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**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**BACHELOR OF EDUCATION SECONDARY**

**ELE 1101 - ACADEMIC WRITING, COMMUNICATION AND STUDY SKILLS**

**SECOND EDITION**

**CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY**

**PRIVATE BAG E 1,**

**LUSAKA**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to ELE 1100 the course titled; Academic Writing, Study and Communication Skills. We promise you greater enjoyment and reward as you study different units in the module. This is full course and designed for all new entrants in university. The course, in brief is meant to expose you to communication and study skills in university. Remember, most of your communication with your lecturers will be through writing, so the course is important, for it will provide you vital information on how to communicate effectively through writing.

## **Rationale**

Communication in general has often times posed a challenge to many people due to lack of communicative skills. For effective communication to take place people need to know the skills involved when they are communicating. These skills should not be a preserve of chief executives alone or people high holding positions in society. They (skills) should be made known to every person.

## **Aim**

The main aim of this module is impart communication skills to University Students for effective communication to take place both between lecturers and among the students themselves.

## **Learning outcomes**

**By the end of this course, you should be able to:**

- write topic sentences and attain coherence in written English;
- develop paragraphs in a logical manner using English;
- recognize and produce cause and effect types of paragraphs in English;
- write accurate formal letters;
- present written reports in a coherent and accurate manner;
- conduct interviews using the English medium;
- present seminar and conference papers;
- deliver an effective public speech; and
- recognize and operate the grammatical rules of English accurately.

## Assessment

Assessment	Comments	Percentage
Assignment 1	Written	20%
Assignment 2 (seminar)	Team work	10%
Test		20%
Final exam		50%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

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# **UNIT 1: COMMUNICATION - A LEARNED SKILL**

## **Introduction`**

This unit exposes you to what communication is. You are advised to pay particular attention to what is being discussed. Once you have known what communication is, you will then be able to apply aspects of it in your day to day communication with your lecturer.

## **Learning Outcomes**

**By the end of this unit, you must be able to:**

- Define communication
- Identify barriers to communication
- Plan your study time and follow it strictly
- Be familiar with the tools used for communication

### **1.1 What is communication?**

The word communication originates from a Latin word *communis* or *communicare*, which means ‘to share’ or ‘to make common’. According to Juliana (2016: 2) communication is defined as the act of conveying intended meaning to another person through the use of mutually understood signs and language. Apart from that, communication is also said to be the transfer of information from one person to another. This may be vocally, written, visually and non-verbal (using body language, gestures, pitch and tone of the voice) ([www.skillsyouneed.com](http://www.skillsyouneed.com)). Communication has to be a meaningful and interactive process. For this to be achieved, there are basic steps that are to be achieved. These are: forming of communicative, message composition, message encoding and transmission of signal, reception of signal, message decoding and finally interpretation of the message by the recipient.

Communication is a key element in human activity. Communication is a learned skill. However, while most people are born with the physical ability to talk, not all can communicate well unless they make special efforts to develop and refine this communication skill. Very often, we take the ease with which we communicate with each other for granted, so much so that we sometimes forget how complex the communication

process actually is. Communication takes place when we are supposedly at the same level of understanding and comprehension as other interlocutors. Common forms of communication include speaking, writing, gestures, touch, using pictures and broadcasting. Communication is therefore not what is said whether verbally or non-verbally, but what is understood.

## **1.2 Tools for Communication**

Communication is done in different ways. As human beings, we communicate through speech, writing and signs. Development of language was an important step in the evolution of the human race. Though the human race is able to organise and share thoughts with others. Writing has extended the human race's use of language through use of codes such as letters of the alphabet a person can code what is going on in his or her mind and the reader with skill of decoding the alphabet is able to get meaning from such communication.

Added to communication, by speech, by writing and by signs, the human race has developed technical communication through the invention of telephones, telegraph, radio, print, computers etc. such forms of communication make social life practicable and at times manageable.

In addition to what we have seen as the meaning of communication namely the sharing, communication has its 'specialist meaning'. For example to a physiologist communication recalls to mind the nervous system – the way messages are transmitted to the brain; to an economist it conjures images of line of communication e.g. railways, roads etc. in this unit you are going to be focusing on communication as sharing of behavior and mode of life verbally, by written word, non-verbally.

You should remember that people communicate for various reasons. A person is not an island. He or she communicates to make others know that they exist. Whenever you are sharing ideas and experiences, you should aim at being understood in the way you communicate. If you write or wave and nod another person responds there has been an attempt to communication but not communicated.

Communication is sharing happiness, pain and involvement in life. When you meet as adults sometimes you want to share feelings of joy or happiness etc. communication is

about resources. There are different kinds of counselors in adult education who want to share ideas education, working in villages linking marginal groups to the larger society where they can look for help. Finally you communicate simply because people are around you. Think of other reasons why you communicate. There are many misunderstanding that occur in conversations when speakers use different words to refer to more or less the same thing or use same words to refer to different things.

### **1.3 Characteristics of Communication**

The characteristics of communication include:

- Communication is a process: Communication is a 2 way process which involves; listening to others (receiving) and message Asserting/Expressing (Sending).
- Communication is a dynamic: this means it is ever changing depending on the variables at play.
- Communication is a complex a process.
- Communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information but also create and share meaning.
- Communication involves the sharing of information using a code. `
- Communication occurs between people and sometimes animals
- Communication is irreversible: once one has communicated something it cannot be recalled back.
- Communication is a system
- Communication must have the elements of communication: Source, receiver, channel, message, noise, feedback.
- Communication can be verbal/ non-verbal or visual.
- Communication can be accidental especially in non-verbal

### **1.4 Functions of communication**

Human beings communicate for various reasons. Here are some of the reasons why we must communicate:

- To change in behaviour to influence others

- To express our thoughts and emotions through words & actions.
- It is a tool for controlling and motivating people.
- It is a social and emotional process.
- Communication for improving self-confidence
- Entertain
- Educate
- Establish relationships
- Inform
- Solve problems
- Make orders
- Give directions

## **1.5 Forms of Communication**

All forms of communication can be categorized as either verbal or nonverbal. Both verbal and nonverbal communication can be subdivided into either vocal or non-vocal. Verbal communication involves using speech to exchange information with others. We usually communicate verbally in face-to-face conversations such as; meetings, interviews, conferences, speeches, phone calls etc. Much of the communication that takes place between people is both verbal and non-verbal; that is, it is based on language and gestures.

### **1.5.1 Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication of the vocal category includes spoken language, while non-vocal verbal communication involves written communication as well as communication that is transmitted through sign language, finger spelling, Braille, or other similar alternatives to verbal language.

### **1.5.2 Para verbal/paralinguistic/ paralanguage features**

Paralinguistic or paralanguage features are the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words. They add emphasis or shades of meaning to what people say. Paralinguistic features accompany verbal communication and are the vocal signals beyond the basic verbal message. Paralinguistic elements in a person's speech convey meaning beyond the words and grammar used. Examples of paralinguistic features include pitch,

rate, quality of voice and amplitude. Other forms of paralanguage can also include laughter or imitative speech. Prosody, which is the rhythm, pattern, stress, rate, volume, inflection and intonation of a person's speech, is also a form of paralanguage.

People express meaning not just in what they say but in the way they say it. The paralinguistic features employed by a speaker provide hint to the meaning, communicate the speakers' attitudes and convey their emotion. Paralinguistic features also alert the listener as to how to interpret the message. Many of these paralinguistic features are culturally coded and inherent in verbal communication, often at a subconscious level.

### **1.5.3 Non-Verbal**

Non-verbal communication is a type of communication that employs gestures and body language. The term "body language" is sometimes used to denote non-verbal communications. "Body Language" is the communication of personal feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body-movements such as gestures, postures, facial expressions, touch, smell, walking styles and positions among others. These movements can be done either consciously or involuntarily; more often they 'happen' subconsciously, and are accompanied, or not accompanied, by words.

There are basically three elements in any face-to-face communication. It is believed that these three elements account differently for the meaning of the message:

- Words account for **7%**
- Tone of voice accounts for **38%**
- Body language accounts for **55%** of the message.

While it is true that some disagree on the percentages, all agree that nonverbal communication dominates. Our body language and tone of voice should be consistent with the words we use. This is only possible when we say what we mean to say and say it rightly. Otherwise we can confuse people and reduce the prospect of getting our message across to be understood. Non-verbal communication can lead to misunderstandings, communication failure and even conflicts if the interlocutors are careless.

Non-verbal communication includes: postures & gestures, eye contact, orientation, presentation, looks, expressions of emotion.

Body language and kinesics are based on the behavioral patterns of non-verbal communication. Body language can actually contradict verbal communications and reveal our inner feelings about any particular person or topic either intentionally or unintentionally.

The way in which you fold your arms, cross your legs, sit, stand, walk, move your head, eyes, lips reveal what you may be thinking or feeling. For example, you may be sitting and conversing with a person; suddenly, he leans forward and with both arms clutches the chair. By doing so he non-verbally communicates to you his desire to end the meeting. Body language has shed new light on the dynamics of relationships.

#### **1.5.4 Hands Gestures**

Hands and arms are used by most of us to communicate our thoughts. People rub arms together, keep their arms closed, and clench the fists. All these tell what the person has in his mind involuntarily. It is a way that people non-verbally communicate positive expectations. Hands clenched together seems to be a confident gesture as some people who use it are often smiling and sound happy. However, if the hands are clenched too tightly, it is indicative of frustration or hostile attitude.

#### **1.5.5 Eye Gestures/facial expression**

Facial expression, offers the most readily observable group of gestures. We focus our eyes on the face more often than on any other part of the body, and the expressions we see there have widely accepted meanings.

If a prospect's eyes are downcast and face turned away, you're being shut out, however, if the mouth move, he is probably considering your presentation. If his eyes engage yours for several seconds at a time with a slight, one-sided smile extending at least to nose level, he is weighing your proposal. It is only when you see 'eye to eye' with another person that a real basis for communication can be established. Other forms of nonverbal communication include: Touch, smell, distance.

The number of people in a communication situation affects the use of non-verbal communication. The more the persons involved, the more complex the use and understanding of the non-verbal communication becomes. However, to decipher the non-verbal communication it is important to see, interpret and understand them holistically and in a context, while identifying the different types of personalities involved.

### **1.6 Levels of communication**

- Intrapersonal (Within a person)
- Interpersonal (Face to face)
- Group communication
- Mass communication

### **1.7 Effective Communication**

Effective communication is defined as verbal speech or other methods of relaying information that get a point across. An example of effective communication is when the person who you are talking to listens actively, absorbs your point and understands it.

Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. As well as being able to clearly convey a message, you need to also listen in a way that gains the full meaning of what's being said and makes the other person feel heard and understood.

Although we can all communicate, not all our communication acts are effective. We must all strive to be effective communicators.

This is the kind of communication which produces results. It is communication where the intended message is delivered clearly, and the desired feedback is achieved. It is communication that does not give room for misunderstanding. It is the best form of communication.

Communication can be effective or it can be misunderstood leading to ineffectiveness. Meaning communication must be effective. Ineffective communication is expensive to the participants because it blocks results. In other words communication is a matter of

effectiveness. Effectiveness is a measure of outcome. Effective communication therefore results in the form of desired outcome.

Effective Communication is communication that conveys information to another person efficiently and effectively and so achieves desired outcome.

It is important to note that not all communication is effective. This course aims to help the learners to become effective communicators both at the university and later in their professional fields.

Communication is a process that can be marked with error such as with messages muddled (i.e., mixed up by the sender, or misinterpreted by the recipient). Miscommunication is avoidable. However, if this is not detected, it can cause tremendous confusion, waste efforts and miss opportunities. In fact, communication is successful only when both the sender and the receiver reach a common understanding regarding the same information as a result of the communication process.

Effective communication is about receiving information from others with as little distortion as possible. Communication is a matter of effectiveness, which is dependent on the interlocutors' (speakers') communication competency. In other words its effectiveness is dependent on one's competency in communication. We can therefore say that communication involves intents and efforts from both the sender of the message and the receiver.

### **1.7.1 Effective Communication Skills**

For communication to be effective, there are skills that both the listener and the receiver must embrace. These include: Eye contact & visible mouth, Body language, Silence, Checking for understanding, summarizing what has been said, Encouragement to continue and asking some questions.

### **1.8 The 7 Cs of Communication**

The 7 Cs provide a checklist for making sure that your meetings, emails, conference calls, reports, and presentations are well constructed and clear so your audience gets your message. According to the 7Cs, communication needs to be:



### **1.8.1 Clarity**

When writing or speaking to someone, be clear about your goal or message. What is your purpose in communicating with this person? If you're not sure, then your audience won't be sure either. To be clear, try to minimize the number of ideas in each sentence. Make sure that it's easy for your reader to understand your meaning. People shouldn't have to "read between the lines" and make assumptions on their own to understand what you're trying to say.

### **1.8.2 Concise**

When you are concise in your communication, you stick to the point and keep it brief. Your audience doesn't want to read six sentences when you could communicate your message in three.

### **1.8.3 Concrete**

When your message is concrete, then your audience has a clear picture of what you're telling them. There are details (but not too many!) and vivid facts. Your message is solid.

### **1.8.4 Correct**

When your communication is correct, it fits your audience. And correct communication is also error free communication.

### **1.8.5 Coherent**

When your communication is coherent, it is logical. All points are connected and relevant to the main topic and the tone and flow of the text is consistent.

### **1.8.6 Complete**

In a complete message, the audience has everything they need to be informed and, if applicable, take action. Does your message include a "call to action", so that your audience clearly knows what you want them to do? Have you included all relevant information – contact names, dates, times, locations, and so on?

### **1.8.7. Courteous/consideration**

Courteous communication is friendly, open, and honest and does not illicit emotions. There are no hidden insults or passive aggressive tones. You keep your reader's viewpoint

in mind, and you're empathetic to their needs. You must always put yourself in the shoes of the person you are talking to and ask yourself how you would feel if you were to be addressed the way you are addressing your receiver. Consideration in communication creates a healthy work environment.

### **1.8.8 Reflection**

Which of the 7Cs do you think can be done away with, but still achieve effective communication?

### **1.8.9 Evaluation**

Make a list of words and phrases that have different meanings in different communication situations.

For example, the word 'bar' can either mean to stop someone from something or a drinking place.

### **1.8.10 Why is effective communication important?**

It is crucial to communicate effectively in negotiations to ensure you achieve your goals. Communication is also important within the business. Effective communication can help to foster a good working relationship between you and your staff, which can in turn improve morale and efficiency.

More than just the words you use, effective communication combines a set of 4 skills:

- Engaged listening
- Nonverbal communication
- Managing stress in the moment
- Asserting yourself in a respectful way

While these are learned skills, communication is more effective when it becomes spontaneous rather than formulaic. A speech that is read, for example, rarely has the same impact as a speech that's delivered (or appears to be delivered) spontaneously. Of course, it takes time and effort to develop these skills. The more effort and practice you put in, the more instinctive and effective your communication skills will become.

## **1.9 Communication Barriers**

You are now going to look at communication barriers. Like already stated, effective communication cannot be achieved unless the environment is made conducive for communication. Therefore, it is important for one to be aware of factors (barriers) that might hinder the process of effective communication. The following are some of the barriers to effective communication.

### **1.9.1 Physiological Barriers**

Physiological barriers may result from individuals' personal discomfort, caused, for example, by ill health, poor eye sight, or hearing difficulties. These may also affect one's personality in many different and mostly negative ways. This can best be handled by working on developing a positive perception as certain physiological features contributing to barriers may not be curable.

### **1.9.2 Physical Barriers**

Physical barriers include:

- Office doors, barrier screens, separate areas for people of different status
- Large working areas or working in one unit that is physically separate from others.
- Distance

Research shows that one of the most important factors in building cohesive teams is proximity. Proximity in different cultures is different and therefore needs to be taken in the right context. It has been observed that people coming from rural backgrounds with more physical space available may not feel comfortable in closed quarters as they tend to have larger personal spaces as compared to people living in urban conditions. This aspect alone can become a significant psychological barrier if they subconsciously feel “threatened” by inadvertent “invasion” of their personal space in case an urbanite approaches them in close proximity considering it as a normal personal space.

### **1.9.3 Cultural Barriers**

Culture prescribes behavior. Humans can adapt to different culture once we come to accept it and appreciate that cultures are different so that we can be recognized from others and that no specific connotations need to be attached to one culture or the other.

### **1.9.4 Language Barriers**

Language that describes what we want to say in our terms may present barriers to others who are not familiar with our expressions, buzz-words, and jargon. When we couch our communication in such language, it is a way of excluding others. In a global setting the greatest compliment we can pay another person is to talk in their language.

### **1.9.4 Interpersonal Barriers**

This is the kind of communication that occurs between people. But this kind of communication may go awry between the two people when the sender's message is received differently from how it was intended. Withdrawal by one of the interlocutors is an absence of interpersonal contact. It is both refusals to be in touch with others and acts as a barrier to interpersonal communication.

### **1.9.6 Psychological Barriers**

There are 3 types of psychological barriers that would be discussed here as they are the most common ones. These include: Perceptual barriers, Emotional Barriers, and Experiential barriers.

### **1.9.7 Perceptual barriers**

The problem with communicating with others is that we all see the world differently. A bad experience would perceptually block out unpleasant things. This could be in the shape of avoiding it and if that is not possible by altering the behaviors i.e., response types in different ways. Similarly, retention filters out things that feel good, and gives the tendency to forget those things that are painful. It is very interesting to note that how our experiences taint or color our perceptions. Perceptual barriers can significantly alter our

understanding and thus affect our communication. They are deep rooted and work in conjunction with our experiences.

### **1.9.8 Emotional barriers**

One of the other chief psychological barriers to open and free communication is the emotional barrier. It is comprised mainly of fear, mistrust, and suspicion. As mentioned earlier the roots of our emotional mistrust of others lie in our childhood and infancy when we were taught to be careful what we said to others.

#### **Experiential barriers**

Experiential barriers on the other hand become barriers by virtue of not having experienced them leading to altered interpretation and comprehension. Our experience shapes our view of the world. For example, when children experience trauma at the hands of trusted adults (especially family members) their emotional link with the adult world is severed, creating distrust. They are left with three companions: guilt, fear and feelings of inferiority.

#### **Stereotypes**

A stereotype is a mistaken idea or belief many people have about a thing or group that is based upon how they look on the outside, which may be untrue or only partly true. Stereotyping people is a type of prejudice because what is on the outside is a small part of who a person is. Like other untrue opinions, stereotypes might be used as reasons to discriminate against another person, or sometimes for a humorous effect in fiction.

Stereotypes are widely circulated ideas or assumptions about particular groups. Stereotypes are usually negative attitudes which people use to justify discrimination of conflict against others. According to Pennington (1986) “there are two characteristics of stereotypes. People are categorized on the basis of very visible characteristics e.g. race, nationality, sex, dress and bodily appearance; All members of a particular group are assumed to have the same characteristics; and

The effects of stereotyping are seen as gross over simplified and over generalized descriptions. They operate to overestimate differences existing between groups and underestimate differences within groups.

Stereotypes distort reality since the over estimation between groups and under estimation within groups bear little relation to the truth.

Stereotyping acts as a barrier to communication because people make preconceived judgment about people which are unfounded if their character does not relate to their appearance.

When we stereotype, we draw conclusions about entire groups of people based on common assumptions, which are often inaccurate and can lead to considerable communication and process breakdowns.

### **1.9.8 How to be a good communicator**

To be a good communicator, one needs to:

- Express own reflections and ideas clearly
- Develop relationships
- Provide feedback (answers, reacts) and be open to others' feedback (accept other answers without prejudice, references etc.)
- Respect attitudes and opinions of others and be tolerant to different customs and cultures
- Giving full attention to people while they are talking to you encourages them to talk, and ask appropriate questions.
- Present your ideas so that others are receptive to your point of view.
- Treat people fairly and let others know how you want to be treated.
- Value teamwork and know how to build cooperation and commitment.
- Strive to understand other people and to be empathetic.
- Be able to easily win people's trust and respect.

- Check to make sure you have understood what other people are trying to communicate.
- Follow through on your commitments.
- Be able to work with people you have difficulties with without becoming negative.

### **1.9.9 Evaluation**

With a colleague, discuss how you can overcome the barriers of communication discussed in this section, in a classroom situation.

### **1.10 Summary**

This section discussed barriers to communication. It is hoped that you have seen that there are so many factors that can hinder communication. It is important therefore, for you as a teacher to know how you can overcome these barriers to achieve effective communication.

## UNIT 2: MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

### 2.0 Introduction

This unit introduces you models of communication. You need to pay particular attention on how each of these models works and also what kind of elements are involved. So see different each model differs from the other. The purpose of a “model” is to offer a visual representation of a concept with the intent of facilitating its understanding. A model of communication refers to the conceptual model mused to explain the human communication process.

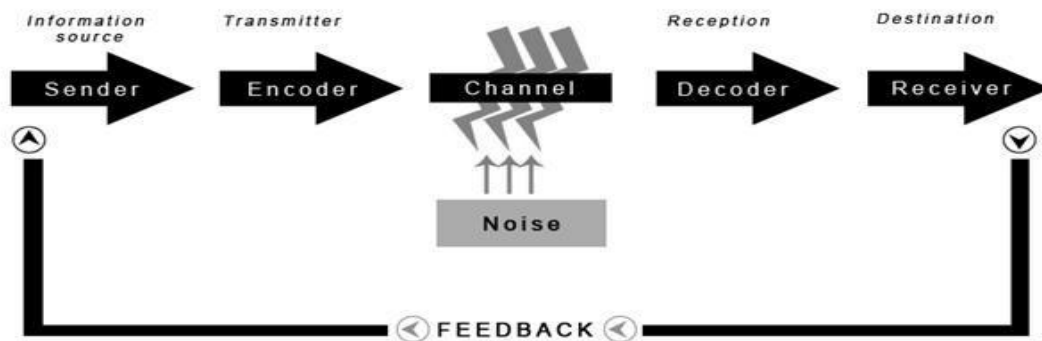
### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify different models applied in the system of communication
- distinguish one model of communication from the other
- identify different elements that permeate each model of communication

### 2.1 Shannon Weaver’s model of communication

The first major model for communication came in 1949 by Shannon and Warren Weaver.



SHANNON-WEAVER’S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Fig. 1

Following the basic concept, communication is the process of sending and receiving messages or transferring information one part (sender) to another (Receiver). Traditionally



speaking, there are three standard models of the communication process: Linear, Interactive, and Transactional, and each offers a slightly different perspective on the communication process.

## 2.2 Lasswell Model of Communication

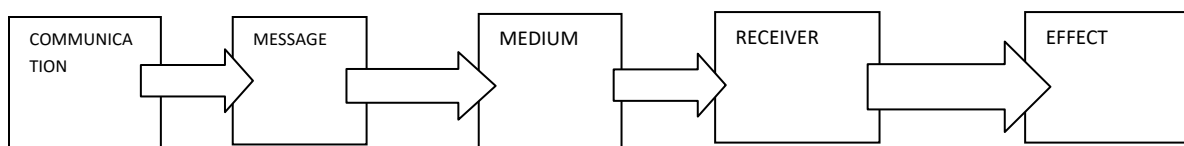
Harold Lasswell was an American Political scientist who developed a basic model of communication. In this model, Lasswell explained the different elements of communication which comprised the message, the medium, the receiver and the effect.

The communicator is the source of information or the one who begins the communication process. The communicator has message to send. The message is the content part of the communication process. In sending the message, the communicator uses a medium or channel to transmit the message. The one to whom the message goes is the receiver.

In this model, Lasswell assumed that communication led to some result and without any result no communication took place. Supporters to this model assumed that communication had persuasive influences on the audiences.

This assumption may not be correct in every environment. In the west, the grip of mass communication on the daily lives of many people is pervasive. In countries without wide spread instruments of mass communication, there are tools of communication and networks that have influences on the lives of the people.

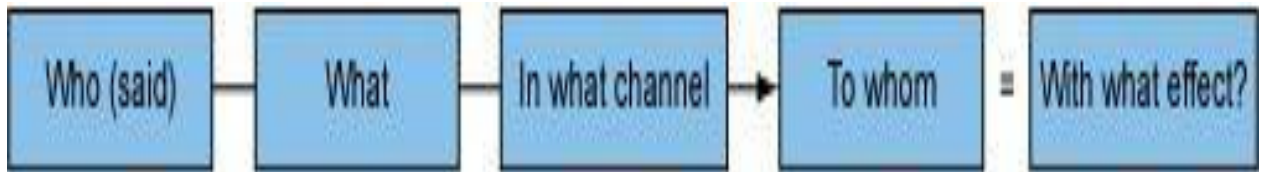
Lasswell's theory is sometimes referred to as the bullet. It assumed that the audiences were passive and could easily be penetrated with the messages.



**Fig. 2**

### 2.3 Linear Model

The linear model views communication as a one-way or linear process in which the speaker speaks and the listener listens according to Lasswell. Lasswell's (1948) model was based on the five questions as reflected in **Fig. 3.**, which effectively describe how communication works:

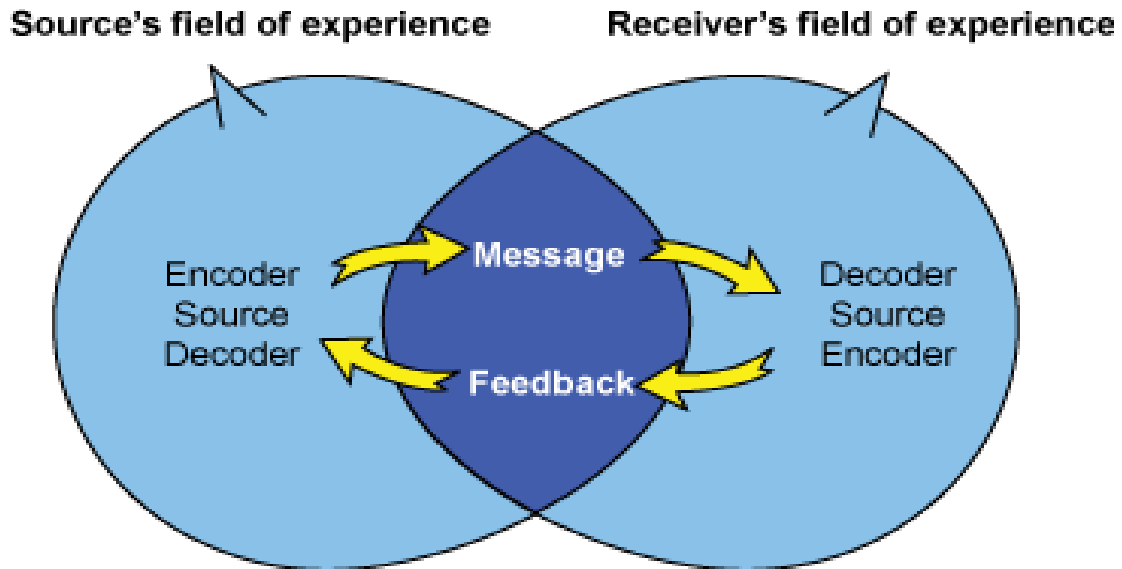


**Fig. 3.**

The main flaw in the linear model is that it depicts communication as a one-way process where speakers only speak and never listen. It also implies that listeners listen and never speak or send messages.

### 2.4 Interactive Model

Schramm (1955) in Wood (2009) came out with a more interactive model that saw the receiver or listener providing feedback to the sender or speaker. The speaker or sender of the message also listens to the feedback given by the receiver or listener. Both the speaker and the listener take turns to speak and listen to each other. Feedback is given either verbally or non-verbally, or in both ways. This model also indicates that the speaker and listener communicate better if they have common fields of experience, or fields which overlap.



**Fig. 4.**

The main drawback in the interactive model is that it does not indicate that communicators can both send and receive messages simultaneously. This model also fails to show that communication is a dynamic process which changes over time.

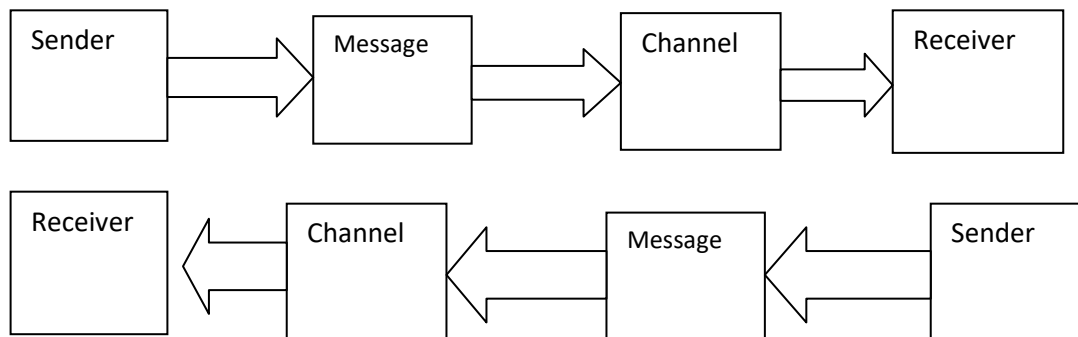
## **2.5 Transactional Model**

The transactional model shows that the elements in communication are interdependent. Each person in the communication act is both a speaker and a listener, and can be simultaneously sending and receiving messages.

There are three implications in the transactional model:

- Transactional” means that communication is an ongoing and continuously changing process. You are changing, the people with whom you are communicating are changing, and your environment is also continually changing as well.
- In any transactional process, each element exists in relation to all the other elements. There is this interdependence where there can be no source without a receiver and no message without a source.
- Each person in the communication process reacts depending on factors such as their background, prior experiences, attitudes, cultural beliefs and self-esteem.

Transactional model of communication takes into account “noise” or interference in communication as well as the time factor. The outer lines of the model indicate that communication happens within systems that both communicators share (e.g., a common campus, hometown, and culture) or personal systems (e.g., family, religion, friends, etc.). It also takes into account changes that happen in the communicators’ fields of personal and common experiences. The model also labels each communicator as both sender as well as receiver simultaneously.



## 2.6 Mclean – Wesley Model

The model has the sender, the message, the channel and the receiver. After receiving the message, the receiver becomes the sender, of the message through a chosen channel and way communication is established because of feedback to the sender.

### Evaluation

Identify some of the networks that are used in communication in your own culture?

### 2.6 Summary

A model of communication has been explained as a visual representation of a concept with the intent of facilitating its understanding. In this section, we have looked at Shannon and Warren Weaver, Lesswel model of communication, Linear model, Interactive model, Transactional model and Mclean Wesley model.

## UNIT 3: GRAMMAR AND STYLE IN WRITING

### 3.0 Introduction

This unit exposes you to grammar and style in writing. The unit is important because it brings to your attention actual linguistic units you will interact with during your stay in the university and of course in your writing process throughout university life. Pay attention to the elements of language and see how you could apply them in your writing. So, welcome to grammar

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit, you should be able to:**

- State what grammar is
- Discuss various parts of speech
- Demonstrate how each part of speech is used
- Distinguish between functional and structural classification of sentences
- Use different sentence types in your writing appropriately

### 3.1 Grammar

In linguistics, grammar is the set of structural rules governing the composition of clauses, phrases, and words in any given natural language. The term grammar can also be used to describe the rules that govern the linguistic behaviour of a group of speakers. Grammar can also refer to the study or use of the rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to make sentences in a language. Put simply, grammar is a system of a language. And so, to be a good writer, one must be conversant with the grammar surrounding the sentence. This is so because writing begins at the sentence level because it is a combination of sentences in a meaningful way.

### 3.2 Parts of speech

This part of the module introduces you to parts of speech (word classes). You must have noticed that thousands of words exist in every language and that not all these words perform the same function. For example, some of the words denote action, others name things, and some of them join words with others while others perform other different functions. You will soon learn that these words are actually the *building blocks* of any language and you may think of them as if they were parts of a house. Note that when we

want to build a house, we use concrete to make the foundation or base. We use bricks to make the walls and window frames to make the windows. We also use door frames to make the doorways and use cement to join them all together. So the different materials make up different parts of a house and each part of the house has its own function. Similarly, when we want to build a sentence, we use the different types of words and each type performing a specific function all together.

There are eight parts of speech in the English language: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. However, we also include a special part of speech called articles, which are often considered as part of the broader category called determiners. To these we add the articles. The part of speech indicates how the word functions in meaning as well as grammatically within the sentence. An individual word can function as more than one part of speech when used in different circumstances. Understanding parts of speech is essential for determining the correct definition of a word when using the dictionary.

### 3.2.1 Nouns

A noun is a word that denotes a person, place, thing, or idea. Words such as: man, spoon, college, house, happiness, Lusaka are naming something hence nouns. In English, nouns are often preceded by noun markers; articles/adjectives (*a, an, the*), but not always. Nouns are of different types. We have concrete nouns, abstract, collective, common, countable, uncountable possessive, plural and singular nouns. We may not go into details of each of these, but you need to study them on your own and master how each of them is used in sentences. Note, however that Proper nouns always start with a capital letter while common nouns do not. Nouns can perform different functions in sentences. For example, a noun can be a subject, direct object, indirect object, subject complement, or object of a preposition and so on. The following are some examples:

- The *students* happily studied grammar. [noun as subject]
- The students happily studied *grammar*. [noun as direct object]
- They taught their *friends* grammar. [noun as indirect object]

- Mr. Zulu is a *lecturer*. [noun as subject complement]
- Students smiled with *glee*. [noun as object of preposition]
- They elected my uncle *mayor*. [noun as object complement]

A noun always follows a noun marker, though adjectives or other words may come between them. Noun markers are underlined. Check the following sentences:

- My former *roommate*.
- A sunny June *day*
- An objective and very thorough *evaluation*
- Some existential *angst*

### 3.2.2 Articles

In grammar, articles are words used with nouns to specify whether a noun is definite or indefinite. Articles include: *a*, *an* and *the*. Note that we use *a* in front of words that start with a consonant sound e.g. *a* horse, *a* carrot and *an* in front of words with a vowel sound e.g. *an* apple, *an* elephant. Note that there is a difference in use between *a/an* and *the*. You need to understand this because it is important. Basically, we use *a/an* when we do not need to say which thing in particular we are talking about. We use *the* to talk about a **specific** thing. See in the examples:

- I caught *a train* to Monze. (It doesn't matter which train)
- The train* was late. (that particular train was late)
- He was talking to *a man*. *The man* was laughing.
- She gave him *a present*. *The present* was very expensive.

Note that we often use *a* when we mention something for the first time, and then change to *the* when it is **clear** which we are talking about. This is done as shown in sentences (c) and (d) above.

Further explanation on the use of *the* is that it is used when it is obvious which thing we are talking about or when there is only one of something: e.g.

- (e) Could you shut *the door*, please?
- (f) I cleaned *the bathroom* this morning.
- (g) He travelled around *the world*.
- (h) *The sun* is hot today.

### 3.3 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. It is usually substituted for a specific noun, which is called its antecedent. In the following sentence the antecedent for the pronoun *she* is the word *girl*. e.g.

The young *girl* brought me a very long letter from the teacher. *She* then quickly disappeared.

Pronouns are further defined by type: personal pronouns which refer to specific persons or things; possessive pronouns indicate ownership; reflexive pronouns which indicate that the subject performs an action for itself or when the action of the verb returns to the subject. Emphatic or intensive are used to emphasize another noun or pronoun; relative pronouns introduce a subordinate clause; and demonstrative pronouns identify, point to, or refer to nouns. Not only these, we also have demonstrative, relative and indefinite pronouns as well as interrogative pronouns. You may have to read about many other types on your own.

In short, pronouns replace nouns. Without them, language would be repetitious, lengthy, and awkward:

*Kapela had severe back trouble, and although Kapela approached stairs gingerly and lifted with care, Kapela did swim and sail, and occasionally Kapela even managed to play touch football with friends, family members, or co-workers.*

With pronouns taking the place of some nouns, that sentence reads more naturally:

*Kapela had severe back trouble, and although he approached stairs gingerly and lifted with care, he did swim and sail, and occasionally*



*he even managed to play touch football with friends, family members, or co-workers.*

The pronoun **he** takes the place of the proper noun Kapela. This makes Kapela the antecedent of the pronoun. As earlier mentioned, the antecedent is the noun or pronoun that a pronoun replaces. There are six types of pronouns:

### 3.3.1 Personal-pronouns

Since nouns refer to specific persons, places, or things, personal pronouns also refer to specific persons, places, or things. Pronouns have characteristics called number, person, and case.

Number refers to whether a pronoun is singular (him) or plural (them). Thus John Kennedy becomes he or him, while the president's friends would be *they* or *them*.

Note that pronouns can either be used as subject of the sentence or as objects. The table below shows subject and object pronouns.

**Subject and Object Pronouns**

<b>Subject Pronouns</b>	<b>Object Pronouns</b>
I	me
We	us
You	you
She	her
He	him
It	it
They	them

### 3.3.2 Possessive pronouns

These are pronouns that help you show possession or ownership in a sentence. They include: *my, mine, your, yours, his, hers, its, our, ours, their*. Note that the pronouns; your, my, his, her, its, our and their function as determiners. They are placed in front of a noun to describe who something belongs to. e.g. “I said that is **my** phone.”

### 3.3.3 Reflexive pronouns

In English grammar, a reflexive pronoun refers, or reflects back to the subject of the sentence, indicating that the same person who is realizing the action of verb is also the recipient of the action. Reflexive pronouns include: *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *itself*, *ourselves*, *themselves*. e.g.

Mary made up *herself* a cup of tea.

Paul taught *himself* to play the piano.

### 3.3.4 Emphatic/intensive pronouns

These are pronouns that are used to add emphasis to the subject or antecedent of the sentence. You will usually find the intensive pronoun right after the noun or pronoun it is modifying, but necessarily. Their form is similar to reflexive pronouns. Examples include: *itself*, *yourself*, *myself*, *herself*, *themselves*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*. Note their occurrence in the following sentences. You need to distinguish emphatic from reflexive pronouns based on how they are used in sentences. Pay particular attention so that they do not confuse you.

The president *himself* addressed the meeting.

I did the work *myself*.

\*Note that not all pronouns have been discussed. Read more about the others not discussed here.

### 3.3.5 Relative pronouns

Relative pronouns are pronouns that refer to a previously used noun and introduce a relative clause. These include: *that*, *which*, *whichever*, *whom*, *whomever*, *whosoever*, *whoever*, *who*, *whose*. Note how some of these are used in sentences. Read on your own about how the others not exemplified here are used.

- (a) That is the boy *whose* mother got arrested yesterday.
- (b) I saw the man *who* stole from my garden.
- (c) The committee *which* met last night discussed your report.

In sentences (a), (b), and (c), relative pronouns *whose*, *who* and *which* are referring to boy, man and which respectively.

### 3.4 Adjectives

An adjective is a word that modifies or describes a noun or a pronoun. It usually answers the question; which one?, what kind?, or how many? (Articles [a, an, the] are usually classified as adjectives.)

- (a) Jessica wore a *pretty* skirt yesterday.
- (b) It is a *smart* suit that the lecturer wore to class.
- (c) *Three* women quarreled on our street on Monday.

### 3.5 Verbs

A verb expresses action or state of being. e.g.

- (a) Lulia *walks* to school every day.
- (b) Phineas *is* an avid reader.

In example (a), '*walks*' is the verb; it describes what the subject, Lulia, does. In example (b), '*is*' describes Phineas' state of being and *is* therefore is a verb.

The verb in a sentence may denote (or express) an action or state of being. There may be a main verb and sometimes one or more helping/auxiliary verbs.

In the sentence 'She *can sing*'. '*Sing*' is the main verb and *can* is the helping verb. A verb must agree with its subject in terms of number (both are singular or both are plural).

For example,

- (c) Mutinta *is* coming home today.
- (d) Learners *are* coming home today.

In sentence (c), *Mutinta* is a singular subject hence takes a singular verb '*is*'. In (d), however, we have plural subject; *Learners* hence the plural verb '*are*'.

Verbs also take different forms to express tense.

### 3.6 Adverbs

An adverb is a word that describes or modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb, but never a noun. It usually answers the questions of when, where, how, why, under what conditions, or to what degree. Adverbs often end in *-ly*, by simply adding *-ly* to an adjective. See from some examples given. In (a) – (c), the description has been given. Try to figure out what the cases are in (d) and (e):

- (a) Mwape drives *carefully*. [adverb modifying verb]
- (b) He is *extremely* kind. [adverb modifying adjective]
- (c) He drives *extremely* carefully. [adverb modifying adverb]
- (d) The meeting is *upstairs*.
- (e) He was arrested *yesterday*.

### 3.7 Prepositions

Prepositions work in combination with a noun or pronoun to create phrases that modify verbs, nouns/pronouns, or adjectives. Therefore a preposition is always part of a prepositional phrase. The prepositional phrase almost always functions as an adjective or as an adverb. Examples of prepositions include: *aboard, about, above, across, after, against, along, amid, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, over, past, since, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, until, unto, up, upon, with, within, without*. A few of these have been exemplified. Research on how the others are used.

- (a) The teacher went on explaining *until* the whole class understood.
- (b) Mary sat *between* John and James.
- (c) Ngozi told her friends *about* the book.

### 3.8 Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word that joins single words or groups of words and indicates the relationship between the elements joined. There are basically three types of conjunctions.

These are: coordination, subordinating and correlative conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions connect grammatically equal elements: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet. Subordinating conjunctions connect clauses that are not equal. In short, these begin a subordinate clause and join it to an independent clause or introduce dependent or subordinate clauses in a complex sentence. Subordinating conjunctions include: because, although, while, since, etc. Note that *subordinating conjunctions* indicate that one element is of lesser value (subordinate) to another element. *Correlative conjunctions* are sort of tag team conjunctions. They work in pairs to join words and groups of words of equal grammatical weight in sentences. Correlative conjunctions include: *Not only ... but also*, *both...and*, *either or... neither nor...*, *whether... or*; see how they have been used in the subsequent sentences:

- (a) ***Both*** Mary ***and*** John are not to blame for their predicament.
- (b) ***Either*** the owl ***or*** the cats wake Samantha with their noise.
- (c) ***Neither*** the cousins ***nor*** Yolanda expressed her disappointment when Aunt Jane vomited on the floor.

### 3.9 Interjections

An interjection is a word solely designed to express convey emotion. It expresses meaning or feeling and is often followed by an exclamation mark. Note that an interjection does not relate grammatically to the other parts of the sentence nor does it help the reader to understand the relationship between words and phrases in the sentence. Instead, it simply conveys to the reader the way the author is feeling. Interjections are rarely used in academic or formal writing, but are common in fiction or artistic writing. They can be used at the beginning of the sentence, in the middle or indeed at the end. Here are some examples: Oh!, Wow!, Oops!, Gosh! Watch how they used:

- (a) Oh! That is wonderful news.
- (b) Huh! It is snowing again.

### 3.10 The English Sentence

This part of the unit introduces to you the classification of English sentences. You will notice that sentences in English are classified in two forms. One classification is based on the sentence's structural appearance or their syntactic classes. The other classification has to do with the functions English sentences perform.

#### 3.10.1 Structural Classification of English Sentences

You will learn in this section that there are four basic sentence structures in English. Sentence structures range from simple to complex, or short to long sentences. Note that during your writing process, you will need to combine different kinds of sentences to make the flow your writing smooth or indeed well pertained. Remember, you will not only use short or choppy sentences or indeed only long ones because your readers may criticize your work. And so, a combination both of short and long, or indeed complex sentences will enable you express simple and complex ideas clearly.

#### 3.10.2 Simple sentence

This is a sentence with just one independent clause (also called a main clause): e.g. *Judy laughed*. Note that a sentence will still be classified as simple even when it has a compound subject or predicate as in the following sentence respectively:

*Mutinta and Mazuba ate nsima and rice.*

#### 3.10.3 Compound sentence

A compound sentence is a sentence that contains two independent clauses: e.g.

*Our students studied hard and passed the examinations.*

The sentence above can be analysed as follows:

***Our students studied hard*** is an independent clause, so is the last part; ***Our students passed the examinations***. There are two independent clauses. Do the same with the last two examples.

*Zulu drove the Volvo, but Jimaima preferred the Gaia.*

*The park was crowded, for Monday was a holiday.*

### **3.10.4 Complex Sentence**

A complex sentence contains an independent clause and at least one dependent clause: e.g.

*Miriam saw the hyena when she visited the national park.*

*I can now greet someone who only knows Tonga.*

### **3.10.5 Compound Sentence**

A compound-complex sentence contains two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause: e.g.

*Chipego read her book and ate her meal while she listened to music.*

*Ocean currents contain a great deal of energy, and can produce electricity once we to harness them.*

## **3.11 Functional Classification of English sentences**

As regards the functions of sentences, note that there are four main types of sentences that can be distinguished by their function and purpose. The sentences have described and exemplified in the subsequent section.

### **3.11.1 Declarative Sentence**

A declarative sentence makes a statement: e.g.

*To pass an examination, one needs to be committed.*

### **3.11.2 Interrogative Sentence**

An interrogative sentence poses a question: e.g.

*Why do you think students have to work hard?*

### **3.11.3 Imperative Sentence**

An imperative sentence gives instructions or expresses a request or command: e.g.

*Get out here now!*

*Stop the work immediately!*

### **3.11.4 Exclamatory Sentence**

An exclamatory sentence expresses strong feelings by making an exclamation: e.g.

*Aren't these ladies beautiful!*

*What a wonderful even this is!*

### **3.12 Reflection**

In which way do you think the parts of are important in a language?

### **3.13 Evaluation**

1. With tangible examples, discuss sentences in terms of function.
2. demonstrate how a noun, verb, adjective and adverb would work in a sentence

### **3.14 Summary**

This unit has discussed grammar. We hope you have had a good experience with the parts of speech and consequently the sentence. These, we are sure have given you insight on how you can stage your continuous writing. Get ready therefore, for the next unit on continuous writing.



## **UNIT 4: CONTINUOUS WRITING**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This unit is about continuous writing. It exposes you to actual application of the grammar you have just interacted with in unit 3. At this stage, you are ready to learn how you will write your academic essays when asked to do so by your lecturers.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**By the end of this unit, you should be able to:**

- Demonstrate what a paragraph is
- State the importance of the topic sentence in each paragraph
- Demonstrate aspects of coherence and cohesion in your writing
- Use transitional words accurately in your writing
- Demonstrate knowledge of various methods of organisation
- State characteristics of an academic essay
- Plan an academic essay appropriately

### **4.1 Continuous writing**

Many students struggle with writing, more so with continuous writing as it is more demanding in many ways. Admittedly, writing is more complex a skill which cannot be learnt overnight. It requires practice as you need to explore ideas and thoughts as well as experiment with language.

You may wish to know at this point that there are two important structures to learn in English with regard to writing; these are the sentence and the paragraph.

#### **4.1.1 The Paragraph and the Topic Sentence**

A paragraph is a group of related sentences dealing with or expressing a single idea or topic. Central to the paragraph is the topic sentence. The topic sentence is the most important sentence in a paragraph that states the main idea in the paragraph. It announces what the paragraph will be focusing on. The topic sentence enables the readers to follow the ideas expressed in the paragraph because it links all sentences in it. The topic sentence is in fact a generalization as well as the summary of the paragraph. In addition, it gives direction to the paragraph.

Note that not all paragraphs in a piece of writing will have a topic sentence, but it is important to have the topic sentence give direction to most of your paragraphs. Once you have the topic sentence, other sentences of your essay will be dedicated to expounding and exemplifying your topic sentence.

Note that the topic sentence need not come at the top of your paragraph as may be misconstrued. Indeed it could be placed anywhere within the paragraph. When placed in the middle of the paragraph, the topic sentence ties the beginning and the end of the paragraph very effectively and hence, unifies the paragraph. Placed at the beginning, the topic sentence will effectively introduce your paragraph and yet at the end, it not concludes, but also summarises the paragraph appropriately as it serves as a clincher. A topic sentence can be written as a declarative statement or an interrogative one. e.g.

**Declarative as in:**

- *My school promotes the wholesome growth of students by engaging them in a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.*

**Interrogative as in:**

- *Need I state that my school promotes the wholesome growth of students by engaging them in co-curricular and extracurricular activities?*

### **4.1.2 Supporting Sentences**

The topic sentence in the paragraph will normally create expectations in the reader, that the writer will provide details to support the topic sentence (main idea) of the paragraph. The supporting sentences will normally take the form of facts, and statistics, examples or anecdotes and so on. A good paragraph is therefore one that has a topic sentence, which is supported by related sentences, and concluded by the clincher sentence.

### **4.1.3 Paragraph Coherence**

A coherent paragraph is a paragraph with strings that are consistent. It helps to focus the reader's attention on view point. It is also able to introduce new topics in a smooth, easy and predictable way that makes the reading experience more enjoyable. You will notice

that sentences in a coherent paragraph are ideas linked together with appropriate transitions which allow the reader to see the progression of thought from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. In a coherent paragraph, each sentence relates clearly to the topic sentence. The sentences flow smoothly into each other without obvious shifts or jumps. Furthermore, a coherent paragraph highlights the ties between old and new information to make the structure of ideas or arguments clear to the reader.

#### **4.1.4 The Concluding Sentence**

Good writers always show that the paragraph has now come to an end. You will need to do this often if you are to become a good writer. The concluding sentence is important. It is the sentence which restates the main idea (found in the topic sentence) and reinforces the point or opinion. Note that restating of the main point is usually done in different words. Before concluding your paragraph, you must write the clincher sentence. This is the closing sentence of that says that; *'I have come to the end of the paragraph.'* A good closing sentence clinches the rest of the paragraph by:

- Restating the main idea,
- Concluding an argument,
- Suggesting a plan of action,
- Giving a personal opinion,
- Announcing the conclusion

#### **4.1.5 Transitional words or transitions**

We have referred to paragraph coherence in the preceding section of the module. And so for your paragraph to be coherent, there are ways in which you as the write has to organise your work. One of the ways is the use of transitional words. Transitional words are words used to link words, phrases or sentences. Transitional words create cohesion and logical sequence in a paragraph. These words enhance flow of information and create clear and meaningful understanding of any piece of writing. Transitional words also unite sentences and paragraphs in writing. These words should help the reader to logically understand the connection between the main idea, point or opinion in the preceding paragraph and the

main idea of the next paragraph. Not only that, transitional words or transitions show how each sentence is related to the preceding one.

#### **4.1.6 Some common transitional words**

You may have been exposed to a number of transitions and you have noted that each of these is used in a specific context or depending on the method of organisation used in a piece of writing. The following are some of the many transitions: *accordingly, moreover, hence, besides, furthermore, nevertheless, however, for instance, consequently, as soon as, at last, by afternoon, first, second*; etc.

### **4.2. Methods of Organisation**

Note that different essays can be take different methods of organisation. This largely depends on the type of essay or indeed the question being dealt with. The following are the methods of organisation you may wish to use in writing your essay:

#### **4.2.1 Chronological order**

In this method of organisation, items are arranged according to when they happened in time. The transitions used in chronological order are called Time-order transitions. Anytime you are asked to describe an event or process in chronological (time) order, these are the words that can help you: *first, second, then, immediately, as soon as finally, after, before, about, slowly, tomorrow, then, during, until, when, meanwhile, yesterday, all the while today, next* etc.

#### **Sample Paragraph with Transitions**

The *first* thing we had to do was build a frame for the floor of the house. *Then* we used a rope to raise all the wood up into the tree. *Afterward*, we carefully nailed the board to the frame, and *soon* we had a floor.

#### **4.2.2 Spatial order**

The word spatial means of or relating to space and the relationship of objects within it. Spatial order is the method of writing in which ideas are arranged in the order of their

physical location. This method is often used in descriptive writing. When you use spatial order in your writing, focus on the story content, grammar, and choice of words. The transitions used here include: *above, below, east, inside, behind, beyond down, alongside, beneath, farther along, in back, in front, near or nearby, on top, to the left or to the right.*

### **Sample Paragraph with Transitions in Spatial order**

*To the left* of me is a laptop, and *to its right* is the mouse.  
*Below* in the cubby *at my center* is a pen cup. *On the left-hand side* of my desk is a phone, and *in front* of it lies a notebook.

### **4.2.3 Order of Importance (Climatic order)**

In this method of organisation, items are arranged in their order of importance as the name suggests, from least important to most important or vice-versa. Ideas may also be arranged in order of degree or interest. In this pattern of organisation, you basically decide what is most important and put it at the beginning or at the end. Typical transitions that may be used in this method would include: *more important, most difficult, still harder, by far the most expensive, even more damaging, worse yet*, and so on. You will notice that this is a flexible principle of organisation, and guide the organisation of all or part of example, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and description.

### **4.2.4 Developmental order (Topical order)**

In this method, items are arranged in a logical progression, in which one idea grows out of another. Here, the organisation of ideas emerges from the topic itself. For example, a description of a computer might naturally involve the separate components of the central processing unit, the monitor and the keyboard, while a discussion a computer purchase might discuss needs, products, vendors, and service. A discussion of a business might explore product, customer, and location, and so on. Topical order, then, simply means order that arises from the nature of the topic itself. Transitions in this method of organisation may be a little vague – things like: *another factor, the second component, in addition, furthermore, besides, despite, however* and so on.

### **4.3 Academic Writing**

Having looked at various methods of organisations, we are sure you now know which method is appropriate to adopt in any academic essay you intend to write. Note that academic writing is always a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting. Writing the paper is never “just” the writing part. To be successful in this kind of writing, you must be completely aware of what your lecturer expects you to do and accomplish with that particular writing task.

But then, what do you understand by the term academic writing? If you do not understand the term, probably you will understand the definition provided below.

A broad definition of academic writing is any writing done to fulfill a requirement of a college or university. Academic writing is also used for publications that are read by teachers and researchers or presented at conferences. A very broad definition of academic writing could include any writing assignment given in an academic setting. Students, professors and researchers in every discipline use academic writing to convey ideas, make arguments, and engage in scholarly conversation. Note that academic writing is characterised by evidence-based arguments, precise word choice, logical organisation and an impersonal tone. Though sometimes thought of as long-winded or inaccessible, strong academic writing is quite the opposite: it informs, analyses, and persuades in a straightforward manner and enables the reader to engage critically in scholarly dialogue.

The following are the components of competent academic writing: clear structure, fluent writing, accuracy in terms of spelling, grammar and punctuation and appropriate use of source readings or reference material. This is called referencing and each instance is called a citation. There are different models of referencing. We shall discuss referencing later in the module.

## **4.4. Characteristics of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is well organised and planned type of writing. Below are some of the characteristics:

### **4.4.1 Complexity**

You must know by now that written language is relatively more complex than spoken language. Written language has longer words, it is lexically denser and it has a more varied vocabulary. It uses more noun-based phrases than verb-based phrases. Written texts are shorter and the language has more grammatical complexity, including more subordinate clauses and more passives.

### **4.4.2 Formality**

Academic writing is relatively formal. In general this means that in an essay you should avoid colloquial words and expressions. Phrasal verbs need to be avoided because they are characteristic of colloquial or informal language.

### **4.4.3 Precision**

Academic writing uses words that convey exact meanings rather than using vague terms which could be interpreted in many different ways. So, there is need to provide evidence for every assertion one advances. In academic writing, therefore, facts and figures are given clearly and precisely as evidence.

### **4.4.4 Objectivity**

Written language is in general objective rather than personal. It therefore has fewer words that refer to the writer or the reader. This means that the main emphasis should be on the information that you want to give and the arguments you want to make, rather than you. For that reason, academic writing tends to use nouns (and adjectives), rather than verbs (and adverbs).

#### **4.4.5 Explicitness**

Academic writing is explicit about the relationships in the text. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the writer in English to make it clear to the reader how the various parts of the text are related. These connections can be made explicit by the use of different signaling words.

#### **4.4.6 Accuracy**

There must be exactness and correctness in academic writing. Owing to this, academic writing uses vocabulary accurately. Most subjects have words with narrow specific meanings.

#### **4.4.7 Hedging**

In academic writing, it is prudent to be cautious in one's statements so as to distinguish between facts and claims. This is commonly known as hedging. Hedging is the use of linguistic devices to express hesitation or uncertainty as well as to demonstrate politeness and indirectness. People use hedged language for several different purposes but perhaps the most fundamental are the following:

- To minimize the possibility of another academic opposing the claims that are being made.
- To conform to the currently accepted style of academic writing.
- To enable the author to devise a politeness strategy where they are able to acknowledge that there may be flaws in their claims.

In any kind of academic writing you do, it is necessary to make decisions about your stance on a particular subject, or the strength of the claims you are making. Different subjects prefer to do this in different ways. Hedging, in short is the type of language use which protects your claims as a writer. e.g.

‘Research conducted by Munsaka (2005) *appears to indicate* that...’



#### **4.4.8 Responsibility**

In academic writing you must be responsible for, and must be able to provide evidence and justification for, any claims you make. You are also responsible for demonstrating an understanding of any source texts you use.

#### **4.4.9 Organisation**

Academic writing is well organised. It flows easily from one section to the next in a logical fashion. A good place to start is the genre of your text. Once you have decided on the genre, the structure is easily determined.

#### **4.4.10 Planning**

Academic writing is well planned. It usually takes place after research and evaluation, according to a specific purpose and plan. Planning an essay involves arranging ideas logically, which help you stay on track during the writing process. Your plan should state how you are going to prove your arguments, including the evidence you are going to use. Planning an essay involves analysing the question. Analysing the question must be done before you even begin to select material for your essay. In your analysis of the question, you will understand the requirement of the question and this will help you to focus on the right material for your essay.

### **4.5 Structure of Academic Writing**

#### **4.5.1 Logical Organization.**

Academic writing follows a standard organizational pattern. For academic essays and papers, there is an introduction, body, and conclusion. Each paragraph logically leads to the next one. So, ensure that you have transitional sentences at the end of each paragraph that should lead you smoothly to the next paragraph.

#### 4.5.2 The introductory paragraph

Note that every academic paper needs to have a well-crafted introductory paragraph. Because the first paragraph acts as the entrance to your essay, it must be captivating and strongly built. It must be that which catches the readers' attention, provide background information, and let the reader know what to expect. Not only that, the introductory paragraph must also have the thesis statement, and should introduce the reader to the topic of your essay. It should create interest in the essay, outline the writer's main ideas, and suggest how these ideas will be presented within the body of the essay. Your introduction should therefore consist of three main elements: a **hook**, **building sentences**, and a **thesis statement**.

#### 4.5.3 Hook

The first sentence (or sentences) of your essay should be constructed in such a way that it catches your reader's attention. It introduces the topic of the essay in an interesting way. Generally, the whole of your introduction should grab the reader's attention, set the issue, and lead in to your thesis. Your introduction is merely a build up of the issue, a stage of bringing your reader into the essay's argument. You need to note that the title and the first paragraph are probably the most important in your essay. Remember, in the first paragraph you either hook the reader's interest or lose it.

#### 4.5.4 Building Sentences

After the hook, the following sentences should provide background information to give readers some context about the topic. They should "build" towards the thesis statement.

#### 4.5.5 Thesis statement

The thesis statement comes at the end of the introduction. It is the most important sentence in the entire essay because it presents the essay topic and the writer's position on that topic. It also indicates the main ideas that will be discussed in the body paragraphs.

#### 4.5.6 The body paragraphs

The body of an essay consists of three paragraphs. Each body paragraph explains in detail one of the main ideas expressed in the thesis statement. There are three parts to each body paragraph: *a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence*. Of course, this has been explained earlier at the beginning of the unit. Expressed simply, body paragraphs support the thesis statement. Each body paragraph has one main point to

support the thesis, which is named in a topic sentence. Each point is then supported in the paragraph with logical reasoning and evidence. Each sentence connects to the one before and after it. The readers do not have to work to find the connection between ideas.

#### **4.5.7 Concluding Paragraph**

The concluding paragraph ends the essay by reviewing the main ideas from each body paragraph and leaving the reader with a final thought. The conclusion consists of three elements: a **restated thesis**, a **summary of main ideas**, and a **final thought**.

#### **4.6 Restated thesis:**

At the start of the conclusion, you need to restate the thesis in words different from those you used in the introduction.

#### **4.6.1 Summary of main ideas:**

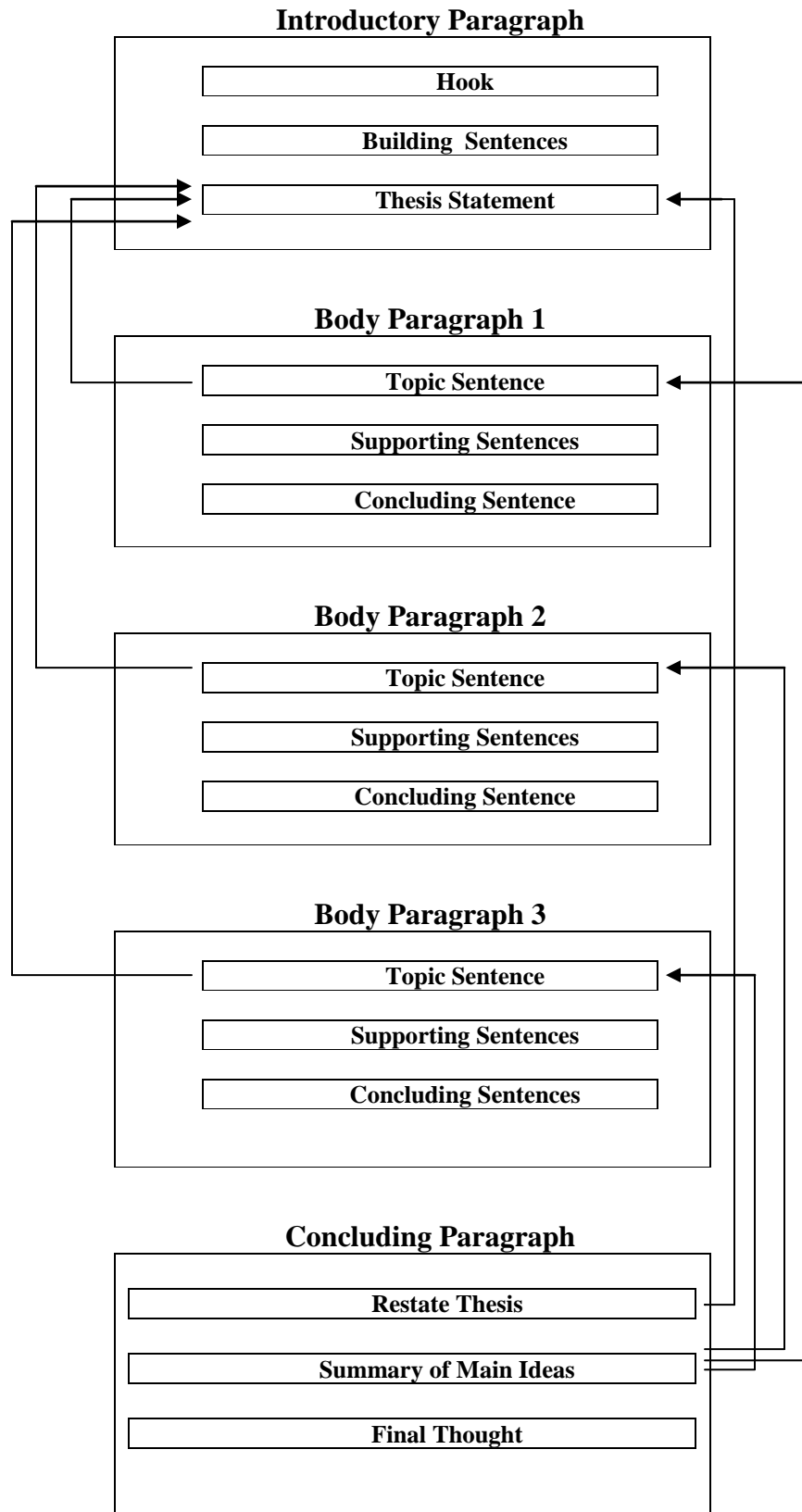
Here you need to summarise the main ideas from each of the body paragraphs as a reminder to the reader.

#### **4.6.2 Final thought:**

The conclusion summarizes the paper's thesis and main points and shows the reader the significance of the paper's findings. It is an opportunity to show the extent to which you have been able to deal with the issues involved in your thesis. Make sure that your conclusion refers back to what you outlined in your introduction and to your thesis. So, as the writer, you are to end your essay by presenting your final thought on the topic – for example, you can state an opinion, a solution, or a prediction. The final thought should leave a strong impression and encourage the reader to think further about the topic.

**In Fig. 6**, you will have a look at an example of the structure of an essay.

**Fig. 6. STRUCTURE OF A FIVE (5) – PARAGRAPH ESSAY**



## 4.7 Terms and Concepts in Academic Writing (clue words)

In essay exams, every question contains a clue word. *Clue words* are the words that the lecturer uses to indicate what angle they want you to take when answering the question. Clue words tell you exactly what to do in your essay, so they are extremely important in essay exams. Examples of clue words are: 'apply', 'discuss', 'identify', 'evaluate', 'simplify', 'differentiate', 'explain' and many others.

Note that knowing and understanding terms and concepts related to academic writing, and being able to apply them, will help you organize your thoughts and ultimately produce a better essay or paper. Important terms for you to know include:

### **Analyse**

To analyse something means to find the main ideas and how they are related and why they are important. The ultimate goal of an analysis is to breakdown the meaning of something or to solve a problem.

### **Apply**

Relate information to real-life examples; ask how information "works" in a different context.

### **Argue**

Academic argument is constructed to make a point, not to argue heatedly. The characteristics of academic argument include language that is:

- impersonal (no personal references)
- logical
- evidence-based (examples)

The purposes of academic argument are to:

- analyze an issue or a situation
- make a case for your point of view
- convince your reader or listener of the truth of something.

### **Comment on**

Commenting on something means to discuss, criticise or explain the meaning of something as completely as possible.

### **Compare**

To compare means to show both the differences and the similarities. Comparison ordinarily answers the question: What are the ways in which these events, words and people are similar?

### **Contrast**

Means compare by showing the differences. Contrast ordinarily answers the question: What are the ways in which they are different?

Note that your instructor may also mean "compare and contrast" when he or she tells you to "compare." Ask questions to clarify what is expected.

In a question of this sought, you need to try to find interesting and unexpected similarities and differences. That is what your instructor is hoping for; ideas he or she has not thought of yet.

### **Define**

In here, you are being asked to provide the exact meaning of a word, term, expression (according to a school of thought, culture, text, individual) within the argument? This basically refers to giving the formal meaning by distinguishing it from related terms. This is often a matter of giving a memorised definition.

Generally, your definition is expected to conform to other people's understanding of how the term is used within a specific discipline or area of study. Your definition must distinguish the term you are defining from all other things. (For example, although it is true that an orange is a fruit, it is not a sufficient definition of an orange. Lemons are fruits too).

A clear definition of a term enables a reader to tell whether any event or thing they might encounter falls into the category designated.

### **Describe**

Answer the questions such as: What does or did this look like, sound like, feel like?

Usually you are expected to give a clear, detailed picture of something in a description. If this instruction is vague, ask questions so you know what level of specificity is expected in your description. While the ideal description would replicate the subject/thing described exactly, you will need to get as close to it as is practical and possible and desirable.

### **Discuss**

Usually you are asked to discuss an issue or controversy. Ordinarily, you are expected to consider all sides of a question with a fairly open mind rather than taking a firm position and arguing it.

Because "discuss" is a broad term, it is a good idea to clarify with your professor.

### **Evaluate/Critique**

You are expected to answer the question: What is the value, truth or quality of this essay, book, movie, argument, etc...?

Ordinarily you are expected to consider how well something meets a certain standard. To critique a book, you might measure it against some literary or social value. You might evaluate a business presentation on the basis of the results you predict it will get.

Often you will critique parts of the whole, using a variety of criteria; for example, in critiquing another student's paper, you might consider: Where is it clear? not clear? What was interesting? Do the examples add to the paper? Is the conclusion a good one?

Be sure you know exactly which criteria you are expected to consider in the assigned evaluation.

If there are no established criteria, make sure you have carefully developed your own, and persuade the reader that you are right in your evaluation by clarifying your criteria and explaining carefully how the text or parts of the text in question measure up to them.

### **Interpret**

You are expected to answer the question: What is the meaning or the significance of this text or event, as I understand it?

You might be asked to interpret a poem, a slide on the stock market, a political event or evidence from an experiment. You are not being asked for just any possible interpretation. You are being asked for your best interpretation. So even though it is a matter of opinion, ordinarily you are expected to explain why you think as you do.

### **React**

You are expected to go beyond summarizing, interpreting and evaluating the text. You attach meaning that is not explicitly stated in the text by bringing your own experiences and prior knowledge into the reading of the text. This kind of writing allows you to develop your understanding of what you read within the context of your own life and thinking and feeling. It facilitates a real conversation between you and the text.

### **Summarize**

You are expected to:

- answer the question: What are the important points in this text?
- condense a long text into a short one
- boil away all the examples and non-essential details, leaving just the central idea and the main points.

A good summary shows your instructor that you understand what you have read, and actually clarifies it for yourself.



- A summary is almost always required preparation for deeper thinking, and is an important tool for research writing.
- If you're going to test whether you really understand main ideas, you'll need to state them in your own words as completely and clearly as possible.

### **Synthesize**

Blend information from many sources; determine which one fits well together with others.

## **4.8 Types of Essays**

Effectively writing different types of essays has become critical to academic success. Essay writing is a common school assignment, a part of standardized tests, and a requirement on college applications. Often on tests, choosing the correct type of essay to write in response to a writing prompt is key to getting the question right. Clearly, students can't afford to remain confused about types of essays.

This part of the module introduces you to the different types of essays. Carefully follow through as explanations are being made. You will realise that knowing each essay type will help give rise to knowing what is to be done exactly in each essay.

First of all, what do you understand by the term Essay? Is it possible for you to identify the types of essays?

An essay is a written composition of moderate length, exploring a particular issue or subject. A composition can also be said to be a test on how well you can express yourself in writing. In essay writing therefore, you are being tested on how well you can express yourself in writing.

There are **4** types of essays in writing namely: Narrative, Descriptive, Expository/Explanatory and Argumentative/persuasive also called Academic writing. Follow through as we try to give a few details on each one of them. In fact, you can as well try to read other sources to learn more of what is involved in each of the types of essays.

#### 4.8.1 Narrative

A narrative involves giving an account of events. It is mainly used in Fiction, creative writing, history and literature review. Narrative writing involves recounting events in a chronological manner. Narratives are mainly fictions or non-fiction (creative writing). Narratives are mainly used in Literature, history and writing stories. They may recount:

- a series of events; a report
- biography or autobiography
- historical events
- fiction or nonfiction

As the writer of a narrative, you can choose how you narrate the event. This way, you are in essence choosing how the story will be told, how the details will unfold. If you use a first-person narration style, your work will have in-your-face immediacy and be able to include all your thoughts on the happenings but will be limited to your own point of view, the first person point of view. You will use such pronouns as “*I*”, if you are narrating alone or “*We*” if you are part of a group. So, with the *first-person* point of view, a story is revealed through a narrator who is also explicitly a character within his or her own story. In a first person narrative, the narrator can create a close relationship between the reader and the writer.

The *second-person* point of view is a point of view where the audience is made a character. This is done with the use of the pronouns “you”, “your”, and “yours.” The narrator is trying to address the audience, not necessarily directly, but rather to administer more of a connection. Stories and novels in second person are comparatively rare.

If you choose to tell the story with a third-person point of view (POV), the story will unfold as if the reader is an observer of whatever is happening and can be *third-person omniscient* or *third-person limited*. With an omniscient (all-knowing) POV, the narrator tells what's happening overall. Every character or person's thoughts can be included in the telling. In the *third-person* narrative mode, characters are referred to by the narrator as “he”, “she”, or “they”. You can read more on point of view.

#### 4.8.2 Descriptive writing

This is the kind of writing that is used to describe a person, a place or a thing or event. This type writing is the kind that paints pictures with words. Descriptive writing relies on concrete sensory detail to communicate its point. There are different types of descriptive writing e.g.

- Static description describes something that is still/not moving
- Cause and Effect describes how one thing causes the effect of another

Descriptive writing can be either objective or subjective in content. A description of something contains full factual and quantifiable information about it. Such information may be personal, touching or sensory impressions and feelings. Descriptive writing appeals to the reader's senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. In descriptive writing, it is important that you use active verbs. For example, do not say: 'Someone's heart was *beating fast*', say: 'it was *thumping*, or *palpitating*, or *skipping*'. Don't say: 'The girl ran down the hall'. Say: 'The girl *skipped* and *danced* down the hall'. To bring about detail in your descriptive writing, use figurative language. Figures of speech are imaginative comparisons between two basically dissimilar things. A figure of speech may enliven a description by making the essay more visual or forceful.

#### 4.8.3 Expository/Explanatory writing

The expository essay is an informative piece of writing that presents a balanced analysis of a topic. In an expository essay, the writer explains or defines a topic, using facts, statistics, and examples. Expository writing encompasses a wide range of essay variations, such as the comparison and contrast essay, the cause and effect essay, and the "how to" or process essay. Because expository essays are based on facts and not personal feelings, writers don't reveal their emotions or write in the first person. Expository essay is an advanced descriptive writing that describes events and people in depth. It involves defining explain and expounding on an idea.

- a process
- an opinion or point of view
- event(s) and phenomena

- instructions and directions

#### **4.8.4 Argumentative Essays**

Argumentative writing is an academic writing which is also called persuasive writing. It is a rational effort to defend or refute a claim and does not have place for emotions, or anger. Most academic writing falls under this category.

Argumentative writing is done argumentatively. The writer collects all his/her points and presents them logically and constructively. The ultimate goal of an argumentative writing is to persuade the audience and convince them to accept the writer's point of view. Argumentative essays are expected to be clear and coherent. The writer must be clear about his/her argument.

To write an argumentative essay, use the following steps to help you:

- Begin by introducing the debate topic in your own words.
- Then write if you agree or disagree with the argument
- Tell people why you hold that opinion and come up with ideas and examples to back up your arguments. Try to put these ideas in an order with the most important ideas first and links between each idea so that the essay flows well.
- Think about why people might have a different opinion (objections) and try to show why they are not important or they are not true.
- Conclude with a brief summary and try to make a strong last sentence that people will remember. For example Oprah Winfrey famously wrote, " I believe the choice to be excellent begins with aligning your thoughts and words with the intention to require more from yourself." The rest of the article maybe forgotten, but that strong sentence is remembered.

## **4.9 The process of writing**

Writing is a process that involves several distinct steps, which, if not well followed may give rise to poor essay writing.

### **4.9.1 Analyse the essay prompt**

The most important step in writing an essay or research paper is to fully comprehend the essay question. An essay can be wonderfully articulated and thought out, but will still result in a poor grade if it does not adequately answer the prompt provided. Break the prompt down into two parts.

#### **4.9.2 What is the prompt *directly* asking?**

- What is the essay topic?
- What research do I need to do to fully understand the topic?
- How long does the essay need to be?

#### **4.9.3 What is the prompt *indirectly* asking?**

- Is the prompt asking for my opinion, the opinion of credible scholarly sources, or facts?
- How can I relate this essay topic to what we have covered in class?

Once these questions have been answered, you can begin constructing your essay.

#### **4.9.4 Create and write your thesis statement**

A thesis in an academic essay is usually written at the end of the introduction. It is the statement you intend to prove with the rest of the essay. So, get started your with a thesis statement that will guide your entire paper. Based on the prompt, what do you want to argue in your essay? Your thesis statement should be concise, but incorporate all the main points you would like to address in your paper. Continually refer to your thesis statement when writing your essay and make sure to never stray from your main points. A good thesis statement can be the difference between an **A** and a **B**.

#### **4.9.5 Make an outline**

An outline is an organised list of points you wish to make in your essay, in the order they make sense and should be written. Getting the thoughts together before hand makes

writing the actual essay much quicker and easier, since you know what direction you are going. Use an outline, therefore, to plan out your essay/research paper before writing it. Working from your thesis statement, plot out how you want your paper to flow and what information you want to include. This will make writing the full draft of your paper much easier

#### **4.9.6 Begin with the body, not the introduction**

Don't start with the introduction. The introduction is where some students struggle the most, so to avoid getting bogged down, create the introduction later. This will allow you to fully form your thoughts and ideas and come back and integrate the main ideas into your introduction.

#### **4.9.7 Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence**

Divide your thought into paragraphs. Each point in on your outline should be in its own paragraph. A paragraph should contain a minimum of 3 sentences to stand alone. Ensure that each paragraph has a topic sentence, which expresses the main idea of the paragraph. Each paragraph should contain quotes or contextual information to defend your topic sentence and thesis statement. Remember a topic sentence can be anywhere in the paragraph. As you progress in your writing, try to follow a pattern of *claim* followed by *evidence* and then *impact*. Note that the claim is a statement which is then supported by evidence such as references or quotations in context and then the impact in an intelligent review of how or why that claim is important in the context of the essay. The impact then becomes the claim of the following paragraph, and so on.

#### **4.9.8 Use credible sources**

Quotes and contextual information are important for establishing credibility and supporting your argument, so make sure that the quotes and information are coming from credible scholarly sources. Examples of scholarly sources include academic journals, peer-reviewed articles, textbooks, books by accredited authors, and articles. Examples of unacceptable scholarly sources are magazine articles, open forum submissions, encyclopaedias entries, and unverified online sources. If you are looking for credible sources to use within your essay, check out *Google Scholar*.

#### **4.9.9 Do not fake it**

Lecturers are not dumb. They know when you do not fully understand the essay topic and when you are rambling to make it longer. Do not use fluff to bulk up your essay. Instead, make sure that every sentence adds substance to your work. If it isn't absolutely necessary, cut it out. Most lecturers would rather have a well-written essay that does not quite meet the length requirement than a paper that meets the requirement, but is 80 percent fluff.

#### **4.9.10 Conclude your essay**

Your conclusion should always begin by restating your thesis statement. This is your chance to tie all of your main points together and go out with a bang. A good conclusion will address the main arguments of each body paragraph in a succinct way and thoroughly prove your thesis statement.

#### **4.9.11 Proofread, then proofread again**

Reviewing is critical to composing a great essay. Some lecturers will not even finish reading essays if they are not grammatically sound or riddled with spelling errors. Here are a few ways to make your essay/research paper more academically acceptable and better overall.

- Take out all contractions (aren't, don't, couldn't, etc.). This will make your paper longer and is more appropriate for academic writing.
- Print out your paper, read it, and mark it up. You will notice more errors when reading it this way than on a computer screen.
- Have friends or parents read it. A second set of eyes can catch any mistakes you missed.
- Read it out loud. This will help with grammar mistakes. If it sounds wrong, it probably is.

Essays and research papers can be a challenge for writers of all skill levels, but these writing tips can make the process a little easier and a lot less daunting.

### **4.9.12 Reflection**

Think about many times you have scored quite low in your assignment. Do you think there is a lot you have not followed with regard to essay writing?

### **4.9.13 Evaluation**

Read through the unit again and write an essay on the following topic:  
“Women are their own betrayers when it comes to matters of gender based violence.” With evidence, argue for or against this assertion.

### **4.10 Summary**

The unit has exposed you to continuous writing. Different concepts concerning writing have been highlighted in the unit. You must have learned of academic writing, types of essays, transitional words, coherence in paragraphs, topic sentence, thesis statement and many aspects relating to academic essay writing. You are now ready to produce a clearly argued out paper at this stage.



## UNIT 5 STYLE IN WRITING

### 5.0 Introduction

This Unit introduces you to style of writing and will help you recognize potential problems in your writing style and learn to correct them. As you read through work, ensure that you clearly understand what style is and how you would achieve clarity in writing.

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit, you should be able to:**

- State what is meant by style in writing
- Demonstrate appropriateness in academic essay writing
- Demonstrate ways of showing clarity in essay writing

### 5.1 Style in Writing

The style in writing can be defined as the way a writer writes and it is the technique which an individual author uses in his writing. It varies from author to author and depends upon one's syntax, word choice, and tone. It can also be described as a voice that readers listen to when they read the work of a writer.

Have you ever wondered what your lecturers mean when they write “wordy” or “awkward” in the margins of your paper? Do you sometimes sense that your sentences could be stronger, clearer, shorter, or more effective? Do you often feel that you know what you mean but do not know how to say it? If you sometimes get feedback from your lecturers that you need to “tighten your prose” or “look at your word choice,” you may need to work on your writing **style**—the way you put together a sentence or group of sentences.

A writer's style is what sets his or her writing apart and makes it unique. Style is the way writing is dressed up (or down) to fit the specific context, purpose, or audience. Word choice, sentence fluency, and the writer's voice — all contribute to the style of a piece of

writing. How a writer chooses words and structures sentences to achieve a certain effect is also an element of style. When Thomas Paine wrote “These are the times that try men’s souls,” he arranged his words to convey a sense of urgency and desperation. Had he written “These are bad times,” it’s likely he wouldn’t have made such an impact!

Style is not a matter of right and wrong but of what is appropriate for a particular setting and audience. Part of the problem with style is that it is subjective. Different readers have different ideas about what constitutes good writing style, and so do different instructors and different academic departments.

## **5.2 Say what you mean**

First, remember that your goal in academic writing is not to sound intelligent, but to get your intelligent point across. You may be reading complicated textbooks and articles, and even when they don’t make sense to you, they all sound smart. So when you have to write a paper, you may try to imitate this type of writing. But sometimes when you imitate the style, you miss the most important goal—communicating and being understood. Your lecturer can’t read your mind—he/she can only read your paper. And if he cannot understand what you are saying, he is going to have trouble giving you credit for it. Remember that the most important goal in every paper is to get your point across as straightforwardly as possible.

### **5.3.2 Say it in the appropriate tone**

Tone refers to the writer’s voice in a written work. It is what the reader or hearer might perceive as the writer’s attitude, bias, or personality. Your tone in academic writing must be formal. Ensure that you avoid slang, clichés and contractions. Phrases such as; “*clear the air*”, “*so to speak*”, “*hear their spin on it*”, have no place in academic writing. Make sure you maintain a formal scholarly voice by avoiding colloquialisms. In other words, try to be as formal as possible. See in the subsequent examples on how you can improve formality.

**Informal:**

*When I got my students to think science was wicked cool, their test scores went through the roof.*

**Formal:**

*When I was able to engage my students and get them interested in science, their test scores improved significantly.*

**5.3.3 How to improve**

To make your writing more formal, do the following: structure your writing into paragraphs with clear topic sentence. Avoid contractions such as *didn't, it'll*. Instead, use full forms e.g. *did not, it will*. Furthermore, choose formal vocabulary instead of informal vocabulary and choose also language which is less intense and less emotional. You may also wish to note that wide and deep reading would help improve your writing. Read novels, newspapers, magazines, and scholarly works. As you read these materials, pay attention to powerful word choices. Then write, and write, as much as you can, and formally of course, and make sure you use words that will enliven your language expressions. Remember also that abbreviations must be spelt out in full when first used, the only exceptions being when the acronym is better known than the full name (BBC, ITV or NATO for example).

**5.3.4 Wordiness**

This term is used to cover a couple of style problems that involve using more words than you absolutely need to say something. Especially when we talk, we use a lot of little “filler” words that don’t actually have anything to add to the meaning of our sentences. In writing, these filler words and phrases become more obvious and act as delays in getting the reader to your point. If you have enough delays in your sentence, your readers might get frustrated. They might even start skimming your paper, which seems a shame after all of your efforts to communicate with them.

## 5.4 Elements of style

Many elements of writing contribute to an author’s style, but three of the most important are *word choice*, *sentence fluency*, and *voice*.

### 5.4.1 Word choice

To be a good writer, you need to be concise and precise, weeding out unnecessary words and choosing the exact word to convey meaning. Precise words — active verbs, concrete nouns, specific adjectives — help the reader visualize the sentence. Good writers use adjectives sparingly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work.

Good writers also choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. Polysyllabic words, alliteration, and consonance can be used to create sentences that roll off the tongue. Onomatopoeia and short, staccato words can be used to break up the rhythm of a sentence. So make sure you have good diction if you are to transmit intended information.

### 5.4.2 Sentence fluency

Note that *Sentence fluency* is the flow and rhythm of phrases and sentences. Good writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects. They use parallel structures within sentences and paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also know how to avoid monotony by varying their sentence structures. Good writers also arrange their ideas within a sentence for greatest effect. They avoid loose sentences, deleting extraneous words and rearranging their ideas for effect. Many students initially write with a looser oral style, adding words on to the end of a sentence in the order they come to mind. This rambling style is often described as a “*word dump*” where everything in a student’s mind is dumped onto the paper in no particular order. There is nothing wrong with a *word dump as a starting point*: the advantage of writing over speaking is that writers can return to their words, rethink them, and revise them for effect. Tighter, more readable style results when writers choose their words carefully, delete redundancies, make vague words more specific, and use subordinate clauses and phrases to rearrange their ideas for the greatest effect.

### **5.4.3 Voice**

Because voice is difficult to measure reliably, it is often left out of scoring formulas for writing tests. Yet *voice* is an essential element of style that reveals the writer's personality. A writer's voice can be impersonal or chatty, authoritative or reflective, objective or passionate, serious or funny.

## **5.5 Formal Writing Style**

### **5.5.1 Complexity**

You must have noticed that written language is relatively more complex than spoken language. Written texts can be said to be lexically dense compared to spoken language and have proportionately more lexical words than grammatical ones. Longer sentences are also likely to be more prevalent in formal writing. Owing to the aforesaid, you need to be as thorough as possible with your approach to each topic when you are using a formal style. Each main point needs to be introduced, elaborated and concluded appropriately.

### **5.5.2 Objectivity**

Being objective suggests that you are concerned about facts and not influenced by personal feelings or biases. Make sure you state main points confidently and offer full support arguments. A formal writing style shows a limited range of emotions and avoids emotive punctuation such as exclamation points, ellipsis, etc., unless they are being cited from another source.

### **5.5.3 Use of Third Person**

Formal writing is not a personal writing style. The formal writer is disconnected from the topic and does not use the first person point of view (I or we) or second person (you).

## **5.6 Improving Sentence Clarity**

If you're having sentence clarity problems in your papers, this handout might be just what you need. There are many strategies for improving the clarity of your sentences and your papers.

### 5.6.1 Go from old to new information

Introduce your readers to the "big picture" first by giving them information they already know. Then they can link what's familiar to the new information you give them. As that new information becomes familiar, it too becomes old information that can link to newer information.

The following example sentence is clear and understandable because it uses old information to lead to new information:

*Every semester after final exams are over, I'm faced with the problem of what to do with books of lecture notes (new information). They (old) might be useful someday, but they just keep piling up on my bookcase (new). Someday, it (old) will collapse under the weight of information I might never need.*

Here is a sentence that is not as clear. It moves from new information to old information:

*Lately, most movies I've seen have been merely second-rate entertainment, but occasionally there are some with worthwhile themes. The rapid disappearance of the Indian culture (new) is the topic of a recent movie (old) I saw.*

Did you find the second sentence hard to read or understand? If so, it could be because the old information comes late in the sentence after the new information. A clearer version that moves from old information to new information might look like this:

Lately, most movies I've seen have been merely second-rate entertainment, but occasionally there are some with worthwhile themes. One recent movie (old) I saw was about the rapid disappearance of the Indian culture- (*new*)

### 5.6.2 Use of Transitional words

There are many words in English that cue our readers to relationships between sentences, joining sentences together. Look out for various Transitional Words (Connecting Words).

You should be able to find such words as *nonetheless*, *and*, *however*, *therefore*, *in addition*, *also*, *but*, *moreover*, *yet* etc. See how some of these have been exemplified in the subsequent example.

I like autumn, *yet* autumn is a sad time of the year, too. The leaves turn bright shades of red *and* the weather is mild, *but* I can't help thinking ahead to the winter *and* the ice storms that will surely blow through here. *In addition*, that will be the season of chapped faces, too many layers of clothes to put on *and* days when I'll have to shovel heaps of snow from my car's windshield.

### 5.6.3 Be careful about placement of subordinate clauses

Avoid interrupting the main clause with a subordinate clause if the interruption will cause confusion:

*Clear (subordinate clause at the end):*

Industrial spying is increasing rapidly *because of the growing use of computers to store and process corporate information*.

*Clear (subordinate clause at the beginning):*

*Because of the growing use of computers to store and process corporate information*, industrial spying is increasing rapidly.

*Not as clear (subordinate clause embedded in the middle):*

Industrial spying, *because of the growing use of computers to store and process corporate information*, is increasing rapidly.

### 5.6.4 Use the active voice

Sentences in the active voice are usually easier to understand than those in the passive because the **active-voice constructions** indicate clearly the performer of the action expressed in the verb. In addition, changing from passive voice to active often results in a more concise sentence. So use active voice unless you have good reason to use the passive. For example, the passive is useful when you don't want to call attention to the

doer; when the doer is obvious, unimportant, or unknown; or when passive voice is the conventional style among your readers.

*Clear (active):*

The committee decided to postpone the vote.

*Not as clear (passive):*

A decision was reached to postpone the vote.

#### **5.6.5 Use parallel constructions**

When you have a series of words, phrases, or clauses, put them in parallel form (similar grammatical construction) so that the reader can identify the linking relationship more easily and clearly.

*Clear (parallel):*

In Florida, where the threat of hurricanes is an annual event, we learned that it is important (1) to become aware of the warning signs, (2) to know what precautions to take, and (3) to decide when to seek shelter.

*Not as clear (not parallel):*

In Florida, where the threat of hurricanes is an annual event, we learned that it is important (1) to become aware of the warning signs. (2) There are precautions to take and (3) deciding when to take shelter is important.

In the second sentence, notice how the string of "things to be aware of in Florida" does not create a parallel structure. Also, notice how much more difficult it is for a reader to follow the meaning of the second sentence compared to the first one.

#### **5.6.6 Avoid noun strings**

Try not to string nouns together one after the other because a series of nouns is difficult to understand. One way to revise a string of nouns is to change one noun to a verb.



*Unclear (string of nouns):*

This report explains our investment growth stimulation projects.

*Clearer:*

This report explains our projects to stimulate growth in investments.

#### **5.6.7 Avoid overusing noun forms of verbs**

Use verbs when possible rather than noun forms known as "**nominalizations**."

*Unclear (use of nominalization):*

The implementation of the plan was successful.

*Clearer:*

The plan was implemented successfully.

#### **5.6.8 Avoid multiple negatives**

Use affirmative forms rather than several negatives because multiple negatives are difficult to understand.

*Unclear (multiple negatives, passive):*

Less attention is paid to commercials that lack human interest stories than to other kinds of commercials.

*Clearer:*

People pay more attention to commercials with human interest stories than to other kinds of commercials.

#### **5.6.9 Choose action verbs over forms of *to be***

When possible, avoid using forms of *be* as the main verbs in your sentences and clauses. This problem tends to accompany nominalization (see above). Instead of using a *be* verb,

focus on the actions you wish to express, and choose the appropriate verbs. In the following example, two ideas are expressed: (1) that there is a difference between television and newspaper news reporting and (2) the nature of that difference. The revised version expresses these two main ideas in the two main verbs.

*Unclear (overuse of be verbs):*

*One difference between television news reporting and the coverage provided by newspapers is the time factor between the actual happening of an event and the time it takes to be reported. The problem is that instantaneous coverage is physically impossible for newspapers.*

*Clearer:*

*Television news reporting differs from that of newspapers in that television, unlike newspapers, can provide instantaneous coverage of events as they happen.*

#### **5.6.10 Avoid unclear pronoun references**

You need to be sure that the pronouns you use refer clearly to a noun in the current or previous sentence. If the pronoun refers to a noun that has been implied but not stated, you can clarify the reference by explicitly using that noun.

*This, that, these, those, he, she, it, they, and we* are useful pronouns for referring back to something previously mentioned. Be sure, however, that what you are referring to is clear.

*Unclear (unclear pronoun reference):*

*With the spread of globalized capitalism, American universities increasingly follow a corporate fiscal model, tightening budgets and hiring temporary contract employees as teachers. This has prompted faculty and adjunct instructors at many schools to join unions as a way of protecting job security and benefits.*

*Clearer:*

*With the spread of globalized capitalism, American universities increasingly follow a corporate fiscal model, tightening budgets and hiring temporary contract employees as teachers. This trend has prompted faculty and adjunct instructors at many schools to join unions as a way of protecting job security and benefits.*

*Unclear (unclear pronoun reference):*

*Michelo worked in a national forest last summer, which may be her career choice.*

*Clearer:*

*Michelo worked in a national forest last summer; forest management may be her career choice.*

## **5.7 Reflection**

Imagine you are writing an essay, what would you do to make it easier your the reader to follow?

## **5.8 Evaluation**

What is style in writing and what constitutes good writing style?

Clearly state how you would improve sentence clarity.

## **5.9 Summary**

In this unit, we have looked at style in writing and formality. We have also looked at how we can improve clarity in our writing. We hope you have gained insight as you read through the unit.

## **UNIT 6: LISTENING AND SPEAKING**

### **6.0 Introduction**

This unit introduces you to listening and speaking. We may ask a question you a question as to whether you know what listening is? It is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. To listen successfully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what the speaker means when they use particular words in particular ways on particular occasions and not simply understand the words themselves. Listening is a skill that many people find difficult even in the mother tongue. The amount of concentration one can bring to a listening activity depends on one's attention span, and the stimulus given. Listening is not a passive skill. We cannot discuss listening in isolation from the other language skill of speaking for the two make up what is termed as oral communication.

### **Learning outcomes**

**By the end of this unit you are expected to:**

- State the purpose of listening
- Discuss how to develop effective listening skills
- Identify tips for listening and speaking
- Identify ways to improve speaking
- Comment on steps to active listening.
- Identify barriers to listening
- Discuss different types of listening

### **6.1 Listening Skills**

Listeners must first hear what is said. Listening skills involve identifying and selecting relevant points recognized as having meaning; that are understood and held in short-term memory. These can be related to what has gone before and to what comes after. Any information considered important is selected and stored for future reference in the long term memory.

Decoding (understanding) a message is generally easier for the listener if a person is speaking rather than reading something out loud. In addition the speaker's facial expressions, and the stress placed on words help the listener to understand the message.

Developing effective listening skills involves two specific steps (Hartley & Bruckman, 2002). These are:

- To develop the ability to recognize and deal with barriers that prevents you listening with full attention.
- To develop and use behaviors which help you to listen. Such behaviors can also serve to let the other person know that you are giving them your full attention.

Listening is the absorption of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain. Listening leads to the understanding of facts and ideas. To listen is to pay attention, or sticking to the task at hand in spite of distractions. It requires concentration, which is the focusing of your thoughts upon one particular problem.

A person who incorporates listening with concentration is actively listening. Active listening is a method of responding to another that encourages communication.

Active listening is composed of six distinct components:

- Hearing: this is the psychological process of receiving sound and/or other stimuli.
- Attending: The conscious and unconscious process of focusing attention on external stimuli.
- Interpreting: The process of decoding the symbols or behavior attended to.
- Evaluating: The process of deciding the value of the information to the receiver.
- Remembering: The process of placing the appropriate information into short-term or long-term storage.
- Responding: The process of giving feedback to the source and/or other receivers.

## **6.2 Barriers to Listening**

The following list identifies just some possible barriers to effective listening;

- Sources of noise
- Forming a judgment or evaluation before we understand what is being said, or 'jumping to conclusions'.

- Hearing what we want to hear.
- Tuning out a point of view that differs from our own.
- Formulating and rehearsing our response.
- Being inattentive - thinking about something else entirely.
- Having a closed mind- you do not want to hear what the person has to say.
- Feeling anxious or self-conscious.
- Judging the person, either positively or negatively.
- Subjective biases based on ignorance or prejudice.
- Cultural issues, e.g. listening to the differences in pronunciation of different accent, rather than the content of the message.
- Excessive and incessant talking or interrupting.

It is important that such barriers to listening are recognized and dealt with. With developing awareness, we can have more control over those barriers that are internal to ourselves, and can adopt and use more helpful listening behaviors.

### **6.3 Effective Listening Tips**

Listening effectively is hearing and understanding what a speaker is saying and how it applies to you, and then remembering it for future use and evaluation. There are ways to improve your listening skills for lectures.

The following is a list of some basic techniques:

Recognize how ideas are organized. Lectures usually begin with some type of introduction, followed by a thesis statement which is supported by additional information. Most professors bring closure to their lecture by summarizing what they have covered. Learn to identify the lecture style that is used by your lecturer.

1. Become involved in what is being said. Be an avid listener. Constantly analyze what is being said.
2. Cut through (or screen out) distractions such as:
  - Background noise
  - unusual accents, dialects, and language mistakes

- speaker disorganization, emotion, or habits
  - unrelated material
  - your own inner voice
3. Organise statements into main points and supporting reasons. Using an outline form may be helpful.
  4. Discriminate between relevancies and irrelevancies. Remember that not all information is important.
  5. Maintain an active body state. Keeping alert and having eye-contact with the speaker will help you listen more effectively.

In order to improve your listening skills, you will need to practice using the suggested techniques until they become automatic

## **6.4 Types of Listening**

Here are six types of listening, starting with basic discrimination of sounds and ending in deep communication.

### **6.4.1 Discriminative listening**

Discriminative listening is the most basic type of listening, whereby the difference between difference sounds is identified. If you cannot hear differences, then you cannot make sense of the meaning that is expressed by such differences.

We learn to discriminate between sounds within our own language early, and later are unable to discriminate between the phonemes of other languages. This is one reason why a person from one country finds it difficult to speak another language perfectly, as they are unable distinguish the subtle sounds that are required in that language.

Likewise, a person who cannot hear the subtleties of emotional variation in another person's voice will be less likely to be able to discern the emotions the other person is experiencing.

Listening is a visual as well as auditory act, as we communicate much through body language. We thus also need to be able to discriminate between muscle and skeletal movements that signify different meanings.

### **6.4.2 Comprehension listening**

The next step beyond discriminating between different sound and sights is to make sense of them. To comprehend the meaning requires first having a lexicon of words at our fingertips and also all rules of grammar and syntax by which we can understand what others are saying.

The same is true, of course, for the visual components of communication, and an understanding of body language helps us understand what the other person is really meaning.

In communication, some words are more important and some less so, and comprehension often benefits from extraction of key facts and items from a long spiel.

Comprehension listening is also known as content listening, informative listening and full listening.

### **6.4.3 Critical listening**

Critical listening is listening in order to evaluate and judge, forming opinion about what is being said. Judgment includes assessing strengths and weaknesses, agreement and approval.

This form of listening requires significant real-time cognitive effort as the listener analyzes what is being said, relating it to existing knowledge and rules, whilst simultaneously listening to the ongoing words from the speaker.



#### **6.4.4 Biased listening**

Biased listening happens when the person hears only what they want to hear, typically misinterpreting what the other person says based on the stereotypes and other biases that they have. Such biased listening is often very evaluative in nature.

#### **4.4.5 Evaluative listening**

In evaluative listening, or critical listening, we make judgments about what the other person is saying. Evaluative listening is also said to be judgmental or interpretive listening. We seek to assess the truth of what is being said. We also judge what they say against our values, assessing them as good or bad, worthy or unworthy.

Evaluative listening is particularly pertinent when the other person is trying to persuade us, perhaps to change our behavior and maybe even to change our beliefs. Within this, we also discriminate between subtleties of language and comprehend the inner meaning of what is said. Typically also we weigh up the pros and cons of an argument, determining whether it makes sense logically as well as whether it is helpful to us.

#### **6.4.6 Appreciative listening**

In appreciative listening, we seek certain information which will appreciate, for example that which helps meet our needs and goals. We use appreciative listening when we are listening to good music, poetry or maybe even the stirring words of a great leader.

#### **6.4.7 Sympathetic listening**

In sympathetic listening we care about the other person and show this concern in the way we pay close attention and express our sorrow for their ills and happiness at their joys.

#### **6.4.8 Empathetic listening**

When we listen empathetically, we go beyond sympathy to seek a truer understand how others are feeling. This requires excellent discrimination and close attention to the nuances

of emotional signals. When we are being truly empathetic, we actually feel what they are feeling.

In order to get others to expose these deep parts of themselves to us, we also need to demonstrate our empathy in our demeanor towards them, asking sensitively and in a way that encourages self-disclosure.

#### **6.4.9 Therapeutic listening**

In therapeutic listening, the listener has a purpose of not only empathizing with the speaker but also to use this deep connection in order to help the speaker understand, change or develop in some way.

This not only happens when you go to see a therapist but also in many social situations, where friends and family seek to both diagnose problems from listening and also to help the speaker cure themselves, perhaps by some cathartic process. This also happens in work situations, where managers, HR people, trainers and coaches seek to help employees learn and develop.

#### **6.4.10 Dialogic listening**

The word 'dialogue' stems from the Greek words 'dia', meaning 'through' and 'logos' meaning 'words'. Thus dialogic listening means learning through conversation and an engaged interchange of ideas and information in which we actively seek to learn more about the person and how they think.

#### **6.4.11 Relationship listening**

Sometimes the most important factor in listening is in order to develop or sustain a relationship. This is why lovers talk for hours and attend closely to what each other has to say when the same words from someone else would seem to be rather boring.

Relationship listening is also important in areas such as negotiation and sales, where it is helpful if the other person likes you and trusts you.

## **6.5 Speaking**

Speaking refers to the action of conveying information or expressing one's feelings.

### **6.5.1 Types of Speaking**

Speaking is the second of the four language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. It involves talking or giving speeches.

In an informative speech, a speaker communicates knowledge about a specific topic to an audience. A speaker should possess a thorough knowledge of the subject about which they are speaking in their informative speech. Informative speeches can be about objectives, events, processes or concepts. The more specific and focused you are on the topic, the easier it is for you as a researcher and writer and for your audience to understand the topic.

In a persuasive speech, a speaker gives a persuasive speech to convince the audience to take his/her position regarding a certain topic. A persuasive speech might contain a call to action, whereby a speaker attempts to persuade members of the audience to perform a certain action or convince the audience to adopt a specific point of view on a certain topic. Political speeches are examples of persuasive speeches. By appealing to emotions through reference to freedom and patriotism, politicians seek to gain the audience's vote. Speaker emphasizes with the audience to demonstrate that he is like them and that he or she understands how they feel and what they think.

Special occasion speech tends to be shorter speeches. They are commonly addressed to a particular audience. Depending on the context, special occasion speeches may be to remember, to praise or to humorously tease. They may contain a use of pathos that aims at to convince the audience to be happy, possibly by being comedic. However, they use a pathos intended to make the audience reflective as in a speech given at a memorial service.

## **6.6 Ways of improving Speaking**

You are unlikely to learn to speak a new language perfectly, but perfection should not be your goal. Your main goal should be effective communication. Here are the steps I take when trying to improve my oral skills:

### **6.6.1 Listen a lot**

You must listen a lot a language every day, and wherever you have time just listen and listen. You should start with short, easier content and graduate to longer more interesting content. Just keep doing it. Ideally listen to material where you also have the transcript so that you have a better chance of understanding it.

### **6.6.2 Read a lot**

Reading, and especially saving words and phrases is the best way to increase your vocabulary. To express yourself you need words. To communicate you need to understand what the other person is saying, and this requires even more words. The combination of reading and speaking will enable your brain to become used to the new language, and this will build up your potential to speak well.

### **6.6.3 Imitate**

Listening when combined with reading will fill your brain with phrases you recognize and will eventually be able to use. You may want to imitate out loud the odd word or phrase, even as you are listening. This is sometimes referred to as shadowing. But you need even more practice at getting the words out. Listen a few minutes to content for which you have the transcript, and where you like the voice and the way the person speaks. After listening, read the same text out loud trying to imitate the way the person speaks. Focus on the rhythm and intonation. Don't worry about words that you mispronounce, get the rhythm and flow. Do this over and over.

### **6.6.4 Write**

Writing is a great way to start producing the language. You may not really feel like writing much at first. Dictation is a great way to get into the writing habit. You will only be writing out the words and phrases that you have saved. Hopefully that will give you the confidence to write more. The main thing, however, is to write to get used to expressing things in the language, without the pressure of speaking with someone.

### **6.6.5 Record yourself**

Use of words is more important than pronunciation. However, we all like to work on getting closer to the pronunciation of the native speaker, although we won't quite get there. In order to work on pronunciation, you can practice recording yourself every now and again, perhaps once or twice a month but not too often. Find content of interest, listen to the audio, then read the same content out loud and record yourself. Listen for the differences. This is your chance to work on specific sounds. It is important to notice the words that you mispronounce and then try to notice these sounds when listening to the language. If you can notice them, you will have a better chance of pronouncing them correctly.

### **6.6.6 Speak**

If you can find someone to speak to where you live, that is great. You should always try to find native speakers to speak with. Don't worry about your mistakes; even encourage your partners not to correct you while you speak. The main thing, however, is to speak more and more, ideally on subjects of mutual interest to you and your native speaker partner.

### **6.7 Reflection**

Think of times you have not listened and then you are told to make a comment on what was being said. How have you fared in those times?

### **6.8 Activity**

Discuss various types of listening discussed in this unit.
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### **6.9 Summary**

This unit has discussed listening and speaking and has brought out what is involved in each case. You are now ready for the subsequent unit. If there are things you did not clearly understand, kindly go back in the unit before you go to the next one.

## **UNIT 7: STUDY SKILLS**

### **7.0 Introduction**

This unit is designed to help you get acquainted to various study skills and , the concept of study, study tips, reading and reading strategies, Strategies for improving comprehension and note taking.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**As you study and work through this unit, you are expected to:**

- explain the concept of study
- mention different study tips
- outline different reading strategies
- state the difference between note making and note taking

### **7.1 Concept of Study**

Do you exactly what the concept of study is? The concept of study is the devotion of time and attention to gaining knowledge of an academic subject, especially by means of books.

### **7.2 Study Tips**

Do you know any study tips at all? Write the down any study tips you are aware of on a piece of paper. Below are some of the study tips that you may use:

#### **7.2.1 Give yourself enough time to study**

Don't leave it until the last minute. While some students do seem to thrive on last-minute cramming, it's widely accepted that (for most of us) this is not the best way to approach an exam. To help sort out your time management, set up a timetable for your study. Write down how many exams you have and the days on which you have to sit them. Then organize your study accordingly. You may want to give some exams more study time than others, so find a balance that you feel comfortable with.

### **7.2.2 Organize your study space**

Make sure you organize enough space to spread your text books and notes out. Have enough light, and a comfortable chair. No playing any computer/cell phone games. Get rid of all distractions and make sure you feel comfortable and be able to focus as possible. For some people, this may mean almost complete silence, for others, background music helps. Some of us need everything completely tidy and organized in order to concentrate, while others thrive in a more cluttered environment. Think about what works for you, and take the time to get it right.

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Make sure you have enough space to spread your textbooks and notes out. Have you got enough light? Is your chair comfortable? Are your computer games out of sight?

### **7.2.4 Use flow charts and diagrams**

Visual aids can be really helpful when revising. At the start of a topic, challenge yourself to write down everything you already know about a topic - and then highlight where the gaps lie. Closer to the exam, condense your revision notes into one-page diagrams. Getting your ideas down in this brief format can then help you to quickly recall everything you need to know during the exam.

### **7.2.5 Practice on old exams**

One of the most effective ways to prepare for exams is to practice taking past versions. This helps you get used to the format of the questions, and - if you time yourself - can

also be good practice for making sure you spend the right amount of time on each section.

### **7.2.6 Explain your answers to others**

Parents and little brothers and sisters don't have to be annoying around exam time. Use them to your advantage. Explain an answer to a question to them. That will help you to get it clear in your head, and also to highlight any areas where you need more work.

### **7.2.7 Organize study groups with friends**

Get together with friends for a study session. You may have questions that they have the answers to and vice versa. As long as you make sure you stay focused on the topic for an agreed amount of time, this can be one of the most effective ways to challenge yourself.

### **7.2.8 Take regular breaks**

While you may think it's best to study for as many hours as possible, this can actually be counterproductive. If you were training for a marathon, you wouldn't try and run 24 hours a day. Likewise, studies have shown that for long-term retention of knowledge, taking regular breaks really helps.

Everyone's different, so develop a study routine that works for you. If you study better in the morning, start early before taking a break at lunchtime. Or, if you're more productive at nighttime, take a larger break earlier on so you're ready to settle down come evening.

Try not to feel guilty about being out enjoying the sunshine instead of hunched over your textbooks. Remember Vitamin D is important for a healthy brain.

### **7.2.9 Eat enough food**

You may feel like you deserve a eat, or that you don't have time to cook, but what you eat can really have an impact on energy levels and focus, so keep away from junk food. Keep your body and brain well-fueled by choosing nutritious foods that have been proven to aid concentration and memory, such as fish, nuts, seeds, yogurt and blueberries. The



same applies on exam day - eat a good meal before the test, based on foods that will provide a slow release of energy throughout. Sugar may seem appealing, but your energy levels will crash an hour later.

### **7.2.10 Plan your exam day**

Make sure you get everything ready well in advance of the exam - don't leave it to the day before to suddenly realize you don't know the way, or what you're supposed to bring. Check all the rules and requirements, and plan your route and journey time. If possible, do a test run of the trip. If not, write down clear directions. Work out how long it will take to get there - then add on some extra time. You really don't want to arrive having had to run halfway or feeling frazzled from losing your way. You could also make plans to travel to the exam with friends or classmates, as long as you know they're likely to be punctual.

### **7.2.11 Drink plenty of water**

As a final tip, remember that being well hydrated is essential for your brain to work at its best. Make sure you keep drinking plenty of water throughout your revision, and also on the exam day.

## **7.3 Reading and Reading Strategies**

Comprehension, or extracting meaning from what you are reading, is the ultimate goal of reading. Usually students take this for granted and may not appreciate the reading comprehension skills required. The process of comprehension is both interactive and strategic. Rather than passively reading text, you must analyze it, internalize it and make it your own.

In order to read with comprehension, you must be able to read with some proficiency and then receive explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies.

In order to learn comprehension strategies, students need modeling, practice, and feedback. The key comprehension strategies are described below.

## **7.4 Using Prior Knowledge/Previewing**

When you preview text, you tap into what you already know that will help you to understand the text you are about to read. This provides a framework for any new information you read.

## **7.5 Predicting**

When you make predictions about the text you are about to read, it sets up your expectations based on your prior knowledge about similar topics. As you read, you may mentally revise your prediction as you gain more information. Identifying the Main Idea and Summarization - Identifying the main idea and summarizing requires that you determine what is important and then put it in your own words. Implicit in this process is trying to understand the author's purpose in writing the text. Questioning - Asking and answering questions about text is another strategy that helps you focus on the meaning of text. Your lecturer can help by modeling both the process of asking good questions and strategies for finding the answers in the text.

## **7.6 Making Inferences**

In order to make inferences about something that is not explicitly stated in the text, you must learn to draw on prior knowledge and recognize clues in the text itself.

## **7.7 Visualizing**

Studies have shown that students who visualize while reading have better recall than those who do not (Pressley, 1977). Readers can take advantage of illustrations that are embedded in the text or create their own mental images or drawings when reading text without illustrations.

## **7.8 Comprehension**

Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. To be able to accurately understand written material, you need to be able to:

- decode what you read;
- make connections between what you read and what you already know; and
- think deeply about what they you read. In comprehension you need to have sufficient vocabulary, or knowing the meanings of enough words. If you have strong comprehension, then you are able to draw conclusions about what you read – what is important, what is a fact, what caused an event to happen, which characters are funny. Thus comprehension involves combining reading with thinking and reasoning.

### **7.8.1 Strategies for Improving Comprehension**

Reading is a skill that children develop throughout each new grade. While many students master the mechanics of reading and have the ability to process information, many children have difficulty with reading comprehension. Students with learning disabilities typically lack basic strategies that good readers use. Strategies play a key role in helping all children learn and perform certain reading tasks. Two useful strategies for effective reading comprehension are metacognitive awareness and cognitive strategies. Metacognitive awareness is a reader’s ability to self-evaluate their own learning process and what is necessary to achieve desired results in a specific learning task. Cognitive strategies are specific, useful tools in helping students improve reading comprehension.

When assigned a challenging reading passage, there are three phases that improve comprehension: pre-reading (the reader creates a plan or strategy for reading a specific passage), *reading* (the reader applies specific strategies to clarify understanding of the text and monitors his/her own understanding) and post-reading (the reader reflects on the passage, encodes key details into long-term memory, and makes inferences about the passage). Fortunately, there are specific strategies that children who struggle with reading comprehension can utilize to improve reading comprehension at each of these three phases.

### **7.8.2 Direct Instruction**

The most effective strategy shown to improve reading comprehension in students, especially those with learning disabilities, is direct instruction coupled with strategy instruction. Direct instruction in reading comprehension involves the teacher providing a step-by-step strategy and modeling effective strategies to understand a particular reading passage. It includes information on why and when to use the strategy and provides systematic practice for students using different examples. The teacher engages in dialogue with the students by asking prompting questions and encouraging students to ask questions. A transition is made from teacher-centered instruction toward independent reading.

### **7.8.3 Strategy Instruction**

Strategy instruction is a student-centered approach that involves teaching a plan or variety of strategies to identify patterns in words and key passages, as well as identify the main idea in a text. The teacher sequences different tasks for the students starting with easy and progressing to challenging. An example of an easier strategy would be you as a teacher telling his/her learners to listen to a story and choose the best title among a list of possible titles. An example of a more challenging task would be for the learner to independently read a passage and answer the question at the end, which may ask him/her to draw an inference to the context. Upon completion, you should go back to the beginning of the story and ask a series of prompting questions aloud to help the learners determine the answer to the question at the end of the story.

Strategic instruction provides learners with very specific and systematic actions for reading comprehension. For example, a series of short activities, such as reviewing vocabulary from a previous lesson followed by highlighting new words in a passage and blending them together, are done to specifically target skills to improve reading comprehension.

#### **7.8.4 Considerations**

It is important for you to refrain from providing learners with the right answer to a reading comprehension question, but rather re-word an explanation, ask prompting questions or suggest strategies that students can use to derive the answer on their own. Encourage children to re-read passages they don't understand and look for context clues to help them effectively process the text. Students must master each step in the reading process to best master reading comprehension skills.

#### **7.8.5 Note Taking and Making**

When you attend lectures, your instructors will provide you with a lot of information some of which is essential and the other non-essential. Sorting out these two types of information becomes an important part of note taking. The lecturer might write notes on the blackboard or give out handouts but these two things do not substitute what you get from the lecture through note taking. What you write down constitutes what you understand. Note taking also involves writing notes from books. Not everything said should be written down. What you require is to capture salient points in the lecture. But how do you distinguish salient from irrelevant points. Salient points are shown by emphasis.

Some lecturers approach their lectures with a degree of prejudice or bias, which may colour what they say while others are emotionally involved in their subjects or lectures. It is important for you to recognize salient points from highlights of subsidiary points.

You should also be familiar with the concepts that are being used in the lectures. Often the lecturer will write down the main concepts being covered. Main concepts are also given emphasis through the time devoted to them, through repetition and through change in pace of delivery. Usually the lecturer will slow down in pace to indicate the most important points. Other lecturers speak more loudly in order to indicate the most important points. They may even change their intonation (rise and fall of voice) to denote important points. Pauses and change in breath may indicate personal attitudes and intentions of the speakers. Cues of what is important may be given through gestures and

eye movements. Taking notes in a lecture and processing/annotating/rewriting these notes effectively requires:

- recognizing the main ideas
- identifying what information is relevant to your task
- having a system of note taking that works for you
- reducing the information to note and diagram format
- where possible, putting the information in your own words
- recording the source of the information

Note making on the other hand is taking notes from reading in some systematic way. This involves reviewing your lecture notes. Do the following on a daily basis.

- Read through or review your lecture notes
- Underline headings and subheading
- Correct spelling mistakes and rewrite illegible portions
- Fill in any gaps
- Underline or highlight important sentences or paragraphs
- Make sure you understand the concepts

### **7.8.6 Reflection**

Think of other ways in which you can improve your study skills apart from those you have studied in the module.

### **7.8.7 Evaluation**

Briefly distinguish between note taking and note making. Discuss the process of note-taking to note-making Comment on the strategies of improving comprehension
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### **7.9 Summary**

This unit has discussed study skills, study tips and what is involved in order for you to improve your comprehension. It is hoped that you have mastered the strategies involved to remain afloat in university through your studies.

## **UNIT 8: LIBRARY SKILLS**

### **8.0 Introduction**

This unit introduces you to library skills. You will be exposed to matters concerning the library. You must ensure you grasp contents of this unit because you will live with library skills throughout your university life. The library will be the place in which you will have to spend longer hours, studying.

### **Learning Outcomes**

**By the end of this unit, you should be able to:**

- State what a library is
- Identify sections of the library
- State functions of each library section
- Identify different sources of information
- Discuss the role of information
- State the uses of a catalogue
- Discuss types of classification of books in the library

### **8.1 The library**

A Library is a collection or group of collections of books and other materials maintained for reading, study and research, organized to facilitate access by a specific clientele and staffed by librarians and other staff, trained to meet the needs of its users.

You as a University student are expected to read, study and research in the library. A good student visits the library often and knows how to access books in the library.

A good student must be information literate. The American Library Association (ALA) presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report (1989) states as follows:

“To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information”. To realize this goal, it requires a structuring of the learning process so that students are taught problem solving techniques for life-long learning. Information

literacy in institutions of higher learning is necessary for both students and staff. The goal of information literacy is to ensure that users are equipped and encouraged to learn from the range of information resources available. It includes learning to use both formal and informal information resources.

According to Bruce (1994) information literacy involves the following:

- Understanding the nature of information society; Acquiring values which promoted information access to use.
- Being able to implement the process of identifying an information need locating, retrieving, evaluating and synthesizing the information required;
- Developing a high level of communication skills, including the ability to communicate with colleagues and information professionals;
- Developing a sound knowledge of network sources and strategies for using them; and
- Developing the ability to manage the information retrieval through the appropriate use of, for example word processors, spreadsheet, and bibliographic management software.

## **8.2 Sections of the library**

### **8.2.1 Acquisition section**

The acquisition section is responsible for acquiring the books that are found in the library.

### **8.2.2 Circulation section**

This is also called the lending section which deals with issue and return of the books as well as registration of smart cards. This section also levy a fine to defaulters, it also reserves books for issue and reminds defaulters to return.



### **8.2.3 Reference section**

This section contains reference works such as biographies, encyclopaedias, hand books, maps, dictionary, and other materials which are generally intended for consultation. Reference books are not lent out; readers consult them within the library premises.

### **8.2.4 Periodical section**

This section of the library deals with subscription of periodical such journals, Magazines and Newspapers.

### **8.2.5 Internet section**

This is the section that offers internet facilities to library users either free or at a fee.

### **8.2.6 Reserved book section**

This is the section where the reserved books are kept. Reserved books are read inside the library and are not lent out. Most books in this section are prescribed by lectures to students.

### **8.2.7 Bindery section**

This section deals with in-house binding of library materials.

### **8.2.8 Audio-visual section**

This section contains films, audio cassettes, record and compact discs that library users can use.

### **8.2.9 Reproductive section**

This section houses Photostat facilities usually at a fee.

### **8.2.10 Special collection, archives or rare books collection**

This section keeps institution documents and rare books, these materials are not lent out, they are supposed to be used within the special collection.

## **8.3 Role of information**

When well organized and disseminated information can be effective in the following areas:

- Facilitate planning, decision-making and problem solving.
- Enhancing social economic cultural scientific and technological development.

- Enable the development of the national economy.
- Promotion of recreation and leisure.
- Develop a cohesive nation of intelligent people In Academia, information is required to:
- Facilitate research, study and teaching; and
- Enable success in studies, assignments and the passing of examinations.

## **8.4 Types of information resources**

These are materials that are used as resources of information for reference, research, study and recreation. Information resources are found in form of books, newspapers, computer disks/ tapes, listening (radio), viewing (TV), and speaking (oral).

### **8.4.1 Books**

UNESCO defines a book as a non-periodical literary publication consisting of 49 or more pages, covers not included. A collection of leaves of paper or other material, written or printed, fastened together in some manner with a cover. In the USA for a publication to be called a book it must consist of 24 or more pages.

### **8.4.2 Newspapers**

These are serial publications usually printed on newsprint and issues daily, semiweekly or weekly containing news, editorial opinion, regular columns, letters to the editor, cartoons, advertisements and other items of current, often local interest to a general readership.

### **8.4.3 Periodicals**

These are publications with distinctive titles containing articles, stories or other short works usually written by different contributors, issued in soft cover more than once, usually at stated intervals. Periodicals are published by scholarly societies, University presses, government agencies, commercial publishing houses, private corporations, trade and professional associations and other organizations.

### **8.4.4 Journals**

These are periodicals devoted to disseminating current research and commentary on developments within a specific discipline sub discipline or field of study usually published in quarterly or bimonthly issues which Libraries bind into continuously paginated

volumes. Most journal articles are longer than five pages and include a bibliography or a list of works cited at the end. Journal articles in science and social sciences usually include an abstract preceding the text, which summarizes the content.

#### **8.4.5 Magazines**

These are popular periodicals containing articles on various topics written by different authors. Most magazine are heavily illustrated containing advertisements and are printed on glossy paper. Articles are usually short (less than five pages) un signed and do not include a bibliography or list of references. Most magazines are issued monthly of weekly.

#### **8.4.6 Abstracts**

An abstract is a short statement of essential content of a book, article, speech, report and dissertation. It gives the main points in the same order as the original work.

#### **8.4.7 Index**

An index is a list of terminologies arranged alphabetically in the last pages of a book. It has page numbers which direct the reader to the specific page of a text on which the desired information can be found.

#### **6.4.8 Archival Sources**

This is an organized collection of noncurrent records of an institution, government, organization or corporate body. Archival sources are managed and maintained by a librarian with special training known as an archivist.

#### **8.4.9 Serial Publications**

A publication in any format issued in successively numbered or dated parts or issues, appearing at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. In our library the serial or periodical catalogue is known as a Kardex.

#### **8.4.10 Patents**

A patent is an official document issued by the government in response to a formal application process in which the applicant (usually the inventor) is granted the exclusive right to manufacture, use, and sell an invention for a specified number of years the document is assigned a patent number by the patent office for future reference.

## **8.5 Other Sources of Information**

### **8.5.1 Audio- Visual Materials**

This is a term used to describe non-print materials such as films, film strips, slides, video recordings, audio recordings, CD-ROMS, machine readable data files and computer software.

### **8.5.2. Computerized Sources**

CD-ROM Compact Disk Read Only Memory.

It is a small plastics optical disk 4.72 inches or 12 centimeters in diameter similar to an audio compact disk. It is used for storing information in digital format. Once information is stored it can be searched and displayed on a computer screen. Information stored in a CD-ROM cannot be changed or erased.

### **8.5.3 Online information resources**

These are information resources accessed through the internet. In libraries we have the Online Public Access Catalogue. It consists of bibliographic records in machine readable format. These records can be accessed from different computers through the library website. The internet is a network which inter connects computers of all types throughout the world. It enables users to communicate via email, transfer of data and program files. The internet also enables users to find information on the World Wide Web and access computer systems such as catalogues and electronic databases.

## **8.6. The Catalogue an important part of the library:**

### **8.6.1 Definition**

A Catalogue is a list of books periodicals, maps or materials in a specific collection, arranged in a definite order usually alphabetically, by author, title or subject. Catalogues are means by which you find on the shelves any book that you want which the library possesses. To locate the book you are looking for in the library, you may use any of the three ways:

- The Author **(Surname of author)**
- The Title **(Title of book)**
- The Subject **(Subject area to which the publication belongs)**

## **8.7 Classification of Books in the Library**

The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), or Dewey Decimal System, is a method of books classification used in libraries. It was first published in the United States in 1876 by Melvil Dewey, and has been revised and expanded through 23 major editions, the latest issued in 2011. DCC is a system made up of ten classes, each divided into ten divisions, each having ten sections. For example, class 600 ("Technology") includes division 630 ("Agriculture and related technologies"), which includes section 636 ("Animal husbandry"). Practically, there are only 99 of 100 divisions and 908 of 1000 sections in total, as some are no longer in use or have not been assigned.

The Decimal Classification introduced the concepts of relative location and relative index which allow new books to be added to a library in their appropriate location based on subject. Libraries previously had given books permanent shelf locations that were related to the order of acquisition rather than topic. The classification's notation makes use of three-digit Arabic numerals for main classes, with fractional decimals allowing expansion for further detail. A library assigns a classification number that unambiguously locates a particular volume in a position relative to other books in the library, on the basis of its subject. The number makes it possible to find any book and to return it to its proper place on the library shelves the classification system is used in 200,000 libraries in at least 135 countries.

### **8.7.2 List of Dewey Classes**

- 000 – General works, Computer science and Information
- 100– Philosophy and psychology
- 200– Religion
- 300– Social sciences
- 400– Language
- 500 – Pure Science
- 600– Technology
- 700– Arts & recreation

- 800– Literature
- 900– History & geography

### **8.8. Library of Congress Classification**

The Library of Congress Classification (LCC) is a system of library classification developed by the library of congress. It is used by most research and academic libraries in the U.S. and several other countries. The classification was invented by Herbert Putnam in 1897, just before he assumed the librarianship of Congress. LCC has been criticized for lacking a sound theoretical basis; many of the classification decisions were driven by the practical needs of that library. Although it divides subjects into broad categories, it is essentially enumerative in nature. That is, it provides a guide to the books actually in one library's collections, not a classification of the world.

Unlike the Dewey Decimal Classification, this system was based on an actual collection of some million books and incorporated the best features of existing systems with individual subject schemes or schedules devised by subject specialists. The arrangement, based on the order devised by the American librarian Charles Cutter in *Expansive Classification* (1891–93), roughly follows groupings of social sciences, humanities, and natural and physical sciences. It divides the field of knowledge into 20 large classes and an additional class for general works. Each main class has a synopsis that also serves as a guide. The resulting order is from the general to the specific and from the theoretical to the practical.

Special features include differentiation between general and general specific (books treating general works in a special way); minute groupings of subjects and geographic places for individual titles; and association of subject by country rather than topic in certain classes (philosophy, social sciences, political sciences). The quarterly appearance of LC Classification schedules testifies to the constant revision.

The Library of Congress does not publish a general index to the classification schedules, but a *Combined Indexes to the Library of Congress Classification Schedules*, compiled by Nancy B. Olson, was published independently in 1975. In place of standard subdivisions, each class may incorporate divisions for literary form and geography. Terminology may be

explicit, exact, scientific, or popular, depending on the situation. There is no attempt to give mnemonic (memory) aids, and the fullness of each class varies. Subdivisions in the Library of Congress system are arranged roughly on a historical basis, and the notation is mixed: capital letters (single and double sets) and Arabic numerals. More combinations and, hence, greater specificity is possible, yet excessively long notations do not occur. Hence, university, special, and government libraries favour its use.

### **LCC Classification**

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Subject area</b>
A	General Works
B	Philosophy. Psychology. Religion
C	Auxiliary Sciences of History
D	World History and History of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, etc..
E	History of the Americas
F	History of the Americas
G	Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation
H	Social Sciences
J	Political Science
K	Law
L	Education
M	Music
N	Fine Arts
P	Language and Literature
Q	Science
R	Medicine
S	Agriculture
T	Technology
U	Military Science
V	Naval Science
Z	Bibliography, Library Science, and General Information Resources

We may not have given as much information on LCC as you may need, but you can carry out a detailed study on the subject matter. The internet would possibly give you clearer information than has been presented here.

### **8.8.1 Reflection**

Imagine libraries never existed. How studies would be conducted or indeed if books were just hipped in one place of the library, how easily would books be accessible?

### **8.8.2 Evaluation**

With reference to your studies in the unit, state the different sections of the library

Discuss any two classification systems you know

State various roles information plays according the unit

Identify different sources of information in the library

### **8.8.3 Summary**

This unit has looked at the library, bringing out different sections of the library, sources of information, various roles of information as well as some classification systems. We hope you enjoyed your studies throughout the unit. We feel you are ready for the next unit.



# **UNIT 9: CITATION AND REFERENCING IN ACADEMIC WRITING**

## **9.0 Introduction**

We now turn to the more technical matter of how to incorporate source material into your own writing and how to document the material you include. And so this unit is designed to show you how to cite and make references when you are writing an academic paper.

## **Learning Outcomes**

**As you read through this unit you are expected to:**

- Clearly cite and making reference in an academic paper
- Show different styles of referencing
- indicate when and where to cite
- Define both citation and referencing
- Mention the importance of citation

## **9.1 Documentation**

**What are documentation styles?**

A documentation style is a standard approach to the citation of sources that the author of a paper has consulted, abstracted, or quoted from. It prescribes methods for citing references within the text, providing a list of works cited at the end of the paper, and even formatting headings and margins. Using sources in your research paper is an important part of building and supporting your argument.

It is important for you as a student to learn the skill of citing and that of writing references in your academic life because your academic writing will have a backing to support your work. For your work to gain local and international recognition your readers should have proof that is backing your work. Otherwise, they will regard it as plagiarized work. When you incorporate material into work, you can do so through direct quotation or through summary or paraphrase; you basically document material by naming the writer and

providing full publication details of the source (Crusius & Channell, 2003). When you include sources of your information in your work, you are actually referencing.

## **9.2 Referencing**

Referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research.

You should also provide references for any graphic information you use. Films, television programs, personal communications and online sources also need to be referenced. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.

## **9.3 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

Different academic disciplines use different documentation styles. It is important to note that different disciplines use different documentation styles. However the most commonly used documentation style by most universities is called the American Psychological Association (APA) The mechanics of citing are complicated, and vary in each format. Amoud University uses APA but does not restrict its usage to disciplines where APA is not applicable.

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- University of Chicago Press (Chicago Manual of Style)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Council of Science Editors (CSE)
- American Chemical Society (ACS)

## 9.4 What is Citation

**Citation** is a reference to a published or unpublished source. More precisely, a citation is an abbreviated alphanumeric expression embedded in the body of an intellectual work that denotes an entry in the bibliographic references section of the work for the purpose of acknowledging the relevance of the works of others to the topic of discussion at the spot where the citation appears. Generally the combination of both the in-body citation and the bibliographic entry constitutes what is commonly thought of as a citation.

Citation is both a sign post and an acknowledgement. As a signpost, it signals the location of your source (Source is the book or internet site or journal you have gotten your information from). As an acknowledgement, citing reveals that you are indebted to that source.

A citation can appear in different formats: within the text (in-text citation) at the bottom of the page (footnotes), or at the end of the paper (endnotes).

### 9.4.1 Importance Citation

Citation is important because it is the basis of academics, that is, the pursuit of knowledge. In the academic endeavor, individuals look at evidence and reason about that evidence in their own individual ways. That is, taking what is already known, established, or thought, they use their reasoning power to create new knowledge. In creating this knowledge, they must cite their sources accurately for three main reasons: To show your reader you have done proper research by listing sources you used to get your information; to be a responsible scholar by giving credit to other researchers and acknowledging their ideas.

**Reason One:** Because ideas are the currency of academia. Citing sources is important because the core of academia is ideas. Citing enables us to credit other writers for their contributions. When a writer cites ideas, that writer honors those who initiated the ideas.

**Reason Two:** Because failing to cite is considered as plagiarism (Academic stealing)

Using someone else's idea without giving credit, violates that person's ownership of the idea. To understand this violation, envision the following scenario: You and your friend are discussing some ideas from class during lunch one day, and you make what you

consider to be a particularly insightful observation. During class discussion that afternoon, your friend brings up your observation but neglects to point out that it is yours, not his. The professor compliments your friend on his clear and insightful thinking.

You likely to feel that there's something unfair about your friend's claim that your idea was his or her own. That sense of violation you feel, the sense that something valuable has been stolen from you, suggests why failure to cite sources hurts another person.

**Reason Three:** Because academics need to be able to trace the genealogy of ideas.

## **9.5. Other reasons can further be advanced as follows:**

### **9.5.1 Attribution serves as a fact-checking tool.**

Accuracy is all important in any writing, especially when we write about science. The very act of looking up a reference for verification serves as an accuracy check, e.g., to double check a direct quote, to ensure the fidelity of a passage that you paraphrased, or to cite another study that is related to your study.

### **9.5.2 Citation makes you a better researcher.**

Some of the hallmarks of good research include attention to detail and the ability to discern patterns and make connections. Good citation practices can help with both. The proper attribution of sources entails many details, such as correct page numbers, the spelling of author names, and of course, the accuracy of facts that you are presenting in your own article or other work.

Becoming detail-oriented in one aspect automatically instills good habits across the board in your research. As for the ability to spot trends and patterns, preparing a good bibliography trains you for this task (which is crucial in scientific analysis) because of the vast amount of information it condenses into a short space.

### **9.5.3 Good citation practices make you a better writer.**

All of us aspire towards that elegant paper in which the prose is as compelling as the content and good attribution habits build a strong foundation towards that goal. Citing

specific sources for the various facts that we present removes the hallmarks of intellectual laziness, vague thinking, and sloppy writing as generalizations, clichés, and outright false claims, e.g., as when the phrases, “everyone knows” or “they say,” are replaced with specific sources.

When you cite sources properly, you leave no question in your readers’ minds regarding your point. Furthermore, by citing, you can easily use active language and avoid raising the dreaded red flag of passivity to journal editors and reviewers. Cite well, and you may forever expunge the phrase “It is said” from your academic paper.

#### **9.5.4 A good bibliography shows off your scientific knowledge.**

A bibliography is simply the compilation of the various sources that you have read and cited in your own manuscript, dissertation, book, etc. Thus, an extensive bibliography is naturally a hallmark of a widely read and well-informed scientist.

#### **9.5.5 Careful citation practices will build your credibility as a scientist or scholar.**

This point is a simple corollary of the previous one. Indeed, showing off scholarship is simply the icing on the cake of what a well-cited article has to offer. A deeper, more meaningful role that a good bibliography plays for researchers is to establish a writer’s credibility among peers in their field. The better documented your research and arguments; the more credible you are to your scientific colleagues.

#### **9.5.6 Citation enables better verification of your work.**

Any piece of academic writing gets vetted several times over before it finally makes it into print or onto a website. Whether one is a peer reviewer, editor, or editorial assistant whose job is simply to track down sources in the bibliography and make sure that the citations are accurate, life is simply easier when there is less busy work. So, your paper is much more likely to be passed through these multiple rounds of editing with minimal criticism and positive feedback if you have already taken the trouble to attribute your information correctly and cite all your sources.

### 9.5.7 Instructions for using the APA documentation style

- In parentheses at the end of the directly or indirectly quoted material, place the author's last name, the date of publication and the exact page number (s) where the material appears. If the author's name appears in the sentence, the date of publication should follow the name directly, in parentheses; the date of publication still comes in parentheses at the end of the sentence. Unlike MLA, the APA style uses commas between the parts of the citation and 'p' or 'pp' before the page numbers. e.g.

**A San Jose State University professor argues that affirmative action “does not teach skills, or educate, or instill motivation” (Steele, 1990, p. 121). Or**

**Steele (1990), a black professor of English at San Jose State University, argues that the disadvantages of affirmative action for blacks are greater than the advantages (p. 171).**

- In a reference list at the end of the paper, provide complete bibliographical information in APA style as your lecturer will have explained.

### 9.5.8 Direct Quotations

Crusius & Channell (2003) argue that direct quotations are exact words taken from the source. The simplest direct quotations are whole sentences worked into your text, as illustrated in the following excerpt from a student's essay. *Katrine (1991) argues that most of us have some choices in how we live and how we conduct our lives.*

### 9.5.9 Indirect Quotation

Indirect quotations are paraphrases or summaries of material, either fact or opinion taken from a source. Here is how you would incorporate an indirect quotation into your paper. When you paraphrase someone else, you are putting someone else's work in your own words. To make that happen, you need to select only the most important information and do one or both of the following: Completely change the order of the ideas and words. It is important to paraphrase because it shows your readers that you can extract an author's ideas into a tight, compact sentence. While it does require more effort than directly quoting an author, it is an important skill that you have to demonstrate when you are writing an

academic paper. To signal to your reader that you have paraphrased an author, you need to indicate the author and the year that the article/ chapter/book/website was published.

**Example:**

One cannot help but agree with pioneer heart-transplant surgeon Christian Barnard (1980) that death should involve dignity and that society may have to conceptualise the practice of euthanasia as a means to death with dignity (p. 8).

The entry in the reference list would appear as follows:

Barnard, C. (1980). *Good life, good death*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

## **9.6 How to use direct quotation**

- Use active voice, the use of the personal pronoun “I” instead of “this researcher” is acceptable. The use of “he” or “she” when presenting the work of other authors is discouraged.
- Block quotations should be single spaced, not double spaced, and should be indented on the left (only) by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.
- When you directly quote someone else, you need to keep all or almost all of the original wording intact. Directly quoting others’ work is effective, especially when the original wording is powerful or when there is no way for you to reasonably paraphrase the original wording.
- To signal to your reader that you have directly quoted someone, you need to use quotation marks around the quoted words and you need to indicate the author, the year that the article/chapter/book/website was published, and the page number or where the quotation can be found.

### **9.6.1 Using Block Quotations**

If a quoted passage runs to four lines of the text in your essay, indent it to one inch (or ten spaces if typewritten) from the left margin, double-space it as with the rest of the text, and omit quotation marks. In block quotations, a period is placed at the end of the final sentence, followed by one space and the parenthetical citation.

The idea of death as release from suffering was expressed by Seneca, a Stoic philosopher of Rome, who lived during the first century C.E.:

Against all the injuries of life, I have the refuge of death. If I can choose between a death of torture and one that is simple and easy, why should I not select the latter? As I choose the ship in which I sail and the house which I inhabit, so will I choose the death by which I leave life. [...] Why should I endure the agonies of disease [...] when I can emancipate myself from all my torments? (quoted in Wennberg 42 - 43)

### **9.6.2 Citation Guide: APA Style**

The American Psychological Association (APA) developed APA style for use in its own publications. APA is now the standard editorial style in many social science and health-related fields, including psychology, sociology, economics, business, criminology, social work, and nursing.

This citation guide offers a brief introduction to APA style, and it illustrates proper citation format for a number of commonly used research sources. The list of Print Sources includes resources typically found in a library, such as books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. The list of Electronic Sources includes resources found online or published on DVD or CD-ROM, including encyclopedias, journals, magazines, newspapers, and government documents. The information in this guide is based on the fifth edition of the APA Publication Manual (2001). For more complete information, consult the APA Publication Manual or the official APA Web site.

APA is one of several commonly used styles for citing references. Your school, or your instructor, may require a different citation style, such as MLA style, developed by the Modern Language Association, or Chicago style, developed by the University of Chicago Press and described in the Chicago Manual of Style. When in doubt about which style to use, ask your lecturer.

### **9.6.3 How to cite**

According to APA style, there are two ways to communicate to your reader that you've used others' work:



- In your text, you need to show that you've paraphrased or directly quoted someone else.
- At the very end of your paper, you need to provide a list of all the articles, chapters, books, and websites that you've used within the body of your text.

#### **9.6.4 When to Cite**

When writing an academic essay, you can cite when you;

- Use an in-text citation: within the text
- Paraphrase someone else's work.

#### **9.7 Further APA guidelines**

- Page margins are to be one inch for the top, bottom, and right side. The left margin is 1.5 cm in your thesis.
- Start page numbering on the first page of text (not the title page), with it and each subsequent page (including the reference list) numbered at the top right margin;
- Any tables or figures should be inserted into text, close to the place cited (but where they are not broken by a page break) if possible.
- Reference lists should be single spaced, with double spacing between citations and arranged alphabetically.

##### **9.7.1 List of References**

The list of References, sometimes labeled Works Cited or Bibliography in other citation styles, is an alphabetized list of citations at the end of a research paper. The list is double-spaced, and each item is formatted with a hanging indent; that is, the second and subsequent lines are indented more than the first line. For example:

Bailey, G., & Peoples, J. (1999). Introduction to cultural anthropology. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

### 9.7.2 In-Text Citations

References that appear within the body of a paper are called in-text citations. The first time a source is mentioned, it should be cited as part of the text. The citation, including the year of publication, is enclosed in parentheses. For example:

... By the end of the 1980s, Gorbachev was losing patience with the  
Lithuanian independence movement (Serrill, 1990). ...

The citation can also be written into a sentence, with the year of publication enclosed in parentheses:

... According to Serrill (1990), by the end of the 1980s, Gorbachev  
was losing patience with the Lithuanian independence movement. ...

### 9.7.3 Quick Tips on APA Style

Certain features distinguish APA from other citation styles.

When you keenly look at the APA documentation style, you notice how different it is from the others. You will notice the following:

- Only the first word of a title or subtitle, and proper nouns, are capitalized in book, magazine, journal, and article titles. In the list of References, all author names are written in last-first order, e.g., Doe, J.
- If there is more than one author, names are separated by commas; an ampersand (&) precedes the final name, e.g., Doe, J., Roe, J., & Roe, R.
- First and middle names of authors are represented by initials only, indicated in this guide as “F. M.” for *First Middle*.
- The year of publication is always included, in both the list of references and in-text citations.

- Citations of online sources include the date on which the source was retrieved from the Web.
- If referring to a particular section of a work, page numbers for that section are included in the list of References, but not in the in-text citation. With the exception of journal articles and printable documents, electronic sources do not usually display page numbers; if page numbers cannot be found; there is no need to include them.

### 9.7.4 Format and Examples

At this point you are being exposed to the actual appearance of citations. And so, for each type of research source, a format “formula” is provided, followed by an example drawn from an existing published work. Each citation is shown in two forms: first as it would appear in the list of References, then as it would appear as an in-text citation.

#### Print Sources

##### 1. Book With One Author

Author, F. M. (Year published). Book title (pp. start page-end page of specific reference {or p. page number if referencing a single page}). City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher. or

Author, F. M. (Year published). Book title. City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher.

In text: (Author, year published).

Example:

Salinger, J. D. (1951). *The catcher in the rye* (pp. 106-107). Boston: Little, Brown and Company. or

Salinger, J. D. (1951). *The catcher in the rye*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

In text: (Salinger, 1951).

## 2. Book With Two Authors

Author, F. M., & Author2, F. M. (Year published). Book title (pp. start page-end page of specific reference {or p. page number if referencing a single page}). City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher. or

Author, F. M., & Author2, F. M. (Year published). Book title. City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher.

In text: (Author & Author2, year published).

Example:

Bailey, G., & Peoples, J. (1999). *Introduction to cultural anthropology* (pp. 96-99). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. or

Bailey, G., & Peoples, J. (1999). *Introduction to cultural anthropology*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

In text: (Bailey & Peoples, 1999).

## 3. Book With Three Authors

Author, F. M., Author2, F. M., & Author3, F. M. (Year published). Book title (pp. start page- end page of specific reference {or p. page number if referencing a single page}). City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher. or

Author, F. M., Author2, F. M., & Author3, F. M. (Year published). Book title. City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher.

In text: (Author, Author2, & Author3, year published)

Example:

Sebranek, P., Meyer, V., & Kemper, D. (2004). *Write for college* (p. 231). Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group. or

Sebranek, P., Meyer, V., & Kemper, D. (2004). *Write for college*. Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group.

In text: (Sebranek, Meyer, & Kemper, 2004).

#### **4. Second or Other Edition of a Book**

(Two authors in this example)

Author, F. M., & Author2, F. M. (Year published). Book title (xth ed.) (pp. start page-end page of specific reference {or p. page number if referencing a single page}). City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher. or

Author, F. M., & Author2, F. M. (Year published). Book title (xth ed.). City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher.

In text: (Author & Author2, year published).

Example:

Mertler, C. A., & Charles, C. M. (2005). *Introduction to educational research* (5th ed.) (p. 321). Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon. or

Mertler, C. A., & Charles, C. M. (2005). *Introduction to educational research* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

In text: (Mertler & Charles, 2005).

#### **5. Journal Article**

(Two authors in this example)

Author, F. M., & Author2, F. M. (Year published). Article title. Journal title, volume (issue), start page-end page of specific reference {start page+ if pages are discontinuous}.  
or

Author, F. M., & Author2, F. M. (Year published). Article title. Journal title, volume (issue), start page-end page of entire article {start page+ if pages are discontinuous}.

In text: (Author & Author2, year published).

Example:

O'Connell, J. F., & Perkins, G. M. (2003). *The economics of private liberal arts colleges*.

Journal of Business, 76(3), 501. or

O'Connell, J. F., & Perkins, G. M. (2003). *The economics of private liberal arts colleges*.

Journal of Business, 76(3), 499-514.

In text: (O'Connell & Perkins, 2003).

## 6. Magazine Article

(One author in this example)

Author, F. M. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Article title. Magazine title, volume, start page- end page of specific reference {start page+ if pages are discontinuous}. or

Author, F. M. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Article title. Magazine title, volume, start page- end page of entire article {start page+ if pages are discontinuous}.

In text: (Author, year published)

Example:

Serrill, M. S. (1990, April 2). *Soviet Union war of nerves*. Time, 135, 29. or

Serrill, M. S. (1990, April 2). *Soviet Union war of nerves*. Time, 135, 26-30.

In text: (Serrill, 1990).

## 7. Newspaper Article

(One author in this example)

Author, F. M. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Article title. Newspaper Title, pp. start page- end page of specific reference {pp. start page+ if pages are discontinuous or p. page number if referencing a single page}. or

Author, F. M. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Article title. Newspaper Title, pp. start page- end page of entire article {pp. start page+ if pages are discontinuous or p. page number if a one-page article}.

In text: (Author, year published).

Example:

Rood, L. (2005, December 31). *The steep costs of driving drunk*. Des Moines Register, p. A12. or

Rood, L. (2005, December 31). *The steep costs of driving drunk*. Des Moines Register, p. A12-A13.

In text: (Rood, 2005).

## 8. Newspaper Article, No Author

Article title. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Newspaper title, pp. start page-end page of specific reference {pp. start page+ if pages are discontinuous or p. page number if a one-page article}. or

Article title. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Newspaper title, pp. start page-end page of entire article {pp. start page+ if pages are discontinuous or p. page number if a one-page article}.

In text: (“Article Title {can be shortened},” year published)

Example:

Gas prices: Pollution rules may be eased. (2006, April 26). *The Seattle Times*, p. A5. or

Gas prices: Pollution rules may be eased. (2006, April 26). *The Seattle Times*, pp. A1+.

In text: (“Gas Prices,” 2006).

## **Electronic Sources**

### **1. Online Encyclopedia Article**

(One author in this example)

Author, F. M. (Year published). Article title. Title of Reference Work. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL

In text: (Author, year published).

Example:

Hart, J. (2006). Water pollution. Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2006. Retrieved April 19, 2006, from [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia761572857/Water\\_Pollution.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia761572857/Water_Pollution.html)

In text: (Hart, 2006).

### **2. Online Encyclopedia Article, No Author**

Article title. (Year published). Title of reference work. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL

In text: (“Article Title,” year published).

Example:

Common cold. (2006). Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2006. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761578766/Common\\_Cold.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761578766/Common_Cold.html)



In text: (“Common Cold,” 2006).

### **3. Article in DVD or CD ROM Encyclopedia**

(One author in this example)

Author, F. M. (Year published). Article title. Title of reference work [DVD {or CD-ROM}]. City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher.

In text: (Author, year published).

Example:

Hart, J. (2006). Water pollution. Microsoft Student 2007 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

In text: (Hart, 2006).

### **4. Article in DVD or CD-ROM Encyclopedia, No Author**

Article title. (Year published). Title of reference work [DVD {or CD-ROM}]. City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher.

In text: (“Article Title,” year published).

Example:

Common cold. (2006). Microsoft Student 2007 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

In text: (“Common Cold,” 2006).

### **5. Online Journal Article**

(Five authors in this example)

Author, F. M., Author2, F. M., Author3, F. M., Author4, F. M., & Author5, F. M. (Year published). Article title. Journal title, volume (issue), start page-end page of specific reference {if available}. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL or

Author, F. M., Author2, F. M., Author3, F. M., Author4, F. M., & Author5, F. M. (Year published). Article title. Journal title, volume(issue), start page-end page of entire article {if available}. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL

In text: (Author, Author2, Author3, Author4, & Author5, year published).

Example:

Muntner, P., He, J., Cutler, J. A., Wildman, R. P., & Whelton, P. K. (2004). Trends in blood pressure among children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 291(17), 2110-2111. Retrieved May 22, 2007, from <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/291/17/2107> or

Muntner, P., He, J., Cutler, J. A., Wildman, R. P., & Whelton, P. K. (2004). Trends in blood pressure among children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, 291(17), 2107-2113. Retrieved May 22, 2007, from <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/291/17/2107>

In text: (Muntner, He, Cutler, Wildman, & Whelton, 2004).

## **6. Online Magazine Article**

(One author in this example)

Author, F. M. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Article title. Magazine title, volume. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL

In text: (Author, year published).

Example:

Nash, J. M. (2006, February 20). Where the waters are rising. *Time*, 165. Retrieved April 25, 2006, from <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601050425,00.html>

In text: (Nash, 2005).

## **7. Online Newspaper Article**

(One author in this example)

Author, F. M. (Year, Month Day {publication date}). Article title. Newspaper title. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL

In text: (Author, year published).

Example:

Waxman, S. (2005, April 19). Hollywood welcomes new crop of moguls. *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F70F16FC345A0C7A8DDDAD0894DD404482>

In text: (Waxman, 2005).

## **8. Online Government Document, No Author**

Government Agency. (Year published). Title of publication (pp. start page-end page of specific reference {or p. page number if referencing a single page}). City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher {if available}. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL or

Government Agency. (Year published). Title of publication. City {include state, province, or country if city is not well known}: Publisher {if available}. Retrieved Month day, year {date retrieved from Web}, from URL

In text: (Government Agency, year published).

Example:

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. (2004). Innovations in Education: Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification (pp. 2-3). Washington, D.C.: Education Publications Center. Retrieved April 20, 2006, from <http://www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/recruit/altroutes/report.html> or

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. (2004). Innovations in Education: Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification. Washington, D.C.: Education Publications Center. Retrieved April 20, 2006, from <http://www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/recruit/altroutes/report.html>

In text: (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004).

## 9.8 Reflection

Think of the many things involved in writing and reflect on their significance to making your writing meet the standards. Think also of what would become of academic writing without these guidelines.

## 9.9 Summary

This section has discussed the necessary library skills a university student should have. The various sections of the library have been discussed. These include the acquisition section, circulation, reference, periodicals, internet section and many more. Do you think this will now make it easy for you to find information for your academic assignments?

## 9.10 Evaluation

Below is a list of jumbled references. Rearrange the references correctly following the reference style of the American Psychological Association (APA), and place them in alphabetical order (i.e. surname first, first name second) under the following categories: 1. Authored book 2. Journal article 3. Magazine Article.

- i. Penina Muhando Mlamba. Creating in the Mother-tongue: The Challenge to the African Write today.
- ii. Daniel Mulaisho, Fountain Publications 1989. Chimanimani: A voyage around Essay. Kabwe
- iii. Kaloi Kasukwe Muunda. 30(5). Research in African Literatures. The Zimbabwean Novel in Shona. 21-40 1996.

## **UNIT 10: PROFESSIONALSKILLS**

### **10.0 Introduction**

This unit is designed to help you learn different professional skills that are needed for you as a teacher and other professionals. It is important for you to know such professional skills as, functional writing, how to conduct a meeting and how to write a curriculum vitae.

### **Learning Outcomes**

As you study and work through this unit, you are expected to:

- Apply functional writing in everyday life
- Write formal letters
- Conduct professional meeting at your school
- Write a Curriculum Vitae appropriately
- Write an academic proposal correctly

### **10.1 Functional writing**

Functional writing is writing that is geared towards a student's academic and professional life. It is writing that equips a student with the necessary skills to write documents required in both academic and professional life such as: Formal correspondence; official letters, emails, memos, reports, curriculum vitae (CV), Business plans among others.

### **10.2 Formal letters**

Formal letters are also called official or business letters and they fulfill official functions, such as applying for a job, apologizing to the headteacher, asking for permission to be away, applying for a place as a pupil, etc. In short, formal letters are written to people we do not know in business, government departments, institutions etc. When we write a formal letter, it is important that the letter is clear and precisely worded. We wish to create a good impression, so we should pay particular attention to the layout, the correctness of our English, our choice of words, our spelling, our punctuation and our handwriting. In formal letters, we do not use short forms or slang expressions. Note the following characteristics of formal letters.

- The address of the writer is on the right hand-top-corner.

(Although with today, people write both addresses on the left corner, one after the other).

- The date of writing is one line below the writer's address.
- Title and address of the person you are writing to. It is important that you include these in formal a letter. Your letter may be opened by a secretary and the envelope may be thrown away. If the title and address of the official you are writing to are not included, it will be difficult to know who the letter is for.
- Salutation: If you know the surname of the person you are writing to, you may use *Dear* followed by this name (e.g. Mr Phiri, Mrs Zulu, Miss Ncube, Dr Mulala). If you do not know the person's name you should use *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam*. And if you are not sure whether the person is a man or a woman, you may write *Dear Sir/Madam* or *Dear Sir* or *Madam*.
- Heading: This is usually written in capital letters and may be underlined. Not all formal letters require headings.
- Opening paragraph: This states what the letter is about. Note that it does not include greetings or an inquiry about the health of the official to whom you are writing.
- Main body: In this section, in letters of application, we usually supply the following information:
  - Personal details i.e. age, sex, and if necessary the marital status of the applicant
  - School background and qualifications
  - Previous experience (if any)
  - The names of referees (if necessary)
- Ending: This is usually 'Yours faithfully,'
- Signature: Your full name must be written in capital letters below the signature. This makes it easy to read. If you as an applicant are female, it usual to put 'Mrs' or 'Miss' in parenthesis after the name.

## **10.3 Interviews**

An interview is a formal meeting between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information, qualities, attitudes, wishes etc. from the interviewee. There are many types of interviews that an organization can arrange. It depends on the objectives of taking the interview. Here are some ways that can help you answer interview questions and convince the hiring manager that you are the one for the job.

### **10.3.1 Practice good nonverbal communication**

It is about demonstrating confidence: standing straight, making eye contact and connecting with a firm handshake. That first nonverbal impression can be a great beginning—or quick ending—to your interview.

### **10.3.2 Dress for the job or company**

Today's casual dress codes do not give you permission to dress as "they" do when you interview. It is important to know what to wear to an interview and to be well-groomed. Whether you wear a suit or something less formal depends on the company culture and the position you are seeking. If possible, call to find out about the company dress code before the interview.

### **10.3.3 Listen**

From the very beginning of the interview, your interviewer is giving you information, either directly or indirectly. If you are not hearing it, you are missing a major opportunity. Good communication skills include listening and letting the person know you heard what was said. Observe your interviewer, and match that style and pace.

### **10.3.4 Don't talk too much**

Telling the interviewer more than he needs to know could be a fatal mistake. When you have not prepared ahead of time, you may ramble when answering interview questions, sometimes talking yourself right out of the job. Prepare for the interview by reading

through the job posting, matching your skills with the position's requirements and relating only that information.

### **10.3.5 Don't be too familiar**

The interview is a professional meeting to talk business. This is not about making a new friend. Your level of familiarity should mimic the interviewer's demeanor. It is important to bring energy and enthusiasm to the interview and to ask questions, but do not overstep your place as a candidate looking for a job.

### **10.3.6 Use appropriate language**

It's a given that you should use professional language during the interview. Beware of any inappropriate slang words or references to age, race, religion, politics, or sexual orientation—these topics could send you out the door very quickly.

### **10.3.7 Don't be overconfident**

Attitude plays a key role in your interview success. There is a fine balance between confidence, professionalism, and modesty. Even if you're putting on a performance to demonstrate your ability, overconfidence is as bad, if not worse, as being too reserved.

### **10.3.8 Take care to answer the questions**

When interviewers ask for an example of a time when you did something, they are asking behavioral interview questions, which are designed to elicit a sample of your past behavior. If you fail to relate a specific example, you not only don't answer the question, but you also miss an opportunity to prove your ability and talk about your skills.

### **10.3.9 Ask questions**

When asked if they have any questions, most candidates answer, "No." Wrong answer. Part of knowing how to interview is being ready to ask questions that demonstrate an interest in what goes on in the company. Asking questions also gives you the opportunity to find out



if this is the right place for you. The best questions come from listening to what you're asked during the interview and asking for additional information.

### **10.3.10 Do not appear desperate**

When you interview with the "please, please hire me" approach, you appear desperate and less confident. Reflect the three Cs during the interview: cool, calm, and confident.

### **10.3.11 Work on your answers**

You know you can do the job; make sure the interviewer believes you can, too. One way to do this is by preparing well-thought-out answers to questions they're most likely to ask.

## **10.4 Curriculum Vitae**

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a professional document that offers the reader an overview of your Professional and Educational history. You can consider it a marketing document because its purpose is to sell you to the prospective employer. Make sure to address how your previous achievements and skills will bring value and solve their current challenges.

### **The best CV should include the following information:**

- **Contact details:** phone number and a professional email address are a must.
- **Professional Title:** ideally it will be the same as the job opening title if you have the necessary skills and experience.
- **Professional Summary:** highlighting your most important achievements and skills.
- **Professional Experience:** list your relevant work experience in reverse chronological order.
- **Your Achievements:** under each position you held, it is really important to mention your achievements rather than simple tasks.
- **Skills:** include the skills that are relevant for the specific job you are applying to and remember to differentiate the soft skills and hard skills.

### **10.5 Reflection**

Reflect on how easy it is to sell yourself using the skills you have acquired in this course. Could have sold yourself so easily before you learned these skill?

### **10.6 Evaluation**

Imagine you have just seen an advertisement for an employment opportunity in a newspaper and you prompted to apply. In the advert, the employer has asked for an application and your CV. What important things would include in your VC and how would you write your letter? Discuss with your friend.

### **10.7 Summary**

This unit has exposed you to professional skills which you could only acquire through the interaction with the material in this module and your lecturer. You have learned how to write an official letter, how to conduct yourself during an interview and how to write your curriculum vitae. It is hoped that you have gained mastery of the skills in this unit as well as other material in the whole module.

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