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A SHADOW

R. K. Narayan

About the Author

R. K. Narayan (1906–2001) was a well-known Indian writer of English fiction. He was one of the first Indian novelists to write in English. The simplicity of his language, his realistic settings and endearing characters have made him one of the most well-loved writers of India. His popular works include *Malgudi Days* (1943), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958) and *The Man-eater of Malgudi* (1961). Besides novels, he has written short stories, travelogues, condensed versions of Indian epics in English, and a memoir titled *My Days* (1974).

About the Text

This is a poignant story about love and loss. Centred around the death of a man, it portrays the deep loss that a family suffers through the eyes and perspectives of a mother and her son. Written in his typical simple style, the story is more complex than it seems. It also highlights the power of cinema/video as a powerful tool to reclaim or revisit memories and relationships.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN . . .

1. Have you ever had someone close to you die? What were some of the ways in which you grieved or mourned?
2. There are so many ways in which we make memories. What are some ways that are your favourites (video, audio, photo, etc.)? Why?



Sambu demanded, 'You must give me four annas¹ to see the film tomorrow.' His mother was horrified. How could this boy! She had been **dreading**² for six-months past the arrival of the film. How could people bear to see him on the screen when they knew he was no more? She had had a vague hope that the producers might not release the picture out of consideration for her feelings. And when a procession appeared in the street with **tom-tom**³ and band, and with young boys carrying **placards**⁴ and huge coloured portraits of her husband, she resolved to go out of town for a while; but it was a desperate and unpractical **resolve**⁵. Now the picture had arrived. Her husband was going to speak, move, and sing, for at least six hours a day in that theatre three streets off.

Sambu was as delighted as if his father had come back to life. 'Mother, won't you also come and see the picture?'

'No.'

'Please, please. You must come.'

She had to explain to him how utterly impossible it would be for her to see the picture. The boy had a sort of **ruthless**⁶ logic: 'Why should it be impossible? Aren't you seeing his photos, even that big photo on the wall, every day?'

'But these photos do not talk, move or sing.'

'And yet you prefer them to the picture which has life!'

The whole of the next day Sambu was in great excitement. In his classroom whenever his master took his eyes off him for a moment he leant over and whispered to his neighbour, 'My father was paid ten thousand rupees to act in that film. I am seeing it this evening. Aren't you also coming?' 'To see *Kumari!*' his friend sneered. He hated Tamil pictures. 'I won't even pass that way.'

'This is not like other Tamil films. My father used to read to us the story every night. It is a very interesting story. He wrote the

¹ annas: a former monetary unit of India and Pakistan, equal to one sixteenth of a rupee

² **dreading**: anticipate with great apprehension or fear

³ **tom-tom**: a small drum

⁴ **placard**: a printed or handwritten notice or sign for public display, either fixed to a wall or carried during a demonstration

⁵ **resolve**: strong determination to do something

⁶ **ruthless**: having or showing no pity or compassion for others

whole story himself. He was paid ten thousand rupees for writing and acting. I will take you to the picture if you are also coming.'

'I won't see a Tamil picture.'

'This is not an ordinary Tamil picture. It is as good as English picture!'

But Sambu's friend was adamant⁷. Sambu had to go alone and see the picture. It was an attempt at a new style in Tamil films—a modern story with a minimum of music. It was the story of Kumari, a young girl, who refused to marry at fourteen but wanted to study in a university and earn an independent living⁸, and was cast away by her stern⁹ father (Sambu's father) and forgiven in the end.

Sambu sitting in the four-anna class was eagerly waiting for the picture to begin. It was six months since he had seen his father, and he missed him badly at home.

The hall darkened. Sambu sat through the trailers and slide advertisements without enthusiasm. After all his father came on the screen. He was wearing just the dhoti and shirt he used to wear at home. And then a little girl came up, and he patted her on the head and spoke to her exactly as he used to speak to Sambu. And then father taught the girl Arithmetic. She had a slate on her knee and he dictated to her: 'A cartman wants two annas per mile. Rama has three annas on hand. How far will the cartman carry him?' The girl chewed her slate pencil and blinked. Father was showing signs of impatience. 'Go on Kumari,' Sambu muttered. 'Say something otherwise you will receive a slap presently. I know him better than you do.' Kumari, however, was a better arithmetician than Sambu. She gave the right answer. Father was delighted. How he would jump about in sheer delight whenever Shambu solved a sum correctly! Sambu was reminded of a particular occasion when by sheer fluke¹⁰ he blundered¹¹ through a puzzle about a cistern¹² with a leak and a tap above it. How father jumped out of his chair when he heard Sambu declare that it would take three hours for the cistern to fill again.

⁷ adamant: refusing to be persuaded or to change one's mind

⁸ living: an income sufficient to live on or the means of earning it

⁹ stern: (here) strict

¹⁰ fluke: luck

¹¹ blundered: clumsily made an attempt

¹² cistern: water tank

When the film ended and the lights were switched on, Sambu turned about and gazed at the **aperture**¹³ in the projection room as if his father had vanished into it. The world now seemed to be a poorer place without father. He ran home. His mother was waiting for him at the door, 'It is nine o'clock. You are very late.'

'I would have loved it if the picture had lasted even longer. You are **perverse**¹⁴ mother. Why won't you see it?'

Throughout the dinner he kept talking. 'Exactly as father used to sing, exactly as he used to walk, exactly...'

His mother listened to him in **grim**¹⁵ silence. 'Why don't you say something, mother?'

'I have nothing to say.'

'Don't you like the picture?'

She didn't answer the question. She asked, 'Would you like to go and see the picture again tomorrow?'

'Yes, mother. If possible every day as long as the picture is shown. Will you give me four annas every day?'

'Yes.'

'Will you let me see both the shows every day?'

'Oh, no. You can't do that. What is to happen to your lessons?'

'Won't you come and see the picture, mother?'

'No, impossible.'

For a week more, three hours in the day, Sambu lived in his father's company, and felt depressed at the end of every show. Every day it was a parting for him. He longed to sit down and see the night show too, but mother bothered too much about school lessons. Time was precious but mother did not seem to understand it; lessons could wait, but not father. He envied those who were seeing the picture at night.

Unable to stand his **persuasions**¹⁶ any more, his mother agreed to see the picture on the last day. They went to the night show. She sat in the women's class. She had to **screw up**¹⁷ all her

¹³ *aperture*: an opening, hole or gap

¹⁴ *perverse*: showing a deliberate and obstinate desire to behave in a way that is unreasonable or unacceptable

¹⁵ *grim*: very serious or gloomy

¹⁶ *persuasions*: the action or process of persuading someone or of being persuaded to do or believe something

¹⁷ *screw up*: (here) idiom meaning to gather one's courage

courage to sit down for the picture. She had a feeling of great relief as long as the slide advertisements, and trailer pieces lasted. When the picture began, her heart beat fast. Her husband talking to his wife on the screen, playing with his child, singing, walking, dressing; same clothes, same voice, same anger, same joy—she felt that the whole thing was a piece of cruelty inflicted¹⁸ on her. She shut her eyes several times, but the picture fascinated her: it had the fascination of a thing which is painful. And then came a scene in which he reclined¹⁹ in a chair reading a newspaper. How he would sit absorbed in a newspaper! In their years of married life, how often had she quarrelled with him for it! Even on the last day he had sat thus after dinner, in his canvas chair, with the newspaper before him: she had lost her temper at the sight of it and said, 'You and your newspaper! I could as well go and sleep off the rest of the day,' and left his company. When she saw him later he had fallen back in his chair with the sheets of newspaper over his face.....

This was an unbearable scene. A sob burst from her.

Sambu, sitting on his seat on the men's side, liked to see his father in the newspaper scene because the girl would presently come and ask him what he was reading, annoy him with questions, and get what she deserved: father would shout: 'Kumari! will you go out or shall I throw you out?' That girl didn't know how to behave with father, and Sambu intensely disliked her....

While awaiting eagerly the snubbing²⁰ of the girl Sambu heard a burst of sobbing in the women's class: presently there was a scramble²¹ of feet and a cry. 'Put the lights on! Accident to someone!' The show was stopped. People went hither and thither²². Sambu, cursing this interruption, stood up on a bench to see what the matter was. He saw his mother being lifted from the floor. 'That is my mother! Is she also dead?' screamed Sambu and jumped over the barrier. He wailed and cried. Someone told him, 'She has only fainted. Nothing has happened to her. Don't make a fuss.' They carried her out and laid her in the passage. The lights were put out again, people returned to their seats, and the

¹⁸ inflicted: cause suffering to someone

¹⁹ reclined: leaned back

²⁰ snubbing: rebuffing or putting someone in their place

²¹ scramble: move in a hurry as a group

²² hither and thither: here and there

show continued. Mother opened her eyes sat up, and said, 'Let us go away.'

'Yes, mother' He fetched a **jutka**²³ and helped her into it. As he was climbing into it himself from the darkened hall a familiar voice said, 'Kumari! Will you go out or shall I throw you out?' On hearing it Sambu's heart became heavy and he burst into tears: he was affected both by his mother's breakdown and by the feeling that this was the final parting from his father. They were changing the picture next day.

Points to Ponder

Loss and death are a part of life. However, everyone reacts to and deals with them differently. Some are able to put their loss in perspective and carry on with their lives easier than others. Some are never able to get over it. Some get depressed or anxious. There is no right or wrong way to deal with death. We can be sad, anxious, angry and yet find the space and the love to move on, remember the bright and loving times and not let it overshadow one's day to day life. For that we need to be patient, loving and accepting of ourselves and our reactions to loss. Be kind, be gentle with yourself and others.

COMPREHENSION

- A. Answer the following questions in one sentence each.
1. How much was a ticket for the movies in the story?
 2. Why was Sambu so excited to see the film?
 3. Who was the lead actor in the film and why was he so important to Sambu?
 4. How does Sambu react to the trailers and advertisements at the beginning of the movie?
 5. What does Sambu's mother feel when the village took out a big procession before the release of the movie?
 6. Why does Sambu's mother faint?

²³ *jutka*: a horse-drawn cart

B. Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words.

1. How does Sambu and his mother's reactions to the trailers and advertisements differ and why?
2. Why does Sambu's mother not want to see the film?
3. How would you describe Sambu's attitude towards the film?
4. Why do you think Sambu keeps pestering his mother to see the film?
5. How would you describe Sambu's reactions at the end of the story?

C. Answer the following questions in about 150 words.

1. Compare and contrast Sambu and his mother's reactions and memories to various scenes in the film.
2. How does the author deal with the idea of death and memory in the story?
3. Comment on the title of the story and how it relates to what the story is about?

2

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

John Keats

About the Poet

John Keats (1795–1821) abandoned his medical profession to become a poet. His imagery is colourful and sensuous, and his word paintings are remarkable. Influenced by Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, Keats's poetry blends the Romantic with the philosophical. Keats's poems were badly received by critics during his lifetime, but his reputation as a poet grew steadily after his death with the increasing popularity of Romanticism. He is now seen as a key figure of the Romantic Movement in English literature. His works have greatly influenced later writers, and are still very popular today.

About the Poem

'La Belle Dame sans Merci' is written in the form of a ballad. Like most traditional ballads, it tells its story through dialogue. The first three verses ask a question. The answer contains the story of a knight who met an otherworldly lady. She took him to a strange cave where he had a terrible dream. When he awoke, he could no longer find the beautiful lady nor get back his strength. The poem can hold many possible meanings. The pitiless lady could symbolise disease; she could be poetry; or she could be the cruelty of life itself. The knight could be somebody suffering from an incurable disease; he could be a poet who can never become extraordinary; or he could be a sensitive human being for whom life, though beautiful, is painful to experience. It may also be about the dangers of addiction. Thus, despite the beguiling simplicity of its surface narrative, the poem is open to many interpretations.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN . . .

1. Have you ever had an experience that felt stranger than fiction? What was it and how did it affect you?

2. There are certain people in our lives whom we feel drawn to, sometimes without good reason. Is there any such person in your life? How would you describe them? Why do you/did you feel enchanted by them? What kind of impact did they have on your life?



O what can ail¹ thee, knight-at-arms²,
Alone and palely³ loitering?
The sedge⁴ has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard⁵ and so woe-begone⁶?
The squirrel's granary⁷ is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily⁸ on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew⁹,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth¹⁰ too!

I met a lady in the meads¹¹,

¹ *ail*: makes one feel ill

² *knight-at-arms*: a man, usually of noble birth, who is awarded a military rank for his services

³ *palely*: (here) sickly; without vigour; lacking vitality

⁴ *sedge*: grass-like plant growing in wet places

⁵ *haggard*: looking unwell or exhausted

⁶ *woe-begone*: sad or miserable in appearance

⁷ *granary*: a storehouse for food (here, refers to the squirrel's habit of collecting nuts in its home for the winter when food is hard to find)

⁸ *lily on thy brow*: The white lily flower was often associated with death. This line may also be a poetic way of saying that the knight looked very pale.

⁹ *anguish moist and fever dew*: The knight's face is described as being wet with the sweat of severe pain and a high fever.

¹⁰ *withereth*: (archaic) withers; fades

¹¹ *meads*: (poetic) meadows

Pull beautiful—a faery's child,
 Her hair was long, her foot was light¹²,
 And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
 And bracelets too, and fragrant zone¹³;
 She look'd at me as she did love,
 And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed¹⁴,
 And nothing else saw all day long,
 For sidelong would she bend, and sing
 A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish¹⁵ sweet,
 And honey wild, and manna-dew¹⁶,
 And sure in language strange she said—
 'I love thee¹⁷ true.'

She took me to her elfin¹⁸ grot¹⁹,
 And there she wept and sigh'd full sore²⁰,
 And there I shut her wild wild eyes
 With kisses four.

And there she lullèd²¹ me asleep,
 And there I dreamed—ah! woe betide²²!

¹² foot was light: The fairy lady walked lightly and left no trace of herself.

¹³ fragrant zone: sweet smelling belt; here, 'zone' means belt

¹⁴ pacing steed: walking horse

¹⁵ relish: flavour; taste

¹⁶ manna dew: (Biblical reference) Manna was food (appearing in the form of dew) miraculously supplied by God to the Israelites during their forty years of exile in the desert. Here, it could refer to the sweet dried juice of the manna-ash plant.

¹⁷ thee: (archaic) you

¹⁸ elfin: relating to an elf

¹⁹ grot: (short for 'grotto') a small cave

²⁰ sore: sad

²¹ lullèd: calm or send to sleep with soft soothing sounds

²² woe betide: an expression of sorrow meaning 'alas!' or 'oh, no!'

The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci²³
Hath thee in thrall²⁴!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam²⁵,
With horrid warning gapèd²⁶ wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn²⁷ here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Points to Ponder

This is a poem that seems to focus both on the creativity of the imagination as well as the way we are enthralled by certain people or things in our lives. Looking up to or being fascinated by a certain person or certain attitudes or substances is something that all of us have encountered in our lives. It might be worthwhile to examine why these things or people have such a strong hold over us and whether we are actually benefitting from or being deluded by them. Having a sense of objectivity and perspective may help you from being pulled into a situation that may end up harming you.

²³ *la Belle Dame sans Merci*: (French) 'the beautiful lady without kindness/mercy'. Keats took the title from *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*, a medieval French poem on courtly love, by Alain Chartier.

²⁴ *thrall*: being under the control of another person

²⁵ *gloam*: (archaic) twilight

²⁶ *gapèd*: opened wide

²⁷ *sojourn*: to spend a certain length of time somewhere

COMPREHENSION

- A. Answer the following questions in one sentence each.**
- What attribute does the knight share with the kings, princes and warriors of his dream?
 - What season or time of year is the poem set in?
 - Who is the narrator of the poem?
 - What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?
 - What do you think the word 'wild' means in the context of the fourth stanza?
- B. Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words.**
- What is the question posed in the poem?
 - Describe the appearance of the knight when the poet finds him. How does his appearance reflect his mental state?
 - Describe the knight's dream in detail.
 - Who or what do the people in the knight's dream represent?
 - How would you describe the main characters in the poem?
- C. Answer the following questions in about 150 words.**
- Keats makes multiple references to nature in this poem. How do these references relate to or symbolise the condition of the knight?
 - How does the poet establish the supernatural atmosphere of the poem? Focus on the diction and imagery used by Keats.
 - Comment on the title of the poem and how it relates to what the poem is about?

3

WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

Rabindranath Tagore

About the Poet

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), who contributed immensely in putting modern India on the world literary map, was a multifaceted personality. He was a poet, a dramatist, a short-story writer, an educationist and a novelist. He was also a philosopher and nation-builder. He wrote primarily in Bengali, but translated a number of his own works into English (and in the process wrote them afresh). Of the volumes of poetry which he rendered into English, the important ones are *Gitanjali* and *The Gardener*. The songs of the *Gitanjali* are mainly devotional poems in the Indian tradition. *The Gardener* consists mainly of love poetry with a human, rather than a divine slant. Sense and sensibility are combined in his poetry to present deeper truths.

About the Poem

‘Where the Mind is without Fear’, which is Poem 35 of the *Gitanjali*, is one of Tagore’s most anthologised poems. It is an expression of the poet’s reflective spirit and contains a simple prayer for his country, the India of pre-Independence times. But the prayer has a universal message which makes it still relevant. He prays that his country will rise above petty concerns and narrow prejudices and soar high into a world of freedom of thought and action based on truth and fearlessness.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN . . .

1. Do you think there is any kind of freedom other than political freedom? Why? What could these freedoms be?
2. In what ways, do you think, we limit our own freedom? How do these limitations affect our lives? Can you write a few sentences on how you limit your own freedom and whether it is by choice, conditioning or forced upon you?

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
 Where knowledge is free;
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments³ by
 narrow domestic walls³;
 Where words come out from the depth of truth⁴;
 Where tireless striving⁵ stretches its arms towards perfection;
 Where the clear stream⁶ of reason has not lost its way into the
 dreary⁷ desert sand of dead habit⁸;
 Where the mind is led forward by thee⁹ into ever-widening¹⁰
 thought and action—
 Into that heaven of freedom¹¹, my Father, let my country
 awake¹².

Points to Ponder

This poem reveals that Tagore, who believed in the essential oneness of humanity, dreamt of a truly global society. At the end of the day, we are all human beings, no matter the colour of our skin, the names of the gods we pray to, the gender we claim, the food we eat, the language we speak or where we live. To rise past these boundaries and ‘walls’ is the essence of freedom. To be equal, to be recognised as equal and to have all the rights and privileges of being human is the essence of freedom.

¹ *head is held high*: refers to pride in one's freedom

² *fragments*: pieces

³ *narrow domestic walls*: a metaphorical reference to boundaries of caste and creed

⁴ *truth*: the ultimate reality, the goal of great poets and philosophers

⁵ *tireless striving*: constant struggle towards a goal

⁶ *clear stream*: pure flowing body of water; not large enough to be a river

⁷ *dreary*: dull and gloomy

⁸ *dead habit*: outdated practices

⁹ *thee*: archaic form for ‘you’

¹⁰ *ever-widening*: that which is always expanding its horizons

¹¹ *heaven of freedom*: a joyful abode which has freedom for the individual

¹² *let my country awake*: Tagore prays not just for territorial independence for his country, but also for its intellectual and spiritual freedom.

COMPREHENSION

A. Answer the following questions in one sentence each.

1. How is the country imagined in the poem?
2. Whom does the poet refer to using the phrase 'my Father'?
3. What is reason compared to in the poem?
4. What does the poet hope our mind would be directed by?
5. What does the word 'domestic' in the phrase 'narrow domestic walls' indicate?

B. Answer the following questions in about 30-40 words.

1. What does the poet mean by 'Where ... the head is held high'?
2. What does the poet say about knowledge?
3. Explain the phrase 'dreary desert sand of dead habit'.
4. What is Tagore's definition of freedom?
5. The poet wishes that 'words come out from the depth of truth'. What does this wish indicate about the present state of the world?

C. Answer the following questions in about 150 words.

1. Describe the central idea of the poem.
2. Does the poem apply only to pre-Independence India or is it relevant to all countries at all times? Give reasons.
3. What qualities does the poet wish his country to have and why?

UNIT II:

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

1

INTRODUCING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Language can be used in different ways in different situations. It is as important to learn the polite and right way of communicating with others as it is to read and write in any language. In this unit, you will learn how to navigate a conversation in a variety of contexts.

To begin with, this section will help you learn how to say who you are after greeting someone who does not know you. You will also learn how to respond to introductions. There are different ways of doing this depending on whether the situation is a formal or an informal one.

Read the following dialogues and pay attention to the expressions in bold, used in formal situations.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Prakash Reddy is a new teacher. He introduces himself to the headmistress, Nina Shetty. Time: morning)

Prakash Reddy: Good morning, Mrs Shetty. I'm Prakash Reddy. I'm the new history teacher reporting for duty.

Mrs Nina Shetty: Good morning, Prakash. (I'm) pleased to meet you. Welcome to the National School. We're glad to have you.

Prakash Reddy: Thank you. I'm looking forward to working here.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Mrs Shakti Thomas walks up to Mr Abhay Sarkar, an employee in the bank where she has just started work.)

Mrs Thomas: Good morning! I'm Shakti Thomas. I've joined the bank today as an assistant accounts officer. I was with a private finance company in Trichy earlier.

Mr Sarkar (rising to his feet): Good morning! I'm happy to meet you. I'm Abhay Sarkar, and I'm a manager in the housing loans division. Welcome to our bank!

Mrs Thomas: Thank you, Mr Sarkar. Very nice meeting you too.

Dialogue 3 (informal)

(Vishal is at a wedding reception. He introduces himself to Jacob, his sister's classmate.)

Vishal: Hello. I'm Vishal, Smita's brother.

Jacob: Hi, Vishal! Nice to meet you.

Vishal: Nice meeting you too.

Points to Note

- Be brief and precise when you introduce yourself.
- You usually do not put a title in front of your name when introducing yourself to others. There are some exceptions, for example, you could introduce yourself as Mrs Sethi. You can also introduce yourself with your rank and title if you are part of the Armed Forces or the police in formal situations, for example, Brigadier Khan or DSP Kaur.
- You can omit using your full name in informal situations but must always do so in formal ones.
- Other ways of introducing yourself are:
Let me introduce myself. I'm . . .
I'll introduce myself. I'm . . .

Now you will learn how to introduce two people who are strangers to each other. Once again, the language and the terms used are different in formal and informal settings.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Dr Preeta Rao and Mr Salil Mohammad meet for the first time at the workplace of a common friend, Mrs Padma Padamsee.)

Mrs Padamsee: Dr Rao, I'd like to introduce you to Mr Salil Mohammad. Mr Mohammad is our company secretary. Mr Mohammad, please meet Dr Preeta Rao. Dr Rao is an educational advisor with the UNICEF.

Dr Rao (shaking hands): How d'you do, Mr Mohammad? I'm happy to meet you.

Mr Mohammad: Thank you, Dr Rao. This is indeed a pleasure. Mrs Padamsee has spoken to me about the fine work that you are doing among children in government schools.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Ms Tara Gupta, the manager of an advertising agency, introduces Mr Subir Jain and Mr Aftab Khan to each other.)

Tara Gupta: (to Subir Jain) Subir, here's Mr Aftab Khan. He heads the copywriting department.

(to Aftab Khan) Aftab, I'd like to introduce Mr Subir Jain to you. He's our new graphic designer.

Aftab Khan: Hello, Mr Jain. Glad to meet you.

Subir Jain: Nice to meet you too. Please call me Subir.

Dialogue 3 (informal)

(Kritika introduces her sister Alka to her classmate John.)

Kritika: John, this is my sister, Alka. She's an editor with the *Times of India*. Alka, meet John. He's my classmate and captain of the college basketball team.

John: Hi, Alka! Nice meeting you.

Alka: Hello, John. It's nice meeting you too. I used to know your cousin Stella at the K. N. Degree College.

Points to Note

- Some other expressions you can use to introduce people to one another are:
 - *I'd like you to meet*
 - *Have you met?*
 - *Do you know each other?*
 - *Let me introduce*
 - *May I introduce (formal)*
 - *It gives me great pleasure to introduce (to an audience at a public function)*
- In formal situations a woman is introduced to a man.
- If the people being introduced are both either women or men, then the older person is usually introduced to the younger.
- At the work place, the senior person is introduced to the junior.

EXERCISES

A. *Look at some expressions used in formal and in informal situations to introduce two persons to each other and those that they can use to respond. Read each item and repeat it filling in a name of your choice.*

1. I'd like to introduce you to
2. Please meet
3. This is
4., meet
5. I'm happy to meet you.
6. This is indeed a pleasure.
7. Nice meeting you.

B. Fill in the blanks after each greeting by introducing yourself in different ways. Say each item aloud for practice.

1. Excuse me, Mr Das.
2. Hello, Kala.
3. Hi, Babu.

C. Working first in pairs and then in groups of three, write and enact the following situations in the form of brief dialogues choosing appropriate expressions from those given above.

1. Rahul Kapoor from Omega Tech, Bangalore, enters the Pune office of his company's chartered accountant with whom he has an appointment. He introduces himself to the person's secretary, explaining who he is, where he is from and why he is there.
2. Smita goes to her friend Praveen's house. Her younger sister, Amita, is with her. Smita introduces the two to each other.
3. Anushree and her mother meet her college professor Dr Priya Mahate in the mall while they are in line for the same movie. Anushree introduces them to each other.

2

ASKING, GIVING AND REFUSING PERMISSION

We sometimes need to ask other people for permissions—for help, information, money or for leave—and also respond when someone makes similar requests to us. It is important to know how to use language carefully to do this if you want a positive response to your request. It is also necessary to give permission pleasantly, without making the other person feel that the request is bothering you or that you are doing him/her a favour. In case you have to decline permission, it has to be done tactfully, without causing offence. In this unit, you will learn how to make and respond to requests for permission politely in English.

Once again note how the language and phrases you use would differ in formal and informal situations.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Aruna asks her teacher for permission to work in the library during her class.)

Aruna: Ma'am, could you permit me to work in the library, please. I have to read up on my topic for the seminar on Monday.

Teacher: Alright. But make sure that you borrow the class notes from your classmates and do the assignment.

Aruna: Thank you, ma'am. I'll do that.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Vanita and friends wish to go to a movie on the occasion of a friend's birthday. She makes a request to the warden for permission.)

Vanita: Good morning, Madam.

Warden: Good morning, Vanita. Is anything the matter?

Vanita: Madam, Today is Monik's birthday. May we seek your permission to go to an evening show?

Warden: When are you returning?

Vanita: We'll be back as soon as the movie is finished, Madam.

Warden: Hmm . . .

Vanita: Please, Madam!

Warden: You may go. Give me the list of friends going to the movie. Make sure you return before 10. I'll inform the security.

Dialogue 3 (formal)

Asif: Good morning, Mr Jain.

Mr Jain: Good morning, Abbas. What's the matter? You look worried.

Asif: My son is unwell and needs to have an operation. I'd be grateful if you could permit me to take ten days leave.

Mr Jain : That shouldn't be a problem. Das can take care of your projects while you are away

Asif: Thank you very much, Mr Jain.

Mr Jain : You're welcome, Abbas. Don't worry. Your son's going to be fine.

Dialogue 4 (formal)

(Praveen asks his boss for permission to take leave. He refuses.)

Praveen: Good afternoon, sir.

Boss: Good afternoon, Praveen. How is work at the factory site progressing?

Praveen: A little slow, but we'll complete it on time.

Boss: Please remember that our deadline is the 31st.

Praveen: The building will definitely be ready by then. Sir, could you permit me to take two days leave, please?

Boss: I don't think that's a good idea. You can't afford to take time off from work at the moment, can you?

Dialogue 5 (informal)

(Manju asks a junior colleague to help her with a project report.)

Manju: Amir, would it be possible for you to help me draft my project report this evening?

Amir: I really wish I could've helped, but I'm leaving after lunch. My mother's arriving from Pune, and I have to meet her at the station. I'm so sorry.

Manju: That's all right.

Dialogue 6 (informal)

(Sudhir asks his cousin Amita to go shopping with him.)

Sudhir: Amita, will you come shopping with me this evening, please? I have to buy a present for mother. It's her birthday next week.

Amita: I'm sorry I can't make it today, Sudhir. I have my music class. But I'd love to help you choose a gift for auntie. Can we go tomorrow evening instead?

Sudhir: Oh, yes. We could do that. See you tomorrow evening then. Bye.

Amita: Bye.

Dialogue 7 (informal)

(Hari is riding his motorbike. He sees Jose at the bus stop.)

Jose: Hi, Hari. Where're you going?

Hari: (I'm going) to the market.

Jose: Can you give me a lift to the post office, please.

Hari: Okay! Hop on.

Jose: Thanks.

Here are some expressions you could use to make and respond to a request. The expressions at the top are more formal than those towards the bottom of the list.

To make a request

*May I request you to . . . , please.**

I was wondering if you'd do me a favour.

I'd be grateful if you could . . .

I'd really appreciate it if you'd . . .

If you don't mind, could you . . . , please.

Could I ask a favour of you, please.

I wonder if you could . . . ?

Do you think it would be possible for you to . . . ? No problem at all.

Do you think you could . . . ?

Would it be possible for you to . . . ?

Would you mind . . . ?

Sorry to bother you, but could you . . . , please.

I hate to trouble you, but could you . . . , please.

To respond

*I consider it a privilege to . . . **

*I feel honoured to . . . **

I would like to thank . . . for . . .

My pleasure.

Certainly.

I'd be delighted.

I'd be happy to.

Of course.

I'd be glad to.

Sure.

Okay.

I am sorry but . . .

I'm sorry.

I hate to do this but . . .

Would you . . . , please.

Could you . . . , please.

Can you . . . , please.

* These expressions are used only in very formal situations.

Points to Note

- Requests can be either direct (as in *Could I use your telephone, please*) or indirect (as in *Would it be possible for you to draft my project report?*)
- When making a request, remember that *Would you . . . ?* or *Could you . . . ?* are more formal than *Will you . . . ?* or *Can you?*
- One way of making a request more polite is by starting with an apology (as in *Sorry to bother you, but could you book a ticket for me?*)
- When agreeing to a request, you can show that you are doing so willingly by using *I'd be happy to/I'd be glad to/Certainly/Yes, of course/My pleasure.*
- When declining a request, you can show that you regret not being able to agree by using expressions such as *I'm sorry, but . . .* and *I wish I could have, but . . .*. You can also indicate that you are concerned about the problem of the person making the request by offering alternative solutions or making helpful suggestions (as in *Can we go tomorrow instead?*)

EXERCISES

- A. Fill in the blanks with suitable expressions. You can use the expressions that appear in bold in the sample dialogues. The first blank is filled for you as an example.

Requests

1. Could you do me a favour, please.
2. _____ carry these books for me to the library?
3. Hey, Rema, can you help me with the physics problem?
4. _____ take baby out for a while?
5. _____ the chairperson to deliver her inaugural address.
6. I was wondering _____ pick up my shirts from the tailor on your way back from the school.

Responses

1. I'd be glad to.
2. _____
3. I'm afraid _____, Arjun.
(give a reason)
4. I'd love to.
5. I feel _____ to address this learned audience.
6. _____ But I have to go to the computer class today, and that's in the other direction.

B. Working in pairs, complete the short exchanges below, consisting of requests and responses (positive/negative). You can use the words in the boxes and add others of your own to fill in the gaps in the outlines. After you have completed the dialogues, enact them with your partner.

1. Mrs Shekhar asks Smita to buy a kurta for her son Amit.
(informal)

sure	can	any	time	thanks	love to
------	-----	-----	------	--------	---------

Mrs Shekhar: Amit.

Smita: I'd , auntie.

Mrs Shekhar:

Smita:

2. Rajiv asks Arun to help him decorate the stage for a dance programme. (informal)

would thanks okay mind wish I could have to be

Rajiv: you staying back to
the dance programme?

Arun: I but I
home early today.

Rajiv: That's

Arun: for understanding.

3. The physical instructor asks the head of the sports department to help him plan the schedule for Sports Day. (formal)

pleasure certainly not too much trouble thank you

Physical instructor: If it's
.....?

Head:

Physical instructor: so much.

Head: My

4. The headmaster requests the chief guest, the Education Minister, to inaugurate the new science block and to address the gathering. (very formal)

look forward delighted may present request

Headmaster: I now the Hon'ble
Education Minister the new science block
and the gathering.

Minister: I'm to be here this
morning, and to speaking to you.

3

DESCRIBING DAILY ROUTINES

Sometimes, perhaps in an interview or in a group discussion you may be asked about your daily routine—meaning what are the things you do on a daily basis. There are certain phrases that demarcate time of day, type of activity, and areas in which you perform those activities that are useful to know in such situations.

Time of day	Areas	Activities
morning	at home	wake up
noon	in school	brush my teeth
night	in office	have lunch/dinner/ breakfast
dawn	in a restaurant	have a shower
dusk	at the bus stop/ station/taxi stand	shave/put on makeup
late afternoon	at the movies	get dressed
evening		drive/take a bus/ auto/taxi
mid-morning		work/attend
meetings/ conference		with clients, etc.
		do the dishes
		do my laundry
		make the bed
		water the plants

Read the following sample dialogues and pay attention to the phrases that are used to describe all your daily activities as well as those that link and arrange your activities in chronological order.

Dialogue 1 (informal)

(Anuj is asked about what his morning routine is like in college by his mother)

Mother: So tell me, what do you do in the mornings? Do you wake up on time? Do you remember to eat breakfast?

Anuj: Come on Ma! I am old enough to take care of myself! I wake up by 6:30 am and brush my teeth. Then I head out for a run or workout on those days that I don't have an 8 am class. I come back by about 7:15 or so, shower, shave, make my bed and head for breakfast by 8. That's when the canteen opens. I am usually done by half past 8 and get into class by 9. Happy?!

Mother: Wow! I didn't realise you could be this disciplined. Where was all this sense of routine when you were living at home?

Anuj: That's because you were there to wake me up!

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Preetika is asked how she will manage working in a company and pursuing her MA in Dance at the same time by a prospective employer Ms Shashi)

Shashi: I see from your application that you are pursuing a Masters in Dance. This is a large commitment on your part. Do you see yourself being able to both work here and do your Masters at the same time?

Preetika: Absolutely ma'am. I have no doubt that I will be able to do justice to both commitments. I have excellent time management skills and I do not foresee my Masters having an adverse impact on my job.

Shashi: How exactly will you find time to do all this? You do realise that this position requires you to be in office from 3 pm to 8 pm everyday except weekends.

Preetika: I understand your concerns. My classes at the university start at 7:30 am and end at 12 pm. Fortunately the university is close to the office so even in peak traffic time it will not take me more than half an hour to reach the office. I would take a lunch break from 12:15 pm to about 1:15 pm or so. Even if I leave campus by 1:45 or 2 pm I would still reach the office by 2:30 pm at the latest. I have my own vehicle and would not be dependent on public transport. The only times I would have to request an allowance to be late or to work from home would be when I have to take the semester examinations. Since those are decided in advance I believe I can work out a sensible shift change with the HR department for those times without causing anyone too much trouble. I hope this answers your question?

Shashi: It seems as if you have thought about this quite thoroughly. I am impressed by your sense of planning and your foresight. Let me think about this and get back to you in a couple of days.

Preetika: Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Points to note

- Keep your sentences short and simple while describing your routine. Don't add unnecessary details unless asked for.
- Remember to use the appropriate phrases for times of day and activities and linking words/phrases to indicate the sequence in which your activities take place.
- Be very careful and precise in the way you approach answering questions about your daily routines in formal settings. For instance, you wouldn't want to mention how much time you take to have a bath or go to the toilet in formal settings.

38 CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

EXERCISES

- A. *Form groups of two or three and enact the following situations with the appropriate dialogues.*
1. Your sister is convinced that you are not putting in enough time to study for your final exams. Convince her how you are structuring your routine to make sure you have enough time to study.
 2. Sheejith, Suvarna and Renjith share their thoughts on how best to make time for exercise whilst attending college classes and participating in extracurricular activities.
 3. You are a professional musician and are being interviewed by a journalist on how you find time to sing, practise and write weekly columns on music education while being a parent.

4

COMPLAINING AND APOLOGISING

There are many situations where you either have to complain about something or apologise for doing the wrong thing. You might want to complain as a customer about a product or service, or the behaviour of a colleague, or simply as a sibling. You might have to apologise to a friend, or to a customer or employer.

The following dialogues demonstrate how to make a complaint in such a manner that the other person involved doesn't feel you are being malicious or unkind.

Dialogue (formal)

(Mrs Nair goes to her neighbour, Shamim, to make a complaint.)

Mrs Nair: Good evening, Mr Shamim. I'm sorry to trouble you, but there's a small problem that I want to speak to you about.

Shamim: What is it, Mrs Nair?

Mrs Nair: There seems to be a leak in your bathroom pipe and the water seeps through the roof of our flat downstairs. **Could you have the pipe repaired, please.**

Shamim: Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I knew the pipe had a leak somewhere, but I didn't realise that it was causing damage to your flat. Please forgive me. I'll have the pipe repaired immediately.

Mrs Nair: That's very kind of you, Mr Shamim. I hope you didn't mind my bringing up this matter.

Shamim: Oh no, Mrs Nair. I'm glad you brought the problem to my notice. I wouldn't have known about it otherwise.

Dialogue (formal)

(The new washing machine that Shashi Bajaj bought stops working after being used for just two days. In spite of the calls she makes, the dealer does not send a service engineer to take a look at it. Shashi goes to the company's office to make a complaint to the manager in charge of the customer service division.)

Shashi: Good morning, Mr Dutta. I have a complaint to make.

Dutta: Good morning, ma'am. Could you tell me what the problem is, please.

Shashi: I bought a Fine Wash fully automatic washing machine from Mayuri, your dealer at Prabhat Nagar, on the 12th of this month. The machine was installed on the 13th. It ran well for two days but on the third day, it simply stopped working. Mayuri has not responded to any of my calls. I'd like you to help me in getting the piece replaced.

Dutta: This is most unfortunate, ma'am. I assure you that the defective machine will be replaced by a fresh piece before evening. Please accept my apologies.

Shashi : Thank you, Mr Dutta, for being so understanding and helpful. I'm sorry for having bothered you.

Dialogue (informal)

(Anil and Afifa are close friends. Anil gets selected to the IPS but forgets to tell Afifa about it. Afifa is hurt and complains to Anil about his behaviour.)

Afifa: Anil, I'm very upset with you.

Anil: Why, Afifa, what have I done?

Afifa: I hear that you have been selected to the Indian Police Service. I'm surprised that you didn't think of telling me about it.

Anil: Oh Afifa, I'm so very sorry! I don't know why I thought that you were with all our other friends when I broke the news. Do forgive me if you can.

Afifa: That's all right. These things happen sometimes. I knew you wouldn't deliberately do a thing like that.

Now look at some dialogues that demonstrate how to apologise and/or accept an apology from someone else.

Dialogue 1 (formal)

(Chandran apologises to a senior colleague for not completing his work on time.)

Sheila Bose: Mr Chandran, could we meet this afternoon to discuss your project proposal, please.

Chandran: Ms Bose, I must apologise for not completing the proposal on time. I was unwell.

Sheila Bose: That's all right. But please complete it by next week.

Chandran: I certainly will.

Dialogue 2 (formal)

(Satish apologises to his teacher for talking in class.)

Satish (at the staff room): Excuse me, ma'am.

Teacher: Yes, Satish. What is it?

Satish: Ma'am, I'm really sorry for talking in class. Suma wanted to know what we did in the class she missed yesterday. But I know I shouldn't have been talking.

Teacher: Satish, you know how annoying it is when you don't pay attention.

Satish: Yes, ma'am, I realise that. I won't do it again.

Teacher: Don't worry about it.

Satish: Thank you, ma'am.

Dialogue 3 (formal)

(Sirish apologises to his boss for reaching the office late.)

Boss: Where's Sirish?

Revati: He hasn't come in yet, sir. (pause) Oh, here he is.

Sirish: Excuse me for being late, sir. The bus didn't turn up, and I had to look for an auto.

Boss: That's okay. But please be on time in future.

Sirish: I will, sir.

Dialogue 4 (informal)

(Shilpa has to meet her friend Arati, who is coming from Assam, at the railway station. But Shilpa is late by ten minutes.)

Arati: Here you are at last, Shilpa! Hi! I was beginning to get worried.

Shilpa: Hi! Look, I'm really sorry I'm late. I was caught in a traffic jam.

Arati: No problem. It's good to see you.

Points to note

- Keep your sentences short and simple while describing your routine. Don't add unnecessary details unless asked for.
- Telling someone that you are not satisfied with something or that you feel hurt about something they have done is perfectly all right. But you must remember to be polite when making a complaint or responding to one.

- When making a complaint, begin by describing the situation and the problem briefly and clearly, for example 'This is about the school bus driver. He is always late.'
- Say how the problem affects you, for example 'The children are never able to get to school on time.'
- Request that a solution be found to your problem, for example 'Could you talk to the driver, please?'
- Always respond to a complaint with an apology, for example 'I'm sorry the bus has been coming late.'
- Promise to find a solution, for example 'We'll make sure the driver is punctual in future.'

EXERCISES

A. Fill in the blanks in the following dialogues, using different expressions to apologise.

1. A: for disturbing you.

1: Oh, that's all right.

2. A: for the delay in returning the books (that) you lent me.

2: Don't worry about it.

3. A: not inviting you to my birthday party.

3: Forget about it.

4. A: Oh, I've spilt all the ink.

4: Never mind.

5. A: for not informing you about the change in the timetable.

5: Don't let it bother you.

B. Fill in the blanks in the dialogues below, giving a reason for a mistake or promising to correct it. After you finish, enact them with your partner. Take turns so that each of you plays the roles of both the person making the apology and the person accepting it.

1. A: I'm so sorry I'm late. (give a reason).

B: It's okay. But please don't be late in future.

2. A: I have to apologise for making so much noise last night.
..... (*promise that it won't happen again*).
B: Oh, that's all right.
3. A: I really feel bad about losing your book.
(*promise to do something to make up for the mistake*).
B: Don't worry about it.
4. A: I must apologise for losing my temper yesterday
..... (*accept that it shouldn't have happened*)
B: It's okay. Don't think about it.

C. *Fill in the blanks in the following dialogues with suitable expressions to accept an apology.*

1. A: I'm so sorry I couldn't complete my assignment yesterday. I had a bad headache.
B: But make sure you complete it by tomorrow.
2. A: Please forgive me for not attending class yesterday. I had to go to the dentist.
B:
3. A: I'm extremely sorry for breaking your vase.
B:
4. A: Can you forgive me for hurting you?
B:
5. A: Sorry about being late for the game. I overslept and didn't know it was five.
B:

UNIT III: INTERVIEW SKILLS

1

JOB APPLICATION LETTER

Applying for a job is one of the most important landmarks in your professional career. There are a number of writing and communication tasks involved in applying for a job. This unit will discuss some of the main steps in some detail.

One of the first steps you will take, after selecting your preferred job, company, etc., is to write a letter or e-mail applying for the job. An application letter may be of two types:

Solicited applications are written in response to advertisements which appear in newspapers.

Unsolicited applications are written not in response to an advertisement, but when a candidate comes to know of a vacancy from a reliable source.

The application letter acts as a covering letter for the résumé (which is discussed in the next chapter). So ideally, a résumé should be sent along with the application letter. The letter should introduce you and give details about the qualifications and skills that may not be apparent in your résumé. The main object of an application letter is to get you an interview. Therefore, it is essential that your letter stimulates prospective employers' interest in your skills and accomplishments and gives them a clear idea about how you can satisfy the needs of their organisation.

An application letter should follow the basic format of a typical business letter. This includes:

- a contact section
- salutation
- information why you are qualified for the job
- a closing, and your signature.

Your Name →
Address
City, State, PIN Code
Phone Number
Email Address

Your contact information

Date

Name →
Title
Company
Address
City, State, PIN Code

Employer contact information

Dear Mr/Ms Last Name, → Salutation

Re: Application for XYS position → Subject line

Body of Cover Letter

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing.

Middle Paragraph(s)

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Remember you are interpreting your résumé, not repeating it.

Final Paragraph

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow up.

Yours sincerely,
Put your signature
Résumé

- Complimentary Close
- Signature
- Enclosure

A job application email will have the following components:

Recipient e-mail ID → Company contact information
Re: Application for XYS post → Subject line

Dear Mr/Ms → Salutation

Body of e-mail

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing.

Middle Paragraph(s)

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Remember you are interpreting your résumé, not repeating it.

Final Paragraph

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow up.

Yours sincerely, → Complimentary Close
Put your signature → Signature
Résumé → Attachment

Remember to attach a PDF of your résumé when you send the e-mail. The attachment should be properly named so that there is no confusion as to what it is. Titles such as "Rohan.pdf" will not

be acceptable. Ideally the attachment should be titled something like "Rohan K_CV_2020.pdf"

Look at the following examples of job application letters:

Namith Shetty
3, Jahnagar Colony
Mangalore - 575 003
0824 23342233
Mobile - 0 98345 16434

11 June 2020

The Manager
Orient Print and Publications
M.G. Road
Pune - 411 032
020 25343455

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Application for the Post of Junior Accounts Officer
Further to your advertisement in the *Deccan Herald* of 10 June 2020 for the post of Junior Accounts Officer, I would like to present myself as a suitable candidate for the post.

I have completed my B.Com. degree this year and topped my class in several subjects. I am willing to work hard and learn from seniors. I have attached my CV for your perusal.

I hope you will give me an opportunity to work in your company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

(Namith Shetty)

Flat No. 36
 C Wing
 Sea Breeze Apartments
 Beach Road
 Goa 346 087

18 November 2020

The Personnel Manager
 Hotel Malabar Palace
 M. G. Road
 Mumbai 400 001

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Application for the post of Assistant Manager, Reservations

This is with reference to your advertisement in *The Hindu* dated 16 November 2020 calling for applications for the above post in your hotel.

I am 26 years old and I am a graduate in hotel management from the College of Vocational Studies, Mumbai. Although I belong to Madhya Pradesh, I am working at present in Hotel Surya, a three-star hotel in Goa, as a sales executive in the reservations department. One of my main duties here is to liaise with travel agents and private companies and get business for the hotel. I have been with Hotel Surya since September 2016.

I enclose copies of my school and college certificates as well as a testimonial from the Manager, Reservations, at Hotel Surya.

I would be grateful if you could consider me for the advertised position.

Yours faithfully,

(Asif Ahmed)

encl. 1. copies of certificates
 2. testimonial

Points to Note

An effective covering letter should have the following features:

- The tone of the letter should be friendly but formal.
- Keep the covering letter to a single page—three paragraphs is ideal.
- Do not use the same covering letter while applying at different places.
- The style and layout are very important. Avoid grammatical and spelling errors. Use good quality paper and printing. Take care not to crumple the edges or stain the paper. Your letter should not appear overloaded with information. Leave enough white space, so that it looks appealing to the eye.
- The covering letter is a kind of persuasive, goodwill message. Show genuine interest in the organisation and a keen interest in the position that you are seeking.
- Omit personal information that is not relevant to the job.
- Remember that you should highlight only the qualifications, skills, and experience that are relevant to the job that you are applying for.

EXERCISES

- A. *There is an advertisement for positions in a university abroad and you think you have the required qualifications. Write a convincing letter to the university board.*
- B. *There is a vacancy in a primary school. How would you apply for it?*
- C. *A firm requires a professional photographer. What are the points you would talk about in your letter?*

2

RÉSUMÉ WRITING

A résumé is a document typically sent with a job application. It is similar to what we generally refer to as a CV, or 'curriculum vitae'. Thus, it is a brief account of a person's education, qualifications, and jobs previously done or posts held in the past. The purpose of writing a résumé is to highlight the features of one's personality, education and experience, and to prove one's suitability for a job.

When a person's résumé is found to be satisfactory or appealing, the prospective employer calls the applicant or candidate for an interview. In other words, a résumé is a marketing piece aimed at presenting a person in the best possible light. However, it is different from an application.

It is evident from the description given above that this is a document having a lot of importance in one's career and professional life. The ability to write and design a good résumé goes a long way in painting a positive and factual picture of a person. It sets a positive tone for the interview. At the same time, it provides adequate clues to the employer or interviewer as to what questions they can ask in the interview.

Let us now consider the steps one should take in order to write a good résumé.

- The first thing to do is to choose a job target or 'Job Objective'. If you can be specific about the target, and can mention the job title, it would bring better results. It is not a smart thing to prepare a generic résumé and use it for every job application indiscriminately.
- There should be no attempt to list everything that the applicant has ever done. Employers are looking for people who know what they can do and what they want.

- Once the target job is identified, it becomes easier to find out what skills, knowledge and experience are required to do that job. This information is most likely to be available in job ads, in the job description given by the employer or from people already working in that field. One should seek this crucial information before writing your résumé.
- The next step is to match the skills, abilities and knowledge level required for the job with your strongest skills, abilities, etc. There should a close correspondence between the target job and the relevant skills that you claim to possess. For instance, a job concerning customer service would require verbal skills, problem solving and computer skills, as well as some experience in the field of customer care. Skills like personnel management, budgeting or financial planning, supervision, etc., would be appropriate for a managerial job.
- The next step is to illustrate these key skills by referring to your accomplishments from your past work history. These fact-based achievements have to be supported by certificates and documents enclosed as evidence. Each achievement should be described in an action statement with a focus on the results achieved. It should not be vague or uncertain. Examples of action statements are:
 1. Advised callers on how to make connections.
 2. Designed and presented weekly orientation plan for members.
 3. Assembled materials and reports.
 4. Developed an improved filing system which saves precious time.
 5. Streamlined the working by re-scheduling the office routine.
- The next step is to make a list of the jobs previously done and the posts held in chronological order. List your most recent job first, then the earlier ones. Include unpaid work if it helps to showcase your skills and experience. This part of your résumé should appear substantial, particularly if you are young and have limited work experience. Employment details may be given in terms of years. If there is little variation in the kind of jobs you have done, make sure to include the jobs you did additionally or the experiences you had when you

were self-employed. Mention the job title and list the specific assignments, accomplishments and the experience you gained once you joined.

- If there are gaps in your work experience, these should be gracefully filled by indicating your work other than office jobs. For instance, parenting, family management, and a short-term course may be indicated as work done during a period generally construed as a 'gap'.
- An account of your training and education should also be given in the résumé, but it should be brief. In case you have had no training or if the target job does not require previous training, this section may be omitted. Usually, the name of the course or training with the years or period followed by the name of the institution or university is enough for the résumé.

Look at the following sample demonstrating how a résumé should be written:

Post applying for: Credit Administrator

Sudeepa Soren

35, Harinath Road, Kendra, Jharkhand

Home: 2331234, Cell: 000-123-2345

Email: soren.sudeepa84@gmail.com

Objective

Seeking administrative level position with a multi-national financial institution overseeing corporate loans and commercial loans

Career summary

Over 3 years of experience with various multinational financial institutions dealing specifically with the mortgage and commercial loans for corporate, real estate and individuals

Summary of skills

- Considerable amount of experience in banking and lending areas with an in-depth knowledge of mortgage lending
- Proficient in writing different type of reports
- Excellent communication skills
- Adept in managing multiple tasks with superb organisational abilities
- Proven negotiation and presentation skills
- Dexterous in handling relevant software applications
- Ability to build rapport with customers with different backgrounds
- Complete knowledge on pricing and the underwriting procedures in the mortgage industry

Professional experience

2008-Present: Loan Officer, JBO Mortgage Corporation, Ranchi

Responsibilities

- Developed the marketing and promotional strategies for JBO's loan products
- Devised promotional strategies in the form of incentives targeted towards loan customers
- Created a sales plan to match the sales targets set by the department
- Guided and assisted the processing staff in loan processing procedures

Educational Profile

- Post graduate degree in Business Administration, University of Ranchi (2008)
- Bachelor's Degree in Economics, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa (2006)

References available on request

Points to Note

- Keep your sentences short and simple.
- Do not include unnecessary information such as hobbies, extra-curricular activities, etc., unless they have a direct impact on the job you are applying for.
- A résumé is always shorter and more to the point than a CV. A CV is usually arranged in a chronological format whereas a résumé focuses on the relevant skills and work experience of the applicant.
- Make sure you proofread and edit your document carefully. Making grammatical or language errors will create an unfavourable impression on a prospective employer or interviewer.

EXERCISES

- A. You have done your summer project with a leading car manufacturer in the PPC (Production Planning and Control) department. Another car producer has advertised for recruitment. Prepare a résumé highlighting the issues in your project and apply to the company with a covering letter.
- B. Using the sample résumé as a model, prepare one for an older relative or friend who is employed. Now consider experimenting with the layout of the résumé, making it more creative and eye-catching.
- C. You are the editor of the college campus magazine. A leading newspaper has advertised for trainee journalists with a technical background. Prepare a résumé specifying your suitability for the job. Also enclose two pieces of writing that you had done for the magazine.
- D. Write a covering letter and a résumé to be sent in response to any one of the following advertisements.

1. Wanted: an experienced office assistant with good knowledge of English, and Marathi. Contact Box No. 9876, c/o *The Times of India*, Mumbai 400 013.
2. Wanted: a chef with at least five years' experience in 3-star hotels, for immediate appointment. Must be able to take full charge of kitchen supervision. Apply to Hotel Astor, Hyderabad 500 029.

3

GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Once you have sent in an application letter and a résumé, you will most likely be called for a face to face interaction with your prospective employer. This is the next stage in the selection process. These interactions can be of two types. The first is a personal interview where you would be asked questions about your experience and knowledge about the field for which you are applying. The other type is a group discussion where three or more candidates are put in a group and are asked to discuss certain topics.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

An interview is a formal meeting where one or more persons ask a candidate several questions. The purpose is to find out whether the candidate is suitable for a job or a seat in an educational institution. In an interview you could either have a one-on-one session or be interviewed by a panel of people.

Preparing for an interview

Preparing well for an interview helps you face the panel of experts with confidence. Remember the following points when you are preparing for an interview:

- Brush up on the subject or the area related to the interview and update yourself on recent developments.
- Prepare answers to some general questions you think the interviewers will ask. Some of these could be:

- Tell us a little about yourself.
- Why do you want to be with us?
- Could you tell us why you want to change your job?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Would you be willing to travel?
- How do you expect to contribute to the field/institution?
- Neatly arrange in a folder the papers and certificates that you may be asked to produce. Check the interview call letter sent to you to see if there is anything you have missed.
- Wear something formal and comfortable for the occasion.
- Plan to reach the place of the interview a little early as this will give you time to familiarise yourself with your surroundings and to relax.
- Think positive, pleasant thoughts and try to regulate your breathing to remain calm.

Interview etiquette

- Wait for your name to be announced, and knock or seek permission before you enter.
- Greet the people in the room formally, but in a pleasant manner.
- Do not sit down until you are asked to.
- Look at the interviewers.
- Remember not to interrupt the interviewer and allow them time to finish speaking before you respond.
- Listen carefully to the interviewers' questions and comments, and speak clearly and at a moderate pace to avoid having to repeat yourself.
- In case you do not hear a question you are asked, or if you do not understand it, you could politely ask for it to be repeated or explained. For example:
 - I'm sorry, but could you repeat the question, please.
 - I'm afraid I'm not sure what you mean. Are you asking me if I . . . ?/Could you clarify the question, please.
- Do not feel embarrassed to say that you do not know the answer to a question. Use expressions such as
 - I'm afraid I don't know . . .

- I'm sorry, but I'm not really certain . . .
- Express your opinions politely, not aggressively, using expressions such as
 - I think . . .
 - I believe . . .
 - In my opinion . . .
- Do not get into arguments or speak negatively or criticise former teachers, colleagues or employers.
- Do not boast or unnecessarily display your knowledge, skills and experience, but if asked, state your achievements simply and honestly.
- Wait for the interviewer to invite you to ask questions in case you have queries. If this does not happen, wait until you sense that the interviewers are done before asking them politely if they could clarify something for you. Examples of the questions you may want to ask the interviewer are:
 - Could you tell me whether the position involves travelling, please.
 - Could I know when I can expect to hear from you, please.
- Wait for the interviewer to tell you that the interview has ended before you get up from your chair. Thank all the people in the room before walking out of the door and closing it softly behind you.
- In case the interview is conducted over the telephone, most of the points above will still be relevant. In addition, be careful about regulating your voice, avoiding long silences and butting in before the interviewer has finished speaking. In fact, if the person at the other end of the line interrupts you, do not drown his or her voice by raising yours, but let the person speak. You can then continue with 'As I was saying . . .', etc.

You can prepare for interviews by holding mock interviews in your class or among your friends. Here are some model interviews for you to look at. You can enact these model interviews as well, taking turns playing the role of interviewer and interviewee.

(Interview for a job)

Candidate: May I come in, please, ma'am.

Manager: Yes, please come in. Good morning.

Candidate: Good morning, ma'am. Good morning, sir.

Assistant Manager: Please sit down.

Candidate: Thank you, sir.

Manager: Could you begin by telling us something about yourself.

Candidate: Ma'am, I belong to West Bengal, but I grew up in Nanded, where my father worked until he retired. I'm married, and I have a baby daughter, who is a year old.

Assistant Manager: I assume you speak both Bengali and Marathi. Am I right?

Candidate: Yes, sir, absolutely. I also speak Hindi.

Manager: Why do you want to join our company?

Candidate: You're one of the leading publishers of law books in the country. With my background and work experience, I hope to be able to contribute to the company and also find here the opportunity to grow further.

Manager: Actually, the vacancy we have is for Lucknow. Would you be open to the idea of being based there?

Candidate: Yes, ma'am. I'm willing to relocate from Mumbai to any part of the country.

Assistant Manager: Could you tell us what kind of salary you expect, please.

Candidate: I'm earning Rs 50,000 net in my present job. Sir, I think anything a little over that should be alright.

Manager: Well, thank you, Mr Shravan Kumar. We'll get back to you in a week's time.

Candidate: Sure, thank you.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Employers are now increasingly using group discussions (GDs) to evaluate a candidate's performance as a member of a team to arrive at a constructive conclusion on a theme or solve a problem. In a work situation a person is required to interact with a number of people—colleagues or outsiders—share views and arrive at a consensus. Being able to function as part of a team without antagonising your colleagues or being locked out of arriving at a solution is an essential workplace skill. Knowing what to expect from a GD and how to behave in one is an important skill to learn.

How a GD functions

A GD is a leaderless group activity. All the candidates are competitors who have to join the discussion without the presence or participation of an evaluator. The candidates are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, communication skill, leadership traits and personality (manners, dress, body language, tone of voice, etc.). The purpose of a GD is to elicit the views of all participants and, through intense interaction, evolve a consensus. An avid interest in national and international activities, and knowledge of political, economic, scientific, cultural and sporting events must be cultivated to be able to participate actively in GDs. Each candidate has to voice his/her opinion and offer counter-arguments in turn. He/she has to be sensitive to the dynamics of a group process. The candidates' self-imposed discipline, sense of responsibility and fair play is judged through GDs.

Parameters of evaluation

Participants are evaluated along various parameters that include:

- *Extent and quality of contribution* – how much you participate, relevance of your observations, etc.
- *Techniques used for discussion* – critical and analytical skills, using questions wisely, using icebreakers, inviting others to participate, etc.

- *Leadership qualities* - which include questioning techniques, response time, positive aggression, ability to break the ice and moderate the discussion.
- *Communication Skills* - ability to listen, to speak clearly and precisely in grammatical English, positive body language, ability to remember names and points being discussed, being polite, listening actively, etc.

Tips and techniques for effective participation

You can make your GD performances better by:

- *Leading*: The prospective employer is looking for a natural leader who is also a balanced thinker. Leadership is helping each team member achieve his/her full potential in solving the problem at hand. So, leading the team will show you in a positive light. For example, you may have twenty minutes for the discussion and about six to seven members in the group. You could regulate the discussion confidently by suggesting that in the first round everyone should take turns and speak for two minutes and then throw the topic open for discussion.
- *Having confidence*: Observe the personality types present in the group. Greet the group cheerfully. Don't be afraid to state your opinion or take the time to say something. The more confident you are, the better your evaluation will be.
- *Being calm*: Always be calm. If unjustly opposed, use polite expressions to restate your position. Don't be sarcastic or get angry at another participant even if they make personal remarks. Don't get personal either. Not maintaining your composure will affect your evaluation negatively.
- *Quick thinking*: Generally, the topic for the GD is given on the spot. In such cases, quickly plan an extempore speech to fill the time that you may be allotted by the group. You can practice by participating in extempore speaking events in your college or college festivals. This is also where being up to date on current events and having some knowledge of a number of topics unrelated to your field will be useful.
- *Listening*: Listening carefully is very important. Do not talk when another participant is addressing the group and try to remember what each person has said. Do not make faces or

look at your watch while others are speaking. It will indicate disrespect.

- *Time management:* See that the group arrives at a conclusion in the allotted time. Help the group to complete the task in time by active timekeeping. Make sure that you too do not take up too much time while speaking.

Remember that these tips and techniques are to be used in addition to the ones listed in the section on interviews. If you practice these regularly, you will have all the tools you need to navigate an interview or GD in any context.

EXERCISES

- A. You have applied for a bank loan to study abroad and have been asked to attend an interview. Think of five questions that you could be asked and write them down along with your possible responses. Exchange questions with your partner and jot down points for your answers to their questions. Enact the interview with a partner.*
- B. You have to appear for an interview for an entry-level job in a company that offers you a career in your area of specialisation. Prepare yourself for the interview by thinking through and outlining for yourself your skills, your interests and your strengths. This will help you become aware of your plus points, your choice of career and your suitability for the particular job so that you can speak about yourself with clarity and confidence at the interview.*

For example:

Skills: Technical skills regarding computer hardware

Strengths: Ability to work in teams, sticking to deadlines

Interests: Accessing inexpensive spare parts and assembling computers

- C. *Work with a partner. Read the interview questions and tick the answers that you think are best. Discuss the reasons for your choice with your partner.*
1. Why have you applied for a position in our company?
 - a. I am interested in the line of work that your company is in.
 - b. Your company is well known.
 - c. Your company offers good salaries.
 2. What do you know about this company?
 - a. The career-counselling cell in my university spoke highly of you.
 - b. Your website and annual reports have told me that you are an innovative leader in the field.
 - c. A relative of mine who works in your organisation says that you offer a lot of perks and job security.
 3. What are your strengths?
 - a. I'm a good worker and insist that people in my team come up to my expectations of them.
 - b. I am good-natured and get along well with people.
 - c. I am energetic and enthusiastic and enjoy tackling challenging situations.
 4. What are your weaknesses?
 - a. I tend to delay and postpone work, but I'm working on improving that aspect of myself.
 - b. I can't think of any weaknesses that will come in the way of doing my job.
 - c. I tend to lose my temper with people, especially when they don't put in their best.
 5. Would you be willing to relocate, if necessary?
 - a. Yes, but only if it is to a big city.
 - b. Yes, if it means that I can contribute to the growth of the company.
 - c. No, because I prefer to stay in an environment that is familiar.
 6. What would you do if one member of your team makes it difficult for the other members of your team to work efficiently?

- a. I would report him to my senior manager.
- b. I would talk to him to find out what the problem is and try to sort it out.
- c. I would ask the team members to ignore him and carry on with their work.
7. Do you enjoy working in groups?
- a. I actually prefer to work alone, although I can work with one other person because then we can get the work done quickly.
- b. Yes, I do enjoy working in a group. Everyone has something to offer in terms of skills and expertise. So working as a team helps to get the job done effectively and efficiently.
- c. Teamwork is not always the best way to get things done because conflicting opinions are bound to emerge among team members.
8. How do you know if you have been successful at your job?
- a. If my supervisor tells me I've done well, I am satisfied.
- b. I know my capabilities and I don't really need anyone to tell me whether I've completed my assignment successfully or not.
- c. Recognition from my colleagues and supervisors is important. In addition, the client should be happy with the results of my work. And finally, I should be satisfied with the work I put in and the results I get.
9. Why do you think you are the best person for this job?
- a. I don't know. That's for you to decide after you review my suitability.
- b. I think I have all the qualities you asked for in your advertisement. In addition, I am a quick learner.
- c. I am a diligent worker, and you won't be disappointed.
- D. Read the following statements about how to conduct yourself at an interview. Write C for 'can do', if you feel that the particular behaviour is easy to achieve, and N for 'need to improve', if you need to work on that aspect of your behaviour. This exercise will help you become aware of the areas you need to work on.

1. Remember to turn off your cell phone.
 2. Greet the interviewers.
 3. Communicate clearly and effectively.
 4. Do not show nervousness through your body language.
 5. Maintain eye contact when speaking and when the interviewers speak to you.
 6. Exhibit interest in the company and the interviewers.
 7. Ask for clarifications whenever necessary to keep you on track during the interview.
 8. Use polite phrases, such as, 'excuse me', and 'I would like to explain'.
 9. Disagree, if necessary, but always politely.
 10. Allow the interviewers to take the lead instead of taking over the conversation.
 11. Allow the interviewers to complete their thoughts and ideas without interruption.
 12. Listen actively to their questions so that your answers are to the point.
 13. Thank the interviewers.
- E. Form groups of four or five and conduct a group discussion on the following topics. Each discussion must not exceed 20 minutes. Following the discussion exchange feedback with each other as to how your performance can improve.**
1. Conflict in the workplace
 2. Gender equality
 3. Religious identity in the workplace
 4. Privacy versus surveillance
 5. Cricket as national religion
 6. Global warming
 7. Reduce, reuse, recycle: how can we do our bit to lessen environmental pollution
 8. Internet: boon or bane
 9. Social media: enabling a more diverse market
 10. What is good governance?

4

PRESENTATIONS

A presentation is a talk giving information about a product, a subject or an idea. Used to present reports, proposals, policy statements and feasibility studies, it has become an important form of oral communication in the spheres of education and work and is closely linked to career and personal growth. Students, teachers, scientists, researchers, managers, sales and marketing executives and administrators all need this skill in the course of their everyday work.

KINDS OF PRESENTATIONS

There are different ways of making presentations:

- overhead projection transparencies (OHPs)
- computer projection (PowerPoint, applications such as Excel, etc.)
- flipcharts or black or white boards, sometimes used as 'scratchpads' to expand on a point
- video or film
- real objects (such as a product or plant specimen)

Of these, PowerPoint is probably one of the most effective and widely used tools today. You will find in this chapter some useful guidelines on preparing presentations and on using language and nonverbal skills to make them effective. Remember though that, like all other skills, you will have to go over your presentation and practise it as many times as you can before you make it. This will not only help you with a particular presentation but will slowly lead to a big improvement in your general presentation skills.

Preparing for a presentation

- The first step in planning your presentation is to decide on its subject. This, of course, is usually given to you, but when it is not, choose a topic that suits the occasion and the audience.
- Begin preparing the content of your presentation by putting down its objective or purpose: is it meant to inform, persuade or report?
- Think of who your audience is going to be; the level of your content, formality and style will depend on this.
- Next, list the main points you want to make in your presentation in the order in which you think of them. Read the points again. You may want to omit some, add more, combine points or split them. It is important not to pack too much content into a presentation because this will diffuse its effect. For example, a presentation of about twenty minutes should not have more than five main points. After you have a final list of points, arrange them in a logical sequence.
- Think of subpoints that could come under your main points. It is best to put only the main points and the subpoints on slides (or flip chart or transparencies) and speak briefly on each of these. Prepare graphs, tables or pie charts that you want to put on slides.
- Write down what you want to say on each point and practise saying it over and over again, until you are confident that you will be able to speak without looking at the written script. To make you feel surer of yourself, you can prepare cue cards, which are numbered cards with key words and phrases related to what you want to say on each point in your presentation. These cues should be so chosen that they are sure to remind you of what you have to say. Remember to mark on your cards the visual aids that go with them so that the right OHP or slide is shown at the right time.
- Practise with the cue cards to make sure that the cues work. Look at an example of a cue card to help you speak when a main point and a bar graph are being displayed.

- compare
- stagnation vs steady growth
- reasons
- plan of action

Structuring content

All presentations, like other forms of oral and written communication, must be complete in themselves, with a beginning, a body and an end.

- The first part must consist of greetings, a brief, clear statement of the subject and purpose of the presentation and an outline.
- The second part must have the main content of the presentation, which will have its own internal structure.
- The last part must have a brief recap or a summary of the most important points, followed by remarks made to conclude the presentation and to thank the audience, and a brief session for questions and clarifications.

Also structure your main content in a logical way so that it would be easy for the audience to follow the presentation. For instance, you could begin by talking about a problem, go on to offer solutions, then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each of them and finally recommend one of them.

Make sure that you make your content interesting and easy to understand with examples and visuals.

Visual aids

You must learn to prepare good visual aids, such as slides and transparencies, and use them effectively. Remember that they are 'aids' to a presentation because they form the framework that supports it. Note the following points about visuals:

- All the visuals you put up or show on screen must be related to your talk.
- Make sure the slides, charts or transparencies are in the right order, matching the sequence of points in your presentation.
- Do not put in too much information on one visual. It will make the slide unreadable, or your audience will spend time reading the slide rather than listening to you. It is always better to have two visuals in place of one that looks crowded.
- Written matter on slides and transparencies should be in the form of key words or phrases, points or short sentences. Try to limit the words per slide to a maximum of ten. You can expand on each of the points when you explain the visual.
- Edit the text on your slides carefully to avoid errors in spelling, punctuation and typeface.
- Prepare your slides in such a way that the audience sees only one visual or point at a time. If the slide has more than what you will talk about, the audience may get distracted and not listen to you. To give information gradually, you can use a sheet of paper to cover what you do not want to show immediately on a transparency. If you are doing a computer presentation, it is easy to reveal information gradually using software that allows phrases, points or graphics to appear on the screen slowly, one by one.
- Before you show a slide or a transparency, tell the audience a line or two about it. After it is put on screen, explain it more fully.
- Do not move from one visual to another without giving the audience time to absorb the information on it.
- Practise moving forwards and backwards within your presentation. You or someone in the audience may want to look at an earlier slide.
- It is useful to give the audience handouts at the end of your presentation—they will be able to watch the slide show and listen to you without having to worry about taking down notes.
- Visuals should be designed with care so that they are simple, clear as well as appealing. The layout should be clear and well designed, and the letters large enough for people even at the back of the room to read easily. A complicated design or too

many effects may confuse or distract your audience. Choose the colours for the background and the lettering carefully to create visuals that are pleasing to the eye and easy to read. This is because some colours such as yellow, though attractive, are not good options from the point of view of clarity.

- Use a minimum 20-point Times Roman or any other friendly typeface that can be read from the back of a room.
- Before you start, check if the projector you will be using works and is kept in the right position. Make sure your laptop or device on which you have your presentation is compatible with the projector. Also make sure that the room is neither too bright nor too dark.

The language of presentations

Presentations are a form of oral communication, and so you should use spoken, not written, language when making one. Here are some expressions you can use when making a presentation.

Opening remarks

- Hello, everyone. (specially appropriate for an informal presentation for a small group of people you interact with every day)
- Good morning/Good afternoon/Good evening. Welcome to . . . (name of organisation)/Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to you today.
- Good morning. I'd like to/I'm happy to welcome you all here today. I'm . . . (name) and I'm . . . (designation) in the . . . office/department (name of the branch or division) here (necessary when you are making a presentation for people who are not part of your organisation).
- Good afternoon, everyone. I'm happy to be here this afternoon. I'm (designation) at . . . (name of the company).
- Good morning. Let me introduce myself. My name is . . . and I'm from . . .
- Good morning. I'm . . . from . . . Thank you for inviting me to talk to you this morning. Before I begin, I'd like to/let me tell you something about myself.

Stating the purpose

- As you know, the subject of my presentation today is ...
- I'm here this morning to ...
- My aim is to ...
- The purpose of my talk today is to ...
- In my presentation today, I'm going to/I'll ...

Giving an outline

- I've divided my presentation into ...
- I'll first ..., then we'll ... Finally, I'll ...
- I'll begin by ... and after that I'll deal with ... before going on to ... The presentation will conclude with ...
- I'll be talking about ... (issues/areas). Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ...
- My talk has four parts: first, I'll introduce you to ..., second, we'll discuss ..., third, you'll learn about ..., and, finally, I'll conclude by giving you ...

Giving other preliminary information and starting with the content

- My presentation will take about half an hour or so. If you don't mind, could I deal with questions after the talk, please.
- I'll take only about fifteen minutes of your time. We'll have a question-and-answer session after that.
- The presentation is going to take around forty minutes. Please feel free to interrupt if you have a question.
- You don't need to/needn't take notes. I'll give a set of handouts with all the points we discuss today.
- There's no need for you to copy down the points on the slides or the visuals. Handouts containing all of them will be distributed.
- I hope everyone has a copy of the handout with the examples we'll be looking at today.
- Let's get started then.
- Right, I'll begin by ...
- Shall we begin?

Let's begin, shall we?

Moving to another point or going back to an earlier point

- Let's now turn to ...
- I'd like to move on to ...
- Turning/moving on now to ...
- This takes me to my next point about ...
- Next, I'd like to consider ...
- Let me go back briefly to an earlier point.
- As I said earlier ...
- To recap what we discussed under the last point ...

Emphasising important points

- What we must understand/realise/do is ...
- What we mustn't do is ...
- We urgently/really need to ...
- ... is absolutely true/highly recommended/totally unacceptable/extremely urgent, etc.

Drawing attention to visuals

- I'd like to draw your attention to ...
- Could you just look at the ... on the screen.
- As you'll see in the next slide ...
- If you look at this ..., you will notice that ...
- You can see that ...

Making recommendations

- I (strongly) recommend that ...
- My recommendation is that ...
- I really think/believe we should ...

Keeping the audience involved

- How would you solve this problem?
- Where are we heading?

- Can you think of a way of dealing with this?
- What are the options open to us?
- Why should we be concerned about this?
- What does this mean for our company?
- Don't you think we must address this problem?
- I'm sure many of you here have experienced this.
- I'd like you to understand why I'm saying this.
- You must all be aware of what is happening.
- I hope you know about the situation.

Summarising and concluding

- To sum up the main points of my presentation, . . .
- Before I end my talk, I'd like to summarise its main points.
- To run through/recap my main points, . . .
- I'd like to conclude by saying . . .
- That brings me to the end of my presentation.
- I'd like to/I must thank you all for listening.
- Thank you all for your attention.

Inviting questions

- If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them.
- If want to ask any questions, I'll do my best to answer them.
- If there are any questions, I'll be pleased to answer them.

Tips and techniques for making a presentation

Besides making sure you have prepared excellent content and visual aids, it is important to remember the points below when making your presentation.

- Plan your presentation in a way that will enable you to keep to the time allotted to you. Remember that this will include about five minutes for questions.
- Stick to your original plan for the presentation. Do not take up other matters, however interesting they may be, because this will lead to total confusion.

- Use your voice cleverly according to the size of the room and the audience. Do not shout or whisper, but speak clearly enough to be heard by everyone in the room. Speak at a natural, even pace—neither too fast nor too slow. Varying the pitch and tone of your voice makes it interesting for the audience to listen to you. Pausing at appropriate points in your presentation—for example, when you want to show that something you said is important or give the audience time to consider it—is effective.
- Avoid pacing up and down. It is less distracting for the audience if you stay in one place, somewhere at the front of the room. Move only when you have to go the whiteboard or operate the equipment or pass handouts around.
- Your appearance, facial expressions, eye contact with the audience and body language are very important factors that contribute to the success of your presentation. These are nonverbal signals that speak to your audience just as much as your words.
- Do not read out the matter on the screen or a prepared script.
- Do not block the screen or stand facing it so that your back is turned to the audience. Remember that you are talking to the audience and that the matter being displayed is for them to read.
- Before the presentation, try operating the equipment you will use to project your slides or transparencies on the screen to see if it works, and if you are comfortable with it. If someone else is going to operate the equipment, speak to the person beforehand and explain what you want when and also how you will signal what you need.
- Also make sure your audio equipment such as collar mics or stand mics are working. Take a few minutes to use the microphones to make sure you are neither too loud nor too soft.
- Finally, prepare your presentation early and rehearse it as many times as you can. Do it by yourself first, and after a few rounds of practice, do it before friends or colleagues whom you can depend on to give you support and helpful suggestions.

EXERCISES

- A. *Read the article below on business schools and make an informative presentation using a flip chart, OHP or PowerPoint. Write down (a) the matter for display on charts or screen and (b) the script of your talk.*

A business school is a university-level institution that confers degrees in business administration. It teaches subjects such as accounting, finance, information systems, marketing, organisational behaviour, strategy, human resource management and quantitative methods.

Types of business schools

Business schools include schools of business, business administration and management. There are four main kinds of business schools.

- University business schools, which are faculties, colleges or departments within the university and which teach predominantly business courses.
- In North America, a business school is often understood to be a university graduate school which offers a Master of Business Administration or an equivalent degree.
- Also in North America, the term 'business school' can refer to a different kind of institution: a two-year school that grants an associate's degree in various business subjects. Most of these schools began as secretarial schools and then expanded into accounting or bookkeeping and similar subjects. They are typically operated as businesses, rather than as institutions of higher learning.
- In Europe and Asia, some universities offer courses only in business.

Business school degrees

- Associate's degrees (awarded by community colleges, junior colleges, business colleges and some bachelors degree-granting colleges/universities in the US and some other countries upon completion of a course of study usually lasting two years): AAB (Associate of Applied Business), ABA (Associate of Business Administration)

Bachelor's degrees: BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration), BBus (Bachelor of Business), BCom (Bachelor of Commerce), BAcc (Bachelor of Accountancy), BBS (Bachelor of Business Studies)

Master's degrees: MBA (Master of Business Administration), MM (Master of Management), MAcc (Master of Accountancy), MMR (Master of Marketing Research), MSM (Master of Science in Management), MHA (Master of Health Administration), MSF (Master of Science in Finance), MST (Master of Science in Taxation), MMS (Masters in Management Studies) and MCom (Master of Commerce). At Oxford and Cambridge business schools, an MPhil, or Master of Philosophy, is awarded in place of an MA or MSc.

- PGDBM (Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management), PGPBM (Postgraduate Programme in Business Management), PGPM (Postgraduate Programme in Management)

- Doctoral degrees: PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), DBA (Doctor of Business Administration), DHA (Doctor of Health Administration), DM (Doctor of Management), DCOM (Doctor of Commerce), FPM (Fellow Programme in Management)

Business school use of case studies

Some business schools centre their teaching around case studies. Case studies have been used in graduate and undergraduate business education for nearly one hundred years. When the Harvard Business School was founded, the faculty quickly realised that there were no textbooks suitable for a graduate programme in business. Their first solution to this problem was to interview leading practitioners of business and to write detailed accounts of what these managers were doing. Of course, the professors could not present these cases as practices to be followed because there were no criteria available for determining what would succeed and what would not. So the professors instructed their students to read the cases and come to class prepared to discuss them and offer recommendations for appropriate courses of action.

Basically that is the model still being used.

Business cases are historical descriptions of actual business situations. Typically, information is presented about a business firm's products, markets, competition, financial structure, sales volumes, management, employees and other factors affecting the firm's success. The length of a business case study may range from two or three pages to thirty pages, or more. Business schools often obtain case studies published by the Harvard Business School. Harvard's most popular case studies include Lincoln Electric Co. and Google Inc. Students are expected to scrutinise the case study and prepare to discuss strategies and tactics that the firm should employ in the future. Three different methods have been used in business case teaching:

- Prepared case-specific questions to be answered by the student: This is used with short cases intended for undergraduate students. The underlying concept is that such students need specific guidance to be able to analyse case studies.
- Problem-solving analysis: This method, initiated by the Harvard Business School, is by far the most widely used method in MBA and executive development programmes. The underlying concept is that with enough practice (hundreds of case analyses) students develop intuitive skills for analysing and resolving complex business situations. Successful implementation of this method depends heavily on the skills of the discussion leader.
- A generally applicable strategic planning approach: This method does not require students to analyse hundreds of cases. A strategic planning model is provided, and students are instructed to apply the steps of the model to six to dozen cases during a semester. This is sufficient to develop their ability to analyse a complex situation, generate variety of possible strategies and to select the best ones. In effect, students learn a 'generally applicable approach' analysing case studies and real situations. This approach does not make any extraordinary demands on the artistic and dramatic talents of the teacher. Consequently, most professors are capable of supervising the application of this method.

Other approaches in business schools

In contrast to the case method, some schools use a skills-based approach in teaching business. This approach emphasises quantitative methods, in particular operations research, management information systems, statistics, organisational behaviour, modelling and simulation, and decision science.

The goal is to provide students a set of tools that will prepare them to tackle and solve problems.

There are also several business schools that still rely on the lecture method to give students a basic business education. Lectures are generally given from the teacher's point of view, and rarely require interaction from the students unless it is to take notes.

Global Master of Business Administration ranking

Each year, well-known business publications, such as *Business Week*, *US News & World Report*, *Fortune*, *Financial Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* publish rankings of selected MBA programmes that while being controversial in their methodology can nevertheless directly influence the prestige of schools that achieve high scores.

(adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/business_school)

- B. Choose a topic from one of your textbooks and prepare a presentation using charts, transparencies or slides. Write down (a) the matter for display on charts or screen and (b) the script of your talk. Do individual presentations before your teacher and classmates.
- C. Think of a product you want to promote in the market. It could be a detergent, an electronic item or a health drink. Prepare a presentation consisting of five charts or slides and make it in class.