

S. H. Burton

A Comprehensive
ENGLISH
Course

Longmans



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

Eric Y. King V.C.

A COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH COURSE

By the same author

THE CRITICISM OF POETRY

COMPREHENSION PRACTICE

ENGLISH STUDY AND COMPOSITION

ENGLISH APPRECIATION

MODERN PRÉCIS PRACTICE

EXERCISES IN CRITICISM

A FIRST ENGLISH COURSE

A SECOND ENGLISH COURSE

A
COMPREHENSIVE
ENGLISH COURSE

by

S. H. BURTON, M.A.

Head of the English Department,
Blundell's School



LONGMANS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO LTD
6 & 7 CLIFFORD STREET, LONDON W1

THIBAULT HOUSE, THIBAULT SQUARE, CAPE TOWN
605-611 LONSDALE STREET, MELBOURNE CI
443 LOCKHART ROAD, HONG KONG
ACCRA, AUCKLAND, IBADAN
KINGSTON (JAMAICA), KUALA LUMPUR
LAHORE, NAIROBI, SALISBURY (RHODESIA)

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO INC
119 WEST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 18

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO
20 CRANFIELD ROAD, TORONTO 16

ORIENT LONGMANS PRIVATE LTD
CALCUTTA, BOMBAY, MADRAS
DELHI, HYDERABAD, DACCA

<i>First Published</i>	1954
<i>Second Impression</i>	1954
<i>Third Impression</i>	1955
<i>Fourth Impression</i>	1957
<i>Fifth Impression</i>	1958
<i>Sixth Impression</i>	1960

*Made and printed in Great Britain by
William Clowes and Sons, Limited, London and Beccles*

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>page</i>
Introduction	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
1. Composition	1
2. Comprehension and Appreciation: Prose	54
3. Comprehension and Appreciation: Verse	87
4. Précis Writing	113
5. Vocabulary	146
6. Analysis	166
7. Syntax	183
8. Punctuation	199
Appendix A. An Outline History of the English Language	210
B. Prefixes and Suffixes	215
C. Prosody and Figures of Speech	219

NOTE TO THE SECOND IMPRESSION

The welcome given to this book made a second printing necessary shortly after the first edition was issued. In preparing this for the press I have incorporated several most helpful suggestions sent to me by various readers.

S. H. B.

INTRODUCTION

THIS book provides the final year's work in English for candidates taking "O" level English Language papers.

Though I have been careful to include all the material that experience in teaching and examining shows to be essential for such candidates, this is not just another "examination book". My purpose has been to develop critical and creative powers and to foster the writing and enjoyment of good English, as well as to help candidates to pass their examinations.

The arrangement of the book will, I hope, support this claim that first things are put first. I have laid special emphasis upon composition, comprehension and précis writing, while providing ample material in the later chapters for vocabulary building and grammatical exercises. Sufficient practice material is provided for a composition exercise and either a full-length précis or a comprehension test in verse or prose to be worked in every week of a forty-week school year, in addition to the grammatical, vocabulary and punctuation exercises.

I have tried to be comprehensive in exposition, yet at the same time sufficiently brief to place the main emphasis on examples and exercises. The appendices provide information about the history and structure of the language, prosody and figures of speech.

S. H. B.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS for permission to quote copyright material are due to the following:—

Messrs. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. for an extract from *Kon-Tiki Expedition* by Thor Heyerdahl; The Society of Authors as the literary representative of the Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman and Messrs. Jonathan Cape Ltd. for "Poem XXXV" from *Collected Poems* by A. E. Housman; Mrs. George Bambridge, The Macmillan Company of Canada, and Messrs. Tauchnitz for Rudyard Kipling's "Cities and Thrones and Powers" from *Puck of Pook's Hill*, published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd.; Mr. Arthur Bryant for an extract from *The National Character*; Cambridge University Press for material from *The Nature of the Physical World* by A. S. Eddington; Messrs. Chatto and Windus for extracts from *Eminent Victorians* by Lytton Strachey and *The Jungle is Neutral* by F. Spence Chapman; Miss D. E. Collins and Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. for G. K. Chesterton's poem "The Wood-Cutter" from *The Wild Knight*; Messrs. Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. for "Ha'nacker Hill" from *Sonnets and Verse* by Hilaire Belloc; The Trustees of the Hardy Estate and Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. for extracts from *Under the Greenwood Tree* and "Mad Judy" from *Collected Poems* by Thomas Hardy; Messrs. George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. for an extract from *Autumn* by Roger Wray, and for permission to base an exercise on material from *Twenty Thousand Miles in a Flying-Boat* by Sir Alan Cobham; Mr. G. B. Harrison for an extract from *Introducing Shakespeare*; The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office for extracts from *War and Archaeology in Britain*

Acknowledgments

and the Board of Education Pamphlet 110 *Homework* (published in 1937, now out of print); Messrs. John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd. for *A Cinque Port* by John Davidson; Messrs. Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. for permission to base an exercise on material from *A Book of Escapes and Hurried Journeys* by John Buchan; Mr. J. D. C. Pellow for his poem "After London"; Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd. and the author's representatives for "Blackbird" from *Collected Poems of John Drinkwater*; and The Editor for an extract from *The Times Everest Supplement* of 5 May, 1953.

1

COMPOSITION

“Any one who wishes to become a good writer should endeavour . . . to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid.”

The King's English :

H. W. FOWLER & F. G. FOWLER.

IT is easier to remember this advice than to put it into practice. The writing of good English is not something that can be learnt once and for all as, for example, we can learn our multiplication tables. To write well involves a constant effort on the part of the writer: a constant endeavour to attain mastery in the use of his own language. Each fresh piece of composition involves a fresh effort and a new set of problems. Nor is this true only of school children: it applies equally to those who have left school; to men and women in their daily lives and to professional writers in their daily tasks. We are all pupils in the art of writing. The novelist at work on a book; the school-leaver applying for a job; the citizen writing to his Member of Parliament; the soldier writing his weekly letter home—we all, throughout our lives, have need of this skill. We all need to be able to write interesting and coherent prose.

What is the purpose of writing? It is to pass on to others experiences, ideas or information that we wish them to possess. The purpose of writing is communication. Now we shall most certainly fail in this task of communication if what we write is incoherent and

uninteresting. If it is incoherent, our readers will not understand what we are trying to tell them. If it is uninteresting, they will not wish to understand what we are trying to tell them, and our words will lose their intended effect.

Do not think of the writing of English in terms of "exercises" or "getting through examinations"; think of it in terms of the English of your daily lives. The exercises and the examinations are a means of preparing you for the big task that lies ahead: the task of living a full and useful life. To perform that task successfully you will need to be able to use your native language well.

Think now of the occasions on which you will need to write English. Can you think of a single one in which these two qualities of coherence and interest will not be of the utmost importance? Take a simple example. You have, perhaps, seen an advertisement for a model aeroplane and have sent for it. When it arrives, you find that, adjust the controls how you will, it stalls very soon after taking off. Obviously you will want to return it, together with a clear description of the fault and a request that the model shall be either repaired or replaced, or that your money shall be refunded. You will certainly need to write a coherent letter; you will certainly be interested in what you write; you will expect the supplier to be interested in reading what you have written. Or, suppose that—at a later stage of life—you have received a notice of assessment from the Inspector of Taxes and you believe that he is over-taxing you. The letter that you write to protest against the assessment—though you may groan at having to write it—will be of great interest to you. You will spare no pains to make it coherent, for you must make clear to the Inspector exactly why you think the assessment wrong, and you will try very hard

to interest him in your case. To achieve these qualities of coherence and interest you will try to write in a manner that is lucid, direct, simple, brief and vigorous.

These, then, should be the distinguishing marks of the English of your daily life.

There are, of course, many different kinds of interest. In the two examples that we have just considered the interest is entirely practical. Let us assume that you write vigorously and clearly and that the Inspector of Taxes and the supplier of the model aeroplane are both anxious to do their jobs honestly, then the subject-matter carries its own interest with it. You will defeat your own purpose if you try to gain added interest by going outside the subject and getting off the point. Your letter will be neither coherent nor interesting if you devote a paragraph to describing the television set that you hope to buy and the programmes you intend to see, should the Inspector agree to a lower assessment. Nor will the supplier of the aeroplane be any more likely to consider your request sympathetically if you describe the journey to the field in which you have been trying to fly the plane.

Take another example. You are applying for a job. What is relevant and what is not? Will you gain added interest by describing your hobbies as well as your academic qualifications and school record? The answer, of course, will depend upon the kind of job. Suppose for a moment that you are seeking employment in the Borough Treasurer's Department. What information will be relevant and, therefore, interesting to your prospective employer?

Now suppose that you are trying to get a job as a junior reporter on the staff of your local paper. What information will be of interest in this case?

You will find that this question of relevance is of the

greatest importance in writing. It affects both coherence and interest. The composition, be it letter or essay, that is distinguished by relevance shows that the writer has his mind on the task, that he thinks clearly and consecutively. We call this kind of thinking "directed thinking". It is the mark of the good writer. Directed thinking (as opposed to aimless and loose thinking) is revealed by the interrelation of all the parts of the composition. Nothing that is included is without significance, but has a part to play in achieving the writer's purpose as a whole. The information given, the feelings expressed, the ideas put forward, the things described, all bear on the main purpose for which the composition is undertaken.

Suppose that you are writing to a friend abroad whom you have not seen for some years. If your letter is to be a good one, if it is to be interesting to its reader, you must make up your mind about its purpose before you begin to write. Most of us would probably say that the purpose of such a letter is to give our friend news of ourselves and our family. The apparent simplicity of such an answer hides the difficulty of the task. What *is* news in this case? The local dramatic society has produced *Hamlet*: this is news if your friend is interested in drama. You have been seriously ill but are now better: this is news because your friend is interested in you. You have had a cold: this is hardly news worth sending even though your friend is interested in you. You were to have taken the part of Claudius in the production of *Hamlet* but you developed a bad cold the day before the first performance and your understudy had to take over: this makes the cold significant and, therefore, interesting.

These few examples show how necessary it is that the English of your daily life should be coherent and interesting. A letter to a friend if it is to achieve its purpose

must be an example of directed thinking. It must reveal an ability to *co-ordinate* parts of equal importance: to *subordinate* the less important to the more, and to give even the less important a *significance* by relating them to the overall purpose of the composition: it must reveal an ability to stress and to contrast. Like every other piece of writing, it must reveal that the writer is in control of his material.

THE TWO USES OF LANGUAGE

There are, as we have said, many different kinds of interest. There are, too, many different purposes for which we shall wish to write. Despite this great variety in subject-matter and intention, we can distinguish the two uses of language that underlie all writing. Every composition is an example of one or the other, or a mixture of the two. Whether it is a successful example depends upon the skill of the writer. We shall not be able to think clearly about our writing unless we accustom ourselves to recognising these two uses of language.

A word can have two kinds of meaning: the thoughts, ideas and images associated with it; and the *feelings* associated with it. The first of these we call its "reference", and the second we call its "emotive" meaning. Take the words, "capitalist", "bolshevik" and "monopoly", for example. All three have a precise reference, but their emotive meaning has been so stressed that we are in danger of being unable to *think* about their meaning. Take another example: "window" and "casement" have exactly the same reference, but whereas "casement" has a strong emotive meaning, "window" has not. It is, as we say, a much more prosaic word. The word "red" has a precise reference, but it can have, too, a strong emotive meaning. Which of the two is

uppermost will depend on the context in which the word is used.

The importance of the context in emphasising reference or emotive meaning is shown in these two sentences:

- (a) The motor car is a very useful vehicle.
- (b) The motor car takes its ghastly toll in death and injury every year.

The second sentence gives "motor car" an emotive meaning that is lacking in the first sentence where the reference of the word is uppermost.

Test this for yourself by using each of the following words in two sentences, emphasising the reference of the words in the first and the emotive meaning in the second:—*cheap, amateur, common, democracy, nationalisation, exclusive, dictator, nation*.

We cannot say that it is "better" to stress reference or "better" to stress emotive meaning. Everything depends upon the writer's purpose. There are some kinds of writing in which it is important to suppress emotive meaning as much as possible, and some kinds in which it is important to emphasise it. Sometimes we want our readers to think, sometimes to feel, and sometimes to do both.

What we should be especially alert for both in our reading and writing is the misuse of these two functions of language. Some writers try to deceive their readers by pretending to make them think when they really wish them to feel. A good reader—which means a clear thinker—will not allow himself to be taken in by this form of dishonesty. Political propaganda and advertising make constant use of it, and it would be an interesting exercise to see how many examples you could collect out of one copy of almost any of the daily or

Sunday papers. You soon get to recognise the trick when you are on the look out for it. E.g.—

Scientific tests show that *Bubble* is good for you. Every drop contains millions of particles of life-giving oxygen to please the palate and to revitalise tired nerves. Laboratory experiments show that one tablespoonful of *Bubble* is equal to an afternoon of pure country air.

Or

Independent men and women should vote for an Independent Candidate! If I am elected I will watch over the interests of YOU ALL, and not those of a select few. Party Politics means Party Government. Put a man with a mind of his own into power, and avoidable human miseries will be avoided. An Independent M.P. obeys the wishes of all his constituents: a Party M.P. obeys the Party Whip. Vote for Noaks and strike a blow for freedom!

Noaks and *Bubble* may be very good things, but little respect is shown in these two pieces of writing for the intelligence of either the voter or the consumer.

First, then, there is the use of language to convey facts or ideas to the reader. This we call the REFERENTIAL or SCIENTIFIC use of language.

Next there is the use of language to express and communicate feelings to the reader. This we call the EMOTIVE use of language.

You can at once think of examples of each of these. A guide book that tells you exactly how to get from point A to point B is using language referentially. A travel book that describes the author's feelings as he went from A to B is using language emotively. A textbook that sets out the solution of Pythagoras's problem is using language referentially. The autobiography of a mathematician that describes how the writer's ambition to pursue the study of mathematics was fired by his

feeling of excitement and triumph when he first understood the solution of Pythagoras, is using language emotively. (Now think of some more examples.)

Both in writing and in reading, an understanding of the distinction between these two uses of language and an appreciation of the correct use of each is of the greatest importance. Here are two examples:

A. Turn down the road at the side of "The Lamb and Flag". Go under the railway bridge and past the church on the left. A mile beyond the church the road is joined by a lane coming in from the right. At the head of the lane is a gate. Go through this and follow the path through the wood. After leaving the wood the path rises steeply, climbing for two miles to reach the crest of Linley Hill. From this high point there are extensive views of the hills and valleys of South Loamshire.

B. It is nearly forty years since I last stood on Linley Hill. The height of the summer was gone, and though the sun was bright there was a hint of autumn in the air as I left the old "Lamb and Flag" and strode out briskly. Would that I could now recapture the eager step and buoyant spirit that bore me up to Linley forty years ago!

I recall that a train thundered over the bridge as I passed beneath it, and the song of its wheels echoed the lilt in my heart. I was thinking of the train that would carry me to London in a few weeks' time. I was going to London, as many a young man has gone, to seek my fortune: and I returned, as many an old man has returned, with only empty pockets and a tired soul to show for all the bruises and the kicks. But I was not to know that as I stepped out for Linley Hill.

I followed the path through the old oak wood, heavy with acorns and the crinkling, crisping, yellowing leaves. Without a pause I climbed the stiff two miles of track until I was looking down on even the tallest of the giants

that had dwarfed me as I came through the wood. With a last breathless spurt I reached the bare summit, and as I stood there with the wind whipping at my clothes and my hair, all the painted counties fell away at my feet. Fold upon fold of hill and valley rolled grandly below me, and in the far, far distance, insubstantial as the visions of a dream, the glint of tall spires, wispy smoke-clouds; a dim, half-realised London—my Promised Land.

Passage A uses language referentially. It tries to communicate facts to the reader; its purpose being to give an accurate description of the route to Linley Hill. Passage B uses language emotively. Its purpose is to tell its readers of a journey that the writer once made to Linley Hill, and to enable them to share in the feelings of the young man who went to Linley and of the old man who is remembering his youth. It would be unfair to criticise A for not being imaginative, or to criticise B for not telling us exactly how to get to Linley.

Let us look at two more examples:

C. Thus kites and buzzards sail round in circles with wings expanded and motionless; and it is from their gliding manner that they are still called in the north of England gleads, from the Saxon verb, *glidan*, to glide. The kestrel, or wind-hover, has a peculiar mode of hanging in the air in one place, his wings all the time being briskly agitated. Hen-harriers fly over heaths or fields of corn, and beat the ground regularly like a pointer or setting dog. Owls move in a buoyant manner as if lighter than air; they seem to want ballast. There is a peculiarity belonging to ravens that must draw the attention of even the most incurious—they spend all their leisure time striking and cuffing each other upon the wing in a kind of playful skirmish; and, when they move from one place to another, frequently turn on their backs with a load croak and seem to be falling to the ground.

The Natural History of Selborne: GILBERT WHITE.

D. The flight of birds is one of the marvels of nature. The sailing of buzzards contrasts with the low flight of the hen-harrier and the hovering of the kestrel. Owls float lightly, and ravens tumble. This great variety is part of the wonderful precision with which nature equips her creatures for the battle of life which each separate species must fight in its own way. The dipper skims prettily over the flashing stream, and the eagle drops like a thunderbolt from his mountain crag. Such amazing contrasts make one wonder at the bountiful resources of wild life.

In considering these two passages, we have no such obvious contrast of intention as we discovered in A and B. Both C and D are trying to communicate information and each is an example of referential or scientific prose. To judge the respective merits of the two passages we must ask which more clearly describes the flight of the different kinds of birds. Is the use of language precise or is it vague? Which of the two passages is the more coherent and interesting? Which writer reveals exactness of observation and directed thinking? Does either writer introduce a vague emotive note out of keeping with the overall intention of the passage? (Study the two passages carefully and try to answer these questions.)

Whether a composition is an example of scientific or emotive writing, or whether both uses of language are called for, the necessity for directed thinking remains. Directed thinking reveals itself in the choice of words, in the structure of sentences and paragraphs, and in the firm plan on which every successful composition is based. The writer must keep his purpose clearly in mind throughout the planning and writing of the composition, so that every sentence and every paragraph plays its part in achieving that purpose. There is no room for irrelevance and verbosity in good writing.

EXERCISE 1

Which of the following topics clearly call for the scientific use of language and which for the emotive use of language? Do any appear suitable for a mixed treatment?

- (a) Write a letter to a bookseller giving him the author, publisher, title and date of an out-of-print book that you wish to buy, and requesting him to obtain a copy for you as soon as possible.
- (b) Write a letter to a friend on National Service, telling him about your recent School Prize-giving.
- (c) What are the main arguments for and against compulsory games?
- (d) Describe your school buildings.
- (e) Should homework be abolished?

In considering your answers to these exercises, you will have learnt something about the importance of the writer's approach to his topic. Some subjects clearly require to be treated in referential language: facts and ideas are all-important. Others are concerned with feelings and lend themselves to emotive writing. Others, again, might be treated in either way, but the writer must make up his mind very clearly about the approach that he will use; otherwise, he cannot plan his composition to achieve an overall effect. In some cases, in the writing of history or biography, for instance, it may be possible and desirable to mingle the two uses of language. A historian may describe the military causes of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and go on to depict the Emperor's emotions when he saw that the battle was lost. A biographer of the Curies may describe the scientific basis of their search for radium and then their joy when they succeeded after so many years of struggle and disappointment. The knowledge of when to use language

referentially and when to use it emotively is essential to success in writing. Each fresh attempt at composition sets the writer this problem.

PLANNING THE COMPOSITION: BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END

Relevance, we have said, reveals directed thinking; and it is directed thinking that gives a composition unity, coherence and interest. (Interest depends, too, on the quality of the writer's mind; but however lively that mind is, however well stored with ideas from books and experience of life, this interest will not be communicated to the reader unless the writer is in control of his material.) Every composition should be complete; and to be complete it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. That sounds very obvious, but it is really the most important principle in writing and by no means easy to put into practice. Suppose, for example, that you have been told to write a composition on "Castles". Where do you begin and where do you end? The composition without a definite beginning and ending is as unsatisfactory as a picture painted by an unskilful pupil who allows himself too much scope in the centre and has to squeeze in the figures at the edges. Proportion, relevance, and significance are destroyed.

A letter, like any other composition, must have a beginning, a middle, and an end; a correctness of proportion that it has not achieved merely by using the proper conventions at the beginning and the end.

EXERCISE 2

Compare the following letters :

The Editor,
“The Broadacres Broadsheet”,
22, Longport Street,
Broadacres.

1, Barrow Road,
Broadacres.
April 7th, 1953.

Sir,

I was surprised to read in last week's “Broadsheet” a letter from Alderman Pursestring in which he advocated the closing of the Broadacres Templeton Library on the grounds of economy and because the existence of a County Library Branch makes the Templeton superfluous.

The County Library is, of course, most welcome, but it can never take the place of the Templeton with its unique collection of books and documents on local history. This collection has been growing for over two hundred years and it is now one of the finest of its kind in the country. Such a specialised library is an asset of which Broadacres should be proud; and proud, too, of the distinguished scholars who have been curators of the collection and whose labours have brought fame to the town.

The Alderman claims that the closing of the Templeton would save Broadacres a penny rate. I suggest that this would be a very small gain for so big a loss, and I hope that the Council will effect economies by greater efficiency rather than by sacrificing the town's main cultural achievement.

Yours faithfully,
Frederick Leathers.

The Editor,
“The Broadacres Broadsheet”,
22, Longport Street,
Broadacres.

10, Addleton Street,
Broadacres.
April 7th, 1953.

Sir,

I, like my father before me, have been a life-long reader of the “Broadsheet”. When my father took the paper it cost one penny and appeared in a very different format; all the

advertisements were on the front page and there were no photographs. Yet the old numbers that I possess resemble their present-day counterparts in one very important thing: they reflect the spirit of Broadacres.

Believing in that spirit and in the readiness of the "Broadsheet" to reflect it, I write to protest against the proposal to close the Templeton Library. I recollect the pleasure that my grandfather derived from the books that he borrowed from the Templeton—there was no County Library in those days; indeed, Broadacres was one of the few towns of its size in these parts that had a library—and I recall the animated discussions that went on between him and his friends on many of the problems of the town's history.

If there were less cinema-going to-day and a more serious spirit of enquiry, we should have more worth-while conversation: one of the greatest needs to train steady and reliable citizens. The responsible attitude of a past generation is most clearly revealed in those old numbers of the "Broadsheet" to which I have referred. I can imagine what my grandfather and his generation would have thought of this plan to close the Templeton.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

H. V. Head.

Which of those two letters has a beginning, a middle, and an end? Which reveals directed thinking? Which makes use chiefly of referential language and which of emotive? Which of the two uses of language is the more appropriate to the theme?

The Beginning

It will be unusual to require more than one paragraph for this in compositions, though the writer of a book may need several paragraphs or, indeed, a whole chapter. The beginning may take many forms, depending on the type of composition and the taste of the writer. What is essential is that it should give a crisp start to the

essay. You may begin with a general statement, with a quotation or anecdote, or by plunging straight into the theme. When in doubt, choose the third method. Nothing is worse and nothing is commoner than an irrelevant "introductory paragraph". The mark of a good beginning is that it grips the reader's interest and directs his attention immediately to the theme of the composition.

The Middle

It is here that the main events are narrated, the main ideas expressed, the main facts set out, or the main features described. Thus it is in the body of the essay that the writer's ability to achieve unity and coherence is most thoroughly tested. Paragraph unity, paragraph linking and the strict relevance of each paragraph to the theme are essential. (See pp. 21-27.)

The End

Like the beginning, it should be firm and interesting. Beware of the twin pitfalls of irrelevance on the one hand, and dull repetition (often a mechanical "summing up") on the other. Remember that your last paragraph and last sentence will be most fresh in the reader's mind when he assesses your quality as a writer. You may proceed to a generalisation, basing it on the details that you have set out in the body of the essay; you may introduce an anecdote, example or quotation that sums up without repetition; you may end with a firm and logical "Q.E.D." Like the beginning, the end will vary according to the kind of composition and the judgement of the writer, but it must be clear and relevant.

The Golden Rule

Whatever the kind of composition, there should be movement in the essay: a progression from the beginning, through the middle, to the end.

EXERCISE 3

Consider the following composition plans carefully:

Topic 1: Imagine that you are a member of the crew of the first space-ship to be launched. Give an account of the events of that momentous journey.

Plan A

Para. 1. The main technical problem: how to land the space-ship.

Para. 2. The Captain: his character and attainments.

Para. 3. The other members of the crew.

Para. 4. The fuel and stores required.

Para. 5. The objective.

Para. 6. The moment of launching: the events: my feelings.

Para. 7. We leave the earth's atmosphere: the long journey through space: the extreme difficulty of making a successful landing: the Captain's skill and example.

Para. 8. We explore Mars.

Plan B

Para. 1. The signal is given: the tense moment before action: the rockets are fired.

Para. 2. We leave the earth's atmosphere: my feelings as we accomplish what no man has done before.

Para. 3. Our long journey through space begins: a sense of unreality grips us all.

Paras. 4, 5 and 6. The Captain: the other members of the crew: myself: our reactions to the long ordeal.

Para. 7. Preparations for the landing: a dangerous moment, but action a relief.

Para. 8. We land safely.

Para. 9. We open the doors and step out on to Mars: the first men to conquer space.

Compare these two outlines. Which is the better? Give full reasons.

Topic 2: Spring.**Plan A**

- Para. 1. Introductory para. describing the discomforts of winter.
- Para. 2. The pleasures of spring: flowers: warmer days: promise of summer.
- Para. 3. The disadvantages of spring: treacherous showers: late frosts: we do not know whether to "cast a clout" or not: dangers to health.
- Para. 4. How the poets have celebrated spring: Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth: cf. Mr T. S. Eliot's line, "April is the cruellest month".
- Para. 5. Football enthusiasts do not welcome spring: cricketers do.
- Para. 6. Householders rejoice at the thought that fires can be dispensed with: labour- and money-saving.
- Para. 7. Spring contrasted with autumn: cf. Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" and Keats' "Ode To Autumn": some will agree with Wordsworth and some with Keats.

Plan B

- Para. 1. " . . . daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty."

The daffodil the eternal symbol of spring: its grace as it dances in the wind: the first brave colouring of the year: both in beauty of colour and grace of movement it epitomises this colourful and fleeting season.

- Para. 2. Many have praised autumn: beginnings are always better than endings: to travel hopefully is better than to arrive: the tender green of spring contrasted with "the sere and yellow leaf" of autumn: birth contrasted with death.

- Para. 3. The superiority of spring over winter needs little demonstration: the rigours of the latter contrasted

with the pleasures of spring: flowers, birds and men all conscious of new life after the nipping frosts.

Para. 4. What of the claims of summer? do we prefer the rosebud to the rose? the sweet uncertainty of spring to the maturity of summer? A difficult choice.

Para. 5. Paradoxically, youth prefers the mature season: maturity and age prefer the poignancy of the youthful one.

Para. 6. Our point of view changes with the season of our lives: when we become devotees of spring we have no doubt of the perfection of our chosen season: the lover of summer will at least admit that spring offers him what no other season can—the keen delight of anticipating the joys of summer.

Para. 7. If “infinite variety” is the mark of richness of experience, then lovers of spring can easily prove the superiority of their season: examples of this: can it then be wondered that Shakespeare, the most varied of geniuses, repeatedly declared his devotion to “proud-pied April”?

Make a detailed comparison between these two plans. Which is an example of directed thinking and which of loose thinking?

Topic 3: The Cinema.

Plan A

Para. 1. The universality of the cinema-going habit: attendance figures for adults and children in Britain and America: hence the enormous influence of the cinema.

Para. 2. The uncritical character of the audiences proved by regularity of their attendance irrespective of the merits of the films shown: the appeal of the “stars”.

Para. 3. The temptation that this offers to producers to manufacture worthless films: the difficulty of raising standards while audiences are so passive: examples of poor films that succeeded financially.

Para. 4. The dangers inherent in any attempt, however well-intentioned, to *force* higher standards on film makers: raising of critical standards among audiences, though slow, the only safe method of improving the cinema.

Para. 5. The good work done by film clubs in producing more critical audiences: plea for the more general establishment of such clubs in schools.

Para. 6. The potentialities of the cinema as art: examples: the hope that these afford of achieving in films something comparable with what was achieved in that other popular art form, the Elizabethan theatre.

Para. 7. The cinema neither a bad nor a good thing in itself: its good influence potentially as powerful as its bad: it presents us with a great challenge and opportunity.

Plan B

Para. 1. The development of the modern cinema: silent films, talkies, 3D.

Para. 2. The great comedians of the screen: Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, the Marx Brothers: the universal desire for laughter.

Para. 3. Spectacle and musicals.

Para. 4. Thrillers.

Para. 5. Documentaries.

Para. 6. Historical films: both these and 5 educational.

Para. 7. The best film that I have seen.

Compare these outlines: which is the better? Give your reasons.

Topic 4: Do the disadvantages of town life outweigh the advantages?

Plan A

Para. 1. Charles Lamb's remark, "I must confess that I am not romance-bit about nature": much sentimentalising of country life.

Para. 2. It would be foolish to deny that the countryside has pleasures to offer: scenery, wild life, walking, riding, etc. yet the visitor enjoys these more than the countryman: they are his relaxation, but the countryman's occupation.

Para. 3. Consider the other side of country life: the loneliness and monotony of life in the depth of the country: the gossip and littleness of life in a village.

Para. 4. True education is the intercourse of minds: how little opportunity for this in the country: cf. the town: great variety and incessant coming and going.

Para. 5. The arts flourish in towns: they languish in the country: art galleries, theatres, cinemas, libraries: the countryman can, of course, visit the town for these delights, but always as a stranger, not as an intimate.

Para. 6. Is the town less healthy than the country? Modern amenities diminish disadvantages of the town in this respect: parks, smoke abatement, wide streets, well-planned buildings: townsman can always take holidays in the country or on the coast: with modern transport can spend any free afternoon in the country.

Para. 7. Balance of advantage thus seen to lie with the townsman: he lives richer life than the countryman whose pleasures he shares, but whose disadvantages he escapes.

Plan B

Para. 1. A difficult question: much to be said on both sides.

Para. 2. Advantages of town life: amenities, cinemas, libraries, etc.

Para. 3. Disadvantages of town life: noise, smoke, crowds, etc.

Para. 4. Advantages of country life: quiet, good health, spacious, etc.

Para. 5. Disadvantages of country life: lonely, bad communications, narrow outlook, few shops, no theatres, etc.

Para. 6. It is all a matter of opinion: some prefer one, some the other.

Which of these plans is the better? Give full reasons for your answer. (You may not agree with the point of view expressed, but you must assess the quality of the argument put forward in each plan: which of the two reveals a development? which writer is directing his thoughts and controlling his material?)

EXERCISE 4

Make composition plans with a beginning, a middle and an end for the following topics, numbering your paragraphs, and showing the three divisions of each composition:

- A. Railways.
- B. Describe your daily journey to school.
- C. A Street Scene.
- D. Are football pools a good or a bad thing?

N.B. Remember the Golden Rule on p. 15.

PLANNING THE COMPOSITION: PARAGRAPH UNITY

To ensure coherence and interest it is essential that the writer shall use clear and well-defined paragraphs. A badly-paragraphed composition is difficult to follow and the reader is bewildered and irritated. Each paragraph should mark a distinct stage in the development of the composition.

As you will have seen from the plans in Exercise 3 and from making your own plans in Exercise 4, each section of a composition may consist of more than one paragraph. To take the most obvious example, the middle or body of a composition can hardly be dealt with adequately in one paragraph. It is in this section

that the writer develops the essential points of his argument or the salient features of his description. Several paragraphs will usually be needed to do this properly.

Just as every full-length composition consists of several paragraphs and each section of that composition may contain more than one paragraph, so the paragraph itself contains several parts: sentences. The paragraph is a small composition in itself, deriving its importance from the contribution that it makes to the whole, but as carefully planned—with beginning, middle and end—as the complete composition of which it is part.

The paragraph consists of a number of sentences all of which bear on one thought: the topic of the paragraph. These sentences are not set down haphazardly, but in a logical sequence leading to or developing from the topic sentence. The topic or key sentence should be clearly distinguished. It may come at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the paragraph, but all the other sentences in the paragraph must bear a clear relationship to the topic sentence. This very important quality of paragraph unity is one of the chief marks of directed thinking. Neglect of it can destroy the value of all the hard work that may have gone into making the plan for the composition.

EXERCISE 5

Consider the following paragraphs:

- A. The whole weight of the Baconian theory rests upon the assumption that Shakespeare was an ignoramus who could not possibly have acquired the immense learning revealed in the plays. There are two fallacies here. Why must it be assumed that Shakespeare was ignorant? The fact that he had not been to the University is hardly proof of ignorance. He had been to a good school, he had a quick intellect, he spent much time in the Southampton

circle and in the taverns and theatres of London. With his natural gifts and the opportunities for studying human nature that this environment afforded him, he was well placed to amass the learning revealed in the plays. For the knowledge that distinguishes his plays above all others is knowledge of life: it is not book-learning.

B. It is strange that the Baconian theory should persist for so long when all the evidence is against it and there is none in its favour; none, at any rate, that would hold water for a moment if subjected to impartial consideration. We do not know exactly when Shakespeare went to London, nor what he did when he first got there—the old “holding-horses’-heads” theory is largely discredited now—but we can trace the details of his later career quite clearly. And what of this charge of ignorance that the Baconians bring against him? He had many opportunities to learn and his temperament was as ardent as his intellect was quick. It would be strange, indeed, if a man like this allowed his faculties to “fust unused”. Bacon was a scholar, it is true. Why not then make him the author of the plays? For the excellent reason that Shakespeare’s plays were written by a scholar not of books but of life.

Which of these two paragraphs has a clearly marked topic sentence? Which argument is the easier to follow? Which writer directs his thinking and makes every sentence bear upon the topic of the paragraph?

EXERCISE 6

Write a paragraph on each of the following subjects. Take care to build the paragraph round a clearly-expressed topic sentence, and see that all the other sentences have a logical connection with it. Your paragraph may come from any of the three parts of the composition.

- A. Professionalism in sport.
- B. A river in flood.
- C. A hurried escape.
- D. Science versus Art.

PLANNING THE COMPOSITION: PARAGRAPH LINKING

Not only must paragraphs have unity, they must also be clearly and logically linked to each other if the composition as a whole is to have unity and coherence. The relationship between paragraphs and the relationship of each paragraph to the whole composition should be clear.

It will be convenient to tabulate the four characteristics of good paragraphing, since no coherent writing is possible if they are forgotten.

1. Each paragraph should have a topic or key sentence.

2. All the other sentences in the paragraph should have close connection with this topic sentence, leading up to or away from it in logical order; fact following fact, event following event, or idea following idea.

3. The first or last sentences in each paragraph should provide a *link* with what has gone before or with what is to come.

4. Every paragraph should be clearly related to the theme of the composition.

EXERCISE 7

Read this composition carefully and then make an analysis of its structure by working the exercises at the end. (Paragraph A in Exercise 5 was taken from this composition.)

The Baconian Theory: A Brief Answer

The greatest success of the Baconian theory has been to spread abroad a vague impression that there is something queer about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. The Baconians have contributed nothing to the study of truth; they have made no discoveries about Bacon, Shakespeare or the Elizabethan period; for all their industry, they have been unable to find a scrap of evidence with which to

support their theory: but they have managed to confuse the mind of the "man in the street". Since the ordinary reader is more likely to encounter the sensational publicity of the Baconians than the reasoned arguments of Shakespearean scholars, it seems worth while to set out very briefly the facts of the matter.

The whole weight of the Baconian theory rests upon the assumption that Shakespeare was an ignoramus who could not possibly have acquired the immense learning revealed in the plays. There are two fallacies here. Why must it be assumed that Shakespeare was ignorant? The fact that he had not been to the University is hardly proof of ignorance. He had been to a good school, he had a quick intellect, he spent much time in the Southampton circle and in the taverns and theatres of London. With his natural gifts and the opportunities for studying human nature that this environment afforded him, he was well placed to amass the learning revealed in the plays. For the knowledge that distinguishes his plays above all others is knowledge of life: it is not book-learning.

Now it would be absurd to deny that Bacon's *Essays* reveal a knowledge of life. The *Essays* are the product of a keen and meditative mind which has thought long and deeply about human experience. Yet this practical wisdom is set forth in an entirely undramatic way. With unrivalled lucidity of thought and expression, Bacon analyses men and motives, but he does not create. Of the richness of character-portrayal which infuses every play of Shakespeare, there is, in the *Essays* of Bacon, no trace. Where the plays reveal a delight in creation, untinged by the desire to pass judgement, the *Essays* consider, comment and sift. Instead of the movement, tension and contrasts of the dramatist, we have the calm reasoning of the philosophical essayist. It is amazing that men who have read the *Essays* can think of their author as the writer of Shakespeare's plays.

It is still more amazing that Bacon can have been put forward as a poet. His genius is essentially a prose genius.

The passionate intensity of Hamlet's soliloquies, of Lear's speeches on the heath, of some of the sonnets, was entirely outside the range of the man who wrote the *Essays*. Balance, moderation and pithy utterance were his, but not the soaring flight of poetry such as this. The warmth of Shakespeare finds no counterpart in the cool rationalism of Bacon.

This brief summary of the internal evidence indicates the weakness of the Baconian theory. A consideration of the external evidence reveals even stronger objections to the idea. If the Baconians are right, the Burbages, Francis Meres, Robert Greene, Ben Jonson, Southampton, Queen Elizabeth and King James must all—through ignorance or duplicity—be brought into the plot. All of these people persisted in regarding Shakespeare as the author of the plays and poems; indeed, they showed not the slightest sign of thinking that anything was amiss. Bacon's deception must have been preternaturally cunning and far-reaching if he could dupe or corrupt so great a variety of his contemporaries. There is, perhaps, no great harm in the Baconians giving free play to their own gullibility, but when they transfer a share of it to Shakespeare's friends, associates and patrons, they become tedious rather than ludicrous.

Such amusement as can be extracted from Baconianism is, surely, long since exhausted: "the clowns" have spoken "more than is set down for them". If, however, any young student of Shakespeare is bothered by the theory, let him investigate it along the lines of inquiry suggested here. His researches will hardly increase his respect for the Baconians, but they will teach him a good deal about Shakespeare.

- (1) Mark the beginning, the middle and the end of this composition.
- (2) Find the topic sentence for each paragraph.
- (3) Show the relationship of each sentence to its topic sentence.

(4) Find the link sentence in each paragraph and show how it binds the paragraph to the preceding or succeeding one.

(5) Show the relationship of each paragraph to the theme of the whole composition.

EXERCISE 8

(1) Analyse in the above manner an essay by any well-known writer.

(2) Choose any subject that you like and make a plan for a composition on it. Number each paragraph; mark the beginning, the middle and the end; show clearly in your notes the topic and link sentence in each paragraph.

WRITING THE COMPOSITION: SENTENCE VARIETY

My journey to school is long and varied. I have to leave home quite early and cycle three miles to the station. The road twists and turns a good deal and there are some steep hills. It is lucky that the road is downhill on the way to the station. If it were not for this I should often miss the train. The station is a small one and the trains are infrequent. In the winter there is no fire in the waiting room. In the summer the flower-beds by the platform are gay with colour. This makes it quite pleasant to have to wait for the train.

The fault with that writing is monotony, and the monotony is caused by the lack of variety in the structure of the sentences. It is not the kind of sentence that is to blame; monotony is just as inevitable if a succession of more elaborate sentences is used. Sentence variety is essential to good writing.

Loose and Periodic Sentences

A periodic sentence is one in which the main statement is held off to the end. A loose sentence is one in which

the main statement is made early on and is then succeeded by qualifying phrases or clauses.

LOOSE

I have been a most fortunate man because I have always worked at tasks that I enjoy and I have been commended for my performance of them.

The danger to the raiders was now acute since the enemy surrounded them, and their water and ammunition were running low.

PERIODIC

Because I have always worked at tasks that I enjoy and have been commended for my performance of them, I have been a most fortunate man.

Since the enemy surrounded them and their water and ammunition were running low, the danger to the raiders was now acute.

We cannot say that a loose sentence is better or worse than a periodic one. Everything depends upon the writer's purpose and whether the one or the other kind will better suit that purpose. The periodic sentence makes for climax and "punch", but a long succession of such sentences can be tiresome and mechanical. If many ideas are to be handled in one sentence, it may well be better to write a loose than a periodic sentence. To hold off the main statement too long distracts the reader and gives the sentence a very artificial ring.

A. Though he had now been in captivity for fifteen years, despite his miserable life—in which poor food, ragged clothes and long hours of labour were the least of evils compared with the harshness of his master—and even though his conditions showed no signs of amelioration, the poor slave's hopes still burnt high.

B. Though he had now been in captivity for fifteen years, and even though his conditions showed no signs of amelioration, the poor slave's hopes still burnt high, despite his miserable life, in which poor food, ragged clothes and long hours of labour were the least of evils compared with the harshness of his master.

B is the better sentence here. The main statement,

“the poor slave’s hopes still burnt high”, comes half-way through and enables the reader to grasp the significance of the other statements. In A, the reader is bewildered by the succession of preliminary statements, the point of which is not clear until the concluding words of the sentence are reached. In a shorter sentence it is often effective to hold off the climax, but in a sentence of this length and containing so many ideas, the reader needs to be given the key to the meaning at an earlier stage than the end.

Notice how Addison in the following passage varies the position of his main statement from sentence to sentence:

Irresolution on the schemes of life which offer themselves to our choice, and inconstancy in pursuing them, are the greatest and most universal causes of all our disquiet and unhappiness. When ambition pulls one way, interest another, inclination a third, and perhaps reason contrary to all, a man is likely to pass his time but ill who has so many different parties to please. When the mind hovers among such a variety of allurements, one had better settle on a way of life that is not the very best we might have chosen, than grow old without determining our choice, and go out of the world as the greatest part of mankind do, before we have resolved how to live in it. There is but one method of setting ourselves at rest in this particular, and that is by adhering steadfastly to one great end as the chief and ultimate aim of all our pursuits. If we are firmly resolved to live up to the dictates of reason, without any regard to wealth, reputation, or the like considerations, any more than as they fall in with our principal design, we may go through life with steadiness and pleasure; but if we act by several broken views, and will not only be virtuous, but wealthy, popular, and every thing that has a value set upon it by the world, we shall live and die in misery and repentance.

“Inconstancy” from *The Spectator*.

Variation of the position of the main statement is one of the marks of accomplished writing.

It is safer in the early days of your writing apprenticeship to keep your sentences short, but this is only a general rule and there are several important qualifications to it.

(1) If you are describing action, a series of short, simple sentences will be effective, but if this type of sentence is overdone a most unpleasant staccato effect will result.

(2) The use of semi-colons and colons will enable you to avoid breaking the flow of your composition with the abruptness that a rapid succession of full stops entails. The structure of each clause will still be simple and, therefore, easier to control, but you will be less likely to give an impression of disconnectedness.

(3) Finally, note the most important point of all: it is unity of thought that should determine the length of your sentences. One thought can be expressed in a simple and short sentence, but a series of ideas, such as must often be expressed when your subject-matter becomes more complex, will demand a complex sentence for adequate expression. There is no superior virtue in either the simple or the complex sentence. The test of good writing is always this: Are the means employed suitable to the task that is to be done?

EXERCISE 9

(1) Rewrite each of the following groups of short sentences as a single sentence:

(a) The ship lurched. The ship heeled over. The crew rushed madly for the boats. The boats could not be launched because of the list.

(b) I did not enjoy this book. I did not like the subject.

I liked least of all the monotony of the sentences. I do not think that the author has much idea of style.

(c) Macbeth laid his plans carefully. He would finish with Banquo and his son. There was no peace for him while they lived. The witches had made the danger from Banquo very clear.

(d) The idea is that credit should be extended. This seems very unsound to me. There is an attraction in the idea. Unthinking people will like it. Those who realise the facts of the situation cannot but be alarmed. The authors of this scheme can have very little notion of economic law.

(2) Make a paragraph consisting of about four or five sentences from the following short sentences. Re-arrange the order of the sentences where necessary and remember to vary the kinds of sentence. Supply any conjunctions and relative pronouns that you need but do not alter the order of the words inside the sentences.

Both horse and rider were now exhausted. The rain beat mercilessly down. A challenge rang out. The horse stumbled. The rider realised that the interminable journey was nearing its end. Just ahead was the steep-sided valley where the Royalist troops were encamped. With a great effort the messenger tightened the reins. He urged the weary horse on for another mile. "Friend," he answered, "I bring despatches from Rupert." As he neared the rocky brink of the cleft, a soldier stepped forward. He dismounted. He rode wearily through the lines. The dangerous mission was accomplished. He entered the Captain's tent. He patted his tired horse. He handed over his despatches. Through half-closed eyes he saw the relief on the Captain's face. He tethered his horse. He asked a groom to rub it down. He sighed deeply and turned away. Sleep was all he wanted now.

(3) Rearrange the following sentences to form coherent paragraphs. Do not alter the order of the words inside the sentences.

(a) I recoiled with disgust at the scene before me; and here I was to work—perhaps through life! I stumbled after Mr Jones up a dark, narrow, iron staircase till we emerged through a trap-door into a garret at the top of the house. My conductor handed me over to one of the men. The windows were tightly closed to keep out the cold winter air; and the condensed breath ran in streams down the panes, chequering the dreary outlook of chimney-tops and smoke. On the floor, thick with dust and dirt, scraps of stuff and ends of thread, sat some dozen haggard, untidy, shoeless men, with a mingled look of care and recklessness that made me shudder. A low lean-to room, stifling me with combined odours of human breath and perspiration, stale beer, the sweet sickly smell of gin, and the sour and hardly less disgusting one of new cloth.

(b) I was left in total darkness. “I hope it is he,” thought I, “and not something worse.” He went: I watched the light withdraw. I listened for some noise, but heard nothing. He passed up the gallery very softly, unclosed the staircase door with as little noise as possible, shut it after him, and the last ray vanished. I was on the point of risking Mr Rochester’s displeasure by disobeying his orders, when the light once more gleamed dimly on the gallery wall, and I heard his unshod feet tread the matting. A very long time elapsed. I grew weary: it was cold, in spite of the cloak; and then I did not see the use of staying, as I was not to rouse the house.

(c) A man is more sure of his conduct, when the verdict which he passes upon his own behaviour is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him. If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind, than to see those approbations which it gives itself, seconded by the applauses of the public. A man’s first care should be to escape the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world.

Balanced Sentences

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow.

Preface to the *English Dictionary*: SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Such sustained use of balanced sentences is old-fashioned now. Even in its heyday (the 18th century), it was considered suitable only for certain kinds of writing. (What kinds, do you think?) Yet an occasional use of balance gives a smoothness and rhythm to writing.

EXERCISE 10

Improve the rhythm of these sentences, changing the word-order and combining the sentences where necessary:

(a) The sun set. A great hush fell over the vast landscape.

(b) His age did not protect him from insult; nor did his poverty.

(c) I have so little to fear from blame that I am indifferent to the opinions of my contemporaries; nor have I anything to hope from praise.

(d) It would be wrong to condemn him altogether. He meant well. The catastrophe was not directly of his making. He chose his subordinates unwisely. This must be held against him. They must carry the main responsibility.

The most remarkable example of rhythmic prose is the Bible. Direct imitation would, of course, be foolish, but

constant reading of the Authorised Version will fill your memory with superb cadences that should be helpful in putting you on your guard against staccato writing.

Some newspapers would see little wrong with the type of writing in Exercise 10 (*d*), except for the plain straightforwardness of the language. A combination of childish constructions and jargon is found in too many leading articles, while the standard of writing in the news columns is deplorable. It appears to be an article of faith with many journalists that their readers are incapable of understanding any but simple sentences, and short ones at that.

EXERCISE 11

Select from the daily papers a passage that illustrates the justifiable use of a succession of short simple sentences. Select another passage in which the expression of the thought and the sound of the words could be improved by combining the short sentences.

Emphasis

There should be no need to underline words or phrases to which you wish your reader to give special attention. The construction of your sentences should throw the most important words into the limelight. Consider the following:

- (*a*) It will hardly be credited that such a man could be a traitor, considering his long years of public service.
- (*b*) Considering his long years of public service, it will hardly be credited that such a man could be a traitor.
- (*c*) Even in a well-planned composition, careless sentence construction is often to be found.
- (*d*) Careless sentence construction is often to be found, even in a well-planned composition.

It is clear from (*b*) and (*d*) that the words we wish to emphasise should come at the beginning or the end of the sentence. To put the weightiest thoughts in these

positions leads to tightness of construction and gives firmness and authority to writing.

A word of caution is essential here, however: in trying to secure emphasis, beware of misusing inversion. It is a device to be used very sparingly indeed. The same caution applies to the use of rhetorical questions and exclamation marks. These extracts from the correspondence of Miss Mannering with Miss Marchmont illustrate the dangers of forced emphasis:

How shall I communicate what I have now to tell! My hand and heart still flutter so much that the task of writing is almost impossible! Did I not say that he lived? Did I not say that I would not despair? How could you suggest, my dear Matilda, that my feelings, considering that I had parted from him so young, rather arose from the warmth of my imagination than of my heart? Oh, I was sure that they were genuine, deceitful as the dictates of our bosom so frequently are. But to my tale—let it be, my friend, the most sacred, as it is the most sincere, pledge of our friendship....

But where and to what is all this tending? Can I answer this question? I cannot. Heaven, that saved him from death and delivered him from captivity; that saved my father, too, from shedding the blood of one who would not have blemished a hair of his head—that Heaven must guide me out of this labyrinth. Enough for me the firm resolution that Matilda shall not blush for her friend, my father for his daughter, nor my lover for her on whom he has fixed his affection.

Guy Mannering: SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Repetition is another device for securing emphasis. Again, it is to be used with great caution and is more suitable in emotive than in referential language.

The best advice that can be given is to avoid all these rhetorical tricks. Careful planning of the composition as a whole, paragraph unity and paragraph linking,

sentence variety—these are the means whereby successful emphasis is secured. Directness, simplicity, brevity, vigour and lucidity are the marks of good writing. They are not attained by the use of these melodramatic devices.

WRITING THE COMPOSITION: TONE AND STYLE

A composition that is structurally sound and grammatically written may yet fail completely in its purpose if its tone is inappropriate. To achieve the right tone is a matter of taste, but taste can be trained by reading and practice. The benefit that comes from reading good authors is not that we can imitate them—the best writers are inimitable—but that they widen our experience and so enable us to handle new situations and more complex material with greater certainty.

The tone of a composition will obviously be at fault if the writer has failed to see that a topic calls for the referential use of language. For example, if the essay set is “Consider the arguments for and against capital punishment”, a beginning such as this will not be successful:

The condemned wretch lay tossing on his bed—the last bed on which his miserable body was to lie before it occupied its earthy couch. The solemn clock struck midnight and so ushered in his final hours on earth. The warders, pale with strain, kept their careful watch. All around, men lay asleep, but in this horrible room, three men were wide awake.

Such are the pictures that come before our eyes when considering this question. . . .

This is, of course, an extreme example of how not to do it, but it is very easy for any of us to strike a false or inappropriate note if we are not directing our thinking (or our feeling) with the care that is essential to good writing.

The sudden intrusion of a slang expression or a colloquialism into a serious discussion strikes a painfully jarring note and shows that the writer is not in control of his material. An attempt at humour or flippancy where hard thought is required, or a pedestrian treatment of an imaginative theme, reveals a similar disharmony between means and ends.

The whole question of tone is closely bound up with that of "style". For many young writers, style is a bogey; they think of it as something detached from the content of their writing, something that the writer puts on as a man puts on his best suit. That is quite the wrong way to think of style.

Good style is simply the use of appropriate means to achieve the desired ends. Bad style is the use of inappropriate means. The less that the writer worries about style and the more he concentrates on clear thinking, accurate observation and sensitive perception, the better for his writing. You cannot "acquire style", but you can discipline your mind by hard thought and practice until it functions efficiently when faced with the problems of composition. When you can select a good method of achieving the particular purpose required, you have got "a style", because you have something to say and you say it.

Look at this example:

Fancy being asked to decide whether Hamlet was mad! Of course he was; mad as a hatter. All those corny jokes that he made over old Polonius's dead body after he'd done him in ought to show anybody that he's bats. And then the way he treats Ophelia. Shocking!

If you were asked to criticise this piece of writing you would probably say that it was an example of a thoroughly bad style. So it is, no doubt, but it would

be instructive to look more closely into the reasons why it is so bad. After all, that same piece of writing could be an example of "good style"; if, for instance, it were an extract from a play or novel and a shallow-minded character were speaking seriously, or another character were speaking with his tongue in his cheek to shock a serious companion. There are many situations in which it could be an effective piece of writing.

But let us now consider why it fails if it is meant as a criticism of the character of Hamlet. Does it really tell us anything about Hamlet? The language used has no precise reference. "Mad as a hatter" is a cliché, a well-worn phrase that has lost the precision of meaning that it had in its original context. "Corny" and "bats" are clichés of slang, blurred in their reference and in their emotive meaning. They tell us vaguely that the writer considers Hamlet mad, but they are too tarnished with constant use to be able to reflect any clear personal feeling. "Shocking" as used here is a vulgarism. It conveys a blurred impression of disapproval, but is as imprecise in reference as "nice". The use of exclamation marks is a mechanical and, therefore, ineffective attempt to secure emphasis. To sum up: the use of language is quite inappropriate to a serious attempt to convey meaning and feeling about a piece of literature.

"Style", you see, cannot be considered as a separate element of writing. The word has meaning only with reference to the task that the writer has set himself.

Whether you are writing objectively (detaching your thoughts from the personal feelings with which they are accompanied) or subjectively (expressing those personal feelings), the need for directed thinking or feeling is paramount. Widen your experience by reading and thinking, be alert and sensitive, discipline your feelings and your thoughts by constant self-criticism of what you

write, relate every word, sentence and paragraph to the task in hand, and you will find that "good style" looks after itself.

EXERCISE 12

(1) Criticise the following composition beginnings. Pay careful attention to vocabulary, construction, tone and relevance. (Remember that "criticise" means "judge" and not necessarily "condemn".)

(a) *Machines are becoming the masters of men.*

This is definitely becoming truer with every passing year. How awful it is that man who cannot master himself should be mastered by machines! The idyllic ages are gone and the shepherd's song no more is heard. An iron dictatorship, unmoved by pity, spreads its tentacles over a subject race which itself created the very monster it now laments. Tears are vain! Hope sickens! But the cause of this state of affairs must now be examined.

(b) . . . *magic casements, opening on the foam*

Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The history of architecture reveals how slowly it has been realised that the provision of adequate window space is essential for health. Light and fresh air are, so to speak, modern inventions, and it may well be that the poet had this in mind when he spoke of "magic casements". ("Casements" is a synonym for "windows".) However, he tends to obscure the point by going on to talk about faery lands, and careful consideration is necessary to disentangle fact from fancy in considering this question, so challengingly but unmethodically raised in this excerpt.

(c) *On the conversation of authors.*

An author is bound to write—well or ill, wisely or foolishly; it is his trade. But I do not see that he is bound to talk, any more than he is bound to dance, or ride, or fence better than other people. Reading, study, silence, thought, are a bad introduction to loquacity. It would be sooner learnt of chambermaids and tapsters. He

understands the art and mystery of his own profession, which is bookmaking: what right has anyone to expect or require him to do more—to make a bow gracefully on entering or leaving a room, to make love charmingly, or to make a fortune at all?

(d) *Modern Art.*

The lunatics have had the field to themselves long enough. It's time plain men said their say. What hope is there for a nation that nationalises its coalmines but gives artists complete freedom to offend decent folk? The people of Britain won't stand it much longer. SOMETHING must be done now! We believe that every decent Englishman feels as we do. All we ask is that these decadents should THINK. But think of others not themselves. It's only a form of selfishness this painting of pictures and writing of poems that the people can't understand. Selfishness is always at the root of snobbery, and this is snobbery of the very worst kind.

(2) Write on each of the following topics:

(a) A city street at night described from the point of view of (i) a policeman on his beat and (ii) a tramp passing through the city and looking for a night's lodging.

(b) Describe your classroom (i) as it appears to you now and (ii) as you think it may appear if you revisit your school in twenty years' time.

(c) An election has just been fought. Write to your local paper (i) the letter that you think the successful candidate might write and (ii) the letter that the defeated candidate might write.

(d) Write an account of a game (of cricket, football, hockey, or what you like) played between your school and another (i) as it might appear in your school magazine, (ii) as it might appear in your rivals' magazine.

(e) An uncle (or aunt) writes to you to say that he considers your last school report so unsatisfactory that he does not propose to give you your usual Christmas present. Write (i) your thoughts on receiving this letter and (ii) a suitable reply to the letter.

THE FOUR KINDS OF COMPOSITION

We can for convenience divide composition into four kinds: 1. Narration, 2. Description, 3. Exposition, 4. Argument or Discussion.

This does not, of course, mean that the four categories are mutually exclusive. In biography, for example, all four kinds may be met with. The biographer describes his hero's appearance, he narrates the events of his life, he sets out the facts relevant to a study of the period in which he lived, and he discusses the contribution that he made to his own times and to posterity. A novelist or short-story writer not only narrates events, he describes scenes and people, and he may discuss motives.

Nevertheless, these distinctions are important and should be borne in mind when writing, for they enable the writer to keep his mind on his job, to use the means that are appropriate to the ends in view; in other words, to direct his thinking. Unless the writer is clear about his aims he can hardly hope to use appropriate means.

NARRATION: the telling of a story; progressing from one event to the next.

DESCRIPTION: representing by words the appearance of people, places, things.

EXPOSITION: setting out the facts concerning any given topic or question; "an explanatory discourse".

ARGUMENT: discussion (sometimes in the form of speeches and dialogue) in which facts and ideas are brought to bear upon a given point, deductions are made, and a conclusion is established.

To all these forms of composition the principles set out earlier in this chapter are relevant, but we can now study each kind of composition separately and note the special features of each.

Narration

The vital feature of a good narrative is the linking of event with event, and the progression from the beginning, through the middle, to the end. It is very important that proportion is maintained. Details necessary to enable the reader to follow the story must be included, but the main thread of the story, "the line of the narrative" as it is often called, must not be obscured by a mass of detail. It is sometimes effective to begin at some point beyond the chronological beginning of the story, and then to retrace one's steps to the beginning before proceeding to the end. Surprise and tension can sometimes be increased like this, but it is a difficult device, and in unskilled hands can result in obscurity. Even in skilled hands, it can appear very mechanical—a sort of structural cliché. Much the simplest plan, and usually the most effective, is to begin at the beginning.

EXERCISE 13

Read the following passages and make an analysis of the progression of events in each, basing your analysis on the specimen given at the end of the first passage:

(a) The constables had gone up the stair in single file. But the head constable no sooner saw the phosphorescent corpse seated by the bedside, than he stood stupefied; and next he began to shake like one in an ague, and, terror gaining on him more and more, he uttered a sort of howl and recoiled swiftly. Forgetting the steps in his recoil, he tumbled over backward on his nearest companion; but *he*, shaken by the shout of dismay, and catching a glimpse of something horrid, was already staggering back, and in no condition to sustain the head constable, who, like most head constables, was a ponderous man. The two carried away the third, and the three the fourth, and they streamed into the kitchen, and settled on the floor, overlapping each

other like a sequence laid out on a card-table. The clerk coming hastily with his torch ran an involuntary tilt against the fourth man, who sharing the momentum of the mass, knocked him instantly on his back, the ace of that fair quint; and there he lay kicking and waving his torch, apparently in triumph, but really in convulsion, sense and wind being driven out together by the concussion.

"What is to do now, in Heaven's name?" cried the alderman, starting up with considerable alarm. But Denys explained, and offered to accompany his worship. "So be it", said the latter. His men picked themselves ruefully up, and the alderman put himself at their head and examined the premises above and below. As for the prisoners, their interrogatory was postponed till they could be confronted with the servant.

Before dawn, the thieves, alive and dead, and all the relics and evidences of the crime and retribution, were swept away into the law's net, and the inn was silent and almost deserted. There remained but one constable, and Denys and Gerard, the latter still sleeping heavily.

The Cloister and the Hearth: CHARLES READE.

Analysis: Constables mount stairs—head constable frightened by corpse—recoils—falls over next constable—(continue).

(b) We worked on; but the water increasing in the hold, it was apparent that the ship would founder; and though the storm began to abate a little, yet as it was not possible that she could swim till we might run into a port, so the master continued firing guns for help; and a light ship, who had rid it out just ahead of us, ventured a boat out to help us. It was with the utmost hazard that the boat came near us, but it was impossible for us to get aboard, or for the boat to lie near the ship's side; till at last the men rowing very heartily, and venturing their lives to save ours, our men cast them a rope over the stern with a buoy to it, and then veered it out to a great length, which they, after great

labour and hazard, took hold of, and we hauled them close under our stem, and got all into their boat. It was to no purpose for them or us, after we were in the boat, to think of reaching their own ship; so all agreed to let her drive, and only pull her towards shore as much as we could: and our master promised them, that if the boat was staved upon the shore, he would make it good to their master; so partly rowing, and partly driving, our boat went away to the northward, sloping towards the shore almost as far as Winterton-Ness.

We were not much more than a quarter of an hour out of our ship when we saw her sink; and then I understood, for the first time, what was meant by a ship foundering in the sea. I must acknowledge, I had hardly eyes to look up when the seamen told me she was sinking; for, from that moment they rather put me into the boat, than that I might be said to go in, my heart was, as it were, dead within me, partly with fright, partly with horror of mind, and the thoughts of what was yet before me.

While we were in this condition, the men yet labouring at the oar to bring the boat near the shore, we could see (when, our boat mounting the waves, we were able to see the shore) a great many people running along the strand, to assist us when we should come near; but we made slow way towards the shore; nor were we able to reach it, till, being past the lighthouse at Winterton, the shore falls off to the westward, towards Cromer, and so the land broke off a little the violence of the wind. Here we got in, and, though not without much difficulty, got all safe on shore, and walked afterwards on foot to Yarmouth; where, as unfortunate men, we were used with great humanity, as well by the magistrates of the town, who assigned us good quarters, as by the particular merchants and owners of ships: and had money given us sufficient to carry us either to London or back to Hull, as we thought fit.

Robinson Crusoe: DANIEL DEFOE.

EXERCISE 14

Write an account of the following events, remembering to paragraph clearly. Rearrange the order where necessary.

(a) Heavily-laden flying boat can only take off up-wind or in dead calm—only fairway at La Luz to south—north wind blowing—meteorological forecast that on following day north wind would drop for ten minutes at dawn—fairway parallel to long jetty—this paced out for estimated take-off—essential not to get out into open Atlantic—rollers too heavy for hull—pilot decided that if not airborne by certain distance attempt must be abandoned—large railway truck on jetty at this crucial spot—man stationed in skiff at stern to cut rope—engines warmed up ready—flying-boat held back by hemp rope—wind dropped—sun rose—signal given—rope cut—crowd on jetty gesticulates—pointing to north—pilot guesses wind coming—now or never—slightest swerve fatal—hemmed in with shipping on either side—rapidly approaching harbour mouth—throttles opened wide—railway truck abreast—no response—pilot tried to lift flying-boat—truck had been moved nearer to harbour mouth—as first swell hit hull another attempt to climb—too late now to shut off—momentum must carry flying-boat into open sea—tense wait for another bump—seconds pass—no bump—safely airborne and climbing.

(b) After the Battle of Culloden the Young Pretender and a few faithful followers making for the coast—King George's troops searching for them—a hot June day—parched with thirst—had to lie in hiding—dared to move only at night—stream nearby—sound of water tormented them—at sunset a boy arrived from a village, bringing goats' milk—refreshed, they move on—soon discover that the Prince's purse is missing—gold essential to their plans for escape—Glenaladale remembers having taken purse out to pay boy—Prince takes cover—the others set off for village—father very angry—threatens to hang boy—purse

produced—soldiers come along track—pass within few feet of Prince—loss of purse saved Prince—track soldiers used was track they were following—Prince in great fear for Glenaladale and companions—soldiers and Glenaladale's party passed in growing dusk on opposite sides of stream.

Remember that a narrative must often include description of people and places if it is to be effective. “Atmosphere”, too, is often of the greatest importance to the teller of a story.

EXERCISE 15

Write compositions based on the following outlines, remembering to plan and paragraph carefully, and to use the hints given for developing characters and setting the scene:

(a) Samuel Johnson an immortal personality—born 1709—son of a bookseller at Lichfield—remarkable powers of memory even as a child—idle but brilliant at school—had to leave Oxford owing to poverty before taking his degree—became schoolmaster—disliked the work—went to London to seek his fortune—many years of poverty—occasional journalism—often walked round the streets at night to keep warm—could not afford lodgings—publication of poem, *London*, in 1738 brought little money but some fame—1755 his great *English Dictionary* appeared; the first true dictionary of the English language—great scholarship and some witty definitions, e.g. “Lexicographer: a harmless drudge”—by now friends with Burke, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and other famous men—gaining his reputation as a great conversationalist—brilliant gathering known as Literary Club—Johnson the presiding genius—many other writings, including *Rasselas*, the *Rambler* and the *Idler*, edition of Shakespeare—his last great work, the *Lives of the Poets*, 1779–1781—met Boswell in 1763—Boswell's great biography has preserved many of his sayings and transmits the richness of his personality—sometimes rude, but very generous—deeply religious—subject to melancholy—1762, pension conferred upon him for his

literary work—this enabled him to give time to the things he loved most, society and talk—called himself an idler, but capable of performing vast amount of writing at great speed—tone-deaf—once taken to concert to hear violinist—in interval asked how he liked certain piece of music—did not answer—pressed for reply and told piece very difficult—“Difficult, do you call it? I would it were impossible”—told of death of an acquaintance in the West Indies—“He will not, whither he is now gone, find much difference either in the climate or the company”—his wit—very big man—utterly fearless—Goldsmith said of him that he had “nothing of the bear but his skin”—strongly prejudiced in many things—“The first Whig, Sir, was the Devil”—died December 13th, 1784—buried in Westminster Abbey.

N.B. You must group the material so as to give your paragraphs unity and to ensure a progression in your narrative.

(b) Dr Jenner born 1749—physician in Gloucestershire—quiet life—a keen naturalist and amateur musician—the scourge of smallpox—very common—death or serious disfigurement—so common that it was known simply as “the sickness”—children often deliberately exposed to it—belief they could get over it more quickly than when accidentally caught—Jenner as young man heard country story that those who had suffered from cowpox, a mild disease, never got smallpox—one day dairymaid came to him with sore on hand caught from sick cow—Jenner took some of discharge from sore—vaccinated Jimmie Phipps, a boy of eight—Jimmie got cowpox—when he recovered, Jenner inoculated him with smallpox—immune—more tests—took discovery to London—much controversy—soon people flocking to be vaccinated—news spread all over Europe—gifts from Empress of Russia—when victorious kings assembled in London at end of Napoleonic Wars, Jenner presented to them all—grants from Parliament—Jenner’s birthday kept as national holiday in Germany for a time—Spain sent expedition to South American

colonies to spread good news—Jenner died 1823—vaccination compulsory in England in 1853—“conscience clause” 1898—disease once the terror of Europe—now virtually extinct.

EXERCISE 16

Write compositions on the following topics:

- (a) The story of *Hamlet* (or any of Shakespeare's other plays).
- (b) A visit to a museum.
- (c) A story to illustrate the quotation, “Much study is a weariness of the flesh”.
- (d) The life of a famous general.

Remember what was said above about the importance of character, place and atmosphere.

Description

We can distinguish two different methods of description: description by enumeration, and description by suggestion. The enumerative method gets its effect by piling up details and relying on their cumulative power to paint the scene, person, or thing described. The suggestive method selects significant details to work on the reader's imagination. The danger of the enumerative method is that it may produce a catalogue and bore the reader. It is always better to aim at firing the reader's imagination with significant details. Be sure, however, that the details *are* significant. Be interested in your own descriptions and you are unlikely to include the irrelevant details that reveal loose thinking.

Remember to appeal to your reader's senses. Make him see, hear and feel (and, if appropriate, taste and smell) what you are describing. Too often, writers rely solely on the visual sense.

Try to approach your description from a definite “angle”: this will give it form and significance. (Read

the description of the onset of the fog in Chapter XLII of Thomas Hardy's *Far From The Madding Crowd* as a good example of the way in which description is made significant.)

EXERCISE 17

Select from a novel or short story a good descriptive passage. Show how the writer gives significance to the details he uses, and how he gives the whole passage significance by relating it to the events or characters of the book. (See the description of Gabriel Oak's clothes and watch in Chapter I of *Far From The Madding Crowd* as an example.)

EXERCISE 18

Write descriptions of the following:

- (a) A churchyard at night.
- (b) A wood in winter.
- (c) An empty theatre.
- (d) A traffic jam.
- (e) A bird in flight.
- (f) A village shop.
- (g) A view from a window.
- (h) A post office at Christmas time.
- (i) A garden.
- (j) A crowd waiting for the gates of a football ground to open.

N.B. Avoid catalogues.

Exposition

The clear presentation of relevant facts is the essence of good exposition. All inessential information must be excluded and there must be no digressions. Words with the clearest possible reference must be chosen and the writer's standpoint must be entirely objective. Order is very important: first things must come first.

Study Franklin's description of the kites that he made during his investigations of electricity:

Make a small cross of two light strips of cedar; the arms so long as to reach the four corners of a large thin silk handkerchief, when extended: tie the corners of the handkerchief to the extremities of the cross; so that you have the body of a kite; which being properly accommodated with a tail, loop, and string, will rise in the air like those made of paper; but this, being of silk, is fitter to bear the wet and wind of a thunder gust without tearing.

EXERCISE 19

Describe the following in not more than 100 words each:

- (a) A chair.
- (b) Filling a fountain pen.
- (c) A crossword puzzle.
- (d) Shuffling cards.

EXERCISE 20

Describe briefly what you would do if (a) You wanted to light a fire, but had a cold and so you were not sure whether the liquid you intended to pour on the sticks was paraffin or petrol. (b) You wanted to telephone a friend from a call-box, but had no money.

EXERCISE 21

Describe in some detail the kind of work that you expect to have to do in your chosen career.

EXERCISE 22

Write on the following topics:

- (a) The influence of Geography on History.
- (b) Future developments in aircraft.
- (c) Science and the farmer.

Argument or Discussion

The writer's purpose is to convince his reader, to persuade him to accept the writer's point of view. He

may wish his reader to think as he does or to feel as he does. Some topics will demand a cool, objective and logical approach; others will permit the expression of controlled but powerful feeling. Both thinking and feeling must be directed. In argumentative composition, the plan—the movement towards a climax—is very important.

It is not necessary that the argumentative composition shall always lead to a definite conclusion one way or the other. The writer may wish to persuade his reader to join him in *not* taking sides in a given issue. Having set out the arguments for and against a proposition, he may come to the conclusion that no clear-cut choice is possible. If this is the case there is redoubled need for firm writing and crisp thinking. Tolerance is one thing, inability to make up one's mind is quite another. Inconclusiveness is a sign of lack of interest and lazy thinking. Clear planning and firm writing will prevent the reader from mistaking your point of view.

When faced with this kind of composition, think hard and arrange your material with the greatest care. Paragraph unity and linking will show a keen mind moving towards a conclusion either for or against the proposition, or in favour of a firmly neutral position.

Consider again essay plan B (Topic 4) on page 20. Note—and learn to avoid—the mechanical, “see-saw” arrangement of “points for and against”, and the lazy-minded, inconclusive type of ending. There is no movement of thought in this plan; the writer is not in control of his material, but drifts vaguely to an ending that is a mere repetition of the beginning.

EXERCISE 23

Write essays on the following topics:

- (a) Science has proved to be the enemy of man.
- (b) All blood sports should be made illegal.
- (c) There is no such thing as progress.
- (d) Examinations should be abolished.

A Final Hint on Writing

Prefer the short word to the long one; prefer active verbs to passive ones; treat abstract themes as concretely as possible.

EXERCISE 24

More essay topics:

- (a) It is better to read books than to listen to dramatised versions of them on the radio. Discuss this point of view.
- (b) If you were marooned on a desert island and could have one book with you, which would you choose, and why?
- (c) At a railway station.
- (d) This is the age of science, therefore scientists should rule. Do you agree?
- (e) Write a story based on the proverb, "Too many cooks spoil the broth".
- (f) Write a letter to a friend abroad describing your family and your home.
- (g) What is your favourite school subject? What progress have you already made in it, and what further progress do you hope to make?
- (h) Advertising.
- (i) Which daily paper do you have at home? Which part of it do you read most regularly, and why?
- (j) Travelling hopefully.
- (k) Christmas cards.

- (l) Write a story ending with the words ". . . it was not his suitcase after all."
- (m) The disadvantages of a sense of humour.
- (n) The qualities of mind and character needed for success in either the law or the fighting services.
- (o) Do you agree with Henry Ford who said, "History is bunk"?

2

COMPREHENSION AND APPRECIATION: PROSE

“... be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours.”

Sesame and Lilies: JOHN RUSKIN.

THIS chapter consists of passages of prose with questions for you to answer. Such close study of the use of language helps you to read books and newspapers with accurate attention and full understanding. If you form good habits through your *intensive* reading, you will bring to your *extensive* reading a clearer mind and a keener appreciation.

Here are some preliminary hints that will enable you to get full benefit from the exercises and, if followed carefully, will train you to read with a clear and critical mind. You will find that many of the points reinforce and amplify the lessons learnt in Chapter 1.

1. *Full Comprehension must precede Judgement*

Make sure that you understand the writer's meaning and intention before you express an opinion about the quality of his writing. Read through the passage very carefully; pick out the key sentence in each paragraph and trace the development of the writer's thought; summarise the theme of the passage pithily by giving it a title. You are then ready to judge. In the exercises that follow, the questions first direct your attention to the writer's meaning, and then lead to a close examination of the methods by which he has tried to communicate

that meaning. In other words, you will first of all consider content and then judge style. Comprehension and appreciation carefully practised like this, will encourage a fuller understanding and enjoyment of all that you read.

2. *The Importance of the Context*

You will notice that the questions in this chapter on the meaning of words always refer to their meaning *in the passage*. It is most important to pay careful attention to this instruction. Your dictionary usually gives a series of definitions for each word, and you can only decide upon the appropriate meaning after a study of the meaning and tone of the context.

Example

(a) That innocent-looking parcel contained the bomb that so nearly wrecked the operations room.

(b) "Here I am, up against the most cunning crook in Europe, and what am I given to work with? Why, the most useless parcel of idiots in the Force." The Inspector surveyed his crestfallen men pityingly as he made this comment.

(c) By the terms of his will dated 15th June, 1888, he gave to the Governors of the Grammar School that parcel of land known as "The Penny-Piece", to be used by the boys of that school as a playing-field.

Decide upon the correct meaning of "parcel" in each of these sentences.

3. *Figurative Language*

We all make use of figurative language. Expressions such as "Don't be an ass", "as heavy as lead", "raining cats and dogs", are part of everyday speech. Most of the figurative expressions that we employ in conversation are as well-worn as those: the writer tries to be more original. Reference to Appendix C will enable you to

identify the various forms that figurative language can take. Here, we must note the qualities that make this use of language effective.

Most figurative language is based on comparison. By comparing one thing with another, a writer tries to give an added significance to the thing described. Figurative language achieves its effect by joining two ideas and so stimulating the imagination of the reader. In similes the comparison is open: *he was like a lion in battle*. In metaphors the comparison is concealed: *a pippin-faced old man* (i.e. an old man with a face like a pippin apple).

In judging the effectiveness of figurative language, ask these questions:

(a) Does the figure of speech add significance to the thing described, or is it superfluous, adding nothing to the writer's meaning? (Remember that a figure of speech may add little to the reference of a passage, but increase the emotive power very much. In such a case, it is certainly not superfluous.)

(b) Is the comparison on which the figure of speech is based natural or does it appear forced? We might never have thought of such a comparison for ourselves, yet we may say of it, "How true! Why did I not think of this before?" On the other hand, the comparison may be so strained as to appear merely ingenious and far-fetched.

(c) Is the comparison true of *both* objects or ideas that are being compared, or does it hold good only for one?

(d) Is the comparison suitable to the context in which it appears? This is an important consideration when judging prose; when we study the appreciation of poetry, we shall see how vital it is there.

(e) Is the comparison fresh or stale? Here, as elsewhere, be on your guard against "second-hand" writing.

Platitudinous thinking and a cliché-ridden style go together.

Consider the following examples of figurative language in the light of these suggestions:

(a) This is the man whose steady hand guided the ship of state safely through the thorns and briars of those troubled years. (What kind of metaphor is this? See Appendix C.)

(b) Under the full moon, the earth lay asleep, wrapped in her warm, white mantle of snow.

(c) Add to intelligence and courage the speed of an ostrich, and you will have some idea of the qualities that made him the outstanding fast bowler of his generation.

(d) His overweening vanity and irrepressible self-confidence sustained him in the circle of brilliant men in which he now moved. His companions were men of original talents, strong and well-ordered minds and inventive genius, while he was as ignorant as a pig.

(e) The redbreast, that friend of man, eternal Christmas symbol of peace and joy, brave songster in the snow, is resident throughout the British Isles. It nests in the last weeks of March and lays five to seven eggs in two to three broods. Each pair holds a well-defined territory, defending it with the utmost ferocity against intruders.

4. *Epithets*

A most important guide to the quality of writing can be obtained from a careful study of the use of epithets. The following points should be noted:

(a) Does the writer overload his descriptions with epithets so that they make only a blurred impression, or does he use adjectives (and adjectival phrases) sparingly and significantly?

(b) Are his adjectives stock or are they fresh? (Examples of stock adjectives are: *stony* silence; *hostile* reception; *rosy-fingered* dawn. These adjectives have

been so often used with these nouns that they have lost all significance and have degenerated into clichés.)

(c) Is every epithet doing a useful job, or are some of them otiose (unoccupied, idle)?

We must distinguish between objective and subjective epithets. An objective epithet is one that describes a factual quality of the person, thing or action that it qualifies. Its truth or falsity can be established. A subjective epithet tells us what the writer thinks or feels about the person, thing or action that he is describing. Its truth or falsity is a matter of feeling and opinion. If, for example, a critic begins a review by saying, "This is a long book", we can test the truth of the statement by counting the number of pages in the book. If he begins by saying, "This is a boring book", we can discover whether we share his opinion by reading the book for ourselves.

It will be obvious that, as a general rule, the writing of scientific prose will entail the use of objective epithets; and that "emotive prose masquerading as scientific or referential writing" (put simply, "writing that pretends to make us think when it is really designed to make us feel") can often be detected by its improper use of subjective epithets. This does not mean, of course, that there is no place in good writing for the subjective epithet. A writer who wishes us to share in his own emotions or in the emotions of the characters that he is creating, will quite rightly make use of subjective epithets. It is when we are trying to think clearly about matters of fact that we should avoid the use of subjective epithets in our own writing, and should be suspicious of the ability or honesty of the writer who employs them as a substitute for thought.

N.B. All these points apply to the use of adverbs and adverbial phrases as well as to adjectives.

5. Construction

Remember what was said in Chapter 1 about the importance of progression in writing: movement from the beginning, through the middle, to the end. In carrying out the careful examination of the structure of a piece of prose that is recommended in the first hint of this chapter, you will study the writer's powers of construction, noting his ability to impose a clear, overall pattern on his material, and to relate each paragraph to that pattern. You will note the construction of the paragraphs and the relation of the other sentences to the key sentence. Thus you will judge his power to co-ordinate, subordinate, stress and contrast: his ability to direct his thinking and feeling so that every part has a clear relationship with the whole. You will be particularly vigilant in detecting irrelevance and verbosity.

Keeping all these points in mind, study the following passages and answer the questions on each, taking care to obey the instructions exactly:

PASSAGES FOR COMPREHENSION AND APPRECIATION

1. Even if our predecessors had started from land with inadequate supplies, they would have managed well enough so long as they drifted across the sea with the current, in which fish abounded. There was not a day on our 5 whole voyage on which fish were not swimming round the raft and could not easily be caught. Scarcely a day passed without at any rate flying fish coming on board of their own accord. It even happened that large bonitos, delicious eating, swam on board with the masses of water 10 that came from astern, and lay kicking on the raft when the water had vanished down between the logs as in a sieve. To starve to death was impossible.

The old natives knew well the device which many shipwrecked men hit upon during the war—chewing thirst-quenching moisture out of raw fish. One can also press

the juices out by twisting pieces of fish in a cloth, or, if the fish is large, it is a fairly simple matter to cut holes in its side, which soon become filled with ooze from the fish's lymphatic glands. It does not taste good if one has anything better to drink, but the percentage of salt is so low that one's thirst is quenched.

The necessity for drinking water was greatly reduced if we bathed regularly and lay down wet in the shady cabin.

If a shark was patrolling majestically round about us and preventing a real plunge from the side of the raft, one had only to lie down on the logs aft and get a good grip of the ropes with one's fingers and toes. Then we got several bathfuls of crystal clear Pacific pouring over us every few seconds.

When tormented by thirst in heat one generally assumes that the body needs water, and this may often lead to immoderate inroads on the water ration without any benefit whatever. On really hot days in the tropics you can pour tepid water down your throat until you taste it at the back of your mouth, and you are just as thirsty. It is not liquid that the body needs then, but, curiously enough, salt. The special rations that we had on board included salt tablets to be taken regularly on particularly hot days, because perspiration drains the body of salt. We experienced days like this when the wind died away and the sun blazed down on the raft without mitigation. Our water ration could be ladled into us till it squelched in our stomachs, but our throats malignantly demanded much more. On such days we added from 20 to 40 per cent of bitter salt sea water to our fresh water ration, and found to our surprise that this brackish water quenched our thirst. We had the taste of sea water in our mouths for a long time afterwards, but never felt unwell, and moreover had our water ration considerably increased.

One morning as we sat at breakfast an unexpected sea splashed into our gruel and taught us quite gratuitously that the taste of oats removed the greater part of the sickening taste of sea water.

The Kon-Tiki Expedition : THOR HEYERDAHL.

(a) Explain the meaning of the following as used in the passage: (i) predecessors (l. 1); (ii) abounded (l. 4); (iii) hit upon (l. 14); (iv) inroads (l. 31); (v) tepid (l. 33); (vi) mitigation (l. 40); (vii) malignantly (l. 42); (viii) brackish (l. 45); (ix) gratuitously (l. 50).

(b) Describe in *your own words* how the bonitos were caught.

(c) Explain in about forty of *your own words*, without detail or illustration, the methods used by the voyagers to combat thirst (paragraphs 3 and 4).

(d) Give an account of the incident described in the last paragraph, showing that you understand the details, and say what its result was. Use *your own words* throughout.

(e) Justify the use of the subjective epithet "malignantly" (l. 42), showing what it contributes to the meaning of the paragraph in which it occurs.

2. Why do the poets feel that autumn is ancient? He romps over the earth, chasing the puppy-like gales, making them scamper over the mirrored pools, and ruffling their surface till the water-weeds hiss him away. He revels in boisterous gaiety, playing pranks like a schoolboy on the first day of his holidays. He turns on the rain-taps to try the effect; he daubs a few toadstools blood-red; he switches on summer sunshine for an hour, and then lets loose a tempest. He torments the stately trees, tears their foliage off in handfuls, rocks them backwards and forwards till they groan, and then scampers away for a brief interval leaving heavenly peace behind him. The fallen leaves are set racing down the lane. With madcap destructiveness he wastes his own handiwork, stripping the finery from the woods and forests. The bare trees sigh and shiver, but he mocks them with howls and caterwaulings. Then he sets the bracken afire and pauses to admire the October tints. Finally, with deceptive golden sunshine, he tempts the sage out of doors, suddenly drenches him, and drives

20 him home saturated to the skin. The sage thereupon changes his raiment, and murmurs about the solemnity of the dying year and the pensive beauties of autumn!

The whole spirit of autumn is frolicsome and changeful as that of an eager child. The "solemn tints" are the 25 grotesque hues of the harlequin, and the "mournful winds" are suggestive of young giants playing leap-frog over the tree-tops. The lengthening period of darkness is a reminder of the long sleep of a healthy child, and when the sun awakes each autumn morning he rubs his misty 30 eyes and wonders what antics he will see before bed-time.

Spring is a lovely maiden; Summer a radiant bride; but Autumn is a tomboy whose occasional quietness is more alarming than his noisiest escapades.

Autumn : ROGER WRAY.

(a) Explain the following as used in the passage: (i) boisterous (l. 5); (ii) daubs (l. 7); (iii) raiment (l. 21); (iv) pensive (l. 22); (v) grotesque (l. 25); (vi) harlequin (l. 25); (vii) antics (l. 30); (viii) escapades (l. 33).

(b) In about forty of *your own words*, without detail or illustration, outline the author's argument that autumn is not ancient.

(c) State, with reasons, how far you think that the metaphorical use of the italicised words in each of the following suggests ideas appropriate to the author's intention in the passage as a whole: (i) the water-reeds *hiss* him away (l. 4); (ii) tears their foliage off in *handfuls* (l. 10); he *mocks* them with howls and caterwaulings (l. 16); he *rubs his misty eyes* (l. 29).

(d) At which point in his argument does the author make use of ridicule?

(e) Discuss the effectiveness of the epithets in each of the following by considering them in relation to their context. (Remember, too, the hints given at the beginning of this chapter): (i) mirrored pools (l. 3);

(ii) madcap destructiveness (l. 13); (iii) deceptive golden sunshine (l. 18); (iv) radiant bride (l. 31).

(f) On what figure of speech is the whole passage based?

(g) Could an argument such as this be conducted satisfactorily in scientific prose? Give full reasons for your answer.

3. I am not trying to paint the picture of an idyllic age. The era of the free English rustic was not an easy one. If the earth of England was his mother, she gave him rough fare and hard work to earn it. The standard of living and hours of working of an English yeoman of three centuries ago would probably not do for us to-day. Nor, I imagine, would his stay-at-home life. Our forefathers seldom left their native village, and when they did so, they hardly ever went beyond the nearest market or assize town.
10 Everything depended on locality and neighbourhood; what mattered to them was the state of the crops in the big field under Windmill Hill, or what Mrs Jones across the way or Hume the blacksmith said; to them all this counted for much more than the distant utterances of kings and parlia-
15 ments. Outside their own little world everything was just a blank; a man from a neighbouring county was a foreigner. New ideas seldom came their way, and when they did they distrusted them—they were foreigners, too, in fact. But whatever had been tried and found to work, they stuck to
20 with dogged persistence: prejudice many may perhaps prefer to call it. Their life was a round of routine, ordered by countless generations who had gone before them.

Probably all this sounds terribly narrow and dull. Yet when one examines their life a little more closely, one finds it to have been far more rich than one had at first supposed. For if they lived life in a narrow compass, they experienced it within those limits very fully and completely: they may not have dug far but they dug deep. They perhaps only learnt one job, but they learnt it thoroughly
30 and practised it as masters: and if they had to be content

with rustic pleasures, they made those pleasures as delightful and varied as they could. All the year there followed a round of traditional feasts and pastimes, in which the whole village took part—Twelfth Night with its cake and 35 stories; Mothering Sunday and May Day, when, as the old chronicler Stow put it, “every man would walk into the street, meadows, and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers”; the Whitsun holiday whose rites varied in every village—at 40 one Oxfordshire hamlet I know all the maidens of the place turned out with their hands tied behind their backs and hunted a fat lamb, the one who caught it by the tail with her mouth being subsequently crowned Queen and presiding at the Feast next night. Then there was the 45 wrestling and dancing of Midsummer Day, the harvest supper and All Hallow’s E’en; the mumming players at Christmas and the spiced ale of the Wassail Bowl that was carried round from door to door on New Year’s Eve: as Herrick puts it:

Thy nut brown mirth, thy russet wit,
And no man paid too dear for it.

The National Character: ARTHUR BRYANT.

(a) Explain the meaning of the following as used in the passage: (i) idyllic (l. 1); (ii) era (l. 2); (iii) assize (l. 9); (iv) locality (l. 10); (v) compass (l. 26); (vi) traditional (l. 33); (vii) chronicler (l. 36); (viii) savour (l. 38).

(b) Summarise in about thirty of *your own words*, without detail or illustration, the advantages of bygone country life as described here.

(c) Which sentence would you select to summarise the theme of the whole passage?

(d) Explain the figurative meaning of the third sentence, showing that you understand the details.

(e) Bring out clearly the reference and the emotive meaning of “persistence” (l. 20) and “prejudice” (l. 20).

- (f) Comment upon the epithet "terribly" (l. 23).
(g) Examine the metaphor in the sentence, "they may not have dug far but they dug deep" (l. 28). Bring out the comparison underlying it and say whether you consider it effective.
(h) What purpose does the description of the Whitsuntide rite at the Oxfordshire hamlet serve? (Is it included solely for its own interest? Does it have a close connection with the theme of the whole passage or merely with the paragraph?)

4. The existence of oxygen in the Martian atmosphere supplies another argument in support of the existence of vegetable life. Oxygen combines freely with many elements, and the rocks in the earth's crust are thirsty for oxygen. They would in course of time bring about its complete disappearance from the air, were it not that the vegetation extracts it from the soil and sets it free again. If oxygen in the terrestrial atmosphere is maintained in this way, it would seem reasonable to assume that vegetable life is required to play the same part on Mars. Taking this in conjunction with the evidence of the seasonal changes of appearance, a rather strong case for the existence of vegetation seems to have been made out.

If vegetable life must be admitted, can we exclude animal life? I have come to the end of the astronomical data and can take no responsibility for anything further that you may infer. It is true that the late Professor Lowell argued that certain more or less straight markings on the planet represent an artificial irrigation system and are the signs of an advanced civilisation; but this theory has not, I think, won much support. In justice to the author of this speculation it should be said that his own work and that of his observatory have made a magnificent contribution to our knowledge of Mars; but few would follow him all the way on the more picturesque side of his conclusions.

Finally we may stress one point. Mars has every appearance of being a planet long past its prime; and it is in any

case improbable that two planets differing so much as Mars and the earth would be in the zenith of biological development contemporaneously.

The Nature of the Physical World: A. S. EDDINGTON.

(a) Explain the following as used in the passage:
(i) terrestrial (l. 8); (ii) in conjunction with (l. 11);
(iii) infer (l. 17); (iv) irrigation (l. 19); (v) prime (l. 27);
(vi) zenith (l. 29); (vii) contemporaneously (l. 30).

(b) Summarise in about forty of *your own words*, the argument for the existence of vegetation on Mars as set out in the first paragraph.

(c) Summarise in *your own words* and in *one* sentence, the writer's views on the possibility of the existence of animal life on Mars as set out in the second paragraph. Do not give his reasons or illustrations.

(d) Comment on the writer's attitude to Professor Lowell's ideas as revealed by his use of the word "picturesque" (l. 25).

(e) Reproduce in *your own words* the argument in the last sentence.

(f) Is this scientific or emotive prose? Examine the writer's use of epithets: is it in harmony with his intention in the passage as a whole?

(g) What characteristics make this a good example of discussion?

5. Her family was extremely well-to-do, and connected by marriage with a spreading circle of other well-to-do families. There was a large country house in Derbyshire; there was another in the New Forest; there were Mayfair 5 rooms for the London season and all its finest parties; there were tours on the Continent with even more than the usual number of Italian operas and of glimpses at the celebrities of Paris. Brought up among such advantages, it was only natural to suppose that Florence would show a 10 proper appreciation of them by doing her duty in that

state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her—in other words, by marrying, after a fitting number of dances and dinner-parties, an eligible gentleman, and living happily ever afterwards. Her sister, her cousins, all the 15 young ladies of her acquaintance, were either getting ready to do this, or had already done it. It was inconceivable that Florence should dream of anything else; yet dream she did. Ah! To do her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her! Assuredly she 20 would not be behindhand in doing her duty; but unto what state of life *had* it pleased God to call her? That was the question. God's calls are many, and they are strange. Unto what state of life had it pleased Him to call Charlotte Corday, or Elizabeth of Hungary? What was that secret 25 voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards—she hardly knew what, but certainly towards something very different from anything around her?

Why, as a child in the nursery, when her sister had shown 30 a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? Why was she driven now to minister to the poor in their cottages, to watch by sick-beds, to put her dog's wounded paw into elaborate splints as if it was a human being?

35 Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving about among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being 40 useful? So she dreamed and wondered, and, taking out her diary, she poured into it the agitations of her soul. And then the bell rang, and it was time to go and dress for dinner.

As the years passed, a restlessness began to grow upon 45 her. She was unhappy, and at last she knew it. Mrs Nightingale, too, began to notice that there was something wrong. It was very odd; what could be the matter with dear Flo? Mr Nightingale suggested that a husband

might be advisable; but the curious thing was that she seemed to take no interest in husbands. And with her attractions and her accomplishments too! There was nothing in the world to prevent her making a really brilliant match. But no! She would think of nothing but how to satisfy that singular craving of hers to be *doing* something.

55 As if there was not plenty to do in any case, in the ordinary way, at home. There was the china to look after, and there was her father to be read to after dinner. Mrs Nightingale could not understand it; and then one day her perplexity was changed to consternation and alarm. Florence announced an extreme desire to go to Salisbury Hospital for several months as a nurse; and she confessed to some visionary plan of eventually setting up a house of her own in a neighbouring village, and there founding, "something like a Protestant Sisterhood, without vows,

60 65 for women of educated feelings". The whole scheme was summarily brushed aside as preposterous and Mrs Nightingale, after the first shock of terror, was able to settle down again more or less comfortably to her embroidery. But Florence, who was now twenty-five, and felt that the

70 75 dream of her life had been shattered, came near to desperation.

Florence Nightingale (from Eminent Victorians):
LYTTON STRACHEY.

(a) Explain the meaning in the passage of the following: (i) an eligible gentleman (l. 13); (ii) morbid (l. 31); (iii) minister (l. 32); (iv) agitations (l. 41); (v) accomplishments (l. 51); (vi) singular (l. 54); (vii) visionary (l. 62); (viii) summarily (l. 66); (ix) preposterous (l. 66).

(b) What was the writer's intention in giving the description of the Nightingale family in paragraph 1?

(c) Explain in *your own words* Florence Nightingale's plan (ll. 62-65), bringing out all the details.

(d) What characteristics of Mr and Mrs Nightingale are revealed in this passage? Give briefly the evidence for the points you make.

- (e) What is the writer's attitude to Florence's parents?
- (f) Summarise in about forty of *your own words*, without detail or illustration, what can be learnt of Florence Nightingale's character from this passage.
- (g) What is the effect of the last sentence of the first paragraph?

6. The most striking point about the room was the furniture. This was a repetition upon inanimate objects of the old principle introduced by Noah, consisting for the most part of two articles of every sort. The duplicate system of furnishing owed its existence to the forethought of Fancy's mother, exercised from the date of Fancy's birthday onwards. The arrangement spoke for itself: nobody who knew the tone of the household could look at the goods without being aware that the second set was a provision for Fancy when she should marry and have a house of her own. The most noticeable instance was a pair of green-faced eight-day clocks, ticking alternately, which were severally two and a half minutes and three minutes striking the hour of twelve, one proclaiming in Italian flourishes, Thomas Wood as the name of its maker, and the other—arched at the top, and altogether of more cynical appearance—that of Ezekiel Saunders. They were two departed clockmakers of Casterbridge, whose desperate rivalry throughout their lives was nowhere more emphatically perpetuated than here at Geoffrey's. These chief specimens of the marriage provision were supported on the right by a couple of kitchen dressers, each fitted complete with their cups, dishes and plates, in their turn followed by two dumb-waiters, two family Bibles, two warming-pans, and two intermixed sets of chairs.

But the position last reached—the chimney-corner—was, after all, the most attractive side of the parallelogram. It was large enough to admit, in addition to Geoffrey himself, Geoffrey's wife, her chair, and her work-table, entirely within the line of the mantel, without danger or even inconvenience from the heat of the fire; and was spacious

enough overhead to allow of the insertion of wood poles for the hanging of bacon, which were cloaked with long shreds of soot, floating on the draught like the tattered banners
35 on the walls of ancient aisles.

These points were common to most chimney-corners of the neighbourhood; but one feature there was which made Geoffrey's fireside not only an object of interest to casual aristocratic visitors—to whom every cottage fireside was
40 more or less a curiosity—but the admiration of friends who were accustomed to fireplaces of the ordinary hamlet model. This peculiarity was a little window in the chimney-back, almost over the fire, around which the smoke crept caressingly when it left the perpendicular course.
45 The window-board was curiously stamped with black circles, burnt thereon by the heated bottoms of drinking-cups, which had rested there after previously standing on the hot ashes of the hearth for the purpose of warming their contents, the result giving to the ledge the look of
50 an envelope which has passed through innumerable post-offices.

Under The Greenwood Tree: THOMAS HARDY.

(a) Explain the following as used in the passage:
(i) severally (l. 13); (ii) Italian flourishes (l. 15); (iii) cynical (l. 17); (iv) departed (l. 18); (v) emphatically perpetuated (l. 20); (vi) parallelogram (l. 27); (vii) innumerable (l. 50).

(b) Explain briefly and in *your own words*, the system of furnishing adopted in Geoffrey's house and the reason for that system.

(c) Explain exactly how the rivalry of the two clock-makers is perpetuated in the cottage.

(d) What examples of exact observation can you find here?

(e) Comment on the author's method of description: does he use cumulative detail or significant detail? Give examples.

(f) What are the figures of speech used at the end of the second and third paragraphs? Comment upon their aptness, bearing in mind the hints given at the beginning of this chapter.

(g) What humour is there in the passage?

Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth Bennet

7. My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly that I am convinced it will add very greatly to 5 my happiness; and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; 10 and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's footstool, that she said, “Mr Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for 15 *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.” Allow me, by the way, to observe, my 20 fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tem- 25 pered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young 30 women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who,

however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.

Pride and Prejudice: JANE AUSTEN.

(a) Explain the following as used in the passage: (i) easy circumstances (l. 2); (ii) brought up high (l. 16); (iii) vivacity (l. 23); (iv) tempered (l. 24); (v) animated (l. 39); (vi) indifferent (l. 41); (vii) uniformly (l. 46).

(b) Summarise in about thirty of *your own words* Mr Collins' reasons for wishing to marry. (Use the third person singular.)

(c) Summarise in about twenty of *your own words* the advice that Lady Catherine de Bourgh gave to Mr Collins.

(d) Why did Mr Collins ask one of Mr Bennet's daughters to marry him?

(e) Is there anything in this passage to make you doubt Mr Collins' assertion that he is "perfectly indifferent to fortune"?

(f) Do you find anything significant in the order in which Mr Collins presents his ideas?

(g) Write a brief character-sketch of Mr Collins, bringing out clearly all that can be deduced about him from this passage.

(h) What evidence can you find of satirical power in this writing? Discuss the tone of the passage.

8. When we reached the top of the little hill in Kuala Kubu at half-past three in the morning, we saw that there was a dazzling arc-light fixed high above the centre of the road and tilted so as to shine straight up the slope towards us. We watched for some time with my field-glasses, but could see no sign of any movement, though there might have been a sentry immediately beyond the light where there was absolute darkness. There was a road further south, which by-passed the town, but we were already half a mile past the turning and I knew from previous experience that this road was barricaded. We discussed the matter and eventually agreed that as the road ran downhill from us to the light, we should get up speed and dash past it before the sentry—if there were one—could do anything to stop us. The only danger was that there might be a barrier in the dense shadow beyond the light.

As we flashed past, I had a glimpse of several men sitting, apparently asleep, on the running-board of a truck drawn up on the left of the road, and as we passed beneath the light there was a clatter of arms and a loud startled voice shouted, "*Hudu*"—whatever that may mean. There was no barricade, and we were safely past and rushing through the black night, only hoping that the road ran straight on.

25 We were afraid that there might be a telephone line to the sentry box which we knew to be at the corner two miles ahead, and hurried on to pass it before the sentry that we had just woken up had time to telephone. The road ran downhill all the way, and somehow we were on to the crossroads much sooner than we expected. Instead of being able to dismount and wheel our bicycles quietly past in the edge of the road, as we had intended, we were

still pedalling furiously and our decrepit machines were groaning and creaking. This was enough to warn the 35 sentry. He flashed a light on to us, then shot three times as we sped down the road, all the time, for some strange reason, shouting at the top of his voice. Haywood's chain broke at this moment, but we were going so fast that we free-wheeled almost as far as the turning down to 40 Kuala Kubu station. We went down this road and, following an inspiration of Haywood's, cut a length from one of the telephone wires and wound it in and out so as to short-circuit all the others.

The Jungle is Neutral: F. SPENCER CHAPMAN.

- (a) Summarise the first paragraph in about forty of *your own words*.
- (b) Why do you think that the two cyclists hoped that the road ran straight on? (Paragraph 2.)
- (c) Describe in about thirty of *your own words* exactly what happened at the crossroads.
- (d) Explain exactly what they did to the telephone wires and why.
- (e) By what means does the writer convey the confusion of the two main events?

9. To those who have not studied Elizabethan records it seems surprising and mysterious that there should be a dearth of intimate information about Shakespeare: so famous an Englishman, and such an unsatisfactory biography. Yet there is no mystery, for even in the lives of the greatest and most spectacular persons of the time there are many gaps. No one knows, nor will they ever know, the private life of Queen Elizabeth herself: and even such details as the date and place of the marriage of the Earl of 10 Essex or of Sir Walter Raleigh are unknown.

Nowadays it is easy to compile the biography of a modern dramatist. The essential facts of his life, his birth, his progress at school, at the university, and elsewhere, his marriage, and his death, are available in the

15 public records. While he is alive a number of the facts of his life will be given in *Who's Who*. His plays, as they come out, are noticed in newspapers and periodicals, and a little research in the files of old newspapers will show when the run of any particular play began and ended.

20 Probably he will have given interviews, and when he dies journalists and critics hasten to write obituary notices and to record their impressions of his personality. He will certainly have written letters, which will be carefully kept, for the letters of eminent authors are commercially valuable. Enough material will thus be provided for anyone to write quite a considerable Life.

Little of this material remains for the biographer of the dramatists of the seventeenth century. The parish registers record the dates of baptism, marriage and burial, but 30 many of them are lost. There were no newspapers, very few diaries, and few individuals wrote chatty letters. Players and dramatists were regarded as persons of dubious standing, about whom no one was likely to be much interested unless they were concerned with some scandal or 35 were made the victims of some scurrilous joke. Moreover, literary persons are seldom spectacular. The man who leads a life of heroic action, has neither the time, nor usually the desire, to express himself in writing. Those who gallop down valleys of death do not usually sing about it. It 40 is the gentle poets living placidly in country rectories or suburban lodgings who write glorious and heroic ballads, as *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, or *Ye Mariners of England*. To be a great writer a man must spend much of his time at a table in the laborious act of writing, which is 45 not an exciting or spectacular occupation. Unless a writer of former days leaves a diary, or (like Keats) writes many letters which his friends will keep, or attracts a biographer (as Dr Johnson attracted Boswell), or meets a note-taker (as Ben Jonson met William Drummond of Hawthornden), 50 or (like Christopher Marlowe) is in trouble with the authorities, the interesting details of his life vanish as soon as those who knew him die. Even to-day, when a literary

man has “news value”, most of his readers will know little more of him than can be amply contained on a postcard.
55 Of Shakespeare’s life the records are far fuller than might be expected.

Introducing Shakespeare: G. B. HARRISON.

(a) Sum up the contents of this passage by giving it a title.

(b) Trace the development of the writer’s thoughts by picking out the topic and link sentences in each paragraph.

(c) List in *your own words* the sources that are available for writing the life of a modern dramatist.

(d) What are the main sources described here for writing a biography of a man of letters of the past?

(e) Write—in a form that may be “amply contained on a postcard”—biographical details of any modern writer.

10. To write the Life of him who excelled all mankind in writing the lives of others, and who, whether we consider his extraordinary endowments, or his various works, has been equalled by few in any age, is an arduous, and may 5 be reckoned in me a presumptuous task.

Had Dr Johnson written his own Life, in conformity with the opinion which he has given, that every man’s life may be best written by himself; had he employed in the preservation of his own history, that clearness of narration and 10 elegance of language in which he has embalmed so many eminent persons, the world would probably have had the most perfect example of biography that was ever exhibited. But although he at different times, in a desultory manner, committed to writing many particulars of the progress of 15 his mind and fortunes, he never had persevering diligence enough to form them into a regular composition. Of these memorials a few have been preserved; but the greater part was consigned by him to the flames, a few days before his death.

20 As I had the honour and happiness of enjoying his friendship for upwards of twenty years; as I had the scheme of writing his life constantly in view; as he was well apprised of this circumstance, and from time to time obligingly satisfied my enquiries, by communicating to me the incidents of his early years; as I acquired a facility in recollecting, and was very assiduous in recording, his conversation, of which the extraordinary vigour and vivacity constituted one of the first features of his character; and as I have spared no pains in obtaining materials concerning him, 25 from every quarter where I could discover that they were to be found, and have been favoured with the most liberal communications by his friends; I flatter myself that few biographers have entered upon such a work as this, with more advantages; independent of literary abilities, in which 30 I am not vain enough to compare myself with some great names who have gone before me in this kind of writing.

The Life of Dr Johnson: JAMES BOSWELL.

(a) Explain the meaning in the passage of the following: (i) endowments (l. 3); (ii) arduous (l. 4); (iii) presumptuous (l. 5); (iv) embalmed (l. 10); (v) desultory (l. 13); (vi) persevering diligence (l. 15); (vii) memorials (l. 17); (viii) apprised of (l. 22); (ix) assiduous (l. 26); (x) vivacity (l. 27); (xi) liberal (l. 31).

(b) Rewrite the first paragraph in *your own words*.

(c) How does Boswell explain Johnson's failure to write his own Life?

(d) Explain in not more than forty of *your own words* the advantages that Boswell believes he has as a biographer of Johnson.

(e) Write a few lines describing the characteristics that Boswell sees as essential to a good biography.

11. Frederic, surnamed the Great, son of Frederic William, was born in January, 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had received from nature a strong and

sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and 5 intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature, or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, 10 were petted children when compared with this heir apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederic William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When 15 his Majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend 20 gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends, a cross between Moloch and 25 Puck. His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bareuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, papists and metaphysicians, and did not very well under- 30 stand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a prince, were to sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to play backgammon for three halfpence a rubber, 35 to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade; he detested the fume of tobacco; he had no taste either for backgammon or for 40 field sports. He had an exquisite ear, and performed skilfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been

French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederic William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and, by abuse and persecution, made them still stronger.

Frederic the Great (from the *Edinburgh Review*):
LORD MACAULAY.

(a) Explain the following as used in the passage:
(i) arbitrary power (l. 12); (ii) admonished (l. 19); (iii) execrable (l. 24); (iv) aversion (l. 27); (v) papists (l. 29); (vi) metaphysicians (l. 29); (vii) an exquisite ear (l. 40); (viii) effeminate (l. 44).

(b) Bring out clearly and in *your own words* the differences in character between Frederic William and his son.

(c) Explain clearly, showing that you understand the details, the following references:

(i) Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse.

(ii) Smike at Dotheboys Hall.

(iii) A cross between Moloch and Puck.

(d) Bring out the full force of the sentence beginning "He hated infidels, papists, and metaphysicians. . . ."

(e) Pick out one simile and one metaphor that seem to you to have especial force, and justify your choice.

(f) In the sentence beginning, "When his Majesty took a walk . . .", what does Macaulay achieve by referring to Frederic William by his title instead of by his name?

(g) Pick out an example of irony.

12. The cardinal fact that struck his eye was the great population that was gathering in the new centres of industry in the north of England, in the factories, and mines, and furnaces, and cyclopean foundries, which the magic 5 of steam had called into such sudden and marvellous being.

It was with no enthusiasm that he reflected on this transformation that had overtaken the western world, and in his

first pamphlet he anticipated the cry, of which he heard
10 more than enough all through his life, that his dream was
to convert England into a vast manufactory, and that his
political vision was directed by the interests of his order.
“Far from nourishing any such *esprit-de-corps*,” he says in
the first pamphlet, “our predilections lean altogether in
15 an opposite direction. We were born and bred up amid
the pastoral charms of the south of England, and we con-
fess to so much attachment for the pursuits of our fore-
fathers, that, had we the casting of the parts of all the
actors in this world’s stage, we do not think that we
20 should suffer a cotton-mill or a manufactory to have a
place in it. . . . But the factory system, which sprang from
the discoveries in machinery, has been adopted by all the
civilised nations in the world, and it is vain for us to think
of discountenancing its application to the necessities of this
25 country; it only remains for us to mitigate, as far as pos-
sible, the evils that are perhaps not inseparably connected
with this novel social element.”

To this conception of the new problem Cobden always
kept very close. This was always to him the foundation
30 of the new order of things, which demanded a new kind of
statesmanship and new ideas upon national policy. . . .
His whole scheme rested, if ever any scheme did so rest,
upon the wide positive base of a great social expediency.
To political exclusion, to commercial monopoly and
35 restriction, to the preponderance of a territorial aristocracy
in the legislature, he steadfastly opposed the contention
that they were all fatally incompatible with an industrial
system, which it was beyond the power of any statesman or
any order in the country to choose between accepting or
40 casting out.

The Life of Richard Cobden: JOHN MORLEY.

- (a) Explain the following as used in the passage:
(i) cardinal (l. 1); (ii) cyclopean (l. 4); (iii) predilections
(l. 14); (iv) pastoral (l. 16); (v) discountenancing (l. 24);
(vi) mitigate (l. 25); (vii) expediency (l. 33); (viii) pre-

ponderance (l. 35); (ix) legislature (l. 36); (x) contention (l. 36).

(b) Make clear the connection between *esprit-de-corps* (l. 13) and "order" (l. 12), by explaining exactly the charge that was brought against Cobden and his answer to it.

(c) Explain in about thirty of *your own words* Cobden's attitude to the industrialisation of England.

(d) Describe in *your own words* the things that Cobden opposed. (See the last sentence of the passage.)

(e) Write 10 to 15 lines about the evils of the new social order that Cobden wished to mitigate.

Read the following passages carefully; then write brief notes on each arranged under these headings: 1. Writer's intention. 2. Means used to achieve that intention: (a) construction; (b) tone; (c) figurative language; (d) epithets; (e) use of detail. 3. Your judgement of the passage as a piece of writing.

A. Old James (grandfather on the maternal side) had called simply as a visitor. He lived in a cottage by himself, and many people considered him a miser; some, rather slovenly in his habits. He now came forward from behind grandfather William, and his stooping figure formed a well-illuminated picture as he passed towards the fireplace. Being by trade a mason, he wore a long linen apron reaching almost to his toes, corduroy breeches and gaiters, which, together with his boots, graduated in tints of whitish-brown by constant friction against lime and stone. He also wore a very stiff fustian coat, having folds at the elbows and shoulders as unvarying in their arrangement as those in a pair of bellows: the ridges and the projecting parts of the coat collectively exhibiting a shade different from that of the hollows, which were lined with small ditch-like accumulations of stone and mortar-dust. The extremely large side-pockets, sheltered beneath wide flaps,

bulged out convexly whether empty or full; and as he was often engaged to work at buildings far away—his breakfasts and dinners being eaten in a strange chimney-corner, by a garden wall, on a heap of stones, or walking along the road—he carried in these pockets a small tin canister of butter, a small canister of sugar, a small canister of tea, a paper of salt, and a paper of pepper; the bread, cheese, and meat, forming the substance of his meals, hanging up behind him in his basket among the hammers and chisels. If a passer-by looked hard at him when he was drawing forth any of these, “My buttery,” he said, with a pinched smile.

B. I cannot find words to express the intense pleasure that I have always in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the old tower of Calais church. The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay; its stern wasteness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds, and overgrown with the bitter sea grasses; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its desert of brickwork full of bolts, and holes, and ugly fissures, and yet strong, like a bare brown rock; its carelessness of what any one thinks or feels about it, putting forth no claim, having no beauty or desirableness, pride, nor grace; yet neither asking for pity; not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly and fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work,—as some old fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets: so it stands, with no complaint about its past youth, in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering human souls together underneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of the surfy sand and hillocked shore,—the lighthouse for life, and the belfry for labour, and this for patience and praise.

C. (These passages should be taken together.)

1

THE BLANKMOOR NATIONAL PARK
MINISTER OUTLINES POLICY

Answering a question in the House on the Government's policy with regard to the Blankmoor National Park, the Minister of Park Land and Open Spaces stated that no final decision had yet been reached about its boundaries. His advisers were in touch with the representatives of the interested parties, and were giving the closest consideration to their views. Delay was inevitable in a matter of such complexity and where there were many divergent interests to reconcile. He had not only to consider the opinions of the bodies anxious to preserve this beautiful region, but also to pay careful attention to the rights of the landowners and farmers. Blankmoor was not an uninhabited wilderness: there were many productive farms on its confines, and he was anxious to interfere with the efficient working of these as little as possible. He was, however, keenly aware of the unique interest of Blankmoor to the naturalist and the country-lover, and he was determined to preserve the region by declaring it a National Park at the earliest possible opportunity. He was sure that the House would be patient and realise that this was indeed a case for making haste slowly.

2

BLANKMOOR BLUNDERS
MINISTER SCUTTLES PARK

With typical callousness the Ministry is preparing to rat on the Blankmoor scheme. Pressed hard in the House yesterday, the Minister's stalling was pitiable. A handful of landowners are holding a pistol to his head and he is weakly allowing them to put a spoke in the wheel. Thousands of workers need Blankmoor as their playground. The Minister pays no attention to their needs; fine words are not enough. Blankmoor must and shall belong to the people. They cannot be held to ransom indefinitely by a clique of reactionaries.

FARMING INTEREST THREATENED BY BLANK-MOOR PARK SCHEME**MINISTER USES BIG STICK IN HOUSE**

The danger to the Blankmoor farmer is now acute. The Minister's closing words in the House yesterday showed where he stands. He is insensitive to the country vote. It is clear that he is intent on dragooning the opposition to the Blankmoor scheme, and steam-rollering the Park plan in the teeth of the farmer. Talk about consultation is revealed as a hollow sham when in the same breath he flings down the gauntlet. Blankmoor, he says, must be a National Park. We intend to fight him in this. Our readers must know that a last ditch stand is needed in the Blankmoor question, and we shall lead them forward in that fight. At the eleventh hour—at midnight if need be—we shall be crusading for the rights of the Blankmoor farmer.

D. They stopped at the avenue gate and alighted, leaving the carriage to the care of the servant, who was a smart fellow, and nearly as well accustomed to such proceedings as his master. Sir Mulberry and his friend were already there. All four walked in profound silence up the aisle of stately elm trees, which, meeting far above their heads, formed a long green perspective of Gothic arches, terminating like some old ruin, in the open sky.

After a pause, and a brief conference between the seconds, they at length turned to the right, and taking a track across a little meadow, passed Ham House, and came into some fields beyond. In one of these they stopped. The ground was measured, some usual forms gone through, the two principals were placed front to front at the distance agreed upon, and Sir Mulberry turned his face towards his young adversary for the first time. He was very pale, his eyes were bloodshot, his dress disordered, and his hair dis-

hevelled,—all, most probably, the consequence of the previous day and night. For the face, it expressed nothing but violent and evil passions. He shaded his eyes with his hand; gazed at his opponent steadfastly for a few moments; and then, taking the weapon that was tendered to him, bent his eyes upon that, and looked up no more until the word was given, when he instantly fired.

The two shots were fired, as nearly as possible, at the same instant. In that instant, the young lord turned his head sharply round, fixed upon his adversary a ghastly stare, and, without a groan or stagger, fell down dead.

“He’s gone!” cried Westwood, who, with the other second, had run up to the body, and fallen on one knee beside it.

“His blood be on his own head,” said Sir Mulberry. “He brought this upon himself, and forced it upon me.”

“Captain Adams,” cried Westwood hastily, “I call you to witness that this was fairly done. . . . Hawk, we have not a moment to lose. We must leave this place immediately, push for Brighton, and across to France with all speed. This has been a bad business, and may be worse if we delay a moment. . . . Adams, consult your own safety, and don’t remain here; the living before the dead . . . goodbye!”

With these words, he seized Sir Mulberry by the arm and hurried him away. Captain Adams—only pausing to convince himself, beyond all question, of the fatal result—sped off in the same direction, to concert measures with his servant for removing the body, and securing his own safety likewise.

So died Lord Frederick Verisopht, by the hand which he had loaded with gifts and clasped a thousand times; by the act of him but for whom, and others like him, he might have lived a happy man and died with children’s faces round his bed.

The sun came proudly up in all his majesty, the noble river ran its winding course, the leaves quivered and

rustled in the air, the birds poured forth their cheerful songs from every tree, the short-lived butterfly fluttered its little wings; all the light and life of the day came on; and amidst it all, and pressing down the grass whose every blade bore twenty tiny lives, lay the dead man, with his stark and rigid face turned upwards to the sky.

3

COMPREHENSION AND APPRECIATION: VERSE

“True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.”

Essay on Criticism: ALEXANDER POPE.

“If poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to the
tree it had better not come at all.”

Letters of JOHN KEATS.

THOSE two quotations represent very different approaches to poetry. Pope is thinking of the art of poetry, the practice that the poet must have in the choice of words and the use of metres. Keats is thinking of the inspiration that is the hallmark of great poetry. The reader will do well to keep both these ideas in mind, and to accustom himself to regarding the poet as an inspired craftsman. Poets often rewrite their work—Keats was no exception to this—and though it is true that poetry must not be laboured so that the effort that has gone into it is apparent, yet the most inspired ideas and the strongest emotions must be given appropriate form if they are to be communicated to the reader. To give that form, a tight control over words is needed. Directed thinking and feeling are as essential to poetic as to prose composition.

For many readers, poetry represents the highest enjoyment that literature can bring. An understanding of poetic methods—an appreciation of style, as it is often called—quicken enjoyment and helps us all to acquire a love of poetry: a love that many wise men have reckoned among the greatest blessings of their lives.

HINTS ON THE APPRECIATION OF POETRY

1. *Meaning and Intention*

We saw in Chapter 2 how necessary it is before judging the quality of a prose passage to make sure that we understand the writer's meaning and intention. It is equally necessary when dealing with poetry. Read through the poem two or three times, summarise the theme pithily, trace the development of the poet's thoughts and emotions from verse to verse, be sure that you understand the tone or mood.

During this effort to comprehend the poet's meaning and intention it is essential that you avoid hasty reactions and prejudice. The time for judgement comes when, having clearly grasped the poet's meaning and intention, you estimate his success in giving appropriate form to that meaning and intention. You must not criticise the poet for failing to do what he did not intend to do. It is no use complaining about lack of humour in Keats' *Hyperion*, for the poet did not intend it to be amusing. It is no use saying that there is a lack of seriousness in *John Gilpin*, for Cowper did not try to write a serious poem. It is in the preliminary and very thorough reading, when you are trying to grasp to the full the meaning and intention of the poem, that your thoughts and feelings must work with and not against the poet. Having made an honest attempt to understand and to share in the ideas and emotions of the poet, you are then ready to estimate the success with which he gives expression to those ideas and emotions. The more practice you get in the reading of poetry, and the more you clear your mind of prejudice, the more sensitive you will become to the very subtle shades of meaning that poetry can convey, and the less likely you will be to mistake the tone in which a poem is written.

2. Versification and Rhythm

You will find in Appendix C a list of some of the commonest English verse-forms and metres. Here, we must try to understand the importance of these aspects of poetic style. The verse-form and the metre are two of the methods that the poet employs to achieve the overall intention of the whole poem. They can only be judged rightly when considered in the light of the poet's intention as a whole. It is worthless merely to be able to identify the verse-form and metre. We must be capable of understanding the part that they play in achieving the total effect made by the poem.

Consider the following examples:

- A. The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heav'd and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

The Destruction of Sennacherib : LORD BYRON.

B.

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty:
 This City now doth like a garment wear
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
 The river glideth at his own sweet will:
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Upon Westminster Bridge : WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

If you read these two poems aloud, you will at once realise that they are very different in form, and if you turn to Appendix C, you will be able to identify the various features that make up the different forms. You will see that A is written in anapaests and that B is iambic: that A rhymes in couplets, and that B rhymes a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a-c-d-c-d-c-d: that A has four feet to the line, and that B has five: that each verse in A consists of two couplets, and that B, though not divided into verses, falls into an octave-sestet arrangement and is what we call a Petrarchan sonnet.

Now all this is very useful knowledge, and, rightly used, can help you to appreciate the two poems. Too few readers, however, use such knowledge rightly. They think that when they have identified the verse-form and metre, they have advanced their understanding of a

poem. In other words, they treat the technicalities of versification as an end in themselves instead of as a means to an end. Always ask *why* a poet chooses the particular verse-form and metre that he is using. Why, in the two examples that we are considering, did Byron use anapaests and Wordsworth iambics? (You cannot, of course, answer the question until you understand the meaning and intention of the two poets.) Consider similarly why Byron chose short verses with close rhymes, whereas Wordsworth chose the sonnet form.

The details of versification and metre are of critical importance only in so far as they reinforce the poet's intention in the whole poem. They are one of the means whereby the total experience expressed in the poem is communicated to the reader.

There is another important principle to be grasped: metre and rhythm are not the same. Metre is the basis of the line, the ground plan, as it were. Rhythm is the particular use that the poet makes of the metre he has chosen. Look at poem B again. The metre is iambic, but the very first line begins with a trochaic not an iambic foot. Was this because Wordsworth made a mistake, or did he vary his basic metre deliberately? Consider the sense of the first line. Does the scansion reinforce the sense? Pick out other examples of variation of the basic metre and try to see their significance in relation to the meaning.

Metre gives pattern, and rhythm gives variations in the pattern. Both pattern and variety give pleasure to the reader. The ear is pleased by the regularity of a pattern of sound: it is pleased, too, when the stress suddenly falls in a new place and reinforces the meaning by the emphasis that the shift in rhythm gives. Then the regular pattern is picked up again.

Always look for these variations in the basic metre and

try to see the poet's purpose in using them. Sometimes the variations will simply be to avoid a monotonous, jog-trot effect (notice how Byron varies his anapaests in poem A), but often they will play a more subtle purpose in reinforcing the poet's meaning and intention. It is in noticing this kind of rhythmic effect, and not in labelling verse-forms and metres with their technical names, that an alert and sensitive critic of poetry reveals his understanding and appreciation.

3. *Diction*

By diction, we mean the poet's choice of words. Nothing, perhaps, more strikingly reveals the quality of the poet than his ability to choose the *right* word. Poetry is, in general, a more tense and compressed medium of communication than prose; each word must tell; it must be in harmony with the poet's intention as a whole; it must be significant. The prose writer may be able to recover from the effect of a word loosely applied and ill-considered. The poet cannot afford to put a word wrong. The use of rhythm heightens the reader's expectations; he demands a more vivid use of language of the poet than of the prose writer.

Look particularly at the poet's use of adjectives and verbs. All the considerations that were stressed in Chapter 11 with regard to the use of epithets in prose apply with even greater force to their use in poetry. Verbs, too, which will often be used metaphorically, must be suitable to their context and charged with imaginative power.

The barge she sat in, like a *burnish'd* throne,
Burn'd on the water . . .

The hearts

That *spaniel'd* me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do *discandy*, melt their sweets
On *blossoming* Caesar!

Those two quotations from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* show the suggestive power that adjectives and verbs can have. Collect some more examples from your own reading of poetry and write brief notes on them showing how they achieve their effect.

Words in poetry more often do their work by suggestion than by direct statement. The words are often chosen by the poet for the associations that they carry with them, and they stimulate the reader's imagination by touching off a train of associated ideas and emotions.

We can sum up the points to be looked for in poetic diction:

- (i) A broad sweep of the brush liberates the reader's imagination more effectively than meticulous and cumulative use of detail.
- (ii) Successful diction appeals swiftly: there is no hint of labour, of striving for effect.
- (iii) Simplicity is often very effective, but the *obvious*-word or phrase has no place in good poetry.
- (iv) "Verbal magic" is an infallible mark of good poetry.

4. *Imagery and Figures of Speech*

As with versification, so with figures of speech: the mere identification of the figures used in no way advances our appreciation of the poetry. We must learn to see *why* the poet uses metaphor or simile, paradox or climax, or any of the other figures of speech that Appendix C lists for you. We cannot see his purpose or estimate his success unless we consider every use of imagery and figures of speech in relation to the theme of the poem as a whole. Do not simply ask yourself, "Is this a metaphor or a simile?", but ask, "What does this metaphor or simile contribute to the poet's purpose as a whole?" For example, in the first quotation from *Antony and*

Cleopatra above, Shakespeare used the verb "burn'd". It does not really help us to understand and appreciate if we content ourselves with saying, "Burn'd is a metaphorical use of the verb." Of course it is, but why did Shakespeare use the verb metaphorically to convey an image to the reader? What does his description of Cleopatra in her barge gain from this image?

An image is an appeal to the senses through words. By using imagery, the poet (or the prose writer) tries to quicken his reader's mind and emotions. He makes him see, hear, touch, taste or smell what he is describing. An image is often, though not always, conveyed by means of a figure of speech: it is always used to communicate an experience more vividly, and its effectiveness must be judged according to whether it succeeds or fails in doing this.

Poetic style, then, is to be judged solely in relation to the poet's purposes. All its elements (versification, diction, and imagery) are the means whereby the poet seeks to communicate the total experience that makes up the poem. These elements are fused by the poet's imagination and technical skill into a certain form which we call "the poem". We can separate the elements for convenience, but they all work together and reinforce each other in conveying the theme. The poet's power is revealed by his ability to control his style and to make it an appropriate medium for the particular experience that he wishes to communicate.

For different styles with different subjects sort,
As several garbs, with country, town, and court.

ALEXANDER POPE.

PASSAGES FOR COMPREHENSION AND APPRECIATION

Read the following passages carefully and answer the questions on each:

1. The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue ethereal sky,
 The spangled heavens, a shining frame,
 Their great Original proclaim.
- (5) Th'unwearied Sun from day to day
 Does his Creator's power display;
 And publishes to every land
 The work of an Almighty hand.
- Soon as the evening shades prevail,
 (10) The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
 And nightly to the listening earth
 Repeats the story of her birth:
 Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
 And all the planets in their turn,
 (15) Confirm the tidings as they roll,
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.
- What though in solemn silence all
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
 What though nor real voice nor sound
 (20) Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
 In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice;
 For ever singing as they shine,
 "The Hand that made us is divine."

JOSEPH ADDISON.

(a) Invent a title for this poem that brings out clearly the poet's meaning and intention.

(b) Explain the following as used in the poem: (i) spacious firmament (l. 1); (ii) ethereal (l. 2); (iii) spangled (l. 3); (iv) Original (l. 4); (v) publishes (l. 7); (vi) shades (l. 9); (vii) prevail (l. 9); (viii) ball (l. 18); (ix) radiant (l. 20); (x) orbs (l. 20).

(c) What is "the wondrous tale" that the Moon takes up (l. 10)?

(d) What are "the tidings" and "the truth" (ll. 15 and 16)?

(e) Explain clearly and in *your own words* the connection between the third verse and the other two, taking care to bring out the details of lines 19–22.

(f) Which of the epithets strike you as being particularly effective? Give full reasons, showing clearly the contribution that each makes to the meaning of the poem, and bringing out the imaginative quality.

2. The sea is calm to-night.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

(5) Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

Come to the window, sweet is the night air!

Only, from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar

(10) Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,

At their return, up the high strand,

Begin, and cease, and then again begin,

With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

(15) Sophocles long ago,

Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought

Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow

Of human misery: we

Find also in the sound a thought,

(20) Hearing it by this distant northern sea:—

The sea of faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;

But now I only hear

(25) Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true

- (30) To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
- (35) And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Dover Beach: MATTHEW ARNOLD.

(a) Describe in *your own words* the scene depicted in verse 1, bringing out what can be heard and felt as well as seen.

(b) Show clearly how the last few lines of verse 1 introduce the main theme.

(c) Explain clearly what the sound of the sea conveyed to Sophocles and what it conveyed to Arnold.

(d) Explain Arnold's use of "distant" in line 20.

(e) Explain the meaning of verse 3, bringing out the comparisons that Arnold is making. Show clearly how the other verses are related to this verse.

(f) Comment on the suitability of the adjective "bright" in line 23.

(g) Explain carefully and in *your own words* the conclusion that Arnold reaches in the last verse, bringing out the full significance of the first line and a half.

(h) Bring out the significance of "darkling" (l. 35) and "ignorant" (l. 37), showing the emotional and logical connection between the two, and explaining how they reinforce the theme of the poem.

(i) Contrast the mood of this poet with that of Addison (No. 1).

3. When the hamlet hailed a birth
 Judy used to cry:
 When she heard our christening mirth
 She would kneel and sigh.
- (5) She was crazed, we knew, and we
 Humoured her infirmity.
 When the daughters and the sons
 Gathered them to wed,
 And we like-intending ones
- (10) Danced till dawn was red,
 She would rock and mutter, "More
 Comers to this stony shore!"
 When old Headsman Death laid hands
 On a babe or twain,
- (15) She would feast, and by her brands
 Sing her songs again.
 What she liked we let her do,
 Judy was insane, we knew.

Mad Judy : THOMAS HARDY.

- (a) Describe in *your own words* the three separate events referred to in this poem.
- (b) Explain clearly Judy's reactions to these events.
- (c) What is the meaning of "like-intending" (l. 9)?
- (d) Explain the meaning of Judy's words in lines 11 and 12.
- (e) What is the meaning of "brands" (l. 15)? Why is it a suitable word in this context?
- (f) What idea is repeated in the poem? What is the effect of this?
- (g) What is the poet's attitude to Judy and to her point of view?

4. Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,
 "This is my own, my native land"?
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd

- (5) As home his footsteps he hath turn'd
 From wandering on a foreign strand?
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his name,
 (10) Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
 Despite those titles, power and pelf,
 The wretch, concentrated all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 (15) To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

(a) Invent a title for this poem.

(b) Explain the meaning of:

- (i) line 4.
- (ii) Minstrel raptures (l. 8).
- (iii) pelf (l. 11).

(c) Deseribe in *your own words* the kind of man of whom the poet is writing.

(d) Explain the significance of "doubly dying" (l. 14).

(e) Explain in *your own words* the fate of this man as expressed in the last line.

(f) Which phrase sums up the whole character of the man?

(g) What features of the versification help to communicate the vigour of Scott's scorn for the man?

5. Sally is gone that was so kindly
 Sally is gone from Ha'nacker Hill.
 And the Briar grows ever since then so blindly
 And ever since then the clapper is still,
 (5) And the sweeps have fallen from Ha'nacker Mill.

Ha' nacker Hill is in desolation:

- Ruin a-top and a field unploughed.
And Spirits that call on a falling nation
Spirits that loved her calling aloud:
(10) Spirits abroad in a windy cloud.

Spirits that call and no one answers;
Ha' nacker's down and England 's done.
Wind and Thistle for pipe and dancers
And never a ploughman under the Sun:
(15) Never a ploughman. Never a one.

Ha' nacker Mill: HILAIRE BELLOC.

- (a) Express the theme of this poem in not more than thirty of *your own words*.
 (b) Explain line 3 showing that you understand the details.
 (c) What is "the clapper" (l. 4)?
 (d) What is the ruin referred to in line 7?
 (e) Explain the idea underlying line 13. Show that the comparison made here contains the central idea of the poem.
 (f) Describe the rhyme-scheme of the poem and show what it contributes to the effect that the poet aimed at.

6. Below the down the stranded town
What may betide forlornly waits,
With memories of smoky skies,
When Gallic navies crossed the straits;
(5) When waves with fire and blood grew bright,
And cannon thundered through the night.
With swinging stride the rhythmic tide
Bore to the harbour barque and sloop;
Across the bar the ship of war,
(10) In castled stern and lantered poop,
Came up with conquests on her lee,
The stately mistress of the sea.

Where argosies have wooed the breeze,

The simple sheep are feeding now;

(15) And near and far across the bar

The ploughman whistles at the plough;

Where once the long waves washed the shore,

Larks from their lowly lodgings soar.

Below the down the stranded town

(20) Hears far away the rollers beat;

About the wall the seabirds call;

The salt wind murmurs through the street;

Forlorn the sea's forsaken bride

Awaits the end that shall betide.

A Cinque Port: JOHN DAVIDSON.

(a) Describe in not more than thirty of *your own words* the contrast drawn here between the past and the present state of the port.

(b) Explain: (i) Gallic navies (l. 4); (ii) the scene depicted in lines 9-12; (iii) line 13; (iv) lowly lodgings (l. 18).

(c) Why is the tide described as "rhythmic"?

(d) Why are the sheep described as "simple"? (Take care to bring out the contrast that is being made here.)

(e) Find examples of internal rhyming. What is the effect of this?

(f) Show that the phrase "the sea's forsaken bride" is reinforced by other expressions in the last verse.

7.

Cities and Thrones and Powers

Stand in Time's eye,

Almost as long as flowers,

Which daily die:

(5) But, as new buds put forth

To glad new men,

Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth

The Cities rise again.

- This season's Daffodil,
 (10) She never hears
 What change, what chance, what chill,
 Cut down last year's;
 But with bold countenance,
 And knowledge small,
 (15) Esteems her seven day's continuance
 To be perpetual.

So Time that is o'er-kind
 To all that be,
 Ordains us e'en as blind,
 (20) As bold as she:
 That in our very death,
 And burial sure,
 Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,
 "See how our works endure!"

RUDYARD KIPLING.

- (a) Invent a title for this poem that epitomises its meaning.
 (b) Explain the meaning in the poem of: (i) to glad (l. 6); (ii) spent and unconsidered (l. 7); (iii) continuance (l. 15); (iv) well persuaded (l. 23).
 (c) To what does "she" refer in line 20?
 (d) What are the shadows referred to in line 23?
 (e) Explain the paradoxes in verse 1.
 (f) Show how verse 2 is linked with the last verse. Use your own words throughout.
 (g) Explain the irony in the last verse.
 (h) What is the poet's attitude to his theme?
 (i) What is the verse-form? Are there any variations in the pattern of the metre? If so, pick out one or two and show how they add emphasis to the meaning and the feeling.

8. We came behind him by the wall,
 My brethren drew their brands,
 And they had strength to strike him down--
 And I to bind his hands.
- (5) Only once, to a lantern gleam,
 He turned his face from the wall,
 And it was as the accusing angel's face
 On the day when the stars shall fall.
- I grasped the axe with shaking hands,
 (10) I stared at the grass I trod;
 For I feared to see the whole bare heavens
 Filled with the face of God.
- I struck: the serpentine slow blood
 In four arms soaked the moss—
- (15) Before me, by the living Christ,
 The blood ran in a cross.
- Therefore I toil in forests here
 And pile the wood in stacks,
 And take no fee from the shivering folk
 (20) Till I have cleansed the axe.
- But for a curse God cleared my sight,
 And where each tree doth grow
 I see a life with awful eyes,
 And I must lay it low.

The Wood-Cutter: G. K. CHESTERTON.

- (a) Explain in *your own words* what the doomed man's face looked like.
- (b) Explain in *your own words* why the murderer dared not look up.
- (c) Explain the meaning in the poem of: (i) brands (l. 2); (ii) serpentine (l. 13).
- (d) Explain in *your own words* the supernatural occurrence at the moment of the murder.
- (e) How is the murderer trying to atone for his crime?

- (f) What is the meaning of line 20?
- (g) Explain in *your own words* the curse that has been laid upon the murderer.
9. To my true king I offered free from stain
 Courage and faith; vain faith, and courage vain.
 For him I threw lands, honours, wealth, away,
 And one dear hope, that was more prized than they.
- (5) For him I languished in a foreign clime,
 Gray-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;
 Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
 And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
 Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
- (10) Each morning started from the dream to weep;
 Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
 The resting-place I asked, an early grave.
 O thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
 From that proud country which was once mine own,
- (15) By those white cliffs I never more must see,
 By that dear language which I spake like thee,
 Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
 O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.
- A Jacobite's Epitaph : LORD MACAULAY.*
- (a) Write two or three lines saying what you think the "one dear hope" is in line 4.
- (b) Explain line 6.
- (c) Explain lines 7 and 8.
- (d) What is the meaning of "started from" (l. 10)?
- (e) Why is the stone "nameless"?
- (f) What do you think the feuds are that are mentioned in line 17?
- (g) Find an example of an archaism here.
10. Lemira's sick, make haste, the Doctor call:
 He comes: but where's his patient? at the Ball.
 The Doctor stares, her woman curt'sies low,
 And cries, "My lady, Sir, is always so."

- (5) Diversions put her maladies to flight;
 True, she can't stand, but she can dance all night.
 I've known my lady (for she loves a tune)
 For fevers take an opera in June.
 And though perhaps you'll think the practice bold,
 (10) A midnight park is sovereign for a cold.
 With colics, breakfasts of green fruit agree;
 With indigestions, supper just at three."
 "A strange alternative!" replies Sir Hans,
 "Must women have a doctor, or a dance?
 (15) Though sick to death, abroad they safely roam,
 But droop and die, in perfect health, at home.
 For want—but not of health—are ladies ill,
 And tickets cure beyond the doctor's bill."

From *On Women*: EDWARD YOUNG.

(a) Invent a title for this extract that sums up the poet's meaning and intention.

(b) Explain the following as used in the extract:
 (i) woman (l. 3); (ii) Diversions (l. 5); (iii) maladies (l. 5); (iv) sovereign (l. 10); (v) colics (l. 11); (vi) green fruit (l. 11); (vii) tickets (l. 18).

(c) What do you think the doctor meant by saying:

"For want—but not of health—are ladies ill,
 And tickets cure beyond the doctor's bill."?

(d) Show how (i) the verse-form and metre and (ii) the tone of the extract support the poet's overall intention.

(e) What kind of poetry is this?

11. He comes on chosen evenings,
 My blackbird bountiful, and sings
 Over the gardens of the town
 Just at the hour the sun goes down.
 (5) His flight across the chimneys thick,
 By some divine arithmetic,
 Comes to his customary stack,
 And crouches there his plumage black,

- And there he lifts his yellow bill
 (10) Kindled against the sunset, till
 These suburbs are like Dymock woods
 Where music has her solitudes,
 And while he mocks the winter's wrong
 Rapt on his pinnacle of song,
 (15) Figured above our garden plots
 Those are celestial chimney-pots.

Blackbird: JOHN DRINKWATER.

(a) Show that the adjective “bountiful” is in harmony with all that the poet thinks and feels about the blackbird.

(b) What do you understand by “divine arithmetic” (l. 6)? What does the phrase contribute to the total meaning and emotional effect of the poem?

(c) Describe the picture that lines 8–10 paint for you.

(d) What is “the winter's wrong” (l. 13) and how does the blackbird “mock” it?

(e) What do you understand by line 14?

(f) Find a synonym for “figured” (l. 15).

(g) Show how the last line epitomises the emotional experience that the poet is trying to convey. With what other words in the poem has it a particularly strong connection?

(h) Write two or three lines bringing out in *your own words* the full significance of lines 11 and 12.

12. Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
 With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
 There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
 The village master taught his little school:
 (5) A man severe he was, and stern to view,
 I knew him well, and every truant knew;
 Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
 The day's disasters in his morning face;
 Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee

- (10) At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
 Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
 Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned:
 Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
 The love he bore to learning was in fault.
- (15) The village all declared how much he knew;
 'T was certain he could write, and cipher too;
 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
 And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.
 In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
- (20) For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still;
 While words of learned length and thundering sound
 Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,
 And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
 That one small head could carry all he knew.
- (25) But past is all his fame. The very spot
 Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.

From *The Deserted Village*: OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

(a) Explain the following as used in the extract:
 (i) straggling (l. 1); (ii) skirts (l. 1); (iii) unprofitably (l. 2); (iv) boding tremblers (l. 7); (v) his morning face (l. 8); (vi) counterfeited (l. 9); (vii) cipher (l. 16); (viii) presage (l. 17).

(b) Write a brief character-sketch of the schoolmaster described here. Use *your own words* throughout.

(c) Describe the poet's attitude to the schoolmaster.

(d) Remembering that the poet describes the schoolmaster as "skilled to rule", suggest any reasons that you can think of why the "mansion" should be "noisy".

(e) What humour can you find in this passage?

13. When first my way to fair I took
 Few pence in purse had I,
 And long I used to stand and look
 At things I could not buy.

(5) Now times are altered; if I care
 To buy a thing, I can;
 The pence are here and here's the fair.
 But where's the lost young man?

—To think that two and two are four
 (10) And neither five nor three
 The heart of man has long been sore
 And long 'tis like to be.

“Poem XXXV” from *Last Poems*: A. E. HOUSMAN.

- (a) Invent a title for this poem that brings out the poet's meaning and intention.
- (b) What do you think the fair is?
- (c) Who is the lost young man?
- (d) Make quite clear the relationship of the last verse to the others.
- (e) What is the poet's attitude to his theme?
- (f) Comment on the diction of the poem in relation to the poet's intention.
- (g) Give very briefly your reasons for liking or disliking this poem.

14. Mortality, behold and fear!
 What a change of flesh is here!
 Think how many royal bones
 Sleep within this heap of stones:
- (5) Here they lie had realms and lands,
 Who now want strength to stir their hands:
 Where from their pulpits sealed with dust
 They preach, “In greatness is no trust.”
 Here's an acre sown indeed
- (10) With the richest, royallest seed
 That the earth did e'er suck in
 Since the first man died for sin:
 Here the bones of birth have cried—
 “Though gods they were, as men they died.”

- (15) Here are sands, ignoble things,
Dropt from the ruined sides of kings;
Here's a world of pomp and state,
Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

On the Tombs in Westminster Abbey : FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

- (a) Explain the meaning of lines 5 and 6.
(b) What are the “pulpits sealed with dust” (l. 7)?
(c) How can the dead “preach”?
(d) What is the meaning of their sermon (l. 8)?
(e) Explain the double meaning of “seed” (l. 10).
(f) What contrast does the poet emphasise throughout these lines?
(g) Is there an example here of the “verbal magic” referred to in the hints at the beginning of this chapter? If you find an example try to account for its imaginative power.

Read the following passages carefully; then write brief notes on each arranged under these headings: (i) The meaning of the poem; (ii) The poet’s intention; (iii) The means that he employs to communicate his meaning and intention (verse-form and metre, diction, imagery and figures of speech); (iv) The total impression made by the poem.

- A. What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need’st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book

Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
 Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving,
 And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

On Shakespeare : JOHN MILTON.

B.

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
 His rollrock highroad roaring down,
 In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
 Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
 Turns and twindles over the broth
 Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
 It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
 Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads
 through,
 Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
 And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
 Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
 O let them be left, wildness and wet;
 Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

Inversnaid : GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS.

C.

The more we live, more brief appear
 Our life's succeeding stages:
 A day to childhood seems a year,
 And years like passing ages.

The gladsome current of our youth,
 Ere passion yet disorders,
 Steals lingering like a river smooth
 Along its grassy borders.

But as the careworn cheek grows wan,
And sorrow's shafts fly thicker,
Ye stars, that measure life to man,
Why seem your courses quicker?

When joys have lost their bloom and breath,
And life itself is vapid,
Why, as we reach the Falls of death,
Feel we its tide more rapid?

It may be strange—yet who would change
Time's course to slower speeding,
When one by one our friends have gone
And left our bosoms bleeding?

Heaven gives our years of fading strength
Indemnifying fleetness;
And those of youth, a seeming length,
Proportioned to their sweetness.

The River of Life: THOMAS CAMPBELL.

D. London Bridge is broken down;
Green is the grass on Ludgate Hill;
I know a farmer in Camden Town
Killed a brock by Pentonville.

I have heard my grandam tell
How some thousand years ago
Houses stretched from Camberwell
Right to Highbury and Bow.

Down by Shadwell's golden meads
Tall ships' masts would stand as thick
As the pretty tufted reeds
That the Wapping children pick.

All the kings from end to end
Of all the world paid tribute then,
And meekly on their knees would bend
To the King of the Englishmen.

Thinks I while I dig my plot,
 What if your grandam's Tales be true?
Thinks I, be they true or not,
 What's the odds to a fool like you?

Thinks I, while I smoke my pipe
 Here beside the tumbling Fleet,
Apples drop when they are ripe,
 And when they drop are they most sweet.

After London : J. D. C. PELLOW.

4

PRÉCIS WRITING

A PRÉCIS is a summary or digest of a longer passage. It embodies the gist of the original in such a way that a reader of the précis can familiarise himself with the substance of the longer passage without having read it.

It follows from this that the précis writer must be accurate and concise. He may not agree with the opinions expressed in the original passage, but he must reproduce them without distortion and without comment. He must be concise because in reducing a passage to its essentials he cannot afford to waste any words. This does not mean that a précis consists of notes, or of sentences strung together in a disconnected and jerky manner. A good précis is a connected and readable piece of prose.

The writing of a précis has both literary and practical value. A constant vigilance about the number of words that one is using encourages an economical and lucid style: it also impresses upon the writer the need to use the *right* word, for there is no room in précis for long-winded explanations. The right note must be struck at once. The practical value of précis writing is obvious: the secretary preparing minutes, the reporter presenting the gist of speeches at a public function, the Civil Servant briefing a minister, the student summarising an important book,—these are just a few of the occasions on which a digest is called for.

The thought-processes involved in précis writing are a valuable mental discipline. First comes comprehension,

for we cannot précis what we do not understand. Next comes judgement, for we must distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. Next comes composition, for our précis must be an example of directed thinking and clear expression.

METHOD

1. Read through the passage two or three times so as to grasp its purport. Then write down on your rough paper a title that epitomises the drift of the passage. Be very careful with this title: it is your digest of the main theme of the passage and reference to it will enable you to weigh the significance of the various points made by the writer. Your title should be as detailed as possible. A vague title is of little use to the précis writer. Your title should also catch the spirit of the original passage, for you should always try to reflect the tone of the given material in your précis. The title you choose should, therefore, contain a clue to that tone, indicating any dominant mood of humour, satire, irony, melancholy, etc., that may mark the original passage. *Do not include the title in your final version unless you are asked for one.*

2. With your title in mind, read through the passage again and note its construction. Jot down on your rough paper numbered headings for each of the main sections into which the narrative or argument falls. *Use your own words for these headings:* if you copy down the words of the original, you will be tempted to include these in your final version. It may be necessary to make sub-headings: these, too, should be in your own words. It is during this stage that your powers of comprehension are most thoroughly tested.

3. Complete your notes by filling in under the main and sub-headings a summary of the main points in each

section. Your powers of judgement are tested here. You must decide which points are essential and which may be omitted. Your notes should be *in your own words throughout* and sufficiently clear and detailed to enable you to write the rough draft of the précis *without referring to the original passage*.

4. Write the rough draft from your notes alone. If you have to refer to the original, you have not done your work properly in stage 3. While writing the rough draft remember:

A. Your job is to reproduce the events or the argument set out in the original passage. You must not alter them or comment on them.

B. Use "compendious" words to reproduce the sense of long phrases.

C. If there is repetition in the original passage it must be avoided in the précis.

D. Figures of speech must be omitted. If their sense is vital to the thought of the original they must be expressed literally.

E. Use reported speech for direct speech.

F. It may be an advantage to rearrange the order of the original material and you may do this provided that you do not change the sense.

G. Throughout the writing of the rough draft, keep in mind the structure of the passage as expressed in your title and notes. This will enable you to trace the links between the various sections, to co-ordinate ideas of equal importance, and to sub-ordinate the less important to the more.

H. Your précis should reflect the tone of the original passage.

5. Go through your rough draft and see that it is a

connected and readable piece of composition. Count the number of words and *see that you have not exceeded the permitted number.* As a rule, the examiner states the exact number of words that you are allowed to use. Never exceed that number. (If the instructions say, "Make a summary of this passage in *about* —— words", do not go above that number by more than ten words. The "ration" is always a generous one, and you should keep to it.) Remember that you are penalised heavily for exceeding the permitted number. If the number of words is not stated, reduce longer passages to one-third of their original length, and shorter passages to one-quarter. N.B. If your draft is very much below the permitted number of words regard this as a danger signal: it probably means that you have omitted a vital point or points.

6. Make a final check between your rough draft and the original passage. Remember that a good précis conveys the essential information in the original passage to a reader who has seen only the précis. See, therefore, that you have omitted nothing essential and that you have not changed the sense of the original. Remove all ambiguities and jerkiness from the rough draft.

7. Write a fair copy.

Example 1

Summarise the argument of the following passage in not more than 140 of your own words:

In politics, again, it is almost a commonplace, that a party of order and stability, and a party of progress or reform, are both necessary elements of a healthy state of political life; until the one or the other shall so have enlarged its mental grasp as to be a party equally of order and of progress, knowing and distinguishing what is fit to be preserved from what ought to be swept away. Each of

these modes of thinking derives its utility from the deficiencies of the other; but it is in a great measure the opposition of the other that keeps each within the limits of reason and sanity. Unless opinions favourable to democracy and to aristocracy, to property and to equality, to co-operation and to competition, to luxury and to abstinence, to sociality and to individuality, to liberty and discipline, and all the other standing antagonisms of practical life, are expressed with equal freedom, and enforced and defended with equal talent and energy, there is no chance of both elements obtaining their due; one scale is sure to go up, and the other down. Truth, in the great practical concerns of life, is so much a question of the reconciling and combining of opposites, that very few have minds sufficiently capacious and impartial to make the adjustment with an approach to correctness, and it has to be made by the rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners. On any of the great open questions just enumerated, if either of the two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular time and place to be in a minority. That is the opinion which, for the time being, represents the neglected interests, the side of human well-being which is in danger of obtaining less than its share. I am aware that there is not, in this country, any intolerance of differences of opinion on most of these topics. They are adduced to show, by admitted and multiplied examples, the universality of the fact, that only through diversity of opinion is there, in the existing state of the human intellect, a chance of fair play to all sides of the truth. When there are persons to be found who form an exception to the apparent unanimity of the world on any subject, even if the world is in the right, it is always probable that dissentients have something worth hearing to say for themselves, and that truth would lose something by their silence.

On Liberty : JOHN STUART MILL.

Stage 1. Title.

The necessity of permitting free expression of opinion in politics so that truth may emerge from the conflict of opposite views.

Stage 2. Construction.

1. A conservative and a radical party essential to political health.

 1a. Reasons for this.

 2. The nature of truth in politics.

 2a. Method of establishing truth arising from this.

 3. Importance of minority opinions.

 4. Necessity of tolerance proved from 3.

 4a. Illustration of this.

Stage 3. Completion of notes.

1. A conservative and a radical party essential to political health.

 1a. Reasons for this: each way of thought valuable—
(i) because of limitations of its opposite, (ii) because of moderating influence it exerts on the other: complete triumph of one would suppress truth held by other.

 2. The nature of truth in politics: truth not the monopoly of any one party.

 2a. Method of establishing truth arising from this: struggle between opposites advances first one aspect of truth then the other.

 3. Importance of minority opinions: truth held by whatever opinion is for the moment in a minority is in danger of neglect.

 4. Necessity of tolerance proved from 3: therefore essential that minority shall be encouraged, otherwise aspect of truth lost: truth so complex that utmost freedom must be given to all opinions.

 4a. Illustration of this: even if majority is very large and right, smallest minority must be heard or cause of truth may suffer.

*Stage 4. Writing of rough draft from full notes.**Stage 5. Revision of rough draft and checking number of words.*

Stage 6. Final check between rough draft and original.

Stage 7. Writing out fair copy. (N.B. Always state at the end of your final version the exact number of words that it contains.)

A conservative and a radical party are essential to political health, since each way of thought supplements the limitations of its opposite and each exerts a moderating influence on the other. The complete triumph of one would entail the suppression of the truth upheld by the other, for truth is not the monopoly of one party, and the struggle between opposites advances first one aspect of truth and then another. It follows from this that minority opinions embody a degree of truth and that minorities should not merely be tolerated but encouraged. Truth is so complex that the utmost freedom must be given to all opinions. Even where the majority is overwhelming and right, the smallest of minorities should be heard, for truth itself may suffer if its opposite is suppressed.

(131 words.)

Example 2

Précis the following passage in not more than 220 of your own words:

On one of the door-posts at this inn, was a tin plate, whereon was inscribed in characters of gold, "Dr Crocus"; and on a sheet of paper, pasted up by the side of this plate, was a written announcement that Dr Crocus would that evening deliver a lecture on Phrenology for the benefit of the Belleville public; at a charge for admission, of so much a head.

Straying upstairs, during the preparation of the chicken fixings, I happened to pass the Doctor's chamber; and as the door stood wide open, and the room was empty, I made bold to peep in.

It was a bare, unfurnished, comfortless room, with an unframed portrait hanging up at the head of the bed; a likeness, I take it, of the Doctor, for the forehead was fully displayed, and great stress was laid by the artist upon its phrenological developments. The bed itself was covered

with an old patch-work counterpane. The room was destitute of carpet or of curtain. There was a damp fireplace without any stove, full of wood ashes; a chair, and a very small table; and on the last-named piece of furniture was displayed, in grand array, the Doctor's library, consisting of some half-dozen greasy old books.

Now, it certainly looked about the last apartment on the whole earth out of which a man would be likely to get anything to do him good. But the door, as I have said, stood coaxingly open, and plainly said in conjunction with the chair, the portrait, the table, and the books, "Walk in, gentlemen, walk in! Don't be ill, gentlemen, when you may be well in no time. Dr Crocus is here, gentlemen, the celebrated Dr Crocus! Dr Crocus has come all this way to cure you, gentlemen! If you haven't heard of Dr Crocus, it's your fault, gentlemen, who live a little way out of the world here: not Dr Crocus's. Walk in, gentlemen, walk in!"

In the passage below, when I went downstairs again, was Dr Crocus himself. A crowd had flocked in from the Court House, and a voice from among them called out to the landlord, "Colonel! introduce Dr Crocus."

"Mr Dickens," says the colonel, "Dr Crocus."

Upon which Dr Crocus, who is a tall, fine-looking Scotchman, but rather fierce and warlike in appearance for a professor of the peaceful art of healing, bursts out of the concourse with his right arm extended, and his chest thrown back as far as it will possibly come, and says:

"Your countryman, Sir!"

Whereupon Dr Crocus and I shake hands; and Dr Crocus looks as if I didn't by any means realise his expectations, which, in a linen blouse, and a great straw hat, with a green ribbon, and no gloves, and my face and nose profusely ornamented with the stings of mosquitoes and the bite of bugs, it is very likely I did not.

"Long in these parts, Sir?" says I.

"Three or four months, Sir," says the Doctor.

"Do you think of soon returning to the old country?" says I.

Dr Crocus makes no verbal answer, but gives me an imploring look, which says so plainly, "Will you ask me that again, a little louder, if you please?" that I repeat the question.

"Think of soon returning to the old country, Sir?" repeats the Doctor.

"To the old country, Sir," I rejoin.

Dr Crocus looks round upon the crowd to observe the effect he produces, rubs his hands, and says, in a very loud voice:

"Not yet awhile, Sir, not yet. You won't catch me at that just yet, Sir. I am a little too fond of freedom for *that*, Sir. Ha, ha! It's not so easy for a man to tear himself from a free country such as this is, Sir. Ha, ha! No, no! Ha, ha! None of that till one's obliged to do it, Sir. No, no!"

As Dr Crocus says these latter words, he shakes his head, knowingly, and laughs again. Many of the bystanders shake their heads in concert with the Doctor, and laugh too, and look at each other as much as to say, "A pretty bright and first-rate sort of chap is Crocus!" and unless I am very much mistaken, a good many people went to the lecture that night, who never thought about Phrenology, or about Dr Crocus either, in all their lives before.

American Notes: CHARLES DICKENS.

Stage 1. Title.

Dickens meets Dr Crocus, who profits by the occasion to do some self-advertisement.

Stage 2. Construction.

1. Dr Crocus is introduced.
 - 1a. His reason for being at Belleville.
2. Dickens sees Dr Crocus's room.
 - 2a. The impression that it made upon Dickens.
3. Dickens meets Dr Crocus.
 - 3a. Appearance of Crocus.
 - 3b. Their conversation.
4. The result of Crocus's remarks.

Stage 3. Completion of Notes.

1. Dr Crocus is introduced: his profession: his name-plate and notice at the inn.

1a. His reason for being at Belleville: lecture on Phrenology that evening: public to be charged so much a head.

2. Dickens sees Crocus's room: door open: bare and cheerless room: dominated by large portrait of Crocus: artist had emphasised height of forehead and power of cranium.

2a. The impression that it made upon Dickens: cheerless though it was, open door, portrait, prominent display of a few books clearly designed to advertise Crocus's skill and to impress simple populace with his learning.

3. Dickens meets Dr Crocus: introduction takes place in crowded passage of inn.

3a. Appearance of Crocus: rather spectacular physique and bearing: more like a showman or a warrior than a doctor.

3b. Their conversation: Dickens asks whether Crocus will soon return to Britain: Crocus gets him to repeat the question more loudly: then repeats it himself to make sure that everybody hears: answers—taking care to observe effect—that he is too fond of freedom to be in a hurry to leave America.

4. The result of Crocus's remarks: his flattery wins him the high opinion of the bystanders: Dickens feels sure that many who cared little about Crocus or Phrenology went to the lecture that night.

Stage 4. Writing of rough draft from full notes.

Stage 5. Revision of rough draft and checking number of words.

Stage 6. Final check between rough draft and original.

Stage 7. Writing out fair copy.

At his inn at Belleville Dickens saw a name-plate announcing that Dr Crocus was in residence. By its side was a notice proclaiming that he would give a lecture on Phrenology that evening, charging the public for admittance.

Dickens peeped into Crocus's sparsely-furnished room,

dominated by a portrait of the doctor in which the height of the subject's forehead and the power of his cranium were heavily emphasised. Though the room was cheerless, the open door, the portrait, and the few books so prominently displayed were all designed to impress simple people with Crocus's skill in his profession.

In the crowded passage of the inn, Dickens was then introduced to Crocus; a man of spectacular physique and bearing, with more of the showman or warrior about him than the doctor. When Dickens enquired whether he would soon return to Britain, Crocus got him to repeat the question in a louder tone, and then, to make quite sure that everybody heard, repeated it himself. Carefully observing the effect of his words, Crocus replied that he was too fond of freedom to be in a hurry to leave America. This flattery had its effect on the bystanders, and Dickens felt sure that many who previously knew nothing about Crocus or Phrenology flocked to his lecture that night.

(217 words.)

Notes on Example 2

1. All direct speech has been turned into reported speech.
(See below.)
2. The whole of the précis is written in the past tense.
(Cf. Example 1. Can you suggest why present tense should be suitable for Example 1 but not for Example 2?)
3. Compare the précis very carefully with the original.
At which points has it been possible to make considerable omissions? Show that in each case the material omitted is not essential to the main drift of the passage as expressed in the title provided in the précis notes.
4. Show that in both the notes and the précis an attempt has been made to reflect the tone of the original passage.
5. Pick out some examples of compendious words or phrases that enable the précis writer to reproduce the gist of the original material very briefly.
6. Compare the paragraphing of the original passage with the paragraphing of the précis.

Sometimes you are told to write your précis in reported speech and in this case, and whenever direct speech occurs in the original passage, the following points must be observed:

Reported Speech

We can relate spoken words in one of two ways, either by giving the actual words (Direct Speech), or by making a report of what was said (Reported or Indirect Speech).

E.g.

1. John said, "I shall not answer this letter until I know the reason for this very strange request."

2. John said that he would not answer the letter until he knew the reason for that very strange request.

3. The guard said to the prisoners, "Move over to the wire."

4. The guard told the prisoners to move over to the wire.

5. "Are you going to the dinner?" said Johnson to Boswell.

6. Johnson asked Boswell whether he was going to the dinner.

You can see from these examples that there are a good many points to be watched when turning direct speech into reported, but practice and common sense and attention to these rules will solve the problems:

1. A saying verb followed by the conjunction "that" introduces reported speech.

2. The tenses of the verbs in the subordinate clause or clauses are governed by the tense of the verb in the main clause. This is usually past and must then be followed by past or past perfect tenses. E.g.

He said that he had been a reader of that paper for many years.

If the tense of the verb in the main clause is present

or future, any tense that suits the meaning may be used in the subordinate clauses.

3. When the verb in the main clause is in the third person, all pronouns and possessive adjectives in the subordinate clause must be changed to the third person.

E.g. He said, "We shall never achieve true unity until we solve the problem of our minorities."

This becomes in reported speech:

He said that *they* would never achieve true unity until *they* had solved the problem of *their* minorities.

4. Adjectives and adverbs that express nearness in place or time in direct speech must be changed in reported speech into corresponding adjectives and adverbs expressing remoteness.

E.g. He said, "The solution of these problems is needed to-day not to-morrow. This is the overriding necessity of our political life."

This becomes in reported speech:

He said that the solution of those problems was needed that day not the next. That was the overriding necessity of their political life.

It is in the handling of difficulties such as this that common sense is most needed.

5. When all the pronouns must be in the third person, ambiguity easily occurs. This can always be avoided by the use of a noun such as "the speaker".

E.g. He replied that he had set out most of the points very clearly and that it was his intention to support his policy as he had described it.

This is better expressed:

He replied that the previous speaker had set out the points very clearly and that it was now his intention to support the policy outlined in that speech.

Avoid the clumsy device of putting the nouns in brackets after the pronouns. There is no need for this

kind of thing: He [the speaker] said that he [the questioner] was missing the point of his [the speaker's] argument.

6. Often in direct speech the person or persons addressed are named.

E.g. The candidate said, "Mr Chairman, I want to make clear what my reasons are for contesting this ruling."

In reported speech, the name of the person addressed can often be omitted, or "the nominative of address," where necessary, can be expressed in some such way as this: The candidate informed the Chairman of his reasons for contesting his ruling.

EXERCISE 1

Rewrite the following passages in reported speech:

A. Boswell. "Mr Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." *Johnson.* "Sir, I am obliged to Mr Dilly. I will wait upon him." *Boswell.* "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have, is agreeable to you." *Johnson.* "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" *Boswell.* "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him." *Johnson.* "Well, Sir, and what then? What care I for his patriotic friends? Poh!" *Boswell.* "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." *Johnson.* "And if Jack Wilkes should be there, what is that to me, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could

not meet any company whatever, occasionally." *Boswell.* "Pray, forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me."

The Life of Dr Johnson: JAMES BOSWELL.

B. Pitt said, "My next duty is to enumerate the particulars of the taxes by which it is proposed to defray the heavy burden which it becomes necessary to impose, in order to meet the exigency of our situation. This is a painful, but at the same time indispensable part of my duty; and I trust that we shall not shrink from performing this duty in its full extent, from any inconvenience which it may present, to our constituents, far less to ourselves; that we shall not fail to give a pledge to Europe that we have both the spirit and the resources to look our situation in the face, and to provide for every emergency which may arise in the present contest."

Parliamentary Orations of WILLIAM Pitt.

C. "Pray, have you any commands for me, Captain Dobbin, or, I beg your pardon, I should say *Major* Dobbin, since better men than you are dead, and you step into their shoes," said Mr Osborne, in that sarcastic tone which he sometimes was pleased to assume.

"Better men *are* dead," Dobbin replied. "I want to speak to you about one."

"Make it short, sir," said the other with an oath, scowling at his visitor.

"I am here as his closest friend," the major resumed, "and the executor of his will. He made it before we went into action. Are you aware how small his means are, and of the straitened circumstances of his widow?"

Vanity Fair: WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

EXERCISE 2

Rewrite the following passages in direct speech, remembering to punctuate correctly:

A. The Mayor said that he was delighted to be with them again. It was some months since his official engagements

had allowed him to attend a meeting of the Old Boys' Association, and he had missed these friendly and informal gatherings very much. He was glad to see so many of them present: these meetings not only gave pleasure but, by keeping the Old Boys in close touch with the School, enabled them to play their part in the steady development of the School's life and activities. The Chairman replied that he was pleased to hear the Mayor stress the practical aspect of their Association, for he was, that very evening, about to launch an appeal to raise funds for the new gymnastic equipment that was so urgently needed.

B. Robin Hood asked Little John how the fight had gone. Little John replied that they had come off very well. Only a few men had been wounded, and the Abbot's body-guard had been put to flight almost at once. The Abbot was in their hands, and they had seized his baggage mules. Robin Hood said that he was better pleased to have possession of the Abbot than his treasure; he was a most important hostage.

C. The Chairman asked the witness whether he would be prepared to repeat his charges on oath and in a court of law, to which the latter replied that he would. He had full proof of all his assertions and considered it a public duty to substantiate them as soon as possible. The Chairman reminded him of the gravity of the offences with which he was charging such eminent men, and the witness answered that he had considered the matter very fully before volunteering his evidence.

FINAL REMINDERS BEFORE BEGINNING PRÉCIS
PRACTICE

1. Your précis must be accurate. You must not comment or distort. Your précis should reflect the tone of the original passage.
2. Your précis must be concise. NEVER exceed the permitted number of words.

3. Your précis must be a connected and readable piece of composition. Do not write in note form. Do not write disconnected sentences or paragraphs.

4. All direct speech in the original MUST be turned into reported speech.

5. USE YOUR OWN WORDS. You may have to use technical terms and proper names that appear in the original, but NEVER transfer phrases and sentences bodily into your précis.

PASSAGES FOR PRÉCIS PRACTICE

1. Précis the following letter in not more than 130 of your own words. Use reported speech throughout and begin, "Writing to Gladstone on 13th February, 1865, Richard Cobden said . . .".

Midhurst, Feb. 13, 1865.

My dear Mr Gladstone,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter written on behalf of the Government, offering in the kindest terms to place at my option the post of Chairman of the Board of Audit, about to be vacated by Mr Romilly. Owing to the state of my health, I am precluded from taking any office which involves the performance of stated duties at all seasons of the year, or leaves a sense of responsibility for the fulfilment of those duties by others. I have for some time been liable to recurring attacks, during certain conditions of the atmosphere, of what medical authorities call nervous asthma. While giving me no pain, it disqualifies me for active exertion during its visitations, and I am certain of exemption from it only in warm weather. I cannot live in London during the season of fog and frost. Here there are good and sufficient reasons why I should for the rest of my days be exempt from the cares of salaried official life. But were my case different, still, while sensible of the kind intentions which prompted the offer, it would assuredly not be consulting my welfare to place me in the

post in question, with my known views respecting the nature of our finance. Believing, as I do, that while the income of the Government is derived in a greater proportion than in any other country from the taxation of the humblest classes, its expenditure is to the last degree wasteful and indefensible, it would be almost a penal appointment to consign me for the remainder of my life to the task of passively auditing our finance accounts. I fear my health would sicken and my days be shortened by the nauseous ordeal. It will be better that I retain my seat in Parliament as long as I am able in any tolerable degree to perform its duties, where I have at least the opportunity of protesting, however unavailingly, against the Government expenditure. But I am wandering from the text of your kind letter, for which I heartily thank you, especially for the postscript, and I remain,

Very truly yours,
Richard Cobden.

The Life of Richard Cobden : JOHN MORLEY.

2. Summarise the following passage in not more than 120 of your own words:

On the Blackmoor estate there is a small wood called Losel's, of a few acres, that was lately furnished with a set of oaks of a peculiar growth and great value; they were tall and taper like firs, but standing near together had very small heads, only a little brush without any large limbs. About twenty years ago the bridge at the Toy, near Hampton Court, being much decayed, some trees were wanted for the repairs that were fifty feet long without bough, and would measure twelve inches diameter at the little end. Twenty such trees did a purveyor find in this little wood, with this advantage, that many of them answered the description at sixty feet. These trees were sold for twenty pounds apiece.

In the centre of this grove there stood an oak, which, though shapely and tall on the whole, bulged out into a large excrescence about the middle of the stem. On this a

pair of ravens had fixed their residence for such a series of years, that the oak was distinguished by the title of the Raven Tree. Many were the attempts of the neighbouring youths to get at this eyrie: the difficulty whetted their inclinations, and each was ambitious of surmounting the arduous task. But when they arrived at the swelling, it jutted out so in their way, and was so far beyond their grasp, that the most daring lads were awed, and acknowledged the undertaking to be too hazardous; so the ravens built on, nest upon nest, in perfect security, till the fatal day arrived in which the wood was to be levelled. It was in the month of February, when those birds usually sit. The saw was applied to the butt,—the wedges were inserted into the opening,—the woods echoed to the heavy blows of the beetle or mall or mallet,—the tree nodded to its fall; but still the dam sat on. At last, when it gave way, the bird was flung from her nest; and, though her parental affection deserved a better fate, was whipped down by the twigs, which brought her dead to the ground.

The Natural History of Selborne: GILBERT WHITE.

3. Reduce the following passage to approximately one-third of its length. Use your own words throughout:

It is difficult to find many characteristics deserving of grave censure, but his (William of Orange's) enemies have adopted a simpler process. They have been able to detect few flaws in his nature, and therefore have denounced it in gross. It is not that his character was here and there defective, but that the eternal jewel was false. The patriotism was counterfeit; the self-abnegation and the generosity were counterfeit. He was governed only by ambition—by a desire of personal advancement. They never attempted to deny his talents, his industry, his vast sacrifices of wealth and station; but they ridiculed the idea that he could have been inspired by any but unworthy motives. God alone knows the heart of man. He alone can unweave the tangled skein of human motives, and

detect the hidden springs of human action, but as far as can be judged by a careful observation of undisputed facts, and by a diligent collation of public and private documents, it would seem that no man—not even Washington—has ever been inspired by a purer patriotism. At any rate, the charge of ambition and self-seeking can only be answered by a reference to the whole picture which these volumes have attempted to portray. The words, the deeds of the man are there. As much as possible, his inmost soul is revealed in his confidential letters, and he who looks in a right spirit will hardly fail to find what he desires.

Whether originally of a timid temperament or not, he was certainly possessed of perfect courage at last. In siege and battle—in the deadly air of pestilential cities—in the long exhaustion of mind and body which comes from unduly protracted labour and anxiety—amid the countless conspiracies of assassins—he was daily exposed to death in every shape. Within two years, five different attempts against his life had been discovered. Rank and fortune were offered to any malefactor who could compass the murder. He had already been shot through the head, and almost mortally wounded. Under such circumstances even a brave man might have seen a pitfall at every step, a dagger in every hand, and poison in every cup. On the contrary he was ever cheerful, and hardly took more precaution than usual. “God in His mercy,” said he, with unaffected simplicity, “will maintain my innocence and my honour during my life and in future ages. As to my fortune and my life, I have dedicated both, long since, to His service. He will do therewith what pleases Him for His glory and my salvation.” Thus his suspicions were not even excited by the ominous face of Gerard, when he first presented himself at the dining-room door. The Prince laughed off his wife’s prophetic apprehension at the sight of his murderer, and was as cheerful as usual to the last.

He possessed, too, that which to the heathen philosopher

seemed the greatest good—the sound mind in the sound body. His physical frame was after death found so perfect that a long life might have been in store for him, notwithstanding all which he had endured. The desperate illness of 1574, the frightful gunshot wound inflicted by Jaureguy in 1582, had left no traces. The physicians pronounced that his body presented an aspect of perfect health. His temperament was always cheerful. At table, the pleasures of which, in moderation, were his only relaxation, he was always animated and merry, and this jocoseness was partly natural, partly intentional. In the darkest hours of his country's trial, he affected a serenity which he was far from feeling.

He went through life bearing the load of a people's sorrows upon his shoulders with a smiling face. Their name was the last word upon his lips, save the simple affirmative, with which the soldier who had been battling for the right all his lifetime, commended his soul in dying "to his great captain, Christ." The people were grateful and affectionate, for they trusted the character of their "Father William", and not all the clouds which calumny could collect ever dimmed to their eyes the radiance of that lofty mind to which they were accustomed, in their darkest calamities, to look for light. As long as he lived, he was the guiding-star of a brave nation, and when he died the little children cried in the streets.

Adapted from *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*:
JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

4. Summarise the following passage in not more than 150 of your own words:

The Greeks, quick and adventurous, skilled in mechanical art, had many of the qualities of successful navigators, and within the limits of their little inland sea ranged fearlessly and freely. But the conquests of Alexander did more to extend the limits of geographical science, and opened an acquaintance with the remote countries of the East. Yet the march of the conqueror is slow in

comparison with the movements of the unencumbered traveller. The Romans were still less enterprising than the Greeks, were less commercial in their character. The contributions to geographical knowledge grew with the slow acquisitions of empire. But their system was centralizing in its tendency; and, instead of taking an outward direction and looking abroad for discovery, every part of the vast imperial domain turned towards the capital as its head and central point of attraction. The Roman conqueror pursued his path by land, not by sea. But the water is the great highway between nations, the true element for the discoverer. The Romans were not a maritime people. At the close of their empire, geographical science could hardly be said to extend farther than to an acquaintance with Europe,—and this not its more northern division,—together with a portion of Asia and Africa.

Then followed the Middle Ages. The organisation of society became more favourable to geographical science. Instead of one overgrown, lethargic empire, oppressing everything by its colossal weight, Europe was broken up into various independent communities, many of which, adopting liberal forms of government, felt all the impulses natural to freemen; and the petty republics on the Mediterranean and the Baltic sent forth their swarms of seamen in a profitable commerce, that knit together the different countries scattered along the great European waters.

But the improvements that took place in the art of navigation, the more accurate measurement of time, and, above all, the discovery of the polarity of the magnet, greatly advanced the cause of geographical knowledge. Instead of creeping timidly along the coast, or limiting his expeditions to the narrow basins of inland waters, the voyager might now spread his sails boldly on the deep, secure of a guide to direct his bark unerringly across the illimitable waste. The consciousness of this power led thought to travel in a new direction; and the mariner began to look with earnestness for another path to the Indian Spice Islands than that by which the Eastern caravans had

traversed the continent of Asia. The nations on whom the spirit of enterprise at this crisis naturally descended were Spain and Portugal, placed as they were on the outposts of the European continent, commanding the great theatre of future discovery.

Adapted from *The History of the Conquest of Peru*:
WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

5. Make a précis of the following passage in not more than 250 of your own words:

Although the world may now hold but few natural mysteries to stir the imagination and attract the efforts of man's aspiring mind, the secret of Everest awaits still with bleak indifference and majestic awe its master and conqueror. For it is by the conquest of such mysteries as Everest—by the acceptance of the attendant trials and terrors, of the pain and ecstasy which they merge into experience—that man seeks to extend his dominion over nature as well as his awareness of life and his power to realise the sacrifices of the past. Yet, as the past thirty years have shown, singleness of mind is insufficient to master Everest; to this quality must be added the latest material aids, the skilled organisation of a small community, and favourable weather. When Everest is overcome—and none dare say when this will be—it will be overcome by a combination of forces; by the same intense spirit of adventure which was the glory of Renaissance man, by the scientific advantages of the mid-twentieth century, and by the self-dedication of the climbers.

The conquest of Everest, unlike that of many other natural phenomena, will have been a long premeditated triumph. For whereas it has been possible to sail the seas and discover by chance hitherto unknown lands, the conquest of the world's highest peak will have been the outcome of at least a century's contemplation, seventy years of study and enthusiasm and more than thirty of toil and application. Except for the two Swiss expeditions led by

Wyss-Dunant and Chevalley in 1952, the attempts to scale Everest have always been organised and led by British societies and climbers. Regardless of who is first to succeed in the assault, the names of Howard-Bury, Bruce, Norton, Ruttledge, Shipton, Tilman and their companions will not be forgotten. For the conquest of Everest will be the achievement not of one man nor of a single party. The individual depends upon his companions in the assault, upon the valiant Sherpa porters and upon the medical and technical experts who must perforce wait below. The expedition of to-day is both inspired by the deeds of yesterday's and able to learn from its mistakes and discoveries. In the words of Colonel John Hunt, "let it be clearly understood that he who first attains the summit of Everest will also stand as it were at the apex of this pyramid of hard-won experience."

When the summit of Everest is finally attained, the race will be over. But the race will have been a relay, and in the moment of success there will be a pause for thanksgiving and gratitude to those who were not present at the end and especially to those who had given their lives for an ideal. There exists among the climbers an awareness of the continuity of purpose, of the discovery which follows the abortive experiment, of the need for careful preparation which must precede success. Such awareness is the strength, perhaps even the greatest strength, of an Everest Expedition, and it is well that this awareness should be communicated to the multitude of well-wishers throughout the world which waits for news of the assault. In these pages Mr Eric Shipton, who has made no fewer than ten trips to the Himalayas, of which five have been to Everest, discusses the history of man's attempt to master the mountain and the chances of the present expedition.

Few are better qualified to write of the past than Mr Shipton, and none of the present than Colonel Hunt, the leader of the 1953 expedition. Colonel Hunt's dispatches will appear exclusively in *The Times* during the coming weeks and months. Indeed, the chief aim of this Supple-

ment is to provide readers with detailed intelligence on the background of the present expedition so that it may serve as a prelude to the chapters which are, at this moment, being written by the party in the Himalaya. Perhaps it is not inappropriate in this Coronation year to link the present adventure with the brave voyages of discovery which marked the reign of the first Elizabeth. All our readers wish Colonel Hunt and his party "God speed" and the fortune to triumph where others have been compelled to admit defeat.

The Times, "Everest Supplement", 5th May, 1953.

N.B. In making your précis, remember what was said in the preliminary hints about the advantage of sometimes rearranging the order in which the points are made in the original passage.

6. Summarise the following passage in not more than 150 of your own words:

The Battle of the Nile

The first two ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action; and the others had in that time suffered so severely that victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth were taken possession of at half-past eight. Meantime, Nelson received a severe wound on the head from a piece of langridge shot. Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal; Nelson himself thought so; a large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye, and the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cock-pit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors,—with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his

hands, that he might instantly attend the admiral. "No!" said Nelson, "I will take my turn with my brave fellows." Nor would he suffer his own wound to be examined until every man who had been previously wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson; he then sent for Captain Louis on board from the *Minotaur*, that he might thank him personally for the great assistance which he had rendered to the *Vanguard*; and, ever mindful of those who deserved to be his friends, appointed Captain Hardy from the brig to the command of his own ship, Captain Berry having to go home with the news of the victory. When the surgeon came in due time to examine his wound (for it was vain to entreat him to let it be examined sooner), the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the whole crew, when they heard that the wound was superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The surgeon requested, and, as far as he could, ordered him to remain quiet, but Nelson could not rest. He called for his secretary, Mr Campbell, to write the despatches. Campbell had himself been wounded, and was so affected at the blind and suffering state of the admiral, that he was unable to write. The chaplain was then sent for; but before he came, Nelson, with his characteristic eagerness, took the pen, and contrived to trace a few words, marking his devout sense of the success which had already been obtained. He was now left alone; when suddenly a cry was heard on the deck, that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave order that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy.

The Life of Nelson : ROBERT SOUTHEY.

7. Make a précis of the following passage in not more than 150 of your own words:

I now began to consider that I might yet get a great many things out of the ship, which would be useful to me, and particularly some of the rigging and sails, and such other things as might come to land; and I resolved to make another voyage on board the vessel, if possible. And as I knew that the first storm that blew must necessarily break her all in pieces, I resolved to set all other things apart, till I got everything out of the ship that I could get. Then I called a council, that is to say, in my thoughts, whether I should take back the raft; but this appeared impracticable: so I resolved to go as before, when the tide was down; and I did so, only that I stripped before I went from my hut; having nothing on but a chequered shirt, a pair of linen drawers, and a pair of pumps on my feet.

I got on board the ship as before, and prepared a second raft; and having had experience of the first, I neither made this so unwieldy, nor loaded it so hard, but yet I brought away several things very useful to me: as, first, in the carpenter's stores, I found two or three bags of nails and spikes, a great screw-jack, a dozen or two of hatchets; and, above all, that most useful thing called a grindstone. All these I secured together, with several things belonging to the gunner; particularly two or three iron crows, and two barrels of musket bullets, seven muskets, and another fowling-piece, with some small quantity of powder more; a large bag full of small shot, and a great roll of sheet lead; but this last was so heavy, I could not hoist it up to get it over the ship's side. Besides these things, I took all the men's clothes that I could find, and a spare fore- topsail, a hammock, and some bedding; and with this I loaded my second raft, and brought them all safe on shore, to my very great comfort.

I was under some apprehensions lest, during my absence from the land, my provisions might be devoured on shore: but when I came back, I found no sign of any visitor; only

there sat a creature like a wild cat, upon one of the chests, which, when I came towards it, ran away a little distance and then stood still. She sat very composed and unconcerned, and looked full in my face, as if she had a mind to be acquainted with me. I presented my gun to her, but, as she did not understand it, she was perfectly unconcerned at it, nor did she offer to stir away; upon which I tossed her a bit of biscuit, though, by the way, I was not very free of it, for my store was not great; however, I spared her a bit, I say, and she went to it, smelled of it, and ate it, and looked (as pleased) for more; but I thanked her, and could spare no more: so she marched off.

Having got my second cargo on shore—though I was fain to open the barrels of powder, and bring them by parcels, for they were too heavy, being large casks—I went to work to make me a little tent, with the sail, and some poles, which I cut for that purpose, and into this tent I brought everything that I knew would spoil either with rain or sun; and I piled all the empty chests and casks up in a circle round the tent, to fortify it from any sudden attempt either from man or beast.

Robinson Crusoe : DANIEL DEFOE.

8. Make a summary of the following passage in about 170 of your own words:

A few years before the war it was laid down that Ministries desiring to use land for purposes of defence should consult among themselves by a system of liaison, in order to prevent any clash of interests or overlapping of requirements. Proposals by Government Departments to acquire land were submitted to the Ministry of Works and examined by that Department's Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments with a view to preventing any ancient site from being disturbed or damaged.

Before the war this was no arduous task, since the schemes were comparatively few, but from 1940 onwards they grew enormously in number. It was fortunate indeed that the use of land by the army, even land containing

an ancient site, did not necessarily entail harm being done to that site. There have been many sites within training areas which have throughout remained undamaged.

Certain of the projects of the fighting forces have, however, inevitably involved the destruction of valuable archaeological sites. Chief among these were new airfields, constructed by the Air Ministry or by the Admiralty, whose close and complete collaboration with the Ministry of Works throughout the war enabled early information of the schemes to be available at all times. In a small proportion of the schemes, less than ten per cent, known ancient sites have been affected. Since land suitable for airfields in any quantity has always been difficult to find, it was clearly not in the national interest to alter a project, to avoid any except a supremely important ancient site. Actually, such an alteration was suggested only twice in four years, and obtained once.

The normal procedure was to excavate the ancient site scientifically, and then to permit its remains to be destroyed or covered. Although in a few cases preservation in perpetuity might have been desirable under normal conditions, the procedure adopted did at least provide for an adequate record to be made of the site concerned. Almost always there was time for this to be done, in spite of the fact that in no single instance was the archaeological work allowed to interfere with the progress of the general work on an airfield.

So far emphasis has been laid upon the fact that these excavations were in the nature of rescue work. There is another side of the picture. The very fact that the site was to be destroyed often caused the excavation to be complete. Frequently in the past lack of funds or other causes have prevented archaeologists from doing more than sampling an ancient site by means of a few trenches. Inevitable destruction, coupled with the advance made in the application of scientific methods in archaeological excavation during recent years, has combined to make much of this work on airfield sites as complete as is possible

at the present day. This is a positive gain, which would not have come so soon to archaeology but for the war. Another point is this: many of the sites excavated were remote and comparatively little known. Some of them were far from being promising sites, yet they have been the most productive of valuable results. Almost certainly they would have remained without examination by the spade for a very long time but for the war. This also is positive gain.

From the Ministry of Works booklet, *War and Archaeology in Britain*: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

9. Précis the following passage in not more than 240 of your own words:

The most drastic remedy which could be applied is obviously the total abolition of homework. Abolition has been tried in some schools and is supported in the press and elsewhere by those who claim that classwork in school takes sufficient toll of the child's energies. As against this it is held that the experiments in abolition are few in number and the evidence from them is inconclusive. Moreover, in the present state of our knowledge too much weight cannot be attached to arguments based on the fatigue of the children. No one has yet offered conclusive proof of so general a statement as that for the secondary pupil of normal health, strength and intelligence working under reasonably good conditions some twenty-five hours a week of schooling takes a full toll of his energies. Moreover, where fatigue is evident, it may be—and frequently is—attributable to other causes than homework, for instance, to an insufficient allowance of sleep. It must indeed be conceded that when to the twenty-five hours of schooling is added a long journey between home and school, the further addition of an hour or an hour and a half of homework may well make an excessive burden. Here special arrangements are called for. For some children in this category it might well be said that no homework at all should be exacted.

The first argument here advanced for the retention of homework is not based on educational grounds. The fact has to be faced that we live in a competitive world. In the competition for this or that economic advantage certain distinctions or hall marks, so to call them, are of importance. The most obvious example of this is the possession of certificates of various kinds and the winning of scholarships. Even if examinations, certificates and scholarships were either modified or abolished, still the keener and better trained intelligence will—other things being equal—carry off the world's prizes. It is clearly established that for training the intelligence, homework, judiciously regulated, is a most powerful instrument.

The indisputable fact that many children, under the economic urge, are striving for distinctions which they cannot hope to gain for lack of the necessary ability, cannot be used as an argument against homework as such. The fault here lies on the side either of the head of the school, or of the parents, or of both, who have not been wise enough to restrain the child, or have wrongly gauged his ability, or have been carried away by ambition.

Arguments of a properly educational kind are not wanting—that is to say, arguments which rest upon a belief that the main function of education is to discover the best that is in the child and to help him to develop it. Perhaps the most important gain to be won from homework is the development of self-reliance and initiative, where the pupil is left to face unaided a problem suited to his abilities; or to follow up for himself a subject which appeals to his interests. Another gain, one of a more purely moral order, results from the pupil having to “settle down to his work” and resist distractions. All these advantages naturally accrue in a higher degree where the homework is done in home surroundings—it being postulated that the surroundings are in themselves not unsuitable—than at school under supervision, with the teacher close at hand to give help when called upon. A further advantage of home surroundings does not always appear to be

appreciated. It is an aim of secondary education to help the pupil so to develop his interests and aptitudes that after leaving school he may be able, if he so wishes, to pursue this or that line of study by himself. Homework helps here: it accustoms the pupil to the idea that school surroundings are not the only ones in which he can work profitably.

Lastly, it is not easy to see how a pupil can attain to anything which could properly be called mastery of this or that subject without independent or unsupervised study. It is not only that certain tasks such as the memorising of facts must be done by him alone, but that revision and consolidation are necessary parts of the process leading to the desired end.

From the Ministry of Education Pamphlet, No. 110,
Homework: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

10. Make a précis of the following passage in about 130 of your own words:

Pitt desired power; and he desired it, we really believe, from high and generous motives. He was, in the strict sense of the word, a patriot. He had none of that philanthropy which the great French writers of his time preached to all the nations of Europe. He loved England as an Athenian loved the City of the Violet Crown, as a Roman loved the City of the Seven Hills. He saw his country insulted and defeated. He saw the national spirit sinking. Yet he knew what the resources of the empire, vigorously employed, could effect; and he felt that he was the man to employ them vigorously. "My Lord," he said to the Duke of Devonshire, "I am sure that I can save this country, and that nobody else can."

Desiring, then, to be in power, and feeling that his abilities and the public confidence were not alone sufficient to keep him in power against the wishes of the Court and of the aristocracy, he began to think of a coalition with Newcastle.

Newcastle was equally disposed to a reconciliation. He,

too, had profited by his recent experience. He had found that the Court and the aristocracy, though powerful, were not everything in the State. A strong oligarchical connection, a great borough interest, ample patronage, and secret-service money, might, in quiet times, be all that a Minister needed; but it was unsafe to trust wholly to such support in time of war, of discontent, and of agitation. The composition of the House of Commons was not wholly aristocratical; and, whatever be the composition of large deliberative assemblies, their spirit is always in some degree popular. Where there are free debates, eloquence must have admirers, and reason must make converts. Where there is a free press, the governors must live in constant awe of the opinions of the governed.

Thus these two men, so unlike in character, so lately mortal enemies, were necessary to each other. Newcastle had fallen in November, for want of that public confidence which Pitt possessed, and of that parliamentary support which Pitt was better qualified than any man of his time to give. Pitt had fallen in April, for want of that species of influence which Newcastle had passed his whole life in acquiring and hoarding. Neither of them had power enough to support himself. Each of them had power enough to overturn the other. Their union would be irresistible. Neither the King nor any party in the State would be able to stand against them.

Essays : LORD MACAULAY.

(If further material is required for précis practice, passages 1–12 in Chapter II are suitable for that purpose.)

5

VOCABULARY

The sea washes England,
Where all men speak
A language as rich
As ancient Greek.

Babel: WALTER DE LA MARE.

THE richness of the English language derives from its vast vocabulary. Nobody can hope to attain enjoyment from reading and competence in writing without taking trouble to acquire a good vocabulary. The reading of well-written books, the use of a dictionary, and frequent practice in writing are all essential to success in this task.

At the end of this book a brief history of the development of the English language is given, and in another Appendix you will find lists of the commonest prefixes and suffixes and their meanings. Reference to this material will help you with the exercises in this chapter, and will enable you to understand how the language has changed in the course of its long history and how it has gained the richness and power that come from its enormous range of words.

There are some important facts about the use of words that must be understood by all who wish to think clearly and to write well:

(1) **The unit of thought is the sentence and not the word, though it is of words that sentences are made.**

Consider the following sentences:

(a) The man in the brown suit, who had been seen at the cross-roads at the time of the accident, was an essential witness.

(b) "Come in, man, out of the cold and the rain", he said, struggling to keep the door open for the stranger as the wind howled round the house.

(c) Through the dark valley, and on towards the broad uplands, marches that perverse and stupid, but wonderfully determined creature, man.

The word "man" occurs in all three of these sentences, but has a different meaning in each. Since the word itself does not change, it must be the change in context that gives it its different meanings. Explain the meaning of "man" in each of the above sentences.

EXERCISE 1

Take three words and use each in three different sentences, showing how the meaning can change with the context.

(2) The same word may mean different things to different people.

The word "valve", for example, may mean to me a little glass container with wire inside which glows when I switch on my set, but to the radio engineer it has a much more precise meaning, for he understands how it is made and what it does.

Then again, different people not only *know* different things and, therefore, sometimes understand different things from the same word, they also *feel* differently about words. As we have already seen in Chapter 1, a word can have two different kinds of meaning: the thoughts, ideas and images associated with the word (its reference), and the feelings associated with it (its emotive meaning).

The writer, then, must take the greatest care to see that his reader understands what he wishes him to understand by the words he uses, and that his words arouse in the reader the feelings that the writer wishes to arouse. Great vigilance is necessary: directed thinking is called for, not only in the planning of the essay, the arrangement and ordering of paragraphs, and the variation of sentence-structure, but in the choice of individual words. Every word must be *meant*; the word must be suited to the context and the context to the word. Loose writing reveals careless thinking.

The practice of definition is a good exercise to encourage precision in the use of words.

EXERCISES

2. Define each of the following words, remembering that words may have more than one meaning. *After* you have attempted to define them, look them up in a dictionary and check the accuracy and completeness of your definitions:

manipulate; organ; paddock; plod; rod; ghost; gravity;
habit; homicide; model.

3. Construct sentences in which each of the following words is used (*a*) referentially, and (*b*) emotively (20 sentences in all):

engineer (verb); rig (verb); capitulate; trade union;
monopoly; aristocracy; patronage; country; patriot; army.

4. Explain the following expressions briefly:

to beg the question; to temporise; to box the compass;
to get the best of both worlds; to burn the candle at both ends.

5. Select the correct definition from the following:

mortuary is brickwork

disappointment

a place for the temporary reception of the
dead

a deadening of the limbs

plummet	is a little plum a sounding-line graphite a nestling's feather
ossification	is being snubbed becoming stupid over-eating the process or state of being changed into a bony substance
proselytise	is to demonstrate angrily to turn verse into prose to make converts to precede
subjugate	is to strangle to conquer part of a verb to delegate authority.

6. Define the following:

an emergency; a field; subsidence; a postage stamp;
an examination; enthusiasm; a portrait; a bicycle; a
tripod; a grammar school.

7. Discuss the emotive meaning of the words in italics in
the following sentences. Is their reference important?

(a) Car for sale. Owner-driven with *loving* care. *Sacrifice* for quick sale.

(b) *Glowing health* for you! Drink Todger's *sparkling* fruit
juice.

(c) Cromwell's *steely* mind and *lofty* ideals *bound* his soldiers
to his cause.

(d) Jones is a *renegade*; he went over to Smith's *faction* a
year ago. Brown, on the other hand, was *converted* to our
cause last week.

(e) Be *modern*, be *wise*! Use *Blitzo* for flies!

A careful reading of advertisements and of political
propaganda will show you how often writers pretend to
want us to think when really they want us to feel. In

using words ourselves and in studying the use that others make of them, we must be clear in recognising the *proper* occasions to emphasise the reference or the emotive meaning of language.

(3) Words can be used either literally or figuratively.

One of the commonest sources of misunderstanding is the failure to distinguish between these two uses of words. In the following examples the distinction is obvious:

- (a) Don't go too near the edge, the lake is very deep.
- (b) They thought they'd got him then, but he was too deep for them.

A careless reader, however, could go wrong with these :

- (a) The statesmen of thirty nations signed the protocol with a golden pen.
- (b) Never before had language been used with such a wealth of images and such rich epithets as those that flowed from the golden pen of Demetrius.

EXERCISE 8

Use each of the following words in two sentences, employing them literally in the first and figuratively in the second:

smiled, babbled, hard, father, cog, keen, head, rusty, gleam, iron.

In order to understand the meaning of words fully we must know something about their ancestry. We said earlier in this chapter that it was necessary to use a dictionary frequently if we were to build up an adequate vocabulary. It is not enough, however, merely to look up the definition of a word, we must also know its derivation if we are to use it with full understanding. That is why the dictionary that we use must be an etymological dictionary. In Appendix A you will find a short account of the way in which English added words

to its vocabulary and changed its structure from Anglo-Saxon times right down to the 16th century. But we have always been great importers of words and the language has not stood still in the last four hundred years. Indeed, though Modern English (as opposed to Old and Middle English—see Appendix A) was fully developed by about 1500, its vocabulary has continued to show that capacity to absorb new words which is its most remarkable feature.

Apart from the acquisition of new words by conquest in the distant past, English has continued to add to its vocabulary through:

(a) Literary influence: words from Latin, Greek and the modern European languages.

(b) War: words from Dutch, German and French, in particular.

(c) Trade: words derived from Arabic, Spanish, Malay, Turkish and almost every spoken tongue.

(d) Word-making (or “coining”): words based upon foreign roots and combined with prefixes and suffixes mainly from the Greek, Latin, French and German languages, to express new ideas in science or psychology and philosophy.

METHODS OF WORD FORMATION

(i) By direct borrowing from other languages. E.g. Dutch: spool, skipper, trek, commando. Arabic: coffee, algebra. Egyptian: gypsy, oasis. German: waltz, swindle. Hebrew: jubilee, amen. Italian: stanza, sonnet. Persian: bazaar, caravan. Russian: bolshevik, steppe. Spanish: Armada, banana.

(ii) By the addition of prefixes and suffixes. E.g. wise, unwise; priest, priesthood; hard, harden; quick, quickly. (See Appendix B for a list of the commonest prefixes and suffixes, their derivations and their meanings.)

(iii) By joining two or more words together. E.g. compound nouns: he-goat, looking-glass, out-law, cut-purse, up-start. Compound adjectives: God-fearing, nation-wide, sky-blue. Compound verbs: under-write, set-off, scandal-monger.

N.B. Hyphens are not always used, especially if the word has been in force for a considerable time. In some cases, the use or omission of the hyphen causes a change in meaning or function. E.g. man-of-war, man of war; cut-throat, cut throat.

(iv) By the invention of words to describe scientific ideas. E.g. geology (Greek—*gē*, earth; *logos*, discourse.)

(v) By derivation, (a) from words already in existence in the language; e.g. glass—(to) glaze; sit—(to) set; fall—(to) fell; (b) from foreign words: e.g. bicycle from Latin *bi* (*bis*)—twice, and Greek *kyklos*—wheel. (Words containing elements from more than one language are known as *hybrids*.)

(vi) By derivation from proper names either in the English or in foreign languages. E.g. Academy from the Greek name *Akademia*, the garden near Athens where Plato taught; boycott, from Captain Boycott who was ostracised by his Irish neighbours in 1880; bowie-knife, from Colonel Bowie who designed a dagger-knife in 1827.

SYNONYMS, ANTONYMS AND HOMOPHONES

Synonym (Greek—*synōnymon*: *syn*—with, *onoma*—a name) a word having the same, or very nearly the same meaning as another or others. Because of its constant borrowings from other languages and its mixed descent, English is unusually rich in synonyms. A good writer can, therefore, draw upon a great variety of words and can select those that give the exact shades of meaning

that he requires. Very rarely do two words mean precisely the same thing, for they often carry different emotional values or feelings. When selecting words from a list of synonyms, we must consider the following points:

(a) The precise shade of meaning required. (i) The mayor began the race. (ii) The mayor started the race. (Which of these is the better version, and why?)

(b) The respective merits in any given case of native English words or of foreign borrowings. (i) The man began to sing. (ii) The man commenced to sing. (Which of these is the better version, and why?)

(c) Euphony—the *sound* of the words. (i) The general generally inspected the troops very thoroughly. (ii) The general usually inspected the troops very thoroughly. (Which of these is the better version, and why?)

(d) The feelings aroused by the words. (i) After inheriting a fortune, the beggar surrounded himself with regal splendour. (ii) After inheriting a fortune, the beggar surrounded himself with kingly splendour. (Which of these is the better version, and why? Compare with (b) above.)

Antonym (Greek—*anti*—against, *onoma*—a name) either of two words having opposite meanings: long, short; easy, difficult; known, unknown.

Homophone (Greek—*homos*—the same, *phōnē*—sound) a word pronounced exactly as another but having a different meaning: fare, fair; be, bee; would, wood.

EXERCISES

1. Criticise the following passages:

(A)

Are You contented with your present pay and prospects? Thousands of ambitious men owe their four-figure salaries to our training. Send no money. A postcard brings by return FREE book describing the course that

will enable you to join the ranks of happy, satisfied, top-grade Officials. Do not delay. Send to-day. This offer is exclusive to readers of the *Daily Blank*.

(B)

(Take these passages together)

(i)

Replying to the debate yesterday evening, the Minister of Space-Ship Production stated that although very great progress had been made in the design of reactor rockets, the problems still to be overcome were very considerable. It was dangerous to prophesy about a subject like this, still in the experimental stage, and he wished the House to be cautious in accepting reports that had appeared in the more sensational organs of the Press. Such reports were based rather on the desire to excite their readers than on reliable information. He was referring in particular to the recent statements that a paper with a very wide circulation had published to the effect that Government timidity was responsible for the delay in launching the satellite planet. This was simply not true. The satellite planet had not been launched because it was not ready for launching. Preliminary tests by the interstellar scientists who had designed the planet had revealed that certain modifications were essential, and these were being made with all speed. The Minister said that he was aware that the reports in the *Daily Rocket* were based upon the opinions of Professor Octopod, but that while he had the greatest respect for the work done by the Professor in his youth on the muscular development of centipedes, he was by no means convinced of the learned gentleman's ability to criticise the research now being undertaken in the somewhat different field of inter-planetary travel. However, Dr Atomson, the head of the Government's scientific research team, had invited the Professor to communicate his views to him in a memorandum, a mode of expression that might prove more conducive to fruitful discussion of this highly technical subject than the columns of the *Daily Rocket*.

As to the charge that the Government was starving space-ship research, the Minister said that the fact that one-tenth of the national income was to be spent on it in the current financial year should be a sufficient answer.

(From the *Daily Examiner*, May 1st, 2000.)

(ii)

GOVERNMENT EVADES "THE ROCKET'S" CHARGES!

VICIOUS ATTACK ON DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST REVEALS MINISTER'S DOUBTS

A typically hesitant speech by the Minister showed an anxious House last night that the Government is badly shaken by the refusal of the *Daily Rocket* to drop its probe into Space-Ship muddle. Unable to deny the authority of Octopod's scientific eminence, the Minister saw fit to sneer at his age before inviting him to help clear up the chaos that bureaucrats have made of Britain's only Sat-Plan experiment. A curious way of enlisting his services! We have reason to believe, however, that the Professor will respond to the call, putting patriotism before pride. In a feeble attempt to deny our charges of Treasury blight on vital research, a smoke screen of economic jargon was let loose. Plain men will demand plain facts in this matter, and we shall continue to press for the blunt truth. THE STARS TO-DAY Not To-MORROW! is *The Rocket's* slogan, and in this, as in all its needs, we shall be the nation's watchdog.

(From the *Daily Rocket*, May 1st, 2000.)

2. Using the correct prefix, give the opposites of the following:

obedient, faithful, practical, cautious, legible, understanding, parity, humanise, reverent, climax.

3. Give the meaning of the prefix in the following:

retrograde, insecure, sinecure, antechamber, antidote, illiberal, anoint, indecent, delegate, denationalise.

4. Use your dictionary to compile the following lists:

10 words derived from Old or Middle English; 10 words derived from Latin; 10 words derived from French; and 10 words derived from Greek.

5. Form adjectives from the following by adding suffixes and making any necessary changes in spelling:

pity, love, discern, poet, impress, fiend, learn, friend, fuss, preface.

6. Give the abstract nouns formed from the following adjectives:

gullible, rough, secret, enthusiastic, heroic, durable, violent, bound, frequent, constant.

7. Add suffixes to form the diminutive of each of the following:

lamb, lad, hill, cigar, bull, cock, duck, drop, stream, man.

8. Give the opposites of the following:

heterogeneous, explicit, objective, irresolute, induction, malevolence, mature, sense, contaminate, pacify.

9. Give the verbs corresponding to:

liquid, danger, witch, emission, feeble, boss, drama, popular, fertile, clean.

10. Give the adjectives corresponding to:

whim, study, sarcasm, giant, toleration, vociferate, severity, bishop, mason, conscience.

11. Make use of your dictionary to discover the original meaning of the following:

prevent, fusty, ardour, silly, villain.

What do the words mean now?

12. Find words beginning with each of the following prefixes and give a definition of each word:

auto-, circum-, contra-, demi-, exo-, extra-, for-, fore-, hemi-, hyper-, hypo-, inter-, intra-, intro-, mono-, neg-, pan-, peri-, poly-, ultra-.

13. Form adjectives from each of the following and use each of the adjectives in a sentence:

Amazon, Cicero, Circe, Colossus, Elysium, Epicurus, Fabius, Flora, Hercules, Homer, Laodicea, Lent, Maea-

der, Mars, Mercury, Pharisee, Plato, Procrustes, Proteus, Satan, Socrates, Sparta, Stentor, Styx, Tantalus, Titan.

14. Write sentences to show the correct use of each of the following names:

Argus, Atlas, Bellona, Helicon, Hesperides, Hippocrene, Janus, Lethe, Midas, Olympus.

15. Explain the meaning and derivation of each of the following:

bowdlerise, dunce, hooligan, jeremiad, lynch, tarmac, martinet, mesmerise, philippic, quixotic, sardonic, volcano, canter, gypsy, utopian, Spoonerism, Malapropism, Wellerism, Jehu, Termagant.

16. Write sentences to make clear the difference in meaning between the following pairs of words:

affect, effect; affectation, affection; allude, elude; allusion, illusion; alternate, alternative; bathos, pathos; canvas, canvass; compliment, complement; contemptible, contemptuous; council, counsel; credible, credulous; decease, disease; earthly, earthy; effective, effectual; emigrant, immigrant; epitaph, epithet; euphuism, euphemism; facility, faculty; formally, formerly.

17. Select the correct word to fill the gap in each of the following:

(a) It is dangerous to drop orange . . . on the pavement.
(peal, peel.)

(b) To become a great batsman, one must (practice, practise.)

(c) The . . . difficulty facing this firm is lack of capital.
(principal, principle.)

(d) Ulysses was able to . . . a way out of all dangers.
(device, devise.)

(e) He was soon promoted to high . . . office. (judicial, judicious.)

(f) Able and . . . , he eventually reaped his due reward.
(industrious, industrial.)

(g) The ship laden with . . . went down on the Goodwin Sands. (specie, species.)

- (h) Our unwelcome guest . . . for a long time. (staid, stayed.)
- (i) The suspect was . . . in High Street. (reprehended, apprehended.)
- (j) The blister on his heel was (sceptic, septic.)
- (k) The marsh could not be drained, and it was, therefore, . . . to lay the foundations of the proposed building. (unpractical, impracticable.)
- (l) Faced with a new word, he had . . . to his dictionary. (recourse, resource.)
- (m) It was only a . . . structure, so the planning authorities did not worry about it. (temporal, temporary.)
- (n) The . . . chief was invited to the ceremony. (tantamount, paramount.)
- (o) At the end of that year he wrote a brilliant (satire, satyr.)
- (p) They sell . . . at this shop. (stationary, stationery.)
- (q) George Washington was noted for his (voracity, veracity.)
- (r) He was indeed a . . . figure and was decorated by many European Governments. (notable, notorious.)
- (s) The . . . machine calls at the farms in October. (thrashing, threshing.)
- (t) He wrote a . . . of the novel for a leading journal. (revue, review.)
18. Form nouns corresponding to the following adjectives:
delirious, splendid, magnificent, grand, industrious,
slothful, comic, noble, long, worthless.
19. Express the meaning of the following in one word:
pertaining to autumn; an exact copy; a low platform;
one who looks on the bright side of life; a writer of
tragedies.
20. Explain the difference in meaning between the following pairs of words:
demagogue, democrat; confine, consign; each, both;
missal, missile; officious, official.

21. Use each of the words in the following groups in sentences that bring out the different meanings of the words:

- (a) cold-blooded, imperturbable, dispassionate.
- (b) disinterested, uninterested.
- (c) meek, tolerant, patient.
- (d) care, anxiety, solicitude.
- (e) staidness, gravity, sobriety.
- (f) fascination, infatuation, fanaticism.
- (g) competence, affluence, opulence.
- (h) obedience, compliance, submission.
- (i) revolt, rebellion, mutiny.
- (j) atheist, agnostic, infidel.

22. Use the following in sentences to show their meaning:
 a Roland for an Oliver; Achilles' heel; the acid test; an Admirable Crichton; the alpha and omega; any port in a storm; the apple of discord; as the crow flies; at daggers drawn; at sixes and sevens; the psychological moment; Attic salt; an axe to grind; a Barmecide feast; to beard the lion in his den; no bed of roses; all beer and skittles; *bête noir*; between Scylla and Charybdis; 'twixt cup and lip; between the devil and the deep blue sea; the bird has flown; birds of a feather; to bite off more than one can chew; to blow hot and cold.

N.B. It is necessary to know the meaning of the above expressions because they have been—and still are—so often used, but they are now clichés, and you should avoid them in your own writing.

23. Use the following in sentences to bring out their meaning:

cosmopolitan, bureaucracy, cynic, illiterate, matricide, colloquialism, provincialism, automaton, moron, euphonious.

24. Explain the meaning of the italicised words in the following:

- (a) His trouble came as *a bolt from the blue*.
- (b) He was not popular because he *blew his own trumpet* so.

- (c) Falstaff was the prince of *boon companions*.
- (d) He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.
- (e) After a whole year of *bowing and scraping* to the duke he managed to gain his patronage.
- (f) They sat silently in the carriage for many miles, but at last *the ice was broken* with a remark about the weather.
- (g) He did not enjoy the lecturing but it *brought grist to his mill*, and so he endured it year after year.
- (h) I thought he might help, but I soon found that I was leaning on a *broken reed*.
- (i) Smith was in a *brown study* and did not reply.
- (j) *Building castles in the air* may be pleasant, but it doesn't help.

N.B. The note to Exercise 22 applies to this Exercise as well.

25. Give a synonym for each of the following:

courage, justice, dexterity, deception, probability, discern, acrid, potion, velocity, originator, strength, adamant, inert, discontinuance, stable (adj.), rotate, lucky, precipitately, prospect (noun), perpetually.

26. Give an antonym for each of the following:

insert, regularity, change, production, presence, summit, exterior, prow, sharpness, ingress, quiet (adj.), impulse, progression, material (adj.), transparent, advertency, confutation, scholar, memory, latent.

27. Explain the following, using each in a sentence that brings out its meaning:

to burn one's boats; to burn the midnight oil; to burn one's fingers; a burning question; to bury the hatchet; to buy a pig in a poke; butter wouldn't melt in his mouth; by hook or by crook; by rule of thumb; by the sweat of one's brow.

N.B. See note to Exercise 22.

28. Give a brief synonymous expression for each of the following:

cakes and ale; call a spade a spade; to cast one's bread upon the waters; to cast pearls before swine; castles in

Spain; caviare to the general; *ceteris paribus*; *chacun à son goût*; a chapter of accidents; cheek by jowl; to chew the cud; cloistered virtue; a consummation devoutly to be wished; cook someone's goose for him; a counsel of perfection; to cost a pretty penny; *coup de grâce*; crocodile tears; to cross the Rubicon; to cry for the moon.

N.B. Clichés again!

29. From what foreign countries are the following words derived:

cambric, champagne, galleon, sherry, emu, port (wine), samovar, vodka, knout, opera, piano, milliner, knapsack, easel, gauntlet, parchment, turkey, shawl, peach, orange, alcohol, arsenal, sugar, chess, cannibal, tobacco, ranch, pampas, blarney, coracle, flannel, tweed, whisky, dinghy, cashmere, fakir, silk, nankeen, ketchup, amok, panzer, plunder, chorale?

30. Write sentences to show the difference in meaning between the following words:

eminent, imminent; masterful, masterly; urban, urbane; elicit, illicit; transpire, respire; simulate, dissimulate; stalactite, stalagmite; sensible, sensitive; radical, radicle; marshal, martial; lineament, liniment; luxurious, luxuriant; literal, literate; personal, personnel; perspicacity, perspicuity; moral, morale; precede, proceed; slander, libel; sarcasm, irony; precipitate, precipitous; temporise, extemporise; successfully, successively; troop, troupe; cast, caste; waive, wave.

31. Substitute the right words for those incorrectly used in the following:

(a) The blow on his head made him subconscious, and only his superb physical condition enabled him to survive the reprehensible attack.

(b) The old man became very indigent when it was suggested that at his age only a nominative salary need be paid for his services.

(c) Late night cessions do not allow Members of Parliament sufficient hours in the arms of Orpheus.

(d) The panacea that he wrote in honour of the admiral made him the envy of the literary world. His enemies now prosecuted him with transcendent benevolence and he died in poverty. None of his works is now extent.

(e) His illusion to the country from whose borne no travailler returns and his melodious annunciation moved his audience deeply.

32. Fill the space in the following sentences with the most suitable *single word*:

(a) At first he found the tropical heat and heavy rain very trying but he soon became

(b) It was a wise move to . . . this ambassador to the Court of St. James, for he was well-liked in England.

(c) The . . . slave used his freedom to campaign tirelessly on behalf of his comrades who were still enslaved.

(d) As there were no . . . circumstances, the judge sentenced him to the maximum term of imprisonment.

(e) His fine collection of rare books earned him the reputation of being the leading . . . of his day.

(f) By murdering his mother, Nero added to his other crimes that of

(g) In posing as a gourmet, he gave rein to his natural greed and became a mere

(h) Transport problems made the proposal to meet twice a year impracticable, and the idea of a . . . conference was abandoned in favour of an annual one.

(i) It was sad to see these former friends quarrelling in public and hurling accusations at each other until the street rang with their mutual

(j) To fall from the zenith of one's career to the . . . in six months may constitute a record, but hardly one that we shall wish to emulate.

33. Explain the origin of the following well-worn expressions, and for each give a simple, clear equivalent:

to cry wolf once too often; to cut off one's nose to spite one's face; to cut one's coat according to one's cloth; to sever the Gordian knot; a Daniel come to judgement;

Dead Sea fruit; *deus ex machina*; to die in harness; to die in the last ditch; a dog in the manger; down at heels; to draw a bow at a venture; to draw in one's horns; Dutch courage; to eat humble pie; Eclipse first and the rest nowhere; *enfant terrible*; an eye for an eye; a feather in one's cap; feet of clay; *fiat justitia, ruat caelum*; to fiddle while Rome burns; filthy lucre; a flash in the pan; the fleshpots of Egypt; flotsam and jetsam; a fly in the ointment; a fool's paradise; forbidden fruit; to foul one's own nest; from Dan to Beersheba; a gay Lothario; gilding the lily; to grasp the nettle; the Greek kalends; the green-eyed monster; to have other fish to fry; to help a lame dog over a stile; to hide one's light under a bushel; Hobson's choice.

34. By using different prefixes, form as many words as you can from the roots “-cede”, “-vert”, and “-ject”.

35. Bring out the different shades of meaning by using the following words in sentences:

insinuation, implication, innuendo; futile, useless, ineffectual; inelegant, graceless, ungraceful; obstinate, tenacious, stubborn; benefit, profit, advantage; plan, scheme, project; utility, usefulness, efficacy; disease, illness, sickness; performer, operator, perpetrator; retaliatory, retributive, recriminatory.

36. Explain the meaning of the adjective in the following:

humdrum existence; dulcet notes; febrile condition; bloated cheeks; retrospective payment; catastrophic mistake; antediluvian fashion; hypothetical case; monotheistic faith; transient significance.

37. Distinguish the meaning of the following by using them in sentences:

compose, comprise; inimitable, inimical; populous, populace; historic, histrionic; continuous, continual; gamble, gambol; flaunt, flout; executioner, executor; immerse, emerge; impressible, impressive; incumbent, incubus; indict, indite; ensure, insure; deprecate, depreciate; evince, convince; confident, confidant; exceptionable, exceptional; imperative, imperious; impair, impeach; spectre, sceptre.

38. Make clear in any way you please the meaning of the following over-worked expressions:

a pretty kettle of fish; the primrose path; to pull the chestnuts out of the fire; to put one's hand to the plough; to pocket one's pride; a Pyrrhic victory; Rabelaisian humour; to rob Peter to pay Paul; a rough diamond; in sackcloth and ashes; the salt of the earth; to be unable to see the wood for the trees; to wait to see which way the cat will jump; to set by the ears; to show the white feather; six of one and half a dozen of the other; a skeleton at the feast; to smell a rat; to smell of the lamp; a sop to Cerberus; a square peg in a round hole; the sword of Damocles; Spenlow and Jorkins; to take the gilt off the gingerbread; there's the rub.

39. Explain the meaning of the words in italics in the following sentences:

(a) He was eventually *hoist with his own petard* despite his clever scheming.

(b) The autocrat had a great disdain for the *hoi polloi*.

(c) His pursuers were now *in full cry*, and he was soon taken.

(d) "Nurse!" cried the patient angrily, "do not allow that *Job's comforter* to come here again."

(e) If the truth be known, every man has his *King Charles's head*.

(f) We should indeed praise famous men, but this is *laying it on with a trowel*.

(g) "What did you think of the play?" "It was rather like the *curate's egg*."

(h) He always gets the *lion's share*, small though he is.

(i) For many years he worked on, *ploughing his lonely furrow* with faith and cheerfulness.

(j) Time and again the harassed administrator received orders from the capital to *make bricks without straw*.

(k) "Surely the amendment is reasonable; after all, we are not subject to the *laws of the Medes and the Persians*."

(l) The difficulties were enormous but, *mirabile dictu*, the ship was towed off the rocks.

(m) There are some customs that are *more honoured in the breach than the observance*.

(n) The fight was going badly for the English, but they *nailed their colours to the mast* and in the end wore down the other side.

(o) They were of different nationality but *of the same kidney*.

(p) Even the most experienced actor is *on tenterhooks* as he waits for his first cue each night.

(q) Sherlock is *on the wrong tack* this time.

(r) Bad enough to *out-Herod Herod* and infamous enough to glory in doing so.

(s) "*He who pays the piper calls the tune*," said the eccentric millionaire, as he ordered his reluctant gardener to sow dandelions on the lawns.

(t) Though shunned at first, the wily diplomat soon became *persona grata* at the Ruritanian Court.

N.B. See the note to Exercise 22.

40. Replace the words in italics by a single word:

(a) Farmers now make use of *apparatuses for hatching eggs*.

(b) His antagonists soon realised that he was *not to be wearied out*.

(c) Calverley was noted for his *comic imitations of the style of other writers*.

(d) *Single eyeglasses* are not now in fashion.

(e) These institutions are *in a dying state*.

(f) It was not surprising that he failed at his audition, for he read the test-piece in a *single, unvaried tone*.

(g) At the front of the mansion was a *range of columns with a roof forming a covered walk*.

(i) During the King's minority the Lord Chancellor was *invested with royal power*.

(j) His knowledge was confined to the *first elements* of the subject.

(k) The crowd was now *in violent commotion*, and the troops were called out.

6

ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS is the process of breaking a sentence up into its various parts to show the relationship between those parts, and the function that each part performs in relation to the whole sentence.

A sentence is “a set of words complete in itself, containing subject and predicate . . . and conveying a statement, question, or command.” (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*.)

It follows from this that:

- (i) A set of words containing a finite verb and *making complete sense on its own* is a sentence.
- (ii) A set of words containing a finite verb but *not making complete sense on its own* is a subordinate clause.
- (iii) A set of words *not* containing a finite verb and *not* making complete sense on its own is a phrase. E.g.
 - (i) He swung his heavy satchel, which was loaded with books, over his shoulder.
 - (ii) . . . which was loaded with books
 - (iii) . . . over his shoulder.

A finite verb is a verb that is limited by person, number, and tense (i.e. it has a subject).

Grammatically, there are three kinds of sentences:

- (i) Simple sentences.
- (ii) Complex sentences.
- (iii) Double and Multiple sentences. (N.B. Multiple sentences are sometimes called Compound sentences.)

1. SIMPLE SENTENCE ANALYSIS

A simple sentence contains one finite verb and makes complete sense. When analysing the simple sentence we use detailed analysis, showing the relationship between the words in the sentence. E.g. The fine old house stood empty for twenty years.

Detailed analysis:

Subject word	house
Enlargement of the subject	:	.	.	.	The fine old
Finite verb.	stood
Subjective complement		.	.	.	empty
Adverbial qualification		.	.	.	for twenty years

Every simple sentence contains both subject and predicate. These two essential parts can be further analysed as follows:

SUBJECT. Subject word.

Enlargement of the subject.

N.B. The subject may take different forms: it may be (i) a noun; (ii) a pronoun; (iii) an infinitive acting as a noun; (iv) an adjective acting as a noun; (v) a verbal noun; (vi) a noun phrase. E.g.

- (i) Noun. The sailors clung to the rigging.
- (ii) Pronoun. They had little hope of rescue.
- (iii) Infinitive. To escape seemed impossible.
- (iv) Adjective. The weak soon gave up.
- (v) Verbal noun (or Gerund). Hoping gave the others strength.
- (vi) Noun phrase. How to communicate with the shore was the problem.

The subject may also be “understood”. E.g. “Halt!” is a sentence. Its analysis is:

Subject word	you (understood)
Finite verb.	:	.	.	.	halt

PREDICATE. The finite verb.

Adverbial qualification of the finite verb (often called "extension of the finite verb").

Direct object.

Enlargement of the object.

Indirect object.

Complement of the finite verb.

N.B. Complements, as their name suggests, complete the meaning of the predicate which, when verbs of "incomplete predication" are used, would otherwise be incomplete. E.g.

They made him *their chief*.

A *subjective complement* refers to the subject. E.g.
The form started *laughing*.

An *objective complement* refers to the object. E.g.
The master made the form *work*.

Examples of simple sentence analysis:

1. After much deliberation, they gave John his passport.

Analysis:

Subject word	they
Finite verb	gave
Extension of the finite verb .	After much deliberation
Direct object	passport
Enlargement of the object .	his
Indirect object	John

2. The loss of the match made him very unhappy.

Analysis:

Subject word	loss
Enlargement of the subject .	The, of the match
Finite verb	made
Direct object	him
Objective complement .	very unhappy

3. Can you help him quickly?

Analysis:

Subject word	you
Finite verb	can
Extension of the finite verb .	quickly help
Direct object	him

EXERCISE 1

Analyse the following simple sentences:

- (i) Running swiftly, they brought Athens the news of victory.
- (ii) Go home at once.
- (iii) He wished to show us his collection of stamps.
- (iv) Who can explain this difficult problem?
- (v) The cautious electors voted him President in 1885.
- (vi) Searching for cynical explanations became his vice in his old age.
- (vii) How to make ends meet can be a difficult problem these days.
- (viii) Give him the pirates' map without delay.
- (ix) Fortunately, the timely bugle call rallied the despairing troops to a renewed effort.
- (x) You would hardly credit his stupidity.

2. COMPLEX SENTENCE ANALYSIS

A complex sentence contains more than one finite verb, and consists of an independent or main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. (Remember the definition of a subordinate clause on page 166.) E.g.

He ran towards the horse which was tethered outside the castle.

In that sentence, the words in italics make complete sense on their own and form an independent or main clause. The other words contain a finite verb, but do not make complete sense on their own: they form a subordinate clause which depends for its sense on the main clause.

Subordinate clauses do the work of either a noun, an adjective, or an adverb, and are, therefore, called noun, *adjectival*, or *adverbial* clauses.

(1) *Noun Clauses*

These do the work of a noun and are, therefore, found:

A. As the *subject* of a verb. E.g.

That I shall win cannot be certain.

Where he was going will never be known.

What measures can be taken will be taken.

B. As the *object* of a verb. E.g.

He was told *that all was lost*.

I saw *what I must do*.

He explained to the captain *where the treasure was to be found*.

C. As the *complement* of a verb. E.g.

His answer was *that Rome must perish*.

The general's opinion is *that we shall have a hard struggle*.

It seems *that the conditions will be accepted*.

D. In *apposition* to a noun or a pronoun. E.g.

The objection *that the troops were weary* was brushed aside.

The fact *that he was over the age-limit* prevented his election.

He considered a proposal *that he should resign*.

N.B. To avoid confusion between the noun clause in apposition and the adjectival clause (see below), try to substitute *which* for *that*. If you can do so, the clause is adjectival.

E. As the *object of a preposition*. E.g.

He was not upset by *what had been said*.

The defence rested its case on *what could be proved*.

It was the familiar question of *how the money could be raised*.

EXERCISE 2

Pick out any noun clauses in the following complex sentences and state their function (N.B. No. (ii)).

- (i) That he had given all counted heavily in his favour at his trial.
- (ii) I am quite undismayed by the opposition that has been raised.
- (iii) Caesar rejected the advice that he should retire.
- (iv) The old man was informed that his services were no longer required.
- (v) I know why this plan will fail.
- (vi) How the crime had been committed was clear to Sherlock Holmes.
- (vii) Tell me what I can do.
- (viii) His reason for turning back was that he was overcome by the cold.
- (ix) The report that the centre-forward had been injured was untrue.
- (x) It was happily anticipated that the picnic would be a success.

(2) Adjectival Clauses

These do the work of an adjective by qualifying a noun or a pronoun. E.g.

The batsmen *who opened the innings* were soon out.

The horse, *which was now weary*, stumbled and fell.

This is the beggar *to whom I gave sixpence*.

N.B. (i) Adjectival clauses are introduced by relative pronouns. (When "that" introduces an adjectival clause — "This is the lighthouse that took so long to build" — it is a relative pronoun.)

N.B. (ii) Adjectival clauses can also be introduced by relative adverbs: "whence", "whither", "why", "when", "where", "wherein". E.g.

This is the country where I was born. ("Where" = "in which": the antecedent is "country".)

N.B. (iii) Care must be taken not to confuse adjectival and adverbial clauses:

We know the exact day *when he will leave*.

In this sentence the subordinate clause is adjectival. It qualifies the noun "day" in the main clause, *not* the verb "know".

EXERCISE 3

Pick out the adjectival clauses in the following complex sentences and name the antecedent:

- (i) The old lady, whose strange behaviour intrigued us all, left the ship at Suez.
- (ii) This is the treasure for which so many men died.
- (iii) The clouds which had been massing stealthily now poured out all their venom.
- (iv) Special envoys were sent who were to arrange a peace between the warring powers.
- (v) Here stood the dear old house in which I lived for so many happy years.

EXERCISE 4

Replace the adjectives and adjectival phrases in the following by adjectival clauses:

- (i) The house was overlooked by a towering rock.
- (ii) Benefits conferred now are better than future ones.
- (iii) His great services were rewarded by a monthly pittance.
- (iv) You may kill him but you cannot destroy his universal fame.
- (v) They took a desperate risk which had an unexpected result.

(3) Adverbial Clauses

These do the work of adverbs by qualifying a verb. There are ten kinds of adverbial clauses:

A. Adverbial clauses of time

E.g.

When I am tired, I shall stop work.

Whenever his name is announced, I switch off.

He always seems to be missing when he is wanted.

To identify an adverbial clause of time, ask the question *When?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

B. Adverbial clauses of place

E.g.

Wherever the English settle, cricket is played.

I shall settle down where the countryside is unspoilt.

The story of his deeds was told wherever his name was known.

To identify an adverbial clause of place, ask the question *Where?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

C. Adverbial clauses of manner

E.g.

He ran down the road as if he had gone mad.

They picked the bombs up as coolly as if they were picking flowers.

As he lived, so he died.

To identify an adverbial clause of manner, ask the question *In what manner?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

N.B. Some grammarians treat the adverbial clause of manner as one kind of adverbial clause of comparison (see below), but it is simpler to treat it separately.

D. Adverbial clauses of condition

E.g.

If I am welcome, I will come.

He would not have yielded unless defeat had been inevitable.

He granted the charter on condition that his rights were respected.

To identify an adverbial clause of condition, ask the question *Upon what condition?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

E. Adverbial clauses of concession

E.g.

Though fashions have changed, he still wears his frock coat.

He will be true even if all the others desert.

Although he is so tired, he must lead the way.

N.B. The adverbial clause of concession expresses a general rule or state of affairs to which the main clause provides an exception. E.g. *He spoke calmly, though*

I could detect his anger. The idea underlying this sentence is: "Angry men do not, as a rule, speak calmly, but he did so although he was angry." (Work out the idea underlying the three examples given above.)

F. Adverbial clauses of comparison (or degree)

E.g.

He was a far better captain than Johnson was.

The committee gave you better terms than it gave him.

He is taller than his brother.

N.B. The verb in the adverbial clause of comparison is often "understood" (see the last example above).

To identify an adverbial clause of comparison, ask the question *To what extent?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

G. Adverbial clauses of cause (or reason)

E.g.

The airliner was late because the captain had flown on the wrong course.

Since he was short of capital, he was driven to raise a loan.

As his ability was not in doubt, he was considered a strong candidate.

To identify an adverbial clause of cause, ask the question *For what cause?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

H. Adverbial clauses of purpose

E.g.

He saved for years so that he could buy that house.

Please regard this as confidential in order that secrecy may be maintained.

Lest he should fail, he worked assiduously.

To identify an adverbial clause of purpose, ask the question *With what purpose?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

I. Adverbial clauses of result

E.g.

He was so greedy that his friends came to despise him.

The train was so often late that regular travellers arrived at the station well after the advertised time.

The state of corruption was such that even the judges were suspected.

To identify an adverbial clause of result, ask the question *With what result?* after the finite verb in the related clause.

J. Adverbial clauses of parenthesis

E.g.

This condition which, as it happened, was inserted as an afterthought, prevented the denunciation of the agreement.

If the sea breaks through, as well it may, we must evacuate the area.

When he shows his hand, as he undoubtedly will, his enemies will get a shock.

N.B. The adverbial clause of parenthesis stands aside from the rest of the sentence and comments on the main or on one of the subordinate clauses.

EXERCISE 4

Pick out the adverbial clauses in the following complex sentences, and state their kind and function:

- (i) As soon as darkness fell he slipped quietly away from the vanguard.
- (ii) Where the bowmen were posted they erected a stout palisade.
- (iii) He uttered his challenge as bravely as he could.
- (iv) Unless we have a reply by midnight we shall declare war.
- (v) Though it was so dark they could see perfectly by the light of their powerful headlamps.
- (vi) I had a better bat than he.
- (vii) Seeing that he was unwilling to take a risk I did not promote him.
- (viii) So that he could take a better aim the sniper

raised himself from the ground. (ix) The party aroused such opposition that its organisers lost heart. (x) If, as may well be, my guess is right, I shall not hesitate to accuse him.

3. DOUBLE AND MULTIPLE SENTENCES

A double sentence contains two main clauses. A multiple sentence contains more than two main clauses.
E.g.

The old man laughed at his own joke and proceeded to make another. (Double.)

He buckled on his pack, rose wearily to his feet and began his long march home. (Multiple.)

The main clauses in double and multiple sentences are of equal importance, i.e. they are *co-ordinate*, and they are joined by co-ordinating conjunctions: e.g. "and", "but", "either", "neither", "or", "nor".

The main clauses in double or multiple sentences may have other clauses depending on them. Such sentences are called double-complex or multiple-complex. E.g.

The discussion which had proceeded calmly for some minutes now took an angry turn, and the chairman had difficulty in restoring order.

Here we have a main clause with dependent clause, followed by another main clause. (There are, of course, more than two finite verbs in the above example, but only two *main* verbs—which are they?—and the sentence is, therefore, double-complex.)

The pattern of double-complex or multiple-complex sentences may be:

(i) Main clause with dependent clause, followed by main clause. (Double-complex.)

(ii) Main clause followed by main clause with dependent clause. (Double-complex.)

(iii) Two or more main clauses each with dependent clauses and with or without other main clauses. (Double-complex or multiple-complex.)

(i) That you are brave is certain, but I doubt your wisdom. (Pick out the main verbs and the co-ordinating conjunction.)

(ii) I tried hard for the prize but the opposition that I had to face was too strong for me. (Pick out the main verbs and the co-ordinating conjunction.)

(iii) The prize for which we had sought for so long was now in our grasp, and we seized it before it could be snatched away. (Pick out the main verbs and the co-ordinating conjunctions. Is this a double-complex or a multiple-complex sentence?)

(iv) The poet, who was born in humble circumstances, had many difficulties to encounter, but he confronted all his trials with courage, and in the end he won a reputation that was the envy of other writers. (Pick out the main verbs and the co-ordinating conjunctions. Is this a double-complex or a multiple-complex sentence?)

EXERCISES

5. Invent sentences on the following plans:

- (i) A double sentence consisting of two main clauses.
- (ii) A double-complex sentence consisting of one main clause with dependent clause, followed by a main clause. (iii) A multiple sentence consisting of three or more main clauses.
- (iv) A multiple-complex sentence consisting of three main clauses each with dependent clauses, followed by two main clauses.

6. Classify the following sentences as either simple, complex, double, multiple, double-complex, or multiple-complex :

- (i) He knew all along that his resources were inadequate for the task. (ii) Long, long ago, in the earliest dawn of human history, this cave was inhabited by ancient man.
- (iii) All this trouble could have been averted if my warnings had been heeded. (iv) His fortune, which was

considerable, could not long withstand the demands he made upon it, and he died in penury. (v) The new batsman, who had been waiting for a long time, was plainly nervous, and though he looked round the field and took his guard very carefully, he did not deceive the fast bowler who at once disposed of him with a yorker. (vi) Carefully trained though he was, his entrance was ill-timed, and the other actors were disconcerted to find an extra character on the stage, but they carried off the awkward situation with great skill. (vii) It is not always easy to distinguish between the various kinds of adverbial clauses, but attention to the function of each clause will solve the problem. (viii) Underline the finite verbs and you will then know the clauses. (ix) The beggar looked searchingly into my face, whined for alms, but, finding me adamant, withdrew his gaze and concentrated on my companion. (x) He passed swiftly through the room and fumbled at the door that we had thought locked.

7. Combine each of the following groups of simple sentences into one sentence:

(i) He mounted his horse. The horse was fresh after its long rest. He galloped away.

(ii) William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth. All his schooldays were passed in the Lake District. The influence of this area upon him was very great. He lived in the Quantocks for a time. He returned to the Lake District as soon as he could.

(iii) He listened carefully. There was not a sound. He took up his book again. He read for a time. The noise began again. It was very faint. It was very mysterious. It was frightening.

4. GENERAL OR CLAUSE ANALYSIS

Each clause must be identified and named and its function must be stated. (If necessary, the clauses can then be analysed in detail like simple sentences, though this is rarely asked for.)

Hints

1. Pick out the finite verbs. (There is a clause for each finite verb, and each clause is either main or subordinate.)
2. Look for the links between the verbs. (The verbs are linked by conjunctions or relative pronouns, expressed or understood.)
3. Classify the links as co-ordinating or sub-ordinating and decide whether the clauses they introduce are main or subordinate.
4. Decide whether the subordinate clauses are noun, adjectival, or adverbial. (Go by the function and not by the appearance.)
5. Set out the analysis clearly in columns as below.

N.B. (i) Conjunctions are links.

- (ii) Relative pronouns are also links, but they are also an essential part of the clauses in which they appear. They are, therefore, included with the clause in the analysis.
- (iii) Co-ordinating conjunctions join clauses of equal value: either main or subordinate clauses.
- (iv) Mark each main clause, A, B, C, etc., and the dependent clauses will then be a¹, a², a³, etc.

Example 1

The cook was a stout, bad-tempered woman who loved to grumble.

No.	Clause	Link	Kind	Function
A	The cook was a stout, bad- tempered woman		Main clause	Independent
a ¹	who loved to grumble		Subordinate adjectival clause	Qualifying noun “woman” in A

(See N.B. (ii) above.)

Example 2

The coach, which was rocking violently, ran into the rocks where the robbers were hiding, and was overturned at once.

No.	Clause	Link	Kind	Function
A	The coach ran into the rocks		Main clause	Independent
a ¹	which was rocking violently		Subordinate adjectival clause	Qualifying noun "coach" in A
a ²	the robbers were hiding (the coach)	where	Subordinate adjectival clause	Qualifying noun "rocks" in A
B	was overturned at once	and	Main clause	Co-ordinate with A

Example 3

When I consider my good fortune in being independent, I realise the blessings of the good health and abundant energy that I enjoyed in my youth and I am very thankful.

No.	Clause	Link	Kind	Function
A	I realise the blessings of the good health and abundant energy		Main clause	Independent
a ¹	I consider my good fortune in being independent	when	Subordinate adverbial clause of time	Qualifying the verb "realise" in A
a ²	that I enjoyed in my youth		Subordinate adjectival clause	Qualifying the nouns "health" and "energy" in A
B	I am very thankful	and	Main clause	Co-ordinate with A

EXERCISE 8

Analyse the following sentences into main and subordinate clauses, stating their function:

- (i) There is little that I can say, but what I can say I will, for I am deeply sorry. (ii) The river ran between high banks, deeply scarred by successive landslips which occurred during the winter storms and left visible traces of the ruin that they brought. (iii) Having given us one glance out of the watching corner of his eye, and having given his nose one triumphant rub with his forefinger, Mr Bucket stood with his eyes fastened upon his confidential companion, and his hand stretched forth ready to take the paper and present it to my guardian. (iv) When the house was out of sight, I sat, with my bird-cage in the straw at my feet, forward on the low seat, to look out of the high window; watching the frosty trees, that were like beautiful pieces of spar; and the fields all smooth and white with last night's snow; and the sun, so red but yielding little heat; and the ice, dark like metal, where the skaters and the gliders had brushed the snow away. (v) With this object, large bodies of the soldiery were several times dispatched to the Mansion House to await his orders; but as he could, by no threats or persuasions, be induced to give any, and as the men remained in the open street, fruitlessly for any good purpose, and thrivingly for a very bad one, these laudable attempts did harm rather than good. (vi) All this, and heaven knows how much more, was done amidst a noise, a hurry, and a distraction like nothing that we know of even in our dreams, which seemed for ever on the rise, and never to decrease for the space of a single instant. (vii) The chief, decorated with feathers of lively colours, and having the majestic appearance of a fighting parrot, no sooner understood (he understood English perfectly) that the ship was "The Beauty", Capt. Boldheart, than he fell upon his face on the deck, and could not be persuaded to rise until the captain had lifted him up, and told him that

he wouldn't hurt him. (viii) He took his end of candle from a shelf, lighted it at another end of candle on the counter without disturbing the mistress of the shop who was asleep in her little room, and went upstairs into his lodging. (ix) It appeared from the little that the man said to those about him, which was quickly repeated all over the circle, that the lost man had fallen upon a mass of crumbled rubbish with which the pit was half choked up, and that his fall had been further broken by some jagged earth at the side. (x) To have known him as an acquaintance or as a friend, is an honour I should have sought if he had remained in society, though I might never have had the good fortune to attain it, being a man of far inferior mark. (xi) The lecturer wished to make it clear to the students that unless they understood the principle underlying the proofs that he had put forward in the lecture he had given that morning, it was no use his proceeding to the next series of demonstrations. (xii) The voice of unfriendly criticism, always as sure an attendant upon merit as envy herself, may perhaps have intimidated the gentleness of her character; or Mrs Radcliffe, as frequently happens, may have been disgusted at seeing the mode of composition, which she had brought into fashion, profaned by a host of servile imitators, who could only copy and render more prominent her defects, without aspiring to her merits.

7

SYNTAX

SYNTAX (from a Greek word meaning “to put together”) deals with the grammatical arrangement of the words in a sentence and with the rules governing this. It is concerned with order, agreement (concord) and government.

Study the following notes on points that are often misunderstood:

(1) SENTENCE ORDER

The normal rule in statements is that the subject should precede the verb and that the rest of the predicate should follow the verb.

Sometimes this normal order is changed or *inverted* to achieve emphasis or surprise, but, as has been seen in Chapter 1, this is a device to be used sparingly. Inversion for inversion’s sake is always to be condemned.

In questions, of course, inversion is essential. In exclamations or commands (if the subject is expressed) inversion may be effective in speech, though rarely in writing.

(2) AGREEMENT OF THE SUBJECT AND THE VERB

The verb must agree with its subject in number and person.
(a) A double subject requires a plural verb. E.g.

The pilot and the observer *were* detained for questioning.

(b) Note, however, that a parenthetical phrase or clause that can be transferred to the predicate does not change a singular subject into a plural one. E.g.

The pilot, together with the observer, *was* detained for questioning.

The master, as well as the boys, *was* astonished.

(c) A collective noun is singular and requires a singular verb *unless* the various parts making up the whole are thought of as acting separately. E.g.

A set of stamps worth thousands *was* sold very cheaply.

The crew *were* hiding all over the ship.

N.B. *Consistency is essential.* E.g.

The gang *was* broken up and *it* gave the police no more trouble.

The gang *were* arrested one by one and *were* soon on *their* way to the cells.

(d) Confusion often arises when the subject and the complement are of different numbers. In such a case, as always, the verb must agree with the subject. E.g.

Their best hope *was* the Sixth and Seventh Legions.

What we need *is* two rows of buoys to mark the channel.

(3) TENSES AND THEIR SEQUENCE

(a) *Be consistent.* Avoid a sudden jump from past to present or vice versa.

(b) The verb in the subordinate clause may be in any tense that gives the required meaning when the main verb is in the present or the future tense. The verb in the subordinate clause must be in the past tense when the verb in the main clause is in the past tense. We can set these rules out thus:

MAIN CLAUSE

1. Present or future tense
2. Past tense

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

- Any tense
- Past tense

There are three exceptions to rule 2:

(i) In an adverbial clause of comparison. E.g.

Napoleon was more famous than you will be.

(ii) In a subordinate adjectival clause. E.g.

He enjoyed little of the good fortune that will come to his son.

(iii) In a subordinate clause containing a statement that is universally true. E.g.

The lecturer demonstrated that the earth's surface is curved.

N.B. Avoid the common misuse of the future and perfect tenses exemplified in the following:

Thank you for your invitation which I shall have much pleasure in accepting. (Correct this.)

He intended to have been at the station when they arrived. (Correct this.)

A little thought will enable you to avoid this error.

(4) ADJECTIVES

(a) *Order.* Adjectives normally precede the noun that they qualify, but adjectives used predicatively are, of course, an exception to this. E.g.

He had a merry heart.

His heart was merry.

The adjective may follow the noun for emphasis in an expression such as this:

They bought chestnuts piping-hot and warmed their frozen fingers.

Note, however, that inversion of the normal adjective order is to be used as sparingly as inversion of the normal statement order.

Inversion of adjective and noun is also found in certain standard phrases: *the headmaster elect; the payment due.*

N.B. Where several adjectives are used to qualify a noun, the most distinctive should come last. E.g.

He was a tall, well-built, powerful, *red-headed* boxer.

A large, white-fronted, *Georgian* house stood back from the road.

(b) *Comparatives and Superlatives*

(i) Confusion is common. Remember that the comparative is used where two things are compared; the superlative where more than two are compared. E.g.

Though his brother was three years *older*, John was the *taller*.

Of the three brothers, he was the *tallest*.

N.B. He was *richer* than all his companions put together. (Only two groups are compared, despite "all" in the comparison.)

(ii) Avoid double comparatives. Few would fall into the gross error of:

They are almost alike, but I think this is more better than that.

It must be remembered, however, that verbs that imply a comparison must not be followed by a comparative. E.g.

I prefer Keats more than Shelley. (Correct this.)

(iii) The subject of the comparison must be compared with something *outside* itself. E.g.

I like cricket better than any game.

Cricket is itself a game, so the comparison as it stands is false. "Other" must be added after "any".

Correct the following:

That platoon came higher in the test than any platoon in the battalion.

I enjoy painting more than any of the arts.

(iv) Some adjectives, describing absolute qualities, cannot properly be used in either the comparative or the superlative. E.g.

Perfect, unique, empty.

(v) Unless you are describing a dead-heat, you cannot properly use the expression “the two first”. E.g.

Sunday and Monday are the two first days of the week.
(Correct this.)

(vi) Use superlatives sparingly.

(c) *This—these: that—those*

Take care that these demonstrative adjectives agree with the noun they describe. E.g.

This kind of objection annoys me.

This sort of sweet is my favourite.

(d) *Other*

Note the correct construction:

Either They had no other choice *than* to fight it out.

or They had no choice *but* to fight it out.

Not They had no other choice but to fight it out.

(5) ADVERBS

(a) *Order.* Adverbs and adverbial equivalents should be placed *as closely as possible to the word they qualify.*

E.g.

He batted for only five minutes.

Not He only batted for five minutes.

The main exception to this rule occurs in a sentence such as this:

I had to push the door leading into the scullery with all my might.

Here, “push” is used transitively, and its object is “the door leading into the scullery”. **It is a mistake**

to separate a transitive verb from its object, unless the object is a lengthy phrase and the adverbial equivalent is short.

There is nothing wrong in placing an adverb between the auxiliary verb and the infinitive or participle. E.g.

I was hardly hoping for such a stroke of luck.

(b) *The Split Infinitive.* Avoid splitting infinitives if possible, but note:

(i) It is sometimes impossible to avoid a split infinitive without writing an ambiguous or clumsy sentence. In such a case, split the infinitive. E.g.

The general decided to repeatedly practise landing from open boats that summer.

In the above sentence, “repeatedly” unambiguously refers to “practise.” Any attempt to avoid the split infinitive here creates more difficulties than it solves.

(ii) Be sure that you do not confuse the split infinitive and the separation of the verb from its complement. Many writers struggle to avoid the latter under the impression that they are avoiding a split infinitive. E.g.

to greatly suffer is a split infinitive.

to be greatly amused is not a split infinitive.

(See Fowler: *Modern English Usage*, pp. 446–450, for a very full discussion of the split infinitive and the position of the adverb.)

(c) *Double negatives.* Double negatives equal positives. You will easily see the error in *You haven't got no money*, but there are concealed double negatives in common and incorrect use. E.g.

The captain didn't scarcely try to win the game. (Correct this.)

The performance had not hardly begun when the rain came down in torrents. (Correct this.)

(d) *Never.* Avoid the common error of using *never* as a simple negative. E.g.

I never played tennis all last summer. (Correct this.)

"You cut last week's practice, didn't you?"

"No, sir, I never." (Correct this.)

(6) PRONOUNS

(a) *Order.* The normal order of personal pronouns is 2nd, 3rd, 1st person. E.g.

You, John and I are chosen.

(b) *Cases.* There is much confusion over the cases of pronouns. Note the following carefully:

(i) The verb *to be* takes the same case after it as before. E.g.

It is *she* they admire, not *you*.

It was *I* for whom they searched.

(ii) A transitive verb must have an object in the accusative case. This often involves using *me*, despite the illiterate superstition that *I* is always correct. E.g.

They invited my brother and *me* to attend.

He ordered Johnson and *me* to step forward.

(iii) A pronoun governed by a preposition must be in the accusative case. E.g.

Remember, this is strictly between you and *me*.

I heard him tell his orderly to take the keys to the corporal and *me*.

(iv) The case of a relative pronoun depends upon its relationship to the verb in its own clause. E.g.

This is the man *whom* the robbers set upon.

This is the man *who* set upon the robbers.

Explain the cases of *whom* and *who* in the above examples.

(v) Care is needed with case in sentences containing a parenthesis. E.g.

I was studying the life of Dr Johnson *who*, I thought, was one of the most original of men.

Cf. That year I saw Robinson *whom* I thought one of the most brilliant of batsmen.

Explain the cases of *who* and *whom* in the above examples.

(vi) Care is needed with case in questions. E.g.

Whom does he mean to support?

Whom do you like best?

Who do you think will win?

Explain the cases of the interrogative pronouns in these examples.

(c) *Consistency* is essential in the impersonal use of *one* and *you*. E.g.

One should never be defeated before one begins the fight.

You must take care to wash your hands before meals.

(d) *Ambiguity* must be avoided, especially with pronouns in the third person. E.g. Explain and remove the ambiguity in the following:

(i) Jones played opposite Smith and he tackled him every time.

(ii) He discovered that the problem, which was a very difficult one, defied the orthodox method of solution and he then abandoned it.

(e) *Choice of relative pronoun: that, which, who.*

(i) *who* (*whose, whom*) of persons.

(ii) *which* (of *which*, about *which*, to *which*, etc.) of things.

(iii) *that* of persons and things.

N.B. (i) *that* (as a relative pronoun) cannot be governed by a preposition.

(ii) The above statements about the choice of relative pronouns constitute a general rule, but grammarians have tried to regularise the confusion between the use of *which* and *that*. The rule they have evolved may be set out thus:

Use *that* to introduce a defining relative clause and *which* to introduce a non-defining relative clause. E.g.

- A. The rule that grammarians have evolved is useful.
- B. This rule, which grammarians have evolved, is useful.

Note that in A the relative clause defines—narrows down—its antecedent, whereas in B the relative clause explains—widens the meaning of—its antecedent. Note, too, that the relative clause in A is not marked off with commas, whereas in B the commas are essential. Finally, note the most important distinction of all: the relative pronoun *that* can be omitted in A without destroying the structure of the sentence, whereas the relative pronoun *which* cannot be omitted in B. (N.B. This applies only to relative clauses in which *that* is not the subject.)

Type A. The house that I have chosen for my retirement is a pleasant though modest villa.

Type B. This weird old house, which so many have feared, is now in ruins.

Type A. The laboratory that I selected for my work stood in a quiet street.

Type B. His laboratory, which is venerated by students of science, stands in a quiet street.

Though this rule is not generally accepted, its application would do much to clear up the current confusion. Remember it when you are hesitating between *that* and *which*.

(N.B. There is more about defining and non-defining clauses in Chapter 8.)

(f) *The use of relative pronouns after co-ordinating conjunctions.* Mistakes often occur in the use of such expressions as *and which*, *but which*, *and that*, etc. It is often forgotten that *and* and *but* are co-ordinating conjunctions the use of which presupposes the use of a similar clause before them. There must be a preceding relative pronoun if these expressions are used. E.g.

This is a situation which demands a vigorous response *and which* we must summon all our resolution to face.

He was a leader who demanded the best from his men *and who* spared neither himself nor them.

Correct the following:

He was a player of great ability and who was confidently expected to win the contest.

The necklace was of no great value but which I regarded with sentiment.

(g) *Neither, either, every, everyone, no one, anyone, none.* These pronouns are all singular. E.g.

Neither of these men *is* guilty.

Everyone who *arrives* late will be refused admittance.

No one *is* to stir.

Any one of these jewels *is* worth a king's ransom.

Each of us *was* held to blame.

Either he or one of the others *has* taken it.

(h) *Each other, one another.* Note this distinction in the use of these two expressions:

The two brothers always supported *each other*.

The four brothers always supported *one another*.

(7) THE UNATTACHED PARTICIPLE

This is a common and ludicrous mistake. E.g.

The pirate's treasure was found while ploughing the headland field.

Turning the corner, the inn came into view.

Being stormy, the excursion was a failure.

The participles in these sentences are doing the work of adjectives but there is no suitable noun or pronoun for them to qualify. Correct the sentences.

(8) GERUNDS (VERBAL NOUNS): PARTICIPLES
(VERBAL ADJECTIVES)

The gerund can perform all the functions of a noun. E.g.

Smoking is harmful.

His favourite exercise was *running*.

(Analyse each of these sentences.)

The gerund can also be used adjectively. E.g.

A *fishing* rod.

A *walking* stick.

It is easy to distinguish between the gerund and the participle in such expressions:

A *walking* stick: *running* water.

In the former, the expression is equivalent to "a stick *for* walking"; the stick does not do the walking. In the latter, the water does the running. The former is the gerund; the latter the participle.

(N.B. The term "gerundive" has no meaning in English grammar.)

(9) SHALL AND WILL: SHOULD AND WOULD

The rule is:

To express future tense, conditional statements, and questions, use *shall* or *should* in the 1st person and *will* or *would* in the 2nd and 3rd persons.

To express obligation, determination, or willingness, use *will* or *would* in the 1st person and *shall* or *should* in the 2nd and 3rd persons.

E.g. Explain the difference in meaning between the following sentences:

I will drown and nobody shall save me.

I shall drown and nobody will save me.

N.B. The verbs *prefer*, *like*, *be glad*, etc., require *should* not *would* in the 1st person. E.g.

I should like to know what your plans are.

(For an exhaustive discussion of this topic see Fowler: *Modern English Usage*, pp. 526–529.)

(10) PREPOSITIONS

(a) Prepositions govern a noun or a pronoun *in the accusative case*. The noun or pronoun is the object of the preposition. E.g.

He did this for his followers not for *me*.

Lay the blame upon *them* and *me* if you like.

(b) The so-called rule that sentences must never end with a preposition should be regarded as a sound piece of general advice rather than a rule. E.g.

What on earth did you do that for?

He is a difficult man to put up with.

In either of the above sentences any attempt to move the preposition from the end results in a very clumsy construction.

(c) *Between* and *among*.

Be careful to distinguish the proper use. *Between* refers to two things: *among* to more than two. E.g.

He gave the two boys a bag of sweets, and they divided it *between* them.

The grain reserves were divided *among* the starving beggars thronging the gates.

(d) Prepositions and adverbs.

Some words can be used either as a preposition or as an adverb. E.g.

The flagstaff fell *down*.

He climbed *down* the flagstaff.

To distinguish between the two uses, remember that a preposition must be followed by a noun or a pronoun and cannot be separated from it.

(e) Correct constructions.

Many words take a special preposition. E.g. amenable to; consist of; identify with. Reading and observation are necessary to master these special constructions.

(11) CONJUNCTIONS

As we have seen in the chapter on analysis, conjunctions are of two kinds: co-ordinating and subordinating. Co-ordinating conjunctions link clauses of equal value, and subordinating conjunctions link noun and adverbial clauses to the main clause. (N.B. Relative pronouns or relative adverbs link adjectival clauses to the main clause.)

A SPECIAL NOTE ON LIKE AND WITHOUT

Like can be a preposition,
an adjective,
a noun,

but it can never be a conjunction.

Without can be a preposition,
an adverb,

but it can never be a conjunction.

E.g. Correct these sentences:

Do it like he did last year.

You can't go down that street without I come with you.

EXERCISES

1. Improve the order of the following sentences:

- (i) It should now be apparent that my client is not prepared to consider favourably your petition.
- (ii) He is an English, determined, forceful batsman.
- (iii) I and my family are going to the sea.
- (iv) They were hoping, as were we all, that the weather would be fine.
- (v) Lemonade cold and biscuits crisp; those, for a party, are the ideal refreshments.
- (vi) I shall only travel a little way by car.
- (vii) He expected enthusiastically to be received.
- (viii) Never should it be overlooked that a reserve force is essential to a commander.
- (ix) He could either choose one or the other but not both.
- (x) The victors even invited their former foes to freely express their views at the conference.

2. Correct the following sentences and give reasons for the changes that you make:

- (i) The chairman put forward two proposals, but neither of them were supported by the meeting.
- (ii) Passing by the old mill, a strange sight met my eye.
- (iii) The success of the interview, they said, was owing to the Secretary having gone in person.
- (iv) Trying to write in ink like his brother did, the child upset the inkwell.
- (v) He is one of the few boys in this form who writes good French.
- (vi) I always have and always will be an admirer of Keats.
- (vii) While apologising for the shortage of seats, patrons are requested to book early.
- (viii) I would be glad to know the date on which the booking-office opens.
- (ix) I will be going to Scotland to-morrow.
- (x) Didn't I ought to have done that?

3. Correct any errors that you find in the following by re-writing the sentences, making as little alteration as possible:

- (i) He and I sat opposite she and her sister.
- (ii) There is the man whom I think is like my brother.
- (iii) The man whom I saw is like my brother.
- (iv) Due to stupidity, he was dismissed.
- (v) I told the two beggars to share the money among them.
- (vi) The officer, together with his men, were taken prisoner.
- (vii) The crew was very tired and their rescuers pitied them.
- (viii) Our greatest need

are some flags to complete the decorations with. (ix) I have been to see poor old Tommy who is ill for so long. (x) The master gave the form many proofs that the earth was round.

4. Each of the following sentences contains an error. Correct it by rewriting, and give a brief explanation of what is wrong:

(i) He meant to have been at the station when they arrived. (ii) The book was an Elizabethan, leather-bound folio. (iii) Good general though he was, he was never fortunate in that campaign. (iv) I am very fond of outdoor games and yet I am not sure that I do not prefer chess more than cricket. (v) So many students dislike algebra more than any form of mathematics. (vi) It is strange to think that he made his reputation with those kind of pictures. (vii) The beaten army had no other course but to surrender. (viii) Fortunately, the thieves only ransacked the dining-room before the police came. (ix) If an audience makes up its mind beforehand not to readily respond to the play, they make things very difficult for the actors.

5. Comment on the points of syntax and style raised by the following:

(i) This was undoubtedly the biggest and best firework display that Dunchester had ever seen. The rockets rose to unbelievable heights and displayed the most magnificent colours; the roman candles were unsurpassed; the set-pieces were the most elaborate in the whole history of the town's unequalled record for staging unique shows.

(ii) One should always remember one's duty to his family when considering your future, shouldn't one?

(iii) Hamlet saw the clown in the graveyard and he joked very coarsely with him.

(iv) The trousers which I bought last year are now too small for me.

(v) It was John having to go away at that particular moment that, his father said, hurt him so much.

(vi) I'd had a very busy day and hadn't scarcely sat down when the telephone rang again.

(vii) Driving at anything over thirty miles an hour, that road is dangerous.

(viii) Many have been the praises lavished upon *Hyperion*, yet still I think *The Ode to Autumn* to be his most famous and good poem.

(ix) I hammered with might and main the great door-knocker, hoping desperately that they should hear.

(x) They have criticised his new novel unmercifully, but I think it awfully good.

6. Rewrite the following passages, preserving the meaning of the original version but removing all errors of syntax and taste:

(i) He must by now have realised that blowing his own trumpet had made him unpopular, yet the bolt that now fell from the blue seemed to take the wind right out of his sails. He could not scarcely seem to realise that it was the acid test of his professed ability to weather any storm, but went to seek the aid of his *soi-disant* boon companions; and they sent him away with a flea in his ear.

(ii) Actually, I am definitely of the personal opinion that the obstreperous deportment of the noisy roisterers who frequent the streets of our little metropolis at the witching hour of night, to wit, when the exodus from the hostellries begin, could considerably be ameliorated should each and every one of us strive to impress upon mine sundry hosts by verbal communication or written missive, that the conduct of one's clientele is his responsibility by and large.

(iii) I would be glad to hear of him winning, for I think he to be the best of the two boxers, and he has certainly deserved to at last win this blue riband of the boxing arena before he takes his curtain call. He was only telling me yesterday that if they would draw, the prize-money being shared among them would satisfy him. He did not hardly hope for victory, but to put up a good fight was his aim. Training for so long and so thoroughly, the prize might well come to him, but the contest was a labour of Hercules against so doughty an opponent and he dare not expect of it.

8

PUNCTUATION

IT was not until the fifteenth century that punctuation marks came into common use before that writing ran straight on without marks to show the pauses the reader of this passage should now have little difficulty in understanding the importance of punctuation as an aid to the writer in communicating his thoughts to the reader.

(1) THE FULL STOP (.)

This is the strongest of the punctuation marks. It is used:

(a) *At the end of a sentence*

After a group of words making complete sense, there is a break in meaning before the next group begins. It is to mark this break that the full stop is used. E.g.

Shelley was born in 1792. He was the son of Sir Timothy Shelley who lived at Field Place, near Horsham in Sussex. The poet was sent to school at Eton before going up to University College, Oxford.

(b) *To mark abbreviations*

E.g.

John Jones, M.A., M.Sc. R.S.V.P. P.S.

N.B. It is permissible to omit the full stop when the abbreviation ends with the last letter of the word for which it stands. E.g.

Mr and Mrs Robinson.

8th April.

(2) THE COMMA (,)

This is the weakest of the punctuation marks. It is used:

- (a) *To separate a succession of clauses, phrases, or items in a list.*

E.g.

He turned, walked to the edge of the cliff, waved at the ship, looked anxiously for a reply, then sat down on the headland.

- (b) *To mark off words in apposition.*

E.g.

Jackson, the form captain, was held responsible for the disorder.

- (c) *To mark a parenthesis.*

E.g.

Jackson, I thought, should have been able to control his form.

N.B. Where a stronger parenthesis is required, a pair of dashes or a pair of brackets should be used.

- (d) *To introduce direct speech or quotations.*

E.g.

It was shortly before he died that he uttered those pathetic words, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

- (e) *To mark the junction of a phrase and a clause, or of a clause and a clause.*

E.g.

At twelve by the town clock, the judge entered the court.

Though the last round had been fired, the crew stood by the gun.

N.B. The *order* is important in determining the punctuation. No comma is needed if the above sentences are reversed.

**A SPECIAL NOTE ON THE PUNCTUATION OF DEFINING
AND NON-DEFINING CLAUSES**

A non-defining clause must be marked off with commas.

E.g.

Young Seamark, who had distinguished himself in the recent action, was promoted at once.

A defining clause needs no commas.

E.g.

The lieutenant who had distinguished himself in the recent action was promoted at once.

Further examples:

Arrogance, which characterised his life, marked his end.

The arrogance that characterised his life marked his end.

(Remember the note in Chapter 7 to the effect that when *that* is the subject of the defining clause it cannot be omitted.)

The will was cunningly hidden away in an old account book, where nobody thought of looking for it.

The will was cunningly hidden away where nobody thought of looking for it.

**A SPECIAL NOTE ON THE PUNCTUATION OF
CO-ORDINATE CLAUSES**

If the subject is the same in both clauses, no comma is needed. E.g.

Though he was universally liked and though he promised to become a good leader, his lack of experience unfitted him for command at that time.

They quarrelled violently over the division of the spoils and let the prisoner escape in the confusion.

Compare with the following:

Though he was universally liked, and though his superiors spoke well of his possibilities, his lack of experience unfitted him for command at that time.

They quarrelled violently over the division of the spoils, and the prisoner escaped in the confusion.

(3) THE COLON (:)

A stronger mark than the comma but not as strong as the full stop. Its use is infrequent nowadays, but in the past, when balanced sentences were commoner, it was often in use to mark the “turning points” of the sentences. Its chief uses nowadays are:

(a) *To introduce lists of examples, or catalogues of ideas or things.* E.g.

He took from the wreck those things that would be most useful: an axe, a barrel of powder, two muskets, a bag of bullets, flint and steel.

Sometimes a dash is added after the colon.

(b) *To introduce direct speech or quotation.* E.g.

Frederick: “Have you considered the cost of all these things?”

Steward: “Yes. They will pay for themselves in about ten years.”

N.B. This use of the colon is better reserved for dramatic dialogue or for quotations introduced by a formal “thus”, etc. (In plays, the inverted commas are omitted. Why?)

(c) *To separate a sharp contrast of ideas, or to separate clauses where the second explains or expands the first.* E.g.

He was a traitor: a miserable fate for one whose ancestors had fought and died for their king.

(4) THE SEMI-COLON (;)

A stronger mark than the comma; not as strong as the colon. Its uses are:

(a) *To separate the two main parts of a long double sentence or the main parts of multiple sentences.* E.g.

The device that he adopted, entailing as it did the impersonation of his friend and the deception of his supporters, was of dubious honesty; but it served its purpose,

and he effected his escape; and thus another crisis in his career was surmounted.

When several ideas are handled in one sentence, the semi-colon is a valuable aid to clarity.

(b) *To separate the items in a list when a stronger mark than a comma is required by the sense.* E.g.

Hereward crawled slowly through the long reeds; head down; body tense; ears alert for the slightest sound.

(5) THE DASH (—) AND THE BRACKET ()

Used to mark stronger parentheses than the comma.

N.B. Do not forget—whatever mark you are using for parenthesis—to complete the pair. The dash—or a series of dashes—is also used to indicate the omission of words. *Avoid using the dash as a substitute for the comma.*

(6) INVERTED COMMAS (“ ”)

These are used:

(a) *For the names of books, plays, poems, inns, ships.*

E.g.

“Hamlet” may not be Shakespeare’s greatest tragedy but it is certainly his most popular.

We left “The Dog and Doublet” at dawn and were on board the “Sicilia” by evening.

(What marks do printers often use for this purpose?)

(b) *To mark quotations and direct speech.* E.g.

Johnson said, “Clear your mind of cant, sir.” Excellent advice, not only for his but also for our times.

I was surprised when the pedlar suddenly whispered, “Don’t go there to-night.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“I can’t speak now,” he answered, glancing nervously around, “but I warn you that you go at your own peril.”

- N.B. (i) The words of each new speaker should begin on a new line.
 (ii) Use a capital letter for the first word of the direct speech, unless, as in the last speech above, the same speaker is continuing.
 (iii) Use single inverted commas to enclose a quotation within direct speech.

E.g.

He said, "The policeman called out, 'Stop at once', and I dared not disobey."

(7) THE APOSTROPHE (')

This is used:

(a) *To show possession.*

- N.B. (i) To form the genitive singular, add '*s*.

E.g.

This is my boy's school.

- (ii) To form the genitive plural, add '*s*' *unless the noun has a special plural form not ending in s.* In that case, add '*s*'. E.g.

This is a boys' school.

These are the elephants' tracks.

The cavaliers' strength lay in their cavalry.

But

This is the tradesmen's entrance.

This is my children's school.

- (iii) If the last syllable of the singular form of the word begins and ends with *s*, simply add the apostrophe. E.g.

Moses' rod.

Ulysses' cunning.

(What is the reason for this?)

(iv) NEVER use an apostrophe with the possessive adjectives and pronouns: *his, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs*. The purpose of the apostrophe is to show possession. Since these words are always possessive, it would be redundant to use it with them.

(b) *To mark the omission of a letter or letters.*

E.g.

He said, "Don't do that. It's very dangerous."

(8) THE QUESTION MARK (?)

This is used after questions in direct speech. E.g.

"How are you?" they asked.

N.B. (i) No comma is needed after the question mark.
(ii) Compare the placing of the question mark in the following:

Did Tom say, "I will let you have it"?

Tom said, "Shall I let them have it?"

(iii) Do not use the question mark in indirect (reported) speech. E.g.

He asked what time the coach usually left.

(9) THE EXCLAMATION MARK (!)

This is used to mark interjections and exclamations E.g.

"Whew!" he said, mopping his face, "that was a near thing."

Do not over-use this mark. Do not use it as an artificial device to gain emphasis. (See Chapter 1.)

(10) THE HYPHEN (-)

This is used:

(a) *To mark compounds.* E.g.

man-servant; mock-heroic; fire-irons.

Remember that the hyphen is not ornamental and

that it should never be used between two words that can do their work equally well without it. Where, however, two words form a compound idea, the hyphen is needed.

(b) *To carry on a word from one line to the next when there is insufficient room to write or print the whole word.*

PUNCTUATION EXERCISES

Punctuate the following passages, inserting the necessary capitals:

(i) I declare before heaven that i was guiltless of it she cried out giving up her cause at once it was your wicked father who who brought this dishonour on our family says mr esmond i know it full well i want to disturb no one those who are in present possession have been my dearest benefactors and are quite innocent of intentional wrong to me the late lord my dear patron knew not the truth until a few months before his death when father holt brought the news to him the wretch he had it in confession he had it in confession cried out the dowager lady

(ii) Thats a nice dog you have there you like him do you yes hes very well bred you know his father took prizes at many shows whats his name its rather a funny one for a dog this size we call him tiny thats funny too i had a dog called tiny once only he was tiny

(iii) Indeed mr bennet said she it is very hard to think that charlotte lucas should ever be mistress of this house that i should be forced to make way for her and live to see her take my place in it my dear do not give way to such gloomy thoughts let us hope for better things let us flatter ourselves that i may be the survivor this was not very consoling to mrs bennet and therefore instead of making any answer she went on as before i cannot bear to think that they should have all this estate if it was not for the entail i should not mind it what should you not mind i should not mind anything at all let us be thankful

that you are preserved from a state of such insensibility i can never be thankful mr bennet for anything about the entail how anyone could have the conscience to entail away an estate from ones own daughters i cannot understand and all for the sake of mr collins too why should he have it more than anybody else i leave it to yourself to determine said mr bennet

(iv) In church a new dilemma arose which promised no easy solution this was which couple should be married first my sons bride warmly insisted that lady thornhill that was to be should take the lead but this the other refused with equal ardour protesting that she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world the argument was supported for some time between them both with equal obstinacy and good breeding but as i stood all this time with my book ready i was at last quite tired of the contest and shutting it i perceive cried i that none of you has a mind to be married and i think we had as good go back again for i suppose there will be no business done here today this at once reduced them to reason the baronet and his lady were first married and then my son and his lovely partner

(v) 21 amersham place redhill road redhill loamshire 3rd april 1937 dear henry i have been presented with two tickets for the concert at the town hall on wednesday would you like to come with me if you cant let me know as soon as possible so that i can ask somebody else i hope you will be able to come the programme is one that will appeal to you yours sincerely william

(vi) There was a pause before the bandit replied i dont know where the treasure is hidden that we cannot believe the lieutenant answered you were mikos right hand man you must have known his plans most of them yes but he was a greedy man and would never let anybody know how he disposed of his spoils to save my life i could not tell you any more to save your life indeed was the reply i am ordered to offer you a pardon if you tell us all you know but if you are obstinate the lieutenants voice died away as he made an ominous gesture with his hand

(vii) When i got to bed i could not sleep i tumbled about fancied the pillow hard the bed badly made the sheets damp and i sat up and punched the pillow as i have seen the chamber maids do but it was all to no purpose and at daybreak i got up in a heat of eagerness and restless fidget to get to charlecote i put the whole house in an uproar got an early breakfast and started off for the lucys place as fast as my legs would carry me my walking is no joke as you know and this morning i would have defied barclay i met a sturdy gypsy and after i had passed him remembered that i might as well ask the way to charlecote right across the cornfield sir and it will bring you to the back way i darted into the pathway and coming to a swinging gate pushed it open and in a moment was inside an ancient park trees full tall gigantic and umbrageous announce the growth indeed of centuries

(viii) The other night i paid my butcher one of the miracles of these times you will say let me tell you that i have all my life been seeking for a butcher whose respect for genius predominated over his love of gain i could not make out before i dealt with this man his excessive desire that i should be his customer his sly hints as i passed his shop that he had a bit of south down very fine a sweet-bread perfection and a calfs foot that was all jelly without bone the other day he called and i had him sent up into the painting room i found him in great admiration of alexander quite alive sir i am glad you think so said i yes sir but as i have often said to my sister you could not have painted that picture sir if you had not eaten my meat sir

(ix) On one occasion being too late to go home and dress he was equipped by a friend mr baillie i believe in a magnificently fashionable and somewhat exaggerated shirt and neckcloth he proceeded to the opera and took his station in fops alley during the interval an acquaintance took his station by him and saluted him come round said matthews why should i come round said the other you have only to turn your head i am close to you that is exactly

what i cannot do said matthews dont you see the state i am
in pointing to his buckram shirt collar and inflexible cravat
and there he stood with his head always in the same per-
pendicular position during the whole spectacle

(x) Not alone said amelia you know rebecca i shall
always be your friend and love you as a sister indeed i will
ah but to have parents as you have who give you every-
thing you ask for and their love which is more precious
than all my poor papa could give me nothing and i had
but two frocks in all the world and then to have a brother
a dear brother oh how you must love him amelia laughed
what dont you love him you who say you love everybody
yes of course i do only only what only joseph doesnt seem
to care much whether i love him or not he gave me two
fingers to shake when he arrived after ten years absence
he is very kind and good but he scarcely ever speaks to
me i think he loves his pipe a great deal better than his but
here amelia checked herself for why should she speak ill
of her brother he was very kind to me as a child she added
i was but five years old when he went away

APPENDIX A

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. *Old English or Anglo-Saxon*

THE English came to England in or about the year A.D. 449* and by the end of the fifth century most of the country was in their power. The British became a subject race and their language gradually died out, only a few place-names and a handful of other words surviving. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes (the English) came from North Germany and the Jutish Peninsula and spoke a language now known to philologists as Old English. This was a Teutonic tongue with inflected endings such as are found to-day in German. There were four chief dialects. In the north where the Angles predominated, Northumbrian and Mercian were spoken: in the south where the Saxons settled, the Wessex dialect predominated: in the east, the Kentish dialect marked the lands of the Jutes. The Wessex (West-Saxon) folk proved the most powerful and their kings established authority over all the lands of England early in the ninth century; so the Wessex power and the Wessex dialect became supreme. This dialect of Old English is the basis of Modern English, and the use of an etymological dictionary will show you how many of our present-day words are derived from Anglo-Saxon.

2. *Early Borrowings*

Before the English arrived, the 400 years of Roman occupation had left their impress upon place-names (*Winchester, Doncaster, Lincoln*) and the Anglo-Saxons themselves used some words of Latin origin, such as *ceapian* (to buy)

* This traditional date comes from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (A.D. 731), but there is good reason to suppose that the invasions began earlier.

which was derived from the Latin *caupones* (wine-dealers), and the word *mangere* ("monger", as in "fishmonger") which came from the Latin *mango* (retailer). The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity brought into the language such words as *scrin* (shrine) from the Latin *scrinium*, and *cugele* (cowl) from the Latin *cuculla*; but the main flood of Latin borrowings was not to come until much later, and it was Scandinavian and French that most influenced English between 449 and 1150. For about 400 years the Anglo-Saxons were free from invasion, and it was the internal strife between Angles, Saxons and Jutes that disturbed the peace. In about 790, however, the Danish invasions began, and the steady consolidation of West Saxon supremacy in politics and language was interrupted. Place-names in the north and east of England testify to the strength and permanence of the Danish settlement: *-beck*, *-by*, *-thwaite*, *-dale* and *-thorp* are all of Scandinavian origin. *Happy*, *seemly*, *ill*, *thrive*, *die*, *meek*, *low*, *scant*, *husband*, *skull*, *haven* and *root* are among the many words that Old Norse (the language of the Danish and Norwegian invaders) added to Old English and that have been transmitted to Modern English.

The first waves of the Danish invasions were checked by King Alfred, and by 954 his successors had reconquered the Danelaw (Northumbria, East Anglia and the north-east Midlands), but the Danes renewed the struggle in 980, and from 1016 to 1042, England was ruled by Danish kings. The English line was restored with the accession of Edward the Confessor, but the long struggle with the Danes left indelible imprints on our language.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066 a vast number of French words was added to the vocabulary. Nearly all words relating to government are of French origin, for the Normans were the conquerors. They gave us *state*, *government*, *crown*, and the verbs *to govern* and *to reign*. *Parliament*, *exchequer*, *minister*, *realm*, *feudal*, *vassal*, *liege*, *prince*, *peer*, *baron*, *honour*, *glory* and *heraldry* all came from this source. French military words such as *armour*, *mail*, *lance*, *banner*, *assault* and *siege*, and French legal terms such as

cause, assize, suit, felony, dower, tenure and penalty were imported. Many words relating to food and cooking and almost all hunting terms came from Norman French.

3. Middle English

From about 1150 onwards, the sharp distinction between the language of the conquerors and that of the conquered gradually disappeared, and English became the common language of all the dwellers in England whether of Norman or of Anglo-Saxon stock. By the middle of the fourteenth century a sense of common nationality was widespread. In 1340, for example, the law of Englishry was abolished: henceforth, all natives of England were legally Englishmen. In 1363 English became the language of the King's law courts, and though French lingered on at the Court and in Parliament, it became increasingly a dialect rather than a language and steadily gave place to English.

During this Middle English period (from about 1150 to about 1500), great changes occurred. Middle English, like Old English, had several dialects, of which the East Midland was the most important because it was the dialect spoken in East Anglia, the most flourishing commercial region of the country. The dialect spoken in London was very similar to the East Midland, and the combined influence of London and East Anglia gave to the East Midland dialect a prestige and power that the other dialects could not command. Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?–1400) wrote his poems in this East Midland dialect, avoiding the French still so fashionable at Court, but avoiding, too, the older alliterative poetic style and the Old English traditions as practised, for example, by Langland. He chose instead the vigorous East Midland tongue, enriched by the fluency and grace of the French so freely spoken at Court and by educated Londoners. He wrote "for the English people in English" (Dr Coulton), and in that form of English most affected by the culture of France.

A third influence helped to establish the East Midland dialect as "standard English". In 1476 William Caxton set up the first printing press in England. He printed

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in the East Midland dialect and translated the many foreign books that he printed into the same dialect. In this he was following Wyclif, who had translated the Bible into East Midland. In order to read printed books it was, henceforward, necessary to be able to read East Midland, and the combination of printing and literary and commercial prestige made the East Midland dialect supreme.

During the Middle English period, the structure as well as the vocabulary of the language changed considerably. The many and intricate inflexions of Old English were simplified and, as a study of the *Canterbury Tales* will show, Middle English presents comparatively few grammatical difficulties to the present-day reader.

4. *Modern English*

We have said that Modern English began in about 1500, and since that date two dominant influences may be noted. First, there was the rapid spread of printing after the pioneer work of Caxton. During the sixteenth century men became accustomed to seeing as well as to hearing words and, though the process took a long time, this made for the standardization of spelling and syntax. Of course, there have been many changes since the sixteenth century, for a living language is always changing, and English has always been a flexible language, ready to absorb words from other languages and to permit the domination of grammar by usage. Nevertheless, change in the structure of the language has been slower between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries than between the eleventh and the sixteenth, and this has been due to the influence of the printed word. One result of the standardization of spelling introduced by printing is that spelling has not kept pace with changes in pronunciation. *Bough*, *rough*, *dough* and *trough*, for example, are spelt, not as they are now pronounced, but as they were pronounced when printing was introduced.

The other great formative influence on Modern English was the Renaissance, that upsurge of intellectual, cultural

and artistic energy which directed the minds of scholars and readers to the classics of Greek and Roman literature. With the Renaissance began the invasion of English by Latin and Greek: an invasion that has not ceased. The study of classical literature, particularly of Latin, had an effect upon the structure of the language as well as upon its vocabulary. After the Renaissance, English prose became heavily impregnated with Latinisms. This was not always a strength, for the vigorous clarity of the native idiom was sometimes submerged by turgid and involved constructions. The enlarging of vocabulary was, however, essential for the expression of scientific, artistic and abstract ideas.

APPENDIX B

PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

CONSIDER the following words: wise, *unwise*; priest, *priest-hood*; hard, *harden*; quick, *quickly*.

It is clear from this short list that the addition of prefixes and suffixes changes words in two ways:

- (i) By modifying the meaning.
- (ii) By modifying the grammatical function of the original word (the "root").

The prefixes and suffixes in English come mainly from three sources: (i) English (including Old and Middle English); (ii) Latin; (iii) Greek. (Many of the Greek prefixes and suffixes came into the English language by way of Latin.) It is useful to know the meaning of the commoner prefixes and suffixes so that the exact meaning of the words in which they are used may be understood. The following list contains some of the most commonly used ones, their sources and their meaning.

PREFIXES

(i) English.

a—on. E.g. aboard; ashore; away.

al(l)—all. E.g. all-wise; alone; also.

be—by, on, around, on all sides. Used in various ways. E.g.

- (a) to form transitive verbs from intransitive verbs: bestride; bewail.
- (b) to form verbs from nouns and adjectives: befriend; bedew.
- (c) to give intensive force to verbs: bestir; belabour; bedaub.
- (d) to give privative force to verbs: behead; bereave.
- (e) to form adverbs and prepositions: below; beside.

for—away. Used with

- (a) intensive force: forbear; forgive.
- (b) privative force: forbid; forget.

fore—before (of place or time). E.g. foreleg; foretell; forerunner.
mis—wrong. E.g. mistake; misdeed; mishap.
over—above, beyond. E.g. overarch; overlap; overlook.
to—in the direction of, as far as. E.g. today; toward; together.
un—not, reverse. E.g. unripe; unhappy; undo; unwind.
with—against, back. E.g. withstand; withdraw.

(ii) *Latin.*

a, ab, abs—away from. E.g. avert; absolve; abstract.
ad—to (the “d” is often assimilated with the first consonant of the root, as in *accede*). E.g. adhere; admit; adverb; aggregate.
am, amb, ambi—round about, both. E.g. ambidextrous; ambiguous; amputate.
ante—before. E.g. antecedent; antechamber; anticipate.
bi, bis—twice, two. E.g. bicycle; biscuit; bilateral.
circu, circum—round about. E.g. circumscribe; circuit; circumnavigate.
co, con—with (by assimilation, often *col, cor*). E.g. concoct; conform; collect; correspond.
contra—against (by assimilation, often *contro, counter*). E.g. contradict; controvert; countersign.
cum—with (by assimilation, often *com, co, con*). E.g. commiserate; concoct; cohere; co-eternal.
ex, e, ef—from, out of. E.g. elect; extract; efflux; eject.
extra (a comparative form of *ex*)—beyond. E.g. extravagant; extraneous; extraordinary.
in—in, not (by assimilation, often *im, ir*, etc.). E.g. invade; impose; ineligible; impossible; irregular.
mal, male, mali—badly, ill. E.g. malevolent; malady; maladjustment.
neg(nec)—not. E.g. neglect; negotiate.
non—not. E.g. nonsense; nonentity; nonplus.
ob—in the way of, towards, against, in front (by assimilation, often, *oc, of, op.*). E.g. obstruct; occur; offer; oppose.
post—after. E.g. postpone; postdate; postprandial.
pre—before. E.g. predict; prefer.
preter—beyond, past. E.g. preternatural; pretermite.
re—again. E.g. rejoin; resound.
 against. E.g. rebel.
 away. E.g. remove; release.
 back. E.g. retrace; retract.

retro—backwards. E.g. retrospect; retrograde.

sub—under (by assimilation, often *suc*, *suf*, *sus*). E.g. submit; succumb; suffer; suspend.

super, supra—over, above. E.g. supernumerary; superpose; superfluous; supramundane.

trans—across. E.g. trans-Pacific; translate; traverse.

vice—instead of. E.g. viceroy; viscount; vice-admiral.

(iii) Greek.

a or an—not. E.g. atheism; anarchy; atom.

anti—against. E.g. anticlimax; antidote; antipathy.

auto—self. E.g. autograph; autobiography; authentic.

cata, cat, cath—down, downwards, throughout. E.g. cataract; catechism; catholic.

dia—two, through. E.g. dialogue; diameter; diagram.

epi, ep, eph—on, as, during. E.g. epigram; epitaph; epoch; ephemeral.

meta, met, meth—with, after (often implying change). E.g. method; metaphor; metonymy.

mono—single. E.g. monograph; monarchy; monotheism; mono-plane.

pan, panto—all. E.g. panacea; panorama; pantomime.

para, par—beside, as, beyond. E.g. parable; parody; paraphernalia.

peri—around, about. E.g. periphrasis; perimeter.

poly—many. E.g. polysyllabic; polyglot; polytheistic.

syn, sy, syl, sym—together, with. E.g. syntax; system; syllable; symbol; sympathy.

tele—far. E.g. telephone; television; telepathy.

SUFFIXES

A. Noun Suffixes.

(i) Denoting abstract nouns.

English: manhood; Godhead; wisdom; darkness; hatred; stewardship.

Latin: wastage; privacy; prudence; prowess; justice; culture.

Greek: sarcasm; heroism; monarchy.

(ii) Denoting agent.

English: father; costermonger; poker; shovel.

Latin: occupant; antiquary; vicar; treasurer; chancellor; warden.

Greek: maniac; critic; royalist.

(iii) Diminutives.

English: *satchel*; *chicken*; *lassie*; *daddy*; *farthing*; *lambkin*.
Greek: *obelisk*.

B. Adjective Suffixes.

English: *feathered*; *wooden*; *leathern*; *manifold*; *merciful*; *fiendish*;
penniless; *childlike*; *friendly*; *endmost*; *loathsome*; *windy*.

Latin: *audacious*; *mental*; *human*; *certain*; *humane*; *errant*; *provi-*
dent; *angular*; *desolate*; *hostile*; *flexible*; *pensive*; *perilous*.

Greek: *gigantic*; *eulogistic*.

C. Verb Suffixes

English: *glimmer*; *sparkle*; *quicken*; *hark*; *lengthen*.

Latin: *inflate*; *coalesce*; *purify*; *abolish*.

Greek: *civilise*.

D. Adverb Suffixes.

English: *loudly*.

APPENDIX C

PROSODY AND FIGURES OF SPEECH

Prosody

Feet

ENGLISH scansion is determined by *stresses* and not by length or shortness of syllable (quantity).

The choice of signs to mark stressed syllables and unstressed (or “slack”) syllables is a matter of convenience, but there is something to be said for using these signs, \diagup stress; \times slack, instead of those used in Latin and Greek scansion. Use of the macron sign – for a stressed syllable and of the brevis sign ~ for a slack syllable may cause confusion for those who are used to the classical quantitative system. The use of the \diagup sign for a stressed syllable has the additional advantage that a syllable not carrying a full stress (but certainly not slack) can be marked \times . English rhythms are very flexible and it is desirable that the method of scansion employed should allow that flexibility to be indicated.

The four commonest feet in English poetry are:

- (i) The iambus: $\times \diagup$
- (ii) The trochee: $\diagup \times$
- (iii) The anapaest: $\times \times \diagup$
- (iv) The dactyl: $\diagup \times \times$

Some writers also distinguish:

- (v) The spondee: $//$
- (vi) The amphibrach: $\times \diagup \times$
- (vii) The tribrach: $\times \times \times$
- (viii) The pyrrhic: $\times \times$

It is doubtful, however, whether these do actually occur. Variations of metre from iambic to trochaic or iambic to anapaestic, etc., are common, and such variations have given rise to the notion that feet other than the basic four are being used.

Length of line

A line containing one foot is called a monometer.

..	..	two feet	..	a dimeter.
..	..	three feet	..	a trimeter.
..	..	four feet	..	a tetrameter.
..	..	five feet	..	a pentameter.
..	..	six feet	..	an hexameter.
..	..	seven feet	..	an heptameter.
..	..	eight feet	..	an octameter.

Lines having a punctuation mark at the end are called "end-stopped". Those without a punctuation mark at the end are called "run-on" lines.

Stanzas

Some of the chief English stanzas are:

1. Ballad Metre

Four-line stanzas consisting of alternate iambic tetrameters and trimeters and rhyming a b c b. (Sometimes called "Eight-Six Time", from the number of syllables to the line.)

E.g.

The wind doth blow to-day, my love,
And a few small drops of rain;
I never had but one true-love;
In cold grave she was lain.

ANON : *The Unquiet Grave.*

2. Blank Verse

Unrhymed iambic pentameters. E.g.

This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them.

SHAKESPEARE : *King John.*

3. The Heroic Couplet

Iambic pentameters rhyming a a b b c c, etc. (i.e. in couplets). E.g.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:

There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.

ALEXANDER POPE: *An Essay on Criticism.*

4. The Spenserian Stanza

A nine-lined stanza consisting of eight iambic pentameters followed by one Alexandrine (iambic hexameter). The rhyme scheme is a b a b b c b c e. E.g.

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring.

LORD BYRON: *Childe Harold.*

5. The Sonnet

All sonnets have fourteen lines, each of which is an iambic pentameter. There are, however, three different types of sonnet:

(a) The Shakespearian (English or Elizabethan) Sonnet.

This consists of three quatrains and a couplet, and rhymes a b a b, c d c d, e f e f, g g. E.g.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet not the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermillion of the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

SHAKESPEARE: *Sonnet XCVIII.*

(b) The Petrarchan Sonnet.

This consists of an octave (the first eight lines), followed by a sestet (the next six lines). The rhyme scheme of the octave is always a b b a a b b a. The rhymes of the sestet are varied, but never end with a couplet. The sestet may rhyme c d e c d e, or c d d e c e, or c d c d c d. There is a distinct break in thought or mood between the octave and the sestet. E.g.

Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

WORDSWORTH.

(c) The Miltonic Sonnet.

This follows the same pattern as the Petrarchan form except that the octave-sestet break is missing; the thought and mood continue without a check.

*Figures of Speech*1. Simile (note the spelling of the plural—*similes*).

Open comparison of one thing with another, introduced by *like*, *as*, *such*, etc. E.g.

*She sat like patience on a monument,
 Smiling at grief.*

SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*.

Epic or Homeric Similes

Extended similes such as the following from *Hyperion* by Keats.

*As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods.*

*Tall oaks, branch-charm'd by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went.*

2. Metaphor

The comparison of one thing with another without the introductory *like*, *as*, *such*, etc. E.g.

Simile: He was like a rock in those perilous days.

Metaphor: He was a rock in those perilous days.

The essence of metaphor is an imaginatively-suggested resemblance between two things usually considered quite different. E.g.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more.

SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*.

Note that single words can be metaphors. E.g.

Flowers *laugh* before thee in their beds

WORDSWORTH: *Ode to Duty*.

Mixed Metaphors. E.g.

Let us not take our hands from the plough until we have fought to the last ditch: we can then go forward with our backs to the wall.

3. Allegory

Extended metaphor. E.g. *Pilgrim's Progress*.

4. Personification

The endowment of abstractions with human qualities.
E.g.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:

KEATS: *Ode to Autumn*.

5. The Pathetic Fallacy

The endowment of natural objects with human emotions.

E.g.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave.

LORD BYRON: *Childe Harold*.

6. Hyperbole

Deliberate exaggeration to achieve emphasis. E.g.

I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum.

SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet*.

7. Litotes or Meiosis

Deliberate understatement to achieve emphasis. E.g.

I am . . . a citizen of no mean city.

Acts xxi. 39.

8. Antithesis

Setting one thing against another to achieve emphasis.

E.g.

But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little, and who talk too much.

DRYDEN: *Absalom and Achitophel*.

9. Epigram

A pointed, crisp saying, often containing antithesis. E.g.

Quoth she, I've heard old cunning stagers
Say, Fools for arguments use wagers.

BUTLER: *Hudibras*.

10. Paradox

An apparent contradiction containing a truth. E.g.

The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
While riding or driving along:
If you go to the left, you are sure to go right;
If you go to the right, you go wrong.

11. Oxymoron.

Compressed paradox. E.g.

bitter-sweet; a fearful joy; sweet sorrow.

12. Irony

Achieving emphasis by saying the opposite of what is really meant. E.g.

Mark Antony's reiteration of the statement, "Brutus is an honourable man."

13. Sarcasm

Irony used with the intention of hurting the feelings of the hearer. E.g.

That was a fine shot. (Said, for example, to a batsman who has snicked a ball through the slips.)

14. Dramatic Irony

Words having an ironical meaning for the audience, but not for the character that utters them. E.g.

Macbeth: Fail not our feast.

Banquo: My lord, I will not.

When Macbeth utters these words he is being deliberately ironical, for he has planned the murder of Banquo and he knows that Banquo will not be at the feast. Banquo is, of course, ignorant of the irony of Macbeth's words and of his own reply. There is, however, a double dramatic irony, for the ghost of Banquo appears, and so the murdered man does not fail to be at the feast.

15. Innuendo

Hinting a meaning without stating it directly. E.g.

"They say that Bloggins was the electrician for the Dramatic Society's last performance."

"Yes; and I hear that the switchboard still works."

16. Euphemism

Expressing a harsh truth mildly. E.g.

He passed away yesterday.

17. Pun

A play upon words. E.g.

Polonius: I did enact Julius Caesar; I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Hamlet: It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.

18. Syllepsis

Achieves surprise and emphasis (usually with comic effect) by linking the same verb with two nouns to which it refers in different senses. E.g.

They returned from the picnic in an open car and wet clothes.
He lost his wand of office and his temper.

19. Transferred Epithet (Hypallage)

Transferring the adjective from the noun that it properly qualifies to one associated with it. E.g.

The wretch was thankful to quit his sleepless bed.

20. Metonymy and Synecdoche

It is not very profitable to attempt to distinguish between these two figures of speech both of which involve the representation of an idea or thing by something closely connected with it. E.g.

Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

SHIRLEY: Death the Leveller.

Thirty sail now lay in the harbour awaiting the order to depart.

His trouble has always been the bottle.
From the cradle to the grave.

21. Onomatopoeia

The representation of the sense by the sound of the words used. E.g.

The trumpet's loud clangour
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!

DRYDEN: A Song for St. Cecilia's Day.

22. Alliteration

The repetition of the initial consonant in a series of words. E.g.

Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh.

HOPKINS: *The Wreck of the Deutschland*.

23. Assonance

The echoing of similar vowel sounds. E.g.

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of day-light's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon.

HOPKINS: *The Windhover*.

24. Climax

The presentation of thoughts or facts in a mounting succession. (The name "climax" means "a ladder.") E.g.

I came; I saw; I conquered.

25. Anticlimax (Bathos)

A sudden and unexpected descent, deliberately or accidentally contrived. Often used for comic effect. E.g.

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, *and of nymphs at home*;
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take . . . *and sometimes tea*.

POPE: *The Rape of the Lock*.

26. Prolepsis

Anticipation: the application of epithets as if they were already true to something not yet complete or in existence at all. E.g.

From this high place he looked down on his kingdom. Where others saw only barren lands, he saw the busy mill, the happy peasants, the smiling cornfields and the secure towns. He would do so much for this inheritance for which he had waited so long.

The bands were playing gaily and the sun shone down on the crowded streets as the citizens cheered their defeated army marching confidently to destruction.

27. Zeugma

The use of one verb or one adjective with two nouns, to only one of which it is really applicable logically or grammatically (cf. No. 18). E.g.

Kill the boys and the luggage.

SHAKESPEARE: *Henry V.*

268 Derwakhem

241 Phrases.

