

# Unit -16

## Composition

### Objectives

After the completion of this unit, you would be able to–

- define a composition.
- identify the parts of a composition.
- write a good composition.

### Overview:

**Lesson 1:** *Composition Writing*

**Lesson 2:** *How to write a good composition.*

### Answer Key

## Lesson-1 : Composition Writing



### What is **Composition**?

A composition can be simply defined as a piece of writing about a particular subject or issue. Writing good compositions is very important in the English Language in the sense that it allows the learner to be able to express what is in his or her mind regarding a particular issue.

In writing a composition or an essay, it is imperative to know that your examiners will not only look at your content but also look at important things such as your grammar, punctuation, and your style of writing. Now let us see how we go about writing a good essay or composition.

### Parts of a composition

A typical composition is made up of four major parts, namely the **heading**, the **introduction**, the **body** and the **conclusion**. Let us take a look at the various parts one after the other.

#### 1. *The Heading*

The Heading or the Title is obviously the first part of a composition or an essay. A heading is basically the title that you write at the beginning of your composition. Your heading can either be written in block letters or in initial capitals (this is where you make each word of the heading start with a capital letter). When choosing a heading or title for your composition, make sure that the heading that you write utterly relates to the content of your essay. And also try keeping your headings short and catchy. A good heading can range from just two words to a couple of words. It is never advisable to write very lengthy headings that end up looking like complex sentences.

#### 2. *The Introduction*

After the heading, the next thing that we do is to move into the introduction of our essay. The introduction or the introductory paragraph is a very relevant aspect of your essay because of the fact that it states the main idea of your composition. It basically lets your reader to know what your composition is going to be about. It is for this reason many experts say that your introduction should be good enough to arouse the interest of your reader and make the reader fall in love with it so that they continue reading. If your introduction fails to catch the interest of the reader, then you haven't done a great job with it.

Your introduction or introductory paragraph should have the following important features:

- Should be interesting enough to grab your reader's interest
- Should prepare your reader(s) for what is to follow
- Should be able to let your reader know what the subject or topic of the composition is going to be about
- Should be concise

You can also decide to define in your introduction one or more of the keywords or key terms that the composition is all about. For example, if you are writing an essay on "***How Global Warming can be reduced***", it will be a good idea that you take a moment to define what

global warming is all about in your introductory paragraph. This helps your readers get to know what global warming actually is in the first place.

In an English Language examination, when you give your composition a very good introduction, you stand a high chance of getting some brilliant marks for that.

### **3. The Body**

After the introduction, we make a smooth transition into the body of the essay or composition. You can call the body of the composition the “main content” because this is where you are going to state the main points of your essay and develop or elaborate on them. Let’s say that you are writing an essay on “The major causes of Road Accidents in your City”, it is obvious you are going to come up with a couple of points. It is always advisable to state and develop about five points. Never write below three points. In an examination, if you are writing an essay that requires that you list and explain certain points, you will lose vital marks for writing below three points.

In writing and developing your points, you should remember to always make sure that each point you bring and develop is contained within a single paragraph. So if you come up with five points, then you are expected to come up with five paragraphs. There are however, certain instances where a particular point is too complex or too broad to the point that one paragraph cannot do proper justice to it; here, you can decide to devote an additional paragraph to the point in order to properly explain it.

You should remember that the body is where the majority of your marks lie. The body is basically the heart of your essay or composition. It is therefore imperative that you make sure that you thoroughly plan it well and make a draft (rough work) of the things that you are going to be discussing before you transfer the draft into the main work. When you plan your essay and jot down the points you are going to discuss in your draft, you will have a lot of points to talk about. If you do not prepare a draft and jot down your points, when writing the real essay you are likely going to forget some very important points. It is always better to plan your essay and write your points in your draft before transferring them into the real composition. If you do this, you will always have an edge over one who thinks and writes into the real composition at the same time. The person is bound to forget some points.

### **4. The Conclusion**

The conclusion is the last but not least part of a good composition. As the name suggests, the conclusion is where you are going to conclude. This is basically the ending of your composition. The conclusion should be in paragraph of its own and should be simple and summarize the main points that you raised in the body of your composition. The conclusion can be made up of two or more sentences. Your conclusion does not necessarily have to be complex or extraordinary. The conclusion performs two functions:

- It provides a beautiful way to end your composition by not bringing the composition to a sudden close down
- It summarizes all your main points in the body of your essay

Although the conclusion is simple and can be achieved in a couple of sentences, it is a very vital aspect of your essay which you should not take for granted.

After you have finished with your composition, it is extremely important that you take a moment and read over what you have written. No matter how carefully you wrote your essay, when you read over it you are bound to find some mistakes such as spelling errors, wrong use of punctuation marks and omitted words. These mistakes can go a long way in denting the beauty of your composition and making you lose vital marks if they are not corrected. This is a very important thing to do.

There are some other important things that you should have at the back of your mind when you are writing your essay.

In writing your composition, you must take note of the following things:

- Keep your sentences short and simple so that your readers can easily understand you
- Your writing should be sharp, vivid and clear
- Avoid the use of bombastic words and complex expressions; your readers and the examiners do not get impressed by such words or expressions
- Never use a word that you do not thoroughly understand
- If you are not sure of the spelling of a word, then it is advisable to look for another word or phrase that means the same as the word you are not sure of (a synonym)
- Do not use slang; if you use an informal word then make sure that you put it in inverted commas

If you follow the guidelines above, then your essays are always going to be good and very interesting to read.

### **Examples of composition**

#### **The Value of Self Confidence**

My friends often ask me, "Tanim, why are you so carefree all the time?". The answer is quite simple. I owe my carefree attitude to self confidence. Now, some people may say that self confidence is a form of conceit, and they may be right. However, my self confidence allows me to feel relaxed no matter how difficult a task I face, so it is extremely valuable to me.

I remember the first time I participated in an English competition. Three years ago, my classmates chose me to speak in an English competition at our school. When I went onstage, I had butterflies in my stomach. Suddenly, my mother's words came back to me: "If you want to do something, it costs nothing but self confidence". Since I was chosen to be there, it meant I must have the ability to succeed. "Get a hold of yourself", I said silently. "You have prepared for this competition for the past three months. You are the best". Strangely, my nervousness vanished after I spoke to myself with such confidence. I began to speak onstage - the feeling was wonderful. The whole audience applauded afterwards. I was successful!

Without my self confidence, I could not have succeeded. My courage and optimism are based on this self confidence. Various difficulties will certainly come into our lives from time to time in the future. If we face those difficulties, we are bound to succeed. Knowing that we are capable of handling any difficulty will build our confidence and lead to success.

So, my friends are confident! Even if you're not the best, it doesn't matter. Don't you always do your best to achieve your aims? Of course you do. That's enough to give you confidence, and confidence will make you happier.

#### **The Greatest Invention in History**

Thousands of years ago in ancient Egypt, people built pyramids for the Pharaoh. At that time there were no machines, so how could they move such huge stones? How could they create such splendid pyramids? How could they create such a miracle? The answer, of course, is the wheel. The wheel makes everything possible.

The common uses of the wheel are obvious. Rather than travel on foot or on horse, we have learned to travel by horse-drawn carriages, cars, trains and now airplanes and rockets. The Industrial Revolution could never have occurred without the wheel. Not only do industrial

machines, such as we find in factories, or home appliances such as washing machines and air conditioners, depend on the wheel, even the printing press that brought learning to the masses depended on gears - toothed wheels! - to work. In other words, though the printing press was important, it simply couldn't exist without the wheel.

The computer chip also would not be the useful device it is, without the help of the wheel. The computer chip itself may not use a wheel or gear directly, but peripheral devices such as printers and disk drives do. Without the wheel, we could in theory have a powerful computing device. However, we wouldn't be able to save our work or show it to other people! Without the invention of the wheel, the computer would be next to useless.

So, can you imagine a world without the wheel? Can you imagine a world without long-distance travel? Can you imagine a world without a printing press to communicate the best writing in the world? Can you imagine a world with no useful computers? Everything that came after the wheel, and everything that is to come, depends on the greatest invention in history. The wheel!



**Exercise :** Write a paragraph on Mobile Phones on campus.



**Answer Key :**

### **Mobile Phones on campus**

The Communication Revolution has changed the way we live, work and have fun. The mobile phone in particular has changed the way we communicate with the world around us. Though mobile phones were a luxury only a few years ago, they are now considered necessities by many people. This attitude even exists among students on campuses all around Bangladesh, especially in big cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet etc.

Nowadays, most of the students possess a cell phone. The advantages of owning a cell phone are obvious. You can talk with your friends and relatives who may live away. You can carry it wherever you go. You don't need a notebook to store phone numbers because your cell phone has a memory.

Students from rich families having cell phones. After all, they can afford it. However, poor students who only buy cell phones in order to avoid losing face. Considering their families' conditions, they should make the decision to buy a cell phone using reason rather than emotion. All students should try to think objectively before spending their hard earned money.

## Lesson-2 : How to write a good composition



### Part one: Prewriting

**Read the assignment closely.** It's important to get a clear understanding of what your tutor expects from your composition. Each tutor will have a different set of things they'll be looking for, both for the topic and the style. Keep your assignment sheet with you at all times while you're working on your composition and read it closely. Ask your tutor about anything you feel unsure about. Make sure you have a good sense of the following:

- What is the idea of the composition?
- What is the subject of the composition?
- What are the length requirements (word limit)?
- What is the appropriate tone or voice for the composition?
- Is research required for the composition?

#### 1

**Do a free-write to get some thoughts on paper.** When you're first getting started in trying to figure out the best way to approach a topic you've got to write about, do some free-writing. No one has to see it, so feel free to explore your thoughts and opinions about a given topic and see where it leads.

- Try a timed writing by keeping your pen moving for 10 minutes without stopping. Don't shy away from including your opinions about a particular topic, even if your tutor has warned you from including personal opinions in your paper. This is not the final draft. So you can write your ideas.

#### 2

**Try a cluster exercise.** A diagram is good to create if you've generated lots of ideas in a free write, but are having trouble knowing where to get started. This will help you go from general to specific, an important part of any composition. Start with a blank piece of paper, or use a chalkboard to draw the outline diagram. Leave lots of room.

- Write the topic in the center of the paper and draw a circle around it. Write the phrase on your paper and circle it.
- Around the center circle, write your main ideas or interests about the topic. Write as many main ideas as you're interested in.
- Around each main idea, write more specific points or observations about each more specific topic. Start looking for connections. Are you repeating language or ideas?
- Connect the bubbles with lines where you see related connections. A good composition is organized by main ideas, not organized chronologically or by plot. Use these connections to form your main ideas.

#### 3

**Consider making a formal outline to organize your thoughts.** Once you've got your main concepts, ideas, and arguments about the topic starting to form, you might consider

organizing everything into a formal outline to help you get started writing an actual draft of the paper. Use complete sentences to start getting your main points together for your actual composition.

#### 4

**Write a thesis statement.** Your thesis statement will guide your entire composition and is maybe the single most important part of writing a good composition. A thesis statement is generally one debatable point that you're trying to prove in the essay.

- Your thesis statement needs to be debatable.
- Your thesis statement needs to be specific.
- A good thesis guides the essay. In your thesis, you can sometimes preview the points you'll make in your paper, guiding yourself and the reader.

### Part two: Writing a rough draft

#### 1.

**Think in fives.** Some tutors teach the "rule of five" or the "five paragraph format" for writing compositions. This isn't a hard and fast rule and you don't need to hold yourself to an arbitrary number like "5," but it can be helpful in building your argument and organizing your thoughts to try to aim for at least 3 different supporting points to use to hold up your main argument. But some tutors like their learners to come up with:

- Introduction, in which the topic is described, the issue or problem is summarized and your argument is presented
- Main point paragraph 1, in which you make and support your first supporting argument
- Main point paragraph 2, in which you make and support your second supporting argument
- Main point paragraph 3, in which you make and support your final supporting argument
- Conclusion paragraph, in which you summarize your argument

#### 2

**Back up your main points with two kinds of evidence.** In a good composition, your thesis is like a tabletop--it needs to be held up with the table-legs of good points and evidence, because it can't just float there all by itself. Each point you're going to make should be held up by two kinds of evidence: logic and proof.

- Proof includes specific quotes from the book you're writing about, or specific facts about the topic.
- Logic refers to your rationale and your reasoning. Explain your proof to the reader by using logic and you'll have a solid argument with strong evidence.

#### 3

**Think of questions that need to be answered.** A common complaint from learner writers is that they can't think of anything else to say about a particular topic. Learn to ask yourself questions that the reader might ask to give yourself more material by answering those questions in your draft.

- Ask how.
- Ask why.

## 4

**Don't worry about "sounding smart."** One mistake that lots of learner writers make is spending too much time to upgrade their vocabulary. Making a strong argument has much less to do with your wording and your vocabulary and more to do with the construction of your argument and with supporting your thesis with main points.

### Part three Revision

## 1

**Get some feedback on your rough draft.** It can be tempting to want to call it quits as soon as you get the page count or the word count finished, but you'll be much better off if you let the paper sit for a while and return to it with fresh eyes and be willing to make changes and get the draft revised into a finished product.

- Try writing a rough draft the weekend before it's due, and giving it to your teacher for comments several days before the due date. Take the feedback into consideration and make the necessary changes.

## 2

**Be willing to make big cuts and big changes.** Good writing happens in revision. Break down the word: revision literally means "to look again" (re-vision). Many learners think that revising is about fixing spelling errors and typos, and while that's certainly a part of proofreading, it's important to know that no writer writes a perfect argument with flawless organization and construction on their first run-through. You've got more work to do. Try:

- Moving paragraphs around to get the best possible organization of points, the best "flow"
- Delete whole sentences that are repetitive or that don't work
- Removing any points that don't support your argument

## 3

**Go from general to specific.** One of the best ways you can improve a draft in revision is by picking on your points that are too general and making them much more specific. This might involve adding more supporting evidence in the form of quotations or logic, it might involve rethinking the point entirely and shifting the focus and it might involve looking for entirely new points and new evidence that supports your thesis.

- Think of each main point you're making like a mountain in a mountain range that you're flying over in a helicopter. You can stay above them and fly over them quickly, pointing out their features from far away and giving us a quick flyover tour, or you can drop us down in between them and show us up close, so we see the mountain goats and the rocks and the waterfalls. Which would be a better tour?

## 4

**Read over your draft out loud.** One of the best ways to pick on yourself and see if your writing holds up is to sit with your paper in front of you and read it aloud. Does it sound "right"? Circle anything that needs to be more specific, anything that needs to be reworded or needs to be more clear. When you're through, go right back through and make the additions you need to make to get the best possible draft.

## 5

**Proofread as the last step of the process.** Don't worry about commas and apostrophes until you're almost ready to turn the draft in. Sentence-level issues, spelling, and typos are called "late concerns," meaning that you should only worry about them when the more important



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parts of your composition--your thesis, your main points, and the organization of your argument--are already as good as they can be.

**Source :** The Internet



**Exercise:** Write compositions on the following topics

The area you live in

A memorable journey of your life

The food habit of urban people

Our heritage

Impact of social network sites



**Answer Key**

Try yourself.