Mzuzu University

Department of Communication Studies

Teaching Module

Communication Skills II

(COMM 1201)

Khumbo Newa

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Contents

UNIT ONE: OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE/BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

a. *Write effective memos*
b. *Write good business letters*
c. *Distinguish a memo from a letter*
d. *Distinguish an ordinary business letter from a reference letter*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

a. *Definition of official correspondence*
b. *Differences between a memo and a letter*
c. *Differences between the various types of end of letter notations*
d. *Types of business letters*

KEY TERMS

Official correspondence, memos, business letters, end of letter notations, order letter, claim letter, letter of complaint, sales letter, letter of inquiry, letter of refusal.

INTRODUCTION

Official correspondence means the exchange of information in written form for business purposes. It usually takes place in two ways: between organisations and within organization. Sometimes it can also take place between an individual and an organization. As students pursuing higher education, it is extremely necessary that you study this topic because it will help you equip yourself with appropriate business communication skills such as writing letters and memoranda (memos). After graduating from this university you will pick up jobs in organisations where chances are that you will be required to communicate with your bosses, fellow employees or other organisations. The most convenient and probably most official way to communicate with them is by sending messages through letters or memos, hence the importance of this topic. In this unit, official correspondence has been divided into two: memos and business letters

Memos

A memo is a short communication usually a single page, circulated/deployed within an organization or institution. It is a formal reminder for something important that has occurred or will occur. A memo is used for communicating with someone within an organization i.e. memos are meant for internal communication. This is how they are differentiated from business letters. Business letters are used for communicating with someone outside your organization. For example, if the Regitrar of Mzuzu University wants to communicate something with the Head of Communication Studies Department, he will write a memo, not a letter because he is communicating to someone who is within Mzuzu University. However, if he wishes to communicate something with Director of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), he will have to write a letter, not a memo because memos are meant for internal communication i.e. the Director of NCHE is outside Mzuzu University.

Functions of a memo

Memos serve various functions. Among them are the following:

- They may confirm in writing the results of oral communication and also to provide some more details on the issues disclosed.
- They may carry a formal request, reminder or suggestion.
- They may notify employees of a change or development in an established course of action.
- They may accompany and introduce documentations such as reports.

Parts of a Memo

- From: Position of a person or department sending the message.
- To: Name of person or title or department to whom the message is sent.
- Date: Day on which the memo is sent.
- Subject: Brief phrase or sentence that tells what message is about.
- Message: Details on the subject.

End of memo notations

a. **C:** Stands for ‘Copy’. It is written when you want to give a copy of a memo to another person other than the main recipient.
b. **Att’d:** Stands for ‘Attachment’. It is written when you attach a document to your memo e.g. a letter, a receipt, a report etc.
c. **Enc:** Stands for ‘Enclosure’. It is used when you have enclosed a document in an envelope together with your memo.
d. **B.C.:** Stands for ‘Blind Copy’. It is used when you want to send a copy of your memo to another person or other persons but you do not want the main recipient to know that you have done so. Put BC followed

by the name of the person receiving that copy. Alternatively use the notation N.O.O. followed by the name of the person/persons receiving that copy. N.O.O. stands for ‘Not On Original’.

NOTE: Students often ask lecturers why some writers use “Cc: or “CC” when making copies to other people, instead of just C? Some people will tell you that they use CC when making copies to two or more people. They will also tell you that they use C when making a copy to one person. However, in this module we want to explain as follows: CC stands for Carbon Copy. In the past people were using carbon paper in order to make copies hence the use of CC. Today (in contemporary writing) we do not use carbon when making copies to other people, therefore the use of CC does not make sense. We thus urge our students to always use C regardless of whether you are making copies to one person or more, because C may stand for Copy or Copies. Despite the fact that CC looks popular, you need to know that it is old-fashioned.

Below are samples of a memos

MZUZU UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Communication Studies

MEMO

To : All Members of the Department

From : Head of Department

Date : 20th February, 2020

Subject : **Away From Office**

I write to inform you that I will be travelling to Blantyre this Friday, 21st February, 2020 on official business. I am expected to be back on Thursday, 27th February, 2020. Therefore all issues requiring the attention of the Head of Department should be forwarded to Mrs Elida Kamanga. She is in the new office block, room number 33.

KHUMBO NEWA

<u>Distribution List</u>
P. Madula
B. Musopole
E. Kamanga
G. Nthala

C: Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences

MZUZU UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Communication Studies

MEMO

To	:	Assistant Registrar, Academics
From	:	Head of Department
Date	:	20th February, 2020
Subject	:	**Request for Examination Rooms**

The Department will be administering mid-semester examinations for all level one students on Friday, 25th February 2020. I therefore write to request you to make Rooms N, O, P, Q and R available for this exercise.

I shall be looking forward to your usual support.

KHUMBO NEWA

C: University Registrar

MEMO

To : University Registrar

From : As below

Date : 20th February, 2020

Subject : **REQUEST TO WITHDRAW FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

I am a level 3 student doing Bachelor of Science (Optometry). I would like to request you that I should be allowed to withdraw from the university on health grounds. I have been in hospital for the last 2 months due to liver problem and the doctor says I will remain there for the next 3 months. I have attached details on the doctor's recommendations.

If all goes well, I intend to re-join the university in the next academic year.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Mervin Harris
BSOPT9818

C: Dean of Health Sciences
Dean of Students
Head of Optometry Department

NOTE: You might have heard about the term *circular*. This is also an example of official correspondence in which a common matter to a large number of organisations, departments or agencies is communicated. In Malawi circulars are very common in government. For example, the Ministry of Education may write a circular to all Secondary and Primary School Head Teachers, Education Division Managers, Teachers Union of Malawi and all other stakeholders informing them about a change in the opening date of a school term.

Business Letters

Business letters represent you or your company/institution. For example, if the Registrar is writing a letter to the Ministry of Education, he is writing on behalf of Mzuzu University and on his own behalf.

Differences between a memo and a business letter

a. A memo does not include addresses while a letter does.
b. A memo does not include a salutation (e.g. Dear Sir) while a letter does.
c. A memo does not include a complimentary close or valediction (e.g. Yours faithfully) while a letter does.
d. A memo is meant for internal communication while a letter is meant for external communication.

Qualities of good business letters

a. They do not contain slang. Slang are words which are not part of our standard vocabulary e.g. mum, dad, wanna, gonna, babe, guys, dude etc. All these must be written using standard vocabulary e.g. write ‘mother’ instead of ‘mum’, want to instead of ‘wanna’, going to instead of ‘gonna’.
b. They are formal and not chatty – no casual expressions. In other words do not write a business letter as if you were writing a friendly letter.
c. They do not contain clichés. Clichés are expressions which have lost their meaning because of overuse e.g. last but not least. They are no longer interesting because everyone wants to use them. It is not wrong to use them, but they are boring.
d. They are courteous. They express displeasure or register complaints without making enemies. Words are chosen carefully. They aim for positive results, so they avoid annoying intended recipients

- **Hint:** file/save types of letters you write most frequently so that you just edit an existing letter to fit particular needs instead of composing an entirely new one.

Parts of a business letter

1. **Senders address** (heading if using letter head):

   -A letter head is the printed heading on a paper giving the sender’s name or address.

   -When writing addresses, there are two ways you can use in presenting the items. You can use the ‘closed punctuation rule’ (where all items are punctuated) or the ‘open punctuation rule’ (where all items are not punctuated).

   a. Do not write your address in slanting manner.
   b. Place it in upper right corner of the letter.
   c. Never use abbreviations eg Dpt.
   d. When you are writing on a headed paper, do not include the senders address because such details are already contained in the letterhead. (See sample of a letter below).

Open Puctuation Rule	**Closed Punctuation Rule**
Mzuzu University Private Bag 201 Luwinga Mzuzu	Mzuzu University, Private Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu.

2. **Date:** Place it one line below sender's address flushed with it, but flushed with the left margin if the letter is on headed paper.

3. **Receiver's address**

   -Consists of receiver's name or title, name of office or department (if any), name of company or institution, postal address.

   -Place it flush with the left margin, one line below the date line.

   -If the name is included, always include proper title: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Dr, Prof. If you choose to put a title after name, do not at the same time put it before.

4. **Salutation**

   -Place it one line below the receiver's address.

   -Address receiver with proper title and last name, unless a knight. When someone is knighted it means he or she has been given special honour by a British king or queen because of his special achievements. A man who is knighted is called 'Sir' while a woman who is knighted is called 'Lady'. When addressing them use first name for a man and surname for a woman. For example if a man's name is John Phiri, write 'Dear Sir John'. If a woman's name is Mercy Phiri, write 'Dear Lady Phiri'.

   -If you are not writing to a specific person in a company, use "Dear Sir or Madam".

   -Use Ms for a woman's title unless she prefers Mrs or Miss.

5. **Subject**

   This is a brief phrase or sentence capturing the theme of the letter.

6. **Body**

   -Begin the body one line below salutation.

   -Show paragraphs by leaving one line between them (not by indenting)

7. **Complementary close/valediction**

   -Place it one line below the body of the letter.

   -Align it with the left margin.

   -Use 'Yours faithfully' if salutation is 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

   -If the name is included in salutation, choose from among: 'Yours sincerely', 'Sincerely yours', 'Respectfully yours' or 'Yours truly'.

8. **Signature** (writer's name and signature)

   -Place your name two lines below the complementary close.

   -Write your signature between complementary close and your name.

9. **End of letter notations**

- Use the same notations as indicated under memos.
  a. C.: For Copy.
  b. Att'd.: For Attachment.
  c. Enc.: For Enclosure.
  d. B.C.: For Blind Copy or N.O.O. for Not On Original.

Here is a sample of a letter, with addresses written using closed punctuation rule:

Mzuzu University,
Private Bag 201,
Mzuzu,
Malawi.

26th April, 2014.

The National Commision for Science and Technology,
Lingadzi House,
Robert Mugabe Crescent,
Private Bag B303,
Capital City,
Lilongwe.

Dear Sir,

RESEARCH PERMIT

I am student at the University of Nairobi in Kenya doing Master of Arts in Public Relations and Advertising. I intend to do a study titled PUBLIC RELATIONS ETHICS IN MALAWI: A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS. I therefore write to request for a research clearance from your institution. I have attached the abstract of my proposal.

I shall be looking forward to your favourable response on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

John Phiri

C: Head of Journalism and Communications

Att'd: Study Abstract

Below is a sample of a letter with a letterhead and the receiver's address written using open punctuation rule:

MZUZU UNIVERSITY
Department of Communication Studies
Private Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu

Tel: +265 1 320 914
Fax: +265 320 568
Email: a.banda@mzuni.ac.mw

7th May, 2020

Head Teacher
New Heavens Private Secondary School
Private Bag 24
Luwinga
Mzuzu

Dear Sir,

CAREER GUIDANCE

Mzuzu university, Department of Communication Studies will be holding a Career Guidance session at Luwinga Secondary School. This is an event which aims at providing information on various programmes that are offered by univertsities in Malawi. We intend to introduce students to the nature and scope of the programmes and educate them on the skills necessary to allow them join the programmes of their choice.

I therefore write to invite your school to participate in this important event which will take place on 20th July, 2020, starting from 2PM.

Enclosed is the list of programmes offered by the universities in Malawi.

I shall be looking forward to your participation.

Yours Faithfully,

Agness Banda
(Head of Department)

C: University Registrar
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences

ENC: Programmes offered by the universities in Malawi

Types of business letters

The following are some of the types of business letters

a. Order letter
b. Letter requesting information
c. Letter of inquiry
d. Letter of complaint (request for redress)
e. Claim letter
f. Letter of response to a complaint or claim
g. Letter requesting participation
h. Letter of refusal

i. Sales letter

j. Letter of apology

A. Order Letter

9. An order letter (to request a shipment of goods) should include:

- ✓ An exact description of the goods – name, size, style, colour, model number, series.
- ✓ Catalogue number if applicable.
- ✓ Quantity.
- ✓ Price per item and total.
- ✓ Address to which goods should be shipped.
- ✓ Method of shipment – pony, post, express, freight, rail/air.

B. Letter Requesting Information

-Used to obtain a simple fact e.g. price, or ask for a document e.g. prospectus, form etc.

-Is brief, easy for recipient to supply information.

-In such a letter:

- ✓ Identify yourself (e.g. as a student, lecturer/professor).
- ✓ Say exactly what you need.
- ✓ Explain briefly why you need the information and how you intend to use it. (if your reason is obvious, do not explain it).
- ✓ Express your appreciation.

C. Letter of Inquiry

10. Used to obtain detailed information hence it is longer and detailed than the letter requesting for information.

11. In such a letter:

- ✓ Identify yourself.
- ✓ Explain why you are asking for information and how you intend to use it.
- ✓ Ask specific and thorough questions (so that the recipient understands what exactly you need to know).
- ✓ If you have several questions, list and number them
- ✓ If you need the information by a specific date, mention the date but remember to give enough time for the recipient to reply.
- ✓ Express your appreciation.

D. Letter of Complaint (Request for Redress)

-The purpose of this letter is to receive better service or to have a mistake corrected.

-The letter should include the following:

- ✓ A detailed description of a faulty product (model, serial number etc).
- ✓ Date of purchase and whether product is still under warranty.
- ✓ Copy of purchase receipt.
- ✓ Details of unsatisfactory service (name of hotel, restaurant, flight number, dates etc.
- ✓ Copies of receipts for service received.
- ✓ Brief but clear explanation of the problem.
- ✓ Request or suggest what should be done.

Note: Be courteous – avoid sarcasm, rudeness, anger. If your letter shows that you are being reasonable, the complaint will likely be regarded as reasonable and legitimate and will receive the redress you want.

E. Letter of Claim

-The purpose of the letter is to receive reimbursement on costs for damage or loss.

-Discuss the damage or loss, details of what happened, date, names of people involved and amount you have spent on the damage or loss.

-Enclose copies of receipts and other necessary documents.

F. Letter of Response to a Complaint or Claim

-Failure to respond will lose good will and business for your organization.

-A well written response will satisfy a disgruntled client and retain his custom

- ✓ Reply promptly.
- ✓ Thank the writer for bringing the problem to your attention and express your regrets.
- ✓ Explain why the problem occurred if you know why.
- ✓ If you do not know why, state that you are investigating the matter and will report back when you have the facts.
- ✓ If you need additional information from the writer, ask for it.
- ✓ Explain what you will do to address the matter and what you plan to do to prevent a recurrence of the problem.
- ✓ Use positive language i.e. minimize the disagreeable part of the letter and stress the positive.
- ✓ Do not apologize profusely.

G. Letter Requesting Participation

-The purpose is to ask the recipient to contribute funds (e.g. in a fundraiser), become a member or office bearer of your committee or organization, participate in some activity etc.

- ✓ Provide a brief introduction aimed at getting the recipient on your side e.g. suggest why the recipient might want to participate (you can refer to something similar the recipient has done in the past).
- ✓ State your request, saying clearly what is wanted and when it is wanted.
- ✓ Say how the recipient can go about doing what you ask (make it easy for him or her; don't give him/her homework).
- ✓ Express your appreciation.

H. Letter of Refusal

-Refuse in a polite and positive manner.

-Use a positive opening to soften the refusal.

-Give clear reasons for the refusal.

-If possible, offer to help at some other time or in some other way.

I. Sales Letter

-The purpose is to persuade a potential client to buy something from you or your services.

-Remember the following three elements in a sales letter:

- It should begin by showing advantages of buying your goods or services. You are not the only supplier of those goods or provider of those services so begin by attracting the reader's attention.

  Startling the reader with a fact, question or offer eg: *Intensive care can cost you only K1000 a day* **(Fact)**; *Do you know what one day in an intensive care unit in a hospital can cost?* **(Question)**; *you can be free from financial worry should you need intensive care in a hospital* **(Statement)**; *here is your chance to shed financial worries should you need intensive care in a hospital* **(offer).**

- Telling the reader that he or she is special (but do not exaggerate); offer a gift e.g. we enclose a free copy of our prospectus or catalogue.
- It should state the advantages of buying your goods or services, giving details of the benefits.
- It should make a specific request that the reader should make an order.

J. Letter of Apology

-The purpose is to express regrets or remorse about some incident e.g. a fight between schools in which your students are to blame.

-Expressions used in a letter of apology include:

i. **Opening expression**: I am writing to apologize for….; I would like to apologize for…; I regret to say…
ii. **Body of the letter**: We had no right to…; There was no reason for us to…
iii. **Concluding expression**: I promise that this will not happen again…; I can assure you that we shall not let this happen again…

Reference Letters

- Reference letters are written when we want to recommend someone for a particular job position or a place in an academic institution.
- A reference letter should provide information on who you are, your connection with the person you are recommending, why they are qualified and specific skills they have. In addition, contact information for follow up should be provided.

Format of a reference letter

- The following reference letter format is appropriate for an employment reference, as well as reference for graduate school:
  a. Return (sender's) address
     - This is written when you are not using a letterhead
  b. Receiver's address (applicable in specific reference letters)
     - This is written when you know the actual address of the receiver. Include the name/position of the receiver
  c. Salutation
     - If you are writing a personal letter of reference, include a salutation (e.g. Dear Mr. Banda). If you are writing a general reference letter, say "To whom it may concern" or simply do not include a salutation.
  d. Subject
     - Briefly summarizes the content of the body.

- Includes the name of the person for whom you are writing the reference letter eg letter of reference for Jane Banda.

e. The Body
   - Paragraph 1
     - ✓ The first paragraph of the reference letter explains your connection to the person you are recommending, including how you know them, and why you are qualified to write a reference letter to recommend employment or graduate school.
   - Paragraph 2
     - ✓ The second paragraph contains specific information on the person you are writing about, including why they are qualified, what they can contribute, and why you are providing reference letter. If necessary use more than one paragraph to provide details
   - Paragraph 3
     - ✓ When writing a reference letter referring a candidate for a particular job opening, the letter will include information on how the person's skills match the position they are applying for. Ask for a copy of the job posting and a copy of the person's resume so that you can target your reference letter accordingly
   - Summary
     - ✓ This section contains a brief summary of why you are recommending the person. State that you 'highly recommend' the person or that you 'recommend without reservations' or something similar
   - Conclusion
     - ✓ Contains an offer to provide more information. Include a phone number within the paragraph or indicate that you have included the phone number and email address in the return section of your letter or in your signature.

f. Complementary Close
   - You can use 'Yours faithfully' or 'Yours sincerely' as already explained above.

g. Signature
   - Include name and signature.

h. Additional points to note:
   - Be objective (honest)
   - Do not over-praise
   - Do not use language that is too damaging to the person you are writing about e.g. very bad; reckless
   - Remember you are not writing a CV for the person so there is no need to write things that are expected to be in the person's CV

Here is a sample of a general reference letter written on a headed paper (letterhead)

MZUZU UNIVERSITY
Department of Communication Studies
Private Bag 201, Luwinga, Mzuzu

Tel: +265 1 320 914
Fax: +265 320 568
Email: k.newa@mzuni.ac.mw

5th February, 2020

Director of Post Graduate Programmes,
University of South Ankra,
Post Office Box 387,
11 November Street,
Aldon Plaza,
New Delhi,
India.

Dear Sir

ACADEMIC REFERENCE FOR LIZZIE. BANDA

I write to recommend Lizzie. Band who has expressed interest to study a Master of Arts in Media Education. I have known Lizzie since 2010 when she joined our university as an undergraduate studying Bachelor of Arts (Education) where she graduated in 2013.

Lizzie Banda, who was my student in third year, demonstrated a high level of organization and displayed remarkable intellectual ability. She regularly engaged me on academic matters and her interrogation of issues was beyond what most of her peers could do.

As she is looking to further her studies, I believe that her undergraduate knowledge will go a long way in helping her accomplish this task. I have no doubt that she will continue to excel in your institution.

I, therefore, recommend Lizzie Banda without any reservations. Her level of ability qualifies her to do further studies, and I tip her to become one of the most successful students in your institution.

Should you need more information, contact me using details provided below.

Yours faithfully,

Khumbo Newa

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *Explain any three differences between a memo and a letter.*
2. *State any three qualities of a good business letter*
3. *Why is language tone important when writing letters of complaint?*
4. *What is the difference between a reference letter and a testimonial?*
5. *Imagine you bought a television set from Game Stores. Upon reaching home you discover that the set is not functioning. You have decided to write a letter to the Shop manager explaining the problem.*
    a. *What kind of a letter would you write?*
    b. *Write the letter*
6. *Why is objectivity important when writing reference letters?*

ACTIVITY

Imagine you are a secondary school head teacher. One of your former students has nominated you as her referee and eventually requested you to write her a letter of reference to support her scholarship application in her quest to study a master's degree at an international university. Write the letter.

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UNIT TWO: MEETINGS

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. *Explain the overall aim of a meeting.*
2. *Give meanings of various terms used in meeting conducted according to the 'parliamentary procedure'.*
3. *Explain the duties of the chairperson, secretary and participants in a meeting.*
4. *Write agendas for meetings.*
5. *Write effective minutes from meetings.*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Definition of a meeting*
2. *Roles of a chairperson and a secretary*
3. *Responsibilities of participants*
4. *Writing minutes*

KEY TERMS

1. *Quorum*
2. *Majority*
3. *Out of order*
4. *Recess*
5. *Resolutions*
6. *Motion*
7. *Floor*
8. *Minutes*

INTRODUCTION

Members or office bearers of an organization, club or committee need to be familiar with rules of effective leadership and effective participation in meetings if they are to be successful in discharging their duties. A meeting is an assembly of individuals called to deliberate on issues affecting an organization, and to take decisions. In organisations, meetings are usually divided into two. The first one is the *Organisational Meeting*. This is a regular meeting involving stakeholders and management. Examples of organizational meetings include a *Board Meeting* and an *Annual General Meeting* (AGM). The second one is the Operational Meeting. This may be a regular or ad hoc meeting involving management and employees such as committee meetings, planning meetings, faculty meetings etc.

"Parliamentary procedure"

- These are set of rules that enable a club or committee conduct meetings in an orderly manner, ensuring that everyone will have a chance to speak.
- The discussion is limited to one matter at a time.
- There is a balance between the rights of the majority, the minority and the individual member.

Some terms used in meeting conducted according to Parliamentary procedure

- Agenda – The list of items to be discussed at a meeting.

- Chair – the person presiding over the meeting.
- Floor – the right to speak – no one else can speak when someone has the floor.
- Minutes – an accurate report of what transpired during a meeting.
- Motion – a proposal that is put before a group it is made by saying "I move".
- Out of order – speaking without the permission of the chair or proposing an action that does not follow the rules of parliamentary procedure.
- Quorum – the number of members who must be present to transact business in a meeting
- Second a motion – to show support of a motion by saying "I second the motion" or simply "seconded".
- Adjourn – to end a meeting.
- Majority – one more than half of those eligible to vote.
- Recess- temporary interruption of a meeting.

Duties of the Chair

The chair is in charge of the meeting

He/she acts as a judge, referee and timekeeper. In these capacities the chair:

- Sees to it that the meeting shall accomplish something.
- Prepares for the meeting by writing out the agenda.
- Budgets the meeting time in order to complete everything on the agenda.
- Keeps control of the meeting at all times.
- Sees that order is restored if a disturbance occurs.
- Makes sure that the group sticks to the topic being discussed.
- Sees to it that the topic is fully discussed before moving on to a new topic.
- Recognizes everyone's rights to speak at some point.
- Clears up any misunderstanding about what is happening in a meeting.
- Cannot ordinary voice an opinion or play favourites.

Duties of the secretary

The secretary's most important duties are taking the minutes of each meeting and reading them loud at the next meeting.

Other duties

- Keeps a membership list of the club /committee.
- Takes attendance at each meeting.
- Sends out notification of the time and venue of meetings.

- Handles the club/committee's correspondence.

Taking Down Minutes

During the meeting the secretary must quickly jot down notes on what is said and done. These notes are then written up as minutes when the meeting is over.

The Munites

They should be as brief as possible.

They should contain the important points of a meeting.

They should not reflect the secretary's viewpoint or attitude.

They should include:

- The name of the group/club/committee. This should constitute the heading of the minutes
- The date, time and venue of the meeting.
- Members present, indicating who chaired the meeting and the secretary (who took the minutes).
- Apologies.
- Whether or not minutes of the meeting were read.
- Corrections made to minutes of the last meeting.
- Matters arising from minutes of the last meeting (unfinished business).
- Date of the next meeting, if known.
- The time the meeting was closed /adjourned

Reading minutes

The secretary should try to keep members attention by reading loudly and clearly and showing interest in each minute.

Responsibilities of participants

- Come to the meeting prepared, knowing what they are going to say on various items on the agenda.
- Listen carefully when others are speaking.
- Speak so that they can be heard clearly and loud enough.
- Limit their speaking time.
- Stick to the topic.
- Be courteous at all times –disagree politely.
- Control their emotions.

- Accept the decisions of the majority.

Atypical agenda

1. **Call to order**
   - The chair says ”The meeting will come to order”

2. **Reading minutes of the last meeting**
   - The chair says “The secretary will read the minutes”.
   - After the minutes have been read the chair asks “Are there any corrections to the minutes?”.
   - If no corrections the chair says” The minutes are approved”
   - After corrections the chair says, “The minutes are approved as corrected”.

3. **Matters arising (from the minutes)/unfinished business**

   The chair brings up for discussion any matters that were not settled at the last meeting

   These are listed on the agenda.

4. **New business**

   New items listed on the agenda are discussed.

5. **AOB (Any Other Business)**

   After new business has been completed the chair asks, “*Is there any other business*?”. This is the time for members to bring up anything they wish discussed.

6. **Date of next meting**

   The chair announces the date of the next meeting.

7. **Closing /Adjournment**

   The chair thanks members for their attendance.

Additional points on minutes writing

1. Minutes should be concise. That is to say, they should be brief, clear and unambiguous. It is not always easy to be brief and to be unambiguous. In general you should always write in complete sentences to avoid ambiguity.

2. The discussion on each point is summarized briefly e.g. It was noted that…. It was pointed out that… It was resolved that… On the issue of school fees, it was agreed that….
3. Names of those who contribute opinions on the discussion are generally unnecessary. Any resolutions that are made are clearly indicated. Resolutions are made based on the number of votes the assenting and dissenting groups can muster. Decisions/resolutions made at such meetings bind all members whether present or not. However, a dissenting minority may apply to a court to have an already adopted resolution set aside if it is deemed illegal.
4. Two language features commonly associated with sets of minutes are passive voice and reported speech, for example:
   - Members of staff were reminded that examinations would begin on 25 June, 2020.
   - It was felt that too many pupils had arrived late without reason.
   - It was resolved that the headmaster would address all pupils.
   - On the issue of buying new computers for the library, it was agreed that management should organize a fundraising event in January next years in order to raise money for this purpose.

Reported speech is necessary for recording what was said and agreed at the meeting. Thus the correct sequence of tenses in indirect speech must be followed in all cases, with past tense forms being used to report discussions and resolutions. Passive voice allows minutes to be recorded in an objective (i.e. fair, detached, unemotional) way

Below is a sample of minutes:

LIFE OF HOPE UNIVERSITY

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

MINUTES OF A STAFF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 20TH JULY, 2019 IN THE MAIN LECTURE ROOM

Members Present.

Prof. Collins Moyo (HOD) Chairperson

Dr. Ken. Mandala

Dr. Daniel Mkuziwaduka

Mr. CHisomo. Basikolo

Mrs. Rose Wefuwefu

Mr Andrew Armstrong

Mr Kingstone. Phiri

Mrs. Anne Chirwa Secretary

Apologies

Ms Christina Banda

OPENING REMARKS

- The meeting started at 2pm with a prayer by Dr. Mkuziwaduka. The Head of Department (HOD) welcomed all the members and asked them to feel free.

ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Members adopted the previous minutes with an observation that they should not be signed before adoption. The agenda was unanimously adopted.

1.0 MATTERS ARISING

1.1. Departmental magazine

- The house noted that they were supposed to publish a magazine highlighting activities carried out in the department. It was agreed that a task force be set up to oversee the project.

1.2. Lunch allowances

- The HOD reported that management had given a green light to give lunch allowances to staff members who work over the weekend. Each member would be getting K 3000 per day.
- It was however, suggested that the accounts personal should not delay in releasing the money to staff on duty.

1.3. Examination grades

- Members were told to speed up processing examination grades to allow for comprehensive moderation exercise.

2.0. AGENDA

2.1 Course allocation

- The house noted that all courses were being taught though some members were overloaded.
- It was noted however, that when Mr. Mahatma reported for duties those with high workloads would be relieved.
- It was also suggested that at least two adjunct staff should be recruited and the HOD should look into that matter.

2.2 Departmental party

- The house agreed to hold a party at the end of the year. To this effect, some members were elected as facilitators.
- Members however, pointed out they wanted a massive party spices by games and eating competion among others.

2.3 Mr. Wefuwefe's weddings

- It was brought to the attention of the house that Mr. Wefuwefu, the Philosophy lecturer, was intending to marry. It was agreed that a gift be arranged for him.
- Each member was to contribute K 1000 Mr. Basikolo and Miss. Maluwa would decide on the appropriate gift.

3.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 Abscondment

- The HOD reported that some members of staff were absconding their duties. It was agreed that members concerned should be summoned for hearing.
- It was also agreed that the HOD should be notified when members would fail to attend their lectures.

3.2 Seminars

- It was agreed that the department should have research dissemination seminars and that a departmental coordinator be appointed for the same.

3.3 Internet facility

- It was proposed that the Department should source computers from well-wishers and connect to the internet in order to promote service delivery.

4.0 CLOSING REMARKS

The HOD thanked all members for their participation. The meeting was closed at 5:00 pm with a prayer by Mr. Mkuziwaduka

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *Why are meetings important in organisations?*
2. *What do the following terms mean as they are used in meetings conducted according to the parliamentary procedure:*

a. *Quorum?*
b. *Recess*
c. *Minority*
d. *Adjourn*
e. *Motion*

3. *Why is it important to satisfy a quorum before a meeting can begin?*
4. *Mr Manda works with 'Tidzutse', a non-governmental organisation responsible for the restoration of cultural practices in Mengazi Zone in Kwacha district. At the end of each month, as a Project Officer, he is responsible for chairing Staff Appraisal Committee meetings.*
   a. *State any **three** things that Mr Manda is supposed to do during the meetings.*
   b. *If new officers have joined the project and are attending the meeting for the first time, what would Mr Manda, as the Chair, say in order to orient them regarding their responsibilities as participants at the meetings?*
5. *Why is it important to read minutes of the last meeting at the next meeting?*
6. *Why are names of people who contribute opinions during meetings generally unnecessary?*

ACTIVITY

Imagine you are the Class Representative and have been receiving complaints from members of your class about the quality of services being offered to them on campus. There have been complaints to do with delayed release of examination results, lack of consultation on issues that matter to them and ineffective maintenance of vital facilities, among others. You decide that the class should have a meeting during which all the complaints can be systematically solicited from the concerned students.

Task

Prepare an agenda for the meeting.

REFERENCES

Chikoti, V.L. (2008). *Business Communications.* Blantyre: Claim Mabuku.

Guffey M. E. & Loewy D. (2016). Essentials of business communication. (10th Edition). Sydney: Thomson.

Grygel, J. A. (1995). *The World Book of word power. (Vol. II).* Chicago: World Book Inc.

Stanto, Nicky (2009). *Mastering Communication. (5th Ed.).* London: Palgrave.

UNIT THREE: PROPOSAL WRITING

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. *Define the term proposal*
2. *Distinguish between the different types of proposal*
3. *Write the different types of proposals*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Definition of a proposal*
2. *Differences between formal and informal proposals*
3. *Writing proposals*

KEY TERMS

Formal proposals, informal proposals, internal proposals, external proposals, solicited proposals, unsolicited proposals, statement of the problem, rationale, methodology, plan of action, recommendations, conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

A proposal is a formal plan or suggestion put forward for discussion and consideration by others. It is a method of persuading people to agree to the writers view or accept his suggestions. It is a systematic, factual, formal and persuasive description of a course of action or set of recommendations or suggestions. A proposal is an action oriented report i.e. it suggests a future task and includes a complete plan of how the task will be accomplished. It consists of procedure or equipment analysis, cost analysis, capabilities of existing facilities, information on involved personnel and usually a timetable for completing the task. The main objective of a proposal is to persuade the reader to accept the proposed course of action. It explains and justifies what is being proposed. In other words, it persuades the reader to accept or fund the proposed project.

Types of proposals

Proposals are generally classified into three categories according to structure, nature of its audience and the source or origin:

1. Non-Formal and Formal proposals (based on structure).
2. Internal and External proposals (based on nature of their audience).
3. Solicited and Unsolicited proposals (based on source of origin).

1. Non-Formal and Formal proposals

Non-formal proposals are written to initiate small projects and are less elaborate. They are usually short. They can take a letter or memo format as the case may be.

Formal proposals are written when you want to initiate big projects and require elaborate description and discussion. They consist of several sections and subsection. They can vary from a few pages to hundreds of pages

2. Internal and External proposals

An internal proposal is addressed to readers within an organisation. It may offer to study a problem, situation, condition or issue in an organisation. It may present different options for solving these problems. For example, one can write a proposal on how an organisation may increase its sales; or an employee of Mzuzu University may write a proposal to management explaining how the institution may generate alternative funds/revenue. Internal proposals are less formal and elaborate than external proposals.

External proposals are written to people outside your organisation. An external proposal may offer to solve a problem or situation of that organisation and give appropriate suggestions and recommendations. They are more formal, detailed and elaborate than internal proposals.

3. Solicited and Solicited Proposals

Solicited proposals are written in response to a specific request from a client. Many organisations solicit proposals for their projects. They specify their requirements and mention their conditions.

Unsolicited proposals are written without any request for a proposal. They are written by individuals or organisations without being asked to do so. For example, an NGO may write a proposal to the department of Disaster Management explaining how floods in the Lower Shire may be managed.

Format of a proposal

When writing a proposal (formal), the following topical headings should be considered for organisational purposes, although each actual proposal will suggest addition of major or minor heading

1. **Title page**

It contains the title of the proposal, the name of a person or organisation (including the address) to whom the proposal is being submitted, the name of the proposal writer (including the address), and the date of submission.

2. **Table of contents**

It lists main headings and sub-headings in the proposal including page numbers.

3. **List of figures**

It includes lists of tables, graphs, figures and charts used in the proposal

4. **Abstract**

It highlights or summarises major points of a proposal.

5. **Methodology**

It summarises the proposed methods of data collection and the procedure for investigating the situation/problem.

6. **Introduction**

It gives the background, states the purpose and discusses the scope. It gives the reader a clear statement of what you are proposing and why you are proposing

7. **Statement of the problem**

It includes existing problems or situation that the proposal intends to address e.g. inefficiency, high costs, dangers etc.

8. **Proposed Plan and Schedule**

This section presents solutions to the problem by providing all particulars of your proposal. Under this section you may wish to include these subheadings: Equipment, procedure, capabilities, costs, personnel and time plan.

9. **Implications/Consequences**

Divide this section into advantages and disadvantages or strengths and weaknesses/limitations. This section must reinforce that the proposal has more advantages than disadvantages. It links benefits to the needs of the situation.

10. **Recommendations**

This section discusses the plan to solve the problem. It is the most persuasive section of a proposal.

11. **Conclusion**

This section provides the final summary of the proposal and focuses on main points. It provides an urge to action. It also re-emphasise the advantages. This section must be closed with a persuasive statement e.g. I urge you to give serious consideration to this proposal and I am available to discuss its particulars.

12. **Appendices**

Secondary materials are put as appendices in proposals. This maintains logical continuity and avoids distractions.

WRITING TIPS

a) Pre-writing stage

During this stage the write should answer the following questions

1. Why is the proposal being written? / What are the objectives?

   (Purpose identification)

2. Who is the audience?

(Audience analysis)

3. Does the proposal involve any project? What is the project?

   (Project analysis)

4. How much information should be included in the proposal?

   (Scope determination)

5. What should the reader do?

   (Analysis of the action desired)

Once these questions are answered, the writer can collect data that relate to the proposal.

b) Writing Stage

This involves organising the data that has been collected, outlining what will be presented in the proposal and writing the first draft

c) Post-Writing Stage

This involves revising, editing and evaluating the draft in order to improve its content, layout and structure. The proposal needs to be edited for grammatical and lexical accuracy.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *What is a proposal?*
2. *Give any two differences between an internal proposal and an external proposal?*
3. *What is the role of the following parts of a formal proposal:*
   a. *Statement of the problem?*
   b. *Plan of action?*
   c. *Timeline?*
   d. *Recommendations?*

ACTIVITY

Suppose you are the PTA (Parent – Teachers Association) secretary in a certain area and you have noted a sharp drop in learner attendance at the school (CDSS). So far, you have an idea to boost learner attendance. The entire PTA has appreciated your idea and has encouraged you to submit a proposal aimed at improving situation. Write the proposal in which you specifically provide; background information, rationale for your suggestion, statement of the problem, and the proposed plan of action and timeline, recommendations and conclusion.

REFERENCES

Guffey M. E. & Loewy D. (2016). Essentials of business communication. (10^{th} Edition). Sydney: Thomson.

Grygel, J. A. (1995). *The World Book of word power. (Vol. II).* Chicago: World Book Inc.

Stanto, Nicky (2009). *Mastering Communication. (5^{th} Ed.).* London: Palgrave.

UNIT FOUR: RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATION/EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. *Define the term Interview*
2. *Effectively answer interview questions*
3. *Identify the three stages of an interview process*
4. *Write effective Curriculum Vitae*
5. *Write effective application letters*
6. *Thoroughly prepare for interviews*
7. *Answer interview*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Definition of an interview*
2. *Stages/phases of an interview*
3. *Format of a CV*
4. *Format of an application letter*
5. *Writing CVs and application letter*

KEY WORDS

Curriculum Vitae, application letter, first phase of an interview, second phase of an interview, third phase of an interview.

INTRODUCTION

The employment interview should be viewed as an information sharing process between the interviewer (prospective employer) and the interviewee (job applicant). The interviewer aims at learning more about the applicant so that he or she can decide whether the applicant has what it takes for the job. The employment interview is a communication situation. Both the interviewer and the interviewee have the **responsibility** to make it a successful communication:

- Each has the responsibility to speak and also to listen.
- Emotional speech should be avoided.
- Negative comments should be avoided.
- Exaggerations should be avoided.
- Politeness is essential.
- The tone of the speech should be more formal than casual.

Structure of an Interview

1. **The Beginning**
    - This is the warm up stage of the interview during which general greetings and conversational remarks about things like weather can exchanged.
    - Introductions are also made at this stage.
    - The interviewer should try to make the applicant feel comfortable rather than intimidating him/her.
    - The applicant should try to make a good first impression.
    - The purpose of this part of the interview is to establish a rapport (good feelings about each other).
    - The interviewee should try to learn names of the interviewers (panel).

2. **The Middle**
    - This is the heart of the interview; the most crucial part.
    - The interviewer evaluates whether the applicant is a good candidate for the job or not.
    - The interviewee sells himself/herself to the panel.
    - The interviewer should control this part of the interview.

3. **The End**
    - The interviewer tells the applicant how and when he/she will be informed about the outcome of the interview.
    - Both the interviewer and the interviewee should try to close the interview on a positive note.

Applicant's Preparation for interviews

1. **Check your CV**
    - Mark parts which you feel the interviewer might want clarified, or about which more information might be needed. Be very clear what this clarification or extra information could be, and how you will present it.
2. **Research the company**
    - A question that is frequently asked during interviews is "why do you want to work for this organization?" To answer it satisfactorily, you must know some basic facts about the organization e.g.:
        - Background – ownership; size.
        - Product/service – what does the organization sell? How is the product/service sold? Who are the customers/.
        - Financial position of the organization.
    - The following maybe of help to source information about the organization:
        - Organisation's website.
        - Newspaper articles (business section)
        - Organisation's annual reports.
        - Organisation's brochures.
        - Employees of the organisation (chat with them).
3. **Research the job**
    - Check the job advert:
        - Duties of the position.
        - Education qualification.
        - Work experience.
    - Investigate the salary for similar positions in other organisations.
4. **Anticipate questions**
    - Prepare yourself by thinking about your answers to the questions you are likely to be asked.
    - Commonly asked questions include:
        - Why did you choose the career you are pursuing?
        - Which is important to you: money or type of job?
        - What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
        - Why should the organisation hire you?
        - What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this job?
        - What do you think it takes to be a good employee of an organisation like ours?
        - In what way do you think you can make a contribution to our organisations?

- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?
- Why did you decide to seek a position with our organisation?
- What two mistakes have you made recently, and what have you learnt from each mistake?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years

➢ Look at your career chronology and apply examples to the interview questions. Aavoid dead air).

➢ Do some mock interviews with friends.

➢ Ask thought provoking questions e.g. what is the most important criteria in this job?

5. Prepare your own questions

➢ It is almost inevitable that at some point the interviewer is going to ask: "Do you have any questions?" Think long and hard about what else you would like to know about the job or the organisation.

➢ Your questions are another opportunity to sell yourself.

➢ Do not ask for information which can be found on the organisation's website.

6. On the day of interview (as a candidate)

➢ Dress appropriately:

- Dress for your interview as you would dress for the job.
- Wear smart business attire.
- Be conservative but neat in appearance. (it's not a fashion show).
- Avoid wearing a strong perfume or heavy make-up.
- Avoid chewing gum.
- Avoid clanking jewelry or to many bangles.

➢ Arrive slightly early: this will make a good impression and give you a chance to absorb the atmosphere of the office.

➢ Be courteous:

- Use the interviewer's name as soon as possible.
- Do not offer to shake hands until the interviewer does.
- Do not sit down until you are offered a chair: relax and sit naturally, but without slouching in your chair or leaning on a desk

    - Don’t smoke unless the interviewer asks you if you wish to smoke
- ➢ Make assessment of each interviewer: Does he/she look tired, pleasant, stern, disciplined (never laughs/jokes), disorganized, nervous? This might determine how you will answer questions and where you can put emphasis).
- ➢ Look at the interviewer: When you are being asked questions, listen carefully and wait until the interviewer stops talking before you give an answer (do not interrupt).
- ➢ Answer questions carefully:
    - Your answers should be honest.
    - They should specifically relate to the question asked. Be alert to question words like what, why, where, how, who. They specify the information you should supply in your answer
    - If you do not understand the question, ask for clarification. Be sure you understand the question before you answer it.
    - If you are asked to give an opinion, be ready with facts to support it.
    - If you do not know the answer to a question, admit it.
- ➢ When asking or answering a question, choose your words carefully. Avoid jargons/slang and grammatical errors.
- ➢ Do not bad-mouth your previous employer(s).
- ➢ Do not ask about salary: if asked, courteously ask what the salary range for the position is (if the advert is silent) before you give an answer. Do not mention a figure below the lowest amount.
- ➢ Do not be disturbed or upset by silence following an answer you have given. The silence may be deliberate to test your composure. Just look calm as if you expect another question.
- ➢ At the end of the interview, express your thanks for having been invited for the interviews.

Interviewers Preparation

- Read the candidate’s CV and application letter.
- Decide the focus of the interview e.g. candidate’s skills, educational qualifications, ability to work with others etc.
- Design questions that mostly relate to the focus chosen.

Rating after the Interview

- Apart from work experience and educational qualifications, items to be rated include:
    - ➢ Appearance.
    - ➢ Promptness.
    - ➢ Ability to communicate.

- ➢ Interest on the job.
- ➢ Enthusiasm for the organization.

The Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A CV is a brief summary of your educational background, work experience and achievements and relevant personal activities.

A CV is also known as a resume.

The purpose of a CV is to introduce yourself to a potential employer with the aim of making a good impression of yourself for a specific job on offer.

CV Preparation

Make your CV as detailed as necessary. Your primary objectives is to catch the reader's eye by including the information he/she needs

Contents of a CV

A CV must include the following information.

1. Your personal particulars
2. Your educational background
3. Your work experience and achievements
4. Relevant personal activities
5. Referees

The format of a CV (Order of presentation of contents)

1. **Heading (Curriculum Vitae):** Position it at the top of the first page and it must be centered.
2. **Personal particulars:** Surname: other names: date of birth, marital status, nationality, home district, traditional authority, village, present position, professional address, permanent address, phone, fax, email.
3. **Education (a summary of your educational background):**
   - ➢ Use the heading **EDUCATION** for this section.
   - ➢ List first the institution you attended most recently and go down the list in reverse chronological order.
   - ➢ For each institution listed state:
     - The years attended
     - The institution's full name
     - Your major(and minor, if applicable)

- Major relevant courses you took
- The paper you received (degree, diploma, certificate) state the grade you achieved: first class, upper class, cum laude

4. **Work Experience (a summary of your work experience and achievements**):
   - Use the heading **WORK EXPERIENCE** for this section.
   - List your most recent job first.
   - For each job include:
     - Period of employment (from which year to which year) (e.g. 2009-present, if currently employed).
     - Job title (position).
     - Name and address of employing organization.
     - Brief job description.
     - Major responsibilities and accomplishments in the position (e.g. projects completed, number of distinctions you produced in subjects you taught etc.). N.B: These should be specifically your accomplishments, not general accomplishments by the employing organization).
   - Leave out "I" in listing responsibilities and accomplishments e.g. Was patron of the school's Science Club(2006-09); Was voted Teacher of the year by staff and students (2008); Received Teachers Union of Malawi Award for excellence in Teaching (2009)

5. **Relevant Personal Activities:** These include school, civic and personal activities that may interest a prospective employer because they demonstrate leadership, civic or fiscal responsibility in the applicant.
   - List involvement in extracurricular or extramural activities if it shows qualities or experience relevant to the job sought.
   - List membership to academic, professional, business organization such organization have some relevance to the job sought e.g. your affiliation to the Nurses Council if you are a nurse.
   - List hobbies that show qualities relevant to the job.
   - List these activities under the following headings:
     - Responsibilities
     - Administrative experience
     - Professional organization
     - Hobbies

6. **Referees:** These are people who can vouch for your intelligence and good character. They include bosses or superiors (if you have worked before) and lectures/ professors members of the clergy (pastors, bishops, priests) if have not worked before.
   - List these people under the heading **REFEREES.**
   - They should be traceable (easy to contact)
   - Provide their full addresses, including business phones, faxes emails etc.
   - Provide their full names, including tittles and positions.
   - Always ask people if you may list them as referees.

Sample of a CV

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Sur Name	:	Banda
First Name	:	Kerstin James
Date of Birth	:	27 October, 1989
Sex	:	Male
Marital Status	:	Single
Nationality	:	Malawian
Religion	:	Christianity
Home District	:	Kasungu
T.A.	:	Kaluluma
Village	:	Satemwa
Address	:	Lilongwe Water Project, P.O. Box 30362, Lilongwe 3
Phone	:	111 967 999
Email:		kerstinjbanda@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Bacherlor of Arts in Journalism from the University of Amtar, Kenya – 2009 – 2013

<u>Courses</u>

Year One

Mass Media Writing I	Telecommunications
Mass Communication	Human Behaviour
Development Journalism	Language and Mass media
Computer Studies	Sociology
Africa and World Art	Literature
Communication Skills	

Year Two

Public Relations	Copy Editing, Design and Layout
Advertising	International Relations
Mass Media Writing 2	Economics
Television Journalism	Statistics
Radio Journalism	World Political Systems
Citizen Journalism and Society	Social Media, Democracy & Society

Year Three

Ethical Issues in Journalism	Politics and Media
History	Freelance Journalism
Photojournalism	Attachment

Year Four

Media and Culture	Media Law
Research Methods	Media and the Civil Society
Media and Gender	International Communication
Contemporary issues in Media Studies	Broadcast Journalism
Research Project	

Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) from Blantyre Secondary School in 2008

Subjects

English 1

Mathematics 3

Biology 1

History 1

Bible Knowledge 1

Commerce 1

Agriculture 3

WORK EXPERIENCE

Employer : Daily Mail

Position : Business Reporter

Duration : May 2013 – December 2014

Accountability : Reporting to the Business Editor

Responsibilities : Writing business stories

Attending corporate functions

Chairing editorial meetings

Taking minutes for the editorial meetings

RELEVANT PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

Administrative experience

Was General Secretary for Students Union at Amtar University – 2012-2013

Hobbies

Reading Newspapers

Watching soccer

Writing Poems

REFEREES: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Journalism and Media Studies

Amtar University

P/Bag 567,

Kenya.

Tel: 01 870 411

The Executive Editor,

Daily Mail Malawi,

P.O. Box 224,

Lilongwe.

Cell: 0888888850.

Application Letters

- Application letters are letters your write in response to employment advents.
- Purpose: An application letter should be regarded as a cover letter to accompany a CV its purpose is to help convince a prospective employer that you should be short –listed for an interview
- Begin an application letter by referring to the advent you are replying to. Name the paper (and date) in which you saw the advert e.g. *In response to the advert which appeared in the Nation Newspaper of 17 July, 2019, I would like to apply for the position of ………*
- Highlight your specific qualifications and skills/experience for the employer's specific needs. Address the qualifications asked for in the advent point by point matching your skills/experience to the list of job requirements, but be brief because the CV has the details.
- Mention that you have enclosed a detailed CV.
- Remember to include the end-of letter notation for the enclosure (as already explained in unit one).

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *How important is the first part of the interview to the interview process?*
2. *Why is the middle part of an interview considered the 'heart of an interview'?*
3. *Imagine that John and Mary went for interviews at Mzuzu City Council. During their interviews they were asked the following questions:*

   John – "How would you describe yourself?"

   Mary – "Can you introduce yourself please?"

   What is the difference between the two questions, and what kind of answers do they demand from candidates?
4. *Why should the interviewee dress well for the interview?*
5. *Why is it important to indicate your affiliation to professional bodies in your CV?*
6. *When writing a CV, why is it important to start with the most recent job when writing the "Work Experience Section?"*

ACTIVITY

1. *Imagine you are the Project Officer for 'Youth Against HIV Aids', an organization whose mission is to fight HIV Aids in Malawi. One of your former officers has applied for a new job as an HIV Aids Officer in the Ministry of Health. The Ministry has asked you to write a confidential reference letter for her. Write the letter.*
2. *Compile your own CV based on your qualifications and experience which you have at the moment.*

REFERENCES

Chikoti, V.L. (2008). Business Communications. Blantyre: Claim Mabuku.

Guffey M. E. & Loewy D. (2016). Essentials of business communication. (10th Edition). Sydney: Thomson.

Grygel, J. A. (1995). The World Book of word power. (Vol. II). Chicago: World Book Inc.

Stanto, N. (2009). Mastering Communication. (5th Ed.). London: Palgrave.

UNIT FIVE: EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- *Explain what is meant by public speaking*
- *Identify different types of oral presentations*
- *Explain the steps needed to be followed when preparing for a presentation*
- *Compose effective speeches*
- *Clearly explain principles of effective presentations*
- *Present effective speeches in public.*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Types of oral presentations*
2. *Preparing for an oral presentation*
3. *Organising oral presentations*
4. *Principles of effective delivery*

KEY WORDS

Informative presentation, persuasive presentation, entertaining, public speaking, attention getters.

INTRODUCTION TO ORAL PRESENTATION

Public speaking is important in many spheres of life such as business, education, and the public arena. There are many benefits to public speaking to human beings. Over the years, public speaking has played a major role in education, government, and business. Words have the power to inform, persuade, educate, and even entertain. The spoken word can be even more powerful than the written word in the hands of the right speaker. In this unit, we will define public speaking or oral presentations, discuss types of oral presentations, preparation for an oral presentation and delivering public speeches.

Definition of an oral presentation

An oral presentation is a speech that is presented live before an audience. There are different types of oral presentations. However, they are usually divided into two general categories:

a. Informative presentations
    - The basic purpose of informative presentations is to promote understanding of an issue. It is meant to make listener aware or understand something.

b. Persuasive presentations
    - These are meant to influence choices. In giving your presentation, you are determined to change your listeners' beliefs.

c. Entertaining presentations
    - These presentations re meant to entertain. Some speakers making persuasive or entertaining presentations integrate their presentations with entertainment in order to keep their attention throughout their presentations. However for this class we are going to focus our attention on informative presentations and persuasive presentations because entertainment is rarely the purpose of presentations in organizations.

- There is a thin line that separates informative and persuasive presentations. Persuasive presentations must inform as well as persuade. A person can only be persuaded to change if he/she is informed of all the facts.
- To achieve your purpose you need to first of all:

    a. Know your audience
    - For instance, if you are asked to make a presentation for a civic group or a youth club outside your school, or to representatives of a certain company, it will be helpful for you to know the following information about your listeners
        1. Type of the group (e.g. what is the composition of the group? Are you going to talk to the youth or members of the clergy?). This may help you in choosing the type of language to be used.

2. Goal or purpose of the group, including its background – This may help you in gathering content which is relevant to the audience.
3. Size of the group – If the group is too big you may wish to use public address system. If the group is small you may even fit them in a small room.
4. Characteristics of the members of the group e.g. ages, occupations, beliefs, values, interests – This may also help you in choosing language to be used. For example language used when speaking to Sunday school children may not be the same as the one used when speaking university students.
5. What knowledge do they have about your topic – This may help you in the sense that if your audience is already familiar some ideas, you may not need to spend a lot of time explaining them.
6. What do they know about you and what general opinions do they have about you? – If you feel they may not believe your message because of your personality, you may need to address their concern first in your speech.

b. Analyse the needs of your listeners

- Attempting to find out your listeners' basic needs or motives is another way to analyse them.
- Abraham Maslow developed a model known as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which is very important in understanding the importance of analyzing the needs of the audience. The model says that people are driven by their needs to act as they do, as such, such needs need to be satisfied for their lives to be complete. He ordered these needs into a hierarchy whereby those at the very bottom were deemed to be very basic and are needed by all us.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

a. Physiological needs – Include such needs as desire for food, desire for water, desire for shelter, desire for air and desire for sleep and desire for sex.

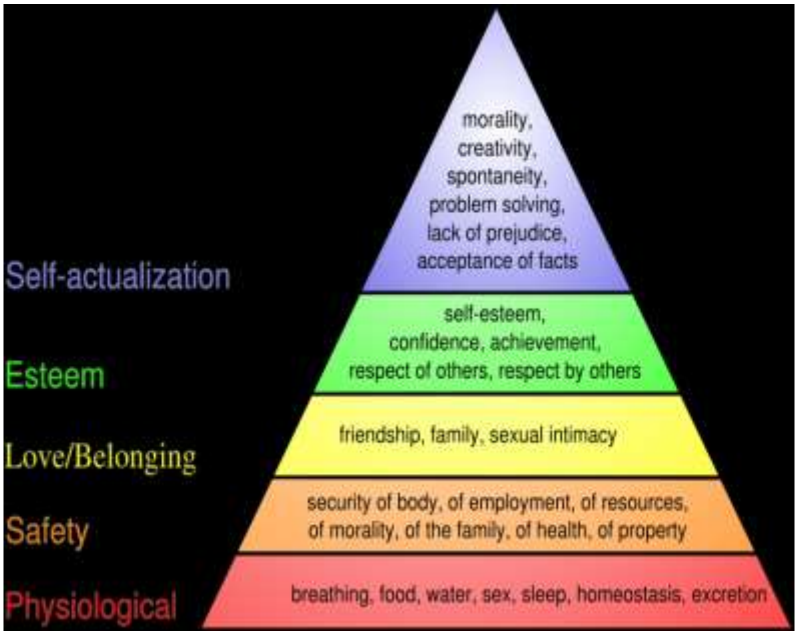
b. Safety needs – They include desire for job and financial security, desire for law and order, need for protection from injury, poor health or harm and need for freedom from fear.

c. Social or love needs – They include such needs as love, companionship, friendship and a feeling of belonging to one or more groups.

d. Esteem needs – They include pride, desire for recognition from others, desire for status and prestige.

e. Self-actualization needs – They include desire to be the best person one can be (to develop oneself to ones fullest capabilities and to achieve worthwhile goals).

- Below is the Malow's Hierarchy of Needs Model presented diagrammatically:



- Chances are you will be a manager at some time during your life and as a manager you will want to inform or persuade your employees. Even if you are not a manager, you may be asked to present certain information to your fellow employees. To be a successful communicator in either of these situations, you should know what needs motivate the employees.

- First, an employee is motivated by personal needs. Communication with employees who have unsatisfied personal needs is very difficult. Their reactions serve as roadblocks to successful communication. Reactions such as anxiety, boredom, self-doubt, frustration, and bitterness keep these employees from paying careful attention or showing an interest in your ideas or information. Such reactions keep employees from believing you or acting as you propose.

- Maslow's Model helps encourages us to analyze the needs of our audience and address them accordingly i.e. if you know the needs of your audience you will package your presentation in such a way that you satisfy them.

Organizing oral presentations

- Although each category is unique in certain ways, the basic organisation of each presentation is the same: an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

a. The Introduction

- This is the opening of your presentation. Its function is to arouse the interest of the audience and to lead them into the main ideas presented in the body. This is the crucial moment you can capture your audience's attention and keep its focus.
- ***The introduction should:***

1. Capture the attention of the listeners

   As you begin your presentation, listener attention may be focused on many things. The purpose here is to direct attention from individual concerns and thoughts to your presentation. You can use the following techniques in order to get their attention:

   a. Revealing one or more startling facts.

   b. Asking a rhetorical question (a question that causes the audience to think rather than respond.

   c. Telling a joke relating directly to the topic (poorly told jokes do not impress listeners. If you are not good at humour, leave it for others).

   d. Briefly citing two or three specific incidents or examples that relate to the topic.

   e. Briefly demonstrate the item or skill you will be discussing in your presentation.

2. Motivate them to listen by showing how your topic will benefit them (reasons to listen).

   To keep your audience, you must convince them that the presentation will benefit them in some way i.e. will help them satisfy personal or job related needs. To help you determine which needs to use to motivate your listeners, you need to look at their needs.

3. Express the purpose of your presentation

   You should include a general statement of purpose and a summary of the main points to be covered. The average listener finds it much easier to follow and remember the ideas contained in your presentation when your introduction lists key points that will be covered.

b. The Body

- This is the largest part of your presentation which contains the arguments, evidence and main content.
- Discuss in detail the main points listed in the introduction. It is wise to have three or four main points in the presentation. If you include too many points, you may lose the listeners.
- However, the number of main points you select should depend on:

  1. How many points are needed to adequately develop your topic?
  2. Time limit.
  3. The knowledge and interest of your audience.

c. The Conclusion

- Is the last part of the presentation. It is a summary of the major ideas that is designed to induce mental or behavioural change in the audience.
- It normally contains two parts: a summary and a closing thought or statement.
- In summary, list the main points covered in your presentation. Your intention should be to clarify any confusions as to the purpose of main points in your presentation.
- A closing thought serves as the last attention getter. Any of the attention getters listed for use in your introduction can also be used successfully to conclude your presentation.
- The purpose of the closing statement is to give the audience a thought or a challenge that will keep them thinking about your presentation long after it is completed.

Principles of Effective Delivery

- Now that you have an oral presentation that is clearly organized with a good introduction, body and conclusion, you are on the road towards delivering an effective presentation.
- You need to do the following:
    - Relax and be enthusiastic and natural – To appear natural and relaxed, you need to look directly at your listeners and even smile occasionally.
    - Be confident – Dressing up for the presentation is one way to gain confidence and a good way to nonverbally indicate that what you have to say is important.
    - Use gestures – A certain amount of movement not only helps you appear natural but also adds enthusiasm and authority to your presentation. Ensure your movements and gestures do not distract your audience. Too little movement can also make your audience lose interest. If used correctly, gestures add excitement and reinforce main ideas.
    - Use a conversational voice – Vocal variety is achieved by varying volume, pitch, emphasis and rate in a natural manner.
        - i. Volume: the loudness and softness of your voice is important in several ways to your success as a speaker. Firstly, a good speaker must be loud enough to be heard easily from all parts of the room. Secondly, a good speaker also needs to vary the volume of his voice to make a presentation interesting. Thirdly, an effective speaker uses increases and decreases in volume to emphasize words or phrases.
        - ii. Pitch: highness and lowness of vocal tones is also important to vocal variety. Too little variety in pitch can make your voice sound dull and uninteresting or even monotonous. Extreme changes in pitch can make you sound unnatural and insincere.

iii. Rate: how fast or slowly you speak is also helpful in maintaining listener attention. Vary the speed to show excitement, build suspense, emphasize etc.

iv. Pausing: be sure to pause after important phrases or ideas to let the listener absorb them.

v. Emphasis: underlying or stressing a word with your voice to give the word significance is another important ingredient of vocal variety. To illustrate this point, say the following sentence five times, each time emphasizing a different word as shown. You should be able to give five different meaning:

1. **Why** did you fire him? (reason)
2. Why **did** you fire him? (there was possibility not to)
3. Why did **you** fire him? (and not someone else)
4. Why did you **fire** him? (and not just warn him)
5. Why did you fire **him**? (and not her)

- Language – Use language that is simple (easy to understand); specific (give details); and vivid (paints a picture for the listener). Your listener needs to understand you the first time. One of the most serious mistakes a speaker can make is to try to impress listeners by using long or extremely technical words or jargons.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE TALKS

- Any effective talk must do three things:
  1. Communicate your arguments and evidence.
  2. Persuade your audience that they are true.
  3. Be interesting and entertaining.

- In our obsession with persuasive argumentation, academics sometimes forget about the third item i.e. having the talk interesting and entertaining. Sometimes we think it follows automatically from the first two. It does not. Sometimes we even scoff at the goal itself. Perversely, we seem to believe that if a talk is entertaining, it is probably not very deep.
- These attitudes are seriously mistaken. It is impossible to communicate and persuade effectively without entertaining as well. Keeping your audience interested and involved (entertaining them) is essential because in order to communicate your work and its value, you need their full attention.
- Listening is hard work. Especially at conferences where the audience listens to so many talks over many hours, people need the speaker's help to maintain their focus. This is the true meaning and importance of 'entertainment".

- In an academic talk, entertainment is not about making your audience laugh or distract them from their troubles, but simply about keeping them focused on and interested in what you have to say.

How to Give a Clear Talk: Some Rules of Thumb

- No rule applies always and everywhere. But the following principles work almost all the time. Try them

USUALLY BETTER	**USUALLY WORSE**
Talk	Read
Stand	Sit
Move	Stand still
Vary the pitch of your voice	Speak in a monotone
Speak loudly and clearly toward the audience	Mumble, facing downward
Focus on main arguments	Get lost in details
Use visual aids: outlines, pictures, graphs	Have no visual aids
Finish your talk within your time limit Corollary: rehearse your talk	Run over time; don't practice
Summarize your main arguments at the beginning and end	Fail to provide a conclusion
Notice your audience and respond to its needs	Ignore audience behaviour
Emulate excellent speakers	
Make eye contact with the audience	Stare at the podium

- The above table is further explained below:

1. Talk rather read – it is easier to listen to and understand; and it allows you to make genuine contact with your audience. Furthermore, it ultimately helps you to think more clearly, by forcing you to communicate your points in ordinary terms

2. Stand up unless you are literally forced to sit: people can see you better. Standing also puts you in a dominant position; remember you are the focus. The audience wants you to be in charge. Listeners need your help to maintain their attention.

3. Move around rather than standing still: it's easier to keep focused on someone who is moving than on a motionless talking head. Hand gestures are good too. It is possible to overdo this one, though. Simply walking back and forth from one side of the room to the other every three or four minutes is probably enough and gesturing too much will create distraction.

4. Vary the pitch of your voice: monotones are sleep-inducing. Many people do not realize they do this. Get a trusted friend or colleague to listen to your delivery and give you honest feedback. This is an important principle in itself. Even better, tape or videotape yourself and check out how you sound.

5. Speak loudly and clearly, facing the audience. Be careful when using visual aids that you continue to face the audience when you speak
    - An important element of vocal technique is to focus on the bottom (the deepest pitch) of your vocal range, which is the loudest and most authoritative tone (this can be important especially t women). Speak from the gut, not the throat. Breathe deeply – it's necessary for volume, and it will help you keep your mind clear.
    - Tip: here are two effective special effects: first, when you come to a key phrase that you want people to remember, repeat it. Second, pause for a few seconds at several points in your talk. This breaks the monotony of a continuous flow of speech. It also gives you a chance so sip some water (digest the point)

6. Make eye contact with the audience. If this is anxiety inducing, at least pretend to do this by casting your gaze toward the back and sides of the room. Be careful not to ignore one side of the audience. Many speakers 'side' unconsciously, looking always to the left or right half or only to the front or the back of the room.
7. Focus on main arguments. Especially in a conference situation, where talks are short and yours is one of many, your audience is not going to remember the details of your evidence. In such a situation, less is more. Give them short striking punch lines that they will remember. They can always read your written work later, but if you don't get them interested and show them why it's important, they won't want to.

8. Use visual aids. This is one of the most important principles of all. At a minimum, have an outline of your talk. Some people seem to think they are giving everything away by showing people what they are going to say before they have said it. But the effect of a good talk outline is exactly the opposite: it makes your audience want to hear the details. At the same time, it helps them understand the structure of your thinking.

   Talk outlines should be extremely concise and visually uncluttered. Seven to eight lines per slide is plenty. Microsoft Powerpoint – now standard issue in many presentation settings – is a great tool, not least because its default presentation formats encourage brevity. But beware: glitzy presentations can be distracting. Worse, they can create the impression that the speaker cares more about surface than substance. The recommendation is: choose simple backgrounds, and limit the use of special effects.

Pictures, graphs and other images are especially helpful. People are visual creatures. The old adage that a picture is worth is worth a thousand words is especially apropos in the context of a talk.
One very important principle of slide presentations: always choose white or light coloured backgrounds. To see dark slides, you will have to turn off the lights. This will make it hard for you to see your notes, and it will also tend to put your audience to sleep. If at all possible, do not turn off room lights or close window shades. Light-coloured slides can usually be read with lights on.

9. Finish your talk within the time limit. Not to do so is disrespectful to your audience, not to mention bad strategy. Never go longer than 45 minutes, which is most people's maximum attention span. If you exceed this limit, you will lose them at the crucial point, namely your conclusion.
   Further in conference settings, exceeding your time limit can be incredibly rude, since it cuts into other speakers' time or in the discussion period. You can make real enemies by insisting on continuing after your time is up.
   The only way to be certain you can keep your limits is to rehearse your talk. After lots of experience, some people can guage talk times accurately. But nothing is more embarrassing – for both you and your audience – than getting only halfway through before hitting the time limit.
   Tip: if you use PowerPoint or some other presentation system, you can develop a good sense of timing by always using the same slide format. After you have given a few talks with the same format, you will know how long it takes you to talk through each slide and you can gauge the length of your talk that way.

10. Summarize your talk at the beginning and at the end. Tell them what you are going to tell them and what you told them. This ancient principle still holds. Following this rule helps your audience get your main points. Even more important, it helps them remember what you said, which is after all, why you are there for

11. Notice your audience and respond to its needs. If people seem to be falling asleep or getting restless or distracted, the problem may not be you. Is the room too hot or cold? Too dark? Can people see you? Is something outside the room distracting them? Don't hesitate to stop talking in order to solve these problems. Alternatively, you may have gone on too long, or you may need to speak louder. Whatever the case, notice what's happening and use it as feedback. If you can't figure out why your audience is responding poorly, ask somebody later and fix the problem next time.

If you are not sure whether people can see or hear, ask someone in the back row directly. This is also a good technique for setting up initial communication with your audience. It makes listeners feel included, and puts you in touch with them as human beings.

Tip: never let someone else to take control of room conditions. Many audiences – thinking they are being helpful – react to overhead projectors by jumping up to turn off lights and close window shades. Unless this is truly necessary, avoid it at all costs, especially at conferences. Taking charge of the talk environment is part of your job as a speaker.

12. Emulate excellent speakers. Perhaps the best way to become an excellent speaker yourself is to watch really good experienced speakers and model your talks on theirs. Notice not just what they say, but what they do.

13. Avoid tics and fillers: People with speech **tics** repeat words or phrases too often or toss them in where they are not necessary. For instance: you know; of course; I mean; actually; the fact is; well etc. **Fillers** (hedges) are noises used to fill gaps between sentences or thoughts e.g. er, umm, ah, eem etc. To avoid tics and fillers, allow yourself to have natural pauses in your speech. Avoid having to think of what you should say next by planning your speech carefully ahead of time.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1 *Explain the difference between informative speeches and persuasive speeches.*

2 *Briefly explain any **three** functions of an introduction.*

3 *State **three** disadvantages of reading when delivering your talk.*

4 *What are the advantages and disadvantages of memorising your speech?*

5 *List any **four** attention getters you would use in the introduction of your speech.*

6 *What is the importance of the closing statement in a speech?*

ACTIVITY

Imagine your former secondary school has invited you to be the Guest of Honour at the graduation ceremony of form four students. Write a speech to be presented at the ceremony.

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UNIT SIX: SPEAKING TO PERSUADE (PERSUASION)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. *Define the term persuasion.*
2. *Use various persuasive strategies in order to achieve their goals.*
3. *Distinguish between persuasion and coercion.*
4. *Apply the Rank's Model in order to achieve persuasion.*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Definition of persuasion*
2. *The nature of persuasion*
3. *The ranks model vis-à-vis Persuasion*

KEY TERMS

Persuasion, coercion, intensifying, downplaying, repetition, association, composition, omission, diversion, confusion.

INTRODUCTION

Persuasive speaking is the kind of speaking where you want the audience to agree with your ideas. In persuasion, your goal is to convince the listeners to accept what you are presenting as being true. Some individuals seem to be especially able to influence others merely through the force of personality and the use of language. The study is called rhetoric – a term that is synonymous with persuasion. The focus of this unit is to explore technics which a speaker may use in order to achieve his/her persuasive goal. **Persuasive speeches** aim at influencing the beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior of others. Unlike an **informative speech**, where the speaker attempts to make some information known to an audience, in a **persuasive speech** the speaker is bent on influencing people to think or behave in a particular way.

Nature of Persuasion

- Persuasion always occurs in a situation where two or more points of view exist.
- It implies observable change which can even be mental e.g. change of attitude, beliefs or values.
- It also implies choice. If a person forces another to do his/bidding, that is not persuasion but coercion.

- According to Tony Schwartz, persuasion occurs when a persuader strikes a chord that always sets up a cooperative response in the receiver.
- The goal of persuasion therefore is to alter the ways people experience themselves and their world, or the goal of persuasion is to establish a responsive chord.

The Rank's model of Persuasion

- Rank (1970) developed a model of persuasion that suggests how persuaders can produce a responsive chord. He concludes that persuaders have two choices in their persuasive goals:
  1. Intensifying an idea
  2. Downplaying an idea
- They can intensify their own positive points and their opponent's negative points.
  - Eg: Paramo is more powerful than any other drug; it is also safer because it does not upset your stomach like some of the drugs on the market
- They can also downplay their own negative points and downplay the other side's positive points
  - Eg: when trading your car for a new one, you may neglect to mention that your used car's engine needs to be overhauled while you find fault with the new car's grinding sound.
- Rank further discusses three strategies to downplay something and three strategies to intensify.

Strategies to Intensify

- He argues intensifying occurs through repetition, association, and composition

1. **Repetition**
   - You can intensify the good or bad points of an argument, an idea or a person merely by repetition
   - For instance in a TV ad, the name of the advertised product is repeated several times. Advertisers know the value of repetition
   - You can also keep repeating something you are not satisfied with to intensify an argument.
2. **Association**
   - You can also intensify something by developing an association in the receiver's mind between the product and something or someone that the receiver already likes or knows e.g Miss Mzuzu University uses Rapsy perfume; the school football star, Eric, reads five hours a day
3. **Composition**
   - Here you compare and contrast the composition of something to something else not only with language but also with design features in the immediate environment of the language

- For instance, when President Bush was campaigning for the Republican nomination in 1980, his advisers were concerned that he had less chances in the polls. A series of tv spots were designed to intensify his popularity

Arriving at an airport rally

Voice off camera*: the plane taxies up the camera. It's raining hard; Mr Bush walks through the rain toward an adoring crowd. Here is Mr Bush shaking hands, smiling, pressing the flesh, receiving accolades of the cheering cloud.*

As he shakes hands with supporters in the rain

George Bush has emerged from the field of presidential candidates because of what he is, a man who has proven that he can do the rough jobs and lead his country.

Downplaying

- There are times when common sense tells us that we should not call attention to something. For example, if we have a shortcoming, it is unlikely that we intensify it to others. That will defeat your persuasive purpose. Instead, you are likely to downplay it.

Strategies for Downplaying

- Rank's model suggests three strategies for downplaying: omission, diversion and confusion

1. **Omission**
    - Means leaving something out. You can either leave out more of your own shortcomings or more of your opponent's strengths
    - The risk with omitting your shortcomings is that the strategy can backfire (cases: Interviews/computer literacy; Senator Hart of Colorado, 1988)
2. **Diversion**
    - Here you shift the focus of attention away from a shortcoming or from an opponent (cases: Ronald Reagan's record budget vs. his second term bid; a drunk and his wife – late coming vs. bad cook)
3. **Confusion**
    - Here a speaker introduces jargons, contradictory information or causes information overload.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *What is persuasion?*
2. *Using examples in each case, explain how you would use Rank's Model to achieve your persuasive goal.*

3. *Why is persuasion:*
    a. *Challenging to achieve?*
    b. *Said to be a psychological process?*
    c. *Different from coercion?*

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UNIT SEVEN: PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. *Explain the difference between various types of public discussions*
2. *Effectively participate in various public discussions*

3. *Explain why public discussions are organized*
4. *Explain how public discussions are hosted*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Public discussions*
2. *Conferences*
3. *Seminars*
4. *Workshops*

KEY TERMS

Forum, symposium, workshop, conference, seminar, chairman, rapportoire.

INTRODUCTION TO PANNEL DISCUSSIONS

These are forms of communication organized to present and discuss topics of interest before an audience (Chikoti, 2008). In most cases very few people participate because of limitations in time and other resources. Public Discussions are hosted by a moderator whose responsibilities include introducing panelists, allocating time to panelists, controlling the discussion and summarizing the deliberations where necessary. There are three types of public discussion:

1. Panel Discussions

- Members of the panel are carefully chosen because of their wide knowledge, experience or interest in the topic. They present their views on the topic.
- The number of panelists may vary depending on the moderator's ability to enable each one of them to participate fairly.
- Panelists agree or disagree while giving their reasons and leave audience to freely choose a stand.
- The audience may be invited to participate by commenting or asking questions.

2. Symposium

- A symposium is an occasion organized to bring awareness to the public through sets of presentations by an organization. A symposium has a theme.
- Presenters are usually professionals who have technical knowledge about the topics of their presentations.
- Speakers present short reports or speeches which tackle different areas of the theme.
- The moderator introduces the speakers and their topics.
- Members of the audience may also be invited to participate.

3. Forum

- This is a session specifically dedicated to questions and answers and is part of any public presentation in which the audience participates. It could be combined with a panel discussion, symposium or public lecture.
- A forum is important in clarifying issues and misconceptions that the audience may have.

CONFERENCES

- These are large groups which meet to share professional information, discuss issues or conduct business.
- They are characterized by sessions spread over a day or several days.
- Conferences are more costly to organize than public discussion.
- The proceedings are recorded by a specifically appointed secretary know as *repertoire*.
- There are two other forms of gatherings that can be accommodated with a conference or can be conducted separately: seminars and workshops.

SEMINARS

- Sessions dedicated to impart knowledge to the participants on how to perform or improve their operations. Seminars may be conducted before introducing a new programme or changing a policy or system (Chikoti, 2008). Participants become conversant with new procedures or machinery before they are formally introduced into a system.
- There could be several sessions in a seminar.
- Depending on the content some seminars may take several days.
- Speakers in different sessions are usually experts in their fields of presentation. Different presentations may be followed by a forum.

WORKSHOPS

- These are gatherings where participants are assigned work to do. The work may have been pending for some time or could be a type of work that needs collective input and cannot be done within normal working schedule (Chikoti, 2008).
- Workshops are also used for reviewing situations and brainstorming or assessing suggested solutions.
- Just like seminars, workshops may be preceded by a presentation which is aimed at expounding the problem or the work to be done and stimulate the minds of participants

- In most cases managers ask participants who attend conferences to submit reports, such reports are necessary for record and actions.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *Explain the difference among the following public discussions:*
   a. *a panel discussion*
   b. *Forum*
   c. *Symposium*
2. *Why do you think a conference is more expensive to organize than a public discussion?*
3. *Why is it important to have a moderator during a symposium?*
4. *Why is it important for a rapporteur to be very attentive during a conference?*

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UNIT EIGHT: FALLACIES

OBJECTIVES

1. *By the end of this units, students should be able to:*
2. *Define the term fallacies*
3. *Identify fallacies in various texts and speeches*
4. *Avoid fallacies in their writing and speeches*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Definition of fallacies*
2. *Types of fallacies*

KEY TERMS

Fallacy, argument, reasoning, error, faulty.

INTRODUCTION

A fallacy is an error in reasoning. It is an idea that many people think is true but is in fact false. It is an argument which is damaged, thus invalid, for one of the following three reasons: inadequate evidence, invalid reasoning and faulty expression. Look for fallacies in:

- Speeches that people make
- Newspaper articles.
- Editorial comments (on radio and in newspapers).
- Adverts.
- Day to day conversation with others.

Your ability to detect fallacies in the reasoning of others will sharpen your own reasoning powers and will help you to avoid errors in your own thinking and writing.

Types of fallacies

1. **Hasty Generalization (Oversimplification)**

- This is an argument in which a conclusion is made on the basis of scanty evidence (limited sample/ conclusion made on the basis of too few examples)
- It is ok to generalize or oversimplify e.g. many, most, all. What is wrong is to generalize hastily or to oversimplify. For example:

Evidence: *A black Mamba is a poisonous snake*

A rattle snake is a poisonous snake

Conclusion: *All snakes are poisonous*

- A sample of three species of snakes is too small to give you evidence to warrant the conclusion that all snakes are poisonous. There are over 2 500 species of snakes!
- To avoid the fallacy of hasty generalization, make sure that the sample is large enough to enable you make a generalization of many, most or all.

More examples:

- ➢ *My mother died in a plane crash, so I will never fly because it's a dangerous mode of transport.*
- ➢ *Two of my brothers married women that were taller than they were, and both marriages ended in divorce. So I will make sure that I don't marry a woman that is taller than I am as it would be a recipe for divorce*

2. Stereotype

- This is a particular kind of hasty generalization where you have a fixed idea about the characteristics of a particular group of people. In other words, you transfer the characteristics of an individual to an entire group to which that person belongs.

Example: *Henry, a Lhomwe man, who worked for a certain company embezzled K200 000 and disappeared. Now everybody at that company goes about saying that Lhomwes can't be trusted.*

- On the basis of one bad experience, it is an error to generalize about the entire group of people. It may be that only Henry is untrustworthy. The correct thing is to see each person as an individual human being.

3. Dependency on unqualified authority

- When you cannot gather evidence for yourself, the authority on whom you rely for your argument should be unbiased expert in that particular field.

Example:

a. It would be an error in reasoning to consult a politician's son in-law on his father in-law's performance in Parliament as leader of opposition even if the son in-law is a professor of political science in a university.

b. My *friend is a qualified medical doctor and he says the global recession will have ended by 2020.*

In the first example, there is an element of conflict of interest, so we may not depend on the son in-law for information. In the second example the medical doctor is not competent to talk about economic recession.

4. False analogy

- A false analogy is a comparison in which two dissimilar things are shown to have something in common.

  Example:

  Being a parent is like having a full-time job. The responsibilities are enormous and doing a good job requires a tremendous amount of time, energy and experience. Therefore parents should be paid by the government for caring for their children.

- This analogy makes a false comparison because being a parent is not like having a full time job. One is hired for a full time job and one can resign from a full time job. Neither of these is true of being a parent

5. Cause-and-effect fallacies

a. Post hoc fallacy

This is based on coincidence. The fact that one thing happened soon after or at the same time as another does not mean that the first thing was the cause of the second. It was just a coincidence. The Latin name for this fallacy is *post hoc, ego propter hoc* which means "after this, therefore because of this".

Example:

Evidence: *Yesterday morning it rained*

Yesterday afternoon I failed my Mathematics test

Conclusion: *I failed my Mathematics test yesterday because it rained*

b. Only-cause fallacy

This is when one claims to have a simple solution to a complex issue. *For example, it is wrong saying that a single thing causes wars, crimes, economic problems. All these can be caused by different things.*

6. Begging the question (circular thinking)

- This is when reasons are not given to support the conclusion. Instead, the conclusion is merely a rephrasing of the initial statement.

  Example:

  Henry is the best candidate for president of the students union because he is better than all the other candidates.

7. Faulty premise

- In deductive reasoning (i.e. reasoning that moves from a general statement to a specific conclusion), the conclusion will not be valid if it is based on a faulty major premise of a syllogism (a three-part form of reasoning consisting of a major premise, minor premise and conclusion).

Example:

Major premise: *All snakes are poisonous*

Minor premise: *A python is a snake*

Conclusion: *A python is a poisonous snake*

- A major premise is faulty if it contains a limiting word such as **some, many, all.** In the above example, the major premise is wrong because not all snakes are poisonous, and it also follows that the conclusion is invalid.

Major premise: *Many teenagers don't respect their parents*

Minor premise: *Mary is a teenager*

Conclusion: *Mary does not respect her parents*

8. Attacking the person and not the issue fallacy (ad hominem)

- This is when a speaker or writer attacks the person who offers the argument rather than addressing the issue itself.

Example:

It would be a mistake to take Ms Msosa's objection to Mr Hara's candidacy seriously. Ms Msosa is a recent divorcee, so she is naturally anti-men.

In the above example, Ms Msosa is being attacked because she was recently divorced. Instead of looking at the merit of what she is saying, the statement is attacking her personality.

9. Either or fallacy (false dilemma)

- This is when a speaker or writer offers only two options for dealing with a situation, ignoring other possible options.

Example:

Mzuzu prison is badly overcrowded. Either the government must extend the prison or at least 25 percent of the inmates must be released by the president during this year's independence anniversary.

10. Appeal to tradition

- This occurs when it is assumed that something is better or correct simply because it is older, traditional or that it has always been done that way.

Example:

Dictatorship is the best system of government. We have had this system of government for 50 years and no one has talked about changing it in all that time. After all, why else would it last long?

11. Appeal to pity (Ad Misericordiam)

- This is when a person substitutes a claim intended to create pity for evidence in an argument.

  Example:

  a. *I'm positive that my application will meet your requirements. I really need the job since my mother is sick.*

  b. *I should receive an 'A' in this class. After all if I do not get an 'A' I will not get the scholarship I want.*

12. Slippery slope (the camel's nose)

- Here, the person asserts that some event must inevitably follow from another without argument for the inevitability of the event in question. In other words, it is when you foresee an inevitable and catastrophic chain of events that would follow from taking a first, apparently harmless step (i.e. once we put a foot on that slippery slope, we are doomed to slide out of sight.

  Example:

  a. *I cannot go to a bottle store because doing so will lead me into drinking and smoking and eventually will start going for prostitutes which will lead to contracting HIV/Aids*

  b. *We have to stop them from banning pornography. Once they start banning one form of literature, they will never stop. Next thing you know, they will be banning all the books!*

13. Bandwagon

- Is a fallacy in which a threat of rejection by one's peers (peer pressure) is substituted for evidence in an argument.

  Example:

  John: *I like Country and Western music and I think it's of higher quality than most modern music*

  James: *That stuff is for old people. It's old fashioned*

  Jim: *That's true; only dull people listen to it. Besides, Pop is the best*

  John: *Well, I don't really like it that much. Pop is much better*

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *What are fallacies?*
2. *Why do u think knowledge of fallacies is of any help to you in your academic pursuit? Explain any* ***three*** *points.*

3. *Identify and explain the type of fallacy that is evident in each of the following instances:*

i. *- I met five ODL student at Chisoni Bar last weekend.*
- Today one ODL student was staggering with alcohol sachets in his hands at the gate.
- ODL students are drunkards.

ii. *-All the Ngonis are allowed to take alcohol.*
- Bernard is a Ngoni from kachindamoto in Dedza.
- Bernard takes alcohol.

iii. *- Patricia joined this university as an upgrading student two years ago.*
- She has been having an uncomfortable family relationship with her husband since then.
- Patricia is about to be divorced because she joined this university.

iv. *Some students think that success in university education is a matter of either working hard in assignments or strategic preparation for the final examination.*

v. *My father has refused to send me to a private secondary school. He says he has always sent his children to government schools, so he doesn't see any reason why I have to join a private school.*

4. *Read the text or story below and answer questions that follow:*

When I was young I was afraid of snakes, and I probably still would be, except for the incident that happened when I was in Standard 3. The headmaster came to our classroom and told our teacher, Mrs Chisoso, that he had a surprise for us. He then introduced a lady who had a live snake around her neck. She told us how she fed and cared for this pet, and that it was harmless. Then she moved around the classroom, letting us touch the snake. When it was Mrs Chisoso's turn, she went white and stepped back. Immediately Colleta, one of the most timid children, rose from her seat and ran up to Mrs Chisoso. Colleta calmly took Mrs. Chisoso's hand, led her right up to the snake, and then stroked it slowly and carefully to show there was no danger. They then examined the snake together, and Mrs. Chisoso became so interested that she forgot to be afraid. Since that day, I haven't been afraid of lions either.

Questions

a. *According to the story above, which statement reflects each of the following fallacies and explain why:*

i). hasty generalization fallacy?

ii). False analogy fallacy?

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UNIT NINE: NEWSLETTERS

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. *Define the term newsletter*
2. *Understand the duties of an editor of a newsletter*
3. *Conduct interviews with news sources*
4. *Write news articles and feature stories*
5. *Understand the difference between a news article and a feature story*

AREAS OF EMPHASIS

1. *Definition of a newsletter*
2. *Definition of news*
3. *News articles and feature stories*
4. *The inverted pyramid*
5. *The rectangular pillar/block*

KEY TERMS

Newsletter, news, inverted pyramid, rectangular block, news article, feature story, news lead.

INTRODUCTION

A newsletter is a **periodical** published by an organization, primarily to **inform readers** about the activities of the organization. A newsletter may also inform readers about new ideas, events in the news and publications that might interest them. The following are the target audience a newsletter:

1. The organisation’s memebers
2. Members of similar organisations (e.g. a newsletter for Mzuzu University might also target members of staff of the University of Malawi because they have similar interests)
3. Donor organisations
4. Prospective donor organisations

Newsletter Content

Stories for a newsletter may come from the following issues:

1. Upcoming events
2. Election of office bearers
3. New Recruits
4. Personality articles about organisation’s members or other interesting or prominent people of relevance to the organization
5. Fundraising drives
6. Organisation’s financial reports
7. Activities of similar organisations
8. A President’s/General Manager’s/Executive Directors column
9. Special events e.g. graduation ceremonies
10. Staff news (mariages, births, deaths, promotions
11. General activities of the organization
12. Views of members of staff (letters to the editor)

Newsletter Staff (The Editor)

Unlike in the mainstream media where you have many members of stff working on stories to be published, the main resource person working on a newsletter in an organization is the editor (Of course he is assisted by other members of staff). The following are his responsibilities:

1. He decides which topics to cover in each issue/publication.
2. He welcomes story suggestions from organisation’s memebers.
3. He often writes all stories himself.
4. He takes overall charge of the production of a newsletter.
5. May assign ‘reporters’ among organisation’s members to research and write some articles for the newsletter.

Types of newsletter articles

1. **News Articles/News stories**

- These are short informational stories/articles. They constitute the larger part of a newsletter.
- They keep members in touch with:
  a. Decisions of the organisations management.
  b. Upcoming events
  c. Accomplishments of the organization
  d. General life of the organization

Gathering information for a news article

- The editor gathers information for a newsletter by:
  a. Attending events e.g press briefings or other functions such as graduation ceremonies.
  b. Talking to appropriate people in person or by phone.
  c. Research e.g. looking at past issues to get some background information on a news event.

Writing a news article

- The process of writing a news story for a newsletter is just like writing a news item press release.
- Start with the lead. The lead is the first paragraph of a news story. It summarizes the important information on the issue. A good lead lead creates interest in the reader so that he finishes reading the whole story.
- The lead should include the 5Ws and 1H. In other words your news article must answer the following questions:
  - Who – is involved in your story?
  - When -- did it happen?
  - What -- happened?
  - Where -- did it happen?
  - Why – did it happen?
  - How -- did it happen?
- These questions are the hallmark or seal of a well packaged news item because they answer all questions which the reader might be having on the issue.

- **The Body of a News Article**
- The body is the part that follows the lead.
- The general style of writing a news item is the Inverted Pyramid Style (IPS). Generally it presents information in descending order. It starts with the most important information and ends with the least important i.e. the least important information is put in the last paragraph.

- This means that the *lead* (first paragraph of a news article) contains the most important information on the topic while the last paragraph contains the least important details. The lead is also known as the *intro*. The lead should try to answer all or as many of the six questions.

The inverted Pyramid

- The top broad base of the pyramid above represents the most important information while the bottom tip represents the least important details.
- The inverted pyramid requires that you place the most newsworthy information at the beginning and the least newsworthy information at the end.
- When you use the inverted pyramid style, the lead summarizes the details on the topic and the subsequent paragraphs presents additional information about names, descriptions, quotations, conflicting view points, explanations and background information in descending order.
- The primary advantage of using the inverted pyramid style is that if someone stops reading or listening to a story after two or three paragraphs, that person will have learnt the story's most important details. In addition, if the story is too long and there is no enough space, the editor can shorten it by removing one or two paragraphs from the end of the story without necessarily affecting its details. The story that follows the IPS rarely contains any surprises as all the most important details are revealed in the first paragraph.

2. **Feature Stories**

- A feature story is an article which finds its impact outside or beyond straight news.

- One characteristic that distinguishes a feature story from straight news is its *human interest.* Human interest stories stir our emotions. They establish an emotional contact quickly and are soft news.
- A very simple thing can make a feature story.
- Human interest stories are about people. Human interest stories appeal to emotions such as fear, sorrow, happiness etc.
- Features fall between straight news and fiction. Unlike fiction, facts of a feature story are solid and represent solid reporting technics. They have news values even though they are not timely.
- They give the reader insight and understanding of the situation or person that might not be included in the straight news.
- They demand more creativity and call for a wide range of writing skills.
- Feature stories may entertain, motivate and teach by example.

Writing a Feature Lead

- Unlike a news article, the feature lead is not necessarily aimed at summarizing the important facts of the topic. Rather, it is aimed at stimulating the reader's interest, getting his or her attention.
- The body of a feature story interprets facts i.e. expresses an opinion on them.
- When writing a feature story, keep verbs of attribution to a minimum i.e. internalize most of the information. Examples of verbs of attribution include he said, he stated, he observed, he reasoned. Verbs of attribution show that the information is coming from someone (the source)
- All parts of a feature story are equally important. The shape therefore is a *Rectangular Pillar* as seen in the diagram below:

- The conclusion is also important. It should leave the reader with a definite attitude to the subject of a feature.

Writing a feature story

In a feature story, the writer explains the significance and importance of a particular development or event. News stories are written on the basis of facts gathered from the spot or collected from several other sources. You would have seen that most news events are forgotten after they appear in newspapers. However, there are certain news events, which are of great importance in several ways. Besides, there are many issues on which if a particular development takes place, several avenues open up for further reporting. For example if the Minister of Foreign Affairs travels to Tanzania today to negotiate with the Tanzanian government on the long standing issue of the boundary between the two countries, someone can simply write a news article on it while the another may choose to do a feature story. A news article will simply say that the minister has gone to Tanzania to negotiate with the Tanzanian government on the boundary question. A feature story will say that the Minister's journey to Tanzania is an important break-through in normalizing relations between the two countries. As is well known, there are numerous bilateral issues between Malawi and Tanzania, which are waiting for a solution. So, this visit is believed to be of great importance. A feature story of this event will explain to the reader the plethora of problems that could be tackled or the extent to which pending matters between the two countries could be sorted out by the goodwill that will flow from the Minister's trip. A feature story goes beyond straight news.

Interviews/Profiles

- Newsletters sometimes include interviews with or profiles on interesting or prominent members of the organization. Some of these profiles may come inform of *question and answer*.
- Interviews/profiles inform, entertain and motivate the reader. Some readers enjoy learning about other people.

Conducting an interview for a newsletter story

- Make an appointment with the person to be interviewed.
- Tell the person the kind of information you want to get from him or her.
- Ask for the CV of the interviewee (source), if he has one on file. You can get some background information from his CV.
- Prepare some questions and list them in order of importance. In case you run out of time, you will have already asked the most key questions.
- In general ask open-ended questions rather than those that will get a **Yes/No** answer.
- Begin the interview by briefly discussing the points you want to cover.
- Ask for correct spellings of any names you write down.
- Let the person do most of the talking. If he digresses, bring him back to the subject by asking appropriate questions.
- Put direct quotes for interesting or important statements made by the interviewee. But make sure you write the exact words of the interviewee.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *Define a newsletter.*
2. *What is a news lead?*
3. *Give any three differences between a news article and a feature story*
4. *Why is it important for an organization to have a newsletter?*
5. *Why is it important for you to have some knowledge on newsletters even though you are not being trained to become a journalist?*

ACTIVITY

1. *Imagine Mzuzu University management held a meeting with the executive committee of MUSREC in the Boardroom during which the following details were revealed:*

a. *The Vice Chancellor said that due to the fact that some students fail to complete paying their school fees in time, from the 2019/2020 academic year all students will be required to pay the whole amount at the beginning of the first semester. No installments shall be allowed.*

b. *All students who fail to pay the whole amount at the beginning of the first semester will not be registered. They will be allowed to withdraw from college and come back in the following academic year.*

c. *If a student fails to raise enough fees so that he can reregister in the following year, he shall have her place forfeited.*

d. *In part the Vice Chancellor's said "It is unfortunate that some students fail to complete paying their school fees in time. In the next academic year we want to do things in a different way. No student shall be allowed to register if he or she fails to pay the whole amount at once. The university relies on your fees to buy teaching and learning resources. Failure to pay your fees means the universities activities are paralyzed. The government subvention is not enough to cater for all our undertakings".*

e. *MUSREC, however, asked management to reconsider its decision. According to them, many students come from very poor families which fail to mobilize enough resources to allow them pay fees at once. Management responded in this way: "When you are applying for a place, the advert clearly indicates that you must provide proof of funding. You all provide this proof, but once you are admitted you fail to pay your fees"*

f. *After the meeting was over, MUSREC president addressed fellow students where he explained management's decision.*

g. *Students agreed to take up the issue with the government. A student called Chifundo Amos advised MUSREC to seek legal redress should the government fail to help them.*

   Based on the above information, write a story to be published in one of the local newspapers. In your story use the "Summary Lead".

2. *Write a feature story on "The Plight of Needy Students at Mzuzu University". Your story should be supported by relevant sources and appropriate quotations.*

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