

DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

ABOUT MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

Diploma in Business Administration (DBA) – Management Communication Skills has been produced by NIPA. All Communication Skills Modules produced by NIPA are structured in the same way as outlined below:

HOW COMMUNICATION SKILLS IS STRUCTURED

- Course Overview
- Course Content
- Resources
- Your comments

How this Management Communication Skills is structured

The Module overview

Welcome to Diploma in Business Administration – Communication Skills. This subject covers aspects of how to communicate effectively in writing and in speech.

Diploma in Business Administration – Business Communication Skills

This subject is intended to enable you give clear and logical expression to your thoughts in speech and writing and develop the communication skills necessary to meet the demands of your job.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- Study skills.
- Where to get help
- Assignments and assessments
- Activity icons

We strongly recommend that you read the overview *carefully* before starting your study.

The Module content

The Module is broken down into twelve (11) units. Each unit comprises:

An introduction to the unit content.

Unit outcomes.

New terminology.

Core content of the unit with a variety of learning activities.

A unit summary.

Assignments and/or assessments, as applicable.

For those interested in learning more on this subject, we provide you with a list of additional resources at the end of this labour law; these may be books, articles or web sites.

Your comments

After completing this Business Communication Skills Module, we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this course. Your feedback might include comments on:

Content and structure.

Reading materials and resources.

Assignments and Assessments.

Duration.

Support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.)

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this course.

Welcome to *Management Communication* Module

This Management Communication Module gives an in-depth knowledge of communication skills.

Module learning outcomes

Upon completion of Diploma in Business Administration – Management Communication module, you will be able to:



- Explain the nature and purpose of communication.
- Use the spoken word appropriately
- Produce readable documents of good quality.
- Undertake communication activities/tasks as required

Time Frame



Expected duration of course/subject – 6 months

Formal study time required – 4 hours per week

Self study time recommended – 6 hours per week

Study skills



As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different to that of your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in other areas such as essay planning, coping with exams and using the web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be *time* and *space* i.e. the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now—before starting your self-study—to familiarize yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web. A few suggested links are:

- <http://www.how-to-study.com/>

The “How to study” web site is dedicated to study skills resources. You will find links to study preparation (a list of nine essentials for a good study place), taking notes, strategies for reading text books, using reference sources, test anxiety.

- <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>

This is the web site of the Virginia Tech, Division of Student Affairs. You will find links to time scheduling (including a “where does time go?” link), a study skill checklist, basic concentration techniques, control of the study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis, memory skills (“remembering”).

- <http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php>

Another “How to study” web site with useful links to time management, efficient reading, questioning/listening/observing skills, getting the most out of doing (“hands-on” learning), memory building, tips for staying motivated, developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these web links were active. If you want to look for more go to www.google.com and type “self-study basics”, “self-study tips”, “self-study skills” or similar.

Need Help?



In case you need help, you can contact NIPA at the following website, phone number or you can email.

www.nipa.ac.zm

NIPA-Main Campus – Outreach Programmes Division

Phone Numbers:+260-211-222480

Fax:

e-mail address: opd@nipa.ac.zm

The teaching assistant for routine enquiries can be located from the Outreach Division from 08:00 to 17:00 or can be contacted on the numbers and email address indicated above.

Library

There is a library located at the main campus along Dunshabe Road. The library opens Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 17:00.

Assignments



There shall be one assignment and a test during residential school given for this module and the assignments should be sent by post or email them to the provided email addressed to the Outreach Programmes Division – Nigeria Hall.

Assignments should be submitted to Outreach Programmes Division Registry.

Assessments



There shall be a minimum of two (02) assessments given to the students undertaking this subject

These assessments shall be teacher marked assessments.

The assessments shall be determined and given by the course tutors after you have covered a number of topics

The teacher/tutor shall ensure that the assessments are marked and dispatched to the student within a period of two weeks.

Getting around the Business Communication Skills Module

Margin icons

While working through this Business Communication Skills module, you will notice the frequent use of margin icons. These icons serve to “signpost” a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity; they have been included to help you to find your way around this labour law module.

A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with the icons and their meaning before starting your study.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| Activity | Assessment | Assignment | Case study |
|  |  |  |  |
| Discussion | Group activity | Help | Note it! |
|  |  |  |  |
| Outcomes | Reading | Reflection | Study skills |
|  |  |  |  |
| Summary | Terminology | Time | Tip |

Learning tips

You may not have studied by distance education before. Here are some guidelines to help you.

How long will it take?

It will probably take you a minimum of 70 hours to work through this study guide. The time should be spent on studying the module and the readings, doing the activities and self-help questions and completing the assessment tasks.

Note that units are not all the same length, so make sure you plan and pace your work to give yourself time to complete all of them.

About the study guide

This study guide gives you a unit-by-unit guide to the module you are studying. Each unit includes information, activities, self-help questions and readings for you to complete. These are all designed to help you achieve the learning outcomes that are stated at the beginning of the module.

Activities, self-help questions and assessments

The activities, self-help questions and assessments are part of a planned distance education programme. They will help you make your learning more active and effective, as you process and apply what you read. They will help you to engage with ideas and check your own understanding. It is vital that you take the time to complete them in the order that they occur in the study guide. Make sure you write full answers to the activities, or take notes of any discussion.

We recommend you write your answers in your learning journal and keep it with your study materials as a record of your work. You can refer to it whenever you need to remind yourself of what you have done.

Unit summary

At the end of each unit there is a list of the main points. Use it to help you review your learning. Go back if you think you have not covered something properly.

Studying at a distance

There are many advantages to studying by distance education – a full set of learning materials as provided, and you study close to home in your own community. You can also plan some of your study time to fit in with other commitments like work or family.

However, there are also challenges. Learning at a distance from your learning institution requires discipline and motivation. Here are some tips for studying at a distance.

1. **Plan** – Give priority to study sessions with your tutor and make sure you allow enough travel time to your meeting place. Make a study schedule and try to stick to it. Set specific days and times each week for study and keep them free of other activities. Make a note of the dates that your assessment pieces are due and plan for extra study time around those dates.
2. **Manage your time** – Set aside a reasonable amount of time each week for your study programme – but don't be too ambitious or you won't be able to keep up the pace. Work in productive blocks of time and include regular rests.
3. **Be organised** – Have your study materials organized in one place and keep your notes clearly labeled and sorted. Work through the topics in your study guide systematically and seek help for difficulties straight away. Never leave this until later.
4. **Find a good place to study** – Most people need order and quiet to study effectively, so try to find a suitable place to do your work – preferably somewhere where you can leave your study materials ready until next time.
5. **Ask for help if you need it** – This is the most vital part of studying at a distance. No matter what the difficulty is, seek help from your tutor or fellow students straight away.
6. **Don't give up** – If you miss deadlines for assessments, speak to your tutor – together you can work out what to do. Talking to other students can also make a difference to your study progress. Seeking help when you need it is a key way of making sure you complete your studies – so don't give up.

UNITS IN THIS MODULE

| | |
|---------|--|
| UNIT 1 | INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION |
| UNIT 2 | LISTENING |
| UNIT 3 | NOTEMAKING AND SUMMARISING |
| UNIT 4 | ORAL PRESENTATION |
| UNIT 5 | COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS |
| UNIT 6 | INTERVIEWS |
| UNIT 7 | BUSINESS LETTERS |
| UNIT 8 | MEMORANDA |
| UNIT 9 | REPORT WRITING |
| UNIT 10 | ADVERTISING |
| UNIT 11 | STUDY AND EXAMINATION WRITING TECHNIQUES |

UNIT 1 : INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

Introduction

This Unit covers the background to communication and provides a general understanding of the nature and purpose of communication in a business context.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this Unit, you will be able to:



- Define communication
- Explain the importance of communication in organizations
- Identify appropriate communication channels
- Overcome/handle communication barriers when they arise
- Use the appropriate medium of communication in a given situation

Content

- Definition, objectives and types of communication
- Non-verbal vs verbal communication
- The communication process
- Barriers to communication
- Channels of communication
- Advantages and disadvantages of various communications media
- Factors to consider in order to communicate effectively

Introduction to Communication: Overview

Communication is said to be the process of transmitting information from one point to another. It is the ability to share information with people and to understand what information and feelings are being conveyed by others. It is a two way process and can take many forms which include verbal and non-verbal ones.

Communication includes a broad range of actions which help people to work more effectively with others. The ability of a person to contribute to the achievement of the organisation's objectives will depend on his/her communication. This unit looks at some of the communication skills that are essential in your work and everyday communication encounters.

This unit gives an overview of the importance of communication, methods of communication and describes the channels of communication that exist in organizations.

In addition to that, it outlines what is involved in the communication process and also discusses problems that may arise as individuals/groups communicate. The unit ends by outlining some important factors to consider in order to communicate effectively.

Why is communication important?

Communication is a pervasive part of human nature and is thus basic to all human activities. In the organizational setting, communication is essential for a range of reasons including:

- Planning and carrying out activities
- Coordinating approaches with others
- Providing information to others
- Receiving information from others
- Building a positive relationship
- Understanding roles and assignments

Methods of Communication

The communication methods used are:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Writing
- Reading
- Non-verbal

Speaking, writing and reading can be categorized under what is referred to as verbal communication, i.e. where words of a language are used in communicating. Non-verbal communication on the other hand involves the use of means other than words of a language. These include gestures, posture, facial expressions, signs and vocalizations (including pitch and tone of voice)

The choice of what method to use depends on various factors including context, purpose and audience.

Organisational Communication Channels

Communication in organizations flows among and between organizational units or groups. It flows in various directions which include vertical and horizontal. These directions are referred to as channels.

Vertical Communication: It is the communication that flows up and down the organization hierarchy, usually along formal reporting lines. It takes place between employees and their superiors and subordinates and may involve several different levels of the organization.

Vertical upwards communication: Consists of messages from subordinates to their direct superior and then to that person's direct superior, and so on, up the hierarchy.

The typical content of upward communication is requests, information, responses to requests, suggestions, complaints, and financial information.

Occasionally, a message might bypass a particular superior depending on the urgency or importance of a communication. Bypassing is where certain levels of the hierarchy are skipped or bypassed in order to get the message across quickly. This channel should be used judiciously as it can cause problems.

Vertical downwards communication: Occurs when information flows down the hierarchy from superiors to subordinates. The typical content of these messages is directives, assignments, performance feedback and general information.

In order to be effective, vertical communication should be two-way in nature, with active feedback.

Horizontal Communication: Flows laterally within the organization and it involves colleagues and peers at the same level of the organization. It may involve individuals from several different organizational units. This type of communication facilitates coordination among interdependent units and can be used for joint problem solving. Horizontal communication also plays a major role in work teams with members drawn from several departments. Sometimes it is called lateral communication.

Diagonal Communication: Flows diagonally across departments and units in an organization. It involves staff at different levels in the organization, and working in different departments or units. This type of communication relays requests, information, suggestions, and responses to requests. In simpler terms, it is communication between a superior in one department and a subordinate in another and vice versa.

The Grapevine: Is an informal communication channel that can permeate the entire organization. This kind of communication has no specific direction and no identification of the source. Users and distributors of grapevine sources of information find their material in the form of confidential letters left unattended on desks, accidental or careless remarks, and loud voices coming from behind closed doors or sudden changes in established routines and practices.

The basis of the grapevine is gossip and rumour, and it flourishes more in organizations in which communication channels are more closed than open. The grapevine has sometimes been described as a 'necessary evil' because it has certain advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of the grapevine

1. It is used far more frequently than formal channels.
2. Managers use it to float ideas and proposals before they are made official.
3. Grapevine information has been found to be mainly accurate according to some research findings.

Disadvantages of the grapevine

1. The source of the information is usually unknown.

2. The message may be distorted as it travels from one person to another.
3. A lot of useful man hours may be wasted when employees engage in too much informal conversation.

**Activity**

List down any other advantages and disadvantages of the grapevine.

The Communication Process

The communication process is the guide towards realizing effective communication. It is through the communication process that the sharing of a common meaning between sender and receiver takes place. The communication process is made up of four key components. These are encoding, medium of transmission, decoding, and feedback. There are also two other factors in the process, and those are in the form of sender and receiver.

The process of communication begins when one person (the sender) wants to transmit information to someone else (the receiver). This information has meaning to the sender.

The sender is an individual, group, or organization who initiates the communication. He/she has an idea or information which he/she wants to transmit.

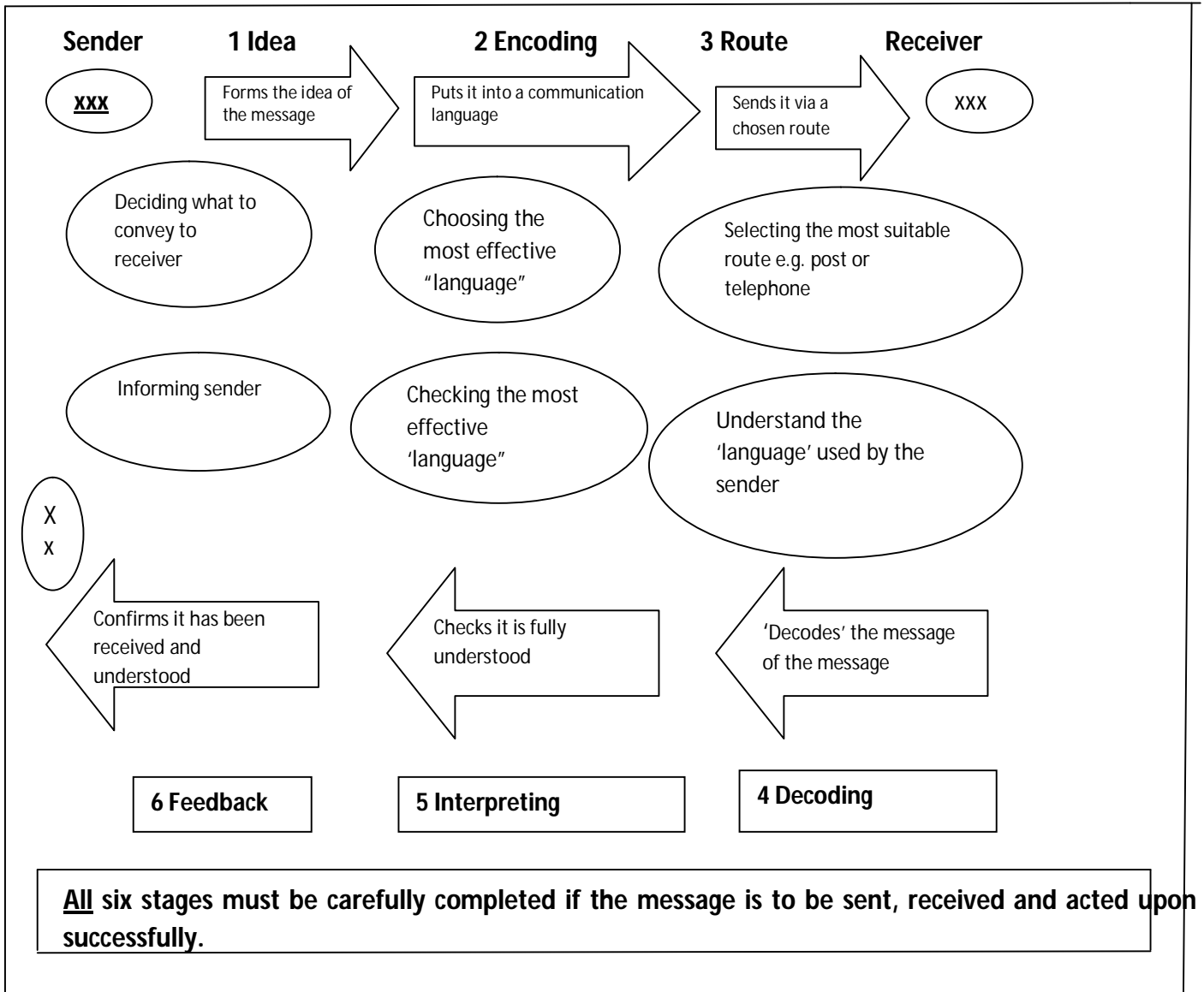
The first step the sender is faced with involves encoding. In order to convey meaning the sender must encode, which means translating the information into acceptable symbols which can take numerous forms such as languages, words, gestures or facial expressions.

After the message has been encoded, it is transmitted through an appropriate medium to the receiver who decodes it. Decoding involves interpreting the symbols sent by the sender and translating the message in order to derive meaning. Successful communication takes place when the receiver correctly interprets the sender's message.

Feedback is the final link in the chain of the communication process. After receiving the message, the receiver responds in some way and signals that response to the sender. The signals may take the form of a spoken comment, a sigh, a written message, a smile or some other action or even inaction.

Feedback is a key component in the process because it allows the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message.

What happens when a message is sent and received?



The objectives of Communication

Whether we are writing or speaking, trying to persuade, inform, entertain, explain, convince or educate or any other objective behind the particular communication task we are engaged in, we always have four general objectives:

- To be understood
- To understand others
- To be accepted
- To get action/to initiate action (change of behavior or attitude).

Types of Communication

1. **Intrapersonal Communication** – This is communication where a person communicates within or with him/herself. Examples of communication within oneself are thoughts, ideas, and reflections. Examples of communication with oneself are, speaking to oneself, or writing out plans for future action.
2. **Interpersonal Communication** – This is communication between two people. It may be in spoken or written form (verbal communication) or in behavior (non verbal communication).
3. **Group Communication** – This is where a number of people interact and exchange ideas and information. Groups may vary in size i.e small medium or large.
4. **Mass Communication** – This is a process where individuals or groups of individuals or organizations or institutions communicate with large audiences. Examples of mass communication forms are television, newspapers, and radio. These forms are essentially designed for mass audiences.
5. **External Communication** – This is communication between an organization and its clients or stakeholders.

Advantages and Disadvantages of various communication media:

| WRITTEN COMMUNICATION | ADVANTAGES | DISADVANTAGES |
|---|---|---|
| Letter Memorandum Report Abstract Minutes Article Press release Etc | Provides written record and evidence of dispatch and receipt; capable of relaying complex ideas; provides analysis, evaluation and summary; disseminates information to dispersed receivers; can confirm interpret and clarify oral communication; forms basis of contract or agreement. | Can take time to produce, can be expensive; communication tends to be more formal and distant; can cause problems of interpretation; instant feedback is not possible; once dispatched, difficult to modify message; does not allow for exchange of opinion, views or attitudes except over period of time. |
| ORAL COMMUNICATION | ADVANTAGES | DISADVANTAGES |
| Face-to-face conversation Interview Meeting Oral briefing Public address Oral presentation Telephone call Conference Training session Etc | Direct medium of communication; advantages of physical proximity and, usually, both sight and sound of sender and receiver; allows for instant interchange of opinion, views, attitudes – instantaneous feedback; easier to convince or persuade; allows for contribution and participation from all present. | More difficult to hold ground in face of opposition; more difficult to control when a number of people take part; lack of time to think things out – quality of decision-making may be inferior; often no written record of what has been said; sometimes disputes result over what was agreed. |
| VISUAL COMMUNICATION | ADVANTAGES | DISADVANTAGES |
| Non-verbal communication e.g.: Expression, gesture, posture Diagram Chart Table Graph Photograph Film slide Film Video tape Model Mock-up etc | Reinforces oral communication provides additional visual stimulus; simplifies written or spoken word; quantifies – provides ideas in number form; provides simulations of situations; illustrates techniques and procedures; provides visual record. | May be difficult to interpret without reinforcing written or spoken word; requires additional skills of comprehension and interpretation; can be costly and expensive in time to produce; may be costly to disseminate or distribute; storage may be more expensive; does not always allow time for evaluation. |

Barriers to Effective Communication

Although the communication process seems simple, it is not. Certain barriers present themselves throughout the process. These barriers are factors that have a negative impact on the communication.

Some common barriers include:

- Differing perceptions
- Emotions
- Language differences
- Technical jargon
- Information overload
- Too little information
- Stereotyping/prejudice
- Distortion along the channel
- Failure to give/seek feedback
- Status
- Wrong message
- Poor timing
- Wrong audience
- Inappropriate medium
- Not listening
- Noise

The most important point to note is that one should be able to identify barriers when they present themselves and also be able to overcome them. Successful and effective communication within an organization stems from the systematic and careful implementation of the communication process. All members of an organization will improve their communication skills if they follow the communication process, and prevent or avoid different barriers.

Some factors to consider in order to communicate effectively:

In view of the importance and pervasiveness of communication in organizations, it is vital that we outline some factors we need to consider in order for us to communicate effectively. These include:

- Purpose – is it: To inform? To persuade? To discharge? To reprimand? Etc
- Audience – Social cultural background; Education; Attitude; etc
- Method – Spoken? Written? Non-verbal?
- Language – What language? What level? What words? Etc.
- Organisation of ideas – order of importance? Chronological order? Geographical or spatial order? Etc
- Approach – Familiar/formal or informal



Activity

Explain the barriers outlined in this unit with relevant examples and how they can be overcome.

UNIT 2 : LISTENING

Introduction

This unit covers various aspects of effective listening and outlines how you can improve your listening skills.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Explain the difference between listening and hearing
- Explain why listening is important
- Use listening techniques effectively at any given time
- Overcome listening barriers when they arise

Content

- Distinguishing listening from hearing
- Importance of improving listening skills
- Guidelines to effective listening
- Characteristics of a:
 - Good listener
 - Poor listener
- Barriers to effective listening

EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Listening is:

- Active;
- Intentional;
- Purposeful;

whereas hearing is the opposite of that.

IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

- (i) It builds relationships by showing concern for the speaker. i.e., rapport is created between sender and recipient.
- (ii) It enables someone to make appropriate responses e.g. in an interview.
- (iii) It enables someone to get the real meaning of what is being said because you will be able to read even the non verbal signals, e.g. intonation of the voice.
- (iv) It helps in conflict resolutions i.e. when two parties have differed you are able to sit them down and listen to both sides in order to resolve the conflict.
- (v) It clarifies and clears misunderstandings created by lack of paying attention e.g. in a meeting.

GUIDELINES TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

1. Prepare to listen i.e. clear your mind and focus on the speaker and what he/she has started to say. (Prepare both psychologically and physically).
2. Be attentive i.e. pay particular attention to what the speaker is saying and try to recall any previous knowledge on the subject.
3. Avoid interruptions when someone is speaking e.g. trying to talk to someone seated next to you.
4. Show the speaker that you are listening by your posture, i.e. alert, looking at him/her nodding etc. It is also a good idea to maintain good eye contact with the speaker.
5. Listen for main points and supplementary details. Distinguish between them and retain the main points. Pay particular attention to the use of semantic markers e.g. 'firstly, in addition; finally, for instance', as they may assist you to follow the talk.
6. Take notes to refresh your memory:
 - (i) This forces you to concentrate and understand
 - (ii) Encourages sender to put more effort i.e. it motivates the speaker
 - (iii) It provides a record for future reference.
7. Make use of sender's non verbal cues or signals to get additional meaning.
8. Be patient i.e. give chance to the sender or speaker to finish whatever they came to say; irrespective of the problems they might have.
9. Avoid total physical inactivity because you may end up day dreaming. Total physical inactivity is a barrier to effective listening.
10. Be open minded i.e. accept and accommodate divergent views.
11. Do not be prejudiced about the speaker e.g. by their appearance, status, profession etc.
12. Avoid being emotional especially when answering questions because you may end up being irrational.
13. Be familiar with the presenter's pattern of presentation.
14. Ask questions/Review what is being said, connect with earlier information but do not lag behind.
15. If it is a group discussion, take care to avoid thinking far ahead about what you will say to the point of stopping listening to the speaker.

BARRIERS TO LISTENING

1. **Noise** in any form especially physical noise can be a hindrance to effective listening.
2. **Lack of interest** – If you do not have interest in what is being discussed; you may not pay particular attention.
3. **Being pre-occupied** with what to say next to the point of stopping listening to the presenter.
4. **If the discussion is too long** - i.e. prolonged speech or presentation might bore the recipient.
5. **Use of jargon** - If the sender uses technical terms to a lay person, it might be difficult to understand.
6. **Distrust** – Individuals who do not trust each other are not likely to listen to each other.
7. **Prejudice** – Judging the speaker by his/her appearance or manner of speech may be a barrier to listening.
8. **Overload** – Giving the listener too much information at any given point there by confusing them.
9. **Language differences** – French Vs English.
10. **Hearing impairment** – If the listener has some hearing disabilities it can create problems in listening.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD LISTENER

The following are some of the characteristics of a good listener:

1. Pays attention
2. Maintains eye contact with the speaker
3. Seeks clarifications where not clear
4. Avoids interruptions
5. Does not prejudge the speaker
6. Sits upright



Activity

- List five other characteristics of a good listener.
- List at least five characteristics of a poor listener

UNIT 3 : NOTE MAKING AND SUMMARIZING

Introduction

This unit covers skills of a good summarizer/note-taker and the various techniques you may use when producing summaries.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Identify situations that require note making/summarizing
- Outline the skills of a note taker/summarizer
- Take down main points from an oral or written source
- Produce information in a summarized form

Content

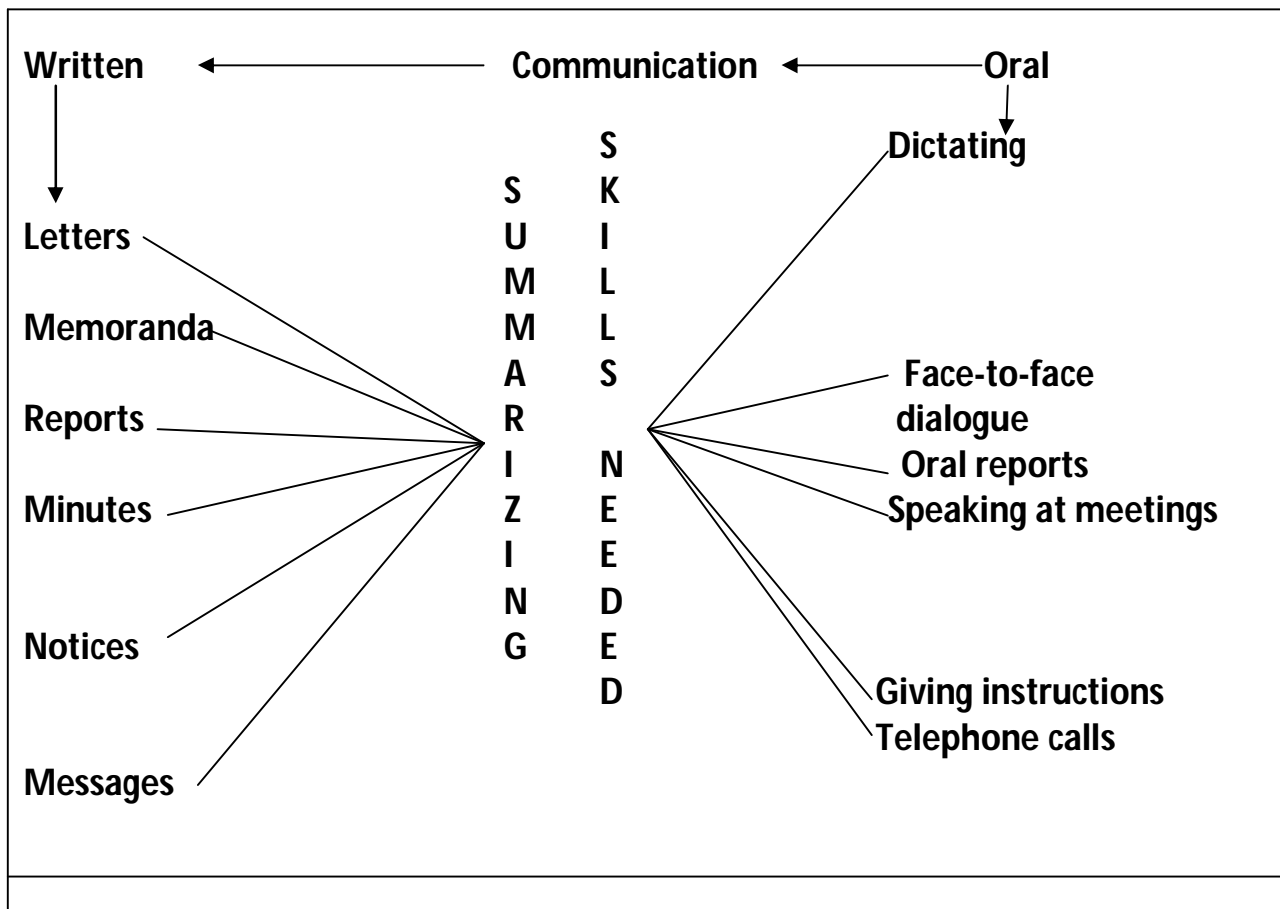
- Definition of summary
- Situations that require summarizing
- Skills of a summarizer
- Prose and note form summary
- Techniques of summarizing
 - Use of layout
 - Removing unnecessary words (Reducing sentences)
 - Shortening Words (Abbreviations)
 - Removing inessential information
 - Shortening sentences (Substitution)

WHAT IS A SUMMARY?

A Summary is a shortened version of something read or heard.

Summaries of written texts should convey all or most of a section of text using a reduced number of words. You use summarizing skills all the time in oral communication situations. The written summary is also not new to you as it is something most of us have done throughout our school days. However, it is rare in business organizations to be asked to do a straight forward continuous prose summary. Summaries in business may be written in the form of an advertisement or notice, an article for the in-house journal or a handout for distribution to trainees. These are all exercises in summarizing, picking out relevant and important information and presenting it in an appropriate manner. The diagram shows situations in which skills of summarizing play an important part.

SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE SUMMARIZING



Other Applications of Summarizing Techniques

- Relaying to a principal the outcome of a meeting
- As chairman, summing up a discussion at a meeting
- Passing a message, either orally or on a message pad
- Designing and advertising for a job
- Delivering the chairman's report at a company's annual general meeting
- Producing a sales report
- Writing a letter or memorandum conveying information or a point of view
- Relaying instructions from above to subordinates
- Editing a press-release for inclusion in a newspaper
- Writing an article for inclusion in a house magazine
- Drafting a notice or circular
- Using the telephone – particularly over a long distance?
- Interviewing a candidate for an appointment
- Giving a briefing to a group, working party or taskforce
- Getting across a point of view or suggestion
- Dispatching a telephone or telex message

Many oral and writing situations take place daily requiring summarizing techniques.

THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS OF A SUMMARISER

If you have to produce information in the circumstances highlighted in the diagram you need to acquire summarizing skills broadly identified as:

- Comprehension
- Classification
- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Selection

Essentially you will exercise your powers of discrimination in deciding which parts of a given piece of material need to be extracted and relayed in a particular format to meet the needs of a third party.

In order to do this you must have or develop the following specific qualities and skills:

- **Ability to comprehend** the material you are working on. You cannot summarise what you do not understand.
- **The judgment to select points** relevant to assigned purposes. Only essential items should be included
- **Discernment** to separate main points from minor ones
- **Ability to be objective** – personal attitudes and opinions must not be allowed to influence selection of materials.
- **Linguistic skill** – wide vocabulary and sure control of sentence structure which are necessary for conciseness, brevity and conveying the tone or attitudes of the original.

TYPES OF SUMMARY

Summaries can be in:

- Note form; or
- Continuous prose



Activity 3.1

What is the difference between note form and continuous prose summaries?

Tables, charts, graphs and diagrams are also ways in which information is presented in a summarized form.



Activity 3.2

Look at the following documents and note how information is presented

- Calendar
- Class timetable
- Travel itinerary
- Telephone directory
- Temperature chart for a patient in hospital

TECHNIQUES OF SUMMARISING

There are many different techniques used in summarizing and note making/taking. In this unit we will look at five ways:

- Using layout to show relationship between sections of information
- Removing unnecessary words i.e. reducing phrases/sentences
- Reducing the number of letters in words (abbreviating) or using symbols instead
- Removing inessential information
- Shortening sentences by substituting

USING LAYOUT

The following are the layout features for notes

1 Headings

- Main heading for the topic covered, clearly marked by the use of capitals, underlining etc.
- Sub- headings for divisions in the main topic. These are normally different from main headings. E.g., main headings in capitals, while sub-headings in lower case letters with underlining.

1 Indenting – This is setting subsidiary sections of information a little to the right of the main sections so that they are easily noticed.

2 Numbering – Sections and sub-sections stand out clearly if they are numbered systematically. Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, etc) may be used for main headings, with or without decimal numbering. If decimal numbering is not used, Roman numbers (i, ii, iii, iv etc) or letters of the alphabet (a, b, c, etc) can be used for sub sections.

3 Marking points – Individual points of information under a single heading should be marked by using symbols such as dashes or bullets etc. Sometimes portions of text may be in italics, bold or underlined.

REMOVING UNNECESSARY WORDS (REDUCING SENTENCES)

In any language normal sentences contain more words or part-words than are absolutely necessary in order to communicate information. Look at this sentence:

‘The typing paper is in the third drawer.’

We could communicate the same information simply by saying:

‘Typing paper in third drawer.’ although this is not a fully grammatical sentence of English.

Because languages use rather more words than are necessary it is always possible to produce a shorter version of a sentence which is still adequate for basic communication. This is done regularly in certain familiar situations.

Newspaper headlines and hasty message all cut out unnecessary words in order to save space, time and money.

The types of word that can be left out of a sentence (in any language) are those which carry virtually no meaning of their own, and are as a result predictable from the remaining words. In English the main types of word that can be left out are:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| ARTICLES | - | the, a/an, some, this, those, etc |
| AUXILIARY VERBS | - | is, are, have, has, do, does, etc |
| MAIN VERB ‘be’ | - | (e.g. ‘John <u>is</u> a policeman’) |
| PRONOUNS | - | I, you, he, him, they, them, who, which, etc |
| PREPOSITIONS | - | at, in, up, through, for, etc |
| (sometimes – not always) | | |

The words that can be left out are also referred to as **function words** whereas those that are maintained are called **content words**.

CONTENT WORDS

Content words carry the meaning of the sentence.

In the last sentence the content words are:

CONTENT WORDS CARRY MEANING
SENTENCE

FUNCTION WORDS

Function words carry very little meaning. They are used to link the content words together to form complete sentences.

In the last sentence the function words are:

THEY ARE TO THE TOGETHER
TO

Note: It is possible to understand the meaning sentence from the content words alone.

Note: It is impossible to understand of the the meaning of the sentence from the function words alone.

Function words should, however, be included in messages if leaving them out would lead to confusion or misunderstanding.

e.g. 'Plans changed unexpectedly' could be:

a) My plans have been changed unexpectedly.

b) Her plans have been changed unexpectedly.

Another way of reducing sentences is shown in the following sentences:

1 a) There's a book lying on the table

b) There's a book on the table

2 a) He holds the position of Chief Accountant

b) He is the Chief Accountant

3 a) What we want to do is set off before the rain starts

b) We want to set off before it rains

In each case the second sentence is a simpler and shorter version of the first, but little information is lost.

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF LETTERS IN WORDS (ABBREVIATING) OR USING SYMBOLS

When you want to take notes from an oral source, you will always need to write fast. It would be helpful if you could write in shorthand but failure to that, you should learn to abbreviate words or use symbols instead.

You may have developed your own personal abbreviations and symbols for use in your personal notes. The following is a list of some commonly used symbols:

↗ increase, greater, growth

→ leads to, causes, results in

↔ connected to, is related to

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| @ | each, at (a rate), valued at |
| % | percent (age) |
| < | smaller than, less than |
| > | greater than |
| ↘ | decrease, reduction, less |
| & | and |
| = | equal (s) |
| ≠ | not equal |



Activity 3.3

What are the symbols for the following?

- Because of.....
- Therefore.....
- Number.....

Some standard abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Account | a/c, acc |
| Approximately | approx |
| Compare | cf |
| Minimum | min |
| For example | e.g. |
| Number | no. |
| Hour | hr |
| That is | i.e. |
| Department | dept |
| Maximum | max |

REMOVING INESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Summarizing anything requires you to identify and remove unimportant details. A lot of information which can be removed from summarizing exercises can be categorized as follows: examples, definitions, additions and rephrasing. You will be able to identify these categories of information by the way they are introduced in the text. 'Clues' are often given as shown below:

| Categories | Clues |
|----------------|--|
| 1. Examples | 'for example.....' '...e.g....' |
| 2. Definitions | 'This is ...' 'This means...' |
| 3. Rephrasing | 'In other words...' 'That is...' |
| 4. Additions | '..., especially...' '..., particularly...' |

Example:

It has been argued, (1) especially in recent years, that an examination summary is not a realistic exercise, (2) i.e. not the type of summary one is required to do in the business world.

(the information to be removed has been underlined)

The reason for removing number (1) is that it is an addition. The clue is the word 'especially.' The reason for removing number (2) is that it is an example. The clue is the 'i.e.'

The sentence can therefore, stand as:

'It has been argued that an examination summary is not a realistic exercise'.



Activity 3.4

The following sentences all contain some inessential information. Highlight the details that should be retained, and state the reason why the rest should be removed, together with the clue that was given. The first one has been done for you:

1. Business letters should be free of slang and other colloquialisms, i.e. expressions used only in conversations.
Reason? Rephrasing
Clue? i.e.
2. An essential part of any documentary evidence, for example letters, invoices, orders, is that it should have the names and the addresses of both parties to the correspondence.
Reason?
Clue?.....
3. References often include departments and file numbers, especially in correspondence with government departments.
Reason?
Clue?.....
4. Some circular letters are unsolicited. This means the recipients have no particular interest in the message.
Reason?
Clue?.....
5. Many companies, particularly the larger ones, are turning more and more to computerization of their clerical procedures.
Reason?
Clue?.....

SHORTENING SENTENCES BY SUBSTITUTING

Another way of shortening sentences is by replacing phrases with single words.

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------------|
| E.g. Throughout the world | ----- | WORLD-WIDE |
| For the time being | ----- | TEMPORARILY |
| As soon as possible | ----- | SOONEST |
| Without delay | ----- | IMMEDIATELY |

You are therefore saying the same thing but in not so many words.



Activity 3.5

In the following sentences replace the section in *italics* by providing just **one** word. The first one has been done for you:

1. When the meeting is over, you must produce the *accurate transcript of the main discussion which took place and the decisions made.* **ANSWER:**
Minutes
2. The next meeting of the board is coming up soon. I must prepare the *list of items to be discussed at the meeting.* **ANSWER:**
3. The *person who greets visitors to an organization* must portray a good impression.
ANSWER:
4. She's not interested in work-only in *tennis, swimming, hockey, golf-anything requiring physical activity.* **ANSWER:**
5. When goods have been purchased, it is usual to send out an *itemized statement informing the buyer of the quantity, description and price of the goods which were bought.* **ANSWER:**

There are many expressions in the English language which are long-winded and could be expressed in a shorter way. The following are some of the more common ones:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|--------------|
| 1. In the near future | ----- | soon |
| 2. Put up with | ----- | tolerate |
| 3. As a result | ----- | consequently |
| 4. A lot of | ----- | many |
| 5. At all times | ----- | always |
| 6. At this moment in time | ----- | now |



Activity 3.6

A. Use one word for the following phrases:

1. Without a doubt
2. With great care

B. Rewrite the following sentences. Use the number of words shown in brackets.

1. Mubanga read the letter's message with great care. (in 5 words)
2. The manager asked if he could be given a summarized version of the article which was about word processing. (in 12 words)
3. He lived longer than his wife (in 4 words)

UNIT 4: ORAL PRESENTATION

Introduction

This unit covers skills of a presenter and the factors you will need to consider in the preparation and delivery of your presentation.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Outline the factors involved in preparing for and delivering an oral presentation
- Give an effective public oral presentation
- Explain the uses of various visual aids

Content

- Factors to consider in preparing for a presentation:
- Factors to consider during delivery
- Use of visual aids
- Advantages and disadvantages of visual aids

Introduction to public speaking

It is true that some people have a natural flair for public speaking and feel reasonably at ease when addressing an audience. For others it is a totally unnerving experience which they would prefer to avoid at all costs.

However, speaking in public is an art which can be cultivated by everybody, and as with most other things, practice will improve that art. Everyone is capable of expressing him/herself forcefully and convincingly when given the necessary guidance.

A. Factors to consider in preparing for a presentation

1. Fix the purpose and aim of the presentation

Is it to be informative? Evocative? Intended to offer new knowledge? Etc.

N.B

Teaching objectives or outcomes should be measurable i.e., what do you intend to achieve at the end of the presentation?

2. Knowledge of the subject

Gather as much information about the subject as you can. Any signs that will show your audience that you have gaps in your subject will make them lose confidence in you.

3. **Structure your presentation so that you have:**

- (i) Introduction – briefly state what you are going to say
- (ii) Main body – say it under appropriate headings and sub headings
- (iii) Conclusion - Summarize what you have said; i.e. highlight the major points.

4. **Ascertain or fix the length of time you are to speak**

This will determine the amount of information you need to collect for your presentation.

5. **Rehearse** your presentation if you can in front of your colleagues or friends. This will enable you make the necessary adjustments to your presentations in order to perfect it.

6. **Set time limits to each section** of your presentation.

This is important because it will ensure that each part is given appropriate amount of time.

7. **Ask yourself whether your presentation could** be more interesting and informative if you used some form of visual aids. Visual aids are teaching materials or equipment such as:

- Over head projector
- Power point
- White board
- Flip charts
- Pictures etc

Visual aids have certain **advantages** such as:

- (i) They can make a presentation interesting e.g pictures
- (ii) They can make a presentation memorable e.g a video clip
- (iii) Some can be stored for future use etc

However, visual aids have certain **disadvantages** as well:

- (i) They can be expensive to produce
- (ii) Some are dependent on electricity so when power goes off, you may not use them.
- (iii) Some require some levels of literacy to interpret. e.g. graphs

NB

If you are going to use any electrical appliances, please check that they are in a working condition prior to your presentation.

8. **Know what kind of audience to expect**, i.e. carry out a target audience analysis so that your presentation is tailor made. For instance;

- How many are expected?
- Any previous knowledge of your subject?
- What is their educational background?
- What is their status (position)?

9. **Leave time** when preparing notes for your presentation for participants to be able to make comments or ask questions at the end of the presentation.
10. **Visit the venue** of the presentation prior to the presentations to familiarize yourself with the sitting arrangements and other logistics.

B. Factors to consider during delivery

1. **Greet the participants** and introduce yourself and let the participants introduce themselves if possible. This is part of climate setting so that rapport is created.
2. **Be sure of your opening words and speak decisively.** Rehearse them if you wish. It is essential to capture the audience's attention at the very beginning; it is difficult to capture it later.
3. **However, nervous you feel, try to relax.** Do not allow nervousness to persist.
4. **Use eye contact as much as possible.** Address them all by looking at everyone in the audience. Apart from showing confidence, eye contact will also enable you read the non verbal communication coming your way.
5. **Avoid bad verbal mannerisms** e.g. over use of a particular word/phrase or constantly sayingeer.....eer because you may end up boring the audience.
6. **Avoid bad physical or non verbal mannerisms** e.g. fiddling with pen, hair, ring etc
7. **Engage the audience** if you can by asking them questions, and let them ask questions in turn. Let them participate as much as possible.
8. **Good voice projection** is necessary for effective delivery. Project your voice at the back of the room but do not shout as you may end up irritating the audience.
9. **Employ humour** if you can but do not overdo it. Humour is important in the sense that it may make your presentation interesting.
10. **Keep to time.** Do not go on and on even when time is up as you may end up boring the audience.
11. **End on a positive note** by summarizing your presentation and asking the audience if they have any questions or comments to make.



Activity 4

List five advantages and five disadvantages of visual aids.

UNIT 5: COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

Introduction

This unit covers the various types of committee meetings, documentation associated with meetings, duties/roles of office bearers and terminology of meetings.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Outline the advantages and disadvantage of committees
- Explain the purpose of meetings
- Identify the different types of meetings which take place in business
- Explain the roles of various office bearers
- Draft various documents associated with meetings
- Explain different terminologies used in meetings

Content

- Definition of committee/meeting
- Types of committees/meetings
- Advantages and disadvantages of committees
- Organising meetings
 - Venue preparation
 - Documentation for meetings
- Conducting meetings
 - Order of deliberations
 - Duties of officers and members
- Minutes of meetings
 - Types
 - Format
 - Language
- Terminology of meetings

What is a Committee?

It is a group of people appointed or selected to attend to special business and to achieve specific objectives.

How do Committees function?

Committees function through meetings. Meetings are forums for discussion and machinery for getting things done. They can range from the very formal with complex rules of procedure, to the very informal, just guided by conversations. Yet all meetings have one thing in common: to channel the group expertise of a number of people to achieve a set of goals or objectives.

Many meetings take place in business and an effective meeting is an efficient tool in the communication process. Meetings enable face-to-face contact of a number of people at the same time. They provide a useful opportunity for sharing information, making suggestions and proposals, taking decisions and obtaining instant feedback.

Meetings are used for a variety of purposes such as:

- To coordinate or arrange activities
- To report on some activity or experience
- To take decisions about actions
- To inform and/or instruct
- To generate ideas

TYPES OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

There are many different types of committees. Some of these are:

- **Executive Committee**
This is one which has the power to act upon decisions made.
- **Advisory Committee**
This is one which refers advice to a main, executive committee
- **Standing Committee**
This is one which meets for an indefinite period. It is permanent in nature.
- **Ad Hoc Committee**
This is a committee constituted to carry out a particular task (from the Latin ‘ad hoc’ meaning ‘for this purpose’). It is temporary in nature.
- **Sub-Committee**
This is one performing for and reporting to a main committee.



Activity 5.1

Make a list of any other types of committee and what they do.

Meetings can be formal or informal.

Formal Meetings

The rules of conduct of formal meetings are outlined in documents such as a company's Articles of Association, Constitution or Standing Orders. With such meetings a quorum must be formed and a formal record of the meeting must be kept. Such meetings include:

- **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

These are held once a year to assess the trading of the organization over the year. All shareholders are invited to attend the AGM but they must be given 21 days notice.

- **Statutory Meetings**

These are called so that shareholders can communicate and consider special reports. Companies are required by law to hold these statutory meetings.

- **Board Meetings**

These are held as often as individual organizations require. They are attended by all Directors and chaired by the Chairman of the Board.

Informal Meetings

Informal meetings are not restricted by the same rules and regulations as formal meetings. Such meetings may take the form of brainstorming or discussion sessions and include the following:

- **Management Meetings**

These are attended by a group of Managers who may need to discuss specific matters, report on progress or receive progress reports.

- **Departmental Meetings**

These meetings are called by the head of department or manager of a section. All staff of that department or section will be invited to attend.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMMITTEES

Advantages of committees

- They offer a combined and integrated judgment of a situation or problem. Members bring with them a wide range of experience, knowledge and ability.
- They help increase individual motivation and commitment on the part of members who feel that they can also contribute to the running of the organization.
- They can foster horizontal communication
- They allow for human resource development and growth. The young and inexperienced can take advantage of observing and learning from other members with much experience or with different viewpoints and knowledge.

Disadvantages of committees

- They can be time consuming and costly if not properly run.
- There is no individual responsibility or accountability. Every member is bound by the principle of collective responsibility.
- They may reach decisions that are products of excessive compromise or minority domination.

ORGANIZING MEETINGS

Meetings can sometimes be a source of communication failure. When they are, these are the usual causes:

- Bad organization
- Inadequate briefing
- Poor performance of 'principal officers'
- Misunderstanding of Terms of Reference.

A meeting must therefore, be well planned and organized. This involves physical arrangements and document preparation.

Physical arrangements include venue preparation i.e. selecting the appropriate room, arranging the seating, preparing the required stationery, refreshments and putting in place any other logistics.



Activity 5.2

Using diagrams, illustrate any five (5) seating arrangements that can be used for meetings

DOCUMENTATION FOR MEETINGS

Documents for meetings serve various purposes:

- a) To ensure that all participants know a meeting is to take place, formal advance notifications of their being called are issued (**notices**);
- b) To ensure meetings achieve their purposes, schedules or lists of items to be discussed are issued to all participants (**agendas**); and
- c) To ensure that all participants are reminded of the business that was conducted, the decisions that were made and the issues that were resolved at the meetings, formal written records are published (**minutes**).



Activity 5.3

List down any other important committee documents that have not been mentioned here and state their function.

Notice and agenda

The notice and agenda are usually combined in one document. The portion at the top is known as the **notice**. This gives details of the type, place, day, date and time of the meeting. You may write a notice using any one of several formats i.e.:

1. **A form postcard** – such postcards are pre-printed and used to call routine, perhaps monthly meetings. Spaces are left for the Secretary to enter the committee member's name and the day, date, time and venue of the meetings.
2. **Centered notification** – some notices are produced on sheets of A5 landscape headed paper. The essential information is in a centered paragraph.
3. **Letter format** – sometimes formal meetings are called by means of a personally written letter from the Secretary to each committee member on the organisation's headed paper.
4. **Memorandum** – in the case of meetings called by a company or public service department, the most frequently used format is the memorandum.

The **agenda** is the middle part of the document. This is a list of topics to be discussed at the meeting.

In addition to providing an ‘early warning system’ to help meeting participants to compare themselves for the topics to be covered, the agenda acts both as a ‘running order’ schedule and timetable during a meeting. Below is an example of a notice and agenda of an ordinary **meeting in memorandum format**:

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION | |
| MEMORANDUM | |
| TO | : All Students – DPA Class |
| FROM | : Class Representative |
| REF | : NIPA/DPA 1 |
| DATE | : 27 th October, 2010 |
| <hr/> | |
| SUBJECT: NOTICE OF MEETING | |
| Please note that there will be a meeting in classroom 13 at NIPA Main Campus on Friday 29 th October, 2010 at 10:30hours. | |
| Please be punctual. | |
| AGENDA | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Chairperson’s opening remarks2. Minutes of last meeting3. Matters arising4. Absconding from classes5. Lecturer attendance6. Any other business7. Closing remarks | |

In the example shown, note that the first three (1, 2, and 3) and the final two (6 and 7) items are known as ordinary business. These are items which will be included on every meeting agenda.



Activity 5.4

- a) List down any situations when any of these ordinary business items may not be included on the agenda.
- b) The agenda for an Annual General Meeting (AGM) differs from that of an ordinary committee meeting. Draw up an agenda for an AGM.

After the first three opening items (1, 2, and 3) of ordinary business, there will be a list of special or new business (items 4 and 5 in the example) – these are special matters to be discussed at this meeting only.

Chairperson's agenda

There are basically two types of agenda, i.e. the chairperson's agenda for use by the chairperson and the general agenda which is circulated to the rest of the members and which you have just looked at in the previous paragraphs.

The difference between the two is that the chairperson's agenda will have supplementary notes to guide the chairperson during the meeting. It will also have wide margins so that the chairperson can take down notes during the meeting.

The following is an example of a chairperson's agenda:

| TIME | AGENDA ITEMS | NOTES IN PREPARATION | NOTES FROM MEETING |
|-------|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| 10:00 | 1. Apologies | Mr Mutale will be away at a conference. | |
| 10:05 | 2. Minutes | Copy attached | |
| 10:15 | 3. Matters Arising | Ask if anyone wishes to make a point | |
| 10:30 | | | |

CONDUCTING MEETINGS

In conducting a meeting, you are guided by the agenda and **the order of your deliberations** will be something like this:

Members arrive and take seats; they form a quorum.

1. Satisfied that a quorum has been formed, the Chairperson calls meeting to order and officially opens the meeting (at the stipulated time as much as possible). He/she leads the members through the agenda. At this stage the Chairperson may make announcements if he/she has any.
2. Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting. The Chairperson requests members to identify mistakes/errors in the minutes of the previous meeting so that they can be corrected in this present meeting before they are adopted as a correct record. These mistakes/errors can be spelling mistakes, grammatical mistakes, misrepresentations, etc, made by the Secretary. Corrections are made page by page under the guidance of the Chairperson.
3. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. The Chairperson or any other members request reports on progress made on tasks or assignments agreed upon in the previous meeting to be carried out. Officers who were assigned these tasks give reports saying how successful they were or what difficulties they encountered.
4. New business. Now new items on the agenda are tackled one by one under the guidance of the Chairperson. There may be one item or more depending on the circumstances. It is advisable that items to be discussed at a single meeting are minimised in order that the items are fully discussed.
5. Any other business (AOB). Once members have finished discussing new items, at this stage the Chairperson allows a chance for those who have other items for discussion, which were not on the agenda.
6. Closure or Closing remarks. The Chairperson announces the date, venue, and time of the next meeting if this has already been decided; he/she thanks the members for their contributions and officially closes the meeting.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

As stated earlier, one of the causes of communication failure in meetings is poor performance of 'principal officers'. It is therefore important that all those involved in meetings know what is expected of them. The following table provides a useful reminder of the essential duties of the officers and members of meetings:

Table 5.1: Duties of Officers and Members

| Before meeting | During meeting | After meeting |
|--|--|---|
| Chairperson <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish and understand the items of business to be transacted. 2. Agree a draft agenda. 3. Ensure members are notified of time, place, purpose of meeting and issue agenda if possible. 4. Ensure the room is properly arranged – seating arrangements, papers, water, ashtrays, etc. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start on time 2. Introduce topics clearly 3. Obtain valid contributions. 4. Maintain order 5. Get decisions. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verify draft copy of minutes prepared by Secretary or minute writer. 2. Monitor progress. |
| Secretary or minute writer <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain the matters from previous minutes or new sources. 2. Draft agenda to a logical order of priorities. 3. Agree with Chairperson. 4. Circulate notice of meeting and agenda. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend before time. 2. Get the room ready. 3. Have all necessary papers available. 4. Take note of the proceedings. 5. Do not allow unclear discussion to pass. 6. Assist the Chairperson. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft minutes. 2. Agree with Chairperson. 3. Distribute to members within two days of meeting. 4. Issue instructions arising from minutes and monitor if necessary. |
| Members <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify Secretary/Chairperson of items for agenda. 2. Read all papers. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend on time. 2. Make disciplined contributions. 3. Take note of | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and verify minutes. 2. Carry out any action required and if necessary report back. |

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| 3. Prepare if appropriate own supporting papers. | decisions made and action. | |
| 4. Clear any points of correction with Secretary. | | |

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Minutes are primarily produced to provide an accurate written record of the business conducted or decisions made or issues resolved by a meeting. **They can therefore be said to be a summarized true record of the deliberations of a meeting**

Types of minutes

Minutes may take three forms:

- a) **Resolution minutes.** Here only the resolutions or decisions are recorded, without describing the discussion preceding the resolution/decision. This is a brief, strictly relevant method, which also serves to disguise possible conflicts and divisions within the meeting.
- b) **Narrative minutes.** Here, a concise summary of the discussion leading up to the resolutions is added. This enables individuals to go on record with their views, and also enables the organisation to assess their soundness of judgment in the light of events. Narrative minutes employ the techniques of reported speech. They should not be so brief as to be uninformative, but should equally avoid irrelevant detail and intrusive `colour` (the emotions, tones and actions of the people concerned).
- c) **Action minutes.** In organisations where the meeting or chair has clear authority to direct members` actions or where it is particularly important for executive decisions to be implemented quickly and there is infrequent contact among participants between meetings, then the format of `action minutes` may be used to indicate what is expected as a result of the resolutions, and who is responsible. A right hand column may be used to note the name of the person who has been asked to perform the necessary action. The advantage of such a format is that it is very clear who has been asked to do what. When the minutes are circulated, it is immediately clear to a participant whether he/she has been required to act in any way.

Action sheet

Sometimes, the Secretary or minute writer may decide to circulate an `action sheet`. An action sheet is a list of tasks emanating from the resolutions and decisions made in a meeting. It indicates the list of tasks, action officers for each task and the completion dates. It is relatively easy to prepare and can be circulated even before the minutes are completed. It serves as a reminder to members who have been assigned tasks. The action sheet is not only a summary of the required

actions but it is also a monitoring tool for the chairperson to follow up implementation of agreed tasks.

Format of minutes

- Name of organisation being represented
- Heading: This includes:
 - ❖ The name of the committee (or body) which met.
 - ❖ The venue at which the meeting was held.
 - ❖ The date and time when the meeting was held.

PRESENT: The list of names of members or persons present at the meeting, with their titles etc.

ABSENT: The list of names of members or persons absent from the meeting without excuses, with their respective titles, etc.

APOLOGIES: The list of names of members or persons absent from the meeting with excuses, with their respective titles, etc.

ITEMS DISCUSSED (set out in agenda order)

1. Chairperson`s opening remarks
2. Adoption of minutes of the previous meeting (if there was one)
3. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting
4. New items (listed by their specific headings)
5. Any other business
6. Closure

*Space for names and signatures of Chairperson and Secretary. The signing is done after the next meeting when the minutes are confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Chairperson:

Date:

Secretary:

Date:

Some guiding principles for the writing of minutes:

- a) The Secretary (or an agreed appointed person) takes detailed notes during the meeting.
- b) Notes should be written up into minute form by the Secretary as soon as possible after the meeting is over.
- c) The Chairperson (or another reliable person who has a good memory or who takes notes for his/her own benefit) should be consulted by the Secretary to see if their accounts of the meeting agree.
- d) The sequencing of items in the minutes should reflect the sequencing of the items in the agenda.
- e) Use alpha-numerical or decimal point numbering systems to break up the text of your minutes to facilitate easy reading.
- f) Use reported speech.

LANGUAGE USED IN MINUTES

Since minutes report what people discussed in a meeting, it follows that reported speech should be used.

Using reported speech

Reported speech, sometimes called indirect speech, is the name given to the kind of writing which reports what someone else has said.

‘I’m sorry I’m late. I missed the bus.’ **DIRECT SPEECH**

‘He said that he was sorry he was late. He had missed the bus.’ **REPORTED SPEECH VERSION.**

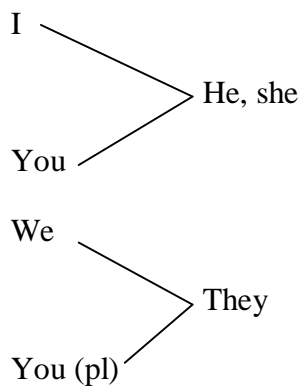
The above reported speech example has deliberately followed the direct speech quotation as closely as possible to show what happens to the person ‘I’ and the verbs ‘am’ and ‘missed’. But it is important to realize from the start, that reported speech often paraphrases or gives the gist of the direct speech:

‘He apologized for being late. He had missed the bus.’

The rules for writing reported speech are quite straight forward, provided that a careful eye is kept on one or two traps.

Rule one: persons/pronouns

Basically, the rule is that first or second persons, singular or plural becomes third person in reported speech.



Personal pronouns already in the third person remain so.

Note that the forms of the personal pronoun sometimes change:

‘Would you like anymore?’

‘He asked them if they would like any more.’

Rule two: the tenses of verbs

The tense of a verb in direct speech goes ‘one further back’ in reported speech

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| I write | he/she wrote |
| I am writing | he/she was writing |
| I wrote | he/she had written/wrote |
| I was writing | he/she had been writing |
| I have written | he/she had written |
| I have been writing | he/she had been writing |
| I had written | he/she had written |
| | (Cannot go further back) |

Notice that future tenses become conditional:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| I shall write | he/she would write |
| I shall have written | he/she would have written |
| I shall be writing | he/she would be writing |

The conditional is needed because it is an intention to write and we don't know whether `he` actually did!

Rule three: the distancing effect

When people use direct speech – say in a meeting – the event is happening `here and now`. When the meeting is reported at a later date, however, the discussion is in the past and took place `there and then`. For this reason, a number of words and expressions need to be adjusted:

Today.....that day, now then, here..... there, this.....that, thesethose, tomorrow.....the next/following day, yesterday the previous day.

Rule four: conveying the tone of the direct speech

If the reported speech writer is not very careful, the reporting may easily slip into a dull `he said, she said, he said, she said`, so it is important to vary the words that introduce the reported speech:

`Asked that, wondered whether, strongly denied that, confirmed that etc`.

In this way, the reader of the reported speech gains a better understanding of the tone of the direct speech.

TERMINOLOGY OF MEETINGS

The following list includes some of the principal terms used in meetings. This list is by no means exhaustive, however, and you shall use it as a basis for your own, more extensive checklist of important technical terms relating to meetings.

Address the Chair - speak to the Chairperson

Ad hoc - from Latin, meaning `for the purpose of` as for example, when a sub-committee is set up

Adjourn - to hold a meeting over until a later date.

Advisory - providing advice or suggestion; not taking action

Agenda - is schedule of items drawn up for discussion at a meeting.

AGM - Annual General Meeting, All members are usually eligible to attend.

Apologies - excuses given in advance for inability to attend a meeting.

Articles of Association - rules required by Company Law which govern a company's activities.

Bye-Laws - rules regulating an organisation's activities.

Extraordinary - meeting a meeting called for all

Caucus - a meeting of the organisation Committee of a political party etc to plan, decide etc.

Chairman - leader or person given authority to conduct a meeting.

Chairman`s agenda - based upon the committee agenda, but containing explanatory notes.

Collective responsibility - a convention by which all committee members agree to abide by a majority decision.

Committee - a group of people usually elected or appointed who meet to conduct agreed business and report to a senior body

Consensus - agreement by general consent, no formal vote being taken

Constitution - set of rules governing activities of voluntary bodies

Convene - to call a meeting

Co-opt: - Invite a non elected member to serve on a committee.

Executive - having the power to act upon taken decisions.

Extraordinary meeting a meeting called for all members to discuss a serious issue affecting all is called an Extraordinary General Meeting. Otherwise a non-routine meeting called for a specific purpose

Ex officio - given powers or rights by reason of office.

Honorary post - a duty performed without payment. E.g. Honorary Secretary.

Information, point of; - the drawing of attention in a meeting to a relevant item of fact

Kangaroo Court: Illegal Court (set without authority) by a group to try someone considered to have acted against their interest

Lobbying - a practice of seeking members' support before a meeting.

Minutes - the written record of a meeting, resolution minutes record only decisions reached, while narrative minutes provide a record of the decision-making process.

Motion - the name given to a 'proposal' when it is being discussed at a meeting.

Mover - one who speaks on behalf of a motion.

Nem Con - From Latin, literally, 'no one speaking against but some may abstain.

Not speaking to the agenda: item being discussed is not on the agenda

Opposer - one who speaks against a motion by 'seconding it'.

Order, point of - the drawing of attention to a breach of rules or procedures.

Other business - other items left over from a previous meeting, or items discussed after the main business of a meeting.

Proposal - the name given to a submitted item for discussion (usually written) before a meeting takes place.

Lie on table: Left to pend and not acted upon

Potem: for that purpose

Proxy - Literally, on behalf of another person. Person appointed to act on behalf of another.

Proxy vote - vote cast on behalf of another person.

Quorum: minimum number of people required to validate a meeting.

Resolution - the name given to a 'motion' which has been passed or carried; used after the decision has been reached.

Rider: Amendment to add, alter or subtract.

Secretary - committee official responsible for the internal and external administration of a committee.

Secret ballot - a system of voting in secret.

Sine die - from Latin, literally, 'without a day', that is to say indefinitely, e.g. adjourned sine die.

Standing committee - which has an indefinite term of office.

Seconder - one who supports the 'proposer' of a motion or proposal

Treasurer - committee official responsible for its financial records and transactions.

Ultra Vires: beyond the powers of (a meeting).

Unanimous - all being in favour.

Vote, Casting - when two sides are deadlocked a chairman may record a second or 'casting vote' or **tie breaker** to ensure a decision is made.

UNIT 6: CONDUCTING AND ATTENDING INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This unit covers various types of interviews conducted in organizations.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Define an interview
- Explain various types of interviews held in an organization
- Discuss the stages in a job selection interview
- Explain different types of questions used in interviews
- Explain factors to consider when preparing for and attending a job selection interview.

Content

- Definition of interview
- Limitation of interviews
- Types of interview
- Stages in the job selection interview process
 - Preparation
 - Opening
 - Conducting and questioning
 - Closing
 - Follow-up
- Attending a job selection interview

Definition

- (a) An interview takes place when two parties meet to satisfy pre-determined objectives.
- (b) An interview is a conversation within a specific context and having a specific purpose, the pattern of which is determined by the interviewer who listens more.

Limitations

- a) They have a limited duration, thus it is not possible to address all the areas that need coverage.
- b) They are artificial situations. Both parties are prepared and on their best behaviour. The true picture of their feelings and personality may not be exhibited.
- c) They put at least one of the persons under pressure. Nervousness or reluctance may create a barrier to communication.
- d) They depend on the willingness and skill of both parties to communicate.

NB: Planning and skilled conduct should minimize the effect these factors might have on the proper conduct of an interview.

Types of interview

- a) Job Selection Interview
- b) Disciplinary Interview
- c) Appraisal Interview
- d) Grievance Interview
- e) Counseling Interview
- f) Job Termination Interview
- g) Fact Finding Interview etc.

Stages in the job selection interview process

There are five (5) basic stages involved in the interview process.

- 1. Preparation
- 2. Opening
- 3. Conducting
- 4. Closure
- 5. Follow-up

Preparation

- i) Set the objectives.
- ii) Prepare the content questions, and necessary documentation.
- iii) Make physical preparations, such as preparing the room and making it conducive.
- iv) Arrange a panel. This should consist of qualified people in the area you are interviewing;
and this is true even only when one person is interviewing
- v) Work out the assessment procedure

Before conducting the job selection interview, the interviewer will have:-

- a) Carefully assessed the needs to be met through their job
- b) Assessed the qualities required
- c) Screened applicants against requirements i.e., short listing

d) Drawn up a checklist of questions to assess applicants; these would cover the following areas:

- Job description
- Academic background
- Knowledge of organization
- Work experience
- Career goals
- Strength and weaknesses

Opening

- i) Mention purpose of interview
- ii) Put the interviewee at ease (create rapport)
- iii) Introduce the panel
- iv) Ask the interviewee to introduce him/herself
- v) Use appropriate tone when speaking

Conducting the interview

- i) Ask the right questions especially those related to the information in the curriculum vitae (cv)
- ii) Listen to the answer
- iii) State each new subject as you come to it
- iv) When asking questions avoid:
 - a. Long questions
 - b. Double-barreled questions
 - c. Cross examination (avoid use of harsh words)
 - d. Criticizing

Questioning

Questioning is very important in an interview because it is the verbal signal through which the interviewer can:

- i) Obtain the vital information he needs
- ii) Control and direct the course of the interview
- iii) Stimulate the thinking and memory of the interviewee

The main body of the interview should normally comprise questions and responses. Remember that the aim of most interviews is to conduct a conversation and not to interrogate. This means that the way you frame your questions and the extent to which you talk and listen will directly influence the atmosphere of the interview, the feelings of the interviewee and thus the outcome of the interview. Therefore, you have to be familiar with the basic types of question and their uses.

- (a) The direct question or close – ended question: This type of question allows the interviewee very little, or no freedom in selecting his response. There is usually one specific answer. For example ‘What is your name?’ ‘What time did you lock the office?’

Uses: when specific replies are sought on a definite topic. It is particularly useful in seeking objective factual or biological data, or where straightforward answers are required for comparisons with other interviewees, ie, qualifications for a job, details about an event or accident, statistical or objective facts.

Disadvantages: it limits the response, thus discourages the interviewee from talking. An interview based exclusively on this type of question is a very cold, lifeless affair which makes the interviewee feel he is being interrogated (which he is) rather than consulted or invited to expand or discuss.

- (b) Bipolar questions or yes/no questions: if the interviewer wants to limit the potential responses beyond the limitations already imposed by direct questions, he can ask a bipolar question, which limits the answer to one of the two possible answers, or simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’. For example, ‘Where you were born in 1969?’ ‘Would you be happy if you were promoted?’ ‘Do you think you are qualified for this job?’

Uses: In a sense bipolar questions are a form of direct question and thus have the same uses. Used with a carefully considered purpose, they can be very effective in eliciting definite information quickly.

Disadvantages: Because they are so limiting in the answers permitted by the nature of the question, when they are used incorrectly they force the interviewee to opt for one or the other extreme answer, when the answer he really wants to give may be halfway between, e.g., ‘Are you happy with the new supervisor?’ strictly speaking implies either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. A fairly talkative interviewee may answer truthfully and go beyond the limitations of the question, but a quiet person who lacks confidence will be inhibited by this question and feel unable to expand.

- (c) The leading question or standard-revealing question: This type of question makes it obvious what the answer should be or what answer the interviewer expects, that he is in effect ‘leading’ the interviewee. For example, ‘Don’t you think that we should increase your salary?’ ‘Surely, it wouldn’t be a good idea if we...’ In the first question a ‘yes’ response is expected, while in the second a ‘no’ is expected.

Uses: Salesmen usually use such questions as a weapon to get unsuspecting potential customers to accept their ideas or products. Used subtly it can be very effective when the purpose of the interview is persuasive.

Disadvantages or abuses: Used aggressively or thoughtlessly it can either make the interviewee feel under severe pressure and attack by revealing the standards by which the interviewer measures people- ‘You didn’t complete your grade 9, did you?’ – it also forces the interviewee to give the ‘right’ answer even if he might have opted for a different explanation: ‘The person we want for this position should be able to supervise a staff of thirty and should have good human relations. Do you think you are right candidate?’ No one but an idiot would not answer anything but ‘yes’ to this question! The interviewer has given away his views or standards, thus helping the interviewee to give the ‘right’ answer.

- (d) The loaded question: Sometimes the use of emotive words in the question indicates the response the interviewer wants. ‘Do you think we should accept this crazy idea?’ ‘What do you think about this whole sorry business?’

Uses: it is difficult to imagine a situation in which this type of question would be anything but useless in terms of eliciting people’s real feelings and opinions.

However, such questions are sometimes used when the interviewer is trying to find out how able the interviewee is to resist being led, and how strongly he holds his own opinions. Taken to an extreme it is also used to discover how an interviewee reacts under stress, and when the interviewer wants to see how far he has to go to get the interviewee to ‘crack’.

- (e) The open-ended questions: Unlike the previous questions, this type of question allows the interviewee maximum freedom in responding. For example, ‘Tell us what you know about market research.’ ‘How can this problem be solved?’ ‘Why do you think this company is losing money?’ Open-ended questions usually begin with ‘why’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and ‘what’.

Uses: When selected carefully, these questions can reveal a great deal about a person’s attitudes, beliefs and motivation. They also reveal how well he/she can collect his/her thoughts, organize what he/she wants to say, and express him/herself without guidance or prompting.

Disadvantages: Although open-ended questions may provide the interviewer with some measure of the person’s ability to think, and may lead to worthwhile areas of discussion not perhaps anticipated by the interviewer, they require considerable thought in their selection and use, otherwise a lot of time may be lost in gaining answers to only a few general questions.

The other types of questions worth noting are:

- (f) The prompting questions: This question helps the interviewee who appears to have a mental ‘block’, or when he is not clear exactly what the interviewer is getting at. For

example, 'Tell me about yourself'. 'Well, starting from your last couple of years at school, what have been your major achievements in life? That sort of thing.'

- (g) The mirror question: This question 'plays back' to the interviewee the interviewer's understanding of the last response, or summarises several different statements made by the interviewee. For example, 'In other words, you are saying you prefer advertising to promotion of products?' 'If I understood you correctly, you want us to install a fax machine and not another telephone?'
- (h) The probing question: Sometimes the initial response is lacking in detail, so that a follow up question is necessary. For example, 'Could you tell us why you think that we need a fax machine, rather than another telephone?'
- (i) The hypothetical question: This is very useful in discovering an interviewee's prejudices, stereotypes, beliefs and values. It is useful for determining how an interviewee might handle some potential job-related situation, or how someone's ideas might work out in practice. For example, 'Suppose we offer you this job as Human Resource Officer and your son comes to you looking for employment. What would you do?'

Closure

- i) Let the interviewee ask questions.
- ii) Keep the door open in case of rechecking data.
- iii) Further action should be communicated to interviewee.
- iv) A polite closure.

Follow up

Once the interviewee has left;

- i) Assimilate the information
- ii) Determine an action required or agreed
- iii) Build notes up into a more complete record for the relevant files or reports.
- iv) Evaluate your performance as an interviewer (have objectives been met, or were you biased in one way or the other?)

Attending a job selection interview

At one time or another, you may be shortlisted to attend a job interview. As an interviewee you have to take note of certain factors before and during the interview for it to be a success.

Before attending interviews; you should have:

- a) Found out about the company and what it does.
 - i) What service does it provide?
 - ii) How long has it been in business?
 - iii) Any good career prospects (staff development)?

- iv) How big is it?
- b) Compiled and duplicated a C.V.
- c) Made a checklist of questions to ask
- d) Thought about questions likely to be asked
- e) Ensured personnel appearance is smart without being over-dressed

On the day of the interview ensure that you arrive at the interview location in good time (do not arrive very early or late).

During the interview, make sure that you:

- a) Are alert and sharp
- b) Maintain eye contact and answer questions in a straight forward manner
- c) Do not sound boastful but do market yourself if the opportunity is offered.
- d) Mind your body language and observe the body language of the interviewer(s) for clues.
- e) Ask questions at the end of the interview about the job and the organization.



Activity 6

Explain the purposes of the different types of interviews outlined in this unit.

UNIT 7: BUSINESS LETTERS

Introduction

This unit covers effective letter writing.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- write effective business letters

Content

- Guidelines to letter writing
- Paragraphing in business letters
- Parts of a business letter
- The application letter for a job
- An effective curriculum vitae
- The complaint letter
- The acknowledgement letter
- Bad news letters

Guidelines to letter writing

1. The letter should be quickly transmitted i.e. an inquiry for instance which does not receive a response within the shortest possible time management, mean loss of business.
2. It should be clearly written
3. It should be brief and avoid run on sentences
4. Choose simple words i.e. simple words should be used rather than unusual ones because they convey your message clearer.
5. Choose appropriate tone. Tone could be defined as the impression the recipient gets when he/she reads your letter. By choosing inappropriate tone, you could offend your recipient. It is important therefore to word your letter appropriately bearing in mind its purpose. We can change the tone of our voice to convey messages in different ways. Similarly, letters can be worded differently so that they sound friendly, apologetic, firm, rude etc.
6. Ensure accuracy – Double check all figures, prices, dates etc as well as spellings and punctuations.

NB: When proof-reading a document, accuracy is more important than speed.

7. Check consistency of presentation e.g. “I” and “we”. For instance, you may begin with “I” in the first paragraph and suddenly change to “we” in the second paragraph.
8. Do not use:-
 - i) Abbreviations e.g. bal – balance
 - ii) Avoid contractions e.g. can’t, won’t
 - iii) Do not use sayings or proverbs e.g. ‘to cut a long story short’.
 - iv) Do not use tired expression e.g. ‘hereby’, ‘whereby’.
 - v) Do not use slang or colloquial language e.g. ‘the company is *broke*’

Paragraphing in business letters

Most business letters are divided into three paragraphs

1. **Opening Paragraph** – it is common to have a short opening paragraph. This will state the purpose of the letter. The purpose will naturally dictate the content of the introductory paragraph. The letter may be:-
 - i) Referring to a letter you have received i.e. acknowledgement letter
 - ii) Responding to an advert you have seen i.e. Application letter
 - iii) Referring to any incident prompting you to write e.g. a complaint letter

NB: This section of the letter should not contain details of the matter at hand

2. The Middle Paragraph(s)

The middle paragraph should then be used to set out the letter’s messages which will elaborate on or move forward from the introductory paragraph. This section will form the substance of your message i.e. details of the matter at hand or the information you wish to communicate. If you are making several points, start a new paragraph with each so that the recipient can digest each part of your message in turn. Organize your material logically not as if it just spills out of your brain. Avoid waffling.

3. Closing paragraph

This section should clearly indicate what response if any is expected. It is a good idea to summarise your points briefly. Conventional examples include the following:-

- i) I look forward to meeting you to discuss this matter.
- ii) We look forward to receiving your payment within seven days.

- iii) I would be grateful if you will confirm these points in writing.
- iv) Thank you again for your order. I trust our service will be to your satisfaction.
- v) I hope to hear from you soon.

Parts of a business letter

1. National Institute of Public Administration
P.O. Box 31990
Lusaka
Fax: 22332
2. Our Ref: JT/BT
3. 31st May, 2012
4. Dr Songiso Chabwela
Lusaka Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 22222
Lusaka
5. Dear Dr Chabwela
6. Business English and Communication Paper

I was pleased and complimented by your invitation to present a paper at the September meeting of the Lusaka Chambers of Commerce.

7. Because I plan to be out of town during the last week of September, I am unable to accept your invitation. An important company business trip is scheduled for that time and it cannot be postponed. I am genuinely sorry that I cannot be with you.

If you wish, I would be pleased to address the Chamber of Commerce on 'Business English and Communication' at a later date. Just let me know at least a month in advance.

8. Yours sincerely
9. Signature
10. Alice Musakanya (Mrs)
Consultant Business Communication
11. Enc
12. Cc

Parts of a business letter explained

1) **Letterhead**

Pre printed headed paper is used only for the first page of the letter featuring company name, logo, address etc

2) **Reference**

This could be a file number or the Initials of the writer. It could indicate the company's reference or the recipient's if this was continuing correspondence.

3) **Date**

Written in full as shown e.g. 31 May, 2012.

4) **Name and address of recipient**

As it will appear on the envelope. The title of the person is usually included e.g. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr etc. Many women prefer the title **Ms.**, and you can use this if their marital status is unknown. If it is a standard or circular letter, the inside address should be left blank or indicated with dotted lines.

5) **Salutation** (Greeting)

Dear Mr. Banda or Dear Ms Banda – use the same name as in the address line. Dear Sir/Madam is still used in very formal correspondence e.g. an application letter for a job.

6) **Subject heading**

This should act as a Newspaper headline – it should prepare the reader for the contents of the letter. It should not be an overlong sentence, six words or less will do, on the other hand it shouldn't be vague i.e. avoid headings of only one word e.g. 'Installation'.

7) **Main body of the letter**

The actual contents/message of the letter usually is divided into three distinct paragraphs. Remember to leave a line space between paragraphs.

8) **Complimentary close**

This is a polite formal way to end a letter. Standard forms are 'yours faithfully' or 'yours sincerely'. The complimentary close must match the salutation:

- Dear Sir/Madam - Yours faithfully.
- Dear Mr. X/Dear Ms X - Yours sincerely

9) **Signature space**

Leave space for the writer to sign the letter.

10) **Name and job title of person sending letter**

Writer's name and job title printed below signature for clarity.

11) **Enclosure abbreviation** (optional)

Added if any documents are being sent with the letter

12) **Cc** (copy notation)

It used to mean Carbon Copy but it now means Courtesy Copy i.e. for the information of someone.

Letter of application for a job

An application letter for a job is a sales letter marketing you for a job. Therefore, it should be sales effective. In most cases your letter is among several letters. Many people are competing for a job that could have been advertised. Against this back ground, you should make sure your letter is written in good English. The letter is your ambassador. Anything negative on it will send wrong messages about you to your prospective employers. Write a short letter. A letter that is too long is most likely carrying details that should be in a résumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV).

Paragraphing

- (a) Opening paragraph – the opening paragraph will normally contain:
 - i) Source – where you saw the advert;
 - ii) Statement of the objective; a statement indicating that you are actually applying for the job.
- (b) Middle paragraph(s)– this will normally contain:
 - i) Academic and professional qualifications;
 - ii) Work experience;
 - iii) Any positive facts about yourself.

NB: The above should be briefly stated

- (c) Closing Paragraph - It may contain any or a combination of some of the following:
 - i) Courtesy ending e.g. 'I hope to hear from you soon 'or' I hope to be invited for interviews where I can give more details about myself'.
 - ii) Indicating enclosure
 - iii) Indicating reference (if CV not included)
 - e.g. 'for any information pertaining to my character and academic achievements, you can contact the following' or 'the following have kindly agreed to act as my referees'.
 - iv) When available for interviews
 - v) Contact numbers or e-mail address
 - e.g., 'In case you require me urgently for interviews you may contact me on...'

Curriculum vitae

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a summary of a person's qualifications, educational background, experience etc. It is used when applying for a job and is usually sent with a covering letter. It is also called a résumé.

Since the Curriculum Vitae is a sales instrument, it should be as attractive as you can make it. It should be typed, perfectly balanced on a page and free from errors and noticeable corrections.

A Curriculum Vitae is usually tailored to meet the employer's needs for the job for which you are applying. Never try to copy someone else's Curriculum vitae or use the same one over and over. Find out what the job you are seeking demands and then tailor your Curriculum Vitae accordingly.

A Curriculum Vitae contains Personal data such as age, telephone, fax and e-mail numbers of applicant. It also contains headings such as experience, education, hobbies or interests, and referees.



Activity 7.1

- a) Write an application letter for the post of Office Management which fell vacant in a large organization. The advert appeared in one of the local papers. Indicate in your application among other things why you feel you are suitable for the job. Be imaginative.
- b) Prepare a Curriculum Vitae (CV) for someone not necessarily yourself who has had several years of working experience as a Business Administration.

Letters of complaint (Grievance)

In business or in human interaction, you may find that you have not received what you were promised or what you expected. The supplier could have delivered wrong items, wrong quality or defective ones. You may decide therefore to lodge a complaint. It is important to note that the aim is not tell off the person but to improve the situation over the matter.

If you have something to complain about to your supplier, do complain but take the following into account:

- (i) Avoid being emotional.
- (ii) Be polite but firm.
- (iii) If you have to use a strong tone, do so but not on the first exchange of letters. You need the cooperation of the person in resolving the problem consequently; you cannot afford to be antagonistic with them.
- (iv) It is advisable to offer a suggestion or a solution to a problem but make sure such a suggested solution is not unreasonable.

- (v) When you use the approach in (iv) above, you are building public relations. Even in difficult situations, good public relations are very important in a competitive market. It encourages people to do business with you in future.

Purpose of complaint letters

- To identify the problem
- To express the effect of the problem on you (how is this problem impacting on your business).
- To notify the recipient of your wishes.

Paragraphing

(a) Opening paragraph

- What are you complaining about?
- Background events e.g. For faulty goods, specify the type of goods, date of purchase, invoice number, sales person etc
- If recipient is to investigate, provide concise accurate details.

(b) Middle paragraph

- Exact nature of complaint – provide details.
- Adverse results i.e. how is it impacting on your business

(c) Closing paragraph

- How and when you expect the problem to be put right i.e. make clear that you expect the mistake to be remedied/corrected.

Example of Complaint Letter

Dear Sir,

ORDER NO. XC 1994

We have received the above order and appreciate the prompt delivery. Everything seems to be correct apart from the contents of case seven (7).

Unfortunately, when this case was checked, we found articles which we had not ordered. We can only assume that a mistake has been made and that the right goods were sent to a wrong address. We enclose a list of the contents of case seven (7) which you can check against the invoice. We shall keep case seven (7) until you tell us what you wish us to do.

Would you please arrange for the missing goods to be sent immediately.

Yours faithfully,

Dabwiso Enelesi Sakala
Stores Manager

Enc



Activity 7.2

Write a reply to the above complaint letter. Use the points given below:

1. Thank you for your letter of 5th _____
2. Apologise about case seven (7)
3. Explain mistake made in delivery
4. The right goods have been sent
5. Keep case seven (7), we shall collect
6. Apologise again

Letters of adjustment

An adjustment is a reply to a complaint letter. It normally has the following objectives:

- To show that you have considered the problem seriously;
- To soothe the complainant's anger, disappointment etc;
- To offer redress that will be acceptable to both parties;
- To keep a positive relationship.

Paragraphing

(a) Opening Paragraph

- Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding of the complaint.
- Express regret, you may wish to apologize.

(b) Middle Paragraph

- Explain why the error occurred
- Show you were concerned to find out
- Indicate what is being done to put things right

(c) Closing Paragraph

- Re statement of apology
- Assurance of non recurrence
- Indicate that you hope good relationship not damaged i.e. you want to be conciliatory as you do not want to lose clients.

Bad news letters

The most difficult communication situation involves saying “no”.

However, you have to say “no” when you refuse requests, adjustments or credit. The bad-news letter should take the indirect route. If you were to relate bad news in the opening sentence, you would immediately lose your reader. Therefore, bad news letters should be based around the following organizational pattern:

1. Neutral opening statement upon which the reader and the writer can agree.
2. Reasons for the refusal stated in positive, tactful and courteous terms.
3. Statement of alternatives, if any.
4. Statement to retain goodwill of reader.

The bad news letter organizational plan might be used to tell a customer that the bank for which you work is unable to lend him or her the K5, 000, 000 requested:

1. Thank customer for the credit requested
2. Discuss the need for collateral. Discuss the income requirements for K5, 000, 000 loan without collateral.
3. Compare customer's qualifications with requirements and courteously refuse request (or combine refusal with alternative approach).
4. Indicate amount you can lend, if any.

5. Indicate that you look forward to hearing from customer if the alternative is satisfactory or invite customer to take advantage of one of your other banking services.

Following is a letter turning down an application for employment. It is an example of a bad news letter:

Dear Mr. Miti

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us regarding career opportunities with Bonnita Milk Centres.

While we are impressed with your background and believe that you have a great deal to contribute to an organization, the limited number of available positions forces us to select only a relatively small number of the many talented applicants we see. Unfortunately, we cannot offer you a position at this time.

We appreciate your interest in Bonnita Milk Centres and wish you much success in whatever career you select.

Yours sincerely

UNIT 8: MEMORANDA

Introduction

This unit covers the writing of a memorandum which is an internal document for internal circulation within a given organization.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Produce memoranda to serve various functions
- Mention the uses of a memorandum
- Identify the major characteristics/features of memos

Content:

- Definition of memo
- Format of a memo
- Uses of memos

Definition of memoranda

A memorandum (frequently referred to as a memo) is an internal document or it can be defined as ‘a note to help the memory’ – a brief written message to remind somebody of something. The word is derived from Latin and it means ‘something to be remembered’.

It is a document only sent to people within an organization. It contains either a limited amount of information or a limited number of instructions. The message is expressed in simple, easily and readily understood language. It is direct and to the point.

The main difference between a memo and a letter is that the memorandum is written to a person in one’s own organization, while a letter is written to someone outside the organization/company. Memos are used to communicate with other employees regardless of where they may be located – whether in the same building or in a branch office hundreds of kilometers away.

The interoffice memo was developed to save time, so that formality of an inside address, salutation and complimentary closing is omitted.

Even at its simplest form, the memo must contain the following items:

- To
- From
- Date
- Reference (not always though)
- Subject heading

Terminology

Singular

Memorandum

Plural

Memoranda

MEMORANDUM CHECKLIST OF COMPONENTS A4 MEMO

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Tours Travel Limited Memorandum</p> <p>Strictly Confidential</p> <p>To: Human Resource Manager From: Home Sales Director Ref: CW/VF Date: xxxxxxxx Subject: <u>Miss Ella Mkandawire, Accounts Department</u></p> <p>Miss Mkandawire has been employed by Tours Travel for just over three years, during which she has proved to be a loyal and conscientious employee. For the past two months she has been reporting to Mr Moses Banda, our Chief Accountant.</p> <p>From the outset, there has been a regrettable clash of personalities which I have been unable to resolve. Today Miss Mkandawire requested a personal interview with me to express her unhappiness with the current situation, and I promised I would do all I could to put matters right.</p> <p>I should therefore be grateful if you would kindly arrange to see Miss Mkandawire as a matter of urgency in order to explore the possibility of a departmental transfer or other opportunity from which she and the company might benefit.</p> <p>Also, I should be grateful if you would find an early opportunity to discuss with Moses Banda how he is finding his new post, as I am beginning to think that the problem with Ella Mkandawire may be symptomatic of difficulties he is experiencing but not admitting so.</p> <p>I enclose a copy of the appraisal recently carried out for Ella Mkandawire and you will see that the agreed summary shows her in a very good light. I should be sorry if the company were to lose her services.</p> <p>Encl:</p> <p>c.c. Director – Finance</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memo head Components: from, to, date, reference, subject. Check names, Job titles and references are correct. 2. Ensure subject heading is sufficiently clear and detailed 3. Memorandum body (keep the message short) 4. Check before dispatch 5. Remember enclosure reference |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Ensure all who are supposed to receive them are sent copies. Check If any blind copy is required and indicate who received it 7. Do not forget | |

Continuation sheet
ref. on A4 if a

second page is
required.

Format

There are two main formats which can be used, i.e., a semi-blocked format or a fully-blocked format. Below are examples:

i) Example of a Fully-blocked format:

Tours Travel Limited
Memorandum

To: Human Resource Manager
Ref: CW/VF
From: Home Sales Director
Date: xxxxx

Subject: **Miss Ella Mkandawire, Accounts Department**

Miss Mkandawire has been employed by Tours Travel for just over three years, during which she has proved to be a loyal and conscientious employee. For the past two months she has been reporting to Mr Moses Banda, our Chief Accountant.

From the outset, there has been a regrettable clash of personalities which I have been unable to resolve. Today Miss Mkandawire requested a personal interview with me to express her unhappiness with the current situation, and I promised I would do all I could to put matters right.

I should therefore be grateful if you would kindly arrange to see Miss Mkandawire as a matter of urgency in order to explore the possibility of a departmental transfer or other opportunity from which she and the company might benefit.

Also, I should be grateful if you would find an early opportunity to discuss with Moses Banda how he is finding his new post, as I am beginning to think that the problem with Ella Mkandawire may be symptomatic of difficulties he is experiencing but not admitting so.

I enclose a copy of the appraisal recently carried out for Ella Mkandawire and you will see that the agreed summary shows her in a very good light. I should be sorry if the company were to lose her services.

Encl:

c.c. Director – Finance

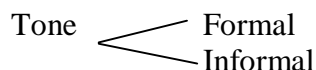
ii) Example of semi-blocked format:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Tours Travel Limited Memorandum | |
| To: Human Resource Manager | Ref: CW/VF |
| From: Home Sales Director | Date: xxxxx |
| Subject: <u>Miss Ella Mkandawire, Accounts Department</u> | |
| <p>Miss Mkandawire has been employed by Tours Travel for just over three years, during which she has proved to be a loyal and conscientious employee. For the past two months she has been reporting to Mr Moses Banda, our Chief Accountant.</p> <p>From the outset, there has been a regrettable clash of personalities which I have been unable to resolve. Today Miss Mkandawire requested a personal interview with me to express her unhappiness with the current situation, and I promised I would do all I could to put matters right.</p> <p>I should therefore be grateful if you would kindly arrange to see Miss Mkandawire as a matter of urgency in order to explore the possibility of a departmental transfer or other opportunity from which she and the company might benefit.</p> <p>Also, I should be grateful if you would find an early opportunity to discuss with Moses Banda how he is finding his new post, as I am beginning to think that the problem with Ella Mkandawire may be symptomatic of difficulties he is experiencing but not admitting so.</p> <p>I enclose a copy of the appraisal recently carried out for Ella Mkandawire and you will see that the agreed summary shows her in a very good light. I should be sorry if the company were to lose her services.</p> <p>Encl: c.c. Director – Finance</p> | |

Tone of Memos

This is normally influenced by the position held by the writer in relation to that held by the recipient.

The personality of the person receiving the memo is what actually determines its tone, whether formal or informal.



Uses

- Send ideas, suggestions, information up the command route
- Send decisions, instructions, exhortations down the command route
- Request/provide information, advice, assistance across and within departmental boundaries

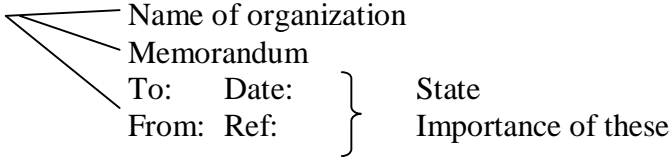
The Recipients

These may be:

- Subordinates
- Supervisors
- A peer group;
- Fellow specialist(s)
- A cross-section
- A colleague of equal status in another department, etc.

Summary:

There are usually three main parts to a memo

1. Heading 
 - Name of organization
 - Memorandum
 - To: Date: } State
 - From: Ref: } Importance of these
2. The subject – brief statement telling what memo is about. (Should be underlined or printed in block capitals)
3. The message – should be clearly presented in simple language which avoids any possibility of ambiguity.



Activity 8

Outline the similarities and differences between a letter and memo.

UNIT 9: REPORT WRITING

Introduction:

This unit covers various aspects of report writing.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:



- Define business reports
- Understand the importance of writing business reports
- Classify business reports, using various criteria
- Distinguish between informational and analytical or investigative reports
- Compose reports according to given instructions
- Identify and correct inappropriate language used in reports

Content:

- Definition
- Classification of reports
- Stages in producing a report
- Format of a report
- Information Vs investigative report
- Language and style

Overview:

Welcome to unit 10 which is on Report writing. This unit will look at aspects of producing a document called a **Report**.

In business, various reports are produced as they serve so many purposes and because of this, reports vary in content, organization, format and style.

Definition

We can start by asking the following question:

What is a Report?

There are several ways to answer the question depending on the context the report is supposed to serve. It can be defined as follows:

- a) A document in which a situation is examined by one person or several for the purpose of presenting information or facts for use by other people;
- b) A document which records information; As well as giving information it may report findings or make policy recommendations;
- c) An investigation together with findings, conclusions, or recommendations arising from an investigation, for the purpose of presenting information or facts for use by people who may need it.

It may be either oral or written

Classification:

Reports may be classified on the basis of:

- a) Format – essay, memo, letter, form or schematic
- b) Frequency – daily, weekly, fortnightly quarterly, bi-annually, monthly, annually.
- c) Length – long or short
- d) Purpose – investigative or information

Reports can either be formal or informal depending on the readership and the relationship between the author(s) and the reader(s).

Frequency is one major criterion used in the classification of reports, hence we may have the following:

- a) Routine – made at regular intervals (monthly, annually etc). For example, a sales report, progress report, production report, safety inspection report etc.
- b) Occasional – made as circumstances require. For example, accident reports, disciplinary report etc.
- c) Specially commissioned – for a specific purpose. For example, policy – changing report, market – research report, product diversification report, investigations report etc;

Types of Reports:

There are two main types:

- a) The short report: It does not need an elaborate structure and can even be presented in memorandum format.
- b) The long report: It is more complicated and needs a more carefully worked out structure

Informative Vs Investigative Reports

Informational Reports present a fact or related fact about a subject. In informational reports, writers, frequently notify the reader of policies and procedures, progress toward goals, proposals for some type of action, recommendations for future action, reports of sales, and a host of other types of business activities. For example, if you send a memo announcing a seminar on wellness, you present facts such as subject, time, place, instructor's name and qualifications, purpose, cost, etc. As the name suggests, informational report present the facts about some particular occurrence or occasion. You make no attempt to analyse or interpret the facts. The reader will use the facts to make a decision or save for future use.

Analytical or Investigative reports

In addition to presenting facts about a subject, an analytical report also includes an analysis of the facts. It leads the reader from the problem to the conclusions. The conclusions are based on the interpretation of the data. Some analytical reports go beyond the analysis of the facts and offer recommendations for future action. Findings and conclusions support these recommendations. Sometimes the writer presents implications. If you had customers fill out a 10 question form after eating at your restaurant, you would summarise the data and then draw conclusions about likes and dislikes. One implication might be that you need to change the menu items.

Stages in producing a report:

There are six stages in producing a report:

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Stage I: | Understanding the terms of reference |
| Stage II: | Preparing and collecting the material |
| Stage III: | Arranging the material |
| Stage IV: | Writing Draft Report |
| Stage V: | Revising the report |
| Stage VI: | Presentation |

Stage I: Understanding the terms of reference:

Find out exactly what you have been asked to do. In other words, try to get concise terms of reference

Stage II: Preparing and collecting the material:

Establish clearly in your mind the subject, scope and purpose of your report. The purpose will generally be:

- i) To give information, either detailed or general
- ii) To report findings
- iii) To put forward ideas
- iv) To recommend a course of action

It may sometimes be combination of these.

Your Reader - Ask Yourself:

- a) What does my reader want to know?
- b) What does he/she know already?
- c) Does he/she understand technical language?
- d) How will she/he want to use my report?
- e) Is her/his outlook administrative or technical?

Your Material

- a) Collect facts and ideas about your subject by observing (on the spot check) Interviews, questionnaire, surveys, reading (texts on the subject), etc.
- b) Write them down in note form. If it is possible at this stage to put them into some kind of order or to divide them into categories, then do so.
- c) Check your facts for accuracy.
- d) Consider them closely and make any deductions.

Stage III: Arrangement

- a) When the material has been collected, it then has to be arranged for presentation in the report. The report has to be built up in a systematic manner so as to lead the reader from the statement of the problem, through the investigation, to the conclusions, in a way which will appear progressive and logical.

In order to achieve this effect, the report is best constructed in the following sections:

- i) **Title:** A general indication of the subject of the report providing immediate identification of the report.
- ii) **Introduction** – An introduction of the subject including the purpose of the report, the background to the report and the scope to be covered. (terms of reference and the plan of the report). When indicating the terms of reference,

the job given to the author(s) of the report is clearly and briefly set out. The precise scope of the report should be stated: e.g working of the present loan scheme as it applies to students. The loan of books to lecturing staff was excluded from our terms of reference. It is also necessary to state whether recommendations were or were not asked for.

- iii) **Procedure-** An outline of the method(s) employed to collect information/opinions: i.e by reading documents, by interviews; by visits, by considering previous history etc.
- iv) **Findings** – The details of the information/opinion/data, may be divided into various sections with headings and sub-headings depending upon the amount of information to be presented. Findings may be itemized if this seems to be the best method of presentation.
- v) **Conclusions** – Specific implication(s) drawn from the findings. A summary based on the findings.
- vi) **Recommendations** – Suggestions on how to solve the problem(s) outlined in the report. These are based on conclusions and may even correspond with conclusions. They may also be itemized;

b) Appendixes:

In order to maintain the even flow of your report (so enabling the reader to follow the main line of thought without interruption), you may have to make use of appendices. Statistical tables, charts, diagrams and sketch-maps should not normally be included in the main body of the report. They should be put together at the end as appendices. You can then refer to each appendix at the appropriate point in the report.

Stage IV: Writing

a) The Draft Copy

When you have decided on the best arrangement for your report, you can then begin to write it. It is essential to write it in draft first of all : use double spacing so as to leave room for amendments.

b) Style:

A straightforward, lucid style is best. Normally you will present the facts in a balanced fashion giving the proposals. A challenging or controversial method may sometimes be justified, particularly if you are trying to “sell” your ideas to your readers, but you must always be careful to distinguish opinion from fact.

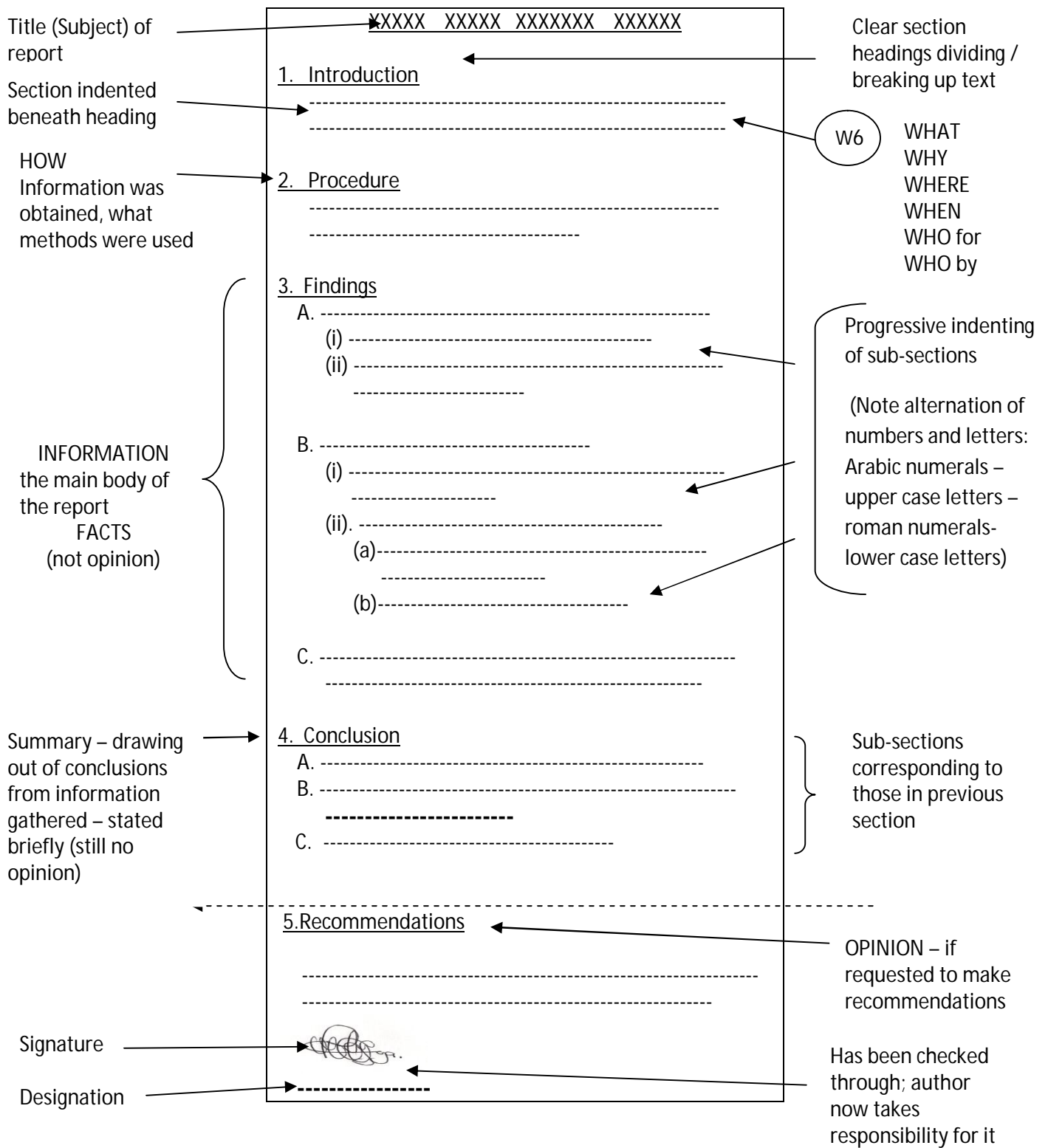
Stage V: Revision

- a) After the draft report has been written, it will require re-reading and revision. Make sure all the corrections are done at this stage, for example, is your report self-contained and self-explanatory? It should not normally be necessary for your reader to have to refer constantly to other reports or other documents.
- b) Examine your text in detail. Check grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- c) See that paragraphs are numbered consistently.
- d) If possible, have your draft checked by a person qualified to give constructive advice.

Stage VI: Presentation

After the necessary corrections have been made, you will now produce a final draft to be submitted to the person who requested for the report. If it is a superior who had requested for the report, remember to submit it with a covering minute.

The Structure of a Formal Report (in schematic format)



The following examples show the main techniques of schematic layout:-

1. DOUBLE SPACING CAPITALS

Use for titles, title page headings:

2. USE CAPITALS FOR MAJOR SECTION HEADINGS

Remember to be consistent throughout

3. Use initial Capitals Underscored For Sub-Section Headings

Again, use these consistently within each major section

4. Employ a consistent system for numbering each part of the report.
You could use: A, B, C, or I, II, III, a, b, c, i, ii, iii, etc for sub-sections

Note: One economic and neat way to number report items is to use 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc for each major report section, and then divide each major section into a series of referenced sub-points e.g. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 for each of, say, three subsections of the third major section, 3.2.1, 3.2.2 etc for any further sub-divisions of a sub-section.

5. USE OF SPACE IDENTIFICATION

Do not be a miser with space! Leave lines blank above and below major section headings – and subsection headings. Also, start subsection entries and any further sub-divisions nearer to the right-hand side of the paper.

Note: Computer printers and exchangeable daisy wheels in typewriters have further extended the scope of eye-catching layout with features such as emboldening of headings and key words and the use of differing type layouts.

USE OF VISUALS IN REPORTS

As the old saying goes, “a picture is worth a thousand words.”

Carefully prepared visuals add value and can make the report more interesting. But even more important, pictures are an effective way to communicate with the diverse audience.

NEED FOR VISUALS

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ❖ To clarify | Support text descriptions of “graphic” topics: Quantitative or numerical information, explanations of trends, descriptions |
| ❖ To simply | Break complicated descriptions into components that can be depicted with conceptual models, flowcharts, organisation charts, or diagrams. |
| ❖ To Emphasise | Call attention to particularly important points by illustrating them with line, bar, and pie charts. |
| ❖ To Summarise | Review major points in the narrative by providing a chart or table that sums up the data. |
| ❖ To Reinforce | Present information in visual and written form to increase reader’s retention. |
| ❖ To Attract | Make material seem more interesting by decorating the cover or title page and by breaking up the text with visual aids. |
| ❖ To Impress | Build credulity by putting ideas into visual form to convey the impression of authenticity and precision |
| ❖ To Unify | Depict the relationship among points – for example, with a flowchart. |

Here is a closer look at some of the visuals:

TABLES

Tables are a simple way of presenting numerical information. Figures are displayed, and can be compared with each other: relevant totals, subtotals, percentages can also be presented as a summary for analysis.

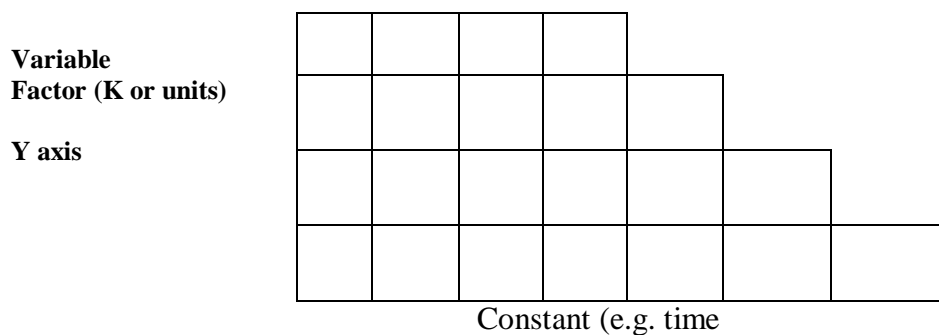
Example:

| SALES FIGURES FOR 2011 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| Product | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total K'000 |
| A | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Line Graphs

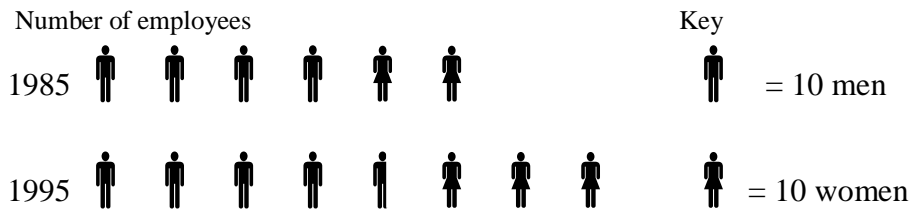
Line graphs are used to display a wide variety of information. They are particularly useful to demonstrate trends.: The progress of events or the fluctuation over time of variables such as profits, prices, sales totals etc.

This is done by plotting points of information on a grid, usually something like this:



Pictograms

A pictogram or picturegram is a simple and striking statistical diagram in which the data is represented by a recognisable picture or symbol, with a clear key to the items and quantities intended. For example a pictogram showing the number of employees at a factory might use pictures of people:



You can see at a glance that the workforce has grown and that the growth has been greatest among women workers

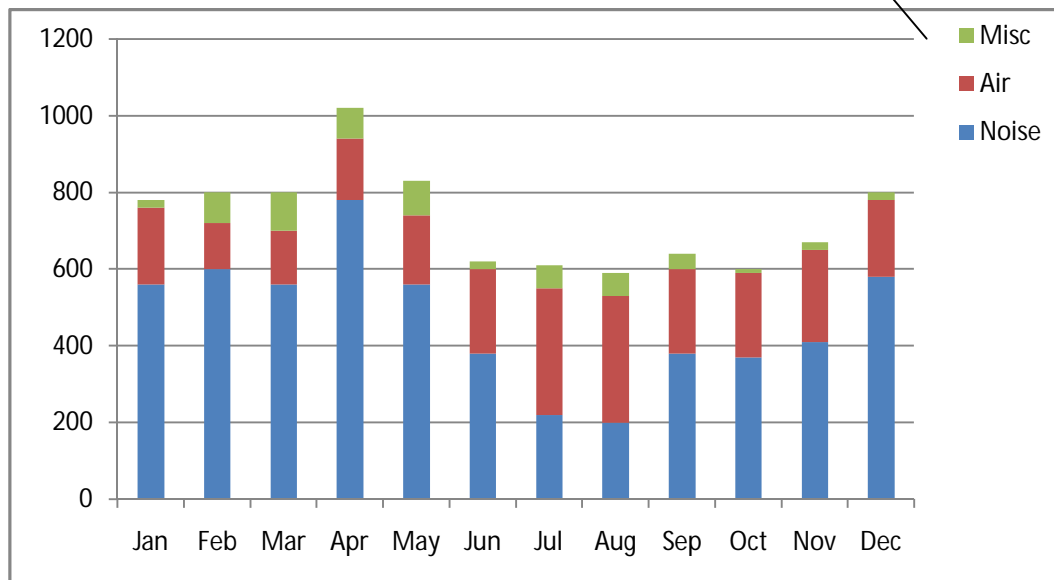
Bar charts

It is a chart in which data is shown in the form of a bar and is used to demonstrate and compare amounts or numbers of things.

Example:

Number of complaints

Pollution complaints

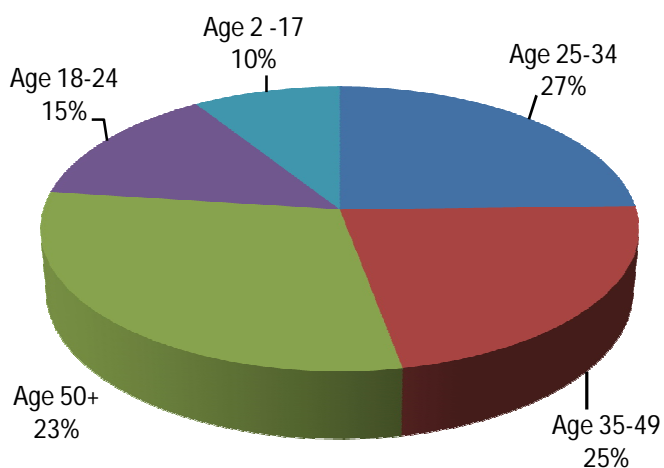


Pie charts

The pie chart is a visual means of displaying number information using a circle or “pie”, which represents a known total, parts of this known total are shown as “slices of pie”.

Example:

Percentage of Time spent online by Age Groups

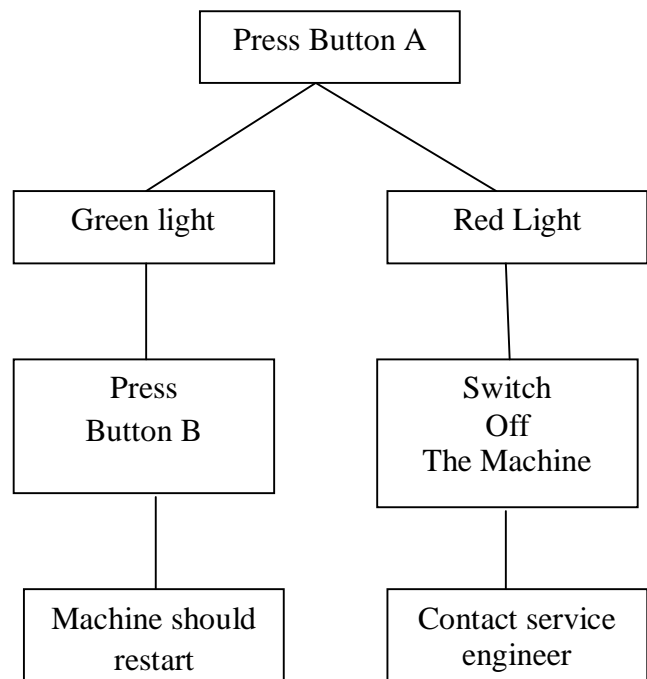


| Age Group | Average Minutes per month | Percent of Time by Age Group |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Age 25-34 | 1642.4 | 27% |
| Age 35-49 | 1496.2 | 25% |
| Age 50+ | 1998.8 | 23% |
| Age 18-24 | 925.9 | 15% |
| Age 2-7 | 605.7 | 10% |

Flow charts

This type of diagram is very useful for presenting a summary of fairly complicated information in an easily digestible form and to indicate links and interrelationships between the different components.

Example:



Cartograms

Maps can be used to convey information which is geographically based, for example different sales areas, distribution networks, different geographical markets etc.

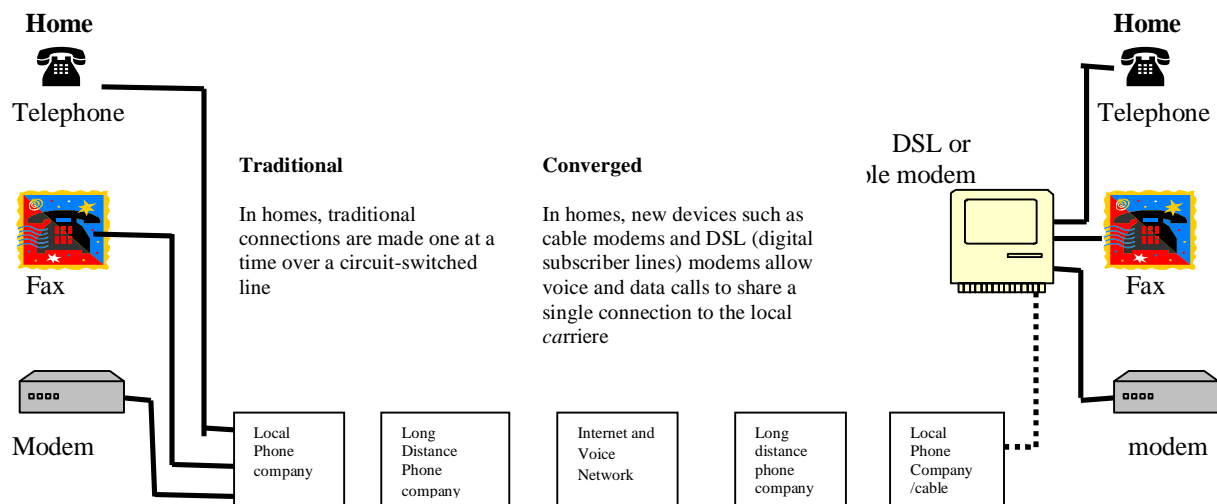
Example:



Diagrams

Diagrams can be much clearer than words alone when it comes to giving the audience an idea of how an item looks or can be used.

Traditional Networks Versus Converged Networks



Principles

Visuals must be:

- Clear
- Placed close to the text they refer to
- Easy to understand
- Interesting and must break the monotony of text
- Assist comprehension of the text and not differ

Visual Presentation:

Impact created through

- Font
- Size
- Style
- Colour
- Shape

Selecting the right visual for the job:

- To present detailed, exact values, use tables
- To illustrate trends over time, use a line chart or a bar chart
- To show frequency or distribution, use a pie chart, segmented bar chart, or area chart
- To compare one item with another, use a bar chart
- To compare one part with the whole, use a pie chart
- To show correlations, use a line chart, a bar chart, or a scatter (dot) chart
- To show geographical relationships, use maps
- To illustrate a process or a procedure, use a flow chart or a diagram.

CHECKLIST FOR COMPILING REPORTS

1. State the facts

Reports set forward a series of facts obtained through study or investigation. Someone may be required to make a decision based on the information provided. Reports should be complete with nothing of relevance omitted and nothing irrelevant included:

2. Be Objective:

Keep your own opinions and preferences out of the report, unless they have been requested. Instead, you must act like a camera, impartially recording only what it sees.

3. Be Logical:

Classify the findings under headings and sub-headings, using numbered points. How you classify the material will depend on your brief and the subject matter.

4. Be consistent

Make sure all sentences in a series consistently follow the same grammatical pattern. Similarly, make sure that you use the same spacing throughout the report and that headings and sub-headings are presented consistently. Attention to these points will make sure your report is clear and will give a good impression to the reader.

5. Be Concise

Avoid long explanations and keep to the point. Check that all the information is accurate and all the reasoning valid.

6. Be Clear

Use a simple, easy to read style and presentation which will help the reader to understand the content easily.

Principal Components of a Report

- a) Title page
- b) Table of contents (with page numbers of where to find information)
- c) Abstract/synopsis of findings/ executive summary
- d) Terms of reference/ introduction
- e) Procedures
- f) Findings
- g) Conclusions
- h) Recommendations
- i) Appendices
- j) Bibliography/references

Your report might also have the following:

- Foreword
- Preface
- Acknowledgements
- Dedication
- Glossary
- Index
- Abbreviations



Activity 9.1

Find out where these parts would appear in the report and what kind of information they contain.

Language/Style in Report Writing

Style is the way you use words to achieve a certain tone or overall impression. You can vary your style – your sentence structure and vocabulary – to create a tone that suits the occasion.

The right choice will depend on the nature of your message and your relationship with the reader. The tone of business messages will vary from informal to conversational to formal. Most messages aim for a conversational tone, using plain language that sounds business like without being stiff.

Instead of trying to impress audiences with an extensive vocabulary, good communicators focus on being logical and objective; they provide supporting facts and a rationale.

To achieve a warm but businesslike tone:

- Don't use obsolete language
 - Avoid out-of-date phrases which are still in use.
- Don't use pompous phrases
 - Avoid using big words and overly complicated sentences to impress others. Such pompous language sounds puffed up and roundabout.



Activity 9.2

Wording in Reports

These expressions are not suitable for including in a report. The language may be inappropriate, details may be missing or they may be vague. Express the statements in appropriate, business report language. The first one has been done for you:

1. Doreen Chishika is the best person for the job. Doreen Chishika is
considered the most

the post of

most suitable applicant for
beauty salon manager.
2. Most staff are negative about the proposal but

some would like to try for a while.

3. The planning department said we should have

no problems in getting permission for this

new project.

4. Bob saw no reason why we shouldn't use

some of the club funds to purchase new

equipment.

5. We could take advantage of Zulu's special

Offer on office furniture.

UNIT 10: ADVERTISING

Introduction

This unit looks at the principles of advertising and also covers the different types of advertising that can be used in organizations.

Outcomes:

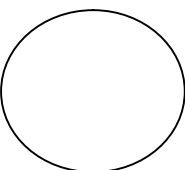
Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to;



- Explain the purpose of advertising
- Explain the principles of advertising
- Explain the different types of adverts and their uses
- Identify the features of a good advertisement
- Draft a suitable advertisement that will appeal to the intended audience

Content:

- Definition
- Purpose of advertising
- Principle of advertising
- Types of advertisements
 - direct mail
 - display advert
 - classified smalls
- Principal advertising media
- Structure of job advertisements

| | |
|---|---|
| Study Guide  | Allow about 2½ hours for reading this unit, plus a few more hours for the analysis of advertisements |
|---|---|

Definition

According to the dictionary ‘Advertise’ means ‘make known, broadcast, or announce’. Many companies advertise in the newspapers magazines or specialized trade journals so as to reach out to a wide, and sometimes specific market and make known their product, service or requirement(s).

Purpose of Advertising:

The reasons for advertising may thus include among others:

- To advertise vacant posts
- To promote products or services
- To announce special events or functions
- To publicize changes in the organization

Various advertisements, whether television commercials, billboards, leaflets, fliers or brochures seek to convince people to switch to a particular product or service. This requires the use of persuasive communication. Since advertising concerns motivating buyers and prospective buyers to purchase or use the products or services of the organization, it involves:

- Giving information
- Persuading; and
- Creating a good image of the organization.

In summary therefore, the purpose of advertising is:

- To inform the customer about a (new) product/service; or
- To persuade the customer to purchase a product/service



Activity 10.1 (2 minutes)

Before you read further, jot down in your note book any other reasons that necessitate advertising.

Advertisements are not free and do not come cheap! They must therefore (be):

- Brief
- Contain all relevant details stated concisely
- Reflect the image of the organization
- Composed and presented in a manner that will attract the attention of the intended reader.



Activity 10.2 (10 minutes)

Before you proceed with reading, jot down in your notebook the various ways in which you can ensure brevity, relevance, corporate identity, and attractiveness of your advertisements.

Principle of Advertising

For an advertisement to achieve the intended objective it must:

- Be seen – it must be physically placed where you will stand a chance of perceiving it.
- Be noticed - seeing, and noticing are different; ‘noticing means you actually give something your selective attention; selecting it from all other stimuli around you at the time.
- Be interesting and relevant – you must believe the message is for you; it must mean something to you at the time.
- Be appealing – you must like the message in some way in order for you to feel positive about the objective of the message.
- Make you want to do something about it – you need to know what you can do and how to do it, otherwise what is the point of the message in the first place?

In relation to this, there is within the press advertising community a key principle for the design of advertisements.

This principle can be remembered by the acronym AIDA. It stands for

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| A | → | Attention - You must attract the audience's attention. |
| I | → | Interest – Get the audience's interest by mentioning something which will appeal to them. |
| D | → | Desire – Arouse the audience's desire to buy, to attend a function, to find out more or to contact the advertiser. |
| A | → | Action – Make the audience want to do something as a result of reading the advert. |

ATTENTION

A The nature of the message means **!**
it gains the attention of the target audience

INTEREST


I The message is framed in a way that makes it **?**
relevant to the target audience – it's of interest

DESIRE

D The audience wants it – it solves a problem,
offers a solution, fits into a gap in their life
resources



ACTION

A The audience knows what to do next to get it – 
by contacting the advertiser/going to a shop, etc.

TYPES OF ADVERTISEMENTS

There are basically four types of advertisements

- Direct mail
- Display advertisements
- Classified smalls
- Front page adverts (the 'Ears')

Direct Mail: Involves the sending of letters to potential and existing clients.

Three types of letters that are used in advertising are:

- Sales letter – to sell goods or services
- Follow up sales letter – to remind of sales offers
- Unsolicited sales letter – to advertise goods or services

Display adverts:

These have a special layout and have a logo head and use bold letters. They have an elaborate structure and are eye-catching. They are very expensive because of the detail they convey. Some examples of display advertisements are appointment, employment, notices, and product or service advertisements.

Display advertisements may incorporate a variety of font styles and sizes. Artwork and/or colour may be included. Charges for such adverts will be based on the amount of space used: usually measured in square cubic centimeters. Information can be displayed (according to preference) within the advertisement to attract special attention to specific points.

You can achieve the AIDA objectives if you follow these guidelines in your display adverts:

- Use a company logo, prominently displayed.
- Compose a catchy headline and display it prominently.
- Use spacing colour and font size and type to advantage, giving special items prominence.
- Categorise information using sub-headings, bullet points etc and clearly state the action you want the reader to take.
- Make your advertisement eye-catching.
- Aim for your advertisement to stand out from all the others around it.

Classified Smalls:

Classified Smalls are also known as smalls because they are small and without a special layout. They do not have an elaborate display and have no logo head. They are less expensive than display advertisements.

You will find such adverts on the classified sections of newspapers and magazines. Such sections categorise advertisements according to subject so that you can find any section quickly. The sections are headed e.g. “real estate for sale”, “employment” etc.

In these adverts also referred to as line adverts information is run on from line to line, often using the same font throughout with no special layout. These adverts are charged per number of words and there is normally a minimum charge for five words or any part of.

The classified pages contain a number of small adverts in a relatively small space, so you must try to use an opening which will catch the reader’s attention. Then give as much summarized

information as possible in as few words as possible. However, you should make sure you choose the right wording when considering the words to fit in a small space.

Front Page Adverts

They appear on the front page of a newspaper on the left and right top corners. They are at times known as the 'Ears'. They are very effective because they attract a client's attention at a glance and are quite expensive.



Activity 10.3 (15 minutes)

Look for a current or old copy of a local newspaper, journal or magazine. Turn to the classified ads section and see if any adverts jump out at you. What makes these adverts interesting or appealing?



Activity 10.4 (25 minutes)

- Refer to the newspaper, journal or magazine you used for activity 11.3 and study the display advertisements contained there.
- Make a list of the features of these adverts and note how they differ from the classified adverts.

CURRENT ADVERTISING MEDIA

Some of the principle advertising media in current use are:

CURRENT ADVERTISING MEDIA

Printed/graphics media

- Colour/Black white display advertisements in newspapers, magazines, trade journals etc.
- Classified small-ads in newspapers/magazines
- Leaflets/brochures/handouts/prospectus/catalogues
- Poster: A3, double crown, billboard, etc
- Sales/unsolicited sales letters

VISUAL/AURAL MEDIA

- Radio/television/cinema commercials: on video, film or tape
- Illuminations, fascia-boards, signs, placards
- Musical call-signs, jingles, theme-music
- Trade-marks, logos, motifs, uniforms, livery

COORDINATE EVENTS

- Exhibitions
- Shows/Fairs
- Demonstrations
- Sales
- Festivals
- Markets
- Sponsored/charity events

The events coordinate and channel oral/aural, textual/graphics/tactile and visual advertising stimuli

Adapted from: D.W Evans, People, communication and Organizations

JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

A job advertisement (internal or external) is, like a product advertisement, designed to attract responses, but its primary purpose is to communicate the organisation's requirements, rather than what the organization has to offer. This may be less evident in a market where skilled labour is scarce, and the organization wishes to attract high-calibre people in competition with other employers, but the emphasis on requirements will still be important, in order to initiate the selection process. A job advertisement has a dual purpose. It must convey the right information:

- a) To attract the attention and interest of the 'right' people (potentially) for the organization and for the position advertised; and
- b) To encourage self-selection (or de-selection): to 'weed out' those who will clearly not be suitable for, or attracted to the organisation or the position advertised. Irrelevant, unsuitable or fruitless applications waste time and resources for both candidate and recruiter, and should be avoided.

There are three ways of encouraging the pre-selection process:

- a) You can place the advertisement in a targeted medium, where only broadly suitable people are likely to see it. (This may be a specialist publication, to attract relevant skills, or it may be within the organization, for relevant experience, loyalty, knowledge or organization culture and so on).
- b) You can say enough about your requirements (experience, qualifications and so on) for a reader to judge whether he will suit the organisation's needs.
- c) You can say enough about the job and organization for the reader to judge whether they will suit his needs.

ADVERTISING MEDIA

Some methods or media for advertising jobs are as follows:

- a) *In-house magazines and notice-boards.* An organization might advertise vacancies for particular jobs through its own in-house magazine or journal, inviting applications from employees who would like a transfer or a promotion to the particular vacancy advertised. In-house notice boards are a traditional, and still much-used method of advertising or 'posting' internal vacancies.
- b) *Professional, trade or technical newspapers or magazines,* for various vacancies requiring the relevant specialist skills and experience.
- c) *National newspaper,* especially for senior management jobs or vacancies for skilled workers, where potential applicants will not necessarily be found through local advertising. *Local newspapers* would be suitable for jobs where applicants are sought from the local area.
- d) *Job Centers.* On the whole, vacancies for unskilled work (rather than skilled work or management jobs) are advertised through local job centers, although in theory any type of job can be advertised here:
- e) *Recruitment agencies:*



Activity 10.5

Make a list of at least three local recruitment agencies you know of.
You can check in the newspapers.

- f) *School and university careers offices.* When an organisation recruits school leavers or graduates, it would be convenient to advertise vacancies through their careers officers. Suitable information should be made available. Ideally, the manager responsible for recruitment in an area should try to maintain a close liaison with careers officers. Some large organizations organize special meetings or careers fairs in universities and colleges, as a kind of showcase for the organization and the careers it offers.

CONTENT OF A JOB ADVERTISEMENT

Preparation of the advertisement requires skill and attention in order to fulfill its objectives of attraction and pre-selection. It should be:

- a) Concise, but comprehensive enough to be an accurate description of the job, its rewards and requirements;
- b) In a form that will attract the attention of the maximum number of the right sort of people;
- c) Attractive, conveying a favourable impression of the organization, but not falsely so: disappointed expectations will be a prime source of dissatisfaction for an applicant when he actually comes into contact with the organization.
- d) Relevant and appropriate to the job and the applicant. Skills, qualifications and special aptitudes required should be prominently set out, along with special features of the job that might attract – on indeed deter – applicants, such as shift-work or extensive travel.

The advertisement might contain information about:

- a) The organization: its main business and location;
- b) The job: title, main duties and responsibilities, and special features;
- c) Conditions: special factors affecting the job;
- d) Qualifications and experience (required, and preferred); other attributes aptitudes and/or knowledge required;
- e) Rewards, salary, benefits, opportunities or training, career development, and so on;
- f) Application: how to apply, to whom, and by what date.

The style and presentation of a job advertisement will have much in common with product advertising or notices. Space tends to be more limited, however: it is common for job advertisements to be small – up to half an A4, page. The information requirements within this space usually preclude illustration – but logos and graphic design can still be used effectively to convey the organisation's image.

INTERNAL JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

An *internal* job advertisement may take other forms, such as:

- a) A memorandum informing staff of a vacancy, to which they – or their family and friends – are invited to reply;
- b) A notice – the equivalent of an advertisement, but using the channel of the notice board;
- c) A circular letter, sent to staff at work or at home, or put as an 'open' letter on the notice board

Clearly, similar information about the vacancy, terms and requirements will be given in an internal advertisement, but there will be less need to provide information about the organization.

JOB ADVERT – SUMMARY

- 1) Bold eye catching headlines e.g.
Staff vacancy
Employment Offered
- 2) Logo or piece of artwork
- 3) Company name displayed prominently eg.
Tobacco Board of Zambia
- 4) Advert's job title displayed prominently e.g.
Trainee Managers
- 5) -Qualification of candidates
-Other important qualities required
-Experience
- 6) Brief job description or outline of main duties
- 7) Fringe benefits/conditions of service etc
- 8) Method of applying
- Name/designation and address of person to write to
- 9) Closing date for applications

NOTICES

The prime function of a notice is:

- To be noticed;
- To be perceived;
- To be attended to; and
- Acted upon.

The prime reason why people or organizations design, write or print and display or circulate notices is to advertise or simply 'to make known to people'.

Notices not only inform but can also instruct, encourage, propagandise, remind announce or cajole.

The success of notices hangs upon their capacity to inform. Any extraneous factors introduced will necessarily detract from this purpose. Thus, when designing notices it is strongly advised that you concentrate first on their function which is to inform and then, secondly, address yourself to the matters of size, shape, format and layout.

Notices are not self generating, they are produced in response to something having previously occurred. Examples of situations where the need for notices arises are as follows:

- a) The fire code or drill in a firm is revised or updated – notices announcing this will be displayed;
- b) A meeting of the staff social or sports club is to be held- notices will be circulated to all staff concerned;
- c) There has been a change in the bank base rate – notices to this effect will be published in national and local newspapers.
- d) There will be a shutdown of water or electricity supply in certain parts of the city – notices to this effect will be published in the national and local newspaper or on television.

It can thus be seen that notices are either internal to organizations (as in examples a and b), or external to organizations (as in examples c and d)

Examples of Notices:

The issuing of the following notice presumes a deteriorated state of affairs where staff is not adhering to previously stated guidelines for telephone usage. They are, therefore in need of a friendly but firm reminder.

ATTENTION ALL TELEPHONE USERS IN THE DEPARTMENT!

PLEASE: - Only make essential telephone calls.

Try to make telephone calls between 13.00 and 17.30 hours if at all possible.

Identify personal calls to the switchboard operator.

Settle your personal telephone bills promptly.

If we all pull together, we can keep telephone costs down and maintain the staff facility to make personal telephone calls during working hours.

Talktime Zulu
IT Manager
20 June 2010



Activity 10.6

Collect some old or recent newspapers and make cuttings of notices, which you should critique, based on what you have learnt.

UNIT 11: STUDY AND EXAMINATION WRITING TECHNIQUES

Introduction:

In this unit we will examine effective strategies for study and examination writing. We will be examining the ways in which you may engage in the effective management of your information gathering and handling.

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to;



- Outline the skills essential for effective study, effective information searches and for effective reading
- Describe the different reading techniques that are in use
- Critically assess questions in an examination paper before making a selection
- Explain the meanings of key words used in examination questions.
- Use appropriate reading techniques and speeds during your study

Content:

- How to study effectively
- Guidelines for effective study
- Studying by distance learning
- Examinations and general study skills
- Key words in examination questions
- Use of quotations in questions
- Effective reading

How to Study Effectively:

A college qualification is not something that is awarded to you automatically after a specified period of time. You must earn it by taking decisions at the very beginning of your studies and commit yourself one hundred percent.

Studying college material for assignments, tests and examinations starts immediately you commence your education. As a college student you are assessed throughout your period of study. Before you write your final examinations, you will have done a number of assignments and tests. These are what are referred to as continuous assessment (CA) and are part of the final mark, which will determine your status at the end of the semester. It is therefore expected that you start your studying immediately – at the very outset of your new course of study! Do not wait for the 11th hour to cram your semester's work during the one or two-week study period just before your exams.

This unit contains some tips and guidelines that may help you develop a study approach that works for you. Remember that these tips and guidelines have been collected from the experiences of many students over a period of years, but you must use them to develop your own study approach. For example, some people are able to study totally absorbed with pop music belting out of home theatre system speakers at deafening decibel levels. Others need total quiet and are irritated if someone so much as clears their throat or coughs. Whatever approach suits you, it is best to stick to it always – provided that you do not pretend to yourself that you are studying when you are in fact day dreaming, listening to music or chatting with friends.

Guidelines for Effective Study

- Do not leave studying to impulse – work out a feasible personal timetable and stick to it.
- Work in short periods of up to a maximum of 60 minutes. After this your attention falls away and study becomes less effective.
- Keep your breaks short and do not allow them to overrun.
- Try to get into a study routine, always starting work and breaking off at the same times.
- Make sure your timetable is a mixture of different types of study – i.e. making notes, reading, doing questions. Too much of one type of study technique gets monotonous.
- Make your own notes on any material that must be learnt. Your own notes will be easier to revise from later.
- Your notes should consist of lots of short, sharp sentences and paragraphs, well spaced with concise headings. Do not just copy from the study pack.
- Use tricks to ease the memorizing process – brief notes or headings on index cards, or mnemonics to learn a list of points.
- Revise what you have learnt constantly. DO NOT leave revision to the last minute.

Golden Rule:

Get organized today!

This simply means:

- a) Managing efficiently the precious resource of time available for study.
- b) Having to hand the necessary and time saving study accessories such as dictionary, thesaurus, pens, pencils, stationery, and, if possible, a personal computer.
- c) Having a settled and comfortable study base at college, at home and perhaps in the library. Such a base needs to be free from distractions and have a welcoming atmosphere.
- d) Having ready access to effective and economic study materials such as textbooks, newspapers and magazine articles, lecture notes, teacher handouts, DVD's CDs, computer software, photographs, diagrams, statutes etc.

Studying by Distance Learning:

Studying by distance learning has its advantages. These include the following:

- A full set of learning materials is provided
- You study in a familiar environment (i.e. close to or in your own home and /or community)
- You can plan some of your study time to fit in with other commitments like work or family.

The major challenge, however is that learning at a distance from your institution of learning requires a lot of discipline and self motivation.

Below are some guidelines for distance learning:

1. **Plan:** Give priority to study sessions and follow the guidelines given in your modules. Make a study timetable and try to stick to it. Set specific days and times each week for study and keep them free of other activities. You could even work out a timetable based on a college timetable for a full time course.
2. **Manage Your Time:** Set aside a reasonable amount of time each week for your study programme. Work in productive blocks of time and include regular breaks.
3. **Be Organised:** Have your study materials in one place and keep your notes clearly labeled and sorted. Work through the units in your modules systematically and seek help for difficulties straight away. Never leave this for later.
NB: Contact numbers/addresses are given in your modules for this purpose.
4. **Find a Good Place to Study** Try to find a suitable place to do your work.
5. **Ask For Help If You Need It:** This is the next vital part of distance learning. No matter what the difficulty is, seek the necessary assistance. **NB:** Contact address and numbers have been provided in the modules.

6. **Don't Give Up:** If you miss deadlines for assignments, speak to the concerned tutor(s) – and work out what to do. If possible, talk to other students — it can make a difference to your study progress. Seeking help when you need it is key to making sure you complete your studies – so don't give up.

Examination and General Study Skills

Know a few facts about the examinations you will take in a given year.

- Keep a note of the dates, time and length (in hours) of the papers(s) you are going to write.
- Familiarize yourself with the design and format of the paper. How many questions are you expected to attempt out of the total given? Are there any compulsory questions?
- Look at previous examination papers from time to time to assess the effectiveness of your study.
- Form a study group which should discuss past exam questions. Even if the previous exam questions are not repeated in tests and future exams this should not discourage you. The group discussions will enable you to help one another in understanding key words used in exam and assignment questions. Words such as “illustrate”, “Compare and Contrast” etc are not easily understood by most people. You will be given a list of such words later in this unit.
- Know what you may be allowed to carry into the examination room e.g. calculators, statutes etc. This will help you avoid wasting time mastering things that you can obtain from permitted ‘tools’ while in the examination room.
- Revision of notes should be done daily otherwise you will forget

Enhance your performance in tests and examinations:

- Begin by assessing all the questions in the paper to select the one you feel you have understood and have enough points on.
- Start with the easier questions. If you mishandle the beginning, you may ruin the rest of your test or exam by going through it terribly shaken. Early successes will increase your motivation and clear the tension from the rest of your body.
- Plan your work before writing the answers. This is especially important for essay type questions. Do not allow a situation where you just begin writing without planning.

Spend a few minutes (5-10 minutes) planning on a forty-five minute question. Those who plunge into answering questions are usually disappointed when a bright idea or point dawns on their mind when they are through with the question. They end up inserting it in a wrong place.

- Watch your time. Make sure that you attempt each question as instructed. Should time run out for normal writing then quickly write your points in an outline form than just writing one point in full paragraph.
- Make sure you have understood all the key words in the question. Some of the common words used in college and university examinations are as follows:

Key words in examination questions

- Account for – Say the reasons for, why for, what for, what brought about
- Analyse – Discuss the things closely, weigh for and against talk critically
- Assess – Weigh the pros and cons, say to what extent or level
- By what means – Give factors leading to an event or circumstances
- By whom (what) – Give a variety of related things leading to other things
- Compare and contrast – Deal with similarities and differences
- Define – Say what something is from various perspectives
- Discuss – Give a clear explanation of something
- Distinguish – Show how something/some things differ from another or others
- Explain – Show the features and characteristics of a policy, theory event and conditions; give the reasons for or causes of, make them known in some detail.
- Express – Write in your own words the significance of factors
- For what reasons – Give reasons why certain things take place
- Give an account of – Make a step by step discussion showing developments
- Give an outline of – Discuss the main things developmentally
- Highlight – Show clearly the main things; isolate the main things from the rest
- How – A step by step discussion to show a process/progression
- How do/did you (ensure) – Through which or what ways, by what
- How far – The extent or limit of certain things in influencing others
- How relevant – Only the things that are contributory to something
- How was – The way things went, ways in which a process took place.
- Identify – Isolate and discuss out of the many factors available
- Mention – Tabulate in a systematic manner and discuss
- Name – Recall and say the importance of something; analyse too
- Narrate – Give a step by step story of an important thing; analyse
- Outline – Give the major factors and discuss them showing relationships
- Relate – Show a connection between two seemingly different things
- Tell – Explain in your own words the significance of something
- To what extent – Show up to what level, stage or success a thing contributed to another
- What – Either one or several factors important in a process, theme or event system and institution.
- What changes – New, additional or different things from existing or previous ones.

- What circumstances – Happenings, factors, issues, condition prevailing
- What factors – Things, issues, conditions attributable to something
- What measures – Actions, procedures taken as of necessity
- What role – Contribution to, importance, significance, relatedness to something
- What ways (say in what ways) – Procedures, nature of developments.
- When can – At what level stage, time of maturity of factors
- When do – The level, stage, period relevant to a given course of action
- When must – The level, stage, period requiring a specific course of action
- When should – Stage of maturity of factors necessitating a specific action
- When was – Time, period of an event, process, or system
- Where – Place or places of importance, communities, civilizations
- Which – Several out of many, a few out of several, one out of more than one thing
- Which of – Several out of many options, a few of many options, one out of more than one option.
- Why – Reasons for something.
- Write about – (Step by step) Discuss a topic under sub-themes sequentially.



Activity 11.1

Other words commonly used in college exams are:

- Describe
- Comment on
- Examine
- Evaluate
- Illustrate

Find out the meanings of these words.

The Use of Quotations When Questioning

- “The level of teaching and learning inputs in most institutions of teacher training in the country leaves much to be desired”. Suggest ways and means through which the situation being referred to could be improved.

What are inputs in this context? Sources, areas where these could be supplied, use of such inputs, the extent to which success could be assured by their use, desired levels and other possibilities from such inputs.

- “Teachers’ salaries should be reduced”. Comment on this statement taking into account the economic situation of the country and other relevant issues prevailing in the country.
Possible approaches: A salary - definition; reduction – definition; the economic situation; a liberalized or capitalist economy, copper mining mono economy, distorted or stagnating industrial production, high level control of the economy by foreign-based firms, poor agricultural policies and a high rate of inflation.
 - Choose to agree or disagree
 - Whichever way you take, discuss the question intelligently bearing in mind the ‘economic situation’ and other relevant factors.

Effective Reading

During your study you will consult numerous documents in your search for information. Once you have found the text book, chapter, section or document that contains the information you need, you have to read to take in that information. Reading for the efficient taking in of information is a skill that has to be learned. This section details the different reading techniques and speeds which you can employ.

Studying Speed: 5/10 - 200 words per minute (wpm)

This is the speed you use if you need to read something carefully for your own studies. You will need to give special attention to detail, to consider the meaning and implications of what you have read, to go back over the material once or twice (or even more) and to make notes on what you have read.

Slow Reading Speed: 150 - 300 wpm

This is the speed of the slow and inefficient reader or of the efficient reader coping with difficult material that contains ideas, words, phrases, terms or expression that they have not met before. Having to use the dictionary or to cross check with other documents or reference works can contribute greatly to this slow reading speed.

Rapid Reading Speed: 300 - 800 wpm

This speed should be easily maintained if you are reading documents with which you are familiar (both in terms of content and form). It is also suitable for most general reading material.

Skimming Speed: 800 - 1,000 wpm

This is a technique used to get a rough overview of the contents of a text. When you skim you have no particular topic in mind: you look simply to see what is there.

The process of skimming involves noticing key words in a text and getting an impression of the contents from them. There is no foolproof way of recognizing key words, but often they are words that occur several times.

When you skim it is important that you should not try to read as the text was written, from left to right. This is too slow, and may be confusing. Look at blocks of text and focus your eyes in the middle of the page running your gaze slowly to the bottom.

Scanning Speed: 1,000 – 2,000 wpm

This is a technique used to find a specific piece of information. It is used particularly in processing tables of contents, indexes, timetables, forms etc.

When you scan you fix in your mind of the word(s) or figure (s) that you are looking for. You then run your eye over the page until you find the words or figures that match your image. You ignore all other text on the page. If you scan efficiently you should be unable to recall any other information on the page!

Scanning and skimming are useful techniques for identifying information in written texts. However, everyone who handles written texts must also be able to read fluently in a more detailed manner. Some texts simply cannot be skimmed, and even when you have identified the general topic of a text by skimming you may then need to study the text more carefully.



Activity 11.2

Set yourself some scanning tasks and practice. If possible, time yourself. Below are some suggestions:

1. Find the day corresponding to various dates on a calendar
2. Locate particular words on pages of your dictionary. (Find the right page first!)
3. Look up well-known topics in the index of a big book.
4. Look up telephone numbers of well-known organizations.



RECOMMENDED READING

Bovee, C.L., J. Thill and B.E. Schatzman (2003) **Business Communication Today**, Pearson Education: Delhi

Burton, S.H. (1980) **People and Communication**, Longman: New York

Evans, D.W. () **People, Communication and Organisations**, MacMillan: London

Kaul, A ()

Stanton, N. (1990) **Communication**, MacMillan: London.

Taylor, S. (.) **Communication for Business: a practical approach**, Third edition, Pearson Education: Delhi