



IIT Madras

BSc Degree

Copyright and terms of use

IIT Madras is the sole owner of the content available in this portal - onlinedegree.iitm.ac.in and the content is copyrighted to IIT Madras.

- Learners may download copyrighted material for their use for the purpose of the online program only.
- Except as otherwise expressly permitted under copyright law, no use other than for the purpose of the online program is permitted.
- No copying, redistribution, retransmission, publication or exploitation, commercial or otherwise of material will be permitted without the express permission of IIT Madras.
- Learner acknowledges that he/she does not acquire any ownership rights by downloading copyrighted material.
- Learners may not modify, publish, transmit, participate in the transfer or sale, create derivative works, or in any way exploit, any of the content, in whole or in part.

Professional Writing

Introduction

- i) What is professional writing? (The domain and its meaning)
- ii) Differences between professional and literary writing
- iii) Elements of professional writing

What is Professional Writing?

- A style of writing used in delivering authentic information on a subject by following systematic rules.
Eg. Catalogues of products, brochures, medical description on a tablet strip, user manuals, etc.
- The intended audience is specific and needs to possess recommended levels of knowledge on the subject in order to understand the content.
- The writing has a purpose to serve.

Differences between professional & literary writing

Professional writing

- Manages specific information so as to take suitable actions
- Written to inform and instruct
- Language used is direct, factual, specific and straight forward.
- It makes use of technical vocabulary, simple sentences, impersonal, and objective tone.
- Written for a specific audience

Literary Writing

- Involves creative constructions such as poems or novels, and other compilations
- Written to entertain and amuse
- Language used involves techniques such as hyperbole, metaphors, etc. to bring in imagination and creativity.
- It appeals to emotions.
- It makes use of complex sentence structures and linguistic aspects such as ambiguity, dialects, etc.
- It is written for general readers.

Elements of Professional Writing

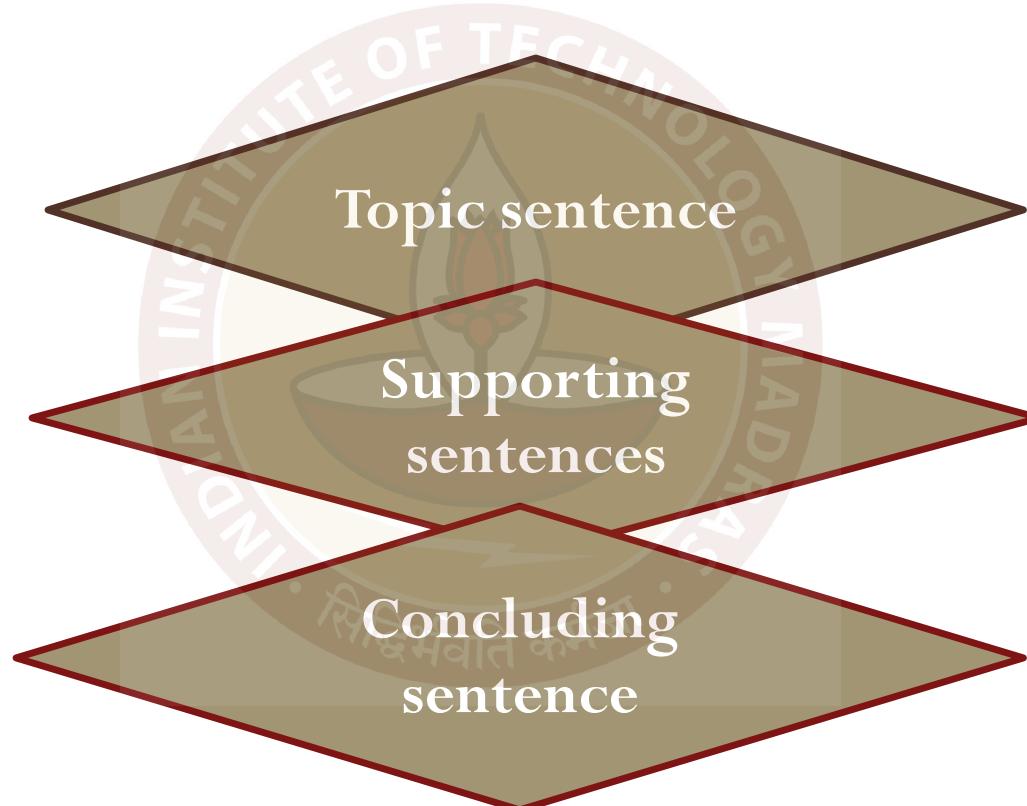
- Developed and organized paragraphs
- Appropriate writing style
- Clarity of ideas
- Spelling and grammar

Professional Writing

Development and organisation of paragraphs

- i) Structure of a paragraph
- ii) Strategies in writing an effective paragraph

Structure of the paragraph

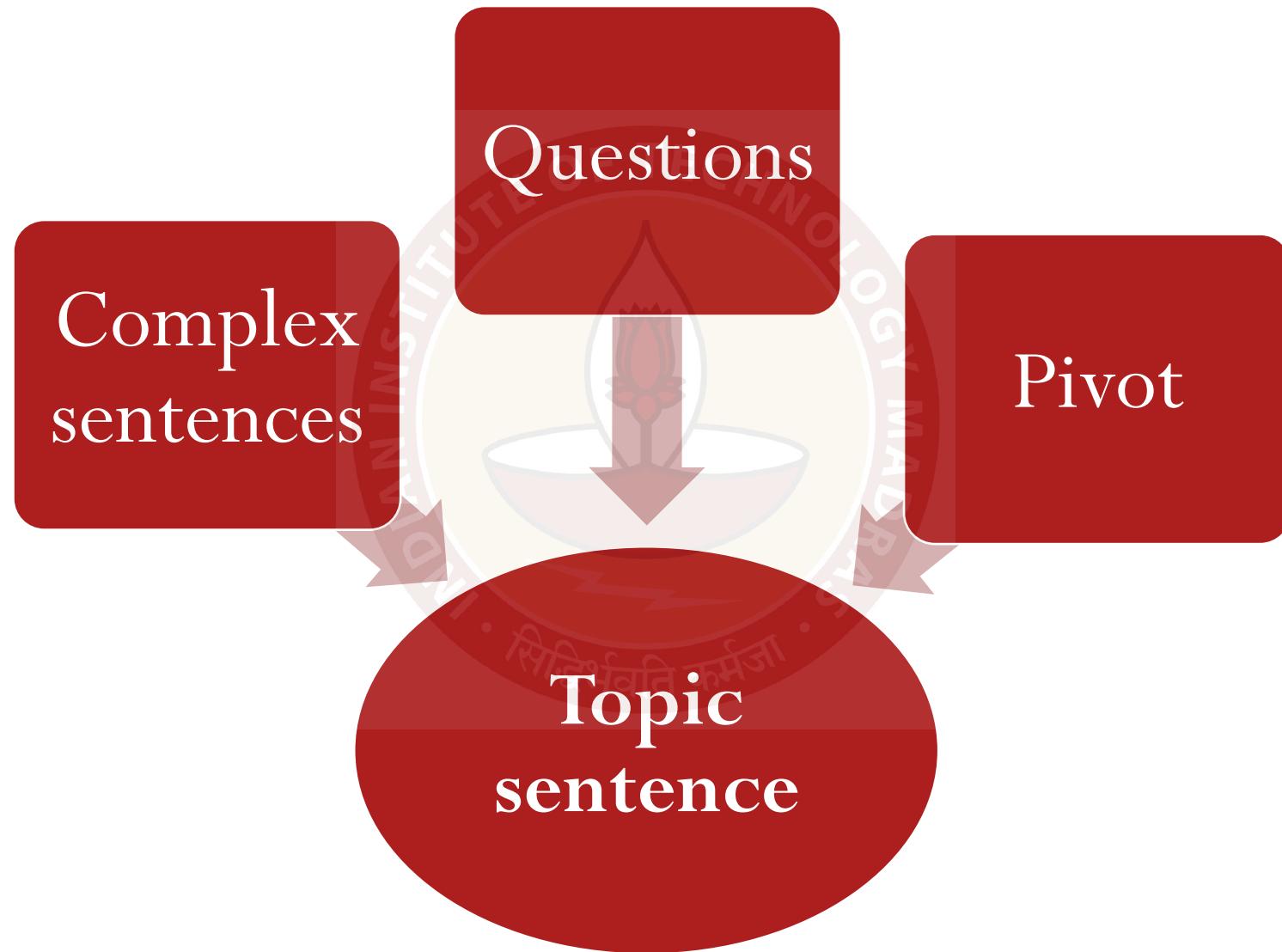


Topic sentence : ‘What’ and ‘How’

WHAT?

- The topic sentence makes a claim about the topic in question.
- It should be arguable i.e. the paragraph should be such that the claim is established through it.
- It should reveal the main point / purpose of the paragraph.
- It should also connect to the overall attitude of the paragraph.

HOW?



Supporting sentences

- They form the substantial segment of a paragraph.
- They are tasked to add/ explain, prove or, elaborate the main point or the central theme of the paragraph.
- These sentences could most commonly do the following.
 - i) Give reasons
 - ii) Cite facts/ data/ statistics
 - iii) Use quotations
 - iv) Give examples

Concluding sentence

- It is a mandatory segment in a stand-alone paragraph.
- The function of this sentence is to restate or reinforce the theme substantiated through the supporting sentences and the topic sentence.
 - A good concluding sentence could do the following.
 - i) Make a prediction
 - ii) Give suggestion(s)
 - iii) Give recommendation(s)
 - iv) Summarise the key points
 - v) Offer a final observation

Strategies for writing a good paragraph

- Unity is a significant requirement in writing a paragraph. The components of a paragraph must present and point towards a single idea and provide for a wholesome idea.

I. Strategies for unification

- Ensure the logical continuity of the idea presented in the paragraph.
- Repeat the key words.
- Use transitional words to add, contrast , or conclude.

II. Strategies for making an argument

- i) Use an example to further/explain the argument.
- ii) To add to a given point use quotations.
- iii) Tell a story or narrate an anecdote if writing a personal paragraph.
- iv) Use a compare and contrast method if the analysis requires the subtleties and nuances of related events/ persons/ period etc. is to be explored.
- v) A cause and effect based organisation is useful when the relationship is that of one leading to the other.
- vi) Factual and scientific details are better represented by citing data, figures, and statistics.
- vii) Definition based style suits when introducing a new concept.

Example: Structure of a paragraph

Traditionally, Flemish comic-book culture was dominated by long-running comic series with an unchanging cast of characters. Most of those comics, initially devised as gag strips or series in newspapers and magazines, are now facing the same problems as the traditional print media in which they are published. For more than half a century, annual compilation albums of such comic strips were one of the main sources of entertainment for young people in Flanders, with print runs of more than 400,000 copies. Today, comics are part of a much wider entertainment context, competing with films, games, animation shorts, the internet, social media, and so on.

Lien Devos , Essay on graphic novels

Example: Strategies for unification

Traditionally, Flemish **comic-book culture** was dominated by long-running **comic series** with an unchanging cast of characters. Most of those **comics**, initially devised as gag strips or series in newspapers and magazines, are now facing the same problems as the traditional print media in which they are published. **For more than half a century**, annual compilation albums of such **comic strips** were one of the main sources of entertainment for young people in Flanders, with print runs of more than 400,000 copies. **Today**, comics are part of a much wider entertainment context, competing with films, games, animation shorts, the internet, social media, and so on.

Professional Writing

Language and style

- i) Aspects of formality
- ii) Tone in formal writing

Aspects of formality



FORMAL STYLE	INFORMAL STYLE
1. Less personal	1. More casual and spontaneous
2. Used for professional or academic purposes	2. Used to write to friends and relatives
3. Uses an objective tone	3. Uses an emotional tone

What makes language formal?

- Specialized situations
- Audience expectations
- purpose



Factors that make language informal

- Group jargons – any in-group specialized language
- Slangs, idiomatic expressions, colloquialism

Eg. Y'all, Asap, cool, yo

- Stereotypical and biased language- gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, disability, sexual orientation

Eg. Mankind, manpower, chairman, man-made (gender based)

- First person pronouns- I, me, my, we, us....
- Contractions- I've, You're,

Professional Writing: Style and clarity

Formal writing avoids phrases or sentences that are wordy, clichéd, jargonised, and are indirect to ensure clarity.

- Wordiness includes lengthy sentences that owe their length to cluttered phrases that are irrelevant to the meaning of the sentence.
- Clichés are overused expressions that lead to redundancy in writing.
- Jargons are inaccessible expressions that can make the writing ambiguous to the reader.

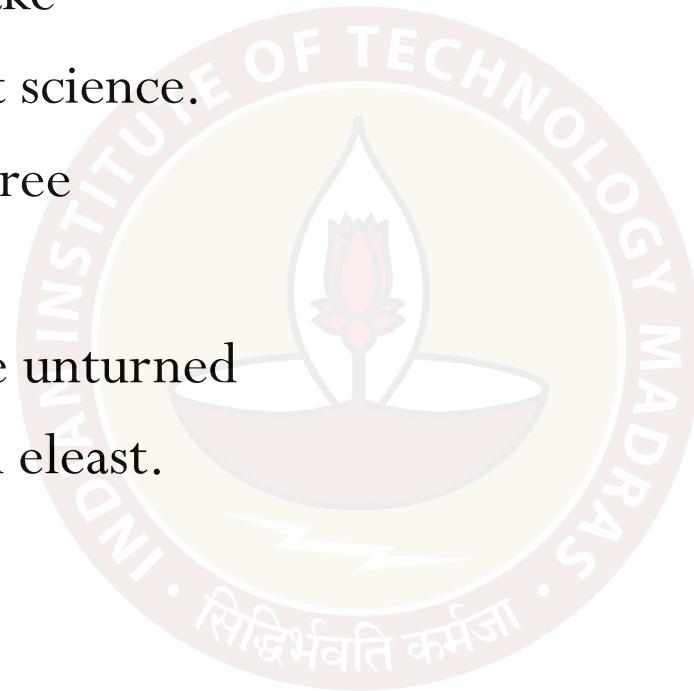
Examples

Wordy sentences

- i) In my personal opinion, the project should be considered for approval. (use instead 'In my opinion')
- ii) She has a tendency to become vengeful when opposed. (use instead 'becomes vengeful')
- iii) I came to the realisation that the office remains open till eight in the night. (use instead 'realised that')

Cliché

- Make no mistake
- It is not rocket science.
- Agree to disagree
- It is what it is.
- Leave no stone unturned
- Last but not the least.



Jargon

- Every discipline and sub-fields have jargons that are specific to them.
- Below is a list of more common and general jargon in writing,
 - i) Tip of the iceberg
 - ii) Low hanging fruit
 - iii) Bottom line
 - iv) Big picture

Tone in professional writing



How to use objective tone in professional writing?

- Emphasis must be on ideas and things, not on people and feelings.

Eg. I think that the argument is valid.

These findings indicate that the arguments are valid.

- Evaluative words that are suggestive of non-evidence based findings or observations must be avoided.
- Avoid intense and emotional expressions.

Eg. The writing is terrible / wonderful. . (use instead ‘less convincing’ or ‘well argued’)

- Use modalities to allow room for disagreements.

Eg. The policy does not negatively affect any sections of the society.

There is a possibility that the policy works good for everyone.

- Use authentic sources for credibility.