UNIT 4: DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

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1. PLANNING, DRAFTING, AND EDITING

1.1 Planning

Before writing any document, careful planning is essential to ensure clarity and effectiveness. The planning process involves:

1. **Identifying the Purpose** – Determine whether the document is for academic, technical, or professional use.
2. **Understanding the Audience** – Who will read it? Experts, students, or the general public?
3. **Outlining the Structure** – A logical arrangement of ideas improves readability.
4. **Researching Content** – Gather accurate and reliable information before drafting.

1.2 Drafting

Once planning is complete, drafting is the next step. It involves:

- Writing a **rough version** without focusing too much on errors.
- Using **clear, concise, and direct** language.
- Maintaining **logical transitions** between paragraphs.
- **Organizing** thoughts effectively.

1.3 Editing

Editing is crucial for refining the document. It includes:

- **Proofreading** for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
- **Rewriting** to improve clarity and readability.
- **Fact-checking** to ensure technical correctness.
- **Ensuring coherence** so that ideas flow smoothly.

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2. PRECISE WRITING & PRÉCIS WRITING

2.1 Precise Writing

Precise writing refers to **expressing information in a concise manner without losing meaning**. Key aspects include:

- Avoiding unnecessary words.
- Using **active voice** for clarity.
- Ensuring **brevity** while keeping the message intact.

Example:

✗ The weather was extremely cold, and due to the presence of snow everywhere, it was difficult to walk.

✓ The snowy weather made walking difficult.

2.2 Précis Writing

A **précis** is a **summary** of a long passage that retains its main points and meaning while being significantly shorter.

Steps for writing a précis:

1. **Read the passage carefully** to understand the main points.
2. **Underline important points** while ignoring unnecessary details.
3. **Write in your own words**, maintaining the core meaning.
4. **Ensure that the précis is about 1/3rd of the original passage.**

Example:

Original Passage (100 words):
Electric cars are becoming increasingly popular due to their environmental benefits. Unlike traditional gasoline-powered vehicles, they do not emit harmful pollutants, making them eco-friendly. Governments around the world are offering incentives to encourage people to switch to electric vehicles. Although the initial cost of electric cars is high, they save money in the long run by reducing fuel expenses. Advancements in battery technology are improving their efficiency, and charging stations are becoming more widely available.

Précis (35 words):
Electric cars are gaining popularity due to their eco-friendliness. Government incentives and battery advancements make them more efficient. Despite high initial costs, they offer long-term savings by reducing fuel expenses and increasing charging availability.

3. TECHNICAL DEFINITION & TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

3.1 Technical Definition

A **technical definition** explains a **scientific or technical concept** precisely.

Example:

- **RAM (Random Access Memory)** – A volatile memory that temporarily stores data for quick access by the processor.

Types of Technical Definitions:

1. **Formal Definition** – Short and clear explanation (e.g., "An atom is the smallest unit of matter.").
2. **Operational Definition** – Describes how something functions (e.g., "RAM allows a computer to run multiple applications simultaneously by storing temporary data.").

3.2 Technical Description

A **technical description** provides a **detailed explanation of an object, process, or system**.

Example: Description of a Washing Machine

- **Components**: Drum, motor, water inlet, detergent dispenser.
- **Working**: Water fills the drum → Clothes rotate → Detergent cleans clothes → Water drains → Clothes spin dry.

Use of Technical Descriptions:

- Used in **user manuals, product descriptions, and scientific explanations**.

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4. REPORT WRITING

4.1 Features of a Good Report

A well-written report should have:
✅ **Clarity** – Simple, direct, and unambiguous language.
✅ **Accuracy** – Data must be factual and correct.
✅ **Conciseness** – Avoid unnecessary details.
✅ **Logical Structure** – Sections should follow a logical flow.

4.2 Structure of a Formal Report

1. **Title Page** – Report title, author's name, and date.
2. **Abstract/Summary** – A brief overview of the report.
3. **Introduction** – Purpose, scope, and background.
4. **Body** – Main content, analysis, data, and discussions.
5. **Conclusion & Recommendations** – Summary of findings and suggestions.
6. **References & Appendices** – Sources and additional materials.

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5. TYPES OF REPORTS

5.1 Report of Trouble

A trouble report describes a **problem and its possible solutions**.

◆ **Example:** A software bug report in IT or a machinery failure report in an industry.

Structure:

- Description of the issue.
- Possible reasons.
- Suggested solutions.

5.2 Laboratory Report

A **lab report** documents **scientific experiments**.

Structure:

1. **Title** – Name of the experiment.
2. **Objective** – Purpose of the experiment.
3. **Materials Used** – List of items required.
4. **Procedure** – Steps taken during the experiment.
5. **Observations** – Recorded data and findings.
6. **Conclusion** – Results and learning outcomes.

5.3 Progress Report

A progress report tracks **work done over a specific period** and is used in business, research, and academic projects.

Structure:

- **Introduction** – Purpose of the report.
- **Progress Summary** – Work completed.
- **Pending Work** – Tasks yet to be done.
- **Challenges & Solutions** – Issues faced and how they were tackled.
- **Conclusion** – Summary of progress and next steps.

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6. OUTCOMES OF THIS MODULE

After studying this unit, you will be able to:
✅ **Develop strong writing skills** for different purposes.

✅ **Plan, draft, and edit documents effectively**.

✅ **Write precise and meaningful content** using précis writing techniques.

✅ **Understand and create technical definitions and descriptions**.

✅ **Write structured reports for various professional needs**.

Conclusion

This unit covers the **fundamentals of writing** for academic, technical, and professional use. Developing writing skills is crucial for **effective communication** in any field. With practice, one can master **clear, concise, and professional writing techniques**.