



SCHOOL THEOLOGY, EDUCATION & ARTS

P.O Private Bag – 20157, KABARAK, KENYA

Course code: COMS 110; Course Name: COMMUNICATION SKILLS I

3 Credit Hours (CFs)

COURSE OUTLINE

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Course description:

The topics to be covered include: The **definition of communication** & communication skills; The communication process and models; Dimensions /Types Communication; importance of Communication; Barriers of communication; Channels of communication: Verbal and Non-verbal, **Language Skills:** An overview of basic grammar; parts of speech; grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, number, person and case; sentence patterns; **Study skills:** Planning a study programme; Study methods; Studying for examination. **Listening and Note taking:** The Listening process; Listening situations; Barriers to effective listening; Note-taking and making- situations; note formats; **Library use Skills:** The meaning of Information, The library and the types, Information sources – types; organization and evaluation, Referencing (acknowledging sources of information). **Reading Skills:** The concept of academic Reading and the reading process; Study Reading Formula (SQ3R); Critical reading; Interpretation of non linear text; Types of reading texts and writers' techniques. **Academic Writing Skills:** The concept of academic writing; The academic writing process, Types of essays and organizational structures; Referencing styles in academic writing.

Purpose of the course

The purpose of this course is to provide you with guidance and practice of academic communication skills. These will enable you manage your studies as an independent knowledge seeker. COMS 110 is a skills-based course. What is discussed in this course should be applied to your specific areas of discipline. This means that content is not the main focus of this course but application of knowledge.

Expected Learning outcomes

At the end of this course, the learner should be able to:

1. Relate the communication process to academic communication skills
2. Adapt effective college level study skills
3. Cultivate and use effective listening and note-taking skills
4. Read, think, analyse different written texts in various disciplines
5. Understand library set up and make effective use of Library resources
6. Learn and practice academic writing techniques in your area of discipline- Gather information, plan and write acceptable academic essays of undergraduate standard.

Learning approaches

Lectures, discussions in class and groups, short presentations, individual exercises and structured activities.

Weeks	Detailed course content
Week 1	The definition of communication & communication skills; The communication process and models;
Week 2	Dimensions /Types Communication; importance of Communication; Barriers of communication; Channels of communication: Verbal and Non-verbal
Week 3	Study skills: Planning a study programme; Study methods; Studying for examination
Week 4	Listening and Note taking: The Listening process; Listening situations; Barriers to effective

	listening; Note-taking and making- situations; note formats;
Week 5	Library use Skills: The meaning of Information, The library and the types,
Week 6	CAT1
Week 7	Information sources – types; organization and evaluation, Referencing (acknowledging sources of information)
Week 8	The concept of academic Reading and the reading process; Study Reading Formula (SQ3R); Critical reading
Week 9	Types of reading texts and writers' techniques; Interpretation of non Linear text;
Week 10	CAT2
Week 11	The concept of academic writing; The academic writing process; Topic Choice and Focusing; Thesis statement; Writing outline; information Gathering; drafting; Revising and editing, Referencing styles in academic writing.
Week 12	Language Skills- Basic grammar- Parts of speech-sentence types
Week 13	Cont... Language Skills- Basic grammar- Parts of speech-sentence types
Week 14	Examination
Week 15	Examination

1 Course assessment

Continuous assessment tests (CATS)	30
Final examination	70
Total	100

Core Reading Texts

1. Montano, M.H (1992). *Successful University Study*. Nairobi Jomo Kenyatta Foundation
2. Montgomery M. (1993). *Study skills for colleges and universities in Africa*. London: Longman.
3. Wyrick, J. (1987). *Steps to Writing Well*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.

Online Sources

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/clarification.html>,
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listening>,
<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html>,
<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/ineffective-listening.html>,

Other reading texts

1. Afolayan, A. and Newson, H.E. (1983). *The Use of English Communicative Skills for University Students*. London: Longman.
2. Baddock, B. *Professional Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Crews, Schor & Hennessy (1993). *The Borzoi Handbook for Writers*. New York: MacGraw-Hill
4. Makenzi and Kiplagat, J. (1999). *A University Course in Library Skills*.
5. Pauley, S.E. and Riordan, D.G. (2000). *Technical Report Writing Today*. A.I.T.B. Houghton Mifflin Company
6. Sheal, P. and Omujuwa, R. (1985). *Advanced English Course for College and University in Africa*. London: Longman.
7. Silverman, J., Hughes, E. & Wienbroer, D.R. (2005). *Rules of Thumb: A Guide for Writers*. Sixth Edition. New York: Mc Graw Hill

COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

COMMUNICATION

What is Communication?

Communication is derived from a Latin word *Communis* meaning common or shared. It belongs to a group of words that include;

- Communion
- Communism
- Community

Until you have shared information with another person, you have not communicated it. Communication is about sharing of information.

Communication occurs when we share information and it is understood by the other person(s) the way you have understood it.

Communication therefore is:

- 1) The process of creating a shared understanding (Barker 2000).
- 2) It is the negotiation of shared meaning (Payne 1998).
- 3) According to Adler and Rodman (2000) communication is the process of human beings responding to the symbolic behavior of other persons.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is a continuous ongoing process, for example, if your classmates

Tells you, "You are Smart". The interpretation of those words will depend on a long series of experiences stretching back in time.

Such questions will cross your mind;

- 1) Has anyone judged my appearance today?
- 2) Am I really smart?
- 3) How is my relationship with the person commenting on my appearance?

All these questions will help shape your response, in turn, the words you speak and how you speak them will shape the way your classmate will behave towards you in this situation and in future.

Communication is like a motion picture in which the meaning comes from the unfolding of an inter-related series of images, there are five aspects of the communication process:

- (1) **The Communicator** who is also called the Sender, Source, Encoder, the originator
- (2) **The message** which is also the content-it can be in form of- Symbols
 - Words
 - Pictures
 - Signs
- 3) **The channel** which is also called the medium
 - Mass Media e.g. Telephone, TV, radio
 - Speaker
 - Written (Letter, books etc)
 - Internet
- 4) **The audience** who is also the recipient, decoder, listeners, they include
 - A congregation
 - Readers
 - Viewers
 - Surfers etc
- 5) **The feedback**-also called response

The Communicator encodes ideas and feelings into a message and conveys them by a means of a channel which can be (Speech, Signs, Mass Media) etc into a receiver who decodes the message. The communicator should, therefore, understand the social importance of his/her role and what he/she wants to communicate. He should understand the characteristics of the channels he is using, his audience and hold his message to the style requirements of each channel he uses and the capabilities of his audience.

BARRIERS / LIMITATIONS OF COMMUNICATION

These are limitations, shortcomings of communication in the communication process

In the communication process, there is a limitation called noise; noise means any force that interferes with effective Communication. They can also be defined as distractions or barriers between the sources to the audience. Noise can occur at any stage of Communication.

Types of noise/barriers

- 1) Physical or external barriers.

- 2) Physiological.
- 3) Psychological.
- 4) Semantic (Connotative).
- 5) Stored experience.

1) Physical or External Barriers

This includes those factors outside the receiver and the communicator that makes it difficult to communicate or hear and any other distractions. They include;

- Noise from moving vehicles
- Loud music
- Noise from construction sites
- Echoes
- Singing birds
- Extreme temperatures (too hot or cold)
- Uncomfortable seats
- Poor Network (phone)
- Poor reception (TV or Radio)
- Low network (for internet) etc

2) Physiological Barriers

They involve biological factors in the receiver or communicator that interfere with accurate reception of information. They include; - Sickness or illness

- Fatigue
- Poor hearing
- Poor sight etc

3) Psychological barriers.

- Refers to forces within the receiver or communicator that interfere with the ability to express or understand a message accurately. Mental issues include;

- Superiority complex
- Inferiority complex
- Ego related factors

Example: A football player exaggerating the number of goals he scored in order to convince that he is a good player. Such a person either suffers from inferiority or superiority complex

4) Semantic/Connotative barriers.

There are two types of meanings for words:

(1) **Denotative meaning** which is the dictionary meaning of a word. Every word has denotative meaning

(2) **Connotative meaning** is associated with stereotypes and cultural settings.

- Connotative meaning arouses qualitative judgments and personal reactions which could be favorable or unfavorable.

Example; The words noble, honest, cowardly could elicit favorable or unfavorable reactions.

Denotative meaning is the literal dictionary or actual meaning of the word. It informs and names objects without any positive or negative qualities.

Semantic noise occurs when a message is misunderstood even though it is received exactly as it was transmitted. The communicator may use words that are too difficult for a member or members of the audience to understand or he or she may use words that have one meaning for him (Communicator) and another meaning for the listeners, the reader or viewer may use words that have connotative meaning or ambiguous words.

5) Stored Experience.

This occurs when the receiver interprets the message in terms of his frame of reference. Each person has stored experience consisting in part of his individual ego related beliefs and values in part of the beliefs and values of groups to which he belongs. These groups could be;

- Family
- Job
- Peer group
- Church etc.

A message which challenges these beliefs and values may be rejected, distorted or misrepresented.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

A skill is a special ability to do something well especially as gained by learning and practice.

What is communication skills?

- 1) They are a set of skills that enable a person to convey information so that it is received and understood.

- 2) They are skills that are needed to use language (spoken, written, sign) or otherwise communicated to interact with others.
- 3) They are skills that enable people to communicate effectively with one another.

Communication skills are the ability to develop mutual understanding and cooperation which is necessary for the society. Communication skills therefore include;

- a) The ability to speak in public
- b) To make presentations
- c) To write letters, reports etc
- d) To chair meetings e.g. board, committee meetings.
- e) To conduct negotiations etc.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS /PATTERNS /NETWORKS.

There are two types of communication networks in an organization.

- Formal
- Informal.

Formal.

- Its laid down by the management.
- Communication networks are reflected in the organizational chart that shows the hierarchy of command.
- Organizational policies and decisions originate from the top hierarchy and they flow down through managers and supervisors to the lower level employees.
- But modern class managements encourage open communications with employees.
- Today's organizations lay down clear communication policies that have to be followed by employees across all levels.

The organizational chart of a company will show how information flows in the organization. Information can flow in the following directions:

- Downward
- Upward
- Horizontal
- Diagonal.

1) Downward Communication.

-This occurs when superiors send down messages to their subordinates. Decision makers e.g. the CEO and managers pass down information about job plans, instructions, policies and procedures so that the organization's culture and work are understood. It's aimed at imparting the vision and mission upon the subordinates and how they can fulfill them. The communication can be in form of reports, memos, notices, procedure manuals etc,

Disadvantages

- 1) There is no opportunity for immediate feedback since its one-way communication. Most of the time it is written.
- 2) The long line of communication from the top level to lower levels is a big barrier. The longer the line of communication of downward, the greater the chance for the distortion of the message.
- 3) There can occur mistrust between superiors and junior employees. Employees who mistrust a superior may block the relay of communication downward.

2.) Upward Communication

Information is sent from subordinates to superiors.

- Employees discuss their problems with superiors, seek suggestions for improvement, they may sort out unsolved work problems, seek solutions to conflicts etc.

Upward communication may begin with verbal messages from subordinates to supervisors who then communicate upwards through e.g. a memo to managers who communicate with the CEO. Other channels apart from face to face are reports, email, telephone messages.

Disadvantages.

- 1) There may arise a gap in perception between the superiors and subordinates.
- 2) People at lower ranks may distort information when communicating to persons of higher ranks to please or impress the boss for certain reasons like promotions and other favours.

Advantages.

- 1) Positive approaches from superiors can change distrustful, intriguing and scheming employees to being productive people.
- 2) Open and healthy communication in an organization can be an important source of quality.

3.) Horizontal (lateral) Communication

- Communication between people in different sections but at the same levels. E.g. accounts manager and procurement manager.

- Communication is in terms of reports, memos, committee meetings, seminars, conferences etc.

Advantages.

- 1) Employees enjoy a conducive environment to discuss their work where there are no supervisors.
- 11) Employees coordinate work, they brainstorm ideas, projects; they share information and knowledge freely.

Disadvantages.

- 1) There is a high likelihood that professional rivalry will arise.
- 2) Those who achieve highly are likely to think about themselves as superior to others thus expecting preferences from the top management.
- 3) Some employees may refuse to share information and knowledge with the achievers.
- 4) As people who enjoy specialization, they may become rigid about their points of view and may reject other people's perspective.

4) Diagonal Communication

This is communication between people of different levels and different sections.

- Tasks may arise which involve more than one department.
- There is usually no obvious line of authority
- It often relies on cooperation, goodwill and respect between parties involved.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

Grapevine

This type of communication occurs due to some weakness in the formal communication networks e.g. problems in command and control, thus the idea of informal communication networks emerges. The reasons behind grapevine include personal experiences, career interests; interpersonal attraction, curiosity about people etc

- It's a network that is not in the organizational chart, such talks and interactions take place in the corridor, water cooler, in the washroom, near the notice boards etc where people cluster around to express their feelings without fear.
- They feel that such talks allow them to breathe fresh air and enjoy their interactions.
- It's linked with gossip or rumormongers. People who are less serious-minded and indulge in loose talks are the ones who keep grapevine alive and strong in an organization.
- Grapevine exists because the formal network does not always provide adequate information about the organizational life.
- Employees seek information from grapevine to satisfy their curiosity. It may be about a superior's bias towards a certain employee, the possibility of the number of public holidays being reduced, shift hours being changed e.t.c

Employees take an interest, in such talks because they are juicy, interesting and fresh.

When correct lines of communication are not used, the grapevine often results. This is characteristic of an official communication system which is constantly changing. It is a vehicle for distortion of the truth, rumours, and gossip.

- An active grapevine can cause much damage to an organization by spreading, incomplete, false or exaggerated information. It results in low morale, fear, and unsettled workforce.

Management should take steps to reduce the influence of grape-vine communication by considering ways in which information is communicated in times of uncertainty within an organization.

The confidence of organizational employees is very important and adequate, accurate information should always be made available to the people concerned at the earliest possible opportunity through the correct channels.

STUDY SKILLS

The profile of an efficient student

- 1) An efficient student must know his/her strengths and weakness so as to know what to concentrate on and what not to.
- 2) He/she must be conversant with the course outline.
- 3) He must budget his time appropriately but revise the time plan when the need arises.
- 4) He should make sure that he attends all lectures, tutorials; practicals etc and write detailed notes for revision and preservation for the future.
- 5) He should file notes and handouts systematically and date them for appropriately for easy revision.
- 6) He should supplement lecture notes with notes from private study.
- 7) He should always revise notes and handouts and be conversant with concepts.
He discusses with genuine colleagues in areas found particularly difficult.
- 8) He should seek assistance from lecturers when the need arises.
- 9) He should complete the assignment in time to avoid backlogs.
- 10) He should file his CATS for future reference.
11. In the course of the semester, he should anticipate the end of semester exams and prepare in advance.

Designing a Study Location.

An ideal study location should pose the following,

- a) Good reading lights
- b) Comfortable and attractive
- c) The study resources (books, journals, etc) should be methodically classified and stored for easy retrieval.
- d) It should have proper sitting support.
- e) It should have sufficient heating.

When designing a study location, you should have a checklist and consider the following;

- 1) Lighting.
- 2) Heating.
- 3) Away from noise.
- 4) Interruptions.
- 5) Chair and Desk.

1) Lighting.

- The best light to study is the natural light (sun). Avoid positions that will make you study in your shadow, adjustable table lamps are recommended because they illuminate the desk area while avoiding eye straining from the dazzling direct light.

1) Heating.

Maintain a temperature of about 22 -24c of room temperature. Overheating will make the brain sleepy while under heating will deter concentration.

2) Noise.

- Ordinary mortals need a quite and hushed silence in which to study seriously. Eliminate distracting noise by closing doors, windows using curtains or soundproof to make the place quiet.

3) Interruptions.

- Arrange the study timetable in a way that you are guaranteed one or two hours of uninterrupted study.

4) Chair and Desk.

- The sitting support should be good for effective study. They should have the proper height that will not cause the muscles and shoulders to cramp or strain.
- Ensure the desk is large enough to accommodate several open books.

EXAMINATIONS: (b) To measure to what extent you have gained a certain body of

Knowledge.

C) To measure how much or how effectively you have learned or studied a particular subject.

(c) To find out the degree to which you can apply or relate the basic

knowledge and skills you have learned to new circumstances or Situations.

(d) To predict your future level of success in your chosen field of study or profession.

(e) To measure your general level of ability, endurance and hard work to manage examinations at your level of education.

(f) To select and arrange individuals for assigning duties and positions in society.

(g) To motivate you to work hard throughout your study at the university.

(h) To train you to have a disciplined approach to life

1) Revising for exams,

The pressure of the exam stimulates you to draw together the strands of your study and acknowledge areas that need more work. As an exam approaches, it's useful to make adequate preparations.

- a) **Organize your notes**, the process of sorting out what is essential from what is interesting in a general way will encourage you to revise.
- b) **Reduce your notes to key headings and points.**
- c) **Use past papers**, -These are the best resource,
 - Remember that each question in that paper links you to the area of your course. You need to find that link and consider the areas the question leads you towards.

d) Select what to revise.

- If you will need to answer three exam questions, revise at least five topics.
- Work out answers to a range of possible exam questions, for a topic so that you can be able to deal with almost all questions that will be set.
- Select the most important theories, references, and evidence from each topic.
- Draw up a timetable, work out exactly how much time to revise, including time to relax and time for emergencies.
 - If all subjects carry equal marks, divide the time equally between all the subjects.
 - Assign more time to subjects that carry more marks.

Preparing for Exams

2. Preparing for an exam can get you off to a good start. You can do the following:

- a) Find out basic information, like how many exams you will do, when they will be done, they will be assessed and where to get past papers.
- b) Find out the exam instructions.
Familiarise yourself with instructions written on exam papers. Instructions can be diff. to understand if you read them for the first time under the stress of the exams itself.
- c) Plan your exam time in advance.
 - for each paper, work out the time that you will start and finish each question for practice.
 - Like most things, exam performance improves with practice.
 - Arrange with a friend or yourself to practice an exam. You can do the following;
 - Pick an old exam or make your own exam to practice
- Write the answers in the time assigned to the question.
- Work alone in silence and afterward discuss with a friend

3. Preparing for exams a week before.

- 1) Know where and when the exam will be done.
- 11) Know when the exams will start and how long they will take.
- 111) Know what type of test or exam they will be. i.e. - essay

- Multiple choices
cloze test etc.

- 1v) Know how many questions are compulsory and how many are optional.

4. Preparing for exams day to/Before exams.

- You need to recheck the time and venue and any last minute changes.
- Confirm whether you have student examination cards & any other documents required.
- Revise any top priority areas.
- Avoid learning new
- enough sleep.
- Promote relaxation activities.

5. During the exam day.

- Eat well before the exam
- Leave plenty of time to the journey to the exam venue
- Arrive early at the exam venue
- Avoid discussing exams last minute.

EXAMS ANSWERING TECHNIQUE:

P-Preview
Q-Question
R-Re-read
S-Select
T-Think.

Preview

- Look at the entire question paper
- Read the general instructions

Question

- Choose the questions that you need to answer
- Note the questions to be answered in each section
- Note the compulsory questions
- Note the marks allocated to each question

Reread

- Reread the instructions given for each question to answer
- Pay attention to the verbs e.g.

Discuss
Outline
Explain
Justify
Analyze etc

Select

- Select the sequence of answering the questions. Start with the easiest questions and move progressively to the difficult ones.

Think

- Think about how to use the allocated time
- Allocate time proportionally according to marks allocated

NOTE

- At the end of the exam, check to make sure that you have answered the correct number of questions and all the compulsory questions.
- Ensure that all your answers are numbered appropriately.
- Ensure all your identification details appear on the cover page of each booklet; if you use papers staple them together.
- Check your answers for punctuations, spelling, grammar etc

TYPES OF TESTS

The best way to prepare for an exam is to learn the materials that will be tested. It will be of great help when you master the different types of tests.

There are many types of tests but we are going to consider only a few of them. The student is advised to research and come up with the other types not discussed.

True/False

This test item gives only two choices, true or false. An answer is true if the entire statement is true, if any part of the statement is false then it is false, for example :

1. Kibaki is the president of Kenya (**true**) (false)
2. Kalonzo musyoka is the vice president of East Africa (true) (**false**)

Even though Kalonzo is a vice president, he is not the vice president of E.A so the statement is only partially true.

Matching Items

In this test, there are two groups of the list of items. You must match each item from the first group with an item from the second group. It is advisable that you complete the easy matches first that will leave you with fewer items that you will choose from.

Example

Match the related words in group A to those in B

A
Cow
Dog
Cat
Lion
Goat

B
curb
kid
puppy
kitten
calf

Multiple Choices

In this test item, a sentence must be answered or completed by picking the best or the most appropriate out of the choices given.

Example

Which one is the largest slum in Kenya?

- (A) Mukuru Kwa Njenga
- (B) Kibera
- (C) Mathare North
- (D) None of the above

Standardized Test

These are tests done by students all over the country, district world, province etc e.g. KCSE, KCPE CASNEB.

READING SKILLS

Reading skills enable readers to turn writing into the meaning and achieve the goals of independence, comprehension, and fluency.

What are reading skills?

Are specific abilities that enable a reader to:

- 1) Read the written form as a meaningful language.
- 2) To read anything written with comprehension, independence, and fluency
- 3) Mentally interact with the message.

Reading skills, therefore, enables the reader to turn writing into the meaning and achieve the goals of independence, comprehension, and fluency.

-Independence is the ability to function in a given area without depending upon another 's help.

In reading, it's the ability to read anything and understand in his/her language without depending on another's help.

-Comprehension is the ability to grasp something, mentally and the capacity to understand ideas and facts.

-Fluency is the ability to read, easily, smoothly and expressively.

Preparation for reading

Before reading, a serious reader has to prepare.

Physical self-preparation: removing yourself from certain destructors like noise/ creating a reading environment, reading materials etc

Mental self-preparation: put oneself in the right frame of mind for reading.

Emotional self-preparation: attempting as far as possible to rid yourself of external emotions so that they do not intrude in your concentration.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE READING

- Mental
- Psychological
- Physical
- POOR Reading habits

Why should students in the university improve reading skills?

- 1) Reading skills represents a major part of students study time, success in the university is directly related to reading ability.
- 2) Most students in the university have not had any instruction in reading, so they do not realize that they need any instruction, neither do they realize they are poor and inefficient readers.
- 3) Reading is a developmental skill which can never be fully acquired therefore one should make an effort to improve one's reading throughout one's life.

Reading habits that deserve to be replaced.

- 1) Head movement.
- 2) Pointing to words
- 3) Vocalization
- 4) Regression
- 5) Recognition span
- 6) Rhythmic eye movement.

Head Movement.

Poor readers often move their heads unconsciously from side to side as they read, such movement is both unnecessary and wasteful. It slows down reading rate/speed. The only muscles that are necessary for reading are the eye muscles.

Pointing to Words.

Poor readers point to words with their fingers, pen pencil etc as they read. Since the eye can move faster than the pen or fingers, reading is slowed down considerably by pointing. This affects the reading rate and comprehension. By pointing to individual words the reader is prevented from taking in whole phrases and thoughts which impedes his/her understanding of thoughts and ideas.

Vocalization.

In the extreme, this refers to whispering or saying the words to oneself as one reads. It also refers to any movement of the vocal apparatus/organs e.g. tongue, lips. Readers who vocalize are in effect reading aloud and this affects their reading rate and understanding.

Regression.

Refers to glancing back and re-reading words, phrases, and sentences that one has already read. This is a bad habit which often results from lack of concentration, it lowers reading speed and understanding.

Recognition Span

-Refers to the number of words that a reader can recognize with his eyes while the eyes are fixed at one point of the reading material i.e. during one fixation.

Poor readers have a small recognition span in that they recognize one or two words at one glance while good readers have a wider recognition span and can take in several words per fixation. A small recognition span affects both reading rate and comprehension.

Rhythmic Eye Movement.

This refers to the way in which the eyes move across the line of print. A poor readers eyes move across the line of print in a haphazard manner rather than in a rhythmic manner, taking in only single words at a time and regressing often, whereas the eyes should move from the middle of one phrase to the middle of the next phrase.

PURPOSE FOR READING

People have different reasons for reading a given material; the common purposes include the following:

- 1) Reading for pleasure/leisure/Entertainment
- 2) For information or general information or knowledge
- 3) To get instructions/directions
- 4) For Academic Purposes

Reading for Pleasure.

This occurs when you read novels, story books, newspapers, cartoons or other light reading materials etc. It helps a person to relax while at the same time gets informed.

Reading for General Information or Knowledge

It's often said that "Information is power" hence getting to acquire as much information. as possible helps one to know how to survive in different situations, It is advisable for one to keep updated with emergent information in social, cultural, economic, political spiritual and technical fields.

Reading to Get Instructions or Directions.

Looking at life today, one is amazed by “the do it yourself” attitude. This is more common in the western world although it’s fast catching up with the lifestyle in developing countries. Look at shopping in the supermarket or instructions that are attached to every consumer package that we are buying. This shows that we need to be effective readers.

Reading for Academic Purpose.

This is reading done in order to achieve in the scholarly world. One needs to acquire knowledge, read for an exam, do a library research, and write a report on a project one is conducting, do an assignment etc for one to achieve all these, one needs to be an effective reader.

TYPES OF READING.

There are several styles of reading but the particular style that one adopts will depend on certain factors, like;

- 1) The purpose of reading
- 2) Individuals intellectual ability
- 3) The ability to understand and interpret what one reads.

1) Survey:

This is taking a general view in determining the relevance of reading materials and whether the materials would serve the purpose for which reading is designed. When carrying out a survey, one should satisfy certain Questions among them are;

- 1) Is the material relevant to the topic I am interested in?
- 2) Is all of the material relevant or only a part of it?
- 3) Is the material by a reputable writer whose Judgment can be trusted?
- 4) Is the material up to date?
- 5) Is the material too far above or too far below the level I am studying at?

2) Skimming and Scanning

-Skimming is a strategy used when a reader wants to get a quick glimpse of the text within a short time for example; when reading the topic sentences only.

-Scanning is a rapid search of important information in a given reading material. For example;

- Names
- Addresses
- Certain phrases
- Certain words etc

The tendency is to ignore all other information except the one of interest.

3) Light Reading

-This is a type of reading that we apply when reading for pleasure/leisure for example

- novels
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- cartoons
- short stories etc

This does not involve any critical assessment or appraisal of the material one is reading. It is fast and superficial.

4) Word by Word Reading

-This is the style used by beginners when reading for their first time in an attempt to understand each word or phrase at a time. It’s also applicable when one is reading scientific or mathematics processes or formulas.

5) Intensive Reading

It is the concentrated, thorough and comprehensive reading style. It’s applied when one wants to understand the contents of the reading deeply. It’s an intellectually involving affair in that the reader will be trying to evaluate how the ideas involved could be applied or adapted to different situations. It’s also analytical critical and interpretive to suit your situation. e.g. –reading notes

- literature books etc

6) Extensive Reading

-This means reading widely in order to gain knowledge in as broad a field as possible. In this type of reading a person is not guided by a particular objective but one reads as much as he can e.g. reading for general information. One does not have to read for academic purposes but one reads out of interest and therefore he/she is not restricted subject wise.

LIBRARY SKILLS

What is a library?

1. **A library is a collection of well-documented books, journals, newspapers and other forms of information that is printed and none printed.**

A university student is required to be self-reliant. Your desire for knowledge cannot be satisfied by your teachers alone, the teachers cannot have all the answers to the questions you have, therefore the student has to do a lot of searching, the searching will take the form of debating with people, observing what exists in the world and finding what others have done or written. You, therefore, need to learn how to use the library.

2. A library is a collection of **selected** information resources which are **organized** and **preserved** for **reading, studying** and **consultation**.

A) Selected: most university libraries select their materials using internationally accepted principles of selection and correct selection tools.

All materials acquired through gifts and donations should be selected and only relevant and useful ones are put on the shelves.

B) Organized: it is only possible to use the collection in the library if it is properly organized. Materials are organized by means of classifying and cataloging, by classifying, library materials are grouped together according to subject similarity and it is assigned a call number that enables users to locate materials. By cataloging, the users are informed of what is available in the library stock.

C) Preserved: preservation is the maintenance of library materials in their original condition through retention and proper care. If materials are damaged, they can be preserved through restoration (this is the procedure that improves the condition of damaged objects and the attempt to reclaim it as close as possible to original condition.)

D) Reading, studying and consultation: library materials are meant for leisure reading e.g. recreational, for study e.g. textbooks, for consultation e.g. reference materials

IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING LIBRARY SKILLS

- 1.) Most of the students in Kenya have not had an opportunity to use well-organized libraries. This is because, at both primary and secondary levels in Kenya, libraries hardly exist and where they exist they are poorly organized with a small collection of materials. Therefore students joining universities need to be taught information handling skills which will help them not only to maximize the use of their respective libraries but also to enable them to make use of any other library other than the university library.
- 2.) Currently, more emphasis is put on student-oriented learning where the lecturer's role is to provide skeleton notes and the students required to fill notes through information acquired in the library. Therefore, the students need to acquire some library skills in order to use the resources effectively.
- 3.) The growth of seminar and tutorial teaching, especially in project work in undergraduate courses, has provided the need for the use of the library

AIMS OF A LIBRARY

- 1.) To store a wide range of academic materials in order to facilitate independent academic pursuit by both students and staff
- 2.) To foster and create interest among students and staff to interact with the material available in the library.
- 3.) To assist students to become more effective in independent research and locating appropriate materials for various tasks
- 4.) To encourage students and staff to explore new things as well as learn more about the familiar ones.

TYPES OF LIBRARIES

There are at least five types of libraries in Kenya

- 1.) National Library
- 2.) Public
- 3.) Academic
- 4.) Private
- 5.) Special

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

These are libraries provided from the public funds through the local authority or the ministry of local government. The use of any of these libraries is not restricted to any class of persons. They are freely available to all the members of the public.

Functions of a public library

- 1.) They promote reading among grown-ups, adolescents, children, youth e.t.c. regardless of age. It's expected to encourage continuing education.
- 2.) It provides a wide range of loan services based on systems of individual libraries i.e. you can borrow reading materials from them.
- 3.) They strive to serve the whole community by:
 - a) being supplemented by mobile and traveling libraries
 - b) providing special facilities for special categories of people e.g. the old
 - c) they organize the provision of services for hospitals and jails and other disadvantaged groups of people in the society

This means that public libraries built up their collection that relate to the interests of the local community. Public libraries generally consider their role to be more than passive lending of materials to those who walk in. Many public libraries provide other facilities like;

- I. meeting rooms for community groups
- II. they sponsor lectures and other forums to show educational motion pictures
- III. they actively participate in adult education programmers

The ideal public library should provide access to knowledge for all people in the country or community regardless of race, creed, color, tribe etc.

NATIONAL LIBRARIES

Also called a reference library.

Usually, books in such libraries are for reference only. The reference library is a copyright library since its main function is to collect and preserve books, periodicals, newspapers published in the country for posterity or prosperity. This is achieved through a law requiring publishers to deposit copies of all publications issued by them and by purchasing books published in other countries.

A copyright act has a penalty clause to enforce this law.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES

They contain a collection of books and other materials dealing with a limited field of knowledge which are provided by a learned society, research organizations, industrial or commercial undertakings, government departments or educational institutions. It may also be a special branch of a public library serving certain interests or occupational groups e.g. a technical library or subject library which meets the needs of users in a given subject area e.g.

KEMRI- medical

UNEP- environmental

KARI- agricultural

A special library is intended to serve the needs of specific users who require detailed information in a limited subject area. Users usually require up-to-date information promptly and their requests may be for information rather than for a book or journal etc.

They are established to meet highly specialized requirements of professionals and businesses; therefore they are usually attached to official institutions and government departments.

A library may be considered special in a variety of ways

- i. by the types of users e.g. a special category of people like
 - research scientists
 - prisoners
 - physically challenged
 - children
 - the old
 - the sick
- ii. by the subject
Are library which stock resources on a particular subject like;
 - medical
 - environment
 - agriculture
 - law etc
- iii. by the type of material and resources
Include a special format of resources for example;
 - video library
 - Braille library[for the blind]

- KBC library

These libraries communicate information to specialists in response to their requests and needs

PRIVATE LIBRARIES

These are libraries owned by individuals, clubs, and societies to which members of the public have no right to access. A private collection may contain varying information depending on individual interest. The private collector may be able to collect in-depth information on a subject, to a level usually impossible for a public library.

For example professor, Author Obey is renown in the cure for HIV(AIDS) and this private collector will have materials that are detailed in terms of formulas used to move through various stages of inventions of the medicines which he has so far discovered. His collection will have inventions of other scientists in the same subjects in details.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

These are libraries associated with educational institutions e.g.

- Universities
- Colleges
- Schools.

They are established to serve the needs of those in the institution.

Functions and Services of Academic Libraries

Enhancing Education:

The library assists both the lectures and the students to achieve their educational objectives.

For the lecturers, the library provides information which will enable them to keep up-to-date in their subject areas. This is necessitated by the fact that information is dynamic and thus the teacher needs to keep abreast of new developments as well as refresh and enrich his knowledge all the time.

For students the library helps in various ways:

For the slow-learner, a library offers the opportunity to catch up with other students by offering books that deal with same information as offered in the lecture halls. For the fast-learner, the library offers facilities to learn and expand on what was taught in the course of learning. For all students, the library offers different resources dealing with various subjects, and therefore opportunity to learn the subjects from various perspectives. A library also offers the opportunity to learn other things that might not be offered in the lecture halls.

Enhancing Reading as a Habit

A library in the university exposes students and lecturers to a wide variety of reading materials. The students will create a habit of reading for pleasure.

Conducive Study Atmosphere

The library is one place set aside in the university complex mainly for the purpose of the quiet study.

The conducive atmosphere is created by among other things:

- appropriate lighting system
- suitable reference collection

Suitable furniture –specially designed chairs and tables for study.

Reference Services:

Are offered which include the provision of quick reference

Books such as encyclopedias, yearbooks, dictionaries and

Directories, which are not allowed out of the library and most of

Which are too expensive for most individuals to purchase?

Lending Services

Enable students and lecturers to have access to a large variety of books which they can borrow and read at their own time and pace. The users are allowed renewal or extension of the loan period if they still need the books and dif no other user requires it.

Discipline:

Is instilled among the library users is several ways. The

University library has rules and regulations which are intended

To guide students in knowing the accepted and expected

Behavior while using both library resources and facilities.

Inter-Library Lending Services & Referral Services.

A library in the university links with other libraries. This makes
The students and lecturers aware of other libraries and enables
Them to have access to the information in these libraries
Through inter-library lending and library cooperation.

Recreation:

The offers resources for recreation such as novels and magazines for leisure reading. The library can also offer facilities to foster personal interest and hobbies by providing information on the study.

Short-loan Services:

The library puts in the reserve collection books which are in high demand and yet the library has only very few copies. Books in this collection are loaned out only for one hour. Also within this collection are lecture notes, past examination papers etc.

Reservation Services:

Students are allowed to reserve books which they know the library has, but which for one reason or the other are not on the shelves (mainly because they have been borrowed). Students reserving books should fill reservation forms at the issue counter to ensure that when books are returned it is kept for them and not put on the open shelves for any other user to pick.

Once the book is returned the student who made the reservation is notified and asked to come and collect the item. If the item is not collected within the indicated dates, the reservation is cancelled.

Other usefulness of a library include offering equal

Opportunities to all students and lecturers without discrimination is services offered as well as offering opportunity for socialization and enhancement of cultural values.

General Year Book:

Some general yearbooks updates & the information covered by the general encyclopedias and are published as annual supplements.

Other yearbooks rather general in scope but are not supplements to encyclopedias and not necessarily limited to the developments of a single year.

General yearbooks include such titles are Compton yearbook, Readers Digest Almanac, the Europe yearbook, Guinness Book of Records. The yearbook of World Affairs. The information given in these sources are factual, statistical and quite recent. The coverage is international and all subjects are dealt with.

Special Year Books:

The specific or special yearbooks deal with the specific field of knowledge or issues of a given country.

Special yearbooks include such titles as Yearbooks of the United Nations; this source provides an annual concise account of the United Nations work and its effect on almost all human activities. "The writers and artists book" on the other hand is a directory of writers only in all fields of knowledge. "The statements yearbook" is a statistical and historical annual of the state of the world. "The Kenya Foot book, for executors" is a national yearbook which provides some information such as on economy, banking, and finance in Kenya.

Almanacs

Almanacs are annual publications, containing a variety of useful facts of a miscellaneous nature and statistical information. Information found here includes information on nations of the world, names of universities, flags of the countries of the world, accidents, and deaths. Some of the almanacs include "Whitakers Almanac" and "Almanac of famous people".

Handbooks and Manuals:

These are reference instructional books providing essentials data and directories on a particular subject on how to carry out certain operations.

They are meant to assist and guide professionals and practitioners in performing their jobs. Some titles found under this heading are: Handbook of chemistry and physics, chemicals Engineers Handbook, Riegel's handbook of industrial chemistry, structural engineering handbook, metals handbook and handbook of contemporary of developments in word

SECTIONS OF A LIBRARY

- 1.) short loan (reserve) section
- 2.) the lending section (general circulation)
- 3.) reference sections
- 4.) information technology
- 5.) national collection (Africana)
- 6.) loose periodical section
- 7.) bound periodical section
- 8.) bibliographic section
- 9.) children section
- 10.) Inter-library loaning section

Short loan (reserve section)

This section contains books and other materials that are in short supply but high on demand. The books can only be borrowed for a short period of time like one or two hours and cannot be taken out of the library before closing hours. Such books are borrowed overnight when the library is closing and should be returned the following morning during the opening.

The lending section

It contains all the books that can be borrowed for a given period of time to be read outside or inside the library. You can also pick the books from the shelves and afterward you are supposed to leave it on the reading desk.

Reference section

It contains books and materials meant for reference e.g. encyclopedia, maps, dictionaries, surveys, handbooks. They must be read within the reference section and be left on the reading table.

Information Technology section

It has three sub-sections:

- a) Audio-visual
- b) Computer sections
E.g. flash disks, diskettes etc
- c) Reprographic sections
E.g. photocopying and binding section

National collection (Africana section)

It contains a collection of works done within the country. It contains theses, dissertations and other special publications mainly used by lecturers and post-graduate students for their research.

Loose periodical section

It contains daily newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines or journals. These materials are usually read within the library and returned after use.

Bound periodical section

It contains materials like magazines, newspapers of past months or years that are bound together and placed on specific shelves.

Bibliographic section

This section deals with cards and catalogues that are used for locating books within the library.

Children section

This section contains books and other materials meant for children e.g. children stories, cartoons, comedies, DVDs that have materials for children.

Inter-library loaning section

It deals with lending and loaning books from other libraries.

SERVICES OFFERED IN A LIBRARY

- 1.) Lending and borrowing
- 2.) Photocopying
- 3.) Computer services- printing, typing
- 4.) Binding and repair
- 5.) Audio- visual materials

LOCATING BOOKS IN A LIBRARY

You need to know a number of things to locate a book in a library;

1. The various sections of a library
2. Know where these sections are located within the library
3. The specific functions of each section
4. The documentation of books and other materials in that library. i.e. classification systems
5. The shelf arrangement within the library
6. Know how to use the card, catalogue or OPAC
7. The procedure used in locating books

PROCEDURE USED IN LOCATING BOOKS

1. find the card in the catalogue or OPAC
2. Write down the call no.
3. look for the book on the shelf, if it's not there
4. go to the short loan, if it's not there
5. check the adjacent shelves, if it's not there
6. Check on the reading tables, if it is not there
7. ask at the issuance desk, if it's borrowed
8. reserve it

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS/SCHEMES

To help any user locate books easily, books are arranged systematically in such a way that books on one subject are placed together and next to those in related areas.

A reader would like to find resource materials easily and quickly.

Libraries use definite internationally acknowledged methods of arranging their materials. These are called **Classification or index system**

Each book is classified as per its subject and is labeled with an identification code called **call number. (Call no.)**

The call no. appears on all the three catalog cards of that book. I.e. the author, title and the subject catalogue.

The call number also appears on the spine of the book

We are going to discuss two commonly used classification systems;

- i. The Dewey Decimal Classification system
- ii. Library of Congress

1.) Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC)

It was designed by an American educator called Melvin Dewey.

This system divides all knowledge into ten main classes. Each class is sub-divided into ten sub-classes.

Each of the resulting 100 sub-classes is further sub-divided into ten sub-classes giving 1000. This subdivision continues on and on. The basis of sub-division is general in particular.

The broad classes of DDC system

000- Generalities e.g. atlas, dictionaries, handbooks, surveys

100- Philosophy

200- Religion

300- Social Sciences

400- Languages

500- Pure Sciences

600- Technology & Applied Sciences

700- Fine Art

800- Literature

900- Geography & History

Example:

Language

400- Language, 401.a

2.) Library of Congress (LC)

It derives its names from the U.S library of congress located in Washington D.C where it was first started.

It divides knowledge into 21 broad classes. Each of these classes is represented by a letter of the alphabet written in capital letters.

A second capital letter signifies a sub-division of the main class. Further sub-division and specific aspects of each subject are indicated by a combination of a number which may range from 1-1999 in order to give the class makes.

The broad classes of LC system

A- Generalities

B- Philosophy

C- General History

D- History (except American history)
E- History of North America
F- Local American history, West Indies and Latin American
G- Geography and Anthropology
H- Social Science
J- Political Sciences
K- Law
L- Education
M- Music
N- Fine Arts
P- Language & Literature
Q- Sciences
R- Medicines
S- Agriculture
T- Technology
U- Military Sciences
V- Naval Science
Z- Bibliography and Library Sciences

REFERENCING

What is referencing?

It is a standardized method of acknowledging the source of information and ideas that you have used in your assignment, project, term papers and any other piece of writing in a way that identifies the source.

What do we need to reference?

A reference is required where;

- a) Quote another person word for word (direct quotation). It doesn't matter if it is a phrase, sentence, paragraph you will need to provide a reference from which it was taken.
- b) When you paraphrase- ideas or data obtained from another writer must be referenced even if you change the wording or content.
- c) Statistics
- d) When you use tables, figures, diagrams and appendices
- e) Controversial facts, opinions, data that can be challenged; however information of general nature like facts which are common knowledge e.g. the year of the world, do need to be referenced.
- f) Electronic sources e.g. internet, videos.

Why do we need to reference?

- a) Avoid plagiarism
- b) To verify quotations
- c) To enable readers to follow up and read more fully the cited author's arguments

What is plagiarism?

It is academic misconduct involving collusion and cheating by owning the work of other authors. It is punishable by law.

How do we reference?

There are two ways;

- i. Writing a reference list at the end of your work (a list of books you used)
- ii. By using in-text citation (indicating the source of information)

In-text citations

- Direct quotations (word for word)
- Indirect quotations (paraphrasing)
E.g. Oechsli (2000) points out/ describes/ argues; many people dream especially adults, however, few of them transform it into reality.

Formats of referencing

- a) Harvard
- b) Oxford
- c) American psychology association
- d) MLA

What is APA?

It stands for American Psychological Association system of referencing

APA style requires referencing into two different places;

- i. Referencing within the body of your work/ in-text citations

In in-text referencing, the author and the year of publication are written in the text itself next to where the information or idea is used. In the case of direct quotations, the page numbers are included. This is not a full reference itself but rather a pointer to the details that are in the reference list.

ii. To write a reference list

At the end of your assignment, there should be a reference list. This is a complete list of all the sources that you used in the construction of your assignment.

It contains the full details of your sources that are sufficient for anyone to find the original source. This information includes:

- a) The author
- b) The date / year of publication
- c) The title
- d) City of publication
- e) Publication details such as the publisher

Example:

Oschelis, M (2000) MIND POWER FOR STUDENTS. Magna publishing co. Mumbai

Example of direct and indirect citations

Direct citation

“Those conclusions seem obvious now, but they didn’t seem so obvious then”. Herera (2007)

OR

According to Herera (2007), “those conclusions” (If less 40 words put inverted commas)

Indirect citation

Those conclusions seem obvious now but they didn't seem so then. But by doing things project we have been able to get through some significant

NB: put the title at the end and the page. If you begin with the author’s name, we end the statement with the page alone.

When paraphrasing

Herera (2007) points out that women tend to have extraordinary personal relationship with clients.

In this case, you do not show the page but indicate the name of the author and year of publication before or at the end of the statement.

How to reference a book with many authors

According to Herera and Philips, (1994) women are known

(Herera & Philips, 1994 pg. 60)(In-text citation)

Referencing:

Madden, R. & Hogan, T. (1997). The history of the world. Colorado: Toronto publishers.

When the authors are more than six, you write et al after the name of the first author e.g.

Madden, R. et al. (1994). The history of the world

If an author writes two books, begin with the first one.

If an author has written two books in one year you write in alphabetical order e.g.

Napier, A. (1993a). Fatal storm. Sidney: Allen & Unwin

Napier, A. (1993b). Survival at sea. Sidney: Allen & Unwin

Internet Referencing

You need to indicate the date when the work was referenced

Example:

Leafy sea dragons and need sea dragons. (2001)

Retrieved Nov. 13, 2002, from

HTTP:// study trek. Lis. Cartin. Edu. Au/

Google search- APA referencing

- footnotes/ bids.op.clt

LISTENING SKILLS

Listening-attention, understanding, mental

hearing-sounds-physical process doesn’t involve the mind.

-before you listen you need to hear.

The Difference between Hearing and Listening;

Hearing is a physiological process involving vibration of sound waves on our eardrums and firing electrochemical impulses to the central nervous system, in the brain.

On the other hand, hearing is a physical process while listening is both physical and mental. Listening involves total concentration while hearing doesn’t involve any concentration.

-Listening is referred to as a lost art because people don’t remember everything they hear, we grasp about 50% of what we hear when we think therefore when we think we will be listening carefully.

Barriers to Effective Listening.

Listening just like other forms of communication is a communication process. The following are barriers to effective listening:

- 1) Internal dialogue.
- 2) Physical factors
- 3) Cultural differences.
- 4) Personal problems
- 5) Semantic/connotative meaning.
- 6) Biases.

1) Internal dialogue.

-Since listening begins in our minds people carry out internal dialogue in response to another's words though without verbalizing.
-Paying attention to internal dialogue affects listening very much. It interferes with message processing. One can forget crucial things like names of people, new concepts etc that may have just been introduced for the first time.

2) Physical factors.

The ability to listen is affected by the physical environment they include; noisy places, extremely hot or cold, poorly lit rooms hard uncomfortable seats etc.

A quite well-lit room with comfortable seats is more appropriate to avoid, listeners should try and ignore physical disruptions in order to get the message.

3) Cultural differences.

-Communications patterns vary among cultures, nonverbal cues e.g. eye contact, the head nodding, verbal encouragements, gestures etc differ from one culture to another.

-There can occur a breakdown of communications if the listeners misinterpret the nonverbal cues of the speaker. To overcome this, the speaker should be aware of the culture of the listeners while the listeners should also understand the culture of the speaker. They should take the differences of their culture into account; knowledge about other people's cultures will improve your cross-culture listening effectiveness.

4) Personal problems.

-Being preoccupied with problems can hinder one from paying attention to someone else message, thinking about an argument with a significant other or financial problems can easily distract someone from listening to what is being said, to avoid this, always pursue to recognize the situation and try to focus on what is being said rather than your problems

5) Semantic/connotative.

CHECK NOTES ON BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION

6) Bias.

Bias is an opinion formed without evidence usually about a person or a group of people, it is the same as prejudice.

-Recognizing bias is an important step towards overcoming it, all people are biased but the degree differs, bias is based on inaccurate stereotypes and incomplete knowledge which can make one form hastily judgments, for example when a pilot is mentioned a male comes people's minds not female.

-Bias is a serious impediment, to overcome, listeners need to recognize its existence and mentally set it aside.

MYTHS ON LISTENING

These are misconceptions, unproven, beliefs, they are non-factual

They are:

- 1) Listening is easy
- 2) Smart people are better listeners
- 3) Listening does not need planning.

1) Listening is easy.

-There is a fallacy that listening is like breathing, hearing people talk to us all our life doesn't guarantee us as effective listeners, complacency about listening because people believe listening is easy. It makes people prone to poor listening habits.

-Listening is not easy it's a mental process that requires a lot of concentration.

2) Intelligent/smart people are better listeners.

-Being intelligent doesn't automatically make one a good listener, some highly intelligent people are very poor listeners therefore listening is a skill and intelligence may help one learn the skill but does not guarantee effective listening.

3) Listening does not need planning

-There's a common misconception among many people that listening just happens and therefore there's need to plan, when going into a listening situation, planning ahead is necessary e.g. in a lecture situation one can prepare writing materials, read the topic in advance e.t.c.

Causes of poor listening

1. Lack of concentration
2. Listening too hard
3. Jumping to a conclusion.
4. Focusing on delivery and personal appearance.

1) Lack of concentration.

The brain is incredibly efficient since individual talks at a rate of 120-150 words per minute while the brain is able to process 400-500 words per minute. People normally take in the speaker's words but still have plenty of spare brain time (the difference between the rate at which people talk and the rate at which the brain can process language) People tend to pay attention to physical/distractions thus letting their thoughts wander rather than concentrating on what is being said, they may talk to their friends think about personal problems, look at the building roof etc.

2) Listening too hard

-Sometimes listeners listen too hard by turning into human sponges soaking up every speaker's words as though every word spoken is important. They try to remember every minute detail e.g. all names, places, examples etc. In so doing one can misinterpret the speaker's key points by submerging into a morass of details.

Facts may be confused at the end; in the worst circumstances in a speech, one can easily pick up the details and miss the main points. It's impossible to remember everything said in a speech therefore effective listeners should concentrate on only key points.

3) Jumping to a conclusion.

-This entails putting words into the speaker's mouth; this is one reason why people communicate so poorly even to close people. This is as a result of being sure of what the speaker means without listening carefully, another way of jumping into conclusion is a prematurely rejecting the speaker's ideas as being boring or misguided, this happens when individuals decide early that the speaker has nothing important to say.

4) Focusing on delivering & personal appearance.

-This is a common problem whereby we tend to judge people by their looks, how they dress, groom e.t.c and the way they speak and fail to listen to what they say. People are put off by personal appearance, regional accents, the way people speak affect the listeners, for example unusual vocal mannerism like stammering, shouting e.t.c they may concentrate so much that they may not be bothered to listen to.

TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE LISTENING.

1. Setting goals.
 - 1) Block out distracting stimuli.
 - 2) Suspend judgments
 - 3) Focus on main points.
 - 4) Recognize highlights & signposts.
 - 5) Note taking.
 - 6) Be sensitive to meta-communication.
 - 7) Paraphrasing.
 - 8) Questioning.

1)Setting goals.

Set up a goal to achieve as a consequence of listening, your goal will guide your behavior as you listen. If you fail to set up a goal at the beginning of a listening process, you may focus on what is peripheral rather than what is central to the purpose.

2)Block out distracting stimuli.

Clear your mind off distracting stimuli, shut out distracting thoughts, you achieve this by relaxing, A relaxed mind is a receptive mind, promote healthy relaxation prior to listening or before listening.

3)Suspend Judgments.

Avoids bias e.g. racial, tribal physical bias etc. You cannot listen when you prematurely judge the communicator or his or her message you may hear but not listen when you judge to avoid judgment

- Recognize that you and everyone else bring subjective experience to the communication process.

- Don't judge a book by its cover.
- Try to separate the message from the communication.

4)Focus on main points.

Listen and concentrate on the main points, don't be indiscriminate by listening and writing down everything, you may risk missing the central points.

- Recognize highlights and signposts.

For example

The most important (highlight) thing to know is to fear God. **Secondly** (signpost) love your neighbour, **equally important** (highlight) respect God, **Also** (signpost) respect your neighbours.

5) Note taking.

-Take down notes when listening to the speaker.

6)Be sensitive to meta-communication. (Non-verbal communication).

It is the non-verbal communication, they include gestures, facial expressions, eyes, posture, and movements etc, one should be keen to observe them.

Paraphrasing.

This involves listening to someone and putting it in your own words.

Confirm that the message has been received accurately then paraphrase i.e. repeat what has been said but in your own words. Paraphrasing is usually done in fewer words than the original message. Paraphrasing should confirm understanding and should be non-evaluating (nonjudgmental)

7)Questioning

It is aimed at finding out if you correctly understood the message but instead of repeating in your own words what you think you have heard you ask questions, you can write down the questions. Pay attention to non-verbal behavior, it will help you know when to appropriately interrupt, don't interrupt the communicator when it's not appropriate.

TYPES OF LISTENING.

- 1.Appreciative listening-
2. Therapeutic listening
3. Critical listening
4. Discriminate listening
- 5.Comprehensive listening

1) Appreciative listening.

This is done for enjoyment e.g. listening to music, stories watching a play, movie, cartoon, dances in a music festival etc. Although it might seem that such listening comes naturally you can enhance your pleasure by;

- Increasing your understanding of what you're listening to.
- Developing your powers of concentration.
- Expanding your listening experiences.

2 Therapeutic listening. E.g. counseling situation.

This type of listening provides the person with the opportunity to talk through a problem. It involves helping people in a non-evaluating, non-threatening way to express their feelings as a therapist helps a client, this requires that the listener focuses his/her attention fully to show their attentiveness verbally and non-verbally.

The listener should be nonjudgmental while demonstrating empathy for the speaker, the listener should not interrupt, change the subject, talk about himself or herself etc the role of a listener is to be a sounding board.

This type of listening is a special skill that demands that you process what the person feels while talking and pay attention to emotive words i.e. words that suggest emotion, that conveys feeling like anger tension, frustration etc.

To improve therapeutic listening;

- Before listening relax and block out distracting stimuli.
- Give the person verbal and nonverbal cues that show you are listening, they include verbal encouragements like go on, okay yes non-verbal like leaning towards the person, nodding eye contact, pat on the back etc.
- Avoid Judgmental statements.

3. Critical listening.

It involves listening to a message critically analyzing the information.

It involves making reasoned Judgments about communicators and their messages. Much of the information we receive is targeted at influencing us and making us comply with the wishes of other. However much of this information is not in our best interest e.g. the advertising of cigarettes, and alcohol encourages us to pursue bad and harmful habits. Listening critically helps us not to be taken advantage of by unscrupulous salespeople, politicians, conmen, and women etc and helps us enhance our ability to communicate interpersonally, on the internet, watching TV, delivering a speech. Listening critically involves focusing on the communication and the message and attempting to verify the validity of what is being said. You can ask yourself the following questions.

- Is the communicator competent and trustworthy?
- What evidence has been given that would make the message true?
- By someone saying something, it is true does not make it true.

4) Discriminative listening.

- It involves distinguishing the verbal & the non-verbal cues, recognize when a verbal message is intended to contradict a non-verbal message, emphasize e.t.c

5) Comprehensive listening.

This is targeted at understanding; a student's listening is aimed at this e.g. making sense of a lecture, assigning meaning to new concepts, understanding mathematical problems etc.

Successful comprehensive listening demands that you understand a message as closely as the source intended.

TIPS ON THE BODY LANGUAGE OF AN ACTIVE LISTENER.

- 1) An attentive face.
- 2) A closed mouth and direct eye contact.
- 3) A comfortable sitting position on the chair, one who doesn't look clumsy or sitting on the edge of the chair.
- 4) No distracting body gestures like a tapping of the foot, drumming of fingers covering of mouth and talking to the person sited next to him or her.
- 5) Occasional head nods in appreciation of what is being said.
- 6) Applauding whenever the speaker gives strong points.

ACADEMIC WRITING

An academic writing is done for academic purposes, it may include

- Project work/thesis
- Term papers
- Assignments
- Composition

Rules / Conventions of an Academic Writing

1) **Avoid abbreviations and contractions.** Abbreviations abt instead of about and contractions for example instead of he would (he'd), will not (won't) etc only well not abbreviations are allowed like e.g., i.e. or e.t.c

2) Be impersonal

-Always use the passive voice as much as possible, and avoid personal pronouns like; I, we, us, my, mine.

Example

- I went to the field and collected the data then I reported = Active voice.

Instead of I, use the researcher.

-The researcher went to the field, collected the data and reported

3) Avoid conjunctions at the beginning of a sentence.

E.g. and, but, or.

4) Numbers Below 100 are often written out in full.

Instead of 10- write ten.

However, figures & statistics should be written in numbers.

E.g. Every 10 Kenyans out of 100 are infected.

4) Be objective.

- Don't be subjective (Judgmental) feelings. (Biased)
- Avoid personal subjective words for example; nice, wonderful, worthwhile.

5) Avoid apologies.

- Don't apologize to the readers for any weakness you may think there will be in your work.

Example

- You might find the subject difficult.

- I have no time to write a conclusion.

Write as if you are confident of what you are saying even if you might not feel it.

6) Avoid addressing the reader.

This is to say avoid asking the reader questions or avoid telling the reader what to do.

7) **Avoid slang and colloquialism** - colloquial are informal words e.g. Kids, folk guy while slang include words like 'dude'

8) Acknowledge the source of your work.

By referencing and citations

- o Writing of footnotes.

9) Be concise.

- Avoid unnecessary words.

10) Use continuous prose.

- As opposed to note- making.
- Use complete sentences, grouped together into paragraphs.
- In Essays avoid lists and points (notes) but incorporate them together into a sentence.

11) Use preferred technical terms. (Jargons).

CONCEPTS OF AN ACADEMIC WRITING.

- 1) An Academic writing is a writing which is done by scholars for scholars.
 - 2) An academic writing deals with topics and questions that are of interest in an academic community.
 - 3) Should be based on informed arguments.
- An academic writing consists of 3 parts;

1) Introduction.

- It sets the goals and boundaries of what is being discussed.
- It presents the thesis statement (Main idea, subject, and theme) which is the central idea or the main point of the work.

2) The body.

It develops the thesis statement and consists of ideas constructed on several factors. All facts are set out in the body and an analysis of these facts done, leading the reader logically to conclusions.

3) Conclusion.

It is usually stated in the last paragraph, it signals the end. It may remind the reader of the main issues discussed. It presents briefly and clearly the main points and finally the conclusions. It harmonizes the introduction and the body and leaves the reader with the final impression he would want to make.

THE NATURE OF AN ESSAY.

- Composition involves putting words together to make one whole entity. The composed entity may be in the form of poetry, drama or prose.
- The composition is referred to as an essay when it is in the form of prose.
- Composition, therefore, refers to the act of putting linguistic expressions together to create a larger linguistic unit.
- This larger unit which must have a status of a unified whole is called an ESSAY.
- The first step in writing an essay is choosing a topic.
- The topic is the most condensed sentence of what your essay is all about.

Selecting a Topic.

The following will assist you in selecting a topic,

- 1) Your interest.
 - Consider the area that you have interest in, it is easy to write well from an area of interest because you will be doing what you like and what you know.
- 2) Time.
 - Before choosing a topic, consider the amount of time available. A very wide topic will require a lot of time; a very narrow one will take too short a time.
 - Consider a topic that you will complete within the available time.
- 3) Materials.
 - When choosing a topic, consider the materials available.
 - Choose a topic that you can easily get materials, these materials include; books, journals; internet etc to provide you with a basis for discussion.
- 4) Broadness & Narrowness.
 - Consider how broad the topic is so that you are not too sketchy in the discussion or how narrow it is so that what you write may not be seen as unworthy.

THE SCOPE OF AN ESSAY.

- The topic of an essay defines the scope.

- The scope of an essay should be reduced to a manageable size.
- A wide topic needs to be reduced tremendously, for example, FARMING IN KENYA is a topic that needs to be reduced significantly.

Planning an Essay

You need to plan your essay and define the scope clearly.

- Make an outline of your essay. The outline shows how the essay should be designed.
- You have to give a lot of thought to your outline.
- You need to have a sketchy picture of what the essay is going to look like.
- Show the order in which you want to present your ideas. For example; if the issues discussed have some natural relationship like; geographical or temporal relationship, you present them in that natural order. I.e. what occurs earlier in time is discussed or mentioned before what happens after.
- Present your ideas in a logical order.
- Study your outline carefully and if necessary modify until you are satisfied that:
 - (a) it reflects what you consider to be best order for presenting your ideas
 - (b) it contains everything you want to talk about, placing each idea exactly where you want
- Use the outline when writing the essay

CLARITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

- Present your thoughts as clearly as possible and in the most effective manner. You can achieve this through clarity and effectiveness. A message can be clear without being effective. But for it to be effective, it must be clear.

Qualities of a Clear and Effective Message

Unity and Coherence

- A message which is effective and clear must have unity and coherence-(flow of information) in a logical order.
- The idea carried in paragraphs is carried by **the topic sentence**.
- Each paragraph in an essay should contain an idea or part of an idea, you achieve unity in a paragraph by ensuring that each sentence is related to the topic sentence.
- Unity is thought of in terms of relevance if a paragraph has unity, then each sentence is related to the topic sentence.
- A paragraph is coherent when the successive sentences express a connected thought.
- A paragraph can have unity without coherence but it cannot have coherence without unity.
- A sentence that does not have relevance to the idea being developed in the paragraph, cannot contribute to the coherence of that paragraph.
- Arranging sentences in a logical order contributes to the coherence of the paragraph.
- You can arrange them from the most important to the least important or the other way round.
- Coherence is usually attained by using appropriate linking and transitional devices like; nevertheless, however, in addition in contrast, finally, firstly, secondly etc.

Words play an important role in the unity and effectiveness of an essay. It is important to choose words that are appropriate to the audience, subject matter, and occasion. Obscure words should be avoided and simple familiar words should be used.

TYPES OF ESSAYS

1. Expository Essays (Explanatory)(Exposition)

- Exposition sets to explain something. It explains the subject of the essay.
- The purpose of exposition is to enable the readers to understand something.
- To make them understand what something is.
- How something works.
- The relationship between one thing and another.
- In exposition, your aim is not to move – (touching feelings or emotions of readers) you appeal to the reader's intellect but not the heart. Therefore if the audience sympathizes with your position, they are convinced but not persuaded. If you impress them, it will be because of your ability to provide an explanation which will be incidental because your aim is not to impress your audience in an exposition.

For your explanation to be effective, you need the following;

a) Definition

- A definition is a common form of exposition e.g. in dictionaries or books. By defining a word, the dictionary helps the reader to understand the meaning.

Lectures are aimed at making you understand the subject but not to drive you to take an action; just the way the dictionary defines a word without aiming at making you make a new commitment. For example, while your priest wants to change your life by persuading you to adopt a new life, say to be a committed Christian, your Theology lecturer wants you to understand the nature of religion.

His work will be done even if after the lecture you form a strong opinion that religion has no place in your personal life.

b) Analysis

- When you analyze something you try to reveal those properties of it that are not accessible to a casual observer.

- It involves breaking up something into constituent parts so that you can lay open their hidden nature and show how they relate to each other and how each one of them contributes to the whole when assembled together.
- When the good analysis is done, it leads to greater understanding of the subjects. For example, John kicked the ball when analyzed can reveal the following: John/

S

kicked/ the ball, analyze HO2

V O

c) Comparison and Contrast

- To explain something, it is helpful, to show how it resembles or differs from other things in the same category or class. This is called explanation by comparison and contrast for example; a vowel is like a consonant. They are both speech sounds. They both require a stream of air in the vowel track for their production. The production of a consonant sound requires a major obstruction that creates some amount of friction while the production of a vowel does not involve such major obstruction.

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY OR ARGUMENTATION

Argumentation is the process of reasoning methodically (Collins English dictionary). The function of argumentation is to convince others of the correctness of a given view.

The argument is also used to mean discussion, debate or even a quarrel in which the participants have opposing views. Here it is argumentation as applies to essay writing.

Meaningful arguments tend to be over matters of morality, policy, politics, theory, interpretation etc that are not generally a matter of fact e.g. it is pointless to argue whether the sun rises from the East or West or about who is taller between two people. All you need is to measure your heights, arguments cannot resolve such disagreements.

Properties of a good argumentative essay.

1. It should be reasonable.

- Considerations as the grounds used to support a given position should be relevant and adequate.
- It should not be biased and matters of fact should not be distorted or ignored.

11) It should be logical.

- This has to do with the relationship between your conclusions and the premises (grounds) on which they are based. A logical argument is one in which conclusions follow undeniably from the proceeding assumptions or statements irrespective of whether those statements are true or false.

111) It should be consistent and clear definition.

- Clearly define the terms.
- This means consistency and clear definition of the key concepts in an argument.
- A consistent argument is one in which the various points made to prove certain ideas, support one another without creating internal contradictions.

For example;

- If you claim that your friend is calm, you should not later report incidences in which he was hot tampered or behaved wild not unless you can show that his behavior was unusual on that particular occasion.
- Defining the key terms in your argument clearly saves you from being misunderstood and prevents the rather frequent situations in which two or more people disagree on a point because they are using key concepts in a different sense.

For example;

- From the above example, explain what you mean by calm.

For an argument to be effective you have to give some evidence.

Types of Evidence.

1. Testimony. (testify)

- In this case, you present an argument as given by somebody who has experienced something relevant to the subject of the debate.

For example;

- If you argue about racism in the U.S.A, use the testimony of someone else that once lived there and experienced it.

2. Authority. (Professional, trained or experienced person)

- You rely on someone else's views, it must be somebody who is trained or experienced and is generally believed to be capable of giving a reliable opinion on a matter e.g. doctor, teacher e.t.c For example if you argue that many students take drugs then use the views of a teacher.

3. Statistical Evidence.

Statistical evidence gives us figures that we hope are reliable and can help us prove a point whose validation requires knowledge of how many items are involved.

4. Empirical Evidence.

- This is what we can observe in the world outside our minds. If a drug is Poisonous we need to cite cases of people who have suffered from it.
- Here we may use the doctors (authoritative) statement to the effect that poisoning of this people has been positively correlated to the taking of the drug in question.