Rai Technology University

ENGINEERING MINDS

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION AND TECHNICAL WRITING

Subject: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION AND TECHNICAL WRITING   **Credits: 4**

SYLLABUS

Communication

What is communication-meaning ,importance, dimensions & channels, Barriers of communication, Effective communication- Essentials of good communication, Types of communication- verbal(oral & written)& nonverbal.

Technical Written Communication

Nature, origin and development of technical written communication. Salient features. Difference between technical writing and general writing.

Pre-requisites of Scientific and Technical Communication

Fragmented sentences,Parallel comparisons, Elements of a series, Squinting construction and split infinitive, Modifiers, connectives and clause subordination,Dangling participles and gerunds,Coherence, Unity, chronological method, spatial method, inductive method, linear method, deductive method, interrupted method, Preparation of summaries.

Business Correspondent

General principles of business correspondence, Ramifications of business letters, Letters giving instructions, inquiries and answers to enquiries, complaints and adjustments, letters urging action, employment letters, application and resumes, Circulars, Notices, E-mails.

Proposal writing

Proposal: Definition and kinds, Division of format proposals (front matter, title page, summary/abstract, Table of contents etc.) Statement of request, body-statement of problem, background, scope, methodology, Advantages and disadvantages.

Writing Scientific and Semi-technical articles

Source material, topic sentence, literature review, Tables, figures, footnotes, bibliography.

Report Writing

Characteristics of business reports, Structure of reports: font matter, main body, back matter, Style of Reports: Definition, the Scientific Attitude, Readability of Reports, Choice of Words of Phrases, Construction and length of Sentences, Construction and length of Paragraphs. The line-out or break up of a format report, Memorandum Form Report, Periodic Report, Miscellaneous Report.

Oral Communication

Interview, Techniques of conducting Group Discussions, Oral Presentations, Telephonic Communication.

List of Practicals

Practice session of oral communication by means of seminars on current topics, debates and contests, discussion Session, Practice of writing official business and personnel letters,3. Practice of handling telephonic communication Practice of technical report writing, Practice of writing personnel biodata and writing, application for a job, Practice session on group discussion.

Suggested Reading:

1. Sherman, Theodore A. (et.al.)- Modern Technical Writing, (Apprentice Hall, New Jersey
2. Legget, Glenn (et. al)-Essentials of Grammar and Composition (Macmillan, Delhi
3. Strunk, Jr., William (et. al)- The Elements of Style,(Macmillan
4. Sharma, S.D.-A Text book of Scientific and Technical Writing, (Vikas, Delhi,
5. O'Conner, J. D. Better-English Pronunciation, James Daniel-English Pronouncing Dictionary,   (J. M.Dent, London, .

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to prepare you in the methods and forms of communication used in business and professional environments, with special attention paid to the new demands of electronicÊ communication skills in a marketplace still dominated by the printed page.

According to departmental and institutional guidelines, Technical and Professional Communication addresses the kinds of writing and speaking, students will encounter on the job and incorporates ... practices that have proven to help students of all kinds to improve their writing and speaking ... The mix of technical and communication professionals in the same course will help each to work with managers, for example, and all of these technical professionals to work with communication professionals.

We will spend the first part of class learning a shared terminology and exploring enough theory to give us a common vocabulary. We will then venture into the tasks of identifying and naming the kinds of technical communication tasks specific to your individual major(s) and creating ways to practice and develop skills pertinent to those tasks

Objectives

We will examine concepts including, but not limited to:

- Why technical communication is an area worth studying;

- How to name, learn about, and approach an audience, hether it be an audience of one or of many, a familiar audience or an unknown quantity;

- What the important differences are among and between various types of media and how writing to those media can place different demands on the construction of an argument;

- How to become a perfectly SMUG (Spelling, Mechanics, Usage, Grammar) writer;

- Incorporating the reporter's "5 W's + an H" (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How) into planning and presentation, and examining that often-neglected question ... "so what?"

- Revising and re-writing with a focus on sailing the 7 C's ... Completeness, Conciseness, Concreteness, Consideration, Courtesy, Clarity and Correctness.

- **Assignments**

Assignments will be tailored to address these concepts; as the class develops and proceeds, we may well find ourselves focusing on one or two of them above and beyond the others.

That is, of course, the way the standard workplace functions - we will discover what interests us most, what we are best at, and we will work at those things to produce documents which reflect that focus. If at any time during the semester you have an idea for an alternative assignment which would help you more professionally than one of those designed and presented, feel free to "pitch" that idea, not only to the instructor, but to the class as a whole for feedback.

The Four Main Goals of Communication

1. **To Inform** - You are providing information for use in decision making, but aren't necessarily advocating a course of action.

2. **To Request** - For a specific action by the receiver

3. **To Persuade** - To reinforce or change a receiver's belief about a topic and, possibly, act on the belief

4. **To Build Relationships** - Some messages you send may have the simple goal of building good-will between you and the receiver

KFC - The Three Aspects of Successful Communication[7]

- **Know** what you want

- **Find out** what you are getting

- **Change** what you do until you get what you want
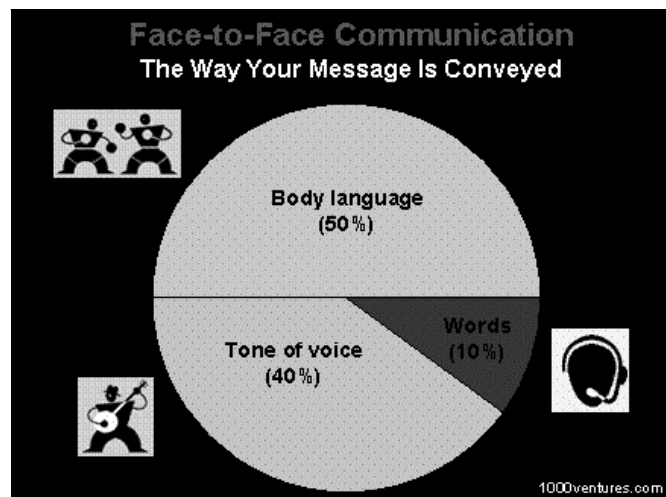
Effective Communication

- Achieves shared understanding

- Directs the flow of information

- Helps people overcome barriers to open discussion

- Stimulates others to take action to active goals

- Channels information to encourage people to think in new ways and to act more effectively

The 10 Essentials of Effective Communication

1. Know your audience and match your message to the audience.

2. Respect your audience and suspend judgments.

3. Know exactly what you want to achieve.

4. Think and organize before you proceed.

5. Think from your audience point of view.

6. Be mindful of what you face and body are conveying nonverbally.

7. Listen carefully to all responses.

8. Be willing to share what you know and hear what you don't know.

9. Stay focused on what you want to achieve and don't get distracted.

10. Find a way to get your audience to explain what they think you said. Discuss differences until you hear a satisfactory version of the message you wanted to convey.

Face-to-Face Communication
The Way Your Message Is Conveyed

Body language (50%)
Tone of voice (40%)
Words (10%)

1000ventures.com

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LESSON 1:
MEANING AND DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION

Communication

Objectives

1. Understand the importance of becoming an effective business communicator in today's changing workplace.

2. Examine the process of communication.

3. Discuss how to become an effective listener.

4. Analyze nonverbal communication and explain techniques for improving nonverbal communication skills.

5. Explain how culture affects communication and describe methods for improving cross-cultural communication.

6. Identify specific techniques that improve effective communication among diverse workplace audiences

Meaning and Definition of Communication

We all use the word 'communication' often in our daily lives. We generally say there was a communication gap when misunderstandings occur or when we play the game 'chinese whisper'. I am sure you must have played this game during your childhood. You must have noticed that when we whisper a phrase for example 'why are you unhappy' , by the time it reaches the last person he might hear it as 'change his nappy'. So you see if communication is not proper the meaning altogether changes. We should be able to convey the exact meaning of what we say.

Now tell me what do you understand by the word 'communication'?

Most of the time we are in one situation or another that involves communication. Even then it is worthwhile to make an attempt to understand the exact meaning and nature of this most important activity of ours. The word ' communicate comes from the Latin verb. **'communicare'** that means to impart, to participate, to share or to make common. By virtue of its Latin origin it is also the source of the English word 'common'. Whatever is common is shared by all. Hence the sense of 'sharing' is inherent in the very origin and nature of communication.

Communication is, indeed, sharing; sharing of ideas and feelings between two or more persons. We, the human beings, being social creatures, do need to convert our ideas to our friends, neighbours, colleagues and subordinates. This activity of sharing our mind with others may take place for several purposes. It may be an order, an advise, a reprimand, an information, a question and so on. Since communication presupposes a definite objective, it has its won science and art. One must learn and practice the skill of effective communication in order to succeed in the modern world.

And, what is it that we share in communication? The one word answer is – **'information'**, i.e., some thing to tell, in whatever way we like, or, as the situation demands.

Why is communication important in society ?

Social Aspect

It is, in this way, a social activity. In society we share our thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions, propositions, facts and figures with individuals as well as group at all levels, higher, lower or equal. Communication is, in fact, the most important of all our activities it has helped us to organize ourselves as a civilized society. In a civilized society there are well-defined roles for all and one. The only way to play these roles is through communication. All communications is based on, and is guided by **role-relationships**. Only when we understand and appreciate these role-relationships can we successfully communicate. **In the words of John Adair "Communication is essentially the**

ability of one person to make contact with another and to make himself or herself understood. Or, if you prefer a slightly more formal version, communication is the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols".

Ingredients of Communication

The important words to note in the definitions given above are

- Process
- Meaning
- Exchange
- People
- Common set of symbols.

A process, by definition or simple explanation, is 'a systematic series of actions, operation of series of change directed to some end." The process of communication leads to a desired result as, for example, in the execution of an order, production of a report, a telephone conversation, a memorandum etc. If we think seriously about this process and try to isolate its ingredients we get the following picture.

Key Elements	Notes
Participants	The persons who are communicating have to be in touch with each other.
Medium or common language	Both parties to communication must share a common language or means of communication
Transmission of the information	The message has to be imparted clearly.
Decoding or Understanding	The message has to be received properly, understood and interpreted.

It means, therefore, that in the process of communication two or more person must participate through a medium that carries the information or message for a particular purpose mutually understood by both the sender and the receiver. Only when these conditions are fulfilled a significant communicative situation will take shape and what transpires between the two parties, viz., the sender and the receiver, whether spoken or written, will be the communicative event. The importance these communicative events cannot be over-emphasized. They are the very lifeline of any organization.

An American woman tourist was at the New York Customs. She was returning from Sri Lanka where she had gone on a short holiday. She was wearing a kaftan that she had picked up from the exotic island.

The Custom Officer took her passport and without bothering to open it asked her 'what's your occupation?' The tourist hesitated for a moment. She was a housewife; she didn't know what to say. There was a time when a woman could cheerfully announce that she was a housewife. But that was no more fashionable. Well after what appeared to be a brief struggle in her mind she answered, 'None'.

The officer found nothing objectionable. He returned her passport and indicated that she could go. She didn't. Instead she asked, Officer! If you don't mind, I'd like to ask you a

question. Why did you search my luggage so thoroughly? You've taken more than half an hour and I've missed my connecting flight. Is it that you pick on people at random and give them hell?'

'No lady', answered the officer, 'but I couldn't believe your story that you were a nun.'

This is a real incident the woman herself reported a few years ago in Readers Digest. The tourist and the officer heard each other very well. As both spoke American English as their mother tongue, there could not have been any linguistic difficulty with the simple question and answer that passed between them in English. Yet the officer mistook her thoroughly. It caused both of them inconvenience. What prevented the officer from decoding the woman's answer correctly?

The answer lies in the way we communicate.

How do we communicate?

The Communication Process
Although all of us have been communicating with others since our infancy, the process of transmitting information from an individual (or group) to another is a very complex process with many sources of potential error.

Consider the simple example:

- Terry: "I won't make it to work again tomorrow; this illness keeps me nausious and my doctor says I should probably be reduced to part time.
- Boss: Terry, this is the third day you've missed and your appointments keep backing up; we have to cover for you and this is messing all of us up.

Message to be sent	decode *some error likely*	encoded by receiver *some error likely)*	message received

In any communication at least some of the "meaning" lost in simple transmission of a message from the sender to the receiver. In many situations a lot of the true message is lost and the message that is heard is often far different than the one intended. This is most obvious in cross-cultural situations where language is an issue. But it is also common among people of the same culture.

Look at the **example**. Terry has what appears to be a simple message to convey-she won't make it to work today because of nausea. But she had to translate the thoughts into words and this is the first potential source of error. Was she just trying to convey that she would be late; was she trying to convey anything else. It turns out she was. She was upset because she perceived that her co-workers weren't as sympathetic to her situation as they should be. Her co-workers, however, were really being pressured by Terry's continued absences, and her late calls. They wished she would just take a leave of absence, but Terry refuses because she would have to take it without pay.

Thus what appears to be a simple communication is, in reality, quite complex. Terry is communicating far more than that she would miss work; she is conveying a number of complex emotions, complicated by her own complex feelings about illness, work, and her future.

She sent a message but the message is more than the words; it includes the tone, the timing of the call, and the way she expressed herself.

Similarly, the boss goes through a complex communication process in "hearing" the message. The message that Terry sent had to be decoded and given meaning. There are many ways to decode the simple message that Terry gave and the way the message is heard will influence the response to Terry.

In this case the boss heard far more than a simple message that Terry won't be at work today. The boss "heard" hostility from Terry, indifference, lack of consideration, among other emotions. Terry may not have meant this, but this is what the boss heard.

There is general agreement Communications is so difficult because at each step in the process there major potential for error. By the time a message gets from a sender to a receiver there are four basic places where transmission errors can take place and at each place, there are a multitude of potential sources of error. Thus it is no surprise that social psychologists estimate that there is usually a 40-60% loss of meaning in the transmission of messages from sender to receiver.

.It is critical to understand this process, understand and be aware of the potential sources of errors and constantly counteract these tendencies by making a conscientious effort to make sure there is a minimal loss of meaning in your conversation .It is also very important to understand that a majoring of communication is non-verbal. This means that when we attribute meaning to what someone else is saying, the verbal part of the message actually means less than the non-verbal part. The non-verbal part includes such things as body language and tone.

From the foregoing discussion it becomes amply clear that man is born to communicate. In other words, communication is a necessary condition of human existence and social organization. But the importance of communication in business organization came to be realized quite late. Traditionally it was regarded as a taken-for-granted affair. However, over the last half century or so serious studies and experiments have shown that every organization is a society in which there are people operating at to achieve common goals proper interaction between and amongst them is, therefore, a must.

Part of the Process of Change

In this connection it is important to note that the world is changing fast, and with it every organization is becoming more and more sophisticated. So, communication has first of all to be given due recognition as an integral part of the process of change. Whenever a change in the direction of technology, structures, objectives etc is called for it becomes easier with the help of communication. Most of the management problems arise because of lack of effective communication. If the communication system is properly devised the chances of misrepresentation or misunderstanding are minimized. If the manager are not ware of the relations and feelings of their subordinates their planning will collapse and numerous obstacle will crop up. Today, technology is highly advanced and the people are suppose to be up to date in every respect. But

undue emphasis on profit motive lead to many complication, first and foremost of them being the human problems. They are far more critical than the technological problems. It is communication that helps solve these problems. In the words of Allen, "**Communication involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding"** There is general agreement that we can't **share** our thoughts and ideas directly with others. We adopt a process of coding and decoding. It goes like this. *I feel like eating jelebies. How do I communicate this to my mother? I put this thought into a verbal code and transmit it through the oral channel:" Momma can you make some roundies?" Momma is the code accepted by everyone at home for "mother". So when I say "Momma" my mother knows I am calling her rather than father or sister or brother. When I say "can you make", I am using one of the codes available to stand for a polite request. And "roundies" is the code we have at home for jelebies. So mother decodes my request accurately. If a guest happens to be around, he will be able to decode only a part of it, that is, I am asking my mother to make something. He cant go much further than that with any certainty because he doesn't know what roundies is a code for at home.*

Knowledge of the code – usually language- helps one code ones message for others and decode others messages. Poor knowledge of the code can make the process of coding and decoding defective. This will impair communication.

Consider the games we play with communication. Consider the roundabout way in which we generally communicate. Lets see how many different meanings can be projected through the simple sentence **" Pankaj the door is open".** Here are few. We can read several more meanings into that string of five words if we put it in different contexts.

- Please come in.
- Please leave. I am not holding you back.
- Lets go in.
- Please close the door.
- Why didn't you close the door? (How many times I have asked you to?)
- The maid has been careless again.
- What a stroke of luck! We don't need to break it.
- Speak softly; someone might hear what you are saying.

Why do we say ' Pankaj, the door is open', when we can clearly say' Pankaj I am angry that you didn't close the door, or Pankaj, please close the door'? There seems to be something more to communication than coding our message and expecting others to decode it correctly. Perhaps we want our messages to be clear but not so clear that nothing is left to imagination. Perhaps we don't want our messages to be open that there is no escape route if we change our mind. Perhaps we are not very clear about our own messages. We are quite used to vagueness and ambiguities in others and ourselves. Life would be boring if everybody was an open book. Our communicative behaviour ensures

That there will always be suspense.

After all this discussion what do you feel is the purpose of Internal and External communication ?

Purpose of Internal Communication

Taking all these factors into account we realize that no organization can function satisfactory or achieve its goals without effective communication that operates both internal and externally. Internally it is important because it integrates the managerial functions. The most important of these functions are:

(i) Establishing and dissemination of the goals of an enterprise.

(ii) Development plans for their achievement.

(iii) Organizing human and other resources in the most effective and efficient way.

(iv) Selecting, developing and appraising members of the organization.

(v) Leading, directing, motivating and creating a climate in which people want to contribute their best, and

(vi) Controlling performance.

Purpose of External Communication

Externally, communication relates an enterprise to the environment outside. It is though information exchange that managers become aware of the needs of customer, the availability of suppliers, the claims of stock-holders, the regulation of governments, and the concerns of a community. It is through communication that any organization becomes an open system interacting with its environment and responds to it fruitfully, purposefully and desirably. Just to take one example, it cannot be forgotten that the customer, who is the most important entity for all business, exists outside a company. It is through the communication system that the needs of the customers are identified. The knowledge of his need enables the company to provide products and services profitably. In the same way, it is through effective communication that the organization becomes aware of competition and other potential; threats and constraining factors. After all, no enterprise can thrive in a vacuum.

Now it must be clear how important effective communication is. It is the very **life blood of all business**. No communication, no business. Even then very often problems, serious and not so serious, arise because of something going wrong in communication. Thee are innumerable instances of miscommunication, miscommunication, incomplete communication, misconstructed communication and so on. Managers often complain about communication breakdowns as one of their most important problem. Specialists in the field have made serious studies regarding these problems and come up with useful insights into what have widely come to be known as 'barriers' to communication.

Before we go into these barriers it is worthwhile to have another, closer look at the process of communication. In the very beginning of this book communication has been defined as a "process by which meanings are exchanged between people though the use of a common set of symbols." A schematic or diagrammatic representation of this process is very much in order at this juncture. It can be shown as follows.
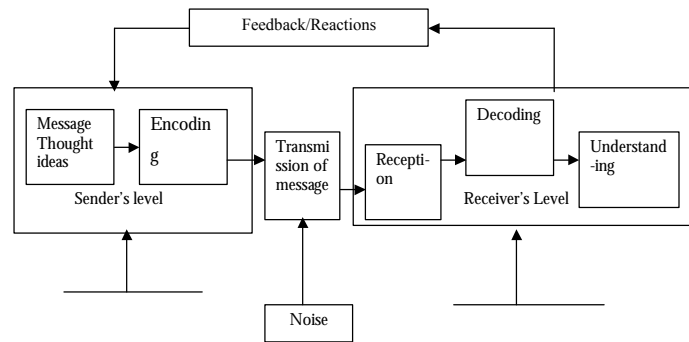
Features of Communication

Whatever the form or situation or event, all communication has some clearly identifiable features that can be stated as follows:

(a) **In the first place**, communication is meaning-based. As has been very succinctly said by a specialist, "The most immediate need for communication is to be able to refer to a core of basic referents or things in the real world, that is, to be able to name things, states, events, attributes, using the words he or she knows". In addition, we must be able to link words together so as to make propositions. Hence, the need to be clear-headed about what we want to say.

(b) **Secondly**, it is important to note that all communication is conventional and, to a large extent, tradition-bound. As English, for example, dominates business worldwide, it is not only necessary for us to imbibe the conventions of English speech and writing, but also the time-honoured traditions' of the organization to which we belong, whether a multinational corporation or traditional Indian family-owned organization or government Administrative Staff College of India, "The relationship in communication provides a context for interaction. In almost all cases over time, the relationship between people expansively spreads beyond the functional interaction, encompassing other areas of their behaviour and life. This leads to communication relationships that begin at the point of function, and then work beyond it".

(c) **Thirdly,** all communication is interactional. It is the use of language to keep open the channels of communication between people and to establish suitable rapport. It is thus aimed largely at the need of speaker and hearer, or writer or receiver, to feel valued and approved of.

(d) **Fourthly**, communication is always supposed to be appropriate. In all its forms it must take into account the relationship between speaker/writer and hearer/receiver, and the constraints imposed by the setting and circumstances, and selection of language/style/tone according to the age, rank and status of the participants in the communicative event. This will further depend on such factors as the age, sex, familiarity, and roles of speaker and hearer, or writer and receiver, which will determine whether a speaker adopts 'conversational' strategies implying either 'affiliation' or 'dominance', or in other words, the language he uses gives indications of his hierarchical status.

(e) Fifthly, it must be noted that all communication is structured. Recent studies in communication regard every piece of communication, whether spoken or written, as a genre, look into the pattern of its information-structuring or logical organization and come up with useful inference for the consumption of the corporate world. A classic example is that of administrative or commercial letter-that which communicates an administrative decision. The letter may communicate 'good news' ("Your application for promotion to the higher grade has been put up before the board of directors.") or it may communicate 'bad news' ("Your application has been rejected"). Both letters will probably be written in the same bureaucratic style but they will probably be organized very differently. The 'good news' letter will announce the award early, whereas the 'bad news' letter will prepare the ground by what is known as 'buffer statement' and the 'bad news' will come late.

Equally important is the difference between the purposes of the two letters beyond the shared superficial intent of providing information about success or failure of the application. The 'good news' letter will be constructed in such a way that the continuation of the correspondence is encouraged, whereas the other one will be designed to terminate the correspondence by giving the unlucky recipient the least possible scope for objection or complaint.

There is another level of structure that we may call process structure. When we talk or write, much of what we transmit is made up of words or phrases which indicate how what we arc going to say relates to what has already been said. For example, our reaction to an idea or opinion may be to expand it, to add something to it, to disagree with it, to substantiate it, to give a reason for it, or to explain it. The following are examples of phrases or words which may serve these functions:

- When it comes to that
- Yes but
- And another thing
- Well may be
- All the same
- Consequently
- In any case
- To give you an idea
- Anyway
- As a matter of fact
- To begin with

Conversational in Nature
All communication is by nature conversation, and the examples given above are called 'conversational gambits'. They signal directions and relations within discourse or the communicative event. Evidence suggests that these contribute significantly to an impression of fluency in conversation writing. In simpler words we may say that these words and phrases are the linking devices that help the logical progression of the speaker/writer's intention. They must, therefore, be carefully marked in any piece of writing or speech, business or otherwise.

In this way we see that there are two levels of the structure of communication-macro and micro. The macro-structure is seen in the ordering of different or related points of information or message. The microstructure is seen in the ordering of sentences or utterances by means of the linking devices. Anybody aiming at effective communication must be conscious of both these levels   imbibe the best of both and try his best to achieve the desired result.

Key Points
(i)   All communication is essentially sharing of information or some message.

(ii)   Communication is the most important of our social activities.

(iii)   Social contact of two or more persons, a common medium, transmission of some message or information, and understanding or interpretation of that message- these four are the ingredients of communication.

(iv)   All communication has five clearly identifiable features :
   (a)   It is meaning-based.
   (b)   It is conventional.
   (c)   It is appropriate.
   (d)   It is interactional.
   (e)   It is structure

(v)   The structure of communication has two levels-macro and micro.

(vi)   All communication is by nature conversational.

Points to Ponder
- Face is the reflection of your mind
- Can an organization function without a grapevine?
- Effective communication skill is the foundation of success
- Feedback is an important component in any business environment

Group Discussion
Importance of communication in today's global business world….think of 10 reasons

You, as the Vice President of the organization, would like to have the feedback of the new work method that you have introduced. Discuss the various ways you can get the feedback.

Your friend is the trainee manager and has just begun her career. Discuss 10 tips that you can give her to communicate effectively with her senior colleague and her peer

Mr. Singh is the supervisor in a garment export company and Ms Iyer is the company's President. Whose ability to communicate is important for the success of the business?

Review Questions
1.   Write in your own words a definition of the term 'communication' and trace its origin.

2.   Show how communication is essentially a social activity.

3.   What is a 'communicative event'? What are its ingredients or constituent elements?

4. Discuss the 'macro' and 'micro' levels of a communicative event like a letter or telephone conversation. Take any particular example of your choice and bring out its details.

5. On the basis of your reading and understanding of this chapter state whether or not following can be regarded as successful communicative events. Also give reasons for your answers.

(a) A letter in English sent by the Chief Minister of a South Indian state to the Ch Minister of a North Indian state who asks for its Hindi version.

(b) The Chief Executive Officer of a multi-national corporation with head-quarters in Singapore talking on telephone to its Regional Director in Bombay.

(c) A telephone subscriber trying to lodge a complaint regarding 'his faulty instrument when all the lines of the Telephone Exchange are engaged.

(d) Two card players making gestures to each other at a casino.

(e) A mentally challenged person talking to himself.

Notes

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LESSON 2:
DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNICATION

In our previous lecture we discussed what is communication and how it is important to society today. Now we shall discuss what are the directions in which communication flows .

Dimensions of Communication

Communication is multidimensional or multidirectional. There are various directions in which it flows. In order to have an idea of how it works in a typical organization it is worthwhile having a look at its levels of operation. It usually takes the form of a pyramid like the one shown here in a large manufacturing and marketing organization.
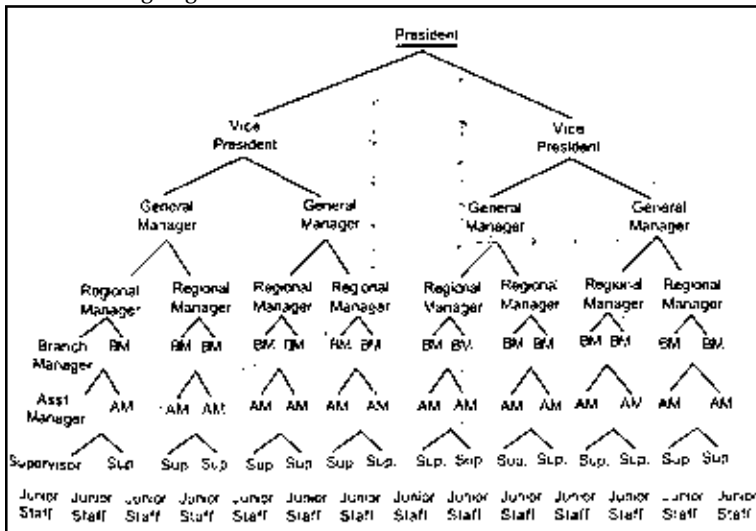
This is a large organization, having eight layers. There may be more layers/levels/tiers or less, all of them being bound or held together by communication. The arrow lines in the pyramid show the following directions of communications:

(a) Downward,

(b) Upward,

(c) Horizontal or Lateral,

(d) Diagonal or Crosswise.

(a) Downward Communication

Any organization has an inbuilt hierarchical system. In the first instance, communication invariably flows downwards. That is why traditional downward communication was highlighted and emphasized. It originated in the assumption that the people operating at higher levels have the authority to communicate to the people at the lower levels. Hence this kind of communication exists especially in organizations with an authoritarian atmosphere. Whether one likes this kind of atmosphere or not, if would be difficult to conceive of any organization without downward communication. A sample representation of downward communication can be stated as follows:

Downward Communication

Written	Oral
e.g. Instructions	e.g. Instructions
Memoranda	Speeches
Letters	Meetings
Handbooks	Telephone
Pamphlets	Loudspeaker
Policy Statements	
Procedures	
Electronic news displays	
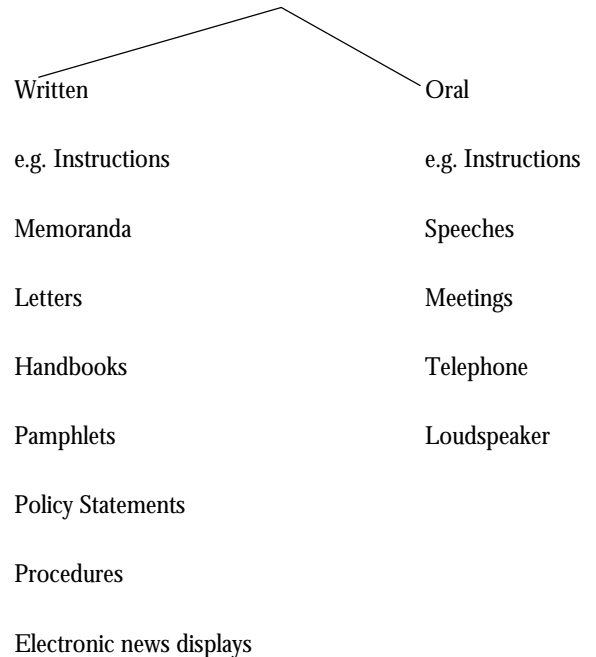
Problems of Downward Communication

While issuing instructions or sending letters, every CEO or General Manager assumes that what he intends to communicate invariably reaches the persons it is intended for and understood. But unfortunately it is not always so. Information is quite often lost or distorted in the course of its journey down the chain of command. In fact, many directives or instructions are not understood or even read. It is, therefore, to be always kept in mind that mere issuance of policies and procedures does not ensure communication. That is why, a feedback system becomes essential. For any communicative purpose to be served, it is essential to find out whether the receiver of the message or information has understood it, or perceived it, in the same way as intended by the sender.

Another problem that very often comes up is that the downward flow of information through different levels of the organization is time-consuming. The more the levels, the more the chances of delay or dilution of information. The delay may sometimes be so frustrating that some top managers make it a point to send the information or message or instruction directly to the person or group concerned.

Moreover, downward communication is likely to be filtered, modified or distorted at any or each level as managers decide what should be passed down to their employees. The accuracy of the information is quite likely to be limited by status and power differences between manager and employee, and lack of trust.

Sometimes managers withhold information in order to keep the employees dependent on them. The net result is that, in the absence of complete information, employees may feel confused, uninformed, or powerless and might fail to carryout their tasks properly. It may lead to unnecessary conflict and spoil the employer-employee, supervisor-subordinate relations.

(b) Upward Communication
The main function of upward communication is to supply information to the upper levels about what is happening at the lower levels. It is just the reverse of the previous dimension. It travels from the people at the bottom and reaches the upper levels of the organization structure. Unfortunately, there is very little appreciation of this form of communication as it does not fit into the traditional concepts of organization behaviour according to which the right to communicate was supposed to have been vested in the higher ups only. Upward communication is essentially participative in nature and can flourish only in democratic organizational environment. And only in such an environment it can satisfy the need of the upper levels of management to know specifically about production performance, marketing information, financial data, what lower level employees are thinking and feeling about the whole or part of the business.

In the words of Koontz, "Typical means for upward communication-besides the chain of command-are suggestion systems, appeal and grievance procedures, complaint systems, counselling sessions, joint setting of objectives, the grapevine, group meetings, the practice of open-door policy, morale questionnaires, exit interviews and ombudsperson".

Problems of Upward Communication
Certain problems do unnecessarily crop up in upward communication. They are primarily psycho- logical in nature. It is quite often seen that higher-ups do not like to be 'told' or even like to hear from their juniors anything against their wishes. Hence the piece of communication may quite often not even be allowed to go up. Or, it may be distorted or misrepresented. It may, in the absence of a healthy open door policy, be misinterpreted, misunderstood or suppressed. The employees may feel let down or become shy and reluctant to express themselves. In such a situation the communication event becomes a non-event. It is increasingly being taken care of by modern management that has come to appreciate the importance and right of the individual/groups of individuals to express.

The Concept of Ombudsperson
In this connection it is worthwhile to discuss the concept of Ombudsperson (or Ombudsman that is a Swedish word meaning a commissioner appointed to investigate the complaints of private citizens against government officials or agencies). Till quite recent times this concept remained only in Sweden. But now many American companies are making very

profitable use of it. They have established a position for a person who investigates employees' concerns. General Electric, Me Donnell Douglas and AT &T are just a few companies that are using the Ombudsperson for promoting upward communication. It provides valuable upward communication link and prevents scandals and legal costs by timely action on the part of the appropriate persons.

(c) Lateral or Horizontal Communication
When communication takes place between two or more persons who are subordinates working under the same person, or those who are working on the same level, it is called lateral or horizontal communication. A good example of this kind of communication is that between functional managers. It is necessary for the reviewing of the activities assigned to various subordinates having identical positions. They are serving the organization in different capacities but their goals are common. Their interaction is necessary to maintain co-ordination. This variety of communication mostly takes place during committee meetings or conferences in which all members of the group, mostly peers, interact. During the course of interaction the views of each other are made known and decisions are arrived at. Here there are no superior subordinate relationships. The best example of lateral communication can be seen in the interaction of production and marketing departments. Strategies of marketing cannot be fruitful unless its plans are communicated to the production department. The marketing chief has to be in constant touch with the production chief in order to meet customer orders as per schedule.

(d) Diagonal or Crosswise Communication
Diagonal or crosswise communication includes the horizontal flow of information as also that among persons at different levels who have no direct reporting relationships. This kind of communication is used to speed information flow to improve understanding, and to coordinate efforts for the achievement of organizational objectives. It must be noted that a very great deal of communication does not follow the organizational hierarchy but cuts across the well drawn lines. Diagonal or crosswise communication usually takes the following oral and written forms

Diagonal or crosswise communication

Oral	Written
Informal meetings	Company newspaper
Lunch hour meetings	Or magazine
Formal conferences	Bulletin boards
Task teams	General notices etc.
Project organization meeting	
Advisory authority interacting	
With line managers of different depts..	

In this type of communication, proper safeguards need to be taken to prevent potential problems. Special care has to be taken that (1) crosswise communication builds up appropriate crosswise relationships, (2) subordinates will refrain from making commitments beyond their authority, and (3) subordinates will keep their superiors informed of important interdepartmental activities. In brief, diagonal or crosswise communication may create difficulties, but it is a necessity in many enterprises in order to respond to the complex and dynamic organizational environment. In other words we may say that in order to secure efficiency in decision-making, all messages do not necessarily route through vertical channels of communication. Organizations also build up environment for cross contacts.

Channels of Communication: Formal Vs. Informal

All communication takes some way, or passage through some well-defined, easily identifiable stages Everyone is familiar with the phrase "through proper channel" that is used in almost all business letters' applications/representations. It means that the sender of the written communication means to pass it on to the addressee through somebody occupying an important position in the hierarchical system of the organization. The word 'channel' therefore, becomes synonymous with the position or point through which the communication passes. These positions or points exist at different levels in the pipeline.

Channels of communication may be classified into two categories:

(a) Formal

(b) Informal

Formal Channel of Communication

A formal channel of communication can be defined as a means of communication that is normally control led by managers or people occupying similar positions in an organization. Any information, decision memo, reminder etc., will follow this path. For example, an executive 'A', occupying a top position, passe; an order to his immediate subordinate 'B' who, after retaining the useful information upto him, passes the desired order to the next man 'C' for necessary action and so on. In this way the channel is a formal one the same way, communication may travel from below and pass through stages or points, again reinforcing the formal structure or character of the organization.

The Influence of Format Channels of Communication

The formal channels influence the effectiveness of communication primarily in two ways. In the first place the formal channels cover an ever-widening distance as organizations grow. For example, effective communication is generally far more difficult in a large retail organization with branches spread far and wide that in a small or big department store located at one place. Secondly, the formal channels of communication can actually inhibit or stand in the way of free flow of information between organizational levels. For example, in a big factory, an assembly-line worker will communicate a problem to a supervisor rather that to the plant manager. Higher-level managers may sometimes not even come to know something of vita importance as and when needed. On the positive side, there are many advantages also. The formal channels, by virtue of their

tendency to monitor and filter information, keep the higher-level managers from getting bogged down with it.

Informal Channel of Communication

By his very nature man cannot always have a highly formalized or regimented living. Logically he cannot and will not always communicate through formal channels alone. Side by side with the formal channel of communication, every organization has an equally effective channel of communication that is the informal channel. It is not officially sanctioned, and quite often it is even discouraged or looked down upon. But, then, it is very much there, and has been given the name 'grapevine' precisely because it runs in all directions- horizontal, vertical, diagonal. As the management experts put it, it "flows around water coolers, down hallways, through lunch rooms, and wherever people get together in groups".

It shows that the people are almost always looking forward to an opportunity to get together. Man is essentially gregarious by nature. The lower we go down the pyramid of the organization the more manifest this gregariousness becomes. There are strong socio-psychological reasons for it. The most important reason is the intense, irrepressible desire to communicate, to talk, to share one's feelings and thought, or just to gossip or to indulge in small talk. This gossip or small talk may, and very often, does, carry some important information. It may even 'manufacture' some piece of information and get the rumour mill working. Every organization has a rumour mill. Every worker, every office goes and above all every manager has to get used to it.

Factors Responsible for the Grapevine Phenomenon

The grapevine becomes hyperactive when the following factors prevail:

(a) Feeling of uncertainty or lack of sense of direction when the organization is passing through a difficult period.

(b)   Feeling of inadequacy or lack of self-confidence on the part of the employees, leading to the formation of groups.

(c) Formation of a coterie, clique or favoured group by the manager, giving other employees a feeling of insecurity or isolation.

Any worker operating in such circumstances will be filled with ideas and will at least whisper to like minded friends at whatever level he finds them. Mostly they find them at their own level, though groupings including other levels are not ruled out. It is a very subtle and interesting phenomenon now being seriously studied and analyzed by psychologists and management experts.

Types of Grapevine Chains

Keith Davis has identified four types of grapevine chains that can be enumerated as follows:

(a) Single-strand chain: In this type of chain 'A' tells something to 'B' who tells it to 'C' and so on it goes down the line. This chain is the least accurate in passing on the information.

(b) Gossip chain : In it one person seeks out and tells everyone the information he or she has obtained. This chain is often

used when information or a message regarding an interesting but 'non-job-related' nature is being conveyed.

(c) Probability chain: In this type of chain individuals are indifferent to, or not really interested in, the persons to whom they are passing some information. They just tell at random, and those people in turn tell others at random. This chain is found when the information is somewhat interesting but not really significant.

(d) Cluster chain : In this type of chain 'A' tells something to a few selected individuals, and then some of these individuals inform a few other selected individuals.

Davis is of the opinion that the cluster chain is the dominant grapevine pattern in an organization. Generally only a few individuals, called, liaison individuals', pass on the information they have come upon, and then they are likely to share it with the people they trust or from whom they would like favours. It has been observed that generally the information they pass on is immediately interesting or relevant to them, job-related, and above all, timely. Most of informal communication takes place through this chain.

Merits of the Grapevine

1. ***Speedy Transmission*** : The greatest feature of the grapevine is that it transmits information at a remarkably fast speed. Everyone knows that a rumour travels, or spreads like wild fire. The moment a worker comes to know that something is labelled as 'top secret' or 'confidential' he becomes curious to look into it or have a sniff of it and passes it on to his very first close bosom friend. And then, from him to another, it spreads within minutes. Managers have been known to distribute information through planned "leaks" or carefully used "just-between-you-and-me' remarks.

2. ***Feedback Value*** : It is above all through the grapevine that the managers or top bosses of an organization get the feed back regarding their policies, decisions, memos etc. The feedback reaches them much faster through the informal channel than through the formal channel. Through the grapevine the managers come to know the pulse of the organization.

3. **Support to Other Channels :** The grapevine functions as a supplementary or parallel channel of communication. The officially recognized or sacred or formal channel takes not only more time in carrying information, but also imposes certain constraints on the process of communication. So, whatever is deemed to be unsuitable for official channel can be very success- fully transmitted through the grapevine.

4. The grapevine gives immense psychological satisfaction and strengthens the solidarity of the workers. While the purely formal channel will put them off, the grapevine draws them near to each other, thus keeping the organization intact as a social entity.

Demerits of Grapevine

1. There is something inbuilt in the very nature of the grapevine that makes it less credible than the formal channels of communication. Since it spreads or transits

information by word of mouth it cannot always be taken seriously. On the other hand it is also very likely to be contradicted. So it is not very dependable.

2. The grapevine does not always carry the complete information. As it is very often based on guesswork or 'whispers' in the corridors it may not give the receiver the complete picture of the situation or the whole message.

3. The grapevine may, and indeed often does, distort the information. As it is entirely unofficial, informal and unauthenticated it may cast aspersion on anybody or impute motives to the most well-meaning of the people. As its origin lies in the rumour-mill it may spread any kind of stories about highly responsible people, even at the risk of spoiling the image of the organization.

4. The speed with which the grapevine spreads may also at times prove counterproductive. Ideally any message or information or policy decision should take its own course and time. But once it leaks it may damage the reputation of the organization or upset the plans of the managers.

Effective use of the Grapevine

With the above points in mind one can always realize the urgent need to use the grapevine effectively. After all we have to learn to live with it. We cannot wish it away. So, a tactful manager has to take some positive measures to get the best out of this informal channel of communication. Given below are a few important points in this regard:

1. In the first place a tactful manager will keep the employees well-informed about organizational policy matters, plans and prospects. This will check the tendency of speculation that can sometimes assume dangerous proportions because of the elements of fear and anxiety on the part of the employees.

2. Fruitful group activities that enhance self-worth and update knowledge should be held as frequently as possible. This will not only boost the morale and self-confidence of the workers but also check their inclination to indulge in small talk.

3. The manager should, as far as possible, have an open-door policy without giving the impression of cheap popularity or favoritism.

4. The manager should create a healthy environment where there is room for personal talk. But it must be made clear that work is of paramount importance. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with the progress of the organization. For this purpose regular timings should be fixed up for meetings with the employees.

5. The manager must tactfully identify the leaders and win their confidence so as to feel the pulse of their followers.

6. As far as possible the employees, through their leaders, should be associated with decision- making. This will frustrate any negative aspect of the grapevine.

7. The manager must keep trying to get clues about his style of functioning through regular interaction with the employees in as tactful, diplomatic manner as possible.

8. Rumour mongering aimed at character assassination or maligning somebody in the organization should not be encouraged. Showing distaste for such talk will earn praise for the manager's leadership qualities.

9. A manager must learn to be a good listener. In this connection it is worth while to enumerate the four types of listening that are as follows:

   (a) Discriminative listening

   (b) Evaluative listening

   (c) Appreciative listening, and

   (d) Empathic listening.

Unfortunately empathic listening is the least practiced by managers. They may be, and mostly they are, too busy to listen empathetically. that means sharing the speaker's feelings. But they should not forget that this is a 'relief-seeking conversation, and therefore very important to build up meaningful human relations. It does not require any regular training as a psychologist. But today's manager can always benefit from the insight of modern psycho-analytical research and learn to practice informal empathic listening.

Key Points

(i) An organization has many levels of hierarchy.

(ii) Communication is a multi-directional activity.

(iii) The directions or dimensions of communication are-downward, upward, horizontal or lateral, and diagonal or crosswise.

(iv) All these directions or dimensions have their own uses and problems.

(v) The ombudsperson has come to occupy an important place in the context of modern business communicational

(vi) Communication passes through some well-defined stages or channels.

(vii) The channels of communication are 'formal' and 'informal'.

(viii) The formal channel of communication is the most effective.

(ix) The informal channel is also called the 'grapevine'.

(x) Both formal and informal channels have their own problems.

(xi) A resourceful manager can put the grapevine to great use.,and diagonal or crosswise.

(xii) All these directions or dimensions have their own uses and problems.

(xiii) The ombudsperson has come to occupy an important place in the context of modern business communication.

Review Questions

1. Give specific reasons for the importance of downward communication.

2. Discuss some of the problems caused by strictly adhering to the practice of downward communication.

3. Write a note on the uses of upward communication.

4. The lack of upward communication can be disastrous". Discuss with reference to some examples.

5. What can managers do to facilitate the free flow of information?

6. What do you mean by lateral or horizontal communication? How and why does it take place?

7. Write a detailed note on the importance and functions of 'ombudsperson'.

8. Discuss the term 'diagonal' or 'crosswise' communication with some examples.

9. Write short notes on the following:

   (a) suggestion box,

   (b) grievance redressal,

   (c) informal meetings,

   (d) company newspaper,

   (e) open-door policy

10 What do you mean by the phrase 'through proper channel'

11 Why is the informal channel called "the grapevine'?

12 How does the formal channel sometimes inhibit information? Discuss with some examples.

13 What factors are responsible for the growth of the grapevine?

14 Why is it necessary for an organization to have an informal channel of communication side by side with a formal channel?

15 How many types of 'grapevine chains' have been identified? How do they function?

16 What are the demerits of the grapevine. Discuss, with examples, some problems created by it in some organization/organizations

17 Write a note on how a manager can effectively control the grapevine

LESSON 3:
BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION

Barriers of Communication

A man goes to his doctor and says, " I don't think my wife's hearing is as good as it used to be. What should I do?"

The doctor replies: "Try this test to find out for sure. When your wife is in the kitchen doing dishes, stand fifteen feet behind her and ask her a question. If she doesn't respond, keep moving closer asking the questions until she hears you."

The man goes home ands sees his wife preparing dinner. He stands fifteen feet behind her and asks, "What's for dinner, honey?" No response. He moves closer to her and asks again: no response. Just five feet behind her; yet no answer. Finally he stands directly behind her and says, "Honey, what's for supper?" She says, "For the fourth time, ISAID CHICKEN!"

There are a wide number of sources of noise or interference that can enter into the communication process. This can occur when people know each other very well and should understand the sources of error. In a work setting, it is even more common since interactions involve people who not only don't have years of experience with each other, but communication is complicated by the complex and often conflicting relationships that exist at work. In a work setting, the following suggests a number of sources of noise:

- Language: The choice of words or language in which a sender encodes a message will influence the quality of communication. Because language is a symbolic representation of a phenomenon, there is room for interpretation and distortion of the meaning exists. In the above example, the Boss uses language (this is the third day you've missed) that is likely to convey far more than objective information. To Terry will be interpreted different by each different person. Meaning has to be given to words and many factors affect how an individual will attribute meaning to particular words. It is important to note that no two people will attribute the exact same meaning to the same words.

- Defensiveness, distorted perceptions, guilt, project, transference, distortions from the past

- Misreading of body language, tone and other non-verbal forms of communication (see section below)

- Noisy transmission (unreliable messages, inconsistency)

- Receiver distortion: Selective hearing, ignoring non-verbal cues

- Power struggles

- Self-fulfilling assumptions

- Language-different levels of meaning

- Managers hesitation to be candid

- Assumptions-eg. Assuming others see situation same as you, has same feelings as you

- Distrusted source, erroneous translation, value judgment, state of mind of two people

- Perceptual biases: People attend to stimuli in the environment in very different ways. We each have shortcuts that we use to organize data. Invariably, these shortcuts introduce some biases into communication. Some of these shortcuts include stereotyping, projection, and self-fulfilling prophecies. Stereotyping is one of the most common. This is when we assume that the other person has certain characteristics based on the group to which they belong without validating that they in fact have these characteristics.

- Interpersonal relationships: How we perceive communication is affected by the past experience with the individual. Perception is also affected by the organizational relationship two people have. For example, communication from a superior may be perceived differently than that from a subordinate or peer

- Cultural differences: Effective communication requires deciphering the basic values, motives, aspirations, and assumptions that operate across geographical lines. Given some dramatic differences across cultures in approaches to such areas as time, space, and privacy, the opportunities for mis-communication while we are in cross-cultural situations are plentiful.

Problems/barriers/breakdowns may arise at any of the following levels :

(a) The sender's level in
  (i) formulating/organizing thought, idea, message;
  (ii) encoding the message

(b) The receiver's level in
  (i) receiving the message;
  (ii) decoding the received message;
  (iii) understanding/interpreting the message.

(c) Transmission level where 'noise' occurs.

(d) The feedback/reaction level that is necessary condition of the completion of the entire process.

Noise
Unfortunately communication is very often affected/distorted blunted by noise that occurs primarily at the transmission level. Literally the word 'noise' means "interference that occurs in a signal and prevent you from hearing sounds properly". It is, therefore, the first major barrier to communication becomes difficult. Blaring of loudspeaker around is bound to interfere with our conversation, whether face to face or on telephone. In the same way a static in the transmission line, as in a poor telephone connection or faulty TV cable, distorts the sound signals and affects communication. In the same way some

technical problem in the ultramodern communication systems or adverse weather conditions interfering with transmission may lead to major communication barriers/breakdowns.

Noise is not just all this. Its wider connotation include many other factors that are likely to hinder communication. And these factors may exist at the level of the sender as well as that of the receiver. For example, on the sender's part encoding may be faulty because of the use of confusing or ambiguous symbols. A the receiver's level reception may be inaccurate because of inattention. Decoding may be faulty because wrong or unexpected interpretation may be attached to words/symbols. Understanding of the message may be warped by prejudices. Desired results may not take place because of fear or inherent resistance to change. In this way we see that noise is not just one single factor but a whole range of factors rolled into one big barricade that we must make every effort to overcome but we cannot wish away.

Lack of Planning

Communication, specially in business environment, is not a casual affair. But unfortunately, some people take it lightly. The result is that ht message to be sent across may not be carefully planned. It may not be properly organized or compose, or may be transmitted though a wrongly chosen medium. For example, giving a long winding narration of events/meetings/results etc in respect of sales during a particular period where a presentation through table/graphs is needed will lead to miscommunication. In the same way careful choice of time is also very important. And so is the choice of place.

Wrong / Unclarified Assumptions

Communication quite often breaks down or become an embarrassing affair if we keep acting an assumptions without caring to seek clarifications. As somebody has lightly but effectively said, "If you assume you make an ass of U (you) and me." If for example, somebody, say a customer, writers to us that he/she would be visiting our office/factory on a particular day without caring to write/telephone that he/she would like to be picked up assuming that we will do all that as routine, it will be regarded as a case of incomplete communication. It lead to loss of goodwill.

Semantic Problems

Communication is primarily concerned with the transmission of meaning the systemic study of which is Semantics. That is why any problems arising from the expression/transmission of meaning are called semantic problems of barriers. Most of the communication is base on words and words are liable to be used in myriad different ways. The number of words, howsoever large, is limited, but the contexts, intended meanings and interpretations, their combination and usages are many times more. "the meaning is in the mind of the sender to be the same as that in the mind of the receiver. It is, therefore, of vital importance for the sender to encoded his message in such a way that the receiver decodes it to get the intended meaning. And very often that does not happen. An advertisement, for example, says, "We give you much more". It is an ambiguous statement. The question arises, "More than what?" There are many different interpretations of every other word/sentence/utterance. One must aim at simplicity, clarity and brevity so as to mini-meaning to a limited group.

Cultural Barriers

It has been pointed out earlier in this book that, especially in international environment, cultural differences often cause communication problems. The same category of words, phrases, symbols, actions, colours mean different things to people of different countries/cultural backgrounds. For example, in Western countries black colour is associated with death and mourning while in the Far East white is the colour of mourning. In the United people love to be called by their first name while in Britain people are more formal and like to be addressed by their title or their last name. In the hierarchical structure of Indian society and business environment also the last name is important.

Socio-psychological Barriers

The attitude and opinions, place in society and status – consciousness arising from one's position in the hierarchical structure of the organization, the state of one's relations with peers, seniors, juniors, family background – all these factors deeply influence one's ability to communicate both as a sender and receiver, both in encoding and decoding the messages. Status-consciousness is widely known to be a serious communication barrier in organizations. It creates psychological distance leading to breakdown of communication or miscommunication. A man high upon an organization often builds up a wall around himself that the people below find it difficult to break though. Thus is sent that power – centers restrict participation of the less powerful in decision-making. In the same way one's family background formulates one's attitudes and commutation skills.

Emotions

Encoding and decoding of message depends to quite some extent on one's emotional state at a particular time. Extreme emotions, like jubilation or depression, are likely to hinder effective communication. Anger is the worst enemy of communication. A message received when one is angry is likely to be interpreted in a very different manner than when one is calm and composed. Stress may also lead to building up of negative emotions, further leading to communication breakdown.

Selective Perception

Most of the factors mentioned above lead to selective perception. It means that the receivers selectively see and hear depending upon their needs, motivation, background, experience and other personal characteristics. While decoding the message they project their own interests and expectation into the process of communication further leading to a particular kind of feed back. The fact is that we don't see reality. We interpret what we see and call it reality.

Filtering

Filtering means that a manipulates information in such a way that it will be seen more favorably by the receiver. For example, a manager likes to tell his boss what he feels his boss wants to hear. In this process he is filtering information. The result of filtering is that the man at the top perhaps never gets objected information. The result of filtering is that the man at the top

perhaps never gets objective information. In this connection it is worthwhile quoting what a former Vice President of General Motors says "… lower-level specialists… provided information in such a way that they would get the answer they wanted. I know. I used to be down below and do it." In the process of filtering the information for onward transmission to the senior executives, the people at the lower levels condense and synthesize it, thus sometimes holding back/ignoring some important parts of information. The more vertical levels in the hierarchical system, the more chances there are for filtering.

Information Overload

Unrestricted flow of information may, and very often does, become another barrier. Too much information is no unmixed blessing. It may stifle the senior executive or bore and frustrate him. People respond to this kind of information in different way. Firstly, they may disregard certain information as, for example, we see that very many letters are ignored. Secondly, people are also likely to make errors, when they become overwhelmed or swamped with too much information. Thirdly people may delay processing/responding to information at least for the time being. Delay may become a habit, causing serious communications problems. Fourthly, people may become highly selective in their response. And selectively may and may not contribute to effective communication.

Loss by Transmission

When message passes on from person in a series of transmission they are likely to become less and less accurate. They get diluted on the way.

Poor Retention

As a corollary to the communication problem mentioned above, mention must also be made of poor retention of informant. Human memory being what it is, and depending upon one's mental makeup, one may not always retina what he is told. Thus, the necessity of repeating the message using several channels/media become obvious. That is why organization often use more than one medium to communicate the same message.

Poor Listening

Poor listening causes serious problem in communication. There are two many talker and too few listeners. The importance of listening has already been highlighted. And, of course, everybody knows about it. But even then problems do keep cropping up owing to poor listening and hasty evaluation. One reason is that mostly people are too much involved in their own problems and papering their own egos. The result is that they are really not interested in the speaker. In order to become good listeners. Otherwise the habit of poor listening is bound to become a major barrier communication.

Insufficient Period for Adjustment

As has been said in the beginning the purpose of communication is to effect change. It may concern change in employees' shifts in time, an employee's transfer to another department, change in type or order of work, decisions regarding the skills to be sued and so on. The management may decide to send communications regarding further training, career a adjustment etc. People respond to change in different ways, and they require

their own time to think about the full meaning, implications, and consequences of the message. It is, therefore, important to give them sufficient time. Only then the communication will be effective.

Goal - conflicts

Various units and sub-units in an organization internalize their own goals, leading to splitting or bifurcation of interests. This internalization of sub-unit goals lead to goal-conflicts while communication can be a conflict-reduction mechanism. Conflict acts as a communication – reduction mechanism. When tow parties are in conflict, communication is minimal. When people start competing for the fulfillment of their narrow sectional interests a number of barriers to communication arise.

Offensive Style of Communication

Experts units out, and as we also realize, the greatest barrier to communication is quite often the style of communication used by the manger. When a manger sends a message in such a way that the workers/juniors become defensive he/she contributes to the negative factor of poor interpersonal relationship. And if the relationships are already strained, any offensive style adopted by the manager is bound to lead to breakdown.

Key Points

(i) Effective communication is the life blood of an organization. But, unfortunately, many barriers and breakdowns in communication arise.

(ii) A thorough understanding of the process of communication is necessary in order to deal with those barriers and breakdowns.

(iii) Problems in communication may arise at the level of the sender, the transmission, the receiver and the feedback coming from the receiver.

(iv) Communication is very often distorted by 'noise' in the course of transmission.

(v) Noise has wide connotations and includes many factors occurring at the level of the sender as well as the receiver.

(vi) There are many kinds of barriers to communication - those resulting from lack of planning and wrong assumptions, semantic, cultural, socio-psychological, emotional barriers, selectivity in perception, passing on information and listening, information overload/ insufficient period for adjustment, goal conflicts and offensive style.

Points to Ponder

• Will your CEO recognize you and know you by your first name?

• An ideal organization should be both upwardly and downwardly mobile that is   visible not only to the senior managers but be felt by the junior managers as well

• When the receiver of our messages fails to understand our message we often get impatient. Stop and think…….and try to remove the barrier.

• Oral communication is the most effective tool of persuasion

- Oral communication creates an atmosphere…it can be either positive or negative
- Listening is a skill that must be cultivated in order to become an effective leader/manager.

Group Discussion

Case study

You work for a travel and tour company and discovered a fantastic place near Uttarkashi ideal for paragliding and white water rafting.

Chalk out a road map/strategy of

…how you will convince your superior in Delhi/Mumbai

…how you will convince your clients (They are schools in Delhi which send their students for adventure camps in their mid-term breaks and summer breaks)

…how you will convince colleagues at the head office, whom you would require for your team or to act as a grapevine to spread the good word.

Split the class into 3 groups and each group can chalk out the strategy to deal with one module.

Review Questions

1. What do you mean by a 'barrier' to communication?
2. Write a note on 'noise', showing how it binders communication.
3. How does lack of planning affect communication?
4. Discuss some of the semantic barriers to communication.
5. How does culture affect communication?
6. Write a note on the socio-psychological barriers to communication.
7. Write short notes on the following,
   (a) Filtering
   (b) Information overload.
   (c) Selective perception
   (d) Goal conflict
   (e) Status-consciousness
   (f) Wrong choice of medium
   (g) Emotions and communication
8. Show how offensive style is the greatest barrier to communication. Cite some examples.
   1. "We don't see reality. We interpret what we see and call it reality." Discuss.

Notes

LESSON 4:
EFFECTIVE OF COMMUNICATION

Effective of Communication

People in organizations typically spend over 75% of their time in an interpersonal situation; thus it is no surprise to find that at the root of a large number of organizational problems is poor communications. Effective communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational, or external levels.

Learning how to communicate assertively allows you the freedom to know that you have a right to speak and be heard in most situations and the confidence to know that you can present yourself in such a fashion that people will want to hear you.

Assertive communication is difficult to teach in a short paragraph but here are some of the main principles:

- First and foremost, assertive speakers demonstrate attentive listening behavior. What you communicate is "I am showing you the respect by listening to you, and assume that you will show me the same courtesy."

- Demonstrate an assuring manner, communicating caring and strength.

- To the extent possible, remain as relaxed as you can. It is physiologically impossible to be both relaxed and anxious at the same time, so focus on being relaxed and develop skills that will help in these situations.

- State clearly what it is that you want.

- State honestly how you feel about the topic.

Both of the above recommendations are more effective whenever you use "I" statements, e.g. "I would like to speak with you about the fight we had last night in the restaurant. I feel very angry about the scene we made and I would like very much for us to work things out." Using "I" statement allows you to take responsibility for your behavior and your feelings. It also gets you out of the habit of blaming others, a sure recipe for defensiveness from the listener

- An assertive speaker also recognizes that there is someone else with whom you are having the conversation. Recognizing their side and their concerns shows respect and usually results in reciprocal behavior.

- An assertive speaker always communicates a desire for a "win-win" outcome, again recognizing the needs of the other person

- Your eyes should be making good contact, but not staring. Your posture should be well balanced, straight, erect and relaxed. Your voice should be firm, warm, well modulated and relaxed.

Putting all of these tips together takes practice but is worth the time and effort to improve your ability to get your point across. When employees ask us for help in addressing a colleague, we usually ask them to do two things: 1. imagine the worst thing that can happen when you speak to this person and be confident that you can handle it; and 2. practice the conversation with the FSAP counselor or some trusted individual so that you will be prepared for most contingencies.

Negotiating Conflict in a Principled Fashion

When dealing with conflicts with two or more employees or between family members, FSAP counselors attempt to teach the model demonstrated in the book "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In" by Roger Fisher and William Ury. This is an excellent guide to learning how to negotiate successfully in any area of your life based on the following four principles:

1. **Always separate the people from the problem.** A good negotiation should involve a desire for maintaining the relationship. This is especially true for co-workers. But the relationship should not influence the substance of the conflict. If it is strictly a relationship problem, deal with it as such.

2. **Focus on the interests, not positions.** Do not get caught up in the position the person has taken. What is behind their position? Why are they offering what they are? Are there other ways to get their needs met (and yours)? Acknowledge their interests and keep up a discussion about both parties interests - this is the way to generate alternative solutions.

3. **Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do.** Realize that solving their problem is also a way of solving yours. Look for ways that you will both benefit (win-win). Don't assume that there is only one single answer (theirs, or yours!)

4. **Insist that results be based on some objective standard.** Ideally, to assure a wise agreement, objective criteria should be not only independent of will, but also legitimate and practical. There are many objective standards that can be applied when trying to negotiate fairly. The following are only a few:

Market Value	What a court would decide
Precedent	Moral Standards
Scientific Judgment	Equal Treatment
Professional Standards	Tradition
Efficiency	Reciprocity

There are three basic points to remember:

1. Frame each issue as a joint search for objective criteria.

2. Reason and be open to reason as to which standards are most appropriate and how they should be applied.

3. Never yield to pressure, only to principle.

Guidelines For Effective Communication

Now since we have a reasonably good understanding of the process of communication and its problems, barriers and breakdowns it should not be difficult to make our communication effective. It must, however, be made clear that ideal communication is rarely achieved. Perhaps it does not exist. But we can and should, strive. As somebody has very well said, "Ideals are like stars. We may never reach them, but they keep guiding our path". So is the case with communication. Given below are some guidelines that must help us communicate effectively.

1. Clarity of Purpose

In the first place we must make a careful analysis of what exactly we wish to communicate. As is often the case in business, we may not be able to clarify the issue completely, unless it is by nature very simple. But any effort made in this direction proves to be fruitful. Hence it is absolutely necessary to understand the purpose the purpose of our message. An this requires careful planning as has been noted in the preceding chapter, lack of planning becomes the first major barrier in communication. Communication does not just take place. We have to make all possible efforts to understand the why's and how's the when and where, and above all the 'what' of our message. As George Bernard Shaw says, " The major mistake in communication is to believe that it happens".

2. Shared Activity

Let us not forget that effective communication is the responsibility of all persons in the organization. They may be at any level – managerial or non managerial. They are all working towards a common goal. It means that all of them have a share, directly or indirectly, in many different ways, in the process of communication. Whether communication is effective can be judged on the basis of the intended results. And the results are the responsibility of the entire organization. It has, therefore, to be group-responsibility. Managers are advised to consult with other whenever necessary. Often it is necessary to seek the authority of communicate before a message is sent, or sary. Often it is necessary to seek the authority to communicate before a message is sent, or someone is to be kept in the picture in regard to the action intended. It is, therefore, useful to remember the headings ' For Action' and 'For Information' when communication are being planned.

3. Commercial Set of Symbols

The encoding and decoding of the message should be done with symbols that are familiar to the sender and the receiver. It is an immutable condition of communication that the code or set of symbols be mutually understood/intelligible. That is why managers, and especially the specialist staff, are advised to avoid unnecessary technical jargon which is intelligible only to the experts in their respective fields. Quite often communication becomes ineffective if he specialists/technical experts, who are accustomed to using a special kind of vocabulary and phraseology among themselves, use their particularly variety of language even with the administrative or accounts section of the organization. They must remember that, beyond their jargon, there is a common core of language.

4. Focus the Needs of the Receiver

Whenever we communicate we must keep in mind the needs of the receivers of the message/information. It should be our endeavor to see that whatever we communicate should be of value to the receiver , both in the short run and in the distant further. Our awareness of the needs of the receiver will make him more receptive.

5. 'Use Feedback'

'Use feedback', exhorts Stephen Robbins, a renowned authority on organization behavior. As the model of the communication process given in the preceding chapter shows, communication is complete only when the message is understood by the receiver. And we can never know whether communication/message is understood unless the sender gets feedback. Many communication problems arise because of misunderstanding and inaccuracies. They are less likely to occur it we make sure that the 'feedback loop' is utilized in the communication process. We can achieve this target by asking questions, requesting a reply to a letter, and encouraging the receiver to give this reaction to the message/information.

6. Active Listening

Active or 'participative' listening is as important as any other element in the process of communication. It shows, again, that communication is a joint responsibility of both the sender and the receiver. Tips for participating have been given earlier in this book.

7. Controlling Emotions

Emotions play an important role in interpersonal relationship between superiors, subordinates and colleagues in an organization. It should, be therefore, an important aim of communication to create an environment in which people are motivated to work toward the desired goals of the enterprise while they achieve their personal goals. There must be generated a healthy climate of involvement and synergistic growth. It must also be remembered that an important function of communication is control – not just top- down control but also self control. It means that a successful communicator must learn / grain himself to exercise restraint on his emotions, especially anger. The truth is that we do not always communicate in a fully rational manner. Our reasoning is often clouded with we do not always communicate in a fully rational manner. Our reasoning is often clouded with negative feelings/emotions. And that leads to all sort of misunderstandings owing to emotion-loaded encoding of the message or misinterpretation of the incoming message. That is why the MBO (Management by Objective) philosophy emphasizes self-control.

8. Politeness

This lead us to the tonal aspect of communication. There is a saying, "The tone makes the music". In the same way, in communicate, the tone of voice, the choice of language and the congruency or logical connection between what is said and how it is said influence the reactions of the receiver. That is why managers are advise to shun authoritarianism, or in other words, to exercise authority with grace. Everybody know that politeness pays, and it is reflected so very 'loudly' both in words and actions. Moreover, in an organization, politeness encour-

ages participative communication involving people at all levels, leading to lateral and diagonal communication from the conventional, hierarchically – structured downward communication.

9. Eliminate Noise

Every possible effort must be made to eliminate the element of noise that distorts communication at the transmission stage. It becomes especially important in the wake of modern technological advancement. Anything going wrong with the equipment or nay disturbance in the transmission line is bound to defeat the very purpose of communication.

10. Clarity Assumptions

No effective communication can be based on assumptions. The sender of the message must first clarify his assumptions and then go ahead with proper encoding of the message.

11. Avoiding Connotations and Ambiguities

Semantic problems can be solved by using simple language and avoiding connotations. Care must be taken to see that the receiver of the message does not have to go beyond the text of the message. A sender should, therefore, use denotative words and expressions in preference to connotative ones. It is also necessary to avoid all ambiguity that means using words with double meaning.

12. Socio-psychological Aspect

As communication is a two-way process involving both the sender and the receiver, both should make conscious efforts to understand each other's cultural and socio-psychological background. As a golden rule for effective communication one must remember, "First understand, then be understand". An effective communicator is an informed communicator.

13. Completeness

One must also endeavor to send a complete message, furnishing all necessary facts and figures. Incomplete communication annoys the receiver as a result of which proper feedback will not come. The message should be so organized that the receiver is not left in doubt about any aspect of the message.

14. Conciseness

Completeness does not mean inclusion of unnecessary details or diversions. An effective communication is concise and crisp. The sender should be clear headed and properly focused in his vision.

15. Proper Use of Body Language

Proper use of body language is of paramount importance, especially in oral communication. No oral communication can be successful or effective if we do not take care of our body language. In the first place there must be good eye-contact with the person to whom we are speaking. The movement of our hands and feet must be graceful. Every listener observes carefully how we walk and how we talk. Our gait says a lot about us. A warm handshake can do wonders. Holding our head straight on our shoulders shows confidence. In fact, our overall appearance can really make or mar communication.

Key Points

(i)   Understanding the process of communication, and the problems/barriers likely to arise in it is necessary for an effective communicator.

(ii)   An effective communicator must be clear about what he wants to say. It can be done only by careful planning. Communication does not take place by chance.

(iii)   Effective communication is the responsibility of all the people in an organization working towards a common goal.

(iv)   Effective communication is based on the use a set of symbols mutually understood by the sender and the receiver. One must, therefore, use simple language and avoid jargon.

(v)   The needs of the receiver must always be kept in mind.

(vi)   Communication will not be regarded complete unless the sender gets feedback from the receiver.

(vii)   For effective communication emotions should be kept under control.

(viii)   Politeness is an indispensable ingredient of effective communication.

(ix)   All efforts must be made to eliminate 'noise'.

(x)   Assumptions mar communication.

(xi)   The language of effective communication is simple, relying more on denotations than on connotations.

(xii)   Communication can be effective only when both the sender and the receiver are well informed about each other.

(xiii)   A message must be complete leaving, as far as possible, no scope for guesswork.

(xiv)   Effective communication is concise and crisp.

(xv)   Proper use of body language is necessary for effective communication.

Review Questions

(1)   What do you mean by 'effective' communication? How does the knowledge of the communication process help us in communicating effectively?

(2)   "The major mistake in communication-is to believe that it happens." Discuss.

(3)   Discuss the relevance of the headings 'For Action' and 'For Information'.

(4)   Why is it desirable to avoid the use of jargon?

(5)   Why is feedback necessary for effective communication?

(6)   Why is it necessary to adapt our message to the needs of the receiver? Give examples.

(7)   Write a note on the importance of self -control in effective communication.

(8)   Discuss the importance of the following in effective communication :

(a) Politeness;	(d) Conciseness;
(b) Clarity;	(e) Body language.
(c) Completeness;	

LESSON 5:
IMPORTANCE OF
VERBALIZATION OR USE OF WORDS

Importance of Verbalization or Use of Words Means/Media of Communication

In the very beginning of our discussion it has been said that communication is a process in which a communicator or participant in a communication event sends or transmits a message/information to another communicator (the receiver) through a mutually understood set of symbols. This mutually understood set of symbols is the means or medium through which the sender encodes his message and the receiver decodes or understands it with, of course, varying degrees of success or effective- ness. A lot has been written about the media or the set of symbols used in this process. Anthropologists, psycholo- gists, linguists and researchers in related areas have been giving serious thought to it. For humans the most commonly and effectively used medium is language. Other species have their own system or set of signals that serves its own limited purpose. But it cannot be called language because the other species do not use words. Only the human beings use words, the production and combination of which makes language. However, human beings do often use animal-like sounds and signals along with language. In fact a human being has a vast range of symbols at his command that can be simply mapped as follows:
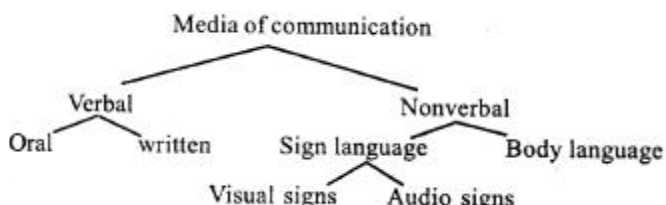
Man is the only species gifted with language. And the use of language is primarily in speech. Writing comes afterwards. That is why I am taking up oral communication before its written counterpart. In any organization, as in everyday life, both formally and informally, we communicate more orally than in writing. It is primarily oral communication that builds up human relationships. It is the use of the gift of speech, or talking, that brings the 'members of a family, neighbours and friends, and likewise, colleagues in an organization together. Without oral communication any organization will become just lifeless. Its importance, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

Formal Vs Informal Oral Communication

In a business organization there are ample opportunities for both formal and informal oral communication, But, in fact, a lot more time is spent in informal oral communication. The simple reason is that all communication is essentially conversa- tional in nature and has a. social purpose. Whenever people get together there is bound to be face-to-face communication in which they will share all sorts of ideas, feelings, etc. The origin of the grapevine lies here. The importance of the grapevine has been discussed earlier.

Another very frequently used type of informal oral communica- tion is called 'phatic communication'. Generally, it is not regarded as important. But the fact is that it is very vital in establishing relation- ships. For example, by making comments on the weather or putting questions about the health of the family one 'breaks the ice' and gets into a dialogue with the person before him. It is just a ritualized way of speaking in which what is said is not as important as the fact that it is said at all. This kind of dialogue generates warmth in relationship with friends or colleagues and promotes further communica- tion by maintaining contact with the listener.

Side by side with, and in addition to, the informal oral commu- nication, various kinds of formal oral communication take place in an organization. Very often people in business have to make formal presentations before a group that may be large or small. At other times they have to participate in meetings and group discussions. Time to time they have to appear for or conduct interviews. Most of the letters and reports are largely dictated. All these are formal kinds of oral communication. In this way we see that both formal and informal types of oral communica- tion thrive together.

Advantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication is the most frequently used means of sending messages because it has certain distinct advantages. Some of these advantages are given below :

(a) The greatest advantage of oral communication is that it provides immediate feedback and clarification. People listening to the speaker can ask questions, make comments, add to the information provided and so on. Both the speaker and the listener/listeners by turn can enter into a kind of short dialogue and make the whole communication event purposeful.

(b) Oral communication builds up a healthy climate in the organization by bringing the superior and the subordinate together. This gives the subordinate a feeling of importance and the superior a better understanding of his mind. Informal or planned meetings can greatly con- tribute to the understanding of problems/issues in which they become partners.

(c) Oral communication is a time-saving device. While a letter, dictated and typed, entered in the diary, put in the envelope and carried to the person addressed will take a long time, oral transmission of the message makes the communication immediately effective. That is why many skilful managers cut down on paper work and save time by calling up their juniors or walking up to their superiors.,

(d) Oral communication is the most effective tool of persuasion as it lends a personal touch to the whole

business. Resolving a conflict will not be possible in the absence of oral communication. Unless a manager/ supervisor 'talks' to the workers in a persuasive tone, the conflict will remain there. No exchange of letters can achieve what a meeting can.

(e) In continuation of the previous point we can see that oral communication is very effective in interacting with groups. The speaker can immediately understand the group's reaction and arrive at a satisfactory conclusion by putting his views across and exchanging points.

(f) Oral communication is also very economical, both in terms of money and time. It saves the money spent on stationery in organizations in which the managers insist on every instruction, every message in writing.

(g) Oral communication provides ample scope to the sender of the message to make himself clear by suitably changing his words, voice, tone, pitch, etc. On the other hand, the words once written cannot be changed. In other words, the message once transmitted in written form cannot be retracted. Oral communication on the other hand, has the advantage of on the spot adaptation/withdrawal/ improvement.

Disadvantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication also 'has some disadvantages as discussed below:

(a) Oral communication does not always save time and money. Quite often meetings go on without any results or agreements achieved. Such meetings can be very tiring and wasteful.

(b) Oral communication in itself is not always effective. There are certain conditions that must be necessarily fulfilled in order to make it effective. It depends mainly on the attitude of the sender and the receiver of the message.

(c) Human memory being what it is, oral messages cannot be retained for a long time. It means that they must be acted upon immediately. They cannot be found in record books and we cannot refer back to them. This is a serious limitation of oral communication.

(d) In the absence of a taped or written record, oral messages do not have any legal validity.

(e) Oral messages also can lead to misunderstanding if the speaker has not carefully organized his thought or the listener misses the message on account of his in attentiveness

(f) Much depends upon the length of the message. If it is long it is not suitable for oral transmission. There are chances of something vital getting dropped or misconstrued.

(g) It is difficult to assign responsibility for anything going amiss or any mistake by omission or commission in oral communication.

Listening

No oral communication can be effective without proper listening on the part of the receiver of the message. we have discussed how a tactful manager can very positively handle the grapevine or informal channel of communication by 'empathic' listening. Here, in this section, we are going to focus on making oral communication effective by improving listening.

Poor listening may defeat the very purpose of oral communication. It has been found by authorities on the subject that generally people retain only about one fourth of what they hear after two days. In this way listening becomes the weakest link in oral communication.

It is, therefore, very important to improve the ability to listen. It requires serious efforts on the part of the listener to absorb what he is being told. It is largely a matter of mental conditioning. We will listen carefully only if we want to listen. Mostly people become lazy, and listening requires serious work. We have to- train ourselves to listen attentively. With an alert mind we have to learn to pay attention to spoken words. The best guidance in this regard is contained in the following. 'Ten Commandments of Listening' as formulated by Keith Davis and John W. Newstrom:

1. **'Stop talking'** Unfortunately, most of us are more prone to talking than listening. Generally we are more interested in what we want to say than in what we are being told. So we must stop talking before we listen.

2. **'Put the talker at ease'** If the speaker/talker is not at ease he will not be able to do his job satisfactorily. So it is very important for the listener/listeners to make the talker comfortable.

3. **'Show the talker that you want to listen'** The talker must be given to understand that the listener/listeners are eager to listen. Hence it is important not to distract the talker by looking at your watch, reading some book or newspaper or looking away from him. Moreover, you should give the talker the impression that you are listening to him to understand rather than to oppose.

4. **'Remove distractions'** Certain activities like tapping with a pen or pencil, shuffling papers or passing something along distracts the talker.

5. **'Empathize with the talker'** True exchange of information can take place only if we place ourselves in the position of the talker. This way we will be able to appreciate his point of view and build up a climate conducive to communication.

6. **'Be patient'** Patience pays. This saying holds good in every situation. We should give enough time to the talker. There are all kinds of talkers. Some get to the point very quickly, while some take a lot more time. So we must give the talker enough time to come to his point in his own way. We must not be" tempted to interrupt.

7. **'Hold your temper'** Anger is the worst enemy of communication as it builds walls among the participants in the communication event. It hardens their positions and blocks their minds to others' words.

8. **'Go easy on argument and criticism'** As Dale Carnegie has very succinctly said, you cannot win an argument. Argument and criticism do not lead anywhere. On the other hand, argument and criticism put the talker on the defensive and make him angry.

9. **'Ask questions'** Putting questions shows an open mind. It shows that you are listening. It shows that you are getting the message and also giving the feedback.

10. **'Stop talking'** This is the last as well as the first commandment. All other commandments or rules of listening depend on it.

In this way we see that we can improve our listening only through conscious effort. Here it is worth while to consider the role of silence in communication.

Silence as Communication

Silence, by its very nature, communicates. 'It can also be deftly used to communicate. There is an age old saying - "Silence is half consent". Yes, very often, especially in response to a request or a question regarding our opinion about something, we keep quiet. That serves the purpose. It shows our approach is positive. On the other hand, silence can also send out a negative signal. For example, if somebody asks us for a loan and we keep quiet it will generally be construed as a negative response. It we want to help somebody we openly say so. Silence also shows our disinterestedness in something. Our interest in something or somebody freely comes to our lips and is evident through our eyes. Interest has an inbuilt element of excitement while lack of interest is best expressed through silence. And we also keep quiet to suppress our anger. A keen observer can easily make out our attitude and interpret our silence in such a situation.

Collective silence of workers in an office communicates a lot about their attitude to work and their culture. There is a world of difference between a place buzzing with raucous noises and one that has people working quietly. Working quietly shows satisfaction while making noises at work shows some discontent.

In a meeting or group discussion if somebody keeps quiet it is construed that he is mentally absent or probably not really interested in what is going on. It may also be interpreted as his ignorance of the matter being discussed. In the same way a candidate's silence in an interview betrays his ignorance.

Silence on the part of the audience at the time of a speech shows interest and participative listening. Speaking at such a time will distract the speaker and give a poor impression-of the audience. That is why quite often we hear 'Silence please'! In this way we see that silence is a multi pronged communication tool and 'speaks' louder than words.

Key Points

(i) Speech comes before writing. Hence there is more oral communication than written.

(ii) There is more informal oral communication than formal oral communication.

(iii) There are various types of formal oral communication like face-to-face talking, oral presentations, interviews etc.

(iv) Oral communication has certain distinct advantages over written communication like immediate feedback, quickness of transmission etc.

(v) Oral communication also has certain disadvantages like waste of time, lack of retention, lack of legal validity, etc.

(vi) Listening is very important to make oral communication effective.

(vii) One has to make serious effort to become a good listener.

(viii) Silence also communicates in different ways.

Review Questions

1. Why do we have more oral communication than written? Give reasons.

2. What do you mean by 'phatic communication'? Illustrate you answer with some examples.

3. What, according to you, are the three most important advantages of oral communication?

4. On the one hand it is said that oral communication saves time, and on the other it is said that it wastes time. How and why does it happen? Discuss with some examples known to you. Otherwise, you could invent any names and details.

5. Write a note on the importance of listening.

6. Why is it necessary to 'stop talking'?

7. Visualize a situation in which, in the midst of your speech, you are repeatedly interrupted by a listener. What effect will it have on the entire communication event?

8. Write a note on the experts advice, "Empathize with the talker".

9. Why is a listener advised to go easy on argument and criticism?

10. How does asking questions help a speaker/talker?

11. Write a note on silence as a means of communication.

LESSON 6:
VERBAL COMMUNICATION : WRITTEN

Verbal Communication: Written

In the previous lecture we discussed the importance of oral communication but today in business organizations written communication plays a very important role.

A famous English writer Francis Bacon has said, "Reading maketh a full man, writing an exact man, conference a ready man." In order to make himself 'exact' i.e. to say effectively what he wants to say, the writer has to make considerable effort. While speech comes to us very naturally and spontaneously, writing comes after serious practice and careful organization of thought. The word 'write' has been derived from the old English word 'writan' that meant to scratch, draw or inscribe. It shows that man learnt writing through a long process of drawing, scoring or incising symbols on rock faces, dried skins, tree barks and clay tablets. The alphabet of any language is, therefore, a result of evolution.

In the same way, the combination of the characters or letters of alphabet into words, words into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs have gone through a long history of man's attempt to communicate, and give some kind of permanence or preservation to his communication. For this purpose every language has evolved its own rules of grammar, though many languages grouped together have more or less similar rules. But, in writing these rules have to be rather strictly followed. Speech, on the other hand, is more flexible. It also does not have the permanence of writing. Unless there is a typescript or tape or simultaneously taken down notes, the speech is heard and sooner or later forgotten.

Salient Features of Written Communication

(a)   From the introduction given above it becomes clear that written communication is essentially a creative activity. It is an activity that requires conscious and creative 'effort. The creativity of this effort comes from the stimuli produced by the mind. The stimuli of oral communication are picked up from outside by the sensory receptors. In other words, written communication is more specifically, more carefully thought out than oral communication that is based on spontaneous reaction to signs picked up from outside.

As an example, let us take up the writing out or production of a report that we want to present or that we have been asked to write. For this purpose we gather all the necessary information or data. We, then, process it through our logical thought processes and encode our communication. This is not a face-to-face communication situation. There is no interchange of messages or external stimuli. This is almost entirely a creative activity of the mind.

(b)   The second salient feature of written communication is the time factor it involves. While in a face-to-face

communication situation, the sender's encoded messages are instantaneously decoded by the receiver, in written communication some delay necessarily takes place. And there is no fixed time limit to this delay. The sender or encoder takes his own time in formulating the message. Then it takes quite some time for the message to reach the receiver or decoder. The receiver will take his own time in filtering it through his mind and responding to it. A priority announcement or telegram may get immediate response. Research reports, on the other extreme, will take weeks or months to prepare and will continue to communicate indefinitely through the file to which repeated references will be made.

(c)   The third salient feature of written communication is that it has fewer cycles than face-to-face oral communication. In oral communication there is multiple exchange of symbols, leading to multiple cycles. Most written communication is a one-cycle event. Usually a message is sent and received, and that is the end of the event. Of course, letters do lead to repeated cycles or communication exchanges. But they cannot compare with the quick succession of cycles involved in a dialogue or informal meeting.

(d)   thought out than oral communication that is based on spontaneous reaction to signs picked up from outside.

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(e)   The second salient feature of written communication is the time factor it involves. While in a face-to-face communication situation, the sender's encoded messages are instantaneously decoded by the receiver, in written communication some delay necessarily takes place. And there is no fixed time limit to this delay. The sender or encoder takes his own time in formulating the message. Then it takes quite some time for the message to reach the receiver or decoder. The receiver will take his own time in filtering it through his mind and responding to it. A priority announcement or telegram may get immediate response. Research reports, on the other extreme, will take weeks or months to prepare and will continue to communicate indefinitely through the file to which repeated references will be made.

(f)   The third salient feature of written communication is that it has fewer cycles than face-to-face oral communication. In oral communication there is multiple exchange of symbols,

leading to multiple cycles. Most written communication is a one-cycle event. Usually a message is sent and received, and that is the end of the event. Of course, letters do lead to repeated cycles or communication exchanges. But they cannot compare with the quick succession of cycles involved in a dialogue or informal meeting.

Written Communication in Business

Just as it is impossible to think of social life without oral communication, it is impossible to think of business or an organization without written communication. There are various reasons for it. In the first place, in an organization, people are too many to have face-to-face communication. They are generally spread over wide geographical distances, and are sometimes not even connected by telephone. The situation is changing fast. But, even then, exchange of letters remains as important as ever. Moreover, people have to function within defined limits of authority and responsibility. In the absence of written communication it will not be easy to determine responsibility. It is an essential part of any manager's responsibility to communicate on paper. Written communication is, in this way, an essential part of organizational life. Telephone, telex, fax machines have not in anyway affected the importance of letters. They have only changed the mode of transmission and made the exchange of letters or memos much faster. That is why written communication including letters, memoranda, agenda, manuals, handbooks, reports, etc, continues to flourish.

Advantages of Written Communication

(a) First and foremost, written communication has the advantage of providing records, references, etc. In the absence of ready reference, great confusion may be created and the working of the organization will virtually come to a halt.

(b) Maintenance of proper records, letters, reports and memos builds up legal defences of the organization. An organization ij like a living organism. And like any organism it is quite vulnerable to offence, both from within and from outside. Organizations usually have their legal advisors who cannot be of any help unless proper records are made available to them.

(c) Written communication promotes uniformity in policy and procedure. It is the only means of laying down clear guidelines for the working of the organization.

(d) Written communication gives access to a large audience through mass mailings. It is common practice on the part of well known organizations to reach out to people at large and win customers through wisely drafted 'mailshots' or unsolicited circulars. For example whenever a new brand of two-wheeler is introduced in the market, or a bank comes forward with some attractive deposit/investment scheme it manages to get names and addresses of all the members of an institution/organization offering them their services on easy terms.

(e) Good written communication builds up the organization's image. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the outgoing letters/messages of certain well known companies are cited as examples to be emulated.

(f) Written communication has the advantage of being accurate and unambiguous. Great care has to be taken in drafting any letter, memo or report so that the message is effectively conveyed. Oral communication may often give rise to confusion because every speaker has his own way of putting himself across. While speech is very personal, written communication rises above the person, especially in a business organization where precision is the law.

(g) As has been said in the beginning of this chapter, written communication is permanent. The growth of an organization is promoted, to a large extent, by reference to its old, well maintained records and minutes of the meetings.

(h) Written communication facilitates proper assignation of responsibilities. One may sometimes go back on words spoken, but not on his words put on paper. Moreover, the lower staff behaves more responsibly, and also feels secure, when communication is sent in writing.

Disadvantages of Written Communication

(a) Written communication creates mountains of paper cluttered around the premises of the organization. It is a common sight in offices, and the staff has tough time trying to handle it. Very often valuable papers get lost. The managers, therefore, have to be extra careful to keep sensitive material in his own custody.

(b) Written communication runs the risk of becoming ineffective in the hands of people otherwise good in their job, but poor in expression. That is why it is a serious concern of a modern organization to recruit people who are very good in expression, especially in letter and report writing ability.

(c) Written communication is mostly handicapped by its inability to get immediate feedback. Both encoding and transmission of the message take time, resulting in immediate delays. It is, therefore, a time-consuming process.

(d) Written communication is also a costly process. It costs a lot in terms of stationery and the number of people involved in typing and sending out letters.

(e) By the same logic it is costly in terms of the man-hours lost in taking dictation, typing, entering in the diary, dispatching etc. The same job can be done more efficiently and expeditiously by harnessing modern technology.

(f) Written communication has another disadvantage. If the receiver of a written message at a distance seeks some clarification, he cannot have it as quickly as he would like to. He will have to write back and wait for the reply to his query. Immediate clarification is not possible in exchange of written communication.

Conclusion

Whatever be the disadvantages of written communication, its importance cannot be denied. With all the modern technological advancement, written communication remains the backbone of

any organization. Almost all formal communication is in writing. Its percentage may be very small in comparison with the huge amount of informal oral communication. But no organization can do without it. Hence the importance of, and emphasis on, the executives' thorough training in written communication.

Key Points

(i)   Writing is not spontaneous like speech. It requires serious effort.

(ii) Written communication is a creative activity of the mind.

(iii) Written communication is time consuming.

(iv) Written communication has fewer cycles than face-to-face communication.

(v)   All business organizations depend on written communication.

(vi) Written communication has many advantages like permanence, legal validity, fixing of responsibilities, etc.

(vii) Written communication has also some disadvantages like huge costs in terms of money and time, lack of feedback and clarification, delay in transmission and so on.

(viii) However, written communication in indispensable.

Review Questions

1.   Discuss Bacon's statement : "Reading maketh a full man, writing an exact man, conference a ready man".

2.   Write a note on the salient features of written communication and show how it differs from oral communication.

3.   Imagine a situation in which a manager gives only oral instructions to his subordinates. What problems do you think can crop up in such a situation?

4.   How does an organization reach out to a large audience through written communication? Take a particular example of such a communication and discuss its impact on the receiver/ receivers.

5.   Take a manual/brochure/house magazine/circular of some well known company and discuss its merits in terms of effectiveness.

6.   Write, in your own words, a note on the advantages and disadvantages of written communication.

Notes

LESSON 7:
NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION :
KINESICS OR BODY LANGUAGE

Non Verbal Communication: Kinesics or Body Language

We know that man does not communicate through words alone, or only through writing, speaking and listening. There is another aspect of communication-the nonverbal (non-word) aspect. Depending on the situation we have to make a more or less conscious effort in the use/choice of words. The nonverbal part of communication, on the other hand, is less deliberate and conscious. But, compared to verbal communication it is very much more subtle and instructive. It also forms the larger part of the overall communication activity. On scientific analysis it has been found that the different aspects of communication account for percentages stated below:

Verbal communication - 7%

Bodily movements, gestures - 55%

Voice tone, inflection etc. - 38%

Non verbal communication, therefore, requires serious consideration. It can be defined as communication that involves neither written nor spoken words but takes place without the use of words. In it we are concerned with such things body movements, space, time, voice tone/pitch, general characteristics of the environment colour and layout/design, and any other kinds of visual and/or audio signals that the communicator may devise.

Since bodily movements, gestures etc. are so important for communication, they are being systematically studied as a sub area of nonverbal communication. It has been termed as 'Kinesics' that literally means 'body movements'. It stands for the way the body communicates without words, and through various movements of its parts.

Reflection Of Thought, Feelings And Position

In this connection it is important to point out that all bodily movements, postures, gestures etc. are guided by our thought processes, emotions etc. By nodding our head, blinking our eyes, waving our hands, shrugging our shoulders and various other ways we send out signals and messages that often speak louder than words. That is why this area of enquiry has been called 'body language'. Just as language uses sets of symbols to convey meaning, our body, consciously as well as unconsciously or instinctively, carries messages, attitudes, status relationships, moods, warmth/ indifference, positive/negative feelings and so on. We have, however, to infer these meanings from body symbols. We look for these symbols in the face and eyes, gestures, posture, and physical appearance each of which has its own functions.

Importance of Body Language

Regarding the importance of body language, management consultant Nancy Austin says. "When people don't know whether to believe what they are hearing or what they are seeing, they go with the body language-it tells the truth. You can play fast and loose with words, but it's much more difficult to do that with gestures". Psychologist Paul Ekman says, "We talk with our vocal cords, but we communicate with our facial expressions, our tone of voice, our whole body".

Understanding body language has immense practical use. In this regard educational psychologist Marilyn Maple says, "When you can consciously 'read' what others are saying unconsciously, you can deal with issues-at work and at home-before they become problems". It has been observed that most of the nonverbal communication at workplace centres on a single theme: power, and power gives one status consciousness. On careful-observation, in a meeting, we can look around and see who has the highest status. In every species and society, those who are in control try to appear large, strong and fearless. Those who feel left out, or find themselves powerless, give out different kinds of body signals.

Professor Albert Mehrabian has very aptly illustrated this point by giving the example of officer- soldier relationship in army. He says, "Status manifests itself subtly in a relaxed posture and way of interacting. The classic example is the soldier standing at attention in the presence of a superior officer. His body is extremely tense and in perfect symmetry-signs of subservience". Almost the same situation prevails in any other organization when a junior worker has to appear in the presence of a senior executive/officer. It is their status and role-relationship that is reflected in this way.

Facial Expression

A popular saying goes like this. "The face is the index of the heart". Whatever we feel deep within ourselves is rat once reflected in the face. It is very important in any face-to-face communication event. We convey such a lot without speaking a word. For example, let us consider the facial expressions generally associated with happiness, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, bewilderment, astonishment and contentment. Let us also consider a smile, different kinds of smile, a frown, corners of lips, the position of the eye brows, the cheeks-whether drawn up or back or drooping, the jaw, nose/ nostrils and the chin. We can easily mark all the signals sent through these parts of the face by others and observe our own expressions by looking at ourselves in a mirror. The thoughts and feelings conveyed may be positive or negative. It follows, then, that we can change our behaviour/expression by changing the inner nature. But it is not easy. Much depends on how deeply motivated we are and what constructive efforts we make to stay calm and relaxed, and send out positive signals to make the best of every given situation. Every facial muscle is an instrument of communication.

Eye Contact

Every one knows that eye contact is of paramount importance in all face-to-face communication. When we look at somebody's face we focus primarily on his eyes and try to understand what he means. The eyes, along with the eyebrows, eyelids and the size of pupils convey our innermost feelings. Eyebrows and eyelids raised and combined with dilated pupils tell us that the person is excited, surprised or frightened. On the other hand, eyebrows with upper and lower eyelids closed and combined with constricted pupils tell us that the person is angry or in pain. These are the most familiar eye patterns.

Along with these eye patterns, eye contact and eye movements are also meaningful. Looking at somebody for a long time shows the intensity of our interest in him. If the eye contact is brief, or we take our eyes off the person very soon, it indicates nervousness or embarrassment on our part. Of course, eye contact and eye movements convey-their meaning in combination with other facial expressions.

Gestures

In addition to facial expressions and eye contact, other parts of our body move in a very meaningful manner. These movements are called gestures-i.e., the physical movements of arms, legs, hands, torso and head. They play a very important role in conveying meaning without using words. For example, pounding fist on a table shows 'anger', a fore-finger held high above the head shows 'Number I ' and a fore-finger and a thumb touching to form a circle stands for 'OK'. In the same way, arms spread apart convey the meaning of 'wide', shuffling from one leg to another means 'nervous' and a torso erect and extended, slightly forward, has been interpreted as 'intense'.

It is important to note that gestures are not used individually but in relation to another person, and acquire meaning at particular times. That particular time, in an interpersonal situation, may be at the beginning, middle or end of a communication event. Speaking, for example, seems to be necessarily linked with gesturing. It has been observed that intensity of speech is directly associated with the size of a gesture. The greater the gesture, the louder the speech. Speech and gestures go together, and, therefore, have to be properly coordinated. In the absence of speech gesture coordination, we experience confusion and discomfort.

Head, Body Shape and Posture

In any face-to-face communication or meeting or interview the way we hold our head is very important. Everybody is aware of the age old saying, "Hold your head high". It is a sign of honour and self respect, confidence, integrity and interest in the person/persons before us. A head bent low, de- pending upon the situation, would show modesty, politeness or diffidence. On the other extreme a head drawn too far backwards or stiffly held straight up indicates pride or haughtiness. Head jerks indicate insolence, rejection or agreement, depending upon the context and personality of the per- son concerned. Nodding the head side ways or back and forth conveys the intended meaning more eloquently than words.

Behavioral scientists have studied the shapes of our bodies and have broadly put them in the following three types:

(a) Ectomorph : thin, youthful and tall.

(b) Mesomorph : strong, athletic, muscular, and bony.

(c) Endomorph : fat, round and soft.

We cannot do much about the shape of our body, but we can no doubt put it to effective use. Both our body shape and posture affect what we think about ourselves, how we relate to others and how others relate to us or respond to our moves. Mostly we act spontaneously, whether we meet a friend or participate in a meeting. But we do become self-conscious while appearing for an interview or making a presentation. On such an occasion we try to make the best possible impression. The effort itself may make the posture awkward. Leaning forward or backward, standing or sitting erect, slouching haphazardly or bending sideways-all these postures make an immediate impression on the other person's mind.

Appearance

Appearance, for our purpose, includes clothing, hair, jewellery, cosmetics etc. All these may seem unrelated to body language. But on having a closer look we find that they are very meaning-fully related to our face, eyes, gestures, posture etc.

A famous writer has said that a man is recognized by his "dress and address". "Dress" does not need any explanation. By address he means the way a person speaks to others. Every occasion has its own particular type of dress. It may be formal or informal. It is normally a part of an organization's work rules to have a formal suit or combination of jacket and trousers for the working hours. Certain organizations have a uniform for all levels of workers. If one changes from the formal dress to informal or casual he is easily noticed, and his dress speaks volumes about his attitude to life, to work, to his colleagues and his own feelings. That is also the reason why invitation cards to formal occasions like cocktails, receptions, dinners etc. convey instructions regarding the dress the guests are expected to appear in.

It is not just the dress or clothes that are important for any occasion but also shoes, hair style, perfume etc that convey 'meaning' in nonverbal form.

Effective Use of Body Language

If Kinesics or body language is so important, the question is-how to make effective use of it. Given below are some useful tips in this regard:

(a) ***Mind the body-talk :*** In our day-to-day communication we should carefully notice details about the way we speak, gesture and move. When standing we should keep our shoulders erect, our body open and our weight evenly balanced on both feet. But we should guard against giving the appearance of a ramrod-straight posture. Such a stiff posture shows rigidity in thought.

We should carefully identify the little things that people do when they are tense. Some people play with their lock of hair or a pen in their hand. Such behaviour, according to a psychologist, undermines the strength of what we want to say.

In order to look confident and in charge we should sit squarely in a chair, feet on the floor and shoulders straight, Austin says, "Rest your forearms on the table. This posture conveys the message 'I will not move". If we slouch or jiggle our feet, we will give the impression of being indifferent, uninterested or distressed. If possible, we can ask a friend videotape us so that we can see our selves as others do.

(b) Be careful with the handshake : In the business world, handshake is very important. It conveys crucial messages about power, status and concern for the person we meet. The handshake that really conveys confidence is firm and dry, with strong but not excessive pressure. Bending the-wrist or gripping only the fingers gives wrong signals.

(c) Establish good eye contact: According to Austin, "Eye contact is the most remembered element in forming an impression of someone. You must acquire the ability to sustain direct eye contact if you want to be taken seriously."

There is, however, a word of caution given in this regard. According to another psychologist Ekman "the dominant person always has the right to look and keep looking: the subordinate is supposed to look away. If you maintain eye contact so intently that your boss feels uncomfortable, he will sense that you're challenging his authority-even if that is not what you intended".

(d) Communicate at the level of the person before you: The way we hold our body can show the person before us where we-and he/they-stand. If we fold our arms across our chest or cross our legs while we talk, we are closing off communication. If we tap our foot/feet, it shows that we are impatient. With young children we should kneel or bend dawn so that we are able to look into their eyes. With older people' we should lean against a wall or counter, put our weight on one foot and keep our arms at our side so as to appear open to their needs. With people in higher position a straight posture shows respect.

(e) We must be ourselves : Maple says, "Non-verbal messages come from deep inside you, from your sense of self-esteem. To improve your body language, you have to start from inside and work out. If you're comfortable with yourself, it shows. People who know who they are have a relaxed way of talking and moving. They always come across well." So, avoiding all tension, we must relax and be ourselves, not try to be, or show off to be, what we are not.

(f) Graceful movements and confident posture improve the atmosphere at the workplace: With only a little care we can look pleasant, send out right signals, enthuse the workers and make the other people interested in us.

Advantages of Body Language

(a) Body language is the most easily visible aspect of communication. It, therefore, helps the receiver of the message in decoding the message.

(b) Body language complements verbal communication. Specially in face-to-face communication, no message can be completely sent across without the accompaniment of facial expressions and gestures. It helps in establishing rapport.

(c) Body language adds intensity to the process of communication. In the absence of any gestures, change of posture, proper eye contact any face-to-face communication will look bland or insipid.

(d) Because people care for body language it goes a long way to improve the overall atmosphere and looks of the organization. A resourceful manager can make very effective use of it.

Limitations of Body Language

(a) Since it is nonverbal communication, relying on facial expressions, gestures etc. it cannot be wholly relied on. Words written or spoken can be taken seriously, but body language cannot always be taken seriously.

(b) People belonging to different cultural back grounds send out different body signals. They are, therefore, liable to be misinterpreted. One has, therefore, to be very careful in their use and understanding.

(c) Facial expressions, gestures, postures etc. become ineffective if the listener is inattentive. It, therefore, requires extra care in getting the right message.

(d) Use of body language is not very effective in large gatherings. It is effective in face-to-face situation, that means there are just two or a small number of participants in the communication situation.

Key Points

(i) Body language accounts for more than half of all communication.

(ii) All body language is a reflection of our thoughts, feelings and our position in the organization.

(iii) Body language is very important in the sense that we can carefully watch it and deal with issues before they become problems.

(iv) Body language works through facial expression, eye contact, gestures, head position, body shape, posture and appearance.

(v) Effective use of body language is very important for managing an organization and dealing with people in any situation.

(vi) Like all aspects/media of communication, body language has its own advantages and limitations. It's greatest advantage is that it complements verbal oral communication. Its greatest disadvantage is that it can be misinterpreted

Points to Ponder

• What happens if you are a quiet non expressive person?

• Does it mean that you at a disadvantage to lead the team or be a part of team?

• At an interview, body language plays an important role. Is it true?

Group Discussion

Case study

Mr. Sen is a bright and well-respected employee but at the same time a difficult person to deal with. He has come to you agitated armed with a list of complaints. You, as the head of the department, has to convince him of the new way of working that you have introduced and which neither Mr Sen nor majority in the department have accepted too well.

Think of a strategy as to how you will manage to convince him through oral, written and non-verbal communication.

Divide the class into groups to list out gestures and body/facial expressions which reflect different moods and emotions.

Example.

anger- stress……clenched teeth

                clenched fists

                tight lips

                biting nails

Review Questions

1. What do you mean by 'kinesics' or body language? Discuss its various aspects in detail.

2. Write a note on the statement, "You can't not communicate".

3. How does a man's way of sitting reflect his position, state of mind and feelings?

4. "You can play fast and loose with words but, it's much more difficult to do that with gestures". Discuss this statement in the context of a meeting you have attended.

5. What do you mean by the saying, "The face is the index of the heart"?

6. Write a detailed note on eye-contact.

7. Discuss speech-gesture coordination in the light of this chapter.

8. How can we make effective use of body language?

9. Discuss in detail the advantages and limitations of body language

10. Write short notes on (a) stiff standing body position; (b) constant gaze; (c) firm hand shake; (d) tapping of feet; (e) nodding.

(9) Discuss the statement - "First understand, then be understood".

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Notes

LESSON 8:
NATURE, ORIGIN AND ART OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Technical Writing

Objectives

Technical Writing students will be able to:

1. Act ethically in their role in the communication situation.

2. Act critically as they apply principles taught in the course to communication situations.

3. Evaluate the rhetorical context of a given writing situation and write accordingly Included in this evaluation are adapting to the communication situation by analyzing the audience, the writer's role, and the appropriate ethical dimensions.

4. Apply concepts of information design These concepts include effective ways to design documents for print, web, and other electronic means of communication in order to construct documents meaningful to the audience.

5. Effectively create standard formats used to construct meaningful documents.
   These formats include genres such as various kinds of reports, sets of instructions, letters and memos, and various electronic genres.

6. Use visual items in effectively constructing meaning in communication situations .These items include, but are not limited to, tables and graphs, photographs, drawings and schematics, and various electronic creations such as screen captures.

7. Effectively negotiate the process of completing technical documents.
   These processes include planning, drafting, editing and revising to quality standards, and, where appropriate, usability testing, research methods and appropriate citation of sources.

8. Recognize and accommodate global concepts.
   These concepts include localization, translation, and globalization.

9. Create clear, concise technical documents that effectively use style and grammar and information structure in ways that create meaning with the reader.

10. Collaborate effectively in various writing situations, including planning, creating, managing, evaluating, editing and revising document production

You're probably wondering what this "technical writing thing" is. Someone may even have told you, "it's this course where they make you write about rocket science and brain surgery." Well, not really . . . . Actually, the field of technical communications is a fully professional field with degree programs, certifications, and—yes!—even theory. It's a good field with a lot of growth and income potential; and an introductory technical-writing course for which this book has been developed is a good way to start if you are interested in a career in this field.

However, the focus for technical-writing courses is not necessarily career as a technical writer but an introduction to the kinds of writing skills you need in practically any technically oriented professional job. No matter what sort of professional work you do, you're likely to do lots of writing—and much of it technical in nature. The more you know about some basic technical-writing skills, which are covered in this guide and in technical-writing courses, the better job of writing you're likely to do. And that will be good for the projects you work on, for the organizations you work in, and—most of all—good for you and your career.

Technical communications—or technical writing, as the course is often called—is not writing about a specific technical topic such as computers, but about any technical topic. The term "technical" refers to knowledge that is not widespread, that is more the territory of experts and specialists. Whatever your major is, you are developing an expertise—you are becoming a specialist in a particular technical area. And whenever you try to write or say anything about your field, you are engaged in technical communications.

Another key part of the definition of technical communications is the receiver of the information—the audience. Technical communications is the delivery of technical information to readers (or listeners or viewers) in a manner that is adapted to their needs, level of understanding, and background. In fact, this audience element is so important that it is one of the cornerstones of this course: you are challenged to write about highly technical subjects but in a way that a beginner—a nonspecialist—could understand. This ability to "translate" technical information to nonspecialists is a key skill to any technical communicator. In a world of rapid technological development, people are constantly falling behind and becoming technological illiterates. Technology companies are constantly struggling to find effective ways to help customers or potential

customers understand the advantages or the operation of their new products.

So relax! You don't have to write about computers or rocket science-write about the area of technical specialization you know or are learning about. And plan to write about it in such a way that even Grandad can understand!

The basic principle of technical writing is simple: Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Then, tell them what you've told them.

Why am I telling you this? Because, like it or not, documentation is part of programming. Good documentation will make your life substantially easier. Consider this - even if you know your code inside and out without documentation, others may not. Would you prefer that every user pesters you with questions, or that your documentation is take care of that, leaving you time to code in peace?

Obviously, if you're the only person working on a project, it's unlikely you'll hire a technical writer to create in depth documentation. In such a case, you'll end up doing the documentation yourself. If you work in an environment in which documentation is farmed out to a technical writer, don't think you're off the hook.

Principles of Technical Writing

Five steps to successful technical writing:

1. Preparation
2. Research
3. Organization
4. Writing a draft
5. Revision

In the next few sections I will go through these steps in more detail, with an eye to highlighting points particularly relevant to software documentation.

Preparation

Writing requires preparation. You can think of this step as being broken down into four tasks:

- Establishing the purpose of the document
- Assessing the audience
- Determining the scope
- Selecting the appropriate medium

Let's look at this document. Before I sat down to write this tutorial, I asked myself some questions.

Who is the audience and what do I know about them?

The audience is the person or people who will read your document. The more you clarify your understanding of their expectations, Knowledge, and beliefs, the better you can write to them. Ask yourself

- Who will read this document?
- How much do they know about the topic
- What are their beliefs about the topic?
- What will they do about the document?
- What form do they expect the document to have?

Knowing your audience will help to create the document that they can use to recreate the message for themselves.

What is the scope?

The purpose of documentation is to convey information. In

order to convey information, you must understand it. In this case we are talking about your code, so hopefully you understand it - but can you explain it?

If you have worked with a technical writer, you have undoubtedly faced a barrage of questions. "What does this do?" "What does that do?" "How does one...?" This is research. It is necessary. You can help it along by commenting your code. The expertise of technical writers varies widely. Some are expert coders themselves. Others may not have expertise beyond their tools of the trade. In any case, having comments in your code will help their research and reduce the amount of time they spend pestering you.

How should you comment your code? In The Art of Code Documentation Drew Sikora distinguishes between commenting for developers and commenting a finished program. When your code is still being developed, it is likely being read only by other developers. In this case, simple comments are fine. When code is finished, comments should be expanded into documentation so that users or future developers can get up to speed with what you were thinking when you were developing the program.

If you are not working with a technical writer, you will need to take on more of the research. You may understand your code, but do you understand how the modules used in your code work? What will users of your program need to know about what the program does? Keep in mind the answers to your questions from the preparation stage.

Organization

Poorly organized documentation may in fact be worse than no documentation. Consider what you need to tell users, and how that information can best be conveyed. For example, if you're writing installation instructions for a program, you will want to go with a sequential method of development: step 1, step 2, and so on. If you're writing a history of versions, use a chronological method of development. Choose the method that best suits your subject, your readers, and your purpose.

In software, often used methods of development are division and classification (explain each parts function and how the parts work together) and general-to-specific. In general-to-specific development, you begin with general information about the function of the software, and move to more specific information.

Once you've decided on an organization scheme, prepare an outline. This provides a road map for your writing. How you outline is a personal choice. Personally, I use an iterative approach: I start with a very broad outline, such as

I then go through my outline and break categories into sub-categories and sub-sub-categories until I feel I have a clear enough map. For example, I broke the Preparation category up in this manner:

- Purpose
- Audience
- Scope
- Medium

Writing a Draft

Once you have your outline, you can begin writing. Expand your outline into paragraphs. Some advise not worrying about matters such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, and layout at this point. Personally, I find it difficult to follow this advice. I usually write fairly polished drafts. Regardless of your tactic, you will be revising your work in the next step.

You may wish to save the introduction for last, since you will have a better idea of what is covered in the body of the document. You will also need to write a conclusion to your document - remember the basic rule of technical writing:

Tell them what you're going to tell them. (Introduction)
Tell them. (Body)
Tell them what you've told them. (Conclusion)

Revision

Revision is one of the longest steps of this process. In my technical writing text, there's a checklist for all five steps of the writing process. The first four fit on the first page, and revision takes up a page of its own.

When revising, check for completeness and accuracy. Check that your writing is concise, and covers a topic clearly. Check your spelling and grammar. Use spell check, but don't use it as a substitute for proof-reading. Review the mechanics: are abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms expanded at their first usage?

Don't do your revision in one step. I'm sure many of you have had the experience of spending hours looking for a bug in your code. You give up, frustrated, and the next day come back to see the problem staring out at you, as if in boldface. Likewise, having someone proofread your work is a good idea. How many times have you been frustrated by a bug, only to get a quick response from someone else pointing out the problem? The same thing works for revision.

Conclusion

You may regard documentation as a chore. You may regard it as an opportunity to learn. Regardless, you do need to document your code. In this tutorial, I've presented the steps used in technical writing/documentation: preparation, research, organization, writing, and revision.

In preparation, key points discussed were: establishing the purpose, assessing the audience, determining the scope, and selecting the appropriate medium. The research section covered the reasons for research and strategies for commenting code. In organization, methods of development used in software documentation were introduced: sequential, chronological, division and classification, and general-to-specific. Outlining was also discussed. Finally, strategies for writing and revision were covered.

Technical-writing introduces you to some of the most important aspects of writing in the world of science, technology, and business—in other words, the kind of writing that scientists, nurses, doctors, computer specialists, government officials, engineers, and other such people do as a part of their regular work.

To learn how to write effectively for the world of work, you'll study common types of reports, special format items such as lists and headings, simple techniques for putting graphics into reports, and some techniques for producing professional-looking final copy.

Technical-writing courses build on what you've learned in other writing courses. But there's lots that is new to learn!

Points to Ponder

- Documentation is not only a reflection of your writing skill but it reflects your organized mind as well.
- Documentation is complete when parts of the written matter is represented visually through graphs.

Group Discussion

Case Study

You have been asked to give a report to Government of Uttaranchal on the cultivation of medicinal plants and their use.

- What kind of preparation will you need?
- Who would you need to meet for your research?
- Who would be your "audience" for writing the draft?
- While revising, what are the important points that you will need to remember?

Notes

LESSON 9:
CHARACTERISTICS OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Characteristics of Technical Writing

This unit is intended to communicate some of the concepts taught in such a class to those who have not had the opportunity of taking one. It is a summary of some of the most important information found in most technical writing classes and texts. This is intended to be a reference to help you develop your writing style to a professional level It is recommended that this lecture be used as a starting point in making this transition. For more information on any of the topics discussed, please consult the references provided at the end of the unit

Purpose
There are two general purposes for technical writing:

- To inform (reports, instructions, descriptions)
- To provide the audience with factual information
- To persuade (proposals, recommendations)
- To convince the audience to draw the desired conclusions from the provided information

To inform
- Remain as concise as possible.
- Explain ideas in enough detail to make it understandable to your audience.
- "Given to new" method – For each new piece of information tie it in to knowledge the audience already has.

To Persuade
- Try to remain, or appear to remain, as objective as possible.
- Appeal to logic, not emotion.
- Provide evidence for all arguments
- Answer the question "Why?"
- "Why is this important?", "Why is this beneficial?", "Why is this a problem?"

Audience
- Just as you have a purpose in writing, your audience has a purpose in reading.
- Your goal is to ensure that the ideas you have when writing are the same ideas that your audience has when reading.
- Determine who your audience is so you can focus in on as small a group as possible.
- The broader the audience, the larger the chance that the same information will be interpreted in different ways.

How to Determine your Audience
- Do this by considering the following questions.
- What is their area and level of education?
- What is their knowledge of your subject?
- What is their position?

- What is their demographic information?
- What is the relationship or status that exists between your audience and yourself?

Style and Diction
- There are two fundamentals to increasing the probability that your audience will interpret your work as you intended.
- Be clear.
- Be concise.

Clarity
- Avoid ambiguous pronoun reference.
- Avoid ambiguous modifiers.
- Break up long noun strings.
- Prefer the active voice
- When to use the passive voice
- Avoid nominalizations
- Maintain parallelism
- Use transition words
- Use intelligent repetition
- Ambiguous
- Our terminal patients enjoy the warm days while they last.
- Clear
- While the warm days last, our terminal patients enjoy them.
- Avoid ambiguous modifiers

Ambiguous
Only press the red button in an emergency.

Clear
In an emergency, press the red button only.

Break up long noun strings

Complex
Surplus production energy capacity price fluctuation control policies seem doomed to failure.

Clear
The policies for controlling price fluctuations caused by surplus production in energy capacity seem doomed to failure.

Prefer the Active Voice
Active voice sentences clearly state who the actor is and what the actor is doing.

Unclear
The formula was discovered by the scientist.

Or
The formula was discovered.

Clear

The scientist discovered the formula.

When to use the passive voice

When the actor is commonly known

When the actor is irrelevant When telling what you did in a report or other document (excluding introduction and conclusion.)

When telling what you did in a report or other document (excluding introduction and conclusion.)

Say "The two wires were connected" not "I connected the two wires."

But still say "The second method produced better results" not "Better results were produced by the second method."

Avoid nominalizations

Nominalizations are verbs that are turned into nouns. Ex. reduce ??reduction

Unclear

The new system lead to a reduction in costs.

Clear

The new system reduced costs.

Maintain Parallelism

Parallelism is putting related ideas into the same form.

Nonparallel

Tungsten steel alloys are tough, ductile, and have a great deal of strength.

Parallel

Tungsten steel alloys are tough, ductile, and strong.

Use Transition Words

Use transitions words to combine thoughts between sentences.

These words make the flow smoother and the transition less abrupt.

However

Therefore

Although

Additionally

FurthermoreUse

 intelligent repetition

Don't use different words to represent the same idea

Unclear

Land deterioration is a major problem today. Many causes of such degradation exist.

Clear

Land deterioration is a major problem today. Many causes of such deterioration exist.

Concision

Eliminate redundancy

Write positively

Paragraph often

Use reasonable sentence length

Limit "to be" verbs

Delete meaningless words

Delete doubled words

Delete redundant categories

Reduce phrases to words

Remove words that can be inferred from another.

Positive

Write positively. It usually takes more words to convey the same idea in a negative form than in a positive form.

Negative

Do not write negatively.

Paragraph Often

Paragraph often to break up dense text.

A good rule of thumb is 60-100 words for an average paragraph.

Use Reasonable Sentence Length

Keep sentences so that readers don't have to remember too much information to understand the sentence.

- Most sentences average 20 words.
- If a sentence is exceeding 40 words, try to find a way to break it up into smaller sentences.

Limit "to be"Verbs

- Limit the use of conjugations of the verb "to be."

Wordy

It was the second method that we used.

Concise

We used the second method.

Delete meaningless words

- Avoid words that do not add any meaning to a sentence.
- Basically
- Generally
- Kind of
- Actually

The picture was kind of blurry.

means the same as

The Picture was Blurry.

Delete Doubled Words

- Do not use word pairs that mean the same thing.
- Delete redundant categories
- Many words imply their category.
- Don't restate the category after such words.
- Reduce phrases to words
- Many phrases can be expressed in fewer words or even in a single word.
- For this reason ??so

- Due to the fact that ??because
- At a much greater rate than ??faster
- Despite the fact that ??although
- A great deal of ??much

Organization

- One of the surest ways to confuse a reader is to have a poor organizational scheme.
- Choose the organizational method based on the document being written and the information going into it.
- The three most common methods are:
- Chronological

Deductive

- Inductive
- Chronological
- A chronological scheme organizes information based on the time of occurrence.
- Chronological organization is usually used in describing processes or giving instructions.

Deductive

- Deductive organization is also known as division.
- Start with the larger ideas and break them down into smaller parts.
- General specific

Inductive

- Inductive organization is also known as classification.
- Start with the smaller ideas and build the larger ideas out of these smaller ones.
- Specific general

Notes

LESSON 10:
TECHNICAL WRITING STYLE

Technical Writing Style

To communicate well through your writing, you need your idea more easily. To develop this style takes time and practice. As you practice, you will better understand what to do as you create drafts and what to look for as you revise drafts. You will develop standards by which to judge your own writing. This lecture explains those standards.

The following sections present guidelines for writing clear sentences and paragraphs, revising for clarity, choosing a tone, and organizing clearly.

Write Clear Sentences for Your Reader

As you generate your drafts, keep in mind these guidelines, which will help you write clear sentences;

- Place the main idea first
- Use normal word order
- Use the active voice.
- Employ parallelism.
- Write sentences of 12 to 25 words.
- Use there are sparingly.
- Avoid normalizations.

Place the Main Idea First

To put the main idea first is a key principle for writing sentences that are easy to understand. Place the sentence's main idea – its subject – first. The subject make the rest of the sentence accessible. Readers relate subjects to their own ideas (their schema) and thus orient themselves. After readers know the topic, they are able to grasp the complexities you develop.

Note the difference between the following two sentences. In the first, the main idea, "three piece of equipment," comes near the end. The sentence is difficult to understand. In the second, the main idea is stated first making the rest of the sentence easier to grasp.

A heaving line, which is a coiled line or rope; a heaving jug, which is a plastic container such as milk or bleach bottle with a half-inch of water in it to give it buoyancy and a line or rope connected to it; and a ring buoy and **Main idea is last** line are three piece of equipment used to tow victims to shore.

Three pieces of equipment used to tow victims to shore **Main idea is first** are a heaving line, which is a coiled line or rope; a heaving jug, which is plastic container such as a milk or bleach bottle with a half-inch of water in it to give it buoyancy; and a ring buoy and line.

Use Normal Word Order

The normal word order is English is subject-verb-object. This order makes reading easier, because it reveals the topic first and then develops the idea for the readers. That order also usually produces the clearest, most concise sentences.

Normal Modems transmit data between two computers.

Inverted Data between two computers is transmitted by modems.

Use the Active Voice

The active voice emphasizes the performer of he action rather than the receiver. The active voice helps readers grasp ideas easily because it adheres to the subject – verb- object pattern and it put the performer of the action first. When the subject acts, the verb is in the active voice ("I wrote the memo"). When the subject is acted upon, the verb is in the passive voice ("The memo was written me").

Change Passive to Active

To change a verb from the passive to the active voice, follow these guidelines:

- Move the person acting out of a prepositional phrase.

Passive   The memo was sent by the manager.

Active   The manager sent the memo.

- Supply a subject (a person or an agent)

Passive   Any loose bubbles can be detected in this way.

Active   You can detect any loose bubbles in this way.

- Substitute an active verb for a passive one.

Passive   The heated water is sent into the chamber

Active   The heated water flows into the chamber

Use The Passive If It Is Accurate

The passive voice is sometimes more accurate; for instance, it is properly used to show that a situation is typical or usual or to avoid an accusation

Typical situation   *The robot is used in repetitive activities.*

Needs no agent

Active verb   *Companies use robots in repetitive activities.*

Requires an

Unnecessary agent(companies)

Active accuses   *You violated the ethics code by doing that*

Passive avoids   *That could be interpreted as a violation of the ethics* code accusing

The passive voice can also be used to emphasize a certain word.

Ex.:T*he ink is forced through the stencil by a squeegee*

Emphasize ink

Use active to   *A squeegee forces the ink through the stencil.*

Emphasize squeegee

Employ Parallelism

Using parallelism means to use similar structure for similar elements. Careful writers use parallel structure for coordinate elements – elements with equal value in a sentence. Coordinate elements are connected by coordinating conjunctions (and, but,

or, nor, or yet so) or are words, phrases, or clauses that appear in a series. In the following sentence the italicized words make up a series.

Technical writers crate memos, proposals, and manuals.

If coordinate elements in a sentence are not treated in the same way, the sentence is awkward and confusing.

Faulty   Managers guarantee that they will replace the old system and to consider the new proposal.

Parallel   Managers guarantee that they will replace the old system and that they will consider the new proposal.

Faulty   Use the cylinder with a diameter of 3 3/16 inches and 1 ½ inches high.

Parallel   Use the cylinder with a diameter of 3 3/16 inches and 1 ½ inches high

Write Sentences of 12 to 25 Words

An easy-to-read sentence is 12 to15 words long. Shorter and longer sentences are weaker because they become too simple or too complicated. However, this is only a rule of thumb. Longer sentences, especially those exhibiting parallel construction, can be easy to grasp. Note that the first of the following sentences is harder to understand not just because it is long; it also ignores the dictum of putting the main idea first. The revision is easier to red because the sentences are shorter and the main idea is introduced immediately.

One sentence,   Low-margin merchandise that is sold at discount operations

40 words long   like bullseye, Quickstop, and Herms consists of items that retailers buy in large quantities so that the company can afford to sell the products to consumers at prices that are substantially low

Two sentences,   Low-margin merchandise consists of items that retailers buy in large quantities to sell at substantially reduced prices. This long merchandise is sold at discount operations like Bulleye, Quickstop, and Herms.

Use There Are Sparingly

Overuse of the indefinite phrase there are and its many related forms (there is, there will be, and so on) weakens sentences by "burying" the subject in the middle of the sentence. Most sentences are more effective if the subject is placed first.

Ineffective   There are 22 different container sizes that lie in this range.

Effective   This ranger includes 22 different container sizes.

Use there is for emphasis or to avoid the verb exists.

Weak   No easy answers exist.

Stronger   There are no easy answers.

Avoid Nominalizations

Avoid using too many nominalizations – verbs turned into nouns by adding a suffix such as –ion, ity, -,ment, or –ness. Nominalizations weaken sentences by presenting he action as a static noun rather than as an active verb. These sentences often eliminate a sense of agent, thus making the idea harder for a

reader to grasp. Learn to find the true action in your sentences and express it with strong verbs. Almost all computer style checkers highlight nominalizations as areas of concern.

Static   Research showed the division of waste products into biodegrad able and nonbiogradable substances.

Active   Research showed that we can divide waste products into Biodegradable and nonbiodegradable substances.

Static   Determination of this percentage figure calls for an analyzation Of various errors and failures that occurred in planned purchases and in allowances on merchandise given to employees.

Active   Determine this percentage figure by analyzing the errors that Occurred in planned purchases and in allowances on merchan dise given to employees.

Exercises

Passive Sentences Make the following passive sentences active.

1.   Water from the storage drum is sent to the working drum leaving some water in the storage drum.

2.   keeping a desired overpressure is accomplished by using a pressure-drop control valve.

3.   When the display has been notate and is no longer needed, press the R/S button to proceed with the program.

4.   Tests are specified in the military's purchasing documents for the pouched meals; they include 27 dimensional checks on pouches.

5.   Recently, it was determined that the purchase of a personal computer was needed.

Parallel Structure   Revise the following sentences making their co-ordinates elements parallel.

1.   it serves the purpose of pulling the sheet off the coil and to straigten or guide the sheet though the rest of the machine.

2.   The two main functions of the tractor are supplying the necessary power to pull the load and to provide steering to guide the vehicle.

3.   The seven steps in selling are (1)opening, (2)present merchandise, (3)handling, (4)to complete the sale, (5)suggesting, (6)record made of he sale, (7)finalize sale.

4.   The student will be changing saw blades frequently for two main reasons; because of full blades, and the need for special bladed for different cutting operations.

5.   The features that favor the Johnson receiver include more durability, better noise reduction, and it is more efficient.

Avoid use of There Are

1.   There are six basic requirements that blister material must fulfill.

2.   Before you start to sew with the machine, there are a few steps which one may or should follow.

3.   With more shops being installed, there should be more traffic generated.

4. There are claims made by both companies that their computer are easy to learn and easy to use.

5. There are safety glasses that are in the drawer that you should use.

Nominalization   Correct the nominalizations in the following sentences.

1. The capacity for an operator, in one day, for reconditioning plugs, is about 400.

2. For a successful business, the satisfaction of the customer's needs at a profit must be done by the company.

3. The two workers accomplished the division of the material into two piles.

4. The process we use to accomplish these objectives is through the concise description of limitations, the investigation of alternatives, and the establishment of communication channels.

5. Avoidance of tooling costs is accomplished if you pick a stock size.

Revise For Clarity

As you revise draft, you should look for language that might cause confusion and make your writing harder to grasp. The following section will help you develop an awareness of many constructions that cause imprecise, difficult-to-read sentences. Although you may produce some of these constructions in your early drafts, you must learn to identify and change them. You should also review Appendix A, which outlines basic fault in sentence structure.

Avoid Strings of Choppy Sentences

Language is considered sexist when the word choice suggest only one sex even though both are intended. Careful writers rewrite sentences to avoid usages that are insensitive and, in most cases, inaccurate. Several strategies will help you write smooth, nonsexist sentences. Avoid such clumsy phrases s he/she and s/he. An occasional he or she is acceptable, but a number of them in a short space undermines the continuity of a passage.

Sexist   *The clerk must take sure that he punches in.*

Revise by using   *The clerk must make sure to punch in.*
An infinitive

Revise by using   *The clerk must make sure that they punch in.*
The plural

Becoming more acceptable in some informal writing is this common spoken usage:

Everyone will bring their special dish to the company potluck.

Here their, which is plural, refers to everyone, which is singular but has a group quality.

Exercise

Choppiness   Eliminate the choppiness in the following sentences.

1. The impellers are jam free. They pivot on a turntable. Their name implies their shape. It is like blades of a rotor.

2. The computer is an Icon glow. It is 7 years old. It does not have sufficient RAM. No new program will run on it.

3. The taste test is important in food development. The test is run by lab technician. The technicians are supervised by a sensory evaluator.

Wordiness   Revise the following sentences, removing unnecessary words.

1. In caring for your blender, you should remember to care for it like you would any other electrical appliance.

2. When preparing the fabric, it is wise to clean and treat the fabric, depending on the type of fabric, in the same manner as the finished garment would be cleaned, to remove this residue.

3. The plate is supported again by a thick wire that extends down into a connecting pin in the base, and the exact position of he pin is the pin next to the notch in the base.

Use of You   Correct the use of you in the following sentences.

1. The operator of the grain spout can maneuver it to deliver grain anywhere in the barge hold. You adjust the spout to compensate for changes in water level.

2. The Docu Data is also an integrated program controlled by menus and commands. However, your flow control is poor.

3. In the microwave the aluminum heats up the oil and pops the popcorn. This process is where you get your increase in efficiency because you are using the heat to pop the popcorn.

Write Clear Paragraphs For Your Reader

A paragraph consists of several sentences introduced by a topic sentence. The topic sentence expresses the paragraph's central idea, and the remaining sentences develop, explain, and support the central idea. You will make the reader's job easier if n constructing paragraphs you place the old, known, or topic-setting idea first and then provide new developments. Readers comprehend paragraphs with this structure more quickly (Slater). Place the topic sentence first and structure paragraphs coherently, making each sentence expand on the idea of the topic sentence.

Put the Topic Sentence First

In technical writing, almost all paragraphs begin with a topic sentence which is followed by several sentences that explain its central idea. This structure, called deductive, gives your para-graphs the direct, straightforward style most report readers prefer (Slater).

State the central idea of each paragraph n a topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph. Then follow with details that support and clarify the central idea, as in this example.

Assembly drawing are drawing that portray and explain the
Topic sentence

Completely fabricated final product. Assemblies are drawn
supporting

On a large sheet of paper. They generally have two or three
details

Views that convey all the information the reader needs about the part. The assembly also explains different parts of the drawing through the bill of materials, a listing of all the different parts that make up the entire piece. It gives the costs, quantity, and description of each part. The assembly drawings, then provide a basic overview of the entire product.

Structure Paragraphs Coherently

In a paragraph that exhibits coherent structure, each sentence amplifies the point of the topic sentence. You achieve coherence by the words you choose and by the way you place sentences in paragraphs. You can indicate coherence by using words in four ways: by repeating terms, by placing key terms in the dominant position, by indicating class or membership, and by using transactions Repeat terms in order to emphasize them. In the following example, path is repeated in the second sentence in order to provide further details.

Note that path was the new idea in sentence 1 but is the old idea in sentence 2.

Because fluid doesn't compress, its only path is between the gears and the housing.

This path is least resistant – it allows the fluid to flow in that direction easily

Use the Dominant Position Placing terms in the dominant position means to repeat a key terms as the subject, or main idea, of a sentence. As a result, readers return to the same topic and find it developed in another way. In the following short paragraph, contrast is the dominant term, and it is always in a dominant position at the beginning of the sentence.

Contrast is one of the most important concepts in black-and - white printmaking. Soft contrast – just a range of grays – is used to portray a calm effect, such as a fluffy kitten. Hard contrast, on the other hand, creates sharp black and bright whites. It is used for dramatic effects, such as striking portraits.

Maintain Class or Membership Relationships   To indicate class or membership relationships, use words that show that the subsequent sentence are subparts of the topic sentence. In the following sentence, store management and merchandising are members of the class career paths.

Retailing has two career paths. Store management involves working in the store itself. Merchandising involves working in the buying office.

Provide Transactions

Using transaction means connecting sentences by using words that signal a sequence or a pattern. Common examples include:

Sequence	first…second…
	Then...next…
Addition	and
	Also
	Furthermore
Contrast	but
	However
Cause and Effect	thus
	So
	Therefore
	Hence

Arrange Sentences by Level

You can develop coherence by the way you place sentences in a paragraph. In almost all technical paragraphs, each sentence has a level. The first level is that of the topic sentence. The second level consists of sentences tht support or explain the topic sentence. The third level consists of sentences that develop one of the second level ideas. Four sentences, then, could have several different relationships. For instance, the last three could all expand the idea in the first:

1   *First level*

2   *Second level*

3   *Second level*

4   *Second level*

Or sentences 3 and 4 could expand on sentence 2, which in turn expands on sentence 1:

As you write, evaluate the level of each sentence makes it possible for readers to get the gist of your document by skimming over the first sentences.

As you write, evaluate the level of each sentence. Decide whether the idea in the sentence is level 2, a subdivision of the topic, or level 3, which provides details about a subdivision. Consider this example ;

(1)   To develop an MRP program, our only investment will be two IBM printers.

(2)   One will be accessed by the line foreman for planning and controlling production orders.

(3)   The second printer will be sued by the marketing and sales staff for customer orders.

(4)   This printer must be able to produce various fonts.

(5)   The two printers will cost $1,000each, plus a setup fee of $5, totaling $2,500.

The sentences of this paragraph have the following structure:

Level 1. To develop an MRP program, our only investment will be two IBM printers.

Level 2. One will be accessed by the line foreman for planning and controlling production orders.

Level 3. The second printer will be used by the marketing and sales staff for customer orders.

Level 4. This printer must be able to produce various fonts.

Level 5. The two printers will cost $1,000 each, plus a setup fee of $500, totaling $2,500.

Choose a Tone For the Reader

The strategies discussed thus far in this chapter will produce clear, effective documents. Using them will make your docu-ments easy to read. These documents, however, assume that the reader and the writer are unemotional strategies, however, assume that the reader and the writer are unemotional cogs in an information-dispensing system. It is as though reader and writer were computers and the document were the modem. One computer emotionlessly activates the modem and send

out bits of information. The other, activated, receives and stores that information.

In fact, situations are not so predictable. The tone, or emotional attitude implied by the word choice, can communicate almost as much as the content of a message You must learn to control tone if you wish to communicate effectively. Let's consider four possible tones:

Forceful

Passive

Personal

Impersonal

The forceful tone implies that the writer is in control of the situation or that the situation is positive. It is appropriate when the writer addresses subordinates or when the writer's goal is to express confidence. To write forcefully:

Use the active voice

Use the subject-verb-object structure.

Do not use "weasel words" (possibly, maybe, perhaps).

Use imperatives.

Clearly indicate that you are the responsible agent.

I have decided to implement your suggestion to form quality circles in our plant.

This proposal has great merit. You have demonstrated that we can raise morale

And increase the bottom line. Make an appointment to see me in order to set up the basic planning.

The passive tone implies that the reader has more power than the writer or that the situation is negative. It is appropriate when the writer addresses a superior or when the writer's goal is to neutralize a potentially negative reaction. To make the tone passive.

Avoid imperatives.

Use the passive voice.

Use "weasel words."

Use longer sentences.

Do not explicitly take responsibility.

The suggestion to from quality circles has not been accepted. The discussion of morale and bottom-line benefits could possibly have other results than those indicated. Because this decision could affect the planning cycle, a meeting will be scheduled soon in order to hold a discussion on this matter.

Compare this to a Forceful Presentation:

We reject your quality circles proposal. Your conclusions about morale and benefits are wrong. Neither morale nor benefits will increase as much as you predict. Make an appointment to see me if you want.

The personal tone implies that reader and writer are equal. It is appropriate to use when you wish to express respect for the reader. To make a style personal:

Use the active voice.

Use first names.

Use personal pronouns.

Use short sentences.

Use contractions.

Direct questions at the reader.

Jack, thanks for that suggestion about quality circles. It's great. We all like the way it will raise morale and increase our bottom line. I'd like to see you soon on this. Would you make an appointment to see me?

This tone is also appropriate for delivering the negative message when both parties are equal.

Jack, thanks for the suggestion about quality circles but we just can't do it right now. I agree with your point about morale but I think you've missed an important figure for the bottom-line argument. Fred pointed out the error. I know this is a disappointment for you. Could we get together to discuss what to do next?

The impersonal tone implies that the writer is not important or that the situation is neutral. Use this tone when you wish to downplay personalities in the situation. To make the tone impersonal:

Do not use names, especially first names.

Do not use personal pronouns.

Use the passive voice.

Use longer sentences.

A decision to implement a quality circles proposal has been made. This project should increase both employee morale and the profits of the company. The following people will attend a meeting on Monday at 4:00 P.M to discuss implementation of this proposal: Jim Jones, Jill Smith, and Ed Johnson.

Organize Documents Clearly

If you carefully organize your documents, you will enable your reader to grasp your message quickly and effectively. The basic principles for organizing documents are the same as those for structuring sentences and paragraphs (Reddish, Williams).

- Move from old/known/accessible to new/unknown/less accessible.
- Put important topic information in key places.

The objective is to structure your paper to accommodate the ways readers comprehended Following these guidelines will enable you to write readable documents that steer readers effortlessly though the topic. These strategies help almost all readers, especially those who are less knowledgeable or who are distant from the writer in the company structure. To clarify your organization:

- Use context-setting introductions
- Place important material first.
- Use preview lists.
- Use repetition and sequencing.
- Use structural parallelism.

Use Context-Setting Introductions

Your introduction should supply an overall framework so that the reader can grasp the details that later explain and develop it. You can use an introduction to orient readers to the content of

the documents in one of three ways: to define terms, to tell why you are writing, and to explain the document's purpose.

Define Terms

You can include definitions of key terms and concepts, especially if you are describing a machine or a process. Training is the process of preparing an individual to perform in a certain manner. In a predictable situation. The training process has four steps: needs assessment, Program development, delivery, and evaluation.

Tell Why You Are Writing

Although you know why you are writing, the reader often does not. To orient the reader to your topic, mention the reason why you are writing. This method works well in memos and business letters.

'At our recent committee meeting, you raised a number of questions about our new word processors. I couldn't answer all you questions the, but I have checked with our computer personnel, and I can now provide the information you requested.'

State the Purpose of the Document

The purpose of the document refers to what the document will accomplish for the reader. In the following one-paragraph introduction, the last two sentences state the purpose.

Although adhesive bonding is a basic function of form/fill/seal (f/f/s) packaging, it is usually the least understood element of the package. Adhesive play a vital role in medical-device packaging today. They not only maintain package integrity but also make possible the physical combining of a wide variety of protective materials. In f/f/s packaging, adhesion must be achieved in line with a number of other packaging operations. Some of which are not always conducive to good seals. This article will discuss the role played by adhesives or sealants. It will characterize the their behaviour in different types of packages at various stages of package formation and use.

Place Important Material First

The beginning of a section or a paragraph always stand out. Placing important material first emphasizes its importance. This strategy orients readers quickly and gives them the context so that they know what to look for as they read further. Put statements of significance, definitions, and key terms at the beginning.

The following two sentences, taken from the beginning of a paragraph, illustrate how a writer used a statement of significance followed by a list of key terms.

A bill of materials (BOM) is an essential part of every MRP plan. For each product, the BOM lists each assembly, subassembly, nut, and bolt.

The next two sentences, also from the beginning of a paragraph, illustrate how a writer used a definition followed by a list of key terms

The assets of a business are the economic resources that it uses. These resources include cash, accounts receivable, equipment, building, land, supplies, and merchandise held for sale.

Use Preview Lists

Preview lists contain the key words to be used in the document. They alos give a sense of the document's organization. You can use lists in any writing situation. To make an effective list, you must understand the various list formats. The basic list has three components: an introductory sentence that ends in a "control word," a colon, and a series of items. The control word (processes in the sample that follows) names the items in the list and is followed by a colon. The series of items is the list itself. The items in the list are italicized in this sample.

Wood is machined by one of two basic processes: orthogonal cutting and peripheral milling.

A more informal variation of the basic list has no colon, and the control word is the subject of the sentences. The list itself still comes at the end of the sentence.

The two basic machining process for wood are orthogonal cutting and peripheral milling.

You can present lists on the page either horizontally or vertically. In a horizontal list, the item follow the introductory sentence as part of the text; the examples we have given are horizontal lists. In vertical lists, the item are listed in a column, which emphasizes them.

Wood is machined by one of these two basic process:

- Orthogonal cutting
- Peripheral milling

Use Repetition and Sequencing

Repetition means restating key subject words or phrases from the preview list; sequencing means placing the key words in the same order in the text as in the list. The author of the following paragraph fist lists the three key terms – pneumatic, hydraulic, and electric. She repeats them at the start of each sentence in the same sequence as in the list.

The power supply required to move the segments of the Set-up list using

manipulator can be of three types; pneumatic, hydraulic, **Key words**

and electric. Pneumatic power employs compresses air to **Keywords repeated**

supply power to certain components. It is generally used **at the beginning**

for lighter loads. Hydraulic power employs a compressor **of the respective**

fluid for power and is generally used on heavier loads. **sentences**

Electric power is probably the most commonly used power source because it is easy to use and can handle most loads, light or heavy. The different kinds of power supply can be used on the same robot system.

Use Structural Parallelism

Structural parallelism means that each section of a document follows the same organizational pattern. The following two paragraphs have the same structure: first a definition, then a list of terms, then the definitions of the terms.

Job Design

Job design defines the specific work tasks of an individual **Definition** or group. Job design focuses on for ideas: job scope, job **List of terms** depth, job enlargement, and job enrichment. Job scope **Terms defined** involves the number and variety of tasks performed by the jobholder. Job depth is the amount of freedom the jobholder has to plan and organize his or her work. Job enlargement gives a jobholder more tasks of a similar nature. Job enrichment increases both job scope and job depth. Adding responsibility is one of the most common ways of "enriching" a job.

Job Analysis

Job analysis determines and reports pertinent information **Definition** about a specific job. Job analysis produces both job **List of terms** descriptions and job specification. A job description **Terms defined** explain what the job is and what the duties, responsibilities, and general working conditions are. A job specification describes the ualifications that the jobholder must possess.

Points to Ponder

- For effective communication, the sender must assess and understand the receiver first and then choose the language accordingly.

- Simplify the writing so that even the most stupid person can understand it!!!! But then again, why not enlighten them with the usage of your new words?

- It is a good idea to think of the key words that you would like to emphasize in your documentation.

Group Activity

Give a topic for the day like "adhesive" or "microwave"

Divide the class into following groups:

1st Group to write the definition

2nd Group to write its function

3rd Group to compare it with another similar item

4th Group to write the conclusion

Notes

LESSON 11:
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TECHNICAL
AND GENERAL WRITING

The difference between general writing and professional or technical writing

Writing is a way to communicate and we communicate with a purpose, to achieve some result. Therefore, there is bound to be a world of difference between the styles and language of general and technical writing.

The word **'general'** is too general to convey a very clear meaning of kind of writing we can include in the category. **All writing that is done without reference to any specialized technique and terminology can be -as general writing**. For example, a personal letter, a social lecture and a speech delivered on some occasion of general importance can be taken as general writing. For this kind of communication no highly specialized forms are required. An appropriately correct and interesting style will be sufficient to achieve the end. **But technical writing is different from this as the technical communication depends much upon some skills peculiar to the field o**f **activity.** If writing is being done on some scientific topic, it must be very objective and factual. The several branches of science again have their respective terminologies which must be perfectly known to the writer. For example, an engineer is not supposed to write in the following manner:

'The soldiering has not been properly done: the crack is not all filled up.'

He should not write in the following manner too:

'the two parts of the metals have not been properly patched up.'

He is expected to use the following sentence:

'The soldering is imperfect.'

Professional communication can be practiced by a technical worker more effectively if he remembers some characteristics of style that should distinguish his writing from general writing.; The objectivity of a scientist must be maintained throughout his report or letter etc. He should aim at precision and lucidity. He should present all the data without any confusion. He need not be figurative or emotional.

The best way is to begin with a **clear objective**. The writer must try to see with his mind's eye what he wants to say. Unless he himself is sure about his theme, he cannot convince, or even satisfy others. written word is the concrete picture of his mind. **The saying- ' style is the man'- is as true in subjective, literary writing as in detached, scientific or professional writing.**

Tables, figures, data, diagrams, graphs etc. can be used to support an opinion or illustrate an idea. It is very desirable that the unnecessary length should be avoided .To ensure that one's writing has the desirable crispness, a revision of the first draft can be made. **Neatness of presentation, sense of proportion**, and due order also make technical-professional communication effective. The writing of reports and proposals etc. Illustrates the distinctive features of technical writing.

All the writing that deals with technical, scientific, and professional subject, for very practical purposes, can be defined as technical writing. A scientific article, a business document, a report or proposal, and all forms of professional communication in writing - these are the example of Technical Writing. An essay-explaining the observations made during an experiment, or enumerating the inferences drawn from the same, or elaborating the practical application of a new technique developed -is as much a part of Technical Writing as the manual describing manual describing the mechanism the procedures, the maintenance etc of a refrigerator which a company hands over to a buyer along with the fridge.

Technical writing must be simple, lucid, factual, objective and dispassionate, logically arranged, unambiguous, and precise. Thus it is different from general writing, which can afford to dispense with the above-mentioned qualities. **General writing can be, and must be if the occasion demands it, figurative, imaginative, passionate mystifying and deliberately ambiguous**, **and stylistic**. We can sum up the differences between the two in the following manner.

Technical Writing	General Writing
i. It is a means to some other end.	i. It can be an end in itself.
ii. It has purely practical motives.	ii. It can have artistic, aesthetic, and rhetorical aims.
iii. It informs and educates.	iii. It may merely delight and move.
iv. It involves intellect.	iv. It can be an affair of the heart.
v. It deals with facts.	v. It can use emotion and fancy.
vi. It must choose the commonest and most accurate works, though these may be jargon to a laymen.	vi. It can be vague, suggestive, equivocal, very plain or very elite, in diction.
vii. If must be precise and direct.	vii. It can be expansive, inflated and roundabout.
viii. It is always impersonal; even if it expresses an individual's opinion on subject.	viii. It can be so personal that the expression of the personality of the author makes everything else irrelevant.

* The distinguishing features of written technical communication are precision, brevity, directness, and plainness.

Precision means accuracy. In technical communication we avoid the use of indefinite or approximate terms. We try to be definite and precise. The example, instead of saying "china considerably ahead of India in information technology,' we should say, "China is ten years ahead of India in information technology'.

Brevity means avoidance of unnecessary details. Written technical communication has no scope for over-elaboration of a point. For example we shall add nothing to the informative value of the statement in the last example if we write "China, that formidable neighbour of India, our traditional rival on the Asian scene, is not only larger than India in terms of area and population, but her senior by a decade I.T.

Directness means to come to the point at once, and be factual, straight and logically ordered. Written technical communication has no patience for beating about the bush, however charming it may be. For example, the idea expressed in the above examples would not be more vivid if given the following form.

Information Technology is one of those fields in which the progress made by our own country, howsoever laudable it may appear to be, is found to be falling so short of the desired goal, that at least ten long years of incessant work are required before India should reach there where China stands even today.'

Plainness means prosaic simplicity, absence of ornament, and objective statement. Written technical communication must be like seeing things in broad-day light, with an eye of which the vision is not coloured with emotion or prejudice. For example, the above quoted idea need not be presented so figuratively as "The creep of the dragon has out-measured the leap of the tiger. In the IT race, the former has outstripped the latter. In fact, the Indian tiger was still crouching on the edge of the precipice when the Chinese dragon was climbing up the hill beyond the valley - ten years in width.

Such features as precision and directness characterize technical communication, for technical communication aims at information, and information can be best communicated by using accurate terms and direct statement. Vague words, disorderliness and circumlocution would rather be the barriers to communication.

Should we cultivate a style in written technical communication ?

Style means the manner of doing or saying a thing. **In written technical communication What is it as important as what we have to say.**

Style is a very inclusive term which covers all the parts of a piece of writing. It determines the choice of words, their arrangement, punctuation marks, length of sentences, arrangement of ideas, distribution of the matter into paragraphs or points, and the tone of the writer.

It has been pointed out above that the saying **–' style is the man** ' applies as much to technical writing as to general writing. We are born with our specific styles - clumsy or elegant, showy or simple. But to succeed in a competitive environment a technocrat or a professional has to cultivate a style, so that he should be able to impress others. However, the best way to cultivate a suitable style in written technical communication is to avoid style. Not to be stylish is the best way to have a style in this particular field.

Let our writing be polished but not ornamental and laboured. All styles, except simplicity, would hamper, rather than assist, technical communication.

In the context of written technical communication, diction plays an important role to shape the style. **Diction means** words, we have just now said that style determines the choice of words. These two statements referring to the relationship of diction and style suggest their interdependence.

While style is a greater, vaster thing than diction, it cannot be an arbiter of vocabulary. The use of a specific terminology will naturally modify the style. For example, the article describing the process of manufacturing a cosmetic item would use the terms referring to the raw material, the machinery, the chemical reaction and so on. But the publicity material to sell that cosmetic would use very different terms- the words that emphasize the value of beauty and the power of man to improve its appeal and endurance. The analysis of the financial aspects of the same business, again, will use a particular kind of diction; the language of profit, investment, cost, wages, taxes, etc. The style of the article describing the manufacturing process will naturally be explanatory, descriptive but scientific, factual. The style of the advertisement will be exciting, sensational, warm and appealing. The style of the financial status will be very precise, using figures, dry and statistical.

Since the style in written technical communication must be simple, the words preferred by the writer tend to be most accurate, specific and concrete words. Such words and phrases make the interpretation easy, quick and correct.

For the benefit of the student of B. Tech., here is an exercise to illustrate the practical of the ideas discussed in this unit.

	Original Expression	Simplified Version	Comment
i.	We are beginning to believe in our animal ancestry.	Now we believe that animal were our ancestors.	Replacement of concrete for abstract.
ii	Science is continually telling us through their mouths.	They abuse scientific language to tell us.	personification avoided.
iii	And it carries impartiality a great deal further than does the legal point or view.'	Scientific point of view is far more impartial than legal point of view.	Circumlocution avoided.
iv	his mind is at the mercy of a number of chemical process in his body...'	Chemical processes in the body of man affect his mental condition	Idiomatic expression avoided.
v	' But it differs profoundly from that which religions have attributed to the almighty being ethically neutral.'	Scientific point of view is very different from the God's -eye view. The former is ethically neutral while the almighty is supposed to be merciful and just in all religions.	Vagueness and suggestion replaced with plainness.

vi	The number of Negroes thus killed was far greater than the casualty list of the civil war.	More Negroes were killed in this manner than in civil war.	diction simplifies.
vii	'They will only arrive at a glance view regarding as the result	If people are educated to have scientific point of view, they will view disease sanely.	a more logical order; more of clarity.

Some do's and don't' s of Technical Writing.

Do's	Don'ts	Do's	Don'ts
Simplicity	Ornament gaudiness	Preplanning& arrangement	Extemporizing eccentricity
Brevity	Verbosity	Objectivity	Subjectivity
Lucidity	Obscurity, ambiguity	Plainness	Suggestiveness
Correctness	Vagueness, bombast	Proportion	Misbalance
Directness	Circumlocution	Logic	Personal feeling
Concreteness	Abstractions	Moderation	Extravagance
Rationality	Abstractions	Fact	Fancies
Discipline and order	Sentimentality	Active Voice	Passive Voice
	License and waywardness		

Writing can be grouped into five basic types: technical, creative, expressive, expository, and persuasive. To help understand technical writing, it may help to compare it to the other types.

- **Technical writing** conveys specific information about a technical subject to a specific audience for a specific purpose.

- **Creative writing** is fiction—poetry, short stories, plays, and novels—and is most different from technical writing.

- **Expressive writing** is a subjective response to a personal experience—journals and diaries—whereas technical writing might be objective observations of a work-related experience or research.

- **Expository writing** "exposes" a topic analytically and objectively, such as news reports. Like technical writing, the goal of expository writing is to explain or reveal knowledge, but expository writing does not necessarily expect a response or action from the reader.

- **Persuasive writing** depends on emotional appeal. Its goal is to change attitudes or motivate to action.

Key points

	Technical Writing	**Creative Writing**
Content	factual, straight-forward	imaginative, meta phoric or symbolic
Audience	specific	general
Purpose	inform,instruct,persuade	entertain, provoke, captivate
Style	formal,standard,academic	informal, artistic, figurative
Tone	objective	subjective

Vocab-ulary	specialized	general, evocative
Organi-zation	sequential, systematic	arbitrary, artistic

Points to Ponder

Is there any difference between style and fashion?

Style is your own creation

Fashion is following a trend.

Group Discussion

Topic : China is ten years ahead of India in information technology.

Write a paragraph of 10 lines.

1st Group to write as software professionals

2nd Group to write as creative writers

3rd Group to write as journalists of The Times of India

Review Question

1. What is technical writing ? How is it different from general writing?

2. What are cardinal principles of professional communication ? Distinguish Professional style of writing from that of general style.

3. Describe communication ?distinguishing features of written technical communication. How are these features characteristic of a technical

4. What do we mean by style in writing ?

5. What is the role of diction and style, in the context of written technical communication?

6. Write a note on choice of words and phrases for technical communication and interpretation?

Reference

1. Technical Report Writing Today, Pauley E. S., Riordan G. D., A. T. B. S Publishers, New Delhi

2. Effective English for Engineers & Technologists, Dr A Rai, Crest Publisher, New Delhi

3. Essay of J.B. S. Maldane, 'Science and Human Life'

4. http:\odtl.dcu.ie/wp/1999/odtl-1999-03.html

5. aechiou.ndhu.edu.tw

Suggested Reading

1. Grammar troublespots, An Editing Guide for Students, Ann Raimes, Cambridge Universitry Press.

2. Grammar & Composition by Wren & Martin

LESSON 12:
FRAGMENTED AND PARALLEL SENTENCES

Pre-requisites of Scientific & Technical Communication

Objectives

- Be able to write well-organized, coherent and relatively error-free paragraphs and short essays.
- Understand the process method of writing, using the skills of brainstorming, outlining and revision.
- Have a better command of English grammar and better understand individual weaknesses in grammar.
- Be able to participate in class discussions on a variety of topics.

Fragmented and Parallel sentences

Fragments

Fragments are simply incomplete sentences—grammatically incomplete. They usually come about because the sentence may already seem too long. Also, in conversation, we typically speak in fragments. Here are some examples and their revisions:

Problem: Mary appeared at the committee meeting last week. And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.

Revision: Mary appeared at the committee meeting last week and made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.

Problem: The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful. The best ideas that they had heard in years.

Revision: The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful, the best ideas that they had heard in years.

Problem: In a proposal, you must include a number of sections. For example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project,and a cost breakdown.

Revision: In a proposal, you must include a number of sections: for example, a discussion of your personnel and their qualifications, your expectations concerning the schedule of the project, and a cost breakdown.

Problem: The research team has completely reorganized the workload. Making sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

Revision: The research team has completely reorganized the workload. They made sure that members work in areas of their own expertise and that no member is assigned proportionately too much work.

Problem: She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Which she eventually sent to her supervisor with the strongest of recommenda tions.

Revision: She spent a full month evaluating his computer-based instructional materials. Eventually, she sent the evaluation to her supervisor with the strongest of recommendations.

Problem: The corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software. Although the more conserva tive executives of the firm are skeptical.

Revision: Although the more conservative executives of the firm are skeptical, the corporation wants to begin a new marketing push in educational software.

Parallelism

Parallelism refers to the way that items in a series are worded. You want to use the same style of wording in a series of items—it makes it easier on the reader. Widely varied wording is distracting and potentially confusing to readers. Here are some examples, with revisions and some comments:

Problem: The report discusses how telescopes work, what types are available, mounts, accessories, and techniques for beginning star gazers. *(The "how" and the "why" clauses are not parallel to the "mounts," "accessories," and "techniques" phrases.)*

Revision: The report discusses how telescopes work, what types of telescopes, mounts, and accessories are available, and how to begin your hobby as a star gazer.

Problem: Customers often call the showroom to inquire about pricing, what items are available, and to place orders. *(The "what items are available" clause does not go with the two phrases beginning with "to.")*

Revision: Customers often call the showroom to inquire about prices, check on the availability of certain items, and place orders.

Problem: While the dialysis solution remains in the peritoneal cavity, the dialysis is achieved, a process that includes the removal of nitrogenous wastes and correcting electrolyte imbalances and fluid overloads. *(The "removal" phrase and the "correcting" phrase are not parallel to each other.)*

Revision: While the dialysis solution remains in the peritoneal cavity, the dialysis is achieved, a process that includes the removal of nitrogenous wastes and the correction of electrolyte imbalances and fluid overloads.

Problem: This report is intended for people with some electronics background but have little or no knowledge of geophysical prospecting. *(The "with" phrase is not parallel with the "have little" clause—this one is not even grammatical.)*

Revision: This report is intended for people with some electronics background but with little or no knowledge of geophysical prospecting.

Parallelism problems have to do when same types of phrasing are not used in the same areas of a document: such as for list items in a specific list, or for all headings at a certain level within a specific part of a document. At times, working on parallelism of phrasing is trivial. However, in many instances, parallel phrasing can give readers important cues as to how to interpret information. A jumble of dissimilar styles of phrasing for similar elements can be confusing. Shown below are those different style:

Examples

She liked games, movies, and going to picnics.

She liked games, movies, and picnics.

He was intelligent but a boring boy

He was intelligent but boring.

The trip had been both difficult and a great expense.

The trip had been both difficult and expensive.

A time not for words but action.

A time not for words but for action.

Either/or, neither/nor, not only/but also, first/second/third

Either I am always in doubt or I am always in trouble.

I am always either in doubt or in trouble.

I am always in either in doubt or trouble.

I am always in either doubt or trouble.

They hoped to go not only to London but also to Paris.

They hoped to go to not only London but also Paris.

For love, for honor, for fame or for money.

For love, honor, fame, or money

Notes

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LESSON 13:
ELEMENT OF A SERIES

Element of a Series

What Is Meant By 'Series'?

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines the word 'series' as a "number of things, events etc., each of which is related in some way to the others esp. to the one before it". In terms of language, the word 'series' refers to the arrangement of sentences or clauses in a given passage. It indirectly refers to a logical order of sequences of sentences and clauses which ultimately enables the author to express himself clearly as well as beautifully.

What are the essential elements of a 'series'?

The sentence is a basic unit of the language, comprising at least one independent verb with its subject. The most basic or elementary form of a sentence is Noun-Verb as in Child weeps. But a writer is free to write sentences with more words or more clauses. Sometimes unnecessary lengthy sentences with more clauses mar the beauty of expression. The succession of clauses, one after another often leads to confusion. Hence, it is advisable if the writer uses a series of clauses, whenever it is really needed.

One important method of being economical, while writing, is the use of the principle of reduction, that is by reducing a sentence into a clause, a clause to a phrase, or a phrase to a word, wherever possible.

Example:

I was born in the city of Mumbai. It is located in the state of Maharashtra.

Now, the second sentence is reduced to a clause:

I was born in Mumbai, which is in Maharashtra

Now, the clause is reduced to a phrase:

I was born in Mumbai, in Maharashtra.

It can be further reduced, the final effective sentence will be:

I was born in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

What is the role of marks of punctuation in a series?

The word punctuation has been derived from the Latin word 'punctun' that means a point. Therefore, punctuation means the right use of putting in **Points or Stops** writing. The following are the principal stops:

Full stop or Period (.)

(i) Comma (,)

(ii) Semicolon (;)

(iii) Colon (:)

(iv) Note of Interrogation (?)

(v) Note of Exclamation (!)

Some other marks in common use are the Dash (-); Parentheses ( ); Inverted Commas or Quotation Marks "" and Apostrophe'.

These marks of punctuation play a significant role in technical written communication. If a composition is not properly punctuated it may lead to confusion. For example, the Comma represents the shortest pause and is **used to separate a series of words in the same construction:**

Examples:

(i) England, France and Italy formed an alliance.

(ii) He lost lands, money reputation and friends.

(iii) It was a long, dull, wearisome journey.

(iv) He wrote his exercise neatly, quickly and correctly.

High and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish all must die.

Squinting Construction and Split Infinitive

What does 'Squinting Construction' mean?

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English describes the word 'squint' as 'having' a squint cross eyed' or 'having' eyes that do not turn together but look in different directions at once'. A man who is squint eyed' will have defective or confused vision.

The philologists have used the word 'squint' in language also. A squinting construction to them means a loosely constructed part of a sentence which leads to confusion. This confusion is often due to the misplaced adverbs.

Adverbs should be so placed in a sentence as to make it quite clear which word or words they are intended to modify. Hence, adverbs should come, if possible, next to the word or words, they modify. Look at the following sentences carefully:

Incorrect : I only worked two sums.

Correct : I worked only two sums.

Incorrect : I praise only him when he deserves it.

Correct : I praise him only when the deserves it.

Incorrect : My uncle has gone out just.

Correct : My uncle has just gone out.

Incorrect : The teacher has told him often to write neatly.

Incorrect : The hostel warden cruelly has treated the residents.

Correct : The hostel warden has cruelly treated the resi dents.

Split Infinitive

What is meant by 'split infinitive'?

Infinitives are verbs which are not limited by person and number. The infinitives are frequently used with 'to' but it is not an essential part or sign of the infinitives. They may also be

used without 'to'. A split infinitive is one which an adverb ias placed between the sign of the infinitive [to] and the infinitive itself.

*Change: To **initially** build the table in the file, you could input transaction records containing the data.*

To: To build the table in the file **initially** you could input transaction records.

Modifiers, Connectives, Antecedents and Clause subordination Modifiers

What do we mean by 'modifiers'? How do the misplaced modifiers lead to confusion?: What is meant by a modifier?

A modifier is a word, or phrase, or clause that explains or adds details about other words, phrases or clauses.

Sentences become confusing when modifiers do not point directly to the word they modify, Misplaced modifiers often result in absurd sentences. They occasionally produce such sentence that make sense but cause the reader to misinterpret the real meaning. Hence, modifiers must be placed in a position that clarifies their relationship to the rest of the sentence. The modifiers are often placed next to the word they modify. Look at the following sentences carefully:

Incorrect : The man is my uncle in black coat.

Correct : The man is black coat is my uncle.

Incorrect : He had a heart attack almost every time he was reviewed by his supervisor.

Correct : He almost had a heart attack every time he was reviewed by his supervisor.

Incorrect : Rama only scored ten marks in History

Correct : Rama scored only ten marks in History

How does the placement of the modifiers in the correct position help in achieving clarity?

To achieve clarity, a writer should remember to use the correct word order, that is, the related elements in a sentence should be kept close together. Thus, modifiers should be kept close to the word they modify. A relative clause should preferably be placed immediately after the noun that it modifiers.

Example

The men who are thought to be embodiments of western culture are progressing fast.

Notice how the proximity[6] of the words the men and of their modifiers who are thought to be embodiments of western culture contribute to clarity. Modifiers in wrong positions can lead to ambiguity[7]. Words like 'only', 'almost', 'really' etc., should come just before the words they modify. To avoid confusion place modifiers next to the word(s) they refer to. Sometimes a modifier placed wrongly is known as the dangling modifier.

What is a Connective?

You can use a **connective** to link words, phrases, and clauses, as in the following example:

I ate the pizza **and** the pasta.

Call the movers **when** you are ready.

Co-ordinating Connectives

You use a **co-ordinating connective**("and," "but," "or," "nor," "for," "so," or "yet") to join individual words, phrases, and independent clauses. Note that you can also use the conjunctions "but" and "for" as prepositions.

In the following sentences, each of the **highlighted** words is a co-ordinating conjunction:

Lilacs **and** violets are usually purple.

In this example, the co-ordinating conjunction "and" links two nouns.

This movie is particularly interesting to feminist film theorists, **for** the screenplay was written by Mae West.

In this example, the co-ordinating connective "for" is used to link two independent clauses.

Daniel's uncle claimed that he spent most of his youth dancing on rooftops **and** swallowing goldfish.

Here the co-ordinating conjunction "and" links two participle phrases ("dancing on rooftops" and "swallowing goldfish") which act as adverbs describing the verb "spends."

Subordinating Connective

A **subordinating Connective** introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).

The most common subordinating connectives are "after," "although," "as," "because," "before," "how," "if," "once," "since," "than," "that," "though," "till," "until," "when," "where," "whether," and "while."

Each of the **highlighted** words in the following sentences is a subordinating conjunction:
After she had learned to drive, Alice felt more independent. The subordinating conjunction "after" introduces the dependent clause "After she had learned to drive."

If the paperwork arrives on time, your cheque will be mailed on Tuesday.
Similarly, the subordinating connective "if" introduces the dependent clause "If the paperwork arrives on time."

Gerald had to begun his thesis over again **when** his computer crashed. The subordinating conjunction "when" introduces the dependent clause "when his computer crashed."

Midwifery advocates argue that home births are safer **because** the mother and baby are exposed to fewer people and fewer germs.

In this sentence, the dependent clause "because the mother and baby are exposed to fewer people and fewer germs" is introduced by the subordinating conjunction "because."

Correlative Connective

Correlative connective always appear in pairs — you use them to link equivalent sentence elements. The most common correlative conjunctions are "both...and," "either...or," "neither...nor,", "not only...but also," "so...as," and "whether...or." (Technically correlative conjunctions consist simply of a co-ordinating conjunction linked to an adjective or adverb.)

The **highlighted** words in the following sentences are correlative conjunctions:

Both my grandfather **and** my father worked in the steel plant.

In this sentence, the correlative conjunction "both...and" is used to link the two noun phrases that act as the compound subject of the sentence: "my grandfather" and "my father".

Bring **either** a Jello salad **or** a potato scallop.

Here the correlative conjunction "either...or" links two noun phrases: "a Jello salad" and "a potato scallop."

Corinne is trying to decide **whether** to go to medical school **or** to go to law school.

Similarly, the correlative conjunction "whether ... or" links the two infinitive phrases "to go to medical school" and "to go to law school."

The explosion destroyed **not only** the school **but also** the neighbouring pub.

In this example the correlative conjunction "not only ... but also" links the two noun phrases ("the school" and "neighbouring pub") which act as direct objects.

Note: some words which appear as conjunctions can also appear as prepositions or as adverbs.

Subordination

Subordination is when you combine an independent clause with a dependent clause using a subordinating conjunction. What this means is that you have a complete thought and an incomplete thought (n.b., this thought is incomplete because of the subordinating conjunction), and you want to combine these two simple thoughts together into a sentence that reflects a more sophisticated form of writing by using one of the words that work to combine independent clauses with independent clauses (complete thoughts with incomplete thoughts). These words are called Subordinating Conjunctions. It is far easier to understand their nature than to memorize all of them,. The way that you can tell if a word functions as a subordinating conjunction is that it will take a regular, independent clause and create a condition that makes the sentence incomplete. In other words, subordinating conjunctions make complete thoughts incomplete. Let me give you an example. Sentences using subordinating conjunctions to combine clauses follow one of two basic formulas: one in which the dependent clause comes first, and one in which the dependent clause comes second. Let's look at the first formula, one where the dependent clause comes first.

SC (Dependent Clause) , (Independent Clause) .
Here's a real sentence made with a dependent clause joined to an independent clause.

Because Billy was hungry , he cooked some eggs.
Following this formula, we see that the subordinating conjunction (denoted by the red **SC** in the example) creates a dependent clause. A dependent clause is, simply put, an independent clause (or stand-alone, complete sentence) that has a subordinating conjunction in front of it. That is why subordinating conjunctions are also called **Dependent Words**, because they create dependent clauses. So, the subordinating conjunction creates a dependent clause, and the beginning dependent clause

is joined to the independent clause by a comma (,). If you have the subordinating conjunction and the comma in the appropriate places, you KNOW that you have formulated this sentence properly. So, if the first clause is dependent, it must be an incomplete thought. Does "Because Billy was hungry" carry a complete thought? Don't we want to know what Billy does because he is hungry? This is the incomplete condition that the subordinating conjunctions create, so if you ever use a word in a sentence, and it creates a condition similar to this one, you will know that this is a dependent clause and must be joined to an independent clause. Now let's look at the other formula.

(Independent Clause)SC   (Dependent Clause)   .
Here's another real sentence made by joining an independent clause to a dependent clause.

Billy cooked some eggs because he was hungry.
Following this formula, the independent clause comes first, then the subordinating conjunction, and finally the dependent clause. You usually do not need a comma to separate the two clauses because the subordinating conjunction serves as a natural separator. When you use a subordinating conjunction to combine two simple sentences into a larger, more complicated one, it is (not surprisingly) called subordination. The new sentence that you made from the two simple sentences is now called a complex sentence. Hopefully, you have a better idea now of how to combine simple sentences using subordination.

Dangling Participles and Gerunds

Dangling Participles

What is a dangling participle?
A participle is a Verbal Adjective which partakes of the nature of a verb and of an adjective. A verb which ends in-ing is usually called the present Participle and it represents an action which I going on or is incomplete or imperfect.

Examples:
We met a girl carrying a basket of flowers.

A drying wind is flowing now-a-days.

We can form from each verb another participle called the Past Participle which represents a completed action or state of the thing spoken of.

Examples:
Driven by hunger he stole a piece of bread.

A painted doll is put up for sale.

Sometime, a participle is used in a sentence either in the beginning or at the end, without modifying a word. In such cases, the Participles become 'Dangling Participles'. In other words, a participle which is a verbal adjective must refer to some noun or pronoun i.e., it must have a proper subject of reference. And if the participle is without a subject of reference, it is said to be a dangling participle.

Examples:

Incorrect	:	Sitting on the gate, a scorpion stung him.
Correct	:	Sitting on the gate, he was stung by a scorpion.
Incorrect	:	Walking along the street one day, a dead cobra was seen.

Correct : **Walking along the street one day, we saw** a **dead cobra.**

Dangling Modifiers/Participles

As a mother of five, my kitchen is always busy.	As a mother of five, I am always busy in my kitchen.
No bacteria were observed using this technique.	Using this technique, we do not observe any bacteria.
Young and inexperienced, the task seemed easy to me.	Young and inexperienced, I thought the task was easy.
Following experimentation, bacteria multiplied.	Following experimentation, we found the bacteria multiplied
Being in poor condition, we were unable to save the animals.	We were unable to save the animals because they are in poor condition.
Using this method, a strong correlation peak was observed.	Using this method, I observed strong correlation peak.
In drawing the picture, his wife was used as the model.	In drawing the picture, he used his wife as the model.

Exercise

Eliminate the dangling participles in the following sentences:

1. While working, tiredness overcame them
2. After soldering for two hours, the equipment was ready for shipping.
3. After chopping food to the desired consistency, the food is removed.
4. When filling out the report form, the personnel section appears first.
5. Entering the room, the light was quite dazzling.
6. Being a very hot day, I remained in my tent.
7. Being weary, sat by the roadside to rest.
8. Being a fine day, I went out.
9. Being smooth, we went for a sail.
10. By examining the drawing, the connection is tightened

Notes

LESSON 14:
COHERENCE AND UNITY

Coherence, Unity, Chronological Method, Spatial Method, Inductive Method, Liner Method, Deductive Method, Interrupted Method

Coherence and Unity

The word 'Coherence' literally means' consistency' especially of speech, thought, ideas reasoning which makes the expression clear and easy to understand. In order to make the readers understand the message, the writing must be coherent and logical. It should include all necessary information and information and ideas should be presented in sensible order. Roy and Rosemary produce a sample letter that creates an almost incomprehensible message:

Sample Letter

This is to notify all employees that mail cannot be accepted after 4.30 for processing, This policy has been in effect for over tow years. Of course, overnight express mail is still an exception.

How can 'coherence' and 'unity' be attained in technical writing ?

Repetition

Repetition of certain words also gives coherence to a paragraph. While using repetition the writer must be very careful because too much of repetition may lead to monotony.

Synonyms

Synonyms are used in place of certain words, already used and have similar meaning. This includes variety and thus helps the writer to avoid monotony.

Connectives

The use of connectives is another device which lends coherence to a paragraph. These connectives, which occur at the beginning of s sentence, link it to the sentence that comes before. The connectives such as and, but, or, therefore, as a result, to sum In a technical writing, every sentence should logically follow from the one preceding it. Loosely hanging fragments, squinting words and clauses, dangling modifiers and unnecessary splitting infinitives should be avoided. Every following sentence should be linked to the one that goes before and it will help to make a single whole. There are four significant devices which may help to attain coherence, namely:

1. Pronouns

2. Repetition

3. Synonyms

4. Connectives

Pronouns

A pronouns is used as a substitute for a noun which is its antecedent. This helps in maintaining continuity of thought. up and in short may be used.

In order to obtain unity of a paragraph the entire paragraph may be developed in certain ways. These are:

1. **Inductive order**

2. **Deductive order**

3. **Question to answer order**

4. **Time order**

5. **Comparison and Contrast**

How are inductive and deductive methods helpful to a technical writer?

Inductive and Deductive methods are two such ways in which a paragraph may be developed in a technical writing.

What is Inductive Method ?

In Inductive method an author moves from particular statement to the general statement. The author gives details, arguments or illustrations, which lead finally to the conclusion. The paragraph, that begins with certain information, concludes with topic sentence often known as conclusion.

Examples

Ram dies, Mohan dies, they are human beings. Hence, we can say that Man is mortal.

What is Deductive Method

The most popular method used by the writers is the Deductive method. It is the reversal of the logical arrangement of the Inductive method. In the Inductive method , we have a conclusion reached by reasoning from general laws to a particular case. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in the paragraph stating some general statements. The author finally tries to deduce his conclusion logically. This gives the paragraph a direct, straightforward style which most report readers prefer.

Example

Man is mortal. Since Ram and Mohan are men, they are mortal.

What is the chronological method ?

This method is the natural order of narration in which one event leads to another. This method is used to document time or the steps in an instruction. Gerson and Gerson give a good example of the use of Chronological method. To quote their words:

For example, and emergency medical technician reporting services provided during an emergency call would document those activities chronically.

"At 1.15 p.m., we arrived at the site and assessed the patient's condition, taking vitals (pulse, respiration, etc.). At 1.17 p.m., after stabilizing the patient, we contacted the hospital and relayed the vitals. By 1.20 p.m., the patient was on an IV drip and en route to the hospital at 1.35 p.m., and hospital staff took over the patient's care".

Chronology method is also used to document steps in an instruction. If we bury key data on the top of the page, and two-thirds from the bottom, we find it garners more attention. Readers generally focus their attention on the first several points more than on the last few. Ideas, therefore they should be organized by importance. The more important ideas should be placed above the less important ones.

What is meant by the Spatial method?

If a technocrat is writing to describe the parts of a machine or a plot of ground, he will like to organize his text spatially. The writer will describe what he sees as it appears in space- left to right, top to bottom, inside to outside or clockwise. This method helps the reader to visualize what he sees and therefore, it is better to understand the physical qualities of the subject matter. The method further helps the reader to envision the layout of the land the writer describes or the placement of each component within the machine. Read the following example carefully and note how the different steps in **Telescope making** have been described:

Step 1

Remove the mirror from its cell and gently brush its surface with a camel's hair brush, the kind photographers use on their camera lenses.

Step 2

Wet a freshly laundered piece of old toweling-the older the better since filler material dust have been washed out by repeated launderings-in distilled water.

Step 3

Pour a solution of detergent and distilled water on the mirror allow it to stand for a few minutes.

This example clearly brings into light how time order or spatial method is employed to device paragraphs and obtain unity.

Linear Method

The literal meaning of the word linear is of lines or involving one dimension. In a paragraph one sentence leads to the next.

Notes

LESSON 15:
SUMMARISING OR PRECIS WRITING

Summarising Or Precis Writing

You will see that for every document in technical writing summarizing is very important .Precise writing therefore is important because it helps in summarizing documents.

On many occasions in business we have to condense or abridge facts and information into quick summaries. Many people are often at a loss to know where to begin when confronted with a lengthy report or sheaves of correspondence, but once a few simple rules of making a summary are mastered, it can be quite a speedy and effective exercise. Also it is a compulsory question in may examination papers as it is the most accurate test whether a student has really understood what he has read.

The object of the summary (or precis, as it is sometimes called) is to give a short but accurate account of what the original writer has said without changing or adding to it in any way. The writer or the passage in any way. It is permissible, and often desirable, to clarify the original where necessary and to make plain anything that may be obscure but must be summarized exactly. Illustrations and subsidiary arguments may be omitted as not really essential, but everything vital to the understanding of his main theme and arguments must be included. The original sense of the passage must not be distorted by additions or omissions or by leaving out any essential information.

The Key Language Points

Vocabulary

A summary is a rather rigorous test not only to comprehension of the passage to be summarized but also of vocabulary. It is often necessary to try to find one word which means the same thing and carries the same sense and tone, as several words in the original.

Look at this example :
When we decided to make use of that vacant piece of land that had been in the family for such a long time, we agreed that we should have to get someone to draw up some plants for us.

This sentence could be broken down and rearranged :

To utilize the old family plot when we decided finally (to make use of) (that vacant piece of land that had been in the family for to employ an architect Such a long time), we agreed (that we should have to get someone to draw up some plans for us).

In the summarized version it would read as follows :
When they decided finally to utilize the old family plot they agreed to employ an architect. (16 words)

The use of the word 'finally' conveys the sense of something being done at last about the piece of land which had remained vacant 'for such a long time'; a 'plot' is a vacant piece of land and an 'architect' is someone who draws up plans for buildings. The changeover from 'we' to 'they' indicates that the piece would be summarized in Reported Speech as it is the kind of

personal information that might be part of a passage in Direct Speech.

Here are some further examples of how a good vocabulary can be used in summarizing"

(i) Mr. Smith always looked on the bright side of things and believed that conditions should most certainly improve (17 words)

(ii) Mr. Smith was an optimist. (4 words)

(i) There can only be very few people in the world today who do not believe that every nation has the right to govern itself. (24 words).

(ii) There can only be a minority who do not believe that every nation should be autonomous. (16 words)

(i) Miss Sen spoke French, German, English and Persian. (7 words)

(ii) Miss Sen was multi-lingual. (3 words)

Style

The summary or précis should be written as a connected piece of prose, consisting of properly constructed sentences. From its very nature a summary obviously needs to be written in as concise a style as possible, in plain, straightforward English. It must be perfectly clear and the sentences should flow smoothly from one to the next. It is not advisable to reproduce the style of the original, particularly if it is in the style of another period of if it contains mannerisms or colloquialisms. On the other hand, there is no point in changing every word or phrase just for the sake of doing so. Very often a large part, if not the whole, of a summary can be built up by lifting a few sentences completely from the original. We must, however, try to use our own words as far as possible.

Order

The passage to be summarized should be reasonably well written and the facts and arguments should therefore already be arranged in an effective and logical order. Sometimes, however, the omission of much of the original detail entails some slight rearrangement that helps the condensation. Therefore, we should not be afraid to change the order of details or facts if it improves the concision and coherence of the summary.

Coherence

It has already been said that the summary should flow smoothly and the sentence should follow one logically. A summary should not be a series of disconnected statements, however accurately each may reproduce part of the sense of the original passage. As in paragraph writing and all forms of composition there must be an easy transition from one idea or argument to the next. Also their relationship to one another and to the general theme must be obvious. Even if this is not entirely clear in the original, the summary writer should try to correct any such shortcomings, as well as any disorderly

arrangement. Certainly he must be perfectly faithful to the original sense.

Some Rules to Remember

For obvious reasons, **Direct Speech is out of place** in a summary. If the original passage gives the actual words used by a speaker, a summary of what he said cannot still be in the same words. For this reason it is usually advisable to **use Reported Speech, the Past Tense and the Third Person** (for example : Mr. John , he, she, they) in a summary, except where the passage obviously refers to conditions which sill exist.

Most summaries can be written in one paragraph unless the original deals with many different points. With a long report of series or correspondence, however, more than one paragraph may be required**. They should be written in the same way as paragraphing in a normal composition or piece of prose writing**.

All summaries should be given a title, which may not necessarily be the same as that of the original – but the title should be a clear indication of what is being said in the passage.

Word Count

The number of words is often specified, particularly in an examination. If we are asked to reduce the passage "by half" or 'to one third', the correct number of words should be calculated from the original. words and one half In case where the word count is very specific it should be remembered that the title is not included; that hyphenated words count is very specific it should be remembered that the title is not included; that hyphenated words counts as one word; that dates, numbers and sums of money count as one word each; that proper name of people, places, organization, etc, in no matter how many individual words, count as one In a situation where a word limit has been specified, the number of words used in a summary should appear in brackets at the end.

We should always make a rough draft first.
This is always permitted in an examination and is, indeed, expected. This means that we can check the order and the coherence of the facts and statements and check our word count. If there are too many words we must go through and delete where possible. If there are insufficient words we are satisfied with the result should we proceed to the final draft.

theme or language.

Now read through your rough draft. Is it fluent? Is it accurate? Does it form a logical unit?
Have you kept to the word limit? Make changes if necessary. If the instructions made reference to one coherent paragraph, write two or more as instructed; if they make reference to "para-graphs". If the question had a specific focus, ensure that you have followed the instructions. (For example, the whole passage may deal with the subject of pollution but the summary may ask you to discuss only air pollution.) Highlight key words in those instructions.
Think of an appropriate title. This should be thought of as a summary of your summary. It must be short and, if it has a dash of wit, you're well on your way to full marks. Provide a title if you're asked for one.

Write out your final perfect neat draft with a title and state the number of words used in brackets at the end.
Your mark will be based on both content and style.

Step 1
We must read through the passage carefully to grasp the main theme and the ideas running through it in order to find out what it is all about.

Step 2
Then we should go through it all again picking out the main points and underlining them in pencil, omitting unnecessary description and embellishments of theme or language.

Step 3
We must now go through and take out the main points from among those we have underlined. It is not necessary to include all of them. We should discard any second thoughts that do not develop the main idea running through the whole.

Step 4
From these notes we can now go on to complete a rough draft; but this must now be in complete sentences which flow on in a logical order.

Step 5
Now we should read through the draft and cut or add where necessary if the word count was not relatively near to the total required, checking that all points have been included and that the whole reads clearly, logically and concisely.

Step 6
We can now proceed to the final draft of the summary.

Although there are subtle differences between summaries, abstracts, and executive summaries, for technical writing the main goal in writing any of these is to reduce the information one to four paragraphs. The tricky part of writing any summary format is to include all the important information in a very compact form. The content should:

- **summarize,**
- **be less technical in terminology, but**
- **include the relevant findings or information from the summariz**ed **document.**

Each of these formats is written for someone who will not have time to read the entire report or who likes to have an overview of the contents of a report before reading. This saves a busy person a lot of time if your report does not deal with an issue that the reader is interested in. The "big picture" reader will understand where you are going with a report after reading a summary and will read more efficiently. Specific information on writing each of these formats follows.

Summary
A ***summary*** may come at the beginning of a report or at the end. Generally, summaries include bullets to highlight the main points of a document. The opening sentence of a summary is a summary sentence. This means that you should include the "who, what, where, when, and why" in a good sentence for the opening. The rest of the summary outlines the pertinent information in descending order (most important first, least

important last). Summaries are usually one to four paragraphs long

Abstract

An *abstract* comes at the beginning of a report and is separate from the report structure. It may even be written in italics and bolded since it is a "preface" to the report instead of being a section. Abstracts are usually written for the reader who is a peer and shares the writer's scientific background. Abstracts are usually descriptive rather than informative (they emphasize what you did more than what you found out).

The first sentence should include all the important information that is included in the report. Include who did the study or research, why, and what the results or conclusions are. The language may be technical, and you may assume that the reader will understand some of your jargon.

The rest of the abstract should describe what you did in general. If readers wants detail, they will read the pertinent sections of the report. Abstracts are usually a paragraph long, but they may have two. Bullets are not common in abstracts since they are more descriptive than informative.

Executive Summary

An *executive summary* is the first section of a report. It is written for a person who is not an expert or even very knowledgeable in a field. The language should be more general rather than scientific. Often a manager who must make a decision will read the executive summary to understand what the writer, who is an expert, found out or recommends. Since the reader may need to understand the gist of a report without having to read every word, the executive summary is longer than one paragraph. Include all major points from each section of the report. The executive summary is a part of the document and the formatting should be the same as the rest of the document that follows.

Ready to test yourself? Good. We'll start with something relatively simple and then take on tougher charges.

Exercise 1

Write a summary approximately 60 words in length, on the following:

Lastly, let me say a word on painting as a spur to travel. There is really nothing like it. Every country where the sun shines and every district in it has a theme of its own. The lights, the atmosphere, the aspect, the spirit, are all different, but each has its native charm. Even if you are only a poor painter you can feel the influence of the scene, guiding your brush, selecting the tubes you squeeze onto the palette. Even if you cannot portray it as you see it you feel it, you know it, and you admire it for ever. When people rush about Europe in the train from one glittering centre of work or pleasure into another, passing - at enormous expense - through a series of mammoth hotels and blatant carnivals, they little know what they are missing, and how cheaply priceless things can be obtained. The painter wanders and loiters contentedly from place to place, always on the look-out for some brilliant butterfly of a picture which can be caught and set up and carried safely home. All he asks for is sunshine

Here is my version marked in bold red .The next step would be to re-write it in rough in your own words and to provide a title. After that you will write out your original version-a masterpiece.

Lastly, let me say a word on **Painting is a spur to travel**. There is really nothing like it. Every country where the sun shines and **every district** in it **has a theme of its own**. The lights, the atmosphere, the aspect, the spirit, are all different, but each has it native charm. Even if you are only a poor painter **you** can **feel the influence of the scene**, guiding your brush, selecting the tubes you squeeze onto the palette. Even if you cannot portray it as you see it you feel it you know it, and you admire it for ever. **When people rush about Europe** in the train **from one glittering centre** of work or pleasure **into another**, passing - **at enormous expense** - through a series of mammoth hotels and blatant carnivals, **they little know** what they are missing, and **how cheaply priceless things can be obtained. The painter wanders** and loiters contently from place to place, always **on the look-out for** some brilliant butterfly of **a picture** which can be caught and set up and carried safely home. **All he asks for is sunshine.** (60)

Note:

- **Do notice that you cannot repeat a point. For example, if you mention sunshine at the beginning you may not refer to it again at the end.**

Write a summary of the following passage in not more than 80 words

Now check your highlighted words against mine

Exercise 2

I have been through hundreds of towns and cities in every climate and against every kind of scenery, and of course they are all different, and the people have points of difference, but in some ways they are alike. American cities are like badger holes, ringed with trash - all of them - surrounded by piles of wrecked and rusting automobiles, and almost smothered with rubbish. Everything we use comes in boxes, cartons, bins, the so-called packaging we love so much. The mountains of things we throw away are much greater than the things we use. In this, if in no other way, we can see the wild and reckless exuberance of our production, and waste seems to be the index. Driving along, I thought how in France or Italy every item of these thrown-out things would have been saved and used for something. This is not said in criticism of one system or the other but I do wonder whether there will come a time when we can no longer afford our wastefulness - chemical wastes in the rivers, metal wastes everywhere, and atomic wastes buried deep in the earth or sunk in the sea. When an Indian village became to deep in its own filth, the inhabitants moved. And we have no place to which to move.

In this, if in no other way, **we** can **see the** wild and reckless **exuberance of our production**, and waste seems to be the index. Driving along, I thought how **in France or Italy** every item of **these** thrown-out **things would have been saved and used** for something. This is not said in criticism of one system or the other but I do wonder whether **there will come a time when we can no longer afford our wastefulness** - chemical wastes in the rivers, metal wastes everywhere, and atomic wastes

buried deep in the earth or sunk in the sea. **When** an **Indian village became** to deep in its own **filth, the inhabitants moved.** And **we have no place to which to move.** (75)

Exercise 3

Write a summary [précis] of the following passage in not more than 105 words. Ensure that your summary is in the form of a coherent passage that clearly conveys the main thoughts of the original passage.

Note:

- A summary or precis longer than 105 words will be penalized.
- Faulty construction, punctuation and paragraphing will be penalized.
- State in brackets at the end the number of words you have used.

Convention would seem to possess two main real advantages, one primarily individual, the other social. The first lies in the fact that, in prescribing within narrow limits what has to be done, said, or worn, it saves us from the mental effort of thinking or deciding for ourselves and provides us, so to speak, with a number of formulae (which may have value as social lubricants) for use on suitable occasions. In this it is like habit, but of course it shares with habit the disadvantage that it may lead us to behave in ways that, with changing circumstances, may have ceased to be appropriate. The second, social advantage consists in helping to preserve the solidarity of the groups or classes concerned. Our judgement as to its value in this respect will largely depend upon how far we consider the retention of such groups or classes is desirable. Those who demand a classless society will rightly look upon many of our conventions with a certain suspicion.

The boundary between conventions and good manners is difficult to draw. Perhaps the chief difference is that manners apply to relatively intimate and personal contacts and relationships. It would be a breach of convention to appear in a bathing costume in a city street, but a breach of good manners to attend a private party thus attired. Good manners, moreover, to a higher degree than conventions and superstitions, often have a sound rational and ethical basis, inasmuch as they may save our fellows from reasonably grounded inconvenience, discomfort, and embarrassment. It is good manners, for instance, to refrain from talking or quoting a foreign language which some of those listening would not understand; in fact, quite generally, good manners imply behaviour that puts people at their ease. The trouble with manners is that they often tend to outlive their usefulness and to degenerate into mere conventions.

Adapted from Man, Morals and Society by J.C. Flugel.

Exercise 4

Replace the 10 deleted sub-headings with sub-headings or tips of your own. Do not exceed the limit of 50 words.

10 Tips on communicating with your children

Suspend your own feelings and try to understand your child's point of view. Don't project your views on what she has to say or judge its value.

Unless your child is laughing too, give her the freedom to express feelings or opinions without fear of ridicule. Keep in mind that a child doesn't think as an adult does. Remember the slimy green dinosaur under your bed when you were small? Or when you were convinced your teacher hated you? These are real concerns for children. You must respect them if you want your child to feel comfortable about confiding in you.

A good method of getting others to open up is by sharing your own thoughts and emotions. Let your child know when you are upset or ecstatic and, most important, what made you feel this way.

And when your child does reveal her feelings, avoid comparisons or one-upmanship language, such as 'When I was your age, I ...' Instead, identify with your child by making empathetic statements, such as 'I felt that way, too.'

Be aware that nonverbal cues indicate whether or not you're really available and listening. With young children, talk face to face, not over your shoulder while standing at the sink. Also try to match the mood and posture of your child. For example, stand or sit so that your shoulders face hers.

With close-mouthed teens, try something as simple as sitting down in the same room and leafing through a magazine. When you begin talking, don't expect instant rapport. Your goal is to show that you are ready to talk whenever your child is, and being available is the first step.

Don't ask, 'How's school?' or, 'How's everything?': they're too general to answer. And avoid the word 'why' - it puts children on the defensive. Questions that begin with 'what' are usually better conversation starters since they are specific but demand more than 'okay' in response.

Television, for instance, can be a wonderful stimulus for conversation, whether you and your child anticipate what will happen in the next episode of their favourite series or discuss a distressing issue raised on TV. Newspaper stories and song lyrics also present opportunities for exchanges of thought.

Children often need to talk to someone they trust as a way of clarifying their thoughts. Sometimes just echoing or paraphrasing a child's words can help her understand the feelings behind them and make it easier to come up with solutions to problems. If your four-year-old daughter is upset because a friend broke her toy, you might simply say, 'It sound as if you're really cross with James for losing your truck's wheel.'

Parents are responsible for guiding and teaching children, but don't lapse into the habit of always using the imperative like, 'Finish your homework' or 'Help your sister clear the table'. Explain to your child why it's important to comply with your wishes.

Children have short attention spans, so if you want them to respond appropriately to what you say, be clear about what is expected of them. Don't say, 'After school we'll be going out.' Instead say, 'Be home by four this afternoon so we can shop for new jeans.'

From the earliest age, let your child know that she is loved no mater what she says or doesn't say, no matter how heated an argument becomes.

Points to Remember !
1. Listen non-judgementally.
2. Don't laugh at your child.
3. Express your feelings openly.
4. Check your body language.
5. Ask specific questions.
6. Use an everyday event to start a conversation.
7. Allow your child to sound out ideas and feelings.
8. Don't issue commands.
9. Give specific instructions.
10. Express unconditional love.

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Notes

LESSON 16:
GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Business Correspondence
Objectives

1. Explain the business communication process.
2. Establish an appropriate reader/writer relationship.
3. Develop a command of the rhetorical strategies appropriate to the business setting.
4. Design documents that are visually appealing and easy to read.

When we buy things we don't go by the looks alone. Nevertheless, looks definitely influence our buying decisions. Good looks are linked, in our minds, with quality and superiority. So, market savvy companies try hard to make the design and presentation of their products appealing. A classy appearance inspires respect in the viewers and gives the products a clear competitive edge over rival products with comparable or even better quality and functions.

Strangely, however, many of us forget or ignore all this when we send out business documents. The letters, reports, and proposals that go out with our signature represent us; they are our products. Their body language subtly influences the way the recipients treat them. With a little effort we can make our documents look more attractive and project a positive, superior image. And we should. Otherwise the work we put into drafting the test may be wasted. Poor looks may even put off the readers. And we won't be around to plead with them to read on.

There are two major dimensions to the looks of written documents: stationery and format. Both are important. Together they largely determine what impressions the reader forms about the sender and her firm even before starts reading. Of course, the text of the document should match for the impressions to be sustained. We shall look at the textual aspects of documents in later chapters.

Although body language is relevant to all documents, here we shall focus on what we need to do with that most neglected of them all – business letters. The presentation of reports and proposals tends to get better attention perhaps because they are bigger and fewer.

Principles of Good Written Communication

1. Good written communication must *command attention and get results*. If the communication is a letter then one should make sure that the letter gets read and that the person who is reading the letter is persuaded to do what the letter writer wants.

2. The communication must be *legible*, if it is hand written; and the same applies to type written messages.

3. The communication must be *carefully Planned*. The ideas should be presented in a logical manner. When several ideas are being communicated, the written material should be properly divided into paragraphs.

4. In good written communication the writer uses words and sentence structures that will be *easily understood* by the reader.

5. A sentence should have one subject and each paragraph should deal with a single topic or aspect of a topic.

6. In good writing a proper technique of *emphasis* should be used. Emphasis can be given by avoiding negatives, passive voice, and by the proper placing of words and sentences.

7. Use the *4 C's of* communication.

8. Use the '*You Attitude*'. Have you kept the reader in mind and written from his or her point of view?

9. Follow *correct language usage*, proper *grammar* and correct *punctuation.*

10. It is not possible to have good written communication without *prewriting*. Prewriting is the first step and involves gathering, information, logical arrangement of facts and a proper mental focus on the assignment.

11. The final stage of good written communication is *editing*. Editing involves a re-reading of what has been written, a spelling and grammar check and rewriting, if necessary.

Common Components and Formats
The following is concerned with the mechanical and physical details of business letters.

Heading
The heading contains the writer's address and the date of the letter. The writer's name is not included and only a date is needed in headings on letterhead stationery.

Inside Address
The inside address shows the name and address of the recipient of the letter. This information helps prevent confusion. Also, if the recipient has moved, the inside address helps to determine what to do with the letter. In the inside address, include the

appropriate title of respect of the recipient; and copy the name of the company exactly as that company writes it. When you do have the names of individuals, remember to address them appropriately: Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and so on. If you are not sure what is correct for an individual, try to find out how that individual signs letters or consult the forms-of-address section in a dictionary.

Salutation

The salutation directly addresses the recipient of the letter and is followed by a colon (except when a friendly, familiar, sociable tone is intended, in which case a comma is used). Notice that in the **simplified letter** format, the salutation line is eliminated altogether. If you don't know whether the recipient is a man or woman, the traditional practice has been to write "Dear Sir" or "Dear Sirs"-— but that's sexist! To avoid this problem, salutations such as "Dear Sir or Madame," "Dear Ladies and Gentlemen," "Dear Friends," or "Dear People" have been tried - but without much general acceptance. Deleting the salutation line altogether or inserting "To Whom It May Concern" in its place, is not ordinarily a good solution either - it's impersonal.

The best solution is to make a quick, anonymous phone call to the organization and ask for a name; Or, address the salutation to a department name, committee name, or a position name: "Dear Personnel Department," "Dear Recruitment Committee," "Dear Chairperson," "Dear Director of Financial Aid,

Subject or Reference line.

As shown in the order letter, the subject line replaces the salutation or is included with it. The subject line announces the main business of the letter.

Body of the Letter

The actual message of course is contained in the body of the letter, the paragraphs between the salutation and the complimentary close. Strategies for writing the body of the letter are discussed in the section on business-correspondence style.

Complimentary Close

The "Sincerely yours" element of the business letter is called the complimentary close. Other common ones are "Sincerely yours," "Cordially," "Respectfully," or "Respectfully yours." You can design your own, but be careful not to create florid or wordy ones. Notice that only the first letter is capitalized, and it is always followed by a comma.

Signature Block

Usually, you type your name four lines below the complimentary close, and sign your name in between. If you are a woman and want to make your marital status clear, use Miss, Ms., or Mrs. in parentheses before the typed version of your first name. Whenever possible, include your title or the name of the position you hold just below your name..

End Notations

Just below the signature block are often several abbreviations or phrases that have important functions.

Initials

The initials in all capital letters in Figure 1-1 are those of the writer of the letter, and the ones in lower case letters just after the colon are those of the typist.

Enclosures

To make sure that the recipient knows that items accompany the letter in the same envelope, use such indications as "Enclosure," "Encl.," "Enclosures (2)." For example, if you send a resume and writing sample with your application letter, you'd do this: "Encl.: Resume and Writing Sample." If the enclosure is lost, the recipient will know.

Copies

If you send copies of a letter to others, indicate this fact among the end notations also. If, for example, you were upset by a local merchant's handling of your repair problems and were sending a copy of your letter to the Better Business Bureau, you'd write this: "cc: Better Business Bureau." If you plan to send a copy to your lawyer, write something like this: "cc: Mr. Raymond Mason, Attorney."

Following Pages

If your letter is longer than one page, the heading at the top of subsequent pages can be handled in one of the following ways:

If you use letterhead stationery, remember not to use it for subsequent pages. However, you must use blank paper of the same quality, weight, and texture as the letterhead paper (usually, letterhead stationery comes with matching blank paper).

Style in Business Correspondence

Writing business letters and memos differs in certain important ways from writing reports. Keep the following advice in mind when you write and especially when you revise your business letters or memos.

State the main business, purpose, or subject matter right away.

Let the reader know from the very first sentence what your letter is about. Remember that when business people open a letter, their first concern is to know what the letter is about, what its purpose is, and why they must spend their time reading it. Therefore, avoid round-about beginnings. If you are writing to apply for a job, begin with something like this: "I am writing to apply for the position you currently have open...." If you have bad news for someone, you need not spill all of it in the first sentence. Here is an example of how to avoid negative phrasing: "I am writing in response to your letter of July 24, 1997 in which you discuss problems you have had with an electronic spreadsheet purchased from our company.

State the main purpose or business of the letter right away. The problem version just starts flailing away from the very outset. The revised version at least establishes the purpose of the letter (and then starts flailing).

If you are responding to a letter, identify that letter by its subject and date in the first paragraph or sentence

Busy recipients who write many letters themselves may not remember their letters to you. To avoid problems, identify the date and subject of the letter to which you respond:

Keep the paragraphs of most business letters short
The paragraphs of business letters tend to be short, some only a sentence long. Business letters are not read the same way as articles, reports, or books. Usually, they are read rapidly. Big, thick, dense paragraphs over ten lines, which require much concentration, may not be read carefully — or read at all.

To enable the recipient to read your letters more rapidly and to comprehend and remember the important facts or ideas, create relatively short paragraphs of between three and eight lines long. In business letters, paragraphs that are made up of only a single sentence are common and perfectly acceptable. Through-out this section, you'll see examples of the shorter paragraphs commonly used by business letters.

"Compartmentalize" the contents of your letter
When you "compartmentalize" the contents of a business letter, you place each different segment of the discussion — each different topic of the letter — in its own paragraph. If you were writing a complaint letter concerning problems with the system unit of your personal computer, you might have these paragraphs:

- A description of the problems you've had with it
- The ineffective repair jobs you've had
- The compensation you think you deserve and why

Study each paragraph of your letters for its purpose, content, or function. When you locate a paragraph that does more than one thing, consider splitting it into two paragraphs. If you discover two short separate paragraphs that do the same thing, consider joining them into one.

Provide topic indicators at the beginning of paragraphs.
Analyze some of the letters you see in this section in terms of the contents or purpose of their individual paragraphs. In the first sentence of any body paragraph of a business letter, try to locate a word or phrase that indicates the topic of that para-graph. If a paragraph discusses your problems with a personal computer, work the word "problems" or the phrase "problems with my personal computer" into the first sentence. Doing this gives recipients a clear sense of the content and purpose of each paragraph. Here is an excerpt before and after topic indicators have been incorporated:

List or itemize whenever possible in a business letter.
Listing spreads out the text of the letter, making it easier to pick up the important points rapidly. Lists can be handled in several ways, as explained in the section on lists. **Place important information strategically in business letters.** Information in the first and last lines of paragraphs tends to be read and remembered better. Information buried in the middle of long paragraphs is easily overlooked or forgotten. Therefore, place important information in high-visibility points. For example, in application letters which must convince potential employers that you are right for a job, locate information on appealing qualities at the beginning or end of paragraphs for greater emphasis. Place less positive or detrimental information in less highly

visible points in your business letters. If you have some difficult things to say, a good (and honest) strategy is to de-emphasize by placing them in areas of less emphasis. If a job requires three years of experience and you only have one, bury this fact in the middle or the lower half of a body paragraph of the application letter. The resulting letter will be honest and complete; it just won't emphasize weak points unnecessarily. Here are some examples of these ideas:

Find positive ways to express bad news in your business letters.
Often, business letters must convey bad news: a broken computer keyboard cannot be replaced, or an individual cannot be hired. Such bad news can be conveyed in a tactful way. Doing so reduces the chances that business relations with the recipient of the bad news will end. To convey bad news positively, avoid such words as "cannot," "forbid," "fail," "impossible," "refuse," "prohibit," "restrict," and "deny" as much as possible. The first versions of the example sentences below are phrased in a rather cold and unfriendly negative manner; the second versions are much more positive, cordial and tactful:

Problem: Because of the amount of information you request in your letter, simply cannot help you without seriously disrupting my work schedule.

Revision: In your letter you ask for a good amount of information which I would like to help you locate. Because of my work commitments, however, I am going to be able to answer only a few of the questions....

Focus on the recipient's needs, purposes, or interests instead of your own. Avoid a self-centered focusing on your own concerns rather than those of the recipient. Even if you must talk about yourself in a business letter a great deal, do so in a way that relates your concerns to those of the recipient. This recipient-oriented style is often called the "you-attitude," which does not mean using more you's but making the recipient the main focus of the letter.

Problem: I am writing you about a change in our pricing policy that will save our company time and money. In an operation like ours, it costs us a great amount of labor time (and thus expense) to scrape and rinse our used tableware when it comes back from large parties. Also, we have incurred great expense on replacement of linens that have been ruined by stains that could have been soaked promptly after the party and saved.

Revision: I am writing to inform you of a new policy that we are beginning, effective September 1, 19XX, that will enable us to serve your large party needs more often and without delay. In an operation like ours in which we supply for parties of up to 500, turn-around time is critical; unscraped and unrinsed tableware causes us delays in clean-up time and, more importantly, less frequent and less prompt service to you the customer. Also, linens ruined by stains that could have been avoided by immediate soaking after the party cause you to have to pay more in rental fees.

Problem: For these reasons, our new policy, effective September 1, 19XX, will be to charge an additional 15% on

unrinsed tableware and 75% of the wholesale value of stained linens that have not been soaked.

Revision: Therefore, in order to enable us to supply your large party needs promptly and whenever you require, we will begin charging 15% on all un rinsed tableware and 75% of the wholesale value of stained linens that have not been soaked. This policy we hope will encourage our customers' kitchen help to do the quick and simple rinsing and/or soaking at the end of large parties that will ensure faster and more frequent service.

Avoid pompous, inflated, legal-sounding phrasing. Watch out for puffed-up, important-sounding language. This kind of language may seem business-like at first; it's actually ridiculous. Of course, such phrasing is apparently necessary in legal documents; but why use it in other writing situations? When you write a business letter, picture yourself as a plain-talking, common-sense, down-to-earth person (but avoid slang).. Avoid pompous, officious-sounding writing. Not only is the tone of the problem version offensive, it is nearly twice as long as the revised version!

Give your business letter an "action ending" whenever appropriate. An "action-ending" makes clear what the writer of the letter expects the recipient to do and when. ineffective conclusions to business letters often end with rather limp, noncommittal statements such as "Hope to hear from you soon" or "Let me know if I can be of any further assistance." Instead, or in addition, specify the action the recipient should take and the schedule for that action. If, for example, you are writing a query letter, ask the editor politely to let you know of his decision if at all possible in a month. If you are writing an application letter, subtly try to set up a date and time for an interview.

Notes

LESSON 17:
LETTER WRITING - RAMIFICATION

All of us are required, every now and then, to write letters, either to our friends or on business. The various types of letters that we are usually required to write in our everyday life are given below.

1. Private or Friendly Letters

written to friends, relatives, or acquaintances. They are, therefore, written in a free and easy manner. Their style is chiefly conversational. They are like friendly talks touching upon many private or familiar topics.

To write a good letter of this kind, the best thing to do is-to imagine that your friend to whom you are writing is sitting near you and then put down just what you would like to say to him. In this way, you will be able to write an interesting and natural letter.

In writing letters you must attend to the following points of form:

1. The Heading
The *Heading* consists of (a) the writer's address, and(b) the date. Write your own address at the right-hand of the top of the page,and put the date just below it. For example:

12 Barakhamba Road,

New Delhi.

January 23,1994.

Note. The date should be written as follows :

23rd January 1994 or January 23, 1994.

Do not write 23-12-1994, which is not pretty to look at, and not polite. Notice also that it is better to write *23rd January, 1994* than *January 23rd,1994.*

2. Greeting or Salutation
After you have written your address and the date, go to the left-hand side of the paper and write the *Salutation.* The form of *greeting* will depend upon the relation in which you stand to the person to whom you are writing.

(i) To the members of your family, for example, it will be :*My dear Father, My dear Mother, Dear Uncle, Dear Aunt, Dear Harish, Dear Lila,* etc.

(ii) To friends it will be as follows :*Dear Mr. Ghose, Dear Ghose, Dear Seth, Dear Gupta, My dear Raman,* etc.

3. Body of the Letter
This is, of course, the main pan of the letter. It should be written in a natural and easy style. It should be divided into paragraphs, if the letter is long. The language used should be simple and direct.

4. Leave-taking or Subscription
When you have Finished your letter, at the end of it, write the word of leave-taking at the right-hand side of the letter, with your name below it thus :

Yours sincerely,
Harish

5. Address on the Envelope
This should be written very clearly, thus:

Shri S.R. Goyal,

52 Chandni Chowk,

Delhi-110006

In writing private letters to relatives, begin and end as follows:

Begin	End
My dear Father,	Your loving son,
My dear Mother,	Your affectionate son,
Dear Brother,	Your loving brother,
My dear Uncle,	Your affectionate nephew
My dear Aunt,	Your affectionate brother,
Dear Satish,	Your affectionate brother,
Dearest Sister,	Yours affectionately,
My dear Lila,	Your loving nephew,

In writing friendly letters to intimate friends,

Begin:	End:
My dear George,	Yours very sincerely,
Dear Ahmed,	Your sincere friend,
Dear John,	Sincerely yours,
Dear Friend,	Ever yours,

Or, if the friend to whom you are writing happens to be a very near and dear friend of yours, you can use some such form as this-

With love and best wishes,

From your affectionate friend,

Krishnan

When we write to friends or acquaintances who are much older than ourselves, and are not related to us, we must begin as-*Dear Mr. Robson, or Dear Mrs. Robson* and end as :-

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Kapil Rao

To a stranger we write—Dear Sir, if he is a gentleman ; Dear Madam, if we address a lady. We sign ourselves—*Yours faithfully or Yours truly.*

To schoolmasters, schoolmistresses, college principals, and professors, we must write—Sir or Madam (not Dear Sir, Dear Madam) and we should end the letter with Yours obediently or Yours respectfully.

Examples of Private Letters
Write a letter to a friend, asking him to come and stay with you after the examination and telling him how you would make his stay pleasant.
6 College Street,
Varanasi.
October 23,1994.

My dear Dutt,
I hope you have not forgotten your promise lo come and spend a few days with us after your examination. Your examination is now over. Will you come and stay with us for a few days ? It will be such a great pleasure to have you here, and I feel sure that you will enjoy your visit. The country is perfectly lovely just now, and the garden with its beautiful lowers is so gay and bright. We have a delightful swing hanging from a large banyan tree, and I promise you some games. There is a stream running at the foot of a neighbouring hill where Papa often takes us to fish ; if you care for this sort of enjoyment you can have plenty of it.

I have also got two ponies ; and so, if you feel like it, we may have pleasant rides in the evenings. I have several friends living near by and we often meet at one another's houses in the evenings and entertain ourselves with music or cards.

Then I promise you a pleasant time on the Diwali day. All the big temples here are beautifully decorated and brightly lit up with candles and are visited by thousands of people on that day.

How anxiously do I expect a reply to this letter ! Write at once to say that you will come and mention the train by which you will arrive.

Yours very sincerely,
Narendra Rao

Your father is away from home on business. Write a letter, telling him of the state of things at home in his absence.
5 Rose Villa,
Ajmer.
April 3,1994.

My dear Father,
I am sorry to tell you that mother has been ill for the past three days. She has been suffering from cough ; she has a high temperature and requires to be carefully nursed. Bimala is nursing her; and the doctor says that. thanks to her careful and patient nursing, mother will be better in a few days. She passed two restless nights, and we were afraid that she would develop pneumonia. But now she is out of danger. You need not be

alarmed on account of her in any way. Her illness must not stand in the way of your business. You can return after you have Finished your work.

You will be glad to learn that Krishnan has come off through the examination with flying colours. Kanta is attending to her lessons as usual. I am also working hard for the coming examination.

Yesterday, dear aunt unexpectedly arrived from Delhi. She never knew that mother was so ill. She is now with us and is a great help to mother and the rest of us.

Your affectionate son,
Roshan

Write a letter of apology to a friend for not having kept an appointment, 2. Write a letter to your brother, reproving him for having neglected his studies, and advising him to be diligent at his work.
156 Tilak Marg
Poona.
18th March, 1994

My dear Ashok,
I gather from the report I have had from your Headmaster that you had done badly in your first quarterly examination. He says that you shirk you homework, and are near the bottom of your class in most of your subjects Evidently you are getting la5hy and neglecting your studies.

My dear brother. I don't want you to waste these precious years in idle pursuits. Remember, if you don't take my advice now, you will repent afterwards, when it will be too late.

So you must make up your mind from today to work honestly an(regularly. Avoid your idle companions. By all means take part in game and sports ; bill do not do so at the cost of your studies. Always do you work first, for your main aim at school is to study.

I hope you will take the warning in the spirit it is meant and settle down to regular and systematic study.

With best wishes from
Your loving brother
Raman

Write a letter to your friend, telling him what you intend to do after your examination
116 Park Street
Bangalore
April 29, 1994

My dear Ranjan,
Thank you very much for your kind letter. I was pleased to hear from you after such a long silence. It is very kind of you to ask me what I intend to do after the Higher Secondary Examination.

I feel that I should never go to college, for I am not very fond of books. Besides this, college education is very expensive. And

even if I become a B.A. or M.A., I do not see any bright future. Only a few of the best can get into Government service ; and you can't succeed easily in professions like Law and Medicine. The only other opening left for graduates is teaching. But I don't envy the lot of a teacher. Nor have I any ambition to be a clerk in some petty office.

What I should like best would be to became a businessman. I want to start an independent business of my own, to export to foreign countries articles made by hands in India. I am sure I shall be able to make a success of it by hard work and persever-ance, since there is a great demand for hand-made articles abroad. By the time you will become explaining fully what prevented you.

18 Lawrence Road,
Lucknow.
July 25,1994.

Dear Narain,

I hope you will excuse me for not being able to see you on the 23rd evening. I had promised to meet you at the Capital Cinema at 6 o'clock, and I am afraid you must have thought me untrustworthy when I did not turn up at the appointed time.

This is what happened. I was on the point of leaving my room to keep my appointment with you, when I received an urgent telegram from my elder brother informing me that father had met with a serious accident, and that I must reach home by the First train. So I hurriedly packed my things and caught the 6-30 train. I had no servant by whom I could send a message to you in time. I was, moreover, so terribly upset by the bad news that I could think of nothing but reaching home and seeing father at the earliest possible. When I reached home I found that, though he was badly injured, he was out of danger.

I take the earliest opportunity of writing this letter to you, apologizing for the inconvenience I caused you.

With kind regards,

I am,
Ever sincerely yours,
Krishna Rao

Write a letter to a friend, giving him an account of the accident which recently happened to you.

15 Garden Road,
Poona.
March 22,1994.

My dear Raghubir,

I am sorry I could not reply to your letter earlier for I have been in bed for the last few days as the result of a nasty accident.

About a week ago, I was going to a friend's house on my bicycle. Unfortunately, I had no lamp for the cycle ; the night was dark and cloudy. I could not see my way clearly before me. I would have remained at the hostel, but then I thought that there was no danger of my meeting with any accident for I knew the road so well.

I had hardly covered half the distance, when, as I turned sharply to the right to take the road leading to my friend's house, I slipped from the cycle. Before I could understand what had happened, I was thrown violently into a ditch near by. I lay there unconscious, I think, for about twenty minutes. When I came back to my senses, I saw an old man with a lantern bending over me. Evidently, he was the man sitting in the tonga which was then passing by. He and the tonga-driver helped me out of the ditch. Every movement was an agony. They then took me to hospital where my head was bandaged. I had to lie in the hospital about a week before I was well again and was allowed to return to the hostel. Father came down the next day as soon as he was called telegraphically. He has now left You should not be worried in the least about me. I am all right now.

Yours sincerely,
Advani

Write a letter to a friend, describing your favourite hobby.
5 Fort Road,
Gwalior.
25th May, 1994.

My dear John,

Many thanks for your gay letter. It is fine to hear from a friend like you every now and then.

You ask in your letter if I have any hobbies. Yes, I have a number of them. But my chief hobby is stamp-collecting. I am very fond of collecting stamps especially foreign. I have quite a large collection. You may be surprised to know that last year I sold ten stamps for Rs. 1000/-. I was very sorry to part with them ; but I could not help that, for I badly needed money at that time.

I have also a few rare stamps especially from Russia, where I have a brother working in a factory, and some from Japan and America. Stamps tell me something about their countries. It is very pleasant to study the portraits of kings, queens, heroes, and patriots printed on these stamps. I specially like the French stamps. which are very pretty to look at.

I find a lot of pleasure in this hobby. The foreign stamps teach me i good deal about other countries in which I am interested. Many of my rare stamps have behind them quite romantic stories. There is a lot of pleasure in collecting things that are rare ; at least, it is so in my case.

When I come there during the X-mas holidays, I will bring with me my collection for you to see and enjoy.

With best wishes,

Your sincere friend,

Tom

8.   Write a letter to a friend on his birthday.
14 Albert Road,
Baroda.
 January 26,1994.

Dear Jim,

Just a few lines to wish you many Happy Returns of your birthday. I am sure, dear old fellow, that you will live for many, many years. May these years be happy ones ! May they grow happier and happier!

I have been seriously thinking as to what I should send you for a present. Knowing that you are interested in photography I am sending you a camera to add to the joy of the happy day. I hope you will like it.

With kindest regards,
Your old friend,
Jack

9. A reply to the above.

16 Temple Road,

Ahmedabad

May 10,1994.

My dear Jack,

Many thanks for your letter expressing your good wishes on my birthday. Your delightful present came to hand this morning, and I must thank you very much indeed for it. It is really very kind of you to have thought of me, and you could not have chosen anything else that would have given me more pleasure. It is just what I have been wanting for a long time. I shall be able to take some fine pictures with it. Once again, many thanks for the delightful present.

Yours very sincerely,
Jim

Write a letter to a friend, congratulating her on her having passed an examination securing very high marks.

5 Raopuia Road,
Bangalore
March 10,1994.

Dear Pinky,

I have just heard that you have passed your examination and come off with flying colours. May I offer you my heartiest congratulations ? It is an achievement of which you ought to be proud. Undoubtedly, you deserved to get through with such a high score. You really worked very hard throughout the year. You stand very high and, I think, you are sure to win a scholar-ship.

Mother joins me in singing your praises. She says your parents ought to be proud of such a child. You have really distin-guished yourself in the examination and brought honour to your family. Which college are you going to join ?

With love,

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
Lily

Write a letter of condolence to a friend who has recently lost his mother.

17 University Road,
Bombay.
July 20,1994.

Dear Pratap,

I have just heard of your sad loss and hasten to send you my deepest sympathies. It is vain to try to console you at such a time. I must say I share your grief. This is really an irreparable loss.

Your mother's life was a long, useful and pious one. I hope you will find some slight consolation in the thought that your mother was in every way a truly noble woman and that you have your friends to sympathise deeply in your sorrow, to whatever little extent it might be a source of consolation at such times.

May God give you strength to bear this blow.

Yours very sincerely,

Anand

II.   Notes of Invitations

A formal invitation is generally written in the third person. It contains no heading, no salutation, and no complimentary close. The writer's name appears in the body of the letter. The address of the writer and the date are written to the left, below the body of the letter.

The reply to such a note of invitation is also written in the third person, and repeats the date and time mentioned in the invitation.

You are having a dinner party on Thursday, September 28, at 7-30 p.m. Draft a Formal Note of Invitation to the Dinner.

Mr. and Mrs. Krishna Rao request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. K-L.Banerjee's company at dinner on Thursday, September 28, at 7-30 p.m.
Good Heavens,
Calcutta.

21st September.

Imagine that you are K.L.Banerjee. You have received an invitation to dinner from Mr. Krishna Rao. Write a reply, (i) accepting the invitation, and (ii) expressing your inability to accept it.

(i)   Mr. and Mrs. K.L. Banerjee have much pleasure in accepting Mr. and Mrs. Krishna Rao's kind invitation to dinner on Thursday, September 28, at 7-30 p.m.

24 Netaji Street, Calcutta.

24th September.

(ii)   Mr. and Mrs. K.L.Banerjee regret that owing to a previous engagement they are unable to accept Mr. and Mrs. Krishna Rao's kind invitation to dinner on Thursday, September 28, at 7-30 p.m.

24 Netaji's Street,

Calcutta.

24th September.

An informal not&- of invitation is written like a friendly letter, though we use here more formal language. The formal beginning is—My dear Mr. George, and the formal close is—*Sincerely yours. Yours very sincerely. Yours affectionately* (to relations, or intimate friends).

Draft an Informal Note of Invitation to Dinner.
49 Sunny Lodge,
Mysore.
February 20,1994.

My dear Mr. Joshi,

Will you come with Indrani to dinner here on Saturday, February 26, at 7 o'clock?

There will be a few friends here, but you have met them all before.

After dinner, we shall be entertained with music by Miss Lajwanti.

Yours very sincerely,

Bakshi

Imagine that you are Joshi. You have received an invitation to dinner from your friend Mr.Bakshi. Write a letter in reply, (i) accepting the invitation, and (ii) refusing the invitation.]

20 Green Mansions,
Mysore.
February 23,1994.

My dear Mr. Bakshi,

How really nice of you to ask me to come to dinner on Saturday, the 26th!

Indrani and I will be delighted to accept your invitation.

Need I say we are looking forward to a very jolly evening. Thanking you for your kind invitation,

Yours very sincerely,

Joshi

20 Green Mansions,

Mysore.

February 23,1994.

My dear Mr. Bakshi,

Very many thanks for your kind invitation. Unfortunately, Indrani has been laid up with a chill for the last three or four days.

Under the circumstances we shall not be able to be with you on Saturday. We are both very sorry. Very many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Joshi

Business letter should be (1) brief, and (2) clear.

1. A business letter should be brief, because businessmen are usually busy, and have no time to attend to unnecessary details. They want to know exactly what you want. If you tell them that, in as few words as possible, you will have written a good business letter.

2. A business letter must be clear, because, it you do not describe the thing you are enquiring about you are likely lo receive something else. For example, if you are writing for a pair of shoes, you should give full details— make, colour, size, price, etc. In order to be clear, it is most important to attend to details.

Modes of Address. Study carefully the following modes of Address:

(1) A shopkeeper is addressed as:

Mr. K.L. Kapila,
Tea Merchant,
142 Fort Road,
Bombay.
Begin *Dear Sir*, and end with *Yours faithfully.*

(2) A Firm is addressed as:

Messrs. Black,
White & Co., Ltd,
General Merchants,
13 Empress Road, Madras.
Begin *Dear Sir*, and end with *Yours faithfully.*

(3) A Professional man is addressed as:

Dr. B.L. Aggarwala,
29 Chandni Chowk,
Delhi.

Begin *Dear Sir* or *My dear Sir*, and end with *Yours faithfully* or *Yours truly.*

Examples of Business Letters

Write a letter to a bookseller, ordering books and stationery]
16, Gandhi Road
Karnal.
May 16,1994

Messrs. Goyal Brothers Prakashan,

Educational Publishers, 11/1903,

Chuna Mandi, Pahar Ganj,

New Delhi-110055.

I shall be obliged if you send me the following articles per V.P.P. at your earliest convenience:

One copy each of:

English Grammar and Composition –Wren &Martin

General Knowledge Today: Books I-VIII

Spell-Well English Wordbooks: I-VIII.

Yours truly,

P.K. Desai

From a business firm to a customer in answer to his complaint that the goods sent for were received in damaged condition]

Messrs. Johnson & Sons,

12 Connaught Circus,

New Delhi.

January 30, 1994

To,

David Green, Esq.
Hill Road,
Dehradun

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 3rd instant, we regret to find that the goods sent by us were received by you in damaged condition. We beg to assure you that the goods were very carefully packed and were in perfectly good condition when they left our godown. We are very sorry to say that we cannot see our way to replace the damaged goods, as we take no responsibility for any damage suffered by them in transit. May we, however, suggest you should draw the attention of the railway authorities to the matter with a view to obtaining a compensation ?

Yours faithfully,
K.C.Dhoomi
Manager

To the Headmaster of your school, asking for leave in consequence of illness.]

16 Sunny Lodge,
Model Town,
Delhi
15th July, 1994.

To,

The Headmaster,
National High School,
Model Town,
Delhi.

Sir,

I have been suffering from diarrhoea since last night and so I am unable to attend the school. I have consulted a doctor, and he says that though the trouble is not very acute, still he has advised me to take a rest for a couple of days. I shall be obliged if you will kindly grant me leave from the 15th to the 18th instant both days inclusive.

Yours respectfully,

Suresh Chandra Bhargava,

Class IX (B).

Exercise . Write the following letters in about 100 words

1. You have celebrated your birthday recently. One of your uncles, living in a foreign country, had sent you a lovely birthday present. Write a letter of thanks to him, telling him of some other presents you got and saying why you liked the present sent by him most.

2. Write a letter to your friend, asking him to attend the marriage of your brother.

3. A friend of yours has failed in the All India Secondary Examination. Write a letter to him, sympathising with him and encouraging him to cheer up and try again.

4. Write a letter to a friend, telling him what you intend to do after your examination.

5. Write a letter to your Principal, asking for a letter of recommendation and explaining what you want

6. Write a letter to your father, explaining what you wish to do after your examination.

7. Write a letter to a dentist, asking him for an appointment.

Exercise Write the following letters

1. Write a letter to a business firm, acknowledging receipt of the goods you had ordered and complaining about the damage caused in transit on account of bad packing.

2. Write a letter to a shop, ordering a pair of football boots, mentioning the size, shape and quality required and the method by which they are to be sent and paid for.

3. Write a letter to your landlord, asking him to do certain repairs in the house you are occupying.

4. Write a letter to the Manager of a sugar factory, seeking his permission for you and your friends to visit the factory.

5. Write a letter to your family doctor, asking him to come and see your brother who is ill.

6. Write a letter to Messrs. Lalwani, Adwani & Co., Ltd., Delhi, complaining that the clock you lately bought from them does not keep good time.

7. Write a letter to a bookseller, complaining that the books sent by him were not those that you ordered.

8. Write an application to the Principal, XYZ School, Tarapur, requesting him to grant you a free studentship. Sign the application as ABC.

9. Write an application to your Principal, requesting him to issue you a character certificate.

10. You are Kumaresh living at 35 Park Street, Rajaji Nagar, Trivandnim-343

Write a letter to the Station Director, Quiz Programmes, Doordarshan

Kendra Trivandrum-343 117, requesting him to give you a chance to participate in the Weekly Quiz Programme in view of your all round interests.

Letters to Newspapers

Letters to newspapers are always addressed to The Editor. The proper form of salutation is *Sir*, and not *Dear Sir*. The formal close is *Yours truly.*

Examples Of Letters To Newspapers

Write a letter to the Editor of a Newspaper, on reckless driving.

To

The Editor,
The Hindustan Times,
New Delhi.

Sir.

It is high time that proper steps are taken to put a stop to the reckless driving of motor-cars in the narrow streets of our thickly populated city. Only yesterday a poor, old beggar very narrowly escaped being run over by a motor-car going at a very

high speed. He was crossing the street when the car came dashing along at a speed of about ninety kilometres an hour. Such reckless driving causes fatal accidents to pedestrians trying to cross the roads.

It is true that regulations regarding the speed limit do exist. But unless the police are strict in enforcing them, what do the drivers care for them ? The police seem to take little or no notice of offenders. And so motor-car accidents are almost a daily occurrence.

I hope that the public, who are the worst sufferers, will bring pressure lo bear upon the police and municipal authorities lo put a slop lo reckless driving, before

we have any more deaths due to accidents.

Yours truly
Observer

Write a letter to a newspaper appealing for help for the victims of a flood.

To

The Editor,
The Hindustan Times,
New Delhi.

Sir,

I have just returned from a tour of the flood-affected areas in Bihar, where unprecedented havoc and destruction have taken place.

No doubt people are already familiar with the terrible tragedy that has ; overtaken Bihar, but the account of an eye witness will bring home to the people with all the greater effect the terrible distress which these disastrous floods have caused. In some places whole villages have been swept away and the crops over a large area destroyed. Thousands of villagers have been rendered destitute, most of them have nothing but the clothes in which they managed to escape somehow. They are living in temporary shelters exposed to all the inclemency of the weather, without proper food and clothes. The government is no doubt doing all it can to relieve the immediate distress, but unless public funds are raised and people make liberal contribu-tions it is not possible to rehabilitate the flood-affected victims. When the floods subside, villages will have to be rebuilt and the villagers will have to be supplied with seed, fodder, cattle and farm implements before they can start work again.

I, therefore, strongly appeal to the people to help the govern-ment in the humanitarian task of relieving the distress of the poor sufferers by contributing generously to the Bihar Flood Relief Fund and thus earn the gratitude of their distressed fellow brethren.

Yours truly
Observer

Notes

Business Correspondence - Application Letters

This section focuses on the application letter (sometimes called a "cover letter"), which together with the resume is often called the "job package." You may already have written one or both of these employment-seeking documents. That's okay. Read and study this section, and then apply the guidelines here to the resumes and application letters you have created in the past.

This section presents many different ways to design and write application letters. Nothing here is trying to force you into one design. *You* design your own letter using whatever *you* find here that is useful and any other sources you know of.

In many job applications, you attach an application letter to your resume. Actually, the letter comes *before* the resume.

The role of the application letter is to draw a clear connection between the job you are seeking and your qualifications listed in the resume. To put it another way, the letter matches the requirements of the job with your qualifications, emphasizing how you are right for that job. The application letter is not a lengthy summary of the resume — not at all. It selectively mentions information in the resume, as appropriate.

Common Types of Application Letters

To begin planning your letter, decide which type of application letter you need. This decision is in part based on requirements that employers may have, and in part based on what your background and employment needs are. In many ways, types of application letters are like the types of resumes. The types of application letters can be defined according to amount and kind of information:

- **Objective letters** - One type of letter says very little: it identifies the position being sought, indicates an interest in having an interview, and calls attention to the fact that the resume is attached. It also mentions any other special matters that are not included on the resume, such as dates and times when you are available to come in for an interview. This letter does no salesmanship and is very brief. (It may represent the true meaning of "cover" letter.)

- **Highlight letters** - Another type of application letter, the type you do for most technical writing courses, tries to summarize the key information from the resume, the key information that will emphasize that you are a good candidate for the job. In other words, it selects the best information from the resume and summarizes it in the letter -this type of letter is especially designed to make the connection with the specific job.

How do you know which to write? For most technical-writing courses, write the highlight letter. However, in "real-life" situations, it's anybody's guess. Try calling the prospective employer; study the job advertisement for clues.

Common Sections in Application Letters

As for the actual content and organization of the paragraphs within the application letter (specifically the *highlight* type of application letter), consider the following common approaches.

Introductory paragraph. That first paragraph of the application letter is the most important; it sets everything up - the tone, focus, as well as your most important qualification. A typical problem in the introductory paragraph involves diving directly into work and educational experience. Bad idea! A better idea is to do something like the following:

State the purpose of the letter-to inquire about an employment opportunity.

- Indicate the source of your information about the job - newspaper advertisement, a personal contact, or other.

- State one eye-catching, attention-getting thing about yourself in relation to the job or to the employer that will cause the reader to want to continue.

And you try to do all things like these in the space of very short paragraph - no more than 4 to 5 lines of the standard business letter. (And certainly, please don't think of these as the "right" or the "only" things to put in the introduction to an application letter.)

Main body paragraphs. In the main parts of the application letter, you present your work experience, education, training - whatever makes that connection between you and the job you are seeking. Remember that this is the most important job you have to do in this letter - to enable the reader see the match between your qualifications and the requirements for the job.

There are two common ways to present this information:

- *Functional approach* - This one presents education in one section, and work experience in the other. If there were military experience, that might go in another section. Whichever of these section contains your "best stuff" should come first, after the introduction.

- *Thematic approach* - This one divides experience and education into groups such as "management," "technical," "financial," and so on and then discusses your work and education related to them in separate paragraphs.

Figure 1-4. Common sections of application letters. You can organize the letter thematically or functionally the same way that you can the resume.

Another section worth considering for the main body of the application letter is one in which you discuss your goals, objectives - the focus of your career - what you are doing, or want to do professionally. A paragraph like this is particularly good for people just starting their careers, when there is not much to put in the letter. Of course, be careful about loading a paragraph like this with "sweet nothings." For example, "I am seeking a challenging, rewarding career with an dynamic upscale

company where I will have ample room for professional and personal growth" — come on! give us a break! Might as well say, "I want to be happy, well-paid, and well-fed."

Closing paragraph. In the last paragraph of the application letter, you can indicate how the prospective employer can get in touch with you and when are the best times for an interview. This is the place to urge that prospective employer to contact you to arrange an interview.

Background Details in the Application Letter

One of the best ways to make an application letter great is to work in details, examples, specifics about related aspects of your educational and employment background. Yes, if the resume is attached, readers can see all that details there. However, a letter that is overly general and vague might generate so little interest that the reader might not even care to turn to the resume.

In the application letter, you work in selective detail that makes your letter stand out, makes it memorable, and substantiates the claims you make about your skills and experience. Take a look at this example, which is rather lacking in specifics:

> As for my experience working with persons with developmental disabilities, I have worked and volunteered at various rehabilitation hospitals and agencies in Austin and Houston [say which ones to inject more detail into this letter]. I have received training [where? certificates?] in supervising patients and assisting with physical and social therapy. Currently, I am volunteering at St. David's Hospital [doing what?] to continue my education in aiding persons with developmental disabilities.

Now take a look at the revision:

> As for my experience working with persons with developmental disabilities, I have worked and volunteered at Cypress Creek Hospital in Houston and Capital Area Easter Seals/ Rehabilitation Center and Health South Rehabilitation Hospital in Austin. I have received CPR, First Aid, and Crisis Intervention certificates from Cypress Creek Hospital. Currently, I am volunteering at St. David's Hospital assisting with physical therapy to persons with developmental disabilities in the aquatics department.

Common Problems in Application Letters

- *Readability and white space* - Are there any dense paragraphs over 8 lines? Are there comfortable 1-inch to 1.5-inch margins all the way around the letter? Is there adequate spacing between paragraph and between the components of the letter?
- *Page fill* - Is the letter placed on the page nicely: not crammed at the top one-half of the page; not spilling over to a second page by only three or four lines?
- *General neatness, professional-looking quality* - Is the letter on good quality paper, and is the copy clean and free of smudges and erasures?

- *Proper use of the business-letter format* - Have you set up the letter in one of the standard business-letter formats? (See the references earlier in this chapter.)
- *Overt, direct indication of the connection between your background and the requirements of the job* - Do you emphasize this connection?
- *A good upbeat, positive tone* -Is the tone of your letter bright and positive? Does it avoid sounding overly aggressive, brash, over-confident (unless that is really the tone you want)? Does your letter avoid the opposite problem of sounding stiff, overly reserved, stand-offish, blase, indifferent?
- *A good introduction* - Does your introduction establish the purpose of the letter? Does it avoid diving directly into the details of your work and educational experience? Do you present one little compelling detail about yourself that will cause the reader to want to keep reading?
- *A good balance between brevity and details* - Does your letter avoid becoming too detailed (making readers less inclined to read thoroughly)? Does your letter avoid the opposite extreme of being so general that it could refer to practically anybody?
- *Lots of specifics (dates, numbers, names, etc.)* - Does your letter present plenty of specific detail but without making the letter too densely detailed? Do you present hard factual detail (numbers, dates, proper names) that make you stand out as an individual?
- *A minimum of information that is simply your opinion of yourself* - Do you avoid over-reliance on information that is simply your opinions about yourself. For example, instead of saying that you "work well with others," do you cite work experience that proves that fact but without actually stating it?
- *Grammar, spelling, usage* - And of course, does your letter use correct grammar, usage, and spelling? .

An application for a post falls into three parts :

1. Subject-reference to the advertisement, nature of the appointment, etc.
2. Statement of age, education, and experience.
3. Reference to the testimonials, etc. Here the applicant should also express his earnestness to serve.

Applicants for post may write Yours respectfully or Yours faithfully.

Examples

Structure of an Application Letter

Applicant's address
Town, State. Postcode

Date

Employer's Name (wherever possible)
Position
Company/Organisation
Address
Town, State. Postcode

Dear (If the employer's name is known use Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs/ Dr Brown not Dear Ben or Dear Julia Brown. If the name is unknown then use Dear Sir/Madam),

Reference Number (if applicable)

In your introductory paragraph, clearly state the purpose of the letter. If you are applying for an advertised vacancy, state the title of the position and when and where it was advertised. Alternatively you may be inquiring about the possibility of work experience or vacation work or writing an unsolicited letter to a potential employer. If appropriate to the position, include details of your educational background.

The middle two to three paragraphs are critical to a successful application; this is where you demonstrate your suitability for the position by addressing the selection criteria. Link your skills, qualifications and experience to the selection criteria (see preparation section). Refer to the examples that you have prepared and mention any other points in your favour. Explain why you want this particular job.

Employers are interested to hear what you know of their organisation, so indicate that you have done your homework by including a paragraph that mentions your interest in the organisation and the advertised job. You may wish to place this information in the first paragraph and so grab the attention of the employer immediately.

In your final paragraph express your willingness to attend an interview to support your application and refer to any enclosures ie. resume, transcript of results.

Yours sincerely (if you have written Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs/Dr Brown) or
Yours faithfully (if you addressed the letter to Dear Sir/ Madam),

Full Name

(And don't forget to sign your letter and enclose your resume and academic results).

Write an application to the Director of Education for the Post of a Teacher in a School.

16 Harrison Road,

Lucknow.

26th May, 1994.

To,

The Director of Education,
UttarPradesh,
Lucknow.

Sir,

I wish to apply for the post of a science teacher in your school. As regards my qualifications, I passed my B.Sc. Examination in the First Division in 1990 from the Government College, Allahabad, taking English, Mathematics and Physics. I also won a gold medal for standing first in Mathematics in the College. I then took the B.Ed. course at the Stale College of Education, Allahabad, and passed the B.Ed. Examination in the First Division in 1991.

I may further beg leave to state that I have about two years' experience as a Science Teacher in St. John's High School, Allahabad. The enclosed certificate from my Headmaster will show you that my work has been approved.

I am a good sportsman, and take a keen interest in games. I am in charge of the Hockey Eleven in my present school.

If am selected I may assure you, Sir, that I shall do my best to give you full satisfaction in my work.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Sudhir Bose

Exercise Write the following applications :

1.   Write an application for the post of a research officer in a pharmaceutical company   in an office.

2.   Write an application for the post of a General Manager in an Agriculture Industry

3.   Write an application for the post of a trained teacher.

4.   Answer the following advertisement:

    "Wanted a Senior engineer with a good knowledge of official correspondence and accounts. Must know computers . Only experienced men need apply. Apply, slating age, experience, and salary acceptable, to the Manager, Long, Short & Co., Ltd, Fort Road, Bombay."

5.   Write an application to the Director of Education, Delhi for appointment as   lecturer for which you are fully qualified.

6   You have passed the Secondary School Examination and are qualified for the post of a Sales Assistant. M/s PQR of City C have advertised a post of a Sales Assistant.

Resume Design:

Before personal computers, people used one resume for varied kinds of employment searches. However, with less expensive desktop publishing and high-quality printing, people sometimes rewrite their resumes for every new job they go after. For example, a person who seeks employment both with a community college and with a software-development company would use two different resumes. The contents of the two might be roughly the same, but the organization, format, and emphases would be quite different.

There is no one right way to write a resume. Every person's background, employment needs, and career objectives are different, thus necessitating unique resume designs. Every detail, every aspect of your resume must start with who you are, what your background is, what the potential employer is looking for, and what your employment goals are-not with from some prefab design.

Basic sections of a resume-whichever format you use, the information generally divides up as shown here.

Sections in Resumes

Resumes can be divided into three sections: the heading, the body, and the conclusion. Each of these sections has fairly common contents.

Heading

The top third of the resume is the *heading.* It contains your name, phone numbers, address, and other details such as your occupation, titles, and so on. Some resume writers include the name of their profession, occupation, or field. In some examples, you'll see writers putting things like "CERTIFIED PHYSICAL THERAPIST" very prominently in the heading. Headings can also contain a goals and objectives subsection and a highlights subsection.

Body

In a one-page resume, the body is the middle portion, taking up a half or more of the total space of the resume. In this section, you present the details of your work, education, and military experience. This information is arranged in reverse chronological order. In the body section, you also include your accomplishments, for example, publications, certifications, equipment you are familiar with, and so on. There are *many* ways to present this information:

- You can divide it *functionally*—into separate sections for work experience and education.

- You can divide it *thematically*—into separate sections for the different areas of your experience and education.

Conclusion

In the final third or quarter of the resume, you can present other related information on your background. For example, you can list activities, professional associations, memberships, hobbies, and interests. At the bottom of the resume, people often put "REFERENCES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST" and the date of preparation of the resume. At first, you might think that listing nonwork and personal information would be totally irrelevant and inappropriate. Actually, it can come in handy—it personalizes you to potential employers and gives you something to chat while you're waiting for the coffee machine or the elevator. For example, if you mention in your resume that you raise goats, that gives the interviewer something to chat with you about during those moments of otherwise uncomfortable silence.

Resumes: Types and Design

To begin planning your resume, decide which type of resume you need. This decision is in part based on requirements that prospective employers may have, and in part based on what your background and employment needs are.

Type of Organization

Resumes can be defined according to how information on work and educational experience is handled. There are several basic, commonly used plans or designs you can consider using.

Functional design

Illustrated schematically in Figure 1-6, the functional design starts with a heading; then presents either education or work experience, whichever is stronger or more relevant; then presents the other of these two sections; then ends with a section on skills and certifications and one on personal information.

Students who have not yet begun their careers often find this design the best for their purposes. People with military experience either work the detail directly on typical or specific employment advertisements. If the job advertisement says that Company ABC wants a person with experience in training, customer service, and sales, then it might be a smart move to design thematic headings around those three requirements. If you want to use the thematic approach in your resume, take a look at your employment and educational experience—what are the common threads? Project management, program development, troubleshooting, supervision, maintenance, inventory control? Take a look at the job announcement you're responding to—what are the three, four, or five key requirements it mentions? Use these themes to design the body section of your resume. These themes become the headings in the body of the resume. Under these headings you list the employment or educational experience that applies. For example, under a heading like "FINANCIAL RECORDS," you might list the accounting and bookkeeping courses you took in college, the seminars on Lotus 123 or EXCEL you took, and the jobs where you actually used these skills.

Type of Information

Types of resumes can be defined according to the amount and kind of information they present:

- *Objective resumes:* This type just gives dates, names, titles, no qualitative salesmanship information. These are very lean, terse resumes. In our technical-writing course, you are asked not to write solely this type. The objective-resume style is useful in resumes that use the thematic approach or that emphasize the summary/highlights section. By its very nature, you can see that the thematic approach is unclear about the actual *history* of employment. It's harder to tell where the person was, what she was doing, year by year.

- *Detailed resumes:* This type provides not only dates, titles, and names, but also details about your responsibilities and statements about the quality and effectiveness of your work. This is the type most people write, and the type that is the focus of this technical-writing course. The rest of the details in this section of this chapter focus on writing the detailed resume.

General Layout and Detail Formats in Resumes

At some point in your planning a resume, you'll want to think schematically about the layout and design of the thing. General layout has to do with the design and location of the heading, the headings for the individual sections, and the orientation of the detailed text in relation to those headings. Detail formats are the way you choose to arrange and present the details of your education and work experience.

General Layout

Look at resumes in this book and in other sources strictly in terms of the style and placement of the headings, the shape of the text (the paragraphs) in the resumes, and the orientation of these two elements with each other. Some resumes have the headings centered; others are on the left margin. Notice that the actual text—the paragraphs—of resumes typically does not extend to the far left and the far right margins. Full-length lines

are not considered as readable or scannable as the shorter ones you see illustrated in the examples in this book.

Notice that many resumes use a "hanging-head" format. In this case, the heading starts on the far left margin while the text is indented another inch or so. This format makes the heading stand out more and the text more scannable. Notice also that in some of the text paragraphs of resumes, special typography is used to highlight the name of the organization or the job title.

Detail Formats

You have to make a fundamental decision about how you present the details of your work and education experience. Several examples of typical presentational techniques are shown in Figure 1-7. The elements you work with include:

Occupation, position, job title

- Company or organization name
- Time period you were there
- Key details about your accomplishments and responsibilities while there.

There are many different ways to format this information. It all depends on what you want to emphasize and how much or how little information you have (whether you are struggling to fit it all on one page or struggling to make it fill one page). Several different detail formats are shown in Figure 1-7.

Resume Design and Format

As you plan, write, or review your resume, keep these points in mind:

Readability: are there any dense paragraphs over 6 lines? Imagine your prospective employer sitting down to a two-inch stack of resumes. Do you think she's going to slow down to read through big thick paragraphs. Probably not. Try to keep paragraphs under 6 lines long. The "hanging-head" design helps here.

- *White space.* Picture a resume crammed with detail, using only half-inch margins all the way around, a small type size, and only a small amount of space between parts of the resume. Our prospective employer might be less inclined to pore through that also. "Air it out!" Find ways to incorporate more white space in the margins and between sections of the resume. Again, the "hanging-head" design is also useful.

- *Special format.* Make sure that you use special format consistently throughout the resume. For example, if you use a hanging-head style for the work-experience section, use it in the education section as well.

- *Consistent margins.* Most resumes have several margins: the outermost, left margin and at least one internal left margin. Typically, paragraphs in a resume use an internal margin, not the far-left margin. Make sure to align all appropriate text to these margins as well.

- *Terse writing style.* It's okay to use a rather clipped, terse writing style in resumes—up to a point. The challenge in most resumes is to get it all on one page (or two if you have a lot of information to present). Instead of writing "I supervised a team of five technicians..." you write

"Supervised a team of five technicians..." However, you don't leave out normal words such as articles.

- *Special typography.* Use special typography, but keep it under control. Resumes are great places to use all of your fancy word-processing features such as bold, italics, different fonts, and different type sizes. Don't go crazy with it! Too much fancy typography can be distracting (plus make people think you are hyperactive).

- *Page fill.* Do everything you can to make your resume fill out one full page and to keep it from spilling over by 4 or 5 lines to a second page. At the beginning of your career, it's tough filling up a full page of a resume. As you move into your career, it gets hard keeping it to one page. If you need a two-page resume, see that the second page is full or nearly full.

- *Clarity of boundary lines between major sections.* Design and format your resume so that whatever the main sections are, they are very noticeable. Use well-defined headings and white space to achieve this. Similarly, design your resume so that the individual segments of work experience or education are distinct and separate from each other.

- *Reverse chronological order.* Remember to list your education and work-experience items starting with the current or most recent and working backwards in time.

- *Consistency of bold, italics, different type size, caps, other typographical special effects.* Also, whatever special typography you use, be consistent with it throughout the resume. If some job titles are italics, make them all italics. Avoid all-caps text-it's less readable.

- *Consistency of phrasing.* Use the same style of phrasing for similar information in a resume—for example, past tense verbs for all work descriptions.

- *Consistency of punctuation style.* For similar sections of information use the same kind of punctuation—for example, periods, commas, colons, or nothing.

- *Translations for "inside" information.* Don't assume readers will know what certain abbreviations, acronyms, or symbols mean—yes, even to the extent of "GPA" or the construction "3.2/4.00." Take time to describe special organizations you may be a member of.

- *Grammar, spelling, usage.* Watch out for these problems on a resume—they stand out like a sore thumb! Watch out particularly for the incorrect use of *its* and *it's*.

Producing the Final Draft of the Resume

When you've done everything you can think of to finetune your resume, it's time to produce the final copy—the one that would potentially go to a prospective employer. This is the time to use nice paper and a good printer and generally take every step you know of to produce a professional-looking resume. You'll notice that resumes often use a heavier stock of paper and often an off-white or non-white color of paper. Some even go so far as to use drastically different colors such as red, blue, or green, hoping to catch prospective employers' attention better. Proceed with caution in these areas!

Resume

Name   :

Father's Name   :

Address   :

Tel No   :

Date of Birth   :

Educational Qualifications   :

Examination	Board / Univ	School / College	% Marks	Year Of Passing

Experience   :

Distinctions/Achievements   :

Awards / Prizes   :

LESSON 19:
CIRCULAR AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Notices seeking the opinions of the staff are often circulated in order that each person has one and can fill it and give his or her own comments on a specific matter. As a secretary, one is quite likely to be asked at some time to draw up a questionnaire asking staff for their opinions/comments on tips already given or to give suggestions of their own. For example, an organization decides to celebrate fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence and the management wants to celebrate the occasion by involving the staff in a suitable way. They may give the following suggestions:

Grand evening dinner (each member of staff is allowed one guest).

Day coach trip (staff only)

Evening tea party for the families with entertainment for the children.

The secretary will have to compile a questionnaire that gives people the opportunity to state their preference for one of these suggestions with space for comments, and any other suggestion that they might like to give :

<div align="center">

Himalaya Drug Company

The Mall, SIMLA

</div>

Staff Circular

The management invite the opinions of all members of staff on how they would like to mark the occasion of the country's fiftieth anniversary celebrations on 14th August

Please indicate below your preference for one of the following suggestions already received and add any comments you might have about them. If you have any other suggestions, please add them to the list in the space provided.

Please tick   Comments

Day trip by coach

To scenic spot/

Place of interest –

Staff members only

OR

Afternoon tea party

For staff families

+entertainment for

children

OR

Grand evening dinner

Party – staff members

+ one guest each

Any other suggestion :

Please return all questionnaires to my office by 31st July

Thank you

Managing Director

Office circulars of a more formal nature are meant to bring to the notice of a certain audience matters of importance to the organization. They are widely used to disseminate information like inviting applications from employees for promotion test/interview, insisitance on punctuality, change in working hours, inviting suggestions etc. they are usually brief, precise and persuasive pieces of writing brought to the notice of staff. Some examples of office circulars in their usual format are given below :

Example 1 : Circular inviting suggestions

Bhagirath Electricals Ltd
Delhi - 110006

Dated : 25 May, 2003

Circular No 435/03

The office manual which was last revised in July 1988 is now due for revision. We look forward to all employees to consider this matter with interest and send their suggestions of the undersigned latest by 25 June, 2003.

<div align="right">

Sd/-

Manager

</div>

Example 2 Circular appealing to employees to donate blood

Prakash Traders
Daryaganj, Delhi
Date : 6 April, 2003

Circular No 25/63

A team of doctors of Jai Prakash Narain Hospital is scheduled to visit the company with a view to collecting donations of blood on 20 April, 2003. Employees are requested to willingly come forward to donate blood. The donation is purely voluntary. Shri Deep Chand, Managing Director of the company will inaugurate the donation camp by being the first donor on that day.

Employees are also requested to bring their friends and relatives to the office for this noble cause.

Arrangement have been made to provide sumptuous refreshments.

<div align="right">

Sd/-

Om Prakash

Manager

(Personnel)

</div>

Example 3. Circular regarding filling in of vacancies

Associated Metal Products

Date : 25 April, 2003

Circular No. 28/98

It is proposed to fill in vacancies for the post of Senior Assistant (Accounts) and Senior Assistant (Administration) from among the employees who fulfil the following requirements.

1. The employee should have put in a minimum of 5 years of services in the company.

2. The candidate must be second class graduate.

3. CA/ICWA qualification (Preferable).

Employees fulfilling the above requirement should forward their applications through their departmental heads latest by……

<div align="right">

Sd/-

Manager Personnel

</div>

Example 4. Circular regarding cleanliness at workplace.

Premier Electronics Limited

Banglore

Date : 10 April, 2003

Circular No 48/36

The management desires all members of staff to observe utmost cleanliness on and around the premises of the company. It has been observed that cigarette butts, disposable glasses, cups and bottles, paper napkins, and leftovers of lunch etc are not properly disposed of by some employees. They are requested to ensure proper disposal of all waste matter and cleanliness of environment.

<div align="right">

Sd/-

Manager

</div>

Office Orders

Office orders, as the term suggests, are communication of different type. They are meant to communicate matters relating to certain rights, withdrawing rights, imposing restrictions, making postings/transfers, promotions, retrenchment, granting annual increment, withholding increment, disciplinary action, etc. orders in writing can only be issued by superiors. They are, therefore, clear examples of downward communication. The drafting of the order is done by subordinates but it is submitted to the concerned higher officer for his perusal and approval with or without necessary changes.

Great care is needed in the drafting of office orders. They are supposed to be very precise and unoffensive. It has to be ensured that neither the receipient of the order nor any other person to whom the copy of the order is sent raises any objection. Especially sensitive issues must be tackled very carefully, keeping in mind all the consequences that they may lead to. That is why it is advisable to use clear and concise, familiar and unambiguous expressions. Idioms and phrases had better be avoided. A few illustrative examples are given below :

Example 1. A transfer order :

British Motors Ltd.
New Delhi-110001

Ref : 64/03/per   Date : 12 April, 2003

Order

Mr. K.J. Thomas has been transferred to the Personnel Department. He shall report to the Personnel Manager latest by 18 April, 2003 after handing over charge of his duties to the Superintedent (Administration).

cc. Account Officer   Sd/-
Supdt (Admn.)   T.James
                                       (Admn Officer)

Example 2. Suspension order

Jain Tube Co.
Ghaziabad

Ref : Per/16/03   Date : 25 April, 2003

Order

Shri P.P. Gupta, Accounts Clerk is suspended from the services of the company with immediate effect. He shall, be entitled to draw subsistence allowance according to the rules of the company.

Shri P.P. Jain shall not be allowed entry into the premises of the company except for the limited purpose of attending the disciplinary proceedings before the enquiry officer.

                                       Sd/-
cc. Notice Board   Rakesh Jain
All Departments   Personnel Manager

Example 3. Order granting special increments

Prime Rubber Industries
Jabalpur

Ref : PRI/15/03   Date : 28-04-03

Order

In recognition of the meritorious performance of Shri M.K. Raina, the management is pleased to grant him special increment of Rs. 300 w.e.f. 1.5.2003.

                                       Sd/-
cc. Accounts Officers   J.K. Jain
                                       Manager (Personnel)

Example 4. Order reinstating a suspended employee

Jain Tube Co.
Ghaziabad

Ref : Per/18/03   Date : 29 April, 2003

Order

Pursuant to the findings contained in the report of the Enquiry Officers Shri R.K. Anand, Shri P.P. Gupta, Accounts Clerk is reinstated in the services of the company. The order number

Per/16/03 of 25 April, 2003 suspending him from services stands revoked with immediate effect.

Sd/-

c.c. Notice Board/All Departments

Personnel Manager

Key Points

- Notices, circulars, questionnaires and orders are widely used in offices to disseminate information. Through circulars and questionnaires they also exchange information.

- Notices, circulars and especially orders are examples of downward communication in organization.

- Most of the above follow more or less standardized formats. Organisations do however, enjoy a certain amount of freedom to evolve their own formats.

- Notices, circulars and orders must be very carefully drafted. They must be precise, pointed and polite.

- In case of notices and circulars tactfulness and persuasion add to their effectiveness.

- Orders are meant to be acted upon. It is, therefore, very important to make them unoffensive or unobjectionable.

Exercise

1. Draw up a notice on behalf of the Managing Director for the office notice-board asking office staff to insert the dates on which they would like to take their annual holidays.

2. Write a circular appealing to the employees to observe punctuality so as to increase the overall efficiency of the company.

3. Write an office order intimating the transfer of an employee from one department to another.

Notes

LESSON 20:
E-MAIL

E-mail

E-mail is truly the miracle mail. It is incredibly fast. It can reach anyone anywhere within minutes, even second, of being sent. It can carry virtually anything that can be saved as a computer file- words, tables, pictures be at to read it and their desk or even in their own city to be able to access their mail. They can usually open their mailbox from almost any computer connected to the Internet. It's as though you have a powerful genie as your personal, sounds, and so on. For someone connected to the Internet it cost very little to send and receive mail.

There is now a problem of plenty. Everyone gets far more mails than they need to read or can read. If our mail doesn't stand out as smart and reader-friendly, it may be sent straight to the cyber trash can. Reaching a mailbox on the other side of the globe is the easiest thing on earth now; getting the recipient reconstruct our message reasonably well is the real challenge.

E-Mail's popularity is will deserved. You can send the mail when you please; your reader can access it when they please. The reader needn't messenger. He will deliver your message almost instantly to whoever you want wherever he is.

Another great feature of e-mail is that you can copy it to as many people as you like without any extra brother or expenditure. It is relatively safe because it is password- protected. Of course, nothing is safe from determined hackers; but then no channel of communication is absolutely safe from people who are determined to pry into it.

E-mailing is so convenient that more and more firms now have intranets or private networks as well. It connects all their employees whether they are on the same premises or on premises in different locations and different countries. Many employees are so used toe-mailing that they send mail to one another even when they are just a few metres apart on the same floor. The logic is simple. You don't need to get up from your seat; you won't disturb your colleagues when they are in the middle of something. They can read your mail when they are free. There is no need to chase one another as with telephone calls.

However, there are serious problems, too. The technology is such that there is a danger of your mail going to unexpected mailboxes because of a tiny-single letter-error. And you may never notice it until it's too late. A slight error in the address may also cause the mail to bounce. Sending e-mail is so quick and easy that there is also the danger of foolish. angry, immature, and offensive mail leaving your computer. You can always recall a letter that has been handed over to the courier or the post office. But, So let's see how to make your mail smart.

Safety First!

Of the millions who zip into the cyber highways, many wear no crash helmets. Some of them suffer server head-injuries when they fall. Here are a few preliminary steps one should take to be a safe and efficient sender of e-mail.

Look Where You're Sending Your Mail to:

With grossly insufficient and even wrong postal index numbers most letters still reach the addressees because efficient couriers or kindly postmen make enquiries before giving up hope and returning undeliverable letters to their senders. There is no such luck with e-mail. Change a single letter, digit, or a punctuation mark in an address, and the cyber postman doesn't know what to do. The mail bounces back with the label 'fatal error' and some depressing message about the user being unknown.

Worse still, your mail may go to someone else's mailbox. They may delete it rather than return it to the original sender although it takes just a mouse-click to do so. Some mails which thus end up in wrong mailboxes can be very, very embarrassing to the sender and the intended recipient. And because the mail hasn't bounced the sender may continue to be under the impression that it has reached the right address. It is sensible to put into a personal address book or quick list in the messaging programme any addresses you are likely to use several times. **Double-check the spelling**. If you have received mail from someone, you can simply copy their address into your address book rather than type it in. Thus you can reduce the strain in checking long and unpronounceable e-mail address from the address book. Even then extreme care has to be taken to ensure that you click on the right nickname.

Don't Mix Business with Pleasure; Have a Separate Web-based Mailbox for Personal Mail.

Although your mailbox doesn't open except with your password, it is very risk to use the same box for personal and work -related mails. Your employer might monitor the mail that goes into and out of the mailbox assigned to you. This is because many companies believe that work-related correspondence is company property. If these mails were conventional letters, they would naturally be field and preserved. Access to them might be restricted; but still there will be several people who can access them. Many companies feel that e-mail is no different.

If a company doesn't or can't access your mailbox, there can be serious problems when you are unable to get work for two or three days at a stretch. Official mail will come into your mailbox and stay there unanswered. The senders of their mail get angry at you not responding. You mightn't want to give the password to a colleague to open your mailbox in your absence because he many go on the other, personal mail as well. If the mailbox given by the company contains only official mail, there

shouldn't be any problem leaving the password with someone for use in an emergency.

Another reason why you should have a separate box for personal mails is that you might work with colleague at the same computer and with your mailbox open. If you have to attend a phone call or leave the room for a while, it won't be proper for you to close the box and go away. Your colleague might the accidentally or deliberately go into other mails in the box. If you have separate box (such as hotmail or rediffmail account) such problems won't arise.

A significant advantage in having a web-based personal mail ID is that when you change jobs you don't need to laboriously inform everyone of the change of address

Moreover, if your company closes your official e-mail account as soon as you leave their job, the mail that comes to you will just bounce.

You might also like to have yet another mailbox exclusively for newsletters and commercial mail from various sources on the Net. You can afford to ignore the mail there for a few days if you are too busy to open the mailbox. If there is spam-junk mail or unsolicited commercial mail- you can deal with it more easily when there is a separate box for it. You know you are not going to miss anything even if you delete the entire contents of an inbox like that looking at the subject lines.

WWW is a Glass House; Your Mail isn't as Private as you think

You will protect your e-mail login with a password. But you'd better not put into your mail what you won't put on post card ! E-mail is private but not fully safe from eyes. Yours mailbox is no safer than a matchbox for someone who is determined to open it. If heavily guarded networks of banks and government have been at the mercy of havockers, what chance do ordinary people like you and me have? You should be careful who gets sensitive information such as your credit card numbers. There is a possibility of misuse. Don't ever put your credit card number into an e-mail message. The only factor that reduces the risk of being detected is the huge volume of traffic on the Internet highways. However, when the search for such information is made with powerful search engines that comb the traffic, it is difficult to assume safety.

Managing The Mailbox
With hundred of mail messages coming into and going out of your mailbox there is a good chance that you mess things up. You may mail that you shouldn't. You may not remember which mail you have replied to and which mail you haven't yet dealt with. You may have difficulty finding what you want when you want them. You need to devise ways of managing the mailbox intelligently.

Don't Let Your Mailbox Burst; Reply within Twenty-four Hours
Speed is the essence of e-mail Open your mailbox at least twice a day; several times if you send and get many mails. Scan the mail you get. Delete any junk you find there. Junk includes mail that is copied to you merely because you are on some list. If there are mails that need nothing more claim a one-or-two line reply key it in and press reply to sender. if a mail needs an urgent reply, send that too.

the full reply. Unlike conventional letters, e-mail comes straight to your desktop. As there are no human intermediaries to meddle with the mail, can't the sender assume that it has reached your mailbox if it hasn't bounced back to him ?

Some senders of mail specifically ask for a receipt. You can't read the mail before responding to that. This can be annoying to you if a sender uses it too frequently. You may feel that you are being trapped. The sender is generating evidence for having sent you that particular e-mail message. Use this facility sparingly when you send our message.

If you are going to be out of town or unable to attend to your mail for more than two days, it is good to arrange to send an auto-reply saying so. If urgent work-related mail is expected, you might ask the sender to contact one of your colleagues who has agreed to look after your work while you're away. Or you can set the system to auto-forward the mail to an address that you can access.

Don't Make Your Mailbox a Junkyard; Put it in Order

It is amazing how quickly mail builds up in your mailbox. If you don't manage it, retrieving mail that your want can be very time consuming. There are two things you need to do to keep the mailbox manageable.

First, delete any messages that are not needed anymore. A lot of mail messages become ???? within hours, even minutes. Why allow them to occupy space in your mailbox ? If you're sure that you need a particular mail while a project is one, you might like to retain it until the end of the project. then delete it.

Secondly, create subfolders within your inbox and outbox, and save in them mail you might need to consult later on. The sub folders could be named after people or companies or projects. Anything that makes sense to you and makes recall easy is OK. Sub folders make it easy for you to access the stored mail you want without any hassle. Of course, having subfolders shouldn't be an excuse for storing junk.

Presenting Your Mail
Professionals get more mail than they want to or can cope with. Your mail is like an article or news item in a 96- page newspaper . There are many similar items competing for the reader's eyes. Just as a newspaper reader skips items on people or ideas that do not interest them, a mail reader with a bulging mailbox may skip mails that don't appear relevant or interesting to them. The only people who read your mail thoroughly may be the ones who get very few mails. They remind one of villagers who sit in teashops and read every single item in the thin local newspaper over a few cups of tea. They have all the time in the world. And the only reading material they get during a whole day is the six-page newspaper.

Most of your potential readers are unlikely to be rural folk with all the time in the world. So you have to learn to present your work-related mail in such a way that a busy reader doesn't skip it.

Invest in the Subject Line: Give Your Mail a Smart Heading

Whether a busy professional will read your mail or delete it without even scanning depends on two factors- your name and the subject line.

If you acquire a reputation for sending junk- lengthy, boring, unimportant, irrelevant, or incoherent mail- your very name may prompt the recipient to hit the delete button. So build up a reputation for sending good, interesting, brief, and useful mail. This is a long-term investment.

The subject line is like the caption of a news item or advertisement. Whether or not a reader judges a news items to be worth reading is often determined by the way the caption is given. the intriguing, interesting, or shocking ones attract the reader most. When you see, 'Panda mating fails, veterinarian takes over' or 'Are there night clubs, asks bishop', you want to read on because your interest has been tickled. The heading promises an interesting treatment of the news item.

You don't need to make your e-mail subject lines outlandish like a clown's jacket. But they should be brief, clear, specific, land well formed. They should tell the reader clearly what the mail is about. They should not be unrelated to the mail however attractive they are. The reader shouldn't feel cheated when they start reading the mail.

If there are unrelated items in the mail, it is difficult to give a subject line that covers them all. It is better to send two or three separate mails, each focused on one item, than a long mail with several unrelated items. If there are several related items, number them. Otherwise the reader may read the first two or three paragraphs and skip the rest thinking he has understood the whole message.

The most common defect found in subject lines is they are too broad and so too vague. They don't tell the reader what the mail is about. If the mail is about the urgent need for a service engineer in your nitrogen plant, that is what should get into the subject lines. If the mail is about 'urgent need for service engineer in nitrogen plant', all the following subject lines except the last one are too broad to attract the reader or to give him a reasonably clear idea of what is in the mail.

Nitrogen plant

Problems in Factory

Nitrogen plant maintenance

Break down

Request

Hello

Mail from Branch office

Maintenance requirements

Urgent need for service engineer in nitrogen plant

Some mail system have a provision to indicate the priority the sender assigns to the mail: Low Normal, High, and Very High. If you are not sure that the recipients system can recognize it, you might want to indicate the priority category in the subject line. Example: "URGENT-Photocopier broken down" or " VERY IMP: Signing contract tonight".

Small is Beautiful. Keep Your Mail Short

There is an old piece of advice about speeches. They should be like skirts- short enough to be interesting and long enough to cover all the vital points. This advice is perfectly valid for e-mail. Small is beautiful indeed.

Common experience and research show that reading from the monitor screen is harder and slower than reading a printout of the same text. The longer the text, the more difficult it is to read online. There are several reasons why this is so.

First, desktop monitors are no match to paper in resolution. Most monitors now have a resolution of less than 75 pixels (tiny dots) per inch/30 pixels per centimeter. It should be at least 150 pixels an inch for it to be read comfortably and 200 pixels for it to match printed matter. It is not surprising that reading the monitor for long periods can be a strain on the eyes.

Second, one has to sit in a fixed position to read the text on the desktop monitor. Even with portable PCs, the monitor is never as flexible as paper.

Third, computer monitors present texts in landscape orientation.

Yet another problem with the monitor screen is that even after maximizing, the total text that you can red at time is severely limited. You can't put two page side in any case except in an illegible small print preview. You have keep scrolling up and down to read the full text. This weakens your perceptions of the whole text. The longer the text of the mail, the more scrolling you need in order to read it and the less comfortable it becomes.

All these factors point to the need for making your mail short. If it is long it risks being read too casually or not being read at all.

Receiving mail is exciting when you just get connected or when you get very few mails. You are likely to look forward to them and read all the mails thoroughly. But when you receive dozens everyday and you have a lot of work in addition to writing and replying to mail, you tend to look different at them. It's like film stars getting letters from fans. In the beginning they read them all, perhaps re-read some several times. Once the volume goes up, fan mail is no more fun mail.

Executive and professionals who used to handle ten to fifteen conventional letters a day are now having to deal with eight to hundred or more mails a day. If they don't read longish mails with concentration, you can't blame them.

Brief is Businesslike, but Abrup0tisn't! Mind Your Tone

Of course, 'brief' doesn't mean 'abrupt'. Some executive take one for the other and burn their fingers. When they send out abrupt mails, they're being business like. They are foolish. They are not sensitive enough to the needs of the reader and the relationship with him. The language of one's mails has to be softened when writing to people who are not part of a close circle of co-workers who understand one another well.

In Mc Cormack on Communication, Mark Mc Cormack refers to a memo by a secretary in their London office to a Secretary in New York. It was a single paragraph saying in effect, " I understand you are the person now handling the transfer of

report on XYZ project. Please be sure to attend to this at the beginning of each month. Please let me know if there is any problem fulfilling these responsibilities."

Mc Cormack adds that there is nothing overly offensive or bossy in this memo. Yet, the Secretary was offended. She said, " Who does this woman think she is?"

Any mail that carries a peremptory tone runs the risk of offending the reader. And you are unlikely to get what you want when you want it and the way you want it from a reader whom you offend with your mail.

Mind Your Luggage; Don't Attach Unwelcome Files to Your Mail

One of the beauties of e-mail is that virtually any file can be attached to e-mail and transmitted. Such files retain any formatting done in it. This makes it easy to distribute copies of documents, artwork, presentation slides, and so forth to a large number of people quickly and reliable. However ,attaching files has dark side, too. The attachments may be unwelcome because the recipients cannot open them for want of the requisite application software. It could be as simple as a World file being saved in a later version than the one the recipient has. Or it could be that the recipient needs uncommon software to open the attachments.

Don't attach to your mail large text and graphics files without checking in advance with the intended receiver.
Her system may not be able to receive large files. She may not open the attachment for fear of viruses that generally spread through attachments. A2 Mb graphics file containing a couple of cartoons might take ten minutes or more to down load if the recipient has a slow dial-up connection. She might not appreciate receiving it, especially if she has to pay the Interest service provider and the telephone company for using the Net.

When you receive attachments, check the source. If it is familiar or a trusted one, it is wise to delete them rather than open them. Attachments are the standard carriers of viruses. While your antivirus software may neutralize known viruses, new may slip in unnoticed and create havoc. Attachments with very catchy titles are particularly risky.

Mind Your Language: Bad Grammar and Spelling Can be Fatal

Countless mails that flash across the globe are unclear and inconsiderate to their readers. They generate even more mails seeking clarification or explaining mails. The reason is simple. In the past, when an executive dictated a letter he would go over the draft before the secretary presented the final version for signature. If the letter didn't make sense the secretary herself might point it out to him. But now the executive sitting in front of his computer types in what he wants to and hits the send button. He may not go over the text even once. The pressure of the mount of mails waiting to be dealt with is such that some executives do not even spell check the mail. Or some depend solely on the computer's spell check which does precisely what it is meant to do - check the spellings of words. It passes all words that conform in spelling with its word list. It is helpless against wrong words with correct spelling.

Fortunately for e-mail users the standard of grammar and spelling expected is much lower than in conventional business writing. There are possibly three reasons for this.

First, e-mail is conversational. The medium is so quick and so immediate that the sender and the recipient feel as though they are speaking to each other long distance. An informal style appropriate to a conversation has therefore emerged as the standard. Just as we ignore half sentences and lapses in grammar when we speak, we tend to ignore spelling and punctuation mistakes in e-mail. We know that mails is generally composed online, or drafted under great pressure of time. Mistakes that do not stand in the way of understanding are ignored or forgiven.

Secondly, nearly all e-mail is keyboarded by the senders them-selves. the reader knows that the mail couldn't have gone through the traditional process of dictation, typing by a professional secretary, editing, and rereading before signing. When a colleague or friend cooks and offers us a dish we don't expect 5-star restaurant standards. The expectations are defi-nitely lower. And so many sins of omission and commission are easily forgiven.

Thirdly, the Americans pioneered electronic mail along with computers and World Wide Web. The American influence is unmistakable in the entire field of computers. One of the facets of American influence is the easy informality and business like brevity and directness characteristic of e-mail.

But we shouldn't forget that the nonverbal accompaniments of ordinary conversations are missing in e-mail. When we speak we abandon many sentences half way because of the expressions on the listener's face or an interruption from him. The little defects in our verbal language are not noticed by either party because the non-verbal support from both the parties for the message is very strong. E-mail depends almost exclusively on written down verbal language. And therefore certain lapses in grammar, spelling and punctuation may create difficulties in understanding in spite of contextual clues.

Spelling and grammar mistakes don't generally carry any stigma in e-mail. But they do carry the risk of misundertanding. basic courtesy demands that we make it easy for the reader to understand what we've written. Checking spelling and grammar is even more important when we write to people who are not in our immediate circle of friends and colleagues or about topics that we don't generally discuss with them. This is because even the contextual clues will then be weak and limited.

When you send a notice to scores of people, it is a good idea to show that draft of the text of a colleague. That could save you from certain silly mistakes which might lead to an avalanche of mail seeking clarification. A common problem is an expression like at 3.00pm on Tuesday, September 11. Let's say it is about a meeting to be held at that time. The trouble is that September 11 is Monday. So does the writer mean 'Tuesday, September 12" or 'Monday, September 11'? If a colleague checks the text, such errors or any lack of clarity can be spotted and corrected before the mail goes to a large number of people.

Mind Your Language; Hold Back Angry Outbursts

Some of us have a way of ventilating anger: swearing, cursing, or calling people names. It might give us a sense of relief. This can spill over to our e-mail also. if a mail provokes us, we might be tempted to pump our anger into our reply. We may be so heated up and in such a hurry to smash the person at the other end that we may press the 'send' button even without reading the mail over at least once. this can cause irreparable damage to human relations.

Yet it is a common problem; that is why the e-mail programme Eudora has brought out a version that has an optional feature: Mood Watch. It monitors the language of outgoing and incoming mails and flags rude words and phrases. Mood Watch uses a system of 'chili pepper grading'. One-chili grade is bad; three-chill grade goes to words and phrases that can land you in trouble.

While you can use Mood Watch or similar programs to alert you to problem words, the traditional advice is still the best. Sleep over the mail. Wait for at least twenty-four hours. If you still feel absolutely sure that you don't want to change anything that you've written, send it. That is the real speaking, not an unthinking slave to an emotional outburst. If you're not absolutely sure, show the text to someone whose judgement you trust. Send the mail off only if he or she clears it. negative emotions is one area where it pays to be slow in the modern world.

In lord derby, Randolph S. Churchill says that one evening in 1919, Lord Derby started a letter to the Foreign Secretary with these words: "My Dear Curzon. I have always known you to be a cad. I now know you to be a liar." The letter did not get into the night's diplomatic bag to London. The next morning Lord Derby looked again at the letter. he felt that the wording was perhaps a bit too strong. And he revised it. The new version began, "My Dear George, You and I have known each other too long to quarrel over so small matter".

Flaunt Your Mail's Vital Statistic: Let Its Figure Show

The worst defect in a large number of mails that get sent and read all over the world everyday is lack of a clear structure of thought. Ideas are thrown into the mail in the order in which they come to the writer. They appear as solid unbroken text. Or they are put at random into incomplete or incoherent paragraphs. Such mails are ugly to look at, difficult to read, or both/

It is vital that the ideas come in a sequence that makes the total message easy to understand and easy to accept. Different sequences may be equally valid, but you should choose the one that suits your potential reader most.

Some might prefer the conclusion first and the reasons later. Others may prefer the background first and the reasons later, and finally the conclusion. Some data lends itself to chronological order. Here again you may start from the past and go on from there to the future or the other way round. They are all logical.

Once you have a structure, flaunt it. let the reader see it. however, even if all the ideas come in the right order but appear like a barrel-solid, unbroken paragraph-it will not be appealing. Choose a liberal layout. The text should be divided into different paragraphs-some long, some short. there should be plenty of white space, too, separating the paragraphs from one another and the body of the mail from the heading and complimentary close.

Plain Commonsense And Etiquette

There is something about e-mail that makes us abandon plain commonsense and etiquette. When we send e-mail we seem to expect people to behave like cold machines rather than like emotional human beings. We will be in for surprises if we don't change our style.

Don't Cry Wolf Too Often; No One May Take You Seriously When the Wolf Comes

Some professionals try to make their mail look important by overdoing the standard mans of highlighting. They label every mail as urgent, top priority, or confidential. Some use upper case letters throughout the mail to crate the same effect.

If you cry wolf too often others stop taking you seriously. When the real wolf comes, there won't be anyone to come to your rescue. Similarly, if you label every mail as urgent, the recipients stop noticing it. It is best to use those labels sparingly for maximum effect.

Research has shown conclusively that texts in upper case are more difficult to read than those in lower case. the reason is simple. Compared to lower-case letters the upper-case ones have very few features that distinguish one from another. they are all of the same height. they all stand on the same base line. Lower case lettes, on the contrary, have different heights and different depths. If we print the same wors in upper case and in lower case we can appreciate the difference in world-shape, which is very important in word recognition.

DIFFERENT - different - different

GARDEN - garden - Garden

CLEVERLY - cleverly - Cleverly

We don't read words letter by letter. The starting letters and the familiar shape of a word in a given context are often more than enough for us to recognize it. As we are used to texts with a combination of upper-case letters at the start of sentences and of proper nouns and lower case for the rest, it is best to follow this convention in e-mail as well.

A word or two that we want to highlight may be printed in upper case. But use of upper case for several lines at a stretch makes it difficult to read fast. Besides, the reader may feel as though the writer of the mail is shouting at him.

Don't Burn Down Your Hut to Kill the Mice. Avoid Private Short Cuts

There is nothing wrong with using abbreviation and acronyms. They are short cuts that save everyone's time-the writer's and the readers. Some abbreviations such as MBBS are so popular that we don't think of the long form when find them or use them. Some people don't know the long form of popular abbreviations. Names of countries (eg. USA, UAE, UK), names of measurements (eg: cm, m, km, ft), names of currencies eg: Rs, DM), and titles (eg: Mr, Mrs, Dr) are all used in the abbreviated form even in formal writing.

It is also common for people working in an organization to use certain short form to refer to people, offices, and procedures they encounter there. Examples include FSM (Field Sales Manager), JP (Jaya Prakash), TA (Travel Allowance), RO (Registrar's Office) and CW (Cash Withdrawal). There is no problem if the terms are well understood by all concerned.

Trouble starts when a writer uses his own short forms in mail. The reader may be able to retrieve the full form from the nonstandard short form. She might be able to rightly conclude that 'pvlg' stands for privilege and that 'xam' stands for examination. But then if she is busy and has dozens of mails to deal with every day, she may not be willing to invest time in deciphering such short forms. She may skip those words or the whole mail. Or she may reconstruct from an abbreviation a word, which you would never think possible.

Why do writers use abbreviations ? They want to save their time. They can perhaps shave off five percent of the writing time if they sue short forms. But how about the reader's time? the time saved by the writer is generally not worth the risk of your mail being deleted unread by the disgusted reader.

Here are a few abbreviations you are likely to find in the mails you receive. Don't use them in formal mail (even informal mail) unless you're sure the reader understands them.

RGDS	(=regards)
ASAP	(=as soon as possible)
NLT	(=no later than)
TMRW	(= tomorrow)
THX	(=thanks)
PLS	(=please)

You can effortlessly forward mail you receive. You can also effortlessly make changes in the text of the mail that you are forwarding. Your recipient will not be able to find out whether or not you altered the text. Both are wrong. It is not right to forward e-mail without the knowledge and permission of the original sender. When they let you do, it is unfair to make changes in the text while forwarding.

In an office where several people work on the computer you might find that a colleague has left her mailbox open and unattended for sometime. Never send mail from other people's user ID without their permission. If, under some special circumstances, they allow you to send mail from their user ID, you must alert the reader to it. As writing and signing are not involved, the reader has no way of knowing who sent a particular message. She has to go by the pre-set information about the sender that the mailhead carries.

Don't read other people's mail even if you have their passwords and can easily access their mail from either your system or theirs. Even if you find money lying around in a friend's house and even if you are sure that no one will notice, you never steal it. The same integrity is expected when you happen to get access to their mail.

If a mail message meant for someone else lands in your mailbox by mistake, don't forward it to anyone. Return it to the sender. You don't lose anything. And it will be a great help to the original sender. Without it he might carry on under the

impression that his mail has reached the intended reader. After all it hasn't bounced. it is just like a letter that the postman leaves in your letterbox because it carries your house number although the addressee's name is different. You will send it back to the sender, won't you?

DON'T Sow wild mails. Don't Slap Mails on People Who Don't Need Them

An HR manager in a multinational company in Delhi sent a mail to all the three hundred and ninety employees about the date, time, and place of a company picnic that had been fixed. Most of them mailed back to him to say they were joining the picnic or they weren't. One of them composed a reply saying he wouldn't able to join because on that day he and his wife were required to go to their daughter's school and meet the teachers.

So far so good. But then he pressed the wrong button: 'Reply to all'. So besides the HR manager, the three hundred and eighty-nine other people who received the HR manager's original mail also were treated to this mail. This is plain foolish whether it was deliberate or a simple case of hitting the wrong

MSGS	(=messages)
IMHO	(=in my humble opinion)
PMFJI	(=pardon me for jumping in)
BTW	(=by the way)
BCNU	(= be seeing you)
FWIW	(=for what it is worth)
FYA	(=for your amusement)
FYEO	(=for your eyes only)
FYI	(=for your information)
OBTW	(=oh, by the way)
OTOH	(=on the other hand)
PTP	(=pardon the pun)
WRT	(=with regard to)
WEF	(=with effect from)

Most readers have no difficult retrieving the full form instantly from 'rgds' and 'pls'. The other abbreviations/acronyms may not be so easy because they aren't used widely except in chatting. It would be foolish for a writer to use them to save his time. You may lose the reader. how smart is it for you to kill a troublesome mouse if in the process you burn your hut down?

The only time you can comfortably sue the less widely known acronyms is when you write to people who you see using them.

Falling in the same category of mysterious acronyms are smiley or emotions (emotional icons). They are clever and compact 'sketches' constructed with the standard keys on the keyboard. They express ideas or emotions such as sadness, anger, and love without using words. here are a few with their common interpretations:

The smiley that the happy and 'sad' are perhaps the easiest to understand for the uninitiated. With their other smiley there is a risk of the reader to getting your message at all. If you enjoy using them, introduce them in mails to people you know well or send relevant malls to. Smiles, however, are not welcome in work-related mail unless you have a very informal relationship

with the recipient. Emotions are as inappropriate in a formal or work-related mail as a Mickey Mouse T-short on a bank executive serving a customer.

Abbreviations save time. So do smiley. But if you are doing something to save time, the smart move is to help the reader save it. They will appreciate the gesture and do you the favour of reading your mail and replying to it. If you do things that save your time at the reader's expense, don't be surprised if she skips your mail altogether.

Follow E-mail Ethics. Don't Violate General Rules of Etiquette

button. But there are numerous cases of irrelevant mail being forced into mailboxes simply because it is effortless to do so.

In the good old days of manual typewriters and carbon copies, very few people received copies of other people's correspondence. Many executives were unhappy at not receiving them. The introduction of photocopying made sending copies easier. But still there was a check on the number of people receiving the copies, because making photocopies and dispatching them involved some effort.

E-mail has changed all that. Sending copies to a few hundred people requires just a mouse-click or two. It is also inexpensive. So some executives routinely copy their mails to everyone on their mailing lists. They are too lazy to ask who on the list needs to receive copies. They also forward to large numbers of people the mails they receive. They don't care to check whether the recipients welcome it.

The problem with such mindless spawning of mail is that you may acquire a reputation as a prolific generator of garbage. Readers may delete your mail unread the moment they see that it is from you.

When Your Mails Fail, Try Smarter, Not Harder

A participant on one of my business writing workshops showed me a coy of six mails he sent from Mumbai to a senior colleague of his in the company's London office. They were about a corrective action he wanted his senior to take. There was no reply to any of the six mails. The only smart thing the did not cover himself was to copy the last three to the senior's team members and project leader.

When two or three mails go without any response or even acknowledgement, it is obvious that there is something wrong. It could be that the addressee is not getting the mail because of some mechanical problem. It could be that he has left the firm r has been moved to another section or office. Overburdened with their own mails his colleagues may not take care of such orphan mails. it could be that the addresses is deliberately ignoring the mail hoping that the problem will go away on its own. or it could even be that he is working on a solution and has decided to get back to you once he has handle on it.

Whether the reason for silence, sending more or longer or angrier mails is not the way out. This is one of the problems posed by the channel that uses remote control. Use another channel such as the telephone. Or if that is impractical, mail to someone else a request to meet the unresponsive person and find out what the problem is.

Don't Hide Behind Your Mail

Nothing can replace the richness of face-of-face, one-on-one communication. So it is unwise to edge it out in favour of e-mailing. While e-mail is excellent for routine and technical communication, it may not be the best channel for communication that involves emotions. This is especially true of unpleasant emotions that one feels towards others.

Many professionals working in the same company in the same building don't see one another or talk to one another. They're too busy. They try and do everything from their cubicles. They use the company's intranet extensively. This is not healthy. We have to learn to spare time for promoting human relations. E-mail gives one breadth in reach bt not depth. And a manager's skill lies in achieving both by using the right channels and the right strategies.

E-mail is not eh best medium if you have to challenge or criticize a co-worker, except in a purely technical matter. You may be articulate; but your co-worker may not be articulat eenought to respond through e-mail to any accusations or insinuations youi make. if he responds with a mail, he may hurt you becaue he may use strong words without knowing how deeply they can cut. Or he may just give up in frustration.

E-mal is like a sharp butcher's knife. It cuts effortlessly. But only a fool will try and use it for heart surgery.

Sample Mails

We shall analyse three mails picked up from three different companies - two multinational and one national. the text is retained without any editing except for changing names of people, places, and companies to protect privacy.

Sample Mail A

The following mail is from a young executive in a financial institution to her senior.

Hi Ahmed

I have begun work on "Debtors reconciliation" for Nepal. I am attaching an incomplete file, which will give u an idea the same.

Much as I would have liked to complete the Reconciliation, the June- based Forecast for 1998and 1999 have come up. This will make it impossible for me to send u a reconciliation immediately.

I have had a discussion with chetan and wee have agreed on the of following:

The earliest I could send u the Recon would be 27th of July or the latest by 1st week of August.

If I could start work on the Recon by 24th of July, I will work on the June figure and if I start work in the 1st week of August , I will use Post -July Opstat figures.

I apologise for the change in schedule.

Regards,

Juhi

Comments

This is a good mail. it is brief. The ideas are clear. The mail is well structured, and the structure is easy to see because each idea has been given a separate paragraph.

Three short forms are used - u, recon, and opstat. Opstat and recon are probably the way 'operations statistics' and reconciliation are generally referred to in Juhi's firm. The single letter 'u' in place of 'you' should not cause any difficulty in this internal mail.

The language used is business like and polite. The writer explains the reason for the change in the previously agreed upon schedule, and apologizes for it. The tone if sine-there is no groveling.

Another feature worth nothing is that this mail is sent before it is too late. The writer has attached an incomplete file, which gives her senior an idea of the work already done. Her temptation would have been to just say that she has started work on reconciliation and to send the report when it is ready. She

has done the right thing by sending the incomplete file and promising a full report between July 27and August first week.

The writer also throws in towards the end a promise to use post –July figures if the work on reconciliation is delayed beyond July end. That it was a routine mail for the writer, not a special one for which she spared a lot of time.,

Sample Mail B

Sample mail B is from the plant Engineering Department of a factory in Andhra Pradesh to the company's headquarters in Mumbai.

Subject: prblms in nitro plant

Dear sir

ur alrdy aware that the nitro plant is having prblms in ops it is taking 10-12 hrs to dvlp 4kg/sqcm pressure and the timer fr pressur swing adjustment unitts are some times not wrking prprly, cause of which the flow it self is not continuous. we have regd a cmplnt otl the local off about this prblm one month back and their srvc

regards,

ram lakhan enggr is

yet to attend the same. We are told that there is only one srvc engr and he has to take care of total a.p. inspite of our regular reminders over phone about the prblm to them have not taken any action on this matter. hence u pls contact their hd off and ask them to arrange some one asap.

Comments This is basically a good mail: it brief , clear, will structured. But a few things have marred it.

The subject line is too broad , too vague: The subject line is so broad that it is misleading. If we read the mail carefully, we will realize that the mail is not really about the problems in the nitrogen plant but about the need for a service engineer to be arranged from Mumbai. The broad subject line, " problems in nitrogen plant" coupled with the body of the mail looking like a solid block may tempt the reader to treat it as a cribbing mail about problems in the regional plant. He may not do anything about it.

The writer has used upper and lower cases indiscriminately: The first six lines of the mail are in upper case and the last four lines in lower case. Why did Ram Lakhan do so ? To highlight the problem? To show the importance or urgency of the problem? We don't know. It is likely that he pressed caps lock for the subject line and then went on in the same mode for a few lines. Then he suddenly realized it and released the caps lock. From then on the he didn't use any upper case letters. If the exclusive use of capital letters in the first few lines is to emphasize the problem, the highlighting is in the wrong place. It may only annoy his senior in Mumbai. Printing a whole sentence in the lower case without regard to the conventions of punctuations also makes it difficult to read this mail. The phrase, "total a.p." may puzzle even people who are quite used to recognizing Andhra Pradesh when they see AP or A.P.

The writer has used abbreviations arbitrarily: Ram Lakhan has used some common abbreviations such as 'pls' and 'asap'. Few readers will have difficulty recognizing their long forms instantly. But the writer's own private abbreviations such as UR,DEV,CONTNS are difficult to make sense of . We can ,of course retrieve the full form ('You are', ' develop' and ' continuous'), but it requires a special effort on our part. When we have to deal with dozens of mails, we may not like to make that extra investment in time and effort to decipher those private short . We might be tempted to skip them -there are better and more urgent things for us to do.

The structure of the mail is not easy to see : If we analyze the mail carefully, we will find that the ideas in the mail are sequence well. First Ram Lakhan refers to problem in the nitrogen plant that has already been reported to the headquarters. He also briefly says what the problem is -pressure is slow to build up, and the timer is not working properly. Then he says what he has done -complained to the local office of the supplier of the machinery. He goes on to say why the supplier has not yet been able to attend to complete - there is only one service engineer for the whole of Andhra Pradesh. Finally , he asks her senior in Mumbai to contact the head office of the supplier of machinery (also in Mumbai) and have a service engineer sent.

Although the ideas are well sequenced, the reader doesn't feel so because visually the mail is one block of text. It is made annoying by the indiscriminate use of upper -case letters and private abbreviations. To make matters worse ,the subject line is misleading.

Let's consider an alternative way of composing the same mail:

Comments

Here the subject line announces not problems in the nitrogen plant but the urgent need for a service engineer. Bold face highlight the subject better than upper-case letters. (The bolding, however, will be lost if the recipient get the mail s plain text.)

The ideas in the alternative version are the same as in the original mail, and they come in the same order, too. The main difference is that each of the three main ideas gets a separate paragraph.

Subject: Urgent need for service Engineer in Nitrogen Plant

As you know, the Nitrogen plant is not OK>

It takes 10-12 hrs to build up 4 kg/sq cm pressure.

The timer for PSA is defective (and so the flow is not continuous)

We complained to the supplier's (Zenith Instruments Ltd) Hyderabad office a month ago and have reminded them several times. They have not attended to the problem because apparently they have just one service engineer for the whole of A.P.

Could you please contact their head office in Mumbai and get a service engineer sent here immediately?

Thanks

Ram Lakhan

The first paragraph talks about the problem . It is not a new one : it has already been reported to the headquarters. So the writer quietly refers to the earlier reports with the phrase, " as you know ". If the problem has already been reported, is it necessary to give the details again? Yes and no. If the reader at the headquarters is very familiar with the problem giving details again may annoy her. But on the other hand it is unrealistic for a regional plant to assume that the people at the headquarter will remember its problems.

A happy compromise is to present the problem in such a way that the reader can read it if she needs to, and skip it if she is aware of the details of the problem. This is what is done in the first paragraph of the alternative version of the mail. the two problems in the nitrogen plant are bulleted and separated from the second paragraph. A quick glance is all the reader needs to refresh her memory.

The second paragraph describes the action taken by the writer and briefly says why it has not borne fruit. this is important because arranging for service engineer is not the job of the headquarters. Explaining why the local efforts have failed prepares the reader at the headquarters to take the unusual request sympathetically.

The third paragraph consists of the request. By separating it from the rest-although it is just one sentence-the writer gives it great prominence. The first and last paragraphs in a text are generally read with greater attention than the middle paragraphs.

Of course, this is not the only way to sequence the three ideas. It is possible to start with the request and follow it up with a paragraph on what the problem is and why it can't be solved locally. Which sequence to use depends on the writer's understanding of his particular reader's way of handling things. Does she want the request up front and the justification later? Or does she want to be briefed on the background and the need to the action requested ? The best sequence depends on the answers to these questions. again this takes us back to the fundamental principal of communication, namely, the best communication strategy is built on a thorough understanding of the communicatee.

Sample Mail C
Here is a mail a Project Leader in a multinational software company, Eksel Technologies, sent to the members of various team when the project they were working on came to an end and most of the project team were disbanded according to the company's regular practice. It is reproduced here exactly as in the original except for the names of people and companies and of the project. In the mail TT stands for Task Teams.

Hi Everyone

We formed TTs last December for documenting the processes of project Neptune.

The TTS did an excellent job of base lining the current processes and documenting them. Their efforts culminated in releasing of Neptune Systemic, which has been well appreciated by Vice Present Anthony Griffiths at HQ. He has given some very constructive feedback on improvement of the Neptune System. This is an ample evidence of how much interest our work has generated at HQ. The full text of the mail is attached.

<< Message: Rakanth8@eksel.com>

All these would not have been possible without your efforts.

Congratulations To All Of You!

As per the implementation framework of the company TTs are temporary task forces to be formed for specific purposes and the to be dissolved after the tasks has been successfully completed.

Now that documentation part is almost completed hence keeping in line with company policy Model , all the TTs (except the TTs for Neptune Systemic and Quality Assurance, since there is still some more work to be done by these TTs) are hereby disbanded.

It has been a real pleasure working with all of you!!

We will known be entering the implementation phase and hence we will be forming a new TTs consisting of Quality Assures (QA) nominated by their Managers to represent their project.

If you have been nominated as QA, we will be working together again and we eagerly look forward to it.

Thanking all of you once again!!

Regards

Ravi Kanth

P.S. Those who want to retain their names in the TT mailing list, in order to be informed of Quality system implementation activities are requested to inform us. Managers are by default included in the TT mailing list.

Comments
The writer is saying nice –to hear things to the software engineers who had worked on the project. And yet, all those who received it said it was too long. Except for one, all of them instantly preferred the following alternative **(version B)** presented to them during a workshop. They also felt that the are was too much hype in the original version.

Re: completion of Project Neptune

Hi Everyone

Congratulations!

Project Neptune has been a resounding success. Vice President Anthony Griffiths at HQ is impressed. He is very happy with what you have done in such a short time.

Congratulations to very member of every Task Team.

Now that work on Project Neptune is over, the TTs (except those working on..) are disbanded. New TTs will be formed

for new projects. But if you wish to learn about the implementation of Project Neptune, please ask to be retained on the mailing list.

Thank you for putting in such a magnificent effort. I enjoyed working with you.

Ravi kanth

The participants said they would definitely prefer Version B to the original one .the main reason was brevity with the right tone. Although it is less than one half of the original mail, it contains all the main ideas. A few of them wanted, however, to retain the feature of the original version where the Project Leader gives them a hyperlink to the mail he has received from HQ. The beauty of what he has done is that you can click on the link if you want to access it: you can skip it if you don't plan to red it.

Yet another version**(version c)** of the same mail was drafted and presented to the same workshop participants. Here it is:

Re: Disbanding of Task Teams on Project Neptune

Hi

Following the company policy, the TTs formed for Project Neptune are hereby disbanded. The few TTs whose work is not completed will be disbanded as soon as they complete it.

Thanks and regards

Ravi kanth

PS. If you want to know how Project Neptune is implemented, please ask me to retain your name on the mailing list.

They uniformly felt that this was a heartless mail. They said it was typical of a use-and –throw attitude .It was unlikely to influence the professionals favourably. So brevity is not a virtue in itself. Professionals aren't purely rational; they also are made up of flesh and blood. Smart mails reach the heart and the mind of the reader.

Key Points

E-mail has become the most widely used channel of communication among many categories of professionals, especially software professionals. Failure to follow e-mail etiquette- ' etiquette' , as it is usually called –may make your mail awful. If your mail isn't smart, people may not read it. The following tips were given in this chapter.

Safety First!

E-mail is different from snail mail in many respects You have to take special precautions to ensure the safe delivery of your mail messages to the right addressee.

Make sure the e-mail address you use is fully correct; if there is the slightest mistake, the mail may bounce or end up in someone else's mailbox.

- Don't use your official mailbox for personal mail. Have a separate web-based mailbox for personal mail.

- WWW is like a glass house. Don't send through e-mail any information that is highly sensitive.

- Managing the Mailbox

- You need to devise ways of managing the mailbox intelligently.

- Don't let your mailbox burst with mail; reply to incoming mail within twenty-four hours and delete messages you don't need any more.

- Don't make your mailbox a junkyard; put your mail in order with the help of well- labeled folders and subfolders.

- How to Make Your Mail Look Smart

- Professional get far more mail than they want to or can cope with. You have to present your work- related mail in such a way that a busy reader doesn't skip it or delete it without reading it.

- Invest a little thought in the subject line: give your mail a smart heading.

- Small is beautiful. Keep your mail short, preferable not more than one page.

- Brief is business like, but abrupt isn't! Mind the tone of your mail

- Don't attach unwelcome files to your mail. If the attachment is very large, check with potential recipients in advance if they would welcome it .

- Mind your language; bad grammar and spelling can cause a lot of trouble.

- Hold back angry outbursts. Delay sending mail that is emotionally over charged.

- Flaunt your mail's vital statistics: let its figure show through attractive layout and paragraphing.

- Plain Commonsense and Etiquette

- We shouldn't abandon our commonsense or violate etiquette when we send e-mail.

- Don't cry wolf too often. Don't label all your mail as urgent, high priority, and so on. Use such labels sparingly.

- Avoid private abbreviations to save time. Follow conventions of grammar and punctuation If any on should save time, it should be the all- important reader.

- Follow e-mail ethics. Don't violate general rules of etiquette..

- Don't send mail to people who don't want it' This is particularly true of forwarding irrelevant mail.

- When your mails fail, try smarter not harder. Don't keep sending the same mail to the same recipients if the first ones didn't work. Instead try other channels such as telephone or even personal visit.

- Don't hide behind your mail. Don't use e-mail as a way avoiding meeting people, especially when you have unpleasant messages to convey.

Exercise

1   Write an e-mail to your Project Manager regarding monitoring activities related to your project

2   Write an e-mail to your H. R. manager regarding discipline issues in your company.

3   Write an e-mail to the procurement department to issue purchase orders.

Reference

- Mark McCormack (1997), Mc Cormack on Communicating p.119. London .Arrow Business Books.
- Jonathan Whelan (2000), e –mail @work Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd. (this is comprehensive and reader-friendly)
- D.B. Hartman and KS Nantz (19960 , the 3 Rs of E-mail , california: Crisp Publications. (Distributor in India-multimedia HRD Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai 400039)
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- Technical Report Writing, Pauley&Riordan
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Notes

LESSON 21:
DEFINITION AND KINDS OF PROPOSAL
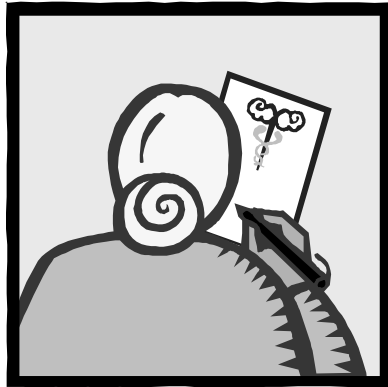
Proposal Writing

Build Strengthen

And

Polish Your

Proposal Writing Skills

Objective :

The Purpose of this unit is manifold. As you and I go thru' this unit our aim will be to -

- Understand the definition of proposal
- Define the kinds of proposal
- Advantages & disadvantages of proposals
- Details of format proposal, examine the different parts of a proposal

At the end of this unit, you should be able to demonstrate the necessities of proposal writing and be in a commanding position to create proposals of the required kind.

Introduction

History has it that early civilization created its own pathways for the survival of mankind. Man taught himself to quench his abstract feelings of thirst and hunger. He lived on fruits, berries, bulbs and raw meat. Accidently, he discovered fire by observing forest fires and experienced the comfort of it. He enjoyed its warmth and learnt to use fire to his advantage. Gradually he learnt the technique of making fire. Similarly the accidental discovery of metal saw the beginning of inventions to suit his needs. With the progress of civilization all the techniques for better existence have come a long long way leading to our present status.

You may wonder, why am I discussing this. Realize that at every stage of progress man PROPOSED SOME IDEA and only then worked towards to bring it to reality. After observing fire, he dreamt of creating one himself. He thought of ways of creating it, PROPOSED the idea of rubbing flint stones. This led the path for creating one of natures most important elements. Similarly, after the discovery of metals, man PRO-

POSED to melt it, he then proposed to mix two different molten metals and the RESULT was an ALLOY.

It can be said that the proposal does not stand alone. It must be part of a process of planning and of research on, outreach to, and cultivation of potential foundation.

Definition and Kinds of Proposal

WHAT is a proposal?

PROPOSAL = PERSUASION (argue or recommend)

Persuade **WHOM**?   **READER**

- CUSTOMER
- EMPLOYER
- SUPERVISOR

Purpose

- FUNDING
- IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM

What is really needed ?

Informative, persuasive writing

Reader needs to know-

- What you are proposing
- How you plan to do it
- When you plan to do it
- How much it will cost

A proposal persuades its readers to accept the writer's idea. Any proposal offers a plan to fill a need, and your reader will evaluate your plan according to how well your written presentation answers questions about how WHAT you are proposing, HOW you plan to do it, WHEN you plan to do it, and HOW MUCH it is going to cost. To do this you must ascertain the level of knowledge that your audience possesses and take the positions of all your readers into account. You must also discern whether your readers will be members of a technical discourse community, or of both, and then use the appropriate materials and language to appeal to both. You might provide, for those outside of your specific area of expertise, an executive summary written in non-technical language, or you might include a glossary of terms that explains technical language used in the body of the proposal, nad/or attach appendices that explain technical information in generally understood language.

You need to follow a step-by-step process in the search. It takes time and persistence to succeed. After you have written a proposal, it could take as long as a year to obtain the funds needed to carry it out. And even a perfectly written proposal submitted to the right prospect might be rejected for any number of reasons.

Aim of proposal

Attempt to educate and convince the reader

Make the reader believe that the solution is practical and appropriate

Proposals are informative and persuasive writing because they attempt to educate the reader and to convince that reader to do something. The goal of the reader is not only to persuade the reader to do what is being requested, but also to make the reader believe that the solution is practical and appropriat**e.**

Types of Proposals

Documents of this kind can be grouped on the basis of different criteria

Proposals
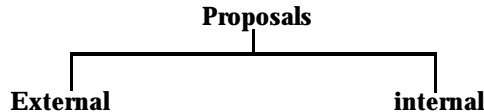
External   **internal**

External Proposal

In this, one firm responds to a request- from another firm or the government – fro a solution to a problem. Ranging from lengthy (100 pages or more) to short (4 to 5 pages), these documents secure contracts for firms.

Characteristics

- Written to win contracts for work

- Request for proposal (rfp) explains the project and lists its specifications

- Companies receiving rfp write proposals to show how they will develop the project

- Rfps are given to the evaluators who assess.

Not all proposals are written to obtain commercial contracts. Proposals are commonly written by state and local governments, public agencies, education, and industry. University professors often write proposals, bringing grants of millions to support research activities.

Internal Proposal

In this, the writer urges someone else in the company/ organization to accept an idea or to fund equipment purchases or research.

Characteristics

- Persuades someone to accept an idea

- Covers a wide range of subjects, may request new pieces of lab equipment, defend major capital expenditures, or recommend revised production control standards.

One can also differentiate between business proposals with respect to their content.

Business Proposal

Stand alone Document   **Support Document**

Carries the whole story   reiteration of presenta
(no personal contact)   tion
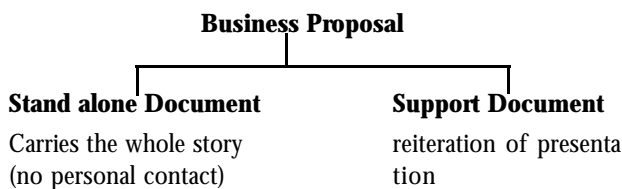
Stand Alone Document

It is judged in direct comparison with those submitted by your competitors.

Page itself will decide whether you win or not.

Characteristics

- Win or loose document

- After finishing – before finalizing

  Do a comprehensive internal assessment

  Let someone not closely associated with the project do the reading

- POLISH and make PERFECT

Support Document

It is to confirm or remind your audience of your presentation.

It is not a throw away document.

Characteristics:

- Works as hard as a stand alone document

- Reviewed by people absent at the presentation

- Reviewed in the evaluation process

- MUST BE GREAT

Advantages and Disadvantages

The approach to writing a proposal may be of two kinds, qualitative and Quantitative approach . Each of these methods have their own advantage as well as disadvantage over the other. Let us briefly look into some of these parameters.

Qualitative and quantitative approaches to research and proposal design have similarities and differences.

Qualitative Analysis is

- A nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations.

- The methods used emphasize depth of understanding and the deeper meaning of human experience.

- It is also used when the concepts of interest are not easily reduced to categories or numbers, when there is relatively little known about the subject of study from the existing literature, or when there are missing links.

- The use of words and observations are more adaptable and easier to correlate with realities.

- Quantitative takes a more specific and scientific approach in a more controlled manner than the qualitative approach.

Quantitative Methods

- emphasize the production of precise and generalizable statistical findings.

- Several years ago the quantitative approach and studies were much more prevalent.

Qualitative methods/questions allow for more flexibility and probes new phenomenon. The quantitative approach has better success at analyzing a topic that we know about and is seeking to verify hypothesis or specifically describe a topic. Again, each is needed and both make important contributions.

There are different styles to qualitative and quantitative proposal writing. When utilizing the qualitative approach the proposal tends to be more detailed and specific in focus and procedures. This style also encompasses a more comprehensive literature review and the entire proposal is more extensive than the qualitative method. The hypothesis is noted and defined prior to starting the process and remains relatively unchanged. The qualitative method has a more general approach and is not as extensive as the quantitative style.

The goals of quantitative research are to test theory, establish facts, give statistical description, and show relationships between variables while controlling other variables. These types of proposals are often extensive and detailed on a specific focus. The hypothesis is written in advance prior to any data collection as well as the literature review. The design is structured, pre-determined, formal and specific. There is a detailed plan of operation.

These approaches can compliment one another. Some re-searches will combine the two approaches to obtain the best results. For example a quantitative measurement using stan-dardized scales is completed to measure variables. The researcher concludes that the data is inconsistent and decides to use a qualitative approach of open-ended, probing interview questions.

When forming qualitative questions there typically is not a defined hypothesis generated prior to starting this process. This is in contrast to quantitative research because the research is based on the hypothesis and it is being conducted to support it. Research and questions are based on new, unexplored areas, or more in-depth on previous research undertaken in qualitative studies. Quantitative research is done on things that may already be known and it is a more scientific approach.

There are many advantages and disadvantages to questions used in qualitative versus quantitative research.

- In developing the questions, it is important to strive for conceptual clarity. Ask the questions of who, what, where, how, when, and why. What exactly do you want to find out? The focus can be very complex and broad for qualitative and the questions that are most often used to generate these ideas are *open-ended.*

- One advantage is that people respond more in-depth. The data is more authentic with emphasis placed on information received from the respondent. Open-ended questions allow the respondent to explain what they know about the subject or their frame of reference. With open-ended questions there is the possibility to probe deeper during the interviewing process with the participant. This would then lead to more flexibility for the researcher to respond with other questions in relation to the responses received. The researcher also would be able to respond to human emotions that these questions may evoke from the participant and respond accordingly, such as either to probe further or to stop because of any negative reactions.

- Other advantages include: being able to read body language, use more clarification and follow up, take

participant's limitations into account, and to get an instant response.

These types of questions also have **disadvantages**.

- They require more energy from the subject when responding to the questions which may inhibit the individual from responding.

- There also can be difficulty in analyzing the data, as some respondents are more verbal than others.

- Taboo topics, confidentiality, not being able to respond anonymously, or the sensitivity of the questions in general may create other disadvantages.

Qualitative type of research takes more time then quantitative. The researcher becomes a part of the research and may actually live with the participants during the study. This would then generate ongoing questions that would be impulsive and continuous. The opposite prevails in quantitative due to exact and precise questions needing to be constant with all partici-pants. This is also done in a limited time frame in order to formulate results.

Closed-ended questions may be used in both types of research but can be limiting. If looking for a precise answer, such as what is found in questionnaires, it is beneficial to use them.

- The response category should be exhaustive, meaning they should entail all possible responses.

- Secondly, the categories must be mutually exhaustive. The individual responding should not feel that two answers could be selected when you are only asking for one.

- One-word answers would enable the researcher to easily score the responses and analyze them quickly. Objectivity would increase and it would not be as time consuming for all involved. A major disadvantage would be the phrasing of the question would come from the researcher's frame of reference which could be limiting.

- The chief shortcomings of closed ended questions lie in the researcher's structuring of responses.

- The human instrument is the primary data for gathering tool used for qualitative research but not so in quantitative research. Some standard instruments used in data collection are questionnaires, polls, surveys, records, documents, and audiovisual material. Field notes, interview transcripts, diaries, etc. are also used in gathering information. Quantitative research questions consist of various types. Examples include yes/no, multiple choice, rank order, true/false, and semantic differential. Quantitative research questionnaires often times utilize closed-ended questions while qualitative questionnaires frequent more open-ended questions. Limits exist with all forms of data collection.

One has to consider all the possible aspects to formulate a proposal to use it to advantage. The advantages versus disad-vantages profile is important to have the reader get to know the benefits likely to be obtained by accepting your proposal.

LESSON 22:
DETAILS OF FORMAT

In the previous lecture we understood the significance of proposal writing. You have also seen that depending on the purpose of the proposal they are classified into different types. *Let us compare this to our daily schedule.*

Each day you go to bed at night you keep in mind the work you have to do the next day. You at this stage have only defined your agenda for the following morning. Now, what do you actually do the next morning ? You start thinking where to get started from, what are the requirements to complete the job, you start formulating a schedule in your mind and then work towards the actual solution to the problem.

As you progress along the chapter, consider the actual task of writing the proposal to be the work scheduled for the day, so the first question we have to address is where to get started.

How to Start ?

Case Building

- Demonstrate logic and reason
- Use evidence in descending order of importance
- Questions of reader
  - Anticipate and answer
  - Consider all arguments
  - Prove one chosen is superior

It is a good idea to imagine yourself as the reader, analyse the situation and find out the key questions that come into your mind as the reader. You will then be able to find the suitable reasons and arguments to prove your point of justification. Include these in the proposal.

Planning Sheet for a Proposal

Keeping the above in mind how does one continue?
Ask yourself what is the need of the proposal –

Analyse the situation requiring the proposal
> For all the above look for answers to the following questions

- What is the subject of the proposal?
- For whom is the proposal intended?
- How do you intend the proposal to be used?
- What is the deadline for submission and for tentative implementation of the proposed solution?
- Have you reviewed the literature that would provide supports for your proposal?

Let us start from zero beginning. Ask yourself , "Is there any information on the subject?, Has any work on this been done before?, To what extent has the subject been studied by others?"

Gathering Background Information
The first thing you will need to do in writing the master proposal is to **gather the documentation** for it. You will

require background documentation in three areas: **concept, program, and expenses**.

Who will give you all this information?   Source

If all of this information is not readily available to you, determine who will help you gather each type of information. If you are part of a small nonprofit with no staff, a knowledge-able board member will be the logical choice. If you are in a larger agency, there should be program and financial support staff who can help you. Once you know with whom to talk, identify the questions to ask.

This data-gathering process makes the actual writing much easier.

Concept

- Have a good sense of how the project fits into the philosophy and mission of your organization.
- Need that the proposal is addressing must be documented. These concepts must be well-articulated in the proposal.
- Funders want to know that a project reinforces the overall direction of an organization.
- Convince the funders that the case for the project is compelling.
- You should collect background data on your organization and on the need to be addressed so that your arguments are well-documented.

Program
Here is a checklist of the program information you require:
- Nature of the project and how it will be conducted
- Timetable for the project.
- The anticipated outcomes and how best to evaluate the results
- Staffing and volunteer needs, including deployment of existing staff and new hires.

Expenses

- Pin down all the expenses associated with the project after the program details and timing have been worked out.
- Thus, the main financial data gathering takes place *after* the narrative part of the master proposal has been written.
- At this stage you do need to sketch out the broad outlines of the budget to be sure that the costs are in reasonable proportion to the outcomes you anticipate.
- If it appears that the costs will be prohibitive, even with a foundation grant, you should then scale back your plans or adjust them to remove the least cost-effective expenditures.

After you have all the details you must now put down the format of presenting the details compiled by you. This is in analogy to the formulating the schedule for your day. The daily schedule will be different depending on the task. Similarly,

depending on the aim of the proposal format of the document will vary.

STYLE OF PROPOSAL

PROSE TEXT	BULLET	COMBINATION
Plenty of sub-heads	Presentation	Text- Introduction
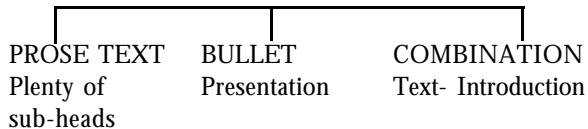
Overall style of the Proposal

- Each new section on new page
- Plenty of white space
- Document must have a structured look

This section is focused at the overall representation of the proposal to make it easier for reading and helps to put across the proposed idea in a friendlier manner.

Composition of a Proposal

Introduction (Beginning)

- Summary of problem
- Solution to the problem
- Benefit to the reader/group
- Cost to that solution

Body (Middle)

- Details of the solution
- Procedure of the job(method, material, personnel to be employed)
- Time frame
- Cost break-up for entire job

Conclusion (end)

- Emphasize on benefits
- Urge the reader to act
- Encouraging, confident and assertive in tone

Contents And Format

No matter how the proposal is submitted, there is a logic to its format

- Title and sub title
- Table and contents
- Introduction — Context statement, Who you are and why you are making this statement
- Background — Core facts where the prospect is right now
- Research findings (or needed) to support these facts
- Needs statement — Requirements suggested by the situation
- Audiences — Who would be affected or whom the result is aimed
- Objectives — What you intend to achieve
- Strategy — How you intend to achieve it

- Tactics — examples of strategic solutions
- Timetable
- Budget
- Name and Biographies of key players
- Other requested support documents
- Support or background data in appendices or exhibits

Components of a Proposal		
Executive Summary:	umbrella statement of your case and summary of the entire proposal	1 page
Statement of Need:	why this project is necessary	2 pages
Project Description:	nuts and bolts of how the project will be implemented and evaluated	3 pages
Budget:	financial description of the project plus explanatory notes	1 page
Organization Information:	history and governing structure of the nonprofit; its primary activities, audiences, and services	1 page
Conclusion:	summary of the proposal's main points	2 paragraphs

Must Format

How must a professional presentation appear?

What should be the sections in a proposal?

> **Title Page**
> **Abstract**
> **Table of Contents**
> **Introduction**
> **Literature Review**
> **Procedure including Budget**
> **References – Footnotes and Bibliography**

Appendices

Let us now understand each of the above sections better

Title Page

The title page should contain, neatly arranged the following:

> Title of the project
>
> Project registration number of the project
>
> Name(s) of the author(s)
>
> Name of the faculty advisor(s)
>
> Name of off-campus, if any
>
> Date of submission
>
> Abstract

What's in an abstract?   Is it important?

Why make it good?

Abstract ⟶ Brief statement of the topic
Procedure
Projected outcome   ⟩ 3-4 sentences
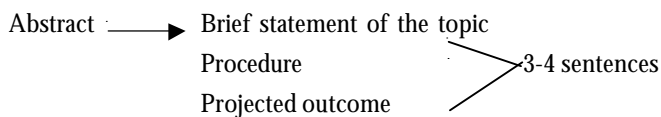
Abstract of the final report can be modified from the one on the proposal and is crucial as it is circulated ff-campus also.

Order of a 3-sentence abstract might well follow this order:

1. First sentence introduces the project topic, mentioning (if relevant) the off-campus agency with whom the project is being done.

2. Second sentence indicates what material will be examined and procedures employed to carry out the project.

3. Third sentence indicates the anticipated conclusions (or results, applications, real world use of the project)

Here's an example-

This proposal, prepared for the U.S. Small business Administration, will describe Flexible Manufacturing Systems (FMS) and assess their impact on small businesses. Working from literature and interviews, we will describe FMS technology, its use in industry, and its impact on small business, especially suppliers. We will assess: 1). If FMS can be used in small businesses, 2). How FMS will impact on small businesses, and 3) if management techniques related to FMS will affect small businesses in the near future.

Table of Contents

What's this? Isn't it simple ?

Of course, but always remember the professional reader is faced with lots of reading and appreciates conveniences.

So, What's in the content of table of contents?

- Final page numbers
- Location of each separately titled section of the report (sequence from abstract to appendices)
- Indicates at a glance what material is covered.

The Statement of Need

If the reader reads beyond the executive summary, you have successfully piqued his or her interest. Your next task is to build on this initial interest in your project by enabling him/her to understand the problem that the project will remedy.

What is the job of the "statement of need"?

- The statement of need will enable the reader to learn more about the issues.
- It presents the facts and evidence that support the need for the project
- Establishes that your problems are understood and therefore can reasonably addressed.
- The information used to support the case can come from authorities in the field, as well as from your organisastion's own experience.

Characteristics

- You want the need section to be succinct, yet persuasive.
- Like a good debater, you must assemble all the arguments.
- Present them in a logical sequence that will readily convince the reader of their importance.

As you marshal your arguments, consider the following six points.

First, decide which facts or statistics best support the project.

Be sure the data you present are accurate. There are few things more embarrassing than to have the reader tell you that your information is out of date or incorrect.

Information that is too generic or broad will not help you develop a winning argument for your project.

Information that does not relate to your organization or the project you are presenting will cause the reader to question the entire proposal.

There also should be a balance between the information presented and the scale of the program.

Second, give the reader hope.

The picture you paint **should not** be so grim that the solution appears hopeless. The reader will wonder whether an investment in a solution will be worthwhile.

Here's an example of a solid statement of need: "Breast cancer kills. But statistics prove that regular check-ups catch most breast cancer in the early stages, reducing the likelihood of death. Hence, a program to encourage preventive check-ups will reduce the risk of death due to breast cancer."

Avoid overstatement and overly emotional appeals.

Third, decide if you want to put your project forward as a model.

This could expand the base of potential readers, but serving as a model works only for certain types of projects. Don't try to make this argument if it doesn't really fit.

Readers may well expect your agency to follow through with a replication plan if you present your project as a model.

If the decision about a model is affirmative, you should document how the problem you are addressing occurs in other communities.

Be sure to explain how your solution could be a solution for others as well.

Fourth, determine whether it is reasonable to portray the need as acute.

You are asking the reader to pay more attention to your proposal because either the problem you address is worse than others or the solution you propose makes more sense than others.

Here is an example of a balanced but weighty statement: "Drug abuse is a national problem. Each day, children all over the country die from drug overdose. In the South Bronx the problem is worse. More children die here than any place else. It is an epidemic. Hence, our drug prevention program is needed more in the South Bronx than in any other part of the city."

Fifth, decide whether you can demonstrate that your program addresses the need differently or better than other projects that preceded it.

It is often difficult to describe the need for your project without being critical of the competition. But you must be careful not to do so.

Being critical of other nonprofits will not be well received by the reader. It may cause the reader to look more carefully at your own project to see why you felt you had to build your case by demeaning others.

The reader may have invested in these other projects or may begin to consider them, now that you have brought them to their attention.

If possible, you should make it clear that you are cognizant of, and on good terms with, others doing work in your field. Keep in mind that today's readers are very interested in collaboration. They may even ask why you are not collaborating with those you view as key competitors. So at the least you need to describe how your work complements, but does not duplicate, the work of others.

Sixth, avoid circular reasoning.

In circular reasoning, you present the absence of your solution as the actual problem. Then your solution is offered as the way to solve the problem.

For example, the circular reasoning for building a community swimming pool might go like this: "The problem is that we have no pool in our community. Building a pool will solve the problem."

A more persuasive case would cite what a pool has meant to a neighboring community, permitting it to offer recreation, exercise, and physical therapy programs.

The statement might refer to a survey that underscores the target audience's planned usage of the facility and conclude with the connection between the proposed usage and potential benefits to enhance life in the community.

The statement of need does not have to be long and involved. Short, concise information captures the reader's attention.

References

References = Footnotes + Bibliography

Footnotes

What is footnote?

- Cite appropriate sources of information (including interviews or verbal contribution from others)
- Cross-reference to additional material
- Form varies with the professional area concerned

Whatever the format, footnotes contain the name(s) of the author(s), book or journal title, date of publication (usually with the place and publisher for books) and, for journals, the volume and page numbers.

Position of footnote

- Bottom of the page
- End of chapters
- End of the report but before the appendices.

Bibliography

What is bibliography?

- Lists all material cited in notes
- Used as full source for the reference for footnotes

Its value as a list of relevant materials often makes it useful to consult independent of the report itself (so be sure to check bibliographies in your sources for relevant materials)

Footnotes very briefly cite the work in question (by author(s) and year, for example), Leaving the full citation in the bibliography.

We shall be discussing this subject in greater detail in the next unit.

Appendices

Singular - appendix

Characteristics

- Contains materials too lengthy for inclusion in the text
- Contains material not directly relevant
- Raw data, background material included here

All material in appendices must be referred to in the text so readers know why they are here.

Other Parts

Is there more to a proposal ?   *What are those?*

Where are they placed?

Executive Summary

Comes after the abstract

Provides an overview of each section in the entire document

All in about 5-10 pages

Executive reports are more often required in professional reports

Must Include

Problem — a brief statement of the problem (one or two paragraphs)

Solution — a short description of the project (one or two paragraphs)

Funding — plans are for funding it in the future (one paragraph)

Organization and its expertise— a brief statement of the name, history, purpose, and activities, emphasizing its capacity to carry out this proposal (one paragraph).

Letter of Transmittal

Affixed before the title page

Business letter format

Tells about the attached proposal as part of an agreed upon plan to conduct the project with the agency the liaison represents.

Letter of transmittal is attached if proposal or report is being submitted to an off-campus liaison

Let us SUMMARISE the contents of a proposal

Front Matter

- Letter of transmittal
- Title Page
- Project Summary (approx. 200 word abstract)

The Proposal

- Introduction
- Body

  Project proposal (Statement of the Problem, Proposed solution(s), Program of Implementation, Conclusions/recommendations)

- Conclusion/Recommendations

Back Matter

- Bibliography and / or Works Cited
- Qualifications (of writer(s) and /or project Implementers)
- Budget (Itemization of expenses)
- Appendices

Research Proposal

One very important proposal that many of you will be writing is a Research Proposal. A research proposal can be of three types-

- **As an assignment at the start of graduate work**

Purpose: so that your supervisor can see that you have a clear idea of previous work in the area, the research problem, and the procedures you will use to tackle it.

How to write it: You need to clearly need to explain the objectives of your proposed research, previous work in the area, how you are proposing to tackle it, the time frame for each stage and facilities, resources, laboratory equipment and technical help needed.

A possible structure

Summary
Research Objectives
Literature Survey or Background
Materials & Methods or Procedure
Resources

- **As a proposal to a funding body or to a commercial organization**

A funding body will use expert assessors who will be familiar with the topic.

A commercial organization's personnel will be their business plan, whether your work will contribute to the company's competitiveness and profitability. (They may have little or no interest in the academic implications of your proposed work. Your report may need to be understood by people with no expertise in your particular field.

Possible structure

To a funding body- application forms are usually provided, therefore the recommended sequence of sections is automatically determined. Otherwise the standard AIMRAD (abstract, Introduction, Materials & Methods, Results and Discussion) structure of a journal paper is acceptable. In addition evidence of your ability, facilities available to you and cost estimates need to be mentioned.

To a commercial organization – Depending on the type of organization, you may need to avoid the classic scientific AIMRAD format instead for a structure that is more suited to a commercial organization..

LESSON 23:
PRACTICE SESSION FOR PROPOSAL WRITING

By now you must be well prepared to write proposals. Just go back to previous 2 lecture notes and follow the said format.

Key Points

- A proposal is an offer to do something. It could be an informal, oral offer. At the end of it could be a formal printed volume running into several hundred pages. For a proposal to be accepted it has to be persuasive rather than data-filled. There are solicited proposals and unsolicited proposals. A solicited proposal is in response to a request made. If one gets a proposal although one never asked for it, it is an unsolicited proposal.

- **Qualities of a Good Proposal**

  Proposals and reports have many things in common. A good proposal are expected to have reader orientation, brevity, smooth transition, completeness, and appropriate language. Proposals are future oriented. And they ought to persuade. *Persuasion is the soul of a proposal.*

- **The Art of Persuasion**

  Persuasion is an extremely complex process. The four pillars of persuasion are: credibility of source, reasonableness of the message, emotional involvement, and attractiveness of the presentation.

- **Parts of a Proposal**

  Proposals allow variations in size, breadth, depth, and formality. It is, therefore, difficult to pin down the standard proposal and count its parts. But we are likely to find most of the following in a full-length formal proposal.

Preliminaries: Title page / Letter of Transmittal / Executive Summary / Table of contents

Body: Introduction / Background / Proposal / Procedures / Methodology / Personnel / Schedule / Equipment / Budget / Conclusion

Appendixes: Draft contract / Note on authors, author's organization / Note on existing customers etc.

Exercises

1. Explain what are proposals.
2. Discuss the different types of proposals
3. Give details of format.
4. What are the steps for writing a research proposal
5. What styles can be adopted for proposal writing?

Given below are some exercises for you to work on.

1. Rewrite the following paragraph. The writer is a product designer, the reader the head of manufacturing. The proposal suggests the use of plastic as the casing material for a flashlight. The purpose of this section is to show that plastic meets the criterion of "availability." Eliminate all unnecessary sentences.

   One of the first things that many designers ask when initially considering the use of a particular material is whether the material is on hand. It is not wise to use a proprietary material that is available only from one supplier if it is likely that the product in question will be made again in 5 years. If you are a captive buyer, you are at the mercy of the supplier on cost and delivery. Sometimes a raw material fabrication technique may limit availability. As an example, it is not common to get delivery times of 6 weeks on special forgings. In lean times castings may be obtained in 4 weeks; other times delivery times can be 12 weeks. These are all important factors under the category of availability. I have checked with several potential plastic suppliers (AVW Plastics Inc. and jasper Plastic supply) within our area and they seem to be able to handle what our production demands, and they can deliver it when we desire.

2. Write a proposal in which you suggest some key changes to the existing space for your college cafeteria. Explain the problem and the solution. Show how the solution meets established criteria or how it eliminates the causes of the problem. Explain the cost and implementation. If necessary, describe the personnel who will carry out the proposal. Explain why you rejected other solutions. Use at least one visual aid in your text.

3. Read another student's proposal and answer the following question.

   a. Is the problem clear ?

   b. Is the solution clear ?

   c. Do you understand (and believe) the benefits ?

   d. Does the implementation schedule deal with all aspects of the situation?

   e. Does the introduction give you the basics of the problem, the solution and the situation ?

   f. Is the style sheet applied consistently ? does it help make the contents clear /

   g. Do the visual aids communicate key ideas effectively ?

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1. Ways to Better Business Writing, Timothy R V Foster, Kogan Page India Pvt. Ltd.

2. Technical Report writing Today, Pauley S. E., Riordan D. G., Fifth edition, A.I.T.B.S. Publishers & Distributors

3. Writing for Science and Engineering: Papers, Presentations and Reports, Heather Silyn-Roberts, Butterworth Heinemann, Great Britain

4. http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Projects/Proposal.html

5. http://www.learning Lab- A Proposal Writing Short Course.html

6. http://www.Proposal Writing – A Practical writing Guide.html

Suggested Reading:

1. Business Communication Strategies, Matthukutty M Monippally, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Ltd.

2. A R Simon and J S Simon (1993), The Computer Professional's Guide to Effective Communication, New York: McGraw-Hill

3. S Sreenivas Rao (1999), Handbook for writers and editors, Ahmedabad: Ahmedabad Management Association.

Notes

LESSON 24:
WRITING SCIENTIFIC AND SEMI TECHNICAL ARTICLES

Writing Scientific And Semi

Technical Articles

Like every other unit, this unit also has its own implications. We must know the general format of a technical article which will of course be different from other general articles and write-ups.

Objectives

- Know source material, topic sentence, literature review
- Understand graphics-tables, figures, footnotes, bibliography

Your aim during the coarse of this chapter should be to identify the different tools required for scientific writing. You should be able to selectively decide on what should and what should not be part of such a document.

So, class pick up your pens and put on your thinking caps to demonstrate your writing skills.

Dear Students, we must remember that any form of work done must be communicated. The work may be related to commerce, engineering, basic science, applied fields, medicine …….. Throughout the world of work, employers and employees write. Each written item has specific objectives which present specific requirements. This unit is designed to help you write semi-technical and scientific papers. Such writing experiences are important for you, because the skills you develop are needed in the professional world. Here you'll learn to gather, read, and evaluate information; to organize material from a variety of sources into one cohesive article; to **write persuasively** and **informatively**; and to **give credit to authors whose material you are using**.

Believe me, all of these skills will be appreciated by your future employers and employees and carry you way up in your career! Above all, enjoy your research and writing experience!

Like in the previous units, let us start from scratch.

Definition & Characteristics

What is a technical article ?

- Scientific/Research/Technical papers share newly developed information or a new understanding of previously known information.
- It is your responsibility as the writer of such a paper to find the best information available, analyze it carefully, and organize it logically into a concise, clear report.
- This explains your new knowledge or understanding.

Firstly, what is the Purpose of a Research Paper ?

Answer these questions before you start?

- Which information is included in your report ?

How you arrange that information will be determined largely by what you hope to accomplish by writing your paper.

- Is your goal to persuade someone to agree with you?

A persuasive research paper will reveal your viewpoint and counter anticipated arguments from the opposition.

- Is your purpose to share information about your selected topic?

An expository research paper presents information from a variety of sources enabling its readers to have an understanding of the current research and theories about this one topic without having to conduct time-consuming research on their own.

- Is your assignment to analyze a statement or position?

An analytical paper will dissect the proposed topic into its component parts, examining each one and its relationship to the others, to arrive at a conclusion about the validity of the position. A research paper may be designed to compel people to act or to stop some action the writer perceives to be unwise. As you can see, your goal will determine many of your decisions as you work on this project.

Now that you have decided why you wish to write, it's time to choose a topic

Topic Selection
The typical semi-technical paper, essay, report or article is an informative document, which sheds light on an event, person or current issue. It also may be persuasive.

If a subject intrigues you, you will do a better job on the finished product.
Completing this paper will require many hours, so choose a subject of interest to you. The hours will seem longer if you aren't interested in the material.

As you home in on a general topic, consider using the brainstorm and freewrite techniques. Eventually, you must narrow your general topic to a specific question.

- Brainstorming, sometimes known as thinking on paper, means jotting down ideas in a computer file or on paper.

Rapidly write rough notes of everything you can think of on the subject.

- Freewriting can help you find your ideas by writing quickly, with no plan, and without stopping for ten to twenty minutes.

Some practical useful tips:

Don't worry about what to say first; start in the middle.

Ignore grammar, spelling and organization.

Let your thoughts flow into a computer file or onto paper as they come.

If you draw a blank, write your last word over and over. More ideas will follow. Freewrite more than once, then write a sentence, which begins, "My main point is ..."

It is often difficult to decide on the topic. Start by deciding on what are the **Unsuitable Topics.**

A research paper topic would be a poor choice if it were...

- Too broad

  Should you try to cover the entire subject of Space Exploration, The History of Witchcraft or the Life of Napoleon in one research paper? No. You should narrow the scope of your topic to include only a portion of a broad subject.

- Too subjective

  A personal topic, such as "Why My Dad Is Best," may be unsuitable because you probably won't be able to support it from library sources.

- Too controversial

  Avoid any subject about which you can't write objectively. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to present the opposing viewpoint objectively. If you're prepared to face the challenge, then go on – get at it….. That skill is also an important lesson to learn.

- Too familiar

  Your work on a technical paper should lead to discovery of things you don't already know. Don't submit a research paper already written for another purpose.

- Too technical

 Don't write about a topic that you still don't understand thoroughly- even after you have completed your research.

It is best to short list one or two possible topics.

Gathering Information

Univ. Public Library Hospital Library Internet Library

When you have selected one or two possible topics, visit your school library to locate reference material. If additional sources are needed or desired, check other locations: the local public library, library services at the hospitals, or other libraries in your area.

It can be frustrating to choose a topic, have it approved by your instructor, and then learn that you are unable to find adequate reference material; therefore, this step is one you must not omit.

REMEMEBER, LIBRARIANS are happy to answer questions you have about locating references. Where the equipment has been installed, they will make arrangements to

help you conduct an electronic search. *However, do not expect them to do the research for you;* **locating information is a skill you must develop for your future use.**

Consider your topic carefully:

- Is it narrow enough to be covered thoroughly? If not, break it down into smaller components and choose one area to develop fully.

- Is it broad enough for you to write the paper without repeating yourself or getting wordy? If not, your subject is too narrow for this assignment; consider expanding into another aspect of the topic.

- Is it current enough to be interesting? Is it too current to have adequate information available? Be sure to check for adequate sources before you commit yourself to a topic.

After you've selected possible topics and listed available resources, have the subject approved by your instructor.

Literature Review / Background Information

Now comes a mammoth task of Literature Review. This, to most of us seems very easy at the initial stages. It is up to you to let it remain easy or make it soooo complicated that you land yourself in a vicious circle with loads of mere books and papers.

So what must you do ? Carry out your search in a cool manner and compile your data systematically.

A review of the literature is an essential part of your academic research project. The review is a careful examination of a body of literature pointing toward the answer to your research question.

Definition

A literature or a body of literature is a collection of published research relevant to a research question. All good research and writing are guided by a review of the relevant literature.

Your literature review will be the mechanism by which your research is viewed as a cumulative process. That makes it an integral component of the scientific process.

Why do it?

The purpose of the literature review remains the same regardless of the research methodology you use. It is an essential test of the research question against that which is already known about your subject.

If you find that your research question has not been answered satisfactorily by someone else, then search out the answers to these questions:

What is known about my subject?

What is the chronology of the development of knowledge about my subject?

Are there any gaps in knowledge of my subject? Which openings for work other workers have identified?

Is there a consensus on relevant issues? Or is there significant debate on issues? What are the various positions?

Remember that nothing is completely black or white. Only you can determine what is satisfactory, relevant, significant or important in the context of your own work.

Obviously, the search is the first step. However, you must remember that you love knowledge and that academic databases can be seductive. You could spend untold hours clicking around the bibliographies of your favorite collections. You may have fun, but you might not advance your literature review.

Have your research question written down and at hand when you arrive at the computer to search databases. Prepare in advance a plan and a preset time limit.

Finding too much? If you find so many citations that there is no end in sight to the number of references you could use, its time to re-evaluate your question. It's too broad.

Finding too little? On the other hand, if you can't find much of anything, ask yourself if you looking in the right area. Your topic is too narrow.

Leading edge research. What if you are trying to research an area that seems never to have been examined before? Be systematic. Look at journals that print abstracts in that subject area to get an overview of the scope of the available literature. Then, your search could start from a general source, such as a book, and work its way from those references to the specific topic you want. Or, you could start with a specific source, such as a research paper, and work from that author's references. There isn't a single best approach.

Take thorough notes. Be sure to write copious notes on everything as you proceed through your research. It's very frustrating when you can't find a reference found earlier that now you want to read in full.

Using resources wisely. Practice makes perfect. Learn how and then use the available computer resources properly and efficiently. Log onto the Internet frequently. Visit on-line libraries. Play with the database resources.

A Note Of Advice
All techniques to reading and compiling literature are magnificent. Modern technology has given us the tool to know the latest by means of internet surfing. As a word of caution, let me tell you that referencing books and journals have their own charm As goes the old saying, *"Man's Best Friend is a Book"*.

Some Useful Tips:
- Identify publications, which print abstracts of articles and books in your subject area.
- Look for references to papers from which you can identify the most useful journals.
- Identify those authors who seem to be important in your subject area.
- Identify keywords in your area of interest to help when you need to narrow and refine database searches.
- Read online library catalogs to find available holdings.
- Be sure to write copious notes on everything.

Getting ready to write. Eventually, a broad overview picture of the literature in your subject area will begin to emerge. Then it's time to review your notes and begin to draft your literature review. But, where do you start?

Finally, selecting information you must evaluate material for its usefulness and validity.

You may choose not to include some of the information because -
- The source is not credible or at best questionable.

Example
A popular tabloid may declare that abstaining from all food and drinking a gallon of vinegar a day for five weeks will cure cancer. Finding no other supporting documentation for this cancer "break-through" and recognizing the questionable credibility of the source, you would not include this information.

- At the same time, you will exclude some absolutely accurate and respected information for a variety of reasons:
  - It is too technical
  - It is similar to details you are including from another source
  - It deals with an aspect of this subject which you are not covering in this paper
  - The information has been updated by more recent investigations.

Be aware that you may find some information that is so fascinating you want to include it even though it falls into one of the above categories. Don't! Save that detail for future use; it may be the perfect beginning for your next piece of writing.

Having selected the material you will be using, you continue the evaluation process as you decide how to use the information you've chosen.
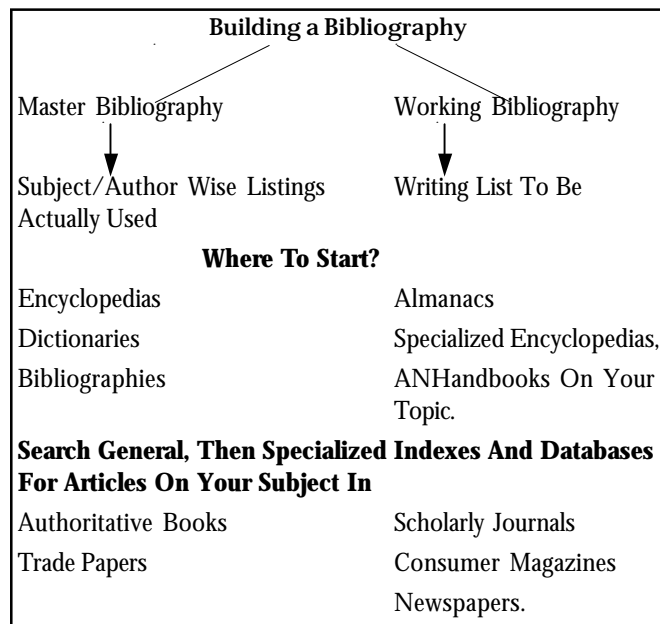
Ask yourself these questions:
- Is there enough material on each point?
- Will this amount of information seem convincing?
- What are the assumptions in the research?
- What are the implications of the research?
- How old is this information?
- Do I have the most recent data?
- Who are the authorities?
- Has the information come from recognized experts?
- Has the information come from respected publications?
- Are the terms clearly defined?
- Are all sources using the terms in the same way?
- Is all the information relevant?
- What do the statistics mean?
- How were the statistics gathered?
- What are the relative merits of the arguments?
- Which arguments are stronger?
- Which arguments are less significant?

Regardless of your reason for writing this paper, it will be a combination of your own words and quotations from other writers.

As researcher, you will have carefully selected material to accomplish your purpose.

As writer, you will blend that information by summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and drawing conclusions. Always give credit to the original authors of information you include—to produce an informative report.

Building a Bibliography

Master Bibliography   Working Bibliography

Subject/Author Wise Listings   Writing List To Be
Actually Used

Where To Start?

Encyclopedias   Almanacs

Dictionaries   Specialized Encyclopedias,

Bibliographies   ANHandbooks On Your
                             Topic.

Search General, Then Specialized Indexes And Databases For Articles On Your Subject In

Authoritative Books   Scholarly Journals

Trade Papers   Consumer Magazines

                             Newspapers.

Taking notes: Read your sources for facts, opinions and examples relating to your subject. Either in a computer file or on cards, jot notes of information important in answering your research question.

Record a page number in the source for each fact or quote you jot down. If you quote from a source, make sure you copy the exact wording and have the page number.

Organizing information: After completing your main research, organize the information you have collected. Of course, you may need to research specific points later while writing.

Outlining the technical paper: Group the information in your computer files or on your note cards coherently by topic. That will lead to an efficient working outline. Organize your points either from most-to-least or least-to-most important.

Write an outline from the organization of your computer files or note cards. List the major divisions and subdivisions to visualize your ideas and supporting material. The outline will reveal whether your research has turned up enough materials to support your conclusion.

How To Do Bibliographies ?

Creating a bibliography manually can be a very annoying and time-consuming job.

Imagine your self going through stacks of journals, papers books…….and not just not getting anywhere but also loosing track of your subject, getting yourself entangled and ultimately finding yourself in the same position as at the start. So, as I have said earlier, SYSTEMATIC COMPILATION is the secret to success.

With the advancement in modern technology, your job has become easier. Professional researchers who work with citations every day use one of the commercial computer software tools for tracking references.

Word Processors-

- Although modern word processors are loaded with features, they don't offer complete help with one of academic writing's most laborious tasks — the bibliography.

- Creating a "bib" means tracking references, including citations in text, and formatting each reference in a particular style.

- They are like employing a personal librarian to track, store and retrieve bibliographic references while you do scholarly writing.

Researchers, scholars, writers, reporters, authors, reviewers, teachers and anyone gathering and maintaining bibliographical references and publishing papers and reports can use these tools to access, organize and update article references pulled from the expanding literature in a knowledge field. If you read, organize, and report references, you might like to try one of these bibliographic software brand names.

Documenting your Sources

Give credit to every one of your sources, even if you change information into your own words. When you use a writer's exact wording, put quotation marks around those words and use a citation.

Plagiarism means writing facts, opinions or quotations you get from someone else or from books, magazines, newspapers, journals, movies, television or tapes as if they were your own and without identifying the source. Unintentional plagiarism still is plagiarism. Include the works cited at the end of your research paper.

You must acknowledge the source of any:

- Statistic
- Paraphrase
- Concrete fact
- Direct quotation
- Idea other than your own
- Opinion held by someone else
- Information not commonly known

If a fact that is common knowledge, don't show a source. For instance, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India.

Internal Parenthetical Citations and Works Cited Page

Use a parenthetical citation format. That means show the source in parentheses eg. (Jones, 1998) inside your text immediately after you give the information. Check guides for specific rules applicable to your research paper:

A reader looks at the works cited at the end of the research paper to find details of the sources shown in the internal parenthetical citations.

Footnotes

Any information that is not included in the main body of the paper or additional information like appropriate sources, cross

references are included in footnotes. Footnotes are positioned at the bottom of the page or end of the subject. This was discussed earlier during our lessons on Proposal writing.

Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing

Summarize and paraphrase more often than you quote.

Quoting: Use quotations in support of your own words.

- Each quotation should illustrate a point you want to make.
- Keep quotations brief. Avoid quotes longer than three or four lines. Shorter quotes are easier to read.
- Use the ellipsis ... to omit the middle of a quote.

Paraphrasing: A paraphrase puts someone else's points in your own words. It includes all information from the original.

Summarizing: A summary condenses original information, summarizing main points of someone's words or ideas.

Topic Sentence

As the name suggests, we are now discussing a single sentence. This is a rather important sentence. It has a lot of weightage since by itself it is expected to explain the entire paragraph and sometimes even the entire document. Let us now **define** it.

How to Write an Abstract ?

How to do it ?

Once you've finished writing, stop and think about the document.

- What is its main subject?
- What is its main conclusion?
- What is its primary purpose?
- What would you expect the reader to do with this document?

Collect this together and write a sentence - that is your topic sentence.

You need to write one sentence that covers the entire document, regardless of whether the document is a one-page letter or a thousand-page manual.

For Inspiration

Look at the recommendations, conclusions, summaries, and results in the completed document. When abstracting a manual, look at the tutorial. These sections cover the essence of the document.

Avoid the Document Title

This can be misleading. It may not help you write the topic sentence. Chances are the title will be too vague. Parts of the title might serve as modifiers in your topic sentence, but you'll probably need to go beyond the title.

Be Specific

Make the topic sentence be specific. Avoid writing "This report describes… [document title]." Instead, write something like "The results of this… [subject]… study show that… [result]."

Use Supporting Sentences to fill in Details

After you identify your topic sentence, write supporting sentences. Make each of these supply specific details about the ideas in the topic sentence.

Your Result

Your abstract is now of use to the reader. This technique works for documents of any length from a couple of pages to multi-volumes. It also works for letters, reports, articles, scripts, and anything else you have to write.

Use Topic Sentences When Writing an Essay

Writing topic sentences at the start of each paragraph helps your reader get to the crux of your message immediately. The topic sentences in your essay contain the key information with every other sentence explaining or adding to the topic sentence. If a sentence does not develop from the topic sentence, you should move it or cut it out.

Think of your topic sentences as the headline to each paragraph, announcing the new point you want to make. ***Example***

When it comes to new products, few businesses are more perilous than making civil aircraft. Aircraft can cost millions to develop. Boeing gambled the company when it launched the 747, spending $2 billion on the project, 2.5 times the value of the firm. Twice as big and efficient as anything else in the air, the jumbo has earned the Seattle company $20 billion in profit since they first flew, 30 years ago almost to the day.

Topic Sentences: Fact Sheet and Exercises

A topic sentence "brings to the paragraph not only order but also unity," and it "announces the topic and an attitude toward it". Sometimes we say that the topic sentence embodies the paragraph's organizing idea or its controlling idea. A topic sentence performs at least some of the following functions:

- Announces the topic
- Makes a transition from the previous paragraph
- Asks and answers a rhetorical question
- Forecasts sub-topics to be dealt with in the paragraph or in a whole section of paragraphs

Position of Topic Sentences

- Topic sentences usually occur at the beginning
- End of a paragraph.
- Much less frequently, topic sentences may appear in the middle of the paragraph or may simply be implied.

At the paragraph's beginning:

An estimated 95% of paragraphs in professional/technical writing begin with their topic sentences

*Example**: A midwinter vacation at Club Tropic has its good points and bad points.** The beaches are clean and uncrowded. The surrounding countryside is lush and soothing to winter-weary eyes. Furthermore, being able to take sailing and scuba diving lessons, while friends back home shovel snow, makes the outdoor activities extra-enjoyable. On the other hand, several features of Club Tropic are substandard. The food is poor, and, because the club is isolated, eating elsewhere is impossible. Security could also be better, as thefts from several guests' rooms indicated. So for some vacationers, nice scenery and fun activities may not be enough to offset the possibility of poor service and lax security.*

At the Paragraph's End:

If the topic sentence is not the first sentence in the paragraph, it is often the last sentence in the paragraph, summarizing or generalizing the paragraph's information.

Example: Beginning at breakfast with flying globs of oatmeal, spilled juice, and toast that always lands jelly-side down, a day with small children grows into a nightmare of frantic activity, punctuated with shrieks, cries, and hyena-style laughs. The very act of playing turns the house into a disaster area: blankets and sheets that are thrown over tables and chairs to form caves, miniature cars and trucks that race endlessly up and down hallways, and a cat that becomes a caged tiger, imprisoned under the laundry basket. After supper, with more spilled milk, uneaten vegetables and tidbits fed to the cat under the table, it's finally time for bed. But before they fall blissfully asleep, the children still have time to knock over one more bedtime glass of water, jump on the beds until the springs threaten to break, and demand a last ride to the bathroom on mother's back. **Constant confusion is a way of life for parents of small children**.

In the Paragraph's Interior:

The interior position is not very emphatic, and hence topic sentences are less frequently found there. In the following example, the first sentence is limiting; '***but'*** is the turn word that introduces the topic sentence:

Example: When we think of Gandhi fasting, plastering mud poultices on his belly, and testing his vow of continence by sharing a bed with his grand-niece, we can easily regard him as a fanatic who happened to be politically lucky. **But *the links between his private fads and his political methods turn out to be quite logical.*** *Gandhi's pursuit of personal rigors helped him to achieve a rare degree of discipline that allowed him to approach political crises with amazing courage. The example of his self-control, furthermore, was contagious; a more worldly man could not have led millions of his countrymen to adopt the tactic of nonviolent resistance.*

It must be noted that every paragraph need not have a topic sentence.

Starting to Write a Research Paper

After outlining, it's time to start writing.

Writing the Review

- One draft won't cut it. Plan from the outset to write and rewrite.

- You will crave a sense of forward momentum, so don't get bogged down.

- Don't restrict yourself to writing the review in a linear fashion from start to finish. If one area of the writing is proving difficult, jump to another part.

Edit and rewrite

- Your goal is to communicate effectively and efficiently the answer you found to your question in the literature.

- Edit your work so it is clear and concise.

- If you are writing an abstract and introduction, leave them for the last.

Communicating ideas is the objective of your writing, so make it clear, concise and consistent. Big words and technical terms are not clear to everyone. They make it hard for all readers to understand your writing.

- Style and writing guides are worth browsing if you are unsure how to approach writing.

- Always re-read what you have written. Get someone else to read it. Read it aloud to see how it sounds to your ear.

- Then revise and rewrite.

Title

- Research paper titles should be descriptive and informative.

- Sometimes the research thesis or research question is used for a title.

- Avoid vague, inaccurate or amusing titles.

Introduction

- The introduction should appeal to a reader's interest and it should make clear what the research paper is about.

- Ask the research question or state the thesis.

The question can come first, informing the reader of the purpose of the research paper. Or, the question can come last, making a transition to the body of the research paper.

Body

- The meat of a research paper is evidence, facts and details.

- You can't have too much documentation, too many references.

- On the other hand, it is possible to have too many quotes. You can control that by paraphrasing and summarizing.

- Discover information and analyze and evaluate it for your readers. Tell readers what your data mean and show them how to weigh the evidence.

- Present your evidence in the body of the research paper.

You must be impartial. Point out strengths and weaknesses on both sides of the issue. Concede worthwhile opposing positions to establish your credibility. Making concessions establishes that you have researched the issue thoroughly.

Artwork

- Use appropriate drawings, pictures, diagrams, maps, tables and charts to illustrate key points. Keep artwork simple.

Conclusion

- The conclusion of the research paper is the culmination of everything written in the paper before the conclusion.

- The research question is answered in the conclusion.

- You must help the reader understand why you reached your conclusion.

Writing the Conclusion.

- Throughout your written review, you should communicate your new knowledge by combining the research question you asked with the literature you reviewed.

- End your writing with a conclusion that wraps up what you learned in the literature review process.

While the interaction between the research question and the relevant literature is foreshadowed throughout the review, it usually is written at the very end. The interaction itself is a learning process that gives researchers new insight into their area of research. The conclusion should reflect this.
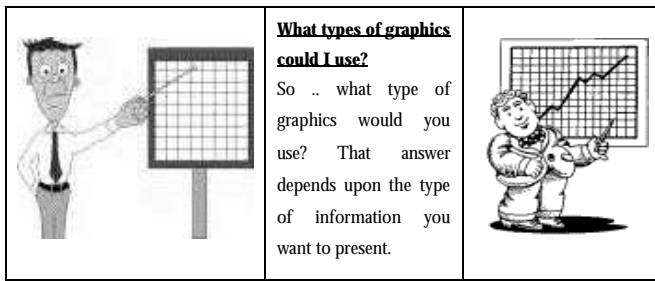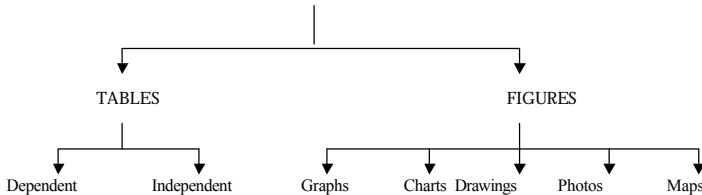
It would not be enough to say, for example, "This evidence shows that it would be unwise to give a gun to a small child." You must help readers understand why your conclusion is the correct one.

Review the main points for your readers. Give a final example, or quote, or something else which will strengthen the end of the research paper.

Drafting a Research Paper

A complete job on a research paper will include writing, editing and revising. Each complete revision is a draft. Don't try to write just one final draft of a research paper.

First draft: Always write a first draft with the intention of having one or more revision drafts.

For the first draft, you will find it faster to write something approximating the points you wish to make, then go back and revise them.

While drafting, keep computer or paper at hand so you can jot down new ideas as they occur to you.

It's faster to edit and revise on computer, without printing out the intermediate drafts. However, if you need to print out a draft for editing, format the text with double-spaced or triple-spaced lines so you can mark changes between lines.

Revising: Write a second draft. Check your spelling and use a thesaurus to make improvements. If needed, edit the second draft for a third draft, and so on.

Continue this process until you are satisfied and leave no room for questions in the mind of the reader. The elements generally found in a research paper are:

Title (and running title if needed0

Author(s) and Affiliation(s)

Abstract

Keywords

Introduction

Materials and Methods Procedure

Results

Discussion

Conclusions and recommendations

Acknowledgements

List of References

Publishing a Paper

Following are the steps in publishing a paper

- Choosing the right journal.
- Submitting the manuscript in the right format along with the letter of transmittal
- Dealing with referees and their comments
- Resubmission of the manuscript in its amended form
- If paper is rejected, give it another try and submit it to another journal

- If accepted, receive the typeset version to proof read. Alternatively, the editorial staff on the journal may do the proof reading.

Notes

LESSON 25:
IMPORTANCE OF GRAPHICS

In our previous class we studied, all about writing a scientific paper. What one needs to always remember is that any form of written communication (lecture 6) has to be made simple and understandable using our pens . So let us proceed form here.

Are black and white words enough for the reader to get your message ? Not always. Also remember, A good writer is one whose readers find the reading material simple and interesting inspite of the complexities of the subject/ scientific and technical terms. At this point one must make use of graphic aids that are simple to follow and under-stand the subject.

What types of graphics could I use?

So .. what type of graphics would you use? That answer depends upon the type of information you want to present.

GRAPHIC AIDS

Characteristics Of Tables

Dependent Table

- Does not have a separate title
- Usually has 3-4 columns and 8-10 lines
- Often completes a sentence
- Begins with a colon

Dependent table is an integral part of the text.

Independent Table

- Self-sufficient
- Has a number, title, and sometimes even a legend
- Has 2 or more columns of numerical data
- Has large number of rows
- Sometimes has data in the form of words. It is then known as a **phrase table**.
- Contains
  i. a sub head - first column. A number of items are listed under it.
  ii. A box head - name for all columns in it

iii. Columns of equal size

iv. Data - recorded in the center of a particular column. A dash is placed where data is not included.

- Footnotes to provide additional in formation not included in the table

- Unit of measurement is at the right hand top corner or in the title.

Below is an example of an independent table.

Report on office furniture

Sl No.	Item	Stock in hand on 20th September 2000		
		Serviceable	Repairable	Unservicable
I	Office Chairs	128	12	10
2	Office Tables	39	9	2
3	Office Desert Coolers	8	2	Nil
4	Water Cooler	Nil	2	Nil
5	Godrej Steel Almirah	38	Nil	2
6	File Cabinets, Stainless Steel	20	Nil	Nil
7	Computer Tables	12	Nil	3
8	Computers HP, Pentium III	5	Nil	Nil
9	Photocopying Machine, Cannon	2	Nil	Nil
10	Laser Printer HP, Colour	I	I	I
11	Electronic Typewriter, Remington	2	Nil	Nil
12	Manual Typewriters	to	Nil	14
13	Stools Peon	10	Nil	Nil
14	Wooden Partitions	Nil	Nil	5
15	Cyclostyling Machines	Nil	Nil	2
16	Telex Machines	Nil	Nil	2

Date: 21 September, 2000   Checked by : Bhana Pratap

Place: DMC Delhi   Signature

Figures

Figures are helpful in providing a gist of the text. They provide information not included in the discussion. Figures include graphs, charts and pictures. Graphs and charts are pictorial representations.
***Data presented in a table is, however more accurate than in a graph or a chart**.*

Graphs

Types Of Graphs

1. Rectilinear graph
2. Multiple line graph
3. Surface graph
4. Bar graph
5. Pie graph

6. Semi-log graph

7. Scatter graph

8. Pictorial graph

9. Box graph

Let us take each of the above graphs and understand them.

Rectilinear Graphs

- Show trends in progress over scattered period of time (especially if time factor is variable)

SALES OF COMPANY (1994-2000)

Multiple Line Graphs

- More than. one index line

- It symbolically shows data of units which are related to each other.

- Such a graph should, as far as possible, not have more than four lines.

Below is a multiple line graph showing boys who sat for competitive written exams, those who cleared the examination and those who cleared group discussion and interview rounds as well.

SUCCESS PROFILE AT EXAM
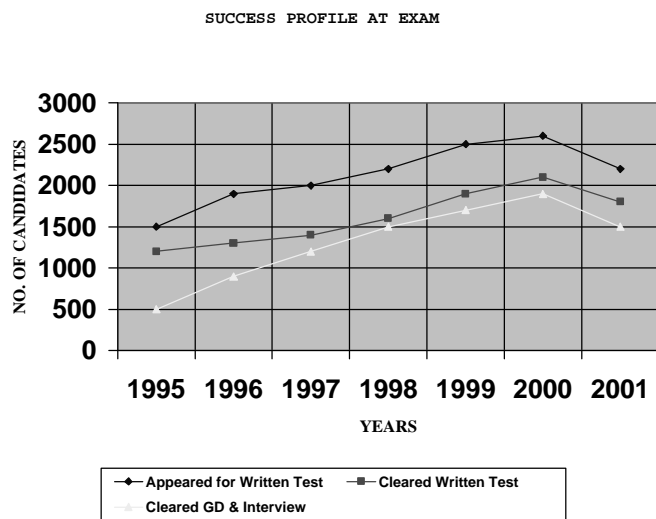
Surface Graphs

- To show sum total of 2 or more components

- Emphasis is on the area between index line and not on the lines themselves

- Zones between lines are darkened – usually darkest at the bottom

Below is a surface graph showing the trend in the number of communication skill books purchased by different groups between 1995-2001.

BOOKS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS PURCHASED BETWEEN 1995-2001
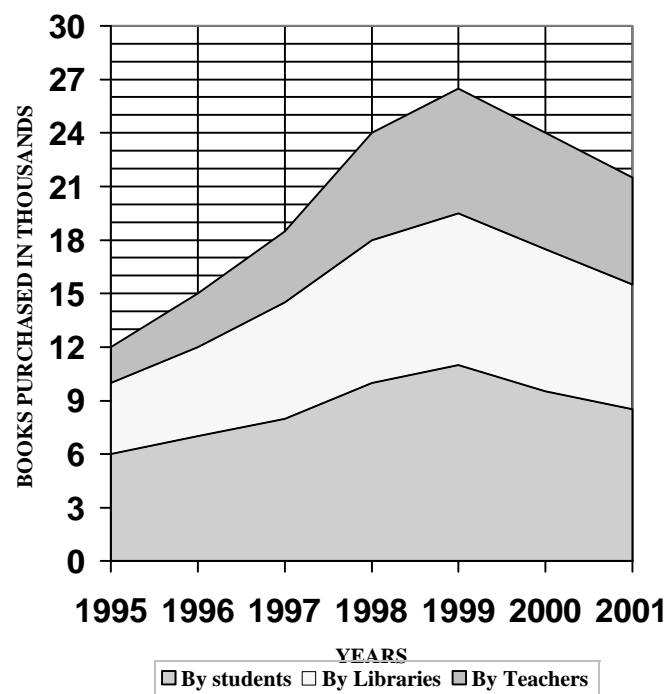
Bar Graphs   *Most adaptable of all graphs*

- Contains parallel lines – drawn vertically or horizontally

- Use to show different periods or different items during the same period

- May be used to compare 2 or more variables

- Bars are used chronologically

- Each value is assessed by length of the bar

Below is a Bar graph showing the growth of the branches of a bank between 1995-1999

BAR GRAPH SHOWING GROWTH OF BRANCHES OF A BANK
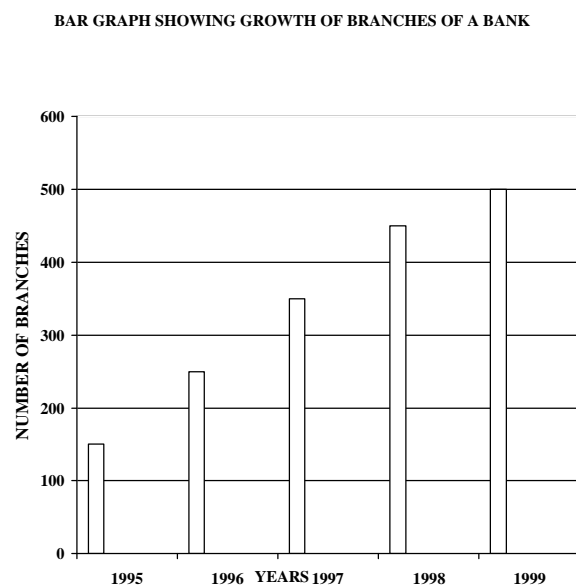
Pie Graphs – *percentage or circle graph*

Pie as in the American pastry

- Represented as a circle with 360 degrees
- Each percent works out to 3.6 degrees
- Data is displayed in terms of %
- Each portion is given a different shade
- Limitation – Must not be used when there are more than 5 items
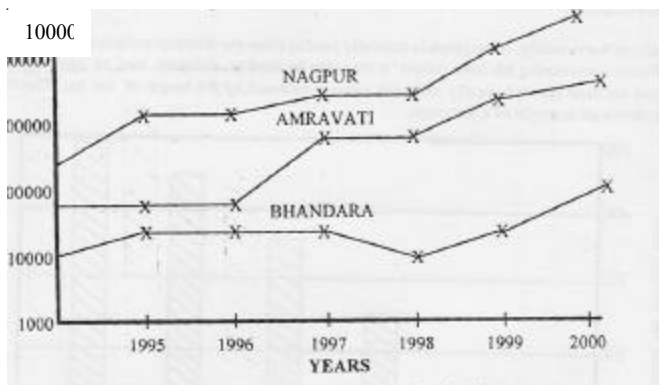- Can also have a square instead of a round shape

Pie Graph Showing Preference of sports by Teens
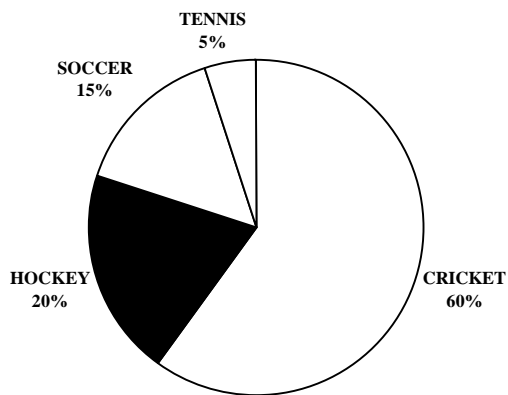
Semi-log Graphs

- Linear scale on one axis (usually x-axis) and logarithimic scale on the other.
- Used when range of one variable is very large
- Rate of change helps to predict future trends

Semi-log Graph Showing Amount Spent For Horticulture In Three Cities During 1995-2000

Scatter Graphs

- Use dots or other marks which show the agreement between two variables
- Absence of cluster means absence of correlations

Scatter Graph Showing Marks Obtained By Students

Scatter graph showing marks obtained by students
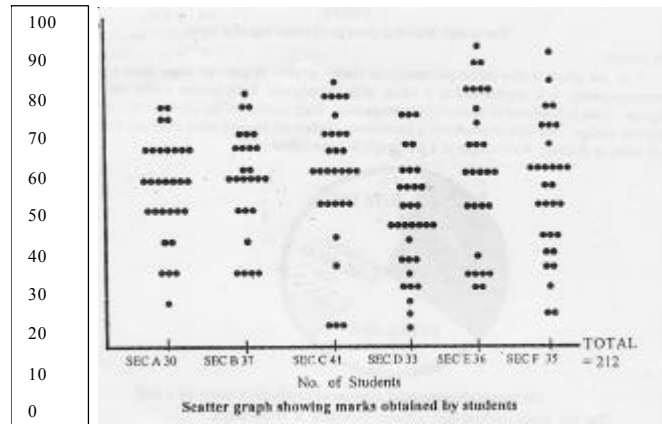
The above graph is a representation of number of students (X-axis) versus the marks obtained from 0 to 100 (y-axis) in intervals of 100

Pictorial Graphs

- Presents data pictorially
- Each unit of graph represents amount or quantity mentioned

POPULATION OF INDIA
Pictorial Graph showing population growth in India between 1947 and 1997
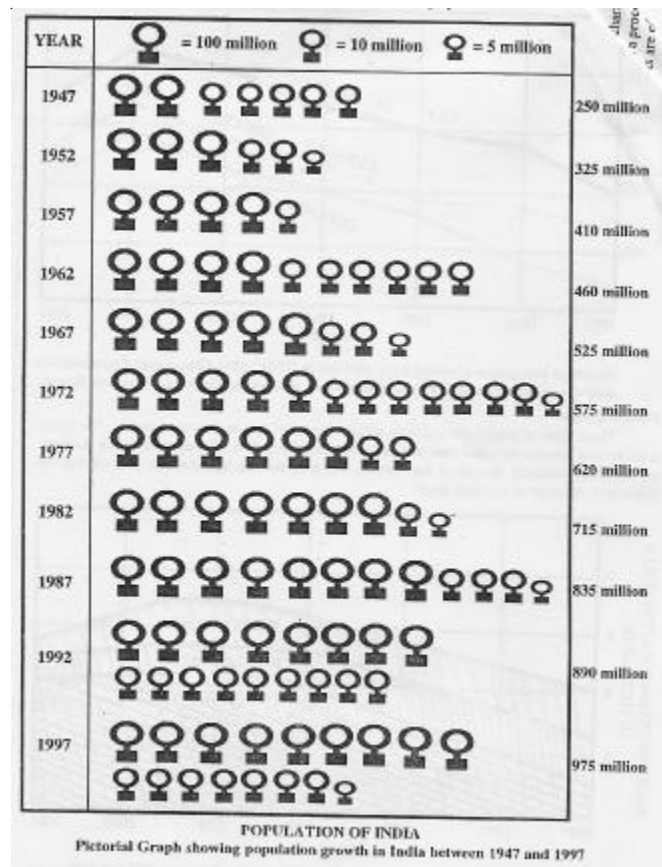
Charts

- Depicts the positioning of various components of something, like a sequence of steps in a process.
- Depicts the organisation of something by representing its sub-divisions.

Types of Charts

1. Organisation charts.
2. Flow charts.
3. Block charts.

Organisation Chart

- Depicts the chain of command in an organisation.
- Depicted in descending order of hierarchy.
- Departments and ranks of equal status are aligned horizontally.
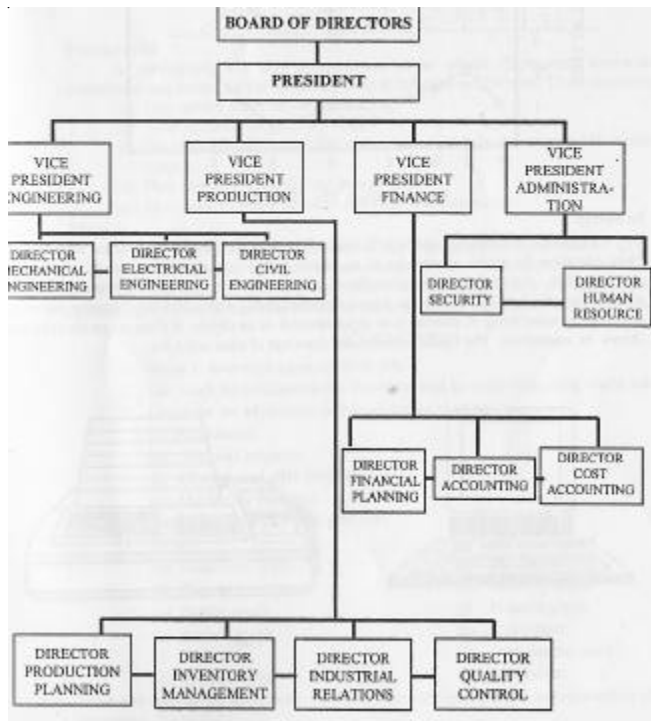
Flow Charts

- Gives us steps in a process
- Sequence of operations
- Symbols showing the steps or sequence are placed in blocks
- Blocks connected by straight lines
- Arrows show flow of the process or operations
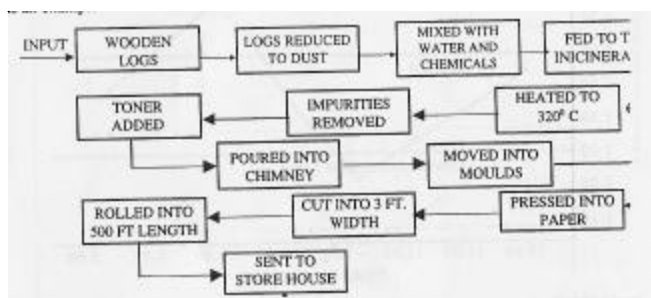
Block Charts

- Use blocks to show major components or groups of a complex structure
- Usually of a technical nature.
- Each block represents a major component.
- Relationship of all constituents is shown by arrows and straight lines.
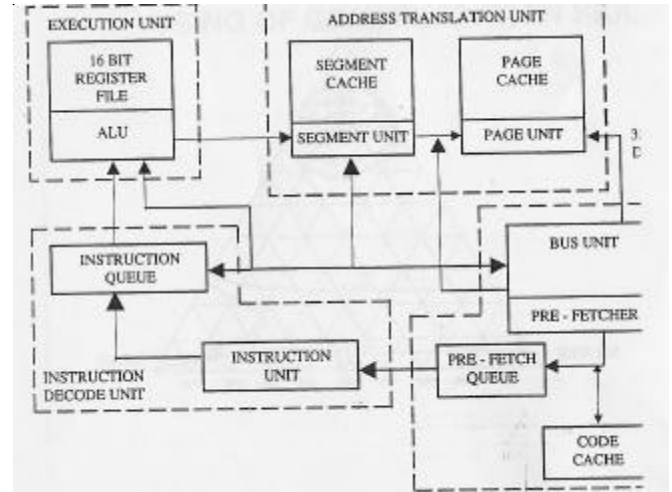
Control Charts

- Shows the difference between the actual and standard quality.
- Used by companies producing goods for quality control
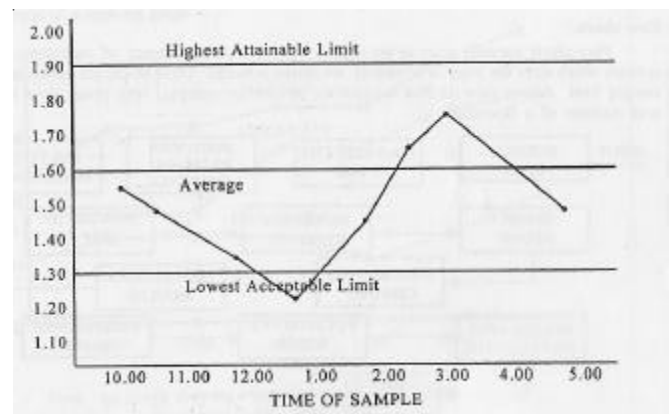
AVERAGE READING

The above graph is the representation of average reading for conversion of a sample A to B (y-axis) versus the shelf time sample conversion (x-axis)

Trilinear Charts

- Used to analyze the chemical and physical properties and alloys of three metals or a compound mixture of any three variable elements.
- A trilinear chart has an equilateral triangle.
- Its altitude symbolizes 100 percent of each component.

Given below is an example of a trilinear chart
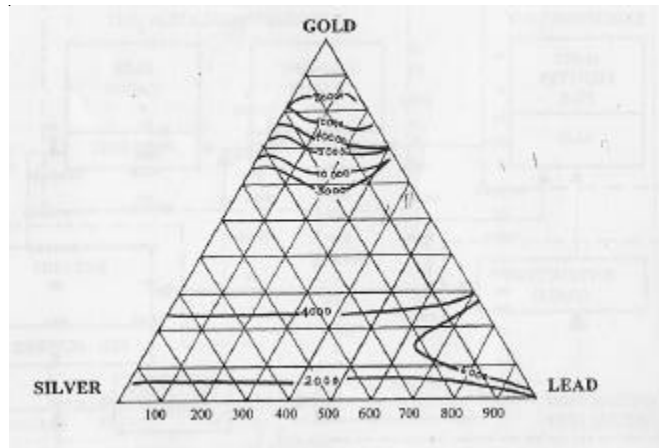
Strata Cbarts

- Shows quantities of a number of objects which have been acquired for a specific need.
- These quantities are shown as layers.

Shown below is a strata chart showing the quantities of gold, silver and lead used in making alloy on various occasions.


Days of Week 12 - 18 Aug 2002
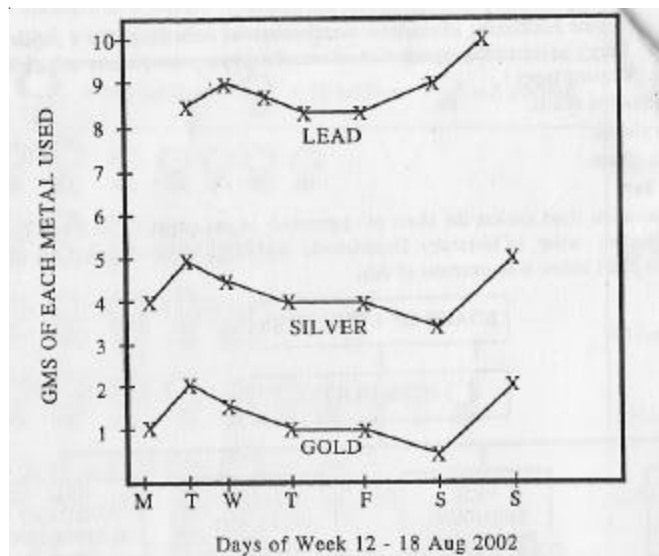
Drawings

- Drawings are normally made with lines.
- They may use shades or hatched lines at times.
- They may show the actual appearance of an object or they may show its sectional exploded or cutaway view.
- An exploded view of an object is larger than real.
- The other two show the outer or inner part of an object.

- A diagram is used interchangeably with a drawing; however, the two do not mean the same.
- A **drawing** is an actual likeness of an object.
- A **diagram**, on the other hand shows its operations.

Telex   Fax
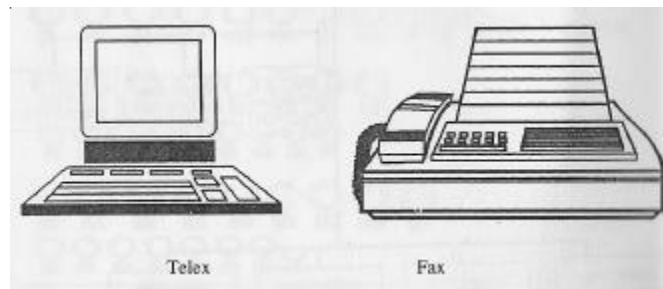
The figure below shows a **diagram** of a laboratory test.
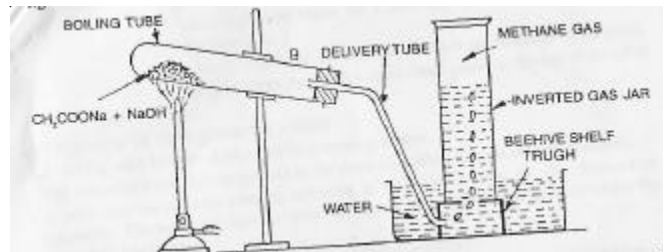
Photographs

- A true representation of an object.
- Photographs have some inherent weaknesses and hence, are not ftequently used in technical assignments. These weaknesses are:

  (a) They cannot stress on vital details.

  (b) Their reproduction costs are high.

  (c) They should be sufficiently big in size if minute details are required.

  (d) They cannot be created ftom data or notes.

  (e) They cannot present an interior or 3D view.

Maps

- Shows geographical distribution of data.
- It focuses its attention on important facts and omits irrelevant details.

For example, if we wish to highlight an urban geographical area we may plot features relevant to it and ignore plotting rivers, mountains, etc. Data is normally plotted in the form of dots, symbols of objects or shaded area.

I am sure you have grasped the essentials of writing scientific and semi technical articles. At this stage, you should be able to able to identify the different tools required for scientific writing.

Key Points

- A scientific or semi technical article gives the detail of the subject on which it is being written. Such articles may be a literature survey or documentation of scientific / research work done, is an offer to do something. At the end, it could be volume running into several hundred pages.

- **Topic selection**

  The topic should be selected such that there is enough information and yet not to broad. The topic chosen should not be too subjective, too controversial or even too familiar. Always narrow down on at least two topics so that if one does not suit for some reason the other can be dealt with.

- **Gathering Information**

  All available resources should be utilized for a complete survey on the background literature already available. The literature review should be complete and up to the latest available information.

- **Topic Sentence**

  This is a single sentence that gives the summary of the entire document. This may be at the start in the abstract. It may also be used to give a summary of each paragraph. It is positioned at the beginning or end of the para and sometimes within the paragraph**.**

- **Graphics**

  These can be in the form of tables, graphs, charts, drawings, photographs and maps. They are responsible in making the understanding of trends, data and the subject simpler.

- **Parts of a scientific/Semi-technical article**

  Some of the main sub titles of such a writing are being given below

  Title, Abstract, Introduction, Discussion, Tables, Graphics, Footnotes, References / Bibliography, Results / Conclusion

Exercise

1. Give details of literature search
2. What do you understand by topic sentence?
3. What are graphics? How are they useful? Discuss in detail the different kinds of graphics.
4. Write a short note on bibliography and footnotes.
5. Discuss the format of a scientific or semi technical writing.

Practice Session:

1. Choose a scientific topic of your interest and list the steps you would follow to write a paper on it.
2. You are serving as General Manager at Royal Pharmaceuticals Company Pvt. Limited. Which type of chart would you use to represent your position in the company. Draw the same showing upto two ranks under yours.

References

1. Communication Skill (For PolytechnicStudents), Bhatia P S R, Manral J S, Moon D Y, S Chand & Company Ltd.
2. Writing for Science and Engineering: Papers, presentations and Reports, Heather Silyn-Roberts, Butterworth Heinemann
3. http://spectrum.troyst.edu
4. MIT Online Writing and Communication Center

Suggested Reading

1. Leggett, Glenn, C. David Mead, and Melinda G. Krammer. *The Prentice Hall Handbook for Writers* 10th ed. Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall, 1988.
2. www.MSU college of Technology

Notes

Report Writing

Friends, since the start of our study on Professional Communication and Technical writing we have seen the prerequisites for writing different types of documents. We have seen how, depending on the objective of the paper certain terms and formats ar modified and used. Our aim is to systematically guide you through the different stages of writing and oral communication. So far, we have dealt with written communication. Various different types of letter writing skills have been discussed. Business communication involves Proposal Writing, Writing Scientific and Semi-technical articles and Report Writing. In this unit we shall focus on the parameters of Report Writing.

The Objective Of This Unit

- *Study the characteristics of business reports*
- *Structure of reports*
- *Style of reports*
- *Different types of reports*
- *At the end of this unit, you should be able to examine the details of final report writing.*

Let us together understand the **meaning** of the term "report". How is it different from other written material ?

Characteristics Of Report Writing

When one is asked to report an event, it automatically means that you are giving information on the matter to another person who was absent or unaware of the proceedings of the event. It is like your report card at school. The teacher prepares the report of the class and on the basis of it your performance is monitored and forwarded to the management. We are going to be discussing reports which are written by business administrators, engineers or scientists write in course of their routine work. These results are end products of diligent analysis, profound mental activity and rational conclusion. They must be written lucidly and they must be presented as per established norms.

What is a report? What is the difference between a report and an essay?

It is not an easy task to give the precise definition of a report because it can mean many different things at the same time. However, we can say that a report is an accunt of something. It either answers questions or meets a demand made by a person who is seeking information.

Thus, "A report is a communication of information or advice from a person who has collected and studied the facts, to a person who has asked for the report because they need it for a specific purpose".

Reports are the normal way of presenting the results of projects for employers.

- A report is a business document, the purpose of which is the speedy communication of important issues

As in our earlier units, we must start by asking some basic questions. By now you must have realized that the answers to these questions form the foundation to the contents of the write-up that you are working on.

What is the purpose of your report?

Start by asking yourself who is the report for?

If your report is technical will your readers be informed enough to understand it?

What is your report for?

Do you need to inform, persuade, argue or recommend?

Purpose of Business Reports

Many of you may think of business reports as dry, boring documents that take a great deal of time and effort to prepare.

Some people wonder if reports are worth all the effort. So … before we start talking about **how** to write a business report, let's talk about **why**.

What is the purpose of business reports?

Simply stated, a business report conveys information to assist in decision-making. The report is the means to present this

information. Some reports might present the actual solution to solve a business problem; other reports might record historical information that will be useful to assist in future decision making. Either way, information is being "reported" that will be useful in making decisions.

In order for the writer to have a clear understanding of why a report is written, a written purpose sentence is essential. This purpose sentence could be written as either a statement or a question. For example:

- To determine ways to improve employee morale. (statement)
- To design a new procedure for the company's annual inventory. (statement)
- Should new computers be purchased to replaced the older models? (question)
- Should the office arrangement be open or modular? (question)

Now that you know why you write business reports, let's go through the steps in how to write one.

Consider Your Audience

Always consider your reader or readers. Reports usually have a fairly wide distribution. Many people may be involved in a decision-making process and need to read the information in the report.

Your job is to make it easy for the reader. In order to make reading your report easier, think in terms of the reader. Each audience has unique needs.

Some audience consideration include:

- Need (from your report)
- Education level
- Position in the organization
- Knowledge of your topic or area
- Responsibility to act
- Age
- Biases
- Preferences
- Attitudes

Some false assumptions commonly made regarding audiences are:

1. That the person who will first read or edit the report is the audience
2. That the audience is a group of specialists in their field
3. That the audience is familiar with the subject of the report
4. That the audience has time to read the entire report
5. That the audience has a strong interest in the subject of the report

6. That the author will always be available to discuss the report

To avoid making these false assumptions, writers should identify everyone who might read the report; characterize those readers according to their professional training, position in the organization, and personal traits; and determine how and when the reader might use the report. Audiences are basically of three kinds:

Primary	People who have to act or make decisions on the basis of the report
Secondary	People affected by actions of the primary audiences would take in response to the report
Immediate	People responsible for evaluating the report and getting it to the right people

Additional questions to ask regarding your audience are:

1. How much background will the audience need?
2. Do you need to define any terms you are using?
3. What language level will be most appropriate for your readers?
4. How many and what kind of visual aids should you use?
5. What will the audience expect from your report?
6. Does the reader prefer everything given in detail or merely a brief presentation that touches upon the highlights?

Parameters of a Formal Report

The following parameters must be met in the case of a formal report:

- It should be presented in an organized manner.
- It must contain rational information.
- An authorized person must have requested the information.

As you go a long way in making a report worth while, certain basic parameters become evident.

- The extent and quality of information available
- The ability to acquire additional information
- The quality of the additional information acquired
- The ability to write quality English (*most organizations work in English, no matter what your views may be otherwise*) or the language in which the report is sought.
- The ability to sift useless, unnecessary and misleading information from genuinely worthwhile matter.
- The ability to convey a focused idea about the central impetus of the report.
- The ability to arrive at objective and rational evaluation.
- The ability to provide worthwhile recommendations.

Importance of Report in an Organisation

A report is of crucial importance in any organization because every worthwhile decision is based on a report and its recommendations. A report becomes necessary when the information available is complex and large, or it is to be accumulated from

many sources. Most organizations know the true worth of a good report and spend lot of time to acquire it. No worthwhile engineer can rise the corporate ladder without his ability to write a worthwhile report. The worth of a report can reach every area of functioning of an organization. It can decide the nature and extent of finance, the type of product to be manufactured, the nature of machinery, raw material etc. required to manufacture the product and the quality and type of men necessary to achieve results.

A technical report reduces to writing the facts of a particular situation, project, process or test. It clearly lays down the basis and methods of arriving at the facts.

- Highlights the significance of the facts
- Establishes a logical conclusion on from the basis of the facts laid down
- Establishes the purpose for which these facts are acquired
- Makes recommendation if and when necessary

A report must never be based on personal prejudices or misplaced learning. It must be objective. There is very little place for subjective evaluation.

From the above it is clear that a report is of crucial importance. *For example: An engineer present's a report after completion of a particular assignment or after the end of every particular set interval of time. It presents his investigation, his testing and his experimentation. In this document the engineer must describe clearly his own contribution to the work so that his efforts are counted in the judgement of his superior. A report is often an engineer's only tangible product. Often the engineer's written report is his only contact with the management.*

These observations regarding engineers can easily be extended to scientists, business executives and public administrators.

Reports may be written or even oral. In this Unit, we will be focusing only on written reports. **Oral reports** have certain inherent flaws.

- Person seeking information has to hear and absorb every word said.
- There is no choice of seeking and assessing information in detail.
- There is no permanent record of the information available.
- It cannot be very large and exhaustive in nature.

A **written report** is more formal in nature than an oral report and removes almost every flaw inherent in oral report. Written reports may be informal or formal. Informal reports are normally written in the form of a memorandum or a letter.

Structure of Report Writing

Getting Started

- As with essays, start with the end in mind.
- Work out how much time you have until the deadline and then break your task into mini-tasks.
- When gathering information don't forget to record where it came from as you go along.
- If you refer to a publication you must give the author and date in the text and then list all publications referred to.
- Information must be up to date, relevant and accurate.

Formal Reports—Component by Component

This section examines each component of the formal report and points out the key requirements in terms of content, design, and format.

Remember that these are requirements, or "specifications." Much of the work that professional technical writers do is governed by specifications.

Just as an electric component much be built according to certain design specifications, so must most technical documents such as instructions manuals, reference books, and so on.

Your job, like any technical writer's, is to stay as close to the specifications as you possibly can.

Listed below are some possible headings

Terms of reference. Indicates scope of report and what is wanted.

Contents. List of main headings.

Summary. Key points. This can be used at the start in order that readers can grasp the main points.

Aim. The overall purpose of the report.

Objective. What you want to achieve in your report.

Introduction. Outline of the key issues. It sets the scene for the reader.

Method. How you gathered information, where from and how much.

Findings. Statement of what you found out.

Conclusions. Draws together your findings.

Recommendations. What should happen now.

References. All items referred to in report.

Appendices. Further information which is useful but may distract in the main report.

Index. Alphabetical list of topics covered.

Presentation

Good presentation is extremely important. Reports should be word processed. Make sure headings are clearly ranked. It is also a good idea to number your sections

- Use appropriate language which reflects the purpose of the report and the readers needs.
- Use visuals to emphasise a point or to make something clearer.
- Always keep a copy of your report
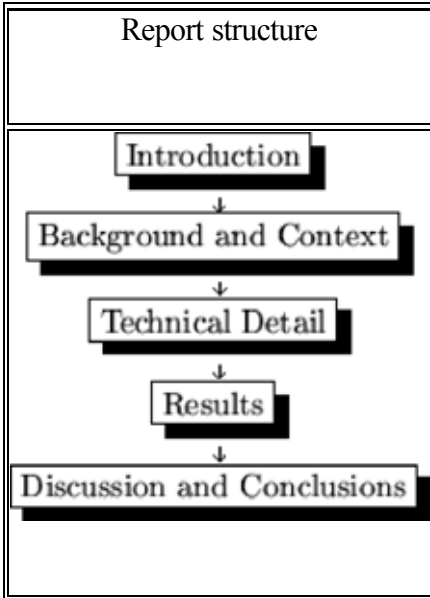
Like before follow a Logical structure

By logical structure is meant the natural unfolding of a story as the reader progresses through the document. This is achieved by going from the general to the specific, with the background material preceding the technical expose, which should lead *logically* to the conclusions.

Consider a *good* joke. It has the structure as shown in the shown below:

Joke structure
Context → Detail (core) → Punchline
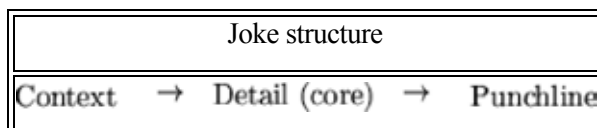
In our case, the punchline is the set of conclusions. Everything should support the conclusions and naturally lead up to them. Remember this when constructing your contents list!

A typical technical report has the following progression:

> ### Report structure
>
> Introduction
> ↓
> Background and Context
> ↓
> Technical Detail
> ↓
> Results
> ↓
> Discussion and Conclusions

If some of the detail is standard, but possibly difficult to obtain, it can be included as an appendix.

Notes

LESSON 27:
STYLE OF REPORT WRITING

There's no reason why technical writing shouldn't be lively and interesting. The real challenge is to express complex ideas simply. Too often technical writing has a flat style making documents difficult and tedious to read. There's no reason why technical writing shouldn't be lively and interesting. As in all good writing, you should put across your message in clear English and avoid complex words, acronyms, jargon and passive verbs. You should also keep your average sentence length low. The real challenge in technical writing is to express complex ideas simply.

Style of Report Writing

Focus on Uniqueness

- Effective report writing boils down to your ability to articulate the uniqueness of the data you gathered in the evaluation. *Many larger studies have been done on similar issues but they may not have reached the constituent of your program.*

- The uniqueness of your local participants and their perspective is what makes quality evaluations so important.

- Don't hesitate to draw important comparisons to other studies that have looked at similar issues but be sure to highlight the contributions of your particular study

Present Your Report Professionally

Finally, a practical suggestion on effective report writing is that you will want to make it look professional.

- Put the report in a binder or some kind of cover.

- Make sure to identify the authors of the report with complete contact information (e.g., phone, email, address) on the cover sheet.

- At the beginning of the report, you will want to acknowledge all staff who helped to conduct the evaluation.

- When you attach your instruments to the back, make sure to place a copyright message in a header or footer of the instruments.

- Invite other people to use and modify your instruments but encourage them to give you credit for the work that they borrow as well.

Professional presentation of a report that provides accurate findings and details the evaluation methods used is a powerful document to promote the effectiveness of your library program.

Elements of Effective Business Report Writing

Now that you have an overall outline and rough draft of your report, you are ready to start the "polishing." In presenting information, an effective business report should be accurate and objective.

Accurate

Accuracy in a business report includes accuracy of information and accuracy of writing.

Make sure your facts are right!

Since the information in a business report is used to make decisions, inaccurate information can lead to inaccurate decisions. The accuracy of any report depends upon the correctness of the data that was gathered to prepare it. Use reliable sources and be accurate in reporting all information.

The accuracy of writing depends on accuracy in writing mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and grammar) and accuracy in writing style. To avoid writing style errors, use precise words and terms that are not likely to be misinterpreted by the reader.

Writing Style

Writing style is probably the most individual aspect of a report, but again there are useful guidelines which aid the readability, professionalism, objectiveness and impact of a report.

Who is the rapporteur?

All reports should be written in the third person i.e., as an objective observer! Avoid using terms such as "I did this experiment and ...." Instead sustitute terms, such as "The eperiment was performed…" Note that he best written description is not necessarily the same as the best verbal description.

Who is the reader?

Decide, in advance of writing, who the likely reader of the document is. The document must be pitched at an appropriate level with sufficient background to allow understanding by the target audience. Examples of target audiences are shown in the table below.

REPORT TYPE	TARGET AUDIENCE
Final Year Project Report	Engineers not specifically familiar with your project area
Masters/Ph.D. Thesis	Researchers familiar with the subject area, but not necessarily with your approach
Research Paper	Researchers familiar with the approach, but not your specific results

If you are not able to be at level with the reader it will result in failure to communicate your ideas effectively, since the reader will either be swamped with complexity, or bored with blandness!

Form – Spelling

Poor spelling makes document seem sloppy and convey an impression that the technical content is as loose as the general appearance. You are lucky to have your spellings checked by a word processor. However, don't assume that a spelling checker will get all your typos. *These checkers are good, but they can't read your mind (yet!).*

Form – Grammar

Same as for spelling, many word processors now have grammar checkers as well as spell checkers, but the usefulness is debatable, so don't rely on them. *If in doubt, keep your sentences short and don't be afraid to ask somebody how to use punctuations correctly.*

Objective

In writing, objectivity means presenting material free from personal feelings or prejudice—a sometimes difficult balancing act.

You can achieve objectivity through the following techniques.

Make a distinction between facts and opinions:

Minimize unsupported judgments and inferences

Example

You are gathering information on the quality of service offered by your bank's tellers. In an interview, a customer tells you that "the tellers are always well-mannered and pleasant, even when they serve customers who rush them or complain because they had to wait in line." While this information is valuable for your report, it should be included as an opinion rather than a fact.

Reporting all pertinent information:

Present both positive and negative aspects

Example

You are reporting on effects of your company's experimental flex-time system for work hours. Look for both benefits and problems resulting from the system. If you enjoy the new system and want to see it become a permanent arrangement, it may be difficult for you to present a fair-minded view of the negative aspects. However, your credibility as a writer and the value of your report depends upon your objectivity.

Using bias-free language:

Avoid emotional terms, such as "amazing," "tremendous," etc.

Example

The collectors achieved an outstanding response rate of 50 percent.

The collectors achieved a response rate of 50 percent.

Using impersonal style:

Avoid interjecting a personal note, which might weaken a report by making it seem merely a statement of one person's opinion and beliefs.

Example

I compared the qualities of three word processors.

Qualities of three word processors were compared.

Comparison of the qualities of three word processors showed.

Form – The capital dilemma

Avoid excessive use of capital letters. One recommendation is to only use capitals for proper nouns (such as place names, company names, etc) and in places where acronyms are being defined, eg., red blood corpuscles (RBC). Acronyms should be defined at the first point of usage and the acronym can then be used freely. Try to avoid the use of capitals for emphasis, use boldfacing or italics instead. Capitals can be used effectively to differentiate between different section levels However, if you wish to do this, or differentiate between different heading levels in a different way, make sure you are consistent in the way you do this.

Justification and Rationale

Engineers and scientists are constant skeptics and need to be constantly re-assured that your work is pragmatic. For each idea presented, you should establish some rationale or motivation for its undertaking and any assumptions made must be justified. Similarly, critical assessment should be made of your results.

Observing the Outside World

Plagiarism is an unacceptable breach of copyright, where an author presents methods, text or results as his or her own, without reference to the original source. Ignorance of the original source or a forgetful omission is no excuse and the consequences for plagiarism are serious where it appears in examination documents.

Writing Conclusions

Conclusions must conclude! They must give some overall insight into the value of your work in general and inform the reader of what the major impact is, together with any caveats which the reader should be aware

You try!

Improve the following sentences to assure accurate use of nouns and/or pronouns.

1. The system change has improved customer service. This has resulted in fewer returns of merchandise.

2. The memorandum reviewed the progress of several departments. It created quite a few misunderstandings.

3. Problems of the past caused changes in personnel, budgeting, and follow-up. As things turned out, they were probably timely.

Rewrite the following sentences to improve objectivity and to incorporate an impersonal style.

1. The enormous increase of 32 percent proves the sales department has done a superb job.

2. The proposed procedure is bad because it would require an inordinate amount of employee time-15 percent to be exact.

3. The deplorable turnover rate could be reduced by about half-to 12 percent-if fringe benefits could be introduced.

4. The enormous increase of 33 percent was a result of the amazing growth in city population of 10,000 during the past year.

5. The horrible effect on employees from the change in parking regulations will be one of creating massive in-and-out traffic problems at the beginning and end of the day.

6. The writer surveyed 15 organizations to examine management styles.

7. We found formal check lists used in 14 of the 15 firms we surveyed.

8. We deleted the discussion on consumer energy habits because of possible errors in data.

9. You will notice how Flow Chart 2 traces the progress of a purchase order through the office under the revised procedure.

10. You can hardly imagine the effect of incentive pay on employee morale.

11. In my opinion, the use of computers will make it easier to compile our monthly sales report.

12. I feel certain that the new plan is better than the old method.

13. I think the sales representatives will agree that the new Call Report form is easier to complete.

14. If you were to ask me, I would select the wood desk over the metal one.

15. Most of us agree that a monthly status meeting will be helpful.

General Formatting Guidelines

Here are some general formatting guidelines that apply to the entire report:

- Use 1- or 1-1/2-inch margins for all four margins of the report. You might want to use a 1-1/2-inch margin at the top and 1-inch margins for the left, right, and bottom.

- Use a 1-1/2-inch left margin if your binding uses a lot of space (for example, brad-type binders that require 2- or 3-hole punch).

- Generally use double spaced typing except in those areas where single spacing is shown (for example, in the transmittal letter, descriptive abstract, figure titles, short vertical lists, and items in the information-sources list).

- Use one side of the paper only.

Covers and Label

Your final report should use some sort of cover and label. The best is the plastic spiral binding that you can have done at most copy shops. It uses only a quarter-inch of the left margin, and the bound report lies flat when open. The least expensive binding is the type for which you punch holes in the left margin and fix the pages in the folder with brads. Loose-leaf, ring binders are generally too large and bulky-also the pages tear. Copy shops offer other kinds of binding that work well also. However, avoid the clear or colored plastic ones with the plastic sleeve that fits on the left side-not only is it grade-schoolish, it's aggravating to use.

As for the label, the best option is to design your own and print it out on an ordinary sheet of paper, then take it to the copy shop and have it copied onto the cover of your choice.

Adhesive labels are okay-but you have to buy hundreds of them and then find a typewriter to type them.

Notes

LESSON 28:
CLASSIFICATION OF REPORTS

In our previous sections on report writing, we have studied the techniques of report writing. The purpose of the report is important to decide the actual framing of such a report. We shall now see the different types of reports.

Classification Of Reports

Informational

- Accumulate and provide information without any assessment or evaluation
- No recommendations are made
- No findings are giving
- Data is presented for others to evaluate and arrive at decisions

Interpretative

- Provide and assess data
- Provide rational findings and recommendations
- Also known as recommendation reports

Routine

- For recording information required at periodic intervals.
- May be in printed forms at regular intervals
- Confidential reports on employees to progress reports

TYPES OF REPORTS

Periodic / Routine	Special
Progress	Information
Inspection	Investigation
Performance appraisal	Feasability/survey
Periodical	Project

The ultimate purpose of any report is to provide the foundation for decisions to be made and action taken. Whatever the purpose and length of reports require the following writing skills:

1. The ability to record facts clearly and objectively.
2. The ability and to interpret information and make conclusions.
3. The ability to present suggestions on ways in which a situation may be improved

Let us now discuss each of the above type of reports.

Progress Report
Most executives thrive on information feedback. One such feedback is a progress report. This is usually submitted for long-term projects or works. These reports not only inform higher authorities whether or not work is progressing on schedule but it also warns workers and supervisors in case it is in arrears. A research student, for instance, submits periodic progress reports. These reports convey the progress of research and whether or not the research is being undertaken as per schedule. Progress reports are sent at intervals, which are decided by those who want them. The periodicity must serve must serve some distinct purpose. Some executives are known to seek information at the cost of production and proper functioning of an organization. A progress report must illuminate and inspire. It must never impede or irritate the person asked to send it. The person who wants a progress report must clearly state the information he wishes to seek and the periodicity of sending the report to him. Reports are usually written in letter form.

Characteristics:

- Information of regarding progress of work or project
- Standard format is usually followed
- Construction of building, manufacture of products, implementation of a scheme

Normally a progress report should contain the following information:

- Name of the work or project
- Nature of the work or project
- Extent of the work to be completed
- The extent to which the work has been completed
- Data on which the work is being submitted
- Amount of work left
- Reasons for delays, if any
- Any other relevant information
- Signature and designation of the reporting officer.

Some sample reports are shown below:

Employees' Progress Report
THE PMK COMPANY LIMITED

57, Ballard Estate

New Delhi 110 001

November 12, 2003

CONFIDENTIAL

The Chairman

PMK Co. Ltd.

Mumbai 400 001

Sub: Half Yearly Report of Marketing Department

Dear Sir,

It is a pleasure to submit to you the first half yearly report of the employees' progress for the Marketing Department under my charge. The report covers the period from 1st May 2003 to 31st October 2003.

The performance of the marketing department, under my supervision and staff of 7 other employees has shown a rise in the sales of 10%. The half yearly balance sheet shows a net profit of 25%.

Two new employees, Mr A Sen (MBA, IIM)and Mr C Naidu (MBA, NMIMS)   have been recruited to supervise the functioning and expanding the rural market.

Mr P Bhowmik was solely responsible for the timely launch of the new disposable gloves. Taking note of this I strongly recommend a hike in his salary.

Immediate recruitment of personnel for the expansion programmes in the next quarter is urgently seeked.

Yours faithfully,

J Rathi

General Manager

Progress Report on an Employee
THE EVERSHINE DEPARTMENTAL HOUSE LIMITED

57, Golf Garden

Mumbai 400 065

December 22, 2003

CONFIDENTIAL

The Chairman

Evershine Departmental House Ltd..

Mumbai 400 065

Sub: Confirmation of Ms B R Sharma

Dear Sir,

Ms B R Sharma joined dour branch as Assistant manager on December 25, 2002. she was to have remained on probation for one year. As she is to complete the period of probation in another 3 days, I recommend that she be confirmed as a permanent member of the staff.

Ms Sharma has given her immediate superiors complete complete satisfaction with her work. She has been responsible for the upliftment of the Food section. She has a strong team spirit. I have found her to be hard working and sincere.

Yours faithfully,

K Pande

General Manager

Other example of progress reports are staff progress report, progress report on training programme, progress report on a branch office etc.

Inspection Report
- Submitted to the authority
- For detecting from deviations from standard established or irregularities at work
- Internal audit for detecting financial irregularities
- Printed forms and guidelines are provided
- Services of experts are also availed

Performance Appraisal Report
- Meant for assessing or recording performance of an employee.
- Annually
- Supervisor/superior fills an assessment form for each subordinate
- Promotions/demotions and other benefits are based on this

Periodical Reports
- Submitted periodically or regular intervals
- Reports the working of a department or section of the organization
- Easily tabulated
- By filling prescribed forms

Some other routine reports are reports on sales visits, equipment and maintenance reports, safety reports, accident reports etc.

First Information Report
- Submitted in case of disaster
- Prepared by a person on spot to the person in-charge
- Relevant information available immediately after incident occurs

Investigation Report
- To find causes of a problem
- Prepared only after thorough study and inquiry
- Prepared by an individual or committee
- Involves collection, analysis and conclusions of information
- Declining sales, declining deposits in a bank or customer complaints

Feasibility Report

- Launch of a new product
- Proposed field is surveyed, conditions observed and recorded
- Availability of essential requirements, Services of competitor, attitude of people/customer, government policies, etc to be included

Project Report

- Describes proposal of new scheme
- Shows cash flow and expected results
- Used fro planning and convincing funding agencies
- Not assigned but prepared by the persons who want their proposal sanctioned

Laboratory Report

- Choice of equipment and instruments
- Arrangement and use of instrument
- Correct procedure
- Ability to accurately record processes reactions and readings
- Ability to arrive at valid conclusions

Special reports may also include reports written in response to requests for specific information; reports made on special topic after research and investigation, report regarding a change in policy and market research report.

Memorandum (Memos)

A very short document, usually up to a page long, an adaptation of a business letter.

Now, being superseded by e-mail

In the context of graduate work, the types of memos that you are likely to write are-

Information memos and Recommendation memos

Characteristics of a Memo

- Formatting of the preliminaries are quiet different from that of a letter
- Memo is headed by the word MEMORANDUM and followed by the sideheadings:

To:

Cc:

From:

Date:

Subject: In a longer memo it is a centred title

Layout of a very short memo

MEMORANDUM
To:
Cc:
From:
Date:
Subject:
Purpose of memo:
Conclusion(s)/Main point
Facts / Data to support conclusion(s)
Recommendations (if necessary)
Your signature   **No salutations are used**

MEMORANDUM
To: Dr. R D'sa, Head of Department, Biotechnology
Cc: Prof. I J Pai, Department of Biotechnology
From: Prof. A Iqbal
Date: 18 November 2003
Subject: My visit to University
This is to let you know that I shall be visiting the Biotech labs at new Delhi campus.
As discussed with you, my main activity will be to look into the lab facilities needed to be provided at Delhi and Mumbai campus for research activities.
I look forward to meting you
XYZ

Example of a very short memo

A memo can be longer (about one page long)

- Even though it is a very short document, readers appreciate a brief summary
- Organize the topics of the main body of the memo in order of importance: key statement first, details afterwards.
- Even in a one page memo, use appropriate side-headings and format it for white space.
- Purpose of a longer memo to come to a conclusion and make recommendations concerning an issue you have investigated.

MEMORANDUM

To:

Cc:

From:

Date:

Title

An informative title, centred, bold faced

Summary

Very briefly state:

1.   Purpose of the memo

2.   Your main conclusion

3.   Your main recommendation

Purpose

A brief statement of why you are sending the memo

Background

A brief description to the background to your work

Further appropriate heading(s)

Conclusions and Recommendations

No salutation or closing

Your Signature

Layout of a longer memo

Notes

LESSON 29:
PRACTICE OF WRITING TECHNICAL REPORTS

Key Points

- Reports are documents presented to the reader who was not present at an event. It gives the details of the subject and work enquired of. Reports can be periodic or special and informal or formal.

- Informal reports are common in the industry Always as concise as possible, the informal report often follows this out line : introduction, summary, background, conclusions, and recommendations and discussion.

- The formal reports uses various standard elements to indicate content. These elements are transmittal correspondence, title page, table of contents, list of illustrations, introduction, summary, conclusions recommendations, reference and appendix.

Exercises

1. What is a report? Why is report writing essential to modern business?

2. What is a progress report? Why is it written?

3. What is a memo? What are the different forms of a memo?

4. Bring out the salient features of an Annual Report.

5. Explain the forms of styles that should be followed during writing a report.

Practice Session

1. Assume that you are the secretary of the cricket club of your institution and write an annual report on its activities.

2. You have just graduated from an engineering college and wish to open your own manufacturing unit. Make out a proposal, seeking loan from the Industrial Bank, Mumbai.

3. Draft the half yearly progress report of a training school for new recruits of the company of which you are the principal.

References

1. Communication Skill (For polytechnic Students), Bhatia P S R, Manral J S, Moon D Y., S Chand & Company Limited New Delhi

2. Business Communication, Theory and Practice, Mathew M J., RBSA Publishers, Jaipur

3. Professional Communication Skills, Bhatia P S R, Sheikh A M., S Chand & Company Ltd., New Delhi

4. www.si.umich.edu

5. www.eeng.dcu.ie/~ringwoodj/home.html

Suggested Reading

1. www.MSU College of Technology

2. Report Writing Today, Pauley S. E., Riordan D. G., A.I.T.B.S Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi

Notes

Oral Communication

We have always been told by our superiors that the key to success at an examination is to practice by writing, rewriting and keep writing to ultimately reach the pinnacle of success. This Unit is very different. We suggest that you speak and only speak until you are confident of putting across your views and ideas. Does that mean that one should speak in the same manner at all times ? Not at all !

Man's earliest form of communication were sounds which grew into words and phrases.

Innumerable languages developed…. to enable communication. Stories, fables, folklores were all a gift of language. The stories our grandparents narrated are carried forward to the next generation. Imagine what it would have been if there was no language, no verbal communication, no written communication- NO COMMUNICATION!. It is this one marvelous medium which puts across our views, ideas and opinions. Thus, **language is the most important tool of communication.**

Then, is language wholly sufficient to put across your thoughts?

Feelings are abstract. We feel good when we are appreciated, hurt when we are scolded. At times we are polite, sometimes rude, or happy and so on……. Are these expressed by mere words in a particular language? I am sure you understand that there is more than that. Sometimes you must have played a game of trying to say the same sentence with different emotions. Try to say, "What a beautiful rose!" with a feeling of joy, happiness, sorrow, anger and so on. The final impact of your message is going to be different. Emotions and tone play a vital role in putting your thoughts across to another person. Compare the chirping of bird- the crowing of crows and the sweet sound of the koyel. Don't we prefer the koyel? Similarly the emotions in the words we utter is vital in translating the actual meaning of our thoughts.

The **Objectives** of this unit is to learn the techniques of the various forms of oral communication

*   Interviews
*   Oral Presentation
*   Group discussion
*   Telephonic conversation

By the end of this unit you should be able to practically demonstrate the techniques involved in the above activities.

Interview

In our earlier units we have learnt the art of preparing our resume. The search for possible career opportunities begins here. A call for an interview is the next step which will have you skip a few heart beats. The mixed feeling of anxiety, joy, nervousness and excitement can actually put a person off track during the coarse of interview. To put our best, let us understand the meaning of the term 'interview'.

So, what is an interview ?

Interview is a face to face interaction between two persons for a particular purpose. It is widely used not only in employee selection, but also for placement, orientation, appraisal, disciplinary action, exit or separation, counselling and general problem solving. Interviews of present employees are a channel of upward communication. Employees' attitudes, opinions and views, ideas and suggestions, feelings of fear, hopes and ambitions are all revealed during an interview. Thus, *interview is a purposeful exchange of views and communicating between two persons.*

Is an interview a test only for the person being interviewed?

You, as students are evaluated on the basis of your performance at examinations, assignments, tutorials, other activities. Your examiners are the teachers and supervisors. What about us who are teaching you? We also prepare our lessons to make our students grasp the subject as comfortably as possible. So our examiners are in reality are you. In short, both of us are being evaluated and both parties have to be well prepared.

Now, let us move out of our classrooms and into an interview hall. Similarly, interview reveals the views, ideas and attitudes of the person being interviewed as well as the skills of the interviewer. Both the interviewer and interviewee must be well prepared for an interview.

The purpose of an interview varies. While the interview for publication is confined to outstanding personalities and journalists, the interview for employment is an inevitable experience for everyone. *The employment interview needs a good deal of preparation by both the interviewer and the candidate.* We shall be focusing on the employment related interview.

Are all interviews of the same kind ?

Many of you have appeared for interviews at various stages to gain admission to different schools, sporting clubs etc. You may have also heard of others being interviewed even within their existing organizations. There are hence various kinds of interviews. Let us understand some of them.

Promotion Interview

- For persons due for promotion (even if there is no competition)
- Informal and serves as induction into a new team, with new responsibilities
- Clarification about nature of duties, responsibilities and expectations
- In case of competition, it helps in selection process
- Serves as an opportunity for discussion of career opportunity for each candidate.

Appraisal Interview

- One method of periodical assessment of employees
- Other methods include completion of self-assessment forms and assessment by superiors.
- Annual appraisal interview is the best method for judging employees' attitudes
- A face-to-face confidential talk is an opportunity for both to discuss several issues.

How to make an appraisal interview successful?

The following points may be kept in mind to make the appraisal interview successful:

1. The manager should allay the fears of the employee with his/her friendly attitude.
2. He/she should first talk about the plus points of the employees' and compliment him. This is to motivate the candidate.
3. Shortcomings should be pointed out in a very calm and objective tone. Criticism should be followed by positive suggestions.
4. The employee should be allowed to present his side, the problems as well as suggestions. The interviewer (manager) should understand the problem and offer help.
5. Employer makes clear the future target to be achieved before the employee.
6. The employee should also display a positive attitude. He/She should try to understand exactly where exactly he/she had gone wrong and assure the manger to improve his performance.

Exit Interview

Is given to an employee who has resigned. Even at this stage a lot can be accomplished in an exit interview by the organization.

1. Find out the precise reason for the employee's decision to leave. This is an opportunity to clear any misunderstanding or ill feeling.
2. Get feedback on employee's attitudes to and opinion of the organization's policies.
3. Check all the details and information in the employee's personal record file to make sure that they are up-to-date.
4. Give final pay cheque, or information about when it will be ready.
5. Give information about accrued benefits like sick leave, earned leave which has not been used by the employee.
6. Give information about Provident fund, Group Insurance or any other benefits, and how and when the dues will be paid
7. Check all the books, manuals, tools, equipments, which were issued to the employee have been returned.

An exit interview can be an asset to the organization if handled carefully and tactfully.

Problem Interview

It is a meeting with a problem employee. An employee whose performance or behaviour is unsatisfactory in spite of warning represents a problem. *An interview is more likely to suggest a solution than warnings and notices.*

At such a meeting,

- Employer can give a clear understanding of what is expected
- Employer can make clear the consequences of unacceptable conduct
- Reason for the employee's poor performance can be found out- could be due to domestic problems, ill health, lack of training, or dissatisfaction with the job, failure to adjust to the environment, etc.

Stress Interview

A stress interview puts the candidate into difficult situations in order to test his/her reaction to stress. It is used for the selection for positions in which the person must be able to face difficult situations without getting upset. A stress interview test, such qualities as courage, tact, cool temper, and self command, which are needed when confronted by employees or people in big or small groups.

Several methods are used to throw the candidate out of balance. The methods adopted could be-

1. rapid fire questions on several topics at once
2. questions asked by different members of the panel together
3. cross questioning and arguing, disputing the candidate's statements, ridiculing the answers
4. subjecting him/her to silence and inattention

   The interviewer adopts hostile behaviour towards the candidate.

So, after so much of cross fire who do you think will be successful?

Only a cool-headed and self-possessed candidate responds appropriately and passes the test.

Interviewers need practice and training in taking a stress interview.

The candidates must be informed at the end that it was a stress interview.

Reprimand Interview:

Reprimand means to criticize anyone severely for making undesirable statement or action. This a **formal** interview. This kind of interview is a **form of disciplinary action** likely to be resented by the employees.

The aim of such an interview is three-fold:

1. To improve the work performance

2. To prevent the recurrence of such offences

3. To protect other employees from the malaise of anti-organisational behaviour.

How does one conduct a reprimand interview ?

- Make sure to possess all the facts. Investigate the matter fully as possible.

- Keep in mind the person you are going to reprimand. Plan well and do not deviate from the plan

- Do not reprimand in public, ensure privacy during the interview.

During the process of interview:

Go straight to the point, be precise and exact about the offence, don't loose control over yourself, don't enter into an argument, allow the employee to present his case fully, don't accept justification or excuses.

Make it clear that the purpose of the reprimand is not to disgrace the employee, but to help him to improve his performance.

The process does not end here. One must keep a watch over the employee's behaviour. If necessary a follow-up action can be taken.

Employment or Selection Interview

This type of interview is likely to interest you the most at this stage. As you progress and get closer to graduation, you would be slowly imagining yourself appearing for interviews. I wish to emphasize here that a selection interview need not be restricted to a job alone, but should be extended to selection for post graduate courses as well.

Remember that on the basis of such an interview, important decisions are taken by both, the candidate and the employer.

Let's compare an interview call letter to a formal party invitation. What would it look like ? The content heads in the invitation will be the same.

What's the venue ?

For announced vacancies interviews are taken in a suitable room in the organization's office. Many organizations recruit promising candidates by holding campus interviews in professional colleges and institutions.

What's the day and time factor ?

An interview may take anything from 10–45 minutes or even longer. Interviewers spend more time on good candidates, they have to gather enough information about the candidates to be able to assess their suitability to join the organization. You as a candidate, must also find out about the organization, its employee policies and culture, what it expects the recruits to do and importantly what opportunities for career development it offers.

Both, the candidate and the interviewer must be well prepared for the interview. Preparation for the same starts well before the actual interview.

We shall now look into what makes a good interviewer and a good candidate.

Role of Interviewer

You may wonder as to how **this section is of use to you. Remember that to do your best one must be able to judge what is in the mind of the person on the other side of the table, what is expected from you by the interviewer.**

The basic technique of conducting an interview is described by the mnemonic **WASP** (**W**elcoming, **A**cquiring Information, **S**upplying Information, **P**arting).

An interview costs time and money and energy. In order to select the most suitable candidates, the interviewer must be adequately prepared. The interviewer must have a clear idea of the qualities and skills required fro a particular job. Organizations have a job description which gives all the details of the elements of the job.

Job Description

Title of the Post

Position (in the organisation)- to whom he reports & who reports to him

Duties & Responsibilities- lists of tasks

Working conditions- working hours,conditions at work place

Economic conditions – salary, allowances, benefits, leave, bonus,

retirement benefits etc.

Personnel specification – description of the kind of person whether suitable for the job.

(not used for value judgement of candidate)

A personality sketch of a candidate is developed by assessment in 5 areas

PERSONALITY SKETCH

Personality   Qualifications   Skills   Emotional Balance   Goals
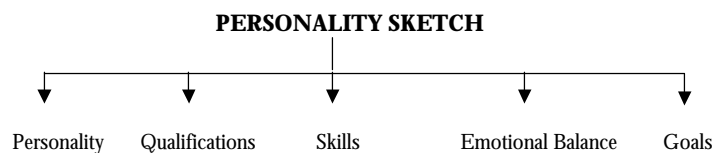
Interviewer's Preparation

- Conditions should be suitable for fair assessment
- Preparation involves clerical work – sorting applications and calling for interview
- Panel of interviewers are selected
- Candidates details are tabulated for use during the interview
- Venue is prepared
- Question preparation- Besides the above physical preparation, each panel members has to examine the bio-data of candidates and prepare questions accordingly.

Questions can be prepared in three ways; each requires a different type of answer and also makes a different impression on the candidate, who tries to answer accordingly.

For example: *Can you prepare an acid buffer solution ? requires a yes or no* for answer, and makes the candidate think that this skill is one of the requirement of the job.

You can prepare an acid buffer solution, can't you ? suggests that it is an essential skill for the job and may put the candidate on the defensive. *How must you prepare an acid buffer ? makes the candidate describe his skill.* Questions that begin with Why or how or what makes the candidate speak and give more information in response; questions which begin with where, when, and who require limited information.

Conducting the Interview

1. Welcoming
The interview(s) of the panel must make the candidate comfortable when he enters by offering a seat, asking or making social questions or statements and making him comfortable. *A nervous and uncomfortable candidate is difficult to assess.*

2. Asking questions
This is the *most important and longest part* of the interview. Friendly responses to what the candidate says make the candidate comfortable and encourage him to speak.

Some of the communication is discussion . The candidate must be given to speak the most. *Assessment opportunities are reduced if panel members discuss amongst themselves.*

It is *important not to be scornful or sarcastic and humiliate* the candidate. Humiliated candidates speak badly of the organiza-tion thus creating a bad image of the organization. *Insulting interview candidates also demonstrates poor organizational culture.*

If a candidate is subjected to stress interview to judge stress tolerance the candidate must be told at the end that it was stress interviewing and not feel anxious about it. *The candidate should never be made to leave with a stressed and anxious feeling.*

3. Giving Information
Candidates should be given all information desired regarding the job and the organization. If any information cannot be given, the candidate should be told so, with justification whenever possible. *Openness in communication is healthier than secretiveness.*

4. Concluding
When all required information has been satisfactorily exchanged, the interviewer must conclude the interview with a suitable remark. *Leave taking must be pleasant and cordial.*

5. Assessment
This is a continuous process during an interview. Every candidate is assessed individually for personal ability and performance and also in comparison with other candidates. *The assessment and grading are constantly reviewed as more candidates are interviewed.*

Candidate' Preparation for the Interview
This section is of obvious relevance to you. You as a candidate must be physically, mentally and psychologically fit for the interview. It is not only information and knowledge of the candidate that is assessed at an interview; *the whole personality is assessed.* You may be presenting your portfolio to a professor, director of education, director of the center for prior learning, a prospective employer, a supervisor, a supervising teacher, for a promotion or tenure committee. Many times the best-qualified person is not hired for the job. Just as the résumé is important for opening the door, the job interview is critical for putting your best foot forward and clearly articulating why you are the best person for the job.

Physical Preparation
A candidate must follow some basic Interview Etiquettes. Good manners are essential on an interview. You always want to make a strong and positive impression. *If it turns out that the current opening is not a match for you but you have established yourself well in the interview, it is possible that the company will call you back for another position in the near future.* Here are some tips you must keep in mind.

- Make sure that you know the exact place and time of the interview.
- Know the exact name, pronounciation and title of the interviewer.
- Wear professional attire, even if the company is casual.
- Arrive 15 minutes early (and start filling out the application, if there is one).
- Bring a copy of your resume and be prepared to hand it to the interviewer, if asked.
- Bring references, but do not volunteer them. Offer them only if they are requested.
- Shake hands firmly and make eye contact.
- Wait to be asked before sitting.
- Refrain from smoking, chewing gum, etc. (even if the interviewer is doing so.)
- Sit upright and alert.
- Remain professional, polite and friendly.
- Exude energy and enthusiasm.
- Maintain comfortable posture throughout the interview
- At the end of the interview, remember to thank the interviewers and wish them *Good day.*

Be Aware of Body Language. Communication is more than speech. Often our body language can be even more revealing than our words. Firm Handshakes express confidence, starting off the interview on the right foot. Eye Contact is very important, showing interest and self-assurance. Sitting Upright shows alertness and energy. Hesitation can make you look unprepared or unsure of yourself. Active Listening allows you to respond intelligently to the interviewer.

Mental Preparation

- For new job seekers, it is necessary to revise subjects studied for the completed examinations and courses. **Knowledge in the field of specialization must be up-to-date.** Your titles, promotions, employment dates, supervisors, salary history as well as responsibilities and accomplishments. You should never have to refer to your resume during an interview. Know all the "why"s as well, such as "Why did you go to that college?" "Why did you pick the career you did?" "Why did you go from 'company one' to 'company two?'"

- You should go well prepared for questions regarding current events and issues around the world. Be prepared to put across your views and opinions on current matter. Must discuss issues intelligently and support their opinions with well considered reasons.

- The candidate must find out as much as possible about the company whose employment she/he seeks.

Psychological Preparation

Several situations or questions during an interview can cause discomfort and embarrassment to the candidate. It is better to anticipate some, and be prepared to deal with such situations. Balance of mind is needed to deal with a discouraging situation. *Psychological preparedness has to be built up slowly and gradually.*

- *Honesty in answering questions is the best policy.* Dishonesty often shows up, and makes a bad impression. It is better to admit inability to answer a question than to pretend and guess answers. *No one is expected to know everything,* it is more important to know the sources of information. *Being able to admit lack of information on a topic without loss of face is a strong point.*

- *Inability to discuss a topic makes a bad impression.* It is useful to read up information and talk about it objectively to friends for practice. *Inhibition can be dealt with only by facing them.*

- Salary is a topic that must be discussed. *It is important to talk about the compensation package without appearing to be bargaining, or being driven or defeated.*

- *A candidate must have the clarity of purpose and determination to know his/her prospects in the organization.* The information is necessary for taking a decision, especially if there are other job offers.

Self-assessment

Anyone who wants to be successful in life, must make a good self-assessment. Knowledge of one's strong points and weaknesses is very useful in gaining self-confidence. This is a time consuming task and has to be done patiently and carefully.

Let your friends and family help in pointing your faults and strong points.

10 Adjectives

It can be very helpful to have on the tip of your tongue ten adjectives or so that describe yourself professionally. You should not have to search too hard for responses to such questions as "Give me two good reasons to hire you" or "What one quality about you will make you stand out among all the people I have interviewed?" Be prepared to talk about yourself: your strengths and weaknesses, what you liked and disliked about each job, your success and accomplishments.

Selling Points

Know what it is about yourself that you should bring to the forefront for this position and company. What specific strengths and skills do you need to get across to the interviewer before the interview is over? An interview is not the place for shyness or too much modesty.

Coming to terms with oneself, knowing how to deal with one's faults, and how to make good use of one's talents and skills is excellent preparation for an interview. It adds a great deal of self-confidence and poise to the personality.

The Presentation at the Interview

- Be on Time
- Be Professional
- Avoid Being Too Familiar
- Answer Questions Fully
- Be Prepared
- Relate Your Experiences to the Job
- Be Honest
- Focus on What You Can Do for the Company
- Be Poised and Relaxed
- Maintain Good Eye Contact
- Close the Interview on a Positive Note

Be on Time

Make certain you write down the date and time of your interview. *A good first impression is important and can be lasting.* If you arrive late, you have already said a great deal about yourself. Make certain you know where you are going and the time of the interview and allow time for parking and other preliminaries. An interview can be considered as having 4 parts: entry, answering questions, asking questions and leaving

Entry

The candidate must be able to adjust to an unfamiliar room. The candidates style of opening and closing the door, walking greeting etc will show whether a candidate is clumsy or graceful. A candidate is under observation from the moment of showing up at the door till she/he goes out of the door. An inexperienced candidate may feel nervous at the entry; being nervous is not a short coming, it disappears when the interview begins.

Being too Familiar

Familiarity can be a barrier to a professional interview. Never call anyone by a first name unless you are asked to. Know the name, title, and the pronunciation of the interviewer's name and don't sit down until the interviewer does.

Answering Questions

This takes major part of the interview time. Questions may range from details of education and experience, special abilities, personal interests, family background and circumstances, to any problems faced and handled in the past. The questions are meant to test the candidate's information and knowledge as well as personal qualities, character, attitude to work and life, career goals, motivation and circumstances.

Be Professional

Don't ramble, or talk too much about your personal life. For example, "Tell me about yourself" is not an invitation to discuss your personal life. Direct your answer to the job. Also, never bad-mouth your former employer. This is unprofessional and says more about you than about them.

Answer Questions Fully

Be clear, concise, and direct. Even if the interviewer is easygoing and friendly, remember why you are there.

Be Prepared

Show that you have knowledge about the company. What product does it make? How is it doing? What is the competition? Always refer to the company when you give *examples: "I understand that your sportswear doubled in sales last year. According to current retail journals, this is just the beginning of a new trend. It may be interesting to market your exercise clothes as the new action clothes for sports and casual wear."*

Find out about the position before you interview

Ask the personnel office to send you a job description. What do you think the company is looking for in the position you are applying for? You will likely be asked the common question, *"Why are you interested in this job?"* Be prepared to answer with a reference to the company. A sample answer: *"Your store has opened up several new chains in the last two years, so I believe that there is an opportunity in your organization and that I have the necessary skills and personal qualities to make a contribution."*

Relate your experiences to the company

Use every question as an opportunity to show how the skills you have relate to the job. Use examples of school, previous jobs, internships, volunteer work, leadership in clubs, and experiences growing up to indicate that you have the personal qualities, aptitude, and skills needed at this new job. *You want to get the point across that you are hard working, honest, dependable, loyal, a team player, and mature. You might mention holding demanding part-time jobs while going to school, working in the family business, being president of your business club, or handling the high-pressured job of working in customer services at a department store during Diwali vacations.*

Be Honest

Don't overstate your accomplishments or grade point average or exaggerate your experience. While it is important to be confident and stress your strengths, it is equally important to

your *sense of integrity* to always be honest. *Dishonesty always catches up* with you, and sooner or later, someone will verify your background.

Focus on what you can do for the company

Don't ask about benefits, salary, or vacations until you are offered the job. This implies a "what can this company do for me" attitude. Be careful about appearing arrogant or displaying a know-it-attitude. You are there to show how you can contribute to the organization. Don't appear to be too eager to move up through the company or suggest that you are more interested in just gaining experience than in contributing to the company.

Be poised and relaxed

Avoid nervous habits such as tapping your pencil, playing with your hair, or covering your mouth with your hand. Watch such turn-off language as, 'you know,' 'ah,' 'stuff like that'. Don't smoke, chew gum, fidget, or bite your nails. *Most career development centers or public speaking classes will videotape you while being interviewed. It is excellent experience, and you can really spot annoying personal habits.*

Maintain good eye contact

Look at people in the eye and speak with confidence. *Your eyes reveal much about you;* use them to show interest, confidence, poise, and sincerity. Relax and take a deep breath. *You are relating to another person, not giving a speech to a large crowd.* Look at the interviewer, and watch for body cues that indicate understanding and rapport. Use other nonverbal techniques (you may refer back to our lecture 7) to reinforce your confidence, such as a firm handshake.

Asking Questions:

The candidate is often invited to ask questions. If not invited, the candidate may seek permission to ask for information. The candidate's questions should arise out of clarity of purpose, motivation and career goals. The questions may be about working conditions, prospects of career growth in the organization, working relationships, etc.

Some examples are given below:

- Will this job involve training?
- What are the avenues for promotion?
- Will there be opportunities for training in this job?

The questions must be asked politely and with sincere desire to get information to assess the opportunities the job offers.

Leaving

Interviewers generally indicate when the interview is over. Like the entry, the exit takes a very short time, but can be confusing and uncomfortable for the candidate. Leave taking should be responsive to the interviewers.

Close the interview on a positive note

Thank the interviewer for his or her time, shake hands, and say that you are looking forward to hearing from him or her. If you had an exceptionally pleasant interview, you may consider sending a personal, handwritten thank-you note.

Follow up with a letter

Following up on details is critical for your job search. A follow-up letter is especially important. It serves as a reminder for the interviewer and an opportunity for you to thank the interviewer for the meeting and a chance to make a positive comment about the job opening and the company. *Writing thank-you notes and letters demonstrates that you have good manners and business etiquette and that you are organized.*

Notes

LESSON 31:
PRACTICE SESSION

Key Points

Let us briefly summarise the chapter.

- Interview is a platform for finding out more about the party. Preparation for the interview has to be done by the interviewer as well as interviewee.

- Interviews can be of different kinds- job/selection interview, reprimand interview, stress interview, appraisal interview.

- One must be well prepared for the interview and if needed must carry out practice interviews.

- Interview technique basically is described by the mnemonic WASP- welcoming, acquiring information, supplying information, parting)

Exercise

1. Show how interviews are a part of the two-way communication process.

2. Why ids it necessary sometimes to have interviews conducted by committees instead of by individuals?

3. How should an interviewer prepare himself for an interview?

4. What is meant by WASP? How does it help in an interview?

5. How should an interviewer behave while conducting an interview for selection? Mention some of the questions he must ask the interviewee.

Practice Session

Let us now demonstrate the process of conducting interviews and bring out the role of interviewer as well as interviewee by performing the following exercises.

Keep the following in mind.

Let us just quickly summarise What to avoid...

- Repeating questions before answering. This is a well-known stalling technique and it may be interpreted that you are unprepared for the question or unsure of your answer.

- Vocal crutches such as "you know" or "to be perfectly honest" which can often be distracting and even annoying.

- Vague answers which can make it look as though you have something to hide. Answer directly, responding specifically to the question you have been asked.

- Yes/no answers, which can turn the conversation into a "drill."

- Over-explaining. Elaborate explanations can often be confusing instead of enlightening. It is best to be clear and concise.

- Derogatory comments about past employers - which are always unprofessional.

- Negative responses. If there is an aspect of the job which does not appeal to you, keep it to yourself during the interview. Later, you will be able to privately weigh all the pros and cons of a position. It is best to avoid rejecting an opportunity before you have received an offer and had time to think it over.

- Discussing salary prematurely. Showing too much interest in the compensation rather than the opportunity is not appropriate.

- Controversial subjects such as religion and politics. This is not the place. *Lying is always unacceptable.*

Practice Interviewing

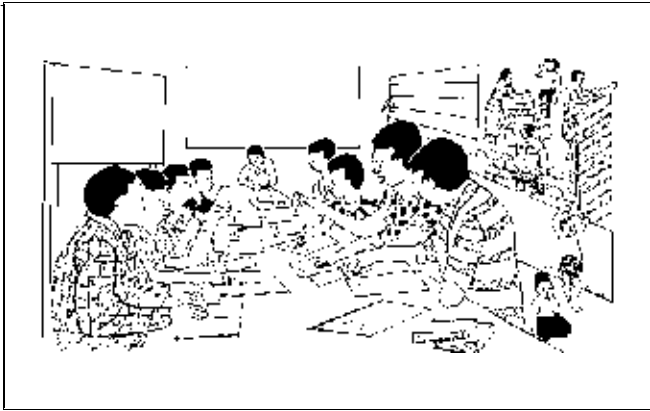Like any skill, the more you practice the better you will be.

- Consider videotaping a practice interview. Most campuses have this service available through the career center or media departments

- Practice being interviewed by a friend.

- Rehearse questions and be prepared.

- Make certain that you communicate your skills, abilities, and talents.

- Answer questions directly and relate the skills that you have learned.

- Expect open-ended questions such as, "What are your strengths?" "What are your weaknesses?" "Tell me about your best work experience," and "What are your career goals?"

- Decide in advance what information and skills are pertinent to the job and reveal your strengths. For example, "I learned to get along with a variety of people when I worked for the park service."

Let us enact the following exercises:

1. You have been called for an interview next week, for a job as medical representative. What preparation would you make? Write your answers to these questions which may be asked at the interview:

   a. What makes you think you will be successful as a medical representative ?

   b. What do you do to keep yourself physically fit ?

   c. What is your idea of medical representative's job ?

2. Form a panel of interviewers and conduct an interview for the post of research scientist. Prepare the job description and demonstrate the conduction of interviews for suitable candidates. Carry out an assessment on the basis of WASP.

   At the end of the exercise, give your reasons for the selection and non-selection of the candidates.

References

1. Professional Communication Skills, Bhatia P S R, Sheikh A M., S Chand & Company Ltd., New Delhi

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Notes

LESSON 32:
TECHNIQUES OF CONDUCTING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

*Each one of us belong to various groups. We form our own groups on the basis of certain common factors between the members of the group. These factors may arise out of common social backgrounds, similar interests, same age etc. When you are part of a group, say **all of you spending time in the college cafeteria**, what do you do? Think of a time when you were with your friends and there was no conversation. Surely, there may never have been such a moment. There is always an exchange of ideas and experiences. Your family too is a group of its own kind.*

Marvin Shaw defines a group as **"persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person."**

Say for example, *Parneet suggests that his group go out for a movie on Friday. All agree to watching the same movie but Chinmay and Mihir think that they should go for the movie but on Saturday. After a lot of consideration it was decided that they shall watch the same movie on Saturday. So what happens in this group discussion? Parneet influences others for a movie, Chinmay and Mihir influence others regarding the day and each one in the group gets influenced.*

Group may have any number of persons. Even two persons can form a group. According to **Bartol and Martin** a group is defined as, **"two or more individuals who interact and influence each other in collective pursuit of a common goal."** At a formal level the size of the group is on the basis of the objective or goal of the group. During your science assignments the group size is usually restricted to 2-5 persons. Committees and conferences are formed with smaller groups, Meetings are with larger groups. The objective for which a small group is formed could include :

- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Idea generating
- Therapy or cure
- Education or learning

Compare your business group to your family (neutral or joint). Every family member acts as a strength and support to the

other, at the same time we are known to display disagreement, differences and resentment towards are own parents and siblings. Let us consider our business group to be a family. Similarly, there will be advantages and disadvantages during group discussions.

A meeting that is not conducted well and does not end fruitfully is oftendefined as "a *table where a group of people meet to decide when and where they should met again".* Meetings are a strange phenomenon. Everyone calls them; everyone attends them. Yet nearly everyone is highly critical of them.

Advantages of Group Discussion/Communication

Working as a team is always considered as a positive work culture. It has tremendous advantages. There is tremendous amount of information and knowledge in every field. Activities are complex and difficult for one person to handle tasks which have several aspects. Discussion permits a multiple point of view; it enables an organization to benefit from the expertise of specialists.

- Group activity provides social and emotional support to the participants. Employees who have a chance to contribute and take part in decisions are known to be more loyal
- Discussing ideas and problems in a meeting is a democratic way of functioning. It shows respect for individuals and their opinions and views.

Problems of Group Discussion/Communication

To get the best out of working in a group, every member of the group must display team spirit of the highest order. *There can be problems in communication even when only two persons are involved.* The aim of working as a group is to benefit from the exchange of ideas. But not always do we accept others view easily. Also, lot many debates and arguments makes the entire process time consuming and tedious. Matters can become extremely difficult if one were to encounter any/all such situations. Group discussions have their own series of problems and disadvantages. Let us point out these problems.

Meetings become wasteful due to any of the following factors

- Poor preparation by convenors and attendees
- Failure to maintain and folloiw up maaetings
- Incompetent chairmans
- Hidden agendas and shadow boxing by attendees
- Committees with too many members
- Absence of key players
- Too big an agenda
- **Problems relating to the chairman:** He may be either too weak or too domineering. In either case there is indecision and confusion. Chairmanship is an art. The chairman, has to guide the discussion and not allow it to

become confused by side issues and random talk. The chairman must provide drive and purpose so that the members present feel that some headway is being made. The chairman should know how motions and resolutions are to be introduced and passed at meetings, how amendments are to be taken up first, and how to deal with points of order that might be raised by members who perceive an irregularity. The formal **agenda** is placed before the meeting by the secretary and its items are discussed at an "intellectual level". The chairman should have the ability to deal with the **"Hidden agenda".** The chairman asks for volunteers in the meeting to take down the **minutes of the meeting.**

- **Expensive and time consuming:** It is not easy to get people together and make them sit down to discuss, consult or decide.

- **Compromises have to be made:** In the interest of harmony, members of the group tend to accommodate one another and compromises, not in the best interest of the organization, have to be made.

- **Appearance of indecision and delay:** Group communication takes time and outsiders often get the impression that the leadership of an organization is indecisive.

- **Lack of responsibility:** As many people are involved in talking and taking decisions, responsibility gets diluted and improper decisions may be taken.

- **Obstruction and silence:** In group communication some people tend to be negative and obstructionist just to satisfy their own egos, while others are shy, diffident and keep silent even when they know better.

- **Clash of egos:** The interest of the organization are lost when members quarrel and there is a clash of egos.

- **Poor knowledge of Procedure:** To be meaningful and in order to produce result, meetings should be conducted according to definite rules and procedure. When this is not done the result is aimless discussions and confusion.

- **Dealing with problem participants:** There are *3 types* of problem participants.

  Commentator- who distracts attention by whispered side conversations while the meeting is in progress.

  Monopoliser- who does not allow others to speak

  Reticent- who does not utter a single word. The chairman should be able to handle all three.

- **Physical and Psychological environment Improper:** If the participants in a group communication are not comfortable and in the right frame of mind a meaningful exchange of views is not possible

- **Numbers too large or few:** Too many people taking part in a group communication session will make it impossible for each member to be heard and to obtain feedback. If there are very few the exercise will be a waste of time.

- **Theoretical, Practical and technical skills are ignored at meetings:** Only people with good debating and communication skills get heard and often have their way.

Objectives of Group Discussion/Communication

As we move along this section, like before compare the situation within your family.

The aim of group discussions may be any of the following –

• To arrive at a consensus	(choosing the right college)
• To get feedback	(consulting your family for advice)
• To solve a problem	(improving your academic performance)
• To collect ideas	(learn from the experience of elders)
• To understand the situation	(confusion regarding choice of a career)
• To learn and train	(guide your sibling younger than yourself)
• To inform and explain	(inform and explain the outcome of the day)

Meeting is a form of group discussion. A meeting is a coming together of a number of persons at a certain time and place for discussion. **Defined in a different way, "it is gathering of two or more persons in order to discuss matters of common concern, in order to arrive at a decision or promulgate a policy."** Thus, there may be political meetings, religious meetings, educational or social meetings. We are going to discuss only "organizational meetings''. Official business meetings have three requirements-

- They should be called by an authorized person by giving a proper notice

- There should be a quorum, a chairman, and a secretary to take notes

- They should be conducted properly, according to the rules or bye-laws of the organization.

Group discussion meetings can also be classified on the basis of the purpose for which they are held.

1. Discussion or Meeting
Committees, boards of directors, and specially appointed bodies with powers to take decisions on behalf of the parent body or appointing authority, hold decision-making meetings.

2. Executive meeting
Some committees like the Board of directors or the executive council have powers to implement decisions; they may review recommendations of other bodies, or take decisions on their own.

3. Consultation meeting
An advisory body, which may consist of experts, holds meetings to discuss and advise other bodies. They do not have powers to take any decisions or action. Joint consultations between different departments, sections, or other related bodies/groups are an example of consultation.

4. Briefing meeting
Giving information is the main function of a briefing session. A prepared note of briefing may be read out and questions or

requests for clarification are answered; but there is no discussion at briefing meetings.

5. Problem-solving meeting

A meeting of all those concerned with a particular activity where problem is found may be called for the specific purpose of solving the particular problem. Everyone contributes by looking at the problem from his/her point of view and task. Any snags and blocks can be dealt with in co-ordination.

6. Negotiation meeting

This is characterised by the presence of two clearly competing sides. When parties with competing interests like buyer-and-seller, or two separate organisations which want to collaborate, or employer-and-employer, need to settle their differences, they meet to discuss and arrive at an agreement. It may take a series of meeting to come to an agreement. Each side is briefed by the authorities they represent, and their agreements have to be ratified by the parent body of each side.

7. Conference

A conference is a meeting of a large group of persons assembled for the purpose of discussing common problems or activities. The number of participants may be anything from 0 to 100 or even more. A large conference is divided into small groups for the purpose of discussions. The participants may be from different organizations. The chief point of difference between a conference and committee meeting is that the conference is far more informal than a committee.

The *advantages* of a conferences are-

- Encourage the exchange of ideas and opinions
- Bring out the many facets of a problem or situation by discussion
- Provide valuable practice in analyzing situations and help to determine what should be done
- Like committee meetings, they provide an opportunity for face to face communication, personal observations and conversations.
- Provide an opportunity for consultation
- Increase employee motivation

He *disadvantages* of a conference type of a meeting are-

- When conferences are held often with subordinate it may give the impression that the management is unable to arrive at a decision on its own
- If a subordinate is called to a conference on a subject which is outside his scope of experience it will only make him feel frustrated and inadequate
- Sometimes, when conferences are badly chaired they might only result in clouding an issue or complicating a problem.

Conferences may be

- Informational conference
- Suggested solution conference
- Problem solving conference
- Sales forecasting conference
- Training conference

8. Committee Meetings

A committee is a small group of persons entrusted with a special business task appointed by a bigger group or someone in authority. A committee is a toool of administration and management and is expected to complete the task given in the given time. It meets as often as required and maintains the minutes of the meetings. It is expected to prepare a report of its conclusions and submit it to the appointing authority.

There are several types of committee-

Sub-committee- Smaller body formed by a large committee from amongst its own members, for completing an aspect or a part of a larger task assigned to the committee.

Ad hoc committee- is a small group selected on the spot, sometimes during a meeting, for looking into troublesome problem; it may have members from among those present at the meeting as well as others. Persons who are knowledgeable about the problem are usually chosen from the committee.

Standing committee – Membership is by position and title and office held. The committee is permanently in existence but its membership may be for one or two years and may change by rotation. eg. Health counselor, labour welfare officer etc. Special committee is appointed for handling a special task. Its members are carefully selected for their special knowledge and experience in the field of the task.

9. Group Discussion

It is informal can be very stimulating and useful activity in organizations. It helps in understanding a situation, in exploring possibilities and in solving problems as it generates a multiple point of view. It gives a sense of participation to all those who participate in it. It is used as a tool for selecting candidates by judging or observing the leadership quality, behaviour and abilities of the individuals taking part in it.

10. Seminar

Here, findings of some research or advanced study are placed in the form of oral or written reports and then discussed in detail. Seminars are held for specialized people on specialized topics in order to exchange ideas.

11. Symposium

It is a getting together of specialized persons or experts who openly discuss topics for the benefit of an audience. Each speaker is given limited time for making his presentation. The role of the audience separates a symposium from a seminar. Here, there is a large audience and the members of the audience are encouraged to interact with the speakers.

12. Panel Discussion

Papers are presented or read out. The participants speak spontaneously, expressing their view, on an announced topic. There is amoderator. Panel discussions are very popular on radio and television.

13. Convention

It is a gathering of closely linked people who share a common interest in a subject or point-of-view. Thus there can may be a convention of engineer, biotechnologists, lawyers or any other group of people with a common interest or a convention of a political or religious nature at which people with a common view-point take part.

LESSON 33:
PRACTICE SESSION

Let us briefly summarise the chapter.

Key Points

- Group discussions or meetings are the coming together of two or more people to discuss something common

- The kind of meeting depends on the purpose of it

- Meetings can be advantageous only when the conduct of it and the members follow a well defined route.

Exercises

1. What is meant by group Communication?

2. Why is the function of the chairman very important?

3. Mention the different advantages and disadvantages of meetings.

4. Define the terms – conference, seminar, symposium, convention and committee

5. What are the problems that can be faced during the conduction of a meeting?

Practice Session

Before we go on with the actual group discussion session, here are some **DO's & DON'Ts** you should be kept in mind. Remember, that this exercise is nowadays becoming more and more popular during selection to careers.

- Do find out the subject of the meting and prepare for it by studying documents and collecting information.

- Arrive in time. Start and end on time.

- Establish objectives and be interested in helping the meeting to make progress

- Set an agenda and stick to it

- Put your point of view clearly and vigorously and also listen to others.

- Be prepared to be convinced by the reasoning and good arguments of other speakers.

- Always respect the authority of the chair

- Don't interrupt others

- Don't dominate the discussion

- Don't stray from the subject

- Don't have side conversations

- Be prepared to carry out the decisions of the meeting

- Circulate the notice and agenda well in advance

1. **Carry out a group discussion on the following topics**

1. Genetic engineering- ethical or non-ethical

2. Brain drain of India

3. **Conduct a meeting** to resolve a long standing issue on the administration of your housing society. Appoint a chairman, set the agenda, conduct the meeting, put out the minutes and bring out its recommendation.

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Notes

LESSON 34:
ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Oral Presentations

Making oral presentations is nothing new for all of you. Yet, there is a lot of scope for improvement. Making an oral presentation does not mean just putting across the correct technical matter, or speaking the correct language but it is a additive of all these parameters and much more.

Public speaking is a talk given to a large gathering; its content is light, given on occasions like anniversary or an inauguration, its main purpose is to encourage, appreciate, congratulate or entertain followed by an applause by the crowd.

Speaking skill can be cultivated & developed with some kind of knowledge to the formal aspects of public speaking & with practice.

Oral Communication is Different from Written Communication

Oral presentation is different from written presentation. *The first is meant to be heard, while the second is meant to be read.* **Both of them, however, must adhere to the basic rules of good writing.**

Listeners have one chance to hear your talk and can't "re-read" when they get confused. In many situations, they have or will hear several talks on the same day. Being clear is particularly important if the audience can't ask questions during the talk.

There are two well-know ways to communicate your points effectively.

- The first is to K.I.S.S. (keep it simple stupid).
Focus on getting one to three key points across. Think about how much you remember from a talk last week.

- Second, repeat key insights: tell them what you're going to tell them (**Forecas**t), tell them, and tell them what you told them (**Summary**).

Designing Oral Messages
A speaker must keep in mind his demeanour, his facial expressions, his body language, his voice, his speech delivery, etc. come into play in any face to face interaction. You must keep the following points in mind while preparing the oral presentations.

- A good speech is rarely made extempore. One has to make adequate preparation

- Collect adequate information and place them in chronological order.

- Prepare notes for personal reference.

- Arrange all points in logical sequence

- Prepare in a manner so that visual aids can be used.

- Avoid lengthy speeches. *They only bore the audience.*

- Be factual. Avoid unnecessary emotions and needless theatrics.

- Use courtesy and compassion

- Be simple in your language

- Be precise, concise, brief and clear.

- Include only concrete facts.

- Make your speech easy and interesting. You know, "simplicity is the essence of beauty".

- Learn the speech but do not memorise it. It only makes it monotonous.

Think about your rhetorical goals
Whenever we set foot on any job we must be focused. We should know what the firnal destination is. Like at the start every unit we have put down the objective of the said unit, a speaker must also know what is the objective of his presentation. Primarily, The speaker objective is three fold.

1. convey precise and optimum information

2. ensure that the information is understood by the audience

3. inspire the audience to accept and act as per his point of view.

For conference talks, for example, there are recommend two rhetorical goals: leave your audience with a clear picture of the gist of your contribution, and make them want to read your paper. Your presentation should not replace your paper, but rather have the audience appetite for it. Thus, it is commonly useful to allude to information in the paper that can't be covered adequately in the presentation.

Characteristics of a Good Speech-

1. **Clarity:** It is the 1st main characteristics of a good speech; it must convey to the audience what you want to speak.

2. **In the manner of an informal talk:** A good speech is like a close informal chat with your friend it should be a perfect rapport between you & audience.

3. **Speech should be vivid & concrete:** The speech should be concrete including in its content & the facts in it should be easy to visualize.

4. **Make the speech brief:** The concentration on an average person does not last for a long time (avg-25mins), so your talk should be short & crisp in its effect.

5. **Speech should be interesting:** Quotations, anecdotes & humor to make the speech more interesting should be used. Humor should be typical, spontaneous & gentle.

6. **Audience – oriented:** A good speech is always be audience oriented. On should always consider
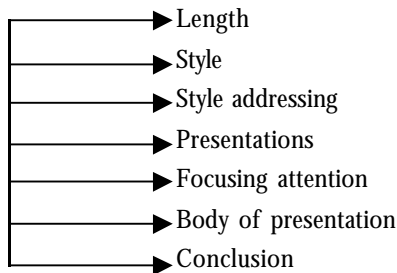
Preparation Work has To be done In Four Stages-

1. Finding out the environment in which the talks are to be delivered-

→ The venue
→ The organizers
→ The occasion
→ Time available
→ Other speakers
→ Audience and respective group
→ Age group (Children, college students, adults)
→ Status
→ Relationship with audience
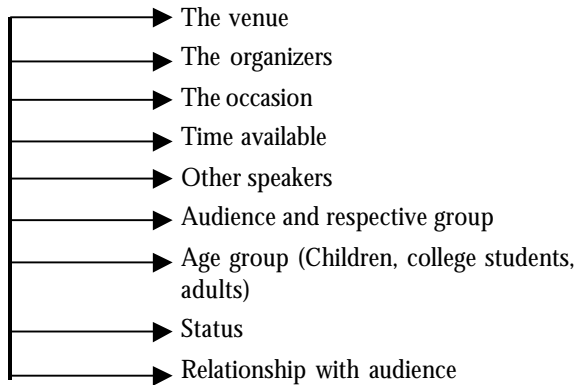
2. Preparing the text- The most important thing in preparing the text is to decide exactly, what to say, find out the required information, to give it proper shape**.**

For beginners it's important to keep a few things in mind-

→ Length
→ Style
→ Style addressing
→ Presentations
→ Focusing attention
→ Body of presentation
→ Conclusion

3. Speaker's appearance & personality- Oral communication comes with the speaker, your physical appearance, presence & personality make an important impact on the audience. Body language includes personality, appearance, good grooming, clothing, & movements.

Here are a few suggestions for new comers for body language-

1. Have a Comfortable position/posture.
2. Make eye contact with crowd.
3. Do not have too much of movement.
4. Have natural facial expressions & gestures.
5. Have a loud voice.
6. Make short pauses while you speak.
7. You should have a good health as heath affect your over all look.

4. Practising delivery of the presentation-Beginners cannot dispense with practicing the actual delivery of the speech, no matter how much time & care have been spent on preparing the text, the delivery is largely responsible for the success of the speech.

Practice not only gives you confidence but also helps you keep time check.

Overall there should be no learning by heart of the matter.

5. Welcome & Introduction- In a welcome speech the speaker gives the audience information about the guest speaker (s) giving a brief history or report of the organization which is holding the function. The speech opens with the welcome of the chief guest, other important people & speakers invited. It is prepared with the Bio-data of the invitee.Your best guide to length your welcome note is to see the crowd, the worst thing the speaker can do is to bore the audience with his long welcome note.

6. Farewell & Sendoff- A farewell is slightly an emotional occasion; speeches on such occasions are short. The content of the speech depends on the relation of the speaker& the person. If the occasions are a send off to a person to a higher position or on a special assignment, the tone is congratulatory. The speech ends with good wishes for health, success, happiness &further achievement.

Think About Your Audience

Another very important aspect for any form of communication is to understand your audience – the age, background, interest, technical knowledge. What may seem very simple to one may be very complex to another. What may be readily known to a colleague may not be known to a client or a subordinate. Technical words, particular to an organization, may not be known to individuals or other technical organizations. Words must be uttered keeping in mind the audience for whom they are meant It is thus the duty of the speaker not only to make his audience understand his matter but also to generate interest in them. ***Presentation of facts rarely amounts to acceptance of ideas.***
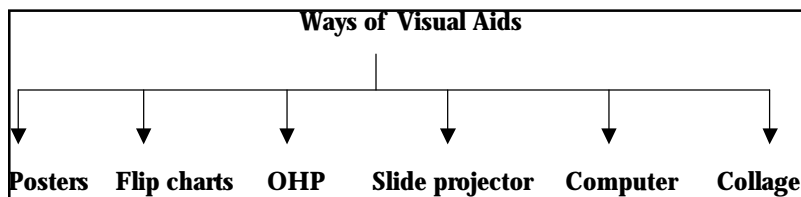
- Most audiences should be addressed in layers: some are experts in your sub-area, some are experts in the general area, and others know little or nothing. Who is most important to you? Can you still leave others with something?

For example, pitch the body to experts, but make the forecast and summary accessible to all. Find out about your audience from the following questions.

a. Whether the audience is general or specialized?
b. How large is the audience?
c. What age group of listeners?
d. What are their religious, political, economic views & prejudices of the listeners?
e. What would be the response of the expected audience?

Using Visual Aids

It is important that you practice your speech along with the visual aids for precise synchronization.This helps in becoming an effective speaker. It also helps overcome fear of stage. Visual materials have a stronger impact than spoken words: most persons retain much more of what they see than of what they hear.

```
                    Ways of Visual Aids
        ┌──────┬──────┬──────┬──────┬──────┬──────┐
        ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓      ↓
```
Posters   Flip charts   OHP   Slide projector   Computer   Collage

A presentation can be prepared in one of the following ways.

1. **Hard sell approach**- In this the speaker begins with a question or a remark which highlights the aspirations of the audience.

2. **Soft sell approach**- In this approach the speaker introduces the company, the product or the idea which he wishes to advance.

Let us now look at the contents of a typical seminar/ conference presentation.

This conference talk outline is a starting point, not a rigid template. Most good speakers average two minutes per slide (not counting title and outline slides), and thus use about a dozen slides for a twenty minute presentation.

- **Title/author/affiliation** (1 slide)

- **Forecast** (1 slide)
  Give gist of problem attacked and insight found (What is the one idea you want people to leave with? This is the "abstract" of an oral presentation.)

- **Outline** (1 slide)
  Give talk structure. Some speakers prefer to put this at the bottom of their title slide. (Audiences like predictability.)

- **Background**

- **Motivation and Problem Statement** (1-2 slides)
  (Why should anyone care? Most researchers overestimate how much the audience knows about the problem they are attacking.)

- **Related Work** (0-1 slides)
  Cover superficially or omit; refer people to your paper.

- **Methods** (1 slide)
  Cover quickly in short talks; refer people to your paper.

- **Results** (4-6 slides)
  Present key results and key insights. This is main body of the talk. Its internal structure varies greatly as a function of the researcher's contribution. (Do not superficially cover all results; cover key result well. Do not just present numbers; interpret them to give insights. Do not put up large tables of numbers.)

- **Summary** (1 slide)

- **Future Work** (0-1 slides)
  Optionally give problems this research opens up.

- **Backup Slides** (0-3 slides)
  Optionally have a few slides ready (not counted in your talk total) to answer expected questions. (Likely question areas: ideas glossed over, shortcomings of methods or results, and future work.)

Academic Interview Talks

The rhetorical goal for any interview talk is very different than a conference talk. The goal of a conference talk is to get people interested in your paper and your work. The goal of an interview talk is to get a job, for which interest in your work is one part.

There are two key audiences for an academic interview talk, and you have to reach both. One is the people in your sub-area, who you must impress with the depth of your contribution. The other is the rest of the department, who you must get to understand your problem, why it is important, and a hand-wave at what you did.

Both audiences will evaluate how well you speak as an approximation of how well you can teach.

An algorithm:

- Take a 20-minute conference talk.

- Expand the 5-minute introduction to 20 minutes to drive home the problem, why it's important, and the gist of what you've done.

- Do the rest of the conference talk, minus the summary and future work.

- Add 10 minutes of deeper stuff from your thesis (to show your depth). It is okay lose people outside of your sub-area (as long as you get them back in the next bullet).

- Do the summary and future work from the conference talk in a manner accessible to all.

- Add 10 ten minutes to survey all the other stuff you have done (to show your breadth).

- Save 5 minutes for questions (to show that you are organized).

Other Talks

Other talks should be prepared using the same principles of considering audience and rhetorical purpose. A presentation on a project in a graduate class, for example, seeks to reach the professor first and fellow students second. Its purpose is to get a good grade by impressing people that a quality project was done. Thus, methods should be described in must more detail than for a conference talk.

LESSON 35:
PRACTICE SESSION

Here is something interesting for you from the net. May be if you still do not know what makes a good presentation then find out what makes a bad presentation.

How to Give a Bad Talk by David A. Patterson
Computer Science Division
University of California-Berkeley Circa 1983

Ten commandments (with annotations gleaned from Patterson's talk by Mark D. Hill):

I. Thou Shalt Not Be Neat
Why waste research time preparing slides? Ignore spelling, grammar and legibility. Who cares what 50 people think?

II. Thou Shalt Not Waste Space
Transparencies are expensive. If you can save five slides in each of four talks per year, you save $7.00/year!

III. Thou Shalt not Covet Brevity
Do you want to continue the stereotype that engineers can't write? Always use complete sentences, never just key words. If possible, use whole paragraphs and read every word.

IV. Thou Shalt Cover Thy Naked Slides
You need the suspense! Overlays are too flashy.

V. Thou Shalt Not Write Large
Be humble — use a small font. Important people sit in front. Who cares about the riff-raff?

VI. Thou Shalt Not Use Color
Flagrant use of color indicates uncareful research. It's also unfair to emphasize some words over others.

VII. Thou Shalt Not Illustrate
Confucius says "*A picture = 10K words*," but Dijkstra says "*Pictures are for weak minds.*" Who are you going to believe? Wisdom from the ages or the person who first counted goto's?

VIII. Thou Shalt Not Make Eye Contact
You should avert eyes to show respect. Blocking screen can also add mystery.

IX. Thou Shalt Not Skip Slides In A Long Talk
You prepared the slides; people came for your whole talk; so just talk faster. Skip your summary and conclusions if necessary.

X. Thou Shalt Not Practice
Why waste research time practicing a talk? It could take several hours out of your two years of research. How can you appear spontaneous if you practice? If you do practice, argue with any suggestions you get and make sure your talk is longer than the time you have to present it.

Commandment X is most important. *Even if you break the other nine, this one can save you*

Exercise

1. List down the points that should be kept in mind while designing oral messages.

2. What objectives should a speaker have?

3. Explain the importance of visual aids.

4. Explain how will you participate in aseminar

5. Explain the characteristics of a good speech

Practice Session

1. As the secretary of your college students' association prepare a welcome speech to be given on the occasion of the inauguration of the annual college fest.

2. Make 30minutes presentation on the following topics.

    a. Recent advances in communication

    b. Current trends of the Indian pharmaceutical industries.

References:

1. Communication Skill (For PolytechnicStudents), Bhatia P S R, Manral J S, Moon D Y, S Chand & Company Ltd.

2. Principles and Practice of Business Communication, Doctor a., doctor R., Sheth Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai

3. Business Communication, Theory and Practice, Mathew M J., RBSA Publishers, Jaipur

4. www.cs.wisc.edu

Suggested Reading

1. Writing for Science and Engineering: Papers, presentations and Reports, Heather Silyn-Roberts, Butterworth Heinemann

2. Business Communication Strategies, Matthukutty M Monippally, Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Ltd.

LESSON 36:
TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION

Telephonic Communication

The telephone is a very useful channel for quick local, national, and international communication. But it has a severe limitation—communicators and communicates have to depend exclusively on voice. The total absence of visual and near-total absence of other non-verbal support (except notably for tone of voice) makes it imperative that we follow certain guidelines when we use the telephone channel for one-to-one calls or conference calls. We get so used to the telephone that we may forget certain aspects of telephone etiquette. The impact on our poor etiquette on the person at the other end of the line-whom we may never see-can be negative.

The Telephone Channel

Telephone is a channel that a modern manager can't do without. Ever since Graham Bell made it able for people at far away places to get connected, the telephone has been an essential tool for business and social communication. **Sitting in offices in different continents and teleconferencing** is on place now even among junior executives and professionals.

The phone has crossed the developmental stage where a physical connection between two instruments essential for telephonic communication. **Fixed phones attached to wires are not dead yet; but this is of the wireless mobile phone**. This gives the users far greater freedom to *get* connected wherever they are. However, the telephone channel's main limitation stays-the listener has to **depend exclusively-, on the speaker's voice** for reconstructing the message. The speaker and the listener should com-e for the total absence of visual and other support in the act of communication. If they don't, they use the phone effectively.

We shall look at the issue from both the caller's angle and that of the person called. But first a few general considerations.

General Preparation

1. Know Your Phone
Find out how your telephone system works.

- There may be several features that help you save your time. Fairly common features include redialing with the press of a single button, memory (to store frequently called numbers), display of the number from which the call is coming, retrieving voice mail, automatic redialing when the line is busy, and the option to transfer the call to another number. You know them well to save your time and that of callers. *If you are unable to transfer a customer's another phone on the intercom, you may give him a very poor image of yourself and of your firm.*

- Also need to know if your phone (and in many cases your telephone exchange) uses the tone or the pulse system. The tone system is superior.

2. Pen and Pad Ready Next to the Phone
Pencil and a scribbling pad handy right next to the phone. A call can come any time from anywhere on earth. Inability to find a pen piece of paper is quite common when people answer the phone at home. You can, of course, ask the caller to hold the line while you hunt for a pen and pad *or send someone to the neighborhood stationers.* **Don't be surprised if in the meanwhile the caller draws an unflattering picture of you; don't be shocked if he cuts the line and goes off in disgust.**

3. Keep Distractors Out; Concentrate on the Call
If you have a speakerphone and use your hands for things that have nothing to do with the on going conversation, you are, of course, asking for trouble. You are allowing distractors in. When you are on the phone, concentrate on the conversation. Don't attempt to do anything else. Otherwise **some of the very important oral clues to the full meaning the other person wants to convey to you may be lost.** And neither you nor the speaker may realize it until too late.

- Some people find it useful to close their eyes while speaking on the phone. This shuts off distraction things.

- Some stand up while speaking on the phone.

- Some also gesture just as in a face-to-face conversation you will find their face taking on expressions, which are more characteristic of face-to-face conversation. Do adopt that technique if it *helps you enrich: Your telephone voice.*

4. Find Out How You Sound on the Phone
You have no way of finding out unless you check with someone you speak to over the phone. Based on the feedback you may need to **adjust the volume** of your voice and the **distance between your mouth and the mouthpiece** of the phone.

- *Some hold the mouthpiece very close the mouth rather like the way pop singers hold the microphone, and speak loud enough for the telephone poles start to shake.* **Such calls are never welcome** because they hurt the listener's eardrums without giving them any additional advantage in clarity.   .

- Some mumble into the mouthpiece as if they are carrying on an internal dialogue. They shouldn't surprised if the person at the other end of the line hangs up and gets on with some other business. So hold the mouthpiece so far

away from the mouth and speak so faintly that the listener has to strain their ears constantly to make sense of the sounds that they hear.

- If you are one of those who can't spare a hand to hold the phone while speaking, you should invest on a hands-free, speakerphone. Planting the receiver between the raised shoulder and the tilted head it need not be the best solution unless it is practiced well. That isn't very comfortable. Besides, your voice it may not be heard properly.

5. Cultivate a Lively Telephone Voice
Tone of voice is crucial in the absence of visual clues. It should be lively. It should show interest in person you are speaking to. From a lively, interested tone the person at the other end can reconstruct lively, interested person. So sound enthusiastic, never bored or indifferent on irritable. Smile as you talk it helps you get a warm tone of voice. Who would want to talk to a fish?

- A cheerful tone may make you speak fast. Resist that tendency Speak slowly and clearly. It is especially important when you speak to people you do not meet regularly or not at all. Your collogues who speak to you face-to-face regularly are used to your expressions and style of speaking. They not have difficulty adjusting to your 'body-less' voice on the phone. Others will have difficulty I speak fast or swallow words.

- Do not eat, drink, smoke, or read while talking on the phone.

6. Be extra Careful When You Speak to Foreigners
Your accent may be perfectly intelligible within the country. This is no guarantee that foreigners will be comfortable with it. You may make yourself an even harder nut to crack if you speak fast or throw in expressions as. *lakh,* crore, *bandh* and acronyms like RBI, RTC, and CM. They' puzzle foreigners. Avoid such short forms and any pure local language.

When you speak in English to foreigners you have to consider two types-those who speak educated English fluently, perhaps as their mother tongue, and those who speak English with difficulty, as a language.

Slowing down 'and speaking clearly are recommended for both the types, especially for those who speak English with difficulty..

7. Don't Ramble Be Considerate to Your Listener I
Rambling is another *tele-sin* that one should avoid. The poverty of the channel-just sounds to carry meaning-makes even ordinary conversations more difficult than face-to-face conversations. *Then you make it worse.* Besides, you don't know how busy the other person is. **Some planning is essential for *any* business call.**

8. Adopt an Efficient Way of Giving Names and Numbers
When you give out names and addresses *on* the phone, spell them out with familiar words to illustrate letter. You can, for instance, spell the name 'Sindhu' in this fashion: S-i-n-d-h-u. S for Singapore, I for India, n for Nepal, d for Denmark, h for Holland, and u for Uganda. These are not standard words,

_oesn't matter. You should use names or words the listener is likely to be familiar with.

How to Make a Call
Simple. Pick up the handset, dial, and speak? No. There is a lot to be done before you touch the phone to call someone on business. Here are the steps.

1. **Ask Yourself if it is the Right Time to Call**

- Lunch time is generally not a good time. Neither is 5.30 p.m. a good time for business call unless the message is urgent. **The first hours of office and early afternoon are usually good**.

- The time you call is especially important when you call people abroad. You may be full of energy at the start of a cool morning while the person you call may be about to start for home at the end of the day. If you don't get a sensible reply, leave alone a friendly one, you know whom to blame.

- In India it is not very difficult to get a person's home telephone number. Don't use it unless the person himself has given it you, and the call can't wait until the first hour of the next working day. If you decide to dial a home number, choose the time very carefully. Apologize for calling them at home. Ask if it is the right time-or if you should call a little later.

2. **Ask Yourself Why You Want to Call**

Is it to ask for information or to give it? Is it to announce something? Is it to fix something or to apologise for something? Is it to discuss something complicated? Ask yourself if a telephone call is the best means. If it isn't, don't call. An e-mail message may be better. A call can be wasteful-you may have to endlessly on.the line listening to synthetic music or straining your ears in long and uncertain sile before you get the person you want. Or you may not get the person you want after all that trouble.

3. **Jot Down the Points You Want to Make**

If the call is anything more than a simple, single-point interaction, jot down the points you want to make in the order in which you want to make them. This planning is important. If you forget something, may have to call again. Getting the same person again can be frustratingly difficult.

4. **Keep at Hand All the Documents Related to the Call**

Any documents you might need to consult during the call should be at hand. It can be very annoying if you call someone and leave them in the middle of the call while you rummage the cupboard looking for an elusive document. *It is common experience that when you are under pressure, you don't what you're looking for even if it is sitting right on your head.*

5. **Mentally Draft a Brief Message for the Person You are Calling**

- You need to have three versions of the message ready.

   One is for the Secretary who might screen the calls with a gentle probe, second version is the message to be left with

whoever is kind enough to answer the phone and third version is for the voice mail or answering machine.

- Don't dial a number without thinking of what message to give if the person you want to speak to is available. You may take an annoyingly long time to formulate it when you suddenly realise that you have to leave a message. Then you may do a bad job by making the message too long and involved to brief and unclear.

6. Dial the Number. Do it Yourself if Possible

You may, of course, ask your Secretary to dial a number and connect you to it. It saves your time. Avoid it except when trying general numbers or when contacting people junior to you. You may also take a Secretary's help when trying direct numbers that are constantly engaged. Otherwise, dial the number yourself if possible. It's direct, and more powerful. Besides, if there is a call-screening, between you and the manager you want to speak to, you have a better chance, than your assistant of getting through. -

After breakfast, King George V would telephone his sister, Princess Victoria. The phone call came through 1 her daily about half-past nine. "Hello, you old fool," she would greet her brother. "Beg pardon, Your Roy Highness," the Buckingham Palace operator had to interject on one occasion, "His Majesty is not yet on the line."

(From *2oth Century Anecdotes* (1990), p.426. Compiled by Frank S Pepper, London: Sphere Books)

7. When Someone Answers Your Call. Greet Them and Identify Yourself

Many people arrogantly believe that others ought to recognize them by their voice. Or they assume that there is no need for callers to identify themselves. So they just start talking without identifing themselves. This is all right when you call your Mom or Dad, or a close or relative or friend member because they can instantly identify you; but this is not appropriate when you make a business call. Identifying yourself is not only foolish but also rude. It puts the person you call in an awkward tone. **Identifying yourself every time you call a person is part of basic telephone etiquette.** A call could come, anywhere in the world. They can't talk properly to you until they know whom they are talking to.

8. Apologise if You Get Through to a Wrong Number -If your Secretary generally dials for you, find out what she says to people before she connects the you. The following sequence is not uncommon. Some busy secretaries do it. It is sure to annoy the person they call.

Apologise as soon as you find out that you have the wrong number, if you cut the call they will never find out who tried to call,

If someone dials your wrong number be courteous to him or her.

When the caller apologises, accept their apologies saying, "That's all right."

9. When you get through to the Right Person, Check if it's the Right Time

Once you get the person you want-direct or via the operator/Secretary-and are through with the introductory routine said in a cheerful but clear and unhurried way, start the conversation. But if you need more than a minute or so for the call, ask if she can spare a couple of minutes. Don't assume that she can spare the time just because she has taken the call. Perhaps it is not the right time. Perhaps she is in middle of meeting someone. So ask her if it is the right time. If it isn't, ask for the best time to call '. Call her again and speak in a relaxed fashion.
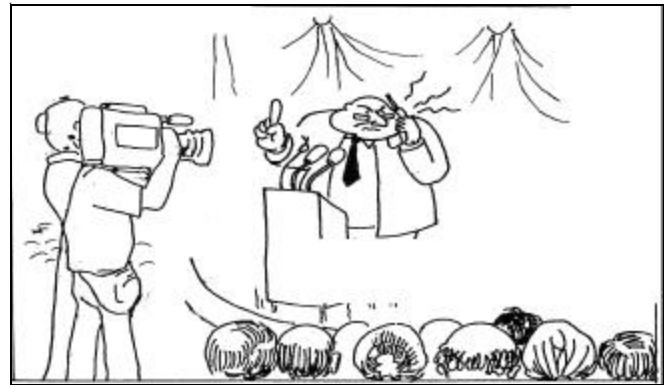
 "We are now offering two toilet brushes for the price of one; but hurry. The offer..."

10. What You Want as Clearly and Briefly as You Can

Consult your notes as you speak. A little bit of planning before you dial the number helps you make the call lucid. Lack of proper sequence is likely to make the listener confused. That you get 'yes', 'OK', and 'fine', from time to time doesn't guarantee that your message has been received clearly.

At the end of the conversation, summaries it if it has been a long one. Repeat briefly any promises, commitments you have made or received. This is particularly important with dates or places fix meetings or delivery dates.

11. Re-dial if the Line Gets Cut Off

If the line gets cut off during the call it is the caller's responsibility to dial again. If both the caller & the called party try to redial, both will end up getting the engaged tone.

Similarly, when you make a call, it is your prerogative to decide when to close it. When you speak to a superior, it is, of course, her prerogative to decide when to close it although you initiated the C2 the same token, when a salesperson makes a cold call you can decide when to terminate the conversation.

12. When the Call is Over, Thank the Person You've Spoken to

Thank them for the help they have given. Thank them for the time they have spared even if you haven't got what you wanted. Thank them even if you are never likely to talk to them again. You lose nothing you may gain something.

13. After the Call, Complete Your Notes

   Jot down the decisions arrived at, the dates fixed, and so on, while everything is fresh in your mind the notes if you are likely to need them later. If you need to inform someone of the details, do it immediately or jot it down on the 'to do' list. Otherwise, you may forget.

How to Answer a Call

Nine out of ten times you pick up a ringing phone without a clue to who is calling. It puts you at a disadvantage. That is why now many phones display what number the call is from. It helps; but you can't be sure who the caller is. So if someone picks up your phone and tells you who the call is it helps you prepare yourself for the call. This is where secretaries offer you invaluable help.

Whether you pick up the phone yourself or have someone pick it up, here is the procedure followed.

1. Don't Let the Phone Ring More Than Two or Three Times

Picking up the phone on the second or third ring should be the standard in your organization. A phone should never be allowed to ring more than five or six times. A phone ringing on in an office without anyone bothering to lift it gives the caller an impression of gross inefficiency and insensitivity. I hear a phone in your office ringing four or five times without anyone answering it, pick it up even you know it can't be for you. Pick it up even if it is a holiday and no one is expected to be there. Tell the caller that it is a holiday. Tell him when to call. A minute spent on it is a priceless demonstration 0f positive attitude to customer care.

I am impressed by the way the software professionals at the Indian subsidiary of the American soft-ware company, Intergraph, deal with the telephone extension in their large dining hall. When the tel-ephone rings there, whoever happens to be sitting at the table closest to the extension picks up the phone announces who it is for. In a hall where there might be anywhere between eighty and a hundred people eating simulta-neously, this is remarkable.

Here should be someone to mind the phone in an office even during the lunch break. Callers wouldn't *know* when you and your co-workers take the lunch break. If you can't get a person to man the phone during the lunch break, install an answering machine that tells the caller when to call.

Don't allow any phone in your office to go on ringing without being attended to. Someone might be In desperately from an airport or a street comer payphone to reach someone in your office. Pick up phone even if it is to tell the caller that they should call later. You will appreciate such courtesy and consider-ation from others when you make a call, won't you?

2. Greet & Identify yourself or Your Firm as Soon as You Pick up the Phone

Here is a routine, which we come across countless times every day:

I *Ring ring; Ring ring.*

IA. "Hello!"

I B. "Hello! Is it Zenith Technologies?"

A. "Yes."

B. "Can I speak to Mr Agnihotri, please?"

A. "May I know who is calling?"

B. "Ajit Singh"

A. "From?"

B. "From RC Computers."

A. *(Silence/music)*

C. "Hello!"

B. "Hello!"

C. "May I know who is calling?"

B. "Hello, this is Ajit Singh from RC Computers. .Mr Agnihotri?

" C. "Speaking."

B. "Mr Agnihotri, I wanted to ..."

This is terribly inefficient; and mutually annoying. Here is a better way.

Ring ring; Ring ring.

A. "Good afternoon. Zenith Technologies." (Can I help you?)

B. "Good afternoon. This is Ajit Singh from RC Computers. Can I speak to Mr Pranav Agnihotri of HR, please?"

A. "Please hold the line." *(Silence/music)* "I'm putting you through to Mr Agnihotri."

B. "Thank you."

C. "Good afternoon, Mr Singh. This is Pranav Agnihotri."

If you are picking up your own direct phone, the identification needn't include the firm's name. You could say, "Good morning. (Pranav) Agnihotri." Some people do not greet. They just say their surname brusquely. They perhaps want to give the impression of being business like. It is much better to get through before identifying oneself. Whatever you choose to do, don't answer a call with an abrupt 'yes?' 'yeah?'

If it is your extension, there should be no need at all to identify the organization. It should be enough for you to identify yourself. The operator will have identified the organization before connecting you to the caller. However, find out what your operators generally say before connecting you to callers. Identification of the firm is not part of it, get your operators to do so. A simple 'hello' may be all right from a home phone; that is just not good enough from a firm's operators.

If it is not your extension but you pick it up, courtesy demands that you should greet, identify. Your office/extension, and identify yourself: "Good evening. Ms Kulkarni's office/ extension. Pranav Agnihotri speaking."

If several people in a group share an extension, you greet and identify the group: "Good evening. Accounts." Then it is for the caller to identify himself and ask for a particular individual.

Greeting and identifying are essential in a phone conversation. The voice-only nature of the channel demands identification. Greetings give the discussion a friendly start.

Identification is important for two reasons. It gives the caller a vital piece of information with which he cannot start a conversa-tion. Secondly, a caller could, as we have seen above, end up at a

with a wrong number. Self-identification by the called-party reassures the caller that he has reached the right place and the right person.

There are times when you can't decipher the caller's name or affiliation. They may have difficult or may use short forms that you haven't ever heard. Or they speak too fast for you to figure out. Name politely to repeat their name. It is all right to ask them even to spell the name if you have difficulty in getting it right.   .

I may wonder if it isn't a nuisance to have to greet when you speak on the intercom. You may have to speak to the same person several times a day. We don't keep greeting them when we meet them again & again on the office corridor or near the vending machine. There may be some relaxation in respect of time if the calls from within the same organization sound different from external calls. The distance is rather like the double ring of local calls and long, single rings of STD calls.) But even an organization you wouldn't know who a call is from. So there is no harm in starting the conver-sation an appropriate greeting each time you pick up the phone. You can't overdo it! Treat it like a Smile Don't we smile at colleagues every time we meet?

3.   Do not Allow the Phone to Interrupt a Meeting or Something Equally Important

This may appear to contradict what was said a little while ago about not letting a phone ring on and on. Doesn't. Just as you don't want a visitor to disturb you when a meeting is on, you don't want a call to disturb you at a meeting. The difference is that a visitor can see for himself or find out from secretary that you are at a meeting, and wait until the meeting is over or decide to come again. But phone caller can't see what is going on. If you take the call while you are at a meeting, the others leave or sit pretending not to listen to the call. The best way out is not to take any calls (except one) when you are at a meeting. Ask your Secretary or a colleague for deal with the calls. Your call can, for instance, be transferred to a colleague's extension. Alterna-tively, you can switch on; Answering machine or voice mail. Return the calls as soon as you are free.

4.   If someone Else Can Deal with the" Call Better Than You, Transfer it to Them

Once a while you may find that someone else in your own department or in some other department can in a call better. Transfer it to them after alerting them. That is smarter than giving inaccurate on or sounding tentative. The caller shouldn't, however, be shunted from person to person be gets the right answer.

5.   If a Person the Caller Wants is Not Available, Offer a Return Call

It is not unusual for secretaries to tell callers, "Mr. Malhotra is not in right now. Please call in half-an Hour.

They call half an hour later. They get the same message: "Call in half an hour." This is not right. be very annoying if it is repeated. The Secretary who picks up the phone on behalf of the boss, offer to call back when he returns, and ask what time might be the most convenient for them to e call. The only exception might be when it is a cold call from a salesperson. It is for them to call

If a manager goes out, she should inform the Secretary when she is expected back at the office, or he can return calls. If the Secretary doesn't know, he may rely on guesswork, mess up things and point the callers. Or he may give indifferent answers. In either case, the manager's image suffers.

6.   Take Notes as You listen

If there is just one point made by the caller, remembering it may Clot be difficult. However, if there several points, including dates of meetings or specifications of products, it may be risky to rely solely your memory. Take notes as you listen. And if you've promised to inform someone about any of points, do it immediately. Otherwise, you're likely to forget it.

7.   If you're taking a Message for Someone, Write it down

It is amazing how forgetful we are about others. When we take a message for Hema, for instance, think we will meet her at lunch and then pass it on to her. Suppose she doesn't come to the dining hall the usual time, the promise to pass on the message is likely to fade from our memory. There are lots of things waiting to take their place.

Even if we meet Hema in the next hour, we may have by then forgotten certain important things including the caller's name or telephone number. If we give her a message like the following, it practically is useless in most cases: "Hema, someone from the Transport Corporation called. It's a g Wants you to call back before four."

Except in special cases a message should be written down during the call itself or immediately after the call. And here is the minimum that should go into the written message:

Mobile Phones

The etiquette applicable to the use of land phones applies to these devices too. But here are a few additional ones.

1.   Switch off Your Mobile Phones When you are at a Meeting

2.   Switch off Your Mobile When You are Driving

If are driving, rather than being driven by someone, switch off your cell phone. Do not attempt to having with phoning. It is dangerous for you and others on the road. Far more dangerous than you

_"Please hold on. Give me a moment to park my car."

3. Don't Force Strangers to listen to Your Non-emergency Calls

Except in an emergency, avoid using the mobile phone for long personal or business calls when sm gel's are forced to listen to them. Common sufferers include air and train passengers. They cannot IDC away. Have pity on them! They are in any case likely to judge your show of self-importance as a sign puerile vanity.

Teleconferencing

Teleconferencing is nothing but a conference or meeting with every participant sitting blindfolded, someone speaks. The vital visual clues which help us present our views, take turns, read others' reactions, and d with them appropriately are missing. Yet, because of the enormous advantage it offers people staying different locations-anywhere in the world-to confer without getting up from their chair, teleconferencing has become very popular. It is popular especially in the information technology sector where iot continental communication is needed day in and day out.

Conference calls are of two types. In the simpler type, there are just two locations but two or me participants at each location. Powerful speakerphones are used so that several people can sit or stand around a table and speak into the phone without having to hold it close to their mouths.

In the more complex type, the participants may be at three or more locations. At each location there may be one or more participants. In this type, there is plenty of room for confusion because there are visual clues at all to when someone is finishing, when someone else wants to start. It is rather like 1 trapeze event in a circus with the lights off.

Here are a few tips on how to run or take part in a teleconference.

If you are Organizing a Conference Call

1. Notify all the participants in advance. Call them and ask them if the date and time you have mind is convenient for them.

2. Fax or e-mail the agenda to all the participants in advance. Include the date, time-starting a closing time-and the names of all those expected to participate in the call.

3. When fixing the time, keep in mind the local time zone if there are participants from diffent countries.

4. Punctuality is extremely important whether you are the organizer or one of the participants. You should be available at the appointed time. Otherwise' you would be wasting a lot of time of all other participants. They can't leave the phone and go away to do something else while waiting for you.

When you start the conference, call the junior participants first. The senior most should be the last one to be connected.

Once everyone is connected, greet all of him or her before starting the business. If there are people who have not been introduced to the rest, introduce them.

If there are several participants, give them a clear idea of how you are going to proceed - who will speak in what order. Don't take anything for granted unless all the participants are members of a regular teleconferencing group.

Once the call is over, mail the 'minutes of the meeting' to all the participants immediately.

If you are Participating in a Conference Call

Where there are three or more participants, it is best for people to talk only when the conference call host asks them to.

Take notes on what others are saying. Refer to them when your turn comes. Don't interrupt the person who 'has the floor'. Don't talk out of turn. Wait for your turn or the host's instructions. Keep at hand all the information you are likely to need for the call. Any time you spend on searching for information will be resented by the participants because they would have to sit glued to the phone unable to do anything else.

Plan for the conference call as you would for a meeting. Be clear about what you want to say, and say it briefly. Don't ramble. The others are forced to listen to you until you stop.

Speak slowly. The others may have difficulty following your accent especially if they are foreign participants.

Be considerate to the other participants. Don't go on and on clogging the line. The listeners form a captive audience. Plan your contributions so that they are considered valuable and are listened to with respect.

LESSON 37:
PRACTICE SESSION

Let us briefly summarise the chapter.

Key Points

The telephone is a channel of communication. It is very useful. But it also has a severe limitation-it depends exclusively on voice. Unless the users are careful, it can cause poor communication.

- **General Preparation**

  Be familiar with the way your telephone works and the special features it has. Keep a pen and pad ready the phone. Find out from friends how you sound on the phone. Correct any problems they identify. Cultivate a telephone voice. Be extra careful when you speak to foreigners. Don't ramble; be considerate to listener. Adopt an efficient way of giving names and numbers.

- **How to Make a Call**

  Before you dial, ask yourself if it is the right time to call and why you want to call. Jot down the points you want to make. Keep at hand all the documents related to the call. Mentally draft a brief message the person you are calling. Dial the number. Do it yourself if possible. When someone answers your call, greet them and identify yourself. Apologise if you ever get through to a wrong number. When you get through to the right person, check if it's the right time if you have to speak for more than a minute or two. Say what you want as clearly and briefly as you can. When the call is over, thank the person you've spoken to. After the call, complete your notes.

- **How to Receive a Call**

  When others call you, don't let the phone ring more than two or three times. Greet and identify yourself or your firm as soon as you pick up the phone. Do not allow the phone to interrupt a meeting. Make an alternative arrangement for the call to be handled. If some else can deal with the call better than you, transfer it to them. If the person the caller wants is available, offer a return call. I

  Take notes as you listen to a call. If you're taking a message for someone, write it down, don't rely on memory.

- **Mobile Phones**

  Mobile phones are a blessing, but they are a nuisance if they ring at meetings. Switch yours off when you are at a meeting and when you are driving. Don't force strangers such as fellow passengers in a train or an airplane to listen to your personal or business conversations.

- **Teleconferencing**

  A teleconference is like a conference where people sit blindfolded. Do all the planning needed f conference. Be punctual. In addition, during the conference make special allowances for the total absence of visual support for both speakers and listeners. Keep at hand all the information necessary for you to participate effectively in the conference.

Exercise

1. Discuss in detail the etiquettes you must follow during a telephonic conversation.

2. How is the utility of mobile phones different from landlines.

3. Describe teleconferencing

Practice Session

1. Enact the following

   a. You are the Vice President of your organization. You wish to speak to the Managing Director of S B Pharmaceuticals to seek an appointment to discuss the joint venture with your firm.

   b. Organise a teleconference with your counter part to discuss the progress they have made in the research activity on analytical project.

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