



Mzuzu University Centre for Open, Distance & e-Learning

COMMUNICATION SKILLS (DPHM 1102)

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Mzuzu University

Centre for Open, Distance & e-Learning

Module 1

Communication Skills I (COMM 1101)

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About the Module

Welcome to “Communication Skills ” coded as DPHM 1102 1101 offered by the Department of Hospitality Management at Mzuzu University. It is a compulsory course. This Communication Skills Module has been divided into eight Units, namely:

- **Unit 1 Introduction to Human Communication**
- **Unit 2 Listening Skills**
- **Unit 3 Essay Writing**
- **Unit 4 Referencing and Citation**
- **Unit 5 Effective Study Skills**
- **Unit 6 Reading Skills**
- **Unit 7 Report Writing**
- **Unit 8 Effective Examination Skills**

For each topic, specific activities are provided for self-testing. You are strongly advised to attempt all the activities for effective learning. A sample examination paper is provided at the very end. We hope you will find it useful when preparing for your examination.

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Unit 1 Introduction to Human Communication

Introduction

This Unit has been designed to give you a comprehensive view of communication; its scope and importance during your studies; at work places and your daily interactions with different audiences. Our intention, through this Unit, is to increase your awareness for exchanging meaningful messages with each other. We also aim at showing you the link between communication and classroom activities. Specifically, we define communication; describe the communication process; highlight basic communication theories; and outline different types of communication. We are confident that upon completing your study, you will be able to understand all the concepts and new terms used in the Unit. The Unit concludes with an assignment that is aimed at assessing your mastery of the content which serves to review the major concepts presented herein.

Areas of emphasis

- definition of communication
- importance of communication
- elements of communication
- code, encoding and decoding
- theories of communication
- characteristics of human communication
- types of human communication

Key words

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Communication | • Receiver |
| • Sender | • Message |
| • Channel | • Feedback |
| • Noise | • Nonverbal communication |
| • Verbal communication | • Code |
| • Theory | • Nonverbal symbol |
| • Source | |

Prerequisite knowledge

Your daily life revolves around communication. You communicate when at home, when teaching and when studying. You find communication wherever you go and in anything you do. In fact it is almost impossible to have a meaningful life without communication. Your life experiences will help you understand the contents of this unit.

Learning outcomes

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

- Define the term communication.
- Describe the elements of communication.
- Explain the characteristic of communication
- Outline communication theories
- Critique different communication theories
- Distinguish between verbal and nonverbal communication

Resources needed

You may easily understand this Unit, if you will have access to the following materials:

- any text book
- telephone
- radio
- fax machine

Time required

In order to comprehensively understand this Unit, you will need to spare at least **15 hours** of your study time.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: The communication process

Lesson 2: Communication theories

Lesson 3: Verbal communication

Lesson 4: Nonverbal communication

Lesson 1 – The Communication Process

Lesson Introduction

Becoming a highly skilled communicator is not easy. The good news is that the skills of effective communication are learned. Though some of us are inherently better communicators than others, we all can learn. However, it takes both a willing student and a competent teacher to lead the process. Improving your communication skills is a particularly unique endeavour. It is therefore, hoped that, this Unit will provide you with the necessary arsenal with which to understand the concept of communication.

1.1. Definition of Communication

The word “communication” is derived from the Latin word ‘communicare’ which renders its meaning as to impart, to participate, to share or to make common. In line with the original meaning, three authors have defined communication as follows:

- *It as a process of sharing or transferring or exchanging messages from a source to a receiver to achieve a desired response (Gibson & Hanna, 1999, p.3).*
- *It is the transmission of information, ideas, and feelings in people with the aim of informing, influencing, and initiating activities (Chikoti, 2008, p.i)*
- *It is any process in which people, through the use of symbols, verbally and/or nonverbally, consciously or not consciously, intentionally or unintentionally, generate meanings (information, ideas, feelings and perceptions) within and across various contexts, cultures, channels, and media (Hybels & Weaver II, p.5)*

From the above definitions, we see that communication is a process of exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, and as a means that an individual or organisation shares meaning and understanding with one another. Thus, communication is the means by which such information is imparted and shared with others. Put more formally, it is the transfer of

information between a source and one or more receivers; a process of sharing meanings, using a set of common rules (Northouse and Northouse, 1998). We communicate information in many different ways. In humans, it is frequently done through spoken and/or written language, but non-verbal communication also plays a significant role in our interactions. Thus, our body posture, expressions, and even the clothes we wear also contribute to the messages that we give out. We constantly communicate information, intentionally unintentionally, about our perceptions, intentions and feelings, as well as about our very identity. People are always communicating and it is absolutely impossible to stop communicating. Even saying or doing nothing conveys a message. Not smiling or laughing at an appropriate time can send just as strong a signal as smiling or laughing.

From the foregoing, you will appreciate that communication is central to our everyday functioning and can be the very essence of the human condition (Hargie & Dickson, 2004). As so aptly put by Hybels and Weaver (1998), "To live is to communicate. To communicate is to enjoy life more fully" (p. 5). Without the capacity for sophisticated channels for sharing our knowledge, both within and between generations, our advanced civilization would not exist (Hargie & Dixon, 2004). Communication therefore, has a vital role to play in ensuring that people belonging to a particular country or a culture or linguistic group interact with and relate to people belonging to other countries or culture or linguistic group. Communication adds meaning to human life. It helps to build relationship and fosters love and understanding. It enriches our knowledge of the universe and makes living worthwhile. The figure below summarises what happens in the communication process.

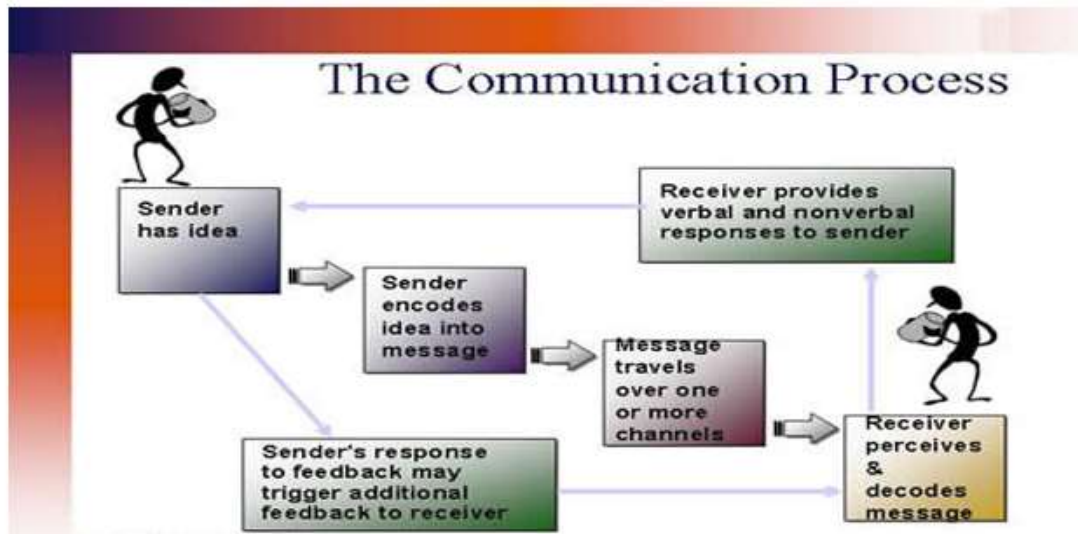


Figure 1. The communication process

1.2. Elements of the Communication Process

Figure 1 above shows what happens in the communication process revolving around the communication elements. Elements of the communication process also known as components of the communication process, refer to the essential parts or stages in the communication process. As shown in Figure 2 below, at a general level, communication events involve the following elements:

- i. A source
- ii. A process of encoding
- iii. A message
- iv. A channel
- v. A process of decoding
- vi. A receiver
- vii. The potential feedback
- viii. The chance of noise

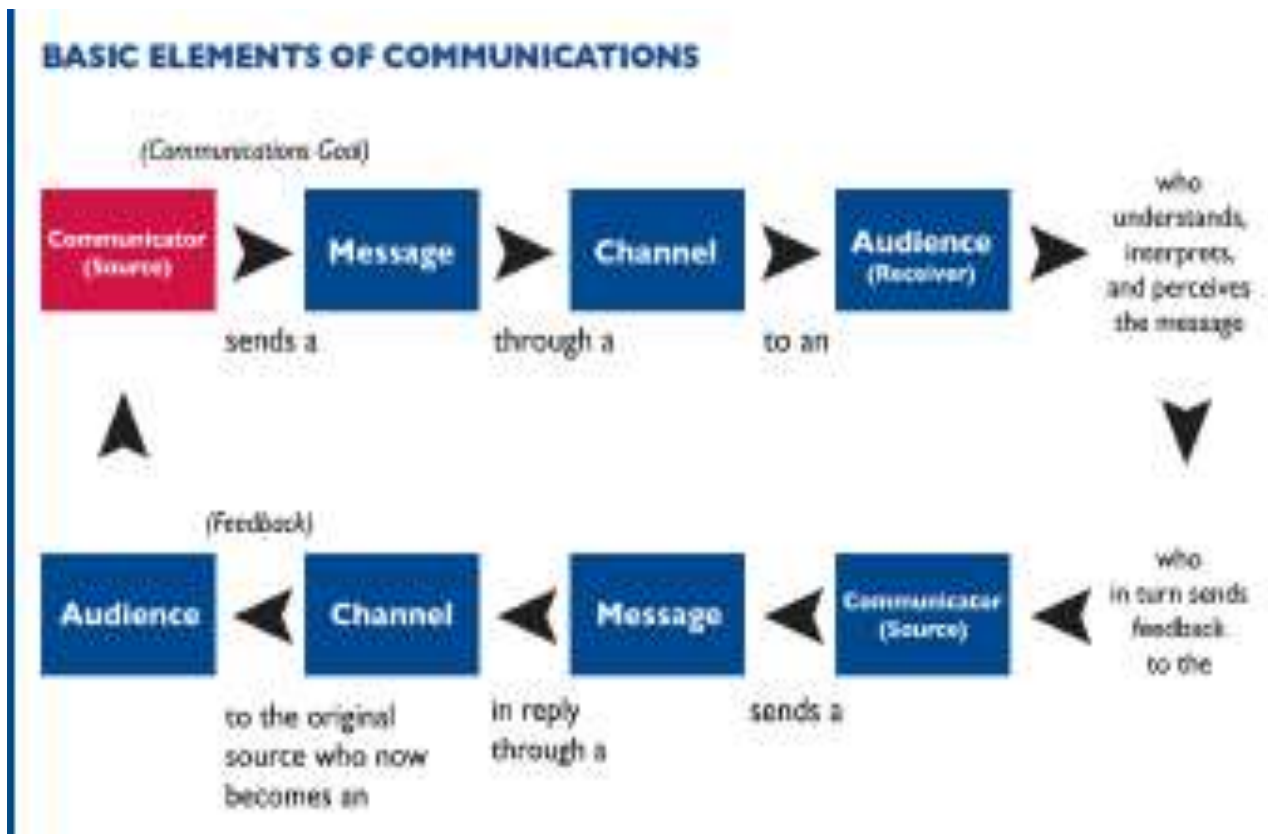


Figure 2 Basic elements of the communication process

i) The Source

To begin with, the **source** (message initiator) initiates the process by having a thought or an idea that he or she wishes to transmit to some other entity. In simple terms, the source sends a message from point A to point B. A good example of this could be a client who has come to the reception of Hotel X. When he starts asking about reservation information he or she is the source and the receptionist is the receiver. The source may or may not have knowledge of the receiver of the message. Sources can be single individuals, groups or even organisations. The source is the originator of the message and puts his or her idea in a code (a systematic arrangement of symbols used to create meanings in the mind of another person or persons). Due to this, the source is also called an **Encoder**.

There are **verbal codes** and **nonverbal codes**. Verbal codes consist of symbols and their grammatical arrangements. Words are used here. All languages are codes because they use symbols. Nonverbal codes consist of symbols that are not words, including bodily movements,

your use of space and time, your clothing and other sounds other than words. Encoding refers to the activities that a source goes through to translate thoughts and ideas into a form that may be perceived by the senses. For instance, when you have something to say, your brain and your tongue usually work in concert to form spoken words. Similarly, for those who cannot speak and use verbal cues to communicate, their brain and other body parts work together in order to produce patterns that can be understood.

Encoding in a communication setting can take place one or more times. For example, in a face-to-face conversation, you as the speaker, encode thoughts into words. On the other hand, when you communicate over the mobile phone, this phase is repeated but the phone subsequently encodes sound waves into electrical energy.

ii) The Message

The message is the actual physical product that the source encodes. Thus, it is the content of the communicative act. For example, when we talk our speech is the message. When we write an assignment, what we put on the piece of paper is the message. When a Television Network beams a live football match, the programme is the message. It is therefore, important to note that human beings usually have a large number of messages at their disposal that they can choose to send ranging from simple to complex. Messages can be cheap to produce (the spoken word) or very expensive (sending message through Internet where you are expected to pay some money).

iii) Channel

It is the means by which a message moves from the source to the receiver of any message. Thus, channels also called **media** are the ways the message travels to the receivers. Sound waves carry spoken words; light waves carry visual messages. Air currents can serve as olfactory channels carrying messages to our noses – messages that are subtle.

For you to communicate effectively, it is important to appreciate that communications flow in different channels namely; up, down, and across. Downward communication includes

provision of technical information, health communications, cascades of training, orders from superiors and managers to junior employees and others. Upward communications include all participatory structures and forms of consultation. These can be formal or informal, direct or indirect. Horizontal communications include involve people talking to peers; student-to-student talks, community meetings, networks and so on and so forth. You need to know that most communications initiatives combine these directions in strategic approaches to exchanges of information.

Channels of communication

It is important as far as possible that you use an appropriate channel or medium when transmitting messages to a target audience. Below are some of the methods that you can use to communicate with a target audience:

- i. **Face to face** – this entails platforms such as interviews, meetings, presentations or informal discussions etc
- ii. **Oral** – this involves usage of telephone, mobile phone, computers, voice mails and answering machines etc
- iii. **Written** – this uses letters, memoranda, reports, fax messages, E-mail etc
- iv. **Visual** – this involves using charts, tables, diagrams, slides, maps or notes, etc

Internal channels of communication

Nature of communication and choice of channels to be used is dependent on a number of factors as will be seen in the next section. For instance, the processing of immediate information to individuals within an organisation includes telephone messages, memoranda, or letters written on a headed paper which is normally kept in a file for future use (record keeping). These are normally transmitted within the shortest time possible and solicit immediate feedback in a very short time-scale. Organisations can also use channels like newsletters, meetings and interviews in order to communicate to target audiences.

External channels of communication

These include paid for advertisements that may appear on billboards, fliers, radio, television, in newspapers, magazines, newsletters etc

Factors to consider when choosing the right channel

Chikoti (2008) has highlighted various factors that an individual needs to consider when choosing a medium that should carry a message:

a) The cost of the channel

Cost of the channel determines how an individual conveys a message. Since some channels are more pricy than others. It makes sense to use channels that can deliver messages at a reasonable cost. For example, face-to-face interaction might be cheaper than communicating through an e-mail.

b) Urgency of the message

Urgent messages ought to be sent using swift means. For example, calling parents at home reminding them about fees balance than writing a letter which could take longer to reach them.

c) Nature of the message

The need to observe privacy and confidentiality dictates the type of channel to be used. For example, a school report would have to be conveyed privately than publically.

d) Viability of the channel

The sender must consider how viable and reliable a channel is. For example, when it is crystal clear that a message will be distorted or abused if a certain channel is used, it would be imperative to use channels that would ensure that the message is delivered in its original form.

e) Need to keep records

If the top of the agenda is to keep records for future reference, then it could be prudent to use a channel that would enable that – written communication for instance.

f) The distance between the sender and the receiver

Distance between interactants is crucial when it comes to choice of channel. For instance, it could not be economical to make a phone call to someone you are together with.

Common sense thus, tells us that a face-to-face conversation would be more viable in such a situation. Therefore, distance determines the type of channel to be used.

g) Need for interaction

Whenever it is needed for the interlocutors to interact and obtain immediate feedback, it is wise to use a channel that will deliver just that. In this case, an interface might be ideal.

iv) Decoding (Receiving the message)

The decoding process is the opposite of the encoding process. It consists of activities that translate or interpret physical messages into a form that has eventual meaning for a receiver. As you read this module, you are decoding a message if you are listening to music while reading these lines, you are decoding two messages. In the communication process, the **Receiver** is the target or destination of the message. This can be a listener, a reader, in other words an audience. The receiver retranslates or decodes the message into forms that are useful to him/her. Because the receiver undergoes this exercise, he or she is also known as a **Decoder** – one who assigns meaning to the message.

The receiver can be a single person, a group, an institution, or even a large anonymous collection of people. In today's environment, people are more often the receivers of communication messages than the sources. For example, most of us see more billboards than we put up and listen to more radio programmes than we broadcast.

v) Feedback

Feedback refers to those responses of the receiver that shape and alter subsequent messages of the source. Feedback represents a reversal of the flow of communication. The original source becomes the receiver, the original receiver becomes the new source. To this end, you should appreciate that in the communication process individuals play both roles of senders and receivers of messages. Feedback is useful to the source because it allows the source to answer the question "How am I doing?" On the other hand, feedback is useful to the receivers to attempt to change some element in the communication process.

Feedback can be positive or negative. In general terms, positive feedback from the receiver usually encourages the communication behaviour in progress; negative usually attempts to change the communication or even terminate it. Feedback can also be immediate or delayed. Immediate feedback occurs when the reactions of the receiver are directly perceived by the source. For example, during lectures if a student gives a wrong answer and gets bored, that is immediate feedback. On the other hand, if you read this module, fail to understand some content and write the Centre for Open and Distance e-Learning asking for clarity, the Centre consults the Module Writer (s), this process might take several days or even longer.

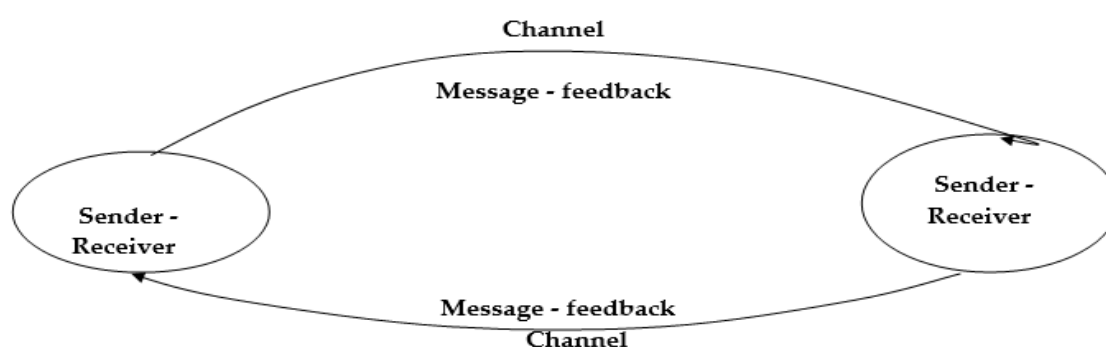


FIGURE 3. Feedback is the response of the senders-receivers to each other

Adapted from Sandra Hybels p.1

iv) Noise

In the context of communication, noise is *anything that interferes with or distorts our ability to send or receive messages*. A little noise might pass unnoticed, while too much noise might prevent the message from reaching its destination. Noise interferes with the encoding and decoding processes that reduces the clarity of a message. As such noise is called a barrier to the communication process and inhibits effective communication between the sender and the receiver. In the communication process, noise comes in three forms: external, internal, and semantic.

a) External noise

This is also known as **physical noise**. It comes from the environment and keeps the message from being heard or understood. For example, your discussion with a classmate can be interrupted by a group of students talking loudly, a helicopter flying overhead or by a sound of cars passing by. External noise does not always come from sound. It could also come from distracting sights like people dancing outside your classroom, from unusual behaviour like someone standing too close for comfort or you could be standing and talking to someone in the hot sun and become so uncomfortable that you can hardly concentrate.

b) Internal noise

This is also known as **psychological noise** and it occurs in the minds of the sender-receivers when their thoughts or feelings are focussed on something else other than the communication at hand. This kind of noise usually occurs when the senders-receivers are distracted by something. For example, during lectures, you as a student might not hear what is being presented because you are thinking about lunch; you fail to concentrate because you are thinking about a loved one or you so much pre-occupied with something that interferes with the way you receive, interpret or provide feedback to messages.

c) Semantic noise

This is also known as **linguistic noise or cultural barrier**. It occurs when different people have different meanings for different words and phrases. **Language** - misunderstandings are common among people who speak the same language, so it's not surprising that people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds face communication barriers. Anything from the mispronunciation of a word to a lack of specificity can lead to misunderstandings. For example, if a sales director in New York asks a contractor in Brazil to do something soon, the two parties may have a different interpretation of the word 'soon.' Language is a reflection of culture, and different cultures have very different ways of assigning meanings to words. It is also caused by people's emotional reactions to words. For instance, many people tune out a speaker who uses profanity because the words are offensive to them. Cultural differences in body language and other behaviours can also cause miscommunications. For example, in the U.S.A, it is important to make eye contact with someone who is speaking to you or they

may think you are distracted or uninterested. However, in many Asian countries, eye contact can be a sign of disrespect or a challenge to authority. There are many other cultural differences in body language that can create barriers to effective communication. Those include differences in facial expressions, the use of nodding to indicate agreement or understanding, and the amount of space to give someone with whom you are having a conversation. Semantic noise is also experienced when the sender uses jargons or difficult vocabulary or when the sender uses bad remarks which may interfere with how the message is decoded.

1.3. Functions of Human Communication

Communication is a purposive activity. Every communication is aimed at certain objectives. It has to complete the functions required by the interactants. You need to know that every communication is aimed at achieving certain objectives set by the sender as well as the receiver. Invariably, there are three key functions of the communication process as explained below:

a) Understanding

One key function of communication is self-other understanding: insight into ourselves and others. The process of understanding is unending. It starts with knowing about things immediately around a person. Then it proceeds further to other aspects of human life. It is through communication encounters that the process of discovering learning and development will take place. Furthermore, clarity of thoughts and feelings, power to influence others, decision-making, and problem solving are also achieved through communication activities. On the contrary, any kind of understanding is almost impossible without communication.

b) Relationship

Relationship building is a bilateral process. In this process, other participants cannot be ignored. Development of a relationship starts with communication. Thus, the vitality of social relationship is met by communicating with others and establishing relationships. Communication offers each of us a chance to satisfy our needs for inclusion, control, and affection. The need for inclusion is being with others, the need for control in feelings of being capable and responsible and the need to express love.

c) Influence

All forms of communication create some kind of influence. Communicators aim at influencing each other according to the purpose. In business, communication mostly influence is a persuasion towards certain objectives. Much time is spent in various types of communication to persuade and develop harmony in thinking. In most cases, our experiences with persuasion afford us the chance to influence others so that we may try to realise our own goals.

1.4. Flows of Human Communication

Flow of human communication within an organisation may progress downwards, upwards, horizontally or diagonally.

a) Downward vertical flows

These are usually in the form of oral or written messages. Oral messages are usually planned intending to communicate a clearly defined set of instructions or information. Oral messages may also be used when the senior manager would like to communicate information about issues that are not so serious to warrant written communication. The written messages will usually be contained in memoranda or notices of staff meetings. See the figure below to appreciate how works.

SENIOR MANAGER



MIDDLE MANAGER

Figure 4 Downward vertical flow

b) Upward vertical flows

These are used to convey information from lower staff levels to management. They can take the form of progress reports, reports of grievance procedures, complaints. Although this type of communication can be done orally, in most bureaucratic organisations this will invariably be in written forms. The style of the written documents will vary from organisation to organisation.

SENIOR MANAGER



MIDDLE MANAGER

Figure 5 Upward vertical flows

c) Horizontal flows

These take the form of the proceedings of cross-functional, problem solving teams in an organisation. They may occur at formal or informal meetings within the functions or they may be responses to or requests for information. See the figure below for an illustration on how these communications flow.

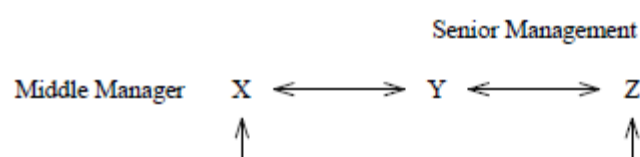


Figure 6 Horizontal flows

d) Diagonal communications

These may take the form of formal meetings or informal conversations. They often relate to issues of improved working conditions, employment termination, desire to stage industrial action, or cross-functional problem-solving activities among others. They may represent a move to coordinate the roles of two or more sectors or departments in particular issues. In most cases, diagonal communications are viewed as an attempt to improve internal communications so that the passing of information or ideas is not restricted to and from management or along the same levels of responsibility.

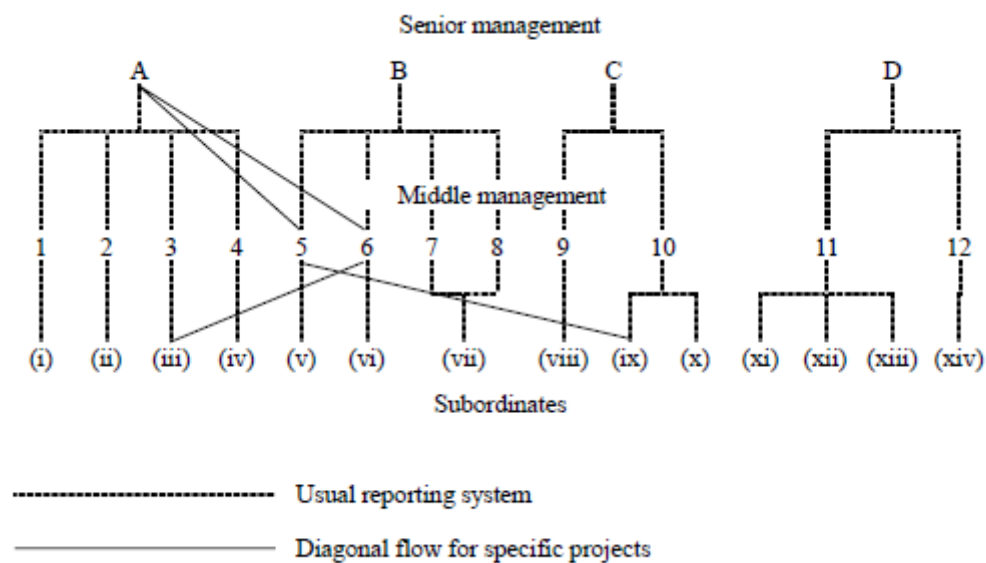


Figure 7 Diagonal communications

The example of diagonal communication in Figure 5 shows **Middle Managers** 5 and 6 who usually report to **Senior Manager B** and employ subordinates (v) and (vi), now working with **Senior Manger A** and subordinates (iii) in **Department A** and (ix) in **Department C**.

1.5. Characteristics of human communication

Having discussed the theories of communication let us now look at the characteristics of human communication. For this to be well understood you must look at the following diagram carefully:

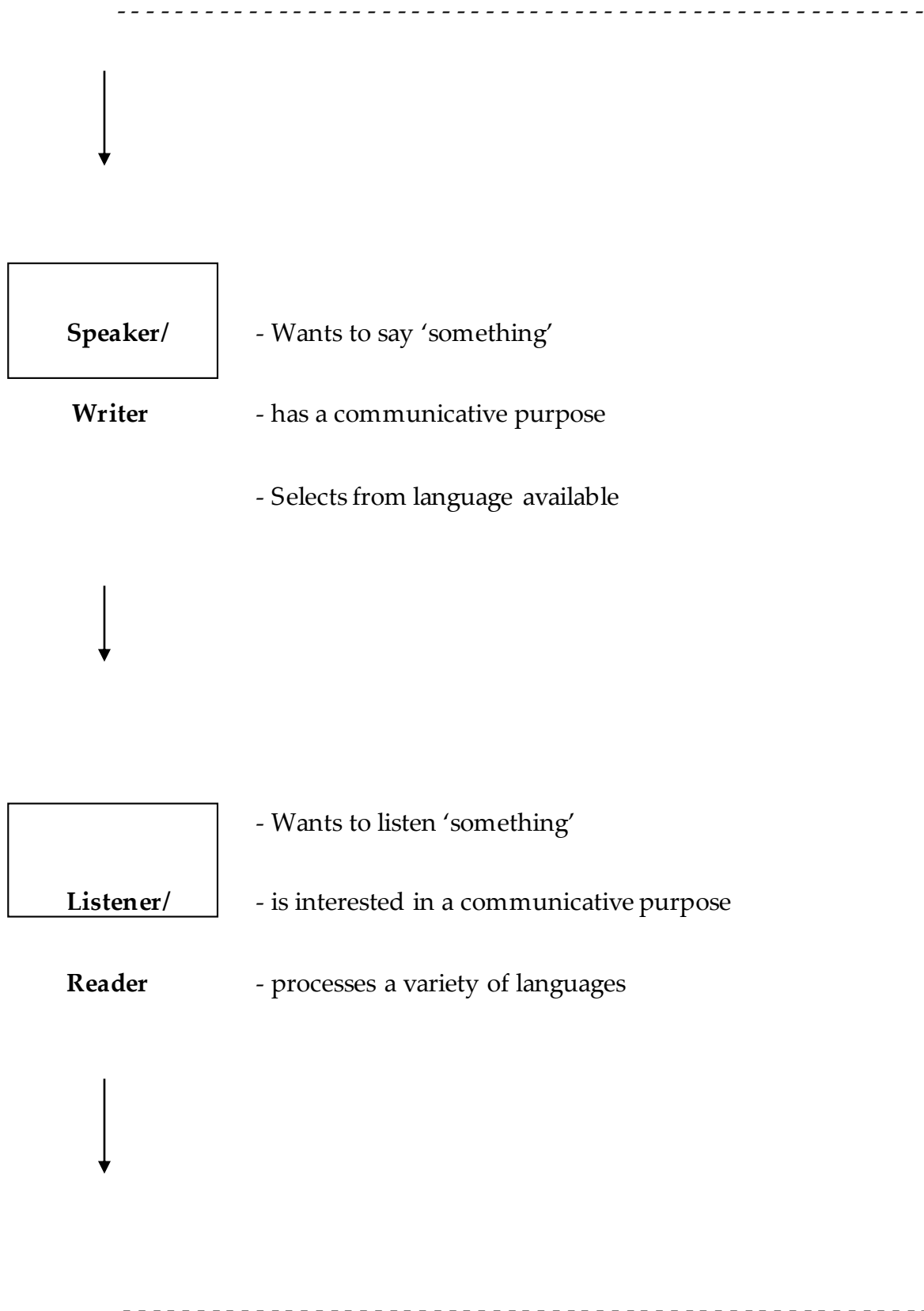


Figure 8 The nature of communication

From the above figure, you might have noted the following characteristics:

- i. Whenever communication takes place, there is a **speaker** and a **listener** (or a writer and reader) who must **interact**.
- ii. The speaker has a **purpose** for speaking while the listener is interested in discovering the purpose. The listener may ask; what does this tell us?
- iii. It is possible for communication to **have both intentional and un-intentional results or effects**. For instance, at times, a joke may be interpreted as an insult; a friendly gesture as a proposal or sexual harassment. On this, you have to know that what we say or do may not always be interpreted in the way we intended. The receiver may understand it in a totally different way than we thought or planned. This is unintentional result of communication.
- iv. **Giving each other turns**. This is usually common in face-to-face interactions. At least two people who influence each other's actions to some extent are involved. In other words, communication involves both the source and the receiver.
- v. **Communication involves the use of symbols** such as movement, gestures and so on, which actually represent the thoughts and feelings of the speaker. To some extent, both the sender and the receiver understand the meanings of these symbols.
- vi. **Dynamism**. All communication is dynamic. This means that all its elements constantly interact with each other. They also affect each other. In the social fabric of human life, individuals are interlinked as well as interdependent. Communication is dynamic in all its aspects. Thus, at micro level it is interpersonal (i.e. individual thinking) and at macro level is interpersonal communication (involving multiple individuals). Neither of them discontinues for a very small period of time.
- vii. **Un-repeatability and Irreversibility**. Every human contact experienced by an individual is unique. The contact would never have happened before and will never take place again quite the same way. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to repeat a communication activity. Although with conscious efforts two similar communication encounters can be similar, those can never be exactly the same. It

is also important to note that communication is irreversible. Words or gestures once transmitted cannot be held or taken back. In some instances, the sender may instantly send a counter-message to the receiver in order to nullify the effect. Nevertheless, the effect of any message cannot be completely neutralised. Moreover, communication is a time taking process and time cannot be rolled backwards. Thus, a message sent will remain recorded in one's mind or on the paper. To "take words back" is actually not possible. Therefore, all forms of communication are irreversible in all circumstances.

Activity 1

Ask your friends to define communication. In what ways do their definitions align with the characteristics of communication discussed in this lesson? In what ways to their definitions counter these characteristics?

Lesson 2 – Communication Theories

Introduction

This lesson talks about what a theory is, why it is important to use theories when studying human communication, and some of the most important theories in communication. I hope these theories will help you to fully appreciate the communication process.

1.6. Communication Theories

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2016) a **theory** is a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained. Theories offer explanations as to why things happen the way they do. Thus, a theory is used to explain what will work, what decisions should be made and how, what actions are likely to result and how, and how things relate. It is a

prediction based on what has happened before. Theory-based practice is preferable because, in most aspects of life, we learn from our previous experiences and the experiences of others. Therefore, when we are looking at theories in communication, we consider a number of theories that attempt to offer explanations to the way people send and receive messages. These theories give us an insight into what happens in the process of exchanging messages from one end to another. When we talk about theories we also talk about models. A model is a system that is an accurate theoretical description of a phenomenon that helps us to understand or explain how it works. Models explain theories in reality as such theories and models are quite often used interchangeably as is the case in this module.

Models of communication simplify the process by providing a visual representation of the various aspects of communication encounter. Some models explain communication in more detail than others. There are many theories that explain the concept of communication process. In this Unit we will study:

- The mathematical theory of communication
- The interaction model
- The transaction model

a) The mathematical theory of communication

This is also known as the **Linear** or **Transmission** model of communication. This theory was developed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1949. It describes communication as a linear, one-way process in which a sender intentionally transmits a message to a receiver. . Here a transmitter sends a signal through a channel. The most important component in this theory is the noise source, which may introduce noise into the channel. The receiver picks up or “collects”, the received signal and conducts it to its destination.

The theory encourages us to ask questions about how messages are sent from one end to another. It also enables us to ask “Are there ways to control sources of noise?” “If we can’t control sources of noise, are there ways to control the effects of the noise in the receiver?”

This model does not display the feedback element, which indicates continuous exchange of information. The Linear model represents the “one-way communication” (Palmer, 1993). The Linear model best represent mass communication, in which the message is sent out via a

transmitter to an audience who will then receive and decode the message, may be via radio or television.

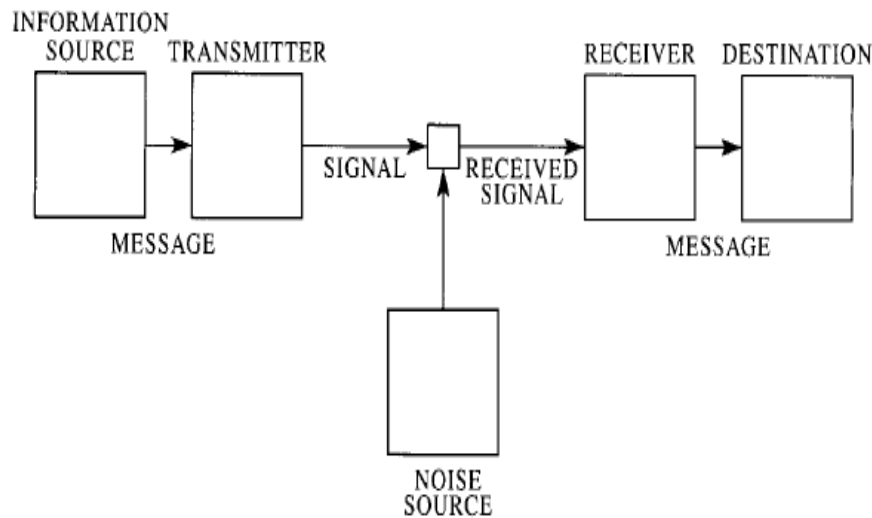


Figure 9 Illustration of the Mathematical Theory

b) The interaction model

The interactive or interaction model of communication describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts. The interactive model incorporates feedback which makes communication a more interactive, two-way process. Feedback includes messages sent in response to other messages. What is crucial in this model, as shown below, is that it seems to depict a conversation between two people who are interacting and taking turns in sending and receiving messages. In this theory, it is crucial to note that the receiver cannot return a message until the speaker's message is received.

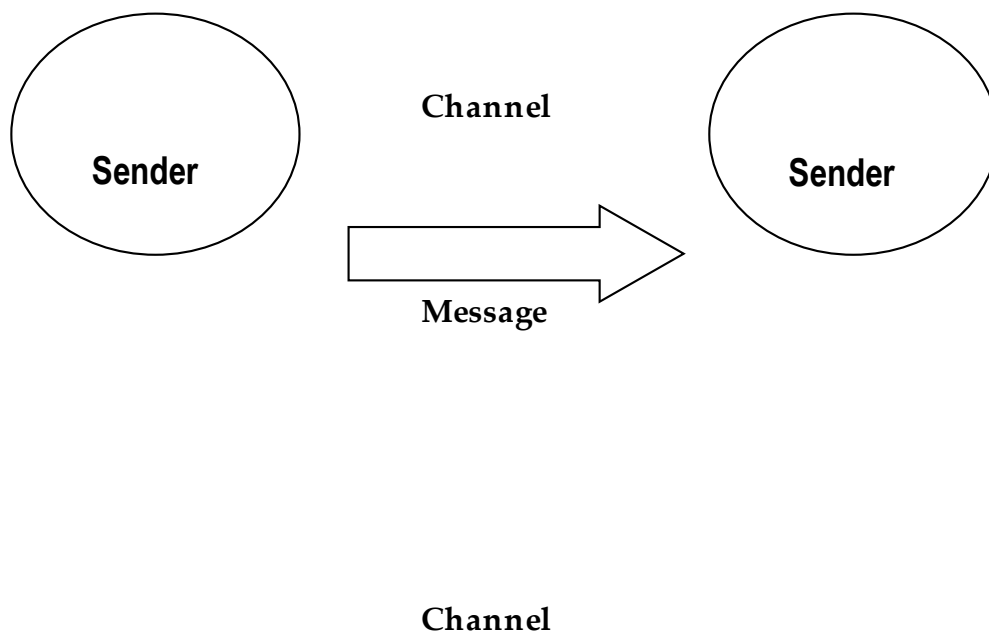


Figure 10 An illustration of the interaction model

The interactive model is less message-focused and more interaction-focused. While the linear model focusses on how a message is transmitted and whether or not it has been received, the interactive model is more concerned with the communication process itself. In fact, this model acknowledges that there are so many messages being sent at one time that many of them may not even be received. Some messages are unintentionally sent. Therefore, communication is not judged effective or ineffective in this model based on whether or not a single message was successfully transmitted or received.

c) The transaction Model

The transaction model of communication describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. The model asserts that we do not just communicate to exchange messages; we communicate to create relationships, form intercultural alliances, shape our self-concepts, and engage with others to create communities.

This model asserts that communication processes simultaneously send and receive messages. Thus sending and receiving are no longer separate activities, and they do not occur in isolation. According to the transactional view, people are continually sending and receiving messages; they cannot avoid communication. There is no need to take turns.

This model highlights what happens when two people are communicating. This visual framework contains five influential elements, including: the people communicating, the messages being sent, the channel of communication, noise, and fields of experience.

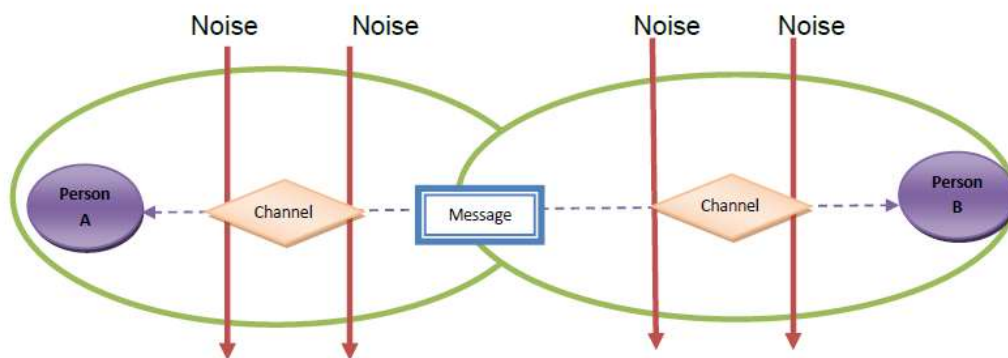


Figure 11 An Illustration of Transactional Model

The Three Principles of Transactional Communication

Communication as a transaction –**transactional communication** – involves three important principles. First, people engaged in communication are sending messages continuously and simultaneously. Second, communication events have a past, present and future. Third, participants in communication play certain roles. Let us now consider each of these principles in turn.

- i. **Participation is continuous and simultaneous.** Whether or not you are actually talking in a communication situation, you are actively involved in sending and receiving messages. Suppose you are lost, walking in a big city that is not familiar to you. You show others that you are confused when you hesitate, look around you, or pull out a map. When you realise you have to ask for directions, you look for someone who might help you. You dismiss two people because they look as if they are in a hurry; you do not ask another one because she looks as though she might be lost too. Finally you see a

person who looks helpful, and you ask for information. As you listen you give feedback, through both words and body language, as to whether you understand.

ii. **All communications have a past, present, and a future.** You respond to every situation from your own experiences, your own moods, and your own expectations. Such factors complicate the communication situation. When you know someone well, you can make predictions about what to do in the future on the basis of what you know about the past. Even when you are meeting someone for the first time, you respond to that person on the basis of your experience. You might respond to physical traits (short, tall, bearded, bald), to occupation (lawyer, accountant, teacher), or even to a name. Any of these things you call up from your past might influence how you respond to someone – at least at the beginning. The future also influences communication. If you want a relationship to continue you will say and do things in the present to make sure it does (“Thank for dinner. I always enjoy your cooking”). If you think you will never see a person again, or if you want to limit the nature of your interactions. This also might affect your communication.

iii. **All communicators play roles. Roles** are parts you play or ways you behave with others. Defined by society and affected by individual relationships, roles control everything from word choice to body language. For example, one of the roles you play is that of student. Your lecturers may consider you to be bright and serious; your peers, who see you in the same role, may think you are too serious. Outside the classroom you play other roles. Your parents might see you as a considerate daughter or son; your best friend might see the fun-loving side of you; and your boss might see you as hardworking and dependable.

Roles do not always stay the same in the relationship. They vary with other’s moods or with one’s own, the setting, and the noise factors. Communication changes to meet the needs of each of your relationships and situations.

Activity 2

Analyse the three models discussed in this lesson, compare and contrast the models and with justification, choose a model that best explains the communication process to you.

Lesson 3 – Verbal Communication

Introduction

Verbal communication refers to any exchange that uses words to communicate information. It thus, uses both spoken and written words. Both writing and speaking rely on the speaker, and the listener who have the same understanding of what words and sounds mean. It is therefore, a bit difficult to have effective communication between interactants who do not share the same language. Being able to communicate effectively using words is critical to your success as a student and in your career after your graduation. Many people who write poorly or are unaware of their tone struggle to be understood favourably in a business context. This lesson therefore, aims at honing your verbal communication skills by providing the building blocks which will help to be an effective communicator in different contexts. After completing this lesson, you will be able to adapt messages to suit your purpose, context, audience and you will also be able to use appropriate style and tone of writing for business purposes

1.5 Verbal Communication

Depending on the medium used for communication, there are many different types of communication but they are classified into two basic types of communication. These two types of communication are **Verbal** and **Non-Verbal Communication**.

1.5.1. Verbal Communication

This is communication which uses words, i.e. language. Verbal communication can either be **Oral** (using voice) or **written**.

1.5.1.1. Oral Communication

This type of communication uses words from the mouth through language. It is the type of communication used in face-to-face interactions, on the phone, radio, TV, at meetings, assemblies or public rallies.

Situations that require usage of Oral Communication

- When it is important for discussions to easily get immediate feedback through nonverbal messages.
- When emotions are high. Oral communication provides more opportunity for both to let off steam, cool down.
- When the receiver is too busy or preoccupied to read the message. Oral communication provides more opportunity to get attention and interest from the receiver.
- When the sender wants to persuade or convince. Oral communication provides more flexibility, opportunity for emphasis, to remove resistance.
- When criticism of the receiver is involved. Oral communication provides more opportunity to accomplish this since it is less threatening than the formalized writing.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Oral Communication

a) Advantages

- i) **Feedback is immediate:** When using oral communication, you can deal with any signs of misunderstanding on the spot. In addition, you can make corrections, amplifications or explanations on the spot.
- ii) **Setting contributes to the way the message will be understood:** Oral messages have an aura of the informal. For instance, in an organisation, an oral reprimand of a colleague or junior may be taken more lightly or more favourably than a written one. In addition, the setting (place) in which such interaction takes place is part of the message for instance in a bar, at a party, in an office etc.

iii) **Paralanguage** helps in making the message clearer i.e. gestures, body movements, tone of voice and other paralinguistic features such as pitch, tempo, loudness (volume) etc.

iv) **Problem solving:** Oral communication is ideal for establishing relationships and for solving problems or resolving conflicts.

b) Disadvantages

i) Oral communication is transitory in nature: There is no permanent record that one can refer to at a future date.

ii) Effectiveness of oral communication heavily depends on the mood of the listener at that particular time. (Impatience, prejudice, anxiety)

1.5.1.2. Written Communication

This is the type of communication that uses written materials. Notes, memos, letters, reports, notices, minutes, circulars, general announcements, newsletters and leaflets are some of the common ways of the written communication used in organisations. It is the ability to express oneself effectively by means of written symbols (either printed or handwritten). Good written communication is essential for business purposes (it is recognised as being a vital business skill). Written communication is used not only in business but also for informal communication purposes. Mobile SMS, letters, etc, are some of the examples. The written communication can be edited and amended many times before it is communicated to the second party to whom the communication is intended. This is one of the main advantages of using writing as the major means of communication in business activity. Writing is like any other skill in that it can be developed with practice and appropriate training.

Advantages of Written Communication

- Written communication can be read at the convenience of the recipient. It enables people to read when they are in a more receptive mood or if they are in a different frame of mind they can shelve and read it some other time. If the message is not understood, the message can be read over and over again e.g. written exam over oral exam.
- People tend to remember better what they see in print.
- Written messages are often better structured by their composers. Words and phrases are more carefully chosen than they are in oral communication. Thus, the process of writing forces the composer to think clearly and to present his/her ideas logically. S/he has time to edit and proof- read his/her work.
- Provides a permanent record; Ideas expressed in writing achieve the permanency that fixes responsibility. This makes it possible to verify very essential information such as dates, times, figures, names etc. It is because of this that people insist on having written information to confirm oral conversation or messages for authenticity, authority and validity.

Disadvantages of Written Communication

- We cannot be certain that the message will receive the attention we think it deserves. Executives often have masses of letters, memos etc that vie for their attention therefore, there is no guarantee that our messages have been attended to as we may want them to.
- Feedback is slow. Therefore, not good for solving problems.
- There are no nonverbal aids to help the reader get the meaning. The message may not be understood as intended.
- Language errors (e.g. bad grammar, poor construction, spellings and punctuation) may make the message vague or altogether make communication impossible.
- There is risk of confidential messages falling into the wrong hands or being received at the wrong time.

Activity 3

- i. Between written and oral communication, which type do you think would be ideal in resolving conflicts? Explain at least four reasons to justify your choice.
- ii. In official transactions, which communication would you use
 - a) Oral
 - b) Written

Give two reasons for your choice in (ii) above

Lesson 4 – Nonverbal Communication

Introduction

Nonverbal communication is any symbolic activity that communicates a message other than words. It covers a wide range of topics such as facial expressions, hand movements, dress, tattoos, jewellery, timing what happens, distance, tone of voice, eye movements, posture and many more. Nonverbal communication is always present during face-to-face interactions and carries messages over and above the words you speak. It is therefore, the purpose of this lesson to introduce you to different forms of nonverbal cues that you can use and also to enable develop an understanding when other people use different nonverbal symbols.

1.6 . Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the process of communicating through sending and receiving wordless messages. No language is used here. Such messages can be communicated through gesture, body language or posture; facial expression and eye contact. It can also be communicated through object communication such as clothing, hairstyles, voice quality. It is therefore, important that people should pay much attention on nonverbal communication because people usually remember more of what they see than what they hear (seeing is believing). Body language fails to hide the truth even if there are attempts to do so (lips, the

voice tone, gesture, etc). Therefore, nonverbal communication help people in recognising the truth – people tend to believe the body language first before the spoken words.

Why use Nonverbal Communication?

Nonverbal communication interacts with verbal communication in six ways: (1) accenting, (2) complementing, (3) contradicting, (4) regulating, (5) repeating, and (6) substituting (Knapp & Hall, 2005).

1) Accenting

Nonverbal communication often serves to *accent* or emphasise some parts of the verbal message. You might, for example, raise your voice to underscore a particular word or phrase; bang your fist on the desk to stress your commitment; or look longingly into someone's eyes when saying "I love you."

2) Complementing

Nonverbal communication may *complement* or add nuances of meaning not communicated by your verbal message. Thus, you might smile when telling a story (to suggest that you find it humorous), or frown and shake your head when recounting someone's deceit (to suggest your disapproval).

3) Contradicting

You may deliberately *contradict* your verbal message with nonverbal movement – for example, by crossing your fingers or winking to indicate that you are lying.

4) Regulating

Movements may be used to *regulate* – to control or indicate your desire to control – the flow of verbal messages, as when you purse your lips, lean forward, or make hand gestures to indicate that you want to speak. You might also put up your hand or vocalize your pauses (for example, with "**um**" or "**ah**") to indicate that you have not finished and are not ready to relinquish the floor to the next speaker.

5) Repeating

You can *repeat* or restate the verbal message nonverbally. You can for example, follow your verbal “Is that all right?” with raised eyebrows and a questioning look or motion with head or hand to repeat your verbal “Let’s go.”

6) Substituting

You may also use nonverbal communication to *substitute for* or take the place of verbal messages. For instance, you can signal “OK” with a hand gesture. You can nod your head to indicate yes, or shake your head to indicate no.

1.6.1. Types of Nonverbal Communication

i) Paralanguage

This refers to vocal cues that accompany spoken language. Among the elements of paralanguage are *pitch*, *volume*, *rate* and *pause*.

Pitch

Pitch is the highness or lowness of the voice. Some people speak naturally at a very high pitch, while other people speak in a lower tone. People often use changes in pitch of their voice to emphasize the parts of a sentence that they think are most important.

Rate

Rate is how fast or slow you speak generally determined by how many words you speak per minute. The rate at which one speaks can have an effect on the way a message is received. Research has shown that faster speakers are seen as more competent, credible, and intelligent but are also seen as less honest and trustworthy than slower speakers (Hybels & Weaver, 2004). Another aspect of rate is how one person will accommodate or adopt to another’s rate. It is called *convergence*.

What happens in convergence is that if you are a faster talker you slow down when interacting with slow talkers; whereas if you are a slow talker you speed up when talking with fast talkers. If you converge or adapt to another’s rate you will be viewed as more attractive

and persuasive. A good example of accommodation is what happens when a doctor is talking to a kid patient, he or she speaks in a tone like that of a child in order to make the child comfortable.

Volume

The meaning of a message can also be affected by *volume* – the loudness and softness of one's voice. Like variations in pitch and rate, some people naturally speak louder or softer than others. It is therefore, important to note that when speaking, changes in volume can provide emphasis to your words by indicating importance or poignancy. Increases or decreases in volume can also convey emotional feeling, for example, shouting when angry and talking softly when displaying romance.

ii) Body Movement

Body movement or body language is also called *Kinesics*, which comes from the Greek word for movement and refers to all forms of body movement, excluding physical contact with another's body.

While interacting, you may move around quite a bit, shift position, walk around as you talk, cross and uncross legs, lean forward on the table, or sit back in a chair. All these are elements of kinesics. Kinesics can be broken into postures and gestures. In every case, whether separately or in combination, these cues convey messages about your relationship to others, about the subject you are discussing (discomfort or relative ease), or about the situation as a whole.

Posture

This is a matter of how we walk, sit, or stand. Posture can be used to determine a participant's degree of attention or involvement, the difference in status between communicators, and the level of fondness a person has for the other communicator. The position of your body during an interaction may be relaxed and welcoming, or tense and off-putting. Both types of posture convey three attitudes:

- 1) Attitude about self (confidence, anxiety, shyness, feeling of authority, laziness)

- 2) Attitude about others (liking, respect, attention) and
- 3) Attitude about the situation (comfort, ease, boredom)

Gesture

Can be defined as a movement of the body or any of its parts in a way that conveys an idea or intention or displays a feeling or an assessment of a situation. It is a non-vocal bodily movement intended to express meaning and it can be articulated with the hands, arms, or body and also the movement of the head, face, eyes, for example, the winking and rolling of one's eye, nodding, and so on.

Gestures can be split broadly into sorts: those that represent feelings or ideas not necessarily being expressed in words (*emblems*) and those that visualise or emphasise something said in words (*illustrators*). **Emblems** are not related to speech in the sense that they do not help illustrate what is being said, although they may clarify what a person means. Good examples of these are police officers directing traffic and coaches signalling plays. **Illustrators** are directly related to speech as it is being spoken and are used to visualise or emphasise its content. For example, scrunching up your face while saying "This taste is disgusting". Just like other nonverbal communication, gestures can also regulate interaction. For instance, while making a speech, you might raise your finger to draw attention to the fact you wish to make a key point.

Facial Expressions

According to research, the richest source of emotional information is the face and that many people are able to decipher facial cues with great accuracy although others lack this ability. Paul Ekman in his research found out that there seven basic emotions – anger, contempt, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise which have clear facial signals. Four of these facial expressions – happiness, sadness, fear, and anger – are easily identifiable across cultures. Your ability to read someone's face increases when you know the person, understand the context of

the interaction, and are able to compare and contrast the person's facial expressions with others you have seen him or her make.

Eye Contact and Gaze

Eye contact refers to the extent to which someone looks directly into the eyes of another person. *Gaze* is distinguished from eye contact where both interactants look at each other – describes one person looking at another and, most of the time, is seen as rewarding. The way you look at someone can communicate many things and it is also important in maintaining the flow of a conversation.

Eyes are the best indicators of emotions and they can also indicate interest, involvement, attention, and openness. Eyes can also elicit a feeling of trust. For example, in the United States of America, someone who “looks you in the eye” while talking is generally seen as reliable and honest. On the other hand, someone with shifty eyes is treated as suspicious and untrustworthy. Furthermore, listeners may also feel that we are not interested in them if our eyes are not focussed on them. Eye contact is also an important way of gauging audience reaction to your speech. If you are presenting something interesting, the eyes will tell it all and if they are confused by what you are saying, the eyes will equally spell it out

Most people generally like to be looked at when they are talking to someone else. In fact, if you gaze at a speaker and smile or nod approvingly, you will probably find that the speaker pays more attention to you, looks toward you more often, and engages in eye contact with you. However, you must appreciate that eye contact is a culturally relative phenomenon. In some cultures, it is considered extremely important to look into the eyes of the person we are talking to. If we do not, we are at risk of being considered dishonest or having something to hide. On the other hand, in Eastern (Asian) cultures, eye contact is perceived as disrespectful and an inferior in the hierarchy should look away from a superior.

Although most eye contact is positive, it can also convey negative messages. For example, a wide-eyed stare can convey a disbelief or a threat. Too much eye contact can also seem confronting and intimidating.

iii) Chronemics

Chronemics is the study of how we use time to communicate. The meaning of time differs around the world with respect to individuals and even cultures. While some people are preoccupied with time, others regularly waste it. While some are typically early, others are chronically late. While some travel through life with a sense of urgency, others amble through it with a more leisurely pace. You will agree that some people function best in the morning (the early birds), while others perform best at night (the night owls). Time perceptions include punctuality, willingness to wait, interactions, the speed of the speech, and how long people are willing to listen. It is therefore, important to appreciate that the way time is used can provide information about people as individuals

Time is seen as a precious resource, a valuable and tangible commodity. We spend time, save it, make it, fill it, and waste it. The way we schedule events also reflects the urgent and precise way we deal with time. Time can be used for psychological effect. For example, a student who is always late for classes might be communicating that he or she is not really interested in that class or does not respect the lecturer.

Time perceptions include punctuality, willingness to wait, interactions, the speed of speech, and how long people are willing to listen. Thus, the way time is used can provide information about people as individuals. As already alluded to, time differs from culture to culture. For instance, people in the United States of America regard 20 minutes to an hour as being fashionably late but suppose you were invited to a party here in Malawi and if the organisers said it would begin at about 6p.m, if you arrived at that time you would notice that preps are still underway and that the party has not yet started. It might start at 8 or 9p.m – this is called *nthawi yachi Malawi* (Malawian time).

Types of Time Systems

There are two types of time systems: **MONOCHRONIC**, where things are done one at a time and is clearly scheduled, arranged, and managed. **POLYCHRONIC**, where several things can be done at once, and a more fluid approach is followed. Monochronic cultures include America and Canada; Polychronic cultures include Latin America and Africa.

iv) Proxemics

The study of space and distance called **Proxemics**, examines the way people use and perceive the space around them as well as the distance they maintain from others. As we look at proxemics, the most important concept is **Territory** – this is the space that a person considers as belonging to him or her either temporarily or permanently. For example, you would probably be upset if you came into the classroom and found someone sitting in “your” chair. You should also appreciate that every culture has rules, usually informal about the use of space and distance. Edward T. Hall, the author of two classic books on nonverbal communication, discovered that North Americans use four distance zones when they are communicating with others: *intimate distance*, *personal distance*, *social distance*, and *public distance*.

a) Intimate Distance

This distance is usually below 45CM. This distance places people in direct contact with each other. A good example of this distance is a parent holding a baby. All our senses are alert when we are this close to someone. This distance is primarily for confidential exchanges and is almost always reserved for close friends. People also maintain an intimate distance in love relationships. Intimate distance exists whenever you feel free to touch the other person with your whole body. When your intimate distance is violated by people who have no right to be so close, you feel apprehensive.

b) Personal Distance

This is the distance you maintain from another person when you are engaged in casual and personal conversations. It is close enough to see the other person's reactions but far enough away not to encroach an intimate distance. This distance is comfortable for conversation between friends. This distance is usually from 46CM to about 1.2M.

c) Social Distance

This is the distance you are most likely to maintain when you do not know people very well. It ranges from 1.2M to 3.5M. Impersonal business, social gatherings, and interviews are examples of situations where you use social distance and interactions become more formal.

d) Public Distance

This distance is typically used for public speaking. It is over 3.5M. At this distance people speak more loudly and use more exaggerated gestures. Communication is even more formal and permits few opportunities for people to be involved with each other. At this distance, perhaps in a shopping mall or street, people barely acknowledge each other's presence. At most, they give a nod or a shake of the head, over 3.5m.

v) Haptics

Haptics Is the study of the specific nonverbal behaviours involving touch. The amount of touching we do or find acceptable is, at least in part, culturally conditioned. In general, women are more accessible to touch than are men.

The kind of touch believed appropriate depends upon the kind of relationships individuals share and the situation they find themselves in. Touch can also reflect status. High-status people touch others and invade their space more than do people with lower status. The person who initiates touch is usually the one with the higher status. The person who initiates touching usually also controls the interaction. How we touch sends messages about us. It reveals our perception of status, our attitudes and even our needs.

vi) Pictures

Pictures are very helpful in communication. They are attractive to the eye, they also communicate in an instant and comprehensive manner to the illiterate. For example, if you went to a foreign land whose language you do not understand it would be easier for you to trace a toilet basically by looking at the pictures of man and woman on the door posts.

a) Advantages of pictorial communication

Pictorial communication is paramount in that pictures are:

- international

- instantaneous in their impact
- comprehensible to the illiterate
- easily remembered

b) Disadvantages of communication through pictures

Much as there are a number of advantages with pictures, you must be aware that they have some disadvantages. Chiefly, pictures cannot be used for such materials as:

- a) Reasoned arguments
- b) Detailed instructions
- c) Exact information
- d) Definition
- e) Records of discussions
- f) Legal matters etc

vii) Dressing and Grooming

Dressing is also another way of transmitting messages. The way one dresses tells a story. It is important to dress to suit the occasion. Clothes and decorations on the body, like body language, send messages about ourselves to all we meet. At times, we dress to indicate the kind of person we wish to play in life. These are often used to communicate information about oneself. Things involved are objects, often clothes, jewellery, trinkets which express one's interests, hobbies, status or life style. The uniform, badges, for example, also give information about job, status, religion, tradition, authority etc.

Activity 4

1. In your own words explain what is meant by nonverbal communication.
2. How does nonverbal communication interconnect with verbal communication?
3. List the most common types of nonverbal communication?

Self-assessment test

- 1 In your own words, explain briefly what is meant by the following:
 - a) source
 - b) receiver
 - c) message
 - d) channel
 - e) medium
- 2 Why is feedback considered crucial in the communication process?
- 3 Using good examples clearly compare and contrast oral and written communication.
- 4 a) Define a theory
 - b) Using the mathematical theory of communication, describe the communication process that takes place during lectures.

Unit Summary

In this Unit we have looked at how messages are transmitted from one end to another. It has been observed that the communication process is complex and that it needs a coordination of several elements in order to bring about desired fruits. We have also discussed how some people have tried to unravel the mystery behind communication by means of theories. More importantly, two types of communication have been tackled. As you have noted, both types work independently but on a greater extent they complement each other. It is our hope that you will be able to employ all the concepts and terms used in the Unit to foster your communication, not only as a teacher, a nurse, researcher etc . In the next Unit, we will build on what you have learnt here in order to help you become an effective listener

Answers to Unit Activities

Activity 1

The students should be able to come up with their own definition that shows that communication is a process that involves transmitting messages from one person to another. Their response should revolve around the characteristics of human communication and see whether they are aligned to the definition they have put forward.

Activity 2

This activity is personal as such there is no single answer to it. What is critical is for you to carefully study the three theories that you have studied and choose a model that best explains the communication processes to you.

Activity 3

- i. The correct answer is oral communication. Here you expected to explain any four advantages of oral communication as highlighted in this Unit.
- ii. The correct answer here is written communication and on the reasons you should cite any two advantages of written communication

Activity 4

1. This is a personal question and does not have a single answer. All you have to do is to clearly demonstrate your understanding of non-verbal communication.
2. Here we should cite the six reasons highlighted in this Unit as to why we use nonverbal communication.
3. This is a simple question and you should list types like gestures, facial expressions, pictures, posture, distance, time etc.

Suggested answers to Self-assessment test

- 1 This is a personal question whose answers will depend on your understanding of the concepts. However, the following serve as your guide:

- a) Source refers to message originator

- b) Receiver is the target destination
 - c) Message is the content that one wants to transmit
 - d) Channel refers to the medium used to send and receive messages
 - e) Medium is another name for channel and refers to the route through which a message travels from a sender to receiver
- 2 Feedback is crucial because it helps us to know whether the message has been successfully delivered and if it has achieved the intended purpose(s).
- 3 Here you should clearly show the differences and similarities between oral and written communication and make sure that in your explanations you give examples to underscore your points.
- 4 a) This is a simple question that requires you to give the definition of a theory that has been provided in this Unit
- b) Here you are supposed to explain the main features of the mathematic theory in view of how the elements of communication have been depicted and state whether they denote complete or incomplete communication.

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Unit 2 – Listening Skills

Introduction

In a world where almost everyone acknowledges the importance of better communication, the need for good listening is obvious. Sadly, experience shows that much of the listening we and others do is not all that effective. We misunderstand others and are misunderstood in return. We become bored and feign attention while our minds wander. This Unit will therefore, help you become a better listener by giving you some important information about the subject. We will talk about some common misconceptions concerning listening and show you what really happens when listening takes place. We will also discuss some poor listening habits, explain why they occur, and suggest better alternatives.

Areas of emphasis

- Listening as an active process
- Listening process
- Types of listening
- Overcoming barriers to effective listening
- Note making]
- Outlining notes
- Branching notes

Key words

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| • Attitude, | • Retention, |
| • Critical listening, | • Selective listening, |
| • Active listening, | • Awareness, |
| • Hearing, | • Reception |
| • Listening, | • Perception |
| • Precision, | |

Prerequisite knowledge

Good listeners are effective communicators. A communication transaction depends on effective listening as much as it does on speaking. Good listening skills can be learned and further developed. It is important to note that listening takes the largest share of all our communicative activities. This is not only true of our everyday life, but also at working places including schools. In fact, studies have shown that the personal failures and successes that we experience are partially attributed to our listening skills.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Define the term listening.
- Differentiate between listening and hearing.
- Describe the listening process
- Explain the barriers to the listening process
- Discuss different types of listening
- Write clear and effective notes

Other resources

You will understand this topic easily if you may have access to the following materials:

- portable radio or television set to assist you in deciphering different types of listening

Time required

You will need at least 15 hours to adequately study this unit.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: The listening process

Lesson 2: Types of listening

Lesson 3: Barriers to the listening process

Lesson 4: Note Taking

Lesson 1 – The Listening Process

Lesson Introduction

Listening is one of the communication activities in which people engage most frequently and it is an essential component of effective communication. Despite this, some people never seem to pay attention when they are being spoken to. It is frustrating when the person you are talking to either ignores you or tells you that he or she is listening to you yet he or she is actively engaged to something else. At times it feels bad when someone you are talking to looks at another person or pursues another activity as that clearly demonstrates that they are not interested in what you saying.

Effective listening entails more than merely going through the motion of hearing what someone says. Effective listening means being active in hearing what is said. This means paying careful attention to what your partner says. In this lesson, we will discuss objectives for listening. We will also address active listening and discuss the distinction between hearing and listening. We will also talk about barriers to effective listening and how you can effectively take down some notes during presentations or lectures. It is hoped that by the end of this lesson, you will be equipped with skills to appreciate the listening process and to enable you to be a good listener and an effective communicator.

2.1. Listening and Hearing Are Not the Same Thing

Before we look at the process of listening in general, it is important to specifically appreciate that listening and hearing are not the same thing. Most people are born with the ability to hear but they may not be effective listeners. **Hearing** is a process that occurs automatically and requires no conscious effort. **Hearing** is the process in which sound waves strike the eardrum and cause vibrations that are transmitted to the brain. It is the passive physiological act of receiving sound that takes place when the sound waves hit your eardrum. If someone starts beating on a desk, the resulting sound waves will travel through the air and heat your eardrum, the act which is an example of hearing. As the act is passive, you can hear without really having to think about it. **Listening** occurs when the brain reconstructs these electrochemical impulses into a representation of the original sound and then gives them meaning. **Listening** is the active process of receiving, attending to, interpreting, and responding to symbolic activity. It is a process of making sense of what is being heard, i.e. trying to understand what one hears. In other words, listening is a mental process that requires concentrating on sound, deriving meaning from it and reacting to it. It is a deliberate process through which we seek to understand and retain aural (heard) stimuli. As opposed to hearing, listening is active because it requires a great deal of work and energy to accomplish. It is also referred to as a process rather than an act, since multiple steps or stages are involved.

Why is Listening Important?

In any community, people spend most of their time listening compared to other communicative activities. The same situation prevails at work places as well as in academic institutions. For communication to occur, listening must take place. In fact feedback is, primarily, triggered by listening. When we talk to each other, we process both verbal and nonverbal messages. We receive many messages and, we attend to some of them and assign a variety of meanings to those messages. We are listeners during most of the times that we are awake.

2.2. The Listening Process

It consists of three phases which are *awareness*, *reception* and *perception*.

i) Awareness:

- It starts with the receiver becoming aware that s/he should listen and becoming attentive to what is being said.
- Once listeners are attentive to the message, they are in the right frame of mind to listen - to be receptive of what is being said.

ii) Reception:

- It is the act of physically hearing the message through the senses of hearing and sight.
- We hear through our ears and also use our eyes to observe non-verbal signals.
- Once people are aware (attentive) and reception has taken place, they can begin to perceive.

iii) Perception:

- This entails interpreting what has reached the brains through the sense of hearing and sight.
- It entails understanding the message and judging the value of the sound that reaches the ears or what our eyes see.

Developing Awareness

To develop awareness both the sender and the receiver have some responsibilities:

Sender's Responsibilities:

- Motivate the receiver by adapting the message to meet his or her goals, objectives and needs. One way of determining your listeners' needs is by identifying their basic needs or motives. This is made sure by using Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Let us now consider this in greater detail as shown in Figure 12 below. Abraham Maslow's model of human needs was developed in the early 1950's. It was devised to illustrate his idea that people are driven by needs to act in the way do. He believed that we require the satisfaction of certain physical and psychological needs for our lives to be complete. These needs were

ordered in a hierarchy in order to show their relative importance. Those at the base are very basic and are needed by all of us. Maslow believed that some needs are more significant than others and that people will try to satisfy those basic needs before they shift to higher order needs. For example, the need of water takes precedence over our love and belonging needs.

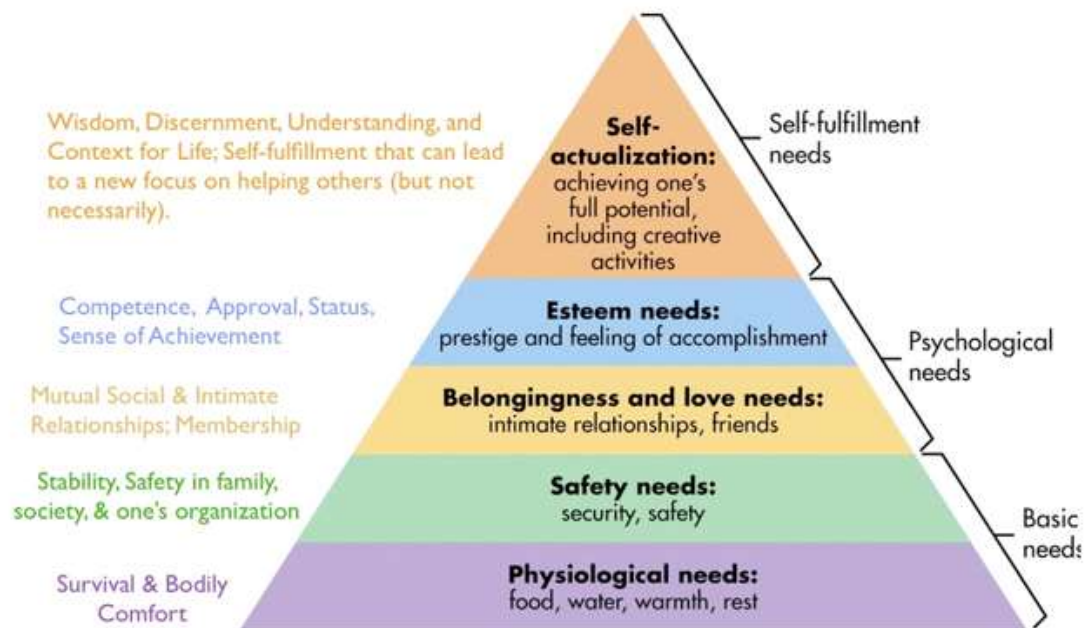


Figure 12 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

- Arouse curiosity by telling jokes or telling humorous stories.
- Speak loudly and clearly enough for the receiver to hear you.
- Ask questions to cause receivers think about what you are saying. This forces them to participate and be attentive.
- Avoid barriers to listening process:

a) Physical (external) barriers:

- Can drown the message
- Can distract the sender and make him/her forget what was being said.

Can distract the listener and refrain him/her from capturing

- what is being said.

b) Verbal barriers:

- Use vocabulary that is on the receiver's level.
- Explain any technical words
- Avoid jargons

c) Emotional barriers:

- Speak with confidence
- Avoid harshness

Receiver's Responsibilities

- To be an effective listener, you need to compensate for any physical hearing problems by:
 - Moving in closer
 - Sitting in front row rather than at the back
 - Asking the sender to raise his/her voice
- Get ready to listen- be in the right posture for listening, straighten up and face the speaker. There is a connection between the body and the mind.
- Use extra thinking to summarise and analyse what is being said:
 - Listen for ideas and meanings
 - Understand key ideas behind the words and details presented to you.
 - Listen to semantic/transitional markers the speaker uses in order to understand fully what is being said.

Reception (the act of physically hearing the message through senses)

In order to hear everything that is being said during a presentation you need to do the following:

- Direct all your attention to what is being said. Do not give room to any other thoughts.
- Listen with more than one sense- observe the sender's non-verbal cues: facial expressions, gestures, pauses, tone, of the voice, emphasis etc
- Be an active listener- ask questions, answer questions, comment, constructively, criticise, give example i.e. personal instances
- Hold your fire- don't be quick in expressing your opinion on what you hear. You should hold your opinion to the end of what is being said at a particular time so that you can gather enough information to enable you make correct evaluation (judgement).
- Try to concentrate on what is being said rather than react to it.
- Judge the content and not the delivery.

Perception

Despite being the last phase in the listening process, perception is the most significant phase because it is at this stage most of our problems in listening occur.

Factors that promote perception

To enhance perception, you need to observe the following:

- Hold your fire- don't be quick in expressing your opinion on what you hear. You should hold your opinion to the end of what is being said at a particular time so that you can gather enough information to enable you make correct evaluation (judgement).
- Try to concentrate on what is being said rather than react to it.
- Judge the content and not the delivery.

Faulty Listening Behaviours

Although we can't listen effectively all the time, most people possess one or more habits that keep them from understanding truly important messages.

PSEUDOLISTENING

Pseudolistening is an imitation of the real thing. Pseudolisteners give the appearance of being attentive: They look you in the eye, nod and smile at the right times, and even may answer you occasionally. Behind that appearance of interest, however, something entirely different is going on, because pseudo listeners use a polite facade to mask thoughts that have nothing to do with what the speaker is saying.

SELECTIVE LISTENING

Selective listeners respond only to the parts of a speaker's remarks that interest them, rejecting everything else. All of us are selective listeners from time to time as, for instance, when we screen out media commercials and music while keeping an ear cocked for a weather report or an announcement of time. In other cases, selective listening occurs in conversations with people who expect a thorough hearing but get their partner's attention only when the conversation turns to the partner's favorite topic—perhaps money, sex, a hobby, or some particular person. Unless and until you bring up one of these pet topics, you might as well talk to a tree.

DEFENSIVE LISTENING

Defensive listeners take innocent comments as personal attacks. Teenagers who perceive parental questions about friends and activities as distrustful snooping are defensive listeners, as are insecure breadwinners who explode when their mates mention money and touchy parents who view any questioning by their children as a threat to their authority and parental wisdom. Many defensive listeners are suffering from shaky public images and avoid admitting this by projecting their insecurities onto others.

AMBUSHING

Ambushers listen carefully, but only because they are collecting information to attack what you have to say. The cross-examining prosecution attorney is a good example of an ambusher. Using this kind of strategy will justifiably initiate defensiveness on the other's behalf.

INSULATED LISTENING

Insulated listeners are almost the opposite of their selective-listening cousins. Instead of looking for something specific, these people avoid it. Whenever a topic arises they would rather not deal with, insulated listeners simply fail to hear it or, rather, to acknowledge it. If you remind them about a problem — perhaps an unfinished job, poor grades, or the like — they will nod or answer you and then promptly forget what you've just said.

INSENSITIVE LISTENING

Insensitive listeners are the final example of people who do not receive another person's messages clearly. People often do not express their thoughts or feelings openly but instead communicate them through subtle and unconscious choice of words or nonverbal clues or both. Insensitive listeners are not able to look beyond the words and behaviour to understand their hidden meanings. Instead, they take a speaker's remarks at face value.

STAGE HOGGING

Stage hogs (sometimes called “conversational narcissists”) try to turn the topic of conversations to themselves instead of showing interest in the speaker. Interruptions are a hallmark of stage hogging. Besides preventing the listener from learning potentially valuable information, stage hogging can damage the relationship between the interrupter and the speaker. For example, applicants who interrupt the questions of an employment interviewer are likely to be rated less favourably than job seekers who wait until the interviewer has finished speaking before they respond. When confronted with stage hogs, people respond in one of two ways. Sometimes the strategy is passive: talking less, tuning out the speaker, showing boredom nonverbally, and leaving the conversation. Other strategies are more active: trying to recapture the floor, hinting about the stage hog's dominance, or confronting the

speaker about his or her narcissism. Reactions like these give stage hogs a taste of their own medicine, turning the conversation into a verbal tug-of-war.

Activity 1

1. With an aid of an example in each case, differentiate between hearing and listening.
2. Is listening part of the communication process? Justify your answer.

Lesson 2 Types of Listening

Lesson Introduction

There are different types of listening that are used in different contexts. For you to be a good listener and communicator in general, you need to develop an awareness of the different types of listening and be able to apply them when you are exposed to different messages. At the end of this lesson, you should be able to identify, distinguish, and apply various types of listening in your daily communications.

2.3. Types of Listening

a) Listening for Pleasure and Enjoyment (Appreciative Listening)

This is listening for enjoyment or relaxation – listening for pleasure. Listening for pleasure takes place when we listen to music, television, comedian for fun, poetry for gratification, or radio as a pass time activity. It does not require much concentration. In fact in the case of music, we rarely listen to every word, phrase or sentence. Some words are easily missed and pass without noticing them. They are seldom meant to be remembered or recorded. A similar situation applies to talk shows. The only difference here is that one has to listen to the flow of the talk by being part of the communication otherwise you run the risk of losing out on the entertainment or

amusement. The common feature in all such situations is that listening for enjoyment requires very little involvement in the communication process.

b) Listening for Information (Comprehensive Listening)

This refers to understanding what others are saying because you are aware of, grasp, and can make sense of the message. It is listening to gain knowledge. This type of listening requires more concentration than listening for enjoyment. This is the case, for instance, when you listen to a class discussion or to an informative speech. As a student you frequently need to apply this type of listening mainly in preparation for examinations or tests. The general objective is to be able to store or recall the information for future use. It is similar to listening to instructions on how to get to Mzimba from Lilongwe for example. Retention of such information becomes necessary for one to reach the destination. A similar example is listening to a training session. Contrast this with listening to an explanation of how your friend escaped a near fatal car accident.

c) Critical Listening

Critical listening is more than just listening for information. It involves analysing and evaluating the worth of information. In this type of listening, you make judgements about what the other person is saying. For example, you seek to assess the truth of his or her message, and you judge what he or she says against your own values. In this way, you can make a determination of worth: is what he or she is saying right or wrong, good or bad, beneficial or detrimental, worthy or unworthy. Another example could be when a Police constable is investigating a crime by interrogating a suspect he goes beyond mere listening with the purpose of recording or recalling the information. He aims at discovering more than what is said by the suspect. Depending on the subject at hand, a researcher may also do the same when collecting information for a study. Some Students apply this type of listening from time to time, especially when listening to instructions and explanation on how to conduct a scientific experiment in a laboratory. Critical listening is also experienced when interviewing a potential employee.

How to Listen Critically?

i) Determine the speaker's motives

What is in it for the other person, or, to rephrase the same question, what is he or she is going to get out of it? Another way of saying the same thing is, who benefits?

ii) Challenge and question ideas

Journalists seek answers to six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? The first question is above: Who benefits? Then, what happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Why did it happen, or why is it important? And how did it happen? The questions can be rephrased in any way that makes sense, but they give you a place to begin challenging and questioning ideas.

iii) Being able to distinguish fact from fiction

A **fact** is something that can be verified in a number of ways, which might include experiments, direct observations, books, articles or websites by authorities. Everyone who applies the same test or uses the same sources should be able to get the same information. An **opinion** is a personal belief while a **fact** is the truth of the matter. All facts are equally true but some opinions are more reliable than others.

- iv)** To achieve critical listening you should be able to recognise your own biases. The tendency to interpret information in light of your beliefs can lead you to distort information that you hear. As a listener who is aware of your own values and attitudes, you are more likely to discard information you disagree with.
- v)** Your fifth job in critical listening is to assess the message. To **assess** is to determine the value of something. Basically it is a critical process of chewing over what you have heard before you swallow it. Ideas that may seem acceptable when you first hear them may not be as palatable when you have had time to think about them. The important thing in assessment is to learn to delay taking a position (or responding) until you receive all the facts and other evidence, until you have had a chance to test them in the marketplace of ideas, and until you have had an opportunity to chew over everything before digestion.

d) Precision Listening

When we are involved in listening to details for clues to the speaker's feelings or state of mind, we go beyond critical listening. The objective here is not just to get the facts but also the subtle messages and feelings conveyed through the quality of voice or facial

expression. This is called listening with precision or exactness with the ability to distinguish clearly. What matters in such cases is not only what is said but also how it is said. To a precision listener, both the substance and the style are important.

e) Empathic Listening

Empathy is the process of mentally identifying with the character and experiences of another person. Often, it involves the emotional projection of yourself into another's life – or their life as revealed by and through communication. The goal when we listen empathically is to understand the feelings and point of view of another person. This is the most advanced type of listening. It needs concentration, retention and judgment. It also requires “the ability to put yourself in someone else's place and understand his or her feelings.” This is called empathy, which requires the skills of a precision listener motivated to listen for an understanding of how the speaker feels.

Qualities of an empathic listener are as follows:

- S/he does not rush to offer a personal opinion
- Is capable of withstanding emotions that are difficult to talk about
- Is capable of suspending judgment and ready to offer opinions when asked
- Understands and recognises the choice for others to talk and respects the role of a listener
- Respects the feelings of others without necessarily agreeing with those feelings.

Consider the situation when Mabvuto says “Please uncle, you will see for yourself.” Malenga immediately realizes that his nephew is distressed and does not feel like continuing talking about the patient. He thus holds and presses his hand by way of reassuring him. Simultaneously, he utters words of encouragement and starts to move in the opposite direction. Malenga's actions including what he says amount to a demonstration of empathic listening towards his nephew. He is, therefore, able to understand and share Mabvuto's feelings.

A summary of types of listening

	Motive	Definition	Skill required	Application example
Listening for Enjoyment	Entertainment	Listening passively for one's own pleasure	None	Listening to a television comedy
Listening for information	Gathering facts, opinions and other information	Listening to acquire data for recall	Concentration, may require note-taking skills, retention	Listening to a sales presentation, Listening to a training session
Critical Listening	Listening with the intent to judge or evaluate	Listening to make an evaluation or judgment of what is said or based on what is said	Concentration, may require note-taking skills, retention, analysis, reflection	Interviewing a potential employee
Precision listening	Understanding substance and style for clues as to meaning	Listening with attention to details that give you clues to the speaker's emotion or state of mind	Concentration, may require note-taking skills, retention, analysis, reflection, recall of details, Willingness to evaluate how something is said as well as what is said	Listening to a student making a research study presentation, listening to a colleague rehearse a speech with the intent of giving advice
Empathic listening	Listening to help others	Listening to understand another person's emotions and state of mind	Concentration, retention, reflection empathy, suspension of judgment	Listening to various sides of a conflict express themselves

Activity 2

1. What are the five kinds of listening?
2. What are the similarities and differences among the five kinds of listening?

3. What is the most common kind of listening that occurs in college, and what three suggestions can you give to help listeners keep focussed, connected and centred?

Lesson 3 Overcoming Barriers to the Listening Process

Lesson Introduction

Listening barriers are any obstacles that impede the listening process. Of course, we cannot listen at full capacity all the time but it is worthwhile to be aware of our ineffective listening behaviours that could distract us from listening effectively. This lesson therefore, gives you an insight into different obstacles and problems that affect the listening process. It is hoped that, by learning about these barriers, you will be equipped with enough arsenal to help avoid them and be an effective listener and communicator.

2.4. Overcoming Barriers to Listening

A listening barrier is any physical, mental or cultural condition that reduces the likelihood of a message to be received and understood as intended. When this happens, interference of effective communication takes place. Once listening barriers are reduced, communication becomes more effective. It is, therefore, important to understand listening barriers so as to avoid them. Barriers to effective listening include: physical barriers, mental barriers, attitudes and cultural barriers. We can discuss these barriers further by examining specific situations in detail.

i) Physical Barriers to Listening

Physical barriers to listen constitute anything that interferes with the hearing itself. Where there is loss of hearing be it partial or total, listening cannot take place. A poor audio system can also cause a physical barrier to listening. It is important to note that both listeners and speakers share responsibility for good listening by avoiding such barriers.

ii) Mental barriers to listening

A wandering mind or inattention that results into lack of concentration represents the most common mental barrier. Thus mental barriers to listening are more difficult to deal with. Such barriers make our minds wander when we are listening.

It has been demonstrated that most speakers communicate at 125-250 words per minute against our brains that process words at over 500 words per minute. The gap between the two tends to be filled by empathy, judgment, analysis and the other skills that help us to listen. This is especially so when we listen for information, criticism, precision and empathy.

iii) **Listener's attitudes**

Attitudes in listening

Attitudes refer to beliefs or feelings we have about ourselves, other people, ideas and events. In other words, it is a state of mind about something or someone. Naturally, an audience with a hostile or apathetic attitude, is most likely to experience listening problems. A good example is in a class where students have a negative attitude about a topic, subject or tutor; listening is likely to be negatively affected.

Selective listening also sometimes stems from an attitude problem of blocking out anything we do not want to hear and pay attention to information that coincides with our beliefs. This also can result to a barrier to listening.

Sometimes a listener's **personal attitude** makes him jump to conclusions before the speaker has concluded what he has to say. Sometimes we think we know what another person will or is about to say and we interrupt or jump to a conclusion. We assume we know the other person's intention based on how we felt. Hence the cliché "I know what you are going to say." Most of the times our guess is wrong! The way to deal with this problem is to learn to be patient. We must learn to listen to the entire message before responding. Such patience is known as "holding fire" and allows us to base our conclusion on all of the information instead of part of it.

iv) **Cultural barriers to listening**

Cultural barriers in language, accent, dialect.

Cultural barriers readily manifest in language, dialect or accent differences. It is thus important to be sensitive to such differences to be able to listen effectively. The obligation

to overcome such barriers rests with the speaker as well. Native speakers of English, for instance, find it difficult to listen to non-native speakers due to accents. It requires more concentration to listen to overall content rather than trying to understand each specific word that is said.

Even within the same linguistic community, the use of certain words in English is considered rude by those in other cultures. For instance, to some cultures “hey” is a greeting similar to “hi” or “hello.”

To some English speakers, “hey” is a means of getting someone’s attention in a rude way. Hence using the word “hey” can be a barrier to listening if it is interpreted as rudeness rather than a friendly greeting.

Activity 3

Using examples in each case, explain the kind of obstacles that people must overcome in order to listen well.

Lesson 4 Note Taking

Lesson Introduction

One of the benefits for being an effective listener is that you are able to pick the main points from a presentation. As a student, this becomes very handy as you are expected to make a record of what your lecturers or facilitators present to you. If your listening skills are not well sharpened you are likely to struggle during lectures. Against this background, this lesson aims at equipping you with habits that can help you to fully understand what is being said and make notes on the same. The lesson ends by providing you with skills which you can use to make various types of notes. It is expected that after going through this lesson you will be an effective note maker.

2.5. Note Taking

This is a process of writing information in brief form (sometimes using symbols and abbreviations) in order to write down main points and sub points of what you have heard or read.

You ought to know that note taking is one of the most important single things you can do to perform well in your study programme. Being able to take notes from lectures or written materials is therefore critical in your scholarship activities. When taking notes you must always remember that your interest is in recording the essence of ideas presented not everything that is aired out nor everything written on a topic. For this to be possible, you will need to possess some skills and techniques that can assist you to gain excellence.

2.5.1. Aims of note taking

There are a number of reasons for taking notes but you need to know the following:

- i. To have a record of the speaker's or writers main ideas – you are likely to come across diverse information. You therefore need to develop a selective mind so that you can be taking down only the main ideas not copying every word.
- ii. Notes are memory aids. They thus help you revise previously taken notes before you take an examination and consequently pass with good grades.
- iii. Note taking also enables you to make what the speaker or writer says a part of your own knowledge. You will realise that the notes are presented in our words and written in materials that we possess. We thus develop ownership and the knowledge becomes our part and parcel.

2.5.2. Basic requirements for successful note taking

As has already been indicated, the process of note taking is very tricky. When you are listening to a presentation, you cannot control how fast the information comes out of the speaker's mouth. Worse still, it is quite often a tall order to discern between main ideas and trivia. You are therefore required to do the following:

- i) Concentrate on what the speaker is saying. At this juncture, you need to be focussed. Refrain your mind from wandering and make a deliberate effort to overcome all distracters that can cripple your listening process.
- ii) Identify the main points.

Not everything spoken or written down is noteworthy. You need to develop a critical view of things so that you can easily differentiate between important information and irrelevant substances.

- iii) Take notes quickly but in a well organised way. You will not have time to take down notes. Therefore, refrain yourself to be at writing. However, this fastness must not make you develop notes in a disorganised manner. Always be organised because if you are not, your own notes may confuse you and this may trigger failure.

2.5.3. Tips for successful note taking during lectures

A) Be prepared for the lecture

- i) Read previous notes

If the lecture is a continuation from a previous lecture, glance through your notes on the previous lecture to refresh your memory. This will give you a good background which can foster understanding in the coming lecture.

- ii) Ask yourself some questions

You need to devise some questions about the coming lecture. If you know the topic of the lecture, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I already know about the topic?
- What do I expect to learn?
- How will the topic relate to other topics already discussed?
- How will this topic help me?

These questions are crucial and they go a long way in giving you a positive attitude towards the coming lecture even before you start the process of taking notes. More importantly, they act as pace-setters in your quest for absorbing new knowledge.

B) During the lecture itself

When attending a lecture you need to conduct yourself in a manner that particularly promotes grasping of concepts. The following are desirable to enhance comprehension:

Sit in the front or centre of the classroom

If you sit in the back of the room or near a door or window, your concentration will suffer. You may be distracted by so many things like people playing outside, someone singing enticingly and so on. Sitting in the front or centre will also enable you to clearly see materials written on the black board or presented on an overhead projector.

Try not to write out the lecturer

At all cost, do not attempt to develop the habit of removing the lecturer in your thoughts. At all times, make him or her an integral part of your studies and this will promote capturing of information, being presented. Sometimes, the lecturer may say something that you strongly disagree with and you may want to stop listening; do not do this. Try to concentrate on what the presenter is saying rather than reacting to it.

C) The actual process of note taking

Listen for cues that indicate important ideas

These cues are also known as semantic markers or signalling devices. They perform different functions and some of them are:

To show emphasis

In this category, we have the following:

- I would like to emphasise
- The point you must remember is
- It is important to note that
- It is worth noting that
- I repeat
- The next point I'm going to give is very crucial
- Listen carefully to this

* Every time these phrases are uttered, you must know that an important point worth taking down is about to be raised.

To show listing

Here we look at examples such as:

- Firstly - in the first place; - to begin with
- Secondly- in the second place
- Thirdly
- Lastly

To show illustration

We have examples such as:

- Let me give you some examples
- For instance, for example
- Let's take
- An example of this is
- To illustrate this point

You should jot down examples given in a lecture. Reasons for doing this is two-fold:

- a) Examples increase your understanding of ideas
- b) They serve as reminder of the basic ideas when you revise.

To show contrast

Examples include:

- But ...
- Nevertheless ...
- On the other hand ...
- And yet ...
- Although

To sum up

Semantic markers used in this category include:

- What I have been saying is this ...
- If I can just sum up ...

To rephrase

Examples are:

- In other words ...
- Let me put it this way ...
- To put it in another way ...
- That is to say ...

To show digression

Digression refers to departure from main subject in speech or writing. During a lecture, when digression occurs, it means that a presenter has side-tracked and is not saying anything noteworthy. You are therefore not supposed to note down digressions because they are just included in a lecture to add some spice thus making it interesting.

Nonverbal clues

Here, the focus is shifted from use of language to transmit ideas and messages. Instead, other features like facial expressions and voice emphasis are considered. You therefore need to recognise voice emphasis in sentences. Particularly check for emphasised words or phrases; similarly, watch out for facial expressions that are used to denote a strong point. You must

also closely watch gestures being made in a presentation. They two illustrate an issue of great importance.

2.6 Note taking and abbreviations

When taking down notes, you need to develop some strategies to enable you cope with the speed at which the speaker is presenting the information. Even when you are reading a book these strategies are equally useful. One of the most effective strategies is use of abbreviations. You are encouraged to use standard symbols and abbreviations.

2.6.1 Reasons for using abbreviations

- i) To keep up with the speaker
- ii) To make the task of note-taking easier.

When using abbreviations, you need to be very clever and extremely careful by observing the following:

- i) Use abbreviations that you will remember when reviewing your notes sometime later. It does not help using abbreviations you are not aware of as this can only confuse you and make your study session very ineffective.
- ii) Make abbreviations clear so that they will not be mistaken for other words.

2.6.2 Types of abbreviations

You may come across several types of abbreviations, but here, we will only talk about three kinds of abbreviations:

Field Abbreviations

These are abbreviations used in different fields. For example, in Chemistry the following are used: C, Ca, Na, H₂O

Commonly understood abbreviations

In this category, we focus on some symbols commonly used in mathematics. For example:

&, =

Personal Abbreviations

These are abbreviations made up by a person. Anybody can develop his/her unique abbreviations which can be used in the notes. These should be those one understands easily and can never be confused with. When developing them you need to:

- *Abbreviate words that are frequently used in a particular lecture or in a particular book.*
- *Abbreviate words by leaving out vowels*

Eg ppl for people

Pplr for popular

Mgt for management

Ltd for limited

Sch for school

- *Abbreviate by using only the beginning of a word.*

E.g. ad for advert

Add for address or addition

Hemi for hemisphere

Reg for region or registration

Mon for Monday

2.6.3. Types of notes

There are two types of notes which you need to be familiar with:

These are: a) Outlining notes

b) Branching notes

a) Outlining notes

These are notes that are made in such a way that main points, subtopics and supporting points are shown. These are made by numbering.

In these notes, you are supposed to put the subject title/topic preferably a short one, at the top, underlined in block letters but not numbered. Following it are numberings for the main topic, subtopic and supporting points. Here, you are at liberty to use different numerals. What matters is consistence. For example, if your first main point starts with a capital Roman numeral **I** then the second main point will be **II**. This trend has to continue till the last main point. On your sub points if they start with Arabic Numerals (i.e. **1**) or Alphabet letters in capital letters (**A**) make sure that you are consistent throughout the notes. For instance, if we start our first sub topic to be numbered **B** and the trend goes on up to the last sub point. Similarly, our supporting point is labelled **a**, the next point of the same will be **b** and so on and so forth. This trend will be repeated in the supporting points for the second main point, third point etc. You should also remember to present your notes in indented format. Thus the first sub topic supporting the main point should be indented and so should the supporting points for the sub topic. This style helps to clearly demonstrate differences on points and above all to promote neatness and good organisation of our notes.

Let us now look at how this format can be presented in real notes.

Topic

I First main idea of the topic

A First subtopic supporting the first main idea

1 Important fact under first subtopic

a) First detail supporting **a**

i) First Minor detail supporting **a**

ii) Second detail supporting **a**

b) Second detail supporting **1**

c) Third detail supporting **1**

B Second subtopic supporting first main idea

1 1st important fact under second subtopic

II Second main idea of the topic

A First important fact under second subtopic

1 First important fact under second subtopic

a) First detail supporting **1**

b) Second detail supporting **1**

2 Second important fact under second subtopic

a) ...

b) ...

With this layout in mind, you need to read the extract below and see how the notes have been developed out of it.

In general, marriage ceremonies are designed to do four main things. The first is to mark the change from one family into another. It used to be a custom in Scotland, for instance, for an old shoe to be thrown after the bride when she left her home to show that her father no longer had any legal right over her.

Among many tribes, a mock fight is staged at the wedding to show the resistance of the bride's family to the carrying off of its members.

Another common function of the marriage is to protect the couple from evil influences. The veil worn by the bride in western cultures was originally designed as a barrier to evil spirits. In oriental countries, brides often wear small mirrors because it is believed that spirits are frightened away when they see their own faces. In Africa and Europe, guns or arrows are often shot in the air to kill or frighten away evil spirits that may be nearby.

A further point is that most marriage ceremonies in the world contain features designed to make sure that the marriage will produce children. In many countries in Europe and Asia, the seeds of various grains are thrown over the couple or poured in their laps. In some countries in Eastern Europe, a small boy is placed on the lap of the bride as part of the ceremony.

Finally, marriage ceremonies generally contain features stressing the unity it is hoped the couple will achieve. In Celebes, the bride and groom are sewn together by their clothes and in several countries a knot is tied to signify the joining in marriage.

Thus we can see that although the details of the marriage ceremony differ widely from culture to culture, the basic purpose, to mark a change from one family to another, banish evil, promote fertility and produce unity, are same in all peoples.

Adapted from Chimombo, M. (ed) 1999.

Note-Making: An MSCE English Language Guide pp. 35 – 36

From the above passage, we can make some notes in outlining format using the methodology that was discussed before. As already discussed, only essential parts are considered. Our notes would look as below:

Marriage Ceremonies

I Change of family

A) Old shoe thrown after bride

- Scotland

B) Mock fight at wedding

- In many tribes

II Protection from evil spirits

A) Bride wearing mirror

- Oriental countries

B) Bride wearing mirror

- Oriental countries

C) Guns & arrows shot in the air

- Africa & Europe

III Promoting fertility

A) Throwing grains

-Asia

B) Small boy placed on bride's lap

-Eastern Europe

IV **Unity**

A) Bride and groom sewn together in clothes

- Celebes

B) Knot tied

That is how the passage on marriage ceremonies could be transformed into notes based on outlining format.

Activity 4

Read the passage below and make outlining notes.

Musical instruments

There are many different kinds of musical instruments. They are divided into three main classes according to the way that they are played. For example, some instruments are played by blowing air into them. These are called **wind** instruments. In some of these, the air is made to vibrate inside a wooden tube, and these are said to be of the **woodwind** family. Examples of woodwind instruments are the flute, the clarinet and the bassoon. Other instruments are made of **brass**: the trumpet and the horn for example. There are also various other wind instruments such as the mouth-organ and the bagpipes.

Some instruments are played by banging or striking them. One obvious example is the drum, of which there are various kinds. Instruments like these are called **percussion** instruments.

The last big group of musical instruments are the ones which have strings. There are two main kinds of **stringed** instruments: those in which the music is made by plucking the strings, and those where the player draws a bow across the strings. Examples of the former are the harp and the guitar. Examples of the later are the violin and the cells.

b) Branching notes

These are notes that are developed by means of circles and lines connected as branches to show relationships between concepts or points. Branching notes are useful in the absence of an outline lecture. They are very flexible to develop and you can easily recapture the speaker's original message and see the relationships between ideas more clearly.

i) Developing branching notes

To take branching notes begin by stating your subject or topic in a few words at the centre of a blank sheet of paper. Then as you absorb some ideas and details either from a lecture or a book, put them in boxes or circles around the subject and draw lines to connect them to each other and to the topic. Put minor ideas or details in smaller boxes and use connecting lines to show how they relate as well.

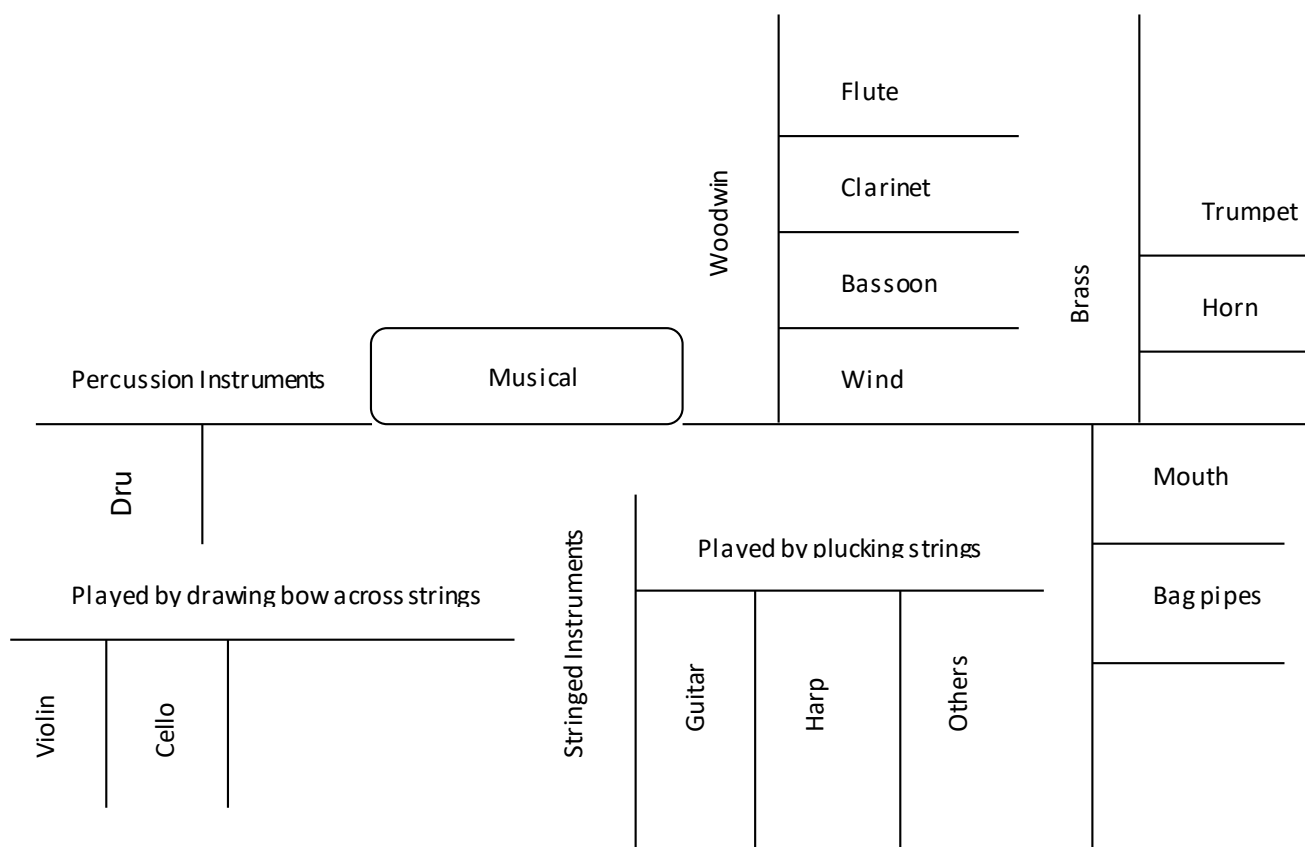
ii) Tips on branching notes

1. Have a double-page spread of note paper.
2. Take notes only on one page of the double pages. Use the other page for adding more information of 'reconstituting' notes, i.e. rewriting your notes in fuller or more convenient form.

3. Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way of branching your notes. What is important is to demonstrate that various ideas and details relate to one another.
4. Make a habit of noting the lecturer's name, the subject and date of the lecture. This is very useful in instances where you may have questions since you can easily contact the lecturer concerned.
5. Always remember to put the topic of the lecture in the centre of the page. If the central topic is not clear, use the first topic.
6. Relate other topics to your central topic and one another by using lines.

An illustration of branching notes

We have already seen how the passage on musical instruments can be developed into outlining notes. At this point, let us use the same passage to make branching notes. In doing this, we should be mindful of what has been discussed above. Carefully made, our notes would look as follows:



Activity 5

Carefully read the passage about Mzuzu University and transform it into branching notes.

Mzuzu University

Mzuzu University opened its doors in 1999. It started with one faculty which was and is still called Faculty of Education.

The Faculty of Education consists of among others; Department of Languages & Literature, Education and Teaching Studies Department, Mathematics Department and Basic Sciences Department. In addition, in around 2003 a new faculty called Faculty of Environmental Sciences was established. This faculty has in the meantime two departments; Forestry Department and Land Management Department.

Furthermore, last year a new baby was born. This was called the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology. Currently there are two departments under it. Namely; Department of Library Science and Information and Communication Technology Department.

More importantly, the Faculty of Health Sciences has just perched at Mzuzu University. For a starter, the Department of Nursing has set the ball rolling but many more departments are in the offing. It is expected that by the year 2010, there shall be more faculties with a variety of departments collaborating to achieve the goal of educating Malawians.

Self-Assessment Test

1. In your own words, explain the difference between listening and hearing.
2. Identify the five different kinds of levels of listening.
3. Identify five strategies that can improve listening.
4. Provide a brief example of a dialogue between a doctor and a patient with a cultural barrier. Provide a strategy for overcoming such a barrier.
5. State three advantages of using outlining notes over branching notes.
6. Why is it important to take note of linking words during lectures
7. Why are abbreviations important in note taking?
 - a) Name any two types of abbreviations

Unit Summary

Our first encounter with a verbal language is through listening. It is not surprising; therefore, that listening is the dominant communication skill. It is partly because of this factor that most people take listening for granted. Even students at all levels have a tendency of not considering listening seriously as they do with writing, for instance. Yet most of the time spent during study activities is on listening. We must always remember that listening is a skill that can and need to be perfected through proper training. This can be done effectively by avoiding potential barriers to listening at all levels. Let the objective for each listening session guides you as regards the choice of the listening skills.

In this Unit, we have also looked at the skill of note taking. You will recall that we have explained all steps that are involved when taking notes. We have stressed the importance of using abbreviations in note taking because they allow us to keep pace with the speaker and more importantly, we save time when our notes are taken from written materials. Besides, we have also discussed two types of notes and each type can be used. It is our hope that from now onwards you will be able to take useful notes which can be used in your study.

Answers to Unit Activities

Activity 1

1. Here you should supply good examples that clearly shows the differences between hearing and listening bearing in mind what has been explained in this Unit.
2. Yes listening is part of the communication process and on your justification you should show why this is the case by drawing from what you learnt in Unit 1.

Activity 2

1. You should list down the five kinds of listening as summarised in the table in this Unit.
2. You should analyse the five kinds of listening then be able to spot the similarities and differences among them.

3. It is listening for information that comes during lectures. You can give the following tips to help listeners keep focussed, connected and centred: In order to hear everything that is being said during a presentation you need to do the following:

- Direct all their attention to what is being said. Do not give room to any other thoughts.
- Listen with more than one sense- observe the sender's non-verbal cues: facial expressions, gestures, pauses, tone, of the voice, emphasis etc
- They should be active listeners- ask questions, answer questions, comment, constructively, criticise, give example i.e. personal instances
- They must hold their fire- don't be quick in expressing their opinion on what they hear. You should hold your opinion to the end of what is being said at a particular time so that they can gather enough information to enable them make correct evaluation (judgement).
- Try to concentrate on what is being said rather than react to it.
- Judge the content and not the delivery.

Activity 3

Here you should explain the barrier to listening such as physical, mental and cultural. Remember to cite examples in each case in order to make your answers weighty.

Activity 4

Refer to the illustration of branching notes about music instruments and convert it into outlining notes.

Activity 5

There is no single answer for this activity. In principle, all that matters is for you to demonstrate your understanding on how to take branching notes using the method that you are most comfortable with i.e using circles, rectangles, lines etc.

Answers to Self-Assessment Test

1. There is no single answer here but just make sure that your response show that hearing is a passive action and that one has no control over what is said while listening is the process of making sense of what one hears and that it is an active process.
2. This is a simple question. Just go to the table that has summarised the different levels of listening in this Unit.
3. Question 3 for Activity 2 above, has already enumerated these stages.
4. Here you supposed to provide any brief dialogue that depicts a scenario where there is a cultural barrier between a doctor and patient. A good example could be a situation where the patient and doctor do not speak the same language and failing to understand each other. A barrier like this could be overcome by having an interpreter that will act as a bridge for the two.
5. They are easy to read; they are well structured; they contain all essential points.
6. Because they indicate different focal points for a presentation, for example, emphasis, addition, similarities, differences etc.
7. i) To keep up with the speaker
ii) To make the task of note-taking easier.

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Unit 3 Writing an Essay

Introduction

Writing is a very important part of your university study. You will write assignments that may range from one paragraph to several long pages, and will write answers on tests and examinations that may be a few sentences long or a complete essay. Most of the times you will be writing essays. Writing an essay is an important part of your learning. It deepens your understanding of the subject you are studying. Essay writing is also a major element in assessing your progress and more importantly, it helps you to think better. After you have completed this Unit, you will be left with an invaluable guide that you can use to write good essays. Specifically, the Unit takes you step by step on how you can weave an academic essay and how you can differentiate various types of essays.

Areas of emphasis

- Definition of an essay
- Parts of an essay
- Stages in the essay writing process
- Types of essays

Key words

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • Essay | • Revising |
| • Introduction | • Editing |
| • Thesis | • Coherence |
| • Body | • Expository |
| • Conclusion | • Descriptive, |
| • Prewriting | • Argumentative |
| • Drafting | |

Prerequisite knowledge

It is very likely that you have written essays before. If not, definitely you have come across essays, read them or probably analysed them. More importantly, in our previous Unit, we talked about how you can acknowledge information when writing essays. This knowledge is very important and it forms the bedrock for your understanding of this Unit.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Define the term essay.
- Describe various parts of an essay.
- Write effectively various parts of an essay.
- Outline stages in essay writing.
- Revise essays effectively.
- Write different types of essays.

Resources needed

- Any text book containing sample essays
- Pens and sheets of paper
- Newspapers

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: Parts of an essay

Lesson 2: Stages in essay writing

Lesson 3: Revising an essay

Lesson 4: Types of essays

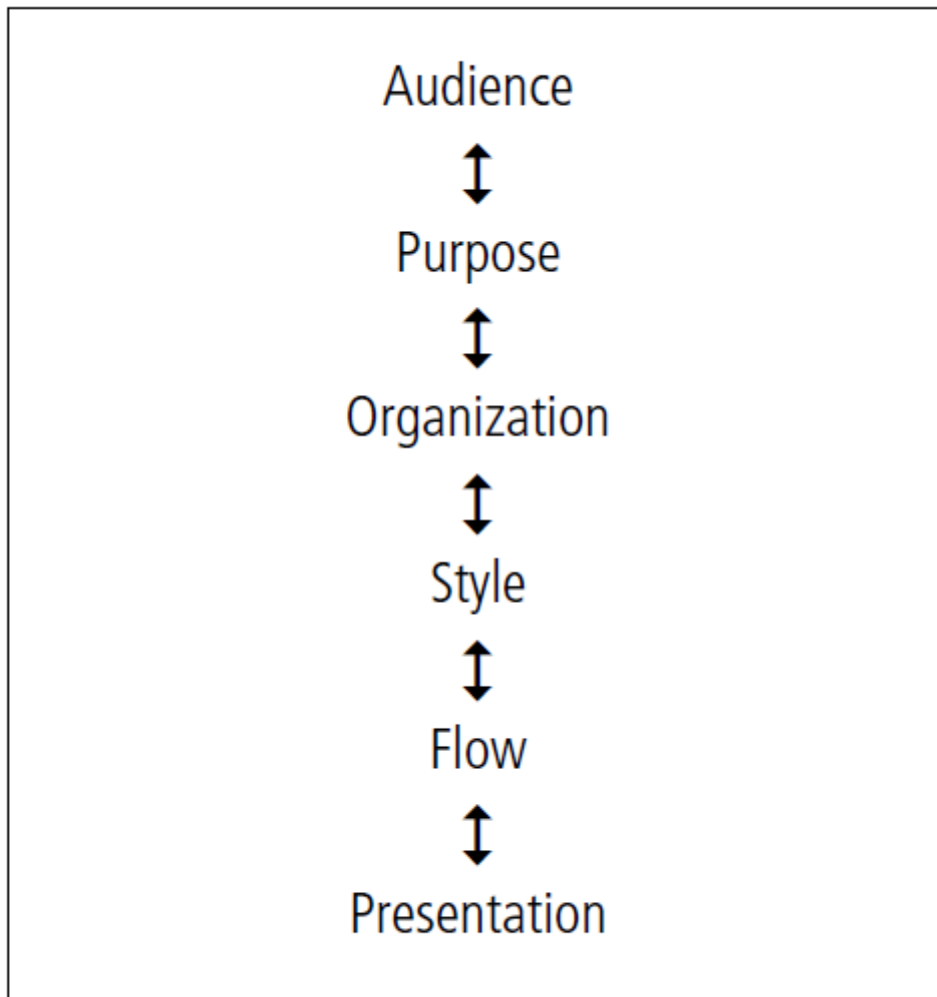
Lesson 1 – Parts of an Essay

Lesson Introduction

As a university student, you will be involved in a lot of writing, mainly essays. And for you to write clear and effective essays you need to know the basic structure which you should use to write academic essays. This lesson has therefore, been designed to help you understand the process of essay writing and how you can write different parts of an essay effectively.

An Approach to academic writing

Essay writing is part of academic writing and you will use it quite often throughout your studies. Understanding your writing strategies is important in becoming a confident writer. As you may already realise, academic writing is a product of many considerations: audience, purpose, organisation, style, flow, and presentation (see Figure 1 below).



Audience

Even before you write, you need to consider your audience. The audience for most graduate students will be an instructor, who is presumably quite knowledgeable about the assigned writing topic and will have expectations with which you need to be familiar. Other possible audiences include advisors, thesis committees, and those who will review research you may want to present at a conference or publish in a paper. Your understanding of your audience will affect the content of your writing.

Purpose and Strategy

Audience, purpose, and strategy are typically interconnected. If the audience knows less than the writer, the writer's purpose is often instructional (as in a textbook). If the audience knows more than the writer, the writer's purpose is usually to *display* familiarity, expertise, and

intelligence. The latter is a common situation for the graduate student writer. The interesting question that now arises is what strategy (or strategies) can a graduate student use to make a successful display. To explore this, let's consider the case of an international student who calls himself Sam in the United States. Sam is enrolled in a master's program in Public Health. He has nearly finished his first writing assignment, which focuses on the impact of video games on the cognitive development of children in the United States. This is a short five-page assignment rather than a major research paper. The deadline is approaching, and there is no more time for further data analysis. He wants to make a good impression with his concluding paragraph. He believes (rightly) that final impressions are important. Sam (quite appropriately) begins his last paragraph by reminding his audience (i.e., his instructor) of what he has done in the paper.

Organisation

Readers have the expectation that information will be presented in a structured format that is appropriate for the particular type of text. Even short pieces of writing have regular, predictable patterns of organization. You can take advantage of these patterns, so that readers can still follow, even if you make some language errors.

Style

Academic writers need to be sure that their communications are written in the appropriate style. The style of a particular piece should not only be consistent but also be suitable both in terms of the message being conveyed and the audience. A formal research report written in informal, conversational English may be considered too simplistic, even if the actual ideas and/or data are complex. One difficulty in using the appropriate style is knowing what is considered academic and what is not. The grammar-check tool on your word processing program is likely not of much help in this matter since such programs are written primarily to find spelling and basic grammar errors and not to offer stylistic advice for *academic* writers. Moreover, what little stylistic advice is offered may not be right for what you are writing. For

example, contrary to what your grammar checker might suggest, if you are describing a procedure or process, you *can* and probably even *should* use passive voice in many cases. Deciding what is academic or not is further complicated by the fact that academic style differs from one area of study to another. For instance, contractions (e.g., *don't*) may be used in Philosophy but are not widely used in many other fields. And, as noted in a study by Chang and Swales (1999), some authors often use informal elements such as sentence-initial *but*; imperatives (as in the common expression *consider the case of . . .*); and the use of *I*. In the case of *I*, we see quite a bit of disciplinary variation.

Flow

Another important consideration for successful communication is flow — moving from one statement in a text to the next. Naturally, establishing a clear connection of ideas is important to help your reader follow the text.

Presentation

Most instructors tolerate small errors in language in papers written by non-native speakers—for example, mistakes in article or preposition usage. However, errors that instructors think could have been avoided by careful proofreading are generally considered less acceptable. These include the use of an incorrect homophone (a word that sounds exactly like another, such as *too/to/two*); basic grammar errors (e.g., subject-verb agreement); and misspelled words, including those that are not identified in a computer spellcheck routine. The issue of grammar errors is a complicated one since many instructors do not appreciate how difficult it is to master some aspects of English such as articles (*a*, *an*, and *the*) and prepositions. We believe that if the flow of ideas is good, small errors may not be noticed; when the flow of ideas is not strong—i.e., does not follow the old-to-new principle—grammar errors may be more pronounced. Thus, it makes more sense to us to focus more on content and information flow first and then tend to matters of grammar only after all other aspects of the paper are in good

shape. Finally, your work is more likely to receive a positive response if you consider these questions.

- a) Does the information flow in an expected manner? Look at the beginnings and ends of all sentences to see if there is a content bridge linking them backward and forward. If there is no content bridge, revise to establish one or consider adding a linking word or phrase.
- b) Consider the overall format of your written work.
- c) Proofread for grammatical accuracy. Do subjects and verbs agree? Have the appropriate verb tenses been used? Have the articles *a*, *an*, and *the* been used where necessary? Is *the* used too much? Do not automatically make changes based on suggestions from the grammar checker of your word processor. Some suggestions, such as changing from passive voice to active voice, may result in a poor connection of ideas.
- d) Check for misspelled words, even if you have spell-checked your work.

3.1. Parts of an Essay

Before we look at parts of an essay, it is important that we know what an essay. The next section defines an essay then delves into various parts of an essay.

3.2. Definition of an essay

In this Unit, we will define an essay as a *group of paragraphs that support a controlling idea called a thesis*. What is coming out clearly here is that an essay has a couple of paragraphs put together in order to convey ideas. If someone writes on a topic in less than two sentences that does not constitute an essay. Essay paragraphs are composed on a specific topic in order to come up with ideas that are properly organised, nicely written and professionally presented.

3.3. Parts of an essay

The Greek philosopher Aristotle likened an essay to an animal. He contended that any essay has head, body and tail just like an animal has. In his words, the head of an essay is the introduction, the body is the actual body where your facts are properly explained and the tail denotes the conclusion. In line with this analogy, you should always remember that an essay must have an *introduction*, *body* and *conclusion*.

3.3.1. The introduction

This is the introductory paragraph of an essay. Sentences put in an introduction aim at attracting the reader's interest as such deliberate effort needs to be made so that readers' attention will be properly grabbed. Within the introduction, you find a ***thesis statement***. This is the controlling statement that will be developed in the essay. In other words, a thesis refers to a statement or opinion that is discussed in a logical way and presented with evidence in order to prove that it is true. It constitutes the main idea in your piece of writing. A thesis statement is the most important sentence in the introduction of an essay because it clearly states what the essay will be about. What is important, is that the thesis statement signals what the essay will be about. The thesis statement consists of a ***subject*** and a ***treatment***. The subject is what you intend to write about and it indicates the general area to be dealt with in your essay. The treatment refers to what you intend to do with the subject. Let us have an example that sheds more light on these two concepts:

Playing soccer is a worthwhile career in this modern age.

The above thesis statement can be analysed as follows:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • Playing soccer: | subject |
| • Is a worthwhile career in this modern age: | treatment |

If you were to write an essay on the above topic, you were supposed to talk about soccer and you would certainly explain how today soccer is profitable in comparison with soccer that was played several years back.

In a nutshell, the thesis statement:

- Tells the reader how you will interpret the significance of the subject matter under discussion.
- Is a road map for the paper. It is a guide that gives readers a preview of what to expect from the rest of your essay.
- Directly answers the question asked of you.
- Is usually a single sentence somewhere in your first paragraph that presents your argument to the readers. The rest of the paper, the body of the essay, gathers and organises evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of your presentation.

Activity 1

Think about any statement of your choice and identify subject and treatment.

If you got the above exercise right, it means you have a springboard that will assist you to write essays.

3.3.1.1. Sources of theses

You can get a thesis from:

- a) Choosing your own thesis. This is arrived at after lengthy thinking.
- b) An assignment given to you by your lecturer. Generally lecturers will give you a thesis statement on which you will be required to advance some arguments.
- c) An examination question. Sometimes, you get thesis statements from examination questions that require you to supply essay answers.

3.3.1.2. Writing the thesis

Writing a good thesis starts with sound thinking. Before you develop an argument on any topic, you have to collect and organise evidence, look for possible relationships between known facts (such as surprising contrasts or similarities), and think about the significance of these relationships. Once you do this, you will probably have a ,working thesis, a basic or main idea, an argument that you think you can support with evidence but that may need adjustments along the way. If this task is done properly, you are likely to come up with an interesting subject and a well-defined treatment.

A well-defined treatment is one that can be developed with supporting information and gives you just the right amount of information that fully supports your controlling statement. You should exercise care when choosing a thesis to ensure that your thesis is not vague, too, broad or too narrow. Let us look at this in depth:

- **Vague thesis – Private Schools (*Subject*) are good institutions (*Treatment*).** This thesis is vague because the treatment is so general. It does not really give us an impression of what we are looking for when we say ,good`. As a result if we were to write an essay based on this, we will certainly lack direction. Worse still, the concept of ‘good’ is subjective and difficult to perceive when advancing our arguments.
- **Better thesis - Private Schools produce better MSCE results than Government Institutions.** We are saying that this thesis is better because it is focused as a result our essay is going to elucidate how private schools perform well compared with government institutions.
- **Too broad a thesis – Private Schools (*Subject*) have many problems (treatment).** This thesis is too broad because the treatment is open-ended and generic.
- It does not limit us on how many problems we should tackle in our essay as a result we may be left in dilemma - whether to write a short essay or an extremely lengthy one. A good thesis should strive to give a hint of what the writer is supposed to do. This has been highlighted below:

- **Better thesis - Private schools are generally more crowded than Government schools.**

This thesis is good because it is focussed in that the writer is going to concentrate on the problem of overcrowding in private schools.

- **Too narrow a thesis – Mzuzu was declared a city in 1978.** This thesis is narrow in the sense that the writer is not given much room to flex the writing muscle. Obviously, it would be difficult to write more than two paragraphs on such a topic. It is a simple fact that does not require much support. Such a statement is sometimes called a *dead-end statement*; there is no place to go with it. This can be improved as below:

- **Better thesis- Mzuzu is Malawi's most expensive city.** This thesis is much better because if you were to write an essay, you would take a comparative approach which would give a lot of information.

3.3.2. Functions of the introduction

The introduction serves the following purposes:

- It attracts the reader's interest. The introductory paragraph should start with several sentences that attract the readers' attention and encourage them to continue reading the essay.
- It states the thesis statement. Here the introduction brings to light the thesis statement by advancing the thesis that will be developed in the essay and sometimes it provides a plan of development or a preview of major points supporting the thesis.
- It leads the readers smoothly into the support paragraphs i.e. the body of the essay. These supporting paragraphs should be listed in the order in which they will appear in the essay.
- It supplies any background information that may be needed to understand the essay.

3.3.3. Types of introduction

When writing an essay, you are required to use any one method or a combination of methods, to introduce your subject in an interesting way to the readers.

- **A direct statement of the thesis statement**

With this introduction, you simply state the thesis statement directly. Attempt to give a preview of what your thesis is all about and how you will go about writing your essay.

- **Background information**

In this type, you give details about something. Make sure that you elaborate the way things are done or happen.

For instance, if you were to write an essay on problems faced by poorly established private schools, you could firstly provide information on how private schools came into being and what happens when people are opening private schools. This background information may set the platform that will be fully expounded in the body.

Example

Mzuzu University opened its doors in 1999 as the second public university in Malawi. Prior to that, there was only one university in Malawi. Mzuzu University was opened with the aim of training secondary school teachers.

- **Definition of terms**

In this type of introduction, writers can start their essay by firstly providing a definition for the most important terms in the thesis. For instance, if the essay is on impacts of deforestation, the writer might begin by providing a definition for the term deforestation. He or she may also go on to talk about causes of deforestation and this may act as a preview of what he or she will say in the body.

Example

Global warming is the rising of temperatures to the levels never experienced before that has made the earth much warmer than it used to be.

- **Use of a quotation**

Another method of introducing your essay is by using a quotation. This quotation can be something you have read in a book or article. It can also be something that you have heard: a popular saying or proverb, a current or recent advertising slogan, or a favourite expression used by friends or families. Using a quotation in your introductory paragraph lets you add someone else's voice to your own.

Example

According to Rubenstein ,most developing countries are in danger of desertification due to tremendous pressure being exerted on forests due to rising populations`.

- **Use a shocking statement**

You deliberately start with a startling fact that is aimed at raising curiosity in your readers. This will motivate your readers as they will want to find out more about the shocker that you have given them.

Example

If you wanted to attack private schools, you could start with a statement that may be bent at shocking your readers i.e. talking about lack of teaching and learning resources, immorality of the teachers and also absence of portable water and good toilet facilities.

- **Ask one or more questions**

Here you may ask a rhetorical question that simply wants the reader to think about possible answers, or you ask a question you intended to answer yourself later in the essay. For example, if you were to write a paper on love, you would come up with questions such as below:

What is love? How do we really know that we are really in love? When we meet that special person, how can we tell that our feelings are genuine and not merely infatuation? And, if they are genuine, will these feelings last? Love... (Langan, 2003, p. 89) .

- **Use an incident or brief story**

Stories are naturally interesting. They appeal to a readers' curiosity. In your introduction, an anecdote will grab the readers' attention right away. The story should be brief and should be related to your main idea. The incident in the story can be something that happened to you; something you have heard about, or something you have read about in a newspaper or magazine.

Example

A couple of months ago, I was travelling to the Northern Region. I left Lilongwe early in the morning.

And as I drove, I kept looking sideways with an interest on our forests. My eyes didn't like what they saw. Most forests have been cleared and I was particularly touched by the way trees are being removed in Chikangawa Forest. The situation is very appalling. I met many trucks carrying timber and yet very little re-forestation is taking place. I felt like crying.

N.B. When developing an introduction, make sure that you do not use some mechanical methods (methods that are normal but just demonstrate the routine way of doing things which may sadly be boring because they have been used over and over again), which though simple and pretty effective, take away the interest in the readers' mind. In other words, mechanical introductions sound dry. Examples of mechanical introductions are:

- The purpose of this essay is to write about
- I will now write a paper about

The above examples need to be avoided, if not, make sure that you combine them with some better ways of introducing essays as we have discussed.

Activity 2

Think about any topic and write an introduction using any one of the methods above.

3.4. The body

The body of an essay deals with supporting points that are developed in paragraphs. It is extremely important that you carefully choose material to be included in your essay. What you include in the body will be determined by the treatment of your thesis and it is advisable that you gather adequate information that best supports your essay before you actually take the trouble of starting developing your body.

When you are writing, your body each of the supporting paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence that states the point to be detailed in that paragraph.

Topic sentence

A topic sentence is a key sentence that provides a focus for a supporting paragraph. The topic sentence is most often found at the beginning of a paragraph though occasionally it may feature in the middle or at the end of the paragraph. To fully understand the concept of topic sentence, read the essay below and answer questions that follow:

The hazards of movie-going

I am a movie fanatic. My friends count on me to know movie trivia and to remember every big Oscar awarded since I was in secondary school. My friends, though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. While I love movies as much as ever, the inconvenience of going out, the temptations of the theatre, and the behaviour of some patrons are reasons for me to wait and rent the video.

To begin with, I just do not enjoy the general hassle of the evening. Since small local movie theatres are a thing of the past, I have to drive for fifteen minutes to get to the nearest multiplex. The parking lot is shared with several restaurants and a supermarket, so it's always jammed. I have to drive around at a snail's pace until I spot another driver backing out. Then it's time to stand in an endless line, with the constant threat that tickets for the show I want will sell out. If we do get tickets, the theatre will be so crowded that I won't be able to sit with my friends, or we'll have to sit in a front row gaping up at a giant screen. I have to shell out a

ridiculous amount of money- up to \$8 – for a ticket. That entitles me to sit while my shoes seal themselves to a sticky floor coated with spilled soda, bubblegum, and crushed raisins.

Second, the theatre offers tempting snacks that I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home, I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going to the theatre, however, is like spending my evening in a Seven-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. Chocolate bars the sizes of small automobiles seem to jump into my hands. I risk pulling out my fillings as I chew enormous mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theatre, I feel disgusted with myself.

Many of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand. Little kids race up and down the aisle, usually in giggling packs. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the screen, whistling, and making what they consider to be hilarious noises. Adults act as if they were at home in their own living room. They comment loudly on the ages of the stars and reveal plot twists that are supposed to be a secret until the film's end. And people of all ages create distractions.

They crinkle candy wrappers, stick gum on their seats, and drop popcorn tubs or cups of crushed ice and sodas on the floor. They also cough and burp, squirm endlessly in their seats.

(Adapted from Langan, J. (2003) College Writing Skills)

Activity 3

- 1 What is the topic sentence for the first supporting paragraph of the model essay?

The first topic sentence is then supported by the following details (fill in the missing details):

a) Have to drive fifteen minutes

b) _____

- c) Endless ticket line
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) Sticky floor

2 What is the topic sentence for the second supporting paragraph of the essay?

The second topic sentence is then supported by the following details:

- a) At home, the only snacks are celery and carrot sticks.
- b) Theatre is like a Seven-Eleven with seats
 - i) Fresh popcorn
 - ii) _____
 - iii) _____

3 What is the topic sentence for the third supporting paragraph of the essay?

The third topic sentence is then supported by the following details:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

Based on the explanatory text and the activity, you should remember that the body of an essay has a topic sentence that is supported by some sentences found in the paragraph.

3.4.1. Methods of organising the body

You need to use some methods that help foster clarity and cohesion of your essay. You may use one or a combination of the following methods:

- **Using division of parts of a unit**

You must split your essay into different parts. You do this mainly by carefully analysing points that fully support your thesis. When you are certain, you are at liberty to divide the supporting

points into different parts, i.e. first part, second part, third part etc. Once these divisions are made, you will develop your body part by part by initially tackling the first part and progress on chronologically. This method is important as it enhances clarity, brevity and coherence in your essay.

- **Division of a process (explanation of how something is done)**

In this method, you take the trouble of explaining how something is executed. For example, if you were to write about how *nsima* is prepared, you would talk about all the processes involved from the moment the pot is cleaned through to the moment when the meal is ready for consumption. Conversely, if you were to write an essay about steps of doing a thing, you would write your essay by chronologically highlighting what happens at each stage or step. By doing this, your essay is going to demonstrate the highest degree of unity and coherence.

- **Using a narrative approach**

When you are writing your essay, using this approach, you write in a story telling manner. You tell about events that happen i.e. personal events, incidents or experiences.

When developing your body using this method, you may either use chronological order or flash-forwards and flashbacks. In chronological order, your essay starts at the beginning of a sequence of events and follows those events step by step until the conclusion. For example:

I had an important appointment in town yesterday, and I had planned to leave for the city at 2:30 p.m. I drove to Luwanga Filling Station with plenty of time to spare but then discovered that I had left my wallet in the office. I raced back to collect it unfortunately the road was very congested and I was forced to drive at a snail's pace. A five-minute journey took me almost fifteen minutes.

By the time I got back to the filling station, it was too late. My appointment was at 3 p.m. but I had not yet arrived to the venue. Though I finally got there, I was late by a good ten minutes.

The above example gives us clear details of how the above event unfolded. It starts from the beginning until the end. That is how you should write your essay when the narrative approach

is used. On the other hand, use flash-forwards and flashbacks to create a special emphasis. A flash-forward is a device that you use to tell about an event before it actually happens. A flash-back tells about an event that happened at an earlier time. Look at the following illustration to appreciate how the flash-forward works:

When I stepped on the stage at the age of six to give my first violin recital, my heart was racing and the blood was pounding in my throat. I walked timidly to the centre of the stage, made a stiff bow, brought the instrument up to my shoulder, and started to play.

Had I been able to anticipate the thunderous applause that would greet me at the end of my performance, I would have been less nervous. My mother shouted “bravo” my father leapt to his feet and cheered, and my grandmother led the audience in a rousing display appreciation. There were calls for an encore, which I gladly granted.

But all that adulation had been far from my mind as I made those scratchy noises on my half-size violin. At the start of the recital, all I had wished was its conclusion.

(Adapted from Word-power 2, p. 217)

- **By using comparison and contrast**

You write your essay based on comparison and contrast. Comparison refers to statements of similarities between two or more related things and on the other hand, contrast refers to statements of differences between two or related things. What you do is to group together all similar points and those that are not similar. Sometimes you may synchronise points or ideas that are similar with those that are different in order to come up with a balanced argument.

- **By argumentation**

Here you write an essay by presenting an argument. You construct an argument by giving facts and examples; relate incidents and present opposing views. An effective argument must be supported by evidence. It is not enough to simply give an opinion. Sometimes in order to

impress your readers, you can either put strong points first or end with weak points or vice versa. You may also advance arguments by looking at both sides of the coin that present both advantages and disadvantages. If you are interested in having a very sound argument, you may look at an idea from the left, centre and right. This will bring about an essay that encapsulates different facts and ideas that make your write up worthwhile and weighty.

3.5. The conclusion

This is a crucial part of the essay and it needs to be given all the time and effort. You do not have to rush otherwise; you will spoil all the good work you have done in the introduction and the body.

Make sure you impress your readers for the last time by writing a conclusion that is catchy. The concluding paragraph often summarises the essay briefly by restating the thesis and at times, the main supporting points. In addition, the writer often presents a concluding thought about the subject of the paper.

3.5.1. Functions of the conclusion

The conclusion performs the following functions:

- It satisfies the reader's interest that was aroused in the introduction. The conclusion should complement what the introduction does. The introduction arouses the reader's interest and the conclusion satisfies the reader. The introduction makes the reader curious, raises expectations in the reader concerning what the writer intends to do. The conclusion makes the reader feel that his/her expectations have been met.
It makes the reader feel that the job the writer set out to do has indeed been completed.
- It reminds the reader about the thesis. As you close your essay, make sure that you touch on the thesis so that your reader can be reminded about the focus of your discussion.

- It provides the writer the last opportunity to impact on the readers' mind in order to create the desired effect on them. Make sure that you develop your conclusion in an enticing way so that you retain your readers' attention up to the last word of your essay and probably leave a life-long impression on them.

3.5.2. Types of conclusion

In this section, we look at best methods of developing a conclusion. Any one of the ways below, or a combination of ways, may be used to round off your essay. What is important though is to see to it that your conclusion clearly relates to the thesis of your essay.

- **Conclude with a quotation**

You end on a high note if you choose a very good punch-line to conclude your essay. You must observe that the quotation you choose has some bearing on your thesis. It may not help matters choosing a quotation though good but very divergent from the thesis of your essay.

Example

In summary, it has been discussed that 'deforestation is indeed a major problem in most developing countries and that unless something is done the entire Sub-Saharan Region will be a huge desert' (Banda, 2004 p. 34).

- **End with a summary and final thought**

Here you follow three classical steps of wrapping up your essay:

- a) Tell them what you are going to tell them
- b) Tell them
- c) Tell them what you have told them

Steps (a) and (b) are executed in the introduction and body respectively. However, step (c) ,Tell them what you have told them` is executed in the conclusion where you restate the thesis with supporting points. Don't use the exact wording you used before though.

Example

In this essay, we have been talking about deforestation. And as it has been highlighted, deforestation is more rampant in developing countries where among others things high population growth, urbanisation and need for settlement land are exerting pressure on the forests.

- **Conclude with a thought-provoking question or a series of questions**

Concluding with a question is another good way to successfully end your essay. A question tends to grab the reader's attention. It is a direct appeal to your reader to think further about what you have written. A question should follow logically from the points you have already made in the paper. Your question must deal with one of these areas:

- a) Why the subject of your paper is important?
- b) What might happen in the future?
- c) What should be done about this subject?
- d) Which choice should be made?

In your conclusion, you may provide an answer to your question. Be sure though, that the question is closely related to your thesis.

Example

In conclusion what is pollution? What causes pollution? What are the dangers of pollution and how can we avoid pollution?

- **Conclude with a call to action**

Here you may present a recommendation that asks your readers to do something. This will be in light of your thesis statement. For instance, if you had been writing an essay on 'poor educational standards in primary schools' you would ask your readers to embrace measures that will address this problem.

Example

It's now crystal clear that standards of education have gone low. We are now calling on the government and all stake holders to put mechanisms in place which will improve our educational standards as soon as possible.

- **Conclude with a summary of the main points**

This is one the easiest way of ending the essay. You just present a summary of what your essay has highlighted. In doing this, concentrate on main points and condense them in a manner that gives one a picture of what your essay is all about. Generally, this method is most appropriate for complex topics.

Example

This essay has highlighted four main causes for the decline in education standards. We have cited proliferation of private secondary schools, lack of well trained teachers, poor salaries and lack of learning and teaching materials. It has been suggested that unless these challenges are addressed, our education standards will keep on going down.

- **Conclude with a warning**

When using this method, make sure you present a sentence that sounds a warning. It is particularly effective when you are writing on a subject that has social connotations. You structure your conclusion in such a way that the warning is clearly seen.

Example

HIV is real. If we do not change our attitudes we may all die.

- **Conclude with a restatement of the thesis**

This is another simple but effective way of ending your essay. You merely restate the thesis. Concluding thesis should be paraphrased in slightly different words from your earlier thesis. You should also aim at pointing at the significance of the thesis statement.

Example

From the overwhelming evidence provided in this essay, it can safely be said that abstinence is the only way of avoiding HIV and AIDS.

Lesson 2 Stages in essay writing

Lesson Introduction

Having looked at the structure of an essay, it is now important that we get into the nitty-gritties on how that structure can be put together in order to create a meaningful essay. Many students struggle to put their ideas together let alone to get started. Writing the first paragraph is such a tall order for many students. This lesson has therefore, been arranged in such a way that it will give you guide you step by step on how you can get started and finish your essay. We hope that at the end of this lesson you will write essays without any struggles.

3.6. Stages in Essay Writing

The following paragraphs highlight different stages in the essay writing process:

3.6.1 Prewriting

Many people have trouble getting started with writing. You may not be able to think of an interesting topic or thesis. Or you may have trouble coming up with relevant details to support a possible thesis. Sometimes even after starting your essay, you may hit snags- moments when

you wonder, “What else can I say?” or “Where do I go next?”. Before you begin writing you decide what you are going to write about. Then you plan what you are going to write. This is called **pre-writing**. The following pages describe stages or techniques that will help you think about and develop a topic and get words on a piece of paper: (1) brainstorming, (2) listing, (3) clustering, and (4) free writing.

- **Technique 1: Brainstorming**

In this technique, you ask the six big questions: Who? Where? When? Why? What? How? These questions will help you generate details for your topic. Asking questions can be an effective way of getting yourself to think about the topic from a number of different angles.

- **Technique 2: Listing**

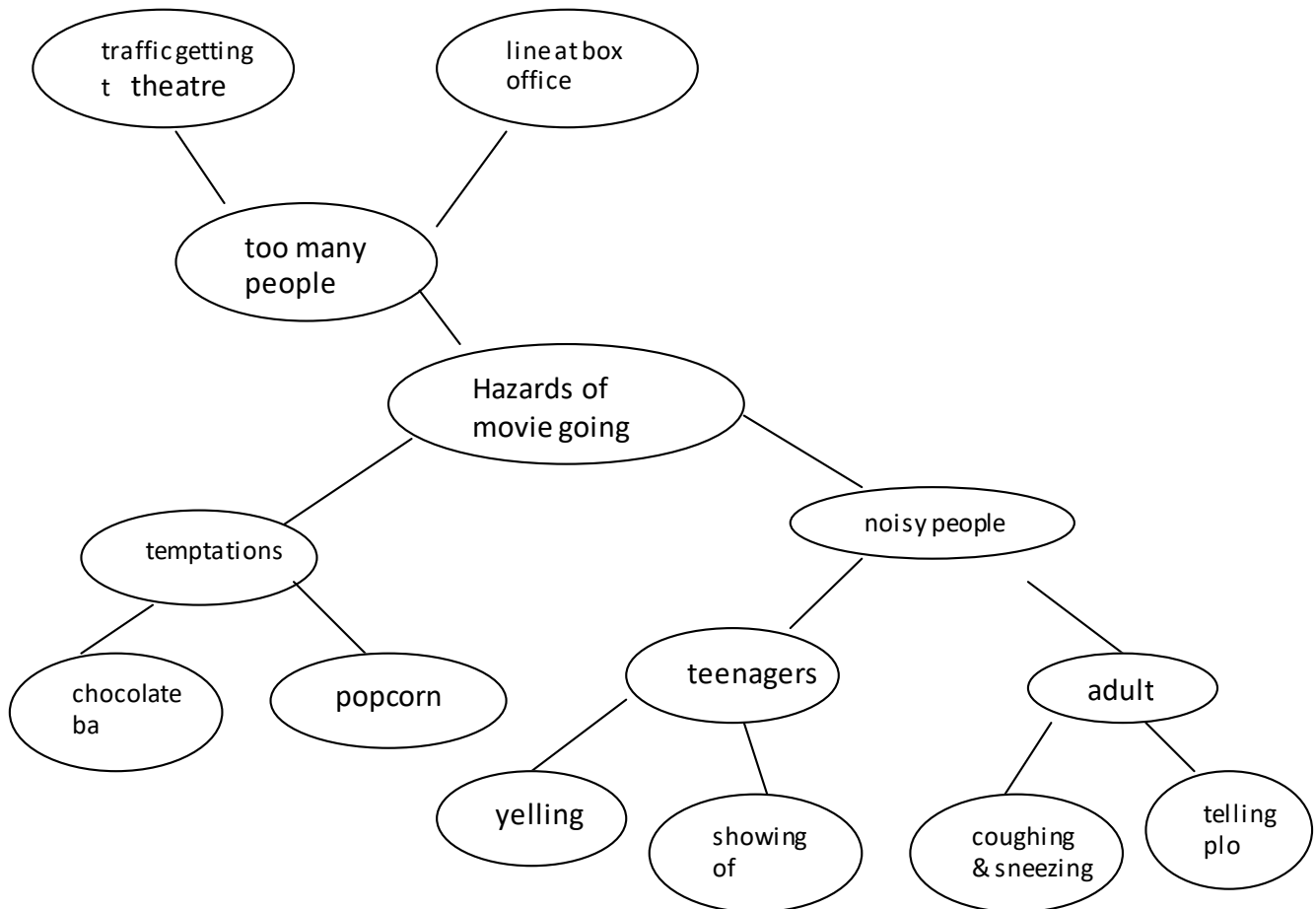
In this technique, you make a list. You collect a list of ideas and details that relate to your subject. Pile these items up, one after another randomly (without trying to sort out major details from minor ones or trying to put details in any special order). Your goal is just to make a list of everything about your subject that occurs to you.

- **Technique 3: Clustering**

This is also known as mind mapping or diagramming. This method is useful for people who like to do their thinking in a visual way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show relationships among the ideas and details that occur to you.

Begin by stating your subject in a few words in the centre of a blank sheet of paper. Then as ideas and details come to your mind, put them in boxes or circles around the subject and draw lines to connect them to each other and to the subject. Put minor ideas or details in smaller boxes or circles and use connecting lines to show how they relate as well. Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way of diagramming or clustering. It is a way to think on paper about how various ideas and details relate to one another. Below is an example of how diagramming can be used:

Diagramming of hazards of movie going



- **Technique 4: Free-writing**

Free-writing means jotting down in rough sentences or phrases everything that comes to the mind about a possible topic. See if you can write non-stop for ten minutes or more. Do not worry about spelling or punctuating correctly, about erasing mistakes, about organising material, or about finding exact words. Instead, explore an idea by putting down whatever pops into your head. If you get stuck for words, repeat yourself until more words come. There

is no need to feel inhibited, since mistakes *do not count* and you do not have to hand in your paper.

Free-writing will empower your writing muscles and make you familiar with the act of writing. It is a way to break through mental blocks about writing. Since you do not have to worry about mistakes, you can focus on discovering what you want to say about a subject. Your initial ideas and impressions will often become clear after you have gotten them down on paper and they may lead to other impressions and ideas.

3.6.2. Drafting your essay

When you have gathered your facts in the prewriting stage, it is now time to get started in writing your essay. The first step in this journey is by coming up with a draft where you prepare rough work. Drafting involves making preliminary version of your essay. In the first-draft stage, you want to get all your thoughts and ideas down on paper.

With your writing purpose, audience and method of development in mind, write your first draft fairly quickly. Do not stop to make corrections in such areas as spelling, grammar and punctuation as your main aim is to put your ideas on paper. The mistakes committed here will be rectified later on. As you develop your draft, make sure you stick closely to your outline otherwise if you do not then your piece of work lacks sound organisation.

Lesson 3 Revising your essay

Introduction

Writing a good essay is a process that involves navigating different stages. In this lesson we will look at how we can revise our work in order to create work that is free from avoidable mistakes and grammatical errors.

3.6.3. Revising your essay

The literal meaning of revise is ,to look again`. Therefore, during revision you should see if you have said what you wanted to say and if you have said it clearly and effectively. Ensure that

you take a careful look at the following: content (the material you have included in your essay i.e., is it suitable?); organisation i.e., has the material been well organised? and language i.e., have you used language effectively- thus have you used the right words in the right manner?

Things to consider when revising

If you want to do a good job during revision then the following things have to be considered:

a) Coherence

This refers to the fitting together of all parts of the essay. It is important when you are writing to ensure that your essay clearly connects to the thesis. Coherence should also be achieved within and without a paragraph(s). This is attained by having sentences that proceed logically. Coherence can also be achieved by using transitional markers. Transitional or linking sentences are used between paragraphs to help tie together the supporting paragraphs in an essay. They enable the reader to move smoothly from one idea to another. Here are some examples of transitional words:

- **Addition signals:** one, first of all, second, the third reason, also, next, in addition, moreover, furthermore, finally, last of all
- **Time signals:** first, then, next, after, as, before, while, meanwhile, soon, now, during, finally
- **Space signals:** next to, across, on the opposite side, to the left, to the right, above, below, near, nearby
- **Change of direction signals:** but, however, yet, in contrast, although, otherwise, still, on the contrary, on the other hand
- **Illustration signals:** for example, for instance, specifically, as an illustration, once, such as, to illustrate
- **Conclusion signals:** therefore, consequently, thus, then, as a result, in summary, to conclude, last of all, finally, in a nutshell, to sum up.

The above list is not exhaustive. You will come across many more transitional words. What is important though is to use them in your essays so as to achieve the coherence we are talking about. You can also achieve coherence by repeating key words in the preceding paragraph. What this entails is identifying key words in a paragraph and repeating them in the next paragraph. By doing this, you will allow for smooth transition from one paragraph to another.

b) Language

Another area that needs careful consideration when you are writing an essay is language. It is important to note that your essay is a formal document as such it must maintain formality. Always use formal language and never use any contracted versions of words. For instance, never write *can't* instead write *cannot*. You should also guard against use of slang language (these are very informal words and expressions that are more common in spoken language, especially used by a particular group of people). For example, words like ,guys`, ,bucks` ,buddies` etc should not find any place in your essay.

You should also avoid using clichés. As you may recall, a cliché is an expression that has lost its impact and meaning due to overuse. It may sound as a good expression but the fact that a myriad others have used it, renders it useless. More importantly, use of clichés undermines your creativity. Some examples of clichés include *last but not least* and *green with envy*.

c) Unity

An essay should show unity when all the components are related to the thesis statement or topic sentence. In other words, if you advance a single point and stick to that point, your essay will have unity. When writing make sure that all the material you include in your essay relates to the thesis. In addition, all the ideas in a paragraph should relate to the topic sentence. Avoid wandering off the topic.

To achieve unity, remove or rephrase all sentences that do not relate to the thesis and the topic sentence.

d) Support

Points advanced in your essay have to be supported with specific evidence. Make sure that the topic sentence of each paragraph is fully supported i.e. proved by adequate material such as examples and explanations. Do not just make an argument without any backing points. Also make sure that the treatment of your thesis is fully supported with materials it promises. You will recall that your thesis may state some points to be expounded in your body and when you are developing the body, ensure that this is done by providing as many facts as possible.

e) Sentences

Another way to demonstrate that you are a good writer is by writing good sentences. Good sentences are those that are free from errors and are composed in an especially impressive way. This is done by varying sentence lengths and sentence patterns. On sentence lengths, what you have to do is ensuring that your essay has both short and long sentences. Short sentences are particularly useful when you are emphasising points or introducing ideas. No matter what, never confine yourself to one type of sentences but always blend. Remember variety is the spice of life.

Similarly, make sure that your sentence patterns are varied. It is important to see to it that your essay contains simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Below is the meaning of these types of sentences:

Simple sentence: is a sentence that has only one main clause and no subordinate.

Examples: The boy ate the banana.

A man and his son watched the football match.

Compound sentence: is a sentence that has two or more main clauses and has no dependent clause.

Examples: John went to the market and James went to church.

The guests have no money; someone must lend them.

Complex sentence: is a sentence that has one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Examples: Although I was sick, I still wrote the examination.

After I finished washing my clothes, I went to the library.

Compound - complex sentence: is a sentence that has more than one main clause and at least one subordinate clause.

Example: If we win this game, we will go to Lilongwe; if we won't, we will lose everything.

3.6.4. Editing your essay

After revising your essay, the last thing you have to do is to edit your work. In editing, you carefully examine what you have written. Look for mistakes in grammar, punctuation, capitalisation, omission (words mistakenly left out), spellings and tenses. The best way to do this is to read your essay aloud to yourself or better still give it to trusted friends who will help you identify the errors committed.

Activity 4

1 Why is a thesis important?

a) Think of any topic and write a thesis statement.

- b) What type of approach have you used to develop the thesis?
- 2 Of the four stages in the essay writing process, which one appeals to you? Give reasons.
- 3 Define the term cliché.
- a) Write five examples of clichés.

Lesson 4 Types of essays

Lesson Introduction

As a student, you will be asked to write different types of essays. It follows therefore, that you get acquainted to various essay types. Much as there are different types, it should be borne in your mind that at times, the assignments you will be given will demand that you blend more than one type in your write up in order to come up with a more powerful and persuasive essay. Please take note of the differences and similarities for in the types of essays and see how you can successfully integrate them in your writing.

3.7. Types of essays

In this last segment, we will look at how we can write different essays. Make sure you notice the distinct features in each type.

3.7.1. Expository essay

Expository essays are simply essays that explain something with facts, as opposed to opinion. Development of these essays centres on the 5W's and H writing style (use of who, what, why, when and how). As you write expository essays, make sure you present and explain information. Mostly, expository essays are written in response to questions that ask the writer to expose or explain a specific topic. These implied questions may include:

- Who or what is the person or thing under discussion?

- Why is the person or thing important?
- What does the person do?
- How does the thing work?
- When did the event take place? Etc.

A response to the above questions will yield:

- Essays that describe how to do something
 - Essays that analyse events, ideas, objects, or written works ©
- Essays that explain/describe an historical event

As you write expository essays, make sure you are thorough enough and present sufficient information that fully explain the topic. Also bear in mind that expository essays should have the same basic structure as any typical essay. They must have an introduction, body and conclusion.

3.7.2. Descriptive essay

The word 'description' means to narrate something in such a way that the reader is able to visualise the image that is portrayed. It also means to paint a word picture. In light of this, descriptive essays are those that say what somebody or something is like. A descriptive essay mirrors the mood of the writer and conjures images that breathe. It has the ability to transfer emotions to the reader through the use of words.

A good descriptive essay arouses and appeals to the reader's senses. The arousal is so powerful that it impacts on the reader's mind to evoke a correct response.

As you write descriptive essays, make sure that your description focuses on the most significant details about your subject. Do not waste time dealing with trivia stuff. Also use concrete language as opposed to abstract language. Let us now look at how we can use concrete language.

The word *happy* much as it shows someone's state is abstract. We need to use a concrete word like *laughing* which physically shows the happiness in an individual. Similarly avoid saying ,She is *sad*` as the word ,sad` is abstract. Instead use a more concrete word like ,She is *sobbing*".

3.7.3. Argumentative essay

This type of essay is also known as **persuasive**. It does not only give information but also presents an argument with the *pros* (supporting ideas) and *cons* (opposing ideas) of an argumentative issue. It may also dwell on arguing from as many different perspectives or viewpoints as possible.

In this type of essay, your primary objective is to convince your audience to agree with your facts, share your values, accept your argument and conclusion and adopt your way of thinking or point of view. To achieve this, make sure that you clearly take your stand and write in a persuasive manner. It is also important to ensure that you aim at convincing your reader to agree with your ideas or convince him or her to follow a particular course of action.

Organisation of an argumentative essay

An argumentative essay follows the basic principles of essay writing. Make sure you handle the entire essay parts well.

Introduction

Your introduction should provide background information on your topic or controversy and hook your reader's attention. This should end with a clear statement of your main idea or point of view.

Body paragraphs

Here is where you advance your argument in a convincing and persuasive manner. Make sure that your body paragraphs present the points in support of your main point or your viewpoint. Always support your views with sound reasons. It does not help matters merely giving opinions without substantiating them.

Ways of supporting an argument

You can support your arguments by using:

- *Facts*- this is a powerful means of convincing your readers. You can get facts from your reading, observation or personal experience.
- *Statistics*- these can provide excellent support to your essay. Be sure your statistics come from responsible sources and always cite your sources.
- *Quotes* -use of direct quotes from leading experts or authorities in support of your arguments is valuable.
- *Examples*- examples enhance your meaning and make your ideas concrete. They are also a proof of the validity of your arguments.

To make your argument prominent, start by presenting opposing views and then proceed to counter them. You can also either deal with less important points first and work up to serious ones later or reverse the procedure, discussing the serious ones first then tailing off into minor ones towards the end.

It is also imperative to provide a balanced argument. Make sure that you explore the weaknesses and bombard them with the merits from left, centre and right.

Make your meaning clear. Do not be vague because vagueness has no place in an argumentative essay. Be explicit and make sure that your reasons, facts and opinions are expressed in such a way that the reader does not ask about what you are trying to mean.

Conclusion

It is important to creatively restate your main argument and supporting points. Give a summary of your argument at the end by stating a course of action you feel the readers should take. Finally, try to leave your audience even more connected to your topic and persuaded by your main idea or perspective.

Patterns of organising argumentative essays

As you are aware, all argumentative topics have PROS and CONS. Before starting writing, it is imperative to make a list of these ideas and choose the most suitable ones among them for supporting and refuting. There are three possible organisation patterns:

Pattern 1

Thesis statement

PRO idea 1

PRO idea 2

CON(s) + Refutation(s)

Conclusion

Pattern 2

Thesis statement:

CON(s) + Refutation(s)

PRO idea 1

PRO idea 2

Conclusion

Pattern 3

Thesis statement:

CON idea 1 -----> Refutation

CON idea 2 -----> Refutation

CON idea 3 -----> Refutation

Conclusion

Activity 5

- 1 Using any two relevant points, compare and contrast expository and argumentative essays.
- 2 What does a descriptive essay do?
- 3 Some scholars have argued that there is a thin line between expository and argumentative essay. Why is this so?

Self-assessment test

- 1 In your own words, define what an essay is.
- 2 Discuss why an introduction is one of the most important parts of your essay.
- 3 Mention any three methods of concluding your essay.
- 4 Of the three methods in (3) which, one in your opinion, is the best method? Provide reasons for your choice.
- 5 Think of any topic and identify the subject and the treatment.
- 6 Using your topic in (5) write an essay of not more than 300 words.
- 7 Why could division of essays into different types be merely a question of convenience than what the essays actually reveal on the ground?

Unit summary

In this unit, we have talked about what an essay is and how you can write it. If you may recall, we have said that an essay is a group of paragraphs that support a thesis. We have also highlighted some useful tips on how to get started and develop your essay in an impressive format that can fetch you good marks. Besides, we have analysed different types of essays you are likely to encounter in your academic work. It is our hope that you will be able to write good academic essays. In the next unit, we will talk about how you can maintain logic and sound reasoning as you advance your arguments.

Answers to Unit Activities

Activity 1

This is a personal question and there is no single correct answer. All you have to do is to compose any statement and be able to identify the subject and treatment as has been explained in this Unit.

Activity 2

You should write an introduction using one or a blend of the techniques for writing an effective introduction as has been highlighted in this Unit.

Activity 3

This is a straightforward activity. All you have to do is to fill in the blank spaces using the answers that have been presented by referring to the passage that has been given to you in this Unit.

Activity 4

- 1 It is important because it acts a roadmap for the essay thereby providing direction which you will take as you write you essay in order to be focussed.

- 2 a) You are at liberty to come up with any topic and ensure that the thesis statement you develop has subject and treatment as has been highlighted in this Unit. Think of any topic and write a thesis statement.
b) Answer to this will depend on how you have developed your thesis and make sure you are able to justify why you think you have used a particular approach.
- 3 This is a personal question that depends on what stage appeals to. Whatever stage you choose, make sure you give reasons to substantiate your answer.
- 4 It is an expression that has lost its impact due to overuse is best used in conversations not formal writing. Provide any examples of clichés.

Self-assessment test

1. Use your own words to define what an essay is. Remember an essay has multiple paragraphs that support a thesis.
2. Because that's where focus and roadmap of your essay is presented.
3. Mention any three methods for concluding essays as highlighted in this Unit.
4. This question gives you a leeway to choose any method that appeals to you. All you should remember to do is to give reason for any choice you make.
5. Develop a thesis statement from a topic of your choice and be able to identify the subject and treatment.
6. Using your topic in (5) you should write an essay that reflects its basic structures as well as effective techniques for developing all the essay parts.
7. Because in normal circumstances one is bound to write an essay that blends all the types discussed in this Unit.

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Unit 4 – Referencing and Citation

Introduction

In the previous Unit you learnt about essay writing. This Unit builds on that and adds a new dimension in the essay writing process which is known as referencing. The Unit emphasises the importance of acknowledging information that you use in writing different types of academic papers. It also explains the different methods of presenting information and provides examples of how different materials can be cited. We hope that after studying this Unit, you will be able to effectively cite in all your sources of information.

Areas of emphasis

- Definition of an essay
- Parts of an essay
- Stages in the essay writing process
- Types of essays

Key words

- Referencing,
- References,
- Citation,
- Reference entry,
- Plagiarism,
- Paraphrasing,
- Summary,
- Quotation,
- APA citation style,
- Publication information

Prerequisite knowledge

It is very likely that you have written essays before. If not, definitely you have come across essays, read them, or probably analysed them. More importantly, in our previous Unit, we talked about how you can acknowledge information when writing essays. This knowledge is very important and it forms the bedrock for your understanding of this unit.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Define the term referencing.
- Explain the importance of referencing
- Explain reasons for avoiding plagiarism
- Differentiate different techniques of citing information within text
- Apply APA citation style in your writing

Resources needed

- Any text book containing sample essays
- Pens and sheets of paper
- Newspapers
- Journal article

Time required

You will need at least 20 hours to adequately study this unit.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: Referencing and citation

Lesson 2: Plagiarism

Lesson 3: Presentation of source material in a text

Lesson 4: How to use American Psychological Association Citation Style

Lesson 1 – References and Citation

Lesson Introduction

Academic institutions (particularly academic writing) and scientific publications demand references for all sources used in the course of writing. Students and researchers often view this as a complicated process that requires too much time and effort. The complexity of this exercise, to the students, increases as there are various types of information materials consulted in the course of writing their research and related assignments (term papers, essays, articles, research projects, among others). In any academic writing you will be expected to write reference or cite sources of information that you have used. Such sources of Information materials include all print and non-print materials such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, reports, students' projects (like theses and dissertations), dictionaries, encyclopaedia, letters, lecture/class notes, posters, manuals, brochures, directories and, photographs etc. Other electronic resources include web pages, social network text, archived e-mails and messages, online audio and video files.

In this Unit, citation and referencing process is set out in detail. You as both a student and a researcher, are reminded of the importance of citation and referencing. In this Unit you will also be drilled on how you can use American Psychological Association citation in all your academic pieces of writing. It is hoped that this Unit will give you the basic foundation for your academic writing.

4.1. Referencing and Citation

In academic writing **Referencing** is also known as **documenting**. It refers to citing, acknowledging or giving credit to sources of the information or views on which you are expressing your own opinion in your essay. Citing a source means that you show, within the body of your text, that you took words, ideas, figures, images, etc from another place. What this implies is that in academic work, referencing is the appropriate acknowledgement of ideas and work that originate from another person. Referencing also denotes that the

information that you have included in your work that comes from some other source (which is not common knowledge or widely accepted).

The terms cite and refer (or citation and reference) are often used to mean the same thing since to cite a piece of work is to provide a reference to its source. A citation is the part of the reference that you include within the main body of your work whenever you directly quote from, paraphrase, summarize or refer to work produced by another author. In academic writing you must always cite (list/show) your sources of information, in other words, you should always give credit where it is due. Citations consist of standard elements, and contain all the information necessary to identify and track down publications, including: *author name (s), titles of books, articles, and journals, date of publication, page numbers, volume and issue numbers (for articles)*

4.1.1. Importance of Referencing

There are a number of reasons for referencing information. Some of them are:

- To avoid plagiarism, i.e. using someone else's ideas as if they were your own. In other words, plagiarism is stealing someone's ideas or words. This is a very serious offence in academic writing and can land you onto punishments like disqualification. If it is found that you have plagiarised- deliberately or inadvertently, you may also face serious consequences- getting a zero grade, or even getting dismissed from the university.
- To facilitate development of ideas and scientific discoveries in all academic disciplines. This is so because information from experts can be used as a yardstick in dealing with different issues as well as in presenting theories that can help solve different problems.
- To make your material authentic, reliable, believable or respectable. It supports and strengthens your argument. Every academic paper is in essence an argument, not in the everyday use of this word, but an argument in the sense that you take a position on an issue and support it with evidence gathered from the sources you have read.
- To give the readers a chance to read more on the subject, or to inspect your source for themselves (to track down the sources you used). Referencing demonstrates that you

have read. As a student writer your purpose is to show your reader (your marker) that you have read, thought about and come to a point of view on the assigned topic. This provides details of sources referred to in your paper so that readers can access them.

- To demonstrate that you are a responsible scholar by giving credit to other researchers and acknowledging their ideas.
- It is a proof that research is substantial and is based on facts.
- It shows the theoretical foundation of the research.

Activity 1

1. Define the term referencing?
2. State any four reasons why referencing is important.
3. Using one example in each case, distinguish common knowledge from well-known fact.

Lesson 2 Plagiarism

Lesson Introduction

As the foregoing section has already indicated, academic writing does not condone stealing of other people's ideas. It is recommended that every time you lift information from other sources, you must cite that. This lesson therefore, emphasises the concept of plagiarism and gives you some tips on how it is committed and how you can avoid it. It is expected that after going through this lesson you will gain good grounding on the importance of avoiding plagiarism.

4.2. Avoid Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when you copy directly from someone else's work without acknowledging (citing) the original author. In other words, it appears as if the work is all your own. This looks as if you are taking credit for someone else's work. It is a form of cheating and in academic writing, there can be severe penalties for plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when you borrow another persons' words (or ideas) and do not acknowledge that you have done so. In

academia, our words and ideas are our intellectual property and cannot be used without our permission.

Most assignments require you to read widely and refer to the work of other people. In both written work and oral presentations, you need to refer to the published work of others as evidence of the accuracy and reliability of the ideas and information. Failing to acknowledge the source (plagiarism) can be a very serious offence in academic studies. Plagiarism can be avoided if you reference your sources properly. Therefore, it is important to know how to correctly acknowledge the sources you use and to be familiar with the referencing style(s) used in your courses.

4.2.1 How plagiarism occurs in academic writing

In written assignments, plagiarism occurs if the sources of information are not acknowledged when:

- using words or sentences 'word-for-word' from the original text (quoting)
- presenting someone else's tables, graphs or images
- expressing ideas from a text in different words (paraphrasing)
- giving a short version of someone else's ideas (summarising).

4.2.2. Other Instances of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can also occur if:

- you copy another student's assignment, in part or in whole
- you write your assignment in conjunction with other students without prior permission (This does not mean you shouldn't meet with other students initially to discuss the assignment topic and/or analyse the question.)

- the assignment you submit has already been submitted for assessment in another course
- you give a direct reference to an author you have not read (although you may have read about them)
- you falsify data.

Whether plagiarism occurs deliberately or by accident, it is still your responsibility and the best way to avoid plagiarism is to cite your sources- both within the body of your paper and in a bibliography/references of the sources you used at the end of your paper.

4.3. Knowing what material requires acknowledging

It is important to appreciate that not all material requires acknowledging. For instance, when you are writing about issues of common knowledge, you are not supposed to cite the source. For example, if you are in Malawi, you are not required to cite the fact that Mzuzu is one of the cities. What you would cite is when you want to name the date when Mzuzu was declared a city. Similarly, if you were to say that Nyasaland was a British protectorate until 1964 or Muluzi was elected president in 1994. You do not need to cite this information. But if you gave the total number of votes that Muluzi won in the 1994 Parliamentary and General Elections, then you must cite the source of the figures so that others can verify whether what you are saying is correct or wrong.

Apart from issues of common knowledge, you are also not required to cite well known facts. For instance, you do not need to attribute the fact that Britain was one of the countries that fought the Slave Trade. But you must acknowledge the source of an argument that Britain fought the Slave Trade because she wanted to replace it with a more profitable and more convenient trade in raw materials.

The following are examples of materials that require to be acknowledged:

- Direct quotations: whenever you use someone's words, even if it is just a phrase, put quotation marks around it and acknowledge the source.
- Facts that are not widely known such as statistics and can be questioned by other people.

- Judgements or opinions of others. Whenever you present another person's opinion, even if you paraphrase it, you must cite the source of the opinion.
- Statistics, charts, tables, diagrams and graphs must all be acknowledged if they do not originate from your own field research. Even when a chart or a graph is your own, you must acknowledge the source.
- To acknowledge the sources of all specific information, be it from primary or secondary source.

Activity 2

1. In your own words, state what plagiarism is.
2. Why is plagiarism an academic offense?
3. Why may it be necessary to cite the sources of opinions and judgements?

Lesson 3 Presentation of Source Material in a Text

Lesson Introduction

Presentation of information from different sources does not happen haphazardly. It needs to be done in an orderly fashion and using a systematic way otherwise your academic may lack the necessary impact. This lesson therefore, aims at teaching you how you can weave other people's ideas or information in your piece of academic writing. Much as we have different methods, you must appreciate that you are at liberty to integrate all of them in one write up. What matters though is using each method as effectively as possible.

4.4. Methods to use when presenting source material in your text

4.4.1. Using Paraphrases

A paraphrase is when you write published information and ideas in your own words without changing its original meaning. Thus, what you do is to restate the material in your own words (to express what somebody has said or written in different words, especially in order to make it easier to understand) It is a legitimate way to include the ideas of others, when appropriately referenced. A paraphrase is usually about the same

length as the original, as opposed to a summary which is usually much shorter. It is important that the sentence structure and the vocabulary are different from the original.

Writing a paraphrase

To paraphrase, use the following steps:

- Change the structure of the sentences
- Change the words

It is not enough to do just one of these; you need to change both the structure and the words.

Changing the structure of a sentence or paragraph

Use the following steps to change the structure of a text.

1. Read the original until you understand its full meaning.
2. Write down the main points or words. Do not copy down entire sentences.
3. Put the text away and, using the main points, write your paraphrase. This means that you are not copying the text word for word.
1. Check what you have written against the original text. You should check that they are not the same, as well as checking that the meaning is still the same, as well as checking that the meaning is still the same.

Changing the words

People's writing styles and the words they use are very distinct. It is generally easy to tell when someone has copied directly from a textbook, as the language and the words used change from the writer's normal style and vocabulary. To paraphrase a text, follow these steps.

1. Read the sentence or paragraph you want to paraphrase a number of times to get the meaning of the text. Once you understand it, write out the sentence in your own words. If you do not fully understand the text, do not attempt to paraphrase it, as you will just copy it.
2. Circle the specialised words, i.e. the words that the text is actually about. These will need to be included in your paraphrase, as without these words, the meaning of the paraphrase can change.

3. Underline any keywords that *can* be changed.
4. Find other words and phrases that have similar meanings that can be used to replace the keywords in the text. Use a thesaurus or dictionary, or look for synonyms in your word processing software.

4.4.2. Using Summaries

These are short statements that give only the main points of something, not details. A summary is a concise record of the main points, of a text presented in your own words. In your citation, summaries are used when you want to present in brief only the general idea of large amounts of information from other people.

Unlike a paraphrase, which is generally of a similar length to the original text, a summary is much shorter. When summarising, you should not alter:

- the author's original idea(s)
- the degree of certainty with which the ideas are expressed.

To create a good summary, you should read the article or text a number of times to develop a clear understanding of:

- the author's ideas and intentions
- the meaning and details
- the force with which the ideas are expressed.

Writing a summary

Use the following steps to write a summary.

1. Write notes in point form using keywords; this will make it easier to express the ideas in your own words.
2. Write the summary directly from your notes without re-reading the passage.
3. Refer back to the original to ensure that your summary is a true reflection of the

writer's ideas.

Tips

- Topic sentences provide a quick outline of the topic and the main idea in a paragraph.
- When summarising a chapter or article, the introduction and conclusion should provide a good overview of the content.
- Summaries need to be referenced. Whether you have summarised or paraphrased an author's words, ideas, or diagram, a reference to the original source must be provided.

4.4.3. Using Quotations

A quotation refers to a group of words or short piece of writing taken from a book, play, speech, etc. and repeated because it is interesting or useful. Direct quotes show where another person's original thoughts, words, ideas, images etc., have been used word-for-word. Quotations are used to:

- acknowledge the direct use of someone's words, thoughts, etc.
- enable the reader to access your sources.

When you are writing essays you are supposed to use quotations but always remember that your essay must be in your own words. Depend on other people's words as little as possible. Avoid over-quoting in your essay.

Only quote:

- A statement expressed so effectively by the author that it cannot be paraphrased without altering its meaning.
- To allow words of an author (expert) to strengthen your argument.

In your text, the quoted sentence of fewer than 40 words should always appear in double quotation marks. However, display a quotation of more than 40 words in a free-standing block and omit quotation marks. Start such a *block quotation* on a new line, indented five spaces from the left margin. Type the entire quotation double-spaced on the new margin and leave space or a line before any subsequent paragraphs.

For a quotation of less than 40 words follow these steps to use direct quotes in your assignments:

1. Copy the exact words from the original source.
2. Use the quotation within your own sentence, i.e. don't quote an entire sentence and use on its own.
3. Use quotation marks at the beginning and end of the copied text.
4. Reference with appropriate author, year and page-number information in the reference style used in your course.

The following examples illustrate the application of American Psychological Association (APA) style to direct quotation of a source:

Quotation 1

He stated that, 'many people catch the virus willingly not ignorantly because of their failure to exercise self-control' (Smith, 2002, p. 200).

Quotation 2

Smith (2002) found that 'many people catch the virus willingly not ignorantly because of their failure to exercise self-control' (p. 200).

Quotation 3

Smith (2002) found the following:

Many people catch the virus willingly not ignorantly because of their failure to exercise self-control. This is particularly true amongst the youths who spend much of their time talking about sexual issues, watch pornographic films as well as read materials that arouse them. By the end of the day, because these people do not have reliable girlfriends they end up hooking prostitutes with whom they engage in unsafe sex. Sadly, instead of changing, this trend persists. As a result, many youths are dying prematurely leaving behind old parents in need of support. (p.200)

You can place a quotation anywhere in your text: at the beginning of a paragraph, in the middle or at the end of a paragraph.

4.4.3.1. When do we use and what does the word “Sic” mean?

The Latin adverb *sic* ("thus"; in full: *sic erat scriptum*, "thus was it written") inserted immediately after a quoted word or passage, indicates that the quoted matter has been transcribed exactly as found in the source text, complete with any erroneous or archaic spelling, surprising assertion, faulty reasoning, or other matter that might otherwise be taken as an error of transcription. It means “that’s really how it appears in the original.” It is used to point out a grammatical error, misspelling, misstatement of fact, or, as above, the unconventional spelling of a name.

Activity 3

1. What is the difference between a paraphrase and a summary?
2. In what circumstances do you use a quotation?
3. Take any newspaper of your choice, read three paragraphs and write:
 - a) a summarised version of the three paragraphs.
 - b) a paraphrase of the three paragraphs.
4. Read a paragraph in any book and present short and long quotations from that paragraph.

Lesson 4 Styles of Documenting Information in Your Text

Lesson Introduction

There are several types of referencing styles (formats) and these depend on the field

understudy or institutional choice (s). Whatever style you adopt, always ensure that uniformity is maintained in your citations, i.e., do not mix different referencing styles in one document or paper. In this lesson, you will be provided with detailed information on how you can cite information from various sources using American Psychological Association (APA) Style. In case your Department does not recommend APA, please, be prepared to master the other citation styles.

4.5. Styles of documenting information in your text

There are a number of referencing styles and some are simple to use while others are hard. Preference on which style to use is dependent on the institution in question and it may vary from place to place. In this section, we will discuss American Psychological Association. Much as this is the case, you should appreciate that there also other styles such Modern Language Association (MLA), Vancouver, Harvard and Chicago Manual of Styles. At Mzuzu University, we recommend usage of APA style of citation but you should be prepared to learn how to use other citation styles as may be prescribed by specific departments and faculties at the University.

4.5.1. The American Psychological Association (APA) style Style of documentation

This style, in most cases, resembles the Harvard System of referencing save for a few distinctive features. The APA style presents sources in parentheses. As a result, in most cases it is commonly known as The APA style for parenthetical citation. All quotations, paraphrases, summaries and other material from other sources are documented within the text of your paper. Generally, the APA format does not use foot notes and is often favoured by people because of its simplicity. There is no need to re-order and re-number references as it happens with other styles.

4.5.2. Footnotes

Footnotes are used to provide additional content or to acknowledge copyright permission status.

4.5.2.1. Content footnotes

Content footnotes supplement or amplify substantive information in the text; they should not include complicated, irrelevant, or nonessential information. Because they can be distracting to readers, such footnotes should be included only if they strengthen the discussion. A content footnote should convey just one idea; if you find yourself creating paragraphs or displaying equations as you are writing a footnote, then the main text or an appendix probably would be a more suitable place to present your information. Another alternative is to indicate in a short footnote that the material is available online as supplemental material. In most cases, an author integrates an article best by presenting important information in the text, not in a footnote.

Number all footnotes consecutively in the order in which they appear in the essay with superscript Arabic numerals. Footnote numbers should be superscripted, like this,¹ following any punctuation mark except a dash. A footnote number that appears with a dash-like this 2- always precedes the dash. (The number falls inside a closing parenthesis if it applies only to matter within the parentheses, like this.)² Do not place footnote numbers in text headings. Subsequent references to a footnote are by parenthetical note: the same results (see Footnote 3), do not use *Ibid.*

4.5.2.2. What does *Ibid* mean?

Ibid is an abbreviation of the Latin word “**ibidem**,” which means “in the same place.” It is used in formal writing to indicate that a reference is from the same source as a previous reference

in other words it is used in citations to refer again to the last source previously referenced. It is not used in APA Style; instead give each citation using author names as usual.

4.5.3. How to use the APA format for parenthetical citations

When using APA parenthetical citation observe the following features:

- Parenthetical citations correspond to full bibliographic entries in a list of references at the end of the text.
- Generally, the author's name is used in a signal phrase to introduce the cited material, and the date, in parentheses, immediately follows the author's name
- For a quotation, the page number, preceded by *p.,pp.*, appears in parentheses after the quotation.

4.5.4. APA format for a list of references

Before we consider the format for arranging references when you are using APA style, it is important to appreciate the differences between reference and bibliography.

References refer to the alphabetical list of the sources cited in your essay. On the other hand, *bibliography* is a list of everything you have read as background for your essay.

References should capture only those materials actually cited in your paper whereas a bibliography will contain both cited and uncited material. The terms bibliography and reference may be used the other way round when you are dealing with other styles of citation.

When you are writing references or bibliography make sure that you follow these:

- Start your list on a separate page after the text of your essay but before any appendices that explain your research procedures or results and any notes.
- Continue the consecutive numbering of pages.
- Type the heading 'References,' neither underlined nor in quotation marks, centred on top of the page.

- Double-space and begin your first entry.
- Do not indent the first line of each entry, but indent any subsequent lines of the entry five spaces.
- Double-space the entire list.
- List your sources alphabetically (i.e. from A to Z) by author's last names.
- If the source is anonymous author, alphabetise it by the first major word of the title.

The APA style specifies treatment and placement of four basic elements - author, publication date, title, and publisher information. These are integral parts and every time you are writing academic papers ensure that you have used them appropriately. Let us now look at these four basic elements in detail:

Author

List all authors last name first, and use only initials for first and middle names. Separate the names of multiple authors with commas and use an ampersand (abbreviated 'and') before the last author's name. For example, Banda, L., & Phiri, K.

Publication date

Enclose the date in parentheses (brackets). Use only the year for books and journals, use the year, a comma, and the month or month and day for magazines. Do not abbreviate the month.

Title

Underline titles (or italicise titles) and subtitles of books and periodicals. Do not enclose titles of articles in quotation marks. For books and articles capitalise only the first word of the title and subtitle and any proper nouns or proper adjectives.

Publication information

For a book, list the city of publication (and the country or postal abbreviation for the state if the city is unfamiliar), a colon, and the publisher's name, dropping any *Inc.*, *Co.*, or *Publishers*. For a periodical, follow the periodical title with a comma, the volume number, the issue number (if appropriate) in parentheses, a comma and the inclusive page numbers of the article. For newspapers, include the abbreviations *p.* ("page") or *pp.* („pages").

Let us now look at how different materials are presented in in-text citation and bibliography or references for various kinds of sources:

In the text	
Placement	<p>In-text citations generally consist of the surname(s) of the author(s), the year of publication of the work cited, and page number(s) if necessary, enclosed within parentheses. For example:</p> <p>The most recent report (Smith, 2016) on the use of ...</p> <p>If the author's name forms part of the discussion, the parenthesis can be limited to the year of publication. For example:</p> <p>Smith (2016) found that the use of ...</p> <p>If <i>both</i> the author's name <i>and</i> the year form part of the discussion, no parentheses need be added. For example:</p> <p>In 2016, Smith's report on the use of ...</p> <p>If a citation appears within parenthetical text, place the year within commas (not square brackets). For example:</p> <p>Even if a reference includes a month and a day of the month, include only the year in the in-text citation.</p>
Page, chapter, etc. number	<p>(Smith, 2016, p. 6) or (Chen, 2016, Chapter 5)</p> <p>Page number ranges are preceded by "pp." and a space, and linked with an en dash, e.g. "pp. 156–163".</p>
With a quotation	<p>This is the text, and Smith (2016) says "quoted text" (p. 1), which supports my argument.</p> <p>This is the text, and this is supported by "quoted text" (Smith, 2016, p. 1).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">This is a displayed quotation. (Smith, 2016, p. 1)</p>
One author	<p>Author named in signal phrase</p> <p>David (2003) argues that many women are unfairly discriminated against contesting in parliamentary seats.</p> <p>As Briggs (1970) observes, parents play an important role in building their children's self-esteem because "children value themselves to the degree that they have been valued" (p. 14).</p> <p>Smith (2016) or (Smith, 2016). Arrange multiple works by the same author in different years in chronological order, separated by a comma (e.g. Smith, 1990, 1995, in press). If the primary authors of two or more works in the reference list have</p>

	<p>the same surname, include the first author's initials in all in-text citations even if the year of publication differs (J. Dawson, 1990; M. Dawson, 1986).</p> <p>Author named in parenthetical citation</p> <p>When you do not name the author in your text, give the name and the date, separated by a comma, in parentheses at the end of the cited material.</p> <p>One study has found that 68 % of people working as sex workers in the Northern Region of Malawi are HIV positive (Phiri, 2000).</p>
Two authors	<p>Use both names in all citations. Join the names with <i>and</i> in a signal phrase, but use the abbreviated and (&) instead in a parenthetical reference.</p> <p>Smith and Jones (2016) or (Smith & Jones, 2016). If both authors of a work have the same surname, include the first author's initials in all in-text citations (e.g. M. A. Light & Light, 2008).</p>

Three to five authors	Cite all authors' names the first time the reference occurs in the text (e.g. Kisangau, Lyaruu, Hosea, & Joseph, 2007). In subsequent citations, include only the name of the first author followed by "et al." and the year of publication, e.g. Kisangau et al. (2007) or (Kisangau et al., 2007).
Six or more authors	Cite only the surname of the first author followed by "et al." and the year of publication, e.g. Smith et al. (2016) or (Smith et al., 2016).
Multiple works by the same author or author group with the same publication date	Add a, b, c, etc. after the year; repeat the year. The sequence is determined by the order of the entries in the reference list, where such references are ordered alphabetically by their title: (Chen, 2011a, 2011b, in press-a; Chen et al., 2016a, 2016b).
Non-identical author groups with the same first author in the same year	If the first author's name and the year of publication are identical for two or more references, cite the surname of the first author and as many co-authors as necessary to distinguish the references, followed by a comma and et al. Include just enough names to eliminate ambiguity. For example: Ireys, Chernoff, DeVet, et al. (2001) and Ireys, Chernoff, Stein, et al. (2001)
Multiple citations within the same parentheses	When two or more works are cited within the same parentheses, arrange them into the same order in which they appear in the reference list: (Brown, 1980; Dawson & Briggs, 1974; Dawson & Jones, 1974; A. L. Smith, 1978; G. T. Smith, 1978; Smith et al., 1978; Tyndall et al., 1978; Willis, 1978) An exception to this rule is that a major citation may be separated from other citations within parentheses using a phrase such as "see also": (Willis, 1978; see also Brown, 1980; Dawson & Briggs, 1974; Dawson & Jones, 1974; A. L. Smith, 1978; G. T. Smith, 1978; Smith et al., 1978; Tyndall et al., 1978)
Organization as author (group author)	The name of an organization can be spelled out each time it appears in an in-text citation, or spelled out only the first time and abbreviated thereafter. A general rule is that enough information needs to appear in the in-text citation to enable the reference to be located easily in the list. An abbreviation (if required) is introduced when the name of the organization first appears in an in-text citation, e.g. American College of Surgeons (ACS, 2001) or (American College of Surgeons [ACS], 2001) For subsequent in-text citations, ACS (2001) or (ACS, 2001) would be used.

No identified author	<p>If a work has no identified author, begin the in-text citation with the first few words of the reference list entry (usually the title or the first few words, e.g. "Editorial," 2000). If the author is designated as "Anonymous", cite the work as such in the text (Anonymous, 1998).</p> <p>The school profiles for the Division substantiates this trend (Guide to Secondary Schools, 1983)</p>
Specific parts of a source	<p>If you want to cite specific parts of a source such as a chapter or section, use abbreviations (<i>chap.</i>, <i>p.</i>, and so on) in parenthetical citation to name the part you are citing.</p> <p>Montgomery (1988, chap. 9) argues that his research yielded the opposite results.</p>
Multiple dates	<p>For in-text citations to publications with a range of dates, give the first and last years of publication linked with an en dash: (Author, 1959–1963).</p> <p>For in-text citations to reprinted publications, give the date of the original and of the reprint linked by a solidus/forward slash: (Author, 1970/1988).</p>
Unknown date	<p>For in-text citations to publications with no date, use "n.d." within parentheses: (Author, n.d.)</p>
Classical or religious work	<p>Works such as the Bible and the Qur'an are cited only in the text. Identify in the first in-text citation the version used, e.g. 1 Cor. 13:1 (King James Version)</p>
Personal communication	<p>Personal communications include private letters, memos, personal interviews, telephone conversations, email, and messages from online discussion groups, etc. Where they do not provide recoverable data, personal communications are cited only in the text and not included in the reference list. Include the initials as well as the surname of the communicator and provide as exact a date as possible, for example:</p> <p>T. K. Lutes (personal communication, April 18, 2001) (V.-G. Nguyen, personal communication, September 28, 1998)</p>

Tables and figures

	<p>References in a table are usually most appropriately put in footnotes to the table. If references must appear within the field of a table, use a separate column or row for them and supply an appropriate heading to identify them.</p> <p>Do not use references within figures, charts, graphs or illustrations. If such references are needed to support the data or methods, put them in the caption.</p>
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Reference list	
Order	<p>At the end of a document, list the references to sources that have been cited in the text, including those found in tables and figures, under the heading “References”.</p> <p>Place references in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author followed by the initials of the author’s given name. Arrange references with the same</p>

	<p>author(s) by year of publication, beginning with the earliest.</p> <p>If several items have the same first author, both alone and with co-authors, arrange the single-author items before any multi-author items. Arrange the multi-author publications alphabetically by the surname of the second author or, if the second author is the same, by the surname of the third author, etc.</p> <p>Items by the same author(s) with the same publication date are arranged alphabetically by title (excluding “A”, “An” or “The”) unless they are identified as belonging to a series, in which case arrange them in series order. Add a lower-case letter (a, b, c, etc.) after the year:</p> <p>Smith, J. (2016a). Smith, J. (2016b).</p> <p>When organizations serve as authors, alphabetize by the first significant word of the name. Full official names should be used in the list (e.g. American Psychological Association, not APA). The name of a parent body precedes that of a subdivision (e.g. University of Michigan, Department of Psychology).</p> <p>If no authors are present, move the title to the author position and alphabetize the entry by the first significant word of the title.</p> <p>If a work is actually signed “Anonymous”, begin the reference with and alphabetize by the word Anonymous in the reference list.</p>
Form of author name	<p>Begin with the surname, followed by the initials, e.g. Author, A. A. Separate successive author names from one another by a comma and a space, e.g. Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C.</p> <p>If the reference list includes more than one author with the same surname and first initial, the authors’ full first names may be given in square brackets, e.g.</p> <p>Smith, J. [Jane]. (2012). Smith, J. [John]. (2016).</p> <p>If an author’s first name is hyphenated, retain the hyphen and add a full stop (period) after each initial, e.g. Latour, J.-B.</p> <p>Place any family designation of rank after the initials, e.g. Author, A. A., Jr.</p>
Date of publication	<p>The year of publication is required for all references. The month is also required when citing a journal that has no volume or issue number, or a presentation at a conference; the month and day of the month are required when citing a magazine, a newsletter or a newspaper.</p> <p>For articles <i>accepted for publication</i> but not yet published, use (in press).</p> <p>If no date of publication is available, use (n.d.).</p>

Title	<p>If the original version of a non-English work is used as a source, cite the original version. Give the original title and, in square brackets, the English translation of the title. Capitalize non-English titles according to the conventions of the particular language.</p> <p>If the English translation of a non-English work is used as a source, cite the English translation. Give the English title without square brackets.</p>
Journal	
Volume and issue numbers	The issue number can be omitted if the journal is paginated consecutively through the volume, but it is not incorrect to include it. Enclose issue information in parentheses. Link multiple volume or issue numbers with an en dash.
Page numbers	List the first and last pages of the article, linked with an en dash, e.g. "156–163".
DOIs	There is no need for authors to include DOI numbers for <i>published</i> articles in a manuscript; these will be added as links in any online version of the article by the typesetter as part of the production process.
Basic format (with one author)	<p>Author, A. A. (Year). Title of article: And subtitle. <i>Journal Title</i>, volume (issue), pages.</p> <p>Fauci, A. S. (2002). Smallpox vaccination policy: The need for dialogue. <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i>, 346(17), 1319–1320.</p>
Two authors	Light, M. A., & Light, I. H. (2008). The geographic expansion of Mexican immigration in the United States and its implications for local law enforcement. <i>Law Enforcement Executive Forum Journal</i> , 8, 73–82.
Three to seven authors	<p>Include all authors' names in the reference list.</p> <p>Good, C. D., Johnsrude, I. S., Ashburner, J., Henson, R. N. A., Firston, K. J., & Frackowiak, R. S. J. (2001). A voxel-based morphometric study of ageing in 465 normal adult human brains. <i>NeuroImage</i>, 14, 21–36.</p>
More than seven authors	<p>List the <i>first six</i> names, followed by an ellipsis ..., then the <i>last</i> author's name.</p> <p>Gilbert, D. G., McClernon, F. J., Rabinovich, N. E., Sugai, C., Plath, L. C., Asgaard, G., ... Botros, N. (2004). Effects of quitting smoking on EEG activation and attention last for more than 31 days and are more severe with stress, dependence, DRD2 A1 allele, and depressive traits. <i>Nicotine and Tobacco Research</i>, 6, 249–267.</p>

Organization as author (group author)	American College of Surgeons, Committee on Trauma, Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Outcomes, Working Group. (2001). Practice management guidelines for emergency department thoracotomy. <i>Journal of the American College of Surgeons</i> , 193(3), 303–309.
No identified author	Editorial: “What is a disaster” and why does this question matter? [Editorial]. (2006). <i>Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management</i> , 14, 1–2.
No volume or issue number	Sampat, P. (2000, January–February). Groundwater shock: The polluting of the world’s major freshwater stores. <i>World Watch</i> , 10–22.
Article in a supplement	Ochi, K., Sugiura, N., Komatsuzaki, Y., Nishino, H., & Ohashi, T. (2003). Patency of inferior meatal antrostomy. <i>Auris Nasus Larynx</i> , 30(Suppl.), S57–S60.
Not in English	Guimard, P., & Florin, A. (2007). Les évaluations des enseignants en grande section de maternelle sont-elles prédictives des difficultés de lecture au cours préparatoire? [Are teacher ratings in kindergarten predictive of reading difficulties in first grade?]. <i>Approche Neuropsychologique des Apprentissages chez l'Enfant</i> , 19, 5–17.
Article published online ahead of placement in an issue	<p>Author, A. (Year). Title of article: And subtitle. <i>Journal Title</i>. Advance online publication. [Retrieved from URL] or [DOI]</p> <p>Von Ledebur, S. C. (2007). Optimizing knowledge transfer by new employees in companies. <i>Knowledge Management Research & Practice</i>. Advance online publication. doi:10.1057/palgrave/kmrp.8500141</p> <p>If the DOI of the article is not provided, include the URL of the article or the journal’s home page. No retrieval date is needed. Do not add a period after the URL.</p>
Not the Version of Record (including Author Manuscript Online, Advanced Author Version, etc.)	<p>Author, A. (in press). Title of article. <i>Journal Title</i>. Retrieved from URL</p> <p>Briscoe, R. (in press). Egocentric spatial representation in action and perception. <i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>. Retrieved from http://cogprints.org/5780/1/ECSRAP.F07.pdf</p>
Other article types	<p>Author, A. (Year). Title of article [Article type]. <i>Journal Title</i>, Volume(issue), pages.</p> <p>Woolf, N. J., Young, S. L., Fanselow, M. S., & Butcher, L. L. (1991). MAP-2 expression in cholinceptive pyramidal cells of rodent cortex and hippocampus is altered by Pavlovian conditioning [Abstract]. <i>Society for Neuroscience Abstracts</i>, 17, 480.</p>

Supplemental material	Marshall-Pescini, S., & Whiten, A. (2008). Social learning of nut-cracking behavior in East African sanctuary-living chimpanzees (<i>Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii</i>) [Supplemental material]. <i>Journal of Comparative Psychology</i> , 122, 186–194.
Special issue or special section	Haney, C., & Wiener, R. L. (Eds.). (2004). Capital punishment in the United States [Special issue]. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i> , 10(4). Greenfield, P., & Yan, Z. (Eds.). (2006). Children, adolescents, and the Internet [Special section]. <i>Developmental Psychology</i> , 42, 391–458.
Monograph	Ganster, D. C., Schaubroeck, J., Sime, W. E., & Mayes, B. T. (1991). The nomological validity of the Type A personality among employed adults [Monograph]. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 76, 143–168. For a monograph with an issue number, include any serial number or supplement/part number in the issue number parenthesis, e.g. 80(3, Pt. 2).
Book	
Place of publication	Always list the city, and for the sake of consistency always include the two-letter state or province abbreviation for US and Canadian cities. Include the country name for other countries only where this is necessary to avoid ambiguity, e.g. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. If more than one place of publication is given, use the first one listed (or the one set in the most prominent font).
Publisher	Abbreviate well-known publishers' names, e.g. "John Wiley & Sons, Ltd." may become simply "Wiley"; but retain the words "Books" and "Press". If the author and the publisher are the same, use the word "Author" as the name of the publisher.
Page numbers	List the first and last pages of a chapter or part being cited, linked with an en dash and preceded by "pp." and a space, e.g. "pp. 156–163". It is not necessary to list the extent (total pagination) of books, conference proceedings and other monographs.
Basic format (with one author)	Author, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of book: And subtitle</i> . Place: Publisher. Bandura, A. J. (1977). <i>Social learning theory</i> . Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Two authors	Van de Velde, R., & Degoulet, P. (2003). <i>Clinical information systems: A component-based approach</i> . New York, NY: Springer.

Three to seven authors	<p>Include all authors' names in the reference list.</p> <p>Ferrozzi, F., Garlaschi, G., & Bova, D. (2000). <i>CT of metastases</i>. New York, NY: Springer.</p>
More than seven authors	<p>List the <i>first six</i> names, followed by an ellipsis ..., then the <i>last</i> author's name.</p> <p>Wenger, N. K., Sivarajan Froelicher, E., Smith, L. K., Ades, P. A., Berra, K., Blumenthal, J. A., ... Rogers, F. J. (1995). <i>Cardiac rehabilitation</i>. Rockville, MD: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (US).</p>
Organization as author (group author)	<p>Advanced Life Support Group. (2001). <i>Acute medical emergencies: The practical approach</i>. London: BMJ Books.</p> <p>American Psychological Association. (2010). <i>Publication manual of the American Psychological Association</i> (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.</p>
No author	<p><i>Handbook of geriatric drug therapy</i>. (2000). Springhouse, PA: Springhouse.</p>
Unknown date of publication	<p>Lederer, J. (n.d.). <i>Alimentation et cancer</i> [<i>Diet and cancer</i>]. Brussels: Nauwelaerts.</p>
Edition	<p>Schott, J., & Priest, J. (2002). <i>Leading antenatal classes: A practical guide</i> (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Books for Midwives.</p>
Edited	<p>VandenBos, G. R. (Ed.). (2007). <i>APA dictionary of psychology</i>. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.</p>
Chapter in an edited book	<p>Author, A. A. (Year). Chapter title. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), <i>Title of book: And subtitle</i> (pp. pages). Place: Publisher.</p> <p>Haybron, D. M. (2008). Philosophy and the science of subjective well-being. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), <i>The science of subjective well-being</i> (pp. 17–43). New York, NY: Guilford Press.</p> <p>Nash, M. (1993). Malay. In P. Hockings (Ed.), <i>Encyclopedia of world cultures</i> (Vol. 5, pp. 174–176). New York, NY: G. K. Hall.</p>
A single volume from a multi-volume work	<p>Katz, I., Gabayan, K., & Aghajan, H. (2007). A multi-touch surface using multiple cameras. In J. Blanc-Talon, W. Philips, D. Popescu, & P. Scheunders (Eds.), <i>Lecture notes in computer science: Vol. 4678. Advanced concepts for intelligent vision systems</i> (pp. 97–108). Berlin: Springer-Verlag.</p>
Multiple volumes from a multi-volume work	<p>Koch, S. (Ed.). (1959–1963). <i>Psychology: A study of science</i> (Vols. 1–6). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.</p>

Not in English	Real Academia Española. (2001). <i>Diccionario de la lengua española</i> [Dictionary of the Spanish language] (22nd ed.). Madrid: Author.
Translated	Flaws, B. (Trans.). (2004). <i>The classic of difficulties: A translation of the Nan Jing</i> (3rd ed.). Boulder, CO: Blue Poppy Press. Luzikov, V. N. (1985). <i>Mitochondrial biogenesis and breakdown</i> . (A. V. Galkin, Trans.). New York, NY: Consultants Bureau.
Reprint	Piaget, J. (1988). Extracts from Piaget's theory (G. Gellerier & J. Langer, Trans.). In K. Richardson & S. Sheldon (Eds.), <i>Cognitive development to adolescence: A reader</i> (pp. 3–18). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. (Reprinted from <i>Manual of child psychology</i> , pp. 703–732, by P. H. Mussen, Ed., 1970, New York, NY: Wiley)
Online (e-book)	Schiraldi, G. R. (2001). <i>The post-traumatic stress disorder handbook: A guide to healing, recovery, and growth</i> [Adobe Digital Editions version]. doi: 10.1036/0071393722 O'Keefe, E. (n.d.). <i>Egoism & the crisis in Western values</i> . Retrieved from http://www.onlineoriginals.com/showitem.asp?itemID=135
Conference	
Proceedings	Antonioli, G. E. (Ed.). (1997, September). <i>Pacemaker leads 1997. Proceedings of the 3rd international symposium on pacemaker leads</i> , Ferrara, Italy. Bologna: Monducci Editore. Callaos, N., Margenstern, M., Zhang, J., Castillo, O., Doberkat, E. E. (Eds.). (2003, July). <i>SCI 2003. Proceedings of the 7th world multiconference on systemics, cybernetics and informatics</i> , Orlando, FL. Orlando, FL: International Institute of Informatics and Systematics.
Paper in proceedings	Lee, D. J., Bates, D., Dromey, C., Xu, X., & Antani, S. (2003, June). An imaging system correlating lip shapes with tongue contact patterns for speech pathology research. In M. Krol, S. Mitra, & D. J. Lee (Eds.), <i>CMBS 2003. Proceedings of the 16th IEEE symposium on computer-based medical systems</i> (pp. 307–313). Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Computer Society.
Symposium contribution	Muellbauer, J. (2007, September). Housing, credit, and consumer expenditure. In S. C. Ludvigson (Chair), <i>Housing and consumer behavior</i> . Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Jackson Hole, WY.
Presentation	Liu, S. (2005, May). <i>Defending against business crises with the help of intelligent agent based early warning solutions</i> . Paper presented at the Seventh

	<p>International Conference on Enterprise Information Systems, Miami, FL.</p> <p>Charles, L., & Gordner, R. (2005, May). <i>Analysis of MedlinePlus en Español customer service requests</i>. Poster session presented at Futuro magnifico! Celebrating our diversity. MLA '05: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.</p>
Dissertation/Thesis	
PhD	<p>Author, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of doctoral dissertation</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from/Available from Name of database. (Accession or Order number)</p> <p>Author, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of doctoral dissertation</i> (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Name of Institution, Location.</p> <p>Adams, R. J. (1973). <i>Building a foundation for evaluation of instruction in higher education and continuing education</i> (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd/</p> <p>Ritzmann, R. E. (1974). <i>The snapping mechanism of Alpheid shrimp</i> (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.</p>
Master's	<p>Author, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of master's thesis</i> (Master's thesis). Retrieved from/Available from Name of database. (Accession or Order number)</p> <p>Author, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of master's thesis</i> (Unpublished master's thesis). Name of Institution, Location.</p> <p>McNiel, D. S. (2006). <i>Meaning through narrative: A personal narrative discussing growing up with an alcoholic mother</i> (Master's thesis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 1434728)</p> <p>Oviedo, S. (1995). <i>Adolescent pregnancy: Voices heard in the everyday lives of pregnant teenagers</i> (Unpublished master's thesis). University of North Texas, Denton, TX.</p>
Technical report	
Report	<p>Author, A. A. (Year). <i>Title of work</i> (Report No. xxx). Place: Institution.</p> <p>Feller, B. A. (1981). <i>Health characteristics of persons with chronic activity limitation, United States, 1979</i> (Report No. VHS-SER-10/137). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics (US).</p> <p>For reports retrieved online, identify the publisher as part of the retrieval statement unless the publisher has been identified as the author.</p> <p>Kessy, S. S. A., & Urio, F. M. (2006). <i>The contribution of microfinance institutions to poverty reduction in Tanzania</i> (Research Report No. 06.3). Retrieved from Research on Poverty Alleviation website:</p>

	http://www.repoa.or.tz/documents_storage/Publications/Reports/06.3_Kessy_and_Urio.pdf
Working paper or issue brief	Employee Benefit Research Institute. (1992, February). <i>Sources of health insurance and characteristics of the uninsured</i> (Issue Brief No. 123). Washington, DC: Author.
Newspaper/Magazine	
Date of publication	Full dates of publication are required, including the month (for magazine articles) and day of the month (for newspaper articles).
Print edition	<p>Chamberlin, J., Novotney, A., Packard, E., & Price, M. (2008, May). Enhancing worker wellbeing: Occupational health psychologists convene to share their research on work, stress, and health. <i>Monitor on Psychology</i>, 39(5), 26–29.</p> <p>Schwartz, J. (1993, September 30). Obesity affects economic, social status. <i>The Washington Post</i>, pp. A1, A4.</p> <p>Precede page numbers for <i>newspaper</i> articles with p. or pp. If an article appears on discontinuous pages, give all page numbers and separate them with a comma.</p>
Online edition	<p>Clay, R. (2008, June). Science vs. ideology: Psychologists fight back about the misuse of research. <i>Monitor on Psychology</i>, 39(6). Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/monitor/</p> <p>Brody, J. E. (2007, December 11). Mental reserves keep brain agile. <i>The New York Times</i>. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com</p> <p>Give the URL of the home page when the online version of the article is available by search to avoid non-working URLs.</p>
Newsletter article, no author named	<p>Six sites meet for comprehensive anti-gang initiative conference. (2006, November/December). <i>OJJDP News @ a Glance</i>. Retrieved from http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/news_at_glance/216684/topstory.html</p> <p>Alphabetize works with no author by the first significant word in the title. In the text, use a short title (unless the full title is short) enclosed in quotation marks: ("Six Sites Meet," 2006).</p>
Unpublished/informally published works	
Unpublished manuscript	Blackwell, E., & Conrod, P. J. (2003). <i>A five-dimensional measure of drinking motives</i> . Unpublished manuscript, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Submitted manuscript	<p>Ting, J. Y., Florsheim, P., & Huang, W. (2008). <i>Mental health help-seeking in ethnic minority populations: A theoretical perspective</i>. Manuscript submitted for publication.</p> <p>Do not give the name of the journal or publisher to which a manuscript has been submitted.</p> <p>Use the same format as above for a draft or a work in progress, substituting "Manuscript in preparation" for the final sentence. Use the year of the draft you saw (<i>not</i> "submitted" or "in preparation") in the in-text citation.</p>
Informally published	<p>Mitchell, S. D. (2000). <i>The import of uncertainty</i>. Retrieved from http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/archive/00000162</p> <p>Kubota, K. (2007). <i>"Soaking" model for learning: Analyzing Japanese learning/teaching process from a socio-historical perspective</i>. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED498566)</p>
Archival sources	
Basic format (with one author)	<p>Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of material. [Description of material]. Name of collection (Call number, Box number, File name/number, etc.). Name and location of repository.</p> <p>Archival sources include letters, interviews, unpublished manuscripts, limited-circulation brochures/pamphlets, in-house institutional and corporate documents, clippings and photographs that are in the personal possession of an author, form part of an institutional collection, or are stored in an archive or repository. Correspondence from private collections should be listed only with permission from the collector.</p> <p>Use square brackets to include information that does not appear on the document, question marks to indicate uncertainty, and the abbreviation "ca." to indicate estimated dates.</p>
Individual letter (in a repository)	<p>Frank, L. K. (1935, February 4). [Letter to Robert M. Ogden]. Rockefeller Archive Center (GEB series 1.3, Box 371, Folder 3877), Tarrytown, NY.</p>
Collected letters (in an archive)	<p>Allport, G. W. (1930–1967). Correspondence. Gordon W. Allport Papers (HUG 4118.10), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.</p> <p>Specific letters from such a collection are cited in the text as, for example: (Allport, G. W., 1930–1967, Allport to E. G. Boring, March 1, 1939)</p>
Interview (recorded)	<p>Smith, M. B. (1989, August 12). Interview by C. A. Kiesler [Tape recording]. President's Oral History Project, American Psychological Association. APA Archives, Washington, DC.</p>

Corporate document	Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene Personnel in School Programs. (1949, November 5–6). <i>Meeting of Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene Personnel in School Programs</i> . David Shakow Papers (M1360). Archives of the History of American Psychology, University of Akron, Akron, OH.
Limited-circulation publication	Sci-Art Publishers. (1935). <i>Sci-Art Publications</i> [Brochure]. Cambridge, MA: Author. A. A. Roback Papers (HUGFP 104.50, Box 2, Folder “Miscellaneous Psychological Materials”), Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.
Photograph	[Photographs of Robert M. Yerkes]. (ca. 1917–1954). Robert Mearns Yerkes Papers (Box 137, Folder 2292), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.
Online sources	
Website	When citing an entire website, it is sufficient just to give the address of the site in the text: The BBC (http://www.bbc.co.uk).
Web page	If the format is out of the ordinary (e.g. lecture notes), add a description in square brackets: Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of document [Format description]. Retrieved from http://URL
Message posted to an electronic mailing list	Smith, S. (2006, January 5). Re: Disputed estimates of IQ [Electronic mailing list message]. Retrieved from http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/ForensicNetwork/message/670
Other reference types	
Review	Reviewer, R. R. (Year). Title of review [Review of the publication <i>Title of the publication</i> , by A. A. Author]. <i>Periodical Title</i> , Volume (issue), pages. Schatz, B. R. (2000, November 17). Learning by text or context? [Review of the book <i>The social life of information</i> , by J. S. Brown & P. Duguid]. <i>Science</i> , 290, 1304.
Patent	Inventor, A. A. (Year of issue). <i>Patent Number</i> . Place: Office Issuing the Patent. Smith, I. M. (1988). <i>U.S. Patent No. 123,445</i> . Washington, DC: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. In the text, cite the patent number and the year of issue: (U.S. Patent No. 123,445, 1988) or U.S. Patent No. 123,445 (1988)

Map (published as independent sheet)	<p>Cartographer. (Cartographer). (Date). Title of map [Map type]. Place of publication: Publisher. or Retrieved from URL</p> <p>Lewis County Geographic Information Services. (Cartographer). (2002). Population density, 2000 U.S. Census [Demographic map]. Retrieved from http://www.co.lewis.wa.us/publicworks/maps/Demographics/census-pop-dens_2000.pdf</p>
Audiovisual media	<p>American Psychological Association. (Producer). (2000). <i>Responding therapeutically to patient expressions of sexual attraction</i> [DVD]. Available from http://www.apa.org/videos/</p> <p>Egan, D. (Writer), & Alexander, J. (Director). (2005). Failure to communicate [Television series episode]. In D. Shore (Executive producer), <i>House</i>. New York, NY: Fox Broadcasting.</p> <p>Producer, P. P. (Producer), & Director, D. D. (Director). (Year). <i>Title of motion picture</i> [Motion picture]. Country of origin: Studio.</p> <p>Van Nuys, D. (Producer). (2007, December 19). <i>Shrink rap radio</i> [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from http://www.shrinkrapradio.com/</p> <p>Writer, W. (Copyright year). Title of song [Recorded by A. A. Artist if different from writer]. On <i>Title of album</i> [Medium of recording, i.e. CD, record, cassette, etc.]. Location: Label. (Date of recording if different from song copyright date)</p>
Dataset	<p>Wang, G.-Y., Zhu, Z.-M., Cui, S., & Wang, J.-H. (2017). <i>Data from: Glucocorticoid induces incoordination between glutamatergic and GABAergic neurons in the amygdala</i> [Dataset]. Dryad Digital Repository. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.k9q7h</p>

<p>Computer program</p>	<p>Rightsholder, R. R. (Year). Title of program (Version number) [Description of form]. Location: Name of producer.</p> <p>If an individual has proprietary rights to the software, name him/her as the author, otherwise treat such references as authorless works:</p> <p>Comprehensive Meta-Analysis (Version 2) [Computer software]. Englewood, NJ: Biostat.</p> <p>If the program is available to download from the web, give this information in place of the publication information:</p> <p>Rightsholder, R. R. (Year). Title of program (Version number) [Description of form]. Retrieved from http://xxxx</p>
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Activity 4

1. Briefly describe the main features of APA style of citation and provide examples to support your description.
2. Imagine you have been researching information on the causes of deforestation. In your reading you used books, newspaper articles, magazines and journals. Write a bibliography which you could present at the end of your essay.

Self-Assessment Test

1. What is documentation?
2. State any two reasons for acknowledging sources of information in academic writing.

3. Compare and contrast references and bibliography.
4. What is common between a direct quotation and a paraphrase of the same text by the same author?
5. Imagine that you have written an essay in which you have incorporated information from the sources listed below. Draw up the list of references for your essay.

Book title: Living Things

Editor: B.M. Backson

Publisher: Longman

Place of publication: London

Year of publication: 2002

Title of article: Human Rights

Author: B. Mwale

Newspaper: Daily Times

Date of publication: 20 April, 2006

Page where article found: 8

Book title: Sweet Dreams

Authors: A. Gondwe and P. Banda

Publisher: McMillan

Place of publication: New York

Year of publication: 1988

Activity 1

This is a straight forward Activity whose aim is to force you master the content. As such refer to the preliminary part of the Unit to get the collect answers to the questions posed in Activity 1.

Activity 2

1. Give your own version of plagiarism which reflects that it is academic theft.
2. Because it involves stealing other people's ideas and present that as if they were your own.
3. Because many people may not have access to those opinions and judgements.

Activity 3

1. A paraphrase presents information in your own words while a summary

provided a condensed version of what the writer has put forward without necessarily changing how the ideas flow as is the case in a paraphrase.

2. When a sentence has been presented in a striking fashion so much that paraphrasing or summarising it will undermine its impact.
3. There is no single answer for this question. All you have to do is grab a newspaper and develop a summary and paraphrase as required in line with what you have learnt in this Unit.
4. Present two quotations: The short quotation should be enclosed in double quotation marks with the author and year of publication mentioned in signal phrase or parenthesis. Page number should also be cited. The long quotation (more than 40 words) should be presented in free standing block without quotation marks but author information, publication date and page numbers should all be captured.

Suggested Answers to Self-Assessment Test

1. Documentation also known as referencing is citing or showing sources of your information in any write up you come up with.
 - To avoid plagiarism, i.e. using someone else's ideas as if they were your own. In other words, plagiarism is stealing some one's ideas or words. This is a very serious offence in academic writing and can land you onto punishments like disqualification. If it is found that you have plagiarised- deliberately or

inadvertently, you may also face serious consequences- getting a zero grade, or even getting dismissed from the university.

- To facilitate development of ideas and scientific discoveries in all academic disciplines. This is so because information from experts can be used as a yardstick in dealing with different issues as well as in presenting theories that can help solve different problems.
 - To make your material authentic, reliable, believable or respectable. It supports and strengthens your argument. Every academic paper is in essence an argument, not in the everyday use of this word, but an argument in the sense that you take a position on an issue and support it with evidence gathered from the sources you have read.
 - To give the readers a chance to read more on the subject, or to inspect your source for themselves (to track down the sources you used). Referencing demonstrates that you have read. As a student writer your purpose is to show your reader (your marker) that you have read, thought about and come to a point of view on the assigned topic. This provides details of sources referred to in your paper so that readers can access them.
 - To demonstrate that you are a responsible scholar by giving credit to other researchers and acknowledging their ideas.
 - It is a proof that research is substantial and is based on facts.
 - It shows the theoretical foundation of the research.
2. References refer to an alphabetical list at the end of your write that consists of only materials cited in your document while bibliography refers to an

alphabetical list at the end of a write up that comprises all materials as one was developing a write up even those that are not cited in the document.

3. They both contain the same author information and publication date.
4. Imagine that you have written an essay in which you have incorporated information from the sources listed below. Draw up the list of references for your essay.

Backson, B.M. (Ed.). (2002). *Living things*. London: Longman

Mwale, B. (2006, April 20). Human rights. *Daily Times*, p.8.

Gondwe, A., & Banda, P. (1988). *Sweet dreams*. New York : McMillan

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Unit Summary

Referencing is an integral part of all sorts of academic writing. This Unit has shown why it is important to cite information that is retrieved from various sources. The Unit has also painted a clear picture on what plagiarism is and what methods should be used in documenting information without recourse to academic theft. The Unit has also alluded to the fact that there several citation styles and that preferences may vary from institution to institution, department to department. Although this is the case, in the absence of a prescribed citation format, this Unit encourages you to master the APA

style which has been thoroughly been presented here. A general rule of thumb when it comes to referencing is consistency – avoid blending different types of citation styles in a single write-up. It is hoped that this Unit will greatly help you in handling various forms of academic writing.

Unit 5 – Effective Study Skills

Introduction

A key component to being successful in college is utilising effective study skills. In light of this, extensive body of research indicates that the knowledge and appropriate usage of study skills (also frequently referred to as study strategies) is an important factor in academic success. This Unit therefore, will equip you good study skills and habits that will foster your learning and help you to retain more material so that you can always be more prepared for examinations. The Unit will give you insight into which study methods you can adopt, appropriate times to study, how to budget your time and ensuring that you make the most out of your study sessions.

Areas of emphasis

- Reasons for studying
- Planning of study time
- Tips on effective studying

Key words

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| • Studying, | • Study environment, |
| • Planning, | • Budget, |
| • Time table, | • Study resources, |

Prerequisite knowledge

Studying is something people do throughout their lives. As a student you have assignments to read, papers to write and tests to take. For all these to be successfully accomplished you need to spend the better part of your time studying. The experiences that you have gone through will be helpful in this unit.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Define the term studying
- Explain the link between studying and planning
- Describe good study habits
- Organise study time
- Study effectively

Resources needed

For you to easily understand this unit you need to have the following materials

- dictionary
- A4 papers

- Pencils
- Pens
- highlighter
- eraser
- sharpener

Time required

You will need 10 hours to effectively study this unit.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: Studying and planning

Lesson 2: Organising study time

Lesson 3: Tips for effective studying

Lesson 1 – Studying and Planning

Lesson Introduction

Studying is a skill. Being successful in college requires a high level of study skills. Students must first learn these skills, practice them and develop effective study habits in order to be successful. Very often the study habits and practices developed and used

in high school do not work for students in college. Good study habits include many different skills: **time management, self-discipline, concentration, memorization with understanding, organisation, and effort.** Desire to succeed is important, too. In this lesson you will discover your areas of strength and identify your weaknesses pertaining to studying. You will learn about your preferred learning channel, tips to organize your studies, and ways to help you remember what you study. The skills you will learn about in this module can be applied in other areas of your life as well: your job, your career, or any activity that requires thought, planning, information processing, and self-discipline. You will find that once you develop effective study habits, the job of studying and learning will become easier. Instead of working harder, you'll be working smarter.

5.1. Studying and Planning

In this section, we will look at two words; studying and planning. Though distinctive, these words are interrelated and they complement each other to assist learners meet some set goals.

Study - there are several meanings for the word and you will likely come across a variety of meanings. Despite this, in this unit, the term study **refers to the process of spending time in learning (one or more subjects) as part of an educational course.**

Studying should be viewed as a learning process. When you are learning, your primary objective is to acquire new knowledge. Similarly, a study session must be a forum where you want to learn a new thing or you want to add on to the existing knowledge. If this goal is implanted in your mind you, will enjoy your studies and you will be purposeful.

For effective studying, you need to tune yourself properly. Apparently, there is a problem. Some students when they hear the word **study** they think of a task imposed by a lecturer. They say “that’s what I have to do to get good grades or prepare for a presentation.” Often, it may seem as though studying is something you do for others, not yourself. This is a serious misconception. Studying is a process which must stem down your mind with a primary aim of meaning something. It must originate from your quest for knowledge not as an assignment. If you have the will to study, you will get psychologically prepared and will easily overcome all barriers. Consequently, you will register success unlike when you perceive it with a negative and unprepared mind.

Reasons for studying

As you have already seen, studying is related to learning. You should conceive it as a discovery process where at the end of the day, you will accrue some new knowledge.

By this token, when we are studying, our aim is to learn new concepts. At times we may be continuing with materials that have already been studied and in that case the aim is to add on the existing knowledge.

Whatever the situation, the bottom line is, studying yields something – it is a learning process. Every time you complete a study session, ask yourself a question “What have I learnt”? If you have not grasped anything from your study know that it was wasteful – not effective. So try to establish the reasons behind and ameliorate the situation in the next study session. If you continuously do this, you will realise that your studies are highly effective, beneficial and rewarding to your academic life.

Good Study Habits

The following habits are central to improving your study skills

1. Decide what to study (reasonable task) and how long or how many (chapters, pages, problems, etc.). Set and stick to deadlines.
2. Do difficult tasks first. To avoid procrastination, start off with an interesting aspect of the project.
3. Have special places to study. Take into consideration lighting, temperature, and availability of materials.

4. Study 50 minutes, and then take a 10 minute break. Stretch, relax, have an energy snack.
5. Allow longer, "massed" time periods for organising relationships and concepts, outlining and writing papers. Use shorter, "spaced" time intervals for rote memorisation, review, and self-testing. Use odd moments for recall /review.
6. If you get tired or bored, switch task / activity, subject or environment. Stop studying when you are no longer being productive.
7. Do rote memory tasks and review, especially details, just before you fall asleep.
8. Study with a friend. Quiz each other, compare notes and predict test questions.

Planning

Planning is one of the most important things in your studies. **It refers to a carefully considered way of carrying out some activity.** In other words, it is a tool for getting things done. A good plan brings success in whatever one does. This is so because it guides your activity – when to do what.

A study plan

In this section you try to budget your time. You carefully split your time into different activities to be completed at set times. A plan for study is based on your strengths, the time and resources you have and how your work will be evaluated. Proper planning will accord you chance to use your time productively. It will also help you work efficiently. For instance, sound planning can help you break down an assignment into manageable pieces.

Activity 1

1. People study for different reasons. Give two reasons why you study.
2. List down some of the challenges that you face when studying
3. How can you solve the challenges listed in 2?

Lesson 2 Organising your study time

Lesson Introduction

To study effectively you will need to learn how to do certain things right. One way of doing that is being able to organise and manage your time. In light of this, in this Lesson we will look at how we arrange our time in order to yield successful studying. You need to carefully draw up a time table (schedule) to ensure that you have the time you

need to achieve whatever you set forth for the day. This time may cover a day, a week or even a month depending on the nature of your activities. Your plan ought to be clearly formulated – splitting your time into different tasks. When doing this, evaluate how much time you have and how you spend that time.

5.2. Organising your study time

Time is the most valuable resource a student has. It is also one of the most wasted of resources. To avoid wasting time you should develop a schedule to guide you in how to allocate the available time in the most productive manner. Sticking to your schedule can be tough. Do not dribble away valuable time. Avoiding study is the easiest thing in the world. It is up to you to follow the schedule you prepared. A good deal of your success in high school or college depends on this simple truth. We have to effectively arrange how we are going to use our time in order to yield successful studying. To do this, you need to carefully draw up a time table (schedule) to ensure that you have the time you need to achieve whatever you set forth for the day.

This time may cover a day, a week or even a month depending on the nature of your activities. Your plan ought to be clearly formulated – splitting your time into different tasks. When doing this, evaluate how much time you have and how you spend that time.

Before drawing a timetable, try tracking where your time goes. Your day begins when you wake up and ends when you fall asleep. You will see that during the weekday, your time is spent on attending classes or meetings. During that time, you cannot use your time for other things. Instead, you have some breathing spaces. These have to be planned in order to utilise them fully.

After classes or meetings, you will discover that your time needs to be shared in order to accomplish some activities like – studies in the library, laundry, recreation, sports, writing assignments etc. For all these to be fulfilled, you need careful planning. It is therefore, important to develop a general timetable that encompasses academic and non- academic activities. For effectiveness sake, make sure you budget your time in such a way that every activity is given ample time. Make it a point that the activities do not interfere with each other.

Look at the following example:

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
--	------------	------------	------------	-------------	------------	------------	------------

TIME							
6 a.m.	Showe r	Showe r	Showe r	Showe r	Showe r	Showe r	Showe r
7 a.m.	breakf ast	breakf ast	breakf ast	breakf ast	breakf ast	breakf ast	Breakf ast
8 a.m.	C	C	C	C	C	L	C
9 a.m.	L	L	L	L	L	A	H
10 a.m.	A	A	A	A	A	U	U
11 a.m.	S	S	S	S	S	N	R
12 Noon	S	S	S	S	S	D	C
1 p.m.	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2 p.m.	C	C	C	C	Class	Watchi ng TV	Watchi ng TV

3 p.m.	L	L	L	L	Class	Watchi ng TV	Watchi ng TV
4 p.m.	A	A	A	A	Sports	Watchi ng TV	Watchi ng TV
5 p.m.	S	S	S	S	Sports	Watchi ng TV	Watchi ng TV
6 p.m.	Suppe r	Suppe r	Suppe r	Suppe r	Supper	Supper	Supper
7 p.m.	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Watchi ng TV	S
8 p.m.	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Watchi ng TV	T
9 p.m.	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Watchi ng TV	U

10 p.m.	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Librar y	Watchi ng TV	D
11 p.m.	S	S	Chatti ng	S	Watchi ng TV	Watchi ng TV	Y
12 Midnight	L	L	Chatti ng	L	S	S	S
1 a.m.	E	E	S	E	L	L	L
2 a.m.	E	E	L	E	E	E	E
3 a.m.	P	P	E	P	E	E	E
4 a.m.	I	I	E	I	P	P	P
5 a.m	N	N	Joggin g	N	Gym	Joggin g	Joggin g

Figure 5.1 General timetable

In summary, a careful budget will accord you time to study, play and do whatever you want with your time; it must be emphasised though that a particular consideration

should be given to recreational activities. Remember “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”. We know you may not wish to be dull so take some time off the books and explore on other things. You will discover that it is an enriching experience befitting a student.

Activity 2

Use the figure below to develop a general time table for yourself.

TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
6 a.m.							
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.							
9 a.m.							
10 a.m.							

11 a.m.							
12 Noon							
1 p.m.							
2 p.m.							
3 p.m.							
4 p.m.							
5 p.m.							
6 p.m.							
7 p.m.							
8 p.m.							
9 p.m.							
10 p.m.							
11 p.m.							

12 Midnight							
1 a.m.							
2 a.m.							
3 a.m.							
4 a.m.							
5 a.m.							

Lesson 3 Tips for Effective Studying

Lesson Introduction

In the previous section we have seen the importance of planning. Much as it is that fundamental, you ought to know that there are also some tips which are equally important. Before we discuss these tips, we have to emphasise that studying is a process that is supposed to result in learning. Sometimes however, it does not. You may be putting in long hours poring over your text books yet earning only average grades or

even failing altogether. Sometimes you may be getting excellent grades which come in the accompaniment of hard work and exhaustion. That does not mean you are unable to learn. Rather it means you need to plan for effective study. Having strategies will put you in control of your studies and consequently your learning.

5.3. Tips for Effective Studying

The following tips/strategies will help you when studying:

a) Linking previous knowledge to new information

You need to properly link what is already in your brain to new information.

This can be achieved by asking yourself questions such as:

- what do I know about this already?
- how does what I am reading mesh with what I know already?
- does it make it clear?
- does it shed light on ideas I was unsure of?
- do I need to replace incorrect details with new ones?

* Having answers to these questions will give you an impetus to benefit from your

study and to effectively foster your learning process.

b) **Organising thoughts and time**

Plan your study time. Leave enough time for each of your subjects and more time for difficult subjects. Most college classes require about **six hours of study per week or two hours of study for every hour in class**. If you are a slow reader or have other study problems, you may need to plan more time.

Prioritize your time and put off other activities to allow for adequate study time. You may find it necessary to postpone or eliminate certain activities in order to fulfill your goals as a student.

Keep a weekly and monthly schedule planner in which to record due dates of assignments, tests, papers, field trips, etc. Transfer important dates from your syllabus to your weekly/monthly planner.

You equally need to organise your thoughts and time. Again a set of questions will aid you to accomplish this:

- do I know what I have to do?
- do I know how to reach my goal?

- what are some ways that I could do this?
- of the choices I have, which one is best in this situation?
- how much time do I have?

* These questions act as pace-setters and if you give them correct answers, you will be able to benefit from any study session that you have.

c) Channelling energy to the task

Another fundamental thing for effective studying to be achieved is to dedicate your energy to the task at hand. Have a deliberate mechanism to see off all barriers that would deter your concentration. You will find the following questions useful for this task:-

- do I monitor internal distraction, such as hunger, fatigue and emotional highs and lows?
- what about external distractions, such as noise, lighting and supplies?
- what question or questions am I asking and answering at the end of the study session?

d) Study Atmosphere

Know where you learn best.

- Do you need absolute silence or a bit of noise?
- Do you need to go somewhere or is studying in your room best?
- Should you go to same place every day or does variety help?
- Do you focus best sitting at a desk? On the couch? Walking around a room? Writing on a large white board?
- Try not to use your bed for studying so you can connect it only with relaxation.

e) **Organise Your Study Area**

- Keep notes and handouts from class in a **file or folder**. This is useful because you can add pages to it, copy notes that were missed from other students, and add handouts from class in the proper sections. You can also put index tabs marking different topics in your note binder.
- Study in an area that is set up for serious study. Have your tools for study:
notebooks, textbooks, pens, pencils, computer, dictionary, thesaurus, etc. Be sure the area is well-lit, free from noise and distractions, and not too comfortable.
- Control for interruptions like phones ringing, doors opening and closing, and people coming and going. Try to study in the same place every day.

f) **Conduct studies in the library**

- Libraries are havens in as far as studying is concerned. They are designed to encourage studying, so they have a lot to offer. They are quiet, well lighted and comfortable.
- When you are at the library, you will not be interrupted by visitors or distractions by family members laughing at a television show.
- You will not only have large tables on which to spread out your papers, but you will also have many more resources to choose from. Besides books, you have periodicals, newspapers, computers for internet etc.
- They have librarians who help you find materials, direct your searches, tell you what services the library provides, and look up information for you.

f) Social Studying

- Be thoughtful about whether you are the kind of person who studies better with others, and if so, whom those people might be. Your best friend is not necessarily your best study partner. In fact, studying with someone who is quite different from you may yield better results because you will be getting a new perspective.
- Agree on the goals and norms of the partnership or group.
- How much preparation is necessary? Are you learning together or are you testing each other?

- How will time be spent? Will you actually be going over material together, or do you just need an accountability partner to check in with, but you do not actually want to talk?
- Check in periodically to make sure the partnership/group is still working for everyone.

g) Plan Ahead for Difficulty Focusing

- Know what type of studying is best at different times of day. For example, if you are a morning person, study the hardest material in the morning and keep the evenings for tasks that do not require a lot of attention, but will prepare you for the following day, such as making flashcards or rewriting charts.
- Study when you are at your peak, when you are more awake and alert and able to absorb new information. If you are a morning person, your best study time is in the morning. If you are an evening person, study at night. If you cannot find time to study at your peak time, try to study when you are feeling relatively awake and alert.
- Have strategies to ease yourself into studying when you just do not feel like it or cannot focus. For example, if you cannot focus on reading, do not just sit there, stare at the book, and mentally beat yourself up. Do something that is a bit easier or more enjoyable for you (in terms of study activity and/or content) and then try again in 30 minutes.

Activity 3

When you are studying at home, what are some of the problems that you face. List as many as you can.

h) Develop study habits

Studying may be a hassle often times. If you do not have the right attributes towards it you may always be futile. It is important to develop habits that can assist you cultivate interest in your studies. The more good study habits the more enjoyable your studies become and the more you grasp materials. At first it may be difficult to develop positive habits and attitudes towards studying but the following activity will help you overcome this difficulty.

i) Set time for rest and relaxation:

As we have said, studying is hard work, and as well as making time for that work, as a student therefore, you have to make time for yourself where you consciously relax and do not feel guilty about other commitments or people. Moreover, if you build stress relief activities into their programmes from the beginning, you can draw on them when the stress levels increase, around exam time for example.

Activity 4

The following statements aim at measuring your study habits. As you read the statements, indicate how true each statement is for you by marking **'Never'**, **'Seldom'**, **'Sometimes'**, **'Often'** or **'Always'**.

Inventory of Study Habits

1 2 3 4 5

When I Study **Never** **Seldom** **Sometimes** **Often** **Always**

1 I try to judge how the writer's ideas make sense

2 I try hard to remember details, such as names, dates, and technical terminologies.

3 I can't focus on what I read for long periods of time

4 I connect what I am reading to ideas learned in other classes

5 I take time to copy my notes before I study them

- 6 I find it hard to keep my mind on my work
- 7 I try to understand what I read so that I could say. It in my own words
- 8 I reread materials that I already understand
- 9 I tend to day dream
- 10 I think of ways to apply what I learn
- 11 I go over what I read page by page in order to remember the details
- 12 I need time to get “warmed up” to the task
- 13 I relate what I read to real-life experiences
- 14 I take extensive notes on what I ’m reading
- 15 I am likely to waste time getting started
- 16 I find what I read for class meaningful to me
- 17 I find my study periods are interrupted by noise, visitors or telephone calls
- 18 I try to memorise word for word most of the information have been assigned to read

The above inventory contains pertinent statements that can foster your studies. You need to answer them correctly and that will be helpful in your day to day studies.

5.1.5 . Managing study resources

By the study supplies, we refer to materials you need to effectively conduct your studying. You may also need the following:- lined paper, typing paper, note books, graph papers, filing folders, calculator, stapler, staple remover, highlighters, pens, pencils, erasers, rulers, scissors, tape, glue, dictionary, disks, hole punch, atlas, calendar and thesaurus.

The materials in question need to be properly managed. You can achieve this by:

- Having a filing system for your papers
- Many papers will come your way every day from your own notes on lectures or reading and from handouts lectures give you
- To keep these safely you need to have a chip folder or three ring binder file and file your papers according to their subjects
- You also need to punch holes in the papers for secure filling.

- You should also use labelled dividers to separate the various subjects in your folder/binder.
- Date your papers as you file them. This gives you a clear record of classes and how your studies are progressing.

b) Self-assessment test

- c) 1 Write brief note on the following terms
 - d) a) studying
 - e) b) planning
 - f) c) budget
 - g) d) study supplies
- h) 2 Why is proper time management crucial in the process of studying?
- i) 3 Amongst the study tips discussed in this unit which ones do you do you prefer most? Give reason for your choice.

Unit summary

In this unit we have tackled two important aspects to a student. The first part has dealt with studying. As has been explained, studying is very important a process. It has been seen that success in academic tasks mainly derives from effective studying. To underscore this, tips and strategies to register success every time one is studying have

been enumerated. You have been given reasons for studying. It is therefore important to consider studying as a very crucial thing and develop a liking for it.

Suggested Answers for Unit Activities

Activity 1

These are really personal questions that are aimed at spurring you to think about the concept of studying. As such, you are at liberty to give reasons why you study. After that cite any challenges that you face and propose suggestions which you think could be used to address those challenges.

Activity 2

For this Activity you are free to develop any general time table you may think of which clearly reflects what you do on a daily basis from Monday to Sunday. There is no wrong or right answer here. Just ensure that your time table is well balanced.

Activity 3

This activity gives you latitude to highlight all problems that you encounter when you are studying at home.

Activity 4

This is yet another personal question. All you have to do is to select a statement that that relates to your habits.

Suggested answers to Self-assessment test

- 1 Write brief note on the following terms:

- a) studying **refers to the process of spending time in learning (one or more subjects) as part of an educational course.**
 - b) planning **refers to a carefully considered way of carrying out some activity.**
 - c) budget is a careful way of organising your time in order to ensure that you have enough time to carry out all essential activities.
 - d) study supplies these are materials that you need in order to effectively study for example, books, papers, pens, pencils etc.
- 2 Because it ensures that time is not wasted on useless activities, rather it is expended on activities that promote learning.
- 3 You are liberty to choose any tips. However, what is crucial is to justify why you very much prefer those tips.

References

You will need the following books in order to supplement what has been written in this unit.

McCarron, G. (2011). *Introduction to communication studies*. New York: Learning Solutions.

Northedge, A. (1992). *The good study guide*. Great Britain: Open University, Milton Keynes.

World Book of Study Power Vol. 1 (1994) *Learning*. Chicago: World Book Inc.

World Book of Study Power Vol. 2 (1991) *Writing and speaking*. Chicago: World Book Inc.

Unit 6 – Reading Skills

Introduction

Reading is a lifelong skill to be used both at school and in other domains of life. As a basic life skill, reading is a cornerstone for a student's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success inevitably will be lost. Despite its importance, reading is one of the most challenging areas in the education system and some students continue struggling even at tertiary level. The primary goal of this Unit therefore, is to enable you to acquire some specific skills that will enable you to become not only an efficient and high-comprehension reader but also a successful university student.

Areas of emphasis

- **definition of reading**
- **process of reading**
- **efficiency in reading**
- **theories of reading**
- **reading strategies**
- **critical reading**

Key words

- Dynamic
- Sensation

- Perception
- Comprehension
- Reaction
- Conceptual abilities
- Process strategies initiative
- Scanning
- Skimming
- Prediction
- Inference
- Discourse
- Signification
- Functional value
- Critical reading

Prerequisite knowledge

As a student your daily life revolves around reading. This experience will help you to understand the contents of this unit.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Define reading.
- Describe the reading process.
- Describe the listening process
- Describe efficient reading
- Discuss reading initiative
- Apply the skills of prediction, scanning, skimming, and inferencing effectively when reading.
- Evaluate texts

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: The reading process

Lesson 2: Reading theories

Lesson 3: Reading strategies

Lesson 4: Critical reading

Lesson 1 – The Reading Process

Lesson Introduction

Reading is such a useful skill that every student must have. Unfortunately, some students are not very efficient in their reading as a result they tend to waste their precious time on information that does not add value to their academic life. This lesson has therefore, been designed to help you understand the process of reading and how you can read relevant materials in an efficient manner. It is hoped that the skills you will cultivate from this lesson will help you throughout your life.

6.1. The Reading Process

6.1.1. What is reading?

You engage in many reading activities in your daily life. Take five minutes to list all the different kinds of things you have read recently. Do not forget to include things

like telephone directory, timetable, notices, letters, instruction leaflets and label of medicine bottle.

Different people have different views of reading. This is because different people use the word to mean different activities. So let us start by making sure that we are thinking about the same thing when we use the term reading. Will you therefore please take a piece of paper and write down briefly what happens when you read.

Your answers are likely to have used words like:

- understand, interpret, meaning, sense etc
- decode, decipher, identify etc
- articulate, speak, pronounce etc.

Reading may involve all these activities. The basic objective of reading is to get the meaning of the text one reads. In other words one reads in order to understand what the text communicates to him or her. To do this, the readers bring their backgrounds; their experience, as well as their emotions into play. A reader who is upset or physically ill will bring these feelings into the act of reading and the feelings will influence the way he or she interprets the text. A person who is very good at reading will understand more than someone less knowledgeable. A reader who is a good critical thinker will gain more from a critical passage than one who is not. A reader who has strong dislikes will come away with different feelings and understandings from those of a reader with strong

likes.

Activity 1

Now, in your own words define the term reading.

6.1.2. Definition of Reading

There is no single definition that can exhaustively define reading. In this Unit we will adopt any of the following definitions:

- Reading refers to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols.
- Goodman (1988) defines reading as a process in which the reader picks and chooses from the available information only enough to select and predict a language structure which is decodable.
- Reading is a dynamic, complex act that involves the bringing to and the getting of meaning from the printed page.

The basic objective of reading is to get the meaning of the text one reads. In other words one reads in order to understand what the text communicates to him or her. To do this, the readers bring their backgrounds; their experience, as well as their emotions into play. A reader who is upset or physically ill will bring these feelings into the act of reading and the feelings will influence the way he or she interprets the text. A person who is very good at reading will understand more than someone less knowledgeable. A reader who is a good critical thinker will gain more from a critical passage than one who is not. A reader who has strong dislikes will come away with different feelings and understandings from those of a reader with strong likes.

6.1.3. The process of reading

As you read silently, these notes, what are you doing? If you are a good reader and are attending carefully to what the notes are trying to say, you will notice the following:

a) Sensation

First, what are your eyes doing? They move together in a swift and well-coordinated way. As they move they make a series of alternating pauses or fixations and quick, jerky, side-wise movements. The eyes see the printed symbols only when motionless during pauses or fixations. This is the first step in the process of reading. It is called sensation. Sensation is awareness that there is something on the printed page.

j) Perception

Sensation is followed by perception. Perception is interpretation of what has been sensed. When a pattern in symbols reaches the brain it is compared with the memory traces of similar patterns. A person usually has many experiences that help him or her to form a concept of a word. Such experiences could be of taste, feel, colour, size and weight. He or she also learns to associate the verbal label of a word with this collection of meanings called concept and traces representing both the concept and its verbal label stored in his or her memory. This combination of seeing and recognising meanings, is called perception.

c) Comprehension

To understand what the writer communicates, involves a series of perceptions taking place in rapid succession. It means recognising as printed word and perceiving it as well as perceiving the word when it is part of a sequence of words used by a writer to express an idea. The reader has to re-create the author's intended meaning. In order to comprehend as text one has to use one's knowledge of syntax and semantics to extract meaning from a series of perceptions of words.

d) Reaction

When we read we react physically, emotionally as well as intellectually. For example, in Section 4.7 definition of reading, we asked you to take five minutes to list the different kinds of things you read recently. You physically stopped reading these notes to perform this activity. Sometimes when you read, you come to a section where a hero in

a story is threatened and your pulse may be quickened or some apprehension may arise. At other times you may read an article and accept, reject or criticise it.

6.1.4. Characteristics of Reading

- Reading and writing are related in a way- we read what is written and there can't be reading without written materials.
- Reading is interactive. The reader interacts with the text in order to come up with reasonable meaning.
- In order to come up with a reasonable meaning readers bring together their background knowledge and experience on the topic, their knowledge of the language in which the text is written.
- Readers bring together cues they get from the text as such they assemble, estimate, predict, judge, extend, apply, guess or even paraphrase.
- It is possible for readers to come up with meanings different from those intended by the authors, i.e. denotative and connotative meaning
- Denotative refers to the surface or dictionary (semantic) meanings.
- Connotative refers to deeper (pragmatic) meanings, i.e. words that can be used symbolically, metaphorically...

6.1.5. Purpose for Reading

Readers have a purpose for reading. Purpose helps them make a sense of issues being discussed in the text. Readers read text in order to *identify causes, correct, remind, expose, support, evaluate, teach, attack, present solutions, entertain or recommend*.

For your reading to be purposeful, it is important that you clearly determine if the text you intend to read will provide you with the appropriate information that you are looking for. As a student, you will not have all the time in this world – there will be a lot of stuff vying for your attention therefore, you need to shrewd in how you spend your reading time. Thus, before reading any text you may wish to ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the topic you are interested in thoroughly covered in the text you want to read?
– i.e. is it right information, written by experts?
- Does the text cover the topic at an appropriate level? – is it too basic that you will not be able to get what you are looking for? Or is it too difficult or detailed that you will not be able to understand or pick out what you want?
- Is the text structured in a way that you can easily find the information that you are looking for?
- Is the style of writing appealing to you such that you are motivated to read the text?

If you ask yourself those questions and manage to get satisfying answers, it will be easy for you to enjoy reading any material and comprehend what is being transmitted through text.

6.1.6. How to determine material relevance

- i. **Read the introductory information about the book.** There is a wealth of information about the content in of a text contained in the introduction and table of contents. For example, the precise wording of the title and background information about the author can indicate to you the author's area of specialization and you will be able to judge whether he or she is an expert on the subject matter under discussion. Information on publication date can also help you to gauge whether you will read a recent publication or an outdated piece of information.
- ii. **Have a look at any conclusions or summaries.** Reading conclusions or summaries can also help you to get an overview of the subject matter which can clearly paint a picture as to whether the text you are planning to read is relevant or not.
- iii. **Read a few pages.** This can give you an indication of whether the text deals with the subject matter to suit your requirement and in a way you can easily retrieve the information you are looking for.

If you can seriously consider the above ways of checking text relevance, you will be able to concentrate your time on reading information that relevant to your needs. As you read the texts, it is also important to take note of References, Bibliographies, and where possible read them for further information.

Lesson 2 Reading Theories

Lesson Introduction

As we saw in Unit 1, theories are integral in understanding phenomena. Thus, they help us to understand why certain things happen the way they do. In the same vein, there are some theories or models that help us to appreciate the reading process in order to gain insight into how we can read effectively and efficiently. In this lesson we will look at three models that explain how reading is done and can be developed. The lesson will also equip us with vital knowledge that can foster our reading efficiency.

6.2. Reading Theories

a) Bottom-up Model and Reading Development

Bottom-up accounts imply that reading is initiated at the “bottom” level of text structure, from discrete, visual units such as graphemes, morphemes, and words. To construct meaning from a text, the reader works her way “upward” to larger-level units such as phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and chunks of written discourse. This bottom-up processing operation is analysable as a “mechanical pattern in which the reader creates a piece by- piece mental translation of the information in the text” —typically with little reference to background knowledge. In a strict bottom-up view, readers linearly process each word letter-by-letter, each sentence word-by-word and each text

sentence-by-sentence proceeding in a fixed order, from sensory input to comprehension and appropriate response. For example, in Gough's (1972) model, the reader begins with letters, which are then recognized by a scanner. The information gained is passed to a decoder which converts a string of letters into a string of systematic phonemes. This string is then passed to a librarian, where with the help of a lexicon, it is recognised as a word. The reader then fixates on the next word and proceeds in the same way until all the words in a sentence have been processed. Reading is therefore, considered as a process of exact identification of letters, words, and ultimately sentences. In a text, the smallest units of language are identified first, and these are chained together to form the highest unit; these units in turn are then chained together to form the next highest unit and so on.

b) The top-down model

The bottom-up model starts with the smallest text unit and one would expect the top-down model to begin with the largest unit, the whole text. But scholars assert that it is impossible to see how a reader can begin by dealing with the text as a whole, then proceed to smaller units of the text, paragraphs and then proceed to smaller units of the text, paragraphs and then sentences, words and letters (Weir & Urquhart, 1998). The term 'top-down' is not used to offer an absolute opposite to 'bottom-up' but refers to approaches in which the expectations of the reader play a crucial and even dominant role in the processing of the text.

In this model, readers process information from higher-level conceptual encoding to lower-level perceptual information, which operates in the opposite direction from bottom-up processing. In this view, the reading process in which the readers' expectations are brought to the text, and that is reader-driven. Reading here is seen to be a cyclical instead of being sequential, and the readers move from their own hypothesis to the text and back to the hypothesis again.

c) The three-component model

Coady (1979) described reading a second language as comprising three variables. He claimed that reading comprehension involves the interaction of the readers' **conceptual abilities, background knowledge, and process strategies**. In Coady's model conceptual abilities are equivalent to intellectual capacity and they are about one's general intellectual capacity to analyse, synthesise (to put things together in order to come up with a meaning) and make inferences (guesses) from material. Background knowledge refers to the knowledge of the subject being read. One's previous knowledge of the social and cultural aspects of the setting of the content or what one already knows about the topic affects how one comprehends it. Background knowledge can keep a reader interested in material in spite of structural complexity. Finally, process strategies mean both a knowledge of the system and the ability to use the knowledge. These are abilities and skills needed to reconstruct the meaning of text

based on the knowledge of the structure of the language, vocabulary etc. They include syntactic information (deep and surface), lexical meaning and contextual meaning .

6.2.1. Efficient reading

Do you usually understand what you read? It is important that you should be able to read well and competently or efficiently. Efficient reading depends on the interaction of three factors. These are conceptual abilities, background knowledge and, process strategies. Let us look at each one of these in turn.

- Conceptual abilities are one's intellectual capacity to analyse, synthesise and make inferences or guesses from material. To synthesise means to put things together to come up with a meaning.
- Background knowledge is one's previous knowledge of the social and cultural aspects of the setting and content or what one already knows about the topic.
- Process strategies, on the other hand, are abilities and skills needed to reconstruct the meaning of a text based on the knowledge of the sentence structure, of the language, vocabulary and so on.

The interaction of the above factors leads to efficient reading.

6.2.2. Initiative in reading

Initiative is personal capacity for thinking up and beginning action; that is to say, the habit of starting and finishing a job because you are know about it. The following are habits that show initiative as a reader:

- a) Trying to make sense of what one is reading,
- b) Connecting new ideas to ideas that one already knows and,
- c) Putting things in one's on words.

Such habits have two things in common. They show that the reader is in active control of what he or she is reading; that is, that the reader is not a passive receiver of ideas. And secondly, they show that the reader cares about what he or she is doing. If you adopt such habits, you will find that whatever you are reading will be more interesting, easier to understand and easier to remember.

6.2.2.1. How to take initiative in your reading

a) Before you begin reading

- i) Think about the title of what you are going to read. Ask yourself what you already know about the topic
- ii) Read any questions or summaries at the end of the sections or chapters. These indicate the main points to look for in what you are going to read

- iii) Notice whether the passage is divided into sections indicated by subheadings. If so, attack the reading material section by section instead of thinking of it as a whole. The sections are like the chewable bites of food
- iv) Examine all pictures, graphs and maps so that they should be easy to refer to when they are mentioned in the passage.

b) As you read

- i) From time to time stop and put what you have just read into your own words. In other words, say to yourself what you have read as you understand it
- ii) Frequently stop and ask yourself whether your reading is going well: whether you really understand what you are reading or not.
- iii) Link the ideas you are learning about in the passage to everyday examples that illustrate them. Make a conscious effort to judge how the ideas you are studying make sense
- iv) Take rough notes as you read. This is one way of putting the ideas or information in your own words

c) After you have read

- i) Close the book and try to remember the ideas you have just read in the passage
- ii) If there are questions at the end of the passage, try to answer them without looking at the passage
- iii) Examine how much you have learnt. Ask yourself how your understanding has changed

Activity 2

Apply the hints you have just read on how to take initiative in your reading in reading the rest of the notes in this unit and check how your understanding will be improved.

Lesson 3 Reading strategies/ techniques

Lesson Introduction

Reading efficiency is not something that just drops from above. It requires employment of some skills and strategies to efficiently process information contained in a text. In this lesson, we will look at various techniques you can use any time you want to read something. The choice of these strategies depends on your reading purpose and amount of time that you have. At times, you can employ a couple of reading strategies in order to get the best from a text. You are therefore, advised to always select a strategy which you feel will easily help you achieve your set purpose.

6.4. Reading Strategies

There are four reading techniques, namely:

- i) Scanning
- ii) Skimming

iii) Prediction

iv) Inferencing

6.4.1. Scanning

You often look up numbers in a telephone directory and words in a dictionary. How do you read when you do this? As a matter of fact, what you do is you scan for information. By scanning, we mean glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (such as a name or date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose (such as whether a book on farming deals with the cultivation of a particular crop). In other words, scanning is reading as fast as possible to find specific information such as date, figure or a name. When scanning you search for key words, or ideas. In most cases, you know what you are looking for, so you are concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning can also enable you to find the main idea of a text or a required detail. Different people scan at different rates. Scanning rate varies according to the text, your purposes, and your comprehension abilities.

Information in content textbooks varies in the way it is organised. It follows one of the following four formats. Determining this format is the first step in scanning. Information in the text follows one of these formats:

- Categorical format
- Alphabetical format
- Historical format
- Hierarchical format

a) Categorical format

Information is divided into units (sections), chapters, major headings under each chapter, and minor headings under major headings.

b) Alphabetical format

Glossaries, bibliographies/references and indexes as well as some types of charts feature in alphabetical format.

c) Historical format

Here sequential information uses a chronological or time format. Thus information is presented from the beginning of a series of events step by step up to the end.

d) Hierarchical information

With this format, information is presented on the basis of its importance. Thus, information is ranked from least to most important or from most to least important.

Clues for scanning

Begin scanning by making purpose setting questions and answers indicating main ideas you look for, for example:

If your question begins

Quickly look for

When?

Capitalised words like days, months or time
periods, time of day, years, words like before,
during, after, soon, later, prior etc.

Where?

Capitalised place names and words like
behind, across, near, next to etc.

Who?

Capitalised words of names of groups, nouns.

Why?

Words like because, for that reason,
consequently, as a result etc.

How?

A sequence or words like by, through, as result
of, etc.

In summary the following are the steps you can follow to scan the main ideas in a text:

- iii) Determine the organizational format of the information.
- iv) Estimate the type of response a purpose setting question requires.
- v) Search for clues which point to the answer.
- vi) Verify the answer by slowing down and reading around the answer.

6.4.2. Skimming

Sometimes when you buy a newspaper, you glance rapidly through an article to determine its gist or its general overall idea. This is called skimming. Skimming helps you identify whether or not to continue reading, what to read carefully, and where the best place is to begin. Skimming an academic text immediately before you read it carefully can help you consider what you already know and can help you develop a purpose for reading. An initial skim can also help maximise your interest in the text and your understanding and reflection on the material. Just like scanning, some words in a text may be ignored or skipped as you read the article. Another example of skimming is when we glance rapidly through a research paper in order to decide whether the paper is relevant to our own work (not just to determine its field, which can be found out by scanning), or in order to keep ourselves generally informed about matters that are not of great importance to us.

The difficulty of the text and your familiarity with the topic determines how quickly you can skim. Your speed will increase when you focus on nouns, verbs or key words and phrases and transfer these to working memory. You should also selectively ignore adjectives, adverbs and connectives; that is to say, prepositions and conjunctions. Further, you should review typographical aids, such as, bold face and italics as well as graphics like charts, maps and graphs. This will ensure that you include key points of a chapter. Skimming can also be used to preview a chapter and getting the gist of a chapter.

A) Steps in skimming

Here are the steps that you can follow in order to skim a chapter effectively:

- a) **Read the title (think of the information the chapter could contain and what you already know about the topic).**
- b) **Read the list of objectives at the beginning of a chapter** (if any) and predict what you should be able to do at the end of the chapter.
- c) **Some texts list terms with specialised meanings at the beginning of a chapter.** Look at meanings in context.
- d) **Skim the introduction or first paragraph.** The first sentence or paragraph usually states the main idea of each section or chapter.
- e) **Read the boldface headings.** These identify the topic of each section.
- f) **Look accompanying graphs, charts etc.** Visuals emphasise main points and summarise details.
- g) **Note typographical aids.** When they are written in the body of a text, they highlight important new terms. In margins, they outline important facts.
- h) **Read the last paragraph or summary of the chapter.** These often restate the main ideas or conclusion.

6.4.3. Predictions

Prediction means saying in advance that something will happen. The best way to begin reading a chapter is to make predictions about what each section contains- in this way, you can actively interact with the text.

You can make predictions about a chapter by:

- (i) Examining chapter objectives provided by the author(s) helps you get learning goals and determine if you have met them. After reading the chapter you should be able to meet the requirements specified in the objectives.
- (ii) Previewing the chapter summary or review questions helps you identify important information to be learned from reading the chapter
- (iii) You can predict using titles (chapters of each section or subtitles).
- (iv) Go through table of contents at the beginning of the book.
- (v) You can predict by changing boldface headings into questions. Such questions help you to predict what the chapter contains. The use of some questioning words identifies main ideas. And once you find main ideas you use other questioning words to locate details

To be a good reader you need to use your experiences and knowledge to make predictions and formulate ideas as you read. This strategy also allows for more student

interaction, which increases student interest and improves your understanding of the text. It is important to compare the outcome in the actual text with the prediction process as it will lead the learner to improve his understanding comprehension.

Predicting Rate

An important relationship exists between reading and reading speed. Reading slowly- you may lose interest in the topic. Reading too quickly- you may be left with surplus or unused information. In reading, the speed at which you process information varies with the material content, your learning goals, and your ability.

6.4.4. Inferencing

Inferencing is the act or process of forming an opinion based on what you already know. It is similar to deduction- the process of using information you have in order to understand a particular situation or to find the answer to a problem. It refers to reading between lines. When information is not directly stated, you make mental associations between external and internal sources. This connection is an inference. You infer from main details and main ideas. Whether you infer one or the other depends on the content of your text and your store of background information. In inferencing you arrive at a meaning from a given data do not explicitly state something. Meaning is implied from a given scenario.

To be effective at inferencing you need to use your own knowledge along with information from the text to draw your own conclusions. Through inferring you will

be able to draw conclusions, make predictions, identify underlying themes, use information to create meaning from text, and use pictures to create meaning. To infer with ease, you can use illustrations, graphs, pictures, dates, related vocabulary and titles from the text to help you decipher what the text is all about.

Have you noticed that sometimes as you follow the writer's trend of thought from one utterance (sentence) to another, you may find that you cannot see the connection between the two utterances? When this happens, it means the writer is expecting you to draw inferences (from other things he/she has said) to bridge the gap. When you use the information collected in a text to come to a conclusion about additional facts and information that are not specifically stated, you are drawing logical inferences. For example, what can a reader infer from these two sentences?

“The treatment was later withdrawn.”

“The next day the patient died.”

Perhaps the reader is supposed to infer that the death was caused by the withdrawal of treatment.

Activity 3

Read the following text and then read the facts stated below. Tick all the facts that you think are implied by the text:

One of the Archaeopteryx specimens was at first wrongly catalogued as a small pterodactyl, because its feathers were very difficult to discern. This shows how even the experts considered it a reptile.

This implies that:

- (i) Archaeopteryx is a reptile.
- (ii) Pterodactyls do not have feathers.
- (iii) Pterodactyls are reptiles.
- (iv) Pterodactyls are large compared with Archaeopteryx
- (v) Archaeopteryx has feathers.

6.5. The structure of discourse in a reading text

Text structures refers to the way information is arranged. It considers how ideas are held together in order to achieve cohesion. It consists of how the vocabulary and the topic of the text are organised. Text structure varies according to the topic or details and the author's purpose. Writers organise their information in paragraphs and these are in turn organised in a variety of ways. For instance, organizations could be according to logical progression of ideas from general to specific or, from specific to general. Writers can also structure information in introductory/summary, enumeration/sequence, and comparison/contrast.

Sometimes, the structure could be that of cause-results (effect), according to sequence of events described or, the structure could be that of problem – solution. This last structure can be illustrated in the following text from Chesterman (1962, p. 208):

“Diseases of the eye are common in hot countries and some of these are very infectious. Handkerchiefs, towels and pillows are common ways in which germs go from a bad eye of one person to the good eye of someone else. Persons suffering from eye trouble often want to rub their eyes with their fingers and handkerchiefs. Anyone suffering from a sore eye should wash his hands after touching it. His towels, handkerchiefs and pillow should be kept apart from other people and all cotton wool and rags used to wash the eyes should afterwards be burned.

A paragraph is like an essay in miniature. Thus, these examples of structures can apply to complete texts like stories, ayes and articles. Organization of narrative material (for example) could begin with a situation which sets a problem, followed by a series of events revolving around the problem which eventually leads to a climax in action or resolution of the problem. In the same way an essay or article could begin with an outline of problems, followed by a description of the problem and/or a text could begin with an introduction of a topic, followed by discussion on the topic or aspects of the topic and/or examples and conclude with a summary of the main points discussed.

It is therefore possible to give a general description of the organization of most paragraphs or texts as follows:-

Stage	What takes place
Beginning	<i>Setting the situation</i> <i>or</i> <i>introduction of topic or main argument</i>
Middle	<i>discussion of topic</i> <i>explanation of topic</i> <i>description of problems or aspects of topic and/or</i> <i>giving of examples</i>
End	<i>result</i> <i>solution to problem</i> <i>summing-up</i> <i>re-emphasis of argument</i> <i>generalisation on topic</i>

Text structure will seldom be one single pattern. Features of various types of text structure are usually combined with one type predominant.

a) Introductory/Summary Text Structure

Identified by their physical placement in a chapter or by headings like “Introduction”, “Summary”. Introductory/Summary- identifies main points. Can be identified by signalling words such as *to begin with, in the first place, firstly, first and foremost, in conclusion, in summary, as a review, to sum up etc* or by location- either at the beginning or end of a discussion of a topic.

b) Enumeration/Sequence

Major points are listed. The points consist of a list of equivalent items (enumeration structure) or a list of items in progression (sequence structure). Such lists include information arranged in order of alphabetical placement, importance, direction, size, time or other criteria. This structure also describes solutions to problems, answers to questions, or proofs of thesis statement.

c) Comparison/Contrast Structure

Expresses relationships between two or more ideas. Comparisons show how ideas are alike while contrasts show how they differ. Comparison signal words include: *similarly, both, as well, likewise, in a like manner*. Contrast signal words include: *however, on the other hand, on the contrary, but, instead of, although, yet, nevertheless, distinguish*.

d) Cause/Effect Text Structure

Shows an idea or event resulting from another idea or event. It describes what happens and why. A cause is something that brings about some action or result while an effect is what happens as a result of a cause. Signal words: *therefore, thus, as a result, because, in turn, then, hence, for this reason, results in, causes, effects, leads to, consequently etc*

Activity 4

Get a copy of a weekend newspaper. Turn to the page where there are letters to the editor. Describe the organisational structure of the letters on this page.

6.6. Signification and value

The broad and general structure of a text, however, does not tell us much about what happens in the text. To understand what happens in the text, we need to see how a writer combines sentences to convey the message or to form stretches of discourse.

There are two types of meaning of an utterance or sentence. The first is signification, the meaning that an utterance can have on its own even if it is not used in a context. The second is value, the meaning or significance of an utterance in a particular context or the reason why an utterance is said.

If we take the utterance 'Farm animals can be divided up according to the number of offspring they have, for example, we can think of different contexts where the sentence could have value: as an explanation why farm animals are different; as a reason why farm animals have different characteristics; as a conclusion of the discussion on differences between farm animals and so on. The value of an utterance or sentence can only be understood when it is used in a certain context.

In a text, a writer usually writes a number of sentences, each with its own communicative value. And the sentences acquire their values from what has been said before or after. To illustrate this, let us analyse the values of sentences in the following text. We have numbered the sentences in the text:

1. The ability to write well organised, concise paragraphs is essential to a student's
2. success in almost all university courses. In preparing scientific reports of laboratory experiments, a student must present his findings in a logical order and clear language in

3. order to receive a favourable evaluation of his work. To write successful answers to essay questions on history or anthropology examinations, a student must arrange the relevant facts and opinions according to some acceptable pattern. Of paragraph
4. structure. And certainly when a student writes a book report for English, or a critique for political studies, or a term paper for sociology, style and organization are often as
5. important as content. Clearly, skill in expository writing is crucial to successful achievement in most university subjects.

This text may be analysed like this:

Sentence 1 is asserting, sentence 2, 3 and 4 are exemplifying the assertion made in sentence 1, and sentence 5 is concluding or re-emphasising the assertion in sentence 1. This complex network of relationships with a text is its rhetorical structure. It is the structure of the underlying ideas, and connections the writer makes between them. Its elements are rhetorical acts that sentences perform; that is to say, their functional values.

Now read the following text and the structure of discourse in the text.

Malnutrition

The struggle against malnutrition and hunger is as old as man himself, and never across the face of our planet has the outcome been more in doubt. Malnourishment afflicts an estimated 400 million to 1.5 billion of the world's poor. Even in the affluent U.S., poverty means under-nourishment for an estimated ten to twenty million. Hardest hit are children, whose growing bodies demand two and half times more protein, pound for pound, than those of adults. Nutrition experts estimate that 70 percent of the children in low-income countries are affected.

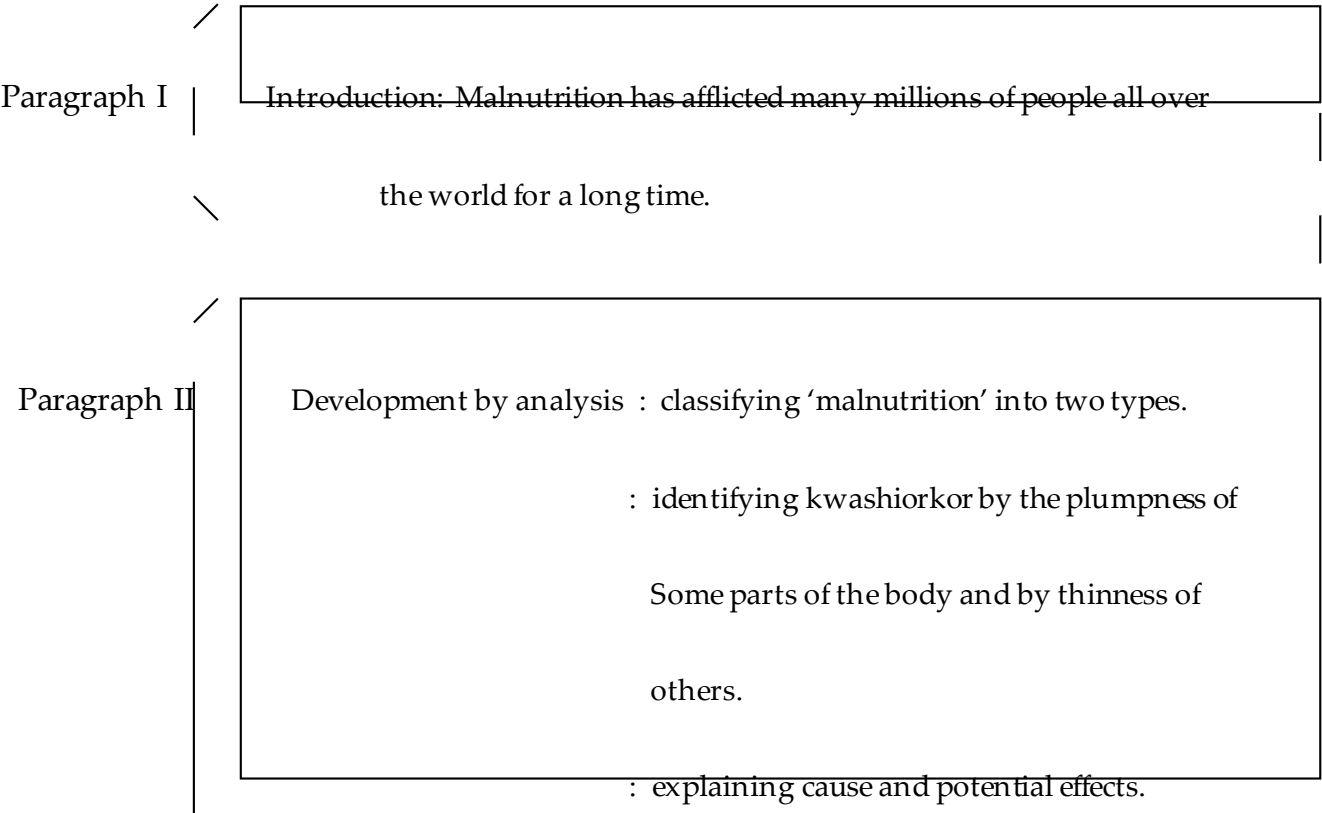
Misshapen bodies tell the tragic story of malnutrition. Medical science identifies two major types of malnutrition which usually occur in combination. The first, kwashiorkor, is typified by the bloated look, the opposite of what we associate with starvation. Accumulated fluids pushing against wasted muscles account for the plumpness of hands, feet, belly and face. Emaciated shoulders reveal striking thinness. Caused by an acute lack of protein, kwashiorkor (a West African word) can bring brain damage, anaemia, diarrhoea, irritability, apathy and loss of appetite.

On the other hand, stick limbs, a bloated belly, wide eyes, and the stretched-skin-face of an old person mark victims of marasmus, a word taken from the Greek "to waste away". Lacking calories as well proteins, sufferers may weigh only half as much as normal. With fat gone, the skin hangs in wrinkles or draws tight over bones. With marasmus comes anaemia, diarrhoea, dehydration, and a ravenous appetite. Children, whose growing bodies require large amounts of protein, are afflicted in greatest numbers, but perhaps only three percent of all child victims suffer the extreme stages described.

Scientists are working feverishly to develop new weapons against malnutrition and starvation.

But two thirds\of the human population f 3.9 billion live in the poorest countries which also have the highest rates. Thus, of the 74 million people added to the population each year, four out of five will be born in a have-not country – a country unable to supply its people’s nutritional needs. (for Foundation Reading II, Vol 3 by the Chalulangkorn University Language Institute)

Look at the organization of the whole passage



Cause

Effects

Lack of protein

brain damage, anemia,

Diarrhea, loss of appetite

Paragraph III

emaciation

Development by analysis (contrast)

: identifying marasmus by bodily

: explaining cause and potential effects

Cause

Effects

Lack of protein

anaemia, diarrhoea,

and calories

dehydration, ravenous appetite

Paragraph IV

Conclusion: the problem of malnutrition can not be solved easily

because of the high rate of population growth.

So there are three parts in the passage:

1. The introduction
2. contrasting them by explaining the cause and effect of each);
3. The conclusion

Lesson 4 Critical Reading

Lesson Introduction

Critical reading is an essential part of the information gathering process that is required to create an academically sound assignment. At its most basic level, critical reading involves not taking for granted anything you read. Whenever you read a journal article,

a book or any piece of text, you need to be convinced by the author's argument. This lesson will therefore, provide you with arsenal to help you be an effective reader reader. Among others, the lesson will delve into the rationale of reading critically as well as giving you insights into facts and opinions.

6.7. Critical Reading

Critical reading is defined as “(1) the process of making judgments in reading; evaluating relevancy and adequacy of what is read; (2) an act of reading in which a questioning attitude, logical analysis, and inference are used to judge the worth of what is read according to an established standard; and (3) the judgment of validity or worth of what is read, based on sound criteria of standards developed through previous experience.” (Harris & Hodges, 1981, p.74). Thus, critical reading is the reading that you partake so that you can judge the value of what you read so it is a high level comprehension skill. This skill enables you to determine whether you should accept or reject the ideas in a text or seek additional information.

The skill of critical reading lies in assessing the extent to which writers have provided adequate justification for the claims they make. This assessment depends partly on what the writers have communicated and partly on other relevant knowledge,

experience and inference that you are able to bring into the frame. Simply put, reading critically involves becoming actively engaged in what we read by:

- developing a clear understanding of the writer's ideas,
- questioning and evaluating the arguments and evidence provided to support those arguments, and
- forming our own opinions.

In other words, critical reading requires us to develop skills that allow us to get more from what we read, not passively taking in information provided.

The most characteristic features of critical reading are that you will:

- examine the evidence or arguments presented;
- check out any influences on the evidence or arguments;
- check out the limitations of study design or focus;
- examine the interpretations made; and
- decide to what extent you are prepared to accept the authors' arguments, opinions, or conclusions.

6.7.1. Why do we need to take a critical approach to reading?

- Regardless of how objective, technical, or scientific the subject matter, the author(s) will have made many decisions during the research and writing

process, and each of these decisions is a potential topic for examination and debate, rather than for blind acceptance.

- You need to be prepared to step into the academic debate and to make your own evaluation of how much you are willing to accept what you read.
- A practical starting point therefore, is to consider anything you read not as fact, but as the argument of the writer. Taking this starting point you will be ready to engage in critical reading.

6.7.2. Types of Critical Reading

1. **Evaluation**- the aim is to look at both strengths and weaknesses of the text.
2. **Appreciation**- the aim is to focus on the merits of the text.

6.7.3. Factors that affect one's reasoning ability

To be a critical reader one needs to have sound reasoning skills. Reasoning ability depends on several factors, namely:

1. Your skill in finding stated and inferred meanings forms the basis of reasoning.
2. Your knowledge of the subject of the text. The more you know about the subject, the easier you make decisions concerning the worth (value) of information.
3. Reasoning. Reasoning is an active process. You process information by taking into account the author's qualifications

4. Distinguishing between fact and opinion

Many students think that because a statement is written in a text book or journal article, it is automatically a fact. This is not always true. To be an efficient reader, you need to know if what you read is an opinion, a fact, or a fact and an opinion combined. Most of the study material you read are writer's opinions or combinations of opinion and statements of fact. You should distinguish between these.

6.7.4. Distinguishing between fact and opinion

Authors have opinions in addition to facts they present. You should be able to tell the difference between a fact and an opinion. Both are important. A fact is the truth of the matter- something known to be true. Sources of facts include direct evidence from actual observation forms the basis of factual information. Descriptive but non-judgement words which indicate specific quantities e.g. ten, 67 etc, or qualities e.g. red, new, frozen, signal facts. Additional terms modify the accuracy or applicability of facts and limit meaning, e.g. limiting terms such as might, could, frequently, occasionally, seldom etc.

An opinion states a person's views, beliefs or evaluations of a subject. They are affected by personal experience, feelings and attitudes. Opinions are often signalled by words

such as *I feel, I think, I believe, or in my opinion, etc.* Identifying opinions is easy when signal words are stated. However, opinions are not always directly signalled.

Consider the following statements and say which states a fact or an opinion:

- a) Cats are more loving than dogs
- b) Malawi receives 50 millimetres of rain yearly
- c) My friend Akuzike Banda is a resident of Lunzu, Blantyre
- d) Fishing relaxes you better than sleeping

In the above sentences, (a) and (d) are opinions while sentences (b) and (c) are facts.

A fact is anything that can be proved or validated. If a statement can be proved right or wrong by verifiable testing or measurement, it is a fact. An opinion cannot be validated.

If no right or wrong can be established, the statement is an opinion.

Author's Qualifications

Knowing the author's background and publication in which information is printed helps you to decide if information is unbiased, valid and reliable. Your judgements can

be supported by finding how the information 'fits' into the context of information you already know. The fact that students use books that have been selected by their instructors does not mean that they should suspend judgement of the information the text contains

Activity 5

Say which of the following statements are facts and which are opinions:

- a) my uncle died in 2001
- b) the temperature in the oven is 35 degrees Celsius
- c) potatoes are better when eaten hot
- d) it is sunny outside
- e) Johannesburg is the best city to visit in South Africa

Some statements may include both facts and opinions. Consider the following:

- a) the Jaguar XJS has a twelve-cylinder engine and is the most beautiful car made
- b) she is having a fifteenth birthday on January 28 and will be emotionally upset

in sentence (a) you can verify that the Jaguar XJS has a twelve-cylinder engine but that it is the most beautiful car made is unverifiable opinion. Similarly, in sentence (b) it can

be proved that January 28 is her birthday but that she will be emotionally upset may be difficult to validate.

Activity 6

Some of the statements below state facts, some express opinions, and others may include both facts and opinions. Identify statements of fact, of opinion and those with both fact and opinion:

- a) The only good reason to go to college is to learn.
- b) Many universities provide condoms on campus, but they are morally wrong to do so.
- c) Hitchhiking is a frequent method of travelling for college students.
- d) My daughter once secretly kept a kitten hidden in her bedroom for nearly three weeks.
- e) A tune-up will cost you K500 at the corner garage and will make your car run better.
- f) The best way to eat cold chicken is to dip it in tomato source.

Self-assessment

- 1 What is the reading process?
- 2 Briefly describe each of the following reading skills:
 - a) scanning
 - b) skimming
 - c) making predictions
 - d) inferencing
- 3 How does interpretation of coherence in a text aid comprehension?

Unit summary

In this unit we have looked at the definition of reading. We have note that reading is a dynamic and complex act that involves the bringing to and the getting of meaning from a printed page. We have also learned about the process of reading, efficient reading and initiative in reading. Various skills that are employed in efficient reading have been explained. These are prediction, scanning, skimming, inferencing and how to identify

the structure of discourse in a reading text. Finally, we have discussed how you can judge the value of what you read by reading critically.

Answers to Unit Activities

For Activities 1 and 2, all you have to do is apply what you have learnt in this Unit in order to come up with the answers.

Activity 3

You are supposed to tick the following Facts:

- (i) Pterodactyls are reptiles.
- (ii) Pterodactyls are large compared with Archaeopteryx
- (iii) Archaeopteryx has feathers.

Suggested answers to Self-assessment

- 1 The reading process entails all the activities that one goes through when reading and they involve sensation, perception, comprehension, and reaction. In your answer you need to explain what these four concepts mean
- 2 Briefly describe each of the following reading skills:
 - a) scanning refers glancing rapidly through a text either to search for specific information or to get the general impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose.
 - b) skimming means glancing rapidly through a text in order to determine its gist or general overall idea.
 - c) making predictions means saying in advance what will happen.
 - d) inferencing refers to the act or process of forming an opinion based on what you already know.
- 3 The way information is weaved together helps one to make sense of what the writer is sending across. Therefore, interpretation of coherence in a text helps the reader to effectively comprehend what is being relayed by the text.

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Unit 7 – Report Writing

Introduction

The ability to write concise, accurate and logically structured reports is a core skill for all students. Reports vary widely in purpose, length, layout and style. Within organisations, there are a range of different styles and views of what constitutes a ‘good’

report. This Unit has therefore, been designed to empower you with skills that will enable you to write different reports depending on purposes and contexts.

Areas of emphasis

- **Definition of a report**
- **Differences between reports and essays**
- **Outline for reports**
- **Types of reports**

Key words

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| • Report | • Short report |
| • Logicality | • Schematic report |
| • Objectivity | • Executive summary |
| • Clarity | • Appendices |
| • Coherence | • Glossary |
| • Formality | • Bibliography |

Prerequisite knowledge

In Unit 3 you learned how to write academic essays. That Unit outlined to you how you can write a well-structured essays that is acceptable for academic purposes. This knowledge will help you how to write reports to serve different purposes.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson you should be to:

- Define report.
- Differentiate between reports and essays.
- Outline requirements for report writing.
- Write different types of reports.

Resources needed

- Any text book containing sample reports
- Pens and sheets of paper
- Newspaper reports

Time required In order to comprehensively understand this unit, you will need to spare at least **15 hours** of your study time.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: Report writing

Lesson 2: Types of reports

Lesson 1 – Report Writing

Lesson Introduction

Writing an effective report is a necessary skill for communicating ideas at a university as well as in the business environment. Reports usually address a specific issue or problem, and are often commissioned when a decision needs to be made. They present the author's findings in relation to the issue or problem and then recommend a course of action for the organisation to take. The key to a good report is in-depth analysis. Good writers will show their reader how they have interpreted their findings. The reader will understand the basis on which the conclusions are drawn as well as the rationale for the recommendations. Report writing sometimes differs in structure and style. This lesson will help you plan, structure, and write a basic report. Remember, though, that reports will vary according to their purpose and the needs of their reader/s. Throughout your

university career, different courses and/or different lecturers may have slightly different requirements for reports. Please always check the requirements for each assignment.

7.1. Report Writing

A report is a very formal document written for a variety of purposes. Different scholars have defined the term “report” in different ways but in this module we will define it as *an official communication which provides an account of something the writer saw, examined, investigated or surveyed*. Report encapsulates a group of documents that inform, analyze or recommend. A report aims to inform, as clearly and succinctly as possible. Reports, then, are factual documents which give accounts of events, processes, methods or systems. Some are written to record the methodology, results and conclusions of investigations. Furthermore, reports provide information of objectives. Thus, reports can range from a short memo to a lengthy one such as progress reports, health and safety reports, cost-benefit analysis, proposals, research, and field reports and so on.

7.2.1. Features of a Good Report

Since report writing is essential for effective human communication, it is imperative that they be well-written to aid comprehension. Care has to be taken to ensure that these features are taken into account:

- (i) **Accuracy:** A report must be accurate and factual. This will prove that the report is authentic and well treated.
- (ii) **Logicity and Objectivity:** Facts in report writing must be logical and objective without any room for possible misinterpretation ambiguities and vagueness. The writer must avoid any form of sentimentality, subjectivity, prejudice and the like. Facts must be presented without any misinterpretation or undue influence from the writer.
- (iii) **Clarity:** A good report must be clear or lucid. The facts presented in the report must be vague or confusing. The writer should select apt words suitable for his subject matter. The information contained in a report should be direct and straight forward and should be able to capture the message intended.
- (iv) **Coherence:** A good report must be coherent. The structure must be perfectly adapted to its subjects and be presented step by step and logically too.
- (v) **Formality:** A good report should be formal. Thus, formal writing should be employed. This simply means writing in full and avoiding slang or colloquialisms and using words correctly. Formal writing is more ordered and stately.
- (vi) **Brevity:** A good report must not be too long. A writer should not explain the same point more than once, not being sure that the meaning was clear at the first attempt. However, some reports are long because they contain a great deal of important information and the information may be required as in the case of a detailed report.

7.2.2. Writing your report

The report writing process is fairly similar to that of other types of written assessment. These are best explained as a series of steps:

- (i) Analyse the task carefully. Things that deserve consideration include the purpose of the report, the scope of the report (what aspects are to be covered), the limits of the report (e.g., information, word count, time frame), and the target audience.
- (ii) Make an initial plan. This step involves the generation and selection of ideas aligned to the purpose of the report (i.e., working out what's relevant and what's not) and the systematic organisation of the ideas (establishing a coherent structure).
- (iii) Find the information, read and make notes. This step involves the research process, which typically begins by employing effective search and information management strategies. Gather and collate information in accordance with your initial plan. Amend your plan to accommodate additional information that your research might yield (but keep a strong focus on the purpose and requirements of the assessment task). Determine whether you are going to include diagrams, graphs and illustrations. Decide which information or calculations could go into an appendix.
- (iv) Write the first draft outline with headings. It is usually best to begin with the main section of the report.
- (v) Revise your draft until ready for submission.

7.3.1. Similarities between Reports and Essays

A report is similar to an essay in that both need:

- formal style
- introduction, body and conclusion
- analytical thinking
- careful proof-reading and neat presentation.

7.3.2. Differences between Reports and Essays

A report differs from an essay in that a report:

- presents information, not an argument
- is meant to be scanned quickly by the reader while an essay is meant to be read carefully
- uses numbered headings and sub-headings and may not flow as continuous text
- uses short, concise paragraphs and dot-points where applicable while an essay links ideas into cohesive paragraphs
- uses graphics wherever possible (tables, graphs, illustrations)
- may need an abstract (sometimes called an executive summary)
- does not always need references and bibliography
- is often followed by recommendations and/or appendices.

7.4. The Purpose of a Report

A report has one general purpose: to present information in a clear, orderly and objective manner. Thus, a report aims at giving an account of something, to offer a solution to a problem, or to answer a question. Much as this is the case, you should know that each report has a specific purpose determined by the subject of the report or the task given to the writer. A report may persuade, inform, entertain, or scare.

7.5. General requirements for Report Writing

- Always bear in mind the recipient of the report (the person to whom the report will be sent). This will determine such things as level of language to be used and which facts to emphasise. The report's specific purpose should be clear in your mind. Develop a central idea. Decide what to include and what to omit. Develop a logical arrangement. Draw up an outline to guide your writing in developing the report.
- There should be a thorough and objective presentation of information so that the report will help the recipient to make an informed and effective decision.
- Structure your paragraphs well. Your headings will help create logical flow for your reader, but under each heading, you should create a series of paragraphs that are also logically ordered and structured. Paragraphs should be ordered in a logical sequence beginning with the most important material first. Within your

paragraphs you should also use a structure that helps your reader. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that states the main idea or topic of the paragraph. Typically a paragraph will have between 100 and 200 words and will have the following structure. Topic sentence (states main idea of paragraph). Explanation sentence (explains or expands on the topic sentence). Support sentences (give evidence for the idea in the topic sentence and include statistics, examples, and citations). Concluding sentence (optional final sentence that answers the question 'so what?'; this is your opportunity to show your critical thinking ability) Remember to link your paragraphs well. The first sentence (usually the topic sentence) is a good place to make a link between paragraphs. One of the most common ways to link paragraphs is to use the principle, 'something old, something new'. This means you will include a word or phrase that contrasts the topic of the previous paragraph with the topic of your new paragraph,

7.5.1. Importance of Knowing your audience When Writing a Report

Knowing your audience will help you determine how long your report should be, how it should be presented, and what level of terminology you should use to best attract and maintain the interest of your reader. If for example, you are writing a report to inform

policy makers, you would want to focus on presenting your evidence clearly and concisely.

Activity 1

Compare and contrast an essay and a report.

Lesson 2 Types of Reports

Lesson Introduction

7.6. Types of Reports

Reports are classified into types according to their subject matter or the circumstances in which they are required.

7.6.1. Classification According to Subject Matter

- (i) **Eye-witness Report:** An eye witness report gives an account of any event or experience. Such an event or experience may range from cases of accidents, thefts, labour, unrest, armed robbery, squabbles and so on. This type of report is normally presented in a narrative form and chronological order.
- (ii) **Work Report:** A work report presents information on tasks confronting an establishment or a parastatal. Thus the information provided must be on job related tasks.
- (iii) **Laboratory Report:** This gives an account of the procedure, result and significance of an experiment with findings and conclusion. The writer of a laboratory report focuses solely on the observable facts and reactions that take place in his observable facts and reactions that take place in his specimen. It outlines, analyses and, evaluates these facts scientifically to form a report.
- (iv) **Progress Report:** A progress report gives detailed information on the progress made in any establishment: the current tasks undertaken during the past

week, month, quarter or year; the progress made; the continuing efforts being made; the projects completed and the problems encountered. Thus this type of report shows that work schedule and time management are meeting set targets and deadlines.

- (v) **Investigative Report:** The head of any unit, parastatal, establishment may constitute a committee to look into any matter, or issue confronting the unit. After investigation, a report is sent in with detailed information on the matter. This type of report is called an investigative or special report.
- (vi) **Analytical Report:** Analytical reports are necessitated by problems in a set-up or opportunities that have come up in a business set-up. So they persuade readers to accept certain conclusions as being factual and valid.

7.6.2. Reports Classified According to Forms

Since a report is a formal document, it should be presented in a precise, accurate and definite pattern. Thus, the report could be schematic or in a letter form. It may also be in a combination of both the schematic and letter forms.

7.6.2.1. Schematic Form

These are lengthy reports written when the subject is complex and detailed with no obvious order of presentation of information. Ideas presented in a report can be

arranged into sections and subsections. These ideas carry headings and sub-headings along with numbers. The schematic form of a report breaks ideas down for the reader and makes ideas more readable. The headings and sub-headings reflect the main focus of the section or subheadings reflect the main focus of the section or sub-section and also help the reader to notion the structure and the organization of the report. They are submitted with a cover letter (letter of transmittal) or memo addressed to the recipient of the report. The cover letter introduces and formally presents the report to the person or group requesting it. It might explain what the report is about, why it was written, how it relates to previous reports or projects, what problems the writer encountered, why the report includes or excludes particular data, and what certain readers may find of interest. The cover letter draws attention to the subject matter (or assignment), the report's specific purpose and the way information was gathered i.e. through research, interviews, focus group discussion etc. The report is given a title, but no addresses, as these are on the cover letter/memo. The cover letter refers to any action that needs to be taken. For easy reading, the material is divided into sections, subsections, following the outline drawn up. It is quite correct to number, bold or underline headings and subheadings in a report. Only use continuous prose (normal writing), notes are not acceptable. Throughout the report, the writer may make relevant recommendations as he/she records his/her findings. The passive voice is generally used in recording findings and presenting recommendations. Use of passive voice ensure that your report is written objectively and that you are detached from it.

Structure of a Schematic Report

A Schematic Report may (but does not have to) contain all of the following the following parts/components:

Cover

Title Page

Letter of Transmittal (Cover Letter)

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary (Abstract)

Introduction

Report Body (Findings)

Conclusion

Recommendations

References or Works Cited

Appendices

The Title/ Title Page

This indicates the subject matter. The title is your first contact with the reader, and should inform him/her succinctly about what he/she is about to read. The title page of a report contains four items:

- The title of the report
- Whom the report is prepared for
- Whom it is prepared by
- The release date

Letter or Memo of Transmittal

Use a memo of transmittal if you are a regular employee of the organisation for which you prepare the report; use a letter if you are not, organise the transmittal in this way:

- Tell when and by whom the report was authorised and the purpose it was to fulfil
- Summarise your conclusions and recommendations.
- Indicate minor problems you encountered in your investigation and show how you surmounted them.
- Point out additional research that is necessary, if any.

Table of Contents

This shows the sections and subsections of the report with the pages of the report where each may be found. List the headings exactly as they appear in the body of the report. If the report is shorter than 25 pages list all the headings. In a very long report, list the two or three highest levels of headings.

List of Illustrations

These consist of both tables and figures. **Tables** are words or numbers arranged in rows and columns. **Figures** include bar graphs, pie charts, maps, drawings, photographs, computer printouts etc. Tables and Figures are numbered independently so you may have both a “**Table 1**” and a “**Figure 1**”. Whatever you call the illustration, list them in the order in which they appear in the report; give the name of each visual as well as its number.

Acknowledgements

This is optional. On this page, the writer expresses his/her gratitude to those who have contributed and helped him/her during the course of the work in one way or the other.

Summary/Executive Summary (Abstract)

This sets out main points of the reports from the beginning, middle and end. The end product of the summary is a concise overview of report. Outlines main findings and recommendations. The purpose of a summary is to provide an overview of the report (telling the reader what the document is about). It is not necessary to give detailed information in the summary, but rather to provide an indication of the type of information that the report contains. Average summaries are between 100-150 words, and are generally written after the report has been completed, so that you know exactly what you are summarising.

The summary enables the reader to obtain the key information quickly without having to read the whole text. That is why it is usually placed at the beginning of the report. In the first paragraph identify the report's recommendations or main point (thesis). In the body identify the major supporting points for your argument. Make the summary clear as a stand-alone document. If you have conducted surveys or interviews, briefly describe your methods.

Introduction

Draws attention to the origin of the subject matter, e.g. who was assigned to the task. It indicates when and how the information was gathered and by whom. Gives the background. Explains the purpose, scope, limitations, assumptions and methods used. It outlines the terms of reference. The introduction should be a brief, accurate background for the body of the report.

The main body of the Report

Under this section of the report, the writer gives authentic discoveries made during the course of the investigation. All the materials collected are interpreted and analysed. It provides a detailed description of the task/subject: the gathering of information, the findings, and the recommendations. It covers the work done and what was found out.

It is divided into topics which are arranged in a logical order with headings and sub-headings.

Main points of the body should have recommendations which emphasise focal areas.

Recommendations are action items that would solve or partially solve the problem.

Recommendations in the body do the following:

- Gives solutions to the problems
- Suggests possible courses of action as a result of the conclusions, e.g. who should take action; what should be done; when and how it should be done?

The Conclusion

This section gives an unbiased judgment of the findings made. Personal opinions are avoided and objective statements are made to prove the authenticity of claims and allegations as the case may be. It summarises points made in the body of the report. It may highlight the overall findings and re-emphasise recommendations made in the body. It may state any action taken by the writer (or others) on the matter. It may request the recipient to offer advice. In general, the conclusion does the following:

- Should relate to the objectives in the introduction and detailed in the discussion.
- What do you conclude from the information gathered?
- Conclusion should be presented in the form of a numbered list.
- The most prominent key concepts or issues are covered first.
- Should introduce all key points, issues and concepts to be covered in every paragraph of the discussion be addressed.
- Outlines the significance and impact of each key point.

Recommendations

Recommendations demonstrate the writer's sense of judgments'. They are actually meant to precede whatever the discoveries are in the findings. Suggest ways in which problems identified in the report may be resolved. They should be given in a numbered list and should be feasible and realistic. Information on how they can be implemented should also be given. There should be a logical relationship between the results and the recommendations, and all recommendations should clearly spring from previously discussed material. If recommendations will seem difficult or controversial, give a brief rationale after each recommendation. If they will be easy for the audience to accept, simply list them without comments or reasons. The recommendations will also be in the Executive Summary and perhaps in the title and transmittal.

Appendices

The raw data used for the reports are also presented in an appendix to support the report but is not essential because it's either too long or too technical for the audience. Some other materials such as blank questionnaires, letters, copies of written tests, maps, and charts are included in an appendix. These are basically meant to show the original forms in which certain pieces of information occur. These contain evidence which supports the.

Bibliography/References

The books and materials consulted in the course of the work are arranged correctly. Usually this adopts alphabetical arrangements. Includes all sources of information used in the report and often those used for background reading as well.

Glossary

Is an alphabetical list of special words, phrases and terms used in the report, accompanied by a short explanation of each. These are common in technical report

Schematic Reports are signed and dated at the bottom. Schematic Reports should have a cover page, which contains the report's title, the reports recipient, the name of the person who prepared the report, the date of submission of the report.

AN EXAMPLE OF A SCHEMATIC REPORT

SAMPLE COVER PAGE

**A REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS
AT LEZA F.P. SCHOOL, BAGANGA DISTRICT**

Prepared for

The District Education Manager

BAGANGA DISTRICT

Prepared by:

E.M. Soko (District Inspector of Schools)

26th May, 2020

**A report on the conditions of grounds and buildings at Leza F.P. School, Baganga
District, 23rd May, 2020**

Summary

It was noted that the overall condition of grounds and buildings was good, but the following points were emphasised:

- a) Two classrooms need re-roofing and three blackboards require repainting.
- b) One half-finished teacher's house needs completion.
- c) More shelves and cupboards are required.
- d) The paths between the classrooms need improvement.
- e) More grass and shrubs should be planted at the entrance.

Introduction

In accordance with instructions from the D.E.O., a survey was carried out of the grounds and buildings at Leza F.P. School, with a view to determining what improvements were needed. The survey was carried out by the D.I.S., Mr. Soko, assisted by the Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster on 23rd May, 2020.

A) The Grounds

The whole area occupied by the school was examined, including the football field. It was noted that in general, paths were clean and clearly marked, and that several plants and shrubs had been planted along them. Grass had been planted over a wide area, and the football field had been well slashed. However, it was felt that the entrance to the

school could be improved by the addition of plants and grass. Also the paths between some classrooms need more stones and some thorough weeding.

B) Classroom and Administration

Most of the classrooms were properly roofed, owing to the assistance from the UNESCO project. In addition, all had proper doors and shutters on the window. Each classroom had a good sized blackboard, a teacher's desk and table. Three classrooms contained desks and chairs, the rest had mud blocks. It was noticed that two classrooms which still had grass roofs needed re-thatching, while three blackboards were old and badly damaged in need of a new coat of paint.

The Headmaster's office and store room were in good condition, but many books are kept on the floor. Clearly there is a need for more shelves and cupboards.

C) Teachers' Houses

There are enough houses for five members of staff and their dependents on the compound. The other teachers lodge in the village. The houses have been recently built and are in good condition. However, one house, which was begun during last year's Youth Week, remains unfinished.

Conclusion

It was generally felt that the school was being well maintained and that many useful developments had taken place. However, it was recommended that action should be taken as soon as possible on the areas already mentioned. It was hoped that improvements could be made through self-help and money from the school fund.

HGphiri

H.G Phiri (Headmaster)

AGlapani

A.G. Lapani (Deputy Headmaster)

Emsoko

E.M. Soko (D.I.S)

23/05/2020

NOTE: A schematic report is signed at the end, therefore, the names on the left side after the Conclusion represent signatures for the individuals that were involved in compiling the report.

Activity 2

Think of any topic of your interest and write a schematic report about it.

7.6.2. Short Report (Letter/Memo Form)

This is written where order of the subject matter is simple and limited, and where there is an obvious order in the presentation of information. It can be written in the format of the memo or business letter as the case may be. This is, however, only possible where the subject matter being presented is a simple one with a single point of view. Short reports are less formal and usually shorter versions. They do not include all of the components of a lengthy report. They do not for instance, have covers, title pages, table of contents, list of figures, abstracts etc.

AN EXAMPLE OF A REPORT WRITTEN IN A MEMORANDUM STYLE

TO : The Headmaster

FROM : The Matron

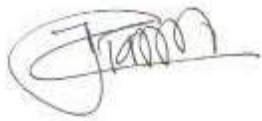
DATE : 26th May, 2020

SUBJECT: ACCIDENT REPORT FOR ESTHER NYIRENDA

I wish to report to you that on 25th May, 2020, Esther Nyirenda, aged 10, a pupil in standard 3 at Bewi F.P. School, was involved in accident at Nyala Bridge.

Esther was walking home from school at 12:30 p.m., after classes, when she was knocked down by a motorcyclist at Nyala Bridge. As a result of the accident, Esther broke one arm and was severely bruised. She was taken to St Mary's Hospital, where condition is said to be improving. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Nyirenda of Sofira Village, P/A Sofira, Mangadi were informed immediately.

I look forward to receiving any recommendations you may wish to make for action on this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tembo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

G. Tembo

AN EXAMPLE OF A SHORT REPORT WRITTEN IN LETTER FORMAT

Ekwendeni F.P. School

Private Bag 5

Ekwendeni

26th May, 2020

The District Education Officer

Private Bag 10

Mzuzu

Dear Sir

FIRE BURNS DOWN SCHOOL BLOCK

I wish to report that one of the classroom blocks at our school caught fire on the night of Sunday 25th May, 2020 and was burnt down. Nearly all the school equipment contained in was destroyed.

On Sunday 25th May, 2020 at 2p.m. a pupil noticed that the roof of the senior section school block was on fire. This block includes the Headmaster's office. Members of staff and villagers from the villages nearby came to help put the fire out, but it was too fierce. As the roof was made of thatch, the whole block was quickly burnt down.

Many items were destroyed. These include the following:

- (i) All the wooden fittings; windows, doors, tables, chairs, etc
- (ii) Pupil's books, new exercise books, rulers, handicraft and needlecraft materials stored in the Headmaster's office.

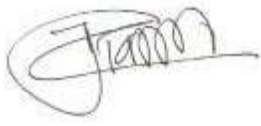
iii) The Administrative records of the school: The Log book, the Cash and Receipt books, the Visitors' Book, and the Register of School Fees(All stored in the Headmaster's office)

Whether anyone set the building on fire or whether it was an accident is not yet clear. However, the accident was reported to the police and the School Committee immediately. The police have already been here and are still conducting investigations into the matter.

The Chairperson and Secretary of the School Committee are intending to see you next Friday to seek financial assistance. They would like to start constructing another roof as soon as possible. The walls and floor of the building are still intact, except one wall which will need repairing.

I would be grateful for any recommendations you may wish to make on this matter.

Yours faithfully



R.B. Ndazona

Headmaster

7.6.3. Mixed Form

The mixed form of a report combines features of the letter form and feature of the schematic form. It begins like a letter and takes the schematic form when the findings are written down. The writer of this form of report returns to the letter form at the end of the report.

Unit Summary

In this lesson we have looked at report writing. As has been seen, a report report is a specific form of writing that is organised around concisely identifying and examining issues, events, or findings that have happened in a physical sense, such as events that have occurred within an organisation, or findings from a research investigation.

Essentially, a report is a short, sharp, concise document which is written for a particular purpose and audience. It generally sets out and analyses a situation or problem, often making recommendations for future action. It is a factual paper, and needs to be clear and well-structured. The style of writing in a report is usually less discursive than in an essay, with a more direct and economic use of language. A well written report will demonstrate your ability to:

- understand the purpose of the report brief and adhere to its specifications;
- gather, evaluate and analyse relevant information;
- structure material in a logical and coherent order;
- present your report in a consistent manner according to the instructions of the report brief;
- make appropriate conclusions that are supported by the evidence and analysis of the report;
- make thoughtful and practical recommendations where required.

It is our hope that after this Unit you will be able to write impressive reports.

Self-assessment

1. Why is it important to consider your audience before writing a report?
2. How does the structure of a short and schematic report differ?

3. In your opinion which is the best type of report? Justify your answer.

Suggested answers for Unit Activities

Activity 1

This is a simple Activity. All you have to do is recall what has been presented in this Unit. In case you have forgotten, please review the section that talks about the similarities differences between essays and reports

Activity 2

Your report should bear the structure of schematic report and ensure that all basic parts are properly written in line with what you have learnt in this Unit.

Suggested answers for Self-Assessment Test

1. Audience determines such things as language, area of emphasis, scope, tone etc
2. Short report is not as detailed and lengthy as schematic report
3. The choice is yours but make sure that your report bears the structure of schematic report and ensure that all basic parts are properly written in line with what you have learnt in this Unit.

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Unit 8 – Effective Examination Skills

Introduction

The ability to perform well on examinations is not only dependent on one's intelligence but also appropriate application of examination skills. It is thus not uncommon for intelligent students to perform poorly during examinations due to inadequate preparations resulting from lack of examination skills. Considering that examinations constitute a very important study component as a tool to measure the extent that learning has taken place and consequently levels of performance, it is imperative to develop appropriate skills. As a student, you should be aware that passing exams is dependent on a number of activities that you do before and during examinations. Sometimes, even you can be fully prepared for an exam, your conduct during exams may bring about failure. This Unit is therefore aimed at equipping you with all the necessary skills which you can use to help you pass any examination that you may take.

Areas of emphasis

In this unit, our focal points are:

- examination skills
- examination assets
- examination rubrics
- examination preparations

- examination telepathy
- effective study skills

Key words

- Examination
- Assets
- Examination telepathy
- Cramming
- Examination rubrics
- Clues
- Personal attitudes
- Self-esteem
- Self-control
- Determination

Prerequisite knowledge

The ability to perform well on examinations is not only dependent on one's intelligence but also appropriate application of examination skills. It is thus not uncommon for intelligent students to perform poorly during examinations due to inadequate preparations resulting from lack of examination skills. Considering that examinations constitute a very important study component as a tool to measure the extent that learning has taken place and consequently levels of performance, it is imperative to develop appropriate skills.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- Define the term examination
- Explain the importance of having examination assets
- Assess personal attitudes that affect preparations for examinations
- Study effectively
- Analyse examination rubrics

Resources needed

In order to easily understand this unit, you need to have access to the following materials:

- examination past paper
- study guide
- notes taken during lectures

Time required

You will need at least 8 hours to adequately study this unit.

Unit Outline

Lesson 1: Preparing for examinations

Lesson 2: Tips during examination time

Lesson 1 – Preparing for Examinations

Lesson Introduction

Preparing and sitting for examinations has for a long time been taken for granted. Rarely do students think of a need to deliberately and systematically develop examination skills. This is surprising considering that students' performance and certification are largely dependent on examinations. Study efforts of many years can easily be put to waste following a poor examination performance. When faced with examinations, the natural tendency has been to resort to the use of our study aids which include notes, handouts, quizzes, past tests and examination papers. The challenge, however, is how to make good use of such materials. This lesson has therefore, been designed to equip with skills which you can use as you are preparing for examinations.

8.1. Preparing for Examinations

Before we delve into details on the basic things you should do when you are preparing for examinations, it is important that we firstly talk what an examination is. The word examination is derived from the verb **examine** which means *to test the knowledge or skills*. An examination therefore, is a process that aims at testing a candidate's knowledge or skills. It is something that we should not dread rather we must eagerly approach it with the view of demonstrating to the examiner how much we know on a subject matter. Much as this is supposed to be the case, some students have phobia over examinations and others wish examinations were not part of their learning process. Being ready for exams depends on a number of factors. In this lesson we will look at three of them, namely:

- (i) Examination assets
- (ii) Examination telepathy
- (iii) Study methods

8.1.1. Examination Assets

Examination assets refer to study aids and personal skills. Study aids include all materials you keep and file away for future reference. It is thus, important to develop a habit of keeping in one place all the study work papers connected with each course you take. Such materials are likely to contain exercises, tests, quizzes, reports, lecture notes, group exercises, handouts, etc. Such materials are very useful when exams are approaching. You are likely to feel relaxed and at ease when you are sure of relevant materials for your study. You can easily avoid examination phobia in this way.

Activity 1

- (i) Make an exhaustive list of all examination assets in your possession. Do you have the habit of keeping such material for future use? Which other material should you keep as examination assets? Do you find such material useful?
- (ii) Develop a filing system of your examination assets convenient to you. Can you easily refer to the material you want or does it take you a long time to do so? Improve your system as appropriate as possible.

8.1.2. Personal Skills

Personal skills refer to the necessary skills associated with preparations as well as what candidates are required to perform when examinations are in progress. Personal skills include the following:

8.1.2.1. Note Taking

It is important that you continue perfecting your note taking skills. This can only be done through frequent practice in note taking. Remember that clear and well organised notes are a good study aid. They are easy to read as future reference for your study. As such, they keep you on the right track of your subject. Your notes are a record of the ideas that were emphasised in reference books as well as during lecture times and are issues that are likely to come in exams.

8.1.2.2. Understanding Examination Rubrics

Examination rubrics refer to direction words/key words or a set of instructions for each question. Be sure to write the kind of answer that each question requires. For example, if a question says “**illustrate**” do not “**compare**”. Remember that it is important that you always answer examination questions according to what the question directs you to do.

Activity 2

Consider the following question:

*Analyse the MSCE results of 2015 and **compare** them with those of 2014, with focus on girls' performance in government secondary schools.*

- a) What is this question asking you to do?
- b) How many parts are there in that question?

Note that the two words appearing in bold letters are the KEY instruction words in the sense that they instruct you on WHAT to do. However, recognising the functions of the two words is not sufficient to enable you answer the question adequately. Now read the phrase “*with focus on girls' performance in government secondary schools.*”

Another important examination rubric is **Key instructions special**. What this phrase does is to set a **condition** to the key instructions. Due to the functions performed by such phrases, they are referred to as special conditions. In other words, key instructions words instruct you **conditions** on **what** to do., whereas special conditions tell you **how** to carry out the instruction(s). Other key instructions ask you to define, explain, state, name, mention, why, how, compare, contrast, differentiate etc. Likewise, other special conditions are: briefly, fully, in detail, with examples, illustrate, etc.

Understanding the requirements of a question is the necessary skill in understanding components of examination rubrics. Other examination rubrics include; number of questions to answer, number of things to choose and; how many parts a question has.

Below are some examples of rubrics and what you are expected to include when answering questions that feature those words:

Term	Meaning
Compare	Show similarities between things and indicate the relevance/consequences of these similarities.

Contrast	Show differences between things and indicate whether the differences are significant.
Criticise	Give the positive and negative points of a subject as well as evidence for those positions. If appropriate give reasons why one item or argument may be preferable.
Define	Give the formal meaning of a term/exact meaning.
Describe	Tell in detail about something/give the main characteristics or features of something/outline the main events.
Diagram	Make a diagram and label it.
Discuss	Give details and if relevant, the positive and negative points as well as evidence for those positions.
Enumerate	List points and number them 1,2, 3, etc
Explain	Make clear why something happens/why something is the way it is.
Examine	Put the subject under the microscope by looking at it in detail.

Evaluate	Give the positive and negative points of a subject as well as evidence for those positions.
Illustrate	Explain by giving exams examples whilst making something adequately explicit.
Interpret	Explain the meaning of something
Justify	Give reasons for something
List	Give a series of points and number them 1, 2, 3, etc
Narrate	Concentrate on saying what happened, telling it as a story.
Outline	Give the main points and important secondary points. Put the main points at the margin and indent secondary points under the main points. Relationships may also be described with logical symbols as follows: 1. _____ a. _____ b. _____ 2. _____
Prove	Show to be true by giving facts or reasons.

Relate	Show connection between or among things.
State	Give the main points.
Summarise	Give a condensed account of the main points by omitting details and examples.
Trace	Describe the development or history of a subject by following the order of different stages in an event or process.

8.1.2.3. Review what you learn in class or read on a daily basis

The habit of constantly reviewing what you learn in class or read in recommended books, will give you the feeling of being constantly ready for exams. It gives you a chance to correct errors and fill gaps in your knowledge.

8.1.2.4. Explain what you have learned to a friend

The practice of explaining what you have learned to a friend does not only help in building self-confidence but also helps in reinforcing your knowledge on specific aspects of your study.

topics. In fact a friends question on your explanation could alert you to aspects of what you have learned but you do not clearly understand.

Write some questions and answers on what you have learned. This will help you remember better what you have covered in your reading or in class.

8.2. Personal Attitudes

To be fully prepared for examinations, it is important to have positive attitudes. Developing the right attitudes for examinations is a very challenging effort. It requires patience and a deliberate effort to resist negative **attitudes** that may negatively affect ones examination performance. There are three major kinds of attitudes that a student needs to develop:

8.2.1. Curiosity

Curiosity refers to eagerness or strong desire to learn, know or find out. It is an important attitude to adopt because it motivates you to study and is likely to result you in learning something from your studying. It thus, becomes easy to remember what you learn during examination. Remember that “the quality that marks a successful learner is the desire to learn something. It’s important to make whatever information you are earning meaningful. Ask

yourself questions to pique your curiosity.” This approach will help you see learning as more than something confined to books. It makes learning mean something in your everyday life.

8.2.2. Enthusiasm

It is important to develop a feeling of interest in exams. Of course it is not easy but it can be done. You should train yourself to look at a test as an opportunity to demonstrate what you know rather than looking at them as a threat. It is hard to take an interest in test if you see them as ominous events that make you lose sleep and disturb your free time. Enthusiasm is possible only if you are well prepared for the exams.

8.2.3. Confidence

You must build a belief that you are able to pass an approaching exam. You should not think of a possibility of failing or having to sit for a supplementary exam. It should only be a question of “how well will I pass this exam?” Confidence is a result of determination. Determination gives you strength to overcome problems that might stand in the way of your successes. It also helps you to focus on the material relevant to your work.

Activity 3

In your own words, explain what you understand by the terms: *curiosity*, *enthusiasm* and *confidence*.

8.3. Examination Telepathy

Telepathy refers to direct communication of thoughts or feelings from one person to another without using speech, writing or any other normal method. Examination telepathy on the other hand refers to ability to be aware of the ideas or thoughts of another person without them telling you. In other words, it is possible to second- guess (predict) your lecturer on the questions he is likely to ask in an approaching exam.

8.3.1. Listen for Clues

Take note of the idea or points that are emphasised by your lecturer or in your reference books. It is, therefore, important to take note of semantic markers used by your lecturer or writers, such as:

- I would like to emphasise ...

- The point you must remember is ...
- It is important to note that ...
- It is worthy noting that ...
- The next point I'm going to give you is very crucial ...
- Listen carefully to this ...

8.3.2. Pay Attention to Lecturer's use of Visual Aids

When a lecturer spends a lot of time using visual aids to make a point or explain a principle that is a sign he or she believes it is important. An exam is likely to come from such a topic.

8.3.3. Know what fascinates your lecturer

It is possible to tell sometimes that a particular idea or point fascinates your lecturer or a writer on a particular topic. You can almost guarantee there will be an exam question on that point. Previous quizzes, tests and exercises can also give you an idea of what fascinates your lecturer.

9.3.4. Know Course Objectives

Course objectives are very important in determining what should appear in examinations. Exam questions are normally used to establish whether the course objectives have been achieved.

Activity 4

1. Briefly list factors that can assist you to predict what is likely to appear in your exam or a test.
2. List objectives for each of the courses that you take? Have you been able to meet some of these objectives in the course of your study? If not, state what needs to be done.

9.4. Study Methods

It is important to revisit the study skills you learned in unit two. Remember to start your studying early. Long term, well planned study will help you avoid cramming i.e. overstuffing your brain at the last minute close to the exams.

9.4.1. Avoid Cramming

Note that although cramming may give enough knowledge to get some answers right, that knowledge is superficial. In other words, it is not deep enough and as such only good for the

exam at hand and not for future application. Hence it amounts to short-term learning. What is required is long-term learning which is essential for genuine learning since it demands more time and commitment.

Also cramming is exhaustive because it is done at the last minute. As such, it is a hard and unenjoyable task. It is recommended to have small doses than long, last minute cram marathons. Remember that cramming takes over your life just before exams and wears you out. Well planned, strategic study will help you avoid cramming.

8.4.2. Avoid memorising stuff if you do not understand them

No matter how you memorise something, what is important is to understand the meaning of what you are learning. For instance, it is not enough just to memorise names of the bones in your body, but also you need to know how they function together.

8.4.3. Use text books effectively

It is important to read assigned pages in your textbook. Use paragraph headings to outline the material you are reading. Other features to look for are chapter titles, summaries, chapter questions, glossaries, topic sentences, materials printed in boldface or in italics and

illustrations such as maps, graphs, charts and diagrams. Textbooks can also provide you with practice tests similar to what you have in this module booklet.

8.4.4. Group Study

Use the study group only to discuss and expand on topics you are already familiar with. The objective should be to meet so as to refine each other's knowledge and not to teach each other. So make sure that the group consists of members who are all knowledgeable. You should not have a group with members who expect to be taught. Stick to a particular point of study. In other words, avoid digressing into material that is irrelevant to a particular point you have agreed to study. And prevent the study session from turning into a party.

Lesson 2 Tips during examination time

Lesson Introduction

At times examinations may not be difficult but sometimes students or people fail them because they fail to do the job right. There are a few essential things that one has to be mindful about if he or she wants to leave the examination room victorious. This lesson has been designed to give you tips that will help you to pass examinations and approach them confidently.

8.5. What to do during examination time

During the examination period, you are advised to do the following:

- Get enough sleep. Do not stay up late cramming during the exam period. A sleep-starved mind will not be alert enough to enable you to do well in exams. Hence the importance of steady, long term and daily study.
- Never skip any meal, especially breakfast. An empty stomach during an exam will distract you from concentrating on your work. It might also add to your anxiety about the exam.
- Avoid overeating. An overstuffed stomach can make you sleepy or sluggish, i.e. slow in thinking. Eat moderately before an exam. Besides, digestion consumes a lot of energy hence you may not think quickly if you over eat.
- Make time for relaxation. Since your brain will be working hard for you during exam period, you must allow it to rest just as you need to rest your muscles after hard physical work.
- In case of sickness, seek medical help. Never push yourself hard so that you even ignore your sickness simply because of exams. However, find out if the medicine prescribed might have the side effect of making you drowsy or might in some way interfere with your thinking. If necessary, alternative treatment may have to be prescribed.

Activity 5

1. Make an exhaustive list of what you did in readiness for your last examination. Can you now take note of variations with what you have covered in this unit?
2. To what extent was your previous approach to planning for exams helpful?

8.6. What you need to do in an examination room

- **Gather the necessary examination supplies that you need.** You may use, items such as pencil, pens with enough ink, calculator, mathematical instrument box, etc. Some examinations allow the use of a limited number of reference books. In this case be sure to bring into the exam room only the necessary and permitted materials for the exam at hand.
- **It is important that you arrive for your exam on time.** Avoid arriving too early; otherwise you will be tempted to go into last-minute study with friends. This may confuse or make you unnecessarily nervous, especially when your friends disagree with you. At this time, there is no possibility of checking who is right and this can shake your self-confidence. Likewise, arriving late can be very disturbing. You will have to

spend valuable time catching your breath and getting organised. And you are likely to miss crucial exam instructions from the invigilators.

- **Listen carefully to invigilator's instructions.** It is, therefore, important that you start only after getting all the instructions right, otherwise you may overlook something important.
- **Understand exam Rubrics.** You may thoroughly know the material but you may miss marks if you misunderstand the requirements of the question. Pay attention to **highlighted words** (in bold type) in general exam direction. Be alert for **key instruction words** and **special conditions** set for each question. Thus, you must look out for words such as *mention, list, state, explain, briefly, define, describe, compare, discuss*, etc.
- **Never ask your neighbour any question, even if you want to borrow something.** It may give an impression that you are cheating. It also disturbs your neighbour. If in need of anything, ask through your invigilator.
- **Before you begin to answer any question, skim through the entire exam.** This will help you see which ones are the most important questions in terms of distribution of marks. In this way you will find it easy to budget your time. In other words, you are likely to begin with easiest questions on which you will spend less time. As you go along, this approach will help you warm up and gain confidence.
- **If a question stimulates a lot of ideas in you, quickly write them down on rough paper.** Later on you may form these ideas into sentences. This ensures that no useful ideas will be forgotten as you write your answer.

- **It is important to be neat and accurate.** Hence you need to write legibly. If your handwriting is hard to read, your examiner may misunderstand your answer and you will not get the marks you deserve. Poor organisation of ideas creates a bad impression. Likewise, wrong spelling including improper punctuation which may change the meaning of a sentence altogether.
- **You must reason out your answers.** Concentrate on each question. Try to see what it means in relation to what you learnt in class on that particular topic. Avoid wandering off the point of this particular question.
- **It is important to guess intelligently.** Do not completely leave out questions you are not sure of. Write whatever you can on them, even if it is not the whole answer. It is better to be partly correct than to leave a complete blank.
- **When time is running out.** If you are writing an essay question and you find that time will run out before you finish it, end your essay with an outline of the remaining points. Try to pack in this outline as many facts as possible. You may even abbreviate words in your outline. You may not receive full marks for the essay, but your lecturer will certainly give you marks for your fact-filled outline. Otherwise, if you did not have that outline you would have missed those marks.
- **Double-check your work.** Set aside a few minutes at the end of the exam for re-reading all your answers. Check for misspelling, missing words, punctuation, mistakes, wrongly labelled diagrams etc. A missing word can render a whole answer senseless.

Self-assessment

1. Write brief notes on the following terms:
 - examination telepathy
 - examination rubrics
 - cramming
2. Why is memorising not a recommended study method?
3. Why is it important to arrive on time during examinations?
4. What does the word examine mean to you?

Summary

Examinations and tests are part of the learning process and a necessary important tool in checking whether learning is taking place or not. As such it is important that you keep on developing appropriate examination skills. Preparation for exams cannot be confined to the last days leading to the exams' dates. It must be an on-going activity to minimise pressure characterised with "study rush" typical of the last days leading to exams. It is equally important that you develop the positive attitudes conducive to facilitating effective preparedness for examinations. Positive attitudes must be supplemented with the skills to

enable you to predict areas of focus for exams questions. Such examination telepathy skills will enable you to be well focussed in your preparations and thereby sharpen your study skills.

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Module assessment test

This section aims at giving you an idea of how questions in this course are formulated. It is our hope that you will attempt to familiarise yourself and ask us questions should you have any problems.

- 1 The head of communication section insists that when students give an oral presentation they should also submit a written copy of the presentation. What could be the reasons for this recommendation? Give any four. **(8 marks)**

2 In preparation for her end of semester communication examinations Chiletso found a quiet secluded place for her study. This was an ideal place for her study, as she likes reading where there is total silence. But after 20 minutes of study she complained that she could not understand what she was reading because there was noise around her.

- a) Give any two examples of the noise that might have disturbed Chiletso. **(2 marks)**
- b) Chiletso is part of the communication process that is taking place at this secluded place. Identify the source, the message, and channel in this communication process. **(6 marks)**
- c) Name any two disadvantages of the communication Chiletso is involved in. **(4 marks)**

- 3 Read the following passage and make branching notes. **(15 marks)**

The hazards of movie going

I am a movie fanatic. My friends count on me to know movie trivia and to remember every big Oscar awarded since I was in secondary school. My friends, though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. While I love movies as much as ever, the inconvenience of going out, the temptations of the theatre, and the behaviour of some patrons are reasons for me to wait and rent the video.

To begin with, I just do not enjoy the general hassle of the evening. Since small local movie theatres are a thing of the past, I have to drive for fifteen minutes to get to the nearest multiplex. The parking lot is shared with several restaurants and a supermarket, so it's always jammed. I have to drive around at a snail's pace until I spot another driver backing out. Then it's time to stand in an endless line, with the constant threat that tickets for the show I want will sell out. If we do get tickets, the theatre will be so crowded that I won't be able to sit with my friends, or we'll have to sit in a front row gaping up at a giant screen. I have to shell out a ridiculous amount of money- up to \$8 – for a ticket. That entitles me to sit while my shoes seal themselves to a sticky floor coated with spilled soda, bubblegum, and crushed raisinets.

Second, the theatre offers tempting snacks that I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going to the theatre, however, is like spending my evening in a Seven-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. Chocolate bars the size of small automobiles seem to jump into my hands. I risk pulling out my fillings as I chew enormous mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theatre, I feel disgusted with myself.

Many of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand. Little kids race up and down the aisle, usually in giggling packs. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the screen, whistling, and making what they consider to be hilarious noises. Adults act as if they were at home in their own living room. They comment loudly on the ages of the stars and reveal plot twists that are supposed to be a secret until the film's end. And people of all ages create distractions. They crinkle candy wrappers, stick gum on their seats, and drop popcorn tubs or cups of crushed ice and sodas on the floor. They also cough and burp, squirm endlessly in their seats.

4 'Personal skills are valuable examination assets'. Briefly explain this statement with reference to any three of the skills. **(6 marks)**

5 In what way is developing empathy a valuable component in listening? **(3 marks)**

6 You were part of the audience in the University Hall where a young lady from Youth Society was making a presentation on 'How to live a pure life'. In her presentation, the lady was tensed up and was visibly shivering with fear. Her articulation of words and the flow of sentences were very jerky. Describe how this state of affairs may have affected your listening. **(6 marks)**

Suggested answers to Unit Activities

Activity 1

1. This question requires you to make a personal reflection and highlight which examination assets are important to you.
2. This question requires you to make a personal question and you will answer the other parts affectively depending on the filing system that you have developed.

Activity 2

The answers will depend on what the two past papers which you managed to retrieve.

Activity 3

State in your own words what curiosity, enthusiasm and confidence mean with closer reference to what has been explained in this Unit.

Activity 4

1. These are: develop examination telepathy; listen for cues; pay attention to lecturer's use of visual aids; know what fascinates your lecturer; know your course objectives.

2. Check the course objectives and examine if you have been able to meet them or not.
Should you discover that you did not meet them, state what needs to be done in order to ensure that you do not miss out on anything.

Activity 5

1. This is a personal question as such you are expected to come up with any list. Once you have done that, compare your list with what you have learnt in this course to see whether there are any discrepancies.
2. For this question you need to give a personal reflection.

Suggested answers to Self-assessment

- 1a) examination telepathy refers to the ability of the candidate to predict questions that will be asked in an examination.
 - b) examination rubrics refer to words of instruction and direction that guide a candidate on what should be done in an exam.
 - c) cramming is the study method where a candidate learns a lot of things at a short time in preparation for an exam.
- 2 Memorising is not recommended because it leads to short term learning which may not be helpful at the end of the day.

3 It is important because you do not have time to enter into last time discussions which may be confusing nor do you panic to catch up because the exam starts when you have already arrived and you also do not miss instructions from the invigilator.

Answers to Module assessment test

1. These are:

- written communication provides permanent records
- written communication can be read at the convenience of the recipient
- people generally understand what they see in print
- messages in written communication are well structured therefore they are easy to understand because they are likely to have better grammar and sentence structure
- written communication can reach distant places, which means it is easier to share this information with students from other universities

2 a) These may be emotional or psychological noise and verbal noise. For instance, psychological worries about coming exams and difficult words in the text which made understanding difficult.

b) Source – book

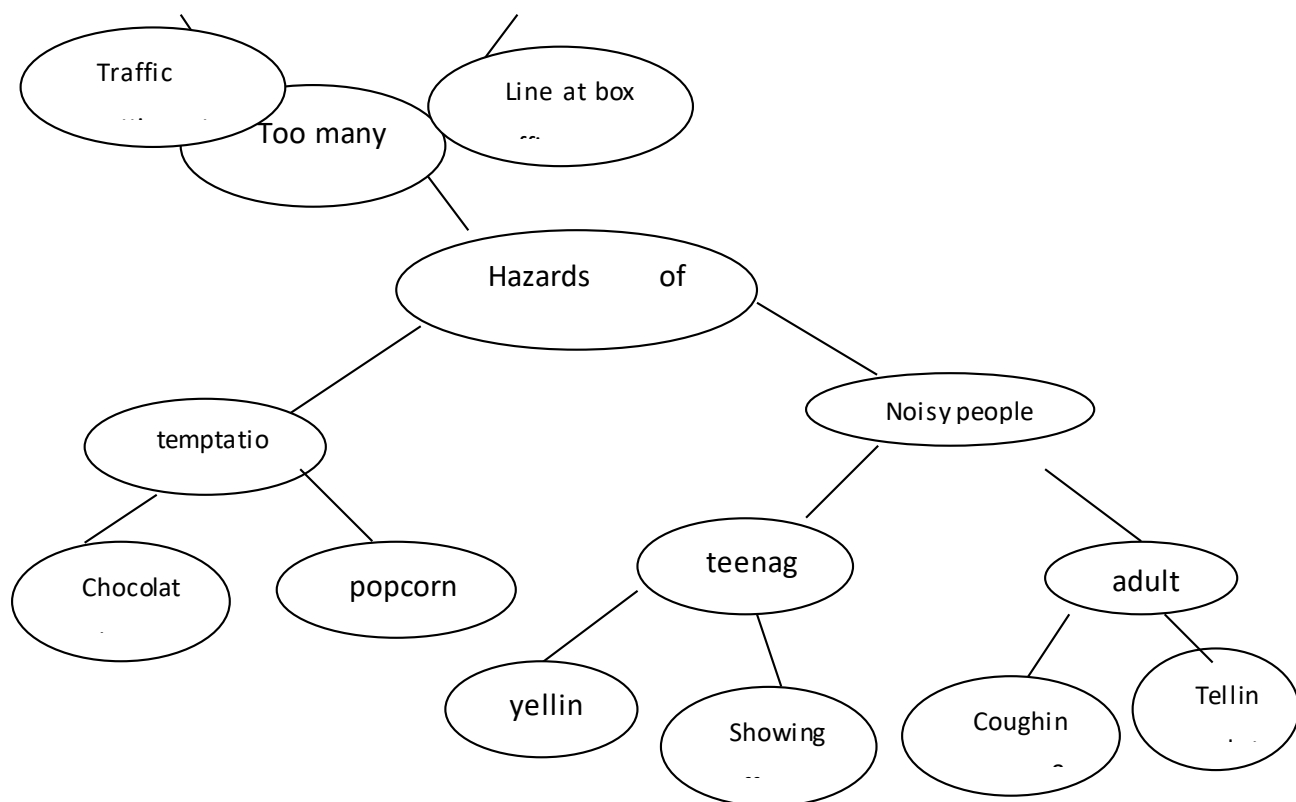
Message - content of the book

Channel – print

c) These disadvantages are:

- Chiletso cannot ask the source for clarification
- There are no nonverbal cues to help Chiletso get the message
- Language errors may make the message vague or altogether make communication impossible

2 The branching notes would look as follows:



4 i) Note-taking skills are important because they enable a student to learn correct and revise quickly and effectively for examinations

ii) Reviewing notes on daily basis- this is important because during the semester, a student should develop a habit of reviewing what is learned each day by going back to the notes. This process allows him/her to make corrections where necessary and reflect on what has been taught thereby deepening understanding

iii) Understanding the examination rubrics- it is important for a candidate to fully understand instructions and directions in an exam. This is critical because it enables the candidate to know what he or she is asked.

5 It is important because it enables you to be in the shoes of the speaker and share his/her feelings. This act leads you to a concrete understanding of the message. In fact, you try to understand the message exactly the way the person feels.

6 Firstly, her lack of confidence might have made you as a listener to doubt the validity or authenticity of the message.

Secondly, it acts as a distracter to listening in the sense that instead of concentrating on the message, the audience “shut off” and just resort to watching the shivering or shaking. Some enjoy it while others feel pity and may start avoiding looking at the speaker thereby missing para-language.

Thirdly, the shivering or jerking affects the articulation of words or sounds which in turn makes reception difficult. Consequently, interpretation becomes problematic. The confusion on the sounds, tone, mood and pitch or voice inflexion have a bearing on interpretation of speech.

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