

UNIT 2

Writing

Lesson - 1 : Writing Notes

Objectives : After you are through this lesson, you'll be able to -

- tell why notes are written
- distinguish between a letter and a note
- write a note effectively
- write notes on different occasions.

A.

Dear student, in this lesson we will discuss writing notes. You must have written notes to and/or received notes from different persons, for example, friends, colleagues, members of the family, teachers and others. In our everyday life, we do write notes to others on different occasions. And, there are some basic differences between a letter and a note. For example :

Letters	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter must have a formal opening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In a note, formal opening is not necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It should mention the date and address of the writer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time, day/date may be mentioned if important.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expressions are given in full sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full sentences are not always necessary in expressing something.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the details are given in different paragraphs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentioning of the points will do - no detail is required and paragraphs are not necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proper punctuation should be there and a formal ending is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punctuation can be avoided and formal ending is not necessary.

Defining 'note' and why do we write notes ?

From the above characteristics, it can be said :

A note is a small peice of writing delivering the important message to the reader, so that the person addressed in the note can plan or do things accordingly.

Why do we write notes then? We write notes to deliver just the information required in short and in an informal way. Notes are written to communicate the information at the earliest opportunity, so that the plan or task can be executed without delay.

Now, let us take a look at one sample letter and one note below, and see if they justify the points mentioned above.

The letter

23-8-99
25 Love Lane
Chittagong

Dear Salma,

How are you ? Hope fine. We are all fine here. We are coming to Dhaka next Thursday to spend the long weekend. Hope you are not planning a holiday like us. Wish to see you and spend time together.

We'll arrive on Thursday, around 4:30 in the evening and will be staying at mom's. Will you please give me a call after 7. Her number is 833333.

I've arranged a get together party on Saturday. Some of our University friends are coming. I'd love you to come too, so please don't make any other plan for Saturday, if you are still free. Sorry, I should have informed you of the party earlier. Regards to your parents.

That's it for now. See you on Thursday then.

Love

Shaila

The note

Salma,
Back in the city. Staying at mom's - call me after 7 (833333)- Come to the party - Saturday for the whole day ??
Love
Shaila.

Have you noticed the differences between the letter and the note Salma has written to Shaila? Do they cover the points regarding the differences between a letter and a note that we have discussed earlier?

B.**When you are writing notes or messages, remember to :**

- 1) mention time and day /date, if it is important.
- 2) emphasize the important words by using capital letters, underlining or other marking (circling, heavy printing, punctuation etc.).
- 3) avoid unnecessary words. Make the note short; full sentences are not necessary especially in notes to friends and family members.
- 4) use dashes instead of using all the punctuation marks. Use punctuation when its necessary to make a meaning clear, i.e. exclamation marks, question marks.
- 5) end as you wish, without being formal. Formal ending is not necessary. Just mentioning of your name will do.

One way of making notes clearer and more interesting is to emphasize certain words by using CAPITAL letters, underlining or other marking and punctuation. An example is given here :

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) DANGER
PLEASE DO NOT USE
TILL FURTHER NOTICE | b) DANGER!!!
PLEASE <u>DO NOT USE</u>
TILL FURTHER NOTICE |
|--|---|

a) and b) are identical notes as regards their message and words; the special markings in note B make it more noticeable and effective.

Dear learner, when there is a message pad given, we can write down messages there: for example,

Message pad

Message for	Subject or Message
Message for : Saima	Ruma is waiting for you at the library. Its urgent.
Date : 12-8-99, Tuesday	
Time : 10:30 a. m.	
Caller : Ruma	
From :	
Telephone no.: 822222	
Please phone :	
will phone again :	
Please visit : ✓	
Urgent : ✓	

If there was no message pad for this message, it could have been written this way :

Saima,

Ruma called twice. She is waiting for you at the library. Its urgent.

M.H (10:30 a.m. Tuesday)

Dear student, now you know how to write notes on different purposes and occasions. From now on, you will be able to write any sort of note that is required to be written, won't you?

Activity

1. What are the differences between a letter and a note ?
2. What points of the letter does Shaila cover in her note to Salma? Does the note cover all the important points mentioned in the letter ?
3. What does 'the letter' suggest - is Salma already in the city? What does the note suggest regarding this ?
4. What is the purpose of writing notes ?
5. Write a note jotting down the main points from the following letter.

24.8.99

24, Bailey Rd.

Dear Imon,

How are you ? Hope fine. I am to attend an official party on Saturday night. As you are supposed to come at around 8-00 in the evening, I am leaving the keys with my neighbour, Mr. Khan. Please collect the keys from there. Sorry for the inconvenience.

I was so very eagerly waiting for you. I wish I could avoid this dinner, but since its an office matter, I am to be there. Never mind, I'll be back by 10-00. By the by, the appointment with Dr. Chowdhury remains as before, at 5 in the afternoon on Sunday. I'll take you there.

Till then,

Love

Ruma.

6. Write notes on the following situations

- 1) You are going out to dinner tonight. You will come home to leave some books. Request your sister to take her dinner in time.
- 2) You have arranged a party at home. Request your guests to wash their own cups.
- 3) You are going to a cinema at 6-00 p.m. Ask your friend to join you at the hall gate.
- 4) You would like your tutorial group to meet you on Saturday, instead of Sunday.
- 5) You ask your students to fill-up a form for appointment.

7. Fill out the message pad below.

Message pad	
Message for :	Subject or Message
Date :	
Time :	
Caller :	
From :	
Telephone no.: Ext. :	
Please phone :	
Will phone again :	
Please visit :	
Urgent :	

8. Make the notes below clearer and more interesting by using:

- capital letters
- extra marking (underlining, circling, heavy printing)
- punctuation (exclamation marks, question marks)

Don't change any word of the notes :

- 1) Attention : Parents who have not signed the cards yet, please get it done by 12 September, 1999.

- 2) Important : ring Sohel – called 5 times before 3 p.m.
- 3) Going to the grocer. Will be back within half an hour. Wait at Nupur’s. Saheli, 11:00 a.m.
- 4) Library closes 4-00 p.m. Return the books on the table. Will be back by 1.
- 5) Get some milk, sugar, eggs and baking powder - need tonight
- 6) Topa,
Don’t forget. Pick up dry cleaning- Tk 100/= to pay
- 7) Topa
Children at 8 tonight. Bring ‘The Lost World’.

9. Write messages taking information from the message pad below:

1)	2)
Message for :	Available on, Sun, Tues, Thurs, 9:00-2:00
Mr. M.H. Khan	Appointment
Date : 23-9-98, Tuesday	Date : Tues.
Time : 11:00 a.m.	Time : 10:00 a.m.
Caller : Mr. S. Chowdhury	Name : Saif Ahmed
Telephone no.: 812020	From : 1 st year
Please phone :	Subject / Message
Please visit :	to discuss a writeup on William Wordsworth
Will phone again : ✓	
Will come :	
Message :	
There is a tea party at Mr. Chowdhury’s tomorrow evening	S. A.
S.A.	

Well, you can now check your answers with the Answer Key.

Answer Key

1.

There are some basic differences between a note and a letter. The differences are given below :

Letter	Note
– letters have formal opening	– formal opening is not necessary.
– date, address of the writer are there	– time, day/date may be mentioned if important
– expressions are given in full sentences	– full sentences are not necessary
– all the details are given	– mentioning of the points will do, a detail is not required.
– formal ending required	– formal ending - not necessary
– proper punctuation need to be there	– punctuation can be avoided
– paragraphs are necessary	– paragraphs are not necessary

So, note is a small piece of writing delivering the important message to the reader, whereas letter is comparatively a longer piece of writing giving information in details to the reader.

2.

The points that Shaila covers in her note to Salma are :

- She is in the town.
- Writes the note at 5 p.m.
- She is staying at her mother's.
- She requests Salma to give her a call at 833333 after 7 in the evening.
- There is a party on Saturday, invites Salma to the party.

These are the important points (excepting that she is coming to the town, and does not mention of the time of writing (the letter) in the letter as well. So, all the important messages are delivered in the note.

3.

The letter suggests that Shaila will be coming to Dhaka next Thursday to spend the weekend.

The note indicates that Shaila is already in the city, she is staying at her mother's.

4.

Note is a small price of writing delivering the important message to the reader, so the person addressed in the note can do/ plan accordingly. We write notes to deliver just the information required in short in an informal way. Notes are written to communicate the information at the earliest opportunity.

5.

Dear Imon, 7-30 p.m.
 I have a party tonight. Keys are with Mr. Khan (my neighbour) - Dr. Chowdhury at 5-00, Sunday evening - we will go together.
 Love
 Ruma

6.

1) <u>RUMKI</u> Going out to dinner tonight, may be home to leave some books. Take meal in time.	2) <u>PLEASE</u> wash your own cups. <u>DISHWASHER OUT OF ORDER !</u>
3) <u>SABBIR</u> CINEMA AT 6-00. Meet at the <u>hall gate</u> <u>SHUMON</u>	4) <u>ATTENTION</u> TUTORIAL GROUP 3 Meet me on <u>Saturday</u> instead of <u>Sunday same time</u> SA
5) <u>STUDENTS</u> For an appointment please fill up the form below :	

7.

Message for : S. A	Subject or message
Date : 1-9-99	Her mother wants to talk to you
Time : 10:30 am	R.C
Caller : Faria Huq	
From : Banani	
Telephone no.: 9111111 Ext.	
Please phone :	
Will phone again :	
Please visit :	
Urgent : ✓	

8.

- 1) ATTENTION : Parents who HAVE NOT signed the cards yet, please get it done by 12 September, 1999.
- 2) *IMPORTANT* Ring Soheli – called 5 times before 3 pm.
- 3) going to the grocer. Will BE BACK within ½ an hour. WAIT at NUPUR’S. Soheli, 11 am.
- 4) LIBRARY CLOSSES -4 pm. RETURN the books on the table. Will be back by **7-00**.
- 5) Get some milk, sugar, eggs, baking powder – need **tonight**.
- 6) ‘Topa’
DON’T FORGET, Pick up dry cleaning Tk. 100/= to pay
- 7) ‘Topa’

Children at 8 tonight Bring ‘THE LOST WORLD’

9.

- 1) Dear Mr. Khan,
Mr. Chowdhury called at 11:00 a.m. (telephone # 812020) -
Invites you to a tea party tomorrow evening at his place –
will phone again.
SA
- 2) Dear sir,
I would like to discuss a writeup on William Wordsworth
with you on Tues, 10:00 am.

Sincerely

Saif Ahmed
Student of 1st year

Lesson - 2 : Writing Paragraphs

Objectives : After completing this lesson you'll be able to -

- write different kinds of paragraphs
- decide when to use more than one paragraph
- keep paragraphs unified
- control paragraph length
- build transitions between paragraphs

A.

Why paragraphs?

When we take a look at a printed piece of writing, we'll notice that each chapter is divided up into sections. These sections are called paragraphs. Paragraphs make our thoughts or ideas more accessible to the reader.

Paragraphs break the entire document into blocks of related sentences. This helps us to predict what's coming, what is the main idea, what one is looking for, and to get the main points by skimming.

The beginning of a new paragraph marks a change of topic, or a step in the development of an argument or of a story. When marked separately, the understanding of the write up we are reading becomes easier. To be effective, a paragraph must be unified, coherent and well developed. To help the reader not to get confused or jeopardized, most paragraphs contain some opening and closing signs so that the reader can tell where the sequence of related sentences begins and ends. Different types of paragraphs are useful for different writing purposes.

What is a paragraph?

How can we define a paragraph? From Section-*A* we know that paragraphs make written composition easier for the reader to read and understand. We can say that :

A paragraph is a group of sentences related to one another by a single idea or subject developing a single point.

The division of a chapter into paragraphs must be made according to the changes of ideas introduced. There is no exact rule as to the length of a paragraph. They may be short or long according to the necessity. Sometimes only a single sentence may make a paragraph.

In a paragraph, sentences must serve a definite purpose. A simple rule about paragraphs is that one paragraph should contain one idea. While composing paragraphs remember not to put too much into one paragraph.

Paragraphs are accessory to organize materials and also to control the visual image of the page. A text without breaks will tire our eyes and discourage reading of the text.

Two letters are here for you. Take a look at them.

2-9-99
25 Eskaton Rd.
Dhaka

Dear Faruk,

We should be very pleased to have you for tea on Tuesday, September 22, at 5 p.m. at my place. Some of our classmates will also join us. So you know all of them. I think it will be wonderful to have a chat altogether after quite a long time. It feels like not meeting all of you for ages. Your presence will make the party brighter. I know you have a very busy schedule at the moment but I wish you will make time and join the party on the 22nd. Looking forward to seeing you. Best wishes.

Shamim.

2-9-98
25 Eskaton Rd.
Dhaka

Dear Faruk,

We should be very pleased to have you for tea on Tuesday, September 22, at 5 p.m.

Some other classmates will also join us. I think it will be wonderful to have a chat altogether after quite a long time. It feels like not meeting all of you for ages. Your presence will make the party brighter.

I know you have a very busy schedule at the moment but I earnestly want you to make time and join the party. Looking forward to seeing you.

Best wishes.

Shamim.

Well, the two letters convey the same message, although the second one contains fewer sentences. Which letter do you think communicates more clearly and makes your reading comfortable ?

8.

The 'Topic sentence' and 'Unity' in a paragraph.

We know that each paragraph has one main idea. And the main idea is represented by the **topic sentence**, i.e., the topic sentence introduces the topic. All the other sentences in that paragraph centres round the topic sentence. So, every sentence in that paragraph supports the statement made in the topic sentence; every sentence in the paragraph must be closely connected with the main topic of the paragraph. A topic sentence is also called a **key - sentence**.

Usually the topic sentence appears at the beginning of the paragraph but sometimes it may appear in the middle or at the end of the paragraph.

Now let's read the following paragraph and find out the topic sentence in it, also decide whether the other sentences in the paragraph centre round the topic sentence or the main idea.

The paragraph :

A myth is an ancient explanation of natural events. Long ago, people could not explain the forces of nature the way scientists can explain them today. When these people of long ago wanted to explain something that they did not understand, they used their imaginations. The stories that they invented are called myths. The three main gods : Zeus, Poseidon and Hades lived on mount Olympus in the myths.

Could you find out the main idea or the topic sentence in the paragraph? You're right. The topic sentence is, A myth is an ancient explanation of natural events. Reading the paragraph, we can also say that the last sentence of the paragraph is not directly related to the topic sentence. It may be placed in another paragraph dealing with mythical gods.

Do you think you could have placed the topic sentence somewhere else in the paragraph? Ok, let's see how does it look and sound if we have it at the end of the paragraph. And whether it remains the topic sentence still ?

Long ago, people could not explain the forces of nature the way scientists can explain them today. When these people of long ago wanted to explain something that they did not understand, they used their imaginations. The stories that they invented are called myths. A myth is an ancient explanation of natural events.

With the topic sentence at the end of the paragraph it still carries the central idea of the paragraph, doesn't it? Having the main idea in it, the topic sentence actually may appear anywhere in the paragraph.

Organizing Paragraphs

To achieve coherence in a paragraph, we have to organize its elements in such a way that they flow rationally and reach a logical conclusion.

One common paragraph pattern is *spatial*. In writing descriptive paragraphs, this pattern may be followed. Here the paragraph beginning at one point in space, moves from there to other points. It maintains a logical sequence. For example, the following paragraph describes a person from her head to her toe.

Ms. Khaleda Khan is a happy person, always seen with a smile. She weaves a scarf to cover her straight hair, some of which have turned gray. Her glittering black eyes peer out through her glasses. Her soft smile gives her face a brighter look. The light-coloured cotton sarees that she usually wears cover her fragile frame adding to her elegance. Wearing clean and shining shoes, she walks on in her own rhythmic way.

In the paragraph, we get a description of Ms. Khan which is described in a logical sequence.

Another common paragraph pattern is *chronological*. Here, the events in the paragraph are arranged chronologically, that means, they are arranged in the order in which they took place. They are in "time" order. Here is an example of this pattern :

Last week I was very busy everyday after office. On Sunday I visited my aunt who is in the hospital for treatment. Monday I went shopping with my children, Tuesday was the newscasters' monthly meeting. Wednesday I had my appointment with the dentist. Thursday was the Fresher's Day at the department.

In this paragraph the events are narrated in the order in which they took place. So, paragraphs can be written following the time scheme in which the event actually happened.

In a paragraph there must be the logical sequence of thought or development of the subject. Events must be related in the order of their occurrence. All ideas must be in connection with the leading idea and arranged according to their importance or order.

Length of a paragraph

Paragraphs could be of different lengths. A paragraph may contain only 2 sentences; or can be 20 sentences long. It is better to keep a paragraph brief, so that a document having several paragraphs may look accessible and well organized. A neat-looking document helps the reader to scan it quickly and find the relevant information.

The length of a paragraph actually depends on the paragraph's topic and the purpose of writing it. Very long paragraphs may contain irrelevant information and very short paragraphs may lack the specific details.

e.

Transitional expressions

A document may contain several paragraphs. When you are writing a document with a number of paragraphs, it is important that you make sure to maintain the link between them. Sentences that are used to connect paragraphs are called “transitions”. They give shape and direction to the document. Transitional expressions are words or word groups that connect different ideas in the composition. Given below is a list of some commonly used transitional expressions for your use :

To add or to show sequence

Again, also, and, then, besides, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, moreover, second, still, etc.

To compare

In the same way, likewise, similarly, etc.

To contrast

Although, and yet, but, but at the same time, despite, even so, even though, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, still, yet, after all, even, for instance, it is true but, of course, that is, etc.

To indicate place

Above, adjacent to below, elsewhere, here, there, near, nearby, on the other side, across, opposite to, to the west, to the left / right, etc.

To indicate time

After a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at that time, before, earlier, formerly, immediately, soon, in the meantime, in the past, in the near future, lately, meanwhile, shortly, since, so far, soon, thereafter, until, when, etc.

To repeat, summarize or conclude

All in all, altogether, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarise, etc.

To show cause or effect

Accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thus, to this end, etc.

Remember and use the transitional expressions while organizing a paragraph. These expressions will make your paragraph clear, lucid and consistent.

Dear learner, when you are writing a paragraph, remember that one paragraph will deal with one idea only i.e. *a paragraph has one main idea*. When you will introduce another idea, begin a new paragraph. Remember to begin a new paragraph if there is a change of place. Also begin a new paragraph if there is a change of time or if you write about a new person. Your choice of words and organization of sentences in a paragraph will lead the reader smoothly from one idea to another.

Activity

1. Read the following text and arrange it into paragraphs.

Now that the mammoth is extinct, the elephant is the largest of all animals living. It is a strange-looking animal, with its thick legs, large, hanging ears, small tail, little eyes, long white tusks, and, above all, its long nose, called the trunk. Elephants are found in India and in Africa. The African elephant differs in some points from the Indian, being larger, with longer tusks and bigger ears. In fact, the two are considered to be different species. The elephant is a very intelligent animal, and its intelligence, combined with its great strength, makes it very useful when trained. Elephants can carry heavy loads, about a thousand kgs each. They are very skillful too, in piling timber. The trained elephant will kneel down, lift a heavy log of wood with its tusks, carry it to the place where it is wanted, and lay it exactly in position. In Africa elephants are hunted mainly for their tusks which are made of ivory and are very valuable.

2. What are the key sentences or topic sentences / main idea in the following paragraphs ?
 - a) Of the many gods who lived on Mount Olympus, there were three who had the highest powers. The three were Zeus, who ruled the heavens; Poseidon, who ruled the seas; and Hades, who ruled the underworld.
 - b) As much as 10 billion metric tons of water may be frozen in soil near the moon's poles. If that much water is there – more than ten times previous estimates – it might one day be enough to build a moon village or to fuel rocket ships cruising even deeper into space.

- c) In an apparent denial of a ballistic missile launch this week, North Korea on Friday said it has successfully fired its first artificial satellite into earth orbit.
 - d) The beautiful pearls that are used in necklaces start out as grains of sand. When a grain of sand gets inside the shell of an oyster, it irritates the oyster. A liquid coating is formed that hardens around the sand. Each coating makes the pearl a little larger.
 - e) During classes I listen to the teacher. After classes I listen to records. Sometimes I listen to the radio. When I watch TV, I listen to what the characters are saying. I really do a lot of listening.
3. Keeping to one idea is an important factor in a paragraph. find out the sentence that has nothing to do with the main idea in the following paragraph :

The Newspaper is a good source of information. All the important news of the city, town, village and nation is reported daily. A newspaper carries international news too. Different kinds of advertisements are published in the newspaper. Public notices are also published here. Movies and other forms of entertainment are announced. My parents and I watched a good film last night.

4. What do you understand by the ‘organization’ of a paragraph ?
5. How a ‘spatial’ paragraph is written ?
6. What is the pattern of a ‘chronological’ paragraph ?
7. Write a paragraph following the spatial pattern.
8. Write a paragraph following the chronological pattern.
9. What should be the length of a paragraph?
10. Why is it important to have transitional sentences and expressions?

Now, you can check your answers with the Answer Key.

Answer key

1. Now that the mammoth is extinct, the elephant is the largest of all animals living. It is a strange looking animal, with its thick legs, large hanging ears, small tail, little eyes, long white tusks, and above all, it’s long nose called the trunk.

Elephants are found in India and in Africa. The African elephant differs in some points from the Indian, being larger, with longer tusks and bigger ears. In fact, the two are considered to be different species.

The elephant is very intelligent animal, and its intelligence combined with its great strength makes it very useful when trained. Elephants can carry heavy loads, about a thousand kgs each.

They are very skillful too, in piling timber. The trained elephant will kneel down, lift a heavy log of wood with its tusks, carry it to the place where it is wanted, and lay it exactly in position. In Africa elephants are hunted mainly for their tusks which are made of ivory and are very valuable.

2. (a) Of the main gods who lived on Mount Olympus, there were three who had the highest powers.
 - (b) As much as ten billion metric tons of water may be frozen in soil near the moon's poles.
 - (c) North Korea on Friday said it has successfully fired its first artificial satellite into earth orbit.
 - (d) The beautiful pearls that are used in necklaces start out as grains of sand.
 - (e) I do a lot of listening.
3. My parents and I watched a good film last night.
4. To achieve coherence in a paragraph we have to organize its elements in such a manner that they flow naturally and reach a logical conclusion. This is called the 'organization' of a paragraph.
5. In writing descriptive paragraphs, 'spatial' pattern may be followed. Here the paragraph begins at a point in space and moves from there to other points. It maintains a logical sequence.
6. In a chronological pattern, the events in the paragraph are arranged chronologically, that means, they are arranged in the order in which they took place. They are in the 'time order' :
7. Show the answer of question 7 to your tutor.
8. Show the answer of question 8 to your tutor.
9. Paragraphs could be of different lengths. It is better to keep a paragraph brief so that a document having several paragraphs may look accessible and well-organized.

The length of a paragraph actually depends on the paragraph's topic and the purpose of writing it. very long paragraphs may contain irrelevant information and very short paragraphs may lack the specific details.

10. A document may contain several paragraphs. To maintain link between the paragraphs, specific sentences and expressions are required. They are called the ‘transitions’. They give shape and direction to the document.

Transitional expressions are words or word-groups that connect ideas prevalent in paragraphs in a document.

MCQ

1. Transitional expressions are used to
 - a. connect different ideas in a composition.
 - b. state the topic of a paragraph.
 - c. compare ideas in a paragraph.
 - d. indicate a place.

2. When we want to compare ideas we use
 - a. again, also, then
 - b. likewise, similarly, in the same way
 - c. elsewhere, here, there
 - d. all in all, altogether, in other words

3. To indicate place which of the following expressions do we use?
 - a. above, near, nearby, on the other side etc
 - b. after a while, immediately, since etc
 - c. besides, finally, still
 - d. yet, although, of course

Lesson - 3 : Writing Letters - 1

Objectives

When you are through this lesson, you'll be able to -

- explain why letters are written
- recognise the format of a letter
- identify the different tones of different kinds of letter
- understand the types of letters
- understand the basic principles to be followed in a letter.
- prepare a CV

A.

We write letters on so many different occasions. It is an integral part of our personal, social and business activities. Letters as a means of personal expression and communication play a vital role.

We all feel delighted to receive letters from our friends, relatives and well-wishers, don't we? The personal letter that we write and receive make our life more meaningful. A letter being a conversation on paper bring people closer, maintains relations, can influence people, can make friends, can win favour, popularity, bringing the ultimate achievement of success.

Letters should be written in such a manner that it will make the recipient happy and convinced and that the reply would come accordingly in favour of the writer. The art of letter-writing is no mere ornamental accomplishment but something that everyone must acquire for practical reasons. The writer must first organise his/her thoughts logically to convey the intended message.

Types of the letters

There are three main types of letters each having its own particular form. They are: informal letters / personal letters, formal letters / business letters and letters of application. There are certain basic principles applicable to all these types mentioned. Let us now take a look at those principles.

1. Length

The length of letter varies depending on its contents. A personal letter reflecting personal thoughts, news, messages could be free and long, whereas a formal or business letter needs to be very much precise, to the point and, therefore, might be shorter in length than a personal one.

2. Planning about the content

The substance of the letter needs to be carefully planned so that it contains a clear, well organised and understandable, communicating document of what the writer wishes to convey. It is very important to take note of spelling, grammar, punctuation and paragraphing.

You must bring the purpose of your writing a particular letter, that is, what do you wish or intend to achieve from the letter. You must analyse the purpose of the letter and the reader's needs before you start writing.

3. Form

To be an effective letter-writer, you have to think of the good communication principles that you can apply in writing. It must ensure that the letter is laid out in the correct form depending on its category to which it belongs. It must have appropriate *heading, salutation, leave-taking and signature*.

4. Tone

Remember that tone is the major ingredient of your message. It is best to put yourself in your reader's place and decide how the reader will respond to what you have just written. Your letter will create a relationship between you and your reader. So, the words should be chosen in order not to offend or confuse the reader but to give a clear idea and to convince.

The tone or style of a letter depends on whom you are addressing and in what connection. But, in all the cases, use a courteous tone and 'you' approach; use plain and precise language, keeping the language warm and personal.

B.

Letter format

The format and layout of a letter are very important. In many cases the first impression is the last impression, therefore, the layout of a letter is significant. The first looking at your letter creates an impression on your reader's mind about you. For almost any letter written in English, there is a general layout or format that is followed, and several general components that are required. So, while writing a letter (all kinds of letters), remember to have the following basic parts :

1. The heading consisting of (a) the writer's address and (b) the date.
2. The courteous greeting or salutation.

3. The communication or message : the body or text of the letter.
4. The subscription or courteous leave-taking, or conclusion of the letter.
The closing word or phrase.
5. The signature.
6. The superscription on the envelope, i.e. the address of the recipient, and the return address.

Lesson 4 will deal with these components in some details.

Activity

1. What should be our purpose in writing a letter?
2. What types of letter do we write?
3. What principles are usually followed while writing a letter?
4. What is the usual format of letter-writing?

Answer Key

- 1) A letter being a conversation on paper brings people closer, maintains relations, can influence people, can make friends, can gain favour and popularity bringing the ultimate achievement of success. Letters should be written in such a manner that it will make the recipient happy and convinced and that the reply would convince accordingly in favour of the writer.
- 2) We write informal or personal letters, formal or business letters and letters of application.
- 3) There are certain principles applicable to all types of letters. These are, the length of the letter, planning and writing the letter, the from and the tone of the letter.
- 4) The format and layout of a letter are very important. In writing a letter, the following parts are to be remembered :
 - The heading consisting of the writer's address and the date;
 - The courteous greeting or salutation;
 - The communication or message – the body or text of the letter;
 - The subscription or courteous leave-taking or conclusion.; and
 - The signature.

Lesson - 4 : Writing letters - 2

Objective : When you are, through this lesson you'll be able to -

- have a clear idea about the format of letter.

A.

From lesson 3 we know that a letter has the following basic parts in it.

1. The heading consisting of (a) the writer's address and (b) the date.
2. The courteous greeting or salutation.
3. The communication or message : the body or text of the letter.
4. The subscription or courteous leave-taking, or conclusion of the letter.
The closing word or phrase.
5. The signature.
6. The superscription on the envelope, i.e. the address of the recipient, and the return address.

Let us now go a little bit deep into these components.

1. The Heading

The heading consists of your address and date to inform the reader 'where' from and 'when' did you write the letter. The 'where', that is the writer's full address, is mentioned to inform the reader to send the reply and the 'when', that is the date, is for reference.

If the sheet of paper you are using to write a letter has your address printed on it, then you are required to put the date only. The heading should be placed in the upper right hand corner at least one inch below the top edge and half an inch from the right hand margin. While writing the heading, alternated forms of the cities, zones, streets etc., should be avoided. Instead, they should be written in full. No letter should be sent without a heading, not even very personal and intimate ones. Look at the sample given below.

**House # 16, Road # 6
Sector # 3, Uttara Model Town
Dhaka-1207**

September 11, 1999

The date in a letter is very important and therefore, should never be forgotten or neglected. September 11, 1999 is preferable to 11th September, 1998 or 11/9/98. Don't use the abbreviated forms of the months like Jan., Feb., Sept., etc. The best usage of writing a date is September 11, 1999.

The date should always be separated from the year by a comma (,) to avoid confusion. The date can also be written in this style : 11 September 1999.

2. Salutation

The salutation or greeting is written at the left hand of the page a little below the level of the heading. It marks the greeting to the recipient of the letter. The mode of salutation will vary according to your relationship with the person you are addressing. As a general rule, when the writer knows, the addressee and is on a 'first name' basis (that is, if they call each other by their first names informally), the writer begins an informal social letter with 'dear' followed by the addressee's first or given name.

For example : Dear Mansur, Dear Khaleda

For formal social letters and business letters, however, the addressee's title and family name follow the salutation 'dear'.

For example : Dear Mr. Khan, Dear Professor K. Begum.

So, begin your salutation with 'Dear'. The usual form is followed by the name of the person. If you are writing to a close friend, you can use the first name, e.g. 'Dear Salma'; but, if it is more a formal letter, you can address the person with his/her last name, e.g 'Mr. Ahmed', or with the prefixes with the surname, e.g. 'Dear Ms. Khaleda Khan'.

The use of the term 'dear' is a more polite expression, not necessarily implying any special affection. The salutation sets the left hand margin and the rest of the letter will be in a straight line with it.

In business letter salutations, other forms are also used. For example : Dear Publisher, Dear Reader, Dear Colleague, etc. This avoids the use of Dear Sir and Gentlemen, which are now outdated. The use of Ms., which is the exact equivalent of Mr., is also noticeable. Ms. Indicates female gender but not whether the person is married or single.

3. The communication or body / text of the letter

The text of the letter is the letter itself, and the style in which it is written will depend upon the kind of letter you intend to write. It contains the main message, idea or information to the addressee.

The letter itself may also begin exactly on the left margin, directly under the salutation, or it may be indented five spaces to the right, the traditional signal for a new paragraph in English. If you prefer not to indent for each new paragraph, you should leave an extra space between paragraphs.

The text of your letter may be divided into paragraphs according to the material of the letter. As a rule, a change in your ideas, thoughts or subject should mark the beginning of a new paragraph. Remember to maintain link between them, forming an integrated and readable text. The paragraphs may vary in length according to the subject material and ideas they contain.

The end of the letter should contain usual concluding courtesies besides repetition of the core message, or the action anticipated on the part of the recipient. Remember that your letter should not have any loose end or abrupt ending. It is important to keep in mind that the body of the letter contains the main message or 'point'.

Use simple and direct language and short sentences. Be clear about what you want to say, and convey the message as directly as possible. Put down your points in some logical order. Use commas, semi colons and full stops in their proper places. Incorrect punctuation may change the proper meaning of a sentence.

4. The subscription or courteous leave-taking

Next follows the cordial formal closing of your letter. Place your complimentary close two spaces below the concluding paragraph, aligned with your heading. The wording of the close is according to your relationship with the recipient.

The close may be preceded by terms of endearment like, "With best wishes", "With regards" etc. in personal letters. It is a kind of final farewell. The complementary close begins with a capital letter and is followed by a comma. Some conventional complementary closes are :

Sincerely,
Sincerely yours,
Respectfully,
Cordially,
Yours truly,
Truly, etc.

In Intimate letters, the closes used are :

Affectionately,
Lovingly,
Yours affectionately,
Yours ever,
With love, etc.

Note that the conclusion often may be simple ‘Thank you’ for the reader’s attention.

5. Signature

The cordial closing is immediately followed by the writer’s signature. The signature will be placed four spaces below the complimentary close.

In correspondence with close friends and relations (informal personal letters), a short form of your name or the first name may suffice, but in formal letters full name should be signed. If there is any possibility that the person receiving your letter may not be able to read your signature (because of a difference of handwriting styles), you should carefully print or type your name clearly and correctly. For example :

Sincerely,	or	With love
<i>S. Khan</i>		
(Salma Khan)		Salma
Assistant Secretary		

Remember that your letter is the only guideline to spelling your name and address correctly for the receiver who is to give a reply to your letter.

6. The superscription on the envelope.

The address of the recipient :

The address of the person addressed on the envelope should be in full. The names of city, street, zone etc., should not be abbreviated. Postal codes should be clearly given.

The return address :

The return address will be placed in the middle left hand corner of the envelope. It helps to get your undelivered letters back, and also the recipient of the letter can immediately know who the sender is.

		STAMP
SABBIR HOSSAIN 23, NEW ESKATON RAMNA DHAKA.	SAIMA RAHMAN ROAD # 12, HOUSE # 10 GULSHAN AVENUE DHAKA.	

A good letter must be clearly thought out, and clearly organised on paper. Its message should be understandable to the reader and its appearance on the page should be well-balanced. A letter, remember, carries the writer's unspoken thoughts and silently reflects the writer's personality. Each letter is a personally creative act of real communication.

Activity

1. How the body or text of the letter is to be arranged?

Answer Key

The text of the letter is the letter itself. It contains the main message, idea or information to the address. The text of the letter may be divided into paragraphs according to the material of the letter. As a rule, a change in ideas, thoughts or subject should mark the beginning of a new paragraph. The paragraphs may vary in length according to the subject, material and idea they contain. The end of the letter should contain usual concluding courtesies besides repetition of the core message. The letter should be clear and convey the message as directly as possible. The points should be put down in a logical manner. The letter should not have any loose end or abrupt ending.

Lesson - 5 : Writing letters - 3

Objective : After you are through this lesson you will be able to -

- write social and personal letters.

A.

Social /personal letters

Letters to friends and relations should be written in easy and conversational style. From the previous lesson, we know what should be the format of letters in general. Personal letters reflect affection, intimacy, liveliness, naturalness and warmth. Some samples of social/personal letters are given here for you :

Letter of congratulations : 1

July 02, 1999
House 2, Road 3
Sector 3, Uttara

Hello !

Congratulations on the birth of your daughter, Saima. May you enjoy all the blessings of parenthood.

With very best wishes,
Sincerely,

Saber Hussain

Letter of congratulations: 2

November 16, 1999
24 Bailey road, Dhaka

Dear Seema,

I wish I could fly to you, to wish you a very happy birthday. I miss the happy times that we spent together, our birthdays. I hope this note reaches you in time.

I have a birthday present for you. My uncle will be going to your town next Sunday. I will send the present with him. Hope you'll like it.

Hoping to meet you soon and to have wonderful times again, wishing you a very happy birthday once again, its good bye for the moment.

Take care of yourself,
Lots of love,

Samina

Letter of congratulations - 3

August 21, 1999
20/1, Banani, Dhaka

Dear Selim,

Accept my heartiest congratulations on your engagement to Sabina. You both are known to me for a long time. I am sure that you'll be one of the happiest and successful couples on earth.

Eagerly waiting to see you in your wedding outfits. Till then, hearty congratulations once again and best wishes.

Yours ever,

Jafor

Letter of thanks : 1

13 September, 1998
31, Boro Moghbazar
Dhaka

Dear Kamal,

It was really very thoughtful of you to lend me the books on literary terms for a month. It helped me a lot in getting ready my research papers. I hope to visit you one of these days.

Thanks again for the favour.

Yours ever,

Shamim

Letter of thanks : 2

15 September, 1998
4/3 Eskaton road
Dhaka.

Dear Mitu,

Thank you so much for sending me that lovely 'get well soon' card. Your words of inspiration and warm wishes meant so much to me. It was really wonderful of you remembering me during my days in the hospital.

I will always remember your feelings for me. Thanks again.

With love,

Tania

Letter of condolence : 1

February 22, 1999
22 Kalabagan, Dhaka

Dear Mr. Sadeq,

I was saddened to hear the news. Please accept my deepest sympathy in your time of sorrow.

Your neighbour

A. Sayeed

Letter of condolence : 2

15 August, 1998
21 Green road, Dhaka

Dear Munira,

I don't know how to console and comfort you at this severest moment of grief and sorrow. I am so sorry to hear that aunty is no more with us. She was such a lovely, wonderful person and so dear a one to all of us.

Words are inadequate to express my feelings. I pray to the Almighty Allah that He gives you strength to overcome such a distressful time.

Please accept my sincere condolences and let me know if I can be of any help at this hour.

In sympathy,

Mansura.

Letter expressing intention

5, Dilu Road
Dhaka
24 September 1998

Dear Doha,

What are you doing next Friday ? How about going to Sonargaon? I was thinking of visiting this historic city for quite a long time. If you are free and agree with my plan, please let me know. It would be a change for a day from the heat of the city.

I will arrange a picnic there and be round your house at 6 on Friday morning. Get your camera loaded. It will be fun for sure.

Best wishes,

Manzoor

Letter giving information

24, Charter Avenue
Coventry, CV4 7AL
England
27 January, 2000

Dear Rumana,

Tonmoy and I are delighted that you are coming to stay with us. We hope you'll enjoy your visit here.

In your last letter you wanted to know about what things you might have to bring with you. Well, its getting rather cold here. So, don't forget to bring some warm clothes. You certainly need a jacket and a coat. It sometimes drizzles too. If you have a raincoat, you can bring it as well. If you don't have one, you can buy it from here. It may also snow at the end of the month. Bring a pair of snow boots with a firm grip so that you don't slip while walking on the snow and don't forget your gloves.

That's about it for now, please confirm your flight number and arrival time, we'll be at the airport.

We both are looking forward to seeing you. Best wishes.

Samira

Letter of invitation

Mr. and Mrs. Mansurul Huq Khan
Request the pleasure of
Mr. and Mrs. Tayebur Rahman
At a dinner
On Friday, November the 6th, 1998
Time 7.30 PM
Venue : House # 2, Road # 2, Sector #12
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

RSVP : 899999

In this lesson, you have been through some sample letters written with different purposes. The letter of congratulation is written to congratulate (1) a couple who have been bestowed with a baby girl, (2) friend on her birthday, and (3) a friend on his engagement announcement.

Letter of thanks can also be written on various occasions. The sample letters are written to thank (1) a friend for lending books and (2) a friend who had remembered a friend in her sickness.

Letter of condolence or condolence message is sent to people who have lost someone or some loss has taken place in their lives. The letters here are written to (1) a neighbour and (2) a friend who has lost his mother recently, to convey sympathy and the feeling of sorrow.

In the letter expressing intention, a friend has written about his weekend plan and also invited his friend to accompany him.

Another sample letter conveys some particular information. A friend from a cold country is writing to a friend from a hot country, informing her what are the things she might have to bring along with her while visiting them.

The sample letter of invitation shows how we can invite people to a party formally.

Activity

1. Write a letter to a friend congratulating her on her recovery from illness
2. Write a reply to a friend for his letter of condolence.
3. Write a letter of condolences to a friend who has lost his younger brother in a road accident.
4. Write a letter to a friend with whom you would like to share your future plans. You want to be a fashion designer and set up your display shop.
5. Write a formal regret letter to a wedding invitation.

Answer key

1.

28 September, 1999
22 Banani, Dhaka

Dear Shoma,

I am so relieved and happy to know about your recovery after the serious and prolonged illness. It must be wonderful being back home. All praises go to the Praiseworthy.

I am sure that in a couple of days you will recover fully and will be coming to the college soon. Do not feel discouraged or disheartened. We all are here to help you. Please follow the doctor's advice as directed and take care of yourself. I am hoping to see your smiling face soon.

Love

Seema

2.

25 October, 1999
30 Kamal Ataturk Avenue.
Banani

Dear Sohel,

Thank you so much for your kind and thoughtful letter. Your letter helped me a lot in overcoming our pain.

Mother and I are grateful to you for your concern at this moment of intense sorrow. Please pray to Allah that we all may overcome this irreparable loss.

Your kindness and sympathy shall ever be remembered.

Sincerely yours

Shojal

3.

133 Elephant Rd. Dhaka
22 November 1999

My Dear Toimur,

Words are inadequate to express my sorrow at the news of the premature death of Rana. I am shocked and bewildered. He was so lovely a boy, so fresh and young. He was not only your brother, but mine to.

I heard that he was coming from his school when that fateful accident took place. I can imagine how shocking and painful the event is to you. I can only pray to the Almighty that He gives to you strength and patience to bear this deep loss.

Please inform me if I can be of any help at this hour.

Yours always,

Tomal

4.

18 December, 1999
23 Gulshan Avenue

Dear Shafiq,

How are you ? Hope fine. Well, in our last letter I informed you that I wished to start up a business of my own.

You will be happy to know that at last I've decided to build up my career as a fashion designer. You know I completed a course on 'Fashion Design'. To be frank, at first I didn't know whether I would really turn up to be a fashion designer seriously but as I proceeded on with my course I knew that I was on the right track. It has immense scope of creativity, and it is also a challenge on my part.

After discussion with some relevant persons in this field, I have decided to open a display centre soon. Some of my friends are also interested to join me. We need a small capital to begin with, and we have enough enthusiastic persons ready to work. I will start designing children's ware. How do you like my plan.

Please let me know your opinion and suggestions. I will inform you as soon as all the necessary arrangements are made to open the centre.

Take care

Yours.

Khaled

5.

Mr. and Mrs Chowdhury regret that a previous engagement prevents their accepting the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Khan to the wedding reception of their daughter Safinaz Khan on Friday, the 20th of July.

25 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka

Lesson - 6 : Writing Letters - 4

Objectives : After you are through this lesson , you'll be able to -

- understand the format of business letters
- write different business letters on different occasions

A.

Business letter

A business letter is more formal than a friendly or social letter. Your letter should be correct in respect of grammar, punctuation and spellings. Incorrect grammar, usage or spellings reflect carelessness, lack of professionalism and confidence resulting in ambiguity and misunderstanding. Be practical and functional in your approach while writing business letters. Keep in your mind the purpose of writing the letter. Be exact, precise and complete in your expression.

Letter format

We know that the format and layout of a letter are very important. The format and layout of an official / business letter is same as the format and layout of a personal letter, with some additions of

1) The letterhead

A business letter may be written on a letterhead. A letterhead is a printed sheet, which is used for the first page of a business letter. It has the company's name/person's name and designation, the full postal address, telephone, telex, e-mail and fax numbers printed on it.

2) Inside address

In a formal business letter, the name, designation and address of the person/company you are writing to are to be mentioned on the left-hand side of the page. The salutation follows it.

For example :

**The Manager
Agrani Bank
Hotel Sheraton Branch, Dhaka**

3) Confidential and Attention lines

These are special entries. If the letter is confidential, you may write "Confidential" one space above the inside address. An "attention line" may

be used when you want to draw attention of an individual, that is attention of a specific person. For example :

*The Treasurer
Bangladesh Open University
Gazipur-1705*

Attention : Mr. Bazlur Rahman. Accounts Officer, Bangladesh Open University.

4) Subject line :

You can use a subject line to make it easier for the recipient to realise what the letter is all about. For example :

**Ms. Tamara Khan
Accounts Division
National University**

Subject : Payment of bills

5) Enclosure Notations :

If you are giving other documents with your letter, then add the enclosure notation one space below your signature. Typing “Enc.” indicates enclosures. It is a sort of reminder to the recipient to take note of the important documents attached with the letter. For example :

Enc. 1. CV

6) Copies to be circulated notation

If you are distributing copies of your letter to other readers, indicate that one space below any enclosure notation. For example:

**C.C. Registrar
C.C. Accounts Officer**

While drafting a formal letter some of the above mentioned points may be added up. In business letters, abbreviations are to be avoided (e.g. advt. instead of advertisement).

In replying to a business letter, always quote the number of reference (if there is one) and the date of the letter you are answering. For example :

In reply to your Letter no. BOU/Admin/222, dated 23 September, 1999

...

Sample business letters

Letter of Acknowledgement

ABC Corporation
123 Crystal Tower
Banani, Dhaka

12 December, 1999

Dear Director,

This is to acknowledge the receipt of the housing contract that I requested for.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

M H Khan
(M H Khan)

M H Khan Associates
Southern Plaza
23, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Letter of Enquiry

TAMARA'S GROUP
22, Kamal Ataturk Road, Banani

September 01, 1999

The Manager
Daffodils Garments
02 Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka.

Subject : Woollen Knitwear

Dear Mr. Hossain,

Ours is an Export House. We are experienced in this area for more than a decade now. We export leather items, cotton and woollen garments to the USA and to some European countries.

We are interested in woollen knitwear of all sizes for children. These products are required to be exported to the USA next month. We want to give an immediate trial order and rely upon you to offer good value in order to secure future business.

In this regard, may we request you to send us your quotations for woollen knitwear for children (for the age group 1-16) at the earliest.

Thanking you.

Sincerely yours,

J. Ahmed

(Jamal Ahmed)

Manager, (Purchase)

Letter of Complaint

Manager, Sales

Gravy and Delicious,

Uttara, Dhaka.

Dear Manager,

This morning, I bought some pizza and fruitcake from your shop. Unfortunately the quality and taste of the products were not found to be satisfactory. Since it's written on the cover of the box provided by your shop that 'products, if not found satisfactory, may be returned' to you mentioning the date of purchase, I am sending back the above-mentioned food items to you.

Please arrange the refund of my payment to you at the earliest.

Sincerely yours,

T. Rahman

(Tanim Rahman)

22 Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani

Letter of Request

Cambridge University Press
Cambridge, England

22 January, 2000

Catalogue Department,

I would like to request a free catalogue on Applied Linguistics. Please send it to the address below.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

S. Din

(Dr. Saima Din)

Department of English
Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705
Bangladesh.

Dear learner, remember that business letters need to be very concise, clear and to the point. They are naturally more formal in style than social/personal letters.

Activity :

- 1) What are the important points in writing a business letter ?
- 2) What might be there in addition in the format a business letter?
- 3) When do we put 'confidential' and 'attention lines' in a letter ?
- 4) Write a letter inquiring about leather goods.
- 5) Write a letter of complaint about delaying delivery of a micro oven you have ordered a week ago.

Answer Key

- Show the answers of questions 1, 2 and 3 to your tutor.

4) Letter of enquiry

20 March, 2000
Mr. Khalid Hossain
Tamara Group
29 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka

Dear Mr. Hossain,

We have been informed that you manufacture export quality leather products that include shoes, bags, pen-holder, jewelry boxes, etc.

We are large dealers in leather goods and there is a steady demand in domestic market of standard goods of this type.

We would like to request for your catalogue and full details of payment and discount allowed on order of quantities not less than 3000 pieces for each item. If possible, please send us some samples of your products.

Looking forward to an early response.

Thank you.

Sincerely

S. Chowdhury

(Shimul Chowdhury)

Handicrafts Palace

5) Letter of complaint

Dear Manager,

This has reference to our Order No. 221 dated 12 November, 1999 for a micro-oven which was to be delivered by a week's time. I have already booked the oven by depositing the required amount. It's over two weeks now since I placed the order. Could you please let me know if I can have it this weekend. If not, then I would like to cancel my order and buy one from some other company.

Waiting for a prompt reply from you.

Thanks

Yours sincerely

S. Ahmed

(Safiq Ahmed)

Lesson - 7 : Writing letters - 5

Objectives : After you are through this lesson , you'll be able to -

- write different letters of application
- write a CV

A

Letter of application

As a prospective candidate for a job, we send letter of application to the organization/company that offers the job. An effective, well-written and well-organized application will help find the suitable job. Since the application will represent you, so, keep in mind to write an effective, convincing and well-planned application, that it may immediately draw the positive attention of your prospective employer. The application should be written with tact and utmost care. A good application may open up doors for you.

While formatting an application, remember the following points :

- In the opening paragraph of your application, state clearly how you came to know about the job, i.e., from a newspaper ad. or from any other source.
- You can write a long letter stating the relevant details like your age, education and experience.
- You can write a short one supported by a resume or CV as an attachment.
- Be brief, concise and exact in your expression.
- Also remember to be simple, personal, polite and appealing in your tone.
- Be careful about spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence-construction.
- Be sure of the spelling of the name of the company and the officer addressed.
- Don't be aggressive or incomplete in your assertion : be positive and optimistic in your outlook.
- Your application should reflect your knowledge about yourself, the job and its requirement.
- You may conclude your application giving references, testimonials and by requesting for an interview at the employer's convenience.

Sample applications

Job application

The advertisement

Sales Manager Wanted

We are looking for a dynamic, young person to be appointed as the Sales Manager, Export department. The selected candidate will be provided with required training. Apply to : The Personnel Manager, Ferdous and Ferdous Company Ltd., 30 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka, before or on November 20, 1999.

Reply :

The Personnel Manager
Ferdous and Ferdous Company Ltd.
30, Motijheel C/A
Dhaka

61 Bangla Motor
Dhaka
November 2, 1998

Subject : Sales Manager – Export department

Dear Sir,

Referring to the advertisement published in *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dated November 1, 1999, I am offering myself as a prospective candidate for the above-mentioned post.

Herewith I enclose a copy of my detailed CV and the names and addresses of two referees. May I mention here that I would be available for an interview at any time.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours

T. Khan
(Tamanna Khan)

Enclosed

1. CV.
2. Name of referees

Application for university entrance

Office of the Registrar
State University
Dhaka

September 21, 1999

Dear Registrar,

I would like to apply for entrance to your university. Would you please send me a prospectus and an application form in this regard.

Thank you.

Yours truly
A. Hossain
(Abrar Hossain)

B.

Writing a CV

From the above discussion, we understand that almost every application for a job needs to have a copy of CV attached to it. Now we are going to discuss some major points in writing a CV. A CV is a brief written account of one's personal details, education and job experience. It is very important to present the CV very clearly.

For work-experience, the most recent job should be mentioned first, then the list of other jobs. Work-experience programmes and voluntary work can also be mentioned. If you are to mention names of referees, then write the name and address of two people who you know well. Before including their names, you must seek permission from them to be your referee. Remember to put your signature and date at the end of your Curriculum Vitae.

A sample of a CV is given below :

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME : Saima Din
DATE OF BIRTH : February 24, 1970
PRESENT POSITION : Lecturer (English)
Bangladesh Open University
Phone : 9800800 (off), Fax : 880-2-865750
PRESENT ADDRESS : Road # 16, House # 01
Sector # 01, Uttara Model Town
Dhaka, Bangladesh, Phone : 8910000
NATIONALITY : Bangladeshi by birth

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION :

Name of Exam.	Division/ Class/Position	Year of Passing	Board/ University	Group/ Subject
Master of Arts	Second class	1992	University of Dhaka	English Literature
Bachelor of Arts (Hons.)	Second Class	1991	University of Dhaka	English Literature
H. S. C.	First	1987	Dhaka Board	Arts
S. S. C.	First	1985	Dhaka Board	Arts

EMPLOYMENT

- Lecturer in English Literature, Banani International College, Banani, Dhaka.
- Teacher of English, Dhanmondi School, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

AWARDS

- Received first grade scholarship in MA on the result of BA (Hons.) examination.
- Received general scholarship in Scondary School Certificate Examination (S.S.C.)
- Received general scholarship in class eight from Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board, Dhaka.

LANGUAGES KNOWN : Bangla, English and Arabic
COUNTRIES VISITED : England, USA, Germany
COMPUTER LITERACY : Acquainted with Computer Basics
and able to use popular, software Windows 98
MEMBERSHIP : National Geographic Society, USA
English Department Alumni,
Society, University of Dhaka
HOBBY : Painting, travelling, reading books

S. Din
(SAIMA DIN)

Activity_

1. What are the points that we need to keep in mind while writing a letter of application ?
2. Read the advertisements below and then furnish the replies accordingly.

(1) Lecturer in English

We have a vacancy of a post of a lecturer in our English department. If you are interested to build up your career in teaching, please send the application along with your CV and two passport size photographs to : The Principal, Shiddeshwari Girls' College, Dhaka, within a week of the publication of this advertisement.

(2) Manager Wanted

We are an internationally reputed travel agency looking for an interested person of 30-32 years of age with an academic background in Management. The ability to work under pressure together with a good command of English is essential. Please send a letter of application and CV to : The Advertiser, Skyline Travels, 26 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka by September 15, 1999.

Answer Key

1. An effective, well-written and well-organized application will help find the job. Since the application represents the applicant, so, it needs to be an effective, convincing and well-planned application, that it may immediately draw the positive attention of the prospective employer. The application should be written with tact and utmost care. A good application may open up doors for the applicant.

While formatting an application the following points are useful to remember :

- In the opening paragraph of the application, it should be stated clearly how the applicant came to know about the job, i.e. from a newspaper ad. or from any other source.
- A long letter can be written stating the relevant details, like age, education and experience.
- A short letter can be written supported by a resume or CV as an attachment.
- Expression should be brief, concise and exact.
- The tone needs to be simple, personal, polite and appealing.

- Care needs to be taken about spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence-construction.
- Spellings of the names of the company and the officer addressed should be correct.
- Aggressive tone or incomplete statement in the applicant's assertion is negative qualities; outlook should be positive and optimistic.
- The application should reflect the applicant's knowledge about him/herself, the job and its requirement.
- The application may be concluded by giving references, testimonials and by requesting for an interview at the employer's convenience.

2.

(1) 31 December, 1999

To
The Principal
Shiddeshwari Girls' College, Dhaka.

Subject : Application for the post of lecturer in English.

Dear Madam,

Referring to the advertisement published in *The Daily Ittefaq*, dated 26 December 1999, I am applying for the post of Lecturer in English.

Please find enclosed a copy of my CV and two passport-size photographs for your kind perusal and consideration. I would be happy to come for an interview as set by you.

Thank you

Sincerely yours

S. Ahmed

(Salim Ahmed)

Attachment : 1. CV
2. 2 passports size photographs

(2)

22 January, 2000

The Advertiser
Skyline Travels, 26 Motijheel CA
Dhaka

Subject : Applying for the post of Manager

Dear Sir,

Referring to the advertisement published in The Bangladesh Times, dated 20 January 2000, herein I am applying for the above- mentioned post.

Please find enclosed a copy of my CV for your kind perusal and consideration.

Thanking you

Sincerely yours,

K. Chowdhury
(Kabir Chowdhury)

Lesson - 8 : Writing a Dialogue - 1

Objectives : After you are through this lesson, you are likely to be able to -

- say what is meant by ‘conversation’
- recognise the features of spoken language
- develop your speaking skills
- make use of this knowledge in writing a dialogue
- write dialogues based on different situations

A.

What is conversation?

Everyday, every now and then we talk to our near and dear ones, friends, colleagues, neighbours, classmates, teachers, and to so many people known and unknown. As the situation and characters change so changes the topic and occasions.

The common viewpoint of conversation is that it is a structurally organised activity that follows definite rules (Richards, 1980). Coulthard (1977) points out that according to Hymes (1982), every speech event can be characterised from the point of view of its structure, settings, participants, purposes, key, topic, channel and message form. The term ‘conversation’ is also used to mean ‘the more general form of talk’ (Wardhaugh, 1991:1), or more precisely, ‘a face-to-face, oral interaction between two or more participants’ (Richards, 1980). The conversation or interaction between persons can be called a dialogue. Dialogue is a talk between two people that is intended to represent the actual speech that we encounter in the real, everyday world.

From the descriptive work of a number of scholars studying spoken language (e.g. Labov, 1972; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975 et al), the following features of spoken language can be extracted :

- (a) The syntax of spoken language is typically much less structured than that of written language:
 - i. it contains many incomplete sentences, often simply sequences of phrases;
 - ii. it typically contains rather little sub-ordination; and
 - iii. active declarative forms are normally found where sentential syntax can be observed.
- (b) The largely paratactically organised chunks (i.e. the relationship between ideas signalled by position rather than direct grammatical

linkage) are related by such connectors as: *and, but, then*, and more rarely, *if*).

- (c) It is rare to find more than two premodifying adjectives and there is a strong tendency to structure short chunks of speech.
- (d) It is quite common to find what Givon (1979) calls topic comment structure.
- (e) Active constructions with intermediate group agents are noticeable.
- (f) In chat about the immediate environment, the speaker may rely on gaze direction to supply a referent.
- (g) Expressions can be replaced or refined as the conversation proceeds.
- (h) A good deal of rather generalised vocabulary is used : *a lot of, do, thing, etc..*
- (i) Same syntactic forms are repeated several times over.
- (j) A large number of prefabricated ‘fillers’ (*well, erm, I think, you know, etc.*) are produced.

In conversation, therefore, the overall effect is of information produced in a much less dense manner than in written language (Brown and Yule, 1983). While writing a dialogue, it is important to remember the features of spoken language to make the dialogue more realistic.

Importance of practising dialogue-writing

What is the use of practising dialogue writing ? In our situation and context, it is important to practice dialogue writing in English since it is a useful form of composition, and through it, a command of spoken English can probably be achieved. Therefore, while writing a dialogue it is worthy to remember the features of spoken language, as dialogue is likely to reflect real conversation. Written dialogue is the written form of conversation. Therefore, it is better to try to form a dialogue as it was to take place in real conversation or communication.

The practice of dialogue-writing helps a person to express his ideas and thoughts in an easy and natural way. It is an effective means of practising the normal day-to-day communication.

The follow-up effect

As a follow up effect of dialogue-writing, it is important to remember that the written dialogue is not supposed to be memorised, but prior knowledge and imagination should also be used in the process of constructing the dialogue. A written finished piece of conversation is not to be presented for memorisation, rather the learners should be able to realise the construction and the use of vocabulary in a dialogue and make use of this knowledge in connection with the real working communication. The meaning of the message that is to be conveyed through the dialogue needs to be clear and

concrete. Through dialogue-writing, the student will develop his imaginative faculty and learn new words to broaden his range of vocabulary. The final objective will be to try to use the language not as a language for passing the examination but for use in everyday communication.

Therefore the goal of writing a dialogue should be the spontaneous production of meaningful speech. Dialogue-writing would provoke a genuine desire to communicate in English with real people under real circumstances.

8.

The successful production of writing dialogues

The successful production of a dialogue needs your insight and imagination into the situation. To frame a meaningful dialogue, you have to put yourself inside two imaginary persons so that you can express the two characters' opinions naturally. You have to change your style and choose appropriate words as the situation demands. The dialogues you are writing need to appear to be spontaneous and impromptu. It is best to make a plan or outline of the dialogue before beginning to write.

It is obviously beneficial to take time in planning your (imaginary though) face-to-face interaction with someone. While planning to talk, most of the time we think of matters related to, 'what to say', 'how to begin', and 'what's the best way to do this'. The answering process is followed by a series of notes scribbled, crossed out and rewritten. But instead of wasting time and energy too much, we can try to follow a chart clarifying the situation that we are in, in order to be set on the right track for successful communication.

Three categories namely, (1) objective goals, (2) emotional needs, and (3) probable expectations will cover the basic kinds of insights you will need to prepare for effective communicative strategies. The chart might look like this :

Character 1	Character 2
Goals	Goals
Needs	Needs
Expectations	Expectations

After understanding the situation and the characters well, you can fill in the chart jotting down the major points, and then begin to give the dialogue a concrete shape. Always keep in your mind the purpose, characters, content and situation of the dialogue you are planning to write.

The chart may help in certain ways :

- It shapes your thoughts in a much more clear-headed level rather than being instinctive and emotional.
- It forces to reduce ideas and feelings to simple, succinct statements of fact.
- It makes ideas concrete and gives chance to be read again and make necessary changes as you make move in your thinking process or thought.

Activity

1. What are the features of conversation ?
2. What is the importance of practising dialogue-writing ?
3. What should be the goal of writing dialogues ?

* Show your answers to your tutor

Answer key

Activity on page 115

1. The features of conversation are given below :

- a. the structure of spoken language must be very lucid,
- b. sometimes spoken language contains incomplete sentences,
- c. very often single phrases or words are used in conversations,
- d. long sentences are connected with *and, but, then*, and more rarely with *if*,
- e. short sentences are used frequently,
- f. in conversation, sometimes gestures and gazes contribute meaning to the expressions used.
- g. frequent use of generalized vocabulary like *a lot of do, thing, get* is noticeable,
- h. same structure is used several times,
- i. the expressions like *well, erm, think, you know* are used.

4. The importance of practising dialogue- writing is given below:

- a. through dialogue writing a good command of spoken English can be achieved,
- b. the features of spoken English may be learnt
- c. an effective and natural way of expressing ideas, thoughts, opinions and beliefs can be learnt,
- d. the means of the normal day to day communication may be identified.

Lesson - 9 : Writing a dialogue - 2

Objective : After you are through this lesson, you'll be able to -

- follow the steps of writing a dialogue systematically.

A

The procedures to be followed in writing a dialogue

As conversation is a structurally organised activity that follows definite rules, therefore, while writing a dialogue, it will be helpful to remember a few points :

- Take time to think carefully over the situation and characters given.
- Jot down points, arguments, and opinions about the subject matter which might be expressed by the imaginary characters/persons.
- You can also 'brainstorm' before starting to write. Search your brain for ideas, and write them down quickly. Don't worry about how useful they will be. At this stage, don't worry about neatness and correctness.
- Keep in mind questions like Who... ? What...? When...? Why...? How...? Think of as many questions as you can.
- Now arrange the ideas that lurk in your mind in some logical order. Try to maintain the natural flow and features of conversation.
- Broaden your imagination regarding the characters and make note of their characteristics. This tactics will help you to express their (the characters) views according to their special characteristics. For example, the expressions or way of speech of a studious boy is likely to differ from a boy who is much more into sports. Different persons with different personalities and characteristics coming from different age group are bound to speak in character.
- In everyday discourse, we do not use bookish phrases; so, avoid using these sort of phrases while you make your characters speak. They should talk in an easy, familiar, spontaneous, and natural manner. Remember how we talk in friendly or formal conversation, and try to maintain this conversational style while writing the dialogue.
- Let the conversation, be brisk and rapid. In real conversation, people take turns and sometimes one person interrupts the other. In your

dialogue, you may sometimes introduce such interruptions to give it a sense of authenticity and naturalness.

- In real conversation we often answer a question by asking another. This element may be included in a dialogue writing to make it more natural.
- We also repeat words or sentences, and ask questions if something is not made clear to us. So, in a made-up dialogue, clarification could be sought and repetition can be included to give it a natural touch.
- In real conversation, we use exclamations, i.e. ‘My goodness;’ ‘Well;’ ‘O, dear,’ ‘How nice,’ etc. and such interjections may be introduced if applicable.
- In real conversation, the opening and closing are important. It should be the same in a written dialogue as well.
- To arrest the reader’s attention, the dialogue should also begin in an interesting way. It should have a logical conclusion and not end abruptly.
- In conversation, we use contractions. Contractions can be introduced in written dialogues too.

Remember to write your dialogue in a natural, interesting and realistic manner. The whole conversation should be brief, and the questions and replies as concise and pointed as possible.

B.

It is also helpful to use models or examples that can help with what to write and how to write it. You can maintain a file of the kind of writing you want to do, so that they are at your disposal when needed. Think about the content (the information included, the questions asked, the ideas mentioned). Look closely at the language used. Underline or make notes of any useful expressions. Look closely at the organization of ideas. And, of course make practical use of your knowledge to achieve your desired goal.

Writing a passage of dialogue may help you construct an actual or typical conversation between two people. You can also recreate a conversation that will bring strong feelings into play or reveal people’s attitudes and motives.

Now, look at the following samples. These dialogues are based on different day-to-day situations.

Greetings and farewells

Situation : Shamim and Khaled are university friends. They meet on their way to the class.

- Shamim : Hello Khaled. How are you ?
- Khaled : O, I'm fine, thank you. How are you, Shamim ?
- Shamim : I'm all right. Are you going to tea at Shumon's this afternoon ?
- Khaled : Yes. What about you ?
- Shamim : I'll be going too. Well, why don't we go together ?
- Khaled : Good idea. Erm... let's meet in front of the library after the 4 O'clock class. Is that ok ?
- Shamim : That's fine with me. See you then.
- Khaled : See you. Bye.

Instructions (how to do things)

Situation : Lopa would like to prepare some pancakes for her friend Jui. She requests her mother to give her instruction about that. Her mother tells her how to make pancakes.

- Lopa : Mom, I would like to make some pancakes for Jui. You know I am going to meet her this afternoon.
- Mom : Hmm. It's a good idea.
- Lopa : Will you please tell me the recipe of pancake mixture and help me make them.
- Mom : Certainly, my dear. Well, let me write down the ingredients for you.

(Mother writes down the following :

200 grams flour 100 grams butter
2 eggs
4 litres milk Sugar, as required)

Ok, first you sift the flour in a bowl and add sugar. Beat the egg lightly, and put it in the mixture. Now, add a little milk, and work the mixture into a thick paste without any lumps. Could you follow me, dear ?

- Lopa : O, yes. Next what mom?
- Mom : Right. Now, continue adding the milk little by little, but each time be sure to stir the mixture well, so it keeps an even texture.
- Lopa : OK.
- Mom : When all the milk has been added, now melt the butter and stir it well into the mixture. It is now ready for use.

Lopa : Thank you, mom.

Mom : My pleasure. O, yes, one thing. If you leave the mixture to stand for say about half an hour it will improve.

Dear student, remember in giving instructions, we always have to follow the steps, which are needed for the act to be completed.

Facing an interview

Situation : Sabbir Hossain is an MA in Accountancy from Dhaka University. He is to face an interview for the post of Accountant in a private bank. He is at the interview board.

Interviewer : Well, Mr. Hossain, your major is Accountancy, right?

Sabbir : Yes sir.

Interviewer : That should help you develop a banking carrier, but you don't have any work experience.

Sabbir : I have just finished my course and this is the first interview board I am facing. Moreover, I have applied for a probationary officer's post. I heard most of the probationary officers are freshers like me.

Interviewer : That's correct, Mr. Sabbir. We build our own officers. The newly-recruited officers go through intensive training before starting their carrer. Now, tell me why do you want to be a banker.

Sabbir : Banks run the economy of a country, and therefore, the job of a banker is very important. Besides that, I found the offered salary and the future career attractive.

Interviewer : Are you saying that if we offered less pay, you wouldn't have come.

Sabbir : No, I don't think so, sir. I have my expectations.

Interviewer : Have you heard of Grameen Bank.

Sabbir : Yes sir.

Interviewer : What do you think of it ?

Sabbir : Professor Yunus is the founder of the Bank and he has done wonders. In Grammen Bank, the recovery rate of loans is 99%, which are given without any collateral security, which no commercial bank can imagine of.

Interviewer : One last question, why did you pick this bank ?

Sabbir : This is a reputed bank. The overall position of this bank is number 2 which is praiseworthy considering its age, what more do I need.

Interviewer : Thank you. We hope to contact you later.

Sabbir : Thank you, sir.

Expressing likes & dislikes

Situation : Shihab and Sakib are travelling in a Premium bus to Uttara and are expressing their likes and dislikes on the weather.

Shihab : I don't like hot and humid days like today. We are lucky, we are travelling in an air-conditioned bus.

Sakib : Well, it is better than rainy days. I hate rainy days, the day becomes depressing and so do you.

Shihab : Do you like the winter ?

Sakib : Well, yes. Winter is quite pleasant in our country. But, in countries like England, it is awfully cold during winter, and thanks to Allah that we do not have such cold in here. Winter reminds me of my visit to England last year. It was so cold and windy.

Shihab : Yes, but though not like England or other cold countries, it does get cold here in the middle of December. It is specially a difficult and hard time for the poor who don't have enough warm cloths.

Sakib : That is just what I was implying. What would have happened to them if it were that cold as it is in England !

Dear learner, remember it is always helpful to draw on dialogues as part of a mix that may blend material from you experience and from a range of oral and printed sources.

Activity

1. What are the procedures that might be followed in writing dialogues ?
2. Looking at models may help improve dialogue writing – in what ways?
3. Prepare dialogues on the following situations :

- a. Mr. Shafiqul Alam is introducing his wife Jesmine Alam to his friend Jamal Ahmed and talking about their plan for the coming weekend.
You may jot down points like :

- Mr Alam and Mr Ahmed are friends
- The conversation will begin with introducing Mrs. Jesmine Alam to Mr. Jamal Ahmed
- Plan for the coming weekend - opinions from both the sides
- The conclusion - whether they plan together or not?

- b. Your younger brother/sister wants to record a recitation on an audio cassette. But she/he doesn't know how to operate the cassette recorder. Give instructions to her/him, so that she/he can manage the recording system.
- This is a close/informal relationship and situation
 - Your sister/brother requests for your help
 - You accept and demonstrate how to operate the cassette recorder
 - Can assure of further help as and when required by your brother/sister
 - S/he thanks you for your kind gesture
- c. Anisa has applied for a post of a lecturer in English Language in the Bangladesh Open University. She is at the interview board. Write a dialogue between the interviewer and Anisa.
- This is a formal situation
 - Opening should be a formal, courteous one
 - Anisa needs to be precise, confident but polite in her approach
 - The leave-taking or the closing of the conversation will be again formal and courteous
- d. Kamal and Abir are expressing their likes and dislikes on movies. Write a dialogue between them.
- Kamal and Abir are friends
 - This is an argumentative situation
 - Both of them will try to prove their own points of view
 - The arguments in favour of likes and dislikes should be clear and to the point
 - How much do they agree with each other?

Think of different situations (formal and informal) with diverse characters and topics, and prepare dialogues using both formal and informal language. Show your piece of writing to your tutor.

Lesson - 10 : Writing a Report - 1

Objectives : After you are through this lesson, you are likely to be able to -

- explain what is meant by the term ‘report’
- adjust your messages/report to your audiences’/readers’ needs and level of technicality
- describe the importance and nature of both formal and informal reports

A.

We often have to write or read reports of different kinds. In our job or professional arena, we need to prepare official reports. We also sometimes write special reports for magazines and journals. Writing book-report or book-review for newspapers/magazines is also an interesting way of putting ideas across about a particular piece of writing. It is therefore an important matter to know the basic rules and principles of report-writing to help us through as we wish to prepare a report on something, be it a formal or an informal one.

What is a report?

A written report is a record that is made on the results of thought, investigation, research and effort. A report projects information, facts and ideas to someone who needs it.

A piece of factual or impersonal writing, stating the facts of the issue with the mention of its plus points and the loopholes, a report usually incorporates recommendations. It may be prepared for an official body with the aim of further developing the existing position of the subject-matter/project/issue. In professional area, we often do report about responsibilities to various people on different occasions with miscellaneous purposes.

The term ‘report’ can be defined as :

‘a document in which a given problem/issue is examined for the purpose of conveying information and findings, putting forward ideas and sometimes making recommendations on the basis of which the decision makers act and decide accordingly’.

Book-reviews that are found in magazines, journals and newspapers are written shortly after, even at times ahead of publication of a book. Book-review sections are a regular and an important feature of many professional publications. Since reports can be written with different purposes and aims, therefore, they are categorised according to their purpose and readership.

Different types of reports

Reports may be written on different occasions with different purposes. For example :

- An account of an accident (e.g. a police report)
- A progress report (e.g. and end-year achievement report from a teacher to a child's parents)
- An investigative report (e.g. a company wants to expand its business)
- Official trip
- Book report/reviews
- Film reviews, etc.

Formal and informal reports

Reports can broadly be classified into 'formal' and 'informal' ones. The essential difference between the two types is that the formal or complex report requires some kind of investigation and research, whereas the informal one does not. The types of report will depend upon the reporting requirements and specific job performance.

Formal reports

The most common types of formal report include information based reports, problem solving reports, proposals, research reports, analytical reports, instructional reports, descriptive reports, etc. The formal report is used usually when the topic/issue requires lengthy discussion.

In writing formal reports, your aim is to show how you arrived at your conclusions and recommendations. Your approach and way of reporting will depend on the subject, purpose and the readers' need. The style of formal report is relatively impersonal and restrained and more official in tone. Here the writer uses third person references such as 'the writer', 'the investigator', 'it was learned' 'investigation shows', etc. instead of referring to himself as 'I' or 'we'.

Informal reports

Informal reports are usually written for readers within and among organisations to keep smooth the regular day-to-day work and communication moving. Usually these reports are quickly prepared. They do not require much extended planning and contains less background information. They are also written without any supplements (abstracts, title page, glossary, etc.). In style, informal report is personal and relaxed. The first person 'I' or 'we' is used in writing an informal report.

Advantages of written reports

Written report, being a piece of permanent record, has many advantages some of which are as follows :

- The written form compels the reporter to be accurate and complete.
- The facts and figures recorded are not likely to be distorted with time.
- All readers get the same report to read; so, the facts and figures and statistics remain always the same.
- It can be referred to the person concerned/interested in its original form again and again

B.

Before writing any report or document, you need to identify your purpose, and gather information about and evaluate your reader's background and situation.

General points to remember

When you write for a particular reader or a group of readers i.e. when your target group is selected and specified, then it is a better way to focus sharply on your readers/target group by throwing light on some specific questions as the following :

- Who wants the report ? Who is my target group ? Who else will/might read it ?
- Why do they want a report ? How will they use it ? What purpose/aim do I want to achieve ?
- How much do the readers already know about the subject ? How well acquainted they are with the subject-area ? How much more do I have to provide ?
- What exactly do the readers need to know and in what format ?
- When is the report due ? When do I need to set a deadline for it?

Answers to all of the above questions will help you formulate your purpose and assess reader's needs. Remember that purpose and reader's need are the two very important elements that measure and govern the whole process of communication.

If your target group/readers are well known to you then you can avail yourself of this opportunity to clarify certain points by asking them directly:

- If they merely want a record of your activities or progress?
- Whether you are expected to supply only raw data or conclusions and recommendations as well?
- If your readers will take immediate action based on your report?

- Whether the readers need step-by-step instructions?
- If they are merely collecting information to be used later?
- Whether the documents will be read and discarded, filed, or published?
- What is most important from your reader's point of view? What do they consider to be of prime importance?
- Have they requested for a letter, memo, short report or a formal report with supplements (title page, table of contents, appendices, glossary and so on)

Now, if you are writing for general readers then try to use non-technical, simple, direct, and conversational language. The information contained in a report can be used as a basis for taking actions. Reports also help all business institutions run smoothly by recording all data and information systematically. Remember that a good report connect you with the readers by recognizing the differences in background, the specific needs, and their preferences.

Activity

1. How would you define a 'report' ?
2. Define informal reports.
3. When do we write formal reports?
4. What do we expect to find in the Body (text) of a report?
5. Choose subjects interesting to you and prepare reports on them.

Show your report to your tutor in the tutorial session for feedback.

Lesson - 11 : Writing a Report - 2

Objectives : After you are through this lesson, you are likely to be able to -

- apply the principles of report writing while preparing one
- structure your reports under the rules of good communication i.e., having an introduction - body - conclusion structure
- organize and queue up materials/data collected in order
- be more coherent, correct and more within the styles.

A

Principles of writing good reports

All good reports result from planning, drafting, and revising decisions that collectively make up the writing process. Every detail in the report should serve a useful purpose. Every sentence and word used in the report should carry its own weight and assist to realise the writer's meaning. So, to make the report an efficient, clear and precise one, every report must conform to the principles of communication, which are :

- Accuracy
- Brevity
- Clarity

Let us now look into the terms in detail so that we understand what is meant by these terms.

- **Accuracy** : The information provided in the report must be checked and cross-checked to ensure its accuracy. The facts and figures supplied must be based on evidence, and it is better to quote the authority for supporting your facts (as witnesses) to avoid confusion and doubt on the reader's part. If you find it necessary to quote an opinion then say it is an opinion. In a nutshell, your report should provide all the necessary information to make it a clear and accurate one.
- **Brevity** : Efficiency is another key word in writing a report. Wherever you write a report, be it a formal or an informal one, you should aim for maximum efficiency. Never use six words when two will do, as many phrases in common use are now regarded as a sign of bad/non-efficient writing. For example, do not write 'I am aware of the fact that' instead of 'I know that'. Choose word that will carry its own weight and full meaning. For example, do not write 'mutual co-operation' when 'co-operation' itself means something mutually done.

- **Clarity** : Clarity is achieved by use of the right and precise words and simple constructions of the sentences can help achieve clarity that will help the reader to understand the report clearly and easily. The argument of the report should follow a logical sequence that leads the reader naturally to the conclusions or recommendations. The whole construction should have a simple and natural flow, not hampering the reader's attention when he reads it. For example :

'Push the printer connector into the serial socket'

This is not a correct use of the word 'push' in this case. The better expression will be 'Insert the printer connector into the serial socket'.

So, a good report must conform to the basic principles of report-writing, being accurate, concise, and clear in its expression.

3.

It is important to know the basic structure that is to be followed in writing any report.

Structure of reports

The following aspects may be included while writing a report :

- Main title
- Aim and scope of the report (or 'the terms and references')
- Introduction
- How you proceeded
- The fact of the situation (or the 'findings')
- What you discovered
- Your evaluation of individual aspects
- An overall evaluation
- Conclusion
- Recommendation
- A summary of the main points

For all sorts of reports, whether they have been orally reported or written, remember to have the following points :

- A clear introduction, including background
- A 'neutral', fairly formal style
- A lot of precise and detailed information, as and when necessary
- A logical organization while presenting it

- A balanced view, but negative where necessary (this may lead to the recommendations that you are likely to make)
- Clear headings with ideas grouped according to the topic
- Clearly organized paragraphs, possibly including a topic sentence
- At the end, a clear and succinct summary, incorporating personal recommendations

So, the main structure of any report should include

1. An introduction
2. Report text (body) or development
3. Conclusion and recommendations

Let us now see what are likely to be included under these headings.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to introduce the subject and the purpose of the message/report. Here you make clear and promise to your readers what message awaits them so to create a picture in the reader's mind about the subject or the background of it. Sometimes this purpose can be achieved and fulfilled simply by providing a heading; sometimes it requires more lengthy treatment in the form of a section or paragraphs of its own. The object is to clarify that you are supplying your readers only what they need. Introduction section should include necessary background information (the term of reference, the reason the report has been called for), indicate the area to be covered and explain how the subject is to be developed.

At the end of your introduction, the reader should have a general, overall picture of what is the purpose of writing the report, how you collected data, what the report is about, and what is to follow next.

2. Report Text (Body) or Development

The body section is the most important part of your report presenting all your evidence and explanations. Since this is the main part of the report, make sure that you set your points down in clear, logical sequence. You should make your presentation accurate, simple, and clear to avoid all possible confusion that might come in the reader's mind. An information title can be given for the report text to make it more precise and clearer. For example, for a descriptive report, the title could be, 'Description and Function of Parts'; for instructions, 'Required Steps', and for a problem-solving report 'Collected Data', etc.

The main goal of this section is to reiterate that your plan for the report will work. To prepare this section, you may answer the following questions first:

- What procedure will be followed in reaching my goals? How will it be done?
- When will it be done? Who will do it?
- What materials, methods, and personnel will it take?
- What facilities are available?
- How long will it take? When is it due?
- How much will it cost and why?
- What results can be expected?
- How do I know it will work?

3. Conclusion

The concluding section ties up all the information already provided in the previous sections by giving readers a clear perspective on the whole report. To put special emphasis on certain aspects of your report and major findings, make a summary of those aspects. Now, frame your recommendations directly on the findings and interpretations. The concluding section of the report often evaluates the significance of the report, its impact, takes a position and predicts an outcome, offers a solution or suggests further research. After reading the report, the interested party may carry on further research based on the recommendations and suggestions made.

At the close of your report, the overall interpretation and restating of the need for the project or proposal with its aims should try to persuade the readers to act accordingly. Remember that the recommendation you make for any further actions must be consistent with the purpose of the report, the evidence presented, and the interpretation given.

Aspects of review-writing

In writing a review (of a film or a book, etc.), the reviewer will focus on the central point that becomes the thesis of the review. The rest of the review is likely to support the central point. The review may sum up the reviewer's interpretation, evaluation and judgment of the film/book - to help us understand the meaning, purpose or intention of the movie/book.

While writing a review, try to answer the following questions :

- What is the central point or thesis of the review ? Where does it need reinforcement? Do I (as a reviewer) need to express any reservations or qualifications that would modify or complicate the central point?
- How do I plan to follow up the central thesis? What kind of details do I need to include in support of it to make it effective?

Remember your review/report often does not take final shape until it is properly being drafted and revised. After the first draft, you may decide to go back to check and add an essential point or shorten or delete something. You may change your negative judgement that seems too direct on a second thought and may present it in a softer tone. You must ensure that your presentation of the facts were logical and put in the right order as a successful organizing strategy creates a momentum that holds the attention of the reader and carries him from the beginning to the conclusion of the report. Paraphrasing and linking expressions can make your writing clearer and easier to follow.

Activity

1. What are the principles that you follow in writing a good report? Explain.
2. Name the principles of writing reports. What kind of structure do you follow in writing a report?
3. How do you write the conclusion of your report?

Lesson - 12 : Writing an Account - 1

Objectives : After you are through this lesson you are expected to be able to -

- recognise the principles of writing an account
- categorize different types of accounts that we make to fit different situations

A.

At times all of us may feel that we are unable to write anymore. This is known as the ‘writer’s block.’ And a blank sheet of paper may have a paralyzing effect on you. Therefore, free association of thoughts and stimulus-response writing may help the writer overcome this writing block. In true free writing, you need to write without much thinking and without stopping, putting down all ideas or images that come to mind. You keep writing filling in the white page. When you have finished writing, you may come back to see what have you written so far and where and what needs amendment there.

In more focused free-association writing, you may begin with a definite stimulus/subject/idea of your choice. At the beginning, you may pick up only a single word, then writing down all your thoughts, memories and associations related to that stimulus set in motion by the specific word.

There are certain principles that are to be followed always while writing any piece of write-up. In our everyday life, we need to give account of incidents and happenings on different occasions. It is important to know the basic principles of writing so that we can write an account precisely, suiting the appropriate occasion. So, when you decide to write an account on an incident, remember the following broad principles :

- **Directness** : In your account, you should get to the point directly, using small sentences instead of long, involved ones. Do not provide unnecessary information that might only make your writing lengthy, not really making it enough weighty and precise. Unnecessary load in the write-up will only make your reader confused and irritated.
- **Simplicity** : Try to express yourself using simple words and sentences. The use of flowery language, extravagant expressions and complex sentences should be avoided. Use smaller, simple sentences, and where possible, use two words instead of six.
- **Conciseness** : Express your thoughts as concisely as possible. Avoid repeating yourself. Use only as many words as are required to make your meaning clear.

- Originality : Be original in your thought and expression. Avoid imitating the style of any author. Be yourself.

Writing an account from experience

We all like to narrate our own experience once in a while. When you write about your personal experience, you write about what you know best, focusing on a specific event or narrating in a series of related events.

Writing about personal experience is a good exercise in writing an account.
:

- Writing from experience helps you discover the motives behind any writing that have personal tone and touching effect on the reader, dealing with issues close to home.
- Writing from experience helps give your writing substance. Your subject-matter and content being your own, will not simply echo what others have already written on it, but will reflect your own language, view, reaction and feelings about it.
- When you write from personal experience, it also tests your ability to organize your resource/material. To make your story interesting to others, you will have to bring some central issue/point into focus. This central issue will help in working out the pattern that gives shape to what happened.

Writing an account : The journalistic formula

There are techniques that can be followed for systematic exploration of a subject. Before starting to write an account you may try to answer a set of questions that cover different dimensions of the topic. Answering of such questions is intended to fill in a number of vacuums in a systematic way. This framework for systematic search and discovery could be called a '**discovery frame**'. Once you have done with your discovery frame for writing an account, it will be easier for you to give your write-up a concrete shape.

A familiar example of a discovery frame is the traditional 'journalistic formula' for news reports. The questions that may be answered are :

- Who was involved in the incident ?
- What happened ?
- When and where did it happen ?
- Why did things happen as they did ?
- How did things happen and how were they done ? Could anything else happen ?

Once you have answers to these questions of who, what, when, where, why and how, you can now start writing your account in detail in subsequent paragraphs. It is obvious that the questions that help you discover material will vary from one paper to another. Let us take a look at the following questions/examples that will help you work up material for some familiar writing tasks :

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST :

- How are two things alike?
- How are they different?
- Which one is better? Which one do you prefer? Arguments for and against that.

PROCESS

- What is the purpose of the process?
- What materials or equipments are needed?
- What are the major steps involved in the process?
- What is the end result?

PROS AND CONS / ARGUMENTATIVE ACCOUNT

- What are the arguments in favour?
- What are the opposing arguments?
- What is the reasonable common ground?

B.

In section A, we have discussed that answering of some strategic questions can help in framing a story line, exploring the major dimensions of the topic, which will make your account a connected whole. These questions can serve as a discovery frame helping you work up a preliminary collection of material for your story with a point. You can answer questions regarding :

- **Setting :**
 - Where did the events take place ?
 - What sights and sounds can be used to make the place realistic?
 - How are you going to set the scene ?
- **People :**
 - Who are the people taking the leading role in the events ?
 - How did these people look, act, and talk ?

- **Situation**
 - Why could things happen the way they did ?
 - Is there any past related to the present occurrence/situation ?

- **Event**
 - What actually happened ?
 - What was the high point ?

- **Point to make**
 - Now what ?
 - What was the impact of the incident on you ?
 - Is it important for you ? Why ?
 - What did you learn from the experience ?

Thus, a typical account follows the ‘where-why-what-so what’ pattern.

Activity

1. What are the broad principles that are to be followed for writing an account?

Lesson - 13 : Writing an Account - 2

Objectives : After you are through this lesson , you will be able to -

- write accounts through different ways
- write accounts (narrative, descriptive, argumentative, etc.) appropriately suiting the occasion/situation.

A.

You can write an account through the way of :

- Narration
- Description
- Dialogue
- Argumentation
- Comparing and contrasting, etc.

Narration or story telling :

Narration, in its simplest form, is giving an account of something that has taken place either in reality or in the imagination of the narrator. Narration can be spoken or written. Wherever we converse with others, often we are giving an account of something that has happened to ourselves or to someone else.

A narration can focus on one key event or a series of related events. In both the cases, the focus will centre round the pivotal points that are essential to moving the story along. The writer, to engage the reader's attention fully, will set up conflicts that produce dramatic action creating suspense that leads the reader up to a climatic finale.

There are certain basic principles applicable in writing all kinds of narrative. They are as follows :

1. **Selection of material :** It is important to select impressive details of the actual occurrence. Irrelevant points that are not really connected to the account should be omitted.
2. **Chronological sequence :** All the events in the narration should be related in the order in which they are supposed to have occurred in reality.
3. **Sensory appeal :** In order to make your narrative fully 'alive', you must appeal to your reader's sense of sight, sound, smell, taste and feeling.

4. **Narration of action** : Narration consists chiefly of action; so, proper atmosphere of suspense to keep the reader engrossed in the story should be created.

PICTURE COMPOSITION

Writing a composition based on a series of pictures, usually six in number, is an interesting effort. If you are given only a single picture then you will have to use your imagination to construct a suitable plot and make it sufficiently interesting.

The following steps can be followed when doing a picture composition.

1. Take a quick glance or two at all the pictures in the correct order. Imagine a rough outline for the incident illustrated in the pictures.
2. Study each picture carefully to observe all the details including the minor ones.
3. Prepare an outline of the story by expressing in a single sentence the substance or theme of each picture. Think about the sentence that you have written and try to formulate a plot based on it. At this point decide whether to write in the first person or in the third person. To write in the first person, you will have to place yourself on the scene somehow, whereas, using the third person will allow you to describe the story as seen by someone else.
4. The six sentences containing the main ideas will be expanded into six paragraphs (consisting of approximately sixty to eighty words each) of your composition. Write down the main events of the incident that should be arranged in chronological order. This will be the first draft of your composition.
5. Now, read through the draft and make necessary changes to improve the style of the composition. If the draft does not read smoothly, you may have to change the construction of some of the sentences. Look for spelling, punctuation and grammar problems and make corrections.
6. Make a fair copy of the revised composition and check it once more.

NARRATING A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

You can write an account based on your personal experience. The ability to write a composition of this type depends a great deal on your power of observation. To be a good and efficient observer, you always need to keep your senses open and alert so that you can recreate the sights, sounds, and feelings later on. It is also a useful practice to maintain a diary in which you can record the events regularly. A good narrative composition gives an accurate account of the event, and also reflects the attitude and reactions of the narrator towards the event/incident.

8.

Description

Descriptive writing could be objective and subjective, practical or personal and imaginative. In objective writing you need to provide measurable facts and figures, without being personal in your preference and keep your personal feeling to a minimum. On the other hand, in a more subjective writing, your personal reactions and judgments will help you achieve proper description of the event. A descriptive writing depends much on your power of observation, to what extent can you stay close to what you see, smell and touch. You need to make maximum use of your sensory power in observing happenings around you and have to practice to be able to reproduce the event putting your expression choosing appropriate words. Remember concrete words appeal directly to our senses, vividly calling the sights, sounds, smells, textures and tastes to the reader's mind. As a descriptive writer, you will recreate for the readers the objects, scenes, and people around you, sharing with them what you have seen and experienced. Remember that selectivity of detail is the essence of a good descriptive composition.

There are certain steps that can be followed while writing a descriptive account of an event, place or a person. First a suitable plan or outline should be sketched out. The arrangement of the descriptive details is most important to avoid confusing the reader's mind. The following procedure is suggested for achieving this aim :

1. Jot down various aspects of the place, person, event as they come in your thought.
2. Select points that you consider as most striking and will give sufficient material for a vivid description.
3. To make your description vivid and effective, you can use appropriate images, striking comparisons - simile (using words such as, *like* or *as if*), metaphor (presenting comparison as if one thing were actually another) and personifications (giving human qualities to objects or ideas).
4. In the case of a character sketch, include elements that are purely descriptive such as portrayal of physical characteristics, dress and mannerisms of the person described. You should also include points of non-descriptive nature, such as the qualities, achievements and other attributes of the character to make your description vivid and real. You can also relate short anecdotes and illustrations of the character's words and actions instead of using direct adjectives in revealing other qualities of your subject's personality.

5. After you are done with your first draft, read your write-up to delete unnecessary information, and to rearrange the points carefully in paragraphs. You can provide headings for your paragraphs. The points you have mentioned should be arranged in a logical order, so that it carries proper meaning and can be read smoothly. The orderly sequence of the matter contained in each paragraph will help make the idea clear and convincing to your readers.
6. Now, write a proper and suitable introduction and conclusion for your essay.
7. Revise your draft, and after making necessary corrections, make a fair copy of the composition.

Dialogue

Dialogue can be another effective way of making people's thoughts and feelings real for the reader. Dialogue can represent the real-world conversation – what people are likely to say in different situations. A good narrative includes authentic voices that praise, question, nag, encourage, love, insult, or complain, etc. Insertion of dialogue can make your account more realistic and interesting having a story-telling effect on your readers. For more on dialogue-writing, consult the lessons on 'Dialogue writing' of this Unit.

Activity

1. Why writing about personal experience is a good exercise in writing an account?
 2. If you are to write a composition based on a picture, what are the steps that are to be followed? Choose pictures from newspapers/magazines and write narratives based on those.
 3. What are the major steps in writing a description? What does the word family mean to you? How has your family situation or your family background influenced you? How has it shaped your outlook? Give a vivid account of people, situation, or events.
 4. What was your first taste of success or failure? How did it affect your attitude toward competition? What did you learn from the experience?
- * Show your compositions based on questions 3 and 4 to your tutor.

Lesson - 14 : Writing an Account - 3

Objective : After you are through this lesson, you will be able to -

- write different kind of accounts suiting the situation.

A.

Argumentative composition

Another kind of account could be given in an argumentative way, bringing points of argumentation both for and against a certain issue. In an argumentative composition, facts and ideas are brought to establish a given point, then deductions are made, and finally a conclusion is provided. However, an argumentative composition may not always lead to a definite conclusion, rather may convince the readers to hold a neutral position. In such a case, the arguments for and against a given proposition will be set out and the conclusion will project no clear-cut choice. The reader will be left with choices to think about and to draw his own conclusion.

When attempting an argumentative composition, the following points should be remembered :

1. First of all, think of all the ideas that occur to you about the given topic and try to decide whether you are for or against the proposition or in favor of a neutral position.
2. You should shape your plan in a way that will give clear indication of the movement of your argument towards a climax, giving a view of your conclusions.
3. Define in your own words the proposition given. Write about the advantages and disadvantages of the issue concerned in separate paragraphs. If you decide to emphasize the advantages then put logic to your decision in a convincing manner. You can use illustrations and comparisons wherever possible.
4. When you are satisfied that you have made your efforts to establish the advantages that outweigh the disadvantages, write clear statements of your final opinion.
5. If, on the other hand, you decide that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, first, talk about the advantages, then go on to emphasize the disadvantages that will automatically lead to a conclusion.
6. If, however, your stand is neutral, put equal emphasis to both sides of your arguments and express your neutrality in the concluding paragraph.
7. Remember that, to gain acceptance of your viewpoint, your argument should be logically worked out and expressed in an informative and matter-of-fact manner. Do not get personally involved in your

expression. To convince your readers, the most important point is that you put your arguments and logic clearly, precisely and effectively.

The techniques discussed above will surely help in writing argumentative compositions.

Compare and Contrast

Contrast is a familiar organizing principle in many narratives. Writers use comparisons and contrasts to :

- show important patterns : how a small village differs from a big city;
- guide our choices : what the advantages of a hand-written letter over a word-processed one are; and
- guide in solving problems : what features set outstanding schools apart from poor ones.

Writing to compare and contrast tests your ability to deal effectively with facts and ideas. In this sort of writing, you will have to bring together points that are usually separated and make connections between them. You will need to work out your own strategy of organization to serve your purpose, to make your readers see your intention.

While writing in a compare-and-contrast pattern, the following guidelines may be followed :

1. Define your purpose and understand why you plan to set up the comparison or contrast the way you planned? What do you want your reader to learn from it?
2. Now, explore the similarities and differences of the issue in a systematic way. Take notes and write about the contrasts pointing out the different features into two columns.
3. Consider your points one by one and remember that your purpose is to make connections between the contrasts and comparisons.
4. When you are finished with your first draft, clarify the point of your comparison, and provide a clearer overview, if necessary. Imagine yourself explaining the plan of your paper to a confused reader. Make necessary re-arrangement of the sequences to bridge any gap that may have been prevailing in your inner logic. Try to make your conclusion a thought-provoking one.
5. Choose the most appropriate words to mark similarities and contrasts. To make a point of similarity, use words and phrases such as : like, similarly, in parallel fashion, exact counter part, along similar lines, etc. To signal contrast, words and phrases such as : whereas, however, by contrast, on the other hand, nearly opposite, as a counter part, etc., can be used.

6. Read your essay thoroughly, revise, and after making necessary changes, write a fair and neat copy of it.

Revision : The chance for a second thought

Revision of an early draft gives you chance to have a second thought about some basic points. You can strengthen your paper by looking at :

- the tone - your attitude towards your subject and towards your audience. What is the main purpose of your account ? To make your writing interesting and effective to your reader, avoid providing unnecessary expressions, unimportant information and too much eloquent and flowery language. Avoid ready-made phrases and try to express your ideas in your own words, so that the reader becomes interested in your essay, thinking that, 'this is something new', or 'this is a good expression'.
- keep the unifying thread of your essay under your control so that your writeup becomes one connected whole, and a coherent one. Put the paragraphs in a logical sentence so that they give clear signals to your readers.
- do not miss to give details when it is of vital importance. Details will individualize and dramatize your description. Make sure not to put too much emphasis on some points where it is not required.
- take special note of the introduction and conclusion of your composition. Give proper emphasis on them, so that your paper carries enough evidence to attract and capture your reader's interest and attention.

As discussed earlier, remember that after you are done with the first draft, you may decide to include additional examples, or exclude some unnecessary points. You may remember a relevant quotation and add it to your write-up. You may also mark something to be lacking in your evidence and include supporting facts and figures. This process of addition and deletion will lead the composition to its final stage, giving it an overall strong pattern.

Activity

1. What are the important things to be remembered in giving an argumentative account of an event/issue? Write an account on the pros and cons of action movies and their effect on the young generation.
2. What are some important words and phrases that could be used while marking a point of contrast and compare?

* Show your answers to your tutor.

Lessons - 15 : Writing a Summary

Objectives : After you are through this lesson, you are likely to be able to -

- understand why and when we write summaries
- explain how to write a good summary
- write an effective summary following the procedures mentioned and described.

A.

In our everyday work, in office or at study, we are required to understand the gist of a lengthy piece of reading. Summary of an article/essay/any piece of lengthy writing helps us to remember the main points of the writing for later use in a convenient and suitable way.

Defining a summary

A summary gives brief account of a passage or an article mentioning only the chief or main points contained in it. It is the substance of a passage given in a condensed form which is usually free from all sorts of unnecessary details, reducing the main text to about one-third of its original length. A summary being the gist or main theme of a passage should be expressed in as few words as possible. It should be lucid, succinct, and full, including all essential points, so that anyone on reading it may be able to grasp the main points and general effect of the passage summarized.

In a busy world when time is a serious matter, people especially businessmen and high officials in the government do not have time to read through lengthy reports and documents. The best way to solve time constraint is to rely upon summaries prepared beforehand based upon which on many occasions important decisions are often taken. Therefore, it is important and essential that a summary is prepared accurately containing the main points.

Why summary writing?

We already have pointed out the main use of summary writing. Summary writing is also a very effective and useful exercise in *reading*. We usually read in a way that is often casual and careless reading. Therefore, the effect of reading leaves us only with a vague idea of what we read. To evaluate one's reading, it is useful to read a chapter or a page in one's usual way of reading and then, closing the book try to put down briefly the sum and substance of what has just been read. Now, if you find your writing to be disordered, muddled and hazy then the reason behind this is that your attention was not fully centred on the passage while you were reading it.

This shows that you read the passage and wrote on it in a haphazard way, probably because you did not remember the passage properly as you did not properly grasp it as you read it.

To write a summary, it is important to understand the meaning of the passage properly and accurately. As mentioned above, we quite often read casually and therefore miss points of importance. Now summary writing forces you to pay attention to what you read because no one can write a summary without clearly grasping its meaning. So, summarizing assists one in concentration of attention, teaching one to read with the mind as well as with the eyes.

Summary writing also assists one in *writing* a composition as it teaches one how to express one's thoughts clearly, concisely, precisely and effectively. Summary writing helps one from being vague and disorderly in one's thought and expression that might be projected in one's writing.

In writing a summary, word-limit is an important factor. Since you have to work within strict limits of words, therefore, your expression needs to be precise and accurate and to the point. And, to maintain clarity, brevity and logical order, you are required to choose your words carefully and to construct your sentences in a condensed manner, carrying its full meaning and proper weight.

So, practice in summary writing helps one to be able to grasp ideas quickly and accurately from what is read or heard, and to reproduce it clearly and concisely, briefly but comprehensively, as and when required.

B.

A summary might include :

- A title
- Stating the topic
- Explaining the topic
- Extra information
- Giving an example of the information

General guidelines in writing a summary :

In writing a summary, it will be helpful to follow three stages : reading of the passage, drafting and writing the summary and revising and writing the final version. You will find the following guidelines useful in writing a summary :

Reading and understanding the text

1. Reading the passage carefully is the first and most important task to be done before starting to write the summary of it. Read the passage through carefully in order to get a general idea of its message and meaning. If one reading is not sufficient then read it over again to become more familiar with the passage and to get a clearer idea regarding its subject and what is said about the subject. To make your understanding clearer, ask yourself :
 - What is it I am reading ?
 - What does the author mean ?
 - What is the subject ?
 - What is the author saying about it ?
 - Can I put in a few words the gist of the text ?
2. Usually you are required to supply a title for your summary. At this stage, think of some word, phrase or short sentence that will sum up briefly the main subject of the passage. Sometimes this is supplied by what we call a 'key-sentence' which may be found in the beginning or at the end of the passage (for more information, see the lessons on paragraph writing). But if you cannot find a convenient and suitable sentence for your title from the passage then try to frame your own title having a clear idea of the subject from the passage as a whole. The effort to find a suitable title will also help you in understanding what exactly the subject or main theme of the passage is.
3. Read the text once more to ensure that you understand the details of the passage as well as the main purpose and theme. If you are not sure of certain words, look them up in a dictionary. This is an important way of study to avoid any sorts of misunderstanding and confusion that may cause you to miss the whole point of the passage.
4. When you are sure and confident that you have understood the central theme of the passage, you now need to separate the most important points from the less important ones. To emphasize a certain point, the writer may repeat the same idea which should be avoided while writing the summary. You should now be in a position to decide what parts of the passage are essential and what parts are comparatively unimportant and so can be omitted without any loss. The process of elimination requires some practice to be able to categorize the points essential to the meaning of the passage. As you find out the main theme of the passage, you will be able to have a clear and correct idea of what is important and what is unimportant.

At this stage, it is useful to jot down your conclusions in brief notes - writing down the subject matter, the title, and the details which you consider essential or important.

5. The purpose of a summary is very important. For example, if you are a journalist, you might want to include an example or a quotation to bring the summary to life. However, if you are writing an official summary of a meeting for a report, these are often excluded. Illustrations and examples, other than those that are essential for understanding an idea clearly, should be omitted in the summary. The same should be remembered with quotations and figures of speech. Irrelevant points, repetition, anecdotes, and unnecessary use of adjectives should be avoided.

Starting to write

Keeping in mind the above points, you may begin writing a rough draft of the summary.

1. Before starting to write, jot down all the important ideas you have come across. Try to use your own words in expressing the ideas. After you have done this, read through the passage once again to check if all the important points have been included or if any of those have been omitted from your notes. Do not introduce any ideas of your own that are not found in the original text. Remember that a summary is something useful and practical; so, do not miss the names of persons, places and dates unless they are only inserted as part of illustrative material. You may omit mere repetitions, illustrations and examples.
2. Write your summary in the third person. If the passage is in the form of a dialogue then use reported speech.
3. Read aloud your draft to see whether it reads smoothly and uninterruptedly as a continuous piece of prose. The use of appropriate conjunctions and linking words will help to achieve this aim. Substitute words for phrases and phrases for clauses or sentences to make the summary a condensed one. If the number of words is mentioned (for example, to reduce the passage to a third of its length) then, count the number of words in the passage and divide by three to ensure its length and not exceed the limit.
4. The summary must be coherent and a connected whole. You may divide it into sections or paragraphs according to the changes in the subject matter, but they must be joined together in such a way as making the reading of it continuous and smooth.
5. The summary must be complete, self-contained and a connected whole; that is, it must convey its message fully and clearly without requiring any reference to the original to complete its meaning. The summary must be in simple, direct grammatical and idiomatic English.

- Remember, a summary is to represent the gist of the passage containing the most important information in a condensed manner; therefore, there is no room in a summary for exaggeration, personal views, colloquial expressions, circumlocutions, periphrasis or rhetorical flourishes. Add nothing; make no comments; correct no facts even if you are tempted to provide the correct information.

Revision and final work

- When you have made your final draft, and are satisfied with its content and length (that it is within the limits prescribed), carefully revise it before you write out the fair copy. Compare it to the original to make sure that you have not missed out any important point. See that whether it reads well as a connected whole, and correct any mistakes in spelling and punctuation, grammar and idiom.
- Now, if you are satisfied that your draft is written as clearly and coherently as possible, write out the fair copy neatly, prefixing the title you have chosen. In your summary, the sequence of ideas will generally be the same as in the original text but this is not essential. Remember that you can use words that are not necessarily found in the original text for a better composition.

Suggested procedure in a nutshell :

In a nutshell, it is worthy to follow the steps mentioned below when you decide to write a summary.

- Read and understand the text to find out :
 - What is the general meaning of the text ?
 - What is really being said ?
 - What is the aim of each paragraph ? At this stage, it is helpful to give each paragraph a heading.
- Decide if there are any paragraphs you can ignore. Pick up the points that seem to be the most essential and important ones for your summary. You can do this by underlining /highlighting the main points in each paragraph. Decide whether to include only facts and general points or also some opinions including details (quotations, examples, etc.)
- Now, make notes of the important points expressing those in your own words. Put the notes in a logical order to make the paragraphs consistent and coherent. Supply one short title, which will express the subject.

4. Note the length or number of words prescribed for the summary, and write out a first draft.

5. Now :

- Check if the length is appropriate? Have you included all the important points? If it is too long, what can you cut or combine? Are there any words/phrases that can go? If it is too short, what can you bring in?
- Review the spelling, consistency of verb forms, vocabulary, sentence-structure, punctuation, etc. Correct all mistakes in spelling, grammar and idiom, and see that it is properly punctuated. Make the language simple and direct.

6. Do a neat, final version.

Summary writing must not be confused with paraphrasing. A summary must always be shorter than the original, for, it is meant to express only the main theme. As the styles of writers differ, no rigid rule can be suggested for the length of a summary; but generally a summary should not contain more than a third of the number of words in the original passage.

Activity

1. What do you understand by the term 'summary'? What is the importance of summary-writing?
2. What are the essential steps in writing a summary?
3. Why is it important to maintain the length of your summary?
4. What points are to be checked before you write the final version of your summary?
5. Select articles/texts and write summaries of them following the procedure discussed in the lessons and show them to your tutor in the tutorial session.