

ENG 001: Access English

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COURSE GUIDE

Introduction

Welcome to English! Well, you are not new to English, and English is not new to you. You have been learning and using English for several years! Yet, you do not seem to have sufficient knowledge and skills in the language that would prepare you for higher education, and even to satisfy some job requirements.

The Access English Course is therefore designed to help you upgrade your knowledge of the language, your ability to use the language properly, so that the benefits required above can be yours now.

This is not a revision course on English! The more time you spend learning and using the language, the more proficient and efficient you'll become in your communication activities. It is your second language, which is required to be used properly in your education and other activities.

Access English Course is a 2 credit course designed particularly to help NOUN students who are deficient in English language, that is, those who do not have a credit pass in the subject at the Senior Certificate English. The course content is based on the West African Examinations Council Syllabus for English Language (1998 - 2003 edition). It is also slightly higher than that.

The content is selected, graded, organized and presented in a way to enable you overcome your problems in such areas as: English grammatical structures and vocabulary, listening – speaking, reading – writing skills, as well as skills in reading comprehension, summary and essays.

The Course Guide

The Course Guide (CG) gives you information on the following elements about the course:

- (i) Course aims/objectives
- (ii) Course requirements
- (iii) Course materials
- (iv) Study modules and units
- (v) Recommended textbooks
- (vi) Assignment file
- (vii) Presentation schedule
- (viii) Nature and mode of assessment
- (ix) Self-assessment
- (x) Tutor-marked assignment
- (xi) Course overview
- (xii) Modules, units and their contents
- (xiii) Strategies for studying the course

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to enable you to:

- (i) master the essential grammatical structures of English;
- (ii) learn and acquire the vocabulary of every-day usage as well as the vocabulary of various fields of human activity such as government and politics, trade and commerce, sports and entertainment, banking, agriculture, and so on;

- (iii) compare various sentence types correctly in English, using appropriate tenses, for various contexts;
- (iv) communicate orally in English (listening and speaking) using appropriate modes and rules of speech acts;
- (v) respond to reading comprehension questions, using appropriate language forms and strategies;
- (vi) compose and write informal and formal letters for various purposes;
- (vii) write essays of different formats and contents using appropriate language;
- (viii) learn and use appropriate mechanics in writing for various purposes.

Course Objectives

To achieve the aims specified in 2.2, some overall objectives are set up for the course. In addition, each Unit has its own specific objectives. It is necessary for you to study these objectives as they will guide you to know what the Course and each unit require.

After successfully completing the course, you should be able to:

- (i) use English grammatical structures and appropriate vocabularies to make correct and appropriate sentences in oral and written statements;
- (ii) compose and develop paragraphs of related ideas in your written assignments and tasks;
- (iii) use appropriate vocabulary, register and expression to communicate in various situations and contexts orally and in writing;
- (iv) use appropriate strategies and skills to perform required reading tasks such as reading for main points and details, to summarise text content, and to evaluate information presented;
- (v) write informal and formal letters using appropriate language and format;
- (vi) write descriptive, narrative, persuasive and expository essays for various purposes, using appropriate language and techniques;
- (vii) apply appropriate mechanics in different forms of writing, such as punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and other layouts.

The overall objectives of this course can be summarised in three broad terms. After completing the Course, you should be able to:

- (i) strengthen your acquisition of English as a living language by recognizing its main features or characteristics as they are different from your own language in many ways;
- (ii) use the language to gain knowledge in various subjects in your further education;
- (iii) use the language effectively for everyday communication in speech and writing.

Working through the Course

The Course consists of five modules or volumes. Each module is split up into a number of units. The number of units in a module depends upon the volume of the areas to be covered in the module.

Modules 1 – 3 cover the major areas of the characteristics or features of the grammar or structure of the language, these include the words (vocabulary, lexis) of the language.

Modules 4 – 5 cover the various areas in which you are required to apply your knowledge of the English language to perform many kinds of tasks in our educational and other personal endeavours. These two modules have more units than Modules 1 – 3.

The application of the knowledge of the language comes in the form of skills you need to develop day-by-day, in the form of language skills. You are required to read and study each unit carefully, noting the explanations and illustrations given. Do the exercise given at each stage before you look up the answer supplied to confirm your self-assessment. At the end of each unit, you are required to submit assignment for assessment. At the end of the course is a final examination. The course should take you around seventeen weeks to complete.

Note: Learning a language and working with the language is an every moment affair in your waking moments! You even dream in the language! The language lives in you and grows in newness every moment, as you use it to express your thoughts and to interact with others.

Course Materials

Major components of the course are;

- (i) Course guide;
- (ii) The study units;
- (iii) Recommended published texts for further reading/practice;
- (iv) Assignment file (to keep your tutor-marked assignments on each unit);
- (v) Video/Audio support materials (to reinforce what is presented in the study units).

Study Units

There are thirty study units in this course. These are stated as follows:

MODULE 1: LANGUAGE STRUCTURE: GRAMMAR AND USAGE I

- Unit 1 Nouns
- Unit 2 Pronouns
- Unit 3 Verbs: recognition and functions
- Unit 4 Verbs and tenses

MODULE 2: LANGUAGE STRUCTURE: GRAMMAR AND USAGE II

- Unit 5 Adjectives and their functions
- Unit 6 Adverbs and their functions
- Unit 7 Prepositions and their functions
- Unit 8 Conjunctions and their functions

MODULE 3: LEXIS AND STRUCTURE

- Unit 9 Vocabulary – Use of dictionary and thesaurus
- Unit 10 Vocabulary development
- Unit 11 Types of sentences
- Unit 12 Sentence structure

MODULE 4: LANGUAGE SKILLS I

- Unit 13 Listening and speaking skills
- Unit 14 Listening and speaking skills
- Unit 15 Reading: reasons for reading
- Unit 16 Types of reading skills
- Unit 17 Reading comprehension practice

MODULE 5: LANGUAGE SKILLS II

- Unit 18 Summary skills – main idea/points
- Unit 19 Summary skills – details
- Unit 20 Mechanics of writing
- Unit 21 Writing: Informal letters
- Unit 22 Writing: Formal letters
- Unit 23 Writing: Formal letters
- Unit 24: Writing: Descriptive essay
- Unit 25: Writing: Descriptive essay
- Unit 26: Writing: Narrative essay
- Unit 27: Writing: Persuasive/argumentative essay
- Unit 28: Writing: Persuasive/argumentative essay

Unit 29: Writing: Expository essay
Unit 30: Writing: Expository essay

Note: The first twelve Units expose you to the grammar and vocabulary of English, how they are organized and used by the native speaker. The next five Units (Units 13 – 17) present to you three areas to develop your abilities to speak, listen to and comprehend speeches; read and make meanings out of written texts, and in the language. Units 18 and 19 are designed to train you to develop and sharpen your skills at making accurate summaries of the contents of texts that you read. Your summary may be oral and also written. Can you state all the information you have read in this paragraph in *one* sentence? Try doing that.

Units 20 – 30 are devoted to training you to write all kinds of letters and essays. This is the most important area where your use of English is put to test. It is an area where you have often failed to use English *properly* for communication.

Exercises in the Units

Each Unit has about two or three exercises you must attempt at each point, to help you check your understanding of the content presented. They are also to help you practise the use of the aspect of language you have studied. You must do the exercise first before checking for the correct answers at the end of the Unit.

References and Texts for Further Reading

At the end of each Unit, some published books are listed as references from which information in the Unit may have been derived, or as sources for you to look for more information on the topic of the Unit.

Tutor-Marked Assignment ((TMA)

Also at the end of each Unit, an assignment is given to further engage you in expanding and practising your knowledge of the aspects of the language presented in the Unit. Your part-time Instructional Tutor will mark the assignment and keep the assessment in the required Assignment File.

Final Examination

At the end of the course, you will be required to take and pass a final examination based on the contents of the entire course. Your scores on the TMAs will form part of your final assessment for the purpose of determining your level of pass or failure. Best wishes for success.

Support Services

Part-time Instructional Facilitator and Tutor will be available at designated contact centres to mark and assess your assignments. The Facilitator/Tutor will also provide tutorial help for your problems with the Course.

The Media Staff of the University will provide back-up Video/Audio/Internet materials to aid and reinforce your learning of the Course materials.

Editor

Module 1

Unit 1

Nouns

1.0 Introduction

In this Unit, you will learn about English nouns, their forms, functions and classes. You will learn to use nouns with definite and indefinite articles and quantifiers to make sentences.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- (i) define a noun and give at least three different examples;
- (ii) make sentences using at least three types of nouns;
- (iii) distinguish between singular and plural forms of nouns by identifying them in sentences;
- (iv) change singular nouns to plural nouns and vice versa in sentences;
- (v) change nouns from singular possessive form to plural possessive form and vice versa;
- (vi) classify nouns in a reading passage according to types or classes;
- (vii) distinguish between two or more types of nouns by explaining or describing their characteristics;
- (viii) distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns;
- (ix) use definite, indefinite articles 'the', 'a', 'an', and quantifiers 'some', 'any' etc. to qualify countable and uncountable nouns.

3.0 Definition of a Noun

The Noun is one of the most important components of any language, be it your mother-tongue or English language. This is because the Noun is commonly found in both speech and written forms of the language.

A noun is defined as the name of a person, place, thing, quality, action or idea. Below are examples of these categories of nouns:

- Person:** Amina, John, Ojo, Efiog, Ngozi.
- Place:** Kaduna, market, farm, Nigeria, hospital .
- Thing:** car, house, dog, book, bag.
- Quality:** intelligence, beauty, anger, patience, love.
- Action:** bathing, cooking, learning, reading, jogging.
- Idea:** peace, justice, democracy, excellence, honesty, honour.

Note that all the words used to name the categories are also nouns: person, place, things, quality, action, idea.

3.1 Nouns and Numbers: Singular and Plural

Nouns are either in singular or plural forms. Alternatively, they may be said to be in singular number or plural number. Number here means ‘how many’. When a noun is one, e.g. one boy, we say it is in singular form or number. When a noun is more than one e.g. two boys, we say, it is in plural form or number.

3.1.1 Formation of Singular Nouns

As mentioned earlier, a noun is in singular form or number if it is just one. Examples of singular nouns are: baby, boy, girl, church, pen, book.

3.1.2 Formation of Plural Nouns

Plural nouns indicate more than one. Examples: boys, babies girls, pens, books etc. Plural nouns are generally formed by adding ‘s’, ‘es’, or ‘ies’ to the singular form of the nouns. Examples include: boys, girls, pens, books, boxes, churches, babies and so on.

There are however, exceptions to the above general rules for forming plural nouns. Some plural nouns are said to be irregular because their formation does not follow the regular or common way. Examples are:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
child	children
goose	geese
phenomenon	phenomena
medium	media
stadium	stadia
man	men

Note: There are nouns that end in ‘s’ which are not necessarily plural in form. Examples are: physics, linguistics, glasses, measles and so on.

3.2 Possessive Nouns

Possessive form of nouns is used to show possession. It is not generally used for things. It is used only for people and for most animals. We use possessive nouns to show that something belongs to a person or animal for whom/which the noun stands. Here are some examples.

Column A	Column B
Nouns Showing Possession	Meaning
This is the boy’s book.	This is the book of the boy.
Mrs. Okon’s dog is called Bingo.	The dog of Mrs. Okon is called Bingo.
The dog’s tail is long.	The tail of the dog is long.
Ade is doing a man’s job.	Ade is doing the job of a man.

Note: It is possible to say or write the sentences in Column B to show possession. However in English language, it is more acceptable to say or write the sentences as in Column A to show possession.

3.2.1 Formation of Possessive Nouns

3.2.1.1 Possessive Forms of Singular Nouns

The possessive form of singular nouns is made by putting an apostrophe ’ + s after the noun that stands for the possessor.

Look at Column A in 3.2, you will observe that the apostrophe and ‘s’ is used after the noun that stands for possession in each of the sentences. For example, you have; boy’s book, Mr. Okon’s dog.

3.2.1.2 Possessive Forms of Plural Nouns

There are two simple rules guiding the formation of possessive plural nouns.

- (i) If the plural ends in 's' you simply add an apostrophe after the 's'.

Examples: The house of the boys = the boys' house.

The bags of the girls = the girls' bags.

- (ii) If the plural does not end in 's' as is the case with irregular nouns such as: men, women, children and so on, you add 's to the noun. Thus, for the above irregular nouns, you will have: men's, women's, children's etc.

Note: Some English names which end in s have their possessive form by adding apostrophe after the s.

Examples: Moses = Moses' house

James = James' brother

Jones = Jones' parents.

Exercise 1

- (i) Here are two Columns labelled A and B.

(a) What are the words in Column A collectively called?

(b) Match each word in Column A with the group to which it belongs in Column B.

Column A	Column B
Adamu	Place
Hatred	Action
Cooking	Quality
Owerri	Thing
Honesty	Person
Book	Idea

- (ii) Write in the brackets the singular forms of these words: children (), geese (), babies () and stadia ().

- (iii) In the spaces provided, rewrite the following sentences using the possessive forms of nouns:

- The home of Jumia is far.
- Dupe is a friend of my brother.
- You will sleep in the room of the children.
- Here are the clothes of the babies.
- Give me the names of the men.

Sample Answers

(i)	(a)	nouns	(b)	Column A	Column B
				Adamu	Place
				Hatred	Action
				Cooking	Quality
				Owerri	Thing
				Honesty	Person
				Book	Idea

- (ii) child goose phenomenon
medium baby stadium

- (iii) a. Jumai's home is far.
b. Dupe is my brother's friend.
c. You will sleep in the children's room.
d. Here are the babies' cots.
e. Give me the men's names.

3.3 Functions of Nouns

Nouns serve three basic functions in the structure of sentences, namely:

- (i) the subject of a verb;
- (ii) the object of a verb;
- (iii) the complement of another noun.

3.3.1 Noun as the Subject of a Verb

Examples: Asabe ate yam.
The book fell down.
Kindness is a good virtue.
Enugu is far from here.

Note: The underlined word in each of the sentences is the subject of the verb or the subject of the sentence.

The subject of a sentence refers to the person, the thing or event being talked or written about.

Can you identify the noun subject in these sentences?

- (i) My children love ice cream.
- (ii) Adamu and Yinka are good friends.

3.3.2 Noun as the Subject of a Verb in a Sentence

A noun is the object of a verb in a sentence if it is the receiver of the action of the verb.

Example: Oki dug a ditch.

The object in this sentence is 'ditch' because it received the action of digging.

There are two possible positions for the object in a sentence – Direct and Indirect.

A noun object could be direct or indirect.

Direct noun object

Example: John failed his examination.

In this sentence, examination is the direct object because it received directly the action of the verb, 'failed'.

Indirect noun object

Examples: Peter gave Ngozi a pen.

The word 'Ngozi' in this sentence is the indirect object because it receives the action of the verb of giving indirectly. On the other hand, the word 'pen' is the direct object because it receives the action of the verb directly. Another form of the same sentence is: Peter gave a pen to Ngozi.

3.3.3 Noun as the Complement of another Noun

A noun is said to be a complement to the first noun subject if it acts as a direct reference to the noun.

Examples: Mrs. Daniel is a teacher.
Uche and Ebele are students.
John is simply a fox.
Teacher Samuel is an angel.

Note: The second noun in each sentence complements the first which is the subject. This is usually used with the verb 'be' and its varied forms. You will see this in Units 3 and 4.

3.4 Types of Noun

Nouns are of several types. These are:

- (a) Proper nouns
- (b) Common nouns
- (c) Collective nouns
- (d) Abstract nouns
- (e) Countable nouns
- (f) Uncountable nouns

3.4.1 Proper Nouns

Proper nouns are words that indicate particular names of people (e.g. Musa), names of places (e.g. Lagos, Ghana), days, months, festivals etc. (e.g. Monday, April, Christmas, Id-el-Kabir), names of specific rivers and mountains (e.g. River Niger, Mount Everest) etc.

A capital letter is always used for the first letter of a proper noun whether it appears at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a sentence.

In the following sentences, proper nouns are underlined.

- (i) When Olu and Jide went to Lokoja, a town in Kogi State, they saw the confluence of the River Niger.
- (ii) Ngozi goes to the market every Saturday.
- (iii) My family and I plan to spend our Christmas at the Obudu Ranch in Calabar this December.

3.4.2 Common Nouns

Common nouns are those names given to all people, things or places. A common noun is usually written, beginning with a small letter except at the beginning of a sentence. Examples of common nouns are those that belong to these classes of nouns: collective, abstract, countable and uncountable nouns. These classes of nouns are presented in the next four sub-sections of this Unit.

3.4.3 Collective Nouns

A collective noun stands for a group of persons or animals e.g. class, mob, family, army, police, term, flock, cattle, club, association, society etc.

A singular verb form is usually used with a collective noun. Here are some sample sentences:

- (a) The crowd is moving towards the stadium.
- (b) Her family lives in Abuja.
- (c) Kanu Nwankwo's team plays well.
- (d) The flock is grazing on the field.

3.4.4 Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns are those nouns that you cannot touch or see. They are not concrete names as is the case of proper or collective nouns. They indicate idea, quality, state of being, as you have learnt in Section 3.0.

Examples of abstract nouns are: absence, presence, beauty, honour, anger, decision, justice, peace, love, happiness, independence, etc.

Sample Sentences

- (a) She was queried for her absence from the meeting.
- (b) Nigeria attained independence on 1st October, 1960.
- (c) He is a man of honour.
- (d) The person who is at peace with others finds peace and joy.

3.4.5 Countable and Uncountable Nouns

3.4.5.1 Countable Nouns

Nouns which indicate things or beings you can count are referred to as Countable Nouns. Examples of such nouns are those whose plurals are formed by adding: -s, -ies, -es, e.g. boy – boys, baby – babies, box – boxes. Other examples are irregular nouns such as: foot – feet, child – children etc.

3.4.5.2 Uncountable Nouns

Uncountable nouns are nouns that indicate things you cannot count. Examples are: sugar, salt, soup, bread, water, oil, advice, rice, information. They could also be called mass nouns because they are not definable as individual units as in the case of countable nouns.

3.4.5.3 Countable and Uncountable Nouns and Indefinite Articles ‘a’ and ‘an’

The quantity of countable nouns can be indicated by ‘a’ and ‘an’ signifying one or singular. Uncountable nouns on the other hand do not use ‘a’ and ‘an’. Below are columns to illustrate this difference between countable and uncountable nouns.

Countable Nouns				Uncountable Nouns			
A1		A2		B			
a	book	an	hour	a	cube] of	sugar
	car		egg		packet		
	pen		orange	a	bowl] of	rice
	table		umbrella		plate		
	foot		aeroplane	a	piece] of	[information furniture advice
	child		engine				
	lion		electrician				
	man		uncle	a	lot] of	[fun milk tea water
				a	glass		
					cup		

Note: Column A1 contains countable nouns that go with indefinite article ‘a’.

Column A2 contains countable nouns that go with ‘an’. Notice that the nouns in A2 begin with vowels.

Column B contains uncountable nouns which use ‘a’ along with some qualifiers. Thus, you have a cube or packet of sugar **not** a sugar.

Note that the uncountable nouns in Column B are all qualified by other nouns. The nouns qualifying the uncountable nouns in the following sentences are underlined.

- (i) There is not a piece of furniture in that room.
- (ii) My friend and I had a lot of fun during the holidays.
- (iii) I love to take a glass of milk at every meal.
- (iv) My teacher gave me a piece of advice that I found useful.

3.4.5.4 Countable and Uncountable Nouns and the Definite Article ‘the’ and Quantifiers ‘some’ and ‘any’

In this sub-section of Unit I, you will learn about the use of definite article ‘the’ and quantifiers ‘some’ and ‘any’ with countable and uncountable nouns.

Note that the definite article ‘the’ is used to signify something specific, particular or definite. On the other hand, ‘some’ and ‘any’ are used to indicate something not specific or definite. All the three, that is, ‘the’, ‘any’ and ‘some’ are qualifiers because they say something about the nouns they are attached to.

The qualifiers, ‘any’ and ‘some’ are also called quantifiers because they signal the quantity of the noun they are attached to. The next table will show you when to use the quantifiers or qualifiers ‘the’, ‘any’ and ‘some’.

Qualifiers/Quantifiers	What they are used with
the	countable and uncountable nouns e.g. the boy (countable) the furniture (uncountable).
any	countable and uncountable nouns. e.g. any time, any amount of salt (uncountable), any child, any picture (countable).
some	countable plural nouns e.g. some hospitals, some women.
some	uncountable nouns e.g. some sugar, some salt, some information.

3.4.5.5 Countable Nouns and Quantifiers: ‘each’, ‘every’, ‘another’

In this sub-section of the study of classes of nouns, you are going to learn how to qualify countable nouns with ‘every’, ‘each’ and ‘another’. These words are qualifiers and quantifiers and they are used only with singular countable nouns. They are called qualifiers because they describe the nouns they are attached to. They are called quantifiers because they show the quantity or number of the noun they are attached to. Here are some sentences as examples.

- (i) Every man is asked to pay ₦100.
- (ii) Every orange in the basket is bad.
- (iii) Each person is allowed a week off.
- (iv) Each egg is sold for ₦20.
- (v) Show me another colour of this shirt.
- (vi) I will have another cup of tea.

3.4.5.6 Uncountable Nouns and Quantifiers: ‘much’, ‘less’, ‘a little’, ‘a large quantity of’, ‘a good or great deal of’, ‘a few’

Here, you will learn some words that are useful in qualifying and quantifying uncountable nouns. Remember that uncountable nouns are those nouns you cannot count. Sometimes in using uncountable nouns, you may wish to indicate the quantity as either little, much, large etc. There are specific words used in English language to indicate this. These words are called ‘Quantifiers’. Here are some sentences for illustration. The underlined words are quantifiers.

- (i) I saw a large quantity of groundnuts in her shop.
- (ii) There was much noise in the room.
- (iii) When he opened his bag, I saw a great deal of money.
- (iv) He drinks a lot of water.

Exercise 2

The following exercise will aid you to revise what you studied in Sections 3.3 — 3.4.5.6 of this unit. As you work through the exercise, feel free to go back to the relevant sections to remind yourself of what you were taught.

- (i) Nouns are of different types or classes.
 - (a) Name and describe three of these.
 - (b) Make a sentence to illustrate each type.
- (ii) What are the two differences between countable and uncountable nouns.
- (iii) Make sentences with countable and uncountable nouns using ‘the’, ‘any’, and ‘some’. Indicate in brackets after each sentence whether the noun used is countable or uncountable.

- (iv) Make sentences with the following words using countable or uncountable nouns: every, each, a lot, much.

Sample Answers

- (i) (a) **Proper nouns** These are words that tell the names of particular persons, places and rivers e.g. Kano.
Sentence: Kano is a commercial city.
Collective nouns: They are words used to name a group of persons or animals e.g. association.
Sentence: The *association* of Nigerian Students in New York is happy about the new Nigerian government.
Abstract nouns: They are words that are used to describe or indicate an idea, quality, state of being e.g. anger.
Sentence: *Anger* is a great vice.
- (ii) (a) Countable nouns can be counted while the uncountable nouns can not be counted.
(b) Countable nouns form their plurals by adding 's', 'ies', 'es' but the plural of uncountable nouns require other words to show quantity.
- (iii) (a) *The book* is costly. (countable noun)
The soup is salty. (uncountable)
(b) I did not buy *any* orange. (countable)
Do you have any information about Ugo? (uncountable)
(c) Have *some mangoes*, please. (countable)
Please pour some water in the basin. (uncountable)
- (iv) *Every day*, he goes to the river to fish. (countable noun)
Each student should pay the school levy. (countable noun)
I saw *a lot of money* when he opened his bag. (uncountable noun)
There is not *much oil* in the yam porridge. (uncountable noun)

4.0 Conclusion

Nouns are very important words in English language. A mastery of these words and your ability to use them correctly will help you in your day-to-day communication needs both in your education and general communication. The contents of this unit which you have completed were selected, organized and presented in ways that will aid you to attain a knowledge of English nouns and how to use them in oral and written communication.

5.0 Summary

Access English Course was designed to help you overcome your deficiency in the knowledge and use of English. The Unit you have just completed is on nouns. It dealt with various aspects of the English noun system such as classes, functions and numbers of nouns. Each of these was systematically presented and taught to enable you learn how to use the English nouns. A diligent study of the unit and the performance of the self-assessment exercises will adequately equip you to use the English nouns more effectively.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- (A) Underline and copy in the brackets provided the abstract noun in each of these sentences.
- (i) The soldiers fought with great courage. ()
- (ii) He has always had very good health. ()
- (iii) The explorer was suffering from hunger and thirst but was full of hope for success. ()
- (iv) I want you to get the measurement of this room. Write down its breadth, length and height. ()

(B) Underline and write in the space provided the collective noun in each of these sentences.

- (i) The man was driving a herd of cattle. ()
- (ii) That ship has a crew of a hundred men. ()
- (iii) A swarm of bees flew out of the hive. ()
- (iv) The audience listened in complete silence to the singer. ()

(C) Read the story below. Identify any four nouns in it and write them down under each noun type in the table below.

Common	Proper	Abstract

Twentieth Century Adventurers

Tourism has today taken the place held by exploration of distant lands in earlier centuries. It satisfies the feelings which sent men like Livingstone and Mungo Park, travelling round Africa in the nineteenth century. The first of these is restlessness, the inability to sit down tamely in known surroundings, carrying out familiar daily tasks. Most explorers, including Marco Polo who made journey after journey to the Far East, Vasco da Gama who sailed round the Cape of Good Hope, have been men who had this urge to travel to far-away places.

Source: Ogundipe, Eckersley and Macaulay (2002, p.8).

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Unit 2

Pronouns

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 1 of this course, you learnt about different types of nouns and their functions. The unit you are going to study now is on Pronouns. Like Nouns, Pronouns are very important and useful components of the English language or any language. Knowledge and mastery of different types of pronouns and their functions in sentence construction will enable you to use the English language effectively in communication. This unit is designed to enable you achieve the objectives listed below.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- (i) define a pronoun and state its functions;
- (ii) name and describe each type of pronouns;
- (iii) classify pronouns according to types;
- (iv) state the relationship between nouns and pronouns;
- (v) write sentences to illustrate the use of each type of pronoun;
- (vi) identify pronouns in a reading passage and state their functions.

3.0 What is a Pronoun?

Pronouns are words used in place of nouns. They are used in a piece of writing or speech to avoid repeating a previously stated noun referred to as the antecedent of the pronoun. The short passage below will be used to illustrate the importance of pronouns in a piece of writing.

Sir Isaac Newton's Absent Mindedness

Sir Isaac newton was one of the greatest scientists who ever lived, but Newton was very absent minded about small matters when Newton was thinking about work. Newton was particularly forgetful about eating whenever Newton was busy with scientific problems.

Source: Ogundipe, Eckersley and Macaulay, 2000, Book 1, p.56

Question: What do you think is wrong in the above passage; did you say too many repeats of Newton?

Yes, you are right. Such repetition of a noun in speech or writing makes listening or recording boring and uninteresting.

Question: What do you think should be done to make the reading of the above text more interesting? Did you say — replace the word 'Newton' in some places with the word 'he'?

Yes, you are right. The word 'he' can replace the second, third and fifth Newton. When you do that, the reading of the above text will be more interesting.

The word 'he' is a pronoun and, as mentioned earlier, pronouns are words used in place of nouns to avoid repetition. Now, rewrite the passage using the appropriate pronoun.

3.1 Types of Pronouns

Pronouns are of different types depending on the grammatical functions they perform in a sentence. Here are some pronoun types.

- (a) Personal and impersonal pronouns
- (b) Reflexive and emphatic pronouns
- (c) Possessive pronouns
- (d) Interrogative pronouns
- (e) Demonstrative pronouns
- (f) Relative pronouns
- (g) Indefinite pronouns

3.1.1 Personal and Impersonal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are those used in place of names of people. Here are some examples:

- (i) 'He' in place of Newton — after the first mention.
- (ii) 'She' in place of Amina.
- (iii) 'They' in place of Hadiza and Adamu.

Study the following sentences:

- (i) Newton loved his work so much he sometimes forgot to eat.
- (ii) Amina cooks well. She always cooks for her family.
- (iii) Hadiza and Adamu are going to get married. They are going to Lagos next week to do their shopping.

Note that in each sentence above, instead of repeating the noun previously mentioned in the sentence, another word was used. These are the words underlined in early sentence. These words are all Personal Pronouns. Others are: I, you, me, we, us.

3.1.1.2 Personal Pronouns: Gender – Masculine, Feminine and Neuter Genders

Personal pronouns can be masculine or feminine in gender, that is male or female.

Masculine gender	=	he/him
Feminine gender	=	she/her

- Note 1:** (a) The pronouns – I, me, you, we and us can be either masculine or feminine according to the person (noun) referred to.
- (b) The pronouns – they and them may be masculine, feminine or neuter in gender.

Note 2: Neuter gender is used to classify the impersonal pronoun, 'it,' which refers to things, places, ideas and abstract nouns, or other common nouns.

Here are some sample sentences to illustrate the use of pronouns in the masculine, feminine and neuter genders.

- (i) He was sad because his father scolded him. (masculine genders).
- (ii) She lost the ring her mother gave her. (feminine gender)
- (iii) The dog is not eating because it is sick. (neuter gender)

Note 3: 'They', and 'them' are used for masculine, feminine and neuter genders.

Examples

- (i) The men caught the two (male) thieves. They took them to the police. (masculine)
- (ii) The girls watched the film. Ask them if they enjoyed it. (feminine)
- (iii) The orange trees are flowered. They should have plenty of oranges on them later in the year. (neuter)

3.1.1.3 Personal Pronouns: Number and Person

Personal pronouns can be in:

- (i) Singular number e.g. he/she, him/her, I/me;
- (ii) Plural number, e.g. they/them, we/us.

‘You’, is a personal pronoun that is both singular and plural as shown in the sentences below:

- (i) You are a good boy/girl. (one boy/one girl - singular).
- (ii) You are good boys/girls (more than one boy/more than one girl = plural).

The Impersonal Pronoun: ‘it’ – Neuter Gender

The impersonal pronoun, ‘it’, which you studied under section 3.1.1.2 as belonging to the neuter gender, has as plural, ‘they’ and ‘them’. Here are some sample sentences.

- (i) The dog is running. It is afraid. (singular)
- (ii) The dogs are running. They are afraid. (plural)
- (iii) The boy is chasing the dogs. He is chasing them. (plural)

The impersonal pronoun, ‘it’, is also used as impersonal subject in sentences such as shown below:

- (i) It is raining.
- (ii) It was a fine day yesterday.
- (iii) It was a sunny day.
- (iv) It was a rainy day.
- (v) It is a long way to Lagos from here.
- (vi) It is a long time since we met.

In these sentences, the pronoun ‘it’ does not refer to any previous noun. This is just the way it is used in English.

3.1.1.4 Personal Pronouns in Sentence Structure

In Unit I where you studied different types of nouns, you were told that a noun could be the subject or object of a sentence.

In English language, nouns always have the same form whether they are in the subject or the object position. Here are some examples to illustrate this point:

Subject	Verb	Object
The boy	hit	the dog
The dog	bit	the boy

As shown in the two sentences, the words, ‘boy’ and ‘dog’, can be subject or object without any change in their form. This is not so with pronouns. With the exception of ‘you’ and ‘it’. For other pronouns, there is one form for the subject and another form for the object. For instance, ‘I’ in the subject position becomes ‘me’ in the object position. ‘He’ in the subject position becomes ‘him’ in the object position.

Here are some examples for illustration:

Subject	Verb	Object
I	know	the boy
The boy	knows	me
They	know	the teacher
The teacher	knows	them

The exception to the above rule are the personal pronoun, 'you' and the impersonal pronoun, 'it'. These are the same, whether in the subject or object positions. Here are examples to illustrate.

Subject	Verb	Object
You	hit	it
It	bit	you

Pronoun and Person in English Grammar

Person is a term in grammar which indicates the relationship among the actor or doer, what is spoken about and the speaker or reporter in a given sentence. There are three choices in sentences:

- 1st Person — the speaker/reporter
- 2nd Person — the one the speaker speaks to
- 3rd Person — the one spoken about

Person is very important to Number (which you already know in Nouns); it is important to Pronoun also because of its various forms, and to the tense of the verb which you will learn in Units 3 and 4.

Study the table below for the choice of the pronouns as to person, number and place in structure.

Person	Singular		Plural	
	Subject	Object	Subject	Object
1st person	I	me	We	us
2nd person	You	you	You	you
3rd person	She, He, It	her, him, it	They	them

Exercise I

- (i) State the functions of pronouns in communication.
- (ii) (a) What are personal pronouns?
(b) Make two sentences using personal pronouns.
- (iii) (a) Distinguish between masculine and feminine gender pronouns.
(b) Make a sentence to illustrate the use of each.
- (iv) (a) Distinguish between singular and plural numbers.
(b) Construct a sentence to illustrate the use of each.
- (v) Underline the pronouns in the following sentences and write the group of person to which each pronoun belongs:
 - (a) You do love your wife very much Jide.
 - (b) He is not working hard at his studies.
 - (c) We saw the National Assembly building in Abuja.
 - (d) They can join us at the party if they wish.

Sample Answers

- (i) Pronouns are used in place of previously mentioned nouns in communication to avoid repetition.
- (ii) (a) Personal pronouns are words used in place of names of persons.
(b) i. *Ejiro* called me yesterday.
She called me yesterday.
ii. *President Obasanjo* is determined to fight corruption.
He is determined to fight corruption.
- (iii) (a) Masculine gender pronoun is used to indicate a male in subject or object e.g. position he/him.
Feminine gender pronoun is used to indicate female in subject or object position e.g. she/her.
(b) Masculine — *He* is a boy.
Feminine — *She* is a woman.

- (iv) (a) Singular number designates one person or one thing.
Plural number designates more than one person or thing.
(b) Singular — *She* loves cakes.
Plural — *They* love cakes.
- (v) (a) You — Second person singular
(b) He — Third person singular
(c) We — First person plural
(d) They — Third person plural

3.1.2 Reflexive Pronouns

In the preceding sections of this Unit, you studied a group of related pronouns called Personal Pronouns. You studied what they are, their functions and usage.

In this section, you are going to study another group of pronouns called ‘reflexive pronouns’. You will learn what they are and how to use them in constructing sentences. You will also learn how reflexive and personal pronouns are related.

What is a Reflexive Pronoun?

A reflexive pronoun is one that refers back to the subject of a sentence. This means that the object of the sentence is the same person or thing as the subject of the sentence. In other words, the action performed in the sentence does not go from one person to another or from one thing to another. The action comes back again – like the reflection in a mirror – to the doer of the action. This characteristic of reflecting gave this group of pronouns the name ‘reflexive’.

Reflexive pronouns always end in – ‘self’ (for singular) and - ‘selves’ (for plural). They appear as: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, oneself (for singular) and ourselves, yourselves, themselves (for plural).

Here are some sentences to illustrate the use of reflexive pronouns in communication.

- (i) I saw myself in the mirror.
- (ii) Ojo, be careful or you will hurt yourself.
- (iii) Uduak dressed herself carefully for the party.
- (iv) One must be allowed to please oneself.
- (v) The cat can scratch itself.
- (vi) We taught ourselves to swim.
- (vii) Okon and Obi hurt themselves getting over the wall.
- (viii) Hamza helped himself to the cakes.

Note: People sometimes use some reflexive pronouns wrongly. Examples of such pronouns are: ourselves, yourselves, themselves. The table below shows the wrong and the correct usages of these reflexive pronouns.

Wrong Usage	Correct Usage
(i) Aisha and I had a great time when we met ourselves.	Aisha and I had a great time when we met each other.
(ii) Have you two saluted yourselves?	Have you two saluted each other?
(iii) Friends should help themselves.	Friends should help one another or each other.
(iv) The supporters of both teams fought themselves.	The supporters of both teams fought one another.
(v) They blamed themselves for the accident.	They blamed one another or each other for the accident.

3.1.3 Emphatic Pronouns

You have just ended your study of reflexive pronouns. One of the things you learnt was that reflexive pronouns always end in ‘-self’ or ‘-selves’. Emphatic pronouns too end in ‘self’ or ‘selves’. However, whereas reflexive pronouns are used to show that the action by the verb in the sentence goes back to the

doer of the action, emphatic pronouns are used to make what is said stronger. In other words, they are used for emphasis.

Another difference between these two types of pronouns is that a reflexive pronoun is necessary for the sentence in which it appears to have some sense or meaning. Emphatic pronoun on the other hand could be missed out and the sentences would still make sense. These short passage below illustrates the above points.

Oiza bathed herself. I know she did. I saw her, myself.

You, yourself, said she looked clean and Oiza, herself, said she had had a bath.

Note: (1) The word, ‘herself’ in the first sentence is a reflexive pronoun. It is the object of the sentence and ‘Oiza’ is the subject of the sentence. Both, that is, ‘Oiza’ (subject) and ‘herself’ (object) are needed for the sentence to be complete and meaningful.

Note: (2) The reflexive pronouns in the remaining sentences could be left out or missed out and the sentences in which they occur would still make sense. These reflexive pronouns therefore are used for purposes of emphasis.

Let us re-write the passage on Oiza, this time leaving out all the reflexive pronouns. The passage will look like this:

Oiza bathed. I knew she did. I saw her. You said she looked clean and Oiza said she had had a bath.

Note: (3) Of the four sentences in the short passage, only the first one does not make much sense. We are told Oiza bathed but we don’t know who she bathed. What this tells us is that, whereas reflexive pronouns are necessary for sentence completeness, emphatic pronouns are not, but they are used in occasions of argument or disagreement for emphasis.

3.1.4 Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are used to show possession. That is, showing that something belongs to someone or something. They are used instead of mentioning the items of possession.

In order to understand well how possessive pronouns function, we will need to do a little study of another English language structure, namely, the Adjective. You will study adjectives and their functions in details in Unit 5. Here, we are only going to mention one adjective type, namely, possessive adjective, to help us in our understanding of possessive pronouns.,

As you will learn in Unit 5, adjectives are used to modify or qualify nouns. Possessive adjectives are used to show ownership of something.

Examples: My pillow. Your bag. Their books.
Her dress. Our house. His ball.

The underlined words are possessive adjectives qualifying the nouns that follow. Here are another set of sentences showing the use of Possessive adjectives on one side and the use of possessive pronouns on another side.

A	B
Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns
This is my pillow.	This pillow is mine. It is mine.
That is your bag.	That bag is yours. It is yours.
That is her dress.	The dress is hers. It is hers.
This is his ball.	This ball is his. It is her’s.
These are their books.	These books are theirs. They are theirs.

Note: The underlined words in Column B are possessive pronouns. Note also that instead of repeating the noun in the other sentence in Column B, the Pronouns ‘it’ and ‘they’ are used. Recall that you studied these in Section 3.1.1 of this Unit.

not Your’s.

3.1.5 Interrogative Pronouns

To interrogate means to ask questions. Interrogative pronouns therefore are used to ask questions and they include such words as: who, whom, whose, what, which, where, whoever. They are also referred to as WH - questions.

Here are some sentences to demonstrate the use of interrogative pronouns. The underlined words are interrogative pronouns.

- (i) Who is knocking at the gate?
- (ii) Which of these books do you want to borrow to read, Yinka?
- (iii) Where are you going to be after this lecture, Abike?
- (iv) Whoever said you could pass without studying hard, Gogo?
- (v) What did Murna do to deserve such shabby treatment?
- (vi) Where are the clothes you promised to buy for me, Obi?
- (vii) Whom did you see when you arrive home?
- (viii) Whose are these suitcases?

Note: Some of the underlined words such as ‘which’, ‘what’ and ‘whose’ could be used as adjectives as shown in the following sentences:

- (i) Which shoes do you want to buy, Amina?
- (ii) Whose umbrella is on the table?
- (iii) What hope is there for a poor man to build a house in this country?

Each of the underlined words is an adjective that qualifies the noun that follows it.

3.1.6 Demonstrative Pronouns

The word ‘demonstrate’ means to show. Demonstrative pronouns therefore are used to show or point at things or people. In English language, the following words are used to point at things or people:

this (singular)	these (plural)
that (singular)	those (plural)

Here are some sentences to illustrate the use of these words.

- (i) This is the girl I want to marry.
- (ii) These are the boys that caught the thief.
- (iii) That is the lecturer whose course I like.
- (iv) Those are the courses for the second semester.

Note: ‘This/these,’ ‘that/those’ are also used as adjectives as you will see in Unit 5 of this course. They are used as adjectives when they qualify a noun. When these words function as adjectives, they are called demonstrative adjectives. Here are sample sentences to illustrate the use of ‘this/these’, ‘that/those’ as demonstrative adjectives.

- (i) This girl is the person I want to marry.
- (ii) These boys caught the thief.
- (iii) That lecturer is one whose course I like.
- (iv) Those courses are for the second semester.

Note: Unlike in the first group of sentences, ‘this/these,’ ‘that/those’ in these sentences are followed by nouns. They function here as adjectives whereas they function as demonstrative pronouns in the first group of sentences.

3.1.7 Relative Pronouns

A relative pronoun does the work of a conjunction and that of another pronoun by joining two simple sentences into a compound or complex one. The two sentences below will be used to illustrate the function of a relative pronoun.

Here are the passengers. The passengers want to travel by Albarka Airlines.

Question: How can we join these two sentences to make one?

Answer: This can be done by using the conjunction, 'and' which is a connecting or joining word and changing the second passenger to 'they'. Thus, you will have as follows:

Here are the passengers and they want to travel by Albarka Airlines.

Note: The above sentence makes sense, alright, but there is a much better way of joining the sentences. This is done by using the relative pronoun.

In English language, we use the relative pronoun to join or connect simple sentences to form a complex one. Using a relative pronoun to join our simple sentences will give us the following:

Here are the passengers who want to travel by Albarka Airline.

Note: The word 'who' is a relative pronoun. It relates or joins the two simple sentences. By so doing, it does the work of the conjunction 'and' as well as the work of the personal pronoun, 'they'. The word 'who' is related to 'passengers' in the first sentence.

Here are some relative pronouns: who/whom (used for people), which (used for things), that (used for people and things) and whose (used for possession).

Sample Sentences to Illustrate the Use of Relative Pronouns

Simple Sentences	Complex Sentences Formed by Relative Pronouns
(i) Here is a course book. It teaches English Grammar.	Here is a course book which teaches English Grammar.
(ii) Dikko has a dog. It is called Bonzo.	Dikko has a dog that is called Bonzo.
(iii) This is the girl. I told you about her.	This is the girl whom I told you about.
(iv) Prof. Soyinka won the Nobel prize. He is a Nigerian.	Prof. Soyinka who won the Nobel prize is a Nigerian.
(v) The doctor is here. You read his book.	The doctor whose book you read is here.

Note: People often speak or write in complex sentences. Relative pronouns are used to create defining and non-defining relative clauses in complex sentences. You will learn this in Units 11 and 12.

3.1.8 Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns as the name suggests, are not definite or specific in their function. For instance, they do not point out any particular thing or person. They are used for both persons and things when these are used in general terms. Here are some indefinite pronouns:

everybody, anybody, everyone, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody,
some, several, all, few, none, both, one,
any, neither, either, each, much, many,

Sample sentences to illustrate the use of indefinite pronouns

- (i) Everybody was happy for the newly wedded couple. (everybody here means all)
- (ii) It seems somebody is knocking at the door. (somebody means anybody)
- (iii) When I visited the hospital, I found neither the doctors nor the nurses.
- (iv) The two men fighting were both drunk.
- (v) Some attended the meeting but many were absent.

Note: Try to use the other words in sentences but be careful not to use them as adjectives!

Exercise 2

Answer the following questions to help you revise some of the contents you learnt in this unit.

- (i) Construct a sentence with each of these: 'each other', 'one another', to illustrate the difference between them.
- (ii) What is the difference between reflexive and emphatic pronouns? Illustrate with a sentence for each type.
- (iii) (a) What is the difference between a possessive adjective and a possessive pronoun?
(b) Construct two sentences for each type to illustrate the difference.
- (iv) (a) What are interrogative pronouns used for?
(b) Construct two sentences to illustrate this.
- (v) (a) Distinguish between demonstrative adjective and demonstrative pronoun.
(b) Construct one sentence to illustrate the use of each.
- (vi) (a) What is the function of relative pronouns in communication?
(b) Give one example of a relative pronoun and use it to make a sentence.
- (vii) (a) Name two indefinite pronouns.
(b) Make a sentence with each.

Sample Answers

- (i) Ego and Ngozi hugged *each other* when they met.
The spectators at the Surulere stadium fought *one another* on Saturday.
- (ii) Reflexive pronoun refers back to the subject of the sentence e.g. Jide cut *himself* when he was shaving this morning.
Emphatic pronoun is used to emphasise what is said in the sentence e.g. The children cleaned the room *themselves*.
- (iii) (a) Possessive adjective qualifies a noun to show possession e.g. This is *my* wallet. Possessive pronoun shows possession by itself e.g. This wallet is *mine*.
- (iv) (a) Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions.
(b) **Examples:** *Where* did you go yesterday evening?
Whose are these books on the floor?
- (v) Demonstrative pronoun is used to point things or people out. e.g.
Sentence 1 – *This* is the text book recommended for Remedial English Course.
Sentence 2 – *Those* are the clothes you are to wash, Uche.
- (vi) Demonstrative adjective points out the noun it qualifies e.g. *Those* boys are making noise.
Demonstrative pronoun points things or people out by itself e.g. *Those* are the boys that are making noise.
- (vii) Relative pronoun functions as a conjunction which joins two simple sentences into a complex one. The relative pronoun relates to the subject of the first clause or sentence.
Example: This is Mr. Dikko. He lost his wife last month. (two simple sentences)
This is Mr. Dikko *who* lost his wife last month. (one complex sentence)
- (viii) (a) few, everybody
Sentence 1 – You need mangoes? I have *few* left.
Sentence 2 – *Everybody* was there at Uche's party.

4.0 Conclusion

Effective communication in English language requires that you know the various parts of the English language and how to use them. Among the parts of speech in the English language are the Pronouns. The functions of pronouns as presented and taught in this unit, if properly learnt, will enable you to understand and use well the other parts of the English language in later units of this course. Endeavour therefore to study diligently each aspect of this unit and do the exercises given.

5.0 Summary

This Unit is the second in this course on Access English. The Unit has presented and taught you in a systematic manner what you need to know about pronouns and how to put this knowledge into practical use. The contents of the unit dealt with what pronouns are, their types and functions.

You will notice that the presentation and teaching of the contents in this unit was not done in isolation but involved the teaching and the use of other parts of English namely, Nouns, Adjectives and Verbs. By this, you are made to learn the interrelatedness of these language components.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Read the passage below. Identify each pronoun in the passage and write it out. State the type of pronoun it is and the sentence number containing the pronoun.

Rockefeller, the Humble Millionaire

(1) This is a story about the American millionaire, John D. Rockefeller, told by a friend of his. (2) This friend said that although Rockefeller spend millions to help other people, he never liked any expense which was for himself. (3) One day, he went to stay at a hotel in New York and asked for the cheapest room they had. (4) The manager told him. (5) 'Is that the lowest priced room you have?' (6) 'I am staying here by myself and only need a small room.' (7) The manager answered, 'That room is the smallest and cheapest we have,' and added, 'but why do you choose a poor room like that?' (8) 'When your son stays here, he always takes our most expensive room; yours is the cheapest?' (9) 'Yes,' said Rockefeller, 'he has expensive tastes; but one can hardly blame him. (10) You see, his father is a wealthy man; mine is not.'

Source: Ogundipe, Eckersley and Macaulay 2001, pg. 9.

7.0 References and other Resources

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Unit 3

Verbs: Recognition and Functions

1.0 Introduction

The first two units of this course taught you two of the components of English language, namely, the nouns and pronouns. You must have observed while working through the units, that both the nouns and the pronouns were presented and taught with another very important language component, namely, the Verbs.

The verbs serve as the vehicle through which the contents of Units 1 and 2 were conveyed to you. Without the verbs, information in the units would have been impossible to convey. In this unit, you are going to learn about English verbs, what they are and their functions in the overall process of communication in English language.

2.0 Objectives

After working through this unit, you will be able to:

- (i) identify verbs in oral and written communication.
- (ii) state the functions of verb in communication.
- (iii) state and describe different types of verbs and their uses.
- (iv) construct simple or complex sentences with correct verb forms.
- (v) compose short passages using appropriate verb forms.

3.0 Definition of a Verb

A verb is a word used to describe or express an action or a state of being. It tells what the subject (noun or pronoun) does or is in a sentence. Verbs are the most important words in any language. Without them, one can hardly communicate in any language.

The form of a verb in a sentence is always determined by the time in which the action or event it expresses takes place. For instance, the action may be in the present, past, future, time or tense. Because of its active nature, a verb is also referred to as a 'doing' or 'action word'.

Below are some sentences to illustrate what a verb means and does.

- (i) Adamu jumps over the fence. (action - present time)
- (ii) Ufot washed his clothes. (action - past time)
- (iii) I will come. (action - future time)
- (iv) Ada is sick. (state of being - present time)
- (v) The mangoes are ripe. (state of being - present time)
- (vi) Ada was sick for two weeks. (state of being - past time)

3.1 Types of Verbs

Verbs are of different types depending on their nature and function in sentences. Here are some verb types in English language you must know and be able to use in oral and written communication.

- (a) Main or lexical verbs.
- (b) Auxiliary verbs.
- (c) Finite and non-finite verbs.
- (d) Transitive and intransitive verbs.
- (e) Active and passive verbs.
- (f) Regular and irregular verbs.

3.1.1 Main or Lexical Verbs

A main verb directly tells what the subject of a sentence does. It does not rely on another verb to perform its function in a sentence. One could say that main verbs are all other verbs except the auxiliary verbs. Here are some examples in simple sentences.

- (i) My mother cooks well.
Question: What does my mother do?
Answer: She cooks well.
- (ii) Abubakar caught a large fish.
Question: What did Abubakar do?
Answer: He caught a large fish.

Here are some more examples of lexical verbs used in compound/complex sentences.

- (i) Efe works hard but her sister Ejiro is lazy.
- (ii) Dagogo and Obi finished their home work and went out.

Note: All the words underlined in the above sentences are main verbs. You can see that each tells us what the subject(s) in the sentence is/are doing or is/are.

3.1.2 Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are never used alone. They are used with main verbs to show tense and to form questions and negative sentences. The function of auxiliary verbs is to help make the meaning of the main verb clear. Sometimes, there could be more than one auxiliary verb in a sentence as in sentences (vii) and (viii) below.

Words such as: do, be, have, can, shall, will and so, are all auxiliary verbs. Note that 'aux' and 'mv' are used respectively to indicate which verbs are auxiliary and which are main verbs. Here are some sentences to show the use of auxiliary verbs with main verbs.

- (i) Mary ^{aux} can ^{mv} speak French.
- (ii) Uzo ^{aux} will ^{mv} help you do the laundry.
- (iii) Do you know that your friend is here?
- (iv) The student ^{aux} are ^{mv} studying Biology.
- (v) We ^{aux} have ^{mv} heard of his arrival.
- (vi) Tyson, the boxer, ^{aux} was ^{mv} defeated at the second round.
- (vii) Jide ^{aux} has ^{aux} been ^{mv} studying for one week.
- (viii) The chairs ^{aux} should ^{aux} be ^{mv} removed immediately.

Note: The following verbs are often used as auxiliaries:

- (a) Forms of the verb **be**: am, is, are, be, being, been, was, were.

- (b) Forms of **have**: have, has, had.
- (c) Forms of **do**: do, does, did
- (d) The verbs can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, must, ought to, used to.

3.1.3 Finite and Non-finite Verbs

A verb is like a family in the sense that it has several forms which it can take according to the different types of roles it has to perform in sentences, just as there are different names - father, mother, son, uncle etc. – for members of a family, according to each person's position. The following are the forms that a verb can take: present infinitive, simple present tense, simple past tense, present continuous, (present participle) and the past participle. Some verbs take four of these forms and are referred to as regular verbs – e.g. to walk (present infinitive tense), walk(s) (simple present tense), is walking (present participle) walked (past participle).

Note that the verb, 'to walk', has the same form for both the past tense and the past participle, that is, 'walked'. Thus, this verb like all regular verbs has only four forms. Some verbs take five forms and are referred to as irregular verbs e.g. to give (present infinitive tense), give(s) (simple present tense), is giving (present continuous, present participle), gave (simple past tense) and (has) given (past participle tense). Note that this verb has a different form for the simple past tense and another for the past participle. Thus, this verb, like other irregular verbs, has five forms. Apart from the four-form and five-form verbs, a very small number of verbs have three forms e.g. put, cut as shown below:

to put (infinitive) put(s) (simple present), and is putting (present participle).

Another small number verbs (auxiliaries) have only two forms, e.g. can/could. Another verb is 'must', which has only one form i.e. it never changes form. The verb 'to be', an irregular verb has eight forms, namely — to be, being, am, is, are, was, were and been.

In this sub-section of the unit on verbs, you have been taught the various forms that a verb can take, depending on the function it is performing in sentences.

Note: Some verb forms can be used alone in a sentence to make complete sense, while others cannot. These others must go with auxiliary-verbs for them to make sense.

The verb forms that can be used alone in sentences, which also make sense by themselves are called 'finite verbs'. These forms are used in the simple present tense and in the simple past tense. The verb forms which must be accompanied by auxiliary verbs to make sensible sentences are called 'non-finite verb'. These are the forms used in the present infinitive, the present participle and the past participle.

These sentences below illustrate the difference in the way the finite and non-finite form of verb function. Let us use the verb 'to give'.

A	B
Finite Forms	Non-finite Forms
(i) Our teacher gives us home work in English. (simple present tense)	Our teacher is giving us home work in English. (present participle)
(ii) Our teacher gave us home work in English. (simple past tense)	Our teacher has given us home work in English. (past participle)
	Our teacher is to give us home work in English.

You can see from the above table that the forms of the verb, 'give,' in Column B cannot make sense on their own without the accompanying auxiliary verbs 'is' and 'has' while the forms in Column A make complete sense on their own.

Differences between Finite and Non-finite Verbs

A verb is finite when there is only one verb form in a simple sentence as you have in Column A. When you have two or more verb forms as in Column B, the first is finite while the other(s) are non-finite. Thus, using the first sentence in Column B, 'is', is finite while 'giving' is non-finite.

A finite verb agrees with its subject in number and person. In other words, it changes according to the number and person of the subject. The non-finites do not change because they never have a subject. Look at these sample sentences using the verb 'to give'.

1st person singular	I am giving home work.
2nd person singular and plural	You are giving home work.
3rd person singular	She/he is giving home work.
1st person plural	We are giving home work.
3rd person plural	They are giving home work.

Note: While the finite form of verb changes as in: am, is, are, according to person or number of the subject, the non-finite, 'giving' remains unchanged in the above sentences.

Note that the non-finite form of verbs are not used alone in sentences in usual constructions.

3.1.4 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verb

A transitive verb is used in a sentence that has a subject and a direct object. It tells the action of the subject on the object of the sentence. Here are some sentences with transitive verbs.

- (i) John kicked the ball.
- (ii) My mother is making a dress.
- (iii) I have done my home work.

The underlined words tell us what the subject in each sentence did, is doing or has done on the object. The questions and answers below will further clarify the point being made about the object of the sentence.

What did John kick? a ball.
What is my mother making? a dress.
What have I done? my homework.

Intransitive Verbs

Verbs that do not act on objects are called Intransitive Verbs. An intransitive verb tells you what the subject does but the action does not pass on to any object in the sentence. No noun or pronoun is affected by the action.

Here are some sample sentences to illustrate this.

- (i) Bolaji laughed.
- (ii) Chika smiled.
- (iii) Okon cried and prayed.
- (iv) My brother and I travelled last week.
- (v) The children went to school.
- (vi) The dog died.

The underlined verbs are intransitive because they do not act on any direct object in the sentences.

Exercise 1

Here are some questions to help you revise what you learnt so far in this unit.

- (1) (a) State the difference between main, lexical and auxiliary verbs.
- (b) With a pencil, underline the main or lexical verbs and circle the auxiliary verbs in this passage.

Honest Labi

Labi was checking through the carton of empty bottles which had been returned from Chief Fadaka's house when he found a paper bag which had slipped between the wrinkled flap and the side of the carton. He took it out, and to his surprise, he found it contained a thick bundle of bank notes of a high denomination, totalling nearly ten thousand naira. Ten thousand naira! It was enough to start Labi in a big beer business of

his own. He could become an independent factor of the oldest and biggest brewery by paying a substantial deposit. He would be able to command ready money. He might soon be able to buy his own pick-up van, even plan to build a beautiful house....

Sources: Ogundipe, Eckersley and Macaulay, (2000, Book I, p.38)

- (ii) (a) Distinguish between transitive and intransitive verbs.
- (b) Construct two sentences in the transitive form and another two sentences in intransitive form to illustrate the difference between these verb forms.

Sample Answers

- (i) (a) Lexical verbs are those verbs that are used alone in sentences to make complete sense. They are also called main verbs.
Auxiliary verbs on the other hand are attached to lexical verbs to make meaningful sentences.

(ii) **Honest Labi –**

Labi was checking through the carton of empty bottle which had been returned from Chief Fadaka's house when he found a paper bag which had slipped between the wrinkled flap and the side of the carton. He took it out, and to his surprise he found it contained a thick bundle of bank notes of a high denomination, totalling nearly ten thousand naira. Ten thousand naira! It was enough to start Labi in a big beer business of his own. He could become an independent factor of the oldest and biggest brewery by paying a substantial deposit. He would be able to command ready money. He might soon be able to buy his own pick-up van, even plan to build a beautiful house.

Source: Ogundipe, Eckersley and Macaulay (2000), Book I p.38).

- (ii) (a) Transitive verbs are used in sentences that have a subject and a direct object. Intransitive verbs are used in sentences that have just the subject with or without some other parts of the sentence that do not occur as object of the verb e.g. Adverbs.
- (b) Transitive Verbs (i) Ejike *washed* the plates.
(ii) Bello and Audu *cut* down the mango tree.
- Intransitive Verbs (i) The plane *landed* at 4 p.m.
(ii) Jide *sings* well.

3.1.5 Active and Passive Voice

Study these two sentences. Can you identify the difference between them?

- (a) Ijeoma washed the plates.
- (b) The plates were washed by Ijeoma.

In the first sentence, the subject 'Ijeoma' did something to the object, 'plates'.
What did she do? She washed the plates.

Explanation: In a sentence like this, we say that the subject, 'Ijeoma', acted on the object, 'plates'. Ijeoma, the subject is therefore called the 'actor' while the plates, the object, is said to be the 'receiver' of the action. When a verb is used in an active sense as in this sentence, we say that it is in the active voice. Now, look at the second sentence. You notice that the subject of this sentence is 'the plates'. However, this subject unlike in the first sentence is not acting on an object, rather it is being acted upon by what is referred to in English language as the 'agent' – Ijeoma, which was the subject in the first sentence.

The verb 'were washed' in the second sentence is said to be acting passively and therefore is said to be in passive voice. Study the sentences in the two tables below for further clarification.

A Active Voice			B Passive Voice		
Subject (Actor)	Verb	Object (Receiver)	Subject (Receiver)	Verb	Agent by + Actor
Ada	bought	the book.	The book	was bought	by Ada.
Emeka	killed	the snake.	The snake	was killed	by Emeka.
We	are learning	English.	English	is being learned	by us.
Ike	has collected	the books.	The books	have been collected	by Ike.
Eno	will write	the letter.	The letter	will be written	by Eno.

Note: Active voice and passive voice are two different ways of saying the same thing. They serve as one of the ways of bringing variation into the Use of English. Such variation reduces repetition and cuts down monotony. Secondly, the noun in the subject position is usually more prominent; the agent can even be omitted in some sentences. For example: The snake was killed. The letter will be written.

Note the changes in the forms of the verbs from the Active to the Passive.

3.1.6 Regular and Irregular Verbs

We will look at another group of verbs, namely, regular and irregular verbs. Here, you will learn what each of these verb type is, the difference between them and how the forms of each come to be.

Regular Verbs

Regular verbs are so called because they are in the majority of English verbs and also the commonest. Typically, they form their past tense and past participle by adding ‘-ed’, ‘d’ or ‘-t’ to the present tense. In addition to the above characteristics, regular verbs have just four forms as you have already learnt under the section on finite and non-finite verbs. Here in the table below are some regular verbs in their four forms.

Regular Verbs in their Four Forms				
Infinitive	Simple Present	Present Continuous Participle	Simple Past (Same	Past Participle Form)
to walk	walk/walks	(am/is/are walking)	walked	(has/have) walked
to open	open/opens	opening	opened	opened
to play	play/plays	playing	played	played
to stop	stop/stops	stopping	stopped	stopped
to cry*	cry/cries	crying	cried	cried
to pay*	pay/pays	paying	paid	paid
to lay*	lay/lays	is laying	laid	laid
to dream*	dream/dreams	dreaming	dreamed/dreamt	dreamed/dreamt
to burn*	burn/burns	burning	burned/burnt	burned/burnt.

Note: The words with asterisk deviate a bit from the normal way regular verbs make their forms. For instance, the word ‘stop’ has additional ‘p’ to form the present continuous, the past and the past participle tenses. Note also that the ‘y’ in cry, pay and lay change to ‘i’ and followed by ‘-ed’ and ‘-d’. Note also that the words ‘dream’ and ‘burn’ could have their simple past and past participle formed by addition of ‘-ed’ or ‘-t’ to the present tense form.

Irregular Verbs

These verbs, as the name implies, are the opposite of regular verbs. Unlike the regular verbs, they are not many and therefore not common. They are also described as irregular because they are in five forms. This is

because they have one form for the simple past tense and another for the past participle. Remember, you learnt about this characteristic of irregular verbs under finite and non-finite verbs. Here in the table below are some of the commonest irregular verbs in their five forms.

Irregular Verbs in their Five Forms

Infinitive	Simple Present	Present Continuous/ Participle	Simple Past	Past Participle
		(am/is/are)		has/have
to begin	begins/begin	beginning	began	begun
to bite	bites/bite	biting	bit	bitten
to blow	blows/blow	blowing	blew	blown
to break	breaks/break	breaking	broke	broken
to bring	brings/bring	bringing	brought*	brought*
to buy	buys/buy	buying	bought*	bought*
to catch	catches/catch	catching	caught*	caught*
to come	comes/come	coming	came	come
to draw	draws/draw	drawing	drew	drawn
to drink	drinks/drink	drinking	drank	drunk
to drive	drives/drove	driving	drove	driven
to eat	eats/eat	eating	ate	eaten
to fall	falls/fall	falling	fell	fallen
to fly	flies/fly	flying	flew	flown
to forget	forgets/forget	forgetting	forgot	forgotten
to get	gets/get	getting	got*	got*
to give	gives/give	giving	gave	given
to hold	holds/hold	holding	held*	held*
to know	knows/know	knowing	knew	known
to lie (i.e. to lie down)	lies/lie	lying	lay*	lain/laid
to lay (something)	lays/lay	laying	lay	laid
to mistake	mistakes/mistake	mistaking	mistook	mistaken
to shake	shakes/shake	shaking	shook	shaken
to take	takes/take	taking	took	taken
to think	thinks/think	thinking	thought*	thought*
to throw	throws/throw	throwing	threw	thrown
to wear	wears/wear	wearing	wore	worn
to win	wins/win	winning	won*	won*
to write	writes/write	writing	wrote	written
to go	goes/go	going	went	gone

Note: Take note of the following important points about irregular verbs.

- Irregular verbs, unlike the regular ones, do not form their simple past and past participle just by adding 'd', 'ed', or 't' rather, they change their vowel sound and in some cases, the end of the word is changed as well.
- Because of their very irregular nature, you must diligently learn and commit to memory the various forms of these verbs.
- Note that a few of the verbs marked with single asterisk do not follow the usual rule of the simple past and past participle forms of irregular verbs, being of different forms. For example, the verbs bring, buy

and catch etc. have the same form of both simple and past participle thus: bring/brought/ brought; buy/ bought/bought; catch/caught/caught etc.

The verb to lie, meaning to speak falsehood, takes the regular ‘-d’ ending for its forms in the past: lying,– lied, lied.

Exercise 2

- (A) (i) Give the past tense and the past participle of each of the verbs below.
(ii) Arrange the verbs into two columns, the regular verbs in one column and the irregular verbs in the other.

play	burn
want	know
stop	think
buy	fall
drink	pay
eat	lie (down)
write	lay
cry	

- (B) Convert the following sentences in the active voice to passive. Use the appropriate form of the verbs.
- Our teacher beat Jumoke last night.
 - The student is composing a song.
 - A doctor has examined the patient.
 - Alice had opened the window twice before noon.
 - You should have left the glass on the table.
 - The captain gave the team a gold cup.

Sample Answers

- (A) Past and Past Participles of Regular and Irregular Verbs

Regular Verbs			Irregular Verbs		
e.g. Words	Past tense	Past participle	Words	Past tense	Past participle
play	played	has played	buy	bought	has bought
want	wanted	has wanted	drink	drank	has drunk
stop	stopped	has stopped	eat	ate	has eaten
cry	cried	has cried	write	wrote	has written
lay	laid	has laid	know	knew	has known
burn	burnt/burned	has burnt	think	thought	has thought
pay	paid	has paid	fall	fell	has fallen
			lie (down)	lay	has lain

- (B) (a) Jumoke *was beaten* by our teacher last night.
(b) A song *is being composed* by the student.
(c) The patient *has been examined* by a doctor.
(d) The window *had been opened* twice before noon by Alice **or** had been opened by Alice twice before noon.
(e) The glass *should have been left* on the table by you.
(f) A gold cup *was given* the team by the captain **or**
The team *was given* a gold cup by the captain.

4.0 Conclusion

Effective communication in English language requires that you master among other things the English verb system. This unit has taught you the various types of verbs and their uses. A diligent study of this unit and a careful completion of the practice exercises will enable you to master the essentials of the English verb system.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you studied verbs and their functions. You learnt that verbs are action words which serve as the vehicle or means of making sentences for the purpose of communicating in any language. You learnt about different types of verbs, such as, lexical or main verbs, auxiliary verbs, transitive and intransitive verbs, verbs in active and passive voice, and regular and irregular verbs. You learnt how these verbs are formed and their functions in sentences. This unit has built upon what you studied in the previous units and prepared you for the next unit which is also on verbs.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- (A) Construct two sentences using lexical verbs and another two, using auxiliary verbs.
- (B) The sentences below are in a particular voice.
 - (i) What is the voice?
 - (ii) Transform each sentence from the present voice to the opposite voice.
 - (a) The car was repaired by the mechanic.
 - (b) The dinner was cooked by Mrs. Effiong.
 - (c) These letters were typed by my secretary.
 - (d) Was this banana grown by you?
 - (e) Was this ring stolen by the thief?
 - (f) Were the shots fired by the soldiers?
- (C) Construct two sentences using finite verbs another and two, containing non-finite verbs. Underline the appropriate verbs.

7.0 Reference

Ogundipe, P.A., C.E. Eckersley and M. Macaulay (2002). *Brighter Grammar Books 1 - 4*. U.K. Longman Group Limited.

Unit 4

Verbs and Tenses

1.0 Introduction

In this Unit, we will continue the study of verbs and their uses. The Unit will be focusing on verbs and the different tenses in which they could be used. You will learn to use tenses appropriate for reporting actions occurring at various times. You will also learn the forms of the verb used with noun subjects.

2.0 Objectives

The contents in this unit will enable you to:

- (i) use verbs in sentences with the right tenses;
- (ii) tell the time an action or a series of actions occurred and the tense of the verb used;
- (iii) report or describe an incident or event, using appropriate tenses of the verbs.

3.0 Tense

The tense of a verb tells whether an event or action occurred in the past (Ade laughed), or is occurring in the present (Ade laughs), or will occur in the future, (Ade will laugh). The tense is also used to show if an action or event is continuous (Ade is laughing).

3.1 Types of Tenses

English has three tenses, the present, the past and the future tenses. The present tense refers to present time, the past tense refers to past time and the future tense refers to future time. Here are some sentences to show you what each of these tenses looks like.

Emeka goes to school everyday. (present tense)

Mohammed went to mecca last year. (past tense)

Uzo will go to Onitsha on Saturday. (future tense)

Note: Each of these three tenses has other tenses that make it up as presented below.

3.1.1 The Present Tense

The present tense tell about actions occurring in the present. The present tense is of three types, namely: the simple present tense, the present continuous tense and the present perfect tense.

(a) The Simple Present Tense

This is used to indicate that something happens always, regularly, often, sometimes as a habit.

Examples: We take our dinner everyday at 7.30 p.m.

Okon listens to the network news on NTA at 9 p.m. everyday.

Adamu and his friend Jide play chess every Saturday night.

(b) **The Present Continuous Tense**

This is used when you wish to indicate that something is happening now, at the very moment of speaking or writing. Put in another way, it is used to express an action that is still going on. It usually consists of two parts: an auxiliary verb (aux) and a main verb (mv). Here are examples:

- (i) Nneka, my friend, is making my wedding dress.
- (ii) Ifeoma and Titi are singing.
- (iii) It is raining.

(c) **The Present Perfect Tense**

This tense form is used to indicate that an action is just finished. We use it to show that a past action has some connection with the present. Here are some examples:

Present Tense	Present Perfect Tense
Ibe eats his lunch. Ronke opens the door. Funke and Ayo dance together. Muyiwa and I (will) wash the plates.	Ibe has eaten his lunch. Ronke has opened the door. Funke and Ayo have danced together. Muyiwa and I have washed the plates.

3.1.2 The Past Tense

The past tense is used to indicate actions or events that happened in the past time. It is of three types: the simple past tense, the past continuous tense and the past perfect tense.

(a) **The Simple Past Tense**

This is used to indicate that an action which happened in the past is finished or completed.

Examples: Ego bought a new television yesterday.

Mr. and Mrs. Okon travelled to Calabar on Monday.

(b) **The Past Continuous Tense**

This is used to show that one of the two actions that occurred in the past was unfinished. The unfinished action is said to be in past continuous tense form while the finished action is in the simple past tense.

Examples: While Obi and I were visiting our friends yesterday, we saw our teacher.

When our plane landed this afternoon, it was raining.

(c) **The Past Perfect Tense**

We use this tense form to show that two actions took place in the past and one was finished first. The finished action is in the past perfect tense and the other is in the simple past tense.

Simple Sentences in Past Perfect Tense

- (i) I had never seen an ostrich until I visited my Uncle's farm in the North.
- (ii) The fire had destroyed the house before the fire-fighters arrived.
- (iii) Ojo had already got home before it began to rain.
- (iv) Ayo had eaten his dinner by the time his friend Jide arrived.

3.1.3 The Future Tense

The future tense is used to tell about actions that are yet to occur. To express the future tense, we use the auxiliary verbs 'shall' and 'will' with a main verb.

'Shall' is used after the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' while 'will' is used after the personal pronouns 'he', 'she', 'they', 'it' and after all nouns.

Note 1: The personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' can also be followed by 'will' when the purpose of the sentence is to express willingness, intention, a firm promise or a strong determination. Here are some sentences to illustrate the use of shall and will.

- (i) I shall go to Kano next week.
- (ii) We shall visit our friends next week.
- (iii) Professor Daudu will give an inaugural lecture on Friday.
- (iv) The twins will celebrate their birthday on the 21st of this month.

Note 2: In the above sentences, 'shall' or 'will' is accompanied by a main verb. The main verbs are underlined with two lines.

Note 3: The following sentences are examples of how you could use 'will' with the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we'.

- (i) A father to his son: Okon, I will give you a computer for your birthday. (firm promise)
- (ii) We will be at your wedding, Jide. (firm promise)

Note 4: In speaking, the short form of 'will' is 'll' e.g. she'll, they'll.

Note 5: Used in the negative, 'shall' and 'will' become 'shall not' and 'will not' respectively. The short forms are: shan't and won't for speaking.

Tense Types in the Future Tense

Like the present and past tenses, the future tense is of three types namely: the simple future tense, the future perfect tense and the future continuous tense. Each of these tenses is described below.

(a) **The Simple Future Tense**

This is used to indicate that something will happen sometime in the future. The sample sentences used in this section to illustrate the use of 'will' and 'shall' are examples of use of simple future tense.

(b) **The Future Perfect Tense**

This is used when we wish to indicate that something will have been completed in the future by a certain time.

Examples: Professor Bello will have ended the lecture before we arrive at the lecture hall.
We shall have left for Lagos by the time Ojo arrives from school.
I shall have copied my notes before the next lecture begins.

(c) **The Future Continuous Tense**

We use this to indicate that of two actions which will take place in the future, it is expected that the first will be interrupted by the second action.

Examples: I will be doing my home work when you arrive from the market.
We will be seeing Oge before she travels to Lagos.

Exercise 1

- (A) (i) What do you understand by the tense of a verb?
- (ii) Name and describe the three tenses in English language.
- (B) Put these sentences into the Simple Past Tense and change the words expressing time.
 - (i) Jide is in school this week.
 - (ii) Musa's sheep has a little lamb today.
 - (iii) Eze goes to Kano today.
 - (iv) Ayo buys a new watch.
 - (v) The flowers are very beautiful this year.
 - (vi) Our class has English lesson today.
- (C) Put these sentences into the Simple Present Tense and change the words expressing time.
 - (i) We were in the second class last year.
 - (ii) Nneka had a new dress.
 - (iii) Our class had Mathematics three times a week last year.
 - (iv) Areta had a bad cold yesterday.

- (v) We were not able to do the assignment on Chemistry.
- (vi) Mary was here yesterday, wasn't she?

Sample Answers

- (A) (i) The tense of a verb tells us the time an action is been performed e.g. in the present, past or future time.
- (ii) The three tenses are:
- a. the present tense — depicts an action occurring in the present.
 - b. the past tense — tells of an action taking place in the past.
 - c. the future tense — depicts an action occurring in the future.
- (B) (i) Jide was in school last week.
- (ii) Musa's sheep had a little lamb yesterday.
- (iii) Eze went to Kano yesterday.
- (iv) Ayo bought a new watch.
- (v) The flowers were very beautiful last year.
- (vi) Our class had English lesson yesterday.
- (C) (i) We are in the second class this year.
- (ii) Nneka has a new dress.
- (iii) Our class has Mathematics three times a week this year.
- (iv) Areta has a bad cold today.
- (v) We are not able to do the assignment on Chemistry.
- (vi) Ture is here today, isn't she?

3.2 Subject – Verb Agreement

In Standard English, verbs agree with their subjects in number and person. Recall that you learnt about this under nouns and pronouns. You were told that singular subjects are used with some verb forms and plural subjects are used with some other verb forms. Here are some examples:

- (i) The boy is here. (singular) The boys are here. (plural)
- (ii) The student is working hard. (singular) The students are working hard. (plural)

Note that some noun words ending in 's' are still singular and they take the verb forms for singular. Examples are the following singular nouns: economics, measles, mathematics, statistics, physics, civics etc.

Sample Sentences

- (i) Mathematics is a difficult subject **not** Mathematics are difficult subjects.
- (ii) Measles is a deadly disease **not** Measles are deadly disease.

The following collective (plural) nouns do not take the 's' you normally add to form plural nouns: cattle, people, clergy, for plurals such as these, you use plural form of verbs.

Examples: The people are anxious to move away from the accident scene.
The cattle look lean and hungry.

Note: Certain sentence structures cause problems in subject – verb agreement. Here are some examples:

- (i) One of those girls has gone home. (not have)
- (ii) The advantages of being a tall person outweigh the disadvantages. (not outweighs)
- (iii) Effiong, along with his classmates, is selling crafts to raise money for their trip. (not are selling)

Exercise 2

- (A) Change the following sentences into the future tense and change the words into future time.
- (i) I am twelve years old today.
 - (ii) Ndu is in the second class this year.

- (iii) We have a busy day today.
- (iv) Mona, you are late for school.
- (v) Rufai is not able to do this exercise.
- (B) Change the following sentences from the simple past tense to past continuous tense.
 - (i) Ejiro swept the floor.
 - (ii) The cat slept under the table.
 - (iii) My mother sang a song to us.
 - (iv) I hoped you would come.
 - (v) Chika made a model aeroplane.
 - (vi) Nosa and Osita swam in the river.
- (C) Change the following sentences from plural to singular form.
 - (i) The nurses bathe the babies.
 - (ii) The cats eat the mouse.
 - (iii) The leaves turn yellow.
 - (iv) The children love to play.
 - (v) The boys sell watches.
 - (vi) The policemen catch the thief.

Sample Answers

- (A) (i) I will be twelve years old tomorrow.
- (ii) Ndu will be in the second class next year.
- (iii) We will have a busy day tomorrow.
- (iv) Mona, you will be late for school.
- (v) Rufai will not be able to do this exercise.
- (B) (i) Ejiro was sweeping the floor.
- (ii) The cat was sleeping under the table.
- (iii) My mother was singing a song to us.
- (iv) I was hoping you would come.
- (v) Chika was making a model aeroplane.
- (vi) Nosa and Osita were swimming in the river.
- (C) (i) The nurse bathes the babies.
- (ii) The cat eats the mouse.
- (iii) The leaf turns yellow.
- (iv) The child loves to play.
- (v) The boy sells watches.
- (vi) The policeman catches the thief.

4.0 Conclusion

A knowledge of tenses in English language is essential for you to be a good user of the language. Such knowledge will enable you to tell or describe actions according to the times of their occurrence whether in the present, past or future.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you learnt about tenses, their types and how to use them to tell, describe or report actions. You learnt that English has three major tenses, namely, the present, the past and the future. You learnt that each of these major tenses is of more parts. You also learnt how verbs agree with their subjects according to number, singular or plural, and tense.

6.0 Tutor–Marked Assignment

Here is a story to test your ability to use correct verb forms. Re-write the passage, putting the verbs in the brackets in the correct tense forms.

Libya Accepts Responsibility for Lockerbie Bombing

The Libyan government (accept) responsibility for the 1988 Lockerbie bombing and (set) up a fund to compensate victims' families. The U.S.A. (demand) that Tripoli (accept) the responsibility for the bombing and (pay) compensation before U.N. and U.S.A. sanctions can be (scrap), a moment eagerly (await) by at least four U.S. oil companies.

A British official (say) after the announcement that Washington and London already (discuss) the outstanding requirements.

“We (take) on the responsibility for this case on the basis of the international law which states that the State (take) on the responsibility for what its employees do”, Chalgam said.

Source: Adapted from *Thisday Newspaper*, Thursday, May 1, 2003, p.51.

7.0 Reference

Ogundipe, P.A., C.E. Eckersley and M. Macaulay (2002). *Brighter Grammar New Edition Books 1 – 4*. UK: Longman Group Ltd.

Module 2

Unit 5

Adjectives and their Functions

1.0 Introduction

The cat chased the mouse.

The fat wild black cat chased the tired weak hungry mouse.

Take a look at the two sentences above, what differences do you notice? The two sentences have the same meaning. In the second sentence, each noun has at least three words to describe it. Such words that describe nouns and pronouns are called 'adjectives'. In this Unit, you will be learning a lot about adjectives. You will have the opportunity to review what adjectives are, their types and functions.

2.0 Objectives

By the time you have gone through this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) identify adjectives by their forms;
- (ii) give examples of various types of adjectives; and
- (iii) use adjectives in making simple lucid sentences.

3.0 Adjectives

What is an Adjective?

It is the word that is used to describe a noun or pronoun. It is not easy to tell an adjective by simply looking at the word in isolation. The form of the word does not necessarily indicate its function.

Example: The tall fat man crossed the road.

An adjective makes a noun or pronoun more specific by giving details about it. It helps you have a clearer picture of what is being talked about. In the sentence above, the adjectives: tall, fat, tell you more about the man who crossed the road.

3.1 Positions of Adjectives

Adjectives occupy two typical positions in a sentence.

- (a) An adjective may come before the noun it qualifies as in the following sentences:
The young man helped the girl.

The excited boy received his reward.

We can say that an adjective can occupy the position immediately before the noun or pronoun it modifies. Such adjectives are called *attributive adjectives*.

- (b) An adjective can also be separated from the noun and put after a verb to function as the complement of the verb. In this case, such adjectives are called *predicative adjectives*.

Examples: He appears happy.

The case became serious.

Miss James is beautiful.

- (c) Adjectives can occupy more than one position in a sentence.

Example Miss James is a tall, beautiful African lady.

The following is a guide on which adjective to place first when you need to make a list.

Position	Types
first	the, a, some, possessive adjectives: my, her etc.
second	adjectives of size e.g. small, short, enormous.
third	adjectives of weight e.g. light, heavy.
fourth	general adjectives e.g. honest, pretty, intelligent.
fifth	adjectives of age e.g. old, new.
sixth	adjectives of shape, e.g. wide, round, curved.
seventh	adjectives of colour e.g. black, blue, gold etc.
eight	adjectives that describe where things come from or what they are made of e.g. African, wooden, plastic etc.
ninth	adjectives ending with 'ing' or 'ed' e.g. walking stick, honoured pilot etc.

Note: When more than one adjective is used to describe a noun in a sentence, the positions stated above will guide you as to the order of occurrence. However, it is not usual to use more than three or four adjectives at a time. Do not be misled by the positions numbered one to nine.

3.2 Identification of Adjectives

Some adjectives can be identified by certain form endings which include the following:

- (a) ful e.g. cheerful, joyful, fearful, hopeful
- (b) able e.g. amicable, likeable, dependable
- (c) ous e.g. generous, advantageous, generous
- (d) ish e.g. foolish, boyish, yellowish, smallish
- (e) ible e.g. edible, credible, feasible
- (f) er e.g. faster, bigger, fatter
- (g) est e.g. slowest, highest, tallest

Nevertheless, many adjectives do not take any of these suffixes.

Exercise 1

Identify the adjectives in the following sentences:

- (i) The careless driver had ignored the red light.
- (ii) These oranges have a bitter taste.
- (iii) There is a fierce dog at the school gate.
- (iv) Two big bulldozers cleared the rocky site.

- (v) A dissatisfied customer told the manager the whole story.

Sample Answers

careless, red, these, bitter, fierce, school, two, big, rocky, whole.

3.3 Types of Adjectives

3.3.1 Possessive Adjectives

As you will remember, in unit two, you learnt that such words as his, hers, mine, ours are called possessive pronouns. Possessive adjectives are also words like his, her, my, our, their, etc. They show possession. A possessive adjective makes the meaning of noun more definite.

Examples: This is his jacket.

These are our pens.

3.3.2 Demonstrative Adjectives

There are also some adjectives that point out nouns.

Examples: I like this tree.

I don't like that tree.

'This' and 'these' are generally used for things that are near. 'That' and 'those' are generally used for things that are further away.

'This' and 'that' go with singular countable nouns while 'these' and 'those' are used with plural countable nouns.

3.3.3 Interrogative Adjectives

These adjectives are used with nouns to ask questions.

Examples: What book are you studying?

Which car is yours?

Whose money was found?

3.3.4 Articles as Adjectives

The most frequently used adjectives are 'a', 'an', and 'the'. These words are usually called articles. 'A' and 'an' are indefinite articles as they refer to one of a general group.

Examples: She danced for an hour.

A car hit him.

'A' is used before a word that begins with a consonant sound while 'an' is used before 'hour' which begins with a consonant, because 'h' in hour is silent.

Note: It is the sound and not the spelling that determines the article.

'The' is the definite article. It indicates that a noun refers to someone or something in particular, that is a definite subject.

Examples: The book is old.

The hour passed quickly.

3.4 Functions of Adjectives (I)

Adjectives give various types of information about the noun. Specifically they provide answers to these questions:

- (a) Which one(s)?

Examples: That boy in green is my friend.

I brought these pencils from home.

- (b) What kind?

Examples: Ade wore a blue shirt and khaki shorts.
The hungry dog barked at the pigs.

- (c) How many or how much?

Examples: We have thirty day vacation.
I met several students in the class.

- (d) Whose?

Examples: Adamu's pencil was stolen.
This is toddler's class.

Note that possessive such as 'Adamu's' or 'toddler's' also function as adjectives.

Exercise 2

Identify the adjective in each of the following sentences and state what type of question it answers.

- (i) Glass cups break easily.
- (ii) Bring me Sam's ball.
- (iii) The red car belongs to my brother.
- (iv) We have forty-two ministers.
- (v) He gave me those books.

Sample Answers

- (i) glass – which one?
- (ii) Sam's – whose?
- (iii) red – what kind? my – whose
- (iv) forty-two – how many?
- (v) those – which ones?

3.5 Functions of Adjectives (II)

Adjectives take various positions in the modification of nouns. Those placed before the nouns they modify are described as *pre-modifiers* or *attributive adjectives*. Those that act as verb complements are called *predicative adjective*, while those that follow directly the items they modify are called *post-modifying* adjectives.

- (i) Attributive adjective modifies a noun attributively.

Examples: All the hardworking men were rewarded.
Bimpe is a quiet girl.

'Hardworking' pre-modifies 'men' while 'quite' pre-modifies 'girl'.

- (ii) Predicative adjectives can be used as subject complement after linking verbs.

Examples: I feel sick this morning.
Your suggestion seems possible.

- (iii) Post-modifying adjectives follow the items they modify.

Examples: The men outside are our friends.
The senator elect will do well.

3.6 Comparisons in Adjectives

Adjectives can be used to compare one thing with another, or one thing with many other things.

Examples: Emeka is shorter than Ngozi.
Emeka is the shortest in the class.

The form of adjective used to compare two things is called the comparative form. Shorter adjectives

form the comparative by adding -er.

Examples: She is taller than her friend.

The king is richer than me.

Longer adjectives and adjectives ending in -ful, -ous, -able use 'more' or 'less' according to the direction of comparison -up or -down.

Examples: Amina is more beautiful than her sister.

This work is more strenuous than I thought.

This house is less spacious.

When you want to compare three or more things, you use the superlative form. It is formed by adding -est to the adjective or by using 'most' or 'least'. Adjectives that use 'more' in comparative will use 'most' in superlative. The ones that use 'less' in the comparative will use 'least' in the superlative.

Examples: He is the tallest boy in class.

The chief is the richest man in town.

Note: Do not use '-er' and 'more'; or '-est' and 'most' at the same time.

Incorrect: English is more easier than Mathematics.

Correct: English is easier than Mathematics.

A few adjectives use completely new words for the comparative and superlative forms.

Examples	good	better	best
	bad	worse	worst
	little	less	least

Exercise 3

Underline the correct form of adjectives in the brackets.

- (i) That route is (short, shorter) to Abuja.
- (ii) The patient feels (better, best) now than he did in the morning.
- (iii) Of the three travels, this one feels (softer, softest).
- (iv) In attitude, Musa is a (good, better) boy.
- (v) My fever got (worst, worse) over the night.

Sample Answers

(i) shorter (ii) better (iii) softest (iv) better (v) worse

4.0 Conclusion

It is important for you to know how to use adjectives as they help to make nouns definite. Adjectives give a vivid description of nouns and pronouns and therefore give your writing or speech some colour. A good description involves the various senses - sights, hearing, touch, taste, smell. Adjectives enable you to create a clear picture in the mind of your reader or listener.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have studied what adjectives are, their types and functions. You have been able to identify different types of adjectives through the self-assessment exercises. For whatever part that is not clear, go back and revise, get a good understanding of adjectives before moving on to the next unit.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

(A) Identify the adjectives in these sentences.

- (i) Those seventy students took the examinations.
- (ii) Does the baby look sleepy?

- (iii) Their house looks dark without the front light.
 - (iv) We had rich garrisoned rice for dinner.
 - (v) The rusty sword was used by Queen Amina.
- (B)
- (i) Construct three sentences containing possessive adjectives.
 - (ii) Construct three sentences containing demonstrative adjectives.
 - (iii) Construct three sentences containing interrogative adjectives.
 - (iv) Construct three sentences containing articles as adjectives.
 - (v) Mention three types of questions that adjectives answer?

Note: You may copy examples from published reading texts but not grammar books. Underline the adjective in each sentence.

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Unit 6

Adverbs and their Functions

1.0 Introduction

The word adverb clearly indicates its association with verbs. In Unit 5, you learnt that an adjective describes (tells us more about) a noun, likewise an adverb tells us more about a verb, an adjective or another adverb in the same sentence. There are of course other classes of adverbs. In this unit, you will learn most of what you need to know about adverbs.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) identify adverbs by form;
- (ii) state various positions of adverbs in sentences;
- (iii) identify the types and functions of adverbs; and
- (iv) use adverbs as appropriate in your own sentences in communication.

3.0 What are Adverbs?

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives or other adverbs. Do you know what the word modify means? Modify means to make more specific by adding information, that is to say adverbs make the verb more specific by telling how something was done.

Examples: They walked slowly. (slowly modifies walked)
Tosin looked angrily at them. (angrily modifies looked)
I answered the questions correctly. (correctly modifies answered)

Note: This is only one of the many types of adverbs.

3.1 Formation of Adverbs

- (a) Some adverbs are formed by adding ‘-ly’ at the end of some adjectives.

Examples: The woman is a slow walker. (Adjective)
The woman walks slowly. (Adverb)
The boy’s behaviour is bad. (Adjective)
The boy behaves badly. (Adverb)
The student was happy to receive the award. (Adjective)
The student received the award happily. (Adverbs)

Note: Not all words that end in ‘-ly’ are adverbs. Some are adjectives.

Example: Azeez is a friendly man. (Adjective)

Other examples are: heavenly, ugly, cowardly etc.

- (b) Certain adverbs can indicate direction. These have endings such as – ‘ward’

Examples: The truck rolled backwards.

The goat ran eastwards to the farm.

- (c) Some adverbs end with ‘-wise’. Such adverbs indicate manner.

Examples: Turn the knob clockwise.

Look at your friend and behave likewise.

- (d) Certain adverbs do not have special ending.

Examples: always, often, here, these, late, early, very, perhaps etc.

- (e) Some phrases function in the same way as single-word adverbs.

Examples: in the noonday, at the school, in, here, during breakfast, before close of work, to the bathroom, etc.

Some clauses can also function in adverb positions.

Examples: as soon as I finish, when it was raining, because you arrived early.

Such phrases and clauses in 3.1.5 are usually referred to as adverbials.

Exercise 1

- (i) Write five adverbs using the adverb formation endings discussed above.
(ii) Use the adverbs to construct sentences. Confirm your answer with your course tutor.

3.2 Types of Adverbs

Adverbs are classified into types according to the setting or situation that they indicate.

3.2.1 Adverbs of Manner

These adverbs tell us how an action was performed.

Examples: The cashier counted accurately.

The old man walked slowly down the road.

The widow sat sorrowfully by the riverbank.

3.2.2 Adverbs of Time

They tell us when an action took place.

Examples: I will do it tomorrow.

Ada lost her pencil yesterday.

Our school will be on vacation soon.

Do your homework now.

3.2.3 Adverbs of Place

These adverbs tell us where an action was done.

Examples: She sat down there.

My brother is playing outside.

The boss is not around.

He came in.

Some adverbs of place occur with prepositions.

The boxer hit his opponent *below the belt*.

- along the road
- inside the room
- across the field.

These are called adverbial phrases because the adverb contains more than one word, made up of preposition + noun.

3.3 Positions of Adverbs

An adverb can be located in a number of positions in a sentence. Adverbs occupy initial, medial and final positions.

Examples: Now I will eat.
I now will eat.
I will eat now.
I will now eat.

3.3.1 Adverbs in the Initial Position

Adverbs can occur before the subject of the verb. These adverbs include those that indicate time or convey the speaker's attitude, feelings or manner of speaking.

Examples: Intentionally, he slapped the boy.
Obviously, Ade slept on the floor.
Occasionally, we go on vacation.
Yesterday, we witnessed a riot in the market.
Personally, I hate reading novels.

Note the comma punctuation mark after the adverb.

3.3.2 Adverbs in the Medial Position

Adverbs in the medial position are those that occur somewhere in the middle of a sentence:

(a) before the main verb.

Examples: He intentionally slapped the boy.
Ade obviously slept on the floor.
We occasionally go on Vacation.
I simply don't believe in ghosts.
My teacher completely ignored her.

(b) after the auxiliary verb.

Examples: Pat can deliberately ignore the warning.
Betty is obviously doing the wrong thing.
The boys may simply refuse to go there.

(c) after the main verb, before the object.

Examples: He declared openly his intention to contest.
The teacher warned seriously against climbing trees.
The boy walked quietly into the sitting room.

Note that not all types of adverbs do occur in each of these positions in the sentences.

3.3.3 Adverbs in the Final Position

Adverbs can occur at the end of the sentence. The final position is the most natural position for most adverbs.

Study these examples:

He slapped the boy, intentionally.

Ade slept on the floor, obviously.
We go on vacation occasionally.
My dad is waiting outside.
Ngozi speaks eloquently.

Note the comma punctuation before the adverb in the second sentence. There is no need for it in the other sentences.

Exercise 2

Make six sentences using adverbs in the initial, medial and final positions. Confirm your answer with your course tutor at the center.

3.4 Functions of Adverbs

An adverb's main function is to modify a verb. It may tell you how, when, where or to what extent (how often or how much) an action is performed. Adverbs also modify adjectives and other adverbs.

3.4.1 As Modifiers of Verbs

- (a) An adverb can answer the question 'how?'
The choir sang beautifully. ('beautifully' modifies 'sang')
Sadly, we told her the news. ('sadly' modifies 'told')
- (b) It can answer the question 'when?'
She told me the news later ('later' modifies 'told')
The Governor will arrive tomorrow. ('tomorrow' modifies 'arrive')
- (c) It can answer the question 'where?'
They found it where you left it.
('where you left it' modifies 'found')
The children played in the garden.
('in the garden' modified 'played')
- (d) An adverb can answer the question 'how often?'
Our dog frequently barks at strangers. ('frequently' modifies 'bark')
We sometimes walk to school. ('sometimes' modifies 'walk')
- (e) An adverb can answer the question 'to what extent?'
She reads thoroughly.
I barely know her.

3.4.2 As Modifiers of Adjectives

Adverbs modify adjectives by answering the question 'to what extent?'.

She is very upset about the accident. ('very' modifies the adjective 'upset').
The tree is rather tall. ('rather' modifies 'tall').
My uncle is extremely rich. ('extremely' modifies 'rich').

3.4.3 As Modifiers of another Adverb

Adverbs can also modify other adverbs as you will notice in the following sentences:

He spoke very emotionally. (The adverb 'very' modifies the adverb 'emotionally')
She dances very well. (The adverb 'very' modifies the adverb 'well')
The teacher works extremely hard. (The adverb 'extremely' modifies the adverb 'hard')

3.5 Comparison of Adverbs

Like adjectives, Adverbs have degrees of comparison.

- (a) The use of the ‘-er’ and ‘-est’ suffixes

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
soon	sooner	soonest
early	earlier	earliest
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

Examples: He drove the car fast.
Remi drove the car faster than we thought.
Ade drove the car fastest.

- (b) The use of ‘more’ and ‘most’

This indicates an upward gradation.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
quickly	more quickly	most quickly
happily	more happily	most happily
dangerously	more dangerously	most dangerously

The use of ‘less’ and ‘least’ which indicate a downward gradation.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
quickly	less quickly	least quickly
slowly	less slowly	least slowly
carefully	less carefully	least carefully

Examples: Of the three, this engine runs least slowly.
Ada drives less slowly than Binta.
I think you drive more dangerously than Daddy!

- (c) Irregular comparison takes the same form as for the adjectives.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
badly	worse	worst
well	better	best
little	less	least
much	more	most

Examples: The patient slept well.
The patient slept better than he did two nights ago.
The patient slept the best today.

Exercise 3

Underline the adverbs in the sentences below and state their functions.

- (i) Ade opened the letter carefully.
- (ii) The room is too dark.
- (iii) Ada is very sad.
- (iv) The student worked very hard.

Sample Answers

- (i) carefully (adverb) modifies opened (verb)
- (ii) too (adverb) modifies dark (adjective)
- (iii) very (adverb) modifies sad (adjective)
- (iv) very (adverb) modifies hard (adverb)

4.0 Conclusion

As a student of English, it is important for you to have a good mastery of adverbs, their uses and functions, as adverbs are often used in everyday speech and writing in various settings. Modification is an important concept in grammar and it will be referred to in later studies of sentences, therefore, spend enough time reviewing the functions of adjectives and adverbs to re-establish this concept.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have studied what adverbs are and their various forms. You have gone through the three functions of adverbs which are to: modify verbs; modify adjectives and modify other adverbs. You have assessed yourself, therefore look again at the sections that you may find rather difficult to understand properly.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Look for newspaper or magazine stories and reports or reading passages from texts. Copy out five sentences each that use adverbs in the initial, middle and final positions. Fifteen sentences are required. Underline the adverbs.

(A) Which of the underlined words are adjectives and which are adverbs?

- (i) The evening was very still.
- (ii) It is still raining.
- (iii) Children find it hard to sit still for long.
- (iv) Okon is a quick runner.
- (v) Okon runs quickly.

(B) Find adverbs in the following sentences:

- (i) The girls sang merrily.
- (ii) The team played well and won the game easily.
- (iii) Ada worked hard, she swept the compound very well.
- (iv) You came here late today, you must come early tomorrow.
- (v) He handled the books carelessly.

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Unit 7

Prepositions and their Functions

1.0 Introduction

In this Unit, you will be learning about prepositions. Prepositions are some of the shortest words in English Language but could sometimes be confusing. We use prepositions in our sentences more often than we realize. Prepositions are used with nouns and pronouns in a sentence, as you will realise, as you read through.

2.0 Objectives

By the time you have gone through this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) Identify what a prepositions is.
- (ii) Mention various types of prepositions.
- (iii) Point out prepositional phrases in prepositions.
- (iv) Use prepositions to construct fluent written and oral sentences.

3.0 What are Prepositions?

Prepositions are words that show relationships. Look at these sentences:

I walked into the store.

The hawker walked past the store.

A preposition is a word used with a noun or pronoun (called its object) to show the relationship between the noun or pronoun and some other nouns or pronouns in the sentence. In the sentences above, the words 'into' and 'past' show the relationship between 'I' and 'store' and between 'hawker' and 'store'.

Prepositions are generally used with a noun or pronoun to make a phrase. You will remember that a phrase is a group of words without a verb. For example: at the farm, in my house.

Prepositions like the above begin phrases. A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition word, its object and any modifier attached to the object. Here are some words often used as prepositions:

about	before	during	out
above	behind	except	out
across	below	for	outside
after	beneath	from	over
against	beside(s)	in	past
along	between	into	since

amid	beyond	like	through
among	but (expect)	of	to
around	by	off	toward
at	down	on	under
until	upon	with	without

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Sometimes, prepositions consist of more than one word (e.g. according to, in spite of, owing to, by means of, in front of, in comparison with, due to, in the light of, on account-of, along with).

3.1 Objects of Prepositions

As mentioned earlier, a preposition appears at the beginning of a phrase. The noun or pronoun at the end of the prepositional phrase is the object of the preposition that begins the phrase.

Examples: under the stars
after you
below the surface
beside him and her
near the house and garden

The underlined are the objects of the preposition that begins the phrase. The object forms of pronouns are the only forms used for objects of prepositions. The object forms to remember are: me, you, her, him, it, us, them and whom.

Amina talked to us.

Come with me.

The bell is ringing for whom?

Sometimes, the object of a preposition is compound.

Take it to John and him.

Note: At times, compound objects are confusing. To test compound objects, say the pronoun alone with its preposition. If it sounds right, that is the correct pronoun to use in the compound object.

Examples: Take it to John and (he, him).
Take it to him.
Take it to John and him.

Exercise 1

(A) Underline the prepositions in the following sentences and circle the noun used as object of the preposition.

Example: Take the book from the desk to the shelf.

- (i) She went to church.
- (ii) My boss spoke against the plan during the meeting.
- (iii) Tope ran from the house and jumped into the car.
- (iv) Thousands of people rushed into the stadium.
- (v) Asabe lived down the street.

(B) Underline the prepositions and circle the pronouns.

Example: I gave the book to (she, her).

- (i) Let's sit between (she, her) and (he, him).
- (ii) Behind (we, us) sat a group of masquerades.
- (iii) In front of (they, them) was a tall man in suit.
- (iv) The medals were awarded to Musa and (she, him).
- (v) The graduates filed past (they, them) and (I, me).

Sample Answers

- (A) (i) *to*, church
 (ii) *against* plan, *during* meeting
 (iii) *from* house *into* car
 (iv) *into* stadium
 (v) *down* street
- (B) (i) *between* her/him
 (ii) *behind* us
 (iii) *in front of* them
 (iv) *to* him
 (v) *past* them me

3.2 Types of Prepositions

In learning the correct use of prepositions, there are certain rules which govern types of prepositions. Learn them and apply them in your sentence construction.

3.2.1 Prepositions of Time

The use of **for** and **since**

‘since’ is followed by a point of time.

Examples: I have lived in this town for ten years.
 We have lived in this town since 1993.
 They have lived in this town for longer than I can remember.
 He has lived in this town since I was two years old.

The use of **at**, **in** and **on**

‘at’ is used with the exact point of time.

Examples: They visited us at Christmas.
 The bus arrived at 8.00p.m.
 The cock crowed at dawn.

in – used with periods of time.

Examples: The accident happened in the evening
 The school will be closed in August.

on – used with days of the week, dates and specific days.

Examples: The group meets on the third Saturdays of every month.
 The accident happened on June 12.
 The cock crowed last on Thursday.

Note: It is important that you note that ‘in’ and ‘on’ are not used before ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘the day after’, etc.

Examples: I have an appointment with the doctor tomorrow.
 The accident happened yesterday.
 The cock crowed today.

The use of **by**

‘by’ has the meaning of not later than’

Examples: My dad will be back by Friday.

My dad will be back at 10:35.

3.2.2 Prepositions of Place

The use of **in** and **at**

‘in’ suggests ‘enclosed’ within an area.

Examples: The rings are in the box.

We met them in London.

‘at’ suggests a particular spot, position or location.

Examples: We watched the match at the stadium.

The manager lives in Lagos, at 12 Osborne Road.

‘by’ is also used for place – location.

Examples: The car was found by the riverside.

3.3 Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, its object and any modifier of the object e.g.

Examples: In the big dark room; by the riverside; over the bridge.

In the first phrase, ‘in’ is the preposition, the object is ‘room’ and the modifiers are ‘big dark’. In the second, ‘by’ is the preposition and ‘riverside’ is the object while ‘the’ is the modifier.

Prepositional phrases are used to modify verbs, adjectives, nouns and pronouns.

3.3.1 Modifiers of Verbs (Adverbial)

A prepositional phrase that modify a verb is an adverbial phrase. Adverbial phrases tell ‘how’, ‘when?’, ‘where?’ and ‘to what extent?’ about verbs.

Examples: Audu carried the bag with great difficulty.

Ronke caught the rat under the bed.

She sell food during break.

The underlined phrases modify the verbs ‘carried’, ‘caught’ and ‘sells’.

3.3.2 Modifiers of Adjectives (Adverbial)

Prepositional phrases that modify adjectives are also called adverbial phrases.

Examples: The girls were busy with their assignment.

Audu is too clever by half.

3.3.3 Modifiers of Nouns and Pronouns (Adjectival)

A prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or a pronoun is called an adjectival phrase. Like adjectives, adjectival phrases tell ‘which one?’ and ‘what kind?’.

Examples: The cover of the book is blue.

The girl in the pretty dress sat down.

The store near my house sold perfumes.

In the examples above, the underlined prepositional phrases modify the nouns, ‘cover’, ‘girl’, and ‘store’.

Exercise 2

Identify the prepositional phrases in the following sentences:

(i) The smoke went up the Chimney.

(ii) The journey into the forest was exciting.

- (iii) Rahila laughed at the joke.
- (iv) Three soldiers were wounded during the battle.
- (v) Plant the tree between the house and the wall.

Sample Answers

Assess yourself with the answers provided below.

- (i) up the chimney
- (ii) into the forest
- (iii) at the joke
- (iv) during the battle
- (v) between the house and the wall.

4.0 Conclusion

After going through this unit on prepositions, you will find that prepositions are easier to identify as they 'govern' the nouns or pronouns that they go with. Your knowledge of modifiers was also useful. Remember, prepositions are frequently used in every day communication.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have studied prepositions, their types and their use as prepositional phrases. You have gone through some self-assessment exercises which should help you evaluate yourself to known areas you need to review.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

(A) Use each of the following groups of words in sentences: *changed with, in accordance with, in the long run, alarmed at, worried about, resentful of, entitled to, made with, allergic to, congratulate on.*

(B) Choose from the list in the brackets the preposition that best completes each of the following sentences:

- (i) The advertised price was subject _____ change. (at, in, to)
- (ii) The students did not agree _____ the speaker's remark. (to, with, about)
- (iii) The marriage was dissolved _____ the grounds of cruelty. (for, from, on)
- (iv) The small village was transformed _____ a modern town. (into, to, in)
- (v) I am sorry _____ to attend the meeting. (for failure, for failing, in failing)
- (vi) He became more mature _____ exposure to life outside the country. (in, from, through)
- (vii) She talked about your behaviour _____. (for a great length, at great length, at great length)
- (viii) The parents _____. (discussed on it, discussed it, discussed about it)
- (ix) The man stabbed the woman _____ the back. (at, on, in)
- (x) The folktale has been handed _____ from one generation to another. (over, down, in)

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Unit 8

Conjunctions and their Functions

1.0 Introduction

There are various ways in which two words, phrases or sentences could be joined together to make one. That's what we do all the time in our use of language. Take a look at these sentences.

Ada chewed the Kolanut.

Ada swallowed the Kolanut.

In what ways can these two be connected to make one sentence?

- (i) Ada chewed and swallowed the kolanut.
- (ii) Ada swallowed the kolanut after she chewed it.
- (iii) Ada either chewed or swallowed the kolanut.
- (iv) Ada not only chewed but she swallowed the kolanut.
- (v) Ada chewed rather than swallow the kolanut.
- (vi) Not only did Ada chew the kolanut, but she swallowed it.

There are various ways of connecting words, phrases and sentences. The underlined connectors are called 'conjunctions'. You will be learning about them in this unit.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) explain what conjunctions are;
- (ii) identify conjunctions in sentences; and
- (iii) use conjunctions correctly in your own sentences.

3.0 What are Conjunctions?

A conjunction is a word that connects words or group of words. They are like the hinges that joins one railway coach to another. Conjunctions could be used to join two simple sentences to make them compound as you will learn later.

Examples: The doctor will call back after he has studied the X-ray.

We can take the bus or join the train.

He helped both Hauwa and Ada with their homework.

Conjunctions are sometimes called connectors as they are capable of joining words, phrases and clauses.

Joining words

Hauwa and Ada
Books or pencils
Neither good nor bad

Joining phrases

In the morning or in the evening
The girls and their friends
The football team or the Fulani dancers

Joining Clauses

I was reading when he came in.
I shall buy some stamps if I get to the post office.
After I read the novel, I became Soyinka fan.

3.1 Types of Conjunctions

There are three kinds of conjunctions: Co-ordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions.

3.1.1 Co-ordinating Conjunctions

These conjunctions join sentence elements of equivalent value (i.e units of the same rank co-ordinates, that is to say that they join words, phrases and clauses but they cannot join words with phrases nor phrases with clauses. The most common co-ordinating conjunctions are: and, or, but, nor, for, so, yet.

Examples: Nike and Bisi will attend the party. (joining words)
The red van and the blue jeep belong to him. (joining phrases)
Will you give me the money or shall I call the police? (joining clauses)

Exercise 1

Use the following conjunctions: and, or, yet, for, so, to link words, phrases or clauses in five separate sentences.

Example: Mr. Bitrus loves students but cannot stand truancy. (links two clauses)

Note: Check your own sentences with the examples given in this section of the units for correct usage. If you are in doubt, consult your tutor.

3.1.2 Correlative Conjunctions

These conjunctions are classified as correlative because they relate one part to the other even though like co-ordinates. They come in pairs.

Examples: not only – but (also); either – or; neither – nor; both – and; whether – or.

Examples: Either you give me the money or I call the police.
Neither Musa nor Ahmed is interested in the Match.
Both girls and boys were present for the lecture.
Not only does she dance, but she sings also.

Another sub-category of correlative consists of groups of words. They include: as well as, as much as, along with, rather than, more than.

Examples: The teacher, along with his students, will be with us.
The Deputy Governor, rather than the Governor, is presenting the budget.

Note: You need to note that when these conjunctions are used, the verb agrees with the first subject (noun phrase) that is, in the above, ‘the teacher’ agrees with ‘will’ and ‘the deputy governor’ agrees with ‘is presenting’.

Exercise 2

(A) Underline the correlative conjunctions.

- (i) Neither the children nor their parents attended the meeting.
- (ii) Not only does she sing but she also composes songs.
- (iii) Both tables and chairs were arranged in the hall.
- (iv) You may choose either the oranges or the mangoes.
- (v) They speak neither Hausa nor Yoruba.

(B) Join the following sentences with correlative conjunctions, you have learnt.

Example: Ngozi bought the book.
Ngozi borrowed the book.

Answer: Ngozi neither bought the book nor borrowed it.

- (i) Hauwa wants to get to the Chemistry laboratory.
Hauwa wants to read in the library.
- (ii) Food is available in abundance.
Drinks are available in abundance.
- (iii) Grace has suffered physically.
Grace has suffered financially.
- (iv) The lecturer was at the party.
The students were at the party.
- (v) The tailor sews my children's dresses.
The tailor designs my children's dresses.

Sample Answers

(A) (i) neither – nor (ii) not only (iii) both – and (iv) either – or (v) neither – nor

(B) Some of the following correlative conjunctions can be used: either-or, neither-nor, not only-but, both-and, as well as, as much as, along with, rather than, etc.

3.1.3 Subordinating Conjunctions

These conjunctions connect clauses of less than equal status. They join main clauses with subordinating clauses. The most common subordinating conjunctions are:

after	because	provided	till
although	before	since	unless
as	how	so that	until
as much as	if	than	when
as if	in as much as	that	where
as long as	in order that	though	while

Note: Some of these words can function as other parts of speech depending on applications. Such words as after, before, since, till, until etc can be used as prepositions while words such as how, when, where could be classified as adverbs.

Subordinating conjunctions usually come at the beginning of the subordinate clause or phrase in a sentence.

Examples: The computer is even better than we had anticipated.

The sun had already set when we reached Ghana.

I will take her home, after lunch.

Although they have a car, they prefer to walk.

Wherever you may go, nemesis will surely catch up with you.

Exercise 3

Identify the subordinating conjunctions in the following sentences:

- (i) Unless you pay the bill, power will not be restored.
- (ii) We saved the money so that we could help the needy.
- (iii) Ronke sat in the car while we went looking for her brother.
- (iv) If the price is right, I will buy your computer.
- (v) Since you can't help me, I will do it myself.

Sample Answers

- (i) unless (ii) so that (iii) while
- (iv) if (v) since

3.2 Functions of Conjunctions

3.2.1 Conjunctions can be used to join part of a compound subject, object or complement in sentences.

Examples: Taiye and Kehinde met at school.

The rich man and his son went abroad.

We met the Director and her Secretary.

The Student is clever but lazy.

3.2.2 Conjunctions can be used to join the parts of a compound verb.

Examples: Hassan and Hussien fight and play tricks on each other.

The girls read or listen to music.

3.2.3 Conjunctions can be used to turn two simple sentences into one compound sentences

Examples: Ekechi went to school today, but he had to leave early.

We would leave home by three, and we'll be back by seven.

I love this music, but it makes my friend angry.

Note that a comma is usually placed before the conjunction in compound sentences.

Note: Other functions of conjunctions can be seen from the explanations and illustrations given in sections 3.0 to 3.1.3

4.0 Conclusion

As you must have realized, conjunctions are easy to identify in sentences and most time in communication, they are used without conscious efforts. Conjunctions help us to write a long meaningful sentence without making it clumsy. Whenever you are connecting words, phrases or even sentences, remember you are using a conjunction. Be careful not to make your connected items or sentences too long. Such sentences could become clumsy and block the reader's understanding.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt about conjunctions. You have practiced how to identify and use conjunctions in linking words, phrases and clauses and in the long run improve on your sentence construction.

6.0 Tutor–Marked Assignment

Select one of the reading passages in any of your books. Copy the passage and underline all the conjunctions used by the writer. The passage chosen should not be less than three hundred words in length.

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Module 3

Unit 9

Vocabulary: Use of Dictionary and Thesaurus

1.0 Introduction

This Unit will show you some ways in which a dictionary can help you learn new words. You will get to know what you need in order to use a dictionary quickly and easily. A dictionary may seem complicated at first, but the more you use it, the more familiar it becomes to you. You will soon find out that it is the best way to improve your vocabulary.

2.0 Objectives

By the time you have gone through this unit, you should be able to:

- (i) recognise the ways a dictionary works;
- (ii) decide on the appropriate meaning of a word in use;
- (iii) add new words to your stock of vocabulary and use them in appropriate contexts.

3.0 Use of the Dictionary

There are two main methods you can use to find out what a new word means. One way is to use context clues. The second way is to use a dictionary. Sometimes, you will need to use both methods to make sure you know the right meaning of a word. When you look up a word in the dictionary, you can learn:

- (i) how to spell the word;
- (ii) how to pronounce the word;
- (iii) how to define the word (tell what it means);
- (iv) how to find the right meaning when a word has several meanings.

There are many kinds of dictionaries. Some are designed mainly for a particular subject e.g. music or art. Many others are general. There are unabridged and abridged dictionaries. The contents of dictionaries may differ. However, they are well organised in the same way.

3.1 Alphabetical Order

All words in a dictionary are arranged in alphabetical order. The words beginning with letter 'a' are first. They are followed by words beginning with 'b' then 'c' and so on.

Words that begin with the same letter also obey the order by their second letter. Words which begin with the same first two letters follow the same order by their third letter, and so on.

3.2 Spellings and Pronunciations

To use words correctly, you should not only know what they mean, but also how to spell and pronounce them. The boldface word at the very beginning of a dictionary entry tells you the accepted spelling. When there are two or more acceptable spellings, the various spellings are given. A dictionary is the best reference work to consult if you are uncertain about doubling a consonant, changing an 'i' to a 'y' and so on.

The best way to learn how to pronounce new words or when you doubt familiar ones, is to look them up in a dictionary. Pronunciation guide comes in parenthesis, directly after the word. This guide will give you three important aids to correct pronunciation:

(i) *Accent Marks*

In words with more than one syllable, at least one of the syllables is pronounced louder. The dictionary indicates the syllable that has extra emphasis (stress) by using this mark:

Examples: ˈheadache, deˈlay, unˈusual

(ii) *Phonetic spellings*

Dictionaries use symbols that represent sounds called phonetic symbols to help you pronounce the words correctly. The symbols are not the same in all dictionaries. There is usually a pronunciation key at the beginning of the book. Words are spelt phonetically. For example:

pan ic [ˈpænik]
ro mance [rɒˈmæns]
sta tion [ˈsteɪʃn]

(iii) *Diacritical Marks*

In order to show different vowel sounds, a dictionary uses diacritical marks. Here are two most common ones:

The first is called a long vowel sign. When it appears above a vowel or below it, it tells you to pronounce the vowel as if you are saying the name of the letter.

Examples: bāke, we, ice, home, fuse

The second mark is the short vowel sign. Short vowels are pronounced as in the words below:

Examples:

a as in tap	i as in dinner
u as in unhappy	e as in debt
o as in bottles	

Note: Some dictionaries have different ways of indicating pronunciation, observe and learn the method on your own.

Exercise 1

Race to see how quickly you can put the following words into alphabetical order, use the dictionary to confirm your arrangement and what each word means.

A	B
dictionary	sensitivity
diagram	sensory
didactic	sacrilege
diction	scene
diahibe	sardonic
dictator	sensuous
dialectic	scrutinize
diametrically	selection
dictation	script

dialogue	sceptical
diagnose	science
diaphragm	sanction
dictum	scarcely
diaphonous	sensibility

You need to keep practising to improve the speed at which you look up words in the dictionary.

3.3 Meaning

Many English words have two or more different meanings. All these meanings are listed under the entry word. When you look up a word, you have to choose the meaning that fits the way the word is being used. The same word can be used as different parts of speech. Here are the dictionary abbreviations for different parts of speech.

noun – n.	pronoun – pron.	adverb – adv.
adjective – adj.	conjunction – conj.	interjection – interj.
preposition – prep.		

Here are some different meanings of the word ‘run’:

run (n.): the act of running
He loves the morning run.

run (v.): to go quickly
Run and call the doctor.

run (v.): to be a candidate for public office
Will your father run for senate?

Always read all the definitions of the word you are looking for. The first definition you read might not be the meaning you are looking for. By reading all the definitions, you will increase your vocabulary by learning to use the word in appropriate contexts.

3.4 Abbreviations Used in the Dictionary

abbr	abbreviation
adj	adjective
adv	adverb
adv part	adverbial particle
app	appendix
approv	approving
arch	archaic
attrib	attributive
Austral	Australian
aux v	auxiliary verb
*Brit	British usage
c	countable noun
comb form	combining form
conj	conjunction
def art	definite article
*derog	derogatory
det	determiner
e.g	for example
emph	emphatic
esp	especiall

etc	et cetera
*euph	euphemistic
fem	feminine
*fig	figurative
*fml	formal
Gp	group noun
ie	that is
indef	indefinite
*infml	informal
interj	interjection
interrog	interrogative
*joc	jocular
masc	masculine
n	noun
neg	negative
NZ	New Zealand
pers	person
pers pron	personal pronoun
pl	plural
possess	possessive
pp	past participle
pred	predicative
pref	prefix
prep	preposition
pres p	present participle
pres t	present tense
pron	pronoun
*propr	proprietary
pt	past tense
reflex	reflexive
rel	relative
*rhet	rhetorical
sb	somebody
*Scot	Scottish
sing	singular
*sl	slang
sth	something
suff	suffix
symb	symbol
*techn	technical
U	uncountable noun
*US	American usage
usu	usually
v	verb

**Source: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1995).*

3.5 The Thesaurus

A Thesaurus is a classic book of synonyms. It contains words and phrases arranged in categories by their meaning and a comprehensive index. Some recent editions put the material in dictionary form i.e. alphabetical order.

The Thesaurus is basically a tool for transforming ideas into words. A dictionary as discussed earlier will tell you things about a word-spelling, pronunciation, meaning etc. You are a thesaurus on the other hand, when you have an idea but do not know, or cannot remember the word or phrase that expresses it best. There are many ways you can express an idea, some ways are more effective than others. A Thesaurus presents you with various possibilities for you to choose that one you think is best.

3.6 How to Use a Thesaurus

As you have read earlier, a Thesaurus could either be arranged alphabetically or according to meaning. A Thesaurus like the Webster's collegiate consist of main and secondary entries introduced by alphabetically ordered boldface headwords, in which case the words are easy to look up once you are familiar to using a dictionary.

Roget's thesaurus is an example of one categorised by meanings. The search for words is a simple two-step process which begin in the index. Suppose you want a stronger word to describe 'repay', make use of the following step.

Step 1: In the index, look for the word 'repay' and pick the subentry closest to the meaning you want.

- be profitable 811.12
- compensate 33.4
- make restitution 823.5
- pay 841.11
- retaliate 955.5

Step 2: If you choose 'compensate', follow the number 33.4 into the text and you will find a whole paragraph of verbs on 'compensate'.

33.4 Verbs – compensate; make compensation; make good; set right; rectify; make up for; make amends, do penance, atone, expiate; recompense; payback; repay; indemnify; cover; fill up, give and take, retaliate.

The Thesaurus contains phrases and quotations that can liven up your writing. It can help in countless ways to improve your writing and speech and enrich your vocabulary of useful words.

Note: The Thesaurus user should consult a dictionary if you are unsure about the stylistic level or the appropriate word.

Exercise 2

Use your dictionary to answer the following questions:

- (i) Which is the more usual spelling: judgment or judgement?
- (ii) How many different meanings are given in your dictionary for the word 'run' as an intransitive (v.i) verb?
- (iii) Distinguish between the meaning of 'councillor' and 'counselor'.
- (iv) Write the plural of 'analysis'.
- (v) Write two acceptable plurals of 'octopus'.

Expand information on the Thesaurus and provide some illustrations as you did for dictionaries.

Provide a quick exercise on the location of meaning of words in a dictionary.

4.0 Conclusion

In this Unit, the necessary information available in the dictionary is discussed. As no speaker of English knows all the words, we always need help sometimes with meaning, spelling, pronunciation or even the use of a particular word. It is here that the dictionary becomes helpful too. Its basic skills are therefore important to a college student.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt how the dictionary is used to find meanings, pronunciation and spellings of words.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Using a dictionary, write two definitions for each word below. Write the part of speech that goes with each of your definitions. Then write a sentence for each of the definitions you choose. Do not copy example of sentences from the dictionary.

Example: fair

- (i) fair (adj.) honest
He is fair in his dealings with his friends.
- (ii) fair (n.) a gathering of people where animals and goods are displayed.
I went to the motor fair at Abuja.

Do the same for the following:

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| (i) train | (vi) book |
| (ii) prune | (vii) produce |
| (iii) shop | (viii) trust |
| (iv) judge | (ix) yoke |
| (v) ape | (x) left |

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Unit 10

Vocabulary Development

1.0 Introduction

Vocabulary is so important in English language, as the number of English words you know and you are able to use will boost your language efficiency throughout your life time. Most importantly, you will see that good vocabulary will help you to succeed in your course at the university and in your conversation with people on general and current issues. Definitely, it is impossible to master and use all the words in English language but it is possible to have a considerable stock of words at your command. New words are added to the language every time. As fashion changes and inventions are created, words are needed to name and describe them. Words like television, sandwich, submarine etc. didn't exist some three hundred years ago. New words keep the English language fresh and vital. It is a language that is always trying to meet the demands of current age.

Learning words to add to your vocabulary is worth the effort as it enables you to express yourself in meaningful contexts and to express yourself exactly, vividly and fluently without being lost for words. In the next two units, you will learn how English words are formed, synonyms, antonyms and other aspects of vocabulary development.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify various forms of words and their formation;
- (ii) state the meanings of some new words using context clues; and
- (iii) identify antonyms and synonyms in passages.

3.0 Meaning from Context

Probably while reading a text, you come across a word that you do not know its meaning, what do you do - you ignore it with the hope that it would not make any difference to the meaning of the sentence, look it up in the dictionary, or ask someone close by? If you come across such word, you may be able to understand the meaning of such word by looking at the words around it. These words provide a context or background for the one you don't know. Often, you will be able to determine what the word means by looking at how it is used in its context. Consider this sentence as an example:

Although she continues to predict victory, Captain Usman was really not sanguine about her team's prospects.

If you do not know what the word 'sanguine' means, the rest of the sentence provides some important clues. The first part suggests that there is something contradictory about Captain Usman's predicting victory. From the whole sentence, you may reasonably conclude that sanguine must mean 'hopeful' or 'optimistic'.

Here are some hints to help you determine the meaning of words from context. Look and see how the word is used in the sentence.

Example: Fulani milkmaids adorned themselves with beautiful beads.

In this sentence, 'adorned' is a verb. It represents an action. The objects used to adorn are beautiful beads and the Fulani milkmaids did something to themselves with these objects. And if you recall what you know about Fulanis, you can guess that 'adorn' means to decorate.

Look at the words surrounding the word.

Example: Ngozi told us a funny anecdote about her childhood.

'Anecdote' is a noun. It was told, it is therefore some kind of story. It was also about Ngozi's past, so you might guess that an anecdote is a true story. An anecdote is a short, amusing story about a real person or event.

Note: You might not be able to guess the exact definition of the word from its context but you can come close.

Exercise 1

Figure out the meanings of the underlined words using clues in the context.

- (i) The last two lines of the poem are so cryptic that no two readers can agree about what they mean.
- (ii) My dog gets very peevish when the weather is hot. He sits in the yard and growls at anyone who passes.
- (iii) The loud, raucous laughter of the students irritated the teacher.
- (iv) After listening to a good deal of coaxing, the mother finally acceded to her children's request.
- (v) Despite the awesome fecundity of certain species of fish, the balance of nature limits the population.

3.1 Formation of Words

It is interesting to note that English words can be made from three principal parts. There is the core part which is called the stem or base. The base can form meaningful word on its own. It is the word on which other words are based. Word parts may be added at the beginning of a base word, at the end or at both the beginning and the end.

Examples

New words: rework, worker, unworkable.

Base words: work

Look at the above examples and see how base words combine with word parts to form new words.

re + design = redesign

joy + ful = joyful

un + accept + able = unacceptable

Word parts are called 'affixes'. In the above examples, -re, -ful, -un, -able are all affixes. Affixes are of two kinds.

- (i) those that come before a word, such as 'un', 're' are called *prefixes*.
- (ii) those that come after, such as '-ful', '-able' are called *suffixes*.

3.1.1 Prefixes and Suffixes

A prefix is a word or syllable that is added to the beginning of a base word to form another word. A suffix is a word or syllable placed after a base word to form another word.

Examples: refreshment, unreachable, international disgraceful, defroster can be analyzed as follows:

Prefix	Base Word	Suffix
re	fresh	ment
un	reach	able
inter	nation	al
dis	grace	ful
de	frost	er

Prefixes and suffixes have their own meanings and adding them to a base word changes the meaning of the base word. Here is a list of common prefixes (just a few, as the list is inexhaustible). Notice how they combine with base words to make new words with new meanings.

Prefix	Meaning	Example
extra-	more, beyond	extrasensory
fore-	in advance	foretell, forecast
co-	with, together	coexist, co-operate
mis-	wrong, bad	mispronounce
non-	not	nonrefundable
re-	again, back	reschedule, reorganize
dis-	not	disagree

Also, note how a few common suffixes also combine with base words to create new words.

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-able, -ible	can be or do	comfortable
-er, -or	one who or that which	inventor, roller
-less	without	noiseless
-ful	full of	truthful
-ous	full of	courageous
-ment	state or quality of being	resentment
-ness	state or quality of being	quickness

etc.

Exercise 2

From the passage below, copy out words with (a) suffixes, (b) prefixes and (c) prefixes and suffixes together. List the words under each of a, b, c.

Our new puppy Bingo is fearless, and that quality makes him unmanageable. Yesterday, he ran through the wet clothes I was about to hang, so I had to rewash them. Even, offering Bingo a bone as a reward for good behaviour is useless. He seems to enjoy being troublesome.

Dad said it was careless of me to leave my new sandals outside, but did Bingo have to chew them until they were unrecognizable? Well, if Bingo isn't careful, he will soon be homeless.

Evaluate yourself with the answers below:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| (i) fearless, | (ii) unmanageable |
| (iii) rewash | (iv) offering |
| (v) handful | (vi) useless |
| (vii) enjoy | (viii) troublesome |

- (ix) careless (x) unrecognizable
(xi) careful (xii) homeless.

Arrange the words under (a) (b) (c) as directed above. Now, check from anywhere how right you are.

Sample Answers

Your answers will vary but the ones below could be used as a guide.

- (i) obscure/ambiguous
- (ii) angry/annoyed
- (iii) harsh/rough
- (iv) gave consent/agreed
- (v) fruitfulness/fertility

3.1.2 Synonyms and Antonyms

Can you name five words that have the same meaning as ‘happy?’ Can you name five words that mean the opposite of ‘happy?’ If you can answer yes to both questions, you already know that using synonyms and antonyms can increase your word power.

Synonyms are words that have the same or almost the same meaning. Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings.

Word	Synonyms	Antonyms
happy	joyous	sorrowful
	cheerful	gloomy
	glad	downcast
	jolly	sad
	merry	miserable

Below are more examples of synonyms and antonyms:

Words	Antonyms	Words	Synonyms
abundance	scarcity	academic	scholarly
alive	dead	affectionate	loving
assemble	disperse	candid	frank
excess	shortage	caution	care
former	latter	ferocious	fierce
complex	simple	gimmick	trick
natural	artificial	obscene	offensive

Exercise 3

- (A) Choose the word opposite in meaning to the underlined word to fill the gap.
- (i) People who are normally _____ often turn to be dauntless heroes in the face of real danger.
A unsteadily B colourless C cowardly D unfriendly.
- (ii) In this argument, Ola was my supporter even though he is often my _____ in other matters.
A opponent B ally C opposition D proposer
- (iii) It is curious how Bayo can be so carefree in his ways when his brother is so _____.
A meticulous B eccentric C easygoing D loveable
- (iv) Personally, I give in rather easily when it comes to arguments, but Emeka will always _____ to his opinions.
A hold in B hold on C hold off D hold back.

- (v) The government has been spending more money on preventive rather on _____ medicine.
A protective. B diagnostic C traditional D curative
- (B) Choose the synonym of the underlined word.
- (i) It takes a great deal of stamina to run the race.
A courage B determination C energy D cleverness
- (ii) My financial situation is so precarious that very soon, I may be insolvent.
A borrowing B soluble C dependent D cleverness
- (iii) He was reluctant to grant my request.
A disposed B delighted C reticent D unwilling
- (iv) But for the principal actor, the play would have been dull.
A important B head C famous D main
- (v) The Governor called for a concerted effort in solving the problems of the State.
A a dramatic B a joint C a directed D an unfailing

Sample Answers

	<i>Opposites</i>		<i>Synonyms</i>
A	(i) C – cowardly	B	i) C – energy
	(ii) A – opponent		ii) D – bankrupt
	(iii) A – meticulous		iii) D – unwilling
	(iv) B – hold on		iv) D – main
	(v) D – curative		v) B – a joint

4.0 Conclusion

A machine that is used too much will soon wear out from overuse. The same is true of words. Using the same word over and over again will cause it to wear out and lose its power. Good vocabulary gives us a variety of ways of expressing ourselves, therefore building up your vocabulary level is a basic for scholarship in the use of English.

Now, consult a Thesaurus for more examples and enlarge your stock of vocabulary.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt how to get the meanings of words from context clues. Also, various ways of forming new words through the use of prefixes and suffixes have been discussed. This Unit has also covered words with similar meanings and words with opposite.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Make a list of ten prefixes and ten suffixes, give their meanings and examples. Do not repeat the ones already used in this Unit.

Examples

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
be –	around, away	behead, beset
post –	after, following	postponed, postscript
Suffix	Meaning	Examples
– age	process, rank	passage, bondage
– ess	feminine	waitress, princess

Take it to your tutor for confirmation and assessment.

7.0 References

Angles, E. (1987). *Scope English: Writing and Language Skills Level Two*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
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Unit 11

Types of Sentences

1.0 Introduction

In this Unit, you will study various types of sentences. You will learn when to use each type and how to change one type of sentence into another type. Your goal is to become familiar with the different sentence structures and their uses. The more you know about sentences, the more successful your writing will be. You will learn about declarative, interrogative sentences and so on. Also, simple compound and complex sentences will be learnt.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify the characteristics of simple, compound and complex sentences;
- (ii) identify the types of sentences according to their functions; and
- (iii) construct these sentences for various communication purposes.

3.0 Sentence

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. Read this group of words:

The boy tossed the ball.

The car is near the garage.

You can understand these groups of words because they express complete thoughts. A sentence may make a statement, ask a question, give a command or make a request. Sentences may be joined together by a conjunction or conjunctions.

3.1 Types of Sentences (According to Functions)

You use sentences for a variety of reasons like making a statement, asking a question, stating something emphatically, *et cetera*. For each of these purposes, you use different kinds of sentences. These kinds will be discussed below.

3.1.1 Declarative Sentence

A declarative sentence is a sentence that makes a simple, straightforward statement and ends with a full-stop in writing (.).

Examples: Bello dances well.
He has worked very hard.

3.1.2 Interrogative Sentence

An Interrogative sentence asks a direct question and ends with a question mark in writing (?).

Examples: How is your mum feeling today?
What happened to my dog?

3.1.3 Imperative Sentence

An Imperative sentence makes a request or gives an order or command. It ends with a full-stop or an exclamation mark in writing.

If an imperative sentence expresses an ordinary request, it ends with a full-stop.

Examples: Pick me up at seven o'clock.
Wait at the gate.

If an imperative sentence expresses a story, request or a command, it ends with an exclamation mark.

Examples: Get out of my house!
Keep quiet!

3.1.4 Exclamatory Sentence

An Exclamatory sentence expresses strong emotional feeling in form of fear, anxiety, surprise, excitement, *et cetera*. It ends with an exclamatory mark (!)

Examples: Oh what a shame!
Help, my feet are stuck!

3.2 Sentence Parts

Every sentence has two parts; a subject and a predicate.

The subject is who or what is doing something or who or what is being talked about while the predicate expresses action performed by the subject or it tells what the subject is or what the subject is like.

The verb is the main word class or part of speech in the predicate.

Examples

Subject	Predicate
My best friend	<i>loves</i> to swim.
The enormous Iroko tree	<i>was struck</i> by lightning.
Bayo	<i>kicked</i> the ball.

A subject or a predicate may consist of a single word or many words as indicated above.

3.3 Sentence Style

Every complete sentence is built on a subject and a verb, just as a paragraph is built upon a main idea. Here is the simplest type of sentence: *Ade slept*. Even though it is only two words long, it can have a strong effect if it is placed in an appropriate position in a paragraph.

The room swayed, the ceiling lights swung faster and faster until it hit the ceiling and smashed. In the streets below, people scattered in all directions, like ants running from a water hose. Buildings swayed and fell, cars crashed. Police and fire sirens rang through the air. Yet, Ade slept.

The final sentence in the paragraph is short and blunt. It comes as a surprise at the end of the description of an earthquake.

Exercise 1

(A) Identify the following sentence types and punctuate appropriately.

- (i) Please set the table
- (ii) Have you heard the latest news
- (iii) What a happy person she is
- (iv) Who won the football match
- (v) The girl had a bad cold
- (vi) My God what a day
- (vii) We had lectures this morning
- (viii) Close the door
- (ix) Who came here yesterday
- (x) Help fire

- (B) In each sentence, draw a line to separate the subject from the predicate.
- (i) Many people watched the match.
 - (ii) Rain fell steadily all day long.
 - (iii) The quick brown fox jumped over the fence.
 - (iv) An expert driver drove the truck.
 - (v) Our group discussed the vices of drug abuse.

Sample Answers

- (A)
- | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------|--------|---------------|-------|---------------|
| (i) | Imperative | (ii) | Interrogative | (iii) | Exclamatory |
| (iv) | Interrogative | (v) | Declarative | (vi) | Exclamatory |
| (vii) | Declarative | (viii) | Imperative | (ix) | Interrogative |
| (x) | Exclamatory | | | | |

- (B)
- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Subject | Pred. |
| (i) | Many people / | watched the match. |
| | Subject | Pred. |
| (ii) | Rain / | fell steadily all day long. |
| | Subject | Pred. |
| (iii) | The quick brown Fox / | jumped over the fence. |
| | Subject | Pred. |
| (iv) | An expert driver / | drove the truck. |
| | Subject | Pred. |
| (v) | Our group / | discussed the vices of driving abuse. |

3.3.1 Function of a Sentence in a Paragraph

Sentences are usually part of a larger unit – the paragraph. All the sentences in a paragraph should work together to achieve your goal. While you are writing and rewriting, pay attention to how the sentences sound and how they relate to each other.

Every sentence has at least two purposes first, it must contain the information you want to communicate, second, it must convey a certain ‘voice’. Though readers can’t hear the tone but they can imagine your tone if you use the right words and sentence style. Your tone can be serious or humorous. It can create a dreamy mood or a mood of violence.

3.4 Structural Sentence Types

3.4.1 Simple Sentence

You know that every sentence has two basic parts: the subject and the predicate. It is possible to have compound subjects and compound verbs. Here are some examples:

Compound Subject	Predicate
Ada, Bello, and Bola	joined the class.
Ahmed or Chima	left a book on the table.
Subject	Compound Verb
Peter	ran and caught the ball.
Ukot	plays and sings.

As you can see, some of the sentences above have a compound subject and some have a compound verb. But all the sentences are alike in one way: they are all examples of simple sentences.

A simple sentence is a sentence which has one subject and one verb. Both the subject and the verb may be compound.

Here are some examples of simple sentences:

Chidinma sings.

Chidinma and Adamu sing.

Chidinma plays and sings.

Chidinma and Adamu play and sing.

Note: A simple sentence may not necessarily be determined by length as it could be long or short, with little or more additions on either side.

3.4.2 Compound Sentence

A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences, joined by connecting words such as: and, or, but, for and so on, or by the use of a semi-colon. A comma is usually placed before the connecting word.

Examples: My mother loves the tune, but I don't like the words.
He sleeps in the afternoon and reads all through the night.

If you are not sure whether or not a sentence is a compound one, see if you can divide it into two simple sentences.

The above sentences can be divided into two simple sentences each.

- (i) My mother loves the tune.
I don't like the words.
- (ii) He sleeps in the afternoon.
He reads all through the night.

Note: When two sentences are joined together to make one compound sentence, each of the former sentences becomes a clause.

3.4.3 Complex Sentence

To make a complex sentence, you use one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses. You will learn about these two types of clauses in Unit 12. A subordinate clause is joined to an independent clause with a connecting word, such as who, which, that, when, if, while, because, since and so on.

Example: *Since* the rain was so heavy, we were afraid of getting soaked.

A complex sentence can also show a relationship between two ideas. This relationship between ideas is usually not shown when the ideas are placed in separate sentences.

Example: My bicycle was stolen.
I was helping a friend to fix his car.

In this sentence, the relationship between the stolen bicycle and the fixing of the car is unclear.

To show that the bicycle theft and the car repair took place at the same time, the sentences will be complex.

My bicycle was stolen *while* I was helping a friend to fix his car.
While I was helping a friend fix his car, my bicycle was stolen.

Exercise 2

(A) Below are five compound sentences, re-write each one as two simple sentences.

- (i) Is he taking piano lesson, or is he studying the tuba?
- (ii) I am eager to see the new horse, but I don't have time now.
- (iii) He likes beans with plantain, but she prefers rice.
- (iv) I'm trying hard to help you, but you're not making it easy for me.
- (v) Adeola is going to make the dinner.
- (vi) Segun will roast the chicken.

(B) Answer the questions below.

- (i) Form two simple sentences.
- (ii) Form a compound sentence. Join the parts either with a comma and a connecting word or with a semi-colon.
- (iii) Form a complex sentence.

Sample Answers

- (A) (i) Is he taking piano lesson?
Is he studying the Tuba?
- (ii) I am eager to see the new horse.
I don't have time now to see the new horse.
- (iii) He likes beans with plantain.
She prefers rice.
- (iv) I'm trying hard to help you.
You're not making it easy for me.
- (v) Adeola is going to make the dinner.
Segun will roast the chicken.

4.0 Conclusion

The knowledge of the structure of sentences is so vital to writing effective essays. With the knowledge of sentence types and structures, you are on your way to writing good essays. However, sentences and their types must be used according to the need for them in communication. They often come naturally to the speaker or writer. But a writer must choose sentence type to suit the context for the writing.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt about types of sentences – functional and structural. You learnt declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences. You also learnt sentence parts as subject and predicate. Finally, the characteristics of simple, compound and complex sentences were learnt.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- (a) Below is a list of topics. Choose one and write ten sentences about it. Be sure to include at least two simple sentences, two compound sentences and two complex sentences. When you finish, read over your work to make sure it is well punctuated.

Topics

- (i) An interesting thing that happened.
- (ii) Out on a rainy day.
- (iii) A traditional celebration in my town.
- (iv) My first day in school.
- (v) A topic of your choice.

- (b) Author should choose an extract and ask the student to identify the types of sentences in the text. How do they follow one another?

7.0 References

- Banjo, A, Ayodele, S. Ndahi, K. S. (2002). *Exam Focus English Language for WASSCE and SSCE*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- Angeles, E. (1987). *Scope English: Writing and Language Skills Level Two*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
- Warriner, J. E. (1988). *English Composition and Grammar*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.

Unit 12

Sentence Structure

1.0 Introduction

In this unit, you will be learning about sentence structures. A sentence is made up of phrases or clauses or as mix of the two.

In your WASC Examination, you must have been asked to identify some kind of phrases and clauses in a sentence. The knowledge of phrases and clauses helps us in constructing good grammatical sentence.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify phrases and clauses in sentences;
- (ii) recognise their characteristics;
- (iii) differentiate between a phrase and a clause and;
- (iv) use different types of phrases and clauses in making meaningful sentences.

3.0 Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words within a sentence. The group of phrase is used as a single part of speech. Consider the sentence below.

The girls are working out in the garden.

The girls/are working/out in the garden.

Each section of this sentence is performing different roles in the sentence and therefore belongs to different classes. 'The girls' is a noun phrase while 'out in the garden' is a prepositional phrase; 'are working' also is a verb phrase.

3.1 Classification of Phrases

Phrases are named after a class of words which has a primary function within that class. Phrases are usually classified according to their central-word or head-word. Phrases are classified into many groups such as: noun, verb, adjectival, prepositional phrases.

3.1.1 Noun Phrases

The noun phrase is a phrase in which the head-word is a noun or pronoun. For example, 'rich king' is the head-word. A noun plus its modifier is called a noun phrase.

Functions of the Noun Phrase

Noun and noun phrases perform basically the same functions. They function mainly as:

- (a) Object of sentences.
- (b) Subject of sentences.

- (a) Subject of a sentence

The small box

The pink small box

The pink small box with designs



is in my room.

- (b) Object of a Verb

The object of a sentence is the noun or noun phrase at which the action of the verb is directed.

It is the receiver of the action of the verb.

- (i) Joshua broke his leg.
- (ii) Mariam caught a fish at the pond.
- (iii) The students took Emeka's clothes.

Sometimes, a single verb has two objects as in sentences (ii) and (iii). The object affected first by the action of the verb is the direct object and the subsequently affected is the indirect object regardless of their order of occurrence. In sentences (ii) and (iii), the direct objects are 'fish' and 'clothes' while the indirect objects are 'the pond' and 'Emeka'.

3.1.2 Verb Phrases

The verb phrase is usually made of a main verb and one or more auxiliary verbs. It is only the main verb that is obligatory. The other forms are optional and that is why these are called auxiliary or helping verbs.

Examples of verb phrases are underlined below.

The bear had been eating the honey.
[one auxiliary verb + main]

The bear might have eaten the honey.
[two auxiliary verbs + main]

Auxiliary verbs help the main verb show the time of an action. Here are some of the most commonly used helping verbs.

has	have	had	was
be	being	been	will
may	might	must	would.

Functions of a Verb Phrase

Verb phrases perform the same function as verbs: they serve as the verb element of the clause. The verb phrase may indicate the following:

- (i) The future
Joy will go to the hospital.
- (ii) The conditional
Joy would go to the hospital if you can't.
- (iii) The perfective
Joy has gone to the hospital.
- (iv) The progressive [continuous]
Joy is going to the hospital.

3.1.3 Prepositional Phrases

These are phrases which are introduced by prepositions such as at, from, for, in, with, before and ends with a pronoun or noun. This noun is called the object of the preposition. The preposition and object form a group called prepositional phrase.

Examples of prepositional phrases with the objects of the prepositions underlined.

- (a) Over the table
- (b) Beneath him and her

Positions of Prepositional Phrases

- (a) A prepositional phrase can come at the beginning of a sentence.

- (i) From the office to the school is about ten kilometers.
- (ii) Around the block, an accident occurred.
- (b) It can come at the middle of the sentence.
 - (i) The dog in the backyard ate my shoe.
 - (ii) She was with my dog when the rain began.
- (c) It can also occur at the end of a sentence.
 - (i) I live around the block.
 - (ii) The car drove up the hill.

3.1.4 Adjectival Phrases

An adjective usually comes before the word it modifies but an adjectival phrase usually comes after the word it modifies.

Examples

A dirty boy opened the door. (adjective)

A boy with a dirty face opened the door. (adjectival phrase)

The adjectival phrase 'with a dirty face' qualifies the noun 'face'.

I like a corner seat in the train. (adjective)

I like a seat in the corner. (adjectival phrase)

'in the corner' is an adjectival phrase because it qualifies or tells more about the noun 'seat'.

Exercise 1

Identify the types of phrases in the sentences below and state their functions.

- (i) I live beyond the river.
- (ii) The house down the road is old.
- (iii) Cold drinks on a hot day are refreshing.
- (iv) The tall slim girl is my cousin.
- (v) She will do her homework later.
- (vi) A bird with a yellow beak was singing.
- (vii) We have been travelling for hours.
- (viii) After breakfast, she left for school.
- (ix) Shehu bought a hat with stripes.
- (x) The teacher gave Tomi a gift.

Sample Answers

- (i) (a) prepositional phrase (beyond the river) (b) end of sentence.
- (ii) Adjectival phrases/modifies the noun *house*
- (iii) Prepositional phrase/middle of sentence
- (iv) Noun phrase/subject of a sentence
- (v) Verb phrase/ the future
- (vi) Adjectival phrase/modifies the noun *bird*
- (vii) Verb phrase/the progressive
- (viii) Prepositional phrase/beginning of sentence
- (ix) Adjectival phrase/modifies the noun *Shehu*
- (x) Noun phrase/object of a verb

3.2 Clauses

As you have learnt, a phrase is a group of related words used as a single part of speech. A clause is a group of words too, but the difference between a phrase and a clause is that a clause contains both a subject and its verb while a phrase does not.

A clause has the same structure as a simple sentence with the component parts of subject, verb, object and complement. Only the first two parts are compulsory. Here are some examples that show the difference between a phrase and a clause.

Phrases

down the hill
was eating
in the house

Clauses

as we walked down the hill
while he was eating
whenever I am in the house

3.3 Independent and Subordinate Clauses

There are two types of clauses: independent clause and subordinate clause. See Unit 11 for the types of sentences that contain clauses.

3.3.1 Independent Clause

An independent clause expresses a complete thought. It can stand on its own as a sentence.

Examples: Will you plough the field?
Bola went to the river.
We ran for cover.

Sometimes, an independent clause is joined with one or more subordinate clause in a sentence.

Examples: When planting season comes, will you plow the field while I plant the seed?
Since she loved to swim, Bola went to the river.
We ran for cover when it started to rain.

As you will notice above, an independent clause may be in the middle, at the end or at the beginning of a sentence.

A sentence can have more than one independent clause.

Examples: Hassan will sing, and you can play the piano.
Grandma is here, but she is planning to leave soon.

These are examples of compound sentences that you learnt in Unit 11. Remember that a comma is usually placed before the connecting word that joins independent clauses of a compound sentence.

3.3.2 Subordinate Clause

Not all clauses express complete thought even though they have subjects and verbs. A subordinate clause is also called a dependent clause. It is a clause that does not express a complete thought and can not stand alone as a sentence. Subordinate clauses begin with such words as: while, if, that since, because, when, who, which, although, after, as, and so on.

Examples: I will feel sad if I don't see you every day.
When Bayo left the house, he walked to the store.
People who wait for the bus are patient.

A subordinate clause can come at the beginning, the middle and at the end of a sentence.

Note: When a subordinate clause begins a sentence, it is usually followed by a comma.

3.4 Functions of Clauses

Clauses perform three main functions. They perform the functions of adjectives, nouns and adverbs as you will learn below.

3.4.1 Adjectival Clause

An adjectival clause is a subordinate clause used as an adjective. It functions exactly like an adjective, modifying a noun or pronoun. An adjectival clause begins with a relative pronoun such as: who, whom, whose, which, where or that.

Examples: It was Ada whom I called yesterday.

Rice is a food that I like a lot.

The lecturer whose car was stolen has bought another.

Each clause qualifies a noun. They qualify 'Ada', 'food' and 'lecturer'.

Note: An adjectival clause must tell us more about a noun or pronoun. Such clauses are often called defining relative clauses.

3.4.2 Noun Clause

A noun clause performs the work of a noun. It can replace a pronoun. A noun clause can be an object of a verb or subject of a sentence.

Examples: I know arithmetic.
Ada said a few words.

Instead of using nouns for the objects above, we can use a clause.

I know that two and two make four.
Ada said that she needed some time off.

These clauses are objects of the verbs – 'know' and 'said'. Noun clauses can sometimes be the subject of a verb.

Examples: Subject

Your works seems very complicated.
My daughter's recovery is a complete miracle.

To replace the subject phrases above with clauses will go as follows:

Subject

What you are doing seems very complicated.
How my daughter recovered is a complete miracle.

3.4.3 Adverbial Clause

An adverbial clause tells us more about the action of the verb in the main clause. They tell us 'when?' 'why?' 'where?' 'how?' 'to what extent?' and 'under what condition?'.

An adverbial clause of time can answer the question 'when?'.

Examples: I was there when the car crashed.

I will do my homework after I have had lunch.

Adverbial clause of place answers the question 'where?'

Examples: We met at the shop where vegetables are sold.

You can work where ever you wish.

Adverbial clause of manner answers the question ‘how?’.

Examples: You were dancing as if you had a broken leg.
He ran as though a lion was after him.

Adverbial clause of purpose or reason answers the question ‘why?’.

Examples: Okeke goes juggling because he needs the exercise.
Bola recovered fully because she was rushed to the hospital.

Adverbial clause of condition states under what condition?

Examples: If you are not careful, you may fall.
The game will start at noon, if you turn up early.

Exercise 2

State whether each underlined statement is a phrase or a clause.

- (i) The milk in the tea is too much.
- (ii) The book you borrowed disappeared.
- (iii) Many women who live in Suleija sell yam.
- (iv) Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State is a large city.
- (v) Harmatan was severe in the previous year.

Sample Answers

- (i.) Phrase (ii.) Clause (iii.) Clause
- (iv.) Phrase (v.) Phrase

4.0 Conclusion

It is important to note that a phrase does not contain a subject and a verb while the clause contains both, and that they function depending on the class of word they represent. They perform different and various functions in the sentences we make when we speak or write about things, events, ideas and so on.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have been introduced to and acquainted with phrases and their classification, clauses and their types and functions in various statements.

6.0 Tutor– Marked Assignment

Use each of the following clauses correctly in your own sentences.

- (i) While the teacher taught
- (ii) When school is over
- (iii) If my money is sufficient
- (iv) Who sells oranges in Kano
- (v) That hit the dog
- (vi) Who won the prize
- (vii) That killed the snake
- (viii) Who climbed the tree
- (ix) Which Hauwa didn’t like
- (x) What you think

7.0 References

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Module 4

Unit 13

Listening and Speaking Skills I

1.0 Introduction

Listening and speaking go together like the dog and its tail. Listening is taking in what is said so that you can think about it and respond. Good listening and speaking come as naturally as you might think. They are skills that you have to work at to develop. For example, imagine yourself in a taxi and the woman next to you start to talk on and on about the price increase on petroleum products. You say *mmm* nodding your head to be polite, but your mind is on how to explain to your English lecturer why your assignment has not been completed. You cannot be blamed for not listening as you have a lot on your mind. There are times too when you want people to listen to you but what you say does not come out the way you want as such people may not listen or if they do, they may hear something that you didn't mean to say. In this unit, you will be studying about listening and speaking, what they entail and how you can improve on the skills of listening.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) list the strategies for effective listening;
- (ii) identify the reasons for listening;
- (iii) use the methods for improving listening comprehension.

3.0 Listening and Speaking

It is important to listen to people who talk to you as it is through listening that you understand what people are trying to say. This is what communication is all about. Have you ever tried talking to a friend while he is watching an interesting movie? You will find out that he will not 'lend you his ears'. The secret of successful listening is paying attention.

Read through this conversation between Bola and Ahmed.

- Bola:** Tomorrow I'll have to go to Abuja to see my sick aunt, so I won't see you at the match.
Ahmed: It's going to be a great match as Okoro and our fan will be playing.
Bola: I can imagine Okoro getting all the cheers.
Ahmed: I'll reserve seats for you, Zara and Ngozi, in case you come late.
Bola: I'll be leaving by 7.0'clock so as to get to Abuja early.

Ahmed: Maybe you will have to reserve the seats for us.
Bola: I have to go now as I have preparation to make.
Ahmed: See you tomorrow.

What do you think will happen when Ahmed fails to see Bola at the match? They both talked, but neither was listening. If Ahmed has listened, he would have known that Bola wasn't coming to the match. If Bola had listened, she would have known that Ahmed did not get her message. Can you find reasons for their not listening from the conversation? Check what each one says.

Paying attention to the speaker is not always easy but very crucial for effective communication. If you want to get the most out of listening, look at the person that is talking. Don't let your eyes wander around. Don't interrupt unless you need to ask a question to clear something. Think about the subject and forget your other concerns for that period.

3.1 Strategies for Efficient Listening

3.1.1 Paying-Attention

As mentioned earlier, the secret of successful listening is paying attention to the speaker. Look at the speaker's face and concentrate. Think along with him or her as the talk is being delivered.

3.1.2 Taking-Notes

Taking notes can help you to listen more effectively. A notebook and a pen are important listening tools. Do not try to take down every word that the speaker says as this will also hinder effective listening. What you need to do is to take notes of the main points, using key words that will jog your memory later, for example, suppose you are listening to a speaker who says:

The President, kept tapping his feet on the morning, he heard that the US President has declared war on this country. It was a tension-filled day and he didn't want people to think he was shivering from fear.

You cannot write everything said above and still catch up with the statement. It is therefore important to note only the key words such as: President – US President – war – fear. These words are sufficient to jog your memory and later develop, this will give you time to listen to the next part of the lecture.

3.1.3 Preparations and Follow-up

If you want to get the most out of listening, you often need to prepare in advance. The more you already know, the more advance you become, the more you'll learn. When you have some knowledge about the subject being discussed, then you know what questions to ask, and you can make better evaluation of what is said. Having done some readings on the next lecture, you would have been ahead of others and that makes you a critical and attentive listener.

Exercise

Listen to a talk show on the radio or television. Take notes while you listen. After the programme, write a brief summary of what was said.

3.1.4 The Courteous Listener

A good listener should help the speaker and other listeners to concentrate by being quiet. That means not tapping your pen, shuffling your shoes, whispering, talking out loud *et cetera*. If for instance, you start to cough in a formal lecture, leave the room and stay outside until the cough subsides. Noise annoys the speaker and other people trying to listen. In a discussion, you do not interrupt until you find the appropriate time or gap to put in your own contribution.

3.2 Reasons for Listening

3.2.1 Listening for Main Ideas

Listening for main ideas has to do with conception, how much a person understands what is being said. Usually, only a few main points are presented in a discussion lecture, therefore, only these important points should be noted. There is need to concentrate to discover the central ideas. Note them down and fasten attention on them. Remember that in most circumstances, the speaker will not repeat himself, therefore you have to be attentive. It is the main ideas you can remember much later after listening to a talk or lecture. They are the key points to note.

3.2.2 Listening for Specific Information

One of the reasons for listening is to extract specific information for effective study purposes. The ability to acquire a lot of information is needed to solve specific problems, contribute to specific issues and or apply them to real life situations. Specific information is usually required to carry out specific activities for example, you need specific instructions before you can operate your new television set.

In order to extract specific information from you lectures, it is important you listen attentively, focus your attention on what is being said, take note of the main points, look for specific information and leave out the details and illustrations which you can add once you get the details.

3.2.3 Listening for Appreciation

A listener could listen to appreciate the speaker's use of words or language, suitable images, effects, rhymes, *et cetera*. This type of listening is often needed while listening to music, recitation, story, poems and the beauty of sounds in the environment.

3.3 Increasing Listening Comprehension Rate

Before we look into the techniques of increasing listening comprehension rate, we need to know the factors that hinder listening comprehension. The following factors can hinder listening comprehension process:

- (i) lack of concentration;
- (ii) distraction and disturbance;
- (iii) interference from another thought in to the main thought;
- (iv) faulty speech habit of the speaker ;
- (v) unfamiliar sentence patterns used by the speaker;
- (vi) difficult vocabulary items in the lecture ;
- (vii) listener's interest, fatigue, motivation etc.

The more you are able to control these factors, the better your comprehension ability. For you to increase your comprehension rate, you will need to:

- (i) listen attentively to the speaker;
- (ii) follow the speaker's thought pattern;
- (iii) have a wide range of vocabulary items enough to understand what is being said;
- (iv) recognize common speech patterns that a speaker can use – like when the speaker introduces his topic, discusses the points and examples, and gives the conclusion.

4.0 Conclusion

Being a good listener is a quality that everyone should strive to possess. We need to pay attention to others, if possible, jot down notes to help our memory. For whatever reason you are listening, make sure you get the best out of every conversation and your lectures on tape, radio, television as well as your course tutors.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, the strategies for efficient listening were discussed, such as the need to pay attention, take notes and have a prior preparation. The reasons for listening were highlighted and the ways in which comprehension rate can be improved were also discussed.

6.0 Tutor–Marked Assignment

Listen to the NTA Network news at 9.00, write down, quickly the major highlights of the news, then listen to the details of each news items. Write down under each new highlight, a summary of the details as you can remember after the news hour.

7.0 References

Angeles, E (1987). *Scope English: Language Skills Level Two*: New York Scholastic Inc.
University of Abuja (1992). *General Studies GST 101. Use of English*. Abuja: University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Unit 14

Listening and Speaking Skills II

1.0 Introduction

This Unit is a continuation of Unit 13. Unit 13 concentrated more on the listening skill but in this Unit, the speaking skill will be looked into. Everyone wants to be listened to but sometimes, what you say does not come out the way you want it. You can make sure people listen to you by following some guidelines that will be discussed in this Unit.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify aspects of communication;
- (ii) list the qualities of a good speech;
- (iii) write a short speech using the guidelines;
- (iv) practice presenting a speech in front of a mirror.

3.0 Speech and Communication

Whenever you want to convey your ideas to people orally, you are in a speaking situation. This situation might vary, it may involve answering a telephone, participating in group discussion, giving information, instructing someone, presenting an idea, making oral reports, and so on.

Everyone wants to be listened to but sometimes, you talk and people might not listen to you. The speaking skill is also a skill that needs to be learnt for you to speak well and for people to enjoy listening to you.

Here are five guidelines for getting your messages across.

- (i) **Know your subject:** If you are familiar with all the materials that you are going to present, you will feel secure and confident when you begin to speak.
- (ii) **Use your voice correctly:** Do not shout or whisper. Do not mumble or talk too fast or too slowly. Pronounce words properly, so people won't misunderstand what you say.
- (iii) **Do not read your speech:** Reading destroys your contact with your listeners and takes out life from what you are saying. Memorise your speech or use notes, so you can keep your eyes on the audience rather than a piece of paper.
- (iv) **Organise your materials:** Plan what you will say, how you will begin, the order of points you are going to make and how you will end, then stick to your plan.
- (v) **Speak to the listeners:** Communicate with them. Make them believe that they are as important as the message you are giving them.

3.1 Telephoning

Today, with the advent of General Systems Mobile (GSM), we make a lot of phone calls to friends, relations and sometimes people we do not know. Whenever you make a phone call, you should let that person know right away why you are calling. You should also be prepared to give some facts in order to get the facts you are after. In other words, you should spend a few seconds, planning what you will say before you make the call.

Whenever you make a call to a hospital, an office, school, a store or a particular place for any enquiry, you usually speak to someone you do not know. Therefore, it is important to:

- (i) know exactly the information you want;
- (ii) speak loud and clear enough to be heard;
- (iii) organize your questions so that they follow sensibly;
- (iv) stay in contact with the person on the line;
- (v) listen when the person tries to speak. You should not be the one doing the talking all the time. Watch out for when to speak and when to listen;
- (vi) have a pen and paper close by so as to jot down information or numbers that will be passed on to you.

Exercise 1

A computer school put an advert in the dailies for summer courses. Plan a telephone call to get information. Make a note of what you would ask e.g the course offered, duration, cost etc.

3.2 Giving Instructions

Giving instructions can be very tricky. You may know how to do something but when you try to explain it to other people, you may find it difficult to transfer the idea precisely, as it is in your mind to them.

To give instructions, you have to organize your materials in such a way that you will show another person how to begin – step by step, complete the task successfully.

Note the following points when giving instructions:

- (i) Don't assume that your audience know anything, so provide them with detailed information.
- (ii) Organise the details, making sure steps are in the right order.
- (iii) Use aids such as pictures and audios to support the details.

3.3 Speech Delivery

Speech is a powerful communication tool used for transmitting ideas, knowledge, information and instruction. This medium is used in institutions of learning to build up individuals in all fields of study.

Talks, report, tutorials and seminars are important avenues for developing your English Vocabulary. If you review the guidelines discussed in this Unit under 3.0, they apply to speech-making. Get familiar with your topic, review various researches and literature pertaining to your topic. From there, you can prepare your speech.

It is advisable not to read your speech even though it is already written out. If you do, you will lose the attention of your audience. While you are looking at your speech, your audience will get distracted. But how can you remember everything you want to say? The most obvious way to remember your speech is to memorise the points. Take them one after the other and discuss. It is important to practice saying the speech in a natural way, as if you are thinking of the words as you speak.

With modern technology, the use of power points and overhead projectors has made speech delivery easier. The points can be highlighted on the screen while the presenter discusses.

3.4 Qualities of a well-Presented Speech

It is important to know the qualities of a well presented speech so as to be able to evaluate ourselves and others.

- a. **Content:** Your audience should determine the topic of your speech. Make sure that you make your materials suitable for the topic. You should be very familiar with your topic as to be able to answer any question that might be asked.
- b. **Unified Theme and Purpose:** You need to identify the aim of presenting your paper. Is it to inform, entertain, convince, impress or arouse your audience to action? You should strive at attaining the aim of your paper at the end of your presentation.
- c. **Selections of Detail:** The ideas in a speech should be supported with materials such as research, data, quotations from renowned scholars etc. These go a long way to convince your audience and to add quality to your presentations.
- d. **Language Usage and Style:** Language used should be clear, effective and fluent. Avoid repetitions but device methods of adequately expressing your ideas. Use questions and vivid statements to involve the audience where necessary.
- e. **Gestures:** Your posture, gestures and the expression on your face are all important when you are making a speech. Practice your speech in front of a mirror – observe yourself. Don't keep your hands in your pocket. Gesturing can be effective if they are not too much. Do not wave your arms over and over again, repeating the same gesture will make the audience laugh. Have a natural and friendly expression. If you are saying something sad or alarming, then look concerned. Usually, this comes naturally if you understand your speech and care about what you are saying.
- f. **Audience Reaction:** The success of any talk is determined by the response and reaction of the audience. Most often, clapping means that the audience is impressed. Always observe to see your audience reactions, though this should not disrupt your presentation. If people in your audience ask questions, feel fulfilled. It means you have interested them and they want to know more. If you have studied your topic well, you should be confident in answering the audience's questions.

4.0 Conclusion

The secret of speaking to audience is to know the rules, follow them and practice. Speaking skills, are so vital as we all express ourselves orally. The need to get people listen to us and to respond is one important aim the speaking skills can help us achieve.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, a lot has been discussed about the guidelines to getting your message across through speaking. Also, the modalities for speech-delivery and the qualities of a good speech have all been highlighted.

6.0 Tutor–Marked Assignment

Write a speech on: 'The Importance of Health Facilities' to be delivered to the Local Government Legislature in your Local Government Area. Use characteristics of a good speech discussed in this lecture.

7.0 References

Angeles, E (1987). *Scope English: Writing and Language Skill Level Two*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
University of Abuja (1992). *General Studies GST 101 A: Use of English*. Abuja: University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Unit 15

Reading: Reasons for Reading

1.0 Introduction

In Units, 1 – 12, you were taught the basic parts of speech in English language, namely, Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Pronouns, Prepositions, Conjunctions and how to use these components to construct sentences. What you learnt in these Units have equipped you with the necessary knowledge to learn the aspects of English language that will make you a practical user of the language.

You are a good user of the English language if you can use the four skills in the language. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Already, you have learnt about listening and speaking skills and how to use these in communication in Units 13 and 14. In this Unit, you are going to study the skills of reading and how to use them to benefit from what others write. Before we do this, however, let us first understand what the word ‘skill’ means and what reading skills are.

A skill is a mental ability that you could use to perform an activity or task. Reading skill therefore, is the ability to perform reading activities or tasks. Examples of reading skills are: ability to understand written statements, ability to infer, ability to interpret, ability to appreciate and ability to judge and evaluate. These reading skills are very important because they will aid you in your studies as well as in other areas of your life that require the acquisition and use of information. This Unit will teach you what reading is, its importance and the reasons why we read.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- (i) explain what reading is;
- (ii) explain the importance of reading;
- (iii) give and explain reasons for reading;
- (iv) apply what you learnt in this Unit to your information-seeking activities.

3.0 Reading and its Importance

Reading is a language skill that enables you to acquire and use information. Being able to read empowers you throughout your life to intelligently seek for and use information to solve problems and make decisions.

For instance, you must be able to read in order to understand your study materials such as your text books; understand written instructions for class assignments, tests and examinations in order to carry out these instructions. Being able to read also helps you to use the internet to seek information to help you in your studies, as well as information about events such as sports, business, tourism, etc.

If you can read and use what you read to solve your problems or other peoples’ problems, you are said to be literate or that you have literacy skills. As a literate, you are better equipped to face the challenges of life

than an illiterate and ignorant person. To succeed in life, you must be able to read. Reading therefore is a very important skill that any one that wishes to succeed in life must have.

3.1 Reasons for Reading

From what you now know about reading and its importance, you can see that there could be a variety of reasons for reading. For purposes of illustrations, let us consider a situation where you arrive for the first time in a town you have never been to. To get to your final destination, you need information on how to get there. This, you can do by asking people for directions or by reading road signs. The directions to where you are going to could be in words, for instance, names of streets or roads and some land marks, or could be signs or both. Whether the directions are in words or signs, you will need to read these so as to be informed about where you are going. Security or safety reasons require that you do not depend wholly on the taxi or bus driver or motorcycle rider or unknown persons to get you to where you are going. If you are literate, you will very easily follow the directions to where you are going, if these directions are available.

Before going further, here is a question for you: ‘Are you one of those who think that we read only textbooks, romantic novels, cartoons?’ If you say yes, then, there is much you will learn in this Unit about other reasons why we read and what we read.

Among the many reasons for reading are:

- (i) reading directions on how to get somewhere;
- (ii) reading instructions on how to do things;
- (iii) reading to study or learn in school;
- (iv) reading for pleasure;
- (v) reading for special and general information.

Each of these reasons will be discussed with useful examples to help your understanding.

3.1.1 Reading Directions on How to Get Somewhere

You recall the example given at the beginning of this section on how being able to read road signs, names of streets and roads and names of striking landmarks such as buildings, would enable you to find your way easily to your destination. Much time and energy are saved if you can read directions and you avoid being frustrated too.

In our every day life activities, there are many instances of reading for directions. Here are a few of such instances, finding your way around in public places such as:

- (i) The government secretariats in the state and national capitals, where the ministries and their Parastatals are located;
- (ii) Hospitals e.g. Teaching and General hospitals;
- (iii) Railway stations;
- (iv) Airports;
- (v) Shopping malls and many other such public places.

To get around public places such as these, you must be able to ask people questions as well as been able to read signs and directions. To illustrate the importance of being literate, here is a real life story of a Nigerian travelling from London back to Nigeria. This traveller arrived Heathrow Airport by train. She gets into the Airport building but missed her way to the right check-in counter of the Airline she was travelling by. Realising her mistake, she quickly retraced her steps carefully, noting the signs and directions and finally got to the right check-in counter.

Have you ever had an experience such as this one, where being able to read helped you find your way? Recall the experience and what you read that helped you find your way.

3.1.2 Reading Instructions on How to Do Things

Instructions are part of our daily lives. Through instructions, we get things done. Instructions could be in oral or written form. Oral instructions are often easier to follow than written ones because the person giving the instructions is often available to clarify or explain instructions for proper understanding. This is generally not so with written instructions where often you rely on yourself to comprehend what the instructions say. Not being able to read to carry out instructions could limit our opportunities of getting things done. Among the many reasons we need to read to get things done are the following:

- (i) Reading instructions on how to use laboratory equipment, tools or implements to carry out experiments, for example in Chemistry, Biology and Physics laboratories. Other examples are reading instructions on how to use tools, implements and equipment in Home Economics laboratories and Engineering workshops. As a Home Economics student for example, you must be able to read the instruction manuals on how to use electric mixer for mixing cakes etc.
- (ii) Reading instructions on how to assemble and dismantle equipment e.g. bicycles, computers, various types of home and office furniture, etc.
- (iii) Reading instructions on labels of medicine and food items containers.

There are many more of these instructions. Can you think of any?

Exercise 1

- (a) Name the four language skills.
- (b)
 - (i) Describe two of these.
 - (ii) Why is the ability to read important? Give two reasons.
 - (iii) Give one reason why we read.
 - (iv) Describe an occasion where being able to read helped you in getting to a place or doing something.

Sample Answers

- (a) Listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- (b) Listening skill enables us to understand what we hear others say.
Reading skill enables us to read and understand what others or we write e.g. textbooks, letters, and instructions on how to do things, even road signs.
Being able to read enables us to seek and obtain information to assist us in our studies, for knowing how to do things.
We read to follow directions or to follow instructions.
Remember the traveller and the airport example.

3.1.3 Reading to Study or Learn in School

You have learnt that reading is a very important skill for seeking and getting information for solving personal and social problems. In normal schools where students and teachers meet face to face in class, the students learn by listening to the teacher and by reading prescribed textbooks. In distant learning situation, as is in your case, students learn more by reading. Even in the normal school setting, students learn more by reading than by listening to the teacher. Reading therefore is a very important skill you must have if you are to do well in your studies. Here are a few examples of how you use reading to study and learn in school:

- (i) Read textbooks, lecture notes, distant learning course materials, for purposes of acquiring knowledge and using the knowledge to answer examination or text questions, and to solve life problems.
- (ii) Read maps, graphs, tables, figures, illustrations and so on.

3.1.4 Reading for Pleasure

When we read for purposes of entertaining ourselves, we are reading for pleasure: such as reading novels, poems, stories of events or people. When we read these, not for examination purposes, we read for pleasure and experience of life. Other materials that you can read for entertainment are stories, reports, cartoons in newspapers and magazines.

Reading for pleasure is not as demanding as reading to study academic materials. Academic reading calls for a serious concentration because you read not only to understand but also to use what is read to answer test or examination questions or to do assignments.

Even though you are not examined by anyone when you read for pleasure, nevertheless, you learn a lot and thereby educate yourself from such reading. For instance, through such reading, you get informed about national and global events such as sports, disputes, entertainment, politics, trade and commerce. You also learn about people such as public figures like Presidents, Ministers etc and what they are doing.

Reading for pleasure expands your horizon and enlarges your mind. Some of the things you read for pleasure may even help you in your studies. If you are a student of Political Science, or Physical Education for instance, columns on politics and sports in newspapers become useful and relevant to your studies.

3.1.5 Reading for General and Special Information

Sometimes, our purpose or reason for reading may be to obtain special information. We may, for instance, read in order to get information on job opportunities, business opportunities e.g. offers of goods and services, admission into educational institutions etc. Such information as these may be referred to as classified. They are usually in the form of advertisements, and are always found on the pages of newspapers and magazines as well as on the Internet.

4.0 Conclusion

Our daily need for information necessitates that we have the right means of sourcing for the needed information. Reading is one of such means by which we get information. Being able to read is a key to unlocking doors of information. Your reason for reading will determine the type of information you are seeking and where to seek the information.

5.0 Summary

This Unit has introduced you to one of the skills in English language, that is the reading skill. You learnt that reading skill is useful in your studies as well as in other areas of your life requiring the acquisition and use of information and knowledge. Here, you were taught some purposes of reading and how you could satisfy such purposes.

6.0 Tutor–Marked Assignment

- (i) Describe **two ways** in which being able to read can help you in your studies. Do not use the examples given in this unit.
- (ii) How would reading for pleasure help you in your studies? Do not use the examples given in this unit.

Unit 16

Types of Reading Skills

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 15, we explained what a reading skill is, we also mentioned examples of reading skills. In this Unit, you are going to study types of reading skills, what each is and how you could use each to source for information. You will also learn the strategies to use to perform and acquire these skills. A strategy is a procedure or way someone uses, to perform a given learning task or activity, involving any or more of the skills below.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- (i) learn four types of reading skills;
- (ii) learn samples of reading tasks involving each of these skills;
- (iii) learn the strategies or ways of using these skills;
- (iv) apply what you learnt in this unit to activities that involve reading such as in your studies.

3.0 Types of Reading Skills and Strategies for Attaining them

- (i) Reading for plain fact.
- (ii) Inference and interpretation.
- (iii) Evaluation and critical reading.
- (iv) Appreciation.

3.1 Reading for Plain Facts

Reading for plain fact is the ability to understand the meaning of words and sentences that give information on ideas, incidents, events and happenings which are explicitly stated in the text read.

A reader demonstrates an understanding of the passage read if he can recall or reproduce from memory much of the information stated, explicitly in the passage when called to do so. Here are examples of some types of information that a reader can understand or recall while reading and after reading.

- (i) **Recall of Details:** You are required to locate or recall detailed information specifically stated such as the names of persons, incidents described or narrated, the place and time the incidents occurred by identifying and listing these.
- (ii) **Recall of the Theme or Main Ideas:** You read and locate the theme or main idea of the passage or of a specific paragraph in the passage by identifying the sentence(s) that tells you what the text is about.
- (iii) **Recall of Sequence or Order of Incidents or Events:** Here, you are required to identify the sequence order occurrence of events or incidents narrated in the passage by listing these.

- (iv) **Recall of Comparison, Similarities, Differences:** Sometimes, you read to locate information to compare similarities and differences, for instance among characters, times, incidents or places explicitly described by the writer, by identifying statements that show differences, and or similarities in the passage.
- (v) **Recall of Cause and Effect Relationship:** You are required to identify information the author explicitly stated that tells or gives reasons for certain events, incidents or actions of characters and the effects or results of such events, incidents and actions.
- (vi) **Recall of Character Traits:** You are required to identify explicitly stated information that tells the type of person a character or person in the passage is. For example, is he kind or wicked?

3.2 Inference

Inferential comprehension is demonstrated when you use the information in the reading passage, your personal knowledge, experience, intuition and imagination as a basis to suggest or guess something that the writer has not stated explicitly. Being able to infer involves your going beyond what is contained in the text.

Inference is a skill you must have, especially when you read literary texts e.g. novels or newspaper articles and reports as well as speeches.

Here are examples of inferential tasks that you may be required to do after reading a piece of writing.

- (i) **Inferring the Main Idea:** This requires that you suggest the theme, main idea, moral or lesson intended by the writer of the passage but not explicitly stated by identifying a sentence that informs you of what the passage is about.
- (ii) **Inferring Comparisons, Similarities, Differences:** Sometimes, a writer may imply that some characters, places and events are similar or different. You may be required to identify sentences that suggest such similarities and differences. For instance, the sports events described by the writer may have similar or different features e.g. the style and agility of the athletes etc.
- (iii) **Inferring Cause and Effect Relationships:** Here, you identify sentences in the passage that suggest or imply reasons or causes of certain events, incidents, actions and utterances the author wrote about. You may also be required to infer the effects or results of these events and actions by identifying sentences that suggest these effects.
- (iv) **Inferring Character Traits:** You read to locate sentences by the writer that imply the type of person a character is. For instance, you may infer from what a character does or says that he is brave or weak, wise or foolish, kind or wicked.
- (v) **Inferring Outcomes, Consequences or Conclusion:** You may read a passage which has no end or conclusion and you will be required to tell or write the conclusion of the text by using the information contained in some sentences in the text that suggest possible outcome, consequences or conclusion.

Exercise I

Read the passage below and answer the questions on it. The questions are to test your ability to read for plain fact and to infer.

Child Rearing Practices in African and Euro-American Societies

There is abundant evidence that African infants, in comparison with their Euro-American counterparts, display accelerated development in psychomotor skills such as sitting and crawling in their first few years of life. This is believed to be as a result of an enriched psycho-social environment that is characterised by extended family living, multiple caretaking and adult involvement with babies both physically and emotionally. Babies are usually carried around on the backs or shoulders of parents and siblings, constantly sung and talked to and never left to sleep or eat by themselves. Apart from all of the above, African babies enjoy prolonged breast-feeding unlike their Euro-American babies.

Exercise 2

Reading for plain fact

- (A) (i) Give two reasons which according to the author are responsible for African children developing psychomotor skills faster than their Euro-American counterparts.
(ii) What are the three types of psychomotor skills mentioned by the author?

Reading to infer and interpret

- (B) (i) What does the author suggest about the way Euro-American children are brought up.
(ii) Which of these two, culture and heredity does the author suggest is responsible for the differences he discussed? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Sample Answers

- (A) (i) They live in extended family environment and are breast-fed for a long time.
(ii) Sitting, crawling and smiling.
- (B) (i) They are not cared for by many people as African children are.
(ii) Culture. The ways the two groups of people take care of their children are influenced by their cultural beliefs.

3.3 Evaluation

You evaluate by checking the quality of the content read. For instance, you check whether what the author wrote about the topic is true and accurate. You also check if there are exaggerations by the writer. Evaluation means judgement. It is a skill you must acquire and develop. It will help you in your reading of literary texts (e.g. novels, poems, plays), newspaper articles and reports, speeches, textbooks in courses such as Political Science, Economics, Religious Studies, etc. Skill in evaluation enables you to use your background knowledge and experience to agree or disagree with the writer's opinion on something(s). Here are examples of evaluation tasks you may be called upon to perform when you read.

- (i) **Evaluation of Reality or Authenticity of Information:** You read to determine or tell if what the writer wrote about incidents, events or persons occurred in real life or just by the writer by checking this information with what you know or have read about the topic of the passage. Novels, newspaper articles are examples of materials to check for reality of occurrences of events, actions or incidents.
- (ii) **Evaluation of Fact or Opinion:** Sometimes, you will need to check whether the information given in the text is based on facts or just the writer's opinion. Newspaper editorials and writings on social events are examples of materials you need to check if they are based on facts or writer's personal opinions.
- (iii) **Evaluation of the Desirability or Acceptability of Someone's or some People's Action(s) or Speech:** When you read or listen to someone's speech, you do not simply accept what you read or heard. You have to evaluate it in terms of whether it is acceptable to you by your standard or the standard of what you previously topic. When you do this, you are judging the worth of what you read by agreeing or disagreeing with the writer, based on personal or societal reasons. For instance, you may read a friend's letter on the conduct of 2003 general elections in Nigeria and disagree with him on his opinion that the ruling party rigged the elections.
- (iv) **Evaluation of Appropriateness of Information:** In Unit 15, you learnt that reading for the purpose of learning to acquire knowledge from text books, lecture notes, course materials was one of the reasons for reading. For such readings, you must be able to evaluate the information by selecting what you consider relevant or important in doing your assignments or examinations or what is relevant to your understanding the topic you read about. This means that it is not everything in the text book that you may consider relevant.

3.4 Appreciation

Appreciation enables you to express emotions or feelings about the text e.g. feeling of joy, excitement, fear, anger. Appreciation also has to do with a reader's awareness of the literary techniques, forms and styles employed by the writer to stimulate emotional responses in the reader and stir up his imagination about events or incidents, places or characters described in the passage. Examples of tasks that involve appreciation are:

- (i) ***Appreciation of a Writer's Opinions:*** Your reading may require you to react to the author's opinion by showing a likeness or otherwise of what he or she wrote. For instance, what the author writes and the way he writes may make you happy or sad, bored or excited, angry. Newspaper articles, novels, letters from friends and relatives, magazine reports on social events and personalities usually stir up in us any of the above feelings.
- (ii) ***Appreciation of Persons, Characters or Events:*** Sometimes when we read, we react to the description of persons and events in the text. The description, for instance, may make us like or dislike an event or character. We may also sympathise or hate a character because of what happened to him or what he did or said.
- (iii) ***Appreciation of Author's Use of Language:*** Writers use certain aspects of language such as similes and metaphors to make their writing interesting to the reader. These aspects of language are called figures of speech and they are used in novels, newspapers, magazines and personal letters. You appreciate author's use of language by reacting emotionally by your feelings on such usage. You also appreciate the author's choice of words e.g. are they simple or difficult to understand.
- (iv) ***Appreciation of Author's Use of Imagery:*** The way a writer uses words to describe a person or a place gives the reader a picture of what the person or place looks like. Writer's use of imagery enables the reader to see, smell, taste, hear or feel things or persons described without physically seeing such places and persons or hearing such persons. You show your appreciation by displaying any of the above emotion reactions to the author's descriptions. The author's use of imagery also enables you to appreciate the tone and mood of the text. You may like or dislike the tone or the mood.

Note: You will notice that the four skills are somehow connected. None is really performed in isolation or independent of the others. For instance, before you can infer, evaluate or appreciate, you must first read the text to understand the information it contains. This is reading for plain fact. You use the fact to infer or deduce something the author implied but did not state explicitly. You can follow this up by judging or evaluating what you inferred the author meant.

The skill of appreciation involves some elements of inferring and evaluating. For example, you are in a better position to appreciate a writer's opinion if you can infer and judge these opinions, using your experience or what you know about the topic you read as standard for judging.

Exercise 3

Read the passage below and answer the questions on it. The questions are to test your ability to evaluate and appreciate.

Bingo and the Squirrel

The things we want the most can sometimes be the worst for us. This principle often applies to material possessions. Once we get them, they can easily control us. It always applies when we desire something, we have no right to have such as someone else's wife, or money obtained fraudulently. We may succeed in getting what we want, but it will be to our own hurt.

Our dog Bingo learnt this principle the hard way. She loved to chase the squirrels that came into our yard. If one appeared, she took after it in a flash, chasing it up the fig tree and barking at it furiously. Although she chased them for six years, she never caught one. But all that changed one harmattan day. A squirrel warned

by the sun was out in the yard, and Bingo went after it. With dust on the ground, the squirrel couldn't scamper as fast as usual and Bingo caught it. She finally had what she always wanted, but soon wished she didn't. The terrified squirrel wrapped itself around Bingo's nose, kicked her throat furiously with its hind feet, and hit fracas with a deep gash and several nasty scratches. I've noticed now that even though she still chases squirrels, she makes sure they get away.

You can see the point. If we insist on getting what we want-wealth, fame, love, or whatever-it could hurt us. If it is illegitimate, it surely will. Let's learn the lesson of the squirrel.

(Source: Olaofe, 1992, Pg. 85)

Reading to evaluate

- (i) Do you agree with the writer that what we desire the most can hurt us? Support your answer with a reason.
- (ii) The writer seems to be saying that Bingo deserved the wounds inflicted on it by the squirrel. Do you share this view?

Reading to appreciate

- (iii) Are you happy about Bingo's experience with the squirrel?
- (iv) Do you like the writer's attitude to Bingo's fate?

Sample Answers

- (i) Answer could be Yes or No. Which ever it is, give a reason.
- (ii) Answer could be Yes or No with a reason.
- (iii) Answer could be Yes or No with a reason.
- (iv) Answer could be Yes or No with a reason.

4.0 Conclusion

Reading involves skills you cannot do without. Being able to read will enable you to source for information and use same to solve your problems and those of others. For instance, learning your courses and appropriately applying the knowledge learnt is made possible by your being able to read. Your ability to read well will improve, if you devote time and energy to studying the contents of this unit and doing the exercises at the end of it.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you were taught the four basic reading skills, namely, literal comprehension, inference, evaluation and appreciation. You were taught the strategies or procedures for executing these skills. Samples of reading tasks involving each of these four skills were presented and explained to you to aid your understanding of each skill. You also learnt that these four skills are interconnected because as you use one skill one or two others may be involved.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Read the text below and answer the questions on it. Before answering each question, write the reading skill you think is being tested.

The Problem with Religion in Nigeria

Since the assertion over a century ago, by the father of communism, Karl Marx, that religion is the opium of the people, an endless controversy has ensued on whether religion should be a pillar of public functions or a private affair.

Those who saw a seed of dissension in religion hold tenaciously to the assertion and adopt it as a faultless ideology while others who believe that nothing can be successfully achieved without faith in the Supreme Creator of all things regard such an assertion as a mere fallacy fabricated by an infidel. The former group claims that religion is an institution which is as old as the world but which should be obliterated or, at least, restricted because it has adversely affected the development of the world.

The latter group argues that it is religion which has so far sustained the world because all laws, rules, and regulations that govern the conduct of man anywhere under the sky emanated from religion, and without these laws, rules, and regulations, the world would have gone into permanent oblivion. It is, therefore, the recommendation of this latter group that if the laws which regulate the public life of mankind are directly or indirectly from religion, then religion should continue to be the main pillar of the public life in any given society.

Here in Nigeria, more than 90% of the population definitely agree with the view that religion is the core of culture and should form the main pillar of our public and private life. But, unfortunately, more than 98% of such people are dogmatically ignorant of how to practise their religion to ventilate the society with the breeze of peace and harmony. And to a great extent, the ignorance of such people is being tacitly encouraged by the Federal and State Governments, which has never seen any danger in ignorance.

Each time there is a crisis in the country, be it social, political, or religious, it is the people who are caught in the violent action or those suspected to be behind the crisis or the political foes of the rulers that bear the burnt. The government is often free from blame even when it fails to prevent the outbreak of violence. Illiteracy seems to compound the problems as over 70% of the population cannot read or write and are unable to understand Nigeria's written law. Consequently, this group of people cannot even understand what actually constitutes a breach of the law.

Nigeria has witnessed several religious crises. The Maitasine carnage is an example. It is painful that, whenever there is any form of crises in the country, the government only reacts by setting up a commission of inquiry. Quite often, such inquiries are used as instruments for destroying political opponents. In the end, neither the government nor the people learn any lessons from the findings of such inquiries.

Many things are responsible for religious crises in Nigeria. Open-air preaching is a major factor. Religionists often barricade the streets and usurp the front space of other people's houses in the frantic endeavour to win converts. This is an awful scene which is possible only in Nigeria. People should preach inside the church or mosque or hire halls for their religious activities.

Some people see religion as a lucrative enterprise. This alone shows why people are ready to kill themselves in the name of religion. If the rate at which Nigerians troop into religion these days is a reflection of their godliness, why is the rate of crime rapidly increasing? Why are some of the religious leaders caught in criminal acts?

People should practise religion honestly. They should not use religion for achieving political goals or material benefits. It is only in this way that they can prove their sincerity to God, their Creator.

(Source: Oluikpe et al 2001)

Questions

- (i) Who founded communism?
- (ii) What is the author's attitude to government's handling of religious crises?
- (iii) Do you agree with the author that religious differences started with the advent of communism? Support your answer with a reason.
- (iv) What are the two different views of religion according to the author?
- (v) What is the author's view about the way most Nigerians practise religion?
- (vi) Do you share the author's view about government's attitude to religious crises? Support your answer with a reason.
- (vii) The author asserts that people could kill because they consider religion as a lucrative enterprise. What is your view?
- (viii) Which of the two different views of religion do you belong to and why?

7.0 References

- Olaofe, I. A (1992). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institutions*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Company.
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Unit 17

Reading Comprehension Practice

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Unit is to teach you how to put into practice the knowledge you gained in the previous two units.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to read various pieces of writings and use appropriate reading strategies to do exercises that call for the ability or skill to:

- (i) extract factual or explicit stated information;
- (ii) infer implicitly stated information, judge or evaluate a writer's opinion(s);
- (iii) appreciate or show likeness or dislike for what you read.

3.0 Reading for Plain Facts

In this section, you will be guided on how to read to extract information explicitly stated in a sample passage by answering some questions based on the passage. To benefit from the instruction in this unit, read carefully the guidelines below. This will give you a proper mental set to learn how to answer comprehension exercises or tasks.

Some Important Guidelines

To do well in reading comprehension exercise, you must do the following:

- (i) Read through the text or passage quickly for the first time.
- (ii) Quickly read each of the questions to understand the task ahead.
- (iii) Read over the text a second time. During this second reading, note the paragraphs where the answers are located. You can do this with a pencil. For ease of identification, number the relevant portion of the text with the number of the question related to that portion. For instance, when you read the part of the text that you think has the answer to question two, label that part of the text, q. 2.
- (iv) Avoid lifting verbatim the answers from the text. You must write the answers to the questions using mostly your own words. This will demonstrate you can read as well as express yourself without copying the author verbatim.
- (v) Avoid being verbose or wordy. Be as brief as possible while ensuring that your answer is grammatically correct and meaningfully related to the question asked.
- (vi) Be creative by avoiding repetition of words and names of characters. For example, instead of repeating the name of a character(s), you could use pronouns: he, she or they.

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Still chewing the last morsels of his early morning meal, Sergeant Monie brushed his lips with the back of his left palm and groaned with satisfaction as he swallowed. Then, he leaned back in his chair and stretched noisily, exclaiming in the name of his late father. With a start, as if he had just roused his senses from a stupor, he leaped out of the chair and announced to himself: "I must go to the Koyimi village market this morning." He fetched his tunic and put it on. It was aged, this tunic. He had brought it back from the Great War twenty years ago, claiming it had been a present from one of his "Whiteman officer massa for army". This tunic he had used almost everyday. It was nearly threadbare, worn out, not only at the seams, but also throughout the fabric. Yet, he would not forsake it. It was his tunic, and his tunic it remained, always with him. The two were two in one, as if in wedlock, and so, inseparable.

He fetched the raffia bag he had inherited from his father. In the bag was, as usual, his drinking horn. Then he pulled a wooden box from beneath his bed, opened plastic bag, took out a handful of fresh unpeeled kolanuts and pushed back the box. A man's drinking horn, his bag and kolanuts are the three things which he carries with him when he knows he is going out to meet other men. With these, he stepped into the yard.

"Are those women still in bed?"

Almost immediately, the wives protested. One said, "No! I'm warming up soup for the children going to school." She then stepped out wiping her hands on her dress. A way of telling her husband that she was now at his disposal. The other three wives came out too, one of them soothing a whimpering child who had been beaten because she had broken a calabash when she went to fetch water from the stream.

"I am going to the Koyomi village market this morning", he declared, and paused for any complaints. There were none. So, he went on: "Just in case anyone comes..."

"But you know Ndikum is supposed to return to school today with his fees, in order to be able to prepare for his examinations which they are starting the day after tomorrow."

"Of course, I know! You might as well give him the money. You've been hawking for years now and you can't tell me..."

"But you know..."

"Shut up, woman!" he shouted, raising his hand to hit her. She shrieked, drew back and broke into a run. Sergeant did not give chase. Instead, he walked off, preferring to attend to the more important issue of the Koyomi market.

Sergeant was well-known in Mbu, his own village. "Sergeant!" children cried out as he passed by. "Morning, Sergeant!" called out the older folk. They liked him, the folk did. They enjoyed the endless stories he told about the great war, especially the one about having shot down a helicopter which had perched on a huge tree and, unseen, had been causing havoc. Some believed all of the stories; others believed only some of them.

Whatever was the case, Sergeant was the only ex-serviceman from the whole of the locality who had been in the war. So, what man was there that could rise and say, "No! Sergeant had told a lie. I was there and things didn't happen the way he has recounted them?" What they didn't doubt, though, was that he had fought in the war, for the older people still remembered the day when the whiteman had come to recruit "bloody natives". Some of them had been "hidden" by their parents, while others had been disqualified. But Sergeant had been recruited. They had seen him, with their "two naked eyes", they would say, being taken away in the whiteman's truck.

Source: Olaofe (1993, p.2)

Questions

- (i) What is the name of the main character?
- (ii) How many wives did Sergeant Monie have?
- (iii) Where did Sergeant Monie decide to go?
- (iv) What had Sergeant Monie just done before deciding to go out?
- (v) Name the three items he took when going out?
- (vi) Did everyone believe Sergeant Monie's stories?

- (vii) What did one of the wives remind Sergeant Monie about?
- (viii) Why did one of the wives shriek?
- (ix) How did he first leave the locality?

Let's Practice It

Question 1

What is the name of the main character?

Note: Before you answer this question, you need to ask yourself what a main character is.

A main character is the major personality or person in a story. For example, the main character in the novel, *Things Fall Apart*, is Okonkwo.

In this story, the writer mentioned some personalities such as Sergeant Monie, his wives and Ndikm his son. But the person around whom the story revolves is Sergeant Monie. He is therefore the main character. He is first mentioned in the first line of the story and is talked about till the end of the story.

Exercise I

The following questions are to further aid you in learning how to answer literal questions. Read them and locate the answers in the text.

Question i: What is Sergeant Monie by profession?

Question ii: What was Sergeant Monie's response when his wife reminded him of the son's fees?

Question iii: Complete the sentence below with appropriate information from the passage:

The people of Mbu liked Sergeant Monie because of ...

3.1 Reading to Infer Implicitly Stated Information

In Unit 16, you were taught what inferential comprehension involves. You learnt for instance, that to infer from a text would need you going beyond what the author explicitly states in the text. You learnt that doing this would require you use your personal knowledge and experience as well as your imagination and intuition to guess things the author might have in mind but does not explicitly state.

Very often, students perform poorly in reading comprehension exercises because they lack the inferential skill and the necessary appropriate strategies to tackle comprehension tasks. It is therefore very important that you follow diligently the guidelines presented in this section. These guidelines are to help you learn how to use appropriate strategies to infer information from a text. Below is the passage: 'Remembering'.

Remembering

These special Indian terms will help you better understand the story:

Bullock cart: A Wagon drawn by large animals, bullocks.

Sari: The traditional dress of Indian women.

Dhal: Cooked, dried lentils, of the legume family of plants.

Curds: Typical Indian food, like yoghurt.

Paddy: The place where rice is grown and rice in general.

A woman, they say, always remember her wedding night. Well, maybe they do; but for me there are other nights I prefer to remember, sweeter, fuller, when I went to my husband matured in mind as well as in body, not as a pained and awkward child as I did on that first night. And when the religious ceremonies had been completed, we left, my husband and I. How well I remember the day, and the sudden sickness that overcame me when the moment for departure came! My mother was in the doorway, no tears in her eyes but her face bloated with their weight. My father standing a little in front of her, waiting to see us safely on our way. My husband, seated already on the bullock cart with the tin trunk full of cooking vessels and my saris next to him. Somehow I found myself also sitting in the cart, in finery, with downcast eyes.

Then the cart began to move. It lurched as the bullock got awkwardly into rhythm, and I was sick. Such a disgrace for me.... How shall I ever live it down? I remember thinking. I shall never forget... I haven't forgotten, but the memory is not sour. My husband soothed and calmed me.

"It's a thing that might happen to anybody," he said. "Do not fret. Come, dry your eyes and sit up here beside me." So I did, and after a while I felt better, the tears left my eyes and dried on my lashes.

For six hours, we rode on and on log the dusty road, passing several villages on the way to ours, which was a good distance away. Halfway, there we stopped and ate a meal: boiled rice, dhal, vegetables and curds. A whole coconut a piece, too, in which my husband nicked a hole with his scythe for me so that I might drink the clear milk. Then he unyoked the bullocks and led them to the small pool of water near which we had stopped, giving them each a handful of hay. Poor beasts, they seemed glad of the water, for already their hides were dusty.

We rested a half-hour before resuming our journey. The animals, refreshed, began stepping jauntily again, tossing their heads and jangling the bells that hung from their red-painted horns. The air was full of the sound of bells, and of birds, sparrows and bulbuls mainly, and sometimes the cry of an eagle, but when we passed a grove, green and leafy, I could hear mynahs and parrots. It was very warm, and being unused to so long a jolting, I fell asleep.

It was my husband who woke me – my husband, whom I will call Nathan, for, that was his name, although in all the years of our marriage I never called him that, for it is not meant for a woman to address her husband except as "husband."

"We are home," he cried. "Wake up! Look!"

I woke; I looked. A mud hut, thatched, small, set near paddy field, with two or three similar huts nearby. Across the doorway, a garland of mango leaves, symbol of happiness and good fortune, dry now and rattling in the breeze.

"This is our home," my husband said. "Come, I will show you."

I got out of the cart, stiff and with a cramp in one leg. We went in: two rooms, one sort of storehouse for grain, the other for everything else. A third had been begun but was unfinished; the mud walls were not more than half a foot high.

"It will be better when it is finished," he said. I nodded; I wanted to cry. This mud hut, nothing but mud and thatch, was my home. My knees gave, first the cramped one, then the other, and I sank down. Nathan's face filled with concern as he came to hold me.

"It is nothing," I said. "I am tired – no more. I will be all right in a minute."

He said, "Perhaps you are frightened at living here alone – but in a few years we can move – may be even buy a house such as your father's. You would like that?"

There was something in his voice, a pleading, a look on his face such as a dog has when you are about to kick it.

"No," I said, "I am not frightened. It suits me quite well to live here."

He did not reply at once but went into the granary and came out with a handful of paddy.

"Such harvests as this," he said, sliding the grains about in his hand, "and you shall not want for anything, beloved!" Then he went out to get the tin trunk and after a while, I followed.

Source: Savignon (1983: p. 160-161)

Questions

- (i) Explain the meaning of each of the following words as used in the passage:
 - (a) bloated
 - (b) lurched
 - (c) soothed and calmed
 - (d) fret
 - (e) rattling

- (ii) Is the person narrating the story in this passage a young girl or a grown up woman?
- (iii) How did the narrator of the story feel on her wedding day?
- (iv) What was the father's attitude seeing his daughter going away with her husband?
- (v) Compare the disposition of the narrator and that of her husband on their wedding day.
- (vi) Did the incidents in the story occur many years ago or recently?
- (vii) How did the husband feel towards his wife?
- (viii) What is the main subject of this story?

Let's Practice It

In this section, you will be guided on how to answer each of the questions on the text, *Remembering*. Before reading the guidelines, read the passage and the questions well.

Note: Reading comprehension is often hindered when the reader does not understand the words used by the writer to convey his ideas in the text. Generally, there are four ways you could use to get the meaning of words and expressions in a text. These are: context clues, sounding the word (that is pronouncing the word out to get the meaning from the sound), structural analysis (breaking a word into smaller parts, e.g. a compound word), and using a reference material such as a dictionary or an encyclopaedia. The acronym for these four strategies is CCSR to help you remember.

Source: Onukaogu (2002: p. 18-20).

Each of these strategies is briefly explained below.

Context Clues

A good or proficient reader is one who can use context clues or cues to unravel or understand the meaning of unknown words and expressions. To do this requires that the reader read the unknown word(s) as well as the surrounding words not only in the sentence in which the word occurs but sentences before and after.

All of these constitute the content or environment of the word and serve as signals that lead the reader to figure out the meaning of an unknown word or expression.

To successfully use such words as: and, although, but, nevertheless, however, in addition, consequently, etc. by authors or writers. These words are called 'text or discourse markers'. Writers use them to signal meanings intended by them. For instance, when a writer uses the word, 'but', in his writing, he is signalling that what follows the word 'but' is in contrast to what has been said before.

In summary, the ability to use context clues is a strategy that you must acquire and develop if you are to become proficient in reading. This strategy is also very important in understanding oral communication, e.g. speech.

Sounding the Word

Another helpful strategy in decoding the meaning of a word is to sound or pronounce the word. If the word is one you had heard before, sounding it out may remind you the meaning.

Structural Analysis of the Word

This strategy you may use to unravel the meaning of a word by breaking the word into its parts. You may have come across a part of the word and know the meaning. From this, you can guess the full meaning of the compound word. Here is an example, with the word: picturesque. This word is made up of a word you are very familiar with – picture. Your general knowledge of how words are formed may lead you to guess that the second part makes the word picturesque an adjective. By structural analysis therefore, one may say that the word picturesque means pictorial, or like a picture.

Note of course that the words surrounding picturesque in the sentence or paragraph in which it occurs will provide the needed cues to understand the writer's use of the word.

Reference Materials: Dictionary/Encyclopaedia

You go to reference materials such as a dictionary when you are not successful in understanding a word, using the first three strategies. It should however be your last resort. In using a dictionary however, you must remember that you may not get the exact meaning of the word(s) as intended by the writer. You must consider the dictionary explanation in the context or environment the word is used.

In summary, CSSR are very useful strategies to aid your understanding when you read. Of the four strategies, the one that is most economical and effective is using context clues. You may be in a situation where structural analysis may not come easily; sounding out the word or using a dictionary may not be possible (e.g. in an examination situation). In a situation such as this, using context clues becomes very helpful.

The text “Remembering” will be used to teach you how to use context clues to understand meanings of words as well as search for information to answer inferential questions on the text.

Question 1: bloated – This word is found in *line 8* in the sentence: “My mother... no tears in her eyes but her face *bloated* with their weight.”

Using context clues: The sentence tells us the mother of the narrator of the story was about to cry. We can tell this from the part of the sentence that says ‘there were no tears in her eyes *but her face was bloated with their weight.*’

Note: The word ‘bloated’ was used to describe the heaviness of the weight of the tears on the mother’s face. Bloated therefore means – ‘swollen’.

- **Lurched:** The meaning of this word is to be found in *lines 13 and 14* in the sentences:... the cart began to move. It lurched as the bullocks got awkwardly into rhythm... and I was sick.
Using context clues: The word ‘awkwardly’ tells us that the movement of the cart pulled by the bullocks was shaky. The word ‘lurched’ was used to describe this unsteadily movement. The word that one could use in place of lurched is ‘jerked’.
- **Soothed and calmed:** The meaning of these words is found in the sentences: I shall never forget... I haven’t forgotten, but the memory is not sour. My husband soothed and calmed me. It’s a thing that might happen to anybody, he said. ‘Do not fret. Come, dry your eyes...’
Using context clues: The first sentence above tells us that the narrator’s memory of what happened on her wedding was not sour. The second and last sentences tell us it was so because her husband soothed and calmed her. The words that the husband spoke to her showed he was concerned and caring. The closest words to – soothed and calmed are ‘comforted’ and ‘quietened’.
- **Fret:** This word is found in *lines 17 and 18* in the sentences, ‘Do not fret. Come, dry your eyes and sit up here beside me.’ So I did, and after a while I felt better.
Using context clues: *Line 14* before the above sentences tells us that the bride felt disgraced because she was sick. She was worried about this as shown in the sentence: ‘How shall I ever live it down?’ It was because she was worried that her husband comforted her and told her not to *fret*. The word to fret therefore means, to worry.
- **Rattling:** This word is found in *line 41* in the sentence: ‘Across the door way a gar land of mango leaves,, dry now and rattling in the breeze’.
Using context clues: The sentence above tells us the mango leaves were dry. The blowing of the breeze caused the dry mango leaves to move and as they moved they made noise. The word, rattling therefore means: to move noisily.

Note: Understanding a word or an expression using context clues will require you read not just the sentence in which the word appears but the sentence(s) before and after. Sometimes, you may have to read

a preceding paragraph to understand a word or an expression in the subsequent paragraph as in the case of the word 'fret'

Question 2: The answer to this question is located in *paragraphs 1 lines 2, 3 and 4* in the sentence '...but for me, there are other nights I prefer to remember, sweeter, fuller, when I went to my husband matured in mind as well as in body, not as a pained and awkward child as I did on that first night.'

Using context clues: *Lines 3 and 4*, tell us that the woman was a child when she got married but not matured in mind and body. The answer to the question is: 'she is a grown woman.'

Question 3: The answer to this question is located in *paragraphs 1 and 2, lines 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18*. In line 11 for instance, the woman mentioned being 'downcast' and in line 14, she said she was sick and mentioned feeling disgraced and tears being in her eyes etc.

Using context clues: The above points show that this woman was not exactly happy on her wedding day. She was torn between leaving his parents' home and going home with her groom. One could therefore say she was sad and unhappy.

Question 4: A sentence in the first paragraph, *line 8* seems to suggest that the father did not display any emotions e.g. no tears. One could say he was feeling proud that he had fulfilled his duty as a father.

Answer: The father was unemotional. Or He was manly in his attitude.

Question 5: The answer to this question is located in *paragraph 1, lines 9, 11, paragraph 2, lines 14, 15* etc.

Answer: While the wife was downcast and tearful, the husband was eager for them to move off.

Question 6 – Answer: The events occurred many years ago, or they occurred a long time ago, or they did not occur recently.

Note: (i) Each of the above sentences is correct. The intention of having this number of sentences is to show you how to vary your sentences.

(ii) Answer to this question is located throughout the text beginning from paragraph one where the narrator tells of the beginning of these events – her wedding ceremonies.

Question 7 – Answer: He was loving and caring, or he was very eager to please her, or the husband was compassionate and understanding. See *paragraphs 2, 3, 11, 13*.

Note: The husband's actions, attitudes and words in these paragraphs imply any of the above sentences.

Question 8:

Note 1: The main subject or theme of a piece of writing or a speech is the purpose of that piece. You can know the theme of a text or speech by the title and or by the information in the body of the text. The title of this text immediately tells us that the passage is about someone or some people remembering or recalling something. On reading the text, we learn of what are being remembered and by whom.

Note 2: There is a main theme and there are also sub-themes.

e.g.: The main theme of "Remembering" is: The narrator's recollection of her feelings on her wedding day.

Or

The narrator tells about her anxiety, fears, sickness and worries on her wedding day.

Or

The woman wants to share with readers the events on her wedding day.

Each of the above sentences captures the essence of the text, that is the main theme of the text.

The sub-themes: These are the sub-themes:

(i) The woman tells about her parents' attitudes or feelings on her wedding day.

Or

(ii) The narrator of the story tells about her first journey to her husband's home.

(iii) She tells about her husband's loving and caring qualities.

General Note: By using context clues, you were able to:

- (i) understand meanings of words without consulting a dictionary;
- (ii) understand characters' actions, attitudes and motives from what they did or said;
- (iii) infer the main theme and sub-themes of the text.

3.2 Reading to Judge or Evaluate

You learnt in Unit 16 that the skill of evaluation enables you to judge a writer's ideas, opinions *et cetera* as to their worth, truthfulness, acceptability. Generally, evaluation involves agreeing or disagreeing with someone on what he wrote or said.

In this section, we are going to study a text titled: The Military by answering evaluative questions based on it.

The Military

The coup ought to instruct future leaders to be more cautious in taking the goodwill of the people for granted, or in thinking repression per se will cow the people.

What I fear most now is that the army is beginning to believe that African nations' redeemers can come only from the inexhaustible stock of 'saviours' in the army mess. With the monopoly of force, they are fast acquiring the monopoly of political power. Indeed, with a military universally and a proposed military bank, they are setting up parallel infrastructures that will facilitate their monopolization of power. With almost a billion naira annual budget for defence, a military banking system looks very much like a parallel economy outside the control. Supervision and audit of the civilians.

But another source of worry is that a belief that the military offers the exclusive source of political redemption invites jockeying for and toying with power, and a game of musical chairs within the barracks. This is a source of national instability. The much-vaunted 'corrective' adventures of the military deserve a second look.

The assumption that civilian politicians 'wrap out' at the sight of the uniform and keep up the good behaviour long after, for fear of the army's return, is no longer so. Evidence abounds that there are sometimes even worse forms of misbehaviour while the army is around.

To stop this endless military crusade, the civilian politicians have to recognize now that they are in competition for power with military politicians, with one group constantly giving the other a bad name to hang them. The way out for African nations is for the civilian politicians to make it impossible for the military politicians to find enough good reasons or any reason at all not to concentrate on the job the nations pay them to do.

Source: Olaofe (1993: p. 25)

Questions

- (i) Do you agree with the writer that there were worse forms of misbehaviour while the army was ruling?
- (ii) Do you share the author's view that the military in Africa considered themselves 'redeemers' and 'saviours' of their nations?

Let's Practise It

Note: Each of the above is a judgemental question that seeks your opinion vis-à-vis that of the writer. To answer the question will require you use information stated in the text as well as what you know of the subject matter or the topic. Your answer may very likely differ from those of your classmates because each person will respond according to his or her perception of the military when they were in power.

Answer each question according to your own view of the military and compare your answer with those of your classmates. If you disagree, use the point of the writer as your take-off point of disagreement.

3.3 Appreciation

Unit 16 taught you that the skill of appreciation enables you to judge a piece of writing in terms of whether you like or dislike what the author wrote about an idea, a character or whether you like the author's style of writing etc.

To practise the skill of appreciation, we will make use of the texts we have been studying, namely: “Sergeant Monie”, “Remembering” and “The Military”.

Questions

- (i) If you were a woman would you wish to be married to a man like Sergeant Monie? Give a reason for your answer.
- (ii) What do you like about what the author of the passage, “The Military” wrote?
- (iii) What do you like about the method of writing of the author of the passage, Remembering?

Let’s Practise It

Your answer to each of the three questions is to a large extent personal to you, especially for questions i and ii. The answer to these questions will depend on your view of what read. Respond to questions i and ii according to your feelings and compare your answers with those of your classmates.

Compare your answer to question iii with those of your classmates as well as the sample answer below.

Answer: I like the author’s vivid description of people’s attitudes and emotions as well as events or incidents.

Exercise 2

- (i) The author of “The Military”, seems to suggest that Civilian Government is better than the Military Government. Do you agree with him? Give reasons.

Note: This question is both inferential and evaluative.

- (ii) Compare the attitudes of the father and mother of the narrator of, “Remembering”.

Note: The question is both inferential and evaluative.

4.0 Conclusion

This Unit has taken you through some guidelines for responding to comprehension questions. To perform well in your personal and academic reading, you will need to practise these guidelines using texts other than the samples studied in the unit. Past WASC comprehension passages and questions would provide you with varied examples to practise with.

5.0 Summary

We read to comprehend or understand what is written. Meaningful comprehension will occur only if we have the necessary reading skills and strategies. This Unit has taught you how to use the four basic reading skills to comprehend information in a written text. The four skills dealt with are:

- (i) Reading to extract factual information.
- (ii) Reading to extract implied information.
- (iii) Reading to evaluate author’s ideas, opinions etc.
- (iv) Reading to appreciate author’s ideas, opinions, method of writing etc.

The application of these four skills was done, using real reading texts on which questions covering the four skills were formed. To master the use of these skills, you must practise with more samples of reading passages. WASC past question papers offer you a rich source for such passages, but read newspapers, magazines and your subject books as well.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- (i) Name the three major events described in the passage, “Remembering”.
- (ii) Compare Sergeant Monie and Nathan on their role as husbands.
- (iii) Do you empathise with the bride in the story, “Remembering”?
- (iv) Do you consider Sergeant Monie’s reaction to his wife reminding him of his son’s school fees appropriate?

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Module 5

Unit 18

Summary Skills I

1.0 Introduction

To summarise is to write a shortened version of something you have read or observed. Newspaper reports and radio or television news are all summaries of actual events as it is impossible to mention everything that happened. When reading text books, it is the major points raised that are jotted down and this becomes a summary of what was read. This unit is therefore of great importance to you as a remedial student as you will need do a lot of summarising in the course of reading your materials, as ninety percent of your studies is done through correspondence materials.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify topic sentence and statement of main idea;
- (ii) identify statement that provide details of the main idea;
- (iii) render the summary of a given passage by stating the major points in your own words;
- (iv) apply the techniques.

3.0 Summary Skills

A summary is a report of the main idea of story or a passage. It is shorter than the passage itself, and it is written in clear, accurate and to the point sentences. In summary writing, the major points are extracted from the passage while a few secondary points are brought in to support the major ones. The person summarising, must use his or her own words to render the information, not the exact sentences of the text.

3.1 Characteristics of a Good Summary

The following are the features of a good summary.

- (a) **Brevity:** You need to be brief as a summary is a shortened form. Do not elaborate the point and avoid the use of long wordy sentences. Briefly express only the essential points.
- (b) **Clarity:** Use clear simple language that express the author's exact thoughts. Avoid winding statements and repetitions.

- (c) **Relevance:** A summary must accurately reflect the original. It must not include any fact that cannot be found in the original passage. A summary must express exactly what the original passage states.
- (d) **Satisfactory Coverage:** In trying to be precise, essential points should not be left out. Make sure that all relevant information is covered and all the point clearly stated.

In writing a summary, there are certain approaches you must avoid as discussed below.

- (i) **Convolutional Statements:** Avoid sentences that are complicated and difficult to follow. Write clear and simple sentences and present your ideas in a straight forward manner. In a summary exercise, always aim at writing sentences that are neat and direct, avoid using negatives and windy sentences.
- (ii) **Repetition:** Avoid repetitions of words, phrases or ideas in summary writing. Usually, an author uses repetitions to emphasise a point. In summary writing, there is no need for undue emphasis.
- (iii) **Figurative Expressions:** There is need for a summary to be precise, direct and plain, therefore the use of figurative expression is unnecessary as they are usually wordy and indirect.

3.2 Effective Coverage

In summarising a passage, there is need to cover the ideas as evenly as possible. To do this, you will need to:

- (i) identify the main and supporting points;
- (ii) fuse, the points into sentences;
- (iii) construct, clear and simple and meaningful sentences.

In identifying the points, you need to have a good understanding of the passage, understand the ideas clearly. Read the passage again after you have read the question and draw lines to indicate points in the passage. After all the points have been identified, you need a good knowledge of how to build grammatically correct sentences so as to fuse the points into sentences. You must use your own sentences, not the ones in the text.

Exercise 1

Read the following paragraph and identify or underline one sentence that summarises the entire paragraph.

A school performs many services for residents of a community. It offers instructional services for school-age children during the day and often provides courses for adults in the evening. It provides a meeting place for community organizations. It also serves as an achieve cultural centre; plays, concert and lectures are often scheduled.

You didn't find this difficult did you? The first sentence can be called a topic sentence as it summarises the entire passage. The other sentences provide the details of the services performed.

3.3 Organisation of Summary Passages

You will find it easier to summarise a passage that you know how it is organized. There are various patterns used in organizing ideas in passages. These will be discussed below.

Topic Sentence

Passages are made up of paragraphs, each paragraph has a main point that the writer is making. When a passage has a sentence that states the main points, such sentence is called 'topic sentence' as it contains the main idea. To find the topic sentence of a paragraph, simply look for the sentence that expresses the idea or information that the other sentences make statements to develop or expand. Study the paragraph in *Exercise 1* again. In some paragraphs, the topic sentence comes first, in some, it may be in the middle while in others, it comes last. However, it is not in all paragraphs you can find the topic sentence obviously written. Where the topic sentence is not stated, you need to determine the topic of the paragraph yourself. To do that, simply ask yourself who or what is most frequently mentioned. Look for the person, place or thing most often referred to.

Example: What is the topic of this paragraph?

Animal have interesting habits. One of the habits of some animals is to use nature's medicines when they are ill. Goats may eat twigs and the bark of trees. Cats and dogs may eat grass when they are not feeling well. Monkeys often eat different kinds of roots and fruits.

Now, how do you determine the topic of this paragraph? The opening sentence look like the topic sentence but all the sentences following it do not discuss the habits of animals generally. Only one of the habits is fully developed. Secondly, only some animals have this habits, not all animals as declared in the opening or topic sentence. All the other sentences expand this one habit. That is, 'What some animals usually do when they are ill.' This is the most appropriate topic of the paragraph. Note that the word 'habit' can be replaced with 'usually do'.

Section – Based

The section-based passage is divided into two or more sections and a question is set on each section. All you need to do is to study the section and identify the points needed to answer the questions.

Listing

A passage that explain a procedure or technique uses the listing method. The passage contains words like first, second, third, initially, finally etc. Take note of such words, they point to the focus areas.

Inference

Sometimes, a paragraph or passage does not directly state the main ideas. The ideas are hinted or implied. You are expected to use the hints given to infer the meanings. This requires you to think a little more about the topic. Check unit 16 for the skill of inference in reading.

Comparison

Comparisons are common in argumentative passages. Usually opposing points are put together in the same sentence or paragraph or even in alternative paragraphs. Understand each of the opposing points so as to get an insight into the writer's thought pattern and to give a summary of the writer's main points of arguments.

4.0 Conclusion

No matter what you are writing, it is important to proof read. Going over the work for mistake in grammar, punctuation and spelling is necessary.

If you follow the steps indicate in this Unit for summary writing, you are likely to find summary writing easier.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt what summaries are and what they entail. You studied the various characteristics of a good summary and how summaries are to be organised.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions.

We have often heard students making wild assertions that the public examining bodies are their worst enemies. Some, in fact, see the officials of these public examining bodies as wicked souls scheming day and night to devise ways of failing them. How correct are these assertions? The facts will speak for themselves.

The task of setting an examination paper begins long before the examination day. Indeed, months or years before then, seasoned experts in the various subjects are given the teaching and examination syllabuses and

requested to set questions. These are compiled for subsequent scrutiny. Then, a second set of experts is invited to examine the questions critically, make necessary modifications and come up with questions that conform with acceptable standards. The result of this exercise is a set of polished and unambiguous questions that are very fair to those being examined. These questions are then securely stored.

The next stage is the registration of candidates. This stage involves not just the examining body, but also the candidates, their parents, their teachers, principals and some other members of public. This is so because apart from the candidate having to fill in the forms, his principal has to endorse them while the parents have to provide the registration fee. Any mistake or inaction on the part of any of these may ruin the candidate's chances. If for instance, the candidate makes a mistake in his choice of subjects or in completing his forms, or if the principal does not forward the registration fee at the right time, his chances in the examination may be jeopardized.

Next is the conduct of the examination itself. Again, more official from outside the examining body than from within it are involved. Think of the supervisor, the invigilator and even the security officials. They are definitely more in number than the staff of the examining body and any one of them could take an action that might result in the failure of candidates. Taking the invigilator for instance, if he is negligent, candidates could swap answer scripts under his very nose; and when this is detected by the markers, as is often is, the results of the candidates may be cancelled.

Probably, the most hated person to the candidate is the marker whom they, in their ignorance, regard as a wicked drunkard who delights in failing candidates. What candidates do not realize is that an examiner is trained to score points strictly according to a carefully prepared marking-scheme form which he must not deviate. It is his constitution. Besides, his work is consistently checked by his team leader and the chief examiner should he be discovered to have marked inaccurately he could be removed. So, contrary to candidates opinion, the examiner is a seasoned teacher, a careful scorer a person always on his guard.

The final stage comes with the collation of results. This stage is mainly computerized and computers do not make mistakes. A candidate's result may not be processed if he is involved in a malpractice, has used a wrong examination number or no number at all, or if he fails to write all the papers that make up a subject. So, when a result is withheld, the fault is mostly that of the candidate.

How then should we view the activities of the public examining bodies? Definitely, we should view them with understanding, sympathy and appreciation.

Questions

- (a) In one sentence, summarize the writer's purpose in the passage.
- (b) In two sentences one for each, state how the actions of the candidate and the invigilator can jeopardize the candidate's chances of success.
- (c) In three sentences, one for each, summarize the step taken by examining bodies to ensure that candidates are given a fair chance of success.

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Unit 19

Summary Skills II

1.0 Introduction

Summary skills were discussed in Unit 18. This unit is a follow-up of that Unit. A review of summary and note-taking skills will be reviewed and practise exercises will be given to check your ability to summarise. Summary writing requires intensive practice, as the cardinal principle of summary writing to exclude illustrations and unnecessary details. This ability of recognizing and restating the essential points of the text can be developed through constant practice.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify main points and details in a text;
- (ii) recognize details that support main points;
- (iii) decide which details can be omitted and the one which are essential in supporting the main idea;
- (iv) restate the main idea and the major supporting details in your own words as a brief summary of the text;
- (v) write the new restatement down in continuous prose.

3.0 Extracting Relevant Information

To do well in summary writing, you will need to follow these basic steps:

- (i) Read the passage carefully until you understand it very well. Identify the theme or main idea of the passage.
- (ii) Identify the relevant information about to be summarised in note form. Concentrate mainly on the important or main ideas and leave out the examples, definitions and explanations.
- (iii) Turn the notes into full sentences using simple and accurate language.
- (iv) Do not copy directly from the passage, try to modify the sentences by changing the structure or words. Your knowledge of synonyms will help you to change some of the words. Be cautious not to change the original idea in the passage.
- (v) Avoid illustrations, examples and unnecessary details in summarisation. It should be precise and to the point.

Practice Exercise I

Using the details above, read the passage below and answer the questions that follow it.

Are you scared of speaking before a large audience or even making a few suggestions in public? This need not be. You can make effective speeches in public. Here are a few pointers.

Perhaps, the most important step is to be sure of what you are going to say. This sounds obvious enough, but it is amazing how many people get up to speak when, in fact, they have very little to say. After one inconsequential point, they discover they have run out of steam. So, to ensure you can speak well, get enough points to speak about, examine them in depths and digest them thoroughly. The more points you have, the more conversant you are with them, the more confident you will be.

How do you present your speech? Certainly before you begin, you will be a little uneasy. Even the most experienced speaker feels the same way before beginning his speech. This is not bad; in fact, it is a good tonic for a successful speech. To overcome this, do not rush headlong into the task. Rather, it pays to breathe in and out, heavily, deeply, calmly. Then begin the speech, slowly, calmly, carefully, with a clear, confident voice. This is when you are going through the salutation. 'The Chairman, Honourable Guests of Honour, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen....' By the time you finish this and to through the usual ritual of stating that it gives you 'great pleasure to stand before this August gathering to discuss a few points....', you would have reached a point of emotional equilibrium. You should now be sufficiently calm to go on with the speech.

Somewhere at the beginning, and at the strategic points in your speech, you should introduce flavour into what you are saying. You would not want to serve tea without sugar after all. So you should inject some humorous remarks once in a while. But this calls for skill. To start with, you cannot introduce humour indiscriminately, otherwise you might sound like a jester. Experienced speakers most often introduce humour early in their speeches, presumably to ease the tension in the hall. But these jokes must be brief, purposeful and closely related to the point.

Many speakers are scared by the countenances of the listeners. Not all their looks are friendly. However, there are bound to be a few friendly ones, and it is advisable to pick them out, look at them from time to time, and ignore the hostile ones. Looking at the friendly faces keeps you at ease.

You are advised to write out your speech in full after which you should read it several times before the day. You could get a willing listener to criticise your delivery. Do this several times until you can almost recite it. Notice that we are not advising you to memorise it, because you could forget vital areas due to anxiety. Writing out and practising the speech would make you much familiar with the content, indeed with every word.

Speech-making is an art. While it is true that some are gifted in speech-making, it is more correct that any one who doesn't suffer from speech handicaps can learn to deliver effective speeches. And you can become a master in this art.

Questions

- (a) In one sentence, state the intention of the writer.
- (b) In five sentences, one of each, summarise the five steps for making a good speech and reason for each step.

Source: WAEC, SSCE June 2000 English Language I

Sample Answers

- (a) The writer intends to teach effective public speech-writing.
- (b)
 - (i) The first step is being certain of what to say to boost confidence.
 - (ii) The second step is starting gradually so as to gain emotional balance.
 - (iii) The third is to introduce flavour so as to reduce tension.
 - (iv) Fourthly, gaze at encouraging faces so as to be comfortable on stage.
 - (v) Lastly, rehearse the written speech well enough to be familiar with the text.

3.3 Summary Writing

It is one thing to extract information to be summarised, it is another to put these points together in correct, precise sentences of your own. Always avoid verbatim reproduction of parts of the passage that contain such ideas.

Practice Exercise 2

Read the passage below.

Every child, whether he comes to his family by birth or adoption, discovers what a family is through the experiences of family life. The new-born infant has no way of knowing which of the many faces that hover above him belongs to a parent. He has no way of knowing what a parent is. He only knows that he is comfortable or uncomfortable, hungry or satisfied.

Gradually, as the months go by, he begins to know who brings comfort when he is uncomfortable and food when he is hungry. He comes to know the feel of the arm that holds him close when he eats and holds him safe in his bath. He knows the voice that soothes him and sings to him. He grows to know who responds to his needs when he cries out. This is his first recognition of a parent.

The mother and father who care for a child, who listen for his voice and try to interpret what he means, who comfort him, feed him and play with him discover for the first time what it is to be parents. They do not become parents by virtue of conception and birth alone. They grow to be parents just as the infant grows to recognise them as such. They come to know the developing personality of their child in a way that no other person really can. They recognise whether he is a lusty eater or a nibbler: vivacious or reserved, adventurous or cautious. By observing his intellectual and physical abilities, they also get to know what he may become in future. They are concerned with meeting his needs and wants; and fostering his growth to maturity.

Sometimes, because of their responsibility to their child, parents have to do unpleasant things. They have for instance, to take him for injections. He can have no choice about taking medicine when he is ill. He must learn quickly, and not necessarily at his own pace, that fire is not a play-thing. In the intimacies of daily living, the child and the parents learn the bitter and the sweet of family relations. It is through the experiences of family life that a child and his parents grow to be a family. For every parent, biological or adoptive, it is the daily loving care of the child and his responsiveness that build up the parents' feelings. For every child, it is being loved and being cared for that produce family closeness.

Questions

- (a) In two sentences, state how the new-born infant perceives his environment.
- (b) In one sentence, say what an infant first learns about its parents.
- (c) In two sentences, say what parents learn about their child as he grows up.
- (d) In one sentence, summarize what a responsible parent often has to do in the interest of the child.

Source: WASSCE June 1997

Sample Answers

- (a) (i) The infant finds his environment strange.
(ii) He also knows when he feels comfortable or not.
- (b) An infant learns that his parents are there in times of need.
- (c) (i) Parents learn about their child's personality development.
(ii) They also get to observe his intellectual and physical abilities and possibly determine his career.
- (d) Responsible parents have to bear with unpleasant things for a child's interest.

Practice Exercise 3

Read the following passage carefully and answer the question on it.

Poverty! Can anyone who has not really been poor know what poverty is? I really doubt it. How can anyone who enjoys three square meals a day explain what poverty means? Indeed, can someone who has two full meals a day claim to know poverty? Perhaps, one begins to grasp the real meaning of poverty when one struggles really hard to have one miserable meal in twenty-four hours. Poverty and hunger are cousins, the former always dragging along the latter wherever he chooses to go.

If you are wearing a suit, or a complete traditional attire, and you look naturally rotund in your apparel, you cannot understand what poverty entails. Nor can you have a true feel of poverty if you have some good shirts and pairs of trousers, never mind that all these are casual wear. Indeed, if you can change from one dress into another, and these are all you can boast of, you are not really poor. A person begins to have true feel of what poverty means when, apart from the tattered clothes on his body, he doesn't have any other, not even a calico sheet to keep away the cold at night.

Let us face it, how can anyone who has never slept outside, in the open appreciate the full harsh import of homelessness? Yet, that is what real, naked, poverty is. He who can lay claim to a house however humble, cannot claim to be poor. Indeed, if he can afford to rent a flat, or a room in a town or city, without the landlord having cause to eject him, he cannot honestly claim to be poor. The really poor man has no roof over his head, and this is why you find him under a bridge, in a tent or simply in the vast open air.

But that is hardly all. The poor man faces the world as a hopeless underdog. In every bargain, every discussions every event involving him and others, the poor man is constantly reminded of his failure in life. Nobody listens attentively when he makes a point, nobody accepts that his opinion merits consideration. So, in most cases, he learns to accept that he has neither wisdom nor opinion.

The pauper's lot naturally rubs off on his child who is subject not only to hunger of the body but also of the mind. The pauper lacks the resources to send his child to school. And even in communities where education is free, the pauper's child still faces an uphill task because the hunger of the body impedes the proper nourishment of the mind. Denied access to modern communications media, the poor child has very little opportunity to understand the concepts taught him. His mind is a rock soil on which the teacher's seeds cannot easily germinate. Thus embattled at home and then at school, the pauper's child soon has very little option but to drop out of the school.

That is still not all. Weakened by hunger, embattled by cold and exposure to the elements, feeding on poor water and poor food, the pauper is an easy target for diseases. This is precisely why the poorest countries have the shortest life expectancies while the longest life expectancies are recorded among the richest countries. Poverty is really a disease that shortens life!

Question

In six sentences, one for each, summarize the problems of the poor man.

Source: WASSCE June, 2001.

Sample Answers

An outline

The poor man goes hungry.

The poor man hardly gets clothes to wear.

He has no roof over his head.

His opinion is not recognised.

He is unable to send his child to school and when he does, the child hardly ever learns.

The poor man has a short life-span.

4.0 Conclusion

Summary writing is not so difficult after all. You only need to practice, remember all the hints given in this unit and with all the practice exercises, you will definitely improve in this skill. Always keep in mind that summaries should not be copied verbatim from the passage, put the sentences in your own words.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt to summarise passages by extracting relevant information and by expressing the major points in your own words.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Summarize in three sentences the importance of leisure, using the following notes:

Why leisure is important:

- (a) play activity – valuable, teaches patience, perseverance.
- (b) leisure – work better, recharge us, new strength, new energy.
- (c) leisure – employment for a lot of people

The Importance of Leisure

Leisure activity is a very important aspect of modern society for a number of reasons:

Leisure time is increasing. It was not so long ago that everyone in the family worked all the daylight hours, and when work was over, they slept. Gradually, the working week has become shorter and the number of annual days' holiday has increased. Micro-chip technology is already releasing people from dull and repetitive work, and could mean that fewer full-time jobs will be available in the future, although the new technology creates many new jobs as well, as happened in the Industrial Revolution.

For some people, leisure time has been increased through unemployment. It is therefore important to consider leisure because the time available for it is, in general, on the increase. One form of leisure activity associated with children is 'play'. When children play together, they learn how to get on with others, how to react when things appear unfair, what can be said and what cannot, what is expected of them in a group. 'Play activity' has value at every age—some sports enjoyed by adults may well teach perseverance, patience and team spirit. The saying 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy', originated at a time when children used to work all day in the mills or mines. They go more and more tired, and became dull and listless in their work. Fortunately, social conditions have changed, but it is now widely accepted that leisure time is necessary for people to 'recharge their batteries'—to regain their strength and energy. The working men's clubs in areas of heavy industry give the men a chance to recover from their work; the hard-pressed executive can cope with a long working day if he relaxes by playing an energetic game for squash.

This is one of the reasons why organizations such as the Lord's Day Observance Society protest against Sunday activities—not to be kill-joys, but to protect those whose needed leisure time would be eroded by having to work on their day off.

As people work shorter hours, and more money is available to purchase more than just necessities, a large industry has grown up to meet leisure needs. These may be 'passive' leisure pursuits—such as watching television, going to a soccer match or to the theatre—or 'active' pursuits: cycling, reading, sport or going to a disco. There is also a whole branch of the leisure industry catering for holidays, travel and tourism. Millions of pounds are spent on these activities every year, and they provide employment for large numbers of people.

Adapted from R. Gower (1983), *Frontiers*, Lion Publishing PLC)

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Unit 20

Mechanics of Writing

1.0 Introduction

One of the things that distinguish human beings from other beings is the power to communicate through listening, speaking, reading and writing which are generally referred to as language skills. In the Units under Module 4, you learnt about the first three of these skills and how to use them in communication. The focus of Unit 20, is to teach you the forth skill namely, writing and how you can use it to communicate.

You will learn what writing is, reason(s) for writing, elements of writing and the steps in the writing process.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this units you will learn and realize:

- (i) what writing is and its importance in communication;
- (ii) that every piece of writing has a purpose;
- (iii) that every piece of writing has a reader or an audience;
- (iv) that every piece of writing must communicate a message;
- (v) that the message or content of writing must be linked to the subject or topic of writing;
- (vi) that a good writer uses punctuation marks in his writing.

3.0 Writing: Its Definition and Importance in Communication

As defined earlier, writing is a means of communicating information to a reader for a purpose. Writing is a powerful means of communication. Through it, you inform someone or others of your ideas, feelings, beliefs and intentions. Writing creates reading because through it, you create a permanent, visible record of your ideas for others to read and reflect on and possibly react to.

Writing, like listening, speaking and reading is a skill you must by all means acquire and develop, if you are to excel in your studies and in life in general. Apart from your academic work which demands that you write many different types of assignments, take notes when you listen at lectures or read on your own, most jobs in today's technological society require writing skills for preparing documents such as letter, memos and reports. Indeed, throughout your life, your writing will reflect your ability to think and intelligently use language to inform other people of your ideas, feelings, beliefs and intentions.

3.1 Elements of Writing

The definition of writing as specified spells out certain elements about writing that any writer must be aware of and understood, to write effectively. These elements diagrammatically will look like this:

Writing → Communicates (transmits) → a message (content) → to a reader (audience) → for a purpose (reason).

Content

What you write is the message or content of your thought. The content must be linked to and flow from the subject or topic of writing. Whether the subject is your choice or is assigned, you must transform it into a message that tells the reader about the topic or subject. The content of every piece of writing usually, a central or main idea from which the other ideas, called minor or supporting ideas, flow.

Purpose of Writing

Writing is defined by its purpose which is the goal or intention of the writer.

The goals of writing vary and are of the, following types:

- (i) taking notes at lectures or when you read;
- (ii) summarising e.g the main idea of a text;
- (iii) answering test or examination questions;
- (iv) narrating an incident, event, an experience;
- (v) describing a process, procedure and event, an object or a person;
- (vi) persuading someone or people;
- (vii) exposing an idea, a procedure, a belief a philosophy.

The Units in Module 5 will teach you in details the above types of writing and how to develop them.

Note that the goal of most forms of writing is essentially to inform. Apart from writing to summarise or take notes, the other forms of writing listed above are used to inform.

The Audience

Another important element in writing is the audience of the readers for whom you are writing. Good writing is judged by the reader(s). If you write without considering your reader(s), you may simply be communicating to yourself. This is not what a serious minded writer wants. Your audience determines your goal of writing and vice-versa. If your goal of writing is to inform through a letter for instance, you will have to consider your intended reader or audience. The audience of a formal letter will need to be communicated to differentiate them from that of an informal letter.

The content or message of your writing is influenced by the goal of your writing and the audience you are writing for. As a student, your audience generally will consist of your instructor and people you correspond with, such as your family members, your friends or some organizations. Here are a few tips to guide you when you write for your teachers.

Your Instructor/Lecturer as Audience

When you write a class assignment, your audience is usually your teacher. Sometimes, especially when you are planning or revising your take-home assignment, your instructor might ask other students in your class to be your audience. Your ultimate audience however, is your instructor. Your instructor is your teacher and 'you are the apprentice'. Your instructor always expects your writing to reflect that you took time to prepare and produce your writing. He or she therefore, is a judge, someone to whom you must show that you are doing your best. Your teachers are very experienced readers and have mastery of the subject matter. They easily recognise minimal effort or a negative attitude in the work you submit.

Students often wrongly assume that their teachers will fill in mentally what is missing in their writing. On the contrary, your teachers expect what he reads to include everything that you want to say or imply. Do not therefore, leave out vital information that will enrich your writing, expecting that your teacher will understand and fill it in.

Remember that every form of writing be it letter writing, descriptive or expository writing, has a format unique to it. You must be familiar with the format of each form, learn it and use it. You will find the description of how to develop each of these formation in the Units in Module 5.

3.2 The Writing Process

Writing is an art and one that must be learnt and developed through constant practice. Many students fail examinations essentially not because they do not know what to write but because they do not know how to write. As you learn the content of a subject, you must also learn how to write about that content.

Many people assume that anybody can pick up a pen and write a finished product. Experienced writers know better. They know that 'writing is a process', and consist of a series of activities that start the moment you begin to think about the topic to write on and end when you complete the final product.

Experienced writers also know that good writing involves rewriting. Rewriting affords you the opportunity to add, delete, reward, rearrange or reorganise your work. In general, the writing process will involve the step below. Note that these steps are not for examination situations but for take-home assignment which provide you opportunities to practice how to write. The steps are also for developing documents as thesis, project, long essays etc.

3.2.1 The Writing Process: Some Useful Steps

- (i) *Choosing a topic* – Topic could be chosen by you or assigned by your teacher.
- (ii) *Planning* – This calls for you to think about the topic and gather related ideas or points.
- (iii) *Shaping* – It involves your considering ways to organise the ideas gathered in a related and orderly manner to show relationship of ideas.
- (iv) *Drafting* – It involves your writing the ideas gathered in sentences and paragraphs.
- (v) *Revising* – You revise by evaluating your draft. Evaluation as you learnt in Unit 17 involves judging the quality of a written material. Based on your evaluation, you make decisions on whether to re-write your draft by adding, deleting, rewording or reorganising.
- (vi) *Editing* – You edit your work by checking the technical correctness of your grammar flow of expression punctuations.
- (vii) *Proof reading* – You proof read to check for typographical errors, if you typed your work. You also check for handwritten.

Exercise I

- (i) Briefly describe two ways that writing is useful to you in your studies.
- (ii) Name and describe the elements you must consider when writing.

3.2.2 Explaining the Steps in the Writing Process

Only the first three steps will be explained in this unit. Further explanation on these and the remaining steps will be given in Units 21-30 where you have practical exercise on how to develop each form of writing.

(a) *Choosing a Topic*

In an examination situation, you may be given up to two or three topics and asked to write on one. The following tips will enable you to choose right in such a situation.

- (i) Read and understand the demand of each question.
- (ii) Select the topic or question you understand and know most about.
- (iii) Take pains to think deeply about the topic you choose.

For class or take-home assignment, there may be no choice. That is, the teacher may give one topic for everyone to write on. Whether for writing in an examination situation, for an assignment or for general communication, the rest of the tips are very useful especially for take-home assignment, where you are likely to have more time for planning, drafting and revising.

(b) ***Planning the Essay***

Planning is the next stage in the writing process. It requires you think deeply about the topic in order to generate relevant ideas. Planning requires you to :

- (i) look for what you are asked to do by the topic, check out any clues given in the topic that will aid your understanding it;
- (ii) think on what you have seen or experienced about the topic;
- (iii) think on what you have heard about the topic;
- (iv) think on what you have read about the topic;
- (v) think on what you can imagine about the topic.

Here are two sample topics to practice with:

- (i) Write a letter to your parents, discussing three problems in your school.
- (ii) Should execution of armed robbers be encouraged?

Note: Part of your understanding of a topic is to know what type of writing is required. For instance, topic (a) above will require a narrative/descriptive form of writing in a letter format. Topic (b) requires an argumentative form of writing.

Thinking about the topic- Topic ‘a’ as example

Topic (a) Requires you to:

- (i) write an informal letter to your parents;
- (ii) discuss three problems in your school;
- (iii) use familiar informal language because your audience are your parents;
- (iv) think and reflect or ponder on the topic by recalling problems your school had e.g ill-equipped library, shortage of water, constant power failure etc.

(c) ***Shaping the Essay***

Having gathered the relevant points on the chosen topic, the next phase is to organise these into sections call paragraphs.

A paragraph is a group of sentences that communicate an idea, a thought or a message in sequential relationships. A piece of writing may contain one, two or more paragraphs, depending on the length of the writing.

Paragraphs are usually organised into three areas, namely:

- (i) introduction (one or two paragraphs);
- (ii) the body of the essay (several paragraphs);
- (iii) the conclusion (one or two paragraphs);
- (iv) Note that although each of these parts is devoted to an idea or thought, the ideas in these three areas must be related to one another and connected to the topic. For further information on how to organise and develop ideas into paragraphs, read Units 21-30 of this course.

3.3 Punctuation Marks

Punctuation marks are used in writing to signal a number of things. They are used for instance, to show that a sentence is broken into bits or that a sentence is completed. Sometimes, they are used to indicate a rise in the voice of a speaker. Punctuation marks help to give meaning and orderliness to your writing. The most commonly used punctuation marks are; the full-stop, the comma, the question mark, the colon, the semi-colon, the exclamation mark, the apostrophe, the quotation mark, the parentheses and the hyphen. Each of these is represented by a sign.

(a) ***The Full-stop (.)***

The full-stop is used to signal the end of a statement as shown in the examples below:

I have six brothers.

She has gone back to school.

The full-stop is also used to show that a word is abbreviated as in the examples below:

Vice-Principal	–	V. P
National Open University of Nigeria	–	N.O.U.N
Mister	–	Mr.
Miss	–	Ms.

(b) ***The Comma (,)***

The comma is used by writers to signal a pause in communication or signal a listing of ideas or items in a sentence. Here are sentences to illustrate the use of comma.

My mother went to the market and bought rice, fish, meat and some tomatoes.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Jegede, will address the students today.

(c) ***The Question Mark (?)***

It is used to signal that a sentence is a question. Here are examples.

Musa, why are you late?

Have you done your home work?

Did you listen to the President's speech last night?

(d) ***The Colon (:)***

This is used by the writer to signal a listing of items or to stress something. Here are some examples:

The following are examples of fruits: oranges, pawpaw, pineapple and grapes.

Here are the names of successful candidates: Musa, Uche, John, Ayo and Ngozi.

(e) ***The Semi colon (;)***

This is used to signal contrast between ideas or notions in a sentence.

Look at the example below.

The Students' Union was addressed by Professor Jedge, the Vice Chancellor; Dr. Peters, the Dean of School of Science and Technology; Mr. Atureta, the Head of Administration; and the other member of the University management.

(f) ***The Exclamation Mark (!)***

A writer uses exclamation mark to express a strong feeling or emotion such as: surprise, joy, happiness, frustration, excitement, etc.

Here are some examples:

What a beautiful sight!

Oh, no!

How nice of you to have come!

What a great holiday!

(g) ***The Quotation Mark Sign (“ ”)***

These are used to signal a direct speech or to signal the title of a book, a story, a poem as enumerated in these examples:

My mother warned me saying, “Do not speak to strangers.”

Prof. Achebe's “Things Fall Apart”, has a French translation.

(h) ***The Apostrophe (')***

This is used to show possession, or to indicate contraction of word. Here are examples.

John's hobby is playing football.

You're my best friend, Nneka.

Biodun, you and your sister's husband look alike.

(i) **Parenthesis/Bracket ()**

We make use of parenthesis to give additional information for purpose of emphasis. The parenthesis is used to enclose the additional information. You may, however; leave out the information and still have a sentence that makes sense. Below are examples.

The women, (each very well dressed), welcomed the first lady of the State.

The strike by the Nigerian workers (which lasted two weeks) brought economic activities to a halt.

(j) **The Hyphen (-)**

This is used to join compound words. It is also used to signal that a word at the end of a line extends to the next line. Below are examples.

Joining Compound words – Vice-Chancellor, Attorney-at-Law.

Words at the end of a line – Gener-al, Hospi-tal.

4.0 Conclusion

Writing is an art, an indispensable skill you need in your studies and throughout life. For instance, it is one of the ways you are regularly assessed by your lecturer to ascertain if you understand what you were taught. You use this skill also to take notes at lectures or when you read, to get informed about a subject or when you write notes or letters to others. Knowing the many benefits of this skill necessitates that you master it. This unit has laid out for you how to attain this mastery.

5.0 Summary

The purpose of this units was to teach you the mechanics of writing. You learnt the elements of writing and the steps in the writing process. You also learnt punctuation marks and when to use them. The Unit concluded by encouraging you to learn and develop the art of writing.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- (i) Name and briefly describe the seven steps in the writing process.
- (ii) The passage below is not punctuated. Read it and insert the relevant punctuation marks at the appropriate points.

One day, a young minister was being escorted through a coal mine. At the entrance of one of the dim passageways, he spied a beautiful white flower, growing out of the black earth. How can it blossom in such purity and radiance in this dirty mine the man asked. Throw some coal dust on it and see for yourself his guide replied. When he did he was surprised that the fine black particles slid right off the snowy petals leaving the plant just as lovely and unstained as before its surface was so smooth that the grit and grime could not adhere to it in commenting on this incident an unknown author said our hearts should have the same characteristics just as that flower could not control its habitat so we cannot avoid living in a world filled with evil.

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Source: Olaofe (1993 p. 88)

Unit 21

Writing: Informal Letters

1.0 Introduction

In this unit, you will learn how to write letters. Writing good letters is an art, but that which is not difficult to learn. An informal letter is a letter written to a friend or relative. You may want to write a letter to your aunt to thank her for a birthday present she sent to you, or write your dad to say you arrived safely in school. A good informal letter makes the reader feel that the two of you are involved in each other's lives. As a result of the familiarity which exists between the two sides, the letter opens with greetings to the recipient, his family, his friends. There is provision for use of figurative expressions and the language is friendly.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) state the parts of an informal letter;
- (ii) outline carefully thought-out ideas to be discussed in each paragraph; and
- (iii) write a well constructed informal letter.

3.0 Informal Letters

Informal letters are private letters written between relatives or friends. As a result of the familiarity that exists between the two sides, any subject, issue, problem or idea can be discussed. The letter is divided into the following parts:

- (i) Writer's address.
- (ii) Salutation.
- (iii) Body of the letter.
- (iv) Conclusion.
- (v) Closing.

3.1 Writer's Address

There are two main ways in which your address can be written:

- (i) the block form
- (ii) the indented form.

These could be open or closed as will be explained below.

Block form

40 Mc Neil Street,
Yaba,
Lagos.
16th March, 2003.

Indented form

40 Mc Neil Street,
Yaba,
Lagos.
16th March, 2003.

The open form of address has no punctuations at the end of the lines. So the addresses above can be said to be the closed form as it is punctuated.

3.2 Date

Notice the date is written as 16th March, 2003. Other acceptable formats are highlighted below:

16 March, 2003.
March 16, 2003.
March 16th, 2003.

You may be allowed to abbreviate some months in the following way:

January	—	Jan.,	August	—	Aug.,
February	—	Feb.,	October	—	Oct.,
September	—	Sept.,	November	—	Nov.,
December	—	Dec.,			

The abbreviated form of 16/03/03 is not acceptable, especially in informal letters.

3.3 Salutation

This is the greeting that begins the letter. It usually consists of the word 'Dear' and the name of the person to whom you are writing if you are of the same age or older, or the kinship title. It starts on the next line below the line for date on the left hand side of the page, and it is followed by a comma.

Examples

Dear Father,

Dearest Mary,

My dearest Uncle John,

It is no longer acceptable to write 'Dear friend', rather use the first name of your friend.

3.4 The Body of the Letter

This is the longest part of the letter. It contains the essential message the writer has for the recipient. It should start with some introductory statement. While writing an introduction to an informal letter, two assumptions can be made:

- (i) You can assume that you have just received a letter and you are about to write a reply to that letter.
- (ii) You can also assume that the receiver of your letter has not written to you before or for a while. It should be so indicated in the introduction.

You should put in enough material to justify the need to write the letter. In developing the paragraphs that make up the body, it is necessary to state points carefully and develop each point fully. Indent every paragraph and only one point should be discussed. Any illustration or example to support the point should be included in the same paragraph. Start your paragraph with a topic sentence. A topic sentence is a sentence that contains a summary of what is to be discussed in that paragraph. Your paragraph should not be too long or too short.

3.5 The Closing

The closing of the letter is the word or words you use before signing your name — Yours, With love, Fondly, Yours sincerely, Your sister etc. Put the closing after the last line of the body of the letter, a little to the right of centre, and put a comma after it. Only the first word of the closing is capitalized. After this comes your name, often your first name would do.

Study this letter:

(Writer's Address)
38 Ogunsanya Street
Surulere
Lagos
Jan. 21 2003

(Salutation)
Dear Bola,

(Body of Letter)

Your gift arrived yesterday, and our house hasn't been the same since. Did you have any idea how much we all wanted a video player? Everyone in the family is having a great time! We've already started watching different movies. Adamu loves Nigerian movies so much that it seems he's becoming an addict.

Thanks so much for sending us such a great gift. Be prepared to join in the fun next time you visit us. I hope it will be soon.

(Closing)
With love,
Ada.

Notice the details and how they are organised in the letter. Ada first thanks Bola for the gift, then describes the great time the family is having with it. This shows Bola how much the family appreciates the gift. Ada concludes by hoping Bola will visit them soon.

Exercise

Write a reply to this letter, acknowledging the receipt of the letter. Indicate that you are pleased that your gift is appreciated. Ask of the welfare of the family members and promise to visit them soon. Make sure you keep to the format discussed in this Unit.

3.6 Model Letter and Comments

An elder sister of yours who has left school had confided in you in her last letter that she plans to elope with her lover whom your parents do not approve of. Write a letter to her advising against such action and suggesting steps she could take to obtain your parents' consent. (WASSCE JUNE 1994)

P.O. Box 831,
Yaba, Lagos.
9th August, 2003.

Dear Sister Esther,

Thank you so much for your letter which I received yesterday. I have been very confused and sad over your plan to elope with Ade. I can assure you that it is not a right step to take if our parents do not approve that you marry him.

I have thought seriously about it and I think the right thing to do now is to find a way of talking to papa and mama. Let them tell you why they don't want Ade, that will give you an opportunity to persuade them that he has the right qualities to be your husband. You might even decide to discuss with Uncle Uche. Uncle Chinedu and Aunt Emeka so that they can help you talk to papa and mama. I know with family intervention our parents will reconsider their stand.

I plan to be home by the 20th of September. I will also discuss the issue with them. I will try to convince them of how much you and Ade love each other. Also, you should be allowed to decide for yourself as you are 25 years old and you have a good job. With this I hope to get across to them.

Meanwhile, let us ask ourselves, why are they against your choice? Ade is a young good-looking man with a good job as an engineer at AKA Oil Company. Any parent would like to have him as a son-in-law. But I think it's because he is not from this part of the country. You remember that papa keeps greeting him in Igbo language. I think you should try to teach Ade a few Igbo words and greetings so that papa will see that he is interested in integrating.

Finally, think of the consequences of eloping with Ade. This will cause a serious problem because our parents will be worried and be looking for you. It will also give our family a bad image. You will also deny yourself of a grand wedding ceremony and your parents' blessings. Think about it. You need to exercise some patience while we try the suggestions above.

Meanwhile, my greetings to every one.

*Your brother,
Chika.*

Comments

- (a) The letter starts with the writer's address in block form, with all punctuation marks in place.
- (b) The date is appropriate with no abbreviations.
- (c) The salutation, 'Dear Sister Esther' is appropriate as the writer calls his elder sister 'Sister Esther' at home.
- (d) The writer goes on to address the purpose of his letter, which is to advise his sister against her plan to elope. He does this by
 - (i) expressing his mind "...it is not a right step to take..."
 - (ii) advising his sister on what to do — discuss with parents and include some family members to intervene (in paragraph 2).
 - (iii) telling of his own plan (paragraph 3).
 - (iv) analysing the possible cause of the problem (paragraph 4).
 - (v) predicting the consequences of her sister's decision if carried out.
- (e) The language is well constructed although there are no obvious figurative expressions.

Sample Answers

- (a) Formal Feature – 10 marks
(address, date, salutation, closing)
- (b) Expression (i.e. quality of language use) – 20 marks
- (c) Organisation (paragraphing) – 5 marks
- (d) Mechanical Accuracy (punctuation, capitalization etc.) – 5 marks

4.0 Conclusion

The informal letters require no formality of tone as it is to a person close to the writer. In an examination or assignment situations, an informal letter should address the task in the question.

The content should be carefully thought out so that a different point is discussed in every paragraph. The sentences should be correctly constructed and should carry the message with life. The use of figurative expressions is welcome.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt to write informal letters. You have learnt in detail the parts of the informal letter which are writer's address, date, salutation, content and conclusion. You have gone through a model letter and the comments which should help you to know how to organise your ideas.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Answer one of the following questions:

- (i) A nagging problem in your family has so far defied all solutions. Write a letter to an uncle of yours stating what the problem is and giving reasons why he should intervene. (*WASSCE June 2000*)
- (ii) Write a letter to your elder brother working abroad describing the hardship you and your parents are facing at home and requesting him to give some financial assistance. (*WASSCE June 1998*)

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Unit 22

Writing – Formal Letters I

1.0 Introduction

Imagine you have to write to the Principal of your former school asking for a copy of your testimonial. Writing this type of letter is different from writing to a friend.

You will learn in this Unit the method for writing formal letters. The formal letter writing is very important as it is such letters you write when seeking employment, when making a request or ordering a product. The informal letter is also called the business letter.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) outline the parts of a formal letter;
- (ii) write addresses, salutation and titles correctly; and
- (iii) write formal letters with appropriate language and points.

3.0 Formal Letters

This is a letter to someone with whom the writer has no personal relationship. Formal letters are written to official figures or people in official positions. You do not need to know the name of the person before writing.

3.1 Parts of a Formal Letter

A formal letter is divided into the following parts:

- (i) Heading or addresser
- (ii) Addressee

Salutation

Title

The body

Closing

Signature

3.1.1 The Heading

All formal letters must contain two addresses namely the address of the writer (addresser) and that of the receiver (addressee). When you use a letter head paper bearing your name or group address, make sure you give a complete address. The addressee's address must contain the name of the person or the position and the address of the organisation.

Example:

178 Aderemi Street,
Garki Area 4,
Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.
28th April, 2003.

The Principal,
Government Day Secondary School,
P. M. B. 0492,
Garki,
Abuja.

3.1.2 Salutation

The salutation is placed after the Principal's address, leaving one space. It is followed by a comma as indicated below:

Dear Sir,

3.1.3 Title or Statement of the Main Subject Matter

Only formal/official letters should have a title and it is not always needed. The title comes after the salutation on the line below. It should be short and centralized. The title tells us the subject of the letter. When you read the title, it will give you an insight into what the letter is all about.

Example: Dear Sir,

Request for Testimonial

Note: Every word in the title could be written in capital letters, and then the underlining would not be necessary. On the other hand, all the words in the title could begin with a capital letter except for prepositions (like-to, of, with), articles (a, the, some) and conjunctions (and, but).

3.1.4 The Body

In writing a formal letter, it is important to use simple courteous language, clearly and directly phrased. You are not expected to ask after the welfare of the family or any other personal thing. Avoid trite phrases such as please be advised or thanking you in advance.

The body is divided into paragraphs. Make sure your paragraph contains one main point with each sentence supporting the main focus of the paragraph.

3.1.5 The Closing

The standard form for closing are: Yours truly, Very truly yours, Yours sincerely, Yours faithfully or Yours respectfully (for very senior government officials).

3.1.6 The Signature

The signature is written in ink and cannot be typed. It is written below the closing and the writer's name will be directly below the signature which may be accompanied by his or her position.

Example: Yours faithfully,

jAmadu
John Ahmadu
President.

3.2 Model Letter and Comments

42 Kano Street,
Angwa Dosa,
Kano.
26th November, 2003.

The Manager,
Personnel Management Unit,
TMX Textiles,
Ilupeju, Lagos.

Application for the Post of an Administrative Officer

I would like to be considered for the post of an Administrative Officer as advertised in 'The Sun' of 24th November, 2003.

I obtained my West African School Certificate in 1999 with high credit grades in the sciences. I attended Bayero University and received a B.Sc in Management in 1999.

I have been working with Malboro Company as an Administrative Officer. I am proficient and I possess great management skills. Attached is my C.V. for your perusal.

Yours faithfully,

MaDokin
Sarah Okosun.

Comments

- (a) The writer's address is in block form with all the punctuation marks indicated.
- (b) The date is quite appropriate.
- (c) The recipient's address is full and in the right position.
- (d) The opening salutation, 'Dear Sir' is appropriate.
- (e) The title of the letter is underlined because it is not in capital letters.
- (f) The first paragraph indicates the purpose of the letter.
- (g) Paragraph 2 gives the background and educational qualification of the applicant.
- (h) Paragraph 3 draws the relevance of the applicant's background to the job and concludes stating her hopes.
- (i) Conclusion with 'Yours faithfully' is appropriate.
- (j) It ends with her signature and name.

Exercise

Write a letter to the principal of your former school, requesting that a copy of your testimonial be sent to you. Give a reason for your need of it.

Points to remember:

- (i) Write the principal's school address.
- (ii) Start with 'Dear Sir'.
- (iii) Have a title.
- (iv) For content, give details of yourself: name, your school registration number, year of graduation, class, and any other information that will help them trace your records.
- (v) Indicate why you need it.

- (vi) Conclude
- (vii) Sign your name and write it in full below.

4.0 Conclusion

You will notice that it is simple to write a formal letter. Through adequate practice, you will get used to the format. It is important that you notice the style of expression which is formal, as no figurative expressions, contracted forms like don't, isn't, can't etc. are used. There are no personal feelings or sentiments which are usually expressed in informal or friendly letters.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have examined how formal letters are written. The various parts were individually discussed in detail with examples. A model letter was discussed with various comments to serve as a guide to how to evaluate your letters personally.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Write one of the letters below:

- (i) Write a letter to the Commissioner for Agriculture in your State, discussing the low level of food production in the State and suggesting measures which the government should take to ensure that there is sufficient food for all.
- (ii) Write a letter to the Governor of your State, telling him the problems facing education in your State and what he should do to solve such problems.
- (iii) Write a letter of application in response to an advertisement in the *Daily News* Newspaper dated 3rd January, 2003. The vacant post advertised is for a Computer Operator.

7.0 References

- Banjo, A. Ayodele, S. Ndahi, K. S. (2002). *Exam Focus English Language for WASSCE and SSCE*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- Olaofe, I. A. (1992). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institution*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Company.
- Omosowone, J. O., Akindolire, N. A. (1997). *Comprehensive English Language for SSCE*. Lagos: A. Johnson Publishing Ltd.

Unit 23

Writing: Formal Letters II

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 23, you studied writing formal letters, and the parts, such as address, title, content, closing etc. In this Unit you will be going a little further by looking at the various kinds of formal letters. You will notice from Unit 22 that there were some letters for application for a job, letter of complaint, request, etc. There are four main types of formal letter which are: letter of inquiry or request, letter of complaint, letter of application and the order letter.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify the different kinds of formal letters;
- (ii) write better formal letters;
- (iii) identify and apply the various steps of writing a formal letter.

3.0 Kinds of Formal Letter

From time to time, you will certainly need to write one kind of formal letter or the other. The structure of all formal letters is similar and this have been discussed in Unit 22. Four types of formal letters will be discussed below.

3.1 Letter of Inquiry or Request

You may require information that can be obtained only by writing a letter. Common situations include writing for your testimonial as you did in Unit 22, or writing for material to use in a research paper. Be brief and direct, but courteous. Remember that you are asking someone to take time to do something for you.

Example

Write a letter to the Commissioner for Agriculture, informing him of the invasion by certain pests, of farms in your locality. Request for advice and help in controlling them. (*WAEC SSCE June 1989*)

8, Yusuf Street,
Papa Ajao, Mushin,
Lagos.
26th April, 2003

*The Commissioner,
Ministry of Agriculture
P. O. Box 2123
Ikeja.*

Dear Sir,

Threat of Pests to Crops

On behalf of the Epe Local Government Area Farmer of Lagos State, I write to inform you of the invasion of swarm of pests on our farms in the above mentioned area.

The invasion started four months ago, and the effects have been so devastating on our crops. This has created the fear of low crop production this year which might eventually lead to high cost of foodstuff.

We have tried various local methods to control the pests but non have been effective so far. We have sprayed some pesticides on some areas of our farms, yet, there has been no improvement. Our hearts are heavy to watch our investment, labour and means of livelihood being consumed by pests and we are so handicapped.

Sir, I want to appeal to you on behalf of the farmer in Epe Local Government Area to come to our aid. We would be grateful if you could send some agricultural experts to help us tackle this battle against the pests.

Your immediate action on this issue will be appreciated by the farmers of Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

iSolaA
Ishola Adele.

3.2 Letter of Complaint

When you write an organisation to register a complaint of any kind, you will get better result if you restrain your annoyance and adopt a courteous tone. This is true also when you write to a government official, complaining about poor service or some other problem.

In a letter of complaint, go as far into the history of the transaction as you need this in order to present your complaint. Always indicate the ways you would want the error corrected or the problem solved.

Example

The radio you bought from a departmental store with a two-year guarantee developed a fault after six months. Write a letter to the manager stating your complaint, explaining the nature of the fault and requesting the store to fulfil its guarantee.

14 Okmagba Avenue,
Aba.

14th November, 2003.

The Manager,
People's Choice Electronic Store,
126 Okafor Street,
Aba.

Dear Sir,

Fault with Radio Bought on 8th September, 2003

On 8th September 2003, I bought a Sony Radio/Cassette player from your store. The cassette player section does not function properly. I have complained to the sales clerk at the store, who directed me to write you this letter.

I have a two-year guarantee on the purchase and as it is only two months old, I will appreciate a replacement.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Chackoro
Charles Okoro.

3.3 Letter of Application

You must make sure that your letter of application is correct in every detail and sufficiently convincing to make the reader consider your application further. It should if possible, be typewritten.

You should follow these steps for writing an effective application.

- (i) Begin by stating your purpose, if you are applying for a job, mention how you learn about the vacancy.
- (ii) State your age, education and experience.
- (iii) Indicate that you are familiar with the requirement of the position and explain why you believe you can meet them.
- (iv) Request an interview at the employer's convenience.
- (v) Be careful with all the detail of letter form, neatness, spelling and grammar. Be sure your letter is perfect so that it would make a good impression.

Example

*P. O. Box 900
Ilorin,
Kwara State,*

25th Nov., 2003.

*Scholarship Board,
Federal Ministry of Education,
P. M. B. 1345
Garki,
Abuja.*

Dear Sir,

Application for Scholarship

I wish to be considered for a scholarship to complete my education. I am a 200 level student of the University of Ilorin, studying Electrical Engineering. I am presently facing some financial crisis due to my parents' inability to continue to pay my fees. Only a scholarship will help me continue and complete my course.

Attached to this letter are photocopies of my admission letter, transcripts of my 100 and 200 level and a proof of Kwara State origin.

The following lecturers have agreed to serve as my referees:

- (1) Prof A.A. Olaade,
Dean, Faculty of Engineering,
University of Ilorin.*
- (2) Dr. I. J. Abdulrahim,
Department of Electrical Engineering,
Faculty of Engineering
University of Ilorin.*

Looking forward to being invited for an interview.

Yours faithfully,

*OlaAfo
Oladare Afolabi.*

3.4 The Order Letter

This kind of letter is written when you need to place order for some items. An order letter has the following requirements:

- (i) Include the list of items you are ordering.
- (ii) Include appropriate details as to quantity size, style, price and other specifications.
- (iii) Indicate how you are paying for the order-by cheque, money order, cash transfer etc.

Example

*Federal College of Education,
P.M.B 230,
Oyo,
Oyo State,*

8th February, 2003.

*The Editor,
The Nigerian Teacher Today Journal,
P. M. B. 0394,
Garki,
Abuja.*

Dear Sir,

Subscription to Journal

We would like to subscribe to issues of 'The Nigerian Teachers Today Journal' for the next one year. We are placing an order for two copies each of the issues.

A cheque of five thousand eight hundred naira is enclosed.

Kindly acknowledge receipt and confirm our order for the period.

Yours faithfully,

Sanusi

*E. A. Sanusi,
Librarian.*

Practice Exercise

- (i) Write a letter to order for item in a company, give a list, specifications and mode of payment.
- (ii) Write a letter to the manager of UTC Store, Abuja, rejecting the goods delivered to you with concrete explanations. Ask him to exchange them with the right ones.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, writing formal or business letter can be an easy task with practice. These letters are usually precise and to the points, as there is no room for emotion or personal feelings and informal discussions.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt the types of formal letter such as letter of enquiry, complaint, application and order letter. Some model letters were provided to give you letter understanding.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

The performance of your country in the recent 8th All African Games has generated a lot of comments. Write a letter to the editor of one of the national newspapers, discussing the factors responsible for the level of performance.

7.0 References

- Banjo, A. Ayodele, S. Ndahi, K. S. (2002). *Exam Focus English Language for WASSCE and SSCE*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- Olaofe, I. A. (1992). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institution*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Company.
- Omosowone, J. O., Akindolire, N. A. (1997). *Comprehensive English Language for SSCE*. Lagos: A. Johnson Publishing Ltd.

Unit 24

Writing: Descriptive Essay I

1.0 Introduction

Descriptive writing is one of the major forms of writing. This type of writing is used to describe a process, a procedure, an event or an object.

The ability to describe is a skill you need to acquire and develop, not only for your studies but also for situations outside of school. The purpose of this Unit is to teach you how to write descriptive essays.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

- (i) identify the characteristics of descriptive essays;
- (ii) use the steps or procedures for developing;
- (iii) analyse a descriptive essay to demonstrate your understanding of this Unit; write the outline (ideas/ points) for a descriptive essay.

3.0 What is a Descriptive Essay?

A descriptive essay demands that you describe. It may require you to describe a place, an event, a process, an object or thing, a procedure or a person. A descriptive essay should be written so as to appeal to the reader's senses, for instance, his sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. In a descriptive essay, the writer verbally points the object he is describing so that the reader can visualize the object without necessarily seeing it physically. This type of writing is usually presented in simple present or past tense form.

3.1 Analysis or Samples of Descriptive Essays

In this section, you are going to study two samples of descriptive writings. The study will entail an analysis of each sample, using the points you learnt about the elements of writing and the processes of writing in Units 20, Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

Sample 1

Rivers: the Elections that Never was - by Walter Wogu

When the other day the National Chairman of the People Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh, gleefully remarked that the turnout of voters during the April 19 governorship and presidential elections in River State was historic, many pitied him for being ignorantly loud. Ogbeh said that the large turnout was the people's own way of appreciating the remarkable performance of Dr. Peter Odili as the Governor of the State. Ogbeh can gloat over his party's pyrrhic victory. But he should, while doing this, recognise the fact, that nobody is deceived by the charade that some call elections.

In Rivers State, to be specific, no elections held anywhere. The result declared which claimed that ninety-eight percent of the voters in the State turn out to vote in spite of the heavy rain that paralysed elections simply indicate that those who rigged the elections in the State are not smart-brained. The rain may have, in a number of ways, exposed the underbelly of those who collaborated and connived to rig the elections. The deduction one can make from the so called large turn out of voters is that the results were prepared ahead of time. The forgers did not anticipate the rain of that day. Therefore, they could not make allowance for it. They did not imagine that the rains could be serious as to reduce voters turn-out by as much as fifty per cent. And that was precisely what happened.

The rain of that day forcibly disenfranchised many. But since the result had been written long before the election day, those who perpetrated that shameless rigging did not consider it is important to reflect the elemental factors that altered the equation they had already drawn.

It is utterly embarrassing to see some people celebrating a victory that is, in every sense, a fraud. It is much more so when people drag the name of Chief Sergeant Chidi Awuse, the governorship candidate of the All Nigeria People Party (ANPP) in the April 19 elections, into the so-called reelection of Odili. I found the entire exercise nauseating. This was so because the writer's effort was no more than one huge fallacy. An election can only be said to have been validly won and lost if it actually took place. In Rivers State, the elections of April 19 did not hold. It is therefore absurd that somebody should choose to labour to explain why one lost or won. The argument hangs on nothing. It cannot, therefore, be logical or meaningful.

Source: *Thisday Newspaper*, May, 1 2003, pg. 16

Note: Newspaper articles like the text above are good sources of reading. Many like the text here are based on real social issues. We will analyse this text to see if it satisfies the elements of writing that we studied.

Questions

- (i) Read the passage. Does the content reflect the titles?
- (ii) Does the content of the writing show that the writer planned it?
- (iii) Are the ideas organised into paragraphs? Are these ideas related to one another and to the topic?
- (iv) Is the text organised into introduction, body and conclusion?
- (v) Are the sentences in the text grammatically correct?
- (vi) Does the essay qualify as a descriptive essay?

Answers

- (i) Yes. The first paragraph introduces the topic while the rest of the passage expatiates this. This introductory paragraph for instance tells about an election that was supposed to have been held but was according to the writer, a charade. Notice that the writer referred to an utterance earlier made by Chief Ogbe. This is a mark of good writing. It gives the background to what the author is going to write about.
- (ii) *Answer:* Yes, In each of the remaining three paragraphs, the author gave points to support his stand that there was no election in River State.
- (iii) *Answer:* The ideas are arranged into four paragraphs which are related to one another and connected to the topic.
- (iv) *Answer:* The text has the three sections:
 - (i) Paragraph 1 contains the introduction,
 - (ii) Paragraphs 2 and 3 make up the body,
 - (iii) Paragraph 4 concludes the essay.
- (v) *Answer:* Yes
- (vi) *Answer:* Yes, it does. It describes an event, namely, the conduct of an election.

Exercise 1

Select an article from any Nigerian newspaper or magazine that describes a specific event, for instance, politics and sports. Analyse that text, using the preceding guide questions. Share your analysis with a classmate and compare with his or her analysis.

Descriptive Essay: Sample 2

One of the most exciting races ever run is now in progress between doctors fighting malaria and mosquitoes. According to the most recent counts, 225 million people a year suffer attacks of malaria and more than two million die. Public health workers around the world are doing all they can to destroy malaria before the mosquitoes that pass on the disease become resistant to the poisons now used against them. It is a race against time and against difficulties, with millions of lives in danger and the chances of winning not in man's favour.

Malaria, it is true has been practically wiped out in thirteen counties, including the United State, and is under attack in many others. But it is equally true that in some parts of the world, certain types of malaria-carrying mosquitoes have already learned to resist some of the sprays that formerly killed them. Other types of mosquitoes are not killed as quickly by present sprays as they once were.

The World Health Organisation is helping national governments to get rid of malaria before resistance among the mosquito population becomes so great that new poisons will have to be found to replace those in use at present. Most of the countries in the world have started, or are planning campaigns against mosquitoes. If the race against resistance is won by man, it is possible that ten years from now, this old evil will have disappeared completely from the African continent, perhaps from the world.

Malaria is the world's oldest recorded disease, referred to in old Chinese and Indian writings. It was one of the causes of the downfall of both the Greek and Roman empires. Even in the past, people recognised that there must be some connections between malaria and swamps, and some believed that insects living near swamps might be the carriers of the disease. The Romans drained the swamps and reduced the mosquito population. This was the best method used for the next fifteen centuries.

The cure for malaria was found long before science learned the cause. During the last few years of the nineteenth century, the combined efforts of the scientist of several nations led to the discovery of the connection between swamps, mosquitoes, and malaria. The first great step forward was made in 1879, when a young Scottish doctor, working in China, proved that another disease was spread by mosquitoes. This led to the discovery that mosquitoes were the carriers of malaria.

Source: Oluikpe et al 2001: pg 60 - 61

Questions

- (i) Does the content reflect the topic and are the ideas organized into related paragraphs?
- (ii) How are the paragraphs organised?
- (iii) Are the sentences in the paragraphs grammatically correct and properly linked to one another?
- (iv) Does the essay qualify as a descriptive writing?

Answers to Analysis

- (i) *Answer:* The topic is reflected throughout the essay. There are four related paragraphs all focusing on the havoc done by malaria, the great danger it still posed and the efforts made so far to control it.
- (ii) *Answer:* The paragraphs are organised into introduction, body and conclusion. Paragraphs 2,3, and 4 described the efforts made and the source of the disease. The last paragraph concluded by telling of the first discovery of cure of malaria.
- (iii) *Answer:* Yes.
- (iv) *Answer:* Yes, it is also an expository essay. The text describes what malaria is, the effort being made to control it. It exposes too its sources and its harmful effect on man.

Exercise 2

Write the outline for the essay titled below. You are to organise your points into: introduction, body, conclusion. Compare your work with those of your classmates.

Topic: How the 2003 Presidential Elections were conducted in Nigeria

4.0 Conclusion

Skill in descriptive essay enables someone who reads your essay to picture or imagine the person, event or procedure described by you. You develop this skill when you know the characteristic of this form of writing and the steps involved in writing it. The more you practice the art of descriptive writing, the more skilled you become in developing it.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you learnt what descriptive writing is and the situations that require you to describe. You were taken through an analysis of two samples of descriptive essays in which you learnt important steps in developing descriptive essays.

6.0 References

Olaofe, I. A. (1993). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institutions*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Co. Ltd.

Troyka, L. Q. (1987). *Simon and Schusters Handbook for Writer*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

7.0 Tutor–Marked Assignment

Write a letter to a friend in another University, describing to him/her your first day at the National Open University.

Unit 25

Writing: Descriptive Essay II

1.0 Introduction

In this Unit, you will learn more about how to generate and organise relevant ideas for descriptive essays.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit, you will learn how to:

- (i) describe a situation;
- (ii) describe an event.

3.0 Developing a Descriptive Essay

In this section, you will read two descriptive essays. One will describe a situation while the other will be describing an event. Both essays are fictional.

3.1 Describing a Situation

Topic: An essay describing three problems in my school.

1. The name of my school is Government College, Ugbokodo. It is situated ten kilometres from a commercial city in one of the States in Nigeria. It used to be one of the best schools in the State in the provision of facilities. The situation, sad to say, changed in the past two years because of a number of problems confronting the school.
2. We, the students have complained about these problems. Some students have even written about these on sheets of paper pasted anonymously on the school's gate and on the door of the principal's office. Some students have even threatened in their write up to go on demonstration if these problems are not taken care of by the school's authorities.
3. First, is the problem of poor feeding which is affecting the health of many of us. The other day, some students had diarrhoea after eating uncooked *moinmoin*. Sometimes, the food served is not enough to go round, resulting in some students going hungry. Bread and tea are luxuries we get once in two weeks.
4. Another serious problem is irregular supply of electricity due to constant breakdown of the school's generating plant. This makes studying at night very difficult. The situation has compelled many students to buy lanterns from a nearby market. Using the lanterns require kerosine and this is not cheap at all because the hawkers buy from the black market.
5. What do I write about the school's library? It is in a bad shape. The school has not lived up to its responsibility of providing enough reading materials to help us in our studies despite the library fees of N500 we pay every term. There are not even enough reading chairs and tables for students.

6. These problems are really affecting our learning. The school's authorities blame the Government for not funding the school adequately. But, thank God, help came at last following desperate letters to parents by some of us. Many parents responded positively, giving a strong hope for immediate help.

An emerging meeting of the PTA was called at which parents unanimously agreed to come to the aid of the school. This has raised the morale of the staff and students who separately wrote letters of appreciation to the school's PTA through its Chairman, Chief John Johnson.

Note the following on the development of this essay:

- (i) The numbers by the edge of the page are used to signal paragraphs to you. Do not do this when you are doing your class assignment.
 - (ii) Paragraph one introduces the essay by indicating the name of the school, its location, its past and present condition.
 - (iii) In paragraph two, the writer mentions in the moves by the students to alert the authorities of the school's condition. In a sense, this paragraph is a continuation of paragraph I and therefore forms part of the introduction.
 - (iv) The body of the essay consists of paragraphs three, four and five which name and describe the three problems in the school. Note that the problems were not just mentioned or listed but described with illustrations as to their nature and consequences. This is a mark of good writing.
 - (v) Paragraph six concludes the essay. It tells of the intervention by the PTA. Note that the rescue from the PTA came as a result of the students' positive move through letters to their parents.
- Finally, note that the paragraphs are related to one another and to the topic.

3.2 Describing an Event

Topic: The Most Exciting Football Match I Have Watched

1. I love football matches and any opportunity I have to watch one, I do not miss it. I have watched several matches, but the most exciting was the match between the Eleven Bombers of Aba and the Crystal Club of Enugu. The venue was the Aba Town Stadium, and the day was 1st October, 2002.
2. At about 11 o'clock in the morning of that day, hours before the kick-off of the match, I was seated on one of the long benches in the stadium. I chose to come early to secure a seat at a vantage point. I was not the only one at the Stadium that early, there were many others sitting around and talking excitedly about the impending match. In no time, the stadium was packed full with many standing or simply sitting on bare ground.
3. At about 3.30pm, all eyes were set towards the building housing the dressing rooms used by the players. Many craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the players as they jogged out to the field. The referee and the linesmen and the other officials were up and about taking their positions. Then, the awaited moment came as the two teams appeared. They all looked very serious as they jogged past waving to us. I waved excitedly to my heroes, the Eleven Bombers' Boys.
4. The referee, by name Chikwe, whistled for the match to commence. Everybody held his breath. The ball was kicked off by the Crystal Club Boys. The first half was without any goal from either side. There was a lot of passing of the ball from one player to another, a lot of dribbling and over the bar shots. The players were spurred on by the singing and drumming by supporters of both teams. Although no goals were scored by either team, the spectators enjoyed the agility displayed by the players.
5. Then the second half began. The Eleven Bombers boys pressed hard on their opponents who put up a gallant fight, standing their ground. At about fifteen minutes of play into the second half, Ken Ofor, whose shots were often described as thunder bolts, was brought in to take over from another player who had an injury. Ofor aimed a few hot shots at the goal mouth of the Crystal Club, but the goal-keeper, would not allow the ball to slip through his hands into the net.
6. When it was four minutes to the end of the game, Ofor did the magic. In a swift lightening move, he took the ball from his attacker, shooting it straight into the opponents' net. That was the million naira

goal that gave the Eleven Bombers' team victory. The roar of 'It is a goal', that came from the lips of the spectators, was as if the walls of the stadium would fall!

7. Seconds after the final whistle, Ofor was carried shoulder high by the enthusiastic Aba crowd. He had done the town proud. My happiness was beyond description. It was indeed the most exciting football match I ever watched.

Note the following on the development of this essay:

- (i) The writer introduces the topic by first telling the reader he is a great lover of football. Introduction such as this helps to stir the reader's interest.
- (ii) Again in paragraph two, the writer builds up the reader's interest by describing the atmosphere in the stadium hours before the match.
- (iii) In paragraph three, the writer again points the picture of what happened before the kick-off of the game.
Note that by these first three paragraphs, the writer has adequately stirred the interest of the reader, thus preparing him to read the rest about the event proper.
- (iv) Paragraph four and five are devoted to describing the football game. Note that the description is such that the reader can visualise what took place. The writer wrote about the movement of the players, the excitement of the spectators, their drumming and singing etc. The description is such that the reader can imagine the game without being there. This is the essence of descriptive writing.
- (v) Paragraph six is the high point of the match. Notice the use of 'swift and lightning', by the writer to describe Ofor's move that resulted in the scoring of the winning goal. Adjectives are powerful tools in writing descriptive essays.
- (vi) Paragraph seven is the concluding part. Note how the writer linked this up with the event described and with the topic of the essay.

Exercise I

Write an essay on the topic: A memorable Day in my Life.

Note: Organise the relevant ideas into an introduction, body and conclusion. Compare your essay with those of your classmates.

4.0 Conclusion

A descriptive essay requires that you describe. The two descriptive essay samples and explanations given on the process of their development, if diligently read by you, will assist you in developing your skill in describing things or events.

5.0 Summary

This Unit presented you with two descriptive writings: one describing a situation and the other an essay describing an event. Each essay was followed by an analysis and explanation of the three components Introduction, Body and Conclusion, making up the essay.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Write an essay titled: An Annual Festival in my Town.

7.0 References

- Olaofe, I. A. (1993). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institutions*. Zaria: Tamaza Publication Company.
- Troyka, L. Q. (1987). *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Inc.

Unit 26

Writing: Narrative Essay

1.0 Introduction

In this Unit you will learn how to write narrative essays. The ability to narrate is a skill you must acquire and develop not just for your present educational needs, but throughout life.

2.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- (i) recognise and describe the characteristics of a narrative essay;
- (ii) learn the steps for developing a narrative essay;
- (iii) analyse the components of a narrative essay;
- (iv) write an outline for a narrative essay;
- (v) write a narrative essay.

3.0 What is a Narrative Essay?

A narrative essay presents the description of an event or events. It is, therefore, like a descriptive essay. It is a mode of writing, commonly used by writers of stories. Narratives cover time and space.

This means that the incident(s) described could be presented as occurring within a specific period of time and location(s) or situation(s). Narratives could involve natural or fictional characters and sometimes contain dialogues.

3.1 Analysis of Samples of Narrative Essays

In this Unit, you are going to study two samples of narrative writing. These samples are real life issues in the Nigerian Society. Each will be analysed in terms of whether the writing has introduction, body and conclusion. The analysis will also include appropriateness of ideas and the organisation of the ideas.

Sample I

Curing the Use of Hard Drugs

The coming into being of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) since January is undoubtedly the most positive thing that has happened to the fight against the hard drugs trade in Nigeria. In its seven months of existence, NDLEA has opened several fronts in the battles: gathering and disseminating information on drug traffickers, striking agreements and liaising with other external anti-drug agencies, as well as improving vigilance at the nations on try points. Recent figures given by the agency's Chairman, Mr. Fidolis Oyahilomo, indicate that those efforts have begun to yield good results.

Sadly however, a new dimension to the problem has begun to rear its head. By all accounts, Nigeria has all along been regarded mainly as a transit station in the international drugs commerce. The country's domestic consumption was quite negligible. But recent studies cited by Oyakhilomo point to a radical increase in the use of drugs among the nation's youths, an increase bordering on the scale of an epidemic.

Although, to speak of an epidemic is rather overstating the case, present trends make it important to listen to this warning. As traffickers find it more and more difficult to cart their poisonous wares across our borders, they would naturally begin to look inwards. The availability of such drugs has the potential of strengthening the internal market, especially with the increased sophistication of the nation's affluent youths and other aspirants and their exposure to pernicious habits elsewhere. We cannot also ignore the relations between the increase in social crimes and the consumption of hard drugs.

As suggested by Oyakhilomo, one immediate step to contain the upswing of this scourge is through education. An enlightenment campaign aimed at discouraging the use of drugs especially among young people needs to be launched, preferably by or in association with the drug law enforcement body. The involvement of a wide cross section of the nation, including educational institutions, religious and professional groups is also desirable.

Of vital importance as well is more funding for NDLEA. If with the present limited resources it can achieve so much, far greater things can be expected with more money. Funding is required for sophisticated surveillance equipment, for information gathering and transmission, and for a host of other activities. With the added educational function proposed above, the need for greater funding can be appreciated.

In spite of the present progress, there is obviously a lot left for the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency to do. We feel concerned that no drug baron is found among all the names and photographs published in the media. Yet, periodic reports abound of the apprehension of such men. This leaves a disturbing feeling, rightly or wrongly, that the agency is being hampered by pressures from certain quarters. For complete confidence in its activities, NDLEA needs to be totally forthcoming about information on suspected drug chieftains.

Source: *The Guardian Newspaper* Editorial, August 4, 1990.

The Analysis

The text consists of six paragraphs. The first introduces the topic and tells about the 'fight against the hard drugs trade' or the role of the NDLEA in this fight and the successes recorded.

The body of the essay runs from the second to the fifth paragraphs. The second and third paragraphs for instance, narrate the problems still being encountered. Note the writer's use of 'however' and 'although', at the beginning of each of these paragraphs to show contrasts or differences. Words such as however, although, but, similarly etc. are called discourse markers and are used by writers to signal meanings such as contrasts and similarities. A good writer must know these words and how and when to use them.

Paragraphs four and five contain suggestions on how to solve the problem while the sixth paragraph concludes the writing.

Note the following about the development of this essay:

- (i) Related ideas are found in the same paragraph(s). The body of the essay for instance, consists of four paragraphs while the first two (2 and 3) focus on suggested solutions.
- (ii) The writing is both narrative and descriptive. This is because the writer narrates about hard drugs as well as describe the operations of those involved in the trade and the efforts being made to curtail this.

Exercise

Select a text from any of these sources: Weekly magazines, daily newspaper, or novels. Analyse the text in terms of the adequacy of their ideas in the introductory part, body and conclusion. Compare your work with those of your classmates.

Sample 2

Life in the Army

I remained at my station in Kaduna until I was posted to Ibadan to take over what was then known as 2 Area Command. 2 Area Command was by then virtually a one battalion formation. This second battalion was less than seven hundred men strong and had fewer than a hundred rifles on charge, with fewer than twenty rounds of ammunition per rifle. There was one machine-gun, one mortar, no recoilless rifle and one set of clothing per soldier. The battalion had one land rover and two trucks issued to it. At the same time, the relationship between the soldiers and the civilian population was strained almost to breaking-point. This was caused by the authoritarian behaviour and high-handedness of some of the soldiers.

My first task was that of restoring mutual confidence and trust amongst the soldiers and between the soldiers and civilians. I discovered that apart from group affinity and loyalty, language was the second cause of friction, suspicion and fear among the soldiers. The actions of a few of the officers did not help, but rather worsened the situation. I instructed that English, which is the nation's official language, would be the medium of communication throughout the units. All soldiers were also ordered to sleep in their barracks and to desist from any act of molestation of civilians. Offenders were severely punished. Corporal punishment was not excluded; in fact, it was very effective. I remember the story of a sergeant who, without permission, drove to Lagos in an army land rover to see his 'brother' without regard for, and over the heads of, all his superior officers in his unit and the Area Command in Ibadan.

The case was reported to me. I had the sergeant formally charged for conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline and for use of a government vehicle on an authorized journey. His unit remanded the case to me. The sergeant was marched before me; and after his charges had been read to him, he pleaded guilty. The sergeant was then severely punished in accordance with military law. That put an end to such acts. Within a short time, mutual trust and discipline were restored among the soldiers and trust and understanding were generated between soldiers and the civilian population.

Source: Obasanjo, 1980; pp. 26-27

The Analysis

This is another narrative descriptive essay. It consists of three paragraphs. The first is the introductory part where the writer tells and describes the situation he was called upon to operate in. Note how he describes the deplorable state of things at the point he took over 2 Area Command by specifying the nature of the problems he identified.

In the second paragraph, the author narrates and describes the steps he took to turn around the situation he met. He concludes in the third paragraph by narrating and describing how he solved one of these problems he had identified.

4.0 Conclusion

Narrative writing requires you to narrate events and incidents. It could involve elements of drama, description and dialogue. Skill in narration enables you to recount, retell or recreate events or incidents. Narrative writing often involves some descriptions.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you learnt what narrative writing is and the characteristics of this form of writing. You studied the components of two narrative samples and learnt the elements that qualify them as narrative.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Write an essay titled: The Night our Home Was Burgled.

7.0 References

- Olaofe, I. A. (1993). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institutions*, Zaria: Tamaza Publication Company.
- Troyka, L. Q. (1987). *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Inc.
- Obasanjo, O. (1980). *My Command*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Unit 27

Writing: Persuasive/Argumentative Essay

1.0 Introduction

There are two forms of persuasive writings: the letter form and the persuasive essay. For both forms, you must develop a sound argument. In this Unit, the essay form will be studied while you will study the letter form in Unit 28.

The art of persuasion does not involve yelling and making a person feel bad. Successful persuasion is calm and reasonable. It consists of sound logic, facts, and positive emotional appeals. Anytime you express an opinion or belief and give you reasons for it, you are engaging in argument used to persuade.

This Unit will help you write a persuasive composition to make someone see things from your own way. You will learn how to organise ideas, choose an approach that is appropriate for your reader, write in clear, reasonable style, and learn to consider the other person's point of view.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) develop logical arguments;
- (ii) use sufficient reasons to support your point; and
- (iii) use evidence or studies to refuse opposing views.

3.0 What is Argumentation?

Argumentation is a feature of your daily conversation. The word argument in this sense means 'a debate or discussion' and not 'an angry disagreement'. Any time you express an opinion or belief and you give your reasons for it, you are engaging in argument.

In an argumentative writing, your purpose is to convince the reader to accept your view on a debatable subject. It states an opinion backed up by reasons and evidence. Argumentative essay uses skilful planning and light reasoning, not only convince an audience of a certain opinion but also persuade the audience to take a specific action.

Argumentation is the process or procedure.

3.1 Choosing a Topic

When writing an argumentative essay, choose a debatable issue as a topic, a topic for which arguments can be made pro (for) and can (against). The topic must state an opinion and not a fact, because facts are not debatable. By definition, a fact is a statement that can be proved to be true. An opinion, on the other hand, is a judgement or belief that may be debated.

3.2 Using Position Statement

Once you choose a topic, you should express your opinion about it in a declarative sentence called the 'position statement'. Position statements often contain such words as 'should' or 'should not'. A position statement should be worded so that its meaning is definite and not ambiguous; it could also state a plan solving a problem. Which of the following is the most specific?

- (i) This school do something about students' recreational facilities.
- (ii) Recreational facilities for students need to be improved.
- (iii) The authorities should sponsor a supervised recreational centre for students in this university.

Of these statements, the third is the most specific. It tells what should be done, who should do it and where. Statements (i) and (ii) are rather vague.

3.3 Building an Argument

You need to outline a logical argument which supports your position statement. That is, you must present believable reasons and sound evidence in a clear and orderly manner.

3.4 Presenting Reasons

Reasons are statements that explain why you hold your opinion and why the reader should also agree with you how convincing an argument depends entirely on the reasons given to support the position statement. They should be sufficient, distinct and relevant. To have sufficient reason, a persuasive essay should contain at least three reasons. The more reasons you give, the more convincing your argument will be.

Take a look at this topic: 'The Nigerian Government Should Pass a Mandatory Law on the Use of Seat Belts.'

Exercise 1

Give three reasons to support the above statement.

It is important to note that reasons given in an argument must be distinct and clearly different from each other. Do not repeat the same idea in a rephrase form. Study the following reasons:

- (a) If you get involved in an accident, your chances of being seriously injured are less if you are wearing a seat belt.
- (b) People who wear seat belts are safer than people who don't.
- (c) A mandatory seat belt law would protect drivers and passengers.

The outline above looks as if it presents three reasons but they are all rephrased. The idea presented is that wearing seat belts protect people. Only (a) is clearly stated, reasons (b) and (c) are vague and a repeat of reason (a).

Clearly distinct reasons are stated below:

- (a) If you get involved in an accident, your chances of being seriously injured are less if you are wearing a seat belt.
- (b) Statistics show that very few people use seat belts when they have an option of not wearing one.
- (c) Statistics show that countries with mandatory seat belt laws have a high number of drivers and passengers using seat belt.

Note: This argument outlines three entirely different logical reasons. Avoid irrelevant reasons as they will weaken your argument and confuse your reader.

3.5 Refuting the Opposing View Point

Persuasive or argumentative writing is usually debatable, with other people holding views completely opposite to yours. Thus, your success may depend on how well you refuse the opposing argument. Take time to consider opposing arguments and prepare a strong reply.

Review the argument for enforcing seat belts and think of some opposing arguments. These might include:

- (i) The use of seat belt could hinder/delay mobility when the need arises for an emergency escape.
- (ii) It causes discomfort by hindering free movement of the body especially for fat people.
- (iii) It rumples your clothing (especially the men's flowing *babariga*) thereby making one look untidy.

How would you refute these reasons? You might do so by stating the opposing reasons and then tell why you believe they are not tenable. You might refute reason (1) in this way:

People believe that seat belts could delay mobility when the need arises for an emergency escape, but in a survey conducted by the Federal Road Safety Commission, it was found that ninety percent of persons involved in ghastly road accidents could increase their chances of survival by the use of seat belts. With this high percentage, the issue of mobility is less significant as seat belts can be cut with scissors or knives when the need arises.

You can always make your refutation stronger by citing some studies, survey or data. In summary, what you are telling the reader is 'this is what my opponent says but it is not true and I will prove it to you'.

Sample Essay

In all school systems of the world, some schools are considered 'better' than others. In fact, based on such judgement, parents often go to great length to have their children enrolled in one school rather than another. One yardstick for making this judgement is student achievement, especially general performance in public examination. Furthermore, among some experts in education, opinions about schools are further narrowed down to subject areas. For example, one often hears that school A is better than school B in Mathematics and Science while the latter is better than the former in English Language and the Liberal Arts. Whatever the focus of these comparative statements, there remains the fact that schools do vary in terms of average student achievement.

Why is it then that some schools have high average student achievement? The reasons are not far-fetched.

The first reason is that some schools are located in privileged areas in the sense that the students come from homes where parents care about their children's education, ensure that the children are well-fed, show interest in their school work and provide easy access to books in the home. On the other hand, there are schools which serve less privileged communities and whose students come from homes where parents are unable to provide the necessary support services for good academic work. Students in the first type of school would generally have a higher rate of achievement than those in the second type.

Another reason for the difference in academic achievement between schools is how well the school are equipped. Schools that have good laboratories and libraries, ample space, places to sit and write for every student and optimum-sized classrooms usually record higher standard of student achievement than those where the basic equipment is lacking or where the students are crammed into inadequate spaces.

The quality of the teachers also has to do with the differences in student achievement between schools. A teacher that does not have a good grasp of his subject matter nor is committed to his job cannot produce an outstanding student. On the other hand, students will generally attain high standard where the teacher is an expert in his field, knows how to structure the material to be learned, demands a lot from his students and motivates them. Also, school management has been found to have a relationship with student achievement. Students perform better in schools where the leadership is enthusiastic and creative than in schools where the principals and teachers adopt a casual attitude to their job.

Finally, discipline cannot be divorced from the learning process, and this is often seen from the perspective of general students behaviour. Where students show a disregard for the rules and regulations that guide good

learning by disobeying their teachers, neglecting their homework or playing truant, they cannot make any reasonable academic progress. On the other hand, students who comfort themselves well have laid a good foundation for academic success.

Source: WASSCE June 1999

- (i) Write a position statement for this essay.
- (ii) What reasons were given on why some schools are considered better than others.
- (iii) How would you classify this essay?
- (iv) In your opinion, would you say the writer built a logical argument to support the position statement? State your reasons.

3.6 Gathering Evidence

As mentioned earlier, you should gather evidence which supports each reason. Pieces of evidence are often facts such as statistics. You can also use examples, incidents and quotations from experts. Whenever possible, each reason in an argument should be supported by some kind of evidence. The evidence must be relevant to that reason, that is, it must directly and logically relate to the reason.

In developing a persuasive essay, there is need to outline your argument. It is a pre-writing step. The outline should be written in clear sentences in a format that highlights your points, reasons and evidence. As you develop your outline, you should also decide an order for listing your reasons. For argumentative writing, order to importance - moving from the least important reason to the most important - is effective. Decide which of your reasons is most important; then outline your argument so that you build up to the most important reason.

4.0 Conclusion

Your argumentative essay should begin with an introduction that presents the topic and includes your position statement. The introduction should also arouse the reader's interest and provide background information.

Each reason and its supporting evidence would be developed as the body of the write-up. You may treat your refutation as one reason which you will present either before or after other reasons. The essay should conclude in the last paragraph, summarising the argument.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt how to write an argumentative essay that is intended to persuade. You were put through the building up of an argument through logical reasoning based on facts such as data, survey or sayings.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

You have been invited to lead the motion in a school debate for or against the proposition that 'the 6-3-3-4 system of education will be beneficial to the youths of Nigeria'. Write out your essay.

7.0 References

Warriner John E. (1998). *English Composition and Grammar*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishing.

Unit 28

Writing: Persuasive/Argumentative Letters

1.0 Introduction

Have you ever needed to ask someone for something that is very important to you? Perhaps you needed some money, a new uniform, or maybe you tried to persuade your parents to allow you to use the car. We all need someone else's approval for something we want at one time or the other. Learning effective persuasion techniques will give you a better chance of getting what you want. This Unit will help you write letter to persuade people to see things your way and also learn to consider other people's views.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) write persuasive letters;
- (ii) use facts to appeal to the emotions of your reader; and
- (iii) outline your idea, stating them in order of importance.

3.0 Persuasive Letter

Unit 27 discussed persuasive essay generally. In this Unit, you shall be learning how to write persuasive letters. Persuasive techniques are necessary in letter writing as they give one a better chance of getting what one wants.

3.1 Organise Ideas

Persuasion requires clear thinking, so it is important that you organise your thoughts before you begin to write. The better your organisation, the greater your chance for success.

As with other forms of writing, the first step in organising your thoughts is to write down your ideas. For example:

Bayo has been recuperating from a broken leg he got from a fall-off a motorcycle on his way to school. Now, his leg has healed. Because his classmates had brought him his assignment and copied his notes for him during recovery, he wanted to hold a party for them. Bayo's parents had travelled to the village but his grandmother was home. She said Bayo could have the party if he got his parent's permission, so Bayo decided to write them a letter.

Bayo wrote down his ideas with the most important reason coming first, others in descending order of importance.

- (i) I'd like to give the party to say thank you to my friends.
- (ii) Grandma is around to supervise us.

- (iii) I promise to clean-up the entire house, so that Grandma won't be disturbed.
- (iv) I have been of good behaviour and maintained good grades.
- (v) After being cooped in the house for six weeks, I feel a party will live me up.

3.2 Consider Possible Objections

When writing a persuasive letter, knowing what objectives the other persons might have will help you in two ways:

- (i) You will be able to counter the objections before the reader makes them.
- (ii) If you show consideration for the person's feelings and opinions, he or she may be more sympathetic toward you.

After you have listed your reasons for wanting something, you should think about why the other person might not want to grant your request.

3.3 Use Facts to Appeal to Emotions

Both facts and emotions have a place in persuasive writing, but the proportion of two is important. Fact can impress the person you are trying to persuade but too many can be boring. An emotional appeal can also be effective.

It is up to you to decide which type of appeal would be more likely to convince the person you are trying to persuade. If you are writing to a person in authority, such as the principal of your school or the editor of a newspaper magazine, emphasising facts may be more effective. If you are writing to a member of your family, using more emotional appeals might be in order. A blend of fact and emotion in the right proportions will get your message across most effectively.

Let's look again at Bayo's reason why he should be allowed to have a party, broken down into the two categories:

- Facts*
- (i) Grandma will be around.
 - (ii) I'll clean up.
 - (iii) My behaviour and grades are good.

- Emotions*
- (i) Say thank you to my friends.
 - (ii) The party will liven me up.

3.4 First Draft

For all forms of composition-writing, there is usually a need to first write a draft which will eventually be proof read and edited.

The following guidelines are necessary when writing a persuasive letter:

- (i) *Write an opening statement:* It is often a good idea to consider the other person's point of view in the statement. If you start your letter this way, you will encourage the reader to read further.
- (ii) *Counter possible objections:* Raise each possible objection the person might have to your request, then give your response to that objection.
- (iii) *Balance facts and feelings:* Give reasons based on facts and reasons that have emotional appeal. Make sure the proportions of facts and emotional appeals are appropriate for the reader.
- (iv) *Use an appropriate tone:* Be sure that your tone is respectful and sincere.
- (v) *Use order of importance:* List your reasons in order of importance. You can list your most important reason first or save it for the last.
- (vi) *Use an open-ended closing:* End the letter with a statement that leaves the matter open for discussion.

3.5 Proof-Reading

Your intentions in writing your letter may be the best, but if it is filled with grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors, it may not adequately convey your message nor achieve a desired effect. Proof read the letter carefully to make sure you cross the t's and dot the i's.

3.6 Model letter

Here is a copy of the letter Bayo wrote to his parents.

Dear Dad and Mum,

How are you enjoying your vacation? Grandma and I are fine and missing you. I know that this is not a right time to bother you with a request, But it is very important to me. You remember how nice my classmates were while I was recovering from my accident. If it weren't for them, I would not have passed my examinations. Schools will be going on holiday next week and before everyone leaves, I thought I should have a small party for them in our house, as a sign of my gratitude.

You might be wondering why can't I wait for you to get back. It's because you will not be back before the school goes on vacation. Grandma has given her permission if you agree, she has even offered to buy some soft drinks. I have also considered the expense of the party. I have some money saved from my pocket money, which I will spend on snacks. I intend to have the party in the backyard so that the house will not be in a mess.

In case you might be worried that we will disturb the neighbours, I promise to keep our music down and you can be sure that Grandma will supervise us. With the help of my friends we will clean up the entire place after the party.

In spite of all these reasons, I will respect your wishes if you still prefer that I do not hold the party. But remember that you said you were proud of my grades despite that fact that I missed school for six weeks. I would appreciate your approvals.

I hope you will consider my request if you have any objections. Hope you will call so that we can talk about them.

Love,

Bayo.

Bayo has written this letter with sincerity and he took the trouble to consider the feeling of his parents. For every possible objection, he states a reasonable reason. A good persuasive letter like the one above is likely to give you a chance of having your ways.

Exercise 1

Look at the topic below and write an outline, using what you have learnt in this Unit.

Your sister wants to marry a man from another ethnic group against your mother's wish. Write a letter to your mother, giving reasons why she should accept your sister's decision.

4.0 Conclusion

A persuasive letter is meant to convince your reader that he or she should grant your request, therefore, it requires more effort than a formal letter. With practice writing, argumentative essays will get easier once you follow the techniques.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt how to outline your ideas on the basis of importance when writing argumentative letters, how you also need to consider possible objections and how the use of facts and appeal to emotions can help you get what you want.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

You received a letter from your father advising you to work towards becoming an accountant so as to help him run his firm later. Write a reply to his letter, persuading him why you have chosen to study medicine.

7.0 Reference

Warriner John E. (1998). *English Composition and Grammar*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishing.

Unit 29

Writing: Expository Essay

1.0 Introduction

An expository essay is one in which the writer is expected simply to expose, define or even explain a given topic. The general principles of writing exposition apply to most of the writings you will do in your studies. An expository essay can be developed with facts and statistics, with examples, by means of cause and effect, by definition, or by a combination of these methods. This is what will be learnt in this Unit.

2.0 Objectives

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

- (i) identify the features of an expository essay,
- (ii) classify your ideas and arrange them in order of importance,
- (iii) write an expository essay.

3.0 Expository Essay

To write an effective expository composition, your interest in and knowledge of your subject must be deep enough to enable you to develop several paragraphs about the subject. It is therefore important that you carefully analyse the topic you have chosen. To analyse a topic, ask yourself the following questions:

- (i) is this topic more interesting to me than the other topic stated?
- (ii) do I know enough about this topic to explain it clearly or to be effectively informative about it?
- (iii) is my experience with this subject wide enough to enable me explain it to someone else?

Using these questions to analyse the topics, you should be able to select the one you can handle best.

3.1 Pre-Writing Stage

Consider the Audience

The audience for your essay may be interested public reader of a magazine or newspaper, or an academic group. Since different audiences will have different backgrounds and interests, you must study the needs of your likely audience to determine how to develop your topic.

Classify and Arrange Ideas

The next step is to classify and arrange your ideas. Since your topic is familiar to you, you would probably have a great deal of information for your essay. If you need to get more information, this could be done through published works such as journals, newspapers etc. Also, an easier way may be asking friends.

Outline the points and state the details and examples under each point, think of how to arrange these ideas and details. Since background information is often necessary to help the reader understand what you have to say, you should give background information and definition of some technical terms first.

3.2 Writing the Introduction

The introduction makes clear the purpose of the composition and arouses the interest of the audience. An introduction could be one paragraph or more. The introduction should arouse the interest of the readers so that they will want to read further. Four ways to attract the audience's attention are:

- (i) begin with a story;
- (ii) begin with a startling statement;
- (iii) beginning with a question; and
- (iv) begin with an example.

An introduction could start with a short story illustrating the topic. Also, a writer can attract the attention of his audience by stating a startling fact or opinion, an example is - 'The past fifty years of what we call civilization has utterly ruined our traditions'. Asking a question at the beginning of a composition simply clarifies what the essay is about. Also, a question forces the reader to think. Example - 'What do the SSCE results predict? Can you forecast from the result of a school leaver how successful he is likely to be ten years from now?'. Finally, begin with an example, call direct attention to evidence in support of the writer's views. For example, a writer tries to condemn television commercials below:

Restore happiness into your household by using EG airconditioners, your family will love you for it! End those lonely nights - use BB mouthwash!

These are the kinds of television commercials we watch day and night. Most of these commercials are insulting and dangerous and should be improved upon.

Exercise 1

Look through newspaper and magazines. Identify the opening paragraphs of articles. Try to find an example each of the four kinds mentioned above. You might possibly discover other methods that were not discussed but which might interest you. Write the examples down.

3.3 Writing the Body

It is in the body that the main ideas you outlined are developed. These points should be developed in paragraphs. You need to decide, depending on the emphasis you want an idea to have, the number of paragraphs to be devoted to it. For example, if you have listed three sub-topics, you could have three paragraphs with an introduction and a conclusion.

You must consider how you can achieve coherence by arranging in logical order the paragraphs that make up the body of your composition. Arrange your opinions in order of importance. Make sure that thoughts flow smoothly from paragraph to paragraph by the use of repetitions, references, and connections. In the same way, that thought should flow from sentence to sentence.

3.4 Writing the Conclusion

Once you have completed the body of your composition, you are ready to write the conclusion. Sometimes, a conclusion summarises the main points, at other times, a conclusion suggests or predicts changes that may occur in the future. Make sure that you create a definite closing and not leave your readers feeling that you ran out of what to say.

Conclusion may be as brief as two or three sentences or as long as one or two paragraphs.

3.5 Studying Sample Essays

The following passage tells us about reading, the introduction captures the audience's attention and interest by asking a question. It goes further to answer the question.

Notice how the body develops the essential skills and factors needed for reading. Figure of speech was used to liven up the write-up.

What is efficient reading? Basically, it involves the ability to read through a passage fairly quickly and the ability to understand what has been read. It is a mark of intellectual immaturity to hold on to a passage for hours without being able to make meaning out of it. Also, it is a mark of bad reading not to be able to recall and discuss what has been read.

The foregoing has however put the issue rather too simply. The ability to read through a passage at a good rate can be attained only after a mastery of the grammatical structures of the language. Without a sound mastery of words and how they function under various situations, the understanding of how sentences are generated, one cannot read even the simplest passage efficiently. Rather, failure would ever dog one's footsteps. Considering the issue from another perspective, merely mastering the vocabulary and structure of the language is not enough. The reader's frame of mind is equally important. Think of a man who is disturbed by the death of a dear one. Such a man would not be able to concentrate on the reading task. If the death of the dear one is still fresh, he might read through a passage several times without understanding it. On the other hand, if the reader is too excited, he might not be able to concentrate. Take the case of a man who has just read in newspaper that he has won a handsome sum of money. If he has to read a passage, he may not be able to concentrate.

Furthermore, the physical state of the body affects one's ability to read efficiently. So also does the presence or absence of distractions. This is why it is best to read when the body is still fresh, and in a place far from noise and other distractions.

Source: WASSCE 1996

- (i) What method did the author adapt for the introduction?
- (ii) Mention at least three ideas that were developed in the body of the essay.
- (iii) In your own opinion, was the passage effectively concluded?
- (iv) Suggest a title for the passage.

The essay below is expository as it discusses the issue of poverty. There is a sequential ordering of facts. The explanations are clear, vivid and interesting.

Poverty! Can anyone who has not really been poor know what poverty is? I really doubt it. How can anyone who enjoys three square meals a day explain what poverty means? Indeed, can someone who has two full meals a day claim to know poverty? Perhaps, one begins to grasp the real meaning of poverty when one struggles really hard to have one miserable meal in twenty-four hours. Poverty and hunger are cousins, the former always dragging along the latter where ever he chooses to go.

If you are wearing a suit, or a complete traditional attire, and you look naturally rotund in your apparel, you cannot understand what poverty entails. Nor can you have a true feel of poverty if you have some good shirts and pairs of trousers, never mind that all these are casual wear. Indeed, if you can change from one dress into another, and these are all you can boast of, you are not really poor. A person begins to have a true feel of what poverty means when, apart from the tattered clothes on his body, he doesn't have any other, not even a calico sheet to keep away the cold at night.

Let us face it, how can anyone who has never slept outside in the open appreciate the full, harsh import of homelessness? Yet, that is what real, naked poverty, is. He who can lay claim to a house, however humble, cannot claim to be poor. Indeed, if he can afford to rent a flat, or a room in a town or city, without the landlord having cause to reject him, he cannot honestly claim to be poor. The really poor man has no roof over his head, and this is why you find him under a bridge, in a tent or simply in the vast open air.

But that is hardly all. The poor man faces the world as a hopeless underdog. In every bargain, every discussion, every event involving him and others, the poor man is constantly reminded of his failure in life. Nobody listens attentively when he makes a point, nobody accepts that this opinion merits consideration. So, in most cases, he learns to accept that he has neither wisdom or opinion.

The pauper's lot naturally rubs off on his child who is subject not only to hunger of the body but also of the mind. The pauper lacks the resources to send his child to school. And even in communities where education is free, the pauper's child still faces an uphill task because the hunger of the body impedes the proper nourishment of the mind. Denied access to modern communications media, the poor child has very little opportunity to understand the concepts taught him.

His mind is a rocky soil on which the teacher's seeds cannot easily germinate. Thus embattled at home and then at school, the pauper's child soon has very little option but to drop out of the school.

That is still not all. Weakened by hunger, embattled by cold and exposure to the elements, feeding on poor water and poor food, the pauper is an easy target for diseases. This is precisely why the poorest countries have the shortest life expectations while the longest life expectations are recorded among the richest countries. Poverty is really a disease that shortens life!

Source: WASSCE June 2000

Note

- (i) The first paragraph is a general introduction. It uses exclamation and questions to catch the interest of the reader.
- (ii) The work is carefully organised, each paragraph tackles a peculiar aspect of poverty e.g. lack of clothing, shelter, voice, education, etc.
- (iii) The closing paragraph rounds off, summarising the characteristics of poverty.

4.0 Conclusion

Expository essays discuss given topics. The essay is usually formal and does not tell stories, but discusses issues giving reasons. The sequential ordering of information is vital, that is why there is need to write a draft first, proof read, edit and rewrite.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, expository essays have been defined and described. The criteria to consider when writing an expository essay have also been discussed. Examples of expository essays were given and their main qualities highlighted.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Choose one out of the following topics and write an expository essay on it, putting to practice the guidelines discussed in this Unit.

- i. Decline in the Level of Discipline and Morality in Nigeria.
- ii. Environmental Pollution in Nigerian Cities.

7.0 References

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Unit 30

Writing: Expository Essay II

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 29, you learnt about expository essays. In this Unit, you will be learning about the modes of expository writing. There are different kinds of exposition and a few of them will be discussed in this Unit.

2.0 Objectives

In this Unit, you will be learning how to write an expository essay that:

- (i) presents the steps in a process in the order they are performed;
- (ii) explains each step clearly and completely; and
- (iii) explains a particular topic by analysing its system and features in some logical order.

3.0 Kinds of Exposition

Exposition comes in different forms, there are some expositions that inform, explain, present cause and effect, classify define and critically review. These will be discussed below.

3.0.1 Exposition that Informs

A common purpose for expository writing is to inform. You write a paper whose purpose is to inform, take a subject, and open it to your audience. Your purpose is not to argue or to persuade but to convey information clearly and accurately. Hints for exposition that explains include the following:

- (a) Select a topic on which you have adequate information. When you write about something you know well, you will not likely be lost for ideal.
- (b) Explain your purpose in a thesis statement for instance, a topic like ‘An account of the adequacy of health facilities in your village’. A thesis statement will indicate the direction of your paper: ‘The inadequacy of health facilities in my village has led to epidemics and great loss to lives.’
- (c) Organise your information in an informal outline. List the facts about the topic and include the details and examples to support the topic.

3.0.2 Exposition that Explains

The kind of exposition that is used most often is exposition that explains. You may frequently find yourself telling someone:

- (i) how to get somewhere;
- (ii) how to make or do something;
- (iii) how something works or happen;
- (iv) the state of some issues, events or situation.

When you explain a process, it is especially important to arrange your ideas in logical order so that your explanation is clear to your audience. It is also of utmost importance that you choose a process that you know well.

When you write, it is important to include all the steps of the process. It is important to organise your details, starting with the first step in the process and then proceed, step by step in a chronological order. When developing sentences, use transitional words and phrase such as:

first,	next,	later,	at the same time,
while,	when,	afterthat	following that,
as,	afterward,	at last,	the next step, and so on.

Transition shows the natural time order of a process and they lead a reader from step to step. Transition helps to make details clear and to link ideas in one paragraph to another.

An example of an exposition topic that explains is: Imagine you are contesting to be the Governor of your State, write what your plans will be for the people of your State.

3.0.3 Cause and Effect Expositions

When you write to explain why something happens as well as the effects, then you are writing an essay which explains cause and effect. Causal analysis is useful for research papers in which you begin with an effect and investigate its causes or investigate a cause effect relationship. For example, if you analyse the causes of a child's poor performance, you may not only look at his attitude to school work but also examine family background, emotional and psychological well-being etc.

The following model used causal analysis to develop the topic (thesis statement).

Road Accidents: Causes and Solutions

There are many means of transportation namely – road, rail, water and air. Road transport appears to be the most commonly used among them. It is affordable when compared with both water and air transport flexibility in its routes, and simple construction mode make it most convenient.

Road accidents are no more news because of their frequency. The carnage on our roads has become worrisome to the citizenry. One now wonders why what ought to benefit us is causing untimely death of all and sundry. The causes of road accidents are many and something urgent should be done to stem the tide.

Many drivers are illiterate. They are unable to read and write. This explains why unnecessary overtaking at corners, zebra crossings, etc. happens. The problem is further compounded by the nature of road signs which cannot be easily deciphered by these group of drivers.

Another cause of road accidents is drug abuse. Drivers are often intoxicated with alcohol and some hard drugs before driving and sometimes during journeys. Drug peddlers are many, hawking one drug or the other, local gin sellers place their wares openly at bus stops, waiting for potential buyers.

The state of our roads is another cause. In developed world, roads are regularly maintained but the reverse is the case in Nigeria. In fact, some portions of our so called express roads are often swept away by erosion yet, these portions are left unattended to until accidents happen. Potholes are so numerous that we have taken them as part of our roads. Before everybody dies in numerous fatal accidents, something constructive ought to be done. The solution to the problem must be collective rather than being put in the hands of government alone.

The licensing authority should ensure that before a driver's licence is issued, the applicant must be taught all the road signs and symbols and he must show practical evidence of understanding. Hawking of drugs, and local gins in and around motor parks must be banned. It is not enough to legislate against its sale but it must be enforced. Government on her part should maintain our roads, road safety corps should be drafted to patrol our roads and toll gates may be erected on some major roads with a view of using the proceeds for the repair of roads.

(Source: SSCE 1988-2003 English Language Past Questions and Answers)

3.0.4 Expositions of Definition

The essay of definition develops a topic by answering the question ‘What is it?’ To define means of give the precise meaning you, the writer intend when you use it. We also define in order to explain the meanings of technical terms to non-specialised audience. To arrive at a specific definition, a two-step process is used.

- (i) **Classification:** The subject being defined is assigned to the larger class or category for example, cockroach can be assigned to a larger category of ‘insects’.
- (ii) **Differentiation:** Specific features of the subject are presented to show how the subject differs from other members of the larger category. Example, Cockroach is a large brown insect which is commonly found in dirty areas.

In addition to the two-step process of classification and differentiation, other methods are used to write an essay of definition such as comparison and contrast. You define a subject by showing how it is similar to or different from other things the audience know well. A title such as the new 6-3-3-4 System of Education in Nigeria calls for a definition and also how it differs from the old system. Also, a topic such as: ‘Lingua Franca in Nigeria’ is also an expository essay that defines.

Lingua Franca in Nigeria

A lingua franca is any language which a country which has different languages chooses to use for easy communication and interactions. A lingua franca is needed in every multi-ethnic group country like Nigeria, India, Indonesia and many other countries. A lingua franca is supposed to be one of the languages spoken in a country and that which all the native speakers of the other languages must subscribe and contribute to. Presently, Nigeria is still using English which was handed over from our former British Colonizers - so it can be best called a national language.

Having a lingua franca is desirable for some reasons. It makes communication and interaction easy among diverse people who find themselves in the same country. Language is the prime medium of communication. A lingua franca is good for national or patriotic reasons. When a group of people use another group of country’s language for their official dealings, they could be easily described pejoratively as a people that lack a well developed linguistic medium. It is through a people’s or a country’s language that the culture or civilisation of the people can be effectively promoted. The adoption of a language as a country’s lingua franca presupposes that there is already a large population of native speakers of it.

Adopting a lingua franca is fraught with many problems. First, the different peoples or speakers of their own mother tongues are warned to resist any attempt to deprive them of their linguistic autonomy by imposing another people’s language on them. In India, for instance, there have been violent and tragic language riots. In Nigeria, the various subtle attempts to adopt one of the three main languages as our lingua franca have failed. What we now have in the ‘wazobia’ tripartite arrangement or promotion of the three main languages nationally is a caricature of a lingua franca policy.

One of the main factors for choosing a language as a lingua franca is the large number of its native speakers cum their geographical spread. But in Nigeria, using this criterion is problematic because Nigerians show unusual interest in census matters and some groups will do anything to influence their numerical strength for certain advantages over the others. And most Nigerian ethnic groups are not in hurry to surrender their linguistic cum cultural independence on the altar of lingua franca.

The desire for a lingua franca is desirable and good for Nigeria for some reasons, but pursuing dogmatically, politically will only bring violent oppositions because no Nigerian wants to fight for foreign domination only to embrace local imperialism. However, a gradualist evolutionary approach should be encouraged.

Source: WASSCE 1991

Exercise

Write an article for a foreign magazine on 'Democracy in Nigeria'.

Guidelines for evaluating your essay:

- (i) Are your ideas developed in a language the audience or reader will understand?
- (ii) Are words that are unfamiliar explained?
- (iii) Are ideas arranged in some logical order?
- (iv) Are comparisons and contrasts made?
- (v) How good is your language of presentation?

4.0 Conclusion

A lot of writings we do are expository; it is therefore important to be familiar with and have practice in writing varieties of exposition. In this Unit, four closely related forms of exposition have been discussed using examples.

5.0 Summary

In this Unit, you have learnt the four forms of expository writing: expository that informs, explains, gives cause and effect and define. You have read some sample essays and you have practised writing an expository essay.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

Study some four or five feature articles in newspapers or magazines. Then choose a similar topic of your own and write an expository article that can be published too. Do not copy what is already published.

7.0 References

- Olaofe, I. A. (1993). *Communicate English: A Rapid Improvement Language Course for Secondary and Tertiary Institution*. Zaria: Tamaza Publication Company.
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