred in the process. If not, there is no effectiveness in such communication. Organizations should, therefore, make conscious efforts to make their communication systems not only efficient, but also cost effective through proper evaluation of available options.

Obtain Feedback

Feedback is another important component of the process of communication. The person communicating the message calls for feedback to reassure him or her that the message has reached the target as envisaged.

Feedback provides valuable information relating to the time factor, quality of the message, understanding of the receiver and the action initiated. Such feedback helps in evaluating the efficacy and reliability of the types, methods and channels of communication used. Feedback helps in understanding the mistakes committed in encoding and decoding the message and losses in transmission. Mistakes, if any, can be dealt by undertaking effective corrective measures.

Avoid Communication Overload

To be effective, communication should always be in measured doses. The communicator should take care not to overdo or overstretch the communication. Communication is essentially a participative process, and if not within reasonable limits, the efficacy will suffer. Imagine receiving a thirty page newspaper every day, or sitting through a non-stop four-hour speech by a single speaker, or participating in a technical workshop from morning till late in the evening. Whatever be the merit in terms of context, the response is more than likely to follow the principle of diminishing returns. Effective communicators learn to limit their communication in line with receptivity and avoid excesses.

In the foregoing paragraphs, an attempt has been made to list out the essentials for effective communication. Since communication is essentially a two-way process, both the giver and the receiver of the message will have to conform to a well-defined principles and norms. The spirit of communication is as important as the modalities. When we talk about leadership qualities and other people-related dimensions in the organizational context, it is the role model type of communication that is being emphasized. Unless one practices what one preaches, words become hollow and communication loses its shine. Effective communication strives to pre-empt any misunderstanding and accomplish complete and clear understanding.

2.3.1 Factors Affecting Communication

Modern communication is undoubtedly a complex process involving human beings as well as instruments and gadgets. We have already examined a host of barriers, both physical and people related, which tend to adversely affect the process of communication. The process of communication is also influenced by several other factors, which both the sender and the receiver of the communication should take cognizance of. The factors that affect the process of communication are discussed in the following section.

Conceptual Clarity

The starting point of every communication, as we have seen already, is the existence of an idea or a concept. It is this concept that gets translated into a message and gets transmitted to the receiver. Conceptual clarity is thus, an important factor affecting communication. Whatever the method may be adopted, the communication must be clear about what the sender wants to convey. They have to give proper shape to their thoughts and should develop the idea meaningfully. If one is not clear about one's thoughts and ideas, the message formulation also gets affected. Communication is all about transmission of information and ideas that seek to translate thoughts into action. Improperly conceived ideas translate into poor messages. Well-conceived and well-organized thoughts make for a good beginning of the communication process. This also explains why conceptual skills are given much importance in modern day business.

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Language

The process of communication is both oral and written. People, however, speak and understand different languages. For both oral and written communication, language becomes the vehicle of thought. Therefore, the sender should ensure that the message reaches the receiver in a language that he/she can understand. As long as the sender and the receiver of the communication speak, write, read and understand the same language, there is direct communication. If not, the communicator will have to resort to translation through an intermediary. The intermediary may be an interpreter or a translator. If the translation or the interpretation is not done properly, the message received would be different from what the communicator intended.

In written communication, the literacy level of the recipient assumes significance. In verbal communication too, the depth of understanding of the spoken language makes a difference. If there are vast differences between the sender and the receiver in terms of mastery over the language and if the sender does not take cognizance of them while sending the message, communication gets affected. Every language has its own vocabulary and the quality of communication is influenced by the word power of both the parties. When the knowledge and level of understanding of the speaker/communicator and the listener/receiver varies significantly, it results in difference in the wavelength. This leads to overhead transmission, i.e., the message goes beyond the comprehension level of the receiver. An example of this is the usage of technical jargon and specialized words or phrases in addressing people who are not familiar with the subject.

Moods and Receptivity

Communication becomes purposeful when the communicator shows enthusiasm and the receiver shows receptivity. Both of them are influenced by the moods. The mood of the communicator and the mood of the listener thus, affect the process of communication. The mood of the person refers to the person's state of mind or the inclination and willingness to send or receive the communication. If any one of the parties is disinclined, the purpose of communication will not be achieved. These factors are particularly relevant when the message to be communicated is something important, somewhat complex and not of a routine nature. Moods apart, the level of fatigue has also to be reckoned with. A tired speaker, an overworked writer and a bored listener cannot do justice to the process of communication, however good their intentions may be. Smooth communicators make efforts to ensure that the conditions are right.

Timeliness

Most messages have a time value. Action can follow only if the communication reaches in time. This is pertinent to individuals as well as to business. For example, an invitation card received after the event is of no use. Similarly, an intimation or notice received after the meeting is over does not serve any purpose and also

shows the sender in poor light. Timeliness, therefore, is an important factor affecting communication. Proper choice of the mode of communication such as courier, telex, fax, telephone and e-mail assumes importance as it helps in achieving timeliness in communication.

Therefore, a host of physical, psychological, cultural and mechanical factors affect communication. They can be either facilitators or barriers to communication. These include power of expression, clarity, coherence, attentiveness, distance, voice or sound levels, relationship and hierarchy, type and quality of the modes of communication and the skill involved in using them. In an organizational context, the prevailing organizational climate and the communication policy are also important factors affecting communication. Especially when it comes to communicating with the media, several organizations and institutions specifically designate spokespersons and others are discouraged from speaking to the press or media. Any policy that encourages confidentiality, withholding of information, suppression of facts and other such controls would naturally hinder the free flow of communication.

Check Your Progress

3. State the first step required for effective communication.
4. What are the facilitators or barriers to communication in an organization?
5. Why is timeliness considered as an important factor which affects communication?

2.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The factors that result in communication barriers may arise out of authority structure, status difference, reporting relationships, culture and background of individuals.
2. The barriers to communication are surmountable because it is possible to anticipate, recognize and foresee the prevalence of barriers and take appropriate corrective action.
3. The first step required for effective communication is to be clear about the purpose of communication. Every communication has an objective. One should be clear about what one wants to achieve through the process of communication.
4. The facilitators or barriers to communication in an organization include power of expression, clarity, coherence, attentiveness, distance, voice or sound levels, relationship and hierarchy, type and quality of the modes of communication and the skill involved in using them.

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5. Timeliness considered as an important factor which affects communication because in the existing times, the value of time is well recognized. Organizations and businesses set goals which have to be achieved within a given time frame. Thus, the channels selected should be such that the message is delivered well in time.

2.5 SUMMARY

- The barriers to communication in an organizational context may arise out of authority structure, status difference, reporting relationships, culture and background of individuals.
- The barriers to communication may arise out of behavioural differences, differences in skills and understanding as well as physical factors.
- The power of expression of the communicator determines the quality of communication. To be effective, the message has to be properly developed from an idea.
- Ambiguity as well as lack of clarity arises due to limited word power, improper organization of ideas and lack of coherence.
- The process of transmission, essential for any communication, is susceptible to errors of omission and commission.
- Indifference or lack of interest in a communication is the most important barrier in the process of communication.
- Noise is yet another barrier which is especially relevant to verbal communication. It disturbs the flow of communication.
- Differences in hierarchical positions have their implications in terms of work structure, authority, status and relationship.
- On the other hand, when the organizational climate is disturbed, and when dissenting voices are stifled, barriers emerge.
- Communication barriers disturb or dilute or hinder the process of communication. These barriers may be classified as physical, psychological, linguistic and cultural.
- Effective communication calls for coordinated effort. Good communication like any other high-quality output is very much the result of hard work.
- The first essential for effective communication is to be clear about the purpose of communication.
- Another essential for effective communication is the need to understand how the process of communication works, i.e., the principles and tools of communication.
- The intended message cannot bring about the desired result unless it reaches the right person or group of persons.

- Effective communication presupposes the ability to communicate under varied circumstances.
- Communication quite often relates to providing information. The initiator of the communication should, therefore, be well informed about the message he or she wants to pass on.
- In order to be effective, communication should be well planned. The messages to be conveyed, the words to be chosen, the action to be sought, the feedback to be obtained, are all the areas that need to be carefully considered.
- Yet another requirement for effective communication is a positive approach and the right mental attitude.
- A positive approach begets a positive outcome and contributes to the success of the communication process.
- Effective communication demands a certain degree of honesty and sincerity on the part of the parties involved in the communication.
- In any communication, especially in business communication, time is of prime importance. Speed and timeliness contribute significantly to the effectiveness of communication.
- Feedback is another important component of the process of communication. The person communicating the message calls for feedback to reassure him or her that the message has reached the target as envisaged.
- Feedback helps in understanding the mistakes committed in encoding and decoding the message and losses in transmission.
- Communication is all about transmission of information and ideas that seek to translate thoughts into action.
- Communication becomes purposeful when the communicator shows enthusiasm and the receiver shows receptivity.
- In an organizational context, the prevailing organizational climate and the communication policy are also important factors affecting communication.

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2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Communication barrier:** It refers to a type of hindrance that does not allow either the receiver or the sender to understand the meaning behind the message conveyed.
- **Mood:** It refers to the person's state of mind or the inclination and willingness to send or receive the communication.
- **Linguistic barrier:** It refers to a type of communication barrier which is a result of people speaking different languages or dialects.

- **Psychological barrier:** It refers to a type of communication barrier in which a person's psychological state affects the ability to communicate properly.

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2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is it essential for a communicator to know about the purpose of communication?
2. State the main types of communication barriers.
3. How does a communication barrier emerge in an organization?
4. Why is lack of interest considered as the most important barrier of communication?
5. Write a short note on feedback as an important component of communication process.

Long Answer Questions

1. Effective communication presupposes the ability to communicate under varied circumstances. Elucidate the statement.
2. Discuss the major factors which affect the communication process.
3. Explain in detail any three barriers related to communication.
4. 'Effectiveness of the communication will depend on the choice of methods and instruments'. Analyse the statement.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - II

ORAL COMMUNICATION

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UNIT 3 ORAL COMMUNICATION

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Oral Communication: Meaning and Importance
 - 3.2.1 Importance of Oral Communication
- 3.3 Forms of Oral Communication
 - 3.3.1 Meetings
 - 3.3.2 Conferences
 - 3.3.3 Seminars, Workshops and Symposia
- 3.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is a type of communication in which interactive forums of business communication include meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia and group discussions. They facilitate two-way active deliberations and participative exchanges. They involve exchange of ideas by participants in groups. Oral communication is one such platform for organizations where employees can present their ideas conveniently. This unit will discuss about the concept of oral communication and the various forms of such communication.

Meetings and conferences have become an integral part of business life. They facilitate exchange of views and constitute as an important means of interactive communication. Conferences and meetings can be together defined as an assembly of people who come together and discuss on topics and issues of communicable interest. These platforms are so common in the existing organizational climate that it is inconceivable to think of any person associated with business organizations who has not been in a meeting or conference. Both these interactive forums facilitate face-to-face discussions that take place at various levels. They may be employer-employee meetings, employee-meetings and conferences or employee-customer meetings.

However, meetings take place more often than conferences, and as compared to conferences, only a few people are involved. While there can be a meeting which may consist of only two people. On the other hand, a conference normally connotes an assembly of a large number of employee people. Similarly, meetings

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may take place any number of times during a day or a week while conferences are normally scheduled annually or bi-annually. While meetings can be both pre-planned and impromptu, conferences are by and large planned well in advance.

While some distinction has been made between meetings and conferences as commonly followed in practice, the distinction is by no means too rigid. A meeting is defined as an assembly of people, who are there to achieve a specific objective whereas a conference is described as a meeting of any organization or association for consultation and deliberation.

Meetings and conferences, when effectively organized and conducted, can play a significant role in business communication. They facilitate exchange of information, articulation of alternative viewpoints, deliberation on specific issues, removal of misconceptions, elaboration and clarification of concepts and ideas, finalization of plans and strategies, review of performance, enlistment of support and a host of such communication needs, so essential in business or organizational context. They facilitate intensive interaction with individuals as well as groups and achieve much more than any written communication. Meetings and conferences, therefore, are to be seen as an inevitable yet useful medium of interaction between people in different businesses and organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to use the various forms of oral communication in an organization as it enhances the growth opportunities for a business.

In this unit, the concept of oral communication, the merits and demerits of oral communication have been discussed in detail. You will also learn about the major forms of oral communication.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of oral communication
- Identify the difference between a meeting and a conference
- Assess the importance of oral communication in an organization
- Explain the major forms of oral communication

3.2 ORAL COMMUNICATION: MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

Oral communication refers to the spoken word. It takes the form of sounds and words. Starting out as a struggle by the early man, oral communication has had a long journey. It has developed across different regions, cultures, countries and continents. The development of numerous languages across the world has empowered oral communication.

Oral communication plays a vital role in everyday life, both for individuals and organizations. It is indeed, the most commonly used method of communication

both at the social level and at the organizational level. Everyone makes copious use of oral communication in their transactions and interactions. For an individual, talking and speaking are a dependable form of communication which may take place within the family and in social groups. Oral communication is also extensively used within the organizations and business entities as well.

Oral communication is also referred to as verbal communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words. Oral communication takes place in many ways whether it is casual and serious, formal and informal, structured and unstructured. Oral communication encompasses conversation, monologue, dialogue, talk, speech and chat. Some of these are pre-meditated and some are not. Formal speeches are pre-planned and well structured, whereas informal ones are unstructured and often loosely worded.

Oral communication can be of many types such as structured and unstructured. It can also be formal or informal. In other words, oral communication comprises of both small talk and big talk. Small talk is informal and unstructured which means that one simply talks and such conversations are casual. On the other hand, big talk is both formal and structured. It is a serious talk with particular concern for its impact and effectiveness. It involves planning and organizing. Small talk usually refers to conversations, chats, gossiping and the like where the speakers talk without much concern for the consequences. They are casual and often described as friendly chat, idle talk, common gossip, and so on.

Figuratively speaking, when we say, 'we indulged in small talk before getting down to business', it means that we did some casual talking before discussing business. Big talk comprises of giving a speech, making a presentation, participating in a meeting, handling a negotiation, counselling, dealing with a crisis, attending an interview, making a sales talk, strengthening customer contact, discussion as a panel member, and a host of other talks which are now an integral part of the business world. Small talk may not always be aimed at achieving anything specific. It, nevertheless, helps in building rapport and paving the way for big talk. Big talk, however, is always goal oriented. Big talk is done with specific objectives. Big talk aims to inform, influence, educate, convince, promote, resolve, motivate, and attain several such objectives. Big talk, to be effective, calls for tremendous skills and persistent efforts. The world of business especially looks for those people who are good at big talk.

Direct person-to-person communication plays a crucial role in any organization, essentially in work situations, where there are employer-employee, superior-subordinate and service provider-customer interactions. Oral communication is a speedy two-way process. The message conveyed through oral communication is instantaneous. The messages can travel back and forth without any loss of time. It is possible for the receiver of the message to respond immediately to the sender, thus, making the process highly interactive. The messages between the sender and the receiver can go back and forth, with role reversals taking place, until the objective is achieved.

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NOTES

There are many businesses and groups where spoken word carries considerable weight. There are businesses where, for various reasons, not much is documented or reduced to black and white. The verbal contracts are taken as seriously as the written ones and are faithfully fulfilled. However, in organizational situations, oral instructions, appeals and messages are seldom disregarded. Oral communication, besides being interactive, can also be quite persuasive.

Another noteworthy merit of oral communication is that it can be supplemented and complemented by non-verbal communication for greater impact. When a speaker speaks, the message is conveyed not only through the spoken words, but also by body movements and actions. When a person is talking or speaking or counselling, the warmth or a person's feelings is also expressed through the body language. It is, however, worth noting that if this language is not used consciously to reinforce the verbal messages; it may lead to confusion and even contradiction.

Notwithstanding its several merits, oral communication gets constrained by various physical factors. It works well in small groups such as the counters, in classrooms, in meetings and conferences, in counselling and persuasive sessions. A major drawback of oral communication is that it cannot be erased. There is a sense of finality concerning with the spoken word. Any word uttered by the speaker travels swiftly and reaches the target. If the message is not conveyed properly, it can cause embarrassment or hurt the sentiments of the people concerned. Speakers, who are skilled in this sphere, are acutely conscious of this factor especially when they make extempore speeches. Recognizing this limitation, while resorting to any form of oral communication, one should learn to make a careful choice of words. Until the fine art of speaking with restraint is developed, it would be desirable to make the speeches and interventions, structured and well thought out rather than spontaneous and extempore. Whenever the oral communication is intended to achieve an important objective, extra care should be taken with the choice of words.

In personal as well as organizational communication, several channels or tools are regularly used. These include the telephone, the cell phone, the microphone, the radio, the amplifier and the loudspeaker. To the extent they are well chosen and well maintained, they facilitate smooth and effective flow of communication. If care is lacking while using them, they may prove to be a hindrance rather than an aid.

Table 3.1 Merits and Demerits of Oral Communication

Merits	Demerits
1. It can be readily used.	1. It is not very effective when the target group is spread out.
2. It is instantaneous.	2. It is constrained by language, accent and vocabulary.
3. It can be persuasive.	3. It is also constrained by noise and other physical barriers.
4. It is cost effective.	4. It is not normally recorded or documented.
5. It facilitates effective person-to-person exchange.	5. It does not permit repeated reference.
6. It works very well in small groups.	6. It cannot be erased.
7. It can be supplemented by non-verbal messages.	7. It is often dependent on memory.

3.2.1 Importance of Oral Communication

It is important that whether in professional or personal sphere, a good communicator should be clear regarding the objective of his or her discussion. It requires planning and a good presentation in order to ensure that the message is well-planned and structured. As we have already discussed, the fact that oral communication can instantly boost the growth of the company in the long run. It therefore, becomes necessary that special emphasis should be given so that the message is clearly conveyed and the other party is immediately interested to work with you or your organization.

If the employee does not convey the message properly, the message may get distorted which may further hamper the course of discussion. A good communicator is a person who can present his or her idea in the form of words that paves a way for a bright future and as well as for the organization. Oral communication play a major factor in the business communication, it is like a starting point for an organization which can yield either a profit or loss. Thus, special emphasis should be given on improving the skills of the employees so that their ideas can be given a good voice and shape.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the types of oral communication?
2. List any three merits of oral communication.

3.3 FORMS OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral communication is a type of communication in which the message is conveyed verbally. We have already discussed in detail the concept of oral communication and its importance in an organization. It can be seen as a prerequisite which enhances the business of an organization.

Thus, an organization should give due importance to such form of communication. It can take place either in forms of meetings, conferences, video calls, seminars and workshops and so on. The major forms of oral communication are discussed in detail in the following section.

3.3.1 Meetings

Meetings are the most popular method of interactive communication. They facilitate direct, face-to-face communication and are essential at various levels in all organizations. If more than two people are involved in a conversation, it takes a form of meeting, structured or otherwise. They serve the valuable objective of facilitating exchange of information, fostering of team spirit and commitment to common goals and objectives. More importantly, they help in elaborating ideas, clarifying concepts and clearing confusion, if any, created on account of ambiguous and incomplete verbal or written messages. Misunderstandings arising from unclear

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memos, circulars, directives and targets can be cleared through meetings with the people concerned.

Meetings are of wide variety and serve numerous objectives. In the everyday business world, meetings are conducted for the following purposes:

- Sharing, exchanging and evaluating information
- Discussing complex issues and solving problems
- Obtaining periodical updates for weekly, monthly, quarterly meetings
- Deliberating on matters of concern and taking decisions
- Bringing together different sections and resolving conflicts
- Describing goals and obtaining commitments
- Inspiring and motivating people to achieve common objectives

Thus, meetings may range from routine information-sharing meetings to the decision making and conflict resolution types.

With the advent of technology, meetings in the corporate world are not necessarily across-the-table face to face meetings. While such meetings are indeed quite ubiquitous and commonplace, we also have meetings in which people are not necessarily in one room. We may have telephone meetings and meetings through teleconferencing and video conferencing. These are appropriate when participants in the meetings are spread across different offices and locations.

There are also online meetings conducted with the use of information technology. With the help of computers and the Internet, the users indulge in their own private conversation through online meetings; these users exchange typed messages in real time. They can hold chat sessions with the help of in-house computer networks. Online meetings are also held by way of exchanging instant messages. This way, the exchanges can be done easily and quickly.

Meetings of marketing executives with prospective customers while launching a new product or service help in clearly bringing out the significant features of the product and clarifying finer points. Similarly, meetings with the computer or electronic data processing (EDP) personnel facilitate detailed and effective planning of connectivity and networking. These are just two examples of the ways in which meetings can be of use to serve a vital communication need in an organization. In fact, on a regular basis, there can be customer meets, supplier meets, investor meets, and dealer meets, managers' meets, staff meetings, association meetings, business meets and review meets.

Like their Western counterparts, Indian executives too, in most of the organizations, spend a large part of their working day in company meetings. In the United States, it is pertinent to note, decisions are made by groups of managers or executives rather than by individual top management functionaries. Similarly, in India too, we have various committees in the organizations like the Purchase Committee, Audit Committee, Executive Committee, Management Committee,

Promotions Committee, Systems Committee, Credit Committee, Recovery Committee and Legal Committee which take decisions, and that is why it becomes necessary to organize so many meetings.

Given the ubiquitous, or present everywhere, nature of meetings in the world of business, the ability to plan, organize and conduct meetings effectively becomes a valuable asset for the business communicator. Anyone who becomes adept at conducting meetings purposefully is bound to be rewarded, recognized and respected in business organizations and institutions.

FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD

Meeting at What Cost?

A study conducted by the American management consultants, Booz, Allen and Hamilton, as reported in the press several years ago, concluded that 299 managers, at an average salary of \$50,000 a year, spent half their time in meetings. And that a large proportion of this time was wasted on useless discussions, political manoeuvring and personal conflicts. Based on their study, the consultants advised organizations not to call a meeting that costs \$10,000 for a decision that is worth \$1,000.

While meetings, which are effective, contribute to decision making and result in positive outcomes, ill-conceived and indifferently conducted meetings entail enormous waste of time, effort and resources. They may even lead to chaos and confusion. It would, therefore, be imperative to give attention to certain details while convening meetings. The preparation for an effective meeting starts well in advance and there is much that needs to be attended to on the day of the meeting, during the meeting and thereafter, till the minutes are drawn up and sent.

3.3.2 Conferences

As we have observed earlier, it is imprudent to draw a rigid line of distinction between meetings and conferences. Organizations do have 'conference halls' where meetings take place regularly.

Conferences, as well as meetings, also take place in hotels and other large venues. The word 'conference' is used to describe meetings of a larger scale. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a conference is a large official meeting which usually lasts for a few days, at which people with same work or interest come together to discuss their views. One usually refers to annual conference or bi-annual conference, zonal or regional conference or two-day conference, suggesting longer duration and larger participation. Business plan conferences are regularly held in business organizations. Several topics of relevance are discussed in such type of conferences. Background papers and posers and audio-visual presentations are prepared in advance to facilitate meaningful deliberations. Conferences, like meetings, are a means of direct, face-to-face interactive communication. The advent of innovative methods like teleconferencing

NOTES

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and video conferencing has facilitated interactive communication between participants, without necessitating physical presence of all concerned at one venue.

The type of preparations and attention for details in relation to the conferences are, by and large, the same as those of meetings. Sometimes, the conferences may also have the features of a function, in which case, the presence of a chief guest, introduction of the speaker or the dignitary, invocation, lighting of the lamp, presentation of bouquets, distribution of brochures and other details become relevant. The checklist for meetings suggested earlier will have to be suitably modified to plan for and accommodate all details. In organizing any such events, it would be desirable to choose the word that fits the occasion. For example, when senior functionaries participate, the programme may be referred to as a 'seminar' or a 'conference' rather than a training programme. We also normally come across words like 'summit' to describe a meeting of the heads of the states and 'retreat' to describe temporary retirement from serious business meetings. Viewed in that context, meeting, meet, conference, workshop, seminar and study circle are, by their nature, platforms facilitating interactive communication and the most appropriate term may have to be used.

3.3.3 Seminars, Workshops and Symposia

Seminars, workshops and symposia are common and popular means of interactive form in modern day business world. These forms if used effectively can play a vital role in the dissemination of knowledge and build-up of skills. They facilitate intense deliberations through participation and interaction in an organized manner.

Seminars relate to any meeting set up for the discussion of one or more topics of interest to groups of persons. Seminars may cover small or big groups and may be held in classrooms or meeting halls or in large auditoriums. They may be organized by institutes of learning or business organizations or chambers of commerce and the like. Seminars may be for a day or longer, ranging from three to five days. Seminars on banking and finance, information technology, agriculture and food processing and business management are just a few examples of interactive business communication.

The main objective of a seminar is to bring together a group of interested people on a common platform for facilitating exchange of views, ideas and developments relating to specific topics. Seminars are generally organized around a particular theme and may include several related topics. They normally include an introductory session, a keynote address, different sessions, panel discussions and concluding sessions. While the specialist speakers and experts make their presentations, the participants interact and benefit from the question-and-answer sessions. Considering that substantial time, effort and resources are involved in organizing seminars, the seminar organizers, coordinators, resource persons and participants should collectively endeavour to make the deliberations focused and worthwhile.

Workshops are of a similar nature and relate to a course of study or work, especially of an experimental or creative kind. Workshops bring together a group of people working on a particular project or area of interest. Workshops are highly participative in nature as they usually involve hands-on participation. Workshops are conducted in small groups and where attention is given to every participant. Such workshops help in making learning an easy process. Some examples of a workshop could be theatre workshop, carpentry workshop, and horticulture workshop and so on. Workshops normally involve demonstrations and how-to-do tips. Depending upon the background of participants, workshops may be basic or advanced. It is expected that people who attend such workshops learn basic skills on some specific activities.

Symposia refer to the plural of symposium. A symposium is also a conference organized to cover a particular subject in detail, especially relating to an academic subject. One can think of a symposium on renewable energy or distance learning or Vedic mathematics and so on. It is another valuable means of disseminating knowledge.

All these interactive methods of communication enhance the skill of the participants. The participants emerge wiser and better informed about the subjects discussed. Lack of adequate planning, absence of well-informed specialists or experts and not providing adequate opportunities to raise questions and get the doubts clarified will undermine the effectiveness of such events. Therefore, efforts should be made to make events like these worthwhile so that employees can perform better in the future.

Check Your Progress

3. Define the term 'symposium.'
4. State the main objective of a seminar.
5. Why are workshops highly participative in nature?

3.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Oral communication can be of many types such as structured and unstructured. It can also be formal or informal.
2. The following are the three merits of oral communication:
 - a) It can be persuasive.
 - b) It is cost effective.
 - c) It works very well in small groups.

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3. A symposium can be defined as a conference which is organized to cover a particular subject in detail, especially relating to an academic subject. It is considered as a valuable mean of disseminating knowledge.
4. The main objective of a seminar is to bring together a group of interested people on a common platform for facilitating exchange of views, ideas and developments relating to specific topics.
5. Workshops are highly participative in nature as they usually involve hands-on participation. Workshops are conducted in small groups and where attention is given to every participant. Such workshops help in making learning an easy process.

3.5 SUMMARY

- Oral communication plays a vital role in everyday life, both for individuals and organizations. It is indeed, the most commonly used method of communication both at the social level and at the organizational level.
- Oral communication is also referred to as verbal communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words.
- Oral communication can be of many types such as structured and unstructured. It can also be formal or informal.
- Small talk may not always be aimed at achieving anything specific. It, nevertheless, helps in building rapport and paving the way for big talk.
- Big talk is done with specific objectives. Big talk aims to inform, influence, educate, convince, promote, resolve, motivate, and attain several such objectives.
- Direct person-to-person communication plays a crucial role in any organization, essentially in work situations, where there are employer-employee, superior-subordinate and service provider-customer interactions.
- Another noteworthy merit of oral communication is that it can be supplemented and complemented by non-verbal communication for greater impact.
- Whenever the oral communication is intended to achieve an important objective, extra care should be taken with the choice of words.
- It is important that whether in professional or personal sphere, a good communicator should be clear regarding the objective of his or her discussion.
- If the employee does not convey the message properly, the message may get distorted which may further hamper the course of discussion.
- Oral communication can take place either in forms of meetings, conferences, video calls, seminars and workshops and so on.

- Meetings are the most popular method of interactive communication. They facilitate direct, face-to-face communication and are essential at various levels in all organizations.
- Meetings serve the valuable objective of facilitating exchange of information, fostering of team spirit and commitment to common goals and objectives.
- Misunderstandings arising from unclear memos, circulars, directives and targets can be cleared through meetings with the people concerned.
- With the help of computers and the Internet, the users indulge in their own private conversation through online meetings; these users exchange typed messages in real time.
- While meetings, which are effective, contribute to decision making and result in positive outcomes, ill-conceived and indifferently conducted meetings entail enormous waste of time, effort and resources.
- According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a conference is a large official meeting, usually lasting for a few days, at which people with same work or interest come together to discuss their views.
- Conferences, like meetings, are a means of direct, face-to-face interactive communication.
- Seminars, workshops and symposia are common and popular means of interactive form in modern day business world.
- Seminars relate to any meeting set up for the discussion of one or more topics of interest to groups of persons.
- The main objective of a seminar is to bring together a group of interested people on a common platform for facilitating exchange of views, ideas and developments relating to specific topics.
- Workshops are of a similar nature and relate to a course of study or work, especially of an experimental or creative kind.
- Symposia refer to the plural of symposium. A symposium is also a conference organized to cover a particular subject in detail, especially relating to an academic subject.
- All the forms of oral communication are interactive methods of communication which enhance the skill of the participants. The participants emerge wiser and better informed about the subjects discussed.

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3.6 KEY WORDS

- **Oral communication:** It refers to a form of communication which takes place between individuals with the help of words.
- **Meeting:** It is defined as an assembly of people who come together to achieve a common objective.

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- **Conference:** It is defined as a large official meeting which usually lasts for a few days and people with same work or interest come together to discuss their views.
- **Seminars:** It is defined as any meeting which is set up for the discussion of one or more topics of interest to groups of persons.

3.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the various modes of online meetings?
2. Differentiate between meetings and conferences.
3. How is oral communication a persuasive form of communication?
4. List the demerits of oral communication.
5. How does a meeting lead to chaos and confusion in an organization?
6. State the main objective of a meeting.

Long Answer Questions

1. 'Conferences, like meetings, are a means of direct, face-to-face interactive communication'. Explain the statement.
2. Discuss the major forms of oral communication.
3. Assess the importance of oral communication in the existing business environment.
4. Why are meetings conducted in an organization? Enlist its purposes in detail.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4 INTONATION

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Meaning, Function and Types of Intonation
- 4.3 Types of Speeches
 - 4.3.1 Preparation of Speech
- 4.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Readings

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is by far, the most common method of communication in use. Ever since man learnt the use of languages, oral communication has developed myriad forms. Talking, conversation, speaking, conversations over phone, interviews, discussions and presentations are all forms of active and direct communication. Business-related success as well as career-related progression of individuals is influenced substantially by oral communication skills. Good speakers, more often than not, carry the day. Sound oral communication skills are imperative for becoming effective leaders. The world of business relies much more on oral communication rather than on written communication. The unit covers the concept of intonation which explains the linguistic details of a language and thus, helps a speaker to say his or her speech in the best possible way.

Speaking with colleagues, business associates, customers, superiors, prospects and various other sections of public in an unambiguous and convincing manner is indeed a fine skill. Spokespersons, good negotiators, people with persuasive skills, counsellors, people with good presentation skills and those who have mastered the art of public speaking command great value and are much sought after in a variety of business organizations and institutions. In the entertainment industry in particular, there is a growing demand for accomplished speakers as anchors, presenters, panellists, moderators, radio jockeys, compères and masters of ceremonies (MCs). There are even professional speakers who are often in great demand. The main parts of a speech have been discussed in-depth in the unit so that the speaker can prepare a speech which focuses on each part accurately.

Research carried out decades ago has shown that an average person spends about 30 per cent of his or her time speaking and about 45 per cent of his or her time listening. These findings relate to the period prior to the onslaught of television

NOTES

and the advent of computers in a big way. The time spent would have undergone some change in the recent years. Nevertheless, the importance of spoken communication, both at the personal level and at the professional level, can hardly be underestimated. Good speaking and good listening are both vital aspects of effective verbal communication. As members of the family, society, community and business, men and women spend much of their time in oral communication. Thus, what they need to do, they must learn to do well as much of our time is spent on communicating our thoughts and ideas.

Communication Clue

Public speaking, like other areas of business communication, relates to communicating with a purpose. As you address your audience, you want to reach out to them with a certain message. You want to inform them, motivate them, persuade them, reassure them, or remind them. You want your audience to know, feel, think, and act in response to your speech. Good speakers know how to achieve what they want to achieve.

The spoken word has assumed such great significance that people who learn the art of saying the right thing at the right time get ahead in life. In the context of management, the art of managing the mouth carries a premium. Speaking only when required, to the extent required, refraining from speaking when the situation so demands and speaking without revealing too much are aspects of managing. Good speakers and orators who can win over and mesmerize the audience with their mastery over the language, depth of the subject, power of expression, fluency and style are in great demand in seminars, conferences, workshops, negotiations, brainstorming sessions, presentations and other interactive forums. A speaker should make a speech which is well prepared and leaves a huge impact on the listeners. The points to be considered while preparing a speech have been highlighted in the unit.

In this unit, the meaning and functions of intonation have been explained in detail. The unit will also discuss the main types of speeches and how a speaker should effectively make use of his or her time while reciting a speech so that the message is conveyed in a simple manner to the target audience.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the types and functions of intonation
- Analyse the four tone pitch movements
- Discuss the main types of speeches
- Identify the main parts of a theme speech
- Explain the procedure related to preparation of a speech

4.2 MEANING, FUNCTION AND TYPES OF INTONATION

Intonation refers to the rise and fall of the voice which takes place while speaking. In the following section, we will discuss the meaning, function and types of intonation in detail.

Voiceless sounds: When the vocal cords are spread apart, the air from the lungs passes between them unimpeded, the sounds produced are described as voiceless sounds. Examples are sounds in English – sit, **s**heet, and fever, **t**hink.

Voiced sounds: When the vocal cords are loosely held together, the air passes through it, makes the vocal sound called vibrate. The sounds created in this manner are called voiced sounds. For example, the consonantal sounds in English such as veil, **t**hese, zoo, **m**e, nose are all voiced sounds.

During the course of our speech, the spoken sounds occur together one after the other to produce meaning in terms of what the individual words (morphs) mean. They also create meaning by the music that is created in the tone in which we utter those words. Based on the vibration of the vocal cords, a certain musical rhythm and note is created. This determines the pitch of our voice. The higher the frequency of vibration, the higher is the pitch of the voice; and the lower the frequency, the lower is the pitch.

One must have noticed that the pitch of our voice is not constant as we speak. There is modulation, in the sense that the pitch keeps changing. In every kind of conversation (barring a few, such as the prayers in church which is in a monotone) there is always the modulation of voice. According to a renowned author Charles Kreidler (1989), English utterances are seldom spoken in monotones. For one, native English speakers produce melodies of varying kinds, with the rising and falling voice. Such melodies are technically called intonation. These patterns of variation are called tones. These tones bring about a change of meaning in an utterance or a change of meaning in a word. Languages in which tones can bring about a change in the meaning of an utterance or word are known as intonation languages.

Many phonologists believe that another important component of intonation is the phenomenon called prominence. Speakers make some syllables more noticeable than others. Such action is usually accomplished by pronouncing syllables louder and longer, assigning them a different pitch, or articulating their phonemes—especially the vowels—more distinctly. Prominence is also referred to as emphasis, focus, main stress, nucleus, or tonic accent. It is equally important to stress that pitch level, pitch movement and prominence are all relative values.

Intonational Functions

Intonational choices made by speakers carry linguistic information and perform a variety of functions. Though researchers of intonation suggest various functions of

NOTES

intonation, the common practice is to Michael Halliday, an English linguistics' model of three functions of intonation as a general practice. These three functions have been discussed in the following section.

NOTES

i. Grammatical intonation

Grammatical intonation helps to identify the grammatical structure in speech. This is similar to the role of punctuation in writing. Grammatical intonation also helps us in identifying clause and sentence units and contrasts questions/statements. According to Halliday, grammatical intonation relates to the grammatical mood (question/statement, etc.) as well as the modality (possibility, validity, etc.). Another linguistic and phonetician, Roach believes, 'Grammatical intonation helps language speakers and learners to recognize the grammar and syntactic structures, e.g., boundaries between phrases, clauses and sentences. It also facilitates our knowledge of the differences between questions and statements as well as the intricacies of grammatical subordination.'

ii. Discourse or informational intonation

Discourse or information entails the kind of response which is to be expected. In normal communication, intonation is used at the place of syntax (sentence). As people communicate primarily through language, intonation should be studied at the discourse level. Recent phonological research defines 'intonation' as a speaker's way of organizing and relating meanings throughout the discourse. More significantly, this approach interprets various meanings based on the choices of the speaker. Almost all intonational choices are tied to the context in which they occur. In contrast to the linguistic universality of grammar, it is impossible in the discourse approach to isolate a speech from its context and, hence, make reasonable generalizations about intonational meaning. We can say that discourse intonation provides a tool for the four options associated with tone units: prominence, tone, key and termination. Each one adds a different type of information.

- Prominence is a syllable on which there is a major pitch movement.
- Tone pitch movements are distinguished by their particular direction: falling, rising, fall-rise, rise-fall.
- Key is the relative pitch level chosen by speakers for each tone unit. Three choices are proposed: low, middle and high.
- Termination is a low, middle or high pitch level choice made by speakers at the beginning or end of a tonal unit.

Gradually, there is a shift in focus towards adopting the discourse view of intonation, particularly in teaching new language learners. According to an author, Martin Hewings (1995) the discourse view of intonation tends to view speech as 'a purpose-driven activity where speakers and hearers cooperate to reach the desired goal of shared understanding'. It also refers

to the common ground that exists between speaker and hearer as the area in which their world views converge.

Although discourse intonation has some difficulties in case of pedagogical application and its adapted and simplified version for teaching purposes, it seems to be most viable and convincing of all intonational functions available at the moment. Moreover, it is a well-developed model which provides us with a strong systematic framework within which teachers and students can study intonation.

NOTES

iii. Attitudinal intonation

We use intonation as a chief means of expressing our attitude, emotions and thoughts. The researchers of intonation point out those patterns with a narrow range of frequency variations. These are the most unpleasant to our ears, while smooth changes in one direction are generally less pleasant. They also point out differences in the judgements according to the grammatical category of the sentence. Statements could be pleasant with either a final rise or fall while questions and commands were pleasant only with a final rise (Fry, 1974). Citing descriptions from *Nine Ways of Saying Yes* by Crystal and Allen, it can be pointed out that the problems of the attitudinal meaning of tone are as follows:

- The imprecision of the descriptions which means that it is difficult to be precise about emotional nuances. For example, it is difficult to differentiate the meanings of the words such as ‘detached, unemotional statement of fact’ and ‘routine, uncommitted comment; detached and unexcited.’
- It results in the form where any tone can mean anything, depending on the context. This is a serious problem for a systematic description.
- The meaning of an intonation choice may depend on associated gestures or facial expressions.

In fact, almost any emotion can be accompanied by any tone. Without lexical or contextual information or other vocal clues, it becomes almost impossible to reliably label a tone as displaying a particular attitude or emotion. Generally speaking, discussions of the function of intonation in English often centre on the relation between intonation and attitudes. In fact, the main function of intonation is analyzed by many phonologists as conveying attitudes. Many other factors, such as loudness, quality of voice, speed of delivery and facial and bodily gestures also contribute significantly to the conveying of attitude. The result of all this is that we cannot really say anything constructive about intonation and attitude.

Now, let us get into some discussion on the four tone pitch movements which are falling tone, rising tone, falling–rising tone and rising–falling tone to understand how they work in our conversation in day–to–day language. These have been highlighted in the following section.

Falling tone

The following types of sentences are generally uttered with a falling tone:

Table 4.1

Statements (matter of fact, complete and assertive)	He is always punctual
Commands	Shut the door
Invitations	Do come in and sit down
Exclamations	What a beautiful painting
Wh Questions	Where has he gone?
Tag Questions	She is rather late, isn't she?

NOTES**Rising tone**

The following types of sentences are generally uttered with a rising tone:

Table 4.2

Yes or no type polarity questions	Are they coming for dinner
Alternative questions	Do you like tea or coffee?
Requests	Come here for a moment
Non-terminal tone unit	As soon as he arrives ----- I will let you know
Non-polarity type or Wh questions expressing politeness, friendliness, personal interest	How's your father?
Repetition question	Ram told me about it. Who told you?
Commands intended to sound like request	Shut the door.
Statement intended to be questions	He's not coming.

Falling–Rising tone

The following types of sentences are generally uttered with a falling–rising tone:

Table 4.3

One which picks out part of the foregoing context	(I thought you both spoke Spanish) My brother does.
Statement which shows partial agreement and a kind of reservation on part of the speaker.	She hasn't done very well (you must admit).
Statement intended to be a warning reproach or to express concern	You must not come late (warning).
Statement intended to be a correction of the information received.	(He speaks six languages). He speaks four.
Non-terminal tone-group.	Generally we go out on Saturdays.
Imperative meant to be a pleading request	Do complete this by tomorrow.

Rising–falling tone

The following types of sentences are generally uttered with a rising– falling tone:

Table 4.4

Statements showing enthusiastic agreement	(Do you like this colour?) Yes.
Exclamations expressing sarcasm, irony	Good Morning (Ironical)
Questions showing suspicion, indignation, incredulity or mockery.	What has he been up to? (suspicious)

NOTES

It is advantageous to learn the intonation of any language as it performs three functions. These are as follows:

- Present recorded utterances in the target language which learners imitate
- Evaluate a learner's response with regard to pitch, volume and tempo
- Display a learner's degree of deviation from agreed-on settings

Check Your Progress

1. What is the function of a tone in any language?
2. State an important use of grammatical intonation.
3. What are the four tone pitch movements of a language?

4.3 TYPES OF SPEECHES

In any business environment, speeches are of wide variety. They could be formal or informal, private or public, long or short and prepared or extempore. Over a period of time, as one grows up in the organizational hierarchy, people will be required to make all types of speeches. Good speakers learn to deliver speeches for all occasions in a manner appropriate to each of them. This is how one can earn the mark of a versatile speaker. They learn how to speak appropriately in meetings, committees, seminars, press conferences, interviews and a host of such situations. Depending upon the occasion, the content, style, delivery and readiness assume relevance. Some occasions call for elaborate and thorough preparation. These occasions are the ones where the speech should be rich in content. There are other occasions where more than the content, confidence and presence of mind come in handy. Let us look at some of the very common kinds.

NOTES

Welcome or Introductory Speech

In Welcome or Introductory speeches, the speaker's job would be to give a good start to the event, be it a meeting or a function or a seminar. The speaker should speak with enthusiasm and make sure to welcome the dignitaries, speakers and participants in proper order. Welcoming or introduction has to be done as per the protocol or a formal order reflecting the importance of the people present. Introductions should be brief and the names should be pronounced properly. Sometimes, the listed speakers may fail to turn up and someone else may deputize for them. The speaker welcoming the guests should take care to ascertain who has come and who has not. The speaker should try to keep the welcome speech brief. The speaker should briefly mention the purpose and refrain from covering the subject which would be covered by the subsequent speakers. If such a type of speech is done properly, it adds value to the occasion and arouses a sense of expectancy among the participants. At the same time, lengthy and faulty speeches mar the occasion and give it a bad start.

Expert Speak: Establish a Friendly Atmosphere

Dale Carnegie, author of 'How to Win Friends and Influence People' makes the following points on introducing a speaker.

An introduction ought to 'sell' both the topic and the speaker to the audience and establish a friendly atmosphere, and it should do these things in the briefest amount of time possible. In making your introduction, manner is quite as important as matter. Try to be friendly; instead of saying how happy you are, be genuinely pleasant making your talk.

(Source: Write Better Speak Better, Reader's Digest, The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. 1985)

When you are giving a Welcome or Introductory speech, the following points should be kept in mind:

- The person giving a welcome speech set the tone for the subsequent events. One should thus, speak with enthusiasm and warmth.
- If you are not known to the audience, introduce yourself before you welcome and introduce others.
- Clearly identify, welcome and introduce the speakers/guests in proper order. Protocol and the status and stature of dignitaries has to be given due importance.
- Be clear about the names, initials and so on. Any kind of mis-pronouncements is to be avoided.
- One should thank or express happiness on the fact that the speakers/guests have accepted the invite and have come over.
- Mention the significance of the event or topics to be discussed and the relevance of the speakers/guests.

- Tell the speaker/guest about the nature and keenness of the audience.
- Briefly mention the topic, the speaker will address, without intruding or overstepping.
- Mention how the speaker is well qualified and well placed to speak on the subject.
- In order to do justice to your job, collect the relevant details about the topics, speakers and guests and so on in advance and cross-check correctness of the same.
- While welcoming and introducing speakers, care should be given so as to avoid mistakes and be accurate, spontaneous and enthusiastic.
- The speaker should keep his/her address short and balanced. Refrain from praising too much and using inappropriate adjectives.

NOTES

Expert Speak: **The Long and Short of It**

According to an anecdote published in 1918 Woodrow Wilson was asked about the amount of time he spent preparing speeches, and his response was illuminating:

“That depends on the length of the speech,” answered the President. “If it is a ten- minute speech it takes me all of two weeks to prepare it; if it is a half-hour speech it takes me a week; if I can talk as long as I want to it requires no preparation at all. I am ready now.”

(Source: quoteinvestigator.com/2012/04/28/shorter-letter)

Vote of Thanks

Vote of Thanks is the last speech in any event or functions. It winds up the deliberations. It should have a tone of sincerity and should not appear to be a mere formality. While all important speakers and those who have contributed to the event or deliberations should be mentioned, however, reading out a long and boring list should be avoided. Although vote of thanks speeches appear to be routine, good speakers know how to make them appealing.

It is necessary that proper order should be followed and important persons should not be left out, prompting the organizers to send chits reminding the speaker about names omitted. One should strictly avoid clichés like ‘last but not the least’ and ‘all those who have directly or indirectly contributed to the programme’ and so on.

Theme or Key Note Speeches

Theme speeches and key note addresses are the main speeches of the occasion. They are relatively long speeches with a reasonably long time allotted to them. The main purpose of theme speech or keynote address is to present the main theme, cover the subject in its totality and provide a good insight into the subjects chosen. The speakers assigned with this speech are normally senior and seasoned speakers who can deal with the subject with some expertise. These speeches are carried

NOTES

out with due preparation and advance notice. The audience comes with a high level of expectancy and they are eager to get themselves enriched on the subject. Speakers for theme address and key note address are chosen with due consideration and keeping in view their ability to do justice to the topic and add value to the deliberations.

A theme speech should follow the standard format of a good speech and should include all the three parts, viz., introduction, body and conclusion. These parts have been elaborated in the following section.

- i. Introduction:** Coming soon after the greeting, introduction or opening generally consists of telling your listeners what you are going to tell them during the course of your address. You introduce the audience to the topic of your presentation. You will tell them what you are going to cover and how you are going to cover the topic. Since the first words spoken by any speaker are heard very attentively by the listeners, the speaker makes them appealing. What the speaker says by way of introduction will determine the attentiveness of the listeners. The speaker must make every effort to gain attention, arouse curiosity and keep the opening interesting.
- ii. The Body:** The body of any speech consists of the essence of the topic or subject chosen. It consists of all the main points that the speaker wants to convey on the subject. The matter is presented logically and sequentially. The speaker may consult his or her notes and bring out all the facts and figures. The speaker refers to the supporting material and provides illustrations and examples in support of the points made. The speaker takes care to make the points clear and coherent. The speaker follows the response of the audience to make sure that the message is comprehended. More than two-thirds of the time spent in the speech is allotted to the body of the speech. The main points are emphasized and highlighted so that the audience understands the message as intended.
- iii. Conclusion:** The conclusion relates to the closing or the winding up of the speech. The main points are briefly reiterated. Good speakers should make the conclusion stand out. To the extent possible, one should try to close the speech with an appealing end. He or she should endeavour to conclude on a humorous note, use quotations or words that are strong and forceful. The speaker should make sure that he or she has conveyed the message loud and clear. The closing should be such as to leave behind a positive impression on the listeners. Equally important is the fact that the speech should be concluded within the allotted time and should not be prolonged and overstretched.

4.3.1 Preparation of Speech

Making a formal speech is indeed a serious business. It calls for an organized effort. Any faux pas or embarrassing blunder in public speaking will adversely

impact the credibility or standing of not only the individual but also the institution he or she represents. Good speeches do not happen by accident. Although good speakers make their speeches look effortless, much effort actually goes into it. There are two vital aspects contributing to every good speech which are preparation and delivery. Both of them are equally important. In the absence of adequate preparation, delivery cannot be effective. At the same time, however good the preparation may be, unless the speech is delivered effectively, the transmission of the message gets disrupted. Preparation provides the content of the speech and brings in confidence. A good preparation is a precondition for an effective delivery.

Communication in business as we have noted already is goal-oriented. That is why speeches and presentations are always done with a purpose. When you stand or sit in front of an audience, you have an objective or a goal in mind. You may want them to feel, think, act, agree, know and respond. The purpose should be built into your speech, and it assumes significance both at the preparation stage and also when you deliver it.

Preparing a speech involves three steps, viz., audience analysis, collection of relevant material and organizing the delivery. Let us discuss each one of these at some length.

Audience Analysis

Audience analysis constitutes the very essence of any good speech. Every speech has two parties—the speaker and the audience. Whatever be the merit of the speaker, no speech can be termed effective unless the audience receives the message as intended. Audience can be as varied as the speakers. In terms of level of knowledge, ability to understand, comprehension of words and phrases, receptivity, proficiency of language and a host of such relevant factors, there could be very significant variations among the audience groups or listeners. A good speaker should be conscious or aware of such differences and organize his or her speeches to suit the audience he or she would be addressing.

Every group of people or every audience that a speaker addresses is different. They would have different personalities, cultural and educational backgrounds, and levels of understanding, expectations and ability to process the information. The core message to be delivered and the information to be provided may not be so different from each other. Yet, the method of delivery and the kind of anecdotes, illustrations and examples need to be tailored to suit the receptivity of the group. A one-suit-fits-all approach may not be effective and this is where the audience analysis assumes relevance.

As Swami Chinmayananda said, ‘The speaker has to adjust his idea delivery and his presentation to suit the type of the audience he is addressing.’ For this, the speaker should make efforts to know about the audience—their interests, their ability to comprehend, their exposure to the topic, their word power or vocabulary and their receptivity. All these should be kept in view while structuring and delivering the speech.

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A good speaker is one who realizes that, by and large, all audiences are good. Good speakers like their audience and the audience reciprocates by liking them. There could be bad speakers and bad speeches, but seldom bad audiences.

Collection of Material

We have already observed that in any speech content counts. Speakers speak on the chosen topic. All relevant facts and figures should be covered in the speech. The level of knowledge of the speaker concerning the topic to be covered assumes importance. The speaker should do the necessary research and access the facts and figures to be used in the speech. The speaker should take care to access the required data from appropriate sources. For any speaker, knowledge is power and it provides confidence. A well-informed speaker gets emboldened to face any kind of audience. Sometimes, when the audience is hostile, they deliberately test the knowledge of the speaker. When the speaker takes extra care to have all the facts and figures at his command, he can face the audience on a confident note.

Organizing the Delivery

Having done the audience analysis and after collecting the relevant facts and figures, the speaker has to take time to organize the delivery. The contents of the speech will have to be delivered in a manner that reaches the audience. The delivery has to be clear, cogent, sequential and tailored to suit the audience and the occasion.

Another very important aspect to be kept in view while organizing the delivery is time management. Every speaker is normally allotted a certain time. In today's business environment time is precious. The speaker should be aware that it is not only his or her time that is involved, but also that of the audience. Maybe, there are other speakers scheduled to speak after his or her speech. If the speaker extends beyond the allotted time, he or she will be encroaching into someone else's time. At the same time, if the speaker is allotted sixty minutes, and the speech is concluded within thirty or forty minutes, there will be a gap left which will have to be covered.

Organizing the delivery of a speech involves preparing appropriately to speak through the allotted time. The speaker should ascertain in advance the time he or she can take for delivering the speech. Organizing the delivery also involves preparing the notes or talking points and keeping handy the material which the speaker proposes to quote during the speech. Any material to be used as reference during the speech will have to be kept in proper order to enable ready reference.

Human beings, as we have noted in the very beginning, are not only rational beings, but are also emotional beings. They not only analyse through their heads, but also feel through their hearts. Good speakers, therefore, know when to make a rational appeal and also when to make an appeal to the emotion. Effective communicators know how to use both the logos and pathos during a speech.

Logos refers to the appeal of logic, reason, cognitive thinking, data and facts. On the other hand, pathos refers to the appeal of emotion, the non-cognitive and non-thinking reasons behind our decisions and action. While organizing the delivery, a good speaker should give adequate space for logos and pathos, appeal to the head and the heart as well.

An important point to be mentioned here is that, in general, speakers tend to run out of time. They are often forced to hurry up towards the end of the allotted time. That being so, good speakers invariably make it a point to cover all their best points and key messages well before approaching the end time. It is also not a good practice for any speaker to consult his watch every now and then. If at all, he or she may discreetly look at the clock in the hall to know the time left. If the best points are not covered in the beginning and middle of the speech, the rush at the end may leave little time to cover those points.

Organizing the delivery would also cover some kind of a rehearsal to assess the time spent, make a note of the pauses and illustrations and amplifications that need to be given at appropriate places.

Check Your Progress

4. What are the three main parts of a theme speech?
5. Why is preparation a precondition for an effective delivery of a speech?
6. State the main purpose of theme speech or keynote address.

4.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The patterns of variation are called tones. The tones bring about a change of meaning in an utterance or a change of meaning in a word.
2. Grammatical intonation helps to identify the grammatical structure in speech. This is similar to the role of punctuation in writing.
3. The four tone pitch movements of a language are falling tone, rising tone, falling–rising tone and rising–falling tone.
4. The three main parts of a theme speech are introduction, body and conclusion.
5. Preparation is a precondition for an effective delivery of a speech because in the absence of adequate preparation, delivery cannot be effective. Preparation provides the content of the speech and brings in confidence.
6. The main purpose of theme speech or keynote address is to present the main theme, cover the subject in its totality and provide a good insight into the subjects chosen.

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4.5 SUMMARY

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- When the vocal cords are spread apart, the air from the lungs passes between them unimpeded, the sounds produced are described as voiceless sounds.
- When the vocal cords are loosely held together, the air passes through it, makes the vocal sound called vibrate. The sounds created in this manner are called voiced sounds.
- For one, native English speakers produce melodies of varying kinds, with the rising and falling voice. Such melodies are technically called intonation.
- Languages in which tones can bring about a change in the meaning of an utterance or word are known as intonation languages.
- Many phonologists believe that another important component of intonation is the phenomenon called prominence.
- Intonational choices made by speakers carry linguistic information and perform a variety of functions.
- Grammatical intonation helps to identify the grammatical structure in speech. This is similar to the role of punctuation in writing.
- Discourse or information entails the kind of response which is to be expected. In normal communication, intonation is used at the place of syntax (sentence).
- Generally speaking, discussions of the function of intonation in English often centre on the relation between intonation and attitudes.
- In Welcome or Introductory speeches, the speaker's job would be to give a good start to the event, be it a meeting or a function or a seminar.
- Vote of Thanks is the last speech in any event or functions. It winds up the deliberations. It should have a tone of sincerity and should not appear to be a mere formality.
- Theme speeches and key note addresses are the main speeches of the occasion. They are relatively long speeches with a reasonably long time allotted to them.
- The main purpose of theme speech or keynote address is to present the main theme, cover the subject in its totality and provide a good insight into the subjects chosen.
- The speaker must make every effort to gain attention, arouse curiosity and keep the opening interesting.
- The body of any speech consists of the essence of the topic or subject chosen. It consists of all the main points that the speaker wants to convey on the subject.

- The conclusion relates to the closing or the winding up of the speech. The main points are briefly reiterated.
- The purpose should be built into your speech, and it assumes significance both at the preparation stage and also when you deliver it.
- A good speaker should be conscious or aware of such differences and organize his or her speeches to suit the audience he or she would be addressing.
- Another very important aspect to be kept in view while organizing the delivery is time management.
- Organizing the delivery of a speech involves preparing appropriately to speak through the allotted time.
- Organizing the delivery would also cover some kind of a rehearsal to assess the time spent, make a note of the pauses and illustrations and amplifications that need to be given at appropriate places.

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4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Intonation:** It refers to the varying melodies produced by the English speakers with the rising and falling voice.
- **Intonation languages:** It refers to languages in which tones can bring about a change in the meaning of an utterance or word.
- **Logos:** It refers to the appeal of logic, reason, cognitive thinking, data and facts.
- **Pathos:** It refers to the appeal of emotion, the non-cognitive and non-thinking reasons behind our decisions and action.

4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is it important to learn the intonation of any language?
2. What are the four options associated with the tone units?
3. State the problems related to attitudinal meaning of tones.
4. Write a short notice on Welcome or Introductory speech.
5. How can a speaker make Vote of Thanks speech appealing?

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Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the main types of intonational functions.
2. Discuss the three main steps related to preparation of a speech.
3. Elaborate the points to be considered while making an Introductory speech.
4. Why is time management an important factor while delivering a speech? Discuss in detail.
5. Analyse the role of a good communicator while preparing and delivering a speech.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 5 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION

Principles of Effective Oral Communication

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Principles of Effective Oral Communication
- 5.3 Ten Commandments of Good Speaking
- 5.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Words
- 5.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.8 Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral communication plays an important role in a business organization. Oral communication can take various forms such as meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars and so on. However, in all these modes, the one thing which is common is the speech of a good communicator. A communicator presents his or her ideas through a speech. It thus, becomes necessary that a speech should be prepared in such a way that the message is communicated in an effective manner.

There are certain guidelines or principles for effective communication which a speaker should adhere to in order to deliver an effective speech. These guidelines help to give a proper shape to his or her ideas. In this unit, the principles for effective communication and the ten commandments of good speaking have been discussed in detail.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the guidelines and principles related to effective oral communication
- Discuss the ten commandments of good speaking
- Assess the importance of postures and gestures
- Identify the five main ingredients related to the Art of Speaking

5.2 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION

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Principles of effective oral communication are basically good guidelines for effective communication which a speaker should adhere to. These principles ensure the fact that the message is conveyed clearly to the target audience, without it getting distorted. These principles have to be followed to facilitate a smooth conversation. In the following section, we will discuss about some of the principles of effective communication.

Principles for Effective Communication

The following are the principles for effective communication. We have discussed some of the principles in Unit 2. Let us revise and study some more important principles necessary for effective communication which will eventually improve oral communication.

- **Preparation:** A speaker must prepare in advance before delivering his or her speech. In order to get the attention of the audience, the speech should be well prepared and the speaker should have a detailed knowledge about the topic, place, time and audience.
- **Drafting the speech:** It is recommended that a speaker should draft a speech beforehand and should also recite it well in advance as it helps to allocate time on different aspects and a speaker can also analyse the part which has to be highlighted the most during a speech. Also, if there will be any error, it can be rectified.
- **Brevity:** It is recommended that the message or main theme of the speech should be clear enough. If the message is complicated for the audience, then there may be some chances of audience losing attention. The speaker should prepare the speech in such a way that the audience can immediately connect with it.
- **Clear Pronunciation:** Speaking clearly is an important aspect which a good communicator should adhere to. He or she should possess the skill to pronounce the words properly. Pronouncing the words properly means that the words should be pronounced with appropriate rise and fall of the words. A speaker thus, should have a proper idea of the concept of intonation. Clear pronunciation is an important quality of a speaker.
- **Logical sequence:** It is important that messages should be organized in a sequential manner so that there is no confusion among the audience. Any sort of irrelevant information should be avoided.
- **Precision:** The message must be precise. The audience must grab the main idea or concept immediately. Use of ambiguous words should be avoided, it is necessary to use plain and simple language. It is also important to use

the time effectively as no one would like to listen to long and boring speeches. It should be clear and to the point.

- **Use of Visual Aids:** Visual aids make the presentation interesting. It is not necessary that a speaker should just stick to his or her speech. A communicator can also incorporate power point presentations, slideshows, and use whiteboard and so on to convey his or her ideas.
- **Use simple and suitable words:** Words have different meanings. They consist of one or more meanings and people can interpret them differently. A communicator should be careful while selecting the words.
- **Body Language:** Body language also plays an important role. Some action may denote a negative gesture. Lack of confidence can also be reflected in such cases. It is necessary that a communicator should understand the concept of body language and use gestures which shows a speaker in a positive light.

Besides, these principles and guidelines for effective communication, a speaker should have an idea about the audience, the background and the main objective of his or her speech. It is necessary to follow these principles in order to make a speech a success for the organization.

Check Your Progress

1. Define principles for effective communication.
2. Why is it necessary to be precise while giving a speech?

5.3 TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOOD SPEAKING

There are some well accepted essentials for good speaking. While we have covered some of them under the principles of effective speech, we can add some more and present them as the ten commandments of good speaking. Any speaker keen on mastering the art of speaking would do well to meticulously follow these commandments.

1. **Personality and Demeanour:** We have already discussed the importance of non-verbal aspects of oral communication. Even before the speaker opens her mouth to speak, the listeners start their appraisal. Audiences tend to size up the speaker from the speaker's appearance, attire and posture. The attire should convey the right message. Casual appearance in an otherwise formal occasion should be avoided. Any speaker creates a visual impact, positive or negative through eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures, mannerisms and behaviour. Good speakers cultivate their personality and demeanour consciously so as to make a positive impact. Demeanour refers to bearing, conduct and appearance. It relates to one's behaviour towards others. The speaker's demeanour should appeal to the audience. Eyes can

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NOTES

be highly expressive. Confident speakers know how to make and sustain eye contact with their audience. Avoiding eye contact may be interpreted by the audience as lack of confidence. Further, eyes can also convey feelings and supplement the verbal message.

Face being the index of mind, facial expressions also communicates the speaker's feelings and intensity. A relaxed and friendly expression helps the speaker connect easily with the audience. And any good speaker must learn to smile. It creates a positive impact. It breaks resistance, if any. Postures and gestures also create an impact on the audience. Posture relates to how one carries one's body. An erect posture conveys confidence and alertness. A sloppy posture or a bent posture conveys casualness. Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body. Gesture also includes gesticulation. Speakers can make deliberate gestures by moving their body, face, head or arms as an expression of feeling. Postures and gestures are used by effective speakers to convey enthusiasm, conviction and intensity. Used effectively, they make the speeches and presentations lively, interesting and appealing.

Mannerisms and behaviour can also create positive or negative impact. Mannerisms cover individual characteristics and body movements. Avoidable body movements and characteristics such as picking the nose, scratching the ear, feeling the face and such other distractions by the speaker do not go well with audience. Behaviour has to do with the speaker's response to any stimulus. Good speakers know how to keep their poise and not get agitated or disturbed.

2. **Audience Connect:** Any speech or presentation is for the audience. Like the reader in written communication, it is the listener or a group of listeners that constitutes the very purpose of the communication. Ultimately, the speech is good or bad depending upon how the audience receives it. Good speakers spare no efforts in learning about their audience. Good speeches are those where the speakers attain the wavelength of their audience. Every speaker, to be effective, should connect with his audience. Such an analysis helps in preparing the speech so as to connect with the audience. If need be, speakers also make it a point to reach the venue in advance and build up a rapport with the audience. Some informal interaction will help the speaker in understanding their expectations.

When we refer to connecting with the audience, it is not through the content alone. Contents of the speech should of course be audience relevant. Apart from that, the delivery of the speech should also be audience friendly. The choice of words, the transmission rate, illustrations and stories, amplification of points, use of jargon and the level of interaction would be such as to ensure a proper connect with the audience. Good speakers make improvisations or make modifications to their original plan if they find that they have not assessed the audience properly. Good speakers adapt to their audience expectations.

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Good speakers are those who earn the attention of the audience from the very beginning and earn the trust and admiration of the listeners through their speeches. Attention of the listeners, it should be noted, does not come about automatically. The speaker should not presume that every group of listeners will necessarily listen with due attention. Today's listeners often ask, 'what is in it for me?' or 'what do I gain from listening to you?'

Speakers should keep this in mind and answer this often unarticulated question. Speakers should note that listeners' attention is indeed a hard won reward. Audience connect can happen with effective use of vocal, verbal and visual play during the delivery of the speech.

3. **Speech Preparation:** As discussed earlier, Good speakers take pains to prepare their speeches in advance. The time spent on preparation would depend upon the familiarity of the topic, nature of audience and length of speech. Good speeches are the result of hard work and meticulous preparation. Even the best of speakers prepare their speeches, although not as elaborately as a beginner. Elsewhere in the exhibit 'The long and short of it', we have noted how President Woodrow Wilson needed two weeks for preparation when he had to speak for ten minutes.

Much advance preparation is needed if one has to make a brief yet memorable speech. Good preparation means that 'the speaker must have his thoughts arranged to form a logically integrated thought process.' Always remember the words of wisdom—the better the preparation, the greater the level of confidence and lesser the nervousness. Preparation may also mean keeping some short notes, jotting down key points, figures and quotations and carrying with you to the podium. Even the best of speakers keep some notes in front of them while speaking. They act as aide memoires.

Quite often, although the subject is the same, the audience may be vastly different. A classroom talk on 'Leadership Qualities' to a new batch of manager trainees will be very different from a speech on the same subject to a group of CEOs attending a refresher program in a business school. The explanations given, quotes and analogies mentioned, empirical studies and factual details discussed and such other relevant aspects would vary significantly, both in terms of preparation and delivery.

Keeping in view the nature of speech, kind of audience and time allotted, while preparing the speech, the speaker could gainfully use the following.

- Anecdotes and personal experiences.
- Humorous quotes and statements that make the listeners chuckle or smile.
- Relevant quotes from people who matter.
- Rhetorical questions.

NOTES

- Essential repetitions and summing up.
- Interesting statistics and illustrations.
- Visuals such as charts, graphs and pictures.
- Pauses, eye contacts, silence and audience involvement.
- Voice modulations, speed variations and body language messages.
- Expert opinions and testimonials from specialists.
- Latin, Sanskrit and such other language expressions.

When we refer to business related speeches and presentations, the speaker will be dealing with a wide variety of audiences. No two groups of audience are identical. Again, the expectations of the same group may vary from time to time. That is why it is essential that speaker pitches his or her speech to the specific audience. Are they young or old, male or female, generalists or specialists, homogeneous or heterogeneous, small or big, well informed or otherwise, friendly or hostile? Similarly, are you the only speaker or one of many, are you speaking first or last or in the middle, in the forenoon session or the afternoon session? Would it be better to warm up with the audience and take a friendly approach or better to be formal and keep a distance? All this matters in making your audience connect.

It is said that broadly speaking, your audience are of three kinds—friendly and interested audience, apathetic and indifferent audience, and aggressive and hostile audience. Your job is easy if you are addressing the first category—warm up and be friendly. If you are addressing the second kind of audience, try to get them interested in what you want to convey—be sincere and persuasive. Your job becomes extremely challenging when you are dealing with the third kind. It will need all your skill and tactfulness to reach out to them—be patient and resourceful. As they say, ‘different strokes for different folks.’

4. **Art of Speaking:** As observed by the Alcuin of York, ‘The art of speaking is made up of five things: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery.’ Each of these five ingredients is equally important. Invention relates to ideas, creativity and innovativeness. It relates to originality of ideas and conceptual clarity. Regular speakers and experts may speak on the same subject to ten different audiences. Every time they know how to vary the speech and bring in creativity and innovativeness suiting the audience. Similarly, a speaker may be called upon to speak on a subject that is perceived by the audience to be drab and boring. Accomplished speakers know how to make even uninteresting subjects interesting and worthy of attention. Arrangement refers to sequencing and order of presentation. It means avoiding going back and forth and speaking in a rambling manner. Style refers to the stamp of individuality. It refers to a copious supply of words and using them with judgement. It means developing a natural and confident manner of speaking

that creates a favourable impression on the listeners. Memory is important especially when the speaker is not consulting any notes. Extempore or impromptu speakers depend much on their memory. While making long speeches, aide memoires or brief notes help in covering all the points in a well- organized manner. The fifth ingredient of the art of speaking consists of delivery. It relates to the actual manner of speaking, which we will be covering in some detail in the following paragraphs.

Communication Clue

According to a communications maxim, in any good speech, you have to do three things—tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them.

5. **Voice Modulation:** Voice modulation determines the vocal impact created by a speaker. Good speakers are well aware of the need for voice modulation. They know how to vary the pitch and intensity of the voice. They also know how to modulate the tone, quality and pace of the voice to suit the content and the force of the message. The tone will be harsh or soft depending upon the situation. The pitch may be high or low. The quality of the voice may be controlled or uncontrolled. The pace may be rapid or slow. The intensity or force will again vary depending upon the message being delivered. All the five features of voice, viz., tone, pitch, quality, pace and force can be varied to create the desired impact. Dull, monotonous voices put off the audience, even when the subject is otherwise interesting. Effective voice modulation helps speakers gain and retain audience attention. Voice modulation makes a big difference to the impact a speaker makes on the listeners. Experts on communication note that even if you have something worth saying, if you express it in a tone or manner that is a turn-off, it guarantees that no one will listen.
6. **Pauses and Punches:** Pauses and punches are to oral communication what full stops and commas are to written communication. Good speakers know how to use pauses and punches for greater effect. Pauses at the right places help in assessing the audience receptivity. Good speakers also use such pauses to review what they have already covered and collect their thoughts about what remains to be covered. While short or brief pauses are acceptable to the audience, unduly long ones detract continuity and focus. Speakers use short pauses to confirm that the audience has understood the message covered so far and may mention how they propose to proceed from that point. Similarly, punches along with appropriate body language facilitate emphasis and reiteration. As Swami Chinmayananda noted, ‘From the platform, when he is delivering, he must be able to punch the ideas into the understanding of the listener.’

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Expert Speak: **Learning From Obama**

Barack Obama has mastered the art of pausing. Just check out his presidential acceptance speech in Chicago to see this skill at work. He pauses to let us catch up with him. He pauses to let his words resonate. He pauses, in a sense, to let us rest. Pauses also give the impression of composure and thoughtfulness.

(Source: *BNET* by Sims Wyeth, Seasonal Magazine)

7. **Listener Participation:** Good speeches and presentations necessarily have to be a participative activity. If the speaker goes on speaking, unmindful of audience participation, very little is achieved. Unless the listener pays attention, actively listens and fully comprehends what the speaker is conveying, no speech or presentation can be termed effective. Good speakers, therefore, are keen on ensuring listener participation. They make every effort to keep the audience attentive and engaged. This is done by establishing eye contact, modulating the voice, making gestures, moving around and involving the audience by asking questions. Illustrations, stories and rhetorical questions keep the audience attentive and engaged. The speakers should use every opportunity to elicit responses from the listeners. Questions such as, 'Are you with me so far?' or 'Shall we proceed further?' or 'Do you have any questions?' provide opportunities to the listeners to respond.

Expert Speak: **Audience Interest**

Audience interest is always high at the beginning of the talk, steadily slips, and then bounces back when the presenter lets on that they are about to close. Every speaker should use this bit of information to improve the effectiveness of his or her presentation.

(Source: Mary Civiello in 'Communication Counts', John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey, 2008.)

8. **Summarizing and Conclusion:** Effective speakers make it a point to summarize and skilfully re-emphasize the key points at appropriate intervals. Like the emphasis at the end of a paragraph in written communication, in oral communication capturing the essence of the message at frequent intervals ensures clarity of speech.

Good speakers draw attention to 'what we have learnt or noted so far'. At the end of the speech, they conclude by reiterating the essence or high points of their message for clarity. They stress on the important areas and make sure that the message is well received. Closing or conclusion is the last opportunity the speaker has to reach out to the audience. The closing should be strong and the speech should end on a firm note which leaves a lasting impression.

9. **Great Delivery:** Delivery relates to the manner in which the message is actually communicated.

It is how the speaker says what he or she has to say. Great speakers attach particular attention to various aspects of speech delivery. They practice

their delivery and plan their talk. Whatever be the keenness of the audience and the force of the topic, they bring in body language, play with words, use pauses and punches and elicit better receptivity from the audience. They keep the atmosphere lively and charged up. Their tone reflects enthusiasm and confidence. Good speakers learn to make their speeches animated and exciting. Listeners enjoy every minute of the speech when there is great delivery. Just as routine or ordinary topics are made interesting by great delivery, very interesting topics are made dull and monotonous by bad delivery. Speaking without giving due attention to various aspects of delivery and ignoring audience response makes any speech tedious and lacklustre. There are speakers who are interesting no matter what the subject is. Similarly, there are speakers who are boring no matter what the topic is. Delivery makes all the difference.

When we talk of great delivery, another point worth emphasizing is correct pronunciation. Poor pronunciation can undermine an otherwise great delivery.

10. **Positive Approach:** Any good communication, be it oral or written, calls for a positive approach.

A positive approach in oral communication includes many characteristics. It means speaking without hurting. It means not underestimating the listeners. It means keeping your cool and not getting provoked by anything the listener says or does. Speaking with a positive approach means that the speaker is considerate and warm. Good speakers weigh their words and avoid anything that is hurtful and demeaning. They do not make fun of the listeners and shun sarcasm. Sarcasm cuts people and alienates them forever. One wrong word uttered can certainly spoil the otherwise well-delivered speech. Any derogatory references to caste, creed, community, religion or colour and sexist remarks should be scrupulously avoided. Wise cracks or remarks at the expense of somebody else do not always go well with the audience. Good speakers show humility and admit their mistakes and shortcomings, if any. They apologize when they are late or say the wrong things and show their respect to the listeners. They use the right kind of wit and humour. They listen while others speak. They smile and establish rapport with their audience. They do not ever consider the audience to be their adversaries or dim-witted or ignorant persons. Positive speakers do not show arrogance or a know-all kind of attitude. They know that just as they are speakers on this occasion, they would be listeners or a part of the audience on other occasions. They treat their audience with dignity and respect.

Check Your Progress

3. What are the five features of a voice?
4. Why are postures and gestures used by a speaker?
5. What are the three main types of audiences?

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5.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Principles of effective oral communication are basically good guidelines for effective communication which a speaker should adhere to. These principles ensure the fact that the message is conveyed clearly to the target audience, without it getting distorted.
2. It is necessary that the speech must be precise so that the audience must grab the main idea or concept immediately. Use of ambiguous words should be avoided, it is necessary to use plain and simple language. It is also important to use the time effectively as no one would like to listen to long and boring speeches. It should be clear and to the point.
3. The five features of voice are tone, pitch, quality, pace and force.
4. Postures and gestures are used by effective speakers to convey enthusiasm, conviction and intensity. Used effectively, they make the speeches and presentations lively, interesting and appealing.
5. The three main types of audience are friendly and interested audience, apathetic and indifferent audience, and aggressive and hostile audience.

5.5 SUMMARY

- Principles of effective oral communication are basically good guidelines for effective communication which a speaker should adhere to.
- The message of the speech must be precise. The audience must grab the main idea or concept immediately.
- Any speaker creates a visual impact, positive or negative through eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures, mannerisms and behaviour.
- Demeanour refers to bearing, conduct and appearance. It relates to one's behaviour towards others.
- Postures and gestures are used by effective speakers to convey enthusiasm, conviction and intensity.
- Mannerisms and behaviour can also create positive or negative impact. Mannerisms cover individual characteristics and body movements.
- Like the reader in written communication, it is the listener or a group of listeners that constitutes the very purpose of the communication.
- Contents of the speech should of course be audience relevant. Apart from that, the delivery of the speech should also be audience friendly.

- Good speakers are those who earn the attention of the audience from the very beginning and earn the trust and admiration of the listeners through their speeches.
- The time spent on preparation would depend upon the familiarity of the topic, nature of audience and length of speech.
- Style refers to the stamp of individuality. It refers to a copious supply of words and using them with judgement.
- Memory is important especially when the speaker is not consulting any notes. Extempore or impromptu speakers depend much on their memory.
- Voice modulation determines the vocal impact created by a speaker. Good speakers are well aware of the need for voice modulation.
- Pauses and punches are to oral communication what full stops and commas are to written communication.
- Good speakers, therefore, are keen on ensuring listener participation. They make every effort to keep the audience attentive and engaged.
- Closing or conclusion is the last opportunity the speaker has to reach out to the audience. The closing should be strong and the speech should end on a firm note which leaves a lasting impression
- Whatever be the keenness of the audience and the force of the topic, the speaker bring in body language, play with words, use pauses and punches and elicit better receptivity from the audience.
- Delivery relates to the manner in which the message is actually communicated.
- A positive approach in oral communication includes many characteristics. It means speaking without hurting.

NOTES

5.6 KEY WORDS

- **Demeanour:** It refers to bearing, conduct and appearance. It relates to one's behaviour towards others.
- **Gesture:** It refers to any significant movement of limb or body.
- **Arrangement:** It refers to sequencing and order of presentation.
- **Style:** It refers to a copious supply of words and using them with judgement.

NOTES

5.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How can body language of a person create a negative image of the speaker?
2. How does visual aid make the speech interesting?
3. Why is face regarded as the index of the mind?
4. Write a short note on voice modulation.
5. Why is it necessary to make speeches participative in nature?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the guidelines for effective communication.
2. 'Good speakers cultivate their personality and demeanour consciously so as to make a positive impact'. Discuss the statement with respect to the role of a good speaker.
3. Analyse the main ingredients in the art of speaking.
4. Why is it said that a listener or a group of listeners constitutes the very purpose of the communication? Discuss in detail.

5.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Madhukar, R.K. 2018. *Business Communication*, 3rd edn. Noida: Vikas Publishing.
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BLOCK - III
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

**UNIT 6 WRITTEN
COMMUNICATION:
AN OVERVIEW**

Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Written Communication: Meaning and Steps
 - 6.2.1 Steps
- 6.3 Written Communication: Importance and Advantages
- 6.4 Use of words and phrases
 - 6.4.1 Use of phrases
- 6.5 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.6 Summary
- 6.7 Key Words
- 6.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 6.9 Further Readings

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Good writing is a craft that can be learnt and perfected over a period of time. Good writing comes from awareness, conscious efforts and following meticulously all the rules of good writing. Good writing is correct writing and much more. Good writers follow correct usage and observe the rules of good writing. In the world of business, every written document is a reflection on the writer, and even the organization he or she represents. In this unit, we will discuss the steps involved in the process of written communication and its advantages over oral communication.

Good writing comes from a clear understanding of all relevant rules and usages. Good writing is absent when any of the following is present—grammatical errors, unstructured paragraphs, incomplete sentences, dull and inappropriate words, punctuation mistakes, poor writing style, weak word power or vocabulary, incorrect usage and misspelling. The ability to write effectively grows along with the grasp of these fundamentals. Learning the rules of good writing is therefore a sine qua non or a must for anyone desirous of becoming an effective writer. Each aspect mentioned above is so vast that it is amenable for lifelong learning. There can be no end to learning. As Alvin Toffler notes, ‘The illiterate of the future will not be the person who cannot read. It will be the person who does not know how

NOTES

to learn'. Good writers, therefore, are constantly on the learning mode. One must start, however, with learning fundamentals. The usage of words and phrases from the English language has been discussed in detail with relevant examples.

The first essential of good writing is correct writing or writing without committing errors. Studying a good book on English grammar, making effective use of a dictionary or thesaurus to build vocabulary and learning to spell correctly are the fundamentals and essential starting points. As a corollary, a good book on grammar, a Standard English dictionary and preferably a thesaurus are desirable companions for any aspiring good writer. Once the fundamentals are grasped, polishing, refinement and mastering different styles of writing become a passion and a lifelong endeavour. The basic rules which a good writer must follow while writing have been highlighted in this unit.

In this unit, the concept of written communication and the steps involved have been discussed. The unit will also explain the usage of words and phrases in the written communication and its advantages have also been dealt. The importance of jargon in business to business communication has also been analysed.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and steps related to written communication.
- Analyse the advantages of written communication over oral communication
- Interpret the rules related to good writing
- Explain the usage and types of determiners and phrases
- Discuss the importance of jargon in written communication

6.2 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: MEANING AND STEPS

Written communication is essential in every business. Writing is a creative activity. While oral communication is based on spontaneous reactions, written communication is more carefully thought out and the information gathered is processed logically. It involves a certain time factor. The writer can take his own time in formulating the message. Then it takes some time to reach the receiver. The receiver then takes his time in understanding and interpreting the message and responding to it. Written communication has fewer cycles than face-to-face communication, that is, in comparison to oral communication, the messages are sent to and fro between the sender and the receiver for a fewer number of times.

6.2.1 Steps

The writing process consists of five steps. The amount of time devoted to each step depends on the type of document to be generated, that is, its length, complexity

and requirement. Writers generally adapt the various steps of the writing process to suit their writing style and needs.

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

Planning

It is the first step in the writing process. Planning the message involves the following components:

- Knowing the purpose of the message
- Knowing the audience
- Determining the contents of the message
- Gathering and collecting information
- Organization of the message

Begin the writing process by determining the purpose of the message, that is, whether the message is meant to give information to, persuade, request, or instruct the reader. Try and determine the purpose as specifically as possible. Knowing the purpose of the message helps the writer in determining what his writing style would be.

The next step of planning the writing is to analyse the audience, that is, to determine who will be reading the message, what is one's relationship with the audience and how is the audience expected to react to the message. The content, organization and tone of the message depend upon these factor. The tone of the message, that is, the degree of formality of the message is affected by the relative status of the reader and the writer. The content will be influenced by the knowledge of the audience, the interest of the audience and the demographic characteristics of the audience.

Anticipation of the audience reaction also has to be taken into account while planning the writing. If the reader reaction is likely to be positive, you can use a direct approach by beginning with important details and coming straight to the actual point in the message. A possibly neutral reaction of the audience can be converted into a positive reaction by using the first few lines to catch the readers' attention and convince the reader of the importance of what you as a writer are trying to convey. In case you anticipate a negative reaction, build a rapport with the reader in the introduction of the message. Start with a neutral statement and supply lots of evidence and arguments in support of your statements and, through logic, increase the acceptability of the message.

The next step is to determine the content, that is, what goes into the message. Based on the purpose and the analysis of the audience, determine what should be the content of the message. Avoid including irrelevant information that wastes the time of the reader. At the same time, do not leave out information which may be vital to the communication. Scot Ober has suggested two techniques to determine what should go into the content of the message.

- Brain storming:* One useful strategy is brain storming, which involves jotting down ideas, possible leads, and anything else you think might be helpful in

NOTES

NOTES

constructing your message. Aim for quantity not quality. Do not evaluate your output unless you have run out of ideas. Then begin to refine, delete, combine and otherwise revise your ideas to form the basis of your message.

- ii. *Mind mapping*: Another possible strategy is mind mapping (also called clustering), a process that avoids the step-by-step limitation of lists. Instead, write the purpose of your message in the middle of the page and circle it. Then as you think of possible points to add, write them down and link them by a line either to the main purpose or to another point. As you think of other details, add them where you think they might fit. The visual outline offers flexibility and encourages free thinking.

Once you plan the content, gather all the information that you will need to facilitate your writing. The various sources from which you can collect the information include reports, past correspondence, journals, newspapers and sales reports.

The final step in the planning process is the organization of the message that is, deciding what goes where in the message. Use the direct approach, which involves presenting the major idea first followed by supporting details for routine and good news messages. For persuasive and bad news messages and messages in which you anticipate a negative reaction use an indirect approach. Here, you first prepare the reader to receive the message and then convey the message. The supporting ideas are presented first followed by the main idea.

Drafting

Once you have the information and a plan to organize the information, start writing. Compose the first version of the message. In the first draft, do not pay much attention to the style or format of the message. Concentrate more on the content part of the message. Just put your ideas in written form on the paper. Remember that it is not possible to have a perfect message in the first draft itself. Leave it for the next stage of the writing process.

Revising

Once the draft is ready, revise the writing, you may need two or more revisions to get the writing in the shape you intend it to be. Revise the writing for content, style and correctness. You can revise the writing based on the principles of effective writing discussed earlier.

Make sure that you have included all the relevant information. The writing should have an impressive style and should be effective. At the same time, it should be accurate, that is, free from grammatical and content-related errors.

Formatting

The presentation of the written message in an impressive layout with an appealing appearance is essential. Some documents need to follow a standard format. The main use of formatting is that it helps the reader to find certain information in a particular position. It gives a neat and visually appealing look to the document.

Proof Reading

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

This is the final step in the writing step. This is the last opportunity the writer has to make any changes to the message before it passes on to the reader. Proof reading ensures the accuracy of the communication. The message must be proofread for content, typographical and format errors.

Content errors may arise if some relevant information is left out or if inconsistent information—contradictory or factually incorrect information—is presented. Most of the content errors are taken care of in the revising stage.

Typographical errors include spelling and punctuation mistakes, a word, a line or a complete paragraph being missed out while typing, duplication of words or typing figures or words incorrectly from the manuscript. Using the spellcheck function available in most word processing software's helps identify many of these errors.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. State the main use of formatting.
2. What are typographical errors?

6.3 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGES

Written communication is the most important form of communication as in this type of communication, there are very less chances of message being distorted. It serves as an evidence for the organizations. Messages are clearly conveyed in written communication as there are chances with the writer to go through their drafts again and again. In this section, we will look at the advantages of written communication over oral communication.

Written communication has the following advantages over oral communication:

- Written communication has an extremely wide reach.
- Written communication can be well-organized so as to convey the precise message.
- Written communication creates records. Maintenance of proper records, letters and reports build up the legal defences of the organization.
- Written communication promotes uniformity in policy and procedure.
- It can be exactly reproduced or repeated.
- It can be targeted to reach specific individuals/sections.
- Written communication can be prepared at a time when the communicator is best prepared to do so.

NOTES

6.4 USE OF WORDS AND PHRASES

Words make your writing. Effective writers know how to choose their words. Let us take a look at these two sentences:

- The consequences of delaying action are obvious.
- But as the real economy worsens, there will be a ricochet effect and banks and investors will continue to be affected by the developing crisis and the losses in the real economy.

The first one is a short sentence with only seven words. The second one is a long sentence with thirty-one words. Both are relevant and convey the intended message. In any good writing, such long and short sentences both co-exist. Every idea cannot be simplified and stated in a less than ten-word sentence. What a good writer tends to do is to use both short and long sentences keeping in view the readability of the target group.

We have noted that building a vast repertoire of words is both an opportunity and a challenge. We have also noted that words and ideas are the raw material that an effective writer requires in abundant supply. Copious supply of words and ideas is a must to build an appealing writing style. In the following paragraphs, we shall be studying in greater detail how one can go about choosing the right words.

NOTEWORTHY

English Crosses the Million Mark Milestone

English crossed the one millionth word mark on 10 June 2009. The Global Language Monitor, an Austin (Texas)-based firm that analyses and catalogues the latest trends in word usage and word choices with a particular emphasis on English, chose the millionth word. The website, languagemonitor.com, which has been monitoring the Queen's language since 2003, notes that English appears to be adding a new word every 98 minutes or 14.7 words a day. In Shakespeare's time, there were only two million speakers of English and fewer than 1,00,000 words. He himself coined about 1700 words.

Unlike a speaker, a writer has time to improve his or her writing. Good writers do not necessarily use the first word that comes to their mind. They stretch into their vocabulary. They delve into their word power and pick up the most appropriate words. Every word, indeed, has many equivalents. Good writing is a progressive accomplishment. One develops and evolves as a competent writer over the years. If you do not accept the first or easiest option and are determined to aim at consistent improvement, your writing gets progressively better.

Let us look at the vocabulary of a beginner. If he or she has limited word power and uses the first option, his or her writing would be somewhat like this:

1. The music was good.
2. The lunch was tasty.

3. The coffee was very nice.
4. The climate is pleasant.
5. The movie was funny.
6. It was a year of good performance.
7. He secured very low marks.
8. The situation is very bad.
9. He mentioned it again.
10. Her face showed no emotion or feeling.
11. It was a year of very ordinary performance.
12. The performance of the team was extremely good.

Apparently, there is nothing wrong with these sentences. They are simple and do convey the meaning in general. However, as the writer makes progress and addresses a more informed audience, the same ideas may have to be expressed more specifically. At the first level, writers tend to use words such as good, bad, ordinary, simple, nice and pleasant. But as their word power improves, they will bring into play words that have greater vigour or words that are more exact. Let us look at the same ideas that we conveyed earlier and see how we can use different words.

1. The music was melodious.
2. The lunch was delicious.
3. The coffee was exquisite.
4. The climate is salubrious.
5. The movie was hilarious.
6. It was a year of robust performance.
7. He secured abysmally low marks.
8. The situation is grave.
9. He reiterated it.
10. Her face was impassive.
11. It was a year of lacklustre performance.
12. The performance of the team was superb/exceptional.

We can see from the mentioned sentences, how the writer's ability to convey ideas and feelings improves as more equivalents become available. The choice of words available to a writer while writing thus, depends on his or her repertoire of words and how readily they come to the writer's mind.

Good writers know how to economize on words. If you can convey the intended meaning with fewer words, your effectiveness improves. The following examples suggest how one can write with fewer words:

NOTES

NOTES

What we have given above are just some examples. In everyday business writing, there would be many such occasions where a good writer can avoid unnecessary words. Good writing relates to using simple words instead of verbose or wordy expressions.

Choosing Words with Right Strength and Vigour

English language has a fascinating world of words. It is indeed a very rich language. And, its already staggering wealth of words is fast expanding. This is due to the fact that English welcomes and adapts words from other languages with open arms. We have stated earlier that the official website of the Oxford English Dictionary notes that the Second Edition of the 20-volume dictionary contains full entries for 1,71,476 words in current use. Similarly, Roget's Thesaurus presents a superb coverage of varied shades of meanings of all English words. Whatever be the words the writer is familiar with, if he or she looks for the equivalents in thesaurus, choosing the right words becomes so easy. As such, these make a ready source of reference for an aspiring good writer. An informed writer or speaker can so build up his or her vocabulary that he or she is not easily at a loss for words.

English is a dynamic language. It means that new words get added and over a period or time, some words go out of fashion. Good writers learn to discard outdated words and use contemporary words. Writing becomes dull and weak when the writer uses those words that are not in current use in business. Just as new words get added, old words get deleted. For example, words like anent, ultimo and proximo that were used frequently a few decades earlier are now outdated. The official website of the Oxford English Dictionary notes that in its second edition, there is a reference to over 45000 obsolete words. And, when there is such an abundant choice of current words, why use obsolete words?

The *Oxford Thesaurus of English* (second edition) contains well over 6,00,000 words. There are 16,000 entries arranged in the alphabetical order and for each entry or word, there are an average of 38 alternatives. The writer needs to know any one of these words to know more about the range of alternatives available. The thesaurus also contains the 'choose the right word' panels that amplify meanings of alternative words and help in selecting the most appropriate word. Examples of some such 'choose the right word' panels are as follows:

- outdo, excel, surpass
- kind, kindly, benevolent
- independence, liberty, freedom
- forbid, ban, prohibit
- flourish, thrive, prosper
- serene, calm, tranquil, placid, peaceful

Such a choice certainly helps the writer in choosing words with strength and vigour depending upon the context and the level of the target group. Apart from the strength of vocabulary or word power, writing with vigour also calls for a

conscious effort at writing better. Editing or revising what is written helps in this endeavour. After writing the piece of communication, he or she should sit back and read it and make appropriate revisions. Unless you are an extremely accomplished writer, there is always scope for revising your writing by inserting more appropriate words.

Another rule relevant for good writing relates to avoiding repetition of words. Using the same word repeatedly in every sentence makes for dull writing. Repeat the words, if necessary, for emphasis, otherwise, take care to avoid repetitive use of words, ideas and phrases.

Jargon relates to the use of specialized terminology specific to a particular trade, profession or sport. Accordingly, there is legal jargon, computer jargon, military jargon and accounting jargon. Jargon here refers to a set of technical words frequently used by people in that particular trade or profession.

Good writers must follow these rules in using jargon. The first rule is to use it sparingly. Any writing, to be effective, should be reader friendly. Use the jargon or technical terms only if the reader is familiar with them. Do not presume that the reader understands the jargon. Jargons can also be expressed in plain English. Let us look at some examples of jargon.

- **Legal jargon:** To file a caveat, to order an arraignment, to file a habeas corpus petition.
- **Computer Jargon:** Redundancies, access privileges, megabytes.

Using jargon for the uninformed people can make them think that the writing is serious and may not reach them at all. If at all jargon is to be used, it should be used with proper explanation at the very first instance so that the reader understands.

Jargon certainly has its place in professional writing. While writing to people in the same profession or while making job applications for technical positions, jargon can be used to create the right impact. In business communication, we differentiate between business-business (B2B) and business-customer (B2C) communication. Jargon may be relevant in a B2B communication. But when it comes to B2C communication, jargon, if used, should be clearly explained. Brochures, product descriptions, how-to-use manuals, advertising and direct mailing and such other writing targeted at the customers, and prospects should make the technical terms clear to the reader. In fact, it is the job of technical writers and copy writers to describe the processes and explain the jargon for easy understanding by the reader.

Good writers make it a habit to use simple and easy-to-understand words in their day-to-day writing. Simple words convey a conversational style of writing and speaking. As long as the main purpose of any communication is to get the message across, simple words are extremely desirable. Most of the business writing involves writing letters, memos, emails, etc. addressed to customers, prospects, and employees and public who would understand simple words, and words that

NOTES

NOTES

are in everyday use. Complex words, lengthy sentences and big paragraphs, bring down the readability quotient of the written message. Some examples include utilize instead of use; erroneous instead of wrong; proximate instead of near; deleterious instead of harmful; comprehend instead of understand; transpire instead of happen and scrutinize instead of inspect.

However, complex words need not be altogether avoided. Sometimes, simple words may not convey the exact meaning or may not have the same impact intended by the writer. Complex words can be used to add clarity, like ‘maximum utilization of space’ would sound better than ‘maximum usage of space’. Complex words may be used to make the writing precise. The technical reports, statutory guidelines, research reports and so on tend to use complex words. The reader is expected to make extra efforts to know the meaning, if he or she is not familiar with the words.

Communication Clue

Whether it is writing or speaking, vocabulary or word power matters very much. Keep learning and using new words throughout your lifetime. Mark Twain said, “Use a new word correctly three times and it’s yours.” When you come across a new word, understand its meaning, learn its spelling and make it a point to use it correctly till it becomes yours.

There will be umpteen number of occasions while writing, reading and speaking when people in business do come across big and unfamiliar words. Good communicators should not limit themselves to knowing and using only simple and familiar words all through one’s work life. Big words, vigorous words, complex words, new words, buzz words and other different kinds of words make reading, writing and speaking truly exciting. It is said that a person on an average comes across 2,000 to 3,000 words per day. Not all of them would be simple and familiar words. That is why, a good business communicator should use simple words in everyday business letters and correspondence, but must keep learning new words.

Wit and Humour

This Way to the Egress

Business writers and speakers refer to an often-told tale about P.T. Barnum to show the impact of using big and unfamiliar words. P.T. Barnum was a great showman and the owner of a circus in New York. It is said that he used to have great difficulty in getting the crowds to leave the circus after seeing the shows. One day, he decided to put up a sign at the end of the shows which read, “**This Way To The Egress**”.

Visitors to the circus being unaware of its meaning would presume it to be another attractive show and follow the sign, only to find themselves outside the circus.

Barnum’s ploy worked well in getting the crowds move out. *Egress*, is a complex, fancy word that stands for ‘a way out’ or ‘exit’.

Good writers use gender-neutral words. The world of business today accommodates a growing number of women. Workplaces are no longer male dominated as they used to be. Similarly, market research studies have shown that women play an important role in making decisions in buying products and using services. Good writers, therefore, should be inclusive writers. Modern writing emphasizes a non-sexist, non-discriminatory approach to business writing. Sexist language suggests prejudice against women and often excludes women. Sometimes the words or terms we use may exclude either men or women. Table 8.2 lists some examples of sexist words and how can they be made gender neutral.

Apart from using gender-neutral words as suggested above, good writers should also ensure that their sentences are not sexist. For example, the sentence ‘A good writer keeps his writing short and simple’ is sexist. Instead you may say, ‘A good writer keeps his or her writing short and simple.’ Another way of ensuring gender neutrality is by making it plural. You may say, ‘Good writers keep their writing short and simple.’ Yet another way is to just say, ‘Good writing is short and simple.’

Gender-neutral writing also relates to avoiding masculine words. Masculine words are generally used in a male-dominated society. Masculine words exclude women. Today’s organizations call themselves equal opportunity employers.

Masculine words generally start or end with ‘man’. We have seen some masculine words already such as businessman, salesman, workman, spokesman and chairman. Those beginning with ‘man’ include man-hours, man-days, manhunt, man-made and mankind. While reasonable efforts should be made to avoid masculine words and make the writing inclusive, it cannot be stretched beyond a point. Some words like man-eater, manhandle and manslaughter may have to be accepted as non-sexist words. Similarly, the word ‘manageress’ though refers to a female manager of a business is considered offensive and not usually used in official titles. It is desirable to use the word manager to refer to someone who manages, be it a ‘he’ or a ‘she’.

FROM THE ACADEMIC WORLD

Why SBI’s First Woman Chief is Called Chairman

When Arundhati Bhattacharya became the first woman to head the State Bank of India in its 207-year history, there was some dilemma internally on how to address the chief. Some of the initial communication chose the neutral term ‘chairperson’. But subsequently there were instructions that she was to be referred to as chairman. Some believed these were instructions from the top. But the choice of designation had more to do with legalities. It turns out that the SBI Act of 1956 does not recognize any designation of ‘chairperson’ and the legal eagles in the bank decided the bank’s first woman head should stick to chairman.

(Source: Times of India, 25.11.2013.)

NOTES

NOTES

Good writers should also make it a point to avoid clichés and hackneyed or trite phrases. Clichés and trite phrases make writing dull and lacklustre. Cliches are overused expressions. Clichés are described as once striking and effective phrases or combination of words that have become stale and hackneyed due to overuse. Clichés are to be avoided because their continued use becomes annoying. Some examples of clichés are given as follows:

- ‘last but not the least’
- ‘needless to say’
- ‘thanking you in anticipation’
- ‘there is no room for complacency’
- ‘assuring you of our best services always.’
- ‘better late than never’.

One comes across such phrases so often, both in written and spoken English that the audience finds them dull and lacklustre. Similarly, some phrases are used so frequently that these expressions have lost their freshness and effectiveness. They are described as trite or hackneyed. A hackneyed phrase is something that is commonplace or banal. Some overused phrases in business writing are—‘assuring you of our best services always’, ‘leave no stone unturned’, ‘achieve greater heights’ and ‘giving a thoughtful consideration.’ Such phrases are used in such a routine manner that the reader sees no sincerity behind these statements.

Precise words are words that are clear and accurate. A precise writer is one who writes providing detailed and accurate information. Precise writing is careful and meticulous writing. The opposite of precise is careless or vague. Sometimes, we may use words that convey somewhat vague meanings. Words like soon or early may convey different meanings to different persons. If you assure a customer that ‘you will attend to his request soon’, by soon you may mean three days, whereas the customer may interpret soon to mean today or tomorrow. Effective writers and speakers choose words with precision.

6.4.1 Use of phrases

A phrase is a group of words which makes sense, but not complete sense. For example:

- Jack and Jill went up the hill.
- Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Examples of phrases

There are hundreds of phrases in the English language. Some of the commonly used phrases are as follows:

1. **Point-blank:** To say something directly or rudely, without explaining or apologizing. Example: The company owner told the workers point-blank that their demands could not be met.

2. **So-so:** Not very satisfactory. Example: My new job is so-so but I cannot afford to give it up.
3. **Chit-chat:** Small talk or unimportant conversation. Example: The boss asked them to stop their chit-chat and get on with their work.
4. **See-saw:** Something that goes up and down. Example: The Indian rupee has been see-sawing for the last one year.
5. **Black-and-white:** Something which is extremely clear. Example: The employees have been told in black-and-white that they have to deliver or quit.
6. **Dos and don'ts:** The rules. Example: A good driver always follows the do's and don'ts of driving.
7. **Haves and have-nots:** Those who are rich and those who are not. Example: In India, there is a wide gap between the haves and have-nots of the population.
8. **Ins and outs:** The details. Example: As I do not know the ins and outs of the situation, I cannot really comment on it.
9. **Pros and cons:** Advantages and disadvantages. Example: One must consider all the pros and cons before buying a new car.
10. **Tried and tested:** Something which has been well tested. Example: Drinking green tea is a tried and tested way of improving the digestion.
11. **Ups and downs:** Very good times and very bad times. Example: He has had a lot of ups and downs in his business.
12. **Flesh and blood:** One's close family. Example: You must help your brother – after all, he's your flesh and blood.
13. **By and large:** Generally. Example: By and large, people prefer quality products to low prices.
14. **Dead and buried:** Something that is not going to happen again. Example: Their long dispute is now dead and buried.
15. **Wine and dine:** To entertain someone lavishly. Example: The Chopras are known for wining and dining their guests.
16. **Bread and butter:** The main source of income, or the most important issue.
Example: Making shoes was the poor shoemaker's bread and butter.
17. **Spick and span:** Very clean and tidy. Example: Mrs Khanna's house is always spick and span.
18. **A bit much:** Something that is excessive or annoying. Example: All that violence in today's movies is a bit much.

NOTES

NOTES

19. Bad egg: A person who cannot be trusted. Example: Do not hire that man – he is a bad egg.

20. Behind bars: To be in prison. Example: Corrupt people find themselves behind bars one day.

Every language has a basic sentence pattern. In the English language, the basic sentence pattern is Subject – Verb – Object (SVO). For example, in the sentence: ‘The boy broke the pen’, the boy is the subject, broke is the verb and the pen is the object.

Noun Phrase (NP) 1.2.2 Noun Phrase (NP)

In keeping with the SVO pattern, every sentence in the English language has a Noun Phrase (NP) and a Verb Phrase (VP). The NP can have a wide range of grammatical constituents which can also be represented with the help of a tree diagram. For example:

- (i) NP – Article + Noun (A girl)
- (ii) NP – Determiner + Noun (The girl)
- (iii) NP – Article + Adjective + Noun (A beautiful girl)
- (iv) NP – Determiner + Adjective + Noun (The beautiful girl)

Determiner

A **determiner** is a noun-modifier that shows the reference of a noun or noun-phrase in the context, rather than attributes expressed by adjectives. This function is usually performed by articles, demonstratives, possessive determiners or quantifiers.

Determiners are independent words that precede the rest of the noun phrase. In other languages, determiners are prefixed or suffixed to the noun, or even change the noun’s form. For example, in Swedish *bok* ‘book’, when definite, becomes *boken* ‘the book’ (suffixed definite articles are common in Scandinavian languages), while in Romanian *caiet* ‘notebook’ becomes *caietul* ‘the notebook’.

Some constructions, such as those that use names of school subjects do not use a determiner. This condition is called the ‘zero determiner’.

The determiner function is not only carried out by the determiner class of words but can also be filled by words from other entities. The following can be categorized as some of the forms of determiners.

1. Basic determiners are words from the determiner class (for example, the girl, those pencils) or determiner phrases (for example, almost all employees, more than two problems)

2. Subject determiners are possessive noun phrases (for example, his daughter, the boy's friend)
3. Minor determiners are simple noun phrases (for example, what colour curtain, 'this' size shoes) and prepositional phrases (under twenty metres, up to twelve people).

The main purpose of a determiner is that it establishes the reference of a noun or noun-phrase, including quantity, rather than its attributes as expressed by adjectives. Despite this tendency, determiners have a variety of functions in English such as being modifiers in adjective phrases and determiner phrases, and even markers of coordination.

This word class, or part of speech, exists in many languages, including English, though most English dictionaries still classify determiners under other parts of speech. Determiners usually include articles, demonstratives, possessive determiners, quantifiers, and cardinal numbers depending on the language.

Determiners form a closed class of words that number about 50 (not counting the cardinal numerals) and include:

- **Alternative determiners:** another, other, somebody else, different
- **Articles:** a, an, the
- **Cardinal numbers:** zero, one, two, fifty, infinite
- **Degree determiners:** many, much, few, little, couple, several, most
- **Demonstratives:** this, that, these, those, which
- **Disjunctive determiners:** either, neither
- **Distributive determiners:** each, every
- **Elective determiners:** any, either, whichever
- **Equative determiners:** the same
- **Evaluative determiners:** such, that, so
- **Exclamative determiners:** what lovely hair!
- **Existential determiners:** some, any
- **Interrogative and relative determiners:** which, what, whichever, whatever
- **Mutual determiners:** a lot of, many, several, much
- **Negative determiners:** no, neither
- **Personal determiners:** we students, you guys
- **Possessive determiners:** my, mine, their, your
- **Quantifiers:** all, few, many etc.
- **Sufficiency determiners:** enough, sufficient, plenty
- **Uniquitive determiners:** the only

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- **Universal determiners:** all, both
All of these determiners can be grouped under the following categories:
- **Definite determiners:** These determiners refer back to a specific already-established entity (cardinals, demonstratives, equatives, evaluatives, exclamatives, relatives, personals, possessives, unicityives).
- **Indefinite determiners:** These determiners broaden their referent to one not previously mentioned, otherwise newly introduced into discourse (disjunctives, electives, existentials, interrogatives, negatives, universals).

Determiners as different from adjectives

According to traditional English grammar, adjectives were called determiners. There are, however, a number of key differences between determiners and adjectives.

In English, articles, demonstratives, and possessive determiners cannot co-occur in the same phrase, while any number of adjectives are typically allowed.

Example: A huge red Italian hat.

1. Most determiners cannot occur alone in predicative complement position but most adjectives can.
Example: The worker is joyful.
2. Most determiners are not gradable while adjectives typically are.
Example: small, smaller, and smallest
3. Some determiners have corresponding pronouns, while adjectives do not have the same.
Example: Everybody likes something unique.
4. Adjectives can modify singular or plural nouns, while some determiners can only modify one or the other.

Determiners as different from pronouns

Determiners such as *this*, *all*, and *some* can often occur without a noun. In traditional grammar, these are called pronouns. There are, however, a number of key differences between such determiners and pronouns which are as follows:

1. Pronouns may occur in tag questions. Determiners cannot.
Example: This is beautiful, isn't it?
2. In phrasal verbs, pronouns must appear between the verb and the particle. Determiners may occur after the particle.
Example: Break it down
3. All pronouns have distinct possessive forms while determiners do not.
Example: This is hers/mine/theirs

Modification

Written Communication:
An Overview

Let us discuss the modification of the Verb Phrase.

Verb Phrase

We have established that a sentence consists of a Noun Phrase (NP) and a Verb Phrase (VP): S = NP + VP

The constituents of the Noun Phrase have been discussed. Let us now discuss the modifications of the Verb Phrase.

Verb Phrase (VP) – Verb + Noun Phrase (NP)

Or

VP – Verb + NP

VP – Verb + Determiner + Noun

Verbs form the second largest word forms after nouns. They denote action and are, therefore, also called action words. For example, walk, climb, talk and sing. Verbs have three grammatical types – lexical, auxiliary and modal.

Lexical verbs form an open class and include most verbs like run, eat, breathe. Auxiliary verbs form a closed class and consist of words like be, do and have. The main function of auxiliary verbs is to add information to other lexical verbs. Modal verbs consist of words like can, could, shall, should, will, would, must, may, might and so on. They add information to lexical verbs about degrees of certainty and necessity.

A verb phrase contains the following optional features:

A modal verb (e.g., *will*)

- The verb *have* to express perfect aspect (created by the auxiliary ‘have’ and the ‘-ed’ participle form of the lexical verb referring to a time period that includes the present moment). For example: *He might have walked home today.*
- The verb *be* to express progressive aspect (referring to uncompleted action and consists of the auxiliary *be* form and the *-ing* form of the lexical verb). For example: *are going.*
- The verb *be* to express passive voice (formed with the auxiliary ‘be’ and the ‘-ed’ participle form of the lexical verb). For example: *She was criticized by her friends.*
- The modal comes first followed by the auxiliary or several auxiliaries and finally the lexical (main) verb. A verb phrase which is a combination of modals and auxiliaries is structured usually in the following order: modal verb >> perfect *have*>> progressive *be*>> passive *be*>> Lexical verb. Whichever verbs are used in the verb phrase, the first verb is conjugated for tense, person and number.

NOTES

NOTES

Adjective Phrase

An adjective is a word that describes or qualifies a noun/pronoun. An adjective phrase can consist of:

- A single adjective – The girl is *beautiful*.
- An adjective which has been modified by an adverb phrase – The girl is **truly***beautiful*.
- An adjective which has been complemented by a prepositional phrase – The girl is *beautiful* **to look at**.

For example:

- **Adjectives of quality** describe the noun, for example, small, good, honest, clever, pretty, thin.
- **Adjectives of quantity** answer the question ‘how much’. They are used with uncountable nouns, for example, much, little, some, all, any, whole, sufficient.
- **Adjectives of number** answer the question ‘how many’?
- **Demonstrative adjectives** point out which person or thing is meant.
- **Possessive adjectives** show possession, for example, his, her, their, whose, when and so forth.
- **Interrogative adjectives** are used with nouns to ask questions, for example, what, which, whose.

The adjective phrase is a group of words, without a finite verb, which describes a noun and functions like an adjective.

For example:

- The boy *in the blueshirt* is my brother.
- She wore a necklace *made of pearls and rubies*.
- Anita is a girl *with a friendly nature*.

In the above sentences, the three groups of words in italics describe the nouns boy, necklace, and girl; so they are adjective phrases.

An adjective can sometimes be changed into an adjective phrase.

For example:

A village road	—	A road through the village
A blank page	—	A page with no writing on it
A silk dress	—	A dress made of silk
An intelligent man	—	A man of intelligence
A rich woman	—	A woman of wealth
A smiling face	—	A face with a smile on it

Some more examples of adjective phrases used in sentences are as follows:

- This book has stories about our freedom fighters.
- He is a student of great promise.
- He is a man of great courage.
- Only a person with plenty of money can afford to travel around the world.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Care must be taken to place an adjective phrase next to the noun it describes, or you may get absurd sentences.

For example:

The dog chased the man with the *curly tail*.

The chair was sold by the man with a *broken seat*.

The two adjective phrases, with the ‘curly tail’ and ‘broken seat’ describe the dog and the chair respectively, and so should have been placed next to the dog and the chair.

The correct sentences should read:

The dog with the curly tail chased the man.

The chair with the broken seat was sold by the man.

Adverb Phrase

An adverb is a part of speech which modifies verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Adverbs perform a wide range of functions and are particularly important for indicating time, manner, place, degree, and frequency of an event, action, or process. An adverb phrase can:

Act as an adverb in a sentence – She came home *too suddenly*.

Modify verbs – She **talks***too loudly*.

Modify adjectives – She was so tired that she fell into a *really***deep** sleep.

Modify adverbs – She fell *very***heavily**.

For example:

- Harry worked hard. (Here, *hard* modifies the verb *worked*.)
- It is bitterly cold today. (Here, *bitterly* modifies the adjective *cold*.)
- They behaved rather noisily. (Here, *rather* modifies the verb *noisily*.)

In the above sentences *hard*, *bitterly* and *rather* are adverbs.

An adverb phrase is a group of words without a finite verb, which does the work of an adverb.

For example:

He spoke *rudely*; we can say, he spoke *in a rude manner*.

NOTES

NOTES

‘Rudely’ is an adverb and modifies the verb ‘spoke’. Similarly, ‘in a rude manner’ modifies the verb ‘spoke’. The only difference is that instead of a single word ‘rude’, we have used a group of words to convey the same meaning.

Therefore, a group of words which does not include a finite verb and which does the work of an adverb, is known as an adverb phrase.

Some examples of adverb phrases are as follows:

- next month
- in the morning
- at the end of this road
- with great care
- with great fury
- in a short period

Instead of using a single word, we are using a group of words to do the same thing, that is, modify a verb.

Just as there are several types of adverbs, there are various types of adverb phrases.

For example:

- He searched all over the place for his keys. (**Adverb phrases of place** (shows where))
- We shall begin the journey soon after sunrise. [**Adverb phrase of time** (shows when)]
- He spoke in a dignified manner. [**Adverb phrase of manner** (shows how)]
- Barking dogs seldom bite. [**Adverb of frequency** (shows how often)]
- I am almost ready. [**Adverb of degree or quantity** (shows how much or to what degree)]
- I do not like milk. [**Adverb phrase of assertion** (shows affirmation or negation)]
- When will he return? [**Interrogative adverb** (used to ask questions)]
- She was, hence, given a punishment. [**Adverb of reason** (shows case or reason)]

An adverb phrase, like an adverb, can also modify an adjective or an adverb.

For example:

- Fruit is *good* for *health*. (‘for health’ modifies the adjective ‘good’.)
- He spoke *well* on the *whole*. (‘On the whole’ modifies the adverb ‘well’.)
- He came *yesterday*, late in the *evening*. (‘Late in the evening’ modifies the adverb ‘yesterday’)

Some important adverbial phrases

Written Communication:
An Overview

1. **Above all**—*most important of all*. Send to me all these things and *above all* don't forget to wire me.
2. **After all**—*whatever may be against it*. You must help him in his distress; *after all*, he is your own brother.
3. **As it were**—*in other words; speaking metaphorically*. After a meeting with his beloved, he was, *as it were*, flying in the air.
4. **Again and again, over and over again, time and again**—*repeatedly, often*. I dialled his number *again and again* but every time I found his telephone engaged.
5. **At large**—*unconfined*. The murderer is still *at large* and the police are hotly after him.
6. **Above board**—*honest and unconcealed*. His conduct has been entirely *above board* and your criticism of him is quite unjustified.
7. **At the eleventh hour**—*at the last moment*. He was coming with us but *at the eleventh hour* he changed his mind.
8. **At any rate, at all events**—*whatever may happen*. In this matter, you must help your friend *at any rate*.
9. **At a stretch**—*continuously*. Yesterday, I worked for ten hours *at a stretch*.
10. **By and by**—*after a little while soon*. Do not be impatient, you will come to know everything *by and by*.
11. **Before long**—*in a short time*. Please be seated: I'll be here *before long*.
12. **By the by or way**—*incidentally*. Yes, I will come to you tomorrow. *By the way*, my brother has come back from England.
13. **Few and far between**—*rare, scarce*. Even though he lives in the same city, his visits to us are *few and far between*. My holidays are *few and far between*.
14. **Far and away, out and out**—*beyond all comparison*. Murty is *far and away* the best player in the team.
15. **Far and near or wide**—*in all directions*. Soon the news spread *far and wide*.

NOTES

Prepositional Phrase

A preposition is a word which shows the relation between persons or things mentioned in a sentence. A prepositional phrase is formed when a preposition combines with its complement. For example:

They are related *to one another*.

The mouse fell *into the well*.

NOTES

A comprehensive list of prepositional phrases combining with their specific complements are as follows:

- at (a) high speed
- at (the) risk (of)
- at / by one's side
- at / for a fraction of
- at / from the outset
- at / in the end
- at / on sight
- at a glance
- at a loose end
- at a loss
- at a low ebb
- at a moment's notice
- at a price
- at a rate of
- at a speed of
- at a standstill
- at all costs
- at all events
- at an advantage
- at any cost
- at any rate
- at breakfast
- at ease (with)
- at face value
- at fault
- at full strength
- at hand
- at heart
- at home (with)
- at issue
- at large
- at least
- at length

- at liberty
- at most
- at night
- at noon
- at odds with
- at once
- at one's best
- at one's discretion
- at one's disposal
- at one's leisure
- at one's request
- at peace / war (with)
- at play
- at present
- at random
- at sea
- at the / in front of
- at the age of
- at the beginning
- at the expense of
- at the foot of
- at the hands of
- at the height of
- at the latest
- at the mercy of
- at the peak of
- at the same time
- at the thought of
- at the time of
- at the top of
- at this juncture
- at times
- at war with
- at work
- behind the scenes

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- by (any) chance
- by / under the name of
- by / with luck
- by accident
- by air /sea /land
- by all accounts
- by all means
- by any standard
- by appointment
- by birth
- by check
- by coincidence
- by courtesy of
- by definition
- by degrees
- by design
- by dint of
- by far
- by force
- by hand
- by heart
- by law
- by marriage
- by means of
- by mistake
- by my watch
- by nature
- by no means
- by oneself
- by order of
- by process of
- by profession
- by reason of
- by request
- by rights

- by sight
- by surprise
- by the side of
- by virtue of
- by way of
- for / in a good cause
- for / to the benefit (of)
- for a (good) reason
- for a change
- for certain / sure
- for fear of
- for good
- for granted
- for hire
- for lack of
- for life
- for love
- for my / your, etc. part
- for real
- for the good of
- for the sake of
- for want of
- from experience
- from memory
- in (no) time
- in / at the forefront of
- in / on demand
- in / out of focus
- in / out of one's element
- in / out of prison
- in / out of season
- in / out of stock
- in / out of touch (with)
- in / out of use
- in / with difficulty

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- in / within sight (of)
- in a deep sleep
- in a flash
- in a heap
- in a hurry
- in a mess
- in a pile
- in a sense
- in a temper
- in abeyance
- in abundance
- in accordance with
- in action
- in addition to
- in advance
- in agony
- in agreement with
- in aid of
- in all likelihood
- in an instant
- in an uproar
- in answer to
- in anticipation of
- in arrears
- in awe of
- in blossom
- in brief
- in bulk
- in cash
- in character
- in charge of
- in code
- in collaboration with
- in combination with
- in comfort

- in command of
- in common
- in comparison with
- in compensation for
- in conclusion
- in confidence
- in confinement
- in confusion
- in conjunction with
- in connection with
- in consequence of
- in contact with
- in contrast with / to
- in control of
- in convoy
- in custody
- in danger
- in debt
- in decline
- in defense of
- in detail
- in disgrace
- in disguise
- in disorder
- in dispute
- in distress
- in doubt
- in due course
- in duplicate
- in earnest
- in effect
- in error
- in essence
- in excess of
- in exchange for

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- in existence
- in fact
- in fairness to
- in favour of
- in fear of
- in flames
- in flower
- in full
- in future
- in gear
- in general
- in good / bad condition
- in good faith
- in hand
- in harmony (with)
- in haste
- in hiding
- in high spirits
- in honour of
- in horror (of)
- in ink / pencil
- in isolation
- in its infancy
- in jeopardy
- in keeping with
- in labour
- in league with
- in length
- in line with
- in love with
- in memory of
- in mid-air
- in mind
- in moderation
- in mourning (for)

- in name
- in office
- in one's absence / presence
- in one's spare time
- in operation
- in opposition to
- in origin
- in other words
- in pain
- in Parliament
- in particular
- in person
- in pieces
- in place of
- in possession of
- in poverty
- in practice
- in preference to
- in preparation for
- in principle
- in private
- in progress
- in proportion to / with
- in public
- in pursuit of
- in quantity
- in question
- in reality
- in recognition of
- in relation to
- in reply to
- in reserve
- in residence
- in respect of
- in response to

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- in retrospect
- in return
- in revenge for
- in reverse
- in ruins
- in safety
- in somebody's interest
- in somebody's opinion
- in search of
- in secret
- in self-defence
- in settlement of
- in short
- in silence
- in small change
- in store for
- in succession
- in support of
- in suspense
- in sympathy with
- in tears
- in terms of
- in terror
- in the absence of
- in the aftermath
- in the balance
- in the case of
- in the course of
- in the distance
- in the event of
- in the extreme
- in the eyes of
- in the flesh
- in the form of
- in the habit of

- in the interests of
- in the lead
- in the light of
- in the long run
- in the making
- in the meantime
- in the midst of
- in the mood for
- in the name of
- in the night
- in the open
- in the process of
- in the right
- in the seclusion of
- in the shade
- in the space of
- in the wake of
- in the way of
- in the wrong
- in theory
- in time for
- in times of
- in town
- in trouble
- in tune with
- in turmoil
- in turn
- in two minds
- in twos / threes / tens
- in uniform
- in unison
- in vain
- in view of
- in vogue
- in words

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- of the opinion
- off / on duty
- off school
- off duty
- off their rocker
- off their meds
- on (the) watch (for)
- on / behind schedule
- on / off the record
- on / off the road
- on / under oath
- on / under pain of
- on / of the air
- on / off balance
- on a diet
- on a journey / trip / cruise
- on a pension
- on a regular basis
- on a spree
- on account of
- on an expedition
- on an island
- on approval
- on average
- on bail
- on behalf of
- on board
- on business
- on condition that
- on credit
- on display
- on edge
- on end
- on file

- on fire
- on foot
- on good terms
- on guard
- on hand
- on horseback
- on impulse
- on leave
- on loan
- on no account
- on occasion
- on one's (own) terms
- on one's own
- on one's own initiative
- on order
- on paper
- on parade
- on patrol
- on principle
- on purpose
- on reflection
- on remand
- on sale
- on second thoughts
- on show
- on strike
- on suspicion of
- on the agenda
- on the assumption
- on the brink of
- on the dot
- on the edge of
- on the eve of
- on the grounds of

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- on the horizon
- on the hour
- on the increase
- on the job
- on the move
- on the off-chance
- on the outskirts
- on the part of
- on the phone
- on the point of
- on the run
- on the strength of
- on the stroke of
- on the tip of
- on the top of
- on the understanding that
- on the verge of
- on the way to
- on time
- on tiptoe
- on trial
- on vacation
- out of / in fashion
- out of / in print
- out of / in step
- out of breath
- out of context
- out of control
- out of curiosity / jealousy / love / hatred
- out of date
- out of doors
- out of duty
- out of hand
- out of ideas

- out of one's mind
- out of order
- out of pity
- out of place
- out of practice
- out of reach
- out of respect for
- out of sight
- out of spite
- out of stock
- out of the ordinary
- out of the question
- out of work
- through no fault of
- to / on the contrary
- to an extent
- to date
- to excess
- to one's astonishment
- to one's credit
- to one's dismay
- to sb's face
- to the / this day
- to the accompaniment of
- to the best of
- to the detriment of
- to the exclusion of
- to the full
- to the satisfaction of
- under / in the circumstances
- under age
- under arrest
- under consideration
- under construction

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

NOTES

- under cover of
- under discussion
- under lock and key
- under one's protection
- under orders
- under pressure
- under regulations
- under repair
- under strain
- under stress
- under suspicion
- under the command of
- under the impression that
- under the influence (of)
- under the misapprehension
- under treatment
- with / in reference to
- with / without success
- with a view to
- with an eye to
- with regard to
- with regret
- with respect to
- with the aid of
- with the compliments of
- with the exception of
- with the help of
- with the intention of
- within / out of earshot
- within / without reason
- within grasp
- within limits
- within one's budget
- within one's power

- within one's rights
- within reach (of)
- within site
- within walking / striking distance
- without (a) doubt
- without a break
- without a hitch
- without delay
- without exception
- without fail
- without foundation
- without precedent
- without question
- without respite
- without warning

*Written Communication:
An Overview*

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. What is the main function of auxiliary verbs?
4. Name the types of jargon.
5. State the main purpose of a determiner.
6. What is an adjective phrase?

6.5 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The main use of formatting helps the reader to find certain information in a particular position. It gives a neat and visually appealing look to the document.
2. Typographical errors include spelling and punctuation mistakes, a word, a line or a complete paragraph being missed out while typing, duplication of words or typing figures or words incorrectly from the manuscript.
3. The main function of auxiliary verbs is to add information to other lexical verbs.
4. The jargon can be of various types such as legal jargon, computer jargon, military jargon and accounting jargon.

NOTES

5. The main purpose of a determiner is that it establishes the reference of a noun or noun-phrase, including quantity, rather than its attributes as expressed by adjectives.
6. The adjective phrase is a group of words, without a finite verb, which describes a noun and functions like an adjective.

6.6 SUMMARY

- While oral communication is based on spontaneous reactions, written communication is more carefully thought out and the information gathered is processed logically.
- Written communication involves a certain time factor. The writer can take his own time in formulating the message.
- The writing process consists of five steps. The amount of time devoted to each step depends on the type of document to be generated, that is, its length, complexity and requirement.
- Begin the writing process by determining the purpose of the message, that is, whether the message is meant to give information to, persuade, request, or instruct the reader.
- The next step of planning the writing is to analyse the audience, that is, to determine who will be reading the message, what is one's relationship with the audience and how is the audience expected to react to the message.
- The content will be influenced by the knowledge of the audience, the interest of the audience and the demographic characteristics of the audience.
- The final step in the planning process is the organization of the message that is, deciding what goes where in the message.
- Once you have the information and a plan to organize the information, start writing. Compose the first version of the message.
- Once the draft is ready, revise the writing, you may need two or more revisions to get the writing in the shape you intend it to be.
- The presentation of the written message in an impressive layout with an appealing appearance is essential.
- Proof reading ensures the accuracy of the communication. The message must be proofread for content, typographical and format errors.
- Written communication creates records. Maintenance of proper records, letters and reports build up the legal defences of the organization.
- Unlike a speaker, a writer has time to improve his or her writing. Good writers do not necessarily use the first word that comes to their mind. They stretch into their vocabulary.

- An informed writer or speaker can so build up his or her vocabulary that he or she is not easily at a loss for words
- Repeat the words, if necessary, for emphasis, otherwise, take care to avoid repetitive use of words, ideas and phrases.
- Jargon relates to the use of specialized terminology specific to a particular trade, profession or sport.
- Accordingly, there is legal jargon, computer jargon, military jargon and accounting jargon
- writing to people in the same profession or while making job applications for technical positions, jargon can be used to create the right impact.
- Most of the business writing involves writing letters, memos, emails, etc. addressed to customers, prospects, and employees and public who would understand simple words, and words that are in everyday use.
- . Clichés are described as once striking and effective phrases or combination of words that have become stale and hackneyed due to overuse.
- A determiner is a noun-modifier that shows the reference of a noun or noun-phrase in the context, rather than attributes expressed by adjectives.
- Determiners such as *this*, *all*, and *some* can often occur without a noun. In traditional grammar, these are called pronouns.
- Lexical verbs form an open class and include most verbs like run, eat, breathe. Auxiliary verbs form a closed class and consist of words like be, do and have.
- The adjective phrase is a group of words, without a finite verb, which describes a noun and functions like an adjective.
- Adverbs perform a wide range of functions and are particularly important for indicating time, manner, place, degree, and frequency of an event, action, or process.

NOTES

6.7 KEY WORDS

- **Jargon:** It refers to a set of technical words frequently used by people in that particular trade or profession.
- **Preposition:** It refers to a word which shows the relation between persons or things mentioned in a sentence.
- **Determiner:** It refers to a noun-modifier that shows the reference of a noun or noun-phrase in the context, rather than attributes expressed by adjectives.
- **Clichés:** It refers to striking and effective phrases or combination of words that have become stale and hackneyed due to overuse.

6.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

NOTES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the various components of the planning stage?
2. List the advantages of written communication.
3. How can you say that English is a dynamic language?
4. Write a short note on jargon and its importance in written communication.
5. What are some of the commonly used phrases in the English language?
6. How are determiners different from pronouns?
7. What do you understand by the term 'zero determiner'?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the steps involved in the planning.
2. Analyse the rules related to good writing.
3. Discuss the main types of determiners.
4. Assess the importance of adverb phrases in the English language with relevant examples.

6.9 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 7 SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

NOTES

Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Sentence: Meaning
- 7.3 Sentence Formation
 - 7.3.1 Types of Sentences
 - 7.3.2 Conditional Sentences
 - 7.3.3 Characteristics of an Effective Sentence
- 7.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Key Words
- 7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 7.8 Further Readings

7.0 INTRODUCTION

A good piece of writing is a result of various sentences combined together. A sentence is defined as a combination of words which convey a meaningful message to the readers. Writing is described as clear and coherent when the meaning flows smoothly from one sentence to other. Sentences should be to the point and should be written in such a way that the main point is understood by the reader immediately. This unit will discuss the types of sentences and the concept of sentence formation.

Conditional sentences are sentences which explain hypothetical situations and their consequences. The main types of conditional sentences along with various examples are given in the unit.

In this unit, the characteristics of an effective sentence are also highlighted. The three main characteristics which are unity, clearness and coherence and emphasis have been dealt in the unit.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Interpret the meaning of a sentence and its types
- Discuss the concept of sentence formation
- Identify the three main types of conditional sentences
- Analyse the main characteristics of an effective sentence

7.2 SENTENCE: MEANING

NOTES

What is a sentence?

A sentence expresses a complete thought which includes the following:

- **A Subject:** It causes or receives action-person(s) or object(s). It is generally the first noun/pronoun/modifier in the sentence.
- **A Predicate:** It indicates the action taken or received by the subject. It is a verb or contains the verb. It generally follows the subject and may also contain an object (noun).

A phrase and a clause are also group of words but they differ from sentences and from each other in the following ways:

Phrase: A group of words that lacks either a subject or a predicate or both. For example, 'While at home' has neither a subject nor a predicate; and 'Sunlight in my study room' has no predicate.

Clause: A group of words that have a subject and a predicate. They are of two types which are as follows:

- i. **Dependent clause:** A group of words which contains a subject and a verb but which cannot stand alone. For example, 'Although I am very honest'.
- ii. **Independent clause:** A group of words which have a subject and a verb and which can stand alone. For example, 'I am going to office next month.'

Types of sentences

There are three types of sentences which are enlisted as follows:

- **Simple Sentence:** A simple sentence is also an independent clause. For example, 'The home was empty.'
- **Compound Sentence:** A compound sentence is a type of sentence in which two or more independent clauses are joined together with a conjunction (and, but, or, for, yet) or a semicolon. For example, 'I am going home next weekend, but this weekend I have to work;' or 'I am going home next weekend; this weekend I have to work.' This type of sentence is generally used when both ideas of the sentence are of equal importance.
- **Complex Sentence:** A complex sentence is a type of sentence in which at least one dependent clause is combined with at least one independent clause by subordination. For example, 'Although I am very homesick, I will not be going home this weekend'. This type of sentence is generally used when information in one part of the sentence is perceived to be subordinate to or less importance than the other. For example: 'Because I have to work, I can't go home this weekend.' In this example, the fact of not going home is perceived as more important than the fact of having to work. These

sentences are characterized by words such as ‘that’, ‘which’ and ‘who’, which are used to join one clause with another.

Table 7.1

Basic units of a sentence

The following are the basic units of a sentence.

Basic Units of a Sentence							
Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Interjections	Pronouns	Prepositions	Conjunctions
Names of People, Places, Things Concepts:	‘Doing’ words:	Words that describe a noun:	Words that add to a verb:	Words that express emotions:	Words used in place of nouns:	Words related to nouns and placed before them:	Words that join two sentences:
For Example: Mother Rita Delhi Train Courage	For Example: to go to believe to have to be to walk	For Example: big box fat boy red house	For Example: ran fast ate slowly slept soundly	For Example: Wow! Oops! Ouch!	For Example: You Me Whom Yourself This Anybody	For Example: On At Under From About	For Example: And But Either

NOTES

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. What do you understand by the term 'phrase'?
2. How is dependent clause different from independent clause?

7.3 SENTENCE FORMATION

A sentence is defined as a collection of words which when put together convey a message. There are certain rules which govern the construction of a sentence. It is necessary to keep these rules in mind to create a content which is error free.

Rule 1—Rule of proximity: Words and phrases which modify the meaning of any word or phrase should be placed near to it. For example,

i. Incorrect: Wanted a governess for a child of above forty years of age.

Correct: Wanted a governess of above forty years of age for a child.

ii. Incorrect: Wanted a table for a man with carved legs.

Correct: Wanted a table with carved legs for a man.

Rule 2—Sentences should be logical: The meaning of any word or phrase used in a sentence should not make it contradictory. For example,

i. Incorrect: Towns and districts in the desert are uninhabited.

Correct: Regions in the desert are uninhabited.

ii. Incorrect: Stretch this barbed wire between each pole.

Correct: Stretch this barbed wire between two poles.

Rule 3—Ambiguous sentences are unacceptable: To ensure clarity in writing, ambiguity in sentences has to be avoided. There can be two sources of ambiguity:

i. Equivocation: When a word in a sentence has a double meaning. For example,

Incorrect: Fine for parking.

Correct: A fine will be imposed for parking.

ii. Wrong punctuation: When a writer uses incorrect punctuation marks.

For example, Could you please tell me how old Mrs Smith is?

The mentioned sentence can be punctuated in two different ways having two different meanings, for instance,

Could you please tell me how, old Mrs Smith is?

Could you please tell me how old, Mrs Smith is?

Rule 4—Incomplete construction: Sometimes some words in a sentence are omitted because their meaning is supposed to be implied in the earlier part. It results in a grammatical mistake. For example,

Incorrect: The walls have been painted and the floor cemented.

Correct: The walls have been painted and the floor has been cemented.

Incorrect: The present manager has been fired and new executives hired.

Correct: The present manager has been fired and new executives have been hired.

NOTES

Rule 5—Overstatements: Sometimes overstatements make the sentences illogical and hence, should be avoided. For example,

Weak sentence: Like all Indians, he is a hero worshipper.

Improved sentence: Like most Indians, he is a hero worshipper.

Rule 6—Remote antecedent: Sometimes a large number of words may be put as antecedent i.e. between a noun and a pronoun, verb and an adverb. This leads to confusion and should be avoided.

Vague sentence: The definitions given by the scholars have been memorised by the students. Only they know their significance.

In the above sentence ‘they’ may refer to students or to the scholars.

Improved sentence: The definitions given by the scholars have been memorised by the students. Only the students know their significance.

Rule 7—Tag questions: While writing sentences which include tag questions, it is recommended to keep the following points in mind:

- i. Use the pronoun given in the statement.
- ii. Use the verb used in the statement.
- iii. The tag question should be in the negative if the statement is in the affirmative, and affirmative if the statement is negative.

For example,

Incorrect: He did not get the gold medal. Didn’t he?

Correct: He did not get the gold medal. Did he?

Incorrect: He has come to office. Has he?

Correct: He has come to office. Hasn’t he?

Rule 8—Redundancies: Words and expressions which do not contribute to the total meaning of the sentence are called redundant words. They can be eliminated from a sentence as they make the sentence bulky and absurd. For example,

Incorrect: I saw the whole episode *with my own eyes*.

Correct: I saw the whole episode.

Some examples of redundant phrases we use and which can be avoided are as follows:

- i. Repeat again
- ii. Equally as

NOTES

- iii. Consensus of opinion
- iv. Different kinds
- v. Period of time
- vi. Refer back to
- vii. Return back
- viii. Widow woman

Rule 9—Faulty Parallelism: Parallel ideas should have parallel structures.

Incorrect: I like to swim, to eat, reading and sleeping.

Correct: I like to swim, to eat, to read and to sleep.

Rule 10—Use of Double Negatives: Avoid using two negatives in one sentence, as you will end up saying just the opposite of what you mean. For example,

Incorrect: Barely no-one noticed that I had a bad cold.

Correct: Barely anyone noticed that I had a bad cold.

Rule 11—Fragments: They are incomplete sentences that are punctuated to appear like sentences. They lack key elements, often a subject or a verb. For example,

Incorrect: She saw her coming. And looked away.

Correct: She saw her coming and looked away.

Rule 12—Run-ons: These jam together two or more sentences, failing to separate them with the appropriate punctuation. The solution is to edit the sentences into several short sentences. For example,

Incorrect: I do not recall what kind of a document it was all I remember is that I left it in the bus.

Correct: I do not recall what kind of a document it was. All I remember is that I left it in the bus.

7.3.1 Types of Sentences

We have already discussed the types of sentences. In this section, a more elaborate discussion has been given on the three main types of sentences.

1. Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is a sentence with one independent clause.

2. Complex Sentences

Complex sentences involve a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. The subordinate clauses are joined to the main clause by means of a subordinate conjunction such as **that, why, what, where, whether, if**, etc. If the subordinate clause is part of the main clause in the same way as a phrase, it is part of the sentence.

For example:

S	V	O
He	confessed	[his crime]
S	V	O
He	confessed	[that he had committed the crime]

NOTES

There are three types of subordinate clauses:

- Noun clauses
- Adjective clauses
- Adverb clauses

The classification of these clauses depends upon the function they play in the main clause.

3. Compound Sentences

Compound sentences are the sentences in which two or more main clauses (i.e. equal clauses of equal rank) are conjoined by means of coordinating conjunctions (such as and, but, or, so). The sentences also show how one clause is related (i.e. relationship of addition or contrast of choice) to the other.

The following instances discuss more about coordination in sentences:

- Two negative clauses can be joined by **and**:
 - I haven't gone to my village for the last four years, **and** I don't intend to go this year also.
- Use **or** instead of **and** if both the negative clauses have the same subject and the same auxiliaries:
 - He does not speak English **or** French.
 - I don't drink **or** chew tobacco as a matter of policy.
- Negative clauses can alternatively be linked by using **and**, **neither**, and **nor**: In such a case, an auxiliary verb (such as **be** or **do**) is placed before the subject:
 - I don't like sweets, **nor** do the rest of my family
 - He was not happy with the arrangements made in the party and **neither** were others.
 - He is not rich, **nor** is he poor.
- The conjunction and if it comes after an imperative sentence followed by a clause which contains a future tense verb, expresses a condition:
 - Pay me 200 and you'll have no trouble. It is the same as: If you pay me ₹ 200, you will face no trouble.
 - Leave now and you will be at the station in time.

NOTES

(e) Sometimes, a coordinate conjunction is followed by another coordinate conjunction:

- She was rich and yet not happy.
- The college was closed and so I could not collect my certificates back from the clerk.

The following are some instances of differences between complex and simple sentences:

Table 7.2 Differences between Complex and Simple Sentences

Complex Sentences	Simple sentences contained therein
This is the house that Jack built.	There are two verbs, which creates two simple sentences: (i) This is the house. (ii) Jack built the house.
This is the cat that lived in the house built.	There are three verbs, which gives us that Jack three simple sentences: (i) This is the cat. (ii) The cat lived in the house. (iii) Jack built the house.
This is the cat that chased the rat house that Jack built.	There are four verbs, which creates that lived in the four simple sentences: (i) This is the cat. (ii) The cat chased the rat. (iii) The rat lived in the house. (iv) Jack built the house.
This is the dog that killed the cat that lived in the house that Jack built.	There are five verbs, so there are five chased the rat simple sentences: (i) This is the dog. (ii) The dog killed the cat. (iii) The cat chased the rat. (iv) The rat lived in the house. (v) Jack built the house.

7.3.2 Conditional Sentences

There are three types of conditional sentences in English language:

- Open condition
- Improbable/rejected condition
- Unfulfilled condition

The following are the instances of these types of sentences:

- If the bus reaches by 10 am, I will be able to reach the MREC by 11 am. (Open condition)

- If the bus did not break down, it would reach Jaipur by 10 am. (Improbable condition)
- (a) If I had started a day earlier, I would have already been in Jaipur. (Unfulfilled condition, with past consequence)
- (b) If the diamond merchant had not given me lift, I wouldn't be here. (unfulfilled condition with present consequence)

In the following section, a more detailed discussion on the types of conditional sentences are discussed.

Open Condition

Study the following sentences:

- If you work hard, you will pass the exam.
- If Ram goes to Agra, he will see the Taj.
- If Radha marries Krishna she will be happy.
- If I am called for the interview, I will be selected.

Notice the following points about the sentences:

If I **work hard**, **I will pass the exam.**

Conditional clause Result clause

The clause beginning with **if** is called the conditional clause and the main clause is called the **result clause**.

In the **if** clause, we use simple present tense and in the result clause, we use **it will + first form of the verb**.

In this respect, this type of clause is different from Hindi conditional sentences. In Hindi, in both the clauses, we use simple future tense.

Therefore, a word of caution is required for Hindi speakers using English. They should avoid using will + first form of the verb in the conditional clause.

Though the most common form to be used in this pattern is simple present + will /shall + first form of the verb, other tenses are also possible as illustrated by the following sentences.

- If you go past the post office, please post this letter for me. (Simple present + imperative)
- If your car is not working, you can use mine. (present continuous + can + first form of the verb)
- If you heat water at 100°C, it starts boiling. (simple present + simple present)
- If you leave now, you may reach by 10 am. (simple present + may + first form of the verb)
- I shall be grateful if you will do me a favour. (shall + first form + will + first form; shows polite request)

NOTES

NOTES

The *if* clause states a condition and if this condition is satisfied, the result will follow.

The time denoted by this type of conditional sentence is generally future.

Improbable/Rejected Condition

Improbable or rejected condition is also called 'doubtful' or 'hypothetical' condition. Look at the following sentences:

- i. If you worked hard, you would pass the exam.

Conditional clause Result clause

- ii. If a ghost came into your room, what would you do?
- iii. If I had wings, I would fly.
- iv. If I were the Prime Minister of India, I would make revolutionary changes in the field of IT.

Note the following points about this condition.

1. This condition is called improbable or doubtful condition. Look at the sentence (i) above. The teacher is doubtful about the student's working hard and hence he is also doubtful about his passing the exam. In (ii) it is improbable that a ghost would come into the room. Sentence (iii) states a hypothetical condition, which is unlikely to be fulfilled.
2. The tense used in the conditional clause is simple past and the tens: used in the result clause is would + first form of the verb. Other configurations are also possible with might, could, etc.
 - i. If you started earlier, you might reach in time. (You will perhaps reach in time.)
 - ii. If you worked hard, you could pass the exam. (You will perhaps pass the exam.)

The time denoted by this conditional type of sentence is future.

It is important to note the fact that these types of conditional sentence are not available in Hindi. Therefore, Hindi speakers using English often make a lot of mistakes.

Unfulfilled Condition

Look at the following sentences:

- i. If you had worked hard, you would have/could have passed the exam. (You did not work hard. You did not pass the exam.)
- ii. If he had helped her, she could have gotten the job. (He did not help her. She did not get the job.)
- iii. If I had known it before, I would have applied for the job. (I did not know it before. I did not apply for the job.)

- iv. If they had played well, they could have won the match. (They did not play well. They did not win the match.)

Note the following features about this condition:

1. This condition is called unfulfilled condition because the condition was not satisfied and hence the result did not follow. For example, the first sentence, shows that he did not work hard and hence, he did not pass.
2. In this type of sentences, we use had + third form of the verb in the conditional clause and would/could/might + have + third form of the verb in the result clause.

Sometimes, we see a variation in the form:

- a. If you had not given me a ride, I wouldn't be here. (present consequence of a past action)
- b. If you had not given me a ride, I wouldn't have reached the college in time. (past consequence of a past action)
3. This type of conditional sentence shows past time.
4. This type of conditional sentence has a negative meaning and can be paraphrased by 'not'.

If you had worked hard, you would have passed the exam.

(You did not work hard. You did not pass the exam.)

Exercise - 1

Put the verbs in the brackets in the following sentences into the correct form.

1. If you (not) work hard now, you (be) sorry afterwards.
2. If you (earn) 2 lac rupees, you (be able) to buy a car.
3. If you have a car, you (be able) to reach office in time.
4. I don't work hard. If I (work) hard, I (pass) the exam.
5. I don't like him. If I (like him), I (stay) with him in the same room.
6. I don't write letters to him. If I (write) letters to him, I (know) where he is.
7. If you (boil) water, it (start) evaporating at 100°C.
8. If your scooter (go) out of order, (use) my car.
9. I don't have a car. If I (have) a car, I (go) to office by car.
10. You seem to be poor. If you (be) rich, you (send) your kids to a good public school.
11. You 'seem to be weak. If you (be) strong, you (not cry) with pain like this.
12. I am not a rich man's daughter. If I (be) rich, I (distribute) all my wealth among the poor.
13. If I (have) the money, I would have bought a car.

NOTES

NOTES

14. If she had money, she (buy) gold ornaments.
15. I don't like wearing gold jewellery. If I (like) it, I (buy) it.
16. I have not seen a ghost till today. If I (see) a ghost now, I (scream) at the top of my voice for help.
17. This plant does not flower in winter. If it (flower) in winter, it (be) a pleasant spectacle.
18. He did not work hard. That is why he failed in the exam. If he (work) hard, he (not fail) in the exam.
19. He did not know how to drive. That is why he did not use a car. If he (know) how to drive, he (use) a car.
20. He did not know how to flatter the management. That is why he lost his job. If he (know) how to flatter the management, he (not lose) his job.
21. I don't like driving fast. If I (drive) fast, I (meet) with an accident.
22. I don't like his tactics. If I (like) his tactics, I (follow) his example.
23. He did not like wearing a dhoti. That is why he was wearing a pair of trousers. If he (not like) wearing a dhoti, he (wear) a pair of trousers.
24. I don't know how to interact with people. If I (know) they (come) to my room too.
25. He did not teach in the class. That is why his result was poor. If he (teach) in the class, his result (not be) so poor.
26. He was no longer popular. That is why his popularity graph declined. If he (be) popular, his popularity graph (not decline).

Exercise - 2

Complete the following sentences:

1. If you go to Kolkata
2. If you go to college by bus
3. If a ghost came into my room
4. If I had enough money
5.the result would be good.
6.the what would happen?
7.the plants would be fresh and green.
8. If you had attended the interview
9.the would have been selected.
10. If you go out of the room
11. If you happen to meet him

12. If he had posted the letter in time
13. If you served humanity
14. If you worshipped two hours every day
15. Look me up
16. If you were an MP,
17. If you win a lottery
18. If he had been brought up well
19. If you see a butterfly
20. If it is raining now,

Exercise - 3

Complete the following sentences:

1. If x-rays had not been discovered
2. If you believe in ghosts
3. If they offered him US dollar 1.5 lac
4. I shall never permit you to attend a Refresher Course if
5. If you think it is absolutely necessary
6. If he had not fallen in the pig sty
7. Oil floats if
8. If I met your friend in the street
9. If he wastes his time
10. If I had the sort of son people have these days
11. I'll consent as well.
12. If May had not gone to Italy.
13. If I won a lottery
14. If it rains tomorrow,
15. What will you do if
16. If many people board the boat
17. If a metro had been built in Chennai
18. Unless you are more careful
19. Would it affect your pension if
20. If I had known there was ginger in it
21. Hurry or else
22. Dial 007 if
23. He will not answer unless

NOTES

NOTES

24. If it had not been a hot day
25. If the driver had a nap
26. If you put salt in water
27. If he didn't smoke so much
28. If I pass this exam
29. The milk wouldn't have turned sour if
30. Should you lose your way
31. I would have been seriously injured.
32. you might succeed.
33. What would you do if
34. If he did not return
35. Remind him to phone me if
36. If you had gone to bed earlier
37. Unless he switches off the radio
38. The flight is generally postponed
39. They generally play football if
40. People earn a lot of money if they
41. He could buy a new car if they
42. If I were the Prime Minister, I
43. If the car hadn't broken down, we
44. If the policeman hadn't shown me the way, I
45. He could have never won his case if his lawyer
46. If I worked hard
47. If a ghost came into the room
48. I would have seen the Taj
49. you should have passed the exam
50. If I were rich
51. If you do not walk carefully
52. If you were to buy a car
53. Were they to arrive tomorrow
54. Had I known he would pass
55. Should you go past the college

Key to Exercise - 1

1. do not work, will be
2. earn, will be able
3. have, will be able
4. worked, would pass
5. liked, would stay
6. wrote, would know
7. boil, starts
8. has gone, use
9. had, would go
10. were, would send
11. were, would not cry
12. were, would distribute
13. had had
14. would have bought
15. liked, would buy
16. saw, would scream
17. flowered, would be
18. had worked, would not have failed
19. had known, would have used
20. had known, would not have lost
21. drove, would meet
22. liked, would follow
23. had not liked, would have worn
24. knew, would come
25. had taught, would not have been
26. had been, would not have declined

Key to Exercise - 2

Note: Other alternatives are possible

1. bring a pair of goggles for me
2. take a bus pass
3. I would chant "Hanuman Chalisa"
4. I would buy a car

NOTES

NOTES

5. If I taught well
6. If you kicked the dust
7. If he watered the plants
8. you would have been selected
9. If they had called him for the interview
10. switch off the lights
11. don't forget to tell him that I still cherish him
12. he would have received it in time
13. God would reward you
14. all your sins would be over
15. if you happen to come this side next time
16. what would you do?
17. what would you do with the money
18. he would have behaved nicely
19. don't catch it
20. don't go out

Key to Exercise - 3

1. many people would have died of deadly diseases
2. you will be called anachronistic
3. he would buy a decent house in Mumbai
4. you don't finish your course in time
5. you should do it
6. he would not have broken his bones
7. you pour it on water
8. I would recognize him
9. he will regret it
10. I would have disinherited him
11. if you agree
12. John would not have fallen in love with Catherine
13. I would buy a car
14. I won't be able to go to Kolkata
15. you win a lottery
16. the boat will capsize

17. the traffic situation would have been much better
18. you will harm yourself
19. you accepted this job
20. I would not have drunk it
21. you will miss the train
22. you are in trouble
23. you goad him
24. I would not have felt tired
25. he would meet with an accident
26. dissolves
27. he wouldn't be sick
28. I will go abroad
29. you had put it in the fridge
30. you must give me a call
31. If you had not saved me
32. If you worked hard y
33. you won a lottery
34. in time, I would be worried
35. he is in trouble
36. you would have woken up on time
37. I will not be able to concentrate
38. if visibility is low
39. the weather is line
40. are hard working
41. had money
42. would introduce free education up to secondary schools
43. wouldn't have been late
44. would not have reached here
45. hadn't helped him
46. I would pass the exam
47. I would scream loudly
48. If I had gone to Agra
49. if you had really worked hard
50. I would distribute my wealth among the poor

NOTES

NOTES

51. you will fall
52. which brand would you buy?
53. we should be unprepared
54. I would not have snubbed him d
55. give this message to the street vendor there

7.3.3 Characteristics of an Effective Sentence

In this section, we will discuss the main characteristics of an effective sentence. The following are the main qualities of a good sentence.

1. **Unity:** Unity is considered as a natural demand which a human mind looks for even in day to day life. Unity in case of a sentence means the way in which the content is presented in such a way that they will immediately feel to belong together. However, the concept of unity is easily achieved in case of simple sentence as these sentences are not complex in nature. It therefore, becomes a bit difficult to find unity in case of complex or compound sentences as two or more sentences are joined together to form a sentence.

There are certain guidelines which one can adhere to achieve unity in a sentence.

- One should not give any sort of introduction in a sentence which is not related to the main thought.
- One should avoid using incongruous ideas.

2. **Clearness and Coherence:** It is essential that a sentence should be simple so that it can be understood easily and there is no ambiguity. The following points should be considered while framing a sentence:

- One should not use participle phrases in which participle is suspended which means that it is without a subject.
- Comparative clauses should not be used too often in a sentence.
- One should arrange the words in a suitable manner so that there is no ambiguity in a sentence. It should be clear and precise.

3. **Emphasis:** Emphasis on a particular aspect makes the message clear and the purpose is explained appropriately. Emphasis is obtained in a sentence by highlighting, capitalising or italicising an important word. It can also be emphasised by changing the normal order of words.

However, linguists often suggest that the most common way to emphasis a concept is by changing the order of the words. It is important to keep in mind that it should not be repeated too often in a piece of writing.

Check Your Progress

3. What is a fragment sentence?
4. Give some examples of redundant phrases.
5. What are the three main types of subordinate clauses?

NOTES

7.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Phrase refers to a group of words that lacks either a subject or a predicate or both. For example, 'While at home' has neither a subject nor a predicate; and 'Sunlight in my study room' has no predicate.
2. Dependent clause comprises of a group of words which contains a subject and a verb but which cannot stand alone. On the other hand, independent clause consists of a group of words which have a subject and a verb and which can stand alone.
3. Fragment sentences are incomplete sentences that are punctuated to appear like sentences. They lack key elements, often a subject or a verb. For example, 'She saw her coming. And looked away'.
4. Some of the examples of redundant phrases are as follows:
 - a) Repeat again
 - b) Equally as
 - c) Consensus of opinion
 - d) Different kinds
5. The three main types of subordinate clauses are noun clauses, adjective clauses and adverb clauses.

7.5 SUMMARY

- A subject causes or receives action-person(s) or object(s). It is generally the first noun/pronoun/modifier in the sentence.
- A predicate indicates the action taken or received by the subject. It is a verb or contains the verb.
- A phrase is a group of words that lacks either a subject or a predicate or both.
- Clause is a group of words that have a subject and a predicate.

NOTES

- Dependent clause is a group of words which contains a subject and a verb but which cannot stand alone.
- Independent clause is a group of words which have a subject and a verb and which can stand alone.
- A compound sentence is a type of sentence in which two or more independent clauses are joined together with a conjunction (and, but, or, for, yet) or a semicolon.
- A complex sentence is a type of sentence in which at least one dependent clause is combined with at least one independent clause by subordination.
- A sentence is defined as a collection of words which when put together convey a message.
- To ensure clarity in writing, ambiguity in sentences has to be avoided.
- Sometimes some words in a sentence are omitted because their meaning is supposed to be implied in the earlier part. It results in a grammatical mistake.
- Sometimes a large number of words may be put as antecedent i.e. between a noun and a pronoun, verb and an adverb. This leads to confusion and should be avoided.
- Words and expressions which do not contribute to the total meaning of the sentence are called redundant words.
- There are three types of conditional clauses which are open condition, improbable condition and unfulfilled condition.
- The clause beginning with if is called the conditional clause and the main clause is called the result clause.
- Improbable or rejected condition is also called 'doubtful' or 'hypothetical' condition.
- Unity in case of a sentence means the way in which the content is presented in such a way that they will immediately feel to belong together.
- However, the concept of unity is easily achieved in case of simple sentence as these sentences are not complex in nature.
- It is essential that a sentence should be simple so that it can be understood easily and there is no ambiguity.
- One should not use participle phrases in which participle is suspended which means that it is without a subject.
- Emphasis on a particular aspect makes the message clear and the purpose is explained appropriately.
- Emphasis is obtained in a sentence by highlighting, capitalising or italicising an important word. It can also be emphasized by changing the normal order of words.

7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Sentence:** It is defined as a collection of words which when put together convey a message.
- **Compound sentence:** It is defined as a type of sentence in which two or more independent clauses are joined together with a conjunction (and, but, or, for, yet) or a semicolon.
- **Complex sentence:** It is defined as a type of sentence in which at least one dependent clause is combined with at least one independent clause by subordination.
- **Redundant words:** It is defined as those words and expressions which do not contribute to the total meaning of the sentence.

NOTES

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is the subject in a sentence?
2. How is phrase and clause different from each other?
3. Differentiate between simple and complex sentence.
4. List the characteristics of an effective sentence.
5. What are the points to be kept in mind while using tag questions?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the rules related to the concept of sentence formation with appropriate examples.
2. Explain the three main types of conditional clauses.
3. Analyse the essential qualities of an effective sentence.
4. What is a subject and predicate of a sentence? Give examples.
5. Discuss the three main types of sentences in detail.

7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 8 PARAGRAPH WRITING

Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Paragraph writing
- 8.3 An Introduction to Essay Writing
 - 8.3.1 Essay writing: Steps Involved
- 8.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Key Words
- 8.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 8.8 Further Readings

NOTES

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Paragraph is defined as group of sentences which convey an opinion or an idea. An essay consists of various paragraphs. Each paragraph helps to build the entire concept which a writer wants to express. It therefore, becomes necessary that a writer should give equal importance while preparing an essay and a paragraph. This unit will explain the elements of a paragraph and characteristics of a good essay.

There are many types of essays such as descriptive, narrative, reflective and imaginative. It is the decision of the writer to decide the appropriate form of the essay so that his or her idea is conveyed properly. The various types of essay and the steps involved while writing an essay have been explained in this unit.

In this unit, the concept of paragraph and essay writing has been explained. The basic requirements while writing a paragraph has also been highlighted. A writer should know about the various steps involved in essay writing as it will help in giving a definite structure. The unit will discuss about such steps and will help one to understand about the ways in which the message can be explained in an appropriate form.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of paragraph writing
- Analyse the main elements of a paragraph
- Identify the characteristics of a good essay
- Explain the types of essay
- Interpret the steps involved in essay writing

8.2 PARAGRAPH WRITING

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A paragraph can be defined as a group of sentences that expresses a single idea, supported by facts, evidences, examples, anecdotes and quotations. Paragraphs primarily indicate the beginning and end of a new idea to the readers. Thus, it helps the readers in assimilating the contents in an organized manner without much difficulty. In paragraph writing, therefore the writer can develop just one idea. When one is writing something longer like an essay or a report, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade. Often in exams we are asked to write a paragraph on a particular topic. One should remember here that there is a difference between writing an essay and writing a paragraph. Whereas, in an essay, there can be many paragraphs, but in paragraph writing all the things have to be presented in such a manner that they should fit in within a paragraph.

Usually the topics of paragraph writing are such that the writer does not need to write more. Therefore, one should learn to write in a concise, clear and logical manner, if one intends to effectively present one's idea in a paragraph. Once one learns to write good paragraphs, he or she immediately learns how to write good essays as an essay consists of many paragraphs.

One should remember here that writing good paragraphs is essential for at least two reasons:

- A paragraph deals with a single idea; therefore it is essential that we learn how to be focused in our writing and not deviate from what is intended. So when one learns to write a good paragraph, one actually learns how to focus on a single topic and write, rather than deviate from the topic and beat around the bush.
- It makes the writing more readable and the reader can easily figure out that a new idea has been introduced.

Exhibit 8.1 Sample paragraph

The Information Revolution

Industrialized economies are gradually changing into 'information economies' as the shift has happened in the 1970s and 1980s due to the social, economic and technological changes that took place during those decades in advanced industrialized societies. The social changes included the entry of entertainment media and computers in home and the growth of the telecommunication industry which made it possible to work from home. The divisions between the home and factory started breaking down as the main work of telecommuters was gathering, processing and storing information with the help of personal computers. Thus as far as the economy is concerned, more workers are now involved with information related industries, such as travel, tourism, hospitality, banking, insurance etc; than the production of commodities for a mass consumer market. Due to

such technological changes some social and economic changes were brought about by the integration of telecommunications, mass media, and computers. And as a result greater flexibility, greater efficiency and lower costs became the motif of the business groups. In sum, today's world is on the way of becoming information centered societies. Therefore some sociologists believe that an 'information revolution' is taking place which is a complete break from the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. Revolution is surely on the way.

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Different Elements of a Paragraph

The main elements of a paragraph are discussed in the following section.

1. Topic Sentence

The first sentence in a paragraph is usually known as the topic sentence and it introduces the main idea of the paragraph. In other words, it is a sentence in which the main idea of a paragraph is summarized so that the readers can figure out what they can expect in the rest of the paragraph. Though it is not always true, as the topic sentence can also be elsewhere in the paragraph, depending upon the demand of the writing.

The following points should be kept in mind while writing the topic sentence:

- The topic sentence is the governing sentence of the paragraph. The whole paragraph should revolve around the topic sentence.
- In most cases, the topic sentence is not about just stating a fact; but it is about a point of view. A point of view that the writer is about to develop in the rest of the paragraph.
- Every sentence in the paragraph should support / uphold / hold / go on to prove / analyse/explain/annotate the topic sentence.

2. Supporting Sentences

Supporting sentences are sentences which support or uphold the topic sentence and make the body of a paragraph. The supporting sentences support by providing facts, details and examples to logically present the argument presented in the topic sentence. One should keep in mind to provide specific details to show how the ideas are valid.

The following points should be considered while writing supporting statements:

- While stating facts, examples, studies and experts' opinions to be specific.
 - (a) Use the experts' names and other details.
 - (b) Examples should also be specific in terms of their names, places and dates and so on.
 - (c) Use specific numbers and dates.
 - (d) In case of scientific studies, explain in short how the study was done.
 - (e) Use vivid descriptions to provide details.

NOTES

- One should make sure that all the details provided in the supporting sentences are relevant; otherwise, the reader may lose interest and focus with unnecessary digressions.
- Try to explain things in detail so that the readers do not have to think too hard to figure out the significance.
- Supporting sentences should not be used to merely repeat your topic sentences in other words, but they should be the explanations, justifications, interpretations and analyses of the topic sentence.
- One should also make sure that all the supporting sentences are in a logical order.

3. Concluding Sentence

The last sentence of the paragraph is termed as the concluding sentence which is usually a review of the paragraph. It should emphasize on the main point or the topic sentence. It is advisable not to end the paragraph therefore with a quotation, but to end with your own words and idea; so that the readers know that you are giving your idea in the paragraph and not merely saying what others have thought and written.

Four Basic Things while Writing a Paragraph

1. **Unity:** By unity it means that all the sentences in the paragraph should deal with a specified idea, topic, argument or point of view. It should not seem that any sentence of the paragraph is redundant; in the sense that, without that sentence the paragraph would have made the same sense. The topic sentence of the paragraph should be the governing idea or the umbrella sentence according to which all the supporting sentences of the paragraph should be written. Moreover, the supporting sentence should provide details and discuss the topic sentence.
2. **Order:** Order in paragraph writing refers to the logical progression of ideas. Sentences which are randomly written on a particular topic will not make it a paragraph. This will be considered as random jotting and will not make any sense till they are joined together in manner that makes it sound like an argument. Therefore, it can be said that order is essential. For example, if you are narrating an incident then the order should be chronological; if you are presenting an argument or writing an argumentative paragraph then the arguments should be presented in order of importance. In other words, it can be said that order is the structure or organization of the sentences in a particular way so that the paragraph makes sense to the readers.
3. **Coherence:** Coherence makes any writing understandable to the readers. This means that the sentences within a paragraph must logically connect to each other so that when one reads the paragraph he or she gets the notion of the paragraph as a whole. Most significant aspect in bringing about

coherence in a paragraph is by using transition words which connect one sentence with another. Some of the examples of transition words are as follows:

- Show order (first, second, third)
- Spatial relationships (above, below)
- Logic (furthermore, in addition, in fact).

Moreover, it is also significant that the whole paragraph is written from a single point of view and a tense which is consistent. Such as, if the paragraph has begun with past tense then the whole paragraph should carry on with past tense and there should not be a mix of tenses.

4. **Completeness:** An idea or an argument should be fully developed within a paragraph. In other words, the topic sentences should be justifiably given supporting sentences for the topic sentence to stand upright.

The Role of PR in Customer Satisfaction

Public Relations (PR) plays a very important role in the private sector as it establishes contact with the important sections of the public – its customers, its stock holders and its employees. Securing the mutual understanding and co-operation of these groups is essential to success. Moreover it helps in promoting the company's services and products in a highly competitive market. Relations with customers depend very much on the quality, price and delivery time, but also very directly on the reputation of the company. Public relations can play a vital role in safeguarding a reputation or in building a new public image. It can also do valuable work in improving methods of communication with existing and potential customers. PR is an aid to marketing all along the line, right from the stage of planning of a new product to its effective selling. The PR manager can evaluate customer's attitude towards a product and provide valuable lines to the marketing department so as to enable it to take corrective action and to decide about the continuation, modification or dropping of a particular product or service. The objective of PR is to win the customers' goodwill on a long term basis. The PR department should also be fully alive to the customers' complaints. Though the individual complaints are normally handled by the complaints department, but the PR manager has to be closely involved in this work as it affects the image of the organization. He should also initiate prompt action in the complaints voiced by the media. Even in the case of groundless and frivolous complaints the PR manager should write a polite letter to the customer. If the complaint is true, it is advisable to tender an apology and replace or repair the product. It is necessary to the PR manager to make a concerted effort in operation with the production and marketing departments to project a new product or a new service. This can be done through features in house journals, by bringing out folders, brochure etc.

NOTES

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. How is essay writing different from paragraph writing?
2. Why is it advisable to end the paragraph in one's own words and ideas?

8.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO ESSAY WRITING

In this section, we will discuss about the concept of essay writing.

Effective Writing Skills

Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message. Barbara Tuchman, a well-known historian, has very aptly said that though effective communication needs both a sender and a receiver, this process can become more successful if the writer (who is the sender in this case) keeps the written form (the message) simple, concise and brief.

Effective writing does not happen just on its own. It is a skill which needs to be cultivated. In other words, it involves the practice of following what is commonly called ABC, i.e., Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity. Accuracy here means use of correct facts and figures, language and tone. Brevity refers to the ability to express oneself in a few words, leaving out unnecessary details. Clarity refers to the expression of thought in a clear and simple language.

Since the success of communication, to a large extent, depends on the receiver and how he responds to the message, recognizing the needs, expectations, fears and attitudes of the receiver/s is very essential. In written communication, the feedback is delayed and the receiver cannot immediately clarify his doubts in case of an unclear message. Therefore, getting our written communication right becomes a matter of prime concern.

The most important task for effective writing is to identify and determine the purpose of communication. The purpose of written communication, as communication in general, is two-fold—to inform and to persuade. Informative writing presents information and is expository in nature. Its purpose is to disseminate knowledge, i.e., to educate and not to persuade. Therefore, maintaining maximum objectivity is very essential. Persuasive or argumentative writing aims at convincing the readers about a matter. It expresses opinions rather than facts.

Effective writing skills, therefore, includes steps such as planning before writing, identifying the purpose of writing, considering the needs of the audience, choosing appropriate language and effective tone. The ability to communicate a message in a simple, concise and accurate written form makes a person's writing skills effective.

Characteristics of a Good Essay

A good essay must have the following qualities:

1. **Unity:** Unity is the first principle of a good essay. It means that the essay must develop a single idea with a definite purpose. Though the idea must be dealt with in a variety of ways and from different points of view, but all unnecessary details must be excluded.
2. **Order:** The essay should be so ordered in a logical sequence so that it comes to a definite conclusion. Thus, planning the structure is important so that thoughts flow in an order without being haphazard and unorganized.
3. **Brevity:** Though the length of an essay depends on the nature of the subject, it must be brief, direct in style and expressed precisely.
4. **Style:** An essay has a literary value. Hence, the style of an essay must be dignified and formal. Colloquial terms, slang words and informal expressions that are non-conventional must be avoided as far as possible. The language used should be simple, clear and direct without any attempts at unnecessary embellishments.
5. **Personal touch:** An essay reflects the personal feelings and opinions of an individual. Therefore, it must give expression to his unique individuality. One must not be afraid to express himself freely in an essay. The personal touch can be given despite maintaining one's objectivity.

Apart from the mentioned features, appropriate subject-matter, proper organization and powerful expression of thoughts make an essay effective.

Essay and its Types

There are mainly six types of essays which are explained in detail in the following section.

1. **Descriptive essays:** A descriptive essay includes the description of some person, place or thing. For example, mother, father, friend (person), Delhi, Bombay, the Taj Mahal (place), cars, aspects of nature like the sun, moon, etc. (thing). As the word suggests, a descriptive essay primarily focuses on specific details and facts pertaining to animate and inanimate things. One could describe a particular creature, or types of clouds. Describing places, buildings and objects, requires familiarity with the subject or close observation. The selection and arrangement of facts should highlight specific characteristics and if there is anything unique or special, one could mention it. A descriptive essay has many images and the tone is usually objective and impersonal. However, the writer's response to the subject he is describing is evident from his choice of words.
2. **Narrative essays:** Narration is extensively used in fiction. It consists mainly in the narration of some event, or series of events. Narrative essays will

NOTES

NOTES

include reflection and some imagination. It can be a historical story, biography of a great leader, incidents and accidents, a journey or voyage and a real or imaginary story. Narrative essays incorporate features of other styles of essay writing. While the primary emphasis is on narrating or talking about, 'recounting and relating' events in an orderly fashion, descriptive and reflective features are present. A narrative account of any historical event, individual or, episode has to be given in a logical and sequential manner. The narrative could be dramatically presented, but you have to keep an overall coherence in mind. Students thus, find it easier to write narrative essays.

3. **Reflective essays:** Reflection means pondering over a subject or idea. It can include qualities like heroism, honesty, patriotism, and socio-political issues such as education, corruption, democracy, philosophical and religious topics.

4. **Imaginative essays:** In an imaginative essay, the writer is required to put himself in someone else's shoes and visualize a situation or experience. For example, an essay on 'If I were the Prime Minister of India' or 'The autobiography of a cow' would be imaginative in nature. Imaginative essays are among the most interesting because the writer gives rein to his imagination and the essay is often characterized by wit, humour, originality. The writer has complete freedom to develop the topic in whichever way he wants to and the style can be personal and subjective. In an imaginative essay, you are visualizing a particular situation, which you may not have experienced, except imaginatively, for example, 'The day my father cooked dinner'. Such a situation may never have taken place, yet you can vividly imagine what might transpire if your father had to cook dinner. Imaginative essays are lively in tone, have an original perspective and are personal in expression.

Fictionalizing an episode and writing creatively about it, is also considered as an imaginative essay, for example, 'My summer holidays'. One can write about events that may not have actually taken place, but what you have imagined.

Imaginative essays are fun to write and students should be encouraged to use their imagination and express themselves.

5. **Expository essay:** An expository essay consists of explanation of a subject or topic. For example, institutions or occupations (parliament, farming), scientific subjects (global warming, evolution of man) and literary topics (nature of poetry, the plays of Shakespeare, the poetry of Keats). The word expository means 'to explain'. An essay that deals with the explanation of a particular process, for example, rain harvesting, an institution, (how legislative bodies function) or a natural phenomenon, (black holes in the universe) or the discussion of a particular text or style of writing, is classified as an expository essay. The writer attempts to explain why and how

something happens. Here, the writer is expected to demonstrate his familiarity with the subject, provide the necessary information, elaborate wherever possible. It is better to write in a linear, sequential manner and it is important to see that your material is well structured. For instance, if one is going to talk about rain harvesting, it is necessary to first explain the term, tell the reader what is required and go through a systematic process, so that the reader understands the entire process and the importance of rain harvesting.

6. **Discursive essay:** Quite often, an essay requires that the writer to discuss a particular subject and come to a conclusion, after examining the merits and demerits of the topic, for example, 'Attendance should be compulsory in a university'. A statement like this challenges a response. One has to be clear about your own view and structure the essay such that the body of the essay examines the arguments that eventually lead to the conclusion.

As far as possible, it is advisable to objectively state both sides and then proceed to your personal conclusion. An essay like this tends to be more analytical as both arguments and counter arguments have to be rationally debated and concluded with a statement or point of view.

However, they cannot be put into water tight compartments and some essays might include features of two or more types. For example, a narrative essay may contain descriptive elements and all essays will be more or less reflective.

Parts of an Essay

An essay consists of paragraphs arranged in a sequence. A paragraph is a group of sentences linked together to form a unit. Each paragraph deals with a single idea. In an essay, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade. As already mentioned, the sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph is called the topic sentence. It is also known as key sentence or theme sentence. The topic sentence can come anywhere in the paragraph, either at the beginning, middle or end. All the other sentences in the paragraph are explanations or illustrations of the topic sentence.

In a paragraph, the sentences are in cohesion, i.e., they stick together in unison. Coherence is also an essential requirement of a paragraph. Coherence means the clear and logical linking of ideas in a paragraph. Thus, each sentence should be well linked with the sentence that precedes and follows it. There should be unity in the sense that all the ideas contained within a given paragraph 'hang together' in a way that is easy for the reader to understand. When the writer changes the idea, he must begin a new paragraph. This helps the reader to go along with the writer's thoughts and flow of ideas. The reader knows that the writer is dealing with one main topic and the beginning of a new paragraph signals that the writer is moving on to a new topic. Consider the following example:

Employees' attitude at National Electric Company should be improved.
The workers do not feel that they are a working team instead of just individuals. If

NOTES

NOTES

people felt they were a part of a team, they would not misuse the tools, or deliberately undermine the work of others.

Management's attitude towards its employees should also be improved. Managers at National Electric act as though their employees are incapable of taking decisions or doing their own work. Managers treat workers like objects, not human beings.

In the above example, two ideas are discussed in separate paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the writer deals with the subject of employees' attitudes. The first sentence is the topic sentence and the other sentences are linked together in a logical sequence and are illustrations of the topic sentence. When the writer changes his idea from employees' attitudes to management's attitude, he begins a new paragraph. This new paragraph has a different topic sentence which is written in italics. The second paragraph, too, displays the features of cohesion, coherence and unity.

Now that we are familiar with the idea of a paragraph, let us discuss the different parts of an essay. An essay basically has three paragraphs, namely, introduction, description (or body) and conclusion. The body of the essay may have more than one or several paragraphs depending on the topic. Before the conclusion, there can be a transitional paragraph.

The introductory paragraph introduces the topic and familiarizes the readers with the main idea of the essay. It should be brisk and to the point. The purpose of an introductory paragraph is to supply sufficient background information and orient the readers with the subject matter. It may consist of a definition, or a quotation, proverb, a brief story or a general remark, leading up to the subject.

Description means the discussion of the topic in detail. It can include explanations and illustrations on the main idea. The length of the description will depend on the topic in question, but the description should be proportionate with each part getting the due weight. It should be to the point and the use of unnecessary words should be avoided. Words and phrases should be carefully chosen so that they match the subject matter and best express the ideas in mind. The sentences should be so framed that they are quite clear and forcefully explain the topic. The paragraphs should be well-constructed and should be related to one another according to the direction of the essay.

After the body, comes the transitional paragraph which anticipates the conclusion and prepares the readers for the end. The concluding paragraph stems directly from the description and must sum up the whole discussion. An effective and satisfying end to an essay is as important as an arresting beginning. An abrupt or feeble ending may spoil the whole effect of the essay. A good conclusion can include a suitable quotation or a striking sentence that would leave the readers satisfied.

The following essay will make clear the above discussion:

Consumerism has killed our Humanitarian Values

*Little Dorothy called her mother,
'Mama there's a penniless child,
His eyes filled with tears of hunger,
Why does no one feed him?'
'He's 'penniless' and 'hungry',
That's the very reason
They don't feed him,'
Replied she.*

NOTES

A round ivory bed covered with golden linen, a walk-in closet, mink blankets, marble floor, a personal Jacuzzi, a huge hall lighted with Swarovski chandeliers, an elaborate meal with the most exotic dishes from different parts of the world, vacations in Paris, Switzerland, Australia, a black 'ROLLS' (Royce), a huge clock that chimes every hour..... I open my eyes with a start as my alarm goes off, I wake up from my dream to face the stark reality of life. Each of us has been into a dreamland (at least once in a while) only to wake up and face reality.

Many of us are extremely brand conscious or rather 'brand freaks', but we forget that there are thousands who die of cold in the dark alleys of the city simply because they cannot wrap a single piece of cloth around their body. And all we do is pity them, but they do not need our pitiful glances. Where has all our compassion for mankind gone? Have we become so self-centered that we do not have a single tear in our eyes when we see penniless little creatures shivering in the cold?

We love going to fancy restaurants for a weekly dine-out. If our parents do not take us out on one Sunday evening, we become cranky and throw tantrums till they give in. But there are millions who cannot have even one square meal a day, countless people who starve to death and do not even have a respectable funeral.

Have you heard of concierge doctors? They are those doctors who tend to the 'needs' of wealthy people in town by paying them a home visit and treating them at home (even the most sophisticated machines are brought to their home), while there are people who die of undiagnosed diseases on the streets.

You would have heard the term 'Born with a silver spoon', it is then that I wonder why can we not, just collect the entire wealth of the world and distribute it equally amongst all the people? It is an absurd idea, but at the same time, it is a grotesque system which allows some people to have too much while many do not have enough.

In the above essay, the introductory paragraph introduces the concept of consumerism through the use of a metaphor. The next two paragraphs constitute

the description or body of the essay. The paragraph about the concierge doctors forms the transitional paragraph and marks a change towards the conclusion. The concluding paragraph aptly wraps up the whole essay.

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8.3.1 Essay Writing: Steps Involved

It is necessary that a proper outline should be prepared well in advance while writing an essay. It is important to understand the structure related to the process of writing and research about the content too. A person writing an essay should know about the idea which has to be presented. There are some essential steps which can be followed while writing an essay and are discussed in this section.

- **Outline:** If a topic has been decided, one has brainstormed about the topic; it becomes necessary then to frame an outline of the essay. It allows a writer to decide the main points of the essay which have to be highlighted and to finalise the sequence of the various paragraphs. It is like a map for the writer which will help her or him to go in a right direction. It not only helps to work in the right direction but saves time too.
- **Layout:** After preparing an outline, a layout has to be prepared. An essay should comprise of an introduction, body and a conclusion. If a person includes these points while writing an essay, it will emerge out as an organized essay. The structure of the essay should be clear and should be to the point. The structure of the essay could be thematic, chronological or comparative.
- **Content:** An essay is described as a piece of writing which informs the reader about a particular topic. The essay must include important points so that the reader gets an appropriate idea about the topic. The content is the main point which has to be worked on diligently as it imparts your ideas or opinions to the reader.
- **Drafting:** Drafting is defined as a stage in which a person develops the first version of his ideas and opinions. The first draft should comprise of the following elements:
 - a) An introduction which should create an interest in the readers and motivates them to keep reading.
 - b) A topic statement which presents the main objective of the essay.
 - c) Supporting sentences should be written in such a way that the main objective is explained in a clearer manner. It should add more information to the main idea.
 - d) Conclusion which should reinforce your idea and should leave a lasting impact in the minds of the readers.
- **Correction:** After preparing the first draft and doing research on your topic, a writer should review his or her work from a critical point of view. After reviewing it, he or she should make necessary corrections.

- **Final Draft:** After making the corrections, the first draft should be reworked on before presenting it to the readers. The final draft should be elaborated and the main idea should be provided in a clear and coherent manner. It should have a definite structure.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. State the most important task for effective writing.
4. Why are imaginative essays the most interesting type of essay?
5. What is the purpose of an introductory message?

8.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. An essay is different from paragraph writing as in an essay, there can be many paragraphs. On the other hand, in paragraph writing all the things have to be presented in such a manner that they should fit in within a paragraph.
2. It is advisable to end the paragraph in one's own words and ideas so that the readers know that you are giving your idea in the paragraph and not merely saying what others have thought and written.
3. The most important task for effective writing is to identify and determine the purpose of communication.
4. Imaginative essays are the most interesting type of essay because the writer gives rein to his imagination and the essay is often characterized by wit, humour, originality. The writer has complete freedom to develop the topic in whichever way he wants to and the style can be personal and subjective.
5. The purpose of an introductory message is to supply sufficient background information and orient the readers with the subject matter. It may consist of a definition, or a quotation, proverb, a brief story or a general remark, leading up to the subject.

8.5 SUMMARY

- A paragraph can be defined as a group of sentences that expresses a single idea, supported by facts, evidences, examples, anecdotes and quotations.
- When one is writing something longer like an essay or a report, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade.

NOTES

- One should learn to write in a concise, clear and logical manner, if one intends to effectively present one's idea in a paragraph.
- The first sentence in a paragraph is usually known as the topic sentence and it introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
- Supporting sentences are sentences which support or uphold the topic sentence and make the body of a paragraph.
- The last sentence of the paragraph is termed as the concluding sentence which is usually a review of the paragraph.
- By unity it means that all the sentences in the paragraph should deal with a specified idea, topic, argument or point of view.
- The topic sentence of the paragraph should be the governing idea or the umbrella sentence according to which all the supporting sentences of the paragraph should be written.
- Order in paragraph writing refers to the logical progression of ideas. Sentences which are randomly written on a particular topic will not make it a paragraph.
- Coherence makes any writing understandable to the readers. This means that the sentences within a paragraph must logically connect to each other so that when one reads the paragraph he or she gets the notion of the paragraph as a whole.
- In other words, the topic sentences should be justifiably given supporting sentences for the topic sentence to stand upright.
- Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message.
- Effective writing does not happen just on its own. It is a skill which needs to be cultivated.
- The purpose of written communication, as communication in general, is two-fold—to inform and to persuade.
- Effective writing skills, therefore, includes steps such as planning before writing, identifying the purpose of writing, considering the needs of the audience, choosing appropriate language and effective tone.
- An essay reflects the personal feelings and opinions of an individual. Therefore, it must give expression to his unique individuality.
- A descriptive essay includes the description of some person, place or thing.
- Narration is extensively used in fiction. It consists mainly in the narration of some event, or series of events. Narrative essays will include reflection and some imagination.
- Reflection means pondering over a subject or idea. It can include qualities like heroism, honesty, patriotism, and socio-political issues such as education, corruption, democracy, philosophical and religious topics.

- An essay that deals with the explanation of a particular process, for example, rain harvesting, an institution, (how legislative bodies function) or a natural phenomenon, (black holes in the universe) or the discussion of a particular text or style of writing, is classified as an expository essay.
- A paragraph is a group of sentences linked together to form a unit. Each paragraph deals with a single idea.
- In a paragraph, the sentences are in cohesion, i.e., they stick together in unison. Coherence is also an essential requirement of a paragraph.
- The introductory paragraph introduces the topic and familiarizes the readers with the main idea of the essay. It should be brisk and to the point.
- Description means the discussion of the topic in detail. It can include explanations and illustrations on the main idea.

NOTES

8.6 KEY WORDS

- **Paragraph:** It is defined as a group of sentences that expresses a single idea, supported by facts, evidences, examples, anecdotes and quotations.
- **Topic sentence:** It is defined as the first sentence in a paragraph and it introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
- **Supporting sentences:** It is defined as the sentence which support or uphold the topic sentence and make the body of a paragraph.
- **Brevity:** It is defined as the ability to express oneself in a few words, leaving out unnecessary details.
- **Expository essay:** It is defined as an essay that deals with the explanation of a particular process or the discussion of a particular text or style of writing, is classified as an expository essay.

8.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Why is it necessary to write good paragraphs?
2. What are the points to be considered while writing the topic sentence?
3. List the four basic things while writing a paragraph.
4. Write a short note on the importance of effective writing.
5. State the purpose of written communication.
6. Why is informative writing expository in nature?

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Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the main elements of a paragraph.
2. Analyse the main characteristics of a good essay.
3. 'Effective writing does not happen just on its own. It is a skill which needs to be cultivated'. Elucidate the statement.
4. Discuss the main types of essay.
5. Assess the steps related to essay writing.

8.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - IV
OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

*Application for
Employment and
Curriculum Vitae*

NOTES

**UNIT 9 APPLICATION FOR
EMPLOYMENT AND
CURRICULUM VITAE**

Structure

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 Sending an application for Employment
- 9.3 Steps involved in preparing Curriculum Vitae
 - 9.3.1 Types of Resumes
- 9.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 9.5 Summary
- 9.6 Key Words
- 9.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 9.8 Further Readings

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Application letter is a type of letter which is written for a particular job and the skills related to that job are highlighted in it. A candidate can send an application letter through two modes that it through suomoto and in response. It is important that certain guidelines should be followed while sending out an application letter. The unit will discuss in detail about the concept of application letters and its two types.

A resume is defined as a brief account of a person's qualifications, professional skills and work experience. It is a way through which one has the opportunity to promote themselves to the organization concerned. In this unit, the steps involved in preparing curriculum vitae have been discussed. Its types and characteristics have also been highlighted.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the ways of sending an application for employment
- Discuss the steps involved in the preparation of a Curriculum Vitae
- Identify the essentials of a good resume
- Interpret the types of resumes

9.2 SENDING AN APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

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Having identified the job the candidate seeks, the next step is to send an application letter. Any organization which is sought after will be receiving hundreds and even thousands of application letters from candidates, often from various parts of the country and even abroad. The candidate sending the application letter should keep in view the likely enormity of such requests or responses faced by the organization and make every effort to get noticed or catch attention. The contents of the application letter apart, its packaging also makes a difference. There are any number of small details which can make a noticeable positive difference—good-quality paper, attractive presentation format, neat and error-free typing, good folding (if at all) and forceful sentences. Similarly, lack of attention to some details would mar the attention-grabbing value of the application form—shabby envelope, misspelling the name of the addressee or the organization, poor typing, illegible handwriting and pedestrian statements. Some relevant dos and don'ts have to be necessarily followed while sending the application letter and the relevant accompanying papers. Various points which have to be kept in view while sending an application letter are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Suo Moto or In Response

Application letters seeking jobs are essentially of two types—*suomoto* and in response. Application letters sent by an applicant *suomoto* (or suomotu) are those where the aspirant is sending the letter by choice and not in response to any specific advertisement or invitation. *Suomoto* means action done on your own without any formal request from anyone. For example, an engineer, soon after completing graduation sends out applications to a few engineering firms without waiting for advertisements. One is hopeful that the organization is offering opportunities in keeping with one's academic qualifications and extra-curricular activities. Similarly, an accounts clerk who has worked in a junior position for a few years has, by now, acquired additional qualifications and relevant experience in view of which the person now sends an application letter *suomoto* seeking an accounts officer position in another firm in the relevant industry. While sending such *suomoto* application letters, the candidates should make appropriate enquires, besides homework. Is the organization looking for or in need of candidates? Is the organization taking up new projects? Is the organization looking for candidates in specific functional and geographical areas? Is the candidate equipped with necessary qualifications and experience to fill the post? As far as possible, the application letter should try to identify a specific post or a functional area and not just seek any suitable post. When telephone calls are made to employers seeking job opportunities even though no jobs are advertised, such calls are called 'cold calls'.

NOTES

The second category of application letters relates to those sent in response to specific advertisements or announcements or invitations. Here the organization/ advertiser has already stated the details of the job offer, the required qualifications and experience, position in the hierarchy, emoluments, place of posting and methods of selection, and the candidates have to make sure that they qualify or meet the eligibility criteria. The application letters have to clearly state how he/she is suitable for the post advertised. These application letters are not always sent directly to the organization. Quite often, the organization keeps its identity confidential and hence, the advertiser would want the application letters to be sent to a specific post box address. In some cases, the selection process may be entrusted to an external recruitment agency or consultancy firm, in which case the application letters have to be addressed accordingly. In sending these application letters, the candidates should strictly abide by the stipulated conditions listed in the advertisement—where and by which date to send the application, the number of pages and size of the paper, essential details to be furnished and whether testimonials need to be enclosed. In some cases, like government and public sector organizations, there would be printed application forms, often available for a fee, and the same have to be obtained, filled in and submitted as directed.

Covering Letter

Application letters are often accompanied by short covering letters. Covering letters, also referred to as cover letters, are often sent along with a job application or a resume. Application letters have to cover all relevant details as called for, or as are necessary to bring out the candidate's strengths and merits. As a result, the letter becomes somewhat detailed. The covering letter comes in very handy and has to be specific and attractive. It could be typed on the letterhead of the candidate or any other good-quality paper to make it elegant. While the covering letter has to be properly addressed to the right person, department, advertiser or post box, the contents have to be necessarily short and sharp.

Any application, as we have noted, quite often competes with numerous others for attention. The covering letter provides an opportunity to the job-seeking candidate to make the application somewhat distinctive. Make it as appealing as you can. At least one should be careful that it should not be unattractive and ordinary looking.

We may have heard that 'first impressions matter', your covering letter is seen even before the addressee takes a look at your application and resume. Since first impressions matter much, it has to be taken seriously. In fact, the appeal and elegance of the covering letter can sway the prospective employers in your favour and get them interested in looking closely at your resume. The basic purpose of any covering letter is to highlight the candidate's strengths so as to call attention of the employer. The cover letter should cover the following points:

1. Should be duly customized and made job specific. A stereotyped letter cannot be a winner.

NOTES

2. Should clearly highlight your accomplishments and skills in bold fonts.
3. Should 'sell' you by ensuring that the highlights provided match the job requirements and arouse employer interest
4. Should be free from grammatical and typing errors.
5. Should be neat and elegant so as to catch attention.

Details to be Covered

An application letter presents the candidate's profile to the organization or the recruitment agency. In order to do that effectively, the application letter has to necessarily cover all essential details about the candidate. Exhibit 9.1 lists the key areas that a good application letter should cover.

Exhibit 9.1

1. Personal Details	Age Date of Birth Sex Address Languages Known
2. Academic Qualifications	Degree Specialization University Marks/Percentage
3. Extra-curricular Activities	Hobbies Interests Sports
4. Experience	Previous Jobs Positions Held Years of Work Job Profile
5. Job-related Achievements	Promotions Awards Recognition Training Special Assignments
6. Distinguishing Qualities	Interpersonal Skills/Team work Leadership Qualities Communicative Skills
7. References	Teachers/Professors Departmental Heads Heads of Institutions Other Prominent Persons
8. Your Strengths	Why You Are Suitable

Exhibit 9.2

Highlight Your Key Strengths

- Have worked as a purchase officer in a professionally managed construction company.
- Have 10 years of experience in teaching post graduate students of economics and commerce.
- Have secured distinction winning the gold medal in marketing management.
- Have captained the university cricket team for four consecutive years.
- Have acquired a high level of proficiency in French language.

- Try to highlight those qualities in your resume that match the job profile. Talk of that quality which the employer would be looking for. It may be academic distinction, your ability to get along with people, knowledge of regions and markets, capacity for sustained hard work, specialized training, and physical fitness, reading wide range of publications, medals and awards for study or work.

NOTES

You Are the Right Candidate

When you are seeking a job by sending an application and facing an interview, you are essentially trying to market or sell yourself. You will have to bring out your strengths, highlight your distinguishing features and underline all those qualities that make you particularly suitable for the job. Reiterate why you think you are the right candidate for the job. Some illustrations on highlighting your strengths are stated in Exhibit 9.2.

Update Regularly

The application letter should be updated on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that the latest details are furnished. If you were twenty-two years old in 2001, you would be twenty-four years old in 2003. If you had six years of experience, subsequently add two more years to it when you use it during 2003. If you added another degree or diploma, have undergone training, got married or your present emoluments have gone up, make sure that you update these details when you send your application or bio data. More importantly, vary the emphasis or focus depending upon the post. If you are applying for the post of an officer as well as a clerk, try to vary the emphasis. Similarly, what you highlight for an operation-oriented job would be different from what you emphasize for a research job or a teaching job. In the former, you focus more on your result-oriented or strategy-oriented skills, whereas in the latter case, you talk more about academic strength and publications. One should avoid straitjacketing.

Survey Report

Work Monitor Survey

Social skills and digital literacy are becoming major ‘must-haves’ for new age employees, says the newly released Randstad India’s latest global Workmonitor Survey 2013, a quarterly review that tracks job seekers’ confidence and provides a comprehensive understanding of the job market sentiment and trends relating to the employment market across 32 countries.

In India, 90 per cent of the job seekers expect their job requirements to be more demanding in the next five years. Further, more than 90 per cent of the employees surveyed in India believe that social skills and digital skills will become more important for their role.

(Source: Bangalore Mirror, December 5, 2013)

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Address to the Right Person

Having taken the initiative of preparing an application and covering letter providing all relevant details in an elegant eye-catching manner, the next step is to ensure that it is addressed to the right person or authority. When the candidate is responding to an advertisement, the address to which the application is to be sent should always be clearly stated. It could be a post box number, the recruitment agency, the selection board or any such stated authority. In contrast to this, in respect of application letters which is sent by the job seekers *suomoto* or on their own, extra care has to be taken to address the application/covering letter to the appropriate authority or the department. It may be the chief executive, the director (personnel), the chief of the personnel department or the specific departmental head. If it goes to the wrong person or the department, there is always the possibility that it may lie there without getting redirected to the appropriate person or department. Ascertain the right addressee for your application letter.

Endorsing Copies

Job seekers sending application letters must resist the temptation to send out multiple copies to the same organization. Sending the letter by courier, fax and e-mail to different departments repeatedly will certainly not help the cause of the candidate. As rightly observed by the Director of Human Resources for GE capital, Asia-Pacific, 'Sending multiple copies of your CV by e-mail and fax, re-sending it with additions and corrections, including multiple e-mail attachments and nagging the company with follow-up phone calls can do much to hurt your chances. It is a deduction of points even before you have a chance for an interview'. In most organizations, the entire process is often internally well streamlined such that other departments/functionaries receiving the application redirect the same to the personnel/HR department. Sending multiple copies to different departments would ultimately mean that all such copies finally end up with the same department, which obviously is to be consciously avoided by the job seeker.

Check Your Progress

1. State the basic purpose of a covering letter.
2. What are the two ways of sending application letters to the organizations?

9.3 STEPS INVOLVED IN PREPARING CURRICULUM VITAE

In this section, we will discuss the ways in which curriculum vitae can be prepared.

Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

A person's resume is probably the first and the most important employment related document. The right resume has the potential to open doors of opportunity. Every

NOTES

person looking for professional success should know how to make it work. A resume is what a candidate sends along with the job application letter. A resume usually accompanies the covering letter and presents all relevant details about the candidate. A resume is also referred to as bio data or curriculum vitae (CV). A resume or a CV is a short account of one's career and qualifications typically prepared by an applicant for a position. A resume is also understood as a personal datasheet that presents the academic qualifications, job-related experience, skills and strong points of a person seeking a job.

While preparing a resume, it is important to know what a good resume can achieve. A good resume helps project the person in proper light. It makes the first right impression on the employer. A good resume helps bring out the basic strengths of the individual in terms of academic achievements, job-related skills, attitude and aptitude and other relevant details in order to hold the attention of the receiver/ employer. A good, neatly prepared and a strong resume reinforces the candidate's confidence. It helps the candidate put his or her best foot forward. A good resume vies for attention and gets noticed. A good resume makes an impression even at a cursory glance. The demand and supply position in the job market being what it is, any application letter or resume competes with numerous others and only those prepared with care and elegance succeed in kindling the interest of the prospective employer. Above all, a good resume helps you get an interview call and move closer to getting the job you are seeking.

FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD

Resume Builder on Microsoft Website

In his book, *Business at the Speed of Thought*, the Chairman of Microsoft, Bill Gates makes the following observation about the resumes the company receives. 'We receive 600 to 900 resumes from job applicants every day by postal mail or via our resume builder on the Microsoft website. Seventy per cent of the resumes arrive electronically via e-mail or the web, up from 6 per cent two years ago and rising. A paper resume is scanned and converted into text that can go into the database. All resumes are electronically matched with the job positions within 24-48 hours of receipt.'

Essentials of a Good Resume

We have seen how crucial it is to have a good resume that gets noticed and takes the candidate closer to an interview call. Let us now look at various essentials to be kept in mind while preparing a good resume.

First and foremost, a resume will have to stand out in terms of its neatness. The presentation of details in the resume will have to be in an organized and orderly manner. Unless your handwriting is exceptionally good, it is desirable to get the resume neatly typed. Smudging, overwriting, uneven lines, ill thought out font variations and unwarranted folding will have to be eschewed. Use a good paper, pen, envelope and a superior format. Take care to do a neat job and avoid careless

NOTES

mistakes. A resume presents an outline and is not a detailed record. Therefore, instead of using lengthy sentences, it would be desirable to use short phrases.

One should remember that a resume has to create a favourable impression. It is the first opportunity you have to impress your prospective employer. The second essential for a good resume is adequacy or completeness. The resume should cover all relevant details about the candidate which the employer will be looking for and yet it should not be loaded with too many details. The recipient will most probably be looking at hundreds or even thousands of resumes and the candidate should try to make it easy to the reader by making it brief and focused. The desirable length of a resume would perhaps vary depending on the qualifications and experience of the candidate and the nature of the post applied for. Freshers and just out-of-the-university candidates may not have much to cover, as compared to those who have had varied exposure and experience over several years. In any case, the recipient would be comfortable with a resume that does not exceed about two to four neatly typed pages. If the resume is short and to the point, the more chances are there to get shortlisted.

Communication Clue

It is said that the thumb rule is that a resume should be of one page for those with less than 10 years of experience and an extra page for every additional 10 years of experience.

In preparing a resume, a candidate is advised to mercilessly leave out trivial or insignificant details about achievements. The resume writer has to resist the temptation to go overboard by packing the resume with too many details. Those who are just out of college may not have much to state in terms of experience and therefore will have to make a pitch in terms of their potential and employability.

Expert Speak: *Knock Them Dead Resumes*

Martin Yates, the author of the book, *Knock Them Dead Resumes* makes the following points about the resumes.

1. Your resume is the most financially important document you will ever own. When it works, the doors of opportunity will open to you.
2. First impressions are important. You have the right and obligation to package your professional experience to its greatest benefit.
3. Don't use all big and pompous words. Write short words in short sentences.
4. Keep a handy list of (key) words that help, such as critical thinking, time management, teamwork, creativity, leadership, integrity, professional values and emotional intelligence.
5. Your resume will get between five and forty-five seconds of initial attention. It should be easy on the eye.

Another requirement towards ensuring a good resume is accuracy of facts and figures. All details furnished in the resume should contain correct and updated

information about the candidate. Care has to be taken to mention correct dates and years, names of the institutions, organizations and designation. Equally important, spelling mistakes have to be carefully avoided. Whether it is the designation of the person or the name of the organization, correctness has to be ensured.

Re-check your resume and covering letter for any grammatical and spelling errors. Also, make sure that the dates and years are accurate. Make sure that the resume is updated to cover the latest developments. Honesty and sincerity are very important ingredients of any good resume. Be truthful about your qualifications and achievements. One should not lie and should project the natural self which is the real you. Any seasoned HR functionary, who keeps going through numerous resumes regularly, can easily detect an insincere and dishonest presentation of false facts and figures.

Any good resume should clearly bring out the strong points of the candidate. For doing so, the applicant should learn to look at the resume from the employer's standpoint. When a job is advertised, the employer is trying to fill up a specific vacancy or position. The position carries a certain job profile with its underlying needs. Every employer looks at the resume and tries to assess it in terms of meeting certain specific needs. The candidate's strength lies in highlighting one's own qualification, experience, skills and attitude such that it appeals to the prospective employer. Considering what the job demands, the candidate should endeavour to suggest how the candidate is equipped to add value to the job. Obviously, no employer would be keen on just offering you or anybody a job. At the same time, every employer would be keen on getting the right candidate or ensuring the right fit for the vacant post. Are you Mr Right or Ms Right? If so, try to highlight it in your resume.

Finally, make sure that the resume is appealing and distinctive. It is recommended that one should not use a standard pattern. Be imaginative, in terms of letterhead, presentation style, and statement of objectives or understanding of employer needs. Fine-tune the presentation keeping in view the nature of the organization and the job expectations. The manner of presentation will vary depending on whether it is a public sector undertaking or a multinational company, whether it is a marketing job or an accounts job and whether it is an academic job or an administrative post. In fine-tuning your resume, use keywords that go well with the job description. Use language specific to the industry or functional responsibility. At the same time, give your resume a personal touch. Take your time and make it a thorough job. Make sure that all the vital contact information such as name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address are furnished prominently on the top right-hand corner of the covering letter/resume. Gather and present all relevant details in a clear, correct, honest and visually appealing manner. There are indeed many ways in which resumes can be presented by job seekers. The candidate has to use discretion in selecting the details to be covered and the headings to be used.

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In deciding the length of the resume, sequencing of data, choice of headings and emphasis on strengths and achievements, the candidate should be guided by: what the advertiser specifies, nature and level of the position, degree of competition and the level of qualification and experience of the candidate. If the occasion demands a one-page bio data rather than a detailed resume, the candidate should take care to condense the resume and present the most significant details within one page. On the other hand, where the application is for a senior position or where it calls for a relatively high level of academic or research achievements, the resume needs to cover the details in a more elaborate manner. Similarly, when the candidate is fresh out of the university or without much job experience, academic achievements and other relevant features will have to be duly highlighted.

Exhibit 9.3

Right and Wrong

Quite often, the candidates make mistakes while mentioning the names of addressees or organizations. Make sure you address it to the right person and mention correct names. Avoid the Wrong ones and ensure the Right ones.

Wrong

The Personal Manager

The CMD

Right

The Personnel Manager (proper designation)

The Chairman and Managing Director (no abbreviation)

Right and Wrong

Quite often, the candidates make mistakes while mentioning the names of addressees or organizations. Make sure you address it to the right person and mention correct names. Avoid the Wrong ones and ensure the Right ones.

Wrong

The Personal Manager

The CMD

The Director

Or

The Vice-President

Rebok India

Axes Bank

The Administrative Officer

IIT, Chennai

Right

The Personnel Manager (proper designation)

The Chairman and Managing Director (no abbreviation)

The Director (Finance)

The Vice-President – Human Resources (be specific)

Reebok India

Axis Bank

The Administrative Officer

IIT, Madras (correct name of the organization)

FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD

Tips From Industry Experts

These are some tips from the experts in the field on how to make your resume eye-catching and reader-friendly.

1. Clearly mention your name, email ID, phone number and address on the top of your resume. Write your name in bold fonts without making it glaring.
2. Do not forget to mention your correct email ID. Avoid using email IDs such as *funnygal@...com*, *naughtyboy@...com*, etc. which sound unprofessional.
3. As far as possible, choose the reverse chronological order format. Start with the latest job, qualification, etc. and go backwards.
4. Use business-like fonts such as Times Roman, Arial or Verdana. Avoid using several fonts and stick to one font throughout.
5. The font size may vary and be higher for highlighting and captions, but for the main body keep the size between 9 and 11 points.
6. Use single line spacing to make your resume reader-friendly. Double line spacing will make your resume look lengthy.
7. Make use of bullet points under each heading when you have to list out several items.
8. Keep your text aligned to the left.

While updating a resume, one should re-write it and add new experiences, qualifications and accomplishments. One should constantly update your resume with new additions. In doing so, however, do not take the easy way and make hand written additions and alterations. This shows carelessness and makes your resume shabby and half-hearted. One should not give the impression of being lazy, clumsy and lacking in enthusiasm. You should submit a new print which looks fresh, neat and professional. The impression it creates is worth the extra effort you put in. As already noted, resumes should be customized depending upon the job requirements. For that purpose, the job applicant should emphasize those facts and accomplishments which are particularly relevant for the particular job.

As one moves up the career ladder and gains varied exposure and experience, one would have acquired substantial values which have to be imaginatively packaged in the resume. Whichever format or style the candidate uses, it should clearly bring out the strong points. While bringing out the academic qualifications, all significant achievements, such as ranks, scores and grades as well as merit scholarships, if any, will have to be properly highlighted. On the other hand, if the grades or scores are not very impressive, the candidate should underplay them without resorting to conspicuous omissions.

*Application for
Employment and
Curriculum Vitae*

NOTES

NOTES

9.3.1 Types of Resumes

Resumes are prepared in different formats. Broadly speaking, they may be chronological or functional, or a combination of these two. Chronological resumes present the details in a historical order, in a timeline. They follow a linear approach. Traditionally, they would proceed in a progressive manner starting with the early history or beginnings and move on to the current position. The more common approach, however, is the reverse chronological resume, where you start with the latest or present position and move backwards. Chronological resume is desirable when the person has progressed gradually over a period of time. Functional resumes do not follow any timeline approach and instead focus on skills and responsibilities. A functional resume is also referred to as a skill-based resume. Functional resumes are useful when several skills have been acquired or several positions held within a short period of time. The combination resume follows a mixed approach highlighting skills and experiences and also providing work experience during different periods. Depending upon the length of experience, career advancements, academic study, skills, achievements and responsibilities, the type of resume should be decided.

The headings or captions under which details are furnished could be many and varied. While some of them covering personal details and academic qualifications would be common to most of the resumes, the other headings may or may not be relevant, depending upon the age and experience of the candidate and the nature and responsibilities of the post.

Make a list of all the things which you want to include in your resume. Before you start writing your resume, it would be a good idea to put together all relevant aspects about yourself. Start from the beginning and move up to your latest position. The list you draw up should cover:

- Academic achievements including the schools and colleges attended
- Areas of study and specialization
- Marks scored, grades achieved and distinctions, if any
- Extra-curricular activities and sports
- Computer skills
- Languages known
- Hobbies and special interests
- Special studies and courses taken
- Employment details and work experience
- Career related contributions and achievements
- Core competencies
- Skills and expertise acquired

- Technical competencies
- Professional education
- Professional accreditations, licenses and certificates
- Memberships and affiliations
- Seminars and workshops attended
- Awards and honours
- Publications, papers and research
- Consultancy and speaking assignments
- Prominent training programs and institutions
- Hobbies and interests
- Personal details and contact address
- Community service and
- References.

Career related contributions and achievements would find expression in the resumes as follows:

- Have brought new high value/ corporate customers
- Have introduced several cost-cutting measures
- Have contributed to improvements in productivity and operational efficiency
- Have developed a product development team
- Have contributed research papers to prominent journals
- Have trained several batches of new recruits.
- Have led a team of software developers

This attempt at drawing up an exhaustive list ensures that nothing of importance is left out. Of course, the number of items to be included from this list for each candidate would vary depending upon the level of experience, professional standing and breadth of accomplishments. This wealth of information would certainly help in picking up relevant items and customizing the resume keeping in view the job description. Further, a comprehensive list prepared and kept ready would also be helpful in preparing application forms and also while preparing for the interview. This list acts as a worksheet. In preparing the final resume, however, the communicator should pick up only relevant details, rearrange the order and priorities, convert facts into accomplishments/ substance statements and highlight the most important ones.

A word of caution in this context about personal details is essential. Although in the Indian context, the resumes provide personal details such as age, date of birth, marital status and so on. However, in some countries, such details are to be avoided. For example, if the resume is meant to be used in applying to a position

NOTES

NOTES

in the USA, such details have to be omitted. Essential facts such as email address, mailing address and contact numbers, and other professionally relevant details should be included in the resume. It is also worth noting that in the U.S, even during the interviews, the interviewers refrain from asking questions about age, marital status and religion.

A suggested list of captions or headings appropriate for resumes in general is given below:

1. Personal details
2. Academic qualifications
3. Academic distinctions
4. Work experience
5. Areas of specialization
6. Career-related achievements
7. Seminars and workshops
8. Papers and publications
9. Membership of boards and committees
10. Guest faculty
11. Consultancy
12. Computer/Technical skills
13. Languages known
14. Marital status
15. Hobbies and interests
16. References

In the mentioned paragraphs, we have looked at the various captions or headings under which relevant details have to be covered in the resumes. In the following pages, we will be presenting illustrations on how relevant details may be presented under each one of the above captions.

Exhibit 9.4

Personal Details

Name	Amit Khanna
Date of Birth	20 December 1990
Age	27 years
Nationality	Indian
Present Position	Reader
Department of Economics	Christ College
	Ambedkar Road, Coimbatore 641018

Residential Address 27, Devaki Apartments
 Ramaswamy Road
 R.S. Puram,
 Coimbatore 641002.

Contact Details Email: akhanna1990@gmail.com
 Tel: 0422-3613052
 Mob: 988844 32132

*Application for
 Employment and
 Curriculum Vitae*

NOTES

Personal details: Personal details to be covered in the Resume/Bio Data include the name, age, date of birth, nationality, present position, residential address and contact details (Exhibit 9.4).

Academic qualifications: Academic qualifications may be mentioned either in the chronological order or from the latest backwards. Similarly, the grades and percentages may or may not be stated. Different illustrations are given in Exhibit 9.5

Exhibit 9.5

Academic Qualifications

Academic Qualifications (Chronological)	BA (Hons) Economics	I Class
	Delhi University	
	MA (Economics)	II Class
	Punjab University	
	Bachelor of Laws	Distinction
Educational Qualification (Reverse Chronological)	Kurukshetra University	
	PhD in Economics	
	2008-2012	
	B.E. Instrumentation	
	R.V. Institute of Technology	65%
	Bengaluru	
	2006-2008	
	Pre-University Course	
	St. Aloysius College	71%
	Mangalore	
2006	SSLC	
	Mysore High School	88%
	Mysore	

Academic distinctions: This is an optional caption, in the sense that only those candidates who have something significant to highlight by way of academic distinctions may use this heading. Medals won, merit scholarships conferred and other such achievements may be highlighted. (Exhibit 9.6)

NOTES

Exhibit 9.6

Academic Distinctions

- Gold Medal for securing the Highest Marks in the BA (Hons) Exam.
- Chancellor's Medal for the Best Student in M.Com.
- Merit Scholarship awarded by the Allahabad University during M.Com.
- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Prize for Scientific Research
- Silver Medal for scoring the Second Highest Marks in LLB

Work experience: Any prospective employer would keenly study details under this caption. The resume writer should take extra care in presenting the details of work experience in an effective manner (Exhibit 9.7).

Exhibit 9.7

Period of Work (Key Phrases)

- Thirty years of experience in the field of education, research, training, consultancy and academic administration in reputed centres of higher education in India and Australia.
- Over 20 years of experience in banking and finance covering diverse operational, administrative and teaching assignments in the Indian Public Sector.
- More than eight years of experience in the area of selling consumer durables, out of which five years as Sales Head of a city branch.
- Have worked as a Professional Service Representative for two years for a multi-national pharmaceutical company in Chennai.

Work experience would normally cover the following details:

- Period of Work
- Functional Designation
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Present Position
- Career Highlights or Previous Positions

Exhibit 9.8

Present Position

Since June 2010 Principal, Aditya College of Commerce (ACC)
Bangalore University.

ACC is a well-established and renowned college offering both graduate and post graduate programmes in commerce, with over 600 students and 30 faculty members.

Baroda

In charge of marketing and distribution of the full range of pharmaceutical products covering Gujarat and Rajasthan. Overseeing 12 Professional Service Representatives and 4 Depot Managers.

*Application for
Employment and
Curriculum Vitae*

NOTES

Areas of specialization: Quite often, people specialize in specific areas or even geographical markets. The resumes should clearly bring out related strengths, especially when the post applied for demands specialization. Given below are two examples:

1. Specific functional areas
 - (a) Labour law
 - (b) Investment banking
 - (c) Economic journalism
2. Specific industries
 - (a) Ceramic industry
 - (b) Mutual funds
 - (c) Auto components
3. Specific regions
 - (a) South-East Asian markets
 - (b) South India
 - (c) Eastern Region
4. Specialized training
 - (a) Advanced Training in Commodity Futures
 - (b) Advanced Program on Asian Financial Markets

Exhibit 9.9

Career Highlights or Previous Positions

2009–2014	Vice-President – Corporate Clients, Perfect Advertising Pvt. Ltd. Bombay Mansions, Worli. Mumbai.
2005–2009	Executive – Client Servicing, Indus Advertisers, Brigade Towers, M.G. Road, Pune.
2003–2005	Sales Executive, Publicity and Event Makers, Apoorva Complex, Itwari, Nagpur.
2012–2016	Associate Professor. Business Communication Bhandari Institute of Management, Chandigarh.
2010–2012	Senior Lecturer, Department of Management, Kapoor College of Arts and Commerce, Ludhiana.
2007–2010	Administrative Assistant, Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi.

DOs and DON'Ts of Resume Writing

Dos

1. Make your resume stand out. Clearly bring out your strong points.
2. Your resume creates your first impression. Make it neat, error-free and professional.
3. Keep your resume short. Should not normally exceed 2-3 pages.
4. Make a comprehensive list of your qualifications, experience, competencies, skills, etc. before writing your resume.
5. Choose headings that reflect your strength and match the employer needs.
6. Make your resume factually accurate and up-to-date.
7. Choose the right format and keep your font professional and appealing.
8. Re-check your resume for grammatical errors and inconsistencies.

Don'ts:

1. Do not boast or exaggerate. Never insert lies.
2. Don't use big and pompous words. Use key words used in the profession.
3. Don't use lengthy sentences. Use catchy phrases.
4. Don't give the contact numbers or a mailing address on which you cannot be reached.
5. Don't use words, fonts, colours and styles which make the resume gaudy and unprofessional.
6. While updating don't just squeeze in additions. Rewrite and reprint.
7. Don't make critical comments on your previous job/superiors.
8. Don't highlight achievements which you cannot substantiate.

Testimonials

Testimonials refer to letters of appreciation or letters of recommendation. A testimonial is a letter of evidence or open acknowledgement of a person's character and abilities, normally issued by a superior or executive under whom the candidate has worked. Unlike a reference, which is in response to the specific request by a prospective employer, a testimonial is not specifically addressed. It is a character reference or an expression of appreciation issued by the authority to the candidate. It is presented in the format of a certificate or statement rather than a letter. Testimonials are also issued by teachers in favour of their students. Testimonials are issued when the student is leaving the college or is applying for admission elsewhere. Similarly, the superior or reporting authority may issue the testimonials to the employee, on request, to enable the employee to seek employment elsewhere. Like certificates, testimonials are used by candidates while seeking admission/job positions.

NOTES

Exhibit 9.10
Illustration of a Good Testimonial
I. To Whom It May Concern

Shri Puran Sinha has served our organization as an Administrative Officer for the last three years. Joining our organization in June 2012 as Administrative Assistant, by virtue of his hard work and administrative abilities, he was elevated as Administrative Officer in September 2016.

Shri Puran Sinha has shown commendable diligence in discharging various responsibilities associated with his job. He has taken keen initiative in introducing cost cutting measures and upgrading systems and procedures relating to office administration. By his genial nature, and result-oriented approach, he has endeared himself to his superiors as well as colleagues and subordinates. He is honest, committed and good at teamwork.

Shri Sinha is leaving our organization for personal reasons, as he desires to move out of this city.

I have no doubt that Shri Sinha will be an asset to any organization which he would be serving.

I wish him every success.

K.S. Indiresan
Director

Exhibit 9.11
Illustration of a Good Testimonial
II. To Whom It May Concern

Miss Chanda Dixit is a student of MSc (Botany) in our institute and will be appearing for her final examination during April 2018.

Miss Chanda has been taking keen interest in her studies and has scored distinction throughout her graduation. She has also actively participated in the literary and cultural activities of the institute and has won the Best Student Award during the academic year 2016—2017.

Miss Chanda has a positive approach to life and gets along well with fellow students and faculty members. She is keen on pursuing higher studies in her chosen field and thereafter take up a career in teaching.

I wish her every success in her professional and academic pursuits.

Anna Thomas
Prof and Head Dept of Botany

NOTES

NOTES

Exhibit 9.12

Illustration of a Good Reference Letter

Mr Mahesh Prasad

Personnel Director

Dear Mr. Prasad,

I refer to your letter dated 20 November 2017.

Mr. Kumar Shetty worked with us as a Restaurant Manager for 4 years from August 2013 to September 2017. During this period, he supervised the functioning of our restaurant which provides both vegetarian and non-vegetarian cuisine.

We found Mr. Shetty to be well informed, diligent and committed. He looked after purchases, preparation and service, maintenance and outdoor catering. Thanks to his innovative ideas, our restaurant became the most popular family eating place in the locality. Except during a brief period of three months during 2016, when he absented himself frequently due to ill health, he was extremely punctual and dependable.

Mr. Shetty has left our organization after due intimation in search of better career prospects and to gain experience in larger hotel groups.

Mr. Shetty is hardworking and willing to assume higher responsibilities. He is also good at people management and crisis management.

He should do well in meeting the challenges associated with supervising a chain of restaurants as Group Manager.

With regards,

PiyushPatil

Managing Partner

Expert Speak: Your Online Reputation

Michael Fertik, Consultant and author of the book, 'The Reputation Economy', says organisations may soon evaluate employees on the basis of their online footprint.

Candidates applying for jobs are leaving a data exhaust of their lives online. This data exhaust is very instructive to HR departments when trying to figure out who to hire. While qualifications matter, a quick scan of your online profile will make it clear whether you are likely to fit in with the work culture of the organisation or not. So what you do in your spare time and post online could provide an insight into whether you are likely to be a good team player, can put in long hours at work or whether a work-life balance is essential for you. As a potential employee, understand that your data is being analysed all the time. Accept it

Your digital reputation could ... impact your chances of landing a coveted job.

(Source: 'Reputation Economy', by PriyankaSangani, *The Economic Times Corporate Dossier*, April 24–30, 2015.)

References

It has become a common practice among prospective employers to seek references from job applicants, and thereafter seek the opinion or views of the referees before taking a final decision on the selection of the candidate. This is true in the case of admissions to universities abroad as well. The approach followed in getting the references is detailed in the following paragraphs.

A job-seeking candidate mentions the names of the references in the resume/application. Referees are people holding important positions known to the candidate. They may be teachers or guides, supervisors or heads of departments and institutions, where the candidate has studied or worked. They have known the candidate well enough to give their opinion on the skills and aptitude of the candidate.

Before mentioning the names of the references in the resume, the candidate seeks their specific permission to do so. In doing so, the candidate will have to refer to the specific period during which the candidate studied or worked in the institute or organization concerned. If there is a lapse of time since then, the candidate will have to refer to some conspicuous events relating to the candidate's studentship or work tenure to facilitate the referee to recall the details concerning the candidate.

A prospective employer seeks a reference from a referee about the candidate. In doing so, the prospective employer will mention the post for which the candidate is being considered, the nature of responsibilities associated with it and the referee's views on the candidate's qualities and capabilities.

As a final step in the process, the referee concerned will reply to the letter written to the prospective employer giving the referee's views on the candidate. Apart from covering the specific details sought, the referee may also provide additional information, which in the referee's opinion is relevant to the context.

An important characteristic that prospective employers look for in the candidate is trust and integrity. Most employers would like to ensure that the candidate to be selected is trustworthy. Apart from noting the academic achievements and professional abilities, employers would be keen to know the ethical and moral aspects of the candidate.

Check Your Progress

3. Why is a resume considered as a personal datasheet?
4. What are chronological resumes?
5. Define the term 'testimonials'.

NOTES

NOTES

9.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The basic purpose of any covering letter is to highlight the candidate's strengths so as to call attention of the employer.
2. *Suomoto* and in response are the two ways of sending an application letter to the organization.
3. A resume is considered as a personal datasheet as it presents the academic qualifications, job-related experience, skills and strong points of a person seeking a job.
4. Chronological resumes present the details in a historical order, in a timeline. They follow a linear approach.
5. A testimonial is a letter of evidence or open acknowledgement of a person's character and abilities, normally issued by a superior or executive under whom the candidate has worked.

9.5 SUMMARY

- Application letters seeking jobs are essentially of two types—*suomoto* and in response.
- Application letters sent by an applicant *suomoto* (or *suomotu*) are those where the aspirant is sending the letter by choice and not in response to any specific advertisement or invitation.
- *Suomoto* means action done on your own without any formal request from anyone.
- The second category of application letters relates to those sent in response to specific advertisements or announcements or invitations.
- In some cases, like government and public sector organizations, there would be printed application forms, often available for a fee, and the same have to be obtained, filled in and submitted as directed.
- Application letters are often accompanied by short covering letters. Covering letters, also referred to as cover letters, are often sent along with a job application or a resume.
- The covering letter provides an opportunity to the job-seeking candidate to make the application somewhat distinctive.
- In fact, the appeal and elegance of the covering letter can sway the prospective employers in your favour and get them interested in looking closely at your resume.
- An application letter presents the candidate's profile to the organization or the recruitment agency.

NOTES

- The application letter should be updated on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that the latest details are furnished.
- Having taken the initiative of preparing an application and covering letter providing all relevant details in an elegant eye-catching manner, the next step is to ensure that it is addressed to the right person or authority.
- Job seekers sending application letters must resist the temptation to send out multiple copies to the same organization.
- A person's resume is probably the first and the most important employment related document. The right resume has the potential to open doors of opportunity.
- While preparing a resume, it is important to know what a good resume can achieve. A good resume helps project the person in proper light. It makes the first right impression on the employer.
- First and foremost, a resume will have to stand out in terms of its neatness. The presentation of details in the resume will have to be in an organized and orderly manner.
- One should remember that a resume has to create a favourable impression. It is the first opportunity you have to impress your prospective employer.
- In preparing a resume, a candidate is advised to mercilessly leave out trivial or insignificant details about achievements.
- Any good resume should clearly bring out the strong points of the candidate. For doing so, the applicant should learn to look at the resume from the employer's standpoint.
- Resumes are prepared in different formats. Broadly speaking, they may be chronological or functional, or a combination of these two.
- Chronological resumes present the details in a historical order, in a timeline. They follow a linear approach.
- Any prospective employer would keenly study details under this caption. The resume writer should take extra care in presenting the details of work experience in an effective manner.
- The resumes should clearly bring out related strengths, especially when the post applied for demands specialization.
- It has become a common practice among prospective employers to seek references from job applicants, and thereafter seek the opinion or views of the referees before taking a final decision on the selection of the candidate.

9.6 KEY WORDS

- **Suomoto:** It refers to an action done on your own without any formal request from anyone.

NOTES

- **Application letter:** It refers to a type of letter which represents the candidate's profile to the organization or the recruitment agency.
- **Resume:** It refers to a short account of one's career and qualifications typically prepared by an applicant for a position.
- **Referees:** It refers to the people who hold important positions known to the candidate. They may be teachers or guides, supervisors or heads of departments and institutions, where the candidate has studied or worked.

9.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. List the points to be kept in mind while sending application letters.
2. State the subject matter of a cover letter.
3. Write a short note on a resume.
4. What are the factors to be considered while deciding length of the resume?
5. List the 'Dos of resume writing.'
6. How is a testimonial different from referrals?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of in-response applications.
2. What is a covering letter? Discuss its importance.
3. Analyse the essential characteristics of a resume.
4. Discuss the various types of resumes.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 10 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

NOTES

Structure

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Meaning
- 10.3 Non-Verbal Communication: Types
 - 10.3.1 Body language-Facial expressions and Eye contact
 - 10.3.2 Postures and Gestures
 - 10.3.3 Attire, Appearances and Handshake
- 10.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 10.5 Summary
- 10.6 Key Words
- 10.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 10.8 Further Readings

10.0 INTRODUCTION

The first two methods of communication are oral and written. The third method of communication relates to non-verbal communication, which is neither oral nor written. While oral communication thrives on listening and the written communication thrives on reading, the non-verbal communication thrives on observation. It can be expressed through gestures, codes, signs and body language and so on.

Non-verbal communication may be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or unintended. It may substitute verbal communication or supplement it. There may also be occasions when the non-verbal communication may be out of line with or even contradict oral communication. When used with full awareness, body language can create the desired impact. At the same time, unintended body movements and expressions may confuse the listener. Non-verbal communication is extremely relevant during meetings and interactions of a direct or face-to-face nature.

The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depends on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak. Mother Teresa's language of love and compassion is just one example. In the organizational context, however, non-verbal language can be used effectively as an adjunct to verbal communication.

In this unit, you will learn about the concept of non-verbal communication, its branches and its various forms. Body-language, postures and gestures and attire, appearance or even a handshake convey different meanings. The unit will

highlight the meanings of such forms of non-verbal communication for a better understanding.

NOTES

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of non-verbal communication
- Analyse the branches of non-verbal communication
- Explain the various forms of non-verbal communication

10.2 MEANING

Non-verbal communication is a prominent third type of communication as distinct from both oral and written communication. It takes place extensively at various levels—individuals, family, society and organization. Non-verbal communication may take any of the following forms—body language, gestures, postures, appearance, personal space, codes, signs and signals, facial expressions, timings, examples and personal behaviour.

Non-verbal communication is ancient and constitutes the earliest type of communication. It developed much before oral communication and languages came into being. Gestures, postures, signals and facial expressions were obviously among the earliest means of communication used by the pre-literate man. The language of the hearing impaired which uses signs and gestures perhaps evolved from these ancient methods of communication. Another significant dimension of non-verbal communication is its universality. Unlike verbal communication, which has limitations in terms of reach, the non-verbal communication is universal in appeal. Words have boundaries, whereas non-verbal communication, which does not use words, transcends linguistic and cultural barriers and boundaries. The language of love and compassion is widely recognized as a universal language. The silent movies of the bygone era are another example of effective non-verbal communication.

The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depends on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak.

QUOTE TO NOTE: To know what people really think, pay regard to what they do, rather than what they say.

—renedescartes

Non-verbal communication is closely associated with the power of observation. The receiver of the communication should be in a position to see, hear and even feel the communicator. The receiver of the communication should be in a position to clearly see the face, the gesture, the tone, the dress, the appearance and also

hear the voice of the communicator. Since it is through observation, non-verbal communication may be both intended and unintended. It is intended when the communicator tries to convey certain messages to the target group through conscious gestures, postures, attire and other forms of body language. Non-verbal communication is unintended when the body language, posture or appearance of the communicator is interpreted by the receiver, even though it is not done consciously. A sloppy posture or a casual attire may be interpreted as lack of seriousness, although the speaker may be quite intent.

Expert Speak: Observe Aggressively

Shrewd insights into people can be gained simply through the powers of observation. Observation is an aggressive act. People are constantly revealing themselves in ways that will go unnoticed unless you are aggressively involved in noticing them.

Aggressive observation means going after the big picture, taking all the conscious and unconscious signals, weighing them, and converting them into usable perceptions.

Aggressive observation does not mean hasty observation—jumping too quickly to conclusions, over-responding to conventional interpretations, or reading meaning into things where none exists.

(Source: Mark McCormick in ‘What They Don’t Teach You at Harvard Business School’.)

Although non-verbal communication can take place independent of other methods of communication, it often goes along with oral or verbal communication by the speaker. Used appropriately, body language and non-verbal messages can supplement and complement the oral message.

Together they can make the message loud, clear and forceful. On the contrary, if they are not consistent, the message that comes out would be ambiguous or garbled. When a speaker speaks, it is not just through words, but through the speaker’s personality as well. Similarly, although interpreting each non-verbal message provides a useful clue, listeners or the target audience should not jump to conclusions, but should, instead, take note of the totality of the messages communicated. It takes conscious effort and keen attention on the part of both the communicator and receiver to appropriately convey and interpret the message. The required degree of awareness and consciousness on the part of both is of particular relevance for the effectiveness of non-verbal communication.

It is essential to note that what a person says, together with the body language of that person creates the total impact. If they are consistent, they strengthen and reinforce the message and if they are inconsistent and contradict each other, then it clearly means that the person is speaking two different things. The body belies what the tongue utters. Sometimes, what a person says with her body negates what she is saying with her tongue. Thus, a person may appear calm and self-controlled, but if her foot is tapping the floor restlessly or she is fidgeting with her fingers, or biting her nails, her nervousness speaks loud. Under such circumstances,

NOTES

the recipient disregards the verbal message and accepts the message conveyed by the body language as the more authentic one.

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Check Your Progress

1. State the greatest merit of non-verbal communication.
2. What are the various forms of non-verbal communication?

10.3 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: TYPES

Non-verbal communication can have an overwhelming impact. There are myriad ways in which the body and its associated actions communicate messages, both intended and unintended. Non-verbal communication takes place at various levels when parts of the body, actions, mannerisms, behaviour, attire and demeanour tend to communicate. In other words, non-verbal communication takes place through the following objects, actions, and expressions:

1. Body language-facial expressions, eye contact, voice modulation
2. Postures/Gestures-carriage, leaning, shrugging, nodding
3. Attire
4. Appearance
5. Handshake
6. Space
7. Timing
8. Example
9. Behaviour
10. Smile

Body language is a well-developed discipline of study. Behavioural psychologists and researchers have studied, over the years, individuals and groups of people in business organizations and have developed the art of interpreting each one of the above as a means to ensuring effective communication.

Social scientists use the term 'paralanguage' to describe a wide range of characteristics or expressions based on voice, facial expressions, or actions. A paralinguistic study relates to interpreting communication that takes place through other than words. It relates to studying the tone of voice and expressions on one's face and actions. Paralanguage relates to 'how' something is said, rather than 'what' is said.

Non-verbal communication covers several branches of study including kinesics, oculesics, haptics and proxemics. A brief description of each of these sub-categories, with particular reference to business communication is given in the following paragraphs.

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Kinesics is the most well-known branch of non-verbal communication. It relates to a systematic study of various aspects of body language. Kinesics covers the study of body movements, gestures, facial expressions, appearance and so on. A well trained person, given to close observation, can meaningfully interpret body movements, facial expressions, etc. in the context of business communication. Superiority, inferiority, likes, dislikes, trust, confidence, earnestness, and a host of such feelings and emotions can be inferred from a close study of the person with whom we are interacting. Such interpretations when done properly will be of great help in negotiations, interviews, counselling, interactive sessions, and the like.

Oculistics is a branch of non-verbal communication that relates to the study of eye movements and eye contact. Human eyes being highly expressive, they often convey a lot to the keen observer. Eye movements are described as glaring, dominating, avoiding, etc. Similarly, the type of eye contact that takes place between individuals is also significant. The extent and type of eye contact that takes place when people meet conveys attention, respect, confidence, alertness, and so on.

Haptics relates to the science of touch. It is a branch of non-verbal communication covering the study of touch. Haptic communication is the means by which humans and animals communicate through the medium of touch. Haptics that relates to touch and proxemics that relates to space are closely related. In business and personal communication, together they have much to convey. Touch can convey trust, encouragement, reassurance, dislike, etc. Any business communicator should, however, know the difference between a good touch and a bad touch, and avoid the wrong kind of touch.

Proxemics is a kind of non-verbal communication that deals with personal space. It relates to the distance that people need to maintain in their personal, social, official and public interactions with the other people. Proxemics covers various types such as intimate distance, personal distance, social distance, and public distance. Most people in business value their personal space and feel discomfort, and even angry, when their personal space is encroached upon. In the business and organizational context, especially while interacting with business associates and superiors, personal space should be respected.

When we talk of these aspects of non-verbal communication, we need to note that there are cultural variations associated with them. Different cultures attach different meanings to body movements, gestures, touch, spacing, and eye contact and while communicating in an inter-cultural context, the differences should be kept in view.

10.3.1 Body language-Facial expressions and Eye contact

There are many ways in which a human body expresses itself. These expressions may be obvious or subtle, conscious or unconscious and complementary or contradictory. It is said that bodies don't lie and body language, therefore, tells the truth. If you are tired, you can't sit erect; if you are sleepless, your eyes tend to

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shut or if you are bored, you tend to yawn. Skilful communicators can express themselves in many ways as long as they are conscious of the fact that various parts of the body may intentionally or otherwise carry a message. Similarly, a keen listener or an observer carries and makes sense from the body expressions as well. Facial expressions, eye movements and the state of the eyes and the variety and intensity of the human voice can and do convey different meanings. Innocence, anger, wonder, shock, grief, terror, indifference, seriousness, friendliness, approval, disapproval, exasperation and many other feelings can be expressed through body language. In some professions, where the facial and body expressions are important, they are consciously cultivated. Let us consider drama artists, movie stars, actors and people in show business. The success of their performance often depends on their ability to cultivate and display a wide range of expressions as the situation demands.

Key Point: Non-Verbal Part Is Overwhelming

According to researchers, the non-verbal part of the communication has an overwhelming impact. It is said that less than ten per cent of the effect of a speaker on an audience is accounted for by words. Over 90 per cent of the effect comes from the non-verbal part. Here again, about 50 per cent of the effect is accounted for by the visual factors- appearance, apparel, body language, facial expression and postures and gestures. Over thirty-five per cent of the effect is accounted for by the voice-tone, sincerity, modulation.

Words often constitute the smallest part of the communication between human beings. When you speak, your personality speaks.

The head, the gait, the walk, the carriage are also various facets of body language. Ramrod straight, bolt upright, hunchback, stoop and slouch are some of the words associated with the body and its movements. Nodding of the head to convey consent or approval and vigorous shaking of the head to convey dissent are also common.

Facial Expressions

It is said that the face is the index of the mind. The thoughts of the mind and the feelings of the heart often find expression on the face. There are people who are good at reading facial expressions. Good communicators, whether they are speakers or listeners, learn to read and interpret facial expressions. Some of the idiomatic phrases used in connection with facial expression are as follows:

- To make a face
- The smile of acknowledgement or recognition
- To carry a wooden expression
- To carry a mask on one's face
- The facial make-up, if any, can also be subjected to interpretation.
- The face that launched a thousand ships

Eyes

The eyes are indeed the most expressive part of the human face. The eyes of a person are often said to tell a tale. In fact, the eyes are the most commonly described part of the body. The feelings of the heart quite often find expression through the eyes. In the expression of love, affection and sincerity the eye contact becomes crucial. Romantic literature, over the years, has seen copious references to the eyes. Some of the words and expressions used in common parlance while reading the eyes are as follows:

- Twinkle in his eyes
- Furtive glance
- Eyes emitting fire
- Worried look
- Sad look
- Wary look
- Unsettling stare
- Hurried glance
- Cold stare

Since eyes are considered to be highly expressive, there is considerable significance attached to the presence or absence of eye contact. In legal cross-examinations, in counselling sessions, in negotiations and other such business situations, the quality of eye contact comes in for particular scrutiny. In dealing with customers at the counter, in facing interviews for recruitment and promotion, in making presentations and in sales talk, eye contact assumes considerable significance.

Voice

Human voices, through their variations, convey different meanings. Speech or oral delivery reaches the audience better through voice modulation. Voice modulation refers to the adjustment or variation of tone or pitch while speaking. Voice has many characteristics and the social scientists have studied these characteristics in detail and given generally accepted interpretations to them. It is generally understood that when studied closely, voice has the following distinct features, viz.:

- Tone-harsh, soft, whisper
- Volume-loud, soft
- Quality-controlled, uncontrolled
- Pace-rapid, slow
- Force-intensity
- Range—wide, narrow

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- Articulation—precise, imprecise
- Rhythm—smooth, jerky
- Resonance—resonant, thin

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Voice-related features are particularly relevant in spoken communication, either face to face or through telephone.

10.3.2 Postures and Gestures

Yet another component of non-verbal communication relates to postures and gestures. Posture refers to the carriage, state and attitude of body or mind. Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body and a deliberate use of such movement as an expression of feeling. Gesture can also be understood as a step calculated to evoke response from another person or to convey intention. Like other aspects of body language, posture and gesture should also be read along with the verbal and other messages. The posture of a person may be described as erect or upright or reclining. Posture may be physical or mental. Gestures in human interfaces are many and varied. People read and interpret gestures and hence these are extremely important in the organizational context.

Nodding, shaking of head, smiling, patting the back, putting the hand over one's shoulder, clasping hands, shrugging, touching, frowning, scowling, blinking, yawning and crossing and uncrossing of legs are among the various types of physical actions and gestures that are used to convey meanings and messages and are likewise interpreted by others receiving the message. The message conveyed through these actions can be both positive and negative, and therefore, the communicator has to be quite conscious of his actions. Again, to be effective, these postures, gestures and actions have to complement the spoken word. If not, the communication results in contradiction and confusion.

Postures, gestures and actions are of much significance in the organizational context. When understood properly, they can be of great help in conveying the right message. Ignored, they can cause considerable unintended damage and misunderstanding. In a meeting where the chairman is addressing, or a promotional interview, or even when an important customer is being attended to, people concerned should be conscious of their body movements and actions. They should convey the proper message that they are both physically and mentally alert and responsive. A smile at the wrong time may be taken as a sneer and, therefore, may irritate a person. Slouching, yawning, swinging of arms and legs and such other actions which give a message of indifference and carelessness will have to be scrupulously avoided in all serious business-related and organizational interactions. In the organizational context, leaders and good communicators make effective use of gestures like a smile, a touch and a pat on the back. They come in very handy for motivation, morale building and clearing misapprehensions.

10.3.3 Attire, Appearances and Handshake

Attire, appearance and handshake are other facets of body language that are subject to interpretation by the audience or the people with whom one interacts.

Attire: Attire or dress is another important aspect of non-verbal communication. The way a person dresses is often subjected too much interpretation. Attire proclaims a person. The dress a person wears, besides announcing him or her, creates the first impression. In business organizations the world over, the attire of a person has come to acquire much significance. Formal, informal or casual dressing conveys different meanings. Important and ceremonial occasions normally call for a formal dress. Organizations, in fact, very often have their own unwritten dress code that is well understood and scrupulously followed. A person addressing an important meeting, making an important announcement, receiving dignitaries or making an appearance at a high-level conference or a court of justice has to wear a formal dress or a dress that is not interpreted as casual wear. Any breach of this unwritten code is likely to dilute the effectiveness of the communication. The dress one wears should be in agreement with the occasion.

Survey Report

Well-Dressed Employees Taken More Seriously

Turning out well dressed at work could automatically mean half your battle won, going by a survey which indicates that employees who dress well are taken seriously at work than those that pay scant attention to those crumpled sleeves and faded collars.

Nearly 89% of the respondents of a survey conducted by Team Lease, a leading staffing company, feel that style of dressing has a long-term impact on the overall image of an individual. Three-fourth of the respondents felt that well-dressed people are taken more seriously at work place.

Breaking the myth of female vanity, the survey revealed that men spend as much time, if not more, focusing on grooming as women.

(Source: Well dressed employees taken more seriously, PTI news report, Financial Express, Bangalore, 19.5.2010)

Appearance: Physical presence and appearance of persons play a key role in the process of communication. The way one looks and presents oneself indicates the importance one attaches to one's presence or participation. A dishevelled look as evidenced by disorderly hair, untidy, ruffled or unkempt appearance, suggests indifference or casualness. Any person who is serious about what he wants to convey, especially in a formal setting, tries to appear so. In modern society, people have the habit of judging others by their appearance. While there may be exceptions, generally a person keen on conveying a serious, business-related message has to make a positive impression in terms of appearance. People tend to prejudge a speaker through his attire and appearance even before he starts speaking. When people speak and interact in business and organizational context, they speak not merely with their words but with their total personality.

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Handshake: It is now well accepted, especially in metropolitan and urban environs, that people greet each other and introduce themselves to one another with a handshake. It is a common form of greeting and introduction among both men and women. Since a handshake is seen as a type of nonverbal communication, it is very essential that it is done properly. Like the other aspects of body language, handshakes are also varied, and each one of them has certain interpretations. Given below are some descriptions and interpretations about the concept of handshake:

- A firm handshake-The right way, shows confidence and keenness.
- A limp handshake-Indicates that the person is not very sure of himself, suggests an inferiority complex.
- A clasp-Using both the hands, suggests high degree of warmth or respect.
- A vice-like grip-A tight grip which makes the other person uncomfortable suggests some kind of aggressiveness and dominance.

A good communicator is aware of what each type of handshake stands for and ensures that the most appropriate one is used.

A limp handshake by a person in authority may be interpreted to mean that the person is not keen on further communication or interaction. Further, when a businessman meets a businesswoman, it is appropriate to let her make the first move, when he is not very sure of the proper way of greeting.

Check Your Progress

3. What do you understand by the term 'oculesics'?
4. What are the features of a voice?

10.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depends on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak.
2. The various forms of non-verbal communication are body language, gestures, postures, appearance, personal space, codes, signs and signals, facial expressions, timings, examples and personal behaviour.
3. Oculesics is a branch of non-verbal communication that relates to the study of eye movements and eye contact.
4. The various features of a voice are tone, volume, pace, rhythm, resonance, range and articulation and so on.

10.5 SUMMARY

- Non-verbal communication is a prominent third type of communication as distinct from both oral and written communication. It takes place extensively at various levels-individuals, family, society and organization.
- Non-verbal communication is ancient and constitutes the earliest type of communication. It developed much before oral communication and languages came into being.
- Gestures, postures, signals and facial expressions were obviously among the earliest means of communication used by the pre-literate man.
- Unlike verbal communication, which has limitations in terms of reach, the non-verbal communication is universal in appeal.
- Non-verbal communication is closely associated with the power of observation.
- Non-verbal communication is unintended when the body language, posture or appearance of the communicator is interpreted by the receiver, even though it is not done consciously.
- Although non-verbal communication can take place independent of other methods of communication, it often goes along with oral or verbal communication by the speaker.
- Non-verbal communication can have an overwhelming impact. There are myriad ways in which the body and its associated actions communicate messages, both intended and unintended.
- Social scientists use the term 'paralanguage' to describe a wide range of characteristics or expressions based on voice, facial expressions, or actions.
- A paralinguistic study relates to interpreting communication that takes place through other than words.
- Kinesics is the most well-known branch of non-verbal communication. It relates to a systematic study of various aspects of body language.
- Oculistics is a branch of non-verbal communication that relates to the study of eye movements and eye contact.
- Haptics relates to the science of touch. It is a branch of non-verbal communication covering the study of touch.
- Proxemics is a kind of non-verbal communication that deals with personal space. It relates to the distance that people need to maintain in their personal, social, official and public interactions with the other people.
- There are many ways in which a human body expresses itself. These expressions may be obvious or subtle, conscious or unconscious and complementary or contradictory.

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- The eyes are indeed the most expressive part of the human face. The eyes of a person are often said to tell a tale.
- Human voices, through their variations, convey different meanings. Speech or oral delivery reaches the audience better through voice modulation.
- Postures, gestures and actions are of much significance in the organizational context. When understood properly, they can be of great help in conveying the right message.
- Attire, appearance and handshake are other facets of body language that are subject to interpretation by the audience or the people with whom one interacts.

10.6 KEY WORDS

- **Paralanguage:** It refers to a wide range of characteristics or expressions based on voice, facial expressions, or actions.
- **Paralinguistic study:** It refers to a type of study which relates to interpreting communication that takes place through other than words.
- **Haptics:** It refers to a branch of non-verbal communication covering the study of touch.
- **Voice modulation:** It refers to the adjustment or variation of tone or pitch while speaking.

10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on gestures.
2. Differentiate between a posture and a gesture.
3. How does voice convey different meanings?
4. Write a short note on body language as a form of non-verbal communication.
5. How is non-verbal communication associated with the power of observation?

Long Answer Questions

1. 'Physical presence and appearance of persons play a key role in the process of communication'. Explain the statement.
2. Explain the importance of non-verbal communication.
3. Discuss the various branches of non-verbal communication.

10.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Madhukar, R.K. 2018. *Business Communication*, 3rd edn. Noida: Vikas Publishing.
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UNIT 11 REPORT WRITING-I

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Structure

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 An Introduction to Report
- 11.3 Types of Report
 - 11.3.1 Format of a Report
- 11.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Key Words
- 11.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 11.8 Further Readings

11.0 INTRODUCTION

Report writing is, in a sense, the ultimate in business communication. It calls for a considerably higher level of writing skills. Reports are of various kinds, varying in terms of complexity and size. Reports are such a common feature that people in organizations, businesses and institutions, at various levels, are called upon to not only read related reports, but also write or associate with the preparation of the reports. It is desirable; therefore, that anyone who is keen on developing varied business communication skills acquires a good insight into the art of report writing. The importance and purpose of a report in a business organization has been described in this unit.

What is a report? English dictionaries cover several interpretations of the word 'report'. These include, bring back account of; state as an ascertained fact; tell as news; narrate or describe or repeat especially as eyewitness and relate as spoken by another. While each of these interpretations has its relevance in the context of report writing, the most appropriate one would be, 'account given or opinion formally expressed after investigation or consideration'. In other words, a report refers to information that has been carefully gathered and logically presented. A report is a document that presents an account of what one has learned or done.

In this unit, the meaning of report from an organizational context and its various types has been discussed. The unit will also explain the basic structure and format of a report.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss about the concept of reports

- Analyse the importance of reports in an organization
- Identify the types of reports
- Discuss the format of a good report

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11.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO REPORT

Reports are an integral part of an organizational activity. Managers are constantly required to submit reports to supervisors and executives to enable them to take informed decisions change policies. Reports are a good way for the management to get a constant and reliable source of information. A report may be defined as a form of systematic presentation of information relating to an event, progress of action or some activity. Reports present facts for the interested reader. More specifically, business reports may be defined as an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves a business purpose.

The characteristics of business reports can be briefly summarised as follows:

- Generally submitted to a higher authority
- Communicated upwards in an organisation
- Logically organized
- Objective in tone
- For a limited audience
- Both short and long

Purpose of business reports

A report carries information from someone who has it to someone who needs it. It is a basic management tool used in decision making. Reports may be used to provide information (information reports), analyse information and give suggestions (analytical reports), request for action or give recommendations to initiate action. Thus, in a business context reports serve the following purposes:

- Reports give factual information to the management.
- Reports record facts and results of investigations or surveys for future reference.
- Reports are useful tools for providing shareholders, customers, creditors and general public with useful information.
- Based on detailed investigations, reports give recommendations which can be used in future.

Importance of reports

The importance of reports can be understood from the following points:

- **Conveyor of information:** Reports serve as conveyors of information. They provide necessary information to various parties who need it.

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- **Review and evaluate operations:** Reports help management to review and evaluate operations continuously. They help in coordinating the activities of the different departments.
- **Decision making:** A report aims at providing correct, objective and suitable information to persons who require it so that correct decisions can be taken at his or her end.
- **Better coordination:** Reports aim to promote common understanding of information between different groups in the organisation, thus, ensuring better coordination.
- **Tools for measuring performance:** Reports are useful tools for measuring departmental performance. The operational data from various departments helps management to assess performance of each department.
- **Help in making desirable changes:** Reports help in making and implementing desirable changes to business policies.

Check Your Progress

1. State the purpose of a business report.
2. Why are reports an integral part of an organization?

11.3 TYPES OF REPORTS

Reports can be in both oral and written forms, though written reports are preferred. Written reports have the following advantages over oral reports.

In this section, we will be dealing with written reports. Reports can range from one page to those running into several volumes. In all cases reports should be clear, concise and objective in their tone as decisions are based on them.

We will classify reports into the following types:

- Informational reports and Analytical reports
- Routine or periodic reports and Special reports
- Informal and Formal reports

These reports have been discussed in detail in the following section.

Informational reports only contain information in the form of facts and data. They do not contain any analysis or suggestions based on the information presented.

On the other hand, **Analytical reports** contain both facts as well as analysis of facts and conclusions. Recommendations/ Suggestions based on the analysis may also be included in such a report.

Routine or periodic reports and Special reports

Routine reports are submitted to the management at regular intervals by individuals, sections, departments, etc to help the management control

administration effectively. These are the most common type of business reports. These may be submitted on a daily, weekly, quarterly, monthly basis. These are generally meant for internal consumption by the organization and are not public documents. The length of these reports may vary from a single page to about ten pages. These include budgets, monthly accounts, cost reports, production reports, etc.

Special reports are prepared to deal with problems or issues specifically developed. They are specifically asked for by the concerned authority and are custom prepared to suit the particular purpose.

Informal and Formal reports

Informal reports do not follow any fixed form or procedure for submission. They are prepared according to the convenience and requirement of the organisation. The term '**informal reports**' does not mean the style and language of the report is informal. It only indicates simplicity in terms of structure or format.

The following are some of the forms these reports may take:

- (i) *Short reports*: These reports are presented in a simple letter format. They are less than five pages in length. The presentation style of such reports is kept simple and facts are reported.
- (ii) *Progress reports*: These reports contain information regarding the progress of a particular work or project.
- (iii) *Staff reports*: These reports are prepared to resolve particular staff problems.
- (iv) *Justification report*: These reports are used to justify a particular recommendation or a course of action.

When a report is prepared in the prescribed form and is presented according to an established procedure, it is called a **formal report**. Formal reports have a uniform structure and format which is specific to the organisation. Generally formal reports have the following characteristics:

- Longer than an informal report
- More thorough and often based on a detailed examination of a problem
- Formal in terms of format, structure, language.

Formal reports may be of the following types:

- (i) *Statutory reports*: These are reports which are prepared as a mandatory requirement by law. The format of such a report is as prescribed by the concerned body.
- (ii) *Non statutory reports*: There is no legal binding for preparation and submission of these reports but these are asked for by the management to facilitate the various managerial functions.

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11.3.1 Format of a Report

A report should be drafted keeping in mind the following points:

- a) Purpose of the report
- b) Time within which it is to be submitted
- c) Level of authority for which it is intended

The procedure for report writing includes the following steps:

- a) Determination of the purpose of the report.
- b) Identify the audience who will be reading the report: Collect information regarding their expertise, hierarchical positions, educational background, etc.
- c) Collect the data necessary to prepare the report.
- d) Identify and classify the data.
- e) Outline the report.
- f) Prepare the final report.
- g) Present the report.

Structure of a report

A report consists of the following parts:

- (i) Title page-may include all or some of these subject, author, date of completion, file reference, confidentiality
- (ii) Table of Contents
- (iii) Acknowledgements
- (iv) Executive Summary (sometimes called 'Abstract' or 'Synopsis' if the report is academic in nature)
- (v) Body of the report
 - (a) Introduction
 - (b) Procedures/method
 - (c) Analysis & Findings
 - (d) Conclusion
 - (e) Recommendations
- (vi) Appendices
- (vii) Bibliography

Executive Summary

The following points have to be kept in mind while drafting an executive summary.

- Very important part of a report.

- Extends from a paragraph to two pages in length..
- Should include a bit of all components of the report.
- No one particular part of the report should dominate
- Written after the entire report is complete.
- Gives a gist/summary of what is there in the report.
- Is an independent document and may be circulated to people who do not have the time to read the entire document.
- Should not be a cut and paste activity from the main report.
- It should be written afresh.
- It should be accurate as decisions might be taken based on just the executive summary.

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Body of the report

The various parts of the body of the report are discussed briefly in this section.

Introduction

- Gives a brief background to the report

Procedures/Method

- Outlines how the data was collected, observations etc.

Analysis & Findings

- The major findings after the analysis of data is presented in an organized, logical and objective form.

Conclusion

- It states what the findings have shown objectively. It is different from an executive summary and should not be confused with it. They are generally written in the past tense.

Recommendations

- Should logically flow from the conclusion.
- Generally expressed in future tense.
- Outlines direct possible course of action.
- No explanation of action is required in the recommendation.

Appendices

- Information that doesn't fit into the text, like charts, data and graphs

Bibliography

- List of references used in the preparation of the report including citations of all websites, books articles
- Consistency should be maintained while citing references

- Listed alphabetically by author's last name
- Various formats are available for bibliographies

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Check Your Progress

3. What are informational reports?
4. What are the various forms of informal reports?

11.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The basic purpose of a report is to provide information (information reports), analyse information and give suggestions (analytical reports), request for action or give recommendations to initiate action.
2. Reports are an integral part of an organizational activity because managers are constantly required to submit reports to supervisors and executives to enable them to take informed decisions change policies.
3. Informational reports are reports which only contain information in the form of facts and data. They do not contain any analysis or suggestions based on the information presented.
4. The various forms of informal reports are short reports, progress reports, staff reports and justification reports.

11.5 SUMMARY

- Reports are an integral part of an organizational activity. Managers are constantly required to submit reports to supervisors and executives to enable them to take informed decisions change policies.
- A report may be defined as a form of systematic presentation of information relating to an event, progress of action or some activity.
- A report carries information from someone who has it to someone who needs it. It is a basic management tool used in decision making.
- Reports serve as conveyors of information. They provide necessary information to various parties who need it.
- Reports help management to review and evaluate operations continuously. They help in coordinating the activities of the different departments.
- Reports may be used to provide information (information reports), analyse information and give suggestions (analytical reports), request for action or give recommendations to initiate action.

- Reports are useful tools for providing shareholders, customers, creditors and general public with useful information.
- A report aims at providing correct, objective and suitable information to persons who require it so that correct decisions can be taken at his or her end.
- Reports are useful tools for measuring departmental performance. The operational data from various departments helps management to assess performance of each department.
- Reports aim to promote common understanding of information between different groups in the organization, thus, ensuring better coordination.
- Reports help in making and implementing desirable changes to business policies.
- Informational reports only contain information in the form of facts and data. They do not contain any analysis or suggestions based on the information presented.
- Analytical reports contain both facts as well as analysis of facts and conclusions.
- Routine reports are submitted to the management at regular intervals by individuals, sections, departments, etc to help the management control administration effectively.
- Special reports are prepared to deal with problems or issues specifically developed. They are specifically asked for by the concerned authority and are custom prepared to suit the particular purpose.
- Informal reports do not follow any fixed form or procedure for submission. They are prepared according to the convenience and requirement of the organization.
- The various forms of informal reports are short reports, progress reports, staff reports and justification reports.
- When a report is prepared in the prescribed form and is presented according to an established procedure, it is called a formal report.
- Statutory reports are reports which are prepared as a mandatory requirement by law.
- In Non statutory reports, there is no legal binding for preparation and submission of these reports but these are asked for by the management to facilitate the various managerial functions.

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11.6 KEY WORDS

- **Report:** It refers to a form of systematic presentation of information relating to an event, progress of action or some activity.

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- **Formal report:** It refers to a type of report which is prepared in the prescribed form and is presented according to an established procedure.
- **Statutory reports:** It refers to a type of report which is prepared as a mandatory requirement by law.
- **Analytical reports:** It refers to a type of report which contain both facts as well as analysis of facts and conclusions.

11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the various parts of the body of the report?
2. Name the types of informal reports.
3. What are the steps related to report writing?
4. List the main characteristics of a business report.
5. Differentiate between informational report and analytical report.

Long Answer Questions

1. Analyse the types of reports.
2. Explain the structure of a report.
3. Interpret the points to be considered while drafting an executive summary.
4. Assess the importance of reports in an organization.

11.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 12 REPORT WRITING-II

Structure

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Essentials of a Good Report
 - 12.2.1 Procedure Involved in Preparation of Report
- 12.3 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 12.4 Summary
- 12.5 Key Words
- 12.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 12.7 Further Readings

NOTES

12.0 INTRODUCTION

Reports present specific details about an organization and which may be useful to the employees, clients or prospective clients. It involves facts, figures and analytical information to the concerned people. It becomes necessary to present the report in an accurate manner especially if it is being prepared for a prospective buyer or a client of the organization. Thus, report writing is a major areas of concern and should be worked on o facilitate the communication in a better way.

In this unit, the essential features of a good report have been discussed. The unit will also explain the objective behind writing reports and the steps involved in the process of report writing.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the features of a good report
- Analyse the purpose of report writing
- Explain the procedure related to preparation of a report

12.2 ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD REPORT

As noted earlier, each kind of report has its characteristics. An enquiry report or a survey report is essentially a fact-finding report and should bring out the facts clearly. A directors' report, on the other hand, is the detailing of the developments, or the progress relating to the business organization during a particular period. A committee report, however, may not only bring out facts and figures, but also cover the alternative viewpoints expressed by the members, and also the final

recommendations made by the committee. Notwithstanding these features specific to the reports, we may take note of certain features relevant to any report writing as stated in the following paragraphs.

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Issue in Perspective

The first essential for any good report is to bring out the issue in its proper perspective, duly emphasizing the pros and cons. Whether it is a progress report, a survey report, an analytical report or an enquiry report, the subject should be presented in an unbiased and objective manner. Both the positive and negative aspects of the issues studied should be covered in the report. The report writer should make conscious efforts to keep out any bias or exaggeration while stating facts and incidents, especially in the enquiry and investigation reports.

Authoritative Facts and Figures

Reports are sought as a fact-finding measure. The report writer should ensure that the facts and figures quoted in the report are authentic and reliable. Very often, the facts and figures quoted are from primary data sources and are taken on the basis of personal enquiries or surveys specially conducted for gathering information. The data quoted in the report are likely to be made use of by several other individuals and agencies who will gain access to the report. It is also very likely that major business-related decisions will be taken on the basis of details mentioned in the report. Even when the data quoted are taken from secondary sources, care should be taken to see that the sources are reliable and cross-verified.

Quote to Note: The truth is far more important than the facts.

—Frank Wright

Expert Speak: Focus on the Essential

Kim Woo Chang, the Founder of the Daewoo Group, makes the following observations regarding meetings and reports. ‘Sometimes, too many meetings just spread confusion. There are many changes in business conditions, so decisions cannot be made theoretically. You must have the feel, the smell, of each situation, plus experience, to get the right information and make the right decisions. Meetings are justified for getting information. But I don’t think you need that much detail. Whenever I get a three-page report, I feel that half a page would be enough. In written reports, managers often go on for two or three pages when one sentence would be enough. The top executive needs only the key things to make a decision.’

(Source: ‘Every Street is Paved With Gold’ by Kim Woo Chang, William Morrow & Co, 1992)

Maintain a Judicial Approach

The report writer should keep to measurable facts and verifiable details. Impressionistic statements and inaccuracies will have to be scrupulously avoided.

A good report calls for an effective assessment based on authentic facts and figures. Human errors, biases and any kind of selective reporting have no place in report writing. Good reports are those where the report writer maintains a judicial and non-partisan attitude.

In-Depth Analysis

It is expected that the reports provide an in-depth study. Any report that does not go into the details of the subject studied may turn out to be peripheral, necessitating one or more report, or additional information being sought. The reporting authority or the report writer, as the case may be, should make it a point to meticulously go about collecting all related information for inclusion in the report.

Alternative Viewpoints

The objective of a report, as we have noted earlier, is to get the facts in proper perspective. When we refer to an enquiry report, an investigation report or a committee report, the intention is to get the inputs or views from different persons who are in a position to throw light on the subject or incident under study. In fact, when we talk of a committee report, a very important requirement for the report writer is to bring out alternative viewpoints. Although the final recommendations may be based on a consensus or majority view, the fact that some other views were also expressed during the course of deliberations or enquiries should also be mentioned. Further, in reporting deliberations or alternative viewpoints, the report writer should not be overly conscious of the hierarchical position of the members. In other words, the points made or the views expressed are to be covered, even if they are from relatively junior members, as long as they are relevant to the issue under consideration. It is worth noting here that when committees submit their reports, apart from giving a majority view, there is also a mention, in some cases, of the note of dissent.

Appropriate Annexures and Appendix

Most reports also contain relevant annexures, which cover additional information that is germane or pertinent to the matter dealt with in the body of the report. Such annexures normally include charts, graphs, relevant statistics, questionnaires, list of centers visited, agencies, institutions and individuals contacted and interviewed. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that any such charts, maps and tables are relevant to the matter under study and enhance understanding. Well thought out annexures help assess the depth of the report and the extent of representativeness of the studies/surveys made in connection with the investigation or study taken up. While major findings and statistics are furnished in the main report, the questionnaire formats, detailed statistical tables and other similar details covered in the annexures provide supplementary information which is of particular value to a more discerning

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reader or researcher. Reports also contain Appendix at the end. Appendix refers to a section giving relevant additional information at the end of the report.

Appendix, like the annexure, constitutes an extra section of the report or a document. Any supplemental information relating to the report is given in the appendix. Appendix generally includes the following: illustrations, photographs, maps, surveys, statistical abstracts, diagrams, questionnaires and samples, pictures, and formulae and calculations.

Glossary

Reports also contain glossary at the end. A glossary is a list of special or technical words used in the document or report. Along with the words, their meanings are also given in the alphabetical order for easy reference. The main use of a glossary is that it helps the readers understand the meanings of key words or the jargon used in the report or book. Every domain or business has words specific to it and the glossary lists out the words and their meanings. It is particularly relevant when the readers are not familiar with the words used in the report.

Index

Voluminous reports, large documents and books carry an Index at the end. Index presents the list of names or topics that are referred to in the report or document or book. They are usually arranged in the alphabetical order. Like the subject index, there can also be an author index. It is worth noting that this book presents Subject Index at the end. In the subject index, key words with the page numbers are given in the alphabetical order. Similarly, in the author index, the names of authors and the page numbers where they appear are mentioned. Microsoft Word, the word processing software, creates an index automatically.

Appearance

Good appearance is of particular significance in presenting reports. Reports constitute an important business document. Their objective is to present a clear picture or objective account of what is learned or done or observed. Quite often, the reports tend to be lengthy. If a report has to be read by the audience, apart from the quality of contents, the manner of presentation assumes relevance. Notwithstanding the relevance and usefulness of the contents, the report may get discredited and ignored if the presentation is casual and shoddy. Good reports are those that are carefully prepared so as to present all the contents in a systematic, appealing and reader-friendly manner.

12.2.1 Procedure Involved in Preparation of Report

A report should be drafted keeping in mind the following points:

- (i) Purpose of the report
- (ii) Time within which it is to be submitted
- (iii) Level of authority for which it is intended

The procedure for report writing includes the following steps:

- (i) Determination of the purpose of the report.
- (ii) Identify the audience who will be reading the report. Collect information regarding their expertise, hierarchical positions and educational background.
- (iii) Collect the data necessary to prepare the report.
- (iv) Identify and classify the data.
- (v) Outline the report.
- (vi) Prepare the final report.
- (vii) Present the report.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the main objective of report writing?
2. State the use of a glossary in a report.

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12.3 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The main objective of a report is to get the facts in proper perspective. It brings out the issue in its proper perspective, duly emphasizing the pros and cons. It also presents a clear picture or objective account of what is learned or done or observed.
2. The main use of a glossary in a report is that it helps the readers understand the meanings of key words or the jargon used in the report or book. Every domain or business has words specific to it and the glossary lists out the words and their meanings.

12.4 SUMMARY

- An enquiry report or a survey report is essentially a fact-finding report and should bring out the facts clearly.

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- A directors' report is the detailing of the developments, or the progress relating to the business organization during a particular period
- A committee report may not only bring out facts and figures, but also cover the alternative viewpoints expressed by the members, and also the final recommendations made by the committee.
- The first essential for any good report is to bring out the issue in its proper perspective, duly emphasizing the pros and cons.
- The report writer should make conscious efforts to keep out any bias or exaggeration while stating facts and incidents, especially in the enquiry and investigation reports.
- Reports are sought as a fact-finding measure. The report writer should ensure that the facts and figures quoted in the report are authentic and reliable.
- The report writer should keep to measurable facts and verifiable details. Impressionistic statements and inaccuracies will have to be scrupulously avoided.
- The reporting authority or the report writer, as the case may be, should make it a point to meticulously go about collecting all related information for inclusion in the report.
- A good report should comprise of points made or the views expressed are to be covered, even if they are from relatively junior members, as long as they are relevant to the issue under consideration.
- Most reports also contain relevant annexures, which cover additional information that is germane or pertinent to the matter dealt with in the body of the report.
- Annexures normally include charts, graphs, relevant statistics, questionnaires, list of centers visited, agencies, institutions and individuals contacted and interviewed.
- Appendix refers to a section giving relevant additional information at the end of the report.
- Appendix generally includes the following: illustrations, photographs, maps, surveys, statistical abstracts, diagrams, questionnaires and samples, pictures, and formulae and calculations.
- A glossary is a list of special or technical words used in the document or report.
- Every domain or business has words specific to it and the glossary lists out the words and their meanings.

- Index presents the list of names or topics that are referred to in the report or document or book.
- Good appearance is of particular significance in presenting reports. Reports constitute an important business document.
- Good reports are those that are carefully prepared so as to present all the contents in a systematic, appealing and reader-friendly manner.

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12.5 KEY WORDS

- **Appendix:** It refers to a section giving relevant additional information at the end of the report.
- **Enquiry report:** It refers to a type of report which is a fact-finding report and should bring out the facts clearly.
- **Glossary:** It refers to a list of special or technical words used in the document or report.

12.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is the criterion of a good report with respect to its appearance?
2. How is a director's report different from a committee's report?
3. Why is it recommended that reports must provide an in-depth study?
4. What are the components of an annexure?
5. How is subject index different from author index?

Long Answer Questions

1. Identify the steps involved in report writing.
2. Discuss in detail the features of a good report.
3. 'Reports are sought as a fact-finding measure'. Elucidate the statement.

12.7 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 13 MEETINGS

Structure

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Meetings
 - 13.2.1 What is a Meeting?
 - 13.2.2 Objectives of a Meeting
- 13.3 Conducting Meetings
 - 13.3.1 Planning a Meeting
 - 13.3.2 Drawing the Agenda
 - 13.3.3 Running the Meeting
 - 13.3.4 Minutes of the Meeting
- 13.4 Guidelines for Effective Meetings
- 13.5 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 13.6 Summary
- 13.7 Key Words
- 13.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 13.9 Further Readings

NOTES

13.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will be introduced to meetings as an important management tool. You will learn the characteristics of effective meetings and the types of meetings based on their objectives. You will, further, learn of the various steps involved in conducting meetings effectively—planning the meeting, drawing the agenda, running the meeting and writing the minutes of the meeting. You will learn about the roles of the chairman, secretary and the members in making the meeting effective. Finally, you will be provided guidelines for improving the effectiveness of meetings.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand meetings as an important management tool
- Discuss the objectives of various types of meetings
- Discuss the various components involved in planning a meeting
- Explain the advantages of an agenda and the steps involved in drawing an agenda
- Discuss the various aspects related to running meetings effectively
- Explain the considerations to be kept in mind while drafting the minutes of a meeting
- List out the guidelines to improve the effectiveness of meetings

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13.2 MEETINGS

Meetings are vital for management and communication. The planning and running of effective meetings for business, sales, strategic planning and team-building are crucial for effective functioning of organizations. Properly planned and conducted meetings help save time, increase motivation and productivity, solve problems and create new ideas. There is no substitute for physical face-to face meetings.

13.2.1 What is a Meeting?

Meeting is a term to describe the process of people getting together to talk and share their knowledge, opinions, experiences, views and suggestions. Meetings may be of many kinds and may serve many purposes but some the characteristics common to all meetings are the following:

- (i) All meetings have a definite purpose.
- (ii) Interaction has to take place between the members attending the meeting.
- (iii) Certain rules have to be observed during the meeting.
- (iv) Generally a chairperson is in control of the proceedings of the meeting.

13.2.2 Objectives of a Meeting

Meetings need to be held for a definite purpose. Meetings without a purpose are a waste of time and resources. Only if absolutely necessary should a meeting be held. The broad objectives for which meetings may be held are as follows:

- To obtain information
- To provide information
- To solve a problem
- To persuade or sell an idea

Meetings may also be held to serve a combination of the mentioned purposes.

To obtain information

The aim of a meeting is to obtain facts, figures, opinions and viewpoints from those attending the meeting. This information is important to take decisions, and to plan or to complete tasks. Meetings to discuss how to improve sales or to assess the progress of a newly launched product are examples of a meeting held to obtain information.

The chairperson needs to stimulate members to readily voice their opinions. He should be a good listener and encourage the members to speak. He should create an atmosphere wherein the participants willingly cooperate and contribute information and do not do so out of fear or coercion.

To provide information

Here the aim is to convey facts, figures and viewpoints to the members attending the meeting. The purpose is to disseminate information. A meeting held to brief the members of a new policy or procedure is an example of such a meeting.

The chairperson has an important role to play as a speaker. He is required to provide participants with clarifications in case they need any. The participants in this case primarily need to listen but they have to be active listeners voicing their doubts and seeking clarifications if need be.

To solve a problem

This type of meeting is held to arrive at a solution to a problem being faced by the organization, department or section. A meeting held to find measures to boost up the declining sales of a product is an example of a meeting held to find solutions to a problem

The chairperson has to ensure that a viable practical solution is arrived at by the active contribution of all the members attending the meeting. A chairperson with considerable experience and expertise in a related area will be suitable for conducting such a meeting.

To persuade or sell an idea

This kind of meeting is held to convince the participants that a particular idea or course of action has to be accepted. The aim is to make the participants believe in the suitability of the idea/decision. A meeting held by the sales department with select customers to launch and advertise a new product is an example of such a meeting.

Here the chairperson should have the ability to sell. He should have a well-developed persuasive ability and should sound convincing.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the main objectives of a meeting?
2. State the main aim of a meeting which is held to persuade or sell an idea.

13.3 CONDUCTING MEETINGS

A badly held meeting is a waste of time, money and resources and is worse than having no meetings at all. When you run a meeting you are making demands on people's time and attention. The need to run effective meetings is more intense than ever in modern times, given the ever-increasing pressure on people's time. New technology—such as telephone conferencing and video conferencing—provides several alternatives to the conventional face-to-face meeting around a table.. Whatever are the reasons for the meeting, it is important to conduct and

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manage the meeting well so that it is a positive and helpful experience for all who attend it.

13.3.1 Planning a Meeting

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Planning is the key to effective meetings. One needs to plan the various aspects of the meeting so that maximum benefits may be derived from the meeting. The following are the issues which need to be considered while planning:



Fig. 13.1 Planning a Meeting

Purpose of the meeting

All meetings need to have a purpose. The various objectives for which meetings can be held have already been discussed in the previous section. The objectives of the meeting should be:

- Clearly expressed
- Known to all the members attending the meeting
- Kept in mind during the course of the meeting

At the end of the meeting, one needs to ascertain the extent to which the purpose of the meeting has been achieved.

Size of the Meeting

The effectiveness of a meeting is, to a large extent, dependent on the size of the meeting. The number of members should not be too many or too few. A meeting of about ten–twelve members is big or small enough to provide considerable opportunity for the members to interact with each other. Also, each member gets more or less an equal opportunity to talk and contribute to the deliberations.

In a meeting with a greater number of members, the chairperson does most of the talking and the other participants generally listen. Occasionally, some of the participants may voice their opinion, provide feedback or seek clarification. A meeting with a large number of participants is suitable when the purpose is merely to disseminate information.

To have an optimal size of the meeting, it is essential to ensure that only those members are asked to attend who can contribute effectively to the meeting. The participants can be decided on the basis of their relevant experience/knowledge and awareness. Sometimes, participants are decided by virtue of the position they hold.

Timing of the meeting

There are three aspects related to the timing of the meeting. The first is the choice of the date and the time of the day when the meeting will be held, the second is the duration of the meeting and the third is the time allocated to the individual items. These aspects have been discussed in detail in the following section.

- (i) **Date and time of the day:** The date on which the meeting is to be scheduled is, in most of the cases, decided based on the convenience of those attending the meeting or the urgency of the issue to be discussed. In the case of routine meetings, the date of the meeting may be fixed. For example, a meeting to evaluate the sales progress may be held on the fifth of every month.

As regards the time slot for the meeting, if one has a choice to select a time slot for the meeting, he/she should consider a time when people are energetic, receptive and fresh enough to effectively deal with dynamic issues which need a decision to be made. However, in most cases, the meeting has to be scheduled at a time which is convenient to all the members depending on their availability.

As far as possible, one must try to avoid slotting meetings immediately after lunch when one is generally dull and sluggish. Similarly, it is better to avoid end of the day meetings when participants may be impatient to reach home.

- (ii) **Duration of the meeting:** The duration of the meeting is dependent upon the number of issues to be discussed, the complexity of the issues and the competency of the members to deal with the issues.

If for any reason the duration of the meeting has already been fixed, then one can limit the number of items on the agenda of the meeting or reduce the time allowed for discussing each issue.

- (iii) **Timing of the items:** It is important to decide in advance the amount of time that will be allotted to each item. This ensures the timely completion of the meeting. The sequence in which various issues will be covered is also important. Some points which need to be considered while drawing the sequence of items to be discussed and the time allotted to them are as follows:

- Take up urgent items first followed by the less urgent items because if need be the less urgent matters can be postponed to another meeting.
- Challenging issues which require active contribution from members should be dealt with first when the members are fresh.

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- Items that are likely to create more discussion and about which opinions of members are divided, should be dealt with first before items that are likely to generate consensus. This is psychologically beneficial as the meeting will be concluded on a consensual note rather than with differences.

Location of the meeting

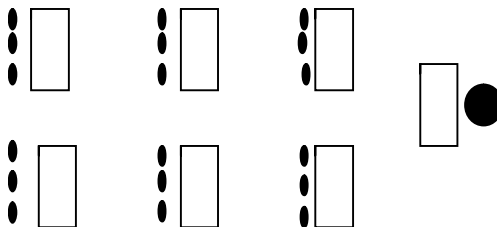
Deciding where the meeting is to be held is another prime consideration. Most of organizations have conference rooms of adequate size to cater to the internal meetings of the organization. However, some issues that influence the choice of the location include the following:

- (i) The size of the room should be appropriate for the number of people attending the meeting. It should not be too large or too small.
- (ii) The location should be convenient for the majority of the members to attend.
- (iii) The room should have appropriate physical arrangements viz.:
 - Lighting should be adequate. If visual aids like OHP projectors are to be used, lighting should be controllable.
 - The room should be neat and clean.
 - Plug sockets and facilities for visual aids should be available.
 - The room should be well-ventilated with the temperature of the room should be comfortable.
 - The seating should be comfortable
 - The room should have minimal disturbance from outside.
 - Arrangements for water should be there. In case the meeting is likely to carry on for a long duration, there should be a provision for tea and refreshments.

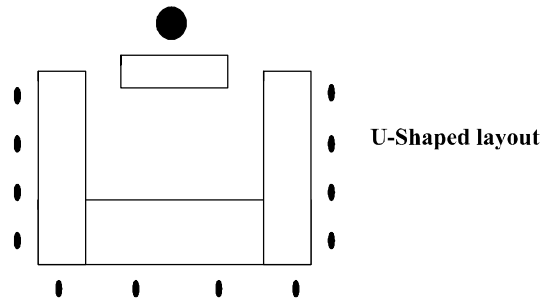
Layout of the room

The layout of the room, that is, the seating arrangement is another issue that requires consideration. Some of the possible layouts have been discussed below:

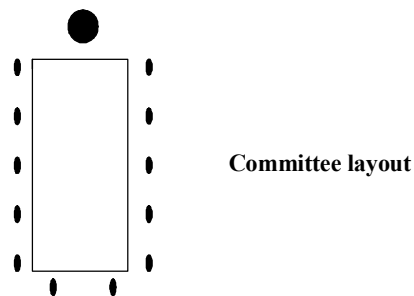
- (i) **Classroom layout:** This type of layout is appropriate when the purpose of the meeting is to provide information and where the chairman does most of the talking. This arrangement is not appropriate for proper interaction amongst members and is, therefore, inappropriate when the meeting calls for considerable interaction



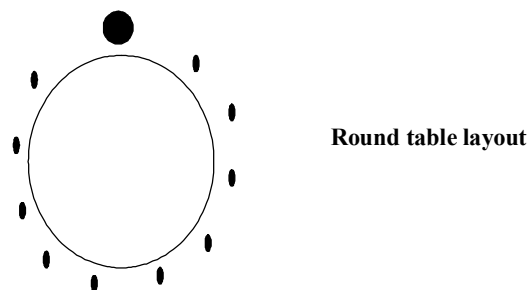
- (ii) **U-Shaped layout:** The basic advantage of this type of layout is that everyone is visible to everyone else and this facilitates interaction and the exchange of views among members. In this kind of layout, the chairman can come to the centre of the 'U' to lay stress on a particular point or to increase his interaction with the other members and decrease the formality of the meeting.



- (iii) **Committee layout:** This is the traditional type of layout, wherein the chairperson sits at the head of the table. This arrangement reflects formality. The secretary or the minutes-taker sits on the left or right side of the chairperson.



- (iv) **Round table layout:** This arrangement is similar to the committee layout with the difference being that it suggests less formality. Being seated around a round table indicates that the chairperson is very much an equal part of the meeting and is not superior to the other members.



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Visual aids

Many meetings require to be supported with visual aids to serve the purpose for which they are intended, like a meeting called to give some information. This kind of meeting may need one to give certain facts and figures, for which visual aids are best suited. Some of the visual aids that can be used to assist meetings and make them more effective have been discussed in the following section.

- (i) **Handouts:** Handouts contain information in the form of reports, summaries, tables, graphs, proposals, and so on, which need to be referred to by the participants of the meeting. The handouts should be brief and clear and should be of relevance to what is being discussed. Care should be taken to ensure that the handouts are free from typographical errors and mistakes.
- (ii) **White board / Chalkboard:** These also are useful during a meeting especially if something needs to be explained with the help of a sketch or a diagram. Sometimes, when points need to be compiled, whiteboards are useful. They are easily available and do not need any special facility like electricity, projector or screen. However, their use is limited especially when a large amount of graphical data or data in the form of complicated figures needs to be displayed.
- (iii) **Flip charts:** These can be prepared beforehand or can be used to note down the salient points to be discussed or the suggestions that emerge during a meeting. Flip charts are easily transportable and are not dependent on power supply or other equipment. However, they are not of much use if the number of members in the meeting is large.
- (i) **Overhead projector (OHP):** An overhead projector (OHP) is used to project overhead transparencies. These are inexpensive and can be produced quickly. These are very commonly used and can be pre-prepared or prepared during the course of the meeting.
- (ii) **Computer-generated slides:** Computer-generated slides are becoming one of the most popular forms of visual aids. These require a screen and an LCD projector connected to a computer. Slides prepared on the computer are very versatile as it is possible to add colour, sound effects and animation to the slides.

13.3.2 Drawing the Agenda

The agenda is a list of items which are to be dealt with during the meeting. The agenda provides a framework for the meeting and ensures that no item is left out. Agendas may be thought of as a planning and control device for meetings.

An agenda for a meeting communicates important information, such as the topics for discussion, the presenter or discussion leader for each topic, the sequence in which the various items will be dealt with and the time allocated for each topic.

An agenda contains the following information:

- Exact place and date
- Time for starting the meeting
- Names of expected attendees
- Objective of the meeting
- Issues to be discussed
- Approximate indication of time for each item
- Any specific preparation required by the members
- Documents containing any information that needs to be provided to the members, attached with the agenda

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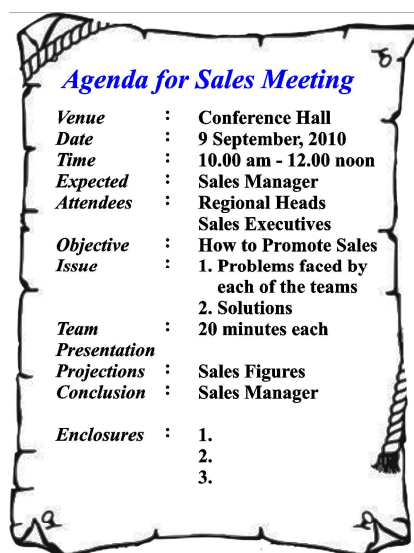


Fig. 13.2 A Sample Agenda

Advantages of a good agenda

The advantages of a good agenda are as follows:

- (i) It ensures that all issues are covered and no issue is left out.
- (ii) It ensures that a proper sequence is followed.
- (iii) It informs the members on what will be dealt with.
- (iv) Since members are made aware of what will be discussed in the meeting they can prepare accordingly and this leads to greater effectiveness of the meeting and also saves time.
- (v) It provides guidelines for the time allocated for each item and hence minimizes wastage of time.

NOTES**Steps for creating a good agenda**

The following are the steps involved in creating a good agenda:

- Send an e-mail stating that there will be a meeting, the goal of the meeting as well as administrative details such as when and where it will be.
- Ask those invited to accept or decline the meeting. Make it clear that once they have accepted the meeting, they are expected to attend.
- Ask those participants requesting for an agenda item to be discussed in the meeting to contact you no less than two days before the meeting with their request, and to inform you about the amount of time they would require to present it.
- Once all of the agenda requests have been submitted to you, summarize them in a table format with the headings—Agenda Item, Presenter and Time. It is your responsibility to ensure that each agenda item is directly related to the goals of this particular meeting.
- Send the agenda to all the meeting participants the day before the meeting with a reminder of the meeting goals, location, time and duration. At this time, ask the presenters if they are happy with the order in which they will be speaking and the amount of time they have been allocated.
- The most important part of creating an effective agenda is to follow it during the meeting.

Agenda guidelines

The guidelines for preparing an agenda are as follows:

- (i) The agenda should not be vague. Each item should be explained clearly with no scope for ambiguity.
- (ii) Clearly specify who is expected to contribute to which item.
- (iii) It may be helpful to circulate some additional information with the agenda.
- (iv) Put an approximate indication of the time for each item.
- (v) Ensure the items are in a logical sequence.
- (vi) ‘Any Other Business’ at the end of the meeting can be avoided if a draft of the agenda is circulated in advance of the meeting. Ask for any other items for consideration. Otherwise this creates at times a free-for-all session that wastes time.
- (vii) Attach labels if possible, such as ‘For information’, ‘For decision’, ‘For action’ to each of the agenda items.
- (viii) Review the items to make sure that not too many items have been scheduled in too short a time.

13.3.3 Running the Meeting

After planning the various aspects of a meeting and drawing up the agenda, the next stage lies in actually conducting the meeting. This includes opening the meeting, starting the discussion, developing the discussion and concluding the meeting.

The chairperson starts the meeting with apologies for his absence followed by his approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. He should restate the purpose of the meeting. If the agenda has not been circulated before, then it should be circulated next. Give members time to go through it. Take up the items on the agenda one by one. Breaking the ice and setting the ball rolling is the responsibility of the chairperson. There are several ways of getting the discussion started. The chairman can start by addressing the meeting and giving views on the item of the agenda. He can give reference to some source like a policy document or report. The chairperson can call upon the person responsible for the particular agenda item to give his points. This is followed by the other members joining in with their contribution towards the issue being discussed. The chairperson needs to steer the discussion back on course in case it goes on to irrelevant issues. The chairperson, from time to time as well as at the end of the discussion on each item, needs to summarize the discussion.

Conclude the meeting on a positive note. Ensure that there are no more ideas that are forthcoming and that an acceptable solution has been reached by viewing the issue from all relevant angles.

A follow-up is essential to ensure that the decisions taken during the meeting are implemented. The minutes of the meeting take care of this aspect. The minutes also mention the specific responsibilities assigned by name, making the task of accountability and follow-up easier.

Basic structure of meetings

The basic structure of a meeting is as follows:

- Use the agenda as a planning tool.
- Circulate the meeting agenda well in advance.
- To run the meeting, keep control, take note of the agreed-upon outcomes, actions and responsibilities, and take notes.
- Write and circulate all notes in the form of minutes, especially those related to action and accountability.
- Follow up on the actions and responsibilities agreed upon.

Role of the chairperson

The chairperson is the key person responsible for the successful conduct of a meeting. Inefficiency on his part may result in wastage of time and resources with the meeting reaching no fruitful conclusion. The chairperson should take care that

NOTES

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he does not monopolize the meeting except when the purpose of the meeting is to give information. Some personal characteristics of an effective chairperson include the ability to think objectively and clearly, good listening skills, a friendly disposition and the ability to maintain one's calm even when the situation gets heated up. The duties of the chairperson include the following:

- (i) Planning the meeting, drawing the agenda and overseeing the arrangements for the meeting
- (ii) Keeping the meeting within time limit, maintaining order and preventing any drifting from the topic
- (iii) Ensuring that the business of the meeting proceeds in the sequence of the agenda
- (iv) Studying in detail the various aspects to be discussed which include facts relating to the topic and the needs of the meeting
- (v) Making everyone aware of the objectives
- (vi) Setting a positive tone for the meeting by creating an atmosphere which encourages healthy participation from the members
- (vii) Facilitating the proceedings towards the ultimate attainment of the pre-decided objectives by questioning, clarifying misunderstandings, providing information and summarizing

Role of the secretary

The secretary too plays an important role in organizing and running the meeting. He should be well aware of the objectives, rules and procedures of the meeting. The duties of the secretary include the following:

- (i) Assisting the chairman in fixing the date, time, location and agenda of the meeting
- (ii) Taking notes during the meeting
- (iii) Preparing a draft of the minutes of the meeting for the approval of the chairman
- (iv) Despatching meeting notifications, agenda, minutes, and so on
- (v) Making administrative arrangements for the meeting

Role of the members

The members are the prime players in a meeting and their cooperation and contribution are essential for the effectiveness of the meeting. The members of the meeting are not merely participants; they too have certain duties. These include:

- (i) Contributing ideas, opinions, views and suggestions based on their knowledge and experience
- (ii) Keeping oneself well informed about the meeting by studying in detail the agenda, additional reports or other related matter

- (iii) Respecting and following the rules laid down by the chairperson
- (iv) Listening actively and attentively
- (v) Cooperating and giving support to fellow members
- (vi) Arriving at the meeting punctually

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13.3.4 Minutes of the Meeting

The proceedings of the meeting are noted in detail and these are referred to as the minutes of the meeting. Generally, it is the responsibility of the secretary to take down notes for preparing the minutes. But in the absence of the secretary, either the junior-most member or any other member may be requested to take down the notes for the minutes. The minutes are finalized within a day or two of the completion of the meeting and are circulated to the members for information and action.

There are two kinds of minutes:

- **Narrative minutes:** Narrative minutes record who said what and when.
- **Decision minutes:** Decision minutes record the decisions taken, the names of the people responsible for implementing them and the deadline for taking action. Most of the time, decision minutes are written as they provide the members with clear guidelines regarding who is to do what and by when.

Parts of the minutes document

The standard parts of the minutes document are as follows:

- Location, date and time of the meeting
- Apologies of absence which includes names of people who were expected to attend but could not attend
- Names of people who attended the meeting
- Decisions taken along with the names of people who have been assigned responsibility for related action
- Names and signature of person writing minutes

SAMPLE-MINUTES OF MEETING

Heading (Title of the meeting)

Date and Time

Venue

Attended by:

Apologies of absence: (names of persons who could not attend but were expected to attend)

The following were the issues discussed during the meeting

1. Approval of previous meeting minutes

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2. Items discussed as per agenda along with the action to be taken, assignment of responsibility and deadline for completion
3. Any other business (issues not covered under agenda items)
4. Date of next meeting
5. Time at which the meeting finished (normally for formal meetings only)
6. Minutes recored by(Name and signature of person who has written the minutes)
7. Signature of attendees (Optional)

Sometimes, the signatures of all attendees as well as the chairperson

Check Your Progress

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What are the aspects related to timing of a meeting? 4. State the basic advantage of a U-shaped layout in a meeting. 5. What are the advantages of a good agenda? |
|--|

13.4 GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

For meetings to run smoothly and efficiently and to derive maximum benefit from them, certain guidelines can prove useful. These include:

- (i) Always have a clear purpose; otherwise, it is better not to have the meeting at all.
- (ii) Decide the issues that are to be included for discussion in the meeting and their relative priority. Depending on their importance and urgency, they are quite different and need to be treated in different ways.
- (iii) Consider the time required for the various items rather than arbitrarily deciding the length of the meeting. Allocate a realistic time slot for each item. Keep the timings realistic—usually things take longer than you think.
- (iv) Decide the date of the meeting well in advance.
- (v) The key to a successful meeting is keeping control. One can keep control by sticking to the agenda, managing the relationships and personalities and concentrating on outcomes.
- (vi) As a chairman, politely suppress the over-zealous and encourage the nervous.
- (vii) Take notes as you go, recording the salient points and the agreed-upon actions, with names, measurable outcomes and deadlines.
- (viii) Do not be late for the meeting.
- (ix) Do not interrupt others when they talk.
- (x) Follow the instructions and requests of the chairperson.

(xi) Take care of your body language. For good body language, you must:

- Sit straight
- Face the speaker
- Look attentive
- Make adequate eye contact with the speaker
- Nod at appropriate junctures

Bad body language is reflected through negative actions such as

- Sitting outside the group
- Avoiding eye contact
- Folding your arms
- Clicking pens
- Shaking legs
- Holding your head in your hands



Holding Your Head in Your Hands

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Check Your Progress

6. List any three guidelines to be considered for carrying out effective meetings.
7. What are the signs which reflect bad body language?

13.5 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The main objectives of a meeting are as follows:
 - a) To obtain information
 - b) To provide information
 - c) To solve a problem
 - d) To persuade or sell an idea

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2. The aim of a meeting held to persuade or sell an idea is to make the participants believe in the suitability of the idea/decision. A meeting held by the sales department with select customers to launch and advertise a new product is an example of such a meeting.
3. There are three aspects related to the timing of the meeting. The first is the choice of the date and the time of the day when the meeting will be held, the second is the duration of the meeting and the third is the time allocated to the individual items.
4. The basic advantage of a U-shaped layout in a meeting is that everyone is visible to everyone else and this facilitates interaction and the exchange of views among members.
5. The following are the advantages of a good agenda:
 - a) It ensures that all issues are covered and no issue is left out.
 - b) It ensures that a proper sequence is followed.
 - c) It informs the members on what will be dealt with.
6. The three guidelines to be considered for carrying out effective meetings are as follows:
 - a) Always have a clear purpose; otherwise, it is better not to have the meeting at all.
 - b) Do not interrupt others when they talk.
 - c) Follow the instructions and requests of the chairperson.
7. There are several signs which reflect bad body language such as sitting outside the group, avoiding eye contact, folding your arms and clicking pens and so on.

13.6 SUMMARY

- Meetings are vital for management and communication. The planning and running of effective meetings for business, sales, strategic planning and team-building are crucial for effective functioning of organizations.
- Meetings need to be held for a definite purpose. Meetings without a purpose are a waste of time and resources.
- The aim of a meeting is to obtain facts, figures, opinions and viewpoints from those attending the meeting.
- The chairperson has an important role to play as a speaker. He is required to provide participants with clarifications in case they need any.
- The need to run effective meetings is more intense than ever in modern times, given the ever-increasing pressure on people's time.

- Planning is the key to effective meetings. One needs to plan the various aspects of the meeting so that maximum benefits may be derived from the meeting.
- The effectiveness of a meeting is, to a large extent, dependent on the size of the meeting. The number of members should not be too many or too few.
- To have an optimal size of the meeting, it is essential to ensure that only those members are asked to attend who can contribute effectively to the meeting.
- There are three aspects related to the timing of the meeting. The first is the choice of the date and the time of the day when the meeting will be held, the second is the duration of the meeting and the third is the time allocated to the individual items.
- The layout of the room, that is, the seating arrangement is another issue that requires consideration.
- Many meetings require to be supported with visual aids to serve the purpose for which they are intended, like a meeting called to give some information.
- The agenda is a list of items which are to be dealt with during the meeting. The agenda provides a framework for the meeting and ensures that no item is left out.
- After planning the various aspects of a meeting and drawing up the agenda, the next stage lies in actually conducting the meeting. This includes opening the meeting, starting the discussion, developing the discussion and concluding the meeting.
- The minutes also mention the specific responsibilities assigned by name, making the task of accountability and follow-up easier.
- The proceedings of the meeting are noted in detail and these are referred to as the minutes of the meeting.

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13.7 KEY WORDS

- **Meeting:** It refers to a term which describes the process of people getting together to talk and share their knowledge, opinions, experiences, views and suggestions.
- **Agenda:** It refers to a list of items which are to be dealt with during the meeting. The agenda provides a framework for the meeting and ensures that no item is left out.
- **Minutes of the meeting:** It refers to proceedings of the meeting are noted in detail.
- **Decision minutes:** It refers to a type of minute which record the decisions taken, the names of the people responsible for implementing them and the deadline for taking action.

13.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short Answer Questions

1. Why do we need meetings? What are the characteristics of meetings?
2. What are the steps involved in writing an agenda for a meeting?
3. Write a short note on the minutes of a meeting.
4. What is the role of a member in a meeting?
5. List the points to be considered while selecting the location of a meeting.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss in detail the various inputs one needs in order to plan and conduct a meeting.
2. Prepare a checklist for ensuring effective meetings.
3. Discuss the aspects related to the timing of the meetings.
4. Explain the role of a chairperson in a meeting.
5. Analyse the importance of visual aids in a meeting.

13.9 FURTHER READINGS

- Madhukar, R.K. 2018. *Business Communication*, 3rd edn. Noida: Vikas Publishing.
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UNIT 14 GROUP DISCUSSION

Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 An Introduction to Group Discussion
- 14.3 Conducting a Group discussion
 - 14.3.1 Quality of Content, Participation, Logical Presentation and Behavioural Skills
- 14.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
- 14.5 Summary
- 14.6 Key Words
- 14.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 14.8 Further Readings

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14.0 INTRODUCTION

A group discussion is defined as a discussion in which around eight to ten people come together to put forward their opinions, ideas or find a solution towards a particular problem either in a formal or an informal way. In the existing times, organizations generally carry a group discussion among the selected candidates to judge their behaviour and mannerisms. This type of discussion is favourable for an organization as they can choose the best candidate from the already selected candidates.

In this unit, the concept of group and group discussion has been discussed in detail. The types of groups based on method of conduct and nature of topic has been highlighted. The essential characteristics which results in a successful discussion has also been explained in detail.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of group discussion
- Analyse the characteristics of group discussion
- Explain the types of group
- Identify the steps which result in successful group discussion

14.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO GROUP DISCUSSION

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A group discussion comprises the two words, 'group' and 'discussion'. Before understanding group discussion as an important group activity, it is important to understand the terms 'group' and 'discussion' independently.

What is a Group?

A group, in the context of organizational communication, is defined as a collection of individuals who interact with each other, accept expectations and obligations as members of the group and share a common identity. Group activities have certain advantages and disadvantages. K.K. Sinha, in his book, *Business Communication*, has listed out the advantages and disadvantages of a group. These have been summarized below:

Advantages of a Group

- (i) Groups are equipped with more complete information as there are many more members.
- (ii) As groups have more members, group decision-making has, as a result, the advantage of a diversity of views.
- (iii) Groups have many approaches and alternatives to consider.
- (iv) Group decision-making shows that there is no one, single, straight solution to anything. It encourages lateral thinking that throws up new and creative ideas and solutions to problems. In other words, groups can always find out ways away from the traditional ones.
- (v) Group decisions increase the acceptability of a solution. With their representatives as members, the parties affected by or concerned with a decision are themselves involved in its making. Thus, they are more likely to accept it. In this way, the decision gets more support and the group is more satisfied.
- (vi) Group decision-making is democratic in its character. It, therefore, increases the legitimacy of the decision. A decision taken by an individual without consultation with other members will be looked upon as autocratic or arbitrary. It, therefore, may not be acceptable to many.
- (vii) The nature of a group, especially a large one, is heterogeneous. Heterogeneity has its own advantages. Many members in a group have expert knowledge of some area that the organization may be concerned with. Group decisions have, therefore, the advantage of expert opinions given by some well-informed member.
- (viii) By the same logic, group decision-making draws out the latent talent of the employees of an organization. In the absence of a chance given to them

through a committee meeting, many of the employees would remain indifferent, as opposed to group decision-making.

- (ix) Group decision-making ensures that the interests of the employees are safeguarded due to which employee relations become cordial. Bound by decisions in which they are themselves involved, the employees remain loyal to the organization.
- (x) This automatically leads to the strengthening of the organization.

Disadvantages of a Group

- (i) It is observed that group decisions tend to be time-consuming. It takes time to contact and assemble a group. Once the members of the group are in place, they take their own time in arriving at a decision.
- (ii) Different individuals have different opinions and approaches; so finding the best way out or a solution to a problem naturally takes time.
- (iii) In group decision-making, it is difficult to fix responsibility. Simply for the reason that group members share responsibility, it is not at all easy to find out who is accountable for the final outcome.
- (iv) Group decisions are quite often dominated by a handful of members. It leads to the creation of groups within a group, and if the dominant group comprises members of low or medium ability, the overall effectiveness of the group suffers.
- (v) In groups, often unhappy compromises have to be made because there are social pressures and clashing demands.
- (vi) Blurred focus and irrelevant discussions very often defeat the purpose of the group.

What is a Discussion?

A discussion is understood as an activity of sitting and talking about a specific subject. The word 'discuss' has been derived from the Latin root 'discutere', which means to shake or strike. Thus 'discussion' refers to thoroughly shaking up the subject, that is, examining it thoroughly to reach a conclusion.

Group Discussions

Group discussions are a very important aspect of group communication. Group discussions are a creative and dynamic activity which stimulates reflective thinking among the members. Group discussions may be defined as an activity in which a small number of persons meet face to face and exchange and share ideas freely or attempt to reach a decision on a common issue.

Group discussions are unstructured and less formal compared to meetings or conferences wherein specific roles are assigned to the participants. In a group discussion, an individual's thought process is influenced by the views and opinions

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of the other members. It also depends on where and in which direction the mood of the discussion moves. In a group discussion, each participant is free to speak his views. A successful discussion involves both listening and speaking.

Characteristics of Group Discussions

According to author, T.N. Chhabra, some of the salient features common to all group discussions are as follows:

- (i) *Interface*: A basic feature of group discussions is the interaction among the various members of the group. They see, hear and communicate with each other orally by paying attention to each other.
- (ii) *Leader and Members*: Group discussions are effective only when there is a group of members and a leader. The leader has to summarize facts and information, integrate them, stimulate thinking and agree to a unanimous solution of the problem. The members of the group become actively related to each other in their respective roles.
- (iii) *Participation*: The effectiveness and efficiency of a group discussion depends, to a large extent, upon the active participation of the members.



Fig. 14.1 Group Discussion

- (iv) *Interpersonal Attraction*: Another characteristic feature of a group discussion is interpersonal attraction. As long as interaction continues, the likes, dislikes, behaviour and temperament of members are known to each other. Among them, empathy develops and as such they share each other's problems.
- (v) *Pressure to conform*: In a group discussion, there is always an element of pressure to conform to norms. The pre-defined and established standards are always enforced and followed.
- (vi) *Conflict*: A conflict is a difference or disagreement among the members of the group, which often arise during deliberations and discussions. A conflict is inevitable and usually develops when alternative solutions are present. It

can stimulate the members to find new solutions to the problem. Thus, conflict is not necessarily bad. But if it arises due to the political behaviour of the members it will have dysfunctional consequences.

Group Discussion

Purpose of Group Discussions

Group discussions may serve various purposes. Some of them are:

- (i) To reach a solution on an issue of concern.
- (ii) To generate new ideas or new approaches to solving a problem.
- (iii) For selecting candidates after the written test for employment or for admission to educational institutes.
- (iv) To provide us with an avenue to train ourselves in various interpersonal skills.

Advantages of Group Discussions

The advantages of group discussions are as follows:

- (i) It provides a deeper understanding of the subject.
- (ii) It improves the ability to think critically.
- (iii) It provides different approaches to solving a problem.
- (iv) It helps the group in taking a decision.
- (v) It gives an opportunity to hear the opinions of other persons.
- (vi) It enables a participant to put across his/her viewpoint.
- (vii) It enhances confidence in speaking.
- (viii) It can change your opinion and show you things from a different perspective.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the purpose of group discussion?
2. State the basic feature of a group discussion.

14.3 CONDUCTING A GROUP DISCUSSION

The ideal group usually consists of eight to ten participants. If the number of participants is more than that, then there is a tendency for some of the members to be passive listeners and avoid participation. Similarly, if the number of participants is less than six, the discussion suffers from a lack of diversity in opinions. The time allotted for the discussion is normally twenty–thirty minutes.

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Generally, no one is nominated as the leader to conduct the discussion, but as the discussion progresses one of the participants emerges as a leader. This is true when the discussion tests the knowledge and oration of the members. The person conducting the group discussion announces the topic and then merely acts as an observer evaluating the proceedings without actively participating in the discussion.

However, in certain cases like when the aim of the group discussion is teaching and learning or when the subject of the group discussion is uncommon or tough, the group discussion may be held under the guidance of a group leader or a facilitator. The group facilitator announces the topic and gives a brief introduction. He may give initial arguments to initiate the discussion. A certain degree of expertise is expected from the group leader. He is generally responsible for concluding and summarizing the discussion.

There are two ways of organizing a group discussion. In one case, the topic is given to the candidates well in advance and the participants are expected to come prepared for the discussion. In the other case, the topic is disclosed to the participants after they assemble, and they are given about ten minutes to think about it.

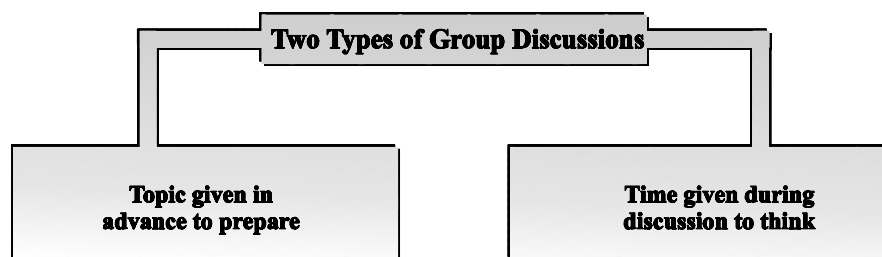


Fig. 14.2 Types of Group Discussions

There are no formal rules for the discussion process. The participants are free to express their views. There may be an observer who evaluates the contribution and behaviour of the different group members.

The seating arrangement should be in the form of a circle or a semi-circle. This facilitates interaction of all members. Needless to say, it is important that the room be well-ventilated and sufficiently lit.

Types of Group Discussion

We will classify group discussions based on the following:

- Method of conduct
- Nature of topic

Based on the method of conduct

Bases on the method of conduct, group discussions can be further classified into the following:

- (i) *Structured Group Discussion*: In structured group discussion, the topic is given to the participants by the selectors and a time-frame is allotted to complete the discussion. This is the most commonly followed technique for a group discussion.
- (ii) *Unstructured Group Discussion*: In unstructured group discussions, unlike in the case of structured group discussions, the candidates themselves decide the topic with mutual consent. This formal method of group discussions is rarely used.
- (iii) *Role Play*: In role play, the candidates are given specific roles to play in the backdrop of a given situation. Within the framework of their role, the participants have to solve the problems inherent in the situation given to them.
- (iv) *Group discussion with a nominated leader*: Generally, no-one is nominated as leader of a group discussion and all participants are treated as equal. But in this type of a group discussion, a person is nominated as a facilitator or a leader of the group. He may summarize the discussion or solutions discussed at the end of the group discussion. Sometimes the leader is nominated by the group members themselves.

Based on Nature of the Topic

Group discussions can also be categorized based on the topic allotted for the discussion to the participants. There are three kinds of topics—controversial topics, abstract topics and case study. topics.

- (i) *Controversial topics*: These are topics which are controversial, and which have the potential to generate an argument. Such topics generally make the discussion lively as arguments and counter arguments are presented. This gives the evaluators more opportunities to evaluate the candidates.
Examples of such topics include ‘Should the examination system be scrapped’ or ‘How ethical is cloning?’.
- (ii) *Abstract topics*: There is a growing trend of assigning abstract topics, that is, topics which are vague or unclear. These topics enable the evaluators to evaluate the creative ability of the candidates. Every candidate can have his own interpretation of the topic. Some such topics are ‘Zero’, ‘One and one make eleven’.
- (iii) *Case study topics*: Here, a situation is provided to the participants which may depict a problem faced by the organization or the managers. Participants need to analyse the situation and think of various alternatives to solve the

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problem. This kind of a group discussion tests the ability of the candidate to think of solutions keeping the situational factors and constraints in mind.

Important Ingredients for Success in Group Discussions

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There are certain important traits which are essential for being a successful participant in a group discussion. These include the following:

- (i) *Positive personality*: Group discussions are an effective tool for assessing the overall personality of the candidate. Personality includes not only one's external appearance but also the traits one possesses. Thus, during group discussions the dressing style, speaking style, attitude towards others, presentation style, and so on, are evaluated. During the twenty-five–thirty minutes one has, one needs to create a favourable impression on the evaluators. A pleasing personality makes a favourable impression giving one an edge over the others.
- (ii) *Communication skills*: The key to an effective group discussion lies in the ability to communicate effectively through both one's verbal and non-verbal skills. One needs to express the ideas and opinions logically and with clarity. Brilliant ideas and sound knowledge are of little use unless they are expressed properly. One needs to possess good oratory skills with a sound vocabulary. Besides being a good speaker, one needs to be a good listener because in group discussions one needs to speak keeping in mind what has been or is being said by others.
- (iii) *Sound knowledge and awareness level*: The participants' knowledge and general awareness is another major ingredient for a successful group discussion. The participant needs to have originality in his/her ideas, that is, he should hold his own viewpoint and have considerable depth of knowledge. Lack of knowledge and ideas may lead to repetition and monotony in expression. This is not desirable and may go against one's success.
- (iv) *Ability to coordinate*: The participant's ability to coordinate the team and work in harmony with others is another ingredient for success in group discussions. Cooperation and positive contribution towards the discussion are vital. One must display the ability to take control of the discussion without appearing to be dominating.

Body Language

As in the case of other techniques of communication, body language is of importance in group discussions as well. It is not only essential that one presents the topic analytically and logically, but one must also exhibit an aptitude of leading the team by being a part of the team. A positive attitude and a willingness to cooperate and be a part of the team should be supported by one's body language

and voice. Some of the points to be kept in mind as regards the body language for effective participation in group discussion are as follows

- (i) Your attire should be formal and professional. Do not wear flashy and bright colours, too much of jewellery or heavy make-up.
- (ii) Be natural. Do not put on an accent or pretend to be someone you are not.
- (iii) While sitting on the chair do not slouch. Maintain a straight and comfortable position.
- (iv) Avoid distracting habits like biting nails, shaking nails, and so on.
- (v) Avoid aggressive and dominating gestures like pointing fingers at fellow participants, raising your voice, and so on.
- (vi) Do not stare at anybody. Maintain soft eye contact with as many people as you can. Do not look down or up while speaking.
- (vii) Do not be conscious of the evaluators. Forget that you are being evaluated as this will make you conscious of your actions and will adversely affect your behaviour.

Skills Evaluated during Group Discussions

The main objective of a group discussion is primarily an activity to evaluate the candidate's ability to work in group. In addition to this, other skills like communication, leadership qualities and persuasive skills are also assessed during group discussions.

Figure 14.1 Skills Evaluated During Group Discussions

Skills Evaluated During Group Discussions				
Interpersonal Skills	Communication Skills	Problem-solving Ability	Leadership Skills	Persuasive Skills
The ability to remain when someone provokes you.	Listening receptively	The ability to come up with divergent and innovative solutions	The ability to lead	The ability to persuade others without hurting them.
The ability to be people-centric rather than self-	The ability to convey thoughts with clarity	Creativity	The ability to inspire	
Service.	Positive body language and other non-verbal communication		The ability to carry the team along	
The ability to empathize				
The ability to remain objective				
The ability to be a team player rather than work in isolation				
The willingness to accommodate the points of view of others				
Emotional maturity				

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Successful Group Discussion Techniques

There are some definite Dos and Don'ts in group discussion techniques.

Table 14.1 *Successful Group Discussion Techniques*

Successful Group Discussion Techniques	
Dos	Don'ts
Organize your thoughts. Pre-plan what you are going to say.	Do not try to be someone you are not. Be as natural as possible.
Speak. It is important for the evaluator to hear you speak.	Do not use too many gestures. They can be intimidating to the other participants.
If you have any doubts regarding the subject, seek clarifications.	Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
In the case of group discussions for selection to jobs or educational institutes, make sure that you are dressed in formal attire.	Do not try to stand out by putting the other person down.
Be assertive without being authoritative or dominating.	Do not ridicule the idea or statement of another participant by referring to it as stupid.
Keep your language formal. Simple spoken English without too much of jargon is most desirable.	Do not impose your ideas on anybody. Respect others' opinions.
Maintain a formal posture which reflects enthusiasm.	Do not shout. Use a moderate tone and a medium pitch.
Try and maintain eye contact with as many people as possible.	Do not lose objectivity and make personal attacks.
Try to make friends by speaking to those who have been ignored by the rest of the group.	Do not attempt to be a leader by trying to conclude when the group has not reached any conclusion.
Watch your body language. Your gestures and mannerisms add to or subtract from what you are trying to say.	
Be clear and fluent in what you are saying	
Refrain from extreme emotions. Maintain your cool. Do not take personal offence to anything that is being said.	
Always be polite. Avoid using strong phrases like 'I strongly object.....'.	
Listen receptively. Do not listen with a desire to contradict or refute. Instead, listen to positively analyse what is being said.	
It may be useful for you to summarize the points made till a particular time and then present your views.	
Stick to the discussion topic. Do not speak irrelevant things.	
Remember that the discussion is not an argument. Be polite even if you disagree.	

Discussion Techniques

Group discussions (GD) is not a debate in which you either support or oppose the topic. There are no clear-cut positions or stands to be taken. GD is a continuous discussion, a live interaction in which you examine a subject/problem from different angles and viewpoints. As a participant you may disagree with or support other points of view or bring in another point of view. But you should do it by showing respect for the other person even if you do not accept his/her point of view as

NOTES

correct. Courtesy in discussion indicates our level of culture and sophistication. Here are the guidelines for all GD participants:

Group Discussion

- **How to join in the discussion**

- a) I'd like to raise the subject of.....
- b) What I think is.....
- c) I think it is important to consider the question of.....
- d) If I could say a word about.....
- e) May I make a point about.....

- **To support what some other participant has said**

Remember that you should not say that you support so and so or I agree with him/her. You should support the views of the person not the person

- a) I'd like to support Miss Renuka's point of view about
- b) That is just what I also think.....
- c) I agree fully with what Mr Rahul has just said. I am in complete agreement with her.

- **To support disagreement**

Again remember that you are opposed to the idea, and not the person who holds it. You can disagree by using polite expressions, instead of curt expressions such as "You are wrong", you can say

- a) Please allow me to differ.....
- b) I would like to differ.....
- c) I think differently on this issue.....
- d) I do not agree; in my opinion.....

- **To make a point very strongly**

- a) I am convinced that.....
- b) You can't deny that.....
- c) Anybody can see that.....
- d) It is quite clear to me that.....

- **To bring a discussion back to the point**

- a) That's very interesting, but I don't think it is indeed to the point.
- b) Perhaps, we could go back to the point.
- c) Could we stick to the subject, please?
- d) I am afraid we are drifting from the point.

Source: Chaturvedi, P.D. and Mukesh Chaturvedi, *Business Communication Concepts: Cases and Analyses*, 1st Edition. Delhi: Pearsons Education, 2004, pp 387–88.

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NOTES**Qualities of a Successful Participant**

As discussed in the earlier sections, group discussions are vital tools for the selection of candidates suitable for job positions or admission to professional academic courses. Some of the qualities which an individual should possess to be a successful participant in a group discussion are enlisted as follows:

- Clarity of expression and logical organization of thoughts
- Good subject knowledge
- Creative and original thinking
- Presence of mind and spontaneity of thinking
- Confident and bold
- Thinks before speaking
- Calm and cool temperament
- Natural leader with an ability to bring the discussion back on track when it tends to steer to irrelevant topics
- Positive thinker and well aware of his/her strengths
- Persuasive and influential abilities
- Cooperative and keeps the team united
- Good orator
- Good listener
- Ready to learn
- The ability to leave a positive impression on others
- The ability to handle pressure
- The ability to take criticism and disagreements positively
- Coherence between verbal and non-verbal language
- A behaviour that is pleasing, trustworthy and natural

14.3.1 Quality of Content, Participation, Logical Presentation and Behavioural Skills

Participation

Group discussion is a task which is aimed evaluating a candidate's behaviour in a group. The interviewers can analyse the behaviour of the candidate through their mannerisms. A candidate's communication skills, knowledge and mental strength can be evaluated through such discussions. The way a person behaves with other participants can also be analysed, it will help them to understand the basic nature of the concerned person. However, there could be different kind of participants in a group. Some of the most common type of participants which are a part of group discussion have been discussed in the following section.

Starting point: There is always a person in a group who likes to initiate the conversation. The person is confident and can set a benchmark for the rest of the candidates right at the beginning. He or she is known as the initiator. However, it is not always if you are not confident enough, one should have a firm belief in their opinion to be the initiator.

Controller: There are some people who like to take control of the discussion by either asserting themselves in their behavior or by proving that their opinion is right. The person carrying out the group discussion should be well aware of such a person as it may lead to an ugly situation.

Clear Facts: Few members of the group will be data driven. They based all their arguments and opinion on the basis of facts and figures. These kinds of people start their arguments in a logical manner and often, they are the ones who are likely to be selected as they have researched well. However, it is important that the facts or the figures must be accurate.

Born Leaders: Some people are born to lead. They are confident and have that aura enough to be the leader among all the people. They are calm, put forward their views with an ease and most importantly, are a good listener.

Moderate Referee: This category of people acts as a coordinator. They make sure of the fact that others get enough time to voice their opinions. They can help in calming down the situation during a heated argument and also help others if one gets stuck somewhere.

Provocative: This category of people considers themselves as 'All in All'. They like to give orders and wants that everyone should agree with his or her point. However, one should be careful of such people as it can provoke other members too, thus, leading to an ugly situation.

Followers: These people just like to follow the opinions of others. They just show their agreement or disagreement by voicing others opinion. They are generally the ones, who does not score well in a group discussion as they do not contribute much to the discussion.

Fault Finder: There are some group members who find fault in everyone's opinion. They are despised by everyone because of their habit to counter mistakes in others arguments. It is not necessary that in a group discussion, one has to counter others argument. One can even support if they agree with the argument put forward.

Question Mark: Besides these people, there are people who just like to question others. They often irritate others by asking unnecessarily questions. Instead of opining themselves, they question others for a simple fact to and thus, scores less in discussions.

NOTES

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. What are controversial topics in a group discussion?
4. State the main objective of a group discussion.
5. What are the two ways of organizing a group discussion?

14.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The following are the purpose of a group discussion:
 - (i) To reach a solution on an issue of concern.
 - (ii) To generate new ideas or new approaches to solving a problem.
 - (iii) For selecting candidates after the written test for employment or for admission to educational institutes.
 - (iv) To provide us with an avenue to train ourselves in various interpersonal skills.
2. A basic feature of group discussions is the interaction among the various members of the group. They see, hear and communicate with each other orally by paying attention to each other.
3. Controversial topics are topics which are controversial, and which have the potential to generate an argument. Such topics generally make the discussion lively as arguments and counter arguments are presented. This gives the evaluators more opportunities to evaluate the candidates.
4. The main objective of a group discussion is primarily an activity to evaluate the candidate's ability to work in group. In addition to this, other skills like communication, leadership qualities and persuasive skills are also assessed during group discussions.
5. There are two ways of organizing a group discussion. In one case, the topic is given to the candidates well in advance and the participants are expected to come prepared for the discussion. In the other case, the topic is disclosed to the participants after they assemble, and they are given about ten minutes to think about it.

14.5 SUMMARY

- A group, in the context of organizational communication, is defined as a collection of individuals who interact with each other, accept expectations and obligations as members of the group and share a common identity.
- Group decision-making is democratic in its character. It, therefore, increases the legitimacy of the decision.

- Group decisions are quite often dominated by a handful of members. It leads to the creation of groups within a group, and if the dominant group comprises members of low or medium ability, the overall effectiveness of the group suffers.
- Group discussions are a very important aspect of group communication. Group discussions are a creative and dynamic activity which stimulates reflective thinking among the members.
- Group discussions are unstructured and less formal compared to meetings or conferences wherein specific roles are assigned to the participants.
- The ideal group usually consists of eight to ten participants. If the number of participants is more than that, then there is a tendency for some of the members to be passive listeners and avoid participation.
- Generally, no one is nominated as the leader to conduct the discussion, but as the discussion progresses one of the participants emerges as a leader.
- A certain degree of expertise is expected from the group leader. He is generally responsible for concluding and summarizing the discussion.
- In structured group discussion, the topic is given to the participants by the selectors and a time-frame is allotted to complete the discussion.
- In unstructured group discussions, unlike in the case of structured group discussions, the candidates themselves decide the topic with mutual consent.
- Group discussions can also be categorized based on the topic allotted for the discussion to the participants. There are three kinds of topics—controversial topics, abstract topics and case study.
- The main objective of a group discussion is primarily an activity to evaluate the candidate's ability to work in group.
- Group discussion is a continuous discussion, a live interaction in which you examine a subject /problem from different angles and viewpoints.

NOTES

14.6 KEY WORDS

- **Group:** It refers to a collection of individuals who interact with each other, accept expectations and obligations as members of the group and share a common identity.
- **Case study topics:** It refers to topics in which a situation is provided to the participants which may depict a problem faced by the organization or the managers.
- **Structured group discussion:** It refers to a form of discussion in which the topic is given to the participants by the selectors and a time-frame is allotted to complete the discussion.

- **Unstructured group discussion:** It refers to a form of discussion in which the candidates themselves decide the topic with mutual consent.

NOTES

14.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the disadvantages of a group?
2. List the advantages of a group discussion.
3. How are groups classified based on topics?
4. What is the role of a group facilitator in a group discussion?
5. What are the types of groups based on the method of conduct?

Long Answer Questions

1. 'Group discussions are a very important aspect of group communication'. Elucidate the statement.
2. Discuss the main characteristics of a group discussion.
3. Interpret the features which results in an effective and successful discussion.
4. Discuss the types of people which can be found in a group discussion.
5. Identify the techniques related to group discussion.

14.8 FURTHER READINGS

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