

Unit-3: Sataya Nadella's E-mail to his Employees on his First Day as CEO of Microsoft

SATAYA NADELLA'S E-MAIL TO HIS EMPLOYEES ON HIS FIRST DAY AS CEO OF MICROSOFT

About the author

- Satya Nadella

Satya Nadella was born in 1967 in Hyderabad and was educated in the Hyderabad Public School. After graduating from high school, Nadella pursued a Bachelor of Engineering (BE) in electronic engineering from the Manipal Institute of Technology; Manipal. He claimed that his time in Manipal allowed him to 'discover what turned out to become a passion.' He then moved to the United States to study computer sciences, earning an MS in the field from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. After graduation, his career took off when he became a member of the technology staff in Sun Microsystems, a company that sold computers and computer components while also offering IT services. Though his thirst to learn remained with him, Nadella prudently recognized the importance of grounding his desire and passion to build through an exposure to the world of business. He began pursuing an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School Business. It was at this point, a job offer from Microsoft came in his way. Nadella worked his way up the ranks, and on 4 February 2014, he was appointed CEO of Microsoft, a role earlier fulfilled by Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer, two people Nadella had idolized. It was, for him, both privilege and an honor.

Pre-reading: Individual-work

Individual Activity: Match the formal phrase from column 'A' with its relevant informal phrase from column 'B'

Column 'A'	Answers	Column 'B'
1. I am writing with regard to		a. Hey XX / Hello XX
2. Dear Sir/Madam		b. I am happy to tell you that.....
3. I would like to know...		c. I wanted to let you know that.....
4. I am glad to inform you that		d. Hope to hear from you soon.
5. I look forward to.....		e. Can you tell me.....?

Pre-reading: Pair-work

Pair Activity: Discuss with your partner to analyze the following e-mail's structure, the phrases used, the language used and the style followed and list out your observations on paper.

Subject: Product quality complaint—model 562 refrigerator

Hello,

I'm writing this email to register my complaint about a refrigerator I purchased at your store at 78 wooden street at Miyapur, Hyderabad. I made my purchase on the 18th of September 2022 with my credit card.

Unfortunately, after using the refrigerator for some days, I discovered it didn't cool the products properly. As a result, I lost almost Rs.5000 worth of groceries. I went back to the store to request a refund, but the store attendant refused to address my concerns. I am deeply disappointed about the quality of the product and the customer service in your store.

I hope you can resolve this issue and stand behind your product. I'm a longstanding customer, and I'd appreciate it if you resolve this issue immediately. Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

(Maria Fernandez)

While-reading Task

Read the following Satya Nadella's E-mail to his employees and make a list of divergent questions (Questions which have neither right nor wrong answers) and write your own possible answers for them as a student in about 20 or 30 words. One has been done for you.

1. Who am I?

I am the one who believe in self and capable of doing unique things. I am also a traveler and love to gain experience and consciousness while on a journey, where I understand, make mistakes, improvise and increase intellect through self-interest.

2.

3.

4.

SATAYA NADELLA'S E-MAIL TO HIS EMPLOYEES ON HIS FIRST DAY AS CEO OF MICROSOFT

-Satya Nadella

It's official, Satya Nadella is Microsoft's next CEO, and on his first day on the job he's sent a letter to the whole staff. In the letter, Nadella speaks of what he thinks makes Microsoft a great company, and where he thinks it can go in the future. He warns that "While we have seen great success, we are hungry to do more. Our industry does not respect tradition — it only respects innovation." Nadella also lays out a bit of his plan for the company. He mentions that he requested Bill Gates to help out more than he has in the past few years, and perhaps more importantly, he speaks generally of focusing the company on what it does best. He says "We need to prioritize innovation that is centered on our core value of empowering users and organizations to 'do more.'" You can read the letter in its entirety below.

From: Satya Nadella

To: All Employees

Date: 4 February, 2014

Subject: RE: Satya Nadella – Microsoft's New CEO

Today is a very humbling day for me. It reminds me of my very first day at Microsoft, 22 years ago. Like you, I had a choice about where to come to work. I came here because I believed Microsoft was the best company in the world. I saw then how clearly we empower people to do magical things with our creations and ultimately make the world a better place. I knew there was no better company to join if I wanted to make a difference. This is the very same inspiration that continues to drive me today.

It is an incredible honor for me to lead and serve this great company of ours. Steve and Bill have taken it from an idea to one of the greatest and most universally admired companies in the world. I've been fortunate to work closely with both Bill and Steve in my different roles at Microsoft, and as I step in as CEO, I've asked Bill to devote additional time to the company, focused on technology and products. I'm also looking forward to working with John Thompson as our new Chairman of the Board.

While we have seen great success, we are hungry to do more. Our industry does not respect tradition — it only respects innovation. This is a critical time for the industry and for Microsoft. Make no mistake, we are headed for greater places — as technology evolves and we evolve with and ahead of it. Our job is to ensure that Microsoft thrives in a mobile and cloud-first world.

As we start a new phase of our journey together, I wanted to share some background on myself and what inspires and motivates me.

Who am I?

I am 46. I've been married for 22 years and we have 3 kids. And like anyone else, a lot of what I do and how I think has been shaped by my family and my overall life experiences. Many who know me say I am also defined by my curiosity and thirst for learning. I buy more books than I can finish. I sign up for more online courses than I can complete. I fundamentally believe that if you are not learning new things, you stop doing great and useful things. So family, curiosity and hunger for knowledge all define me.

Why am I here?

I am here for the same reason I think most people join Microsoft — to change the world through technology that empowers people to do amazing things. I know it can sound hyperbolic — and yet it's true. We have done it, we're doing it today, and we are the team that will do it again.

I believe over the next decade computing will become even more ubiquitous and intelligence will become ambient. The co-evolution of software and new hardware form factors will intermediate and digitize — many of the things we do and experience in business, life and our world. This will be made possible by an ever-growing network of connected devices, incredible computing capacity from the cloud, insights from big data, and intelligence from machine learning.

This is a software-powered world.

It will better connect us to our friends and families and help us see, express, and share our world in ways never before possible. It will enable businesses to engage customers in more meaningful ways.

I am here because we have unparalleled capability to make an impact.

Why are we here?

In our early history, our mission was about the PC on every desk and home, a goal we have mostly achieved in the developed world. Today we're focused on a broader range of devices. While the deal is not yet complete, we will welcome to our family Nokia devices and services and the new mobile capabilities they bring us.

As we look forward, we must zero in on what Microsoft can uniquely contribute to the world. The opportunity ahead will require us to reimagine a lot of what we have done in the past for a mobile and cloud-first world, and do new things.

We are the only ones who can harness the power of software and deliver it through devices and services that truly empower every individual and every organization. We are the only company with history and continued focus in building platforms and ecosystems that create broad opportunity.

Qi Lu captured it well in a recent meeting when he said that Microsoft uniquely empowers people to “do more.” This doesn’t mean that we need to do more things, but that the work we do empowers the world to do more of what they care about — get stuff done, have fun, communicate and accomplish great things. This is the core of who we are, and driving this core value in all that we do — be it the cloud or device experiences — is why we are here.

What do we do next?

To paraphrase a quote from Oscar Wilde — we need to believe in the impossible and remove the improbable.

This starts with clarity of purpose and sense of mission that will lead us to imagine the impossible and deliver it. We need to prioritize innovation that is centered on our core value of empowering users and organizations to “do more.” We have picked a set of high-value activities as part of our One Microsoft strategy. And with every service and device launch going forward we need to bring more innovation to bear around these scenarios.

Next, every one of us needs to do our best work, lead and help drive cultural change. We sometimes underestimate what we each can do to make things happen and overestimate what others need to do to move us forward. We must change this.

Finally, I truly believe that each of us must find meaning in our work. The best work happens when you know that it’s not just work, but something that will improve other people’s lives. This is the opportunity that drives each of us at this company.

Many companies aspire to change the world. But very few have all the elements required: talent, resources, and perseverance. Microsoft has proven that it has all three in abundance. And as the new CEO, I can’t ask for a better foundation.

Let’s build on this foundation together.

Satya

Glossary

Humbling	To feel courteously respectful.
Empower	Make someone stronger and more confident
Innovation	The process of devising new ideas, products, methods, etc.
Cloud	A kind of internet-based computing which enables multiple companies to share processing facilities and data over the internet, rather than developing and hosting these facilities in-house.
Hyperbolic	Deliberately exaggerated
Ubiquitous	Found everywhere
Ambient	In one's immediate surroundings
Intermediate	Act as a medium or go-between
Insights	An accurate and deep understanding
Big data	Very large sets of data which can be analyzed to reveal patterns, trends and associations in human behavior
Aspire	Aim to achieve something
Perseverance	Persistence in achieving a goal despite difficulties

Post-reading Tasks

Exercise 1A: Answer the following questions in about 50 to 60 words each.

1. Why did Nadella choose to work at Microsoft?

2. What inspires Nadella?

3. In which direction is technology evolving, according to Nadella?

4. What are the three factors that Nadella lists as his formative influences?

5. What will help employees find meaning in their work?

6. What are the elements of greatness a company must possess, in order to achieve greatness?

Exercise 1B: Choose the appropriate answers from the given options.

1. What inspires Satya Nadella to be with Microsoft even today?
 - a. **Because he knows that there is no better company to join to make a difference.**
 - b. Because Microsoft conducts family support programs.
 - c. Because employees at Microsoft can balance their work-life.
 - d. Because Microsoft supports not only the employee, but also his/her family.

2. What are the three elements that Microsoft has in abundance?
 - a. unity, equality and eligibility
 - b. talents, resources and perseverance
 - c. products, benefits and identities
 - d. technology, ideas and etiquettes

3. Who was the new chairman of the board when Satya Nadella joined as CEO?
 - a. John Thompson
 - b. Steve Ballmer
 - c. Bill Gates
 - d. Amy Hood

4. Which year could be of the following when Satya Nadella joined as an employee of Microsoft?
 - a. 1991
 - b. 1992
 - c. 1993
 - d. 1994

5. The synonym of the word 'paraphrase' is _____.
 - a. restate
 - b. copy
 - c. modify
 - d. guide

Reading to Identify Facts and Opinions

In order to read effectively, readers must be able to identify and comprehend which statements are fact, and which are opinion. This is an essential part of understanding the meaning of the passage, whether it is read as part of an assignment in college or in the workplace. Knowing the difference between fact and opinion may be even more important when the purpose of reading is for news or entertainment.

Facts: Statements that can be verified. They can be proven true or false. Statements of fact are objective -- they contain information but do not tell what the writer thinks or believes about the topic.

Example: My car payment is Rs. 20000 per month.

Questions to Identify Facts:

1. Can the statement be proved or demonstrated to be true?
2. Can the statement be observed in practice or operation? Can you see it happen?
3. Can the statement be verified by witnesses, manuscripts, or documents?

Opinions: Statements that express a writer's feelings, attitudes, or beliefs. They are neither true nor false. They are one person's view about a topic or issue.

Example: My car payments are too expensive.

Types of Opinions:

1. Positions on controversial issues
2. Predictions about things in the future
3. Evaluations of people, places, and things

Words to Identify Opinions:

1. Biased Words (bad, worse, worst, good, better, best, worthwhile, worthless, etc.)
2. Qualifiers (all, always, likely, never, might, seem, possibly, probably, should, etc.)

Informed Opinions: The opinions of experts are known as informed opinions. As experts in their field, they may make observations and offer comments that are not strictly factual. Instead, they are based on years of study, research, and experience.

Example: Chimps are in massive danger of extinction from dwindling habitats.
(Jane Goodall, primate expert and ethologist)

Questions to Identify Informed Speakers:

1. Does the speaker have a current and relevant background to the topic under discussion?
2. Is the speaker generally respected within the field?
3. Does the speaker carefully signal, via judgment words, to identify when they are presenting opinions vs. facts?

Why Are Fact and Opinion So Important?

The ability to distinguish between fact and opinion helps students develop their critical and analytical skills in both their reading and their listening. Fact and opinion are often woven together in texts and speeches. It is, therefore, imperative that students can unravel the threads of what is true from what is mere belief if they are to successfully navigate the deluge of media they will encounter in their lifetimes.

Whether on the news, in advertising, or in a history book, distinguishing between what is fact and what is opinion is crucial to becoming an autonomous person with the critical abilities necessary to avoid being manipulated easily.

The language of Fact and Opinion: Signal words and Phrases

As we mentioned above, writers will liven up their facts with a sprinkling of opinions. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be challenging to extract the verifiable truths from the author's preferences and biases. Luckily the language used itself often throws up helpful clues in the forms of words and phrases that assist us in identifying statements as fact-based or opinion-based.

Let's now take a look at some examples of those signal words and phrases being used in the sentence

fragments that often precede a statement of fact or opinion:

<i>FACT</i>	<i>OPINION</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The annual report <i>confirms</i>...• Scientists have recently <i>discovered</i>...• <i>According to</i> the results of the tests...• The investigation <i>demonstrated</i>...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He <i>claimed</i> that...• It is the officer's <i>view</i> that...• The report <i>argues</i> that...• Many scientists <i>suspect</i> that...

As we can see from the above examples, the language used to introduce fact and opinion statements can help indicate whether it is being framed as a fact or an opinion.

Students must understand that things are not always as they appear to be. At times, writers, whether consciously or not, will frame opinion as fact and vice versa. This is why it is vital that students develop a clear understanding of what constitutes fact and opinion and are afforded ample opportunities to practice distinguishing between the two.

What is Context?

Context is the circumstances surrounding an event, statement, or idea and in terms of which it can be fully understood. Facts and opinions must be placed in context to draw conclusions.

For example, a young boy who tells his mother, "I ate a truckload of sweets at the party last night" needs to be placed in the context of his age and audience.

We can confidently infer he never actually ate a real truckload of sweets, but we can reasonably appreciate he ate a lot of them and wanted to emphasise that point.

His mother might ask a clarifying question to turn that opinion into a hard fact.

Exercise 2A: Identify if the following statements are Facts or Opinions

1. Alligators provide no physical care for their young. _____
2. Humans should be concerned about the use of pesticides that kill insects at the bottom of the food chain. _____
3. There are 28 more humans living on the Earth now than there were 10 seconds ago. _____
4. We must bear greater responsibility for the environment than our ancestors did. _____
5. Nuclear power is the only viable solution to our dwindling natural resources. _____

Exercise 2B: Underline or circle the bias or qualifying words in the following statements

1. Purchasing a brand-new car is a terrible waste of money.

Activity 2: Evaluate an Editorial

Newspaper editorials can be a superb resource for students to practice recognizing facts and opinions. They are filled with the editor's opinions on the issues of the day, intermingled with facts that are selected to support that opinion.

First, give students copies of a newspaper editorial. Then, working in pairs, have students go through the editorial identifying the facts by underlining them and the opinions by highlighting them. Remind them to look for the signal words we covered earlier to help identify facts and opinions.

When they have finished, students can compare their answers and discuss the reasons for their decisions. This will help to identify any areas of confusion within the class, providing you with valuable data to inform your future planning on this topic.

Tips to help at home!

- Challenge yourself to name a fact and opinion about different objects.
- Watch television commercials and write a list of facts and opinions about the product.
- Do a fact/opinion acrostic. Write a name down the side of a piece of paper. Decide if the acrostic is going to be fact or opinion based. Then write phrases for each letter of the word.
- Read a newspaper article and highlight Facts/Opinions using different colours.

Writing

E-Mails

Electronic mail is primarily known as e-mail, a method of communication where an individual or a company uses a computer or some other electronic device to compose and send a message to another individual or a group of individuals. Emails are easily accessible anytime and anywhere in the world. Audio and video clips easily fit into this format and can be sent as an attachment or within the message.

Before you write an e-mail, you need to follow certain guidelines:

- ✓ Use the 'To' line for the recipient's e-mail id. If there is more than one, the addresses can be separated by semicolons (;). The email id of the sender will appear automatically in the recipient's copy.
- ✓ Use the 'CC' (Carbon Copy) line to send copies of your mail to others whom you want to keep informed.

- ✓ Use the 'BCC' (Blind Carbon Copy) line for people who want to keep their privacy.
- ✓ Do not skip the 'Subject' line. It must give clear idea of content of your message.
- ✓ Send files that you want to go with your message as attachments.
- ✓ Be ready for problems when sending attachments. Sometimes, attachment can take long time to download.
- ✓ While drafting an official e-mail, we must use formal language and tone must be courteous
- ✓ Do not risk writing anything highly confidential such as ATM password or credit card number

Etiquettes to write E-mails

There are some key etiquettes to be followed when writing and email:

- ✓ Be sure to include a meaningful subject line; this helps clarify what your message is about and may also help the recipient prioritize reading your email.
- ✓ Just like a written letter, be sure to open your email with a greeting like Dear Dr. Jones, or Ms. Smith
- ✓ Use standard spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN AN EMAIL SCREAMING A MESSAGE IN ALL CAPS. Do not use text abbreviations (like *u* instead of *you*, for example).
- ✓ Write clear, short paragraphs and be direct and to the point; professionals and academics alike see their email accounts as business. Don't write unnecessarily long emails or otherwise waste the recipient's time
- ✓ Be friendly and cordial, but don't try to joke around (jokes and witty remarks may be inappropriate and, more commonly, may not come off appropriately in email)
- ✓ Make sure to include a signature block that contains the necessary information for someone to reach you should a reply be necessary and/or expected; typical closings include a sign off phrase (e.g., best, thanks, sincerely) and the sender's name. Additional information may be included when appropriate (e.g., department, office location, position, etc.).

Source: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/email_etiquette.html

Sample E-mail

From: robert.fernandech@gmail.com

Date: 22.09.2022 Thursday 14:12:14

TO: harish.malhotra@ymail.com

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: Reminder

Dear Sir/Madam,

You should know that I am no longer responsible for retail orders as mentioned in our internal circulars. Susan has taken this responsibility and it would be better if you contact him in future regarding purchases and orders.

I shall be happy if you personally take note of this and bring the same to the notice of your staff.

Yours Sincerely,

Dinesh Gupta

Exercise 3

You are Santosh and you need to go to Malaysia for a project related to the department of agriculture in order to observe the germination of seeds in Malaysia. Send an email to the department of Agriculture, University of Malaya to find out the visiting dates and request for their permission while writing an email to the head of Malaysia foreign university affairs. You are going to send the email on istiqlal225@hotmail.com.

DESCRIBING OBJECTS

Describing an object is a motivating activity to enhance language skills. It requires creativity in thinking and writing. Before writing a description, observe the picture carefully and identify different visible features. Description is all about describing the features observed.

Describing objects consists of 5 parts as follows:

- 1. Function/ Use**
- 2. Components/ Parts**
- 3. Characteristics**
 - material
 - shape/ figure
 - dimensions
 - property
 - colour

4. Position

5. Connection between parts

➤ Function/Use

E.g.: A drum is used for making music.

A drum is used to make music.

➤ Components/ Parts

E.g.: A hammer consists of a handle and a head.

A hammer has **two parts**: a handle and a head.

two Sections: one is a handle, the other is a head.

two Components: one is a handle, the other is a head.

➤ Characteristics

- Material

E.g.: A chair is made of wood. Bread is made from wheat.

This kind of car is made by a big company in Japan.

Nouns and Adjectives to describe shapes/figures of an object:

Noun	Adjective
Square	square
rectangle	rectangular
triangle	triangular
ellipse	elliptical
semicircle	semicircular
circle	circular
cube	cubic
pyramid	pyramidal
Cone	conical
hemisphere	hemispherical
cylinder	cylindrical

- Dimensions

Length, width, height, depth, thickness etc.

E.g.: The height of this building is 250 meters.

Nouns and Adjectives to describe dimensions of an object:

Adjective	Noun
long	length
high	height
wide	width
broad	breadth
deep	depth

- Property

Property is a special quality that belongs to the object.

E.g.: The interior of a ping-pong ball is hollow.

This book is thick.

The glass bottle is fragile.

The edge of a table is straight.

The sides of a car are flat.

The middle of a bottle is curved.

- Colour

Black, white, green, etc.

➤ Position

If the objects to be described are complicated, consisting of many parts, or appearing in a set, positions must be given.

E.g.: inside, outside, at the top, on the left/ right, in the middle, to the right/ left (of), at the bottom, above, over, between, below, beside, at the end, behind, in front of, near, by, etc.

The engine is inside the scooter with a headlight at the top.

The spare wheel is at the back. There is a petrol cap under the seat.

A car has four headlights at the front.

At the top of the engine is the radiator and at the top is an oil cap.

➤ Connection between Parts

Connection is a relationship between two or more things. If the object has more than one part, we have to describe them part by part with a connection between them.

Verbs that signal the connection are: attach, detach, join, connect, support, fix, lead, link, etc.

E.g.: The head of a hammer is fixed to the handle.

The wire leads from the switch to the bulb.

The wire links between the switch and the bulb.

The wheels of a car are connected by the axles.

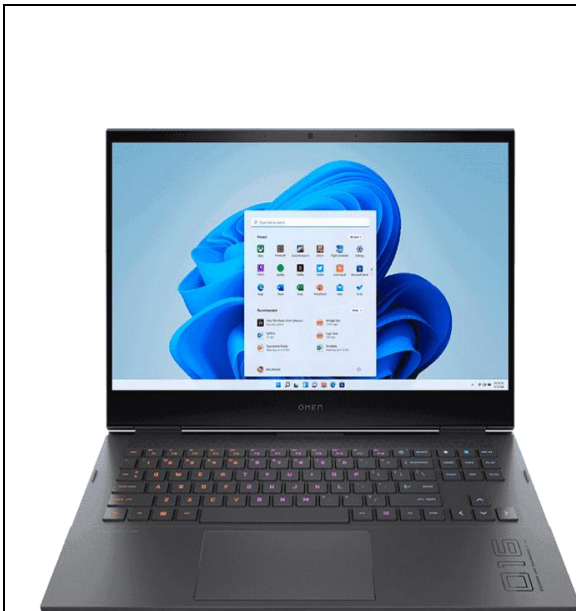
Sample Descriptions:

Describe a kettle.



A kettle is a metal container which is used for boiling water. It consists of 4 main parts: a vessel, a lid, a spout, and a handle. The vessel is 7 inches high. It is hollow and spherical in shape. The base is flat and circular. It has a diameter of 6 inches. On the top of the vessel, there is a convex lid with a plastic knob in the middle. The lid is 5 inches in diameter. Above the lid is a curved handle which is covered with plastic at the middle part. At the side of the vessel is a conical spout for pouring water out of the vessel.

Exercise 4: Describe the given object in your own sentences



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Grammar
Active Voice and Passive Voice

There are two voices used in English:

The **active**:

My wife chose the wallpaper.

And the **passive**:

The wallpaper was chosen by my wife.

In the passive, the object of an active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb. Both sentences basically have the same meaning, but the focus is different. In the active voice, the focus is on the agent, i.e., my wife – she's responsible! In the passive voice, the focus is also on the subject, (i.e., the wallpaper, this time). But in the passive voice, the agent (or 'doer' of the action) is much less important, or doesn't appear, as in the following example:

active

I painted the door last week.

passive

The door was painted last week. (no agent)

Only transitive verbs (verbs followed by an object, such as *sell, take, buy, write*, etc.) are used in the passive. It is not possible to use verbs such as *happen, sleep, come* and *seem* (intransitive verbs) in the passive.

Form

Auxiliary verb 'be' (as per table below) + past participle

For both the active voice and the passive, the tense of the sentence always remains the same. In the passive voice the tense is indicated by the auxiliary verb 'be', and in the active voice, the tense is shown by the main verb.

TENSE	PASSIVE FORMATION
Present simple	is/are + past participle
Present continuous	is/are being + past participle
Present perfect	have/has been + past participle
Past Simple	was/were + past participle
Past continuous	was/were being + past participle
Past perfect	had been + past participle

Future Simple	will be + past participle
Future perfect	will have been + past participle

Note: Future continuous tense and Perfect continuous tenses are not normally used in the passive.

Exercise 5A: For practice try changing the following from the active into the passive. One has been done for you.

A crocodile eats Henry – **Henry is eaten by a crocodile.**

A crocodile is eating Henry

A crocodile has eaten Henry

A crocodile ate Henry

A crocodile was eating Henry

A crocodile had eaten Henry

A crocodile will eat Henry

A crocodile will have eaten Henry

Usage

The passive is most frequently used when it is **not known, not important, or we don't want to say, exactly who performs an action.**

E.g., Trespassers will be prosecuted. (It is not important to know who will prosecute you if you trespass.)

Last night a man was murdered. (It is not known who killed him.)

The passive may be used with a **by** phrase when the speaker or writer wants the listener or reader to know who performs the action.

E.g., Life on the Mississippi was written by Mark Twain. (In this example, Mark Twain is important to the meaning and the emphasis is on 'Life on the Mississippi'. Mark Twain wrote Life on the Mississippi **would convey the same** meaning but now the focus would be on Mark Twain.)

Typical student errors/mistakes

- Leaving the verb 'to be' out of the sentence.
- Using the verb 'to be' in the wrong tense.
- Overuse of 'by'.

Exercise 5B: Change the following active voice sentences into the passive voice. Only include the agent/doer if you think it is important or relevant to the meaning.

1. Farmers grow rice in India.

Ans:

2. I will finish the report later.

Ans:

3. Scotland has never won the World cup.

Ans:

4. The American people elected George W. Bush.

Ans:

5. Agatha Christie wrote 'Murder on the Orient Express'.

Ans:

Vocabulary
Idioms and Phrases

Idioms and Phrases are a poetic part of the English language. A set expression of two or many words that mean something together, instead of the literal meanings of its words individually.

People use Idioms to make their language expressive and more poetic. They are used to express subtle meanings or intentions. Idioms are generally used to convey the meaning of an expression or a word. Sometimes, Idioms and Phrases can be very useful in explaining the meaning compared to the literal word. They make the reader understand with a poetic touch to the writing.

"If natural language had been designed by a logician, Idioms would not exist."

(Philip Johnson-Laird, 1993).

Idioms

An Idiom is an expression or way of speaking that is used in common parlance. They are the amalgamation of words that convey a separate meaning altogether.

For Example

His patience was put to an acid test.

His patience was not actually put through an acid test but it means that the effectiveness of his patience was checked.

Most Commonly Used Idioms

A Blessing in Disguise

Meaning: A good thing that initially seemed bad

A Dime a Dozen

Meaning: Something that is very common, not unique

Adding Insult to Injury

Meaning: To make a bad situation even worse

Beat Around the Bush

Meaning: Avoid sharing your true viewpoint or feelings because it is uncomfortable

Beating a Dead Horse

Meaning: Giving time or energy to something that is ended or over

Bite the Bullet

Meaning: To get an unfavorable situation or chore over with now because it will need to get finished eventually

Best of Both Worlds

Meaning: The choice or solution has all of the advantages of two contrasting things at the same time

Biting Off More than You Can Chew

Meaning: Not having the capacity to take on a new assignment or task that is just too taxing

By the Skin of Your Teeth

Meaning: Just barely making it

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover

Meaning: Not judging something by its initial appearance

Doing Something at the Drop of a Hat

Meaning: Doing something at the moment of being asked

Don't Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch

Meaning: Not to count on something happening until after it's already happened

Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Meaning: Making a choice between two unpleasant choices

Costs an Arm and a Leg

Meaning: Something that is overpriced or very expensive

Cutting Corners

Meaning: Not performing a task or duty correctly in order to save time or money

Devil's Advocate

Meaning: To take the side of the counter-argument, or offer an alternative point of view

Feeling Under the Weather

Meaning: Not feeling well, or feeling sick

Fit as a Fiddle

Meaning: Being in good health

Getting a Taste of Your Own Medicine

Meaning: Being treated the way that you have been treating others

Getting a Second Wind

Meaning: Having energy again after being tired

Giving the Benefit of the Doubt

Meaning: Believing someone's story without proof even though it may seem unbelievable

Giving Someone the Cold Shoulder

Meaning: Ignoring someone

Going on a Wild Goose Chase

Meaning: Doing something that is pointless

Heard it on the Grapevine

Meaning: Hearing rumors about someone or something

Hitting the Nail on the Head

Meaning: Performing a task with exactness

Killing Two Birds with One Stone

Meaning: Accomplishing two different tasks in the same undertaking

Letting Someone Off the Hook

Meaning: Not holding someone responsible for something

Letting the Cat Out of the Bag

Meaning: Sharing information that was intended to be a secret

No Pain, No Gain

Meaning: You have to work hard in order to see results

On the Ball

Meaning: Doing a good job, being prompt, or being responsible

Once in a Blue Moon

Meaning: Something that doesn't happen very often

Piece of Cake

Meaning: A task or job that is easy to complete

Pulling Someone's Leg

Meaning: Joking with someone

Speak of the Devil

Meaning: When the person you have just been talking about arrives

Stealing Someone's Thunder

Meaning: Taking credit for someone else's achievements

Straight from the Horse's Mouth

Meaning: Reading or hearing something from the source

The Last Straw

Meaning: The last difficulty or annoyance that makes the entire situation unbearable

The Elephant in the Room

Meaning: An issue, person, or problem that someone is trying to avoid

Throwing Caution to the Wind

Meaning: Being reckless or taking a risk

Your Guess is as Good as Mine

Meaning: To not know something

Can't Make an Omelette without Breaking Some Eggs

Meaning: You can't make everyone happy

You Can Lead a Horse to Water, but You Can't Make Him Drink

Meaning: You can't force someone to make what is seemingly the right decision

Clouds on the Horizon

Meaning: Trouble is coming or is on its way

Phrases

A Phrase is a collection of words that stands together as a single unit in a sentence, typically as part of a clause or a sentence.

A Phrase does not contain any subject and verb so it cannot convey any thought.

Examples of Phrases

There are different types of Phrases in the English language.

Noun Phrase

A group of words that consists of nouns and any modifiers.

Verb Phrase

A group of words that consists of nouns and modifiers.

Prepositional Phrase

A group of words that begins with a preposition and helps to explain the relationship between two things.

Examples of Phrases

The brown hat

Blowing away

In the wind

Example of Phrases Put Together in a Sentence

The brown hat was blowing away in the wind.

Examples of Noun Phrases

The brown hat

My English teacher

The grocery store

Examples of Verb Phrases

Ran quickly

Has been raining

Stopped

Examples of Prepositional Phrases

On the boat

Above the stove

Around the corner

Exercise 6A: Out of four alternatives given for idioms underlined in the following sentences, choose one which expresses the meaning of the idiom.

1. That news came straight from the horse's mouth, so it's true.
 - A. Hearing something from the source
 - B. Believing someone who is very confident
 - C. Getting information from a popular television channel
 - D. Hear something from someone who has many followers

2. The Parents hit the nail on the head when they said that there is some flaw in the school's discipline.
 - A. To do the right thing
 - B. To destroy one's reputation
 - C. To announce one's fixed views
 - D. To teach someone a lesson

3. I was time to address the elephant in the room; so, David decided to speak up.
 - A. To fail in a spectacular manner
 - B. An issue, person or problem that someone is trying to avoid
 - C. Joking with someone
 - D. Reading or hearing from the source

Exercise 6B: Identify the phrases used in the following sentences.

4. She was wearing a bangle made of gold.

5. Calcutta is a city of thick population.

6. He has been following me.

7. The lean old man saw me with surprise.

8. Do you enjoy reading this book