COMMAND AND STAFF TRAINING INSTITUTE

BANGLADESH AIR FORCE

Individual Staff Studies Programme (ISSP)

Effective English Writing

Phase-1 : Part-I

EFFECTIVE ENGLISH WRITING
PHASE-1 : PART-I

First Edition : January 2012

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Approved vide Air HQ/10066/Air Trg/Vol-46/64A dt 18 Jan 2011.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PHASE

Scope of the Phase

1. As globalisation marches ever-onward, the world gets smaller and smaller and collaboration technology gets better and better. Yet only a handful of these advancements (international conference calls, Skype, video chats, etc.) allow people to speak rather than to write. Now, more information is exchanged via text than ever before, making it extremely important that you can communicate effectively in writing. Unless you plan on abstaining from participation in this knowledge economy, which grows more and more important with each passing day, you will need to learn how to write at least passably well. You do need to know how to express yourself properly in written form since the art of getting one's message across effectively has become a vital part of being successful in today's world.

2. The topics of Phase-1 are not filled up with traditional rules of grammar and usage, with correct verb agreement or spelling. They do not repeat rules you learned — or did not learn— in English classrooms before or after commission. While these issues are important for good writing, these pages focus on broader concerns. Our attention here lies more with shaping and analyzing extended discussion, with broader questions of how thoughts are developed and how meaning is conveyed within a written discussion to communicate effectively. As such, an attempt has been made in this Phase-1 to deal with salient features of effective written communication as well as few traditional topics like Paragraph, Essay etc.

3. **Training objectives.** At the end of Phase 1, you should be able to produce writing that is:

   a. Accurately and concisely expressed.

   b. Highly readable as a result of appropriate and wide use of vocabulary.

   c. Substantially free from errors of grammar, syntax and punctuation.

TASK-1

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD WRITING

Introduction

1. Language is the primary means of communication between human beings, so any exercise in clear writing is an exercise in the use of clear thought. We can communicate satisfactorily only by thinking first what we wish to communicate. We must have a store of words which we understand, because they are the tools of all our thinking, and we must be able to group them into orderly statements, or sentences, which others can understand.

2. There are 2 reasons why it is important to write effective English:

   a. The aim of all writing is to communicate ideas. If there are no ideas, or these are misunderstood, then what is written serves no purpose.

   b. What we write reflects our thoughts at the time of writing, and so our thoughts will be judged by the words we have. Written. Extensive knowledge or brilliant ideas may count for little.

What is Correctness?

3. You will sometimes have been told that what you have written is incorrect. This is not the same as being badly written, which is a matter of style and clarity. The criticism implies a departure from an accepted standard based on some authority such as the 'Oxford English Dictionary', Fowler's 'Modern English Usage' or Gower's 'The Complete Plain Words'. These books record the accepted usage of most educated people of the day, so that when we talk of correctness, in this context, we mean the speech or writing of formally educated people. Rules must be a guide rather than a rigid formula because English in all its forms is fluid and constantly changing. Without rules for language there would be endless confusion of meaning.

What is Clarity?

4. People can read the most complex material if forced to do so, but the material they prefer to read is written simply. If you wish to write clearly you must be able to draw a line between simplicity on the one hand and complexity on the other. New terms are necessary, of course, but much special jargon is designed to impress rather than to express, because it rests on the assumption that complexity is the badge of wisdom. Quite the opposite is true: to write simply and well you must train your mind to cut through surface details and express your thoughts clearly.

Clear Thinking

5. Clear thinking is hard work but loose thinking is bound to produce loose writing. Clear thinking is required throughout the Staff Course not only for written work but also for oral work, eg syndicate discussions. A knowledge of the problems and the rules will help you to argue logically, both orally and on paper. It will also enable you to detect flaws. In other people's arguments.

6. **Barriers to Clear Thinking.** There are several obstacles to clear thinking and if you can identify them you may be able to avoid them. Here are some of the barriers and a few simple rules:

a. **Barrier of Language**. People only speak the same language if they use the same words with the same meaning. Concrete terms such as 'tree', 'rifle' or 'horse' are easy to use. Beware of abstract terms such as 'freedom' and 'democracy' which may mean different things to different people.

b. **The Barrier of Self-Interest**. Most beliefs are held through self-interest. Always suspect opinions or beliefs when you recognize that a person's happiness depends upon his continuing to hold them, or that he might lose by changing them.

c. **The Barrier of Habit**. Everyone has habits of thought. They are beliefs that we originally accepted without question and that we have continued to hold ever since. These are what we call our 'convictions', but other peoples' 'prejudices'. Prejudices create obstacles in our mind and make us unwilling to think straight on certain subjects. They are often strongly-held beliefs but generally they collapse when subjected to the tests of logical reasoning. Do not confuse prejudice with matters of taste or judgment.

d. **The Barrier of Emotion**. Many words appeal so strongly to the emotions that their basic meanings are obscured. Emotional words prejudice us in advance and prevent us from reaching impartial conclusions.

e. **The Barrier of Suggestion**. We are all responsive to suggestion. The psychological basis of suggestibility is simply the tendency to believe any statement that is repeated a great number of times, regardless of its accuracy. Suggestion can, therefore, constitute an insidious and formidable barrier to clear thought.

f. **The Barrier of Generalization**. Many generalizations are accurate and necessary. They are based on previous observations of at le4at a sample of the case in question. On the other hand, most people are guilty of using the 'sweeping statement' in argument. Very often the sweeping statement untrue, or hides an untruth. It may often be based on prejudice. To guard against the mistake of generalization one should insert such words as 'all' 'some', 'never', 'sometimes' whenever it is necessary to make the meaning of a statement or argument more precise.

7. **Logical Reasoning**. The logical form into which most arguments can be translated so that any fallacies may be detected is known as a syllogism and consists of:

a. A major premise, which is the statement of a general law or principle.

b. A minor premise, which connects a particular case with the general law or principle.

c. A conclusion, which is a new fact validly inferred from the 2 premises.

8. The following example contains true premises followed by a valid, and therefore true, conclusion:

a. Major Premise. All boggy ground is impassable to tanks.

b. Minor Premise. The ground on the left is boggy.

c. Conclusion. The ground on the left is impassable to tanks.

9. **Serial Arguments**. Arguments may be in serial form, with the conclusion of one argument becoming the premise of the next. This is commonly used in military appreciations: “If I have a preliminary fire plan I will lose surprise. If I lose surprise the enemy may be able to concentrate superior forces against me. If this happensetc, etc.”

10. **Reduction ad Absurdum**. This is a method of disproving an argument by producing a statement which can obviously be deduced from the argument but which, equally obviously, is untrue.

11. **Dilemma**. The word ‘dilemma’ is often used incorrectly. To be in a dilemma is to be faced with 2 alternative courses of action, each of which is likely to have awkward results.

12. **Summary**. Truth may be distorted by prejudice or unfair argument. Conversely, the evidence from which conclusions are drawn may be incorrect or incomplete. Look critically at all the evidence, distinguish between statements of fact and opinion, and take account of any pressures which may be influencing the argument.

What is Standard English?

13. **Definition and Characteristics of Standard English**. In the entry for "Standard English" in The Oxford Companion to the English Language (1992), Tom McArthur observes that this "widely used term . . . resists easy definition but is used as if most educated people nonetheless know precisely what it refers to." For some of those people, Standard English (SE) is a synonym for good or correct English usage. Others use the term to refer to a specific geographical dialect of English or a dialect favored by the most powerful and prestigious social group. Some linguists argue that there really is no single standard of English. From the dozens of definitions of Standard English available in the literature on English, we may extract five essential characteristics:

a. SE is a variety of English--a distinctive combination of linguistic features with a particular role to play.

b. The linguistic features of SE are chiefly matters of grammar, vocabulary, and orthography (spelling and punctuation). It is important to note that SE is not a matter of pronunciation.

c. SE is the variety of English which carries most prestige within a country. In the words of one US linguist, SE is "the English used by the powerful."

d. The prestige attached to SE is recognized by adult members of the community, and this motivates them to recommend SE as a desirable educational target.

e. Although SE is widely understood, it is not widely produced. Only a minority of people within a country . . . actually use it when they talk. . . . Similarly, when they write--itself a minority activity--the consistent use of SE is required only in certain tasks (such as a letter to a newspaper, but not necessarily to a close friend). More than anywhere else, SE is to be found in print.

14. **Written English and Spoken English**. There are many grammar books, dictionaries and guides to English usage which describe and give advice on the standard English that appears in writing. . . . These books are widely used for guidance on what constitutes standard English. However, there is often also a tendency to apply these judgments, which are about written English, to spoken English. But the norms of spoken and written language are not the same; people don't talk like books even in the most formal of situations or contexts. If you can't refer to a written norm to describe spoken language, then, as we have seen, you base your judgments on the speech of the "best people," the "educated" or higher social classes. But basing your judgments on the usage of the educated is not without its difficulties. Speakers, even educated ones, use a variety of different forms of English.

The Principles of Effective Writing

15. Effective written communication is a vital means of getting business done. This Guide contains the principles for effective writing and presentation, and will help you produce various types of document. Effective writing is largely about simplicity of expression, accuracy of content and brevity of style. The importance of clear writing is that it reflects clear thinking. However, standard formats, often called ‘house style’, help to provide structure to a document and ensure that you do not leave out key elements of information. Before any writing one should consider the following:

a. **When do you need to write?** You need to write if:

(1) A record has to be kept to account for expenditure or to record financial or other important decisions.

(2) Information or a decision has to be passed to a wide audience.

(3) Your message is too detailed or complex to deliver verbally or may need to be studied carefully.

b. **Things to bear in mind.** When you write anything, bear in mind the following points:

(1) What is the purpose of the document, who are you writing to and what is the most appropriate style?

(2) Accountability aligns with responsibility, so always sign off your own documents and include your job title.

c. **The Aims of Writing.** Always aim to be accurate and brief and to make your message clear. Structure documents logically, and strive for effective, relevant and persuasive content.

Written Style

16. **General Points**. Although it's important to think carefully about when and what we write, how we write is just as important. You write to communicate something, achieve an aim or get something done. If your words are not understood, fail to convince or don't have the desired effect, business may be held up or opportunities missed. Getting it 'right' means more than simply getting the layout right. **It's far more important to choose the right style and words, and express yourself clearly and concisely in a logical order**. This is something we should all do, whatever we are writing and whatever our intentions.

17. **Guiding Principles**. Clear, concise writing is a necessity, not an optional extra. It saves everyone time and effort if work is clear, direct and easily understood:

a. **Be Direct and Courteous (tone)**. Rudeness and discourtesy have no place in correspondence. If you receive such remarks, they are best ignored. Stick to the subject in hand. The main points should stand out on first reading. You can be tactful, discreet or diplomatic, but don't obscure your meaning. If you're writing to a member of the public, use the words you and your. However, only use the first person singular, I, when putting across your own view. To express a general point, or write on behalf of someone else (eg when you sign 'For OC'), or an organization (eg an HQ or stn) use we, our and us, not I, my and me. This prevents the tone becoming over-personal.

b. **Express Your Views Simply**. If your argument is convincing, it doesn't need dressing-up with impressive-sounding words. If your argument is not convincing, fancy language will not help. Develop your argument and build the case logically for reaching a recommendation.

c. **Use Short, Everyday Words**. Short, everyday words and phrases help get your message across. For example, try use instead of utilize, help rather than assistance, show for demonstrate, and about or some instead of approximately. It's also very important that you understand the correct meaning of the words you choose.

d. **Avoid Acronyms and Jargon**. Keep in mind who will read your work, and avoid using departmental or Service acronyms or jargon which the reader may not understand. Spell out any acronyms fully the first time you use them and always explain any technical terms. Your readers may not have a glossary; those who do will not thank you if they have to refer to it. On the other hand, don't insult your readers by explaining the obvious: a Service reader doesn't need you to explain NATO or UN.

e. **Abbreviations**. You may use abbreviations, but only when the recipients will understand them. DWG, Chapter 6, Paragraphs 41 to 42 offers guidance on how to use abbreviations. Use abbreviations in the accepted sense, or your meaning will be unclear. For example, the abbreviation op means operate, operated, operates, operational, or operator but it doesn't stand for operating. Sparing use of well-known abbreviations can make work succinct and business-like. Too many abbreviations will make your work difficult to understand.

f. **Passive verbs**. Compare 'I am sorry that I did not convince you' (active) with 'It is regrettable that my explanation was not found to be convincing' (passive). Passive verbs soften the message and it's often tempting to use them when writing something which the recipient will find disappointing or unacceptable. Too many passive verbs will make writing seem pompous, impersonal or dull.

g. **Avoid 'Padding'**. Don't use several words where one will do. Leave out unnecessary phrases or words such as it is true that, there is no doubt that, at the end of the day, clearly and obviously. Replace by means of with by, in order to' with to, in view of the fact that with because, large-scale with big, and weather conditions with weather. Avoid any compound noun ending with situation, such as a stand-off situation. "Write to Express Not to Impress". Inexperienced writers often try to impress rather than to express. They talk with their own voice but when they write they try to be someone else. They spend time and effort in seeking long, unfamiliar words and in forming meandering sentences. The result is foggy writing which fails to communicate and irritates the receiver. This comes from 2 things: first, the writer fails to get the message clear in his mind before he ties to convey it; secondly, he fails to put his message into clear, concise and simple language.

h**.** **Avoid Foreign Words and Phrases**. In most cases, there is a perfectly acceptable way of saying what you mean in English, which will be readily understood. Showing off your knowledge of Latin, French or German is likely only to confuse or irritate your reader - even when you get it right. For example, use among other things instead of inter alia; use namely instead of viz; and use as written instead of sic.

j. **Fashionable Words or Phrases**. Many words are misused or misunderstood. Examples include capstone, underpinning, synergy, draw down and benchmark or benchmarking, and scientific terms, such as critical mass and quantum leap. If you must use them, use them correctly.

k. **Use Short Sentences**. It's difficult to understand long sentences of more than 25 words, and complex sentences with many different points. Keep sentences short and to the point, with an average length of 15 to 20 words. Using long sentences also increase the risk of making structural and grammatical errors. 19. Clearly, short sentences alone are not enough. Sentences must vary in length and in structure if the reader is to be saved from boredom. Effective writers maintain a balance between long and short sentences. Some practical hints to keep sentences short are:

(1) Remember that you can break up any long sentence and can often save words.

(2) Be sure that each word in every sentence carries its weight. Remove unnecessary words, and where one word will do the work of 2, use that.

l. **Length of Paragraphs**. There is no general rule about the length of a paragraph. A paragraph is a unit of thought, not a unit of length. Each paragraph should deal with one topic of your argument, and deal with it fully. A good paragraph heading will help you define the topic of the paragraph. Everything in the paragraph should relate to that topic and that heading; include nothing else. However, several very short or one-sentence paragraphs will ruin your style and the flow of an argument. People will read your work more readily if they see from the start that there will be natural breaks in the text. Finding a whole page consisting of one paragraph is discouraging and what you're trying to say would be hard to understand.

m. **Prefer the Simple to the Complex**. If a short word does the job, use that. The principle does not outlaw the use of the longer word, because you need both simple and complex words for clear expression. Fowler advises anyone who wants to become a good writer to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous and lucid. This general principle means:

(1) Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched: 'start' not 'initiate'.

(2) Prefer the concrete word to the abstract – 'crisis' not 'dangerous situation'.

(3) Prefer the single word to the circumlocution – 'scarce' not "in short supply'.

(4) Prefer the short word to the long – 'go' not 'proceed'.

(5) Prefer the Saxon word to the Roman – 'many' not 'numerous'.

n. **Write as You Would Talk**. This principle must not be interpreted literally. The trouble with some people is that they do write just as they would talk – with unfortunate results. When you catch yourself writing a vague or complex phrase or sentence ask yourself: "How would I say that? If the reader were sitting beside me, how would I say it to him?" Usually this will suggest a simple and more direct way of writing. You cannot write exactly what you might say because most of us speak untidy English; we repeat ourselves and think aloud, searching for the right words.

Nevertheless, writing based on the construction and style used in speech is usually easier to read.

p. **Use Terms Your Reader Can Picture**. One of the difficulties with long words is that so many of them are abstract and represent concepts rather than things. It is much harder to say just what they mean. The reason is that the meaning is not in the word; it is in the mind of the person who uses it, or reads it or hears it.

Academic Writing

18. Academic writing is based on analysis - the process of breaking down ideas - to increase one's understanding. It uses deductive reasoning, semiformal voice, and third person point-of-view.

a. **Use of deductive reasoning**. Stating the thesis (main idea) early and then following with supporting examples and details make complicated ideas easier to understand.

b. **Semiformal voice**. This means no slang, colloquialism (common expressions of ordinary speech), contractions of nouns and verbs, etc.

c. **Third person point-of-view**. Third person points-of-view (e.g., he, she, it, and they as well as their accusative, dative, and possessive forms) should be used. No first and second person points-of-view (e.g., I, you, we) are used in academic writing.

Characteristics of Academic Writing

19. Academic writing has following general characteristics:

a. **General purpose** - to present information that displays a clear understanding of a subject.

b. **Specific purpose** - varies according to the assignment.

c. **Argument and Persuasion** - To persuade readers to accept the writer's opinion

d. **Exposition** - To explain something

e. **Description** - To describe something

f. **Narration** - To tell a story

Structure of Academic Writing

20. **Introduction**. The introduction (opening paragraph) basically accomplishes two goals:

a. Gains the reader’s attention.

b. Identifies the focus, or thesis, that is developed in the main part (body) of the essay.

c. There are several ways to draw the reader's attention to the subject:

(1) Open with a series of questions about the topic.

(2) Present startling or unusual facts or figures.

(3) Define an important, subject related term.

(4) Quote a well known person or literary work.

21. **Body**. Developmental paragraphs (body paragraphs) are the heart of an essay:

a. They must clearly and logically support the thesis.

b. They must be arranged in the best possible way, e.g. chronologically, order of importance, etc.

c. The paragraphs should flow smoothly from one to the next, e.g. the first sentence in each new paragraph serves as an effective link to the preceding paragraph. In addition, minor supporting ideas are linked together within the paragraphs in a smooth manner.

22. **Conclusion**. The conclusion is the summary paragraph. It should accomplish the following:

a. Remind the reader of the paper's thesis by paraphrasing it.

b· Tie together all of the important points in the essay by way of a summary and draw a final conclusion for the reader.

TASK-2

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Introduction

1. There are many different ways of organizing words into sentences. (Or we might say, Words can be organized into sentences in many different ways.) For this reason, describing how to put a sentence together isn't as easy as explaining how to bake a cake or assemble a model plane. There are no easy recipes, no step-by-step instructions. But that doesn't mean that crafting an effective sentence depends on magic or good luck.

Basic Structure

2. Experienced writers understand that the basic parts of a sentence can be combined and arranged in countless ways. So as we work to improve our writing, it's important to understand what these basic structures are and how to use them effectively. We'll begin by introducing the traditional parts of speech and the most common sentence structures. For practice in shaping these words and structures into strong sentences, following 10 basic structures are to be considered which are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

a. 1st Structure. Traditional use of ‘Parts of Speech’.

b. 2nd Structure. Use of ‘Subjects, Verbs and Objects’.

c. 3rd Structure. Use of ‘Adjectives and Adverbs’.

d. 4th Structure. Use of ‘Prepositional Phrases’.

e. 5th Structure. Use of Coordinating Conjunctions ‘Coordination’.

f. 6th Structure. Use of ‘Adjective Clause’.

g. 7th Structure. Use of ‘Appositives’.

h. 8th Structure. Use of ‘Adverb Clauses”.

j. 9th Structure. Use of ‘Participial Phrases’.

k. 10th Structure. Use of ‘Absolute Phrases’.

1st Structure-The Parts of Speech

3. One way to begin studying basic sentence structures is to consider the traditional parts of speech (also called word classes): nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and interjections. Except for interjections ("ouch!"), which have a habit of standing alone, and articles (a, an, the), which appear in front of

nouns, the parts of speech come in many varieties and may show up just about anywhere in a sentence. To know for sure what part of speech a word is, we have to look not only at the word itself but also at its meaning, position, and use in a sentence. Review the parts of speech listed below, and for each one see if you can provide examples of your own. The basic function of parts of speech in a sentence is shown in the following table:

PARTS OF SPEECH	BASIC FUNCTION	EXAMPLES
noun	names a person, place, or thing	pirate, Caribbean, ship
pronoun	Takes the place of a noun	I, you, he, she, it, ours, them, who
verb	identifies action or state of being	sing, dance, believe, be
adjective	modifies a noun	hot, lazy, funny
adverb	modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb	softly, lazily, often
preposition	shows a relationship between a noun (or pronoun) and other words in a sentence	up, over, against, by, for
conjunction	joins words, phrases, and clauses	and, but, or, yet
interjection	expresses emotion	ah, whoops, ouch
article	identifies and specifies a noun	a, an, the

2nd Structure-Subjects, Verbs, and Objects

4. The basic parts of a sentence are the subject, the verb, and (often, but not always) the object. The subject is usually a noun--a word that names a person, place, or thing. The verb (or predicate) usually follows the subject and identifies an action or a state of being. An object receives the action and usually follows the verb. Here you will learn how to identify and use subjects, verbs, and objects--which together form the basic sentence unit.

a. **Subjects and Verbs**. The basic parts of a sentence are the subject and the verb. The subject is usually a noun--a word that names a person, place, or thing. The predicate (or verb) usually follows the subject and identifies an action or a state of being. See if you can identify the subject and the predicate in each of the following short sentences:

The hawk soars.
The widows weep.
My daughter is a wrestler.
The wrestlers are tired.

In each of these sentences, the subject is a noun: hawk, widows, daughter, and children. The verbs in the first two sentences--soars, weep--show action and answer the question, "What does the subject do?" The verbs in the last two sentences--is, are--are called linking verbs because they link the subject with a word that renames it (wrestler) or describes it (tired).

b. **Pronouns**. Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns in a sentence. In the second sentence below, the pronoun she stands for Rivu:

Rivudanced on the roof of the barn during the thunderstorm.
She was waving an American flag.

As the second sentence shows, a pronoun (like a noun) may serve as the subject of a sentence. The common subject pronouns are I, you, he, she, it, we, and they.

c. **Objects**. In addition to serving as subjects, nouns may also function as objects in sentences. Instead of performing the action, as subjects usually do, objects receive the action and usually follow the verb. See if you can identify the objects in the short sentences below:

The girls hurled stones.
The professor swigged coffee.
Gus dropped the aquarium.

The objects--stones, coffee, aquarium--all answer the question what: What was hurled? What was swigged? What was dropped?

5. **The Basic Sentence Unit**. You should now be able to identify the main parts of the basic sentence unit: SUBJECT plus VERB, or SUBJECT plus VERB plus OBJECT. Remember that the subject names what the sentence is about, the verb tells what the subject does or is, and the object receives the action of the verb. Although many other structures can be added to this basic unit, the pattern of SUBJECT plus VERB (or SUBJECT plus VERB plus OBJECT) can be found in even the longest and most complicated structures.

3rd Structure-Adjectives and Adverbs

6. A common way of expanding the basic sentence is with modifiers--words that add to the meanings of other words. The simplest modifiers are adjectives and adverbs. Adjectives modify nouns, while adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. For instance, in the sentence below, the adjective sad modifies the noun smile (the subject of the sentence).

The clown's sad smile touched us deeply.

In this same sentence, the adverb deeply modifies the verb touched. Used carefully, adjectives and adverbs can make our writing clearer and more precise.

7. **Arranging Adjectives**. Adjectives most often appear just in front of the nouns that they modify:

The old, cranky caretaker refused to answer our questions.

Notice that when two (or more) adjectives precede a noun, they are usually separated by commas. But occasionally adjectives follow the nouns they modify:

The caretaker, old and cranky, refused to answer our questions.

Here the commas appear outside the pair of adjectives, which are joined by the conjunction and placing the adjectives after the noun is a way of giving them added emphasis in a sentence.

Adjectives sometimes appear in a third position in a sentence: after a linking verb such as am, are, is, was, or were. As their name implies, these verbs link adjectives with the subjects they modify. See if you can identify the adjectives in the sentences below:

His voice was rough.
Your children are cruel.
This seat is wet.

In each of these sentences, the adjective (rough, cruel, wet) modifies the subject but follows the linking verb (was, are, is).

8. **Arranging Adverbs**. Adverbs usually follow the verbs they modify:

I dance occasionally.

However, an adverb may also appear directly in front of the verb or at the very beginning of a sentence:

I occasionally dance.
Occasionally I dance.

Because not all adverbs are this flexible in all sentences, you should try them out in different positions until you find the clearest arrangement.

4th Structure-Prepositional Phrases

9. Like adjectives and adverbs, prepositional phrases add meaning to the nouns and verbs in our sentences. There are two prepositional phrases in the following sentence:

The steamy air in the kitchen reeked of stale beer.

The first prepositional phrase--in the kitchen--modifies the noun air; the second--of stale beer--modifies the verb reeked. The two phrases provide information that helps us to understand the sentence. A prepositional phrase has two basic parts: a preposition plus a noun or a pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition. A preposition is a word that shows how a noun or a pronoun is related to another word in a sentence.

10. **Building Sentences with Prepositional Phrases**. Prepositional phrases may do more than just add minor details to a sentence: they may, in fact, be needed for a sentence to make sense. Consider the vagueness of this sentence without prepositional phrases:

The workers gather a rich variety and distribute it.

Now see how the sentence comes into focus when we add prepositional phrases:

From many sources, the workers at the Community Food Bank gather a rich variety of surplus and unsalable food and distribute it to soup kitchens, day-care centers, and homes for the elderly.

Notice how these added prepositional phrases give us more information about certain nouns and verbs in the sentence:

Which workers? - The workers at the Community Food Bank.

What did they gather? - A rich variety of surplus and unsalable food.

Where did they gather the food? - From many sources.

Who did they distribute it to? - To soup kitchens, day-care centers, and homes for the elderly.

Like the other simple modifiers, prepositional phrases are not merely ornaments; they add details that can help us understand a sentence.

5th Structure-Coordination

11. A common way to connect related words, phrases, and even entire clauses is to coordinate them--that is, connect them with a basic coordinating conjunction such as "and" or "but. "When we coordinate things, whether we're talking about our schedules or our clothing, we make connections--or, as the dictionary says in a more fanciful way, "bring things together in a common and harmonious action." The same idea applies when we talk about coordination in grammar.

a. The basic coordinating conjunctions are: and, but, yet, or, nor, for, and so.

b. The following paired conjunctions:

both . . . and
either . . . or
neither . . . nor
not . . . but
not . . . nor
not only . . . but (also)
whether . . . or

12. **Using Commas with Conjunctions**. The paired conjunctions serve to emphasize the words being connected. We often use the basic coordinating conjunctions and paired conjunctions in our writing to connect related ideas. When just two words or phrases are joined by a conjunction, no comma is needed. However, when two or more items are listed before a conjunction, those items should be separated by commas. Similarly, when two complete sentences (called main clauses) are joined by a conjunction, we should generally place a comma before the conjunction. Although no comma is needed before the and that joins the verbs advance and retreat, we do need to place a comma before the second and, which joins two main clauses.

6th Structure-Adjective Clauses

13. To show that one idea in a sentence is more important than another, we rely on subordination--that is, treating one word group as secondary (or subordinate) to another. One common form of subordination is the adjective clause--a word group that modifies a noun. The most common adjective clauses begin with one of these relative pronouns: who, which, and that is a useful way of connecting ideas that are roughly equal in importance. But often we need to show that one idea in a sentence is more important than another. On these occasions we use subordination to indicate that one part of a sentence is secondary (or subordinate) to another part. One common form of subordination is the adjective clause--a word group that modifies a noun. Consider how the following sentences might be combined:

My father is a superstitious man.
He always sets his unicorn traps at night.

a. One option is to coordinate the two sentences is giving emphasis on each main clause. Like :

My father is a superstitious man, and he always sets his unicorn traps at night.

b. What if we want to place greater emphasis on one statement than on another? We then have the option of reducing the less important statement to an adjective clause. For example, to emphasize that father sets his unicorn traps at night, we can turn the first main clause into an adjective clause:

My father, who is a superstitious man, always sets his unicorn traps at night.

As shown here, the adjective clause does the job of an adjective and follows the noun that it modifies--father. Like a main clause, an adjective clause contains a subject (in this case, who) and a verb (is).

c. Unlike a main clause an adjective clause can't stand alone: it has to follow a noun in a main clause. For this reason, an adjective clause is considered to be subordinate to the main clause.

14. **Identifying Adjective Clauses**. The most common adjective clauses begin with one of these relative pronouns: who, which, and that. All three pronouns refer to a noun, but who refers only to people and which refers only to things. That may refer to either people or things. The following sentences show how these pronouns are used to begin adjective clauses:

Mr. Clean, who hates rock music, smashed my electric guitar.
Mr. Clean smashed my electric guitar, which had been a gift from Vera.
Mr. Clean smashed the electric guitar that Vera had given me.

In the first sentence, the relative pronoun who refers to Mr. Clean, the subject of the main clause. In the second and third sentences, the relative pronouns which and that refer to guitar, the object of the main clause.

7th Structure-Appositives

15. An appositive is a word or group of words that identifies or renames another word in a sentence--most often a noun that immediately precedes it. Appositive constructions offer concise ways of describing or defining a person, place, or thing.

a. **From Adjective Clauses to Appositives**. Like an adjective clause, an appositive provides more information about a noun. In fact, we may think of an appositive as a simplified adjective clause. Consider, for example, how the following two sentences can be combined:

Aich is a professional magician.
Juwel Aich performed at my sister's birthday party.

(1) One way to combine these sentences are to turn the first sentence into an adjective clause:

Juwel Aich, who is a professional magician, performed at my sister's birthday party.

2) We also have the option of reducing the adjective clause in this sentence to an appositive. All that we need to do is omit the pronoun who and the verb is:

Juwel Aich, a professional magician, performed at my sister's birthday party.

The appositive a professional magician serves to identify the subject, Jimbo Gold. Reducing an adjective clause to an appositive is one way to cut the clutter in our writing. However, not all adjective clauses can be shortened to appositives in this fashion--only those that contain a form of the verb to be (is, are, was, were).

b. **Arranging Appositives.**

(1) An appositive most often appears directly after the noun it identifies or renames:

Arizona Bill, "The Great Benefactor of Mankind," toured Oklahoma with herbal cures and a powerful liniment.

Note that this appositive, like most, could be omitted without changing the basic meaning of the sentence. In other words, it's nonrestrictive and needs to be set off with a pair of commas.

(2) Occasionally, an appositive may appear in front of a word that it identifies:

A dark wedge, the eagle hurtled earthward at nearly 200 miles per hour.

(3) An appositive at the beginning of a sentence is followed by comma.

(4) An appositive may appear before or after any noun in a sentence.

(5) Placing an appositive at the very end of a sentence is another way to give it special emphasis. Compare these two sentences:

At the far end of the pasture, the most magnificent animal I had ever seen**--a white-tailed deer--**was cautiously edging toward a salt-lick block.

At the far end of the pasture, the most magnificent animal I had ever seen was cautiously edging toward a salt-lick block**--a white-tailed deer**.

c. **Punctuating Nonrestrictive and Restrictive Appositives**. As we've seen, most appositives are nonrestrictive--that is, the information that they add to a sentence is not essential for the sentence to make sense. Nonrestrictive appositives are set off by commas or dashes. A restrictive appositive (like a restrictive adjective clause) is one that cannot be omitted from a sentence without affecting the basic meaning of the sentence. A restrictive appositive should not be set off by commas:

Rahim's sister Mona became a nurse after their brother Hakim took a job at a hotel.

d. **Four Variations**

(1) Appositives that Repeat a Noun. Although an appositive usually renames a noun in a sentence, it may instead repeat a noun for the sake of clarity and emphasis:

In America, as in anywhere else in the world, we must find a focus in our lives at an early age, a focus that is beyond the mechanics of earning a living or coping with a household.

Notice that the appositive in this sentence is modified by an adjective clause. Adjectives, prepositional phrases, and adjective clauses (in other words, all of the structures that can modify a noun) are often used to add details to an appositive.

(2) **Negative Appositives**. Most appositives identify what someone or something is, but there are also negative appositives that identify what someone or something is not:

Line managers and production employees, **rather than staff specialists**, are primarily responsible for quality assurance.

Negative appositives begin with a word such as not, never, or rather than.

(3) **Multiple Appositives**. Two, three, or even more appositives may appear alongside the same noun:

Saint Petersburg, a city of almost five-million people, Russia's second-largest and northernmost metropolis, was designed three centuries ago by Peter the Great.

(4) **List Appositives with Pronouns**. A final variation is the list appositive that precedes a pronoun such as all or these or everyone:

NAM Flats, Baily road houses, the old MP hostels now occupied by government offices--all seem in focus, with their electric supply continuously.

8th Structure-Adverb Clauses

16. Like an adjective clause, an adverb clause is always dependent on or subordinate to an independent clause. Like an ordinary adverb, an adverb clause usually modifies a verb, though it can also modify an adjective, an adverb, or even the rest of the sentence in which it appears. An adverb clause begins with a subordinating conjunction--an adverb that connects the subordinate clause to the main clause. Here we'll practice building sentences with adverb clauses.

a. **From Coordination to Subordination**. Consider how we might combine these two sentences:

The national speed limit was repealed.
Road accidents have increased sharply.

(1) One option is to coordinate the two sentences:

The national speed limit was repealed, **and** road accidents have increased sharply.

Co-ordination with and allows us to connect the two main clauses, but it doesn't clearly identify the relationship between the ideas in those clauses.

(2) To clarify that relationship, we may choose to change the first main clause into an adverb clause:

Since the national speed limit was repealed, road accidents have increased sharply.

(3) In this version the time relationship is emphasized. By changing the first word in the adverb clause (a word called a subordinating conjunction), we can establish a different relationship--one of cause:

Because the national speed limit was repealed, road accidents have increased sharply.

Notice that an adverb clause, like an adjective clause, contains its own subject and predicate, but it must be subordinated to a main clause to make sense.

b. **Common Subordinating Conjunctions**. An adverb clause begins with a subordinating conjunction--an adverb that connects the subordinate clause to the main clause. The subordinating conjunction may indicate a relationship of cause, concession,

comparison, condition, place, or time. Here's a list of the common subordinating conjunctions:

(1) **Cause.**

as
because
in order that
since
so that

Example: "I'm not a vegetarian because **I love animals. I'm a vegetarian** because **I hate plants."**

(2) **Concession and Comparison**.

although
as
as though
even though
just as
though
whereas
while

Examples: "You will find that the State is the kind of organization which, though it does big things badly, does small things badly, too."

(3) **Condition**

even if
if
in case
provided that
unless

Example: "If you have ever lain awake at night and repeated one word over and over, thousands and millions and hundreds of thousands of millions of times, you know the disturbing mental state you can get into."

(4) **Place**

where
wherever

Example: "Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out."

(5) **Time**

after
as soon as
as long as
before
once
still
till
until
when
whenever
while

Example: "As soon as **you trust yourself, you will know how to live."**

9th Structure-Participial Phrases

17. A participle is a verb form used as an adjective to modify nouns and pronouns. All present participles end in -ing. The past participles of all regular verbs end in -ed. Irregular verbs, however, have various past participle endings. Participles and participial phrases can add vigor to our writing as they add information to our sentences.As seen in Identifying Verbals, a participle is a verb form used as an adjective to modify nouns and pronouns. Participles can add vigor to our writing as they add information to our sentences. Here we'll practice creating and arranging participial phrases.

a. **Participles as Modifiers**. Consider the different verb forms in this sentence:

My father's hair, **streaked** with gray and **receding** on both sides, **is combed** straight back to his collar.

The main verb (or predicate) of the sentence is the phrase **is combed**. The other two verbs forms are participles: **streaked** is a past participle, formed by adding **-ed** to the present form of the verb ("streak"); **receding** is a present participle, formed by adding **-ing** to the verb ("recede").Both participles work as adjectives and follow the noun they modify: "hair."

Like regular adjectives, participles may also appear in front of the nouns they modify:

The **whispering** breeze scattered seeds across the **abandoned** fields.
Here, both the present participle **whispering** and the past participle **abandoned** stand in front of the nouns they describe ("breeze" and "fields").

b. **Present and Past Participles**. When thinking about participles, don't be misled by the words present and past. These terms refer to different forms of verbs, not to different times or tenses.

(1) All present participles end in **-ing:**

The **laughing** lady
the **falling** temperature
the **stinging** remark

(2) The past participles of all regular verbs end in **-ed**:

The **tired** dancer
the **injured** player
the **cracked** vase

c. **Participial Phrases**. Both present and past participles can be used in phrases--called participial phrases--that modify nouns and pronouns. A participial phrase is made up of a participle and its modifiers. A participle may be followed by an object, an adverb, a prepositional phrase, an adverb clause, or any combination of these. Here, for example, the participial phrase consists of a present participle (holding), an object (the torch), and an adverb (steadily):

Holding the torch steadily, Merdine approached the monster.

In the next sentence, the participial phrase includes a present participle (**making**), an object (**a great ring**), and a prepositional phrase (**of white light**):

Merdine waved the torch over her head, **making a great ring of white light**.

d. **Arranging Participial Phrases**. A participial phrase is flexible, a structure that can be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence. Participial phrases may be arranged to show a sequence of actions, as in the "pinball" sentence just seen. They may also be set up to show that two or more actions are occurring at the same time:

‘The eagles swooped and hovered, **leaning on the air**, and swung close together, **feinting and screaming with delight**.’

In this sentence, the eagles were "leaning on the air" as they "hovered"; they were "feinting and screaming with delight" as they swung close together.

In each sentence below, the participial phrase clearly modifies the subject ("my younger sister") and suggests a cause:

‘Discouraged by the long hours and low pay, my sister finally quit her job.’

‘My sister, **discouraged by the long hours and low pay**, finally quit her job.’

But consider what happens when the participial phrase moves to the end of the sentence:

'My sister finally quit her job, **discouraged by the long hours and low pay**.'

Here the logical order of cause-effect is reversed, and as a result the sentence may be less effective than the first two versions.

e. **Dangling Phrases**. A participial phrase should refer clearly to a noun or pronoun in the sentence. We have to be careful when combining sentences such as these:

I curled my toes and squinted.
The doctor prepared to puncture my arm with a needle.

Notice what happens if we drop "I" and change the first sentence to a participial phrase:

Curling my toes and squinting, the doctor prepared to puncture my arm with a needle.

Here the participial phrases refer to "the doctor" when they should refer to "I"--a pronoun that's not in the sentence. This kind of problem--called a dangling modifier--should be avoided.

10th Structure-Absolute Phrases

18. Among the various kinds of modifiers, the absolute phrase may be the least common but one of the most useful. An absolute phrase, which consists of a noun plus at least one other word, adds details to an entire sentence--details that often describe one aspect of someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the sentence.

a. **Identifying Absolute Phrases.** An absolute phrase is a word group that modifies an entire sentence. It consists of a noun plus at least one other word, as shown here:

The hunters rested for a moment in front of the shack, **their breaths white in the frosty air**.

The noun (breaths) that begins this absolute phrase is followed by an adjective (white) and a prepositional phrase (in the frosty air).

In addition to adjectives and prepositional phrases, adverbs and participles can also follow the noun in an absolute phrase. As the sentence above shows, an absolute phrase lets us move from a description of a whole person, place, or thing to just one or more parts: from hunters, for instance, to their breaths.

b. **Building and Arranging Absolute Phrases.** Consider how the sentence just seen might be broken down into two sentences:

> The hunters rested for a moment in front of the shack.
> Their breaths were white in the frosty air.

The second sentence, we see, can be turned into an absolute phrase simply by omitting the linking verb were. The absolute phrase may appear at the end of a sentence:

> The hunters rested for a moment in front of the shack, **their breaths white in the frosty air**.

The absolute phrase may also appear at the beginning of the sentence:

> **Their breaths white in the frosty air**, the hunters rested for a moment in front of the shack.

And occasionally an absolute phrase is positioned between the subject and verb: The hunters, **their breaths white in the frosty air**, rested for a moment in front of the shack.

Further Reading

Please refer to " Learning English – the easy way" by Dr. Sadruddin Ahmed for further reading on sentence structure.

TASK-3

PUNCUATION AND MECHANICS

Introduction

1. You should not punctuate merely to observe some rule, but because the sentence that you are writing demands punctuation if it is to be understood. Punctuation enables the reader to read quickly and without ambiguity. Its purpose is to make perfectly clear the construction of the written words. Common sense and logic are the best guides to punctuation. Fowler in 'Common English Usage' says:

> "It is a sound principle that as few stops as possible should be used as will do the work . . . . Everyone should make up his mind not to depend on his stops. They are to be regarded as devices, not for saving him the trouble of putting his words into the order that naturally gives the required meaning, but for saving his reader the moment or 2 that would sometimes, without them, be necessarily spent on reading the sentences twice over, once to catch the general arrangement, and again for the details."

The Full Stop

2. **Main Function**. The full stop is used to denote the end of a sentence. Whatever comes between one full stop and the next must be a sentence in the grammatical sense of the word; it should contain a subject and a finite verb, and should express a complete and independent thought or idea. In Service writing the exception to this rule is that full stops are used at the end of all sub-paragraphs, even though they many consist of only one word.

3. **Use in Abbreviations**. Although full stops usually appear after abbreviated words in ordinary English usage, in Service writing they are not used in a person's initials, decorations, qualifications or in authorized abbreviations.

4. **Omissions**. Three or 4 full stops in combination are used to denote that words have been omitted in a quotation.

5. **Use after Headings etc**. The modern tendency is to dispense with the full stop at the end of words and phrases used as headings or at the foot of notices. Note that in Service writing full stops are never used after titles or main and group headings and also after list or example(s) and unnumbered sub-paragraphs introduced by a paragraph and so on unless these are full sentences but are inserted after paragraph and sub-paragraph headings.

The Colon

6. Some people regard the colon and the semicolon as identical stops and use them indiscriminately; some, avoiding the semicolon, use the colon in exactly the same way as the semicolon is normally used; some never use the colon. A good definition of the main specialized function of the colon is given by Fowler. He says:

"The main function of the colon is to deliver the goods that have been invoiced in the preceding words."

7. **Uses of the Colon**. In modern usage the colon is used:

a. Between 2 sentences that are in clear antithesis, but not connected by a conjunction eg:'Man proposes: God disposes.'

b. To introduce a short quotation eg:'Always remember that ancient maxim: 'know thyself'.

c. To introduce a lists eg:'The Laws of England are derived from 3 sources: custom, precedents and statutes.'

d. To introduce a sentence that fulfils a promise implied in the previous sentence eg:'Some things we can, and others we cannot do: we can walk, but we cannot fly.'

e. To introduce an explanation that is not connected with the previous sentence by such words as 'for', 'since' and 'because', eg:'Rebuke thy son in private: public abuse hardens the heart.'

The Semicolon

8. **General Function**. The semicolon is half-way between the full stop and the comma; it is heavier than a comma but lighter than a full stop. There are times when it may be better to use a semicolon instead of a comma, and there are also times when the required shade of meaning is expressed more correctly by substituting a semicolon for a full stop.

9. **Instead of a Full Stop**. In this case the semicolon usually separates 2 main clauses, unconnected by a conjunction, which could stand independently, as 2 sentences if they had a full stop between them, but which are somewhat closely connected in sense. Such clauses cannot be punctuated by a comma unless a conjunction is added to connect them, eg: 'The enemy machine-gunners were most difficult to dislodge; they resisted stubbornly to the last man'.

10. **Instead of a Comma between Independent Clauses**. Where 2 independent clauses are linked by a conjunction' and there are sound reasons for preferring a heavier stop than a comma, a semicolon is the right stop to use. Before doing so, however, it is essential to make sure that the conjunction joining the 2 clauses is a coordinating conjunction ('and', 'or', 'yet' etc) and not a subordinating conjunction ('since', 'because', 'as', 'when', 'if', 'though', etc), eg:

'He collected a miscellaneous force consisting largely of cooks, batmen, lorry drivers, men returning from leave, and other details; and these troops managed to hold back the enemy till nightfall'.

11. **Instead of a Comma between Subordinate Clauses**. Semicolons may be used, with advantage, to separate subordinate clauses if these clauses are somewhat lengthy, and especially if there are already commas marking of shorter clauses or phrases within these clauses, eg:

> 'The strikers agreed to resume work immediately if a tribunal were formed to investigate their grievances; if on such a tribunal the workers were represented, if an undertaking were given that, neither now nor at any future time, would there be any victimization; and finally if it were guaranteed that when the recommendations of the tribunal were announced, they would be put into force without delay.'

The Comma

12. The comma is so important that it is almost true to say: 'Take care of the commas and the other stops will take care of themselves'. The most important point to remember is that the comma must not be so inserted as to cause an unnecessary break in the construction of the sentence. Apart from the many occasions where the insertion or omission of a comma is largely a question of taste, there are times when the clarity of a passage is entirely dependent on the insertion or omission of a comma. As an example compare the following which changes a truism into an insult:

a. 'Pilots whose minds are dull do not usually live long'.

b. 'Pilots, whose minds are dull, do not usually live long'. (Non-defining relative clause.)

13. **The Superfluous Comma**. It is a sound principle that a subject, object, or complement must not be separated from its verb by a comma, eg:

> 'The proposals that the Ambassador is taking with him, are set out in an adjoining column'.
> (The comma after 'him' is superfluous).

14. **The Inadequate Comma**. A common mistake is to separate by a comma 2 clauses that are not linked by a conjunction, eg:

> 'To proceed was impossible, the road was blocked by an overturned lorry'.
> (The comma here is inadequate; either it should be replaced by a semicolon or a word such as 'as' should be inserted after it).

15. **Commas with Participles**. Participle clauses are almost always marked off by commas when they are sandwiched into the middle of a sentence, , and even when the clauses come at the beginning or end of a sentence it is usual to separate them from the main clause by a comma, eg:

> 'He put down his newspaper and, turning to his neighbour, enquired what he thought of the international situation'.

‘Turning to his neighbour, he enquired what he thought of the international situation’.

16. **Commas with Relative Clauses**. There are 2 main classes of relative clauses:

a. The ‘defining’ relative clause, eg ‘The house that jack built.,
b. The ‘non-defining’ relative clause, eg ‘The Prime Minister’s house, which is in Downing Street, was damaged by blas’.

The ‘defining’ relative clause does not have commas; the ‘non-defining’ relative clause always has them.

17. **Commas with Certain Words and Phrases**. As a general principle all such words and phrases as ‘however’ ‘too’, ‘indeed’, ‘clearly’, ‘no doubt’, and ‘none the less’, should be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas when the omission of commas would involve any risk of ambiguity, eg:

‘These incidents, however trivial in themselves, are liable to lead to more serious demonstrations’.
(Note the change in meaning if a comma is inserted after ‘however’).

18. **Commas and Words or Phrases in Apposition**. Words or phrases in apposition to a preceding word or phrase are usually placed between commas, eg:

‘Lord Perth, the British Ambassador, returned to Rome this afternoon’.

19. **Commas with Adjectives**. When 2 or more adjectives qualify the same noun they are usually separated by commas, eg:

‘He was a conscientious, industrious officer’.

20. **Commas in Enumeration**. A series of words, phrases, or clauses requires commas between each word, phrase, or clause. In applying this rule the problem is to avoid ambiguity. Possibly the wisest course is to be guided by how the piece reads when punctuated.

21. **Commas in Parenthesis**. A parenthesis is an explanation, reference, etc, which is slipped into a sentence where it is not grammatically essential and which can be removed without affecting the meaning of the sentence. A parenthesis should be marked off by commas, dashes, or brackets, depending on the extent to which it disturbs the main sentence. For example, to avoid ambiguity some form of stop is obviously necessary in: “But, you will say, Caesar was not an aristocrat”. Of the 3 forms available, in this example the commas are preferable to either dashes or brackets.

Dashes and Brackets

22. **Uses of Dashes**. The dash is a sadly abused stop and should be used with reserve. Some writers use dashes by the score, whilst others refuse to recognize them as genuine stops. The following list gives what are usually acknowledged as legitimate uses of the dash:

a. Adding to a phrase already used, as an explanation, example or preferable substitute, eg:'The end of our financial resources was in sight – nay, .had actually been reached'.

b. Marking arrival at the principal sentence after a subordinate clause that is long or compound, eg:

'As soon as the Queen shall come to London, and the Houses of Parliament shall be opened, and the speech from the throne delivered – then will begin the struggle of the contending factions'.

c. Introducing a list in the same way that a colon does, eg:

'The 4 greatest names in English literature are almost the first we come to – Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton'.

d. Used in pairs it serves the same purpose as brackets, except that it provides a middle course between the light comma-parenthesis and the heavy bracket-parenthesis, eg:

'In a very well-regulated community – such as that of England – the laws own no superior'.

23. **Brackets**. Brackets provide the heaviest stops for isolating a parenthesis from the remainder of the sentence, ,eg:

'The 'pueblos' (towns or villages) are still as they were years ago'.

The Exclamation Mark and the Question Mark

24. **The Exclamation Mark**. This mark should be strictly confined to genuine exclamations, eg 'Good Lord!' 'blow me down!' etc. Its use merely for effect at the end of sentences should be avoided. It is unlikely to be needed in Service writing. Never use double or treble exclamation marks.

25. **The Question Mark**. This mark is legitimate only at the end of direct questions. It should not be used after indirect questions, nor should it be used in brackets after a word in the middle of a sentence in an attempt to achieve sarcasm, eg 'We attended a really cultured (?) dinner party last night . . . . '

Quotation Marks

26. **Main Use**. Quotation marks must enclose only the actual words of the speaker, eg: 'He said, "It is a mistake to attach all the blame to one side. Both parties have grievances and . . . " .

27. **Double and Single Quotation Marks**. There is a certain amount of controversy among writers about the use of double and single quotation marks. The use advocated here is in accordance with the normal practice of Service writing, namely to use double quotation marks when one is quoting words actually spoken or written by someone, and single quotation marks when one wishes to single out a particular word or phrase.

28. **Quotation Marks and Other Stops**. No additional stop is ever required at the end of a quotation to separate the quotation, as such, from what follows; that is sufficiently done by the quotation mark itself. It may, therefore, be laid down that the 'true' stops – commas, semicolons, colons, and full stops should never stand before the closing quotation mark, except:

a. When complete sentences, entirely isolated and independent in grammar, are printed as quotations.

b. When a stop is necessary to divide the first fragment of an interrupted quotation from the second.

29. **Exclamation or question marks** – which are not true' stops, but tone symbols – may be an essential part of a quotation, and may, therefore, stand before the closing quotation mark, eg:

'He said, "It is a mistake to do that". (Full stop after closing quotation mark).

"You are breaking the rules". "Well, the rules are silly". (Full stop before closing quotation mark).

"Certainly not;" he exclaimed, "I would have died rather". (Semicolon before closing quotation mark).

'But what is the use of saying "Call no man happy till he dies"?' (Question mark after closing quotation mark).

The Apostrophe

30. The apostrophe is used to mark:

a. The possessive case of a noun, eg 'The dog's tail'. (NB where the noun is in the plural it follows the 's', eg 'Spectators' entrance').

b. The omission of letters, eg 'Don't do it; it's dangerous'.

c. The plurals of figures and letters, eg ‘How badly you write your 5’s!’ or ‘There are 2 o’s in woolly’.

31. The apostrophe should not be used:

a. With possessive pronouns, except for ‘one’s’, eg ‘yours, theirs, hers; but one’s book’.

b. When forming the plurals of abbreviated words or sets of initials eg ‘COs’ not ‘CO’s’. Note the variation at Paragraphs 73c.

The Hyphen

32. The hyphen is not an ornament but an aid to being understood and should be employed only when it is needed for that purpose. Its primary function is to indicate that 2 or more words are to be read together as a single word with its own meaning, eg ‘stick-in-the-mud’.

33. A hyphen should be used in the following cases:

a. When a phrase is used as an adjective, eg ‘Home-Rule Bill’.

b. When a composite adjective is formed by 2 adjectives or a noun and adjective, eg ‘red-hot’ and ‘sky-high’.

c. Where the lack of a hyphen to closely connected words may result in absurdity, eg ‘The unit had 400-odd visitors during the year’.

34. **Vagueness**. Many writers punctuate correctly and construct their sentences to give the correct degree of emphasis, but fail to write clearly. The reason is that they use words which have been robbed of all meaning, or words which are vague in themselves. Writing would be much clearer if the words in the left-hand column were replaced by those in the right-hand column:

It is clear that …	Clearly …
It was noted that if …	If …
It is obvious that …	Obviously …
It is observed that soldiers who …	Soldiers who.
It has a tendency to …	It tends to …
For the reason that …	Because ……
Take into consideration …	Consider ….

35. **Abstract Tag Words**. Words such as ‘nature’, ‘condition’ and ‘aspect’ are over-worked. They still have a use in the right context but often they lack punch because they are used continuity of the sentences.

TASK-4

COMPOSITIONS OF SENTENCES, PARAGRAPHS AND ESSAYS

Introduction

1. The word 'composition' may mean different things in different circumstances. It could be a personal narrative, a short work of fiction or prose, an essay, a dramatic work or a poem. Each of these works has its own set of rules. This article has described how-to process of several types of composition: sentence, paragraph, essay, and others. This article will give a general overview of the composition; for more information on how to write a composition. It would help to write any types of organized, Natural, compact or Active writing.

COMPOSTION DEVELOPMENT

Elementary Style of Composition

2. Following are the most accepted style or rules of writing composition:

   a. Form the possessive singular of nouns with 's

   b. In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last

   c. Enclose parenthetic expressions between commas

   d. Place a comma before and or but introducing an independent clause

   e. Do not join independent clauses by a comma

   f. Do not break sentences in two

   g. A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject

   h. Divide words at line-ends, in accordance with their formation and pronunciation

3. **Form the possessive singular of nouns with 's**. Follow this rule whatever the final consonant. Thus write,

Charles's friend
Burns's poems
the witch's malice

Exceptions are the possessives of ancient proper names in -es and -is, the possessive Jesus', and such forms as for conscience' sake, for righteousness' sake. But such forms as Achilles' heel, Moses' laws, Isis' temple are commonly replaced by

the heel of Achilles
the laws of Moses
the temple of Isis

The pronominal possessives hers, its, theirs, yours, and oneself have no apostrophe.

4. **In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last.** Thus write,

red, white, and blue
honest, energetic, but headstrong
He opened the letter, read it, and made a note of its contents.

In the names of business firms the last comma is omitted - Brown, Shipley and Company. The abbreviation etc., even if only a single term comes before it, is always preceded by a comma.

5. **Enclose parenthetic expressions between commas.** Thus we should write:

The best way to see a country, unless you are pressed for time, is to travel on foot.

a. This rule is difficult to apply; it is frequently hard to decide whether a single word, such as however, or a brief phrase, is or is not parenthetic. If the interruption to the flow of the sentence is but slight, the writer may safely omit the commas. But whether the interruption be slight or considerable, he must never omit one comma and leave the other. Such punctuation as:

Marjorie's husband, Colonel Nelson paid us a visit yesterday,

b. Non-restrictive relative clauses are, in accordance with this rule, set off by commas.

The audience, which had at first been indifferent, became more and more interested.

c. Similar clauses introduced by where and when are similarly punctuated.

In 1769, when Rakib was born, Rahim had started going to school.

d. In these sentences the clauses introduced by which, when, and where are non-restrictive; they do not limit the application of the words on which they depend, but add, parenthetically, statements supplementing those in the principal clauses. Each sentence is a combination of two statements which might have been made independently.

> The audience was at first indifferent. Later it became more and more interested.

e. Restrictive relative clauses are not set off by commas.

> The candidate who best meets these requirements will obtain the place.

In this sentence the relative clause restricts the application of the word candidate to a single person. Unlike those above, the sentence cannot be split into two independent statements.

f. The abbreviations etc.andjr. are always preceded by a comma, and except at the end of a sentence, followed by one.

g. If a parenthetic expression is preceded by a conjunction, place the first comma before the conjunction, not after it.

> He saw us coming, and unaware that we had learned of his treachery, greeted us with a smile.

6. **Place a comma before and or but introducing an independent clause.** For example:

> The situation is perilous, but there is still one chance of escape.

a. Sentences of this type, isolated from their context, may seem to be in need of rewriting. As they make complete sense when the comma is reached, the second clause has the appearance of an after-thought. Further, and, is the least specific of connectives. Used between independent clauses, it indicates only that a relation exists between them without defining that relation. In the example above, the relation is that of cause and result. The sentence might be rewritten:

> Although the situation is perilous, there is still one chance of escape.

b. Or the subordinate clauses might be replaced by phrases:

> In this perilous situation, there is still one chance of escape.

c. Two-part sentences of which the second member is introduced by as (in the sense of because), for, or, nor, and while (in the sense of and at the same time) likewise require a comma before the conjunction.

d. If a dependent clause, or an introductory phrase requiring to be set off by a comma, precedes the second independent clause, no comma is needed after the conjunction.

> The situation is perilous, but if we are prepared to act promptly, there is still one chance of escape.

7. **Do not join independent clauses by a comma.** If two or more clauses, grammatically complete and not joined by a conjunction, are to form a single compound sentence, the proper mark of punctuation is a semicolon. As example:

> Shafiq's romances are entertaining; they are full of exciting adventures.

a. It is of course equally correct to write the above as two sentences each, replacing the semicolons by periods.

> Shafiq's romances are entertaining. They are full of exciting adventures.

b. If a conjunction is inserted, the proper mark is a comma.

> It is nearly half past five, and we cannot reach town before dark.

c. Note that if the second clause is preceded by an adverb, such as accordingly, besides, so, then, therefore, or thus, and not by a conjunction, the semicolon is still required.

> I had never been in the place before; so I had difficulty in finding my way about.

d. In general, however, it is best, in writing, to avoid using so in this manner; there is danger that the writer who uses it at all may use it too often. A simple correction, usually serviceable, is to omit the word so, and begin the first clause with as:

> As I had never been in the place before, I had difficulty in finding my way about.

e. If the clauses are very short, and are alike in form, a comma is usually permissible:

> Man proposes, God disposes.

8. **Do not break sentences in two.** In other words, do not use periods for commas.

> I met them in a bus several years ago. Coming home from Sylhet to Dhaka.

It is permissible to make an emphatic word or expression serves the purpose of a sentence and to punctuate it accordingly:

Again and again he called out. No reply.

The writer must, however, be certain that the emphasis is warranted, and that he will not be suspected of a mere blunder in punctuation.

9. **A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject.** For example:

Walking slowly down the road, he saw a woman accompanied by two children.

The word walking refers to the subject of the sentence, not to the woman. If the writer wishes to make it refer to the woman, he must recast the sentence:

He saw a woman, accompanied by two children, walking slowly down the road.

Participial phrases preceded by a conjunction or by a preposition, nouns in apposition, adjectives, and adjective phrases come under the same rule if they begin the sentence.

A soldier of proved valor, they entrusted him with the defence of the city.	A soldier of proved valor, he was entrusted with the defence of the city.

Sentences violating this rule are often ludicrous.

Being in a dilapidated condition, I was able to buy the house very cheap.

10. **Divide words at line-ends, in accordance with their formation and pronunciation.** If there is room at the end of a line for one or more syllables of a word, but not for the whole word, divide the word, unless this involves cutting off only a single letter, or cutting off only two letters of a long word. No hard and fast rule for all words can be laid down. The principles most frequently applicable are:

a. Divide the word according to its formation:

know-ledge (not knowl-edge); Shake-speare (not Shakes-peare); de-scribe (not des-cribe); atmo-sphere (not atmos-phere);

b. Divide "on the vowel:"

edi-ble (not ed-ible); propo-sition; ordi-nary; espe-cial; reli-gious; oppo-nents; regu-lar; classi-fi-ca-tion (three divisions possible); deco-rative; presi-dent;

c. Divide between double letters, unless they come at the end of the simple form of the word:

Apen-nines; Cincin-nati; refer-ring; but tell-ing.

d. The treatment of consonants in combination is best shown from examples:

for-tune; pic-ture; presump-tuous; illus-tration; sub-stan-tial

(either division); indus-try; instruct-tion; sug-ges-tion; incen-diary.

Elementary Principles of Composition

11. Following are the basic or elementary principles writing composition:

a. Make the paragraph the unit of composition: one paragraph to each topic.

b. As a rule, begin each paragraph with a topic sentence; end it in conformity with the beginning

c. Use the active voice

d. Put statements in positive form

e. Omit needless words

f. Avoid a succession of loose sentences

g. Express co-ordinate ideas in similar form

h. Keep related words together

j. In summaries, keep to one tense

k. Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end

12. **Make the paragraph the unit of composition: one paragraph to each topic.** If the subject on which you are writing is of slight extent, or if you intend to treat it very briefly, there may be no need of subdividing it into topics. Thus a brief description, a brief summary of a literary work, a brief account of a single incident, a narrative merely outlining an action, the setting forth of a single idea, any one of these is best written in a single paragraph. After the paragraph has been written, it should be examined to see whether subdivision will not improve it.

a. The extent of subdivision will vary with the length of the composition. For example, a short notice of a book or poem might consist of a single paragraph. One slightly longer might consist of two paragraphs

b. As a rule, single sentences should not be written or printed as paragraphs. An exception may be made of sentences of transition, indicating the relation between the parts of an exposition or argument.

c. In dialogue, each speech, even if only a single word, is a paragraph by itself; that is, a new paragraph begins with each change of speaker. The application of this rule, when dialogue and narrative are combined, is best learned from examples in well-printed works of fiction.

13. **As a rule, begin each paragraph with a topic sentence; end it in conformity with the beginning.** Again, the object is to aid the reader. The practice here recommended enables him to discover the purpose of each paragraph as he begins to read it, and to retain the purpose in mind as he ends it. For this reason, the most generally useful kind of paragraph, particularly in exposition and argument, is that in which

a. The topic sentence comes at or near the beginning;

b. The succeeding sentences explain or establish or develop the statement made in the topic sentence; and

c. The final sentence either emphasizes the thought of the topic sentence or states some important consequence.

d. Ending with a digression, or with an unimportant detail, is particularly to be avoided.

e. If the paragraph forms part of a larger composition, its relation to what precedes, or its function as a part of the whole, may need to be expressed.

f. In narration and description the paragraph sometimes begins with a concise, comprehensive statement serving to hold together the details that follow.

g. The brief paragraphs of animated narrative, however, are often without even this semblance of a topic sentence. The break between them serves the purpose of a rhetorical pause, throwing into prominence some detail of the action.

14. **Use the Active Voice.** The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive:

I shall always remember my first visit to Boston.

This is much better than

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered by me.

The latter sentence is less direct, less bold, and less concise. If the writer tries to make it more concise by omitting "by me,"

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered,

As a rule, avoid making one passive depend directly upon another.

Gold was not allowed to be exported.	It was forbidden to export gold (The export of gold was prohibited).

15. **Put statements in positive form.** Make definite assertions. Avoid tame, colorless, hesitating, non-committal language. Use the word not as a means of denial or in antithesis, never as a means of evasion.

He was not very often on time.	He usually came late.
He did not think that studying Latin was much use.	He thought the study of Latin useless.

16. **Omit needless words.** Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell. Many expressions in common use violate this principle:

the question as to whether	whether (the question whether)
there is no doubt but that	no doubt (doubtless)
used for fuel purposes	used for fuel
he is a man who	He
in a hasty manner	Hastily
this is a subject which	this subject
His story is a strange one.	His story is strange.

In especial the expression the fact that should be revised out of every sentence in which it occurs.

owing to the fact that	since (because)
in spite of the fact that	though (although)
call your attention to the fact that	remind you (notify you)
I was unaware of the fact that	I was unaware that (did not know)
the fact that he had not succeeded	his failure
the fact that I had arrived	my arrival

17. **Avoid a succession of loose sentences.** This rule refers especially to loose sentences of a particular type, those consisting of two co-ordinate clauses, the second introduced by a conjunction or relative. Although single sentences of this type may be unexceptionable, a series soon becomes monotonous and tedious. An unskilful writer will sometimes construct a whole paragraph of sentences of this kind, using as connectives and, but, and less frequently, who, which, when, where, and while, these last in non-restrictive senses.

18. **Express co-ordinate ideas in similar form.** This principle, that of parallel construction, requires that expressions of similar content and function should be outwardly similar. The likeness of form enables the reader to recognize more readily the likeness of content and function. The unskilful writer often violates this principle, from a mistaken belief that he should constantly vary the form of his expressions. It is true that in repeating a statement in order to emphasize it he may have need to vary its form. For illustration,

see the paragraph from Stevenson quoted under Rule. But apart from this, he should follow the principle of parallel construction.

Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method, while now the laboratory method is employed.	Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method; now it is taught by the laboratory method.

The left-hand version gives the impression that the writer is undecided or timid; he seems unable or afraid to choose one form of expression and hold to it. The right-hand version shows that the writer has at least made his choice and abided by it.

19. **Keep related words together.** The position of the words in a sentence is the principal means of showing their relationship. The writer must therefore, so far as possible, bring together the words, and groups of words, that are related in thought, and keep apart those which are not so related.

a. The subject of a sentence and the principal verb should not, as a rule, be separated by a phrase or clause that can be transferred to the beginning.

Wordsworth, in the fifth book of The Excursion, gives a minute description of this church.	In the fifth book of The Excursion, Wordsworth gives a minute description of this church.

b. The relative pronoun should come, as a rule, immediately after its antecedent.

There was a look in his eye that boded mischief.	In his eye was a look that boded mischief.

c. If the antecedent consists of a group of words, the relative comes at the end of the group, unless this would cause ambiguity.

The Superintendent of the Chicago Division, who	
The grandson of William Henry Harrison, who	William Henry Harrison's grandson, Benjamin Harrison, who

d. A noun in apposition may come between antecedent and relative, because in such a combination no real ambiguity can arise.

The Duke of York, his brother, who was regarded with hostility by the Whigs

e. Modifiers should come, if possible next to the word they modify. If several expressions modify the same word, they should be so arranged that no wrong relation is suggested.

All the members were not present.	Not all the members were present.
He only found two mistakes.	He found only two mistakes.

20. **In summaries, keep to one tense.** In summarizing the action of a drama, the writer should always use the present tense. In summarizing a poem, story, or novel, he should preferably use the present, though he may use the past if he prefers. If the summary is in the present tense, antecedent action should be expressed by the perfect; if in the past, by the past perfect. But whichever tense be used in the summary, a past tense in indirect discourse or in indirect question remains unchanged. Apart from the exceptions noted, whichever tense the writer chooses, he should use throughout.

21. **Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end.** The proper place for the word, or group of words, which the writer desires to make most prominent is usually the end of the sentence.

This steel is principally used for making razors, because of its hardness.	Because of its hardness, this steel is principally used in making razors.

A subject coming first in its sentence may be emphatic, but hardly by its position alone. In the sentence,

Great kings worshipped at his shrine,

To receive special emphasis, the subject of a sentence must take the position of the predicate.

Through the middle of the valley flowed a winding stream.

PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT

What is a paragraph?

22. Paragraphs are the building blocks of papers. Many students define paragraphs in terms of length: a paragraph is a group of at least five sentences, a paragraph is half a page long, etc. In reality, though, the unity and coherence of ideas among sentences is what constitutes a paragraph. A paragraph is defined as "a group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit" (Lunsford and Connors 116). Length and appearance do not determine whether a section in a paper is a paragraph. For instance, in some styles of writing, particularly journalistic styles, a paragraph can be just one sentence long. Ultimately, a paragraph is a sentence or group of sentences that support one main idea. In this handout, we will refer to this as the "controlling idea," because it controls what happens in the rest of the paragraph.

How do I decide what to put in a paragraph?

23. Before you can begin to determine what the composition of a particular paragraph will be, you must first decide on a working thesis for your paper. What is the most important idea that you are trying to convey to your reader? The information in each paragraph must be related to that idea. In other words, your paragraphs should remind your reader that there is a recurrent relationship between your thesis and the information in each paragraph. A working thesis functions like a seed from which your paper, and your ideas, will grow. The whole process is an organic one—a natural progression from a seed to a full-blown paper where there are direct, familial relationships between all of the ideas in the paper.

24. So, let's suppose that you have done some brainstorming to develop your thesis. What else should you keep in mind as you begin to create paragraphs? Every paragraph in a paper should be:

a. **Unified**. All of the sentences in a single paragraph should be related to a single controlling idea (often expressed in the topic sentence of the paragraph).

b. **Clearly related to the thesis**. The sentences should all refer to the central idea, or thesis, of the paper.

c. **Coherent**. The sentences should be arranged in a logical manner and should follow a definite plan for development.

d. **Well-developed**. Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be adequately explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea.

How do I organize a paragraph?

25. There are many different ways to organize a paragraph. The organization you choose will depend on the controlling idea of the paragraph. Below are a few possibilities for organization, with brief examples.

a. **Narration.** Tell a story. Go chronologically, from start to finish.

b. **Description.** Provide specific details about what something looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or feels like. Organize spatially, in order of appearance, or by topic.

c. **Process.** Explain how something works, step by step. Perhaps follow a sequence—first, second, third.

d. **Classification.** Separate into groups or explain the various parts of a topic.

e. **Illustration.** Give examples and explain how those examples prove your point. (See the detailed example in the next section of this handout.)

5-Step Process to Paragraph Development

26. There are well accepted a 5-step process to building a paragraph. Each step of the process will include an explanation of the step and a bit of "model" text to illustrate how the step works. Our finished model paragraph will be about slave spirituals, the original songs that African Americans created during slavery. The model paragraph uses illustration (giving examples) to prove its point.

a. **Step 1. Decide on a Controlling Idea and Create a Topic Sentence.** Paragraph development begins with the formulation of the controlling idea. This idea directs the paragraph's development. Often, the controlling idea of a paragraph will appear in the form of a topic sentence. In some cases, you may need more than one sentence to express a paragraph's controlling idea. Here is the controlling idea for "model paragraph," expressed in a topic sentence:

Model controlling idea and topic sentence— Slave spirituals often had hidden double meanings.

b. **Step 2. Explain the Controlling Idea**. Paragraph development continues with an expression of the rationale or the explanation that the writer gives for how the reader should interpret the information presented in the idea statement or topic sentence of the paragraph. The writer explains his/her thinking about the main topic, idea, or focus of the paragraph. Here's the sentence that would follow the controlling idea about slave spirituals:

Model explanation—On one level, spirituals referenced heaven, Jesus, and the soul; but on another level, the songs spoke about slave resistance.

c. **Step 3. Give an Example (multiple examples)**. Paragraph development progresses with the expression of some type of support or evidence for the idea and the explanation that came before it. The example serves as a sign or representation of the relationship established in the idea and explanation portions of the paragraph. Here are two examples that we could use to illustrate the double meanings in slave spirituals:

Model example — Slaves even used songs like "Steal Away to Jesus (at midnight)" to announce to other slaves the time and place of secret, forbidden meetings.

d. **Step 4. Explain the Example(s)**. The next movement in paragraph development is an explanation of each example and its relevance to the topic sentence and rationale that were stated at the beginning of the paragraph. This explanation shows readers why you chose to use this/or these particular examples as evidence to support the major claim, or focus, in your paragraph. Continue the pattern of giving examples and explaining them until all points/examples that the writer deems necessary have been made and explained. NONE of your examples should be left unexplained. You might be able to explain the relationship between the example and the topic sentence in the same sentence which introduced the example. More often, however, you will need to explain that relationship in a separate sentence. Look at these explanations for the two examples in the slave spirituals paragraph:

Model explanation for example — When slaves sang this song, they could have been speaking of their departure from this life and their arrival in heaven; however, they also could have been describing their plans to leave the South and run, not to Jesus, but to the North.

e. **Step 5. Complete the Paragraph's Idea or Transition into the Next Paragraph**. The final movement in paragraph development involves tying up the loose ends of the paragraph and reminding the reader of the relevance of the information in this paragraph to the main or controlling idea of the paper. At this point, you can remind your reader about the relevance of the information that you just discussed in the paragraph. You might feel more comfortable, however, simply transitioning your reader to the next development in the next paragraph. Here's an example of a sentence that completes the slave spirituals paragraph:

Model sentence for completing a paragraph—What whites heard as merely spiritual songs, slaves discerned as detailed messages. The hidden meanings in spirituals allowed slaves to sing what they could not say.

ESSAY STRUCTURE

Basic Structure

27. The following is the basic essay structure or discernible pattern, which should help you plan your essay and organize your material, expanding the three elements that constitute any essay.

a. **Introduction. T**o identify the main issue(s), explain and justify the methods(s) of analysis to be use, and assess the quality of the evidence available Your introduction should:

(1) Comment on the title or topic of the essay

(2) Define or explain any difficult or ambiguous terms in the title; plus keywords

(3) Direct the reader by stating which aspects off the topic you intend to cover and why

(4) The introduction should be roughly 7-10% of the total length of your essay, generally one paragraph.

b. **Main Body** . Where the evidence is presented, examined, arguments put forward and supported or refuted. The main body of the essay should develop your argument or theme. Take each of your main points and support them with examples and illustrations. Break your materials down into paragraphs; one paragraph for each aspect of the topic. A paragraph may:

(1) Raise a particular issue, or

(2) Develop a particular issue.

c. **Developing Main Body**. The following are ways to develop your essay from one paragraph to the next, and common linking words for each.

(1) **Cause and Effect**. You can discuss the cause in one paragraph and the effect in the next one, or the other way round. In this case you are expressing a relationship or drawing a conclusion. Linking words: 'as a result', 'thus', 'therefore', 'consequently',' thus', 'for this reason', 'because of'.

(2) **Positive and Negative Aspects**. You can contrast the positive and negative aspects of something. You might discuss the positive aspects in one paragraph and the negative in the next. Linking words: 'but', 'however', 'on the other hand', 'although'.

(3) **Sequence of Events, i.e. before and after**. You can show the next step or the previous step to the event you are discussing. Linking words: 'then', 'after that', 'finally', 'ultimately', 'following', 'before', 'first', 'previously', 'firstly', ' ...secondly ', ..thirdly'.

(4) **Illustration**. You can illustrate or give an example of what you have been talking about. Linking words: 'for example', 'for instance', 'such as', 'that is'.

(5) **Extension**. You can extend an idea, add weight to your argument, give further examples. inking words: 'similarly', 'moreover', 'furthermore', 'in addition', 'not only'.

d. **Conclusion**. Where you sum up and draw the threads. Your conclusion should:
(1) Summarize your main ideas.
(2) Answer any specific questions which were asked, through your answer may be tentative.
(3) Draw a general conclusion from your argument.
(4) In your conclusion you may also, discuss the wider implications.
(5) You should not introduce any new arguments or information.
(6) The conclusion should make up about 7-8% of the total length of your essay.

Checking Essay

28. It is useful to check the essay for basic errors a day or two after writing it, if you have allowed time for this and you are not then tempted to start re-writing bits of it. Following questions must be answered for checking the essay:

a. Can you read it out loud without stumbling?

b. Does every word and action count? There should be a reason why a character acts or speaks in a certain way.
c. Is the series of events logical? Do they relate?
d. Is it clear what your goal or your main character's goal is throughout the piece of writing?
e. Are vivid/descriptive words used to describe characters and/or events?
f. Is your train of thought clear? Are there any tangents?
g. Do you use a variety of verbs throughout the piece? (Something instead of "SAID")
h. Is it wordy and redundant? Are you using the same words and phrases over and over again?
j. Is there a catchy introduction? Does the conclusion leave the reader thinking?
k. Do supporting details support only the topic sentence of that paragraph?
l. Are transitional devices used throughout?
m. Is there a strong hook, thesis and lead-in?
n. Is proper format followed throughout?
p. Are all sentences complete or are there sentence fragments?
q. Is a vivid mental picture created in the reader's mind?
r. Have you completed sentence expansion where necessary? (NO "HE RAN!")
s. Did you use a thesaurus?

REVISING THE WRITINGS

Content

29. For revising the contents of the writing the followings must be met:

a. Is the information complete? If not, what still needs to be added?

b. Is there too much information? If so, what information can be taken out?

c. Is the content original? Is there any plagiarism? Does the writer document words or ideas that are not their own? (See Using Outside Sources module.)

Organisation

30. For checking the logical organization of the contents followings must be met:

a. Do the ideas follow logically? If not, how could they be rearranged to create a more logical flow of information?

b. Does the introductory paragraph give the reader a clear sense of what to expect? If not, how could it be changed to do so?

c. Does the introduction gain the interest of the reader? If not, how could it have done so?

d. Does the introduction imply who the intended reader is? If so, who do you think the intended reader is? If not, what could be changed?

e. Does each paragraphs deal with one major idea and no more? If yes, indicate in a word, or two, what each of the paragraphs deals with? (Do this in the margin) If no, what needs to be changed?

f. Are there any ideas or paragraphs that seem out of place? If yes, what needs to be changed.

g. Does the concluding paragraph summarise the main points? If not, what were the main points? How could they be summarised?

h. If you are looking at a classmate's essay, how does their organisation differ from yours?

Development

31. Whether the paper has been developed logically or not, to check that the following must be answered:

a. Have ideas been developed fully? If not, what areas could be developed more? If you asked yourself the questions why or how while you were reading, and those questions are not answered later in the writing, there may be a need for more development.

b. What development strategies does the writer use? (e.g. statistics, extended illustrations, descriptions, comparisons)

c. Are the development strategies appropriate? If no, what would you suggest.

d. Does the writer vary the types of development in the writing? If not, what suggestions could be made to give the writing more variety in development?

e. Is the development appropriate for the kind of reader who will be reading this writing?

Language

32. The language or syntax must be checked with the following:

a. Is terminology correctly used? If not, how could this be changed?

b. Are there any word choice problems? If so, what suggestions could you make?

c. Examine the verbs the writer uses. Are they used correctly? Could you suggest more descriptive/interesting verbs?

d. Is the language original (i.e., not plagiarized)? If not, what parts need to be paraphrased and then documented?

e. Are there any passive sentences that should be rewritten in the active voice? If so, which ones?

f. Are there any word order problems? If so, where and how could they be rewritten?

g. Are transitional words (cohesive devises) used correctly? If not, which and how could transitions be improved?

h. Can any short choppy sentences be combined? If so which ones?

j. Can any long sentences be rewritten to improve clarity? If so, which ones?

k. Do all pronouns have clear antecedents? If not, which ones are unclear?

l. What tone was used in the writing? (e.g., a neutral tone, formal, informal) Was it appropriate? If not, what needs to be changed?

m. Is there any repetition that can be removed? If so, where?

n. Are there any parts of the writing that could be rewritten for precision or clarity? If so, where and why?

Grammar

33. Check for the following types of grammatical problems:

a. Subject-verb agreement

b. Tense problems

c. Articles

Final question

34. The final question to be answered - What did you like most about the writing and why?

Source: http://www.diku.dk/hjemmesider/studerende/myth/EOS/strunk.html#III

TASK –5

PRÉCIS AND SUMMARIES

Introduction

1. Précis is a condensed version of an original paper or papers. It may be written for one or more of the following purposes :

   a. To give the gist of a long document.

   b. To clarify obscure or involved argument in an original document .

   c. To concentrate the essentials contained in a series of papers.

2. A précis must not alter the sense or argument of the original. Should a staff officer wish to comment, his views should be attached as an annex to the précis.

3. A summary is a concise statement of salient points from a file or series of papers for information, ready reference or record. It may be in note or tabular form.

4. A 3-centimetre right-hand margin is normally drawn in on the paper to enable the reader to make notes and flag.

Précis

5. **Principles**

   a. **Content**. A précis should be accurate, brief and clear. It should contain only the important features of the original, presented in a readily understandable form.

   b. **Impartiality**. Impartiality is especially important and the original author's meaning must not be coloured or distorted.

   c. **Style**. A series of extracts is not a précis. The same words or terms as the original need not be used but its tone and force must be retained.

   d. **Arrangement and Length.** The essentials of the original may be rearranged to achieve brevity and clarity, and the précis should read smoothly and logically. It may not be necessary to reduce all passages in proportion to their original length; some long passages may be reduced to a sentence, while others may bear very little abbreviation. A précis should be as short as possible for its purpose. As a guide it should be between a fifth and a third of the length of the original.

6. **Method.** The writer of a précis should consider the purpose for which it is required and then :

a. Read through the original carefully, several time if necessary, to establish the tone of the whole document and identify the essentials.

b. List the essential points, where necessary rearrange them in a logical order and then group them under suitable headings.

c. Write the précis from these notes in his own words, but using words or phrases from the original when they are appropriate. A précis should normally be in impersonal form. The tense of the original can usually be retained, but the past tense must be used for reported speech.

d. Revise the précis. the questions to be answered are :

(1) Have all the essential points been included and are they in a logical order ?

(2) Does the précis read smoothly ?

(3) Is it impartial and does it convey exactly the meaning of the original?

(4) Does it preserve the original's tone and force ?

(5) Is it suitably brief ?

7. **Layout.** The layout of a précis conforms to that of normal rules of Service writing. The subject heading normally takes the form :

'PRECIS OF A (paper, article etc) ON (subject) BY (author of the original) FROM (source) DATED (date of original)'.

SUMMARIES

Characteristics of a Summary

8. The purpose of a summary is to give a reader a condensed and objective account of the main ideas and features of a text. Usually, a summary has between one and three paragraphs or one hundred to three hundred words, depending on the length and complexity of the original essay and the intended audience and purpose. Typically, a summary will do the following:

a. **Cite the author and title of the text**. In some cases, the place of publication or the context for the essay may also be included.

b. **Indicate the main ideas of the text.** Accurately representing the main ideas (while omitting the less important details) is the major goal of the summary.

c. **Use direct quotations of key words, phrases, or sentences.** Quote the text directly for a few key ideas; paraphrase the other important ideas (that is, express the ideas in your own words.)

d. **Include author tags.** To remind the reader that you are summarizing the author and the text, not giving your own ideas. . . .

e. **Avoid summarizing specific examples or data** unless they help illustrate the thesis or main idea of the text.

f. **Report the main ideas as objectively as possible.** Do not include your reactions; save them for your response.

Summary in Armed Forces

9. The purpose of a summary is to record or present the salient points from a file or a series of papers. It may be in tabular form. The original documents or files may be attached and reference made to the relevant sections in the summary; such sections are flagged and references to the flags are made in the text. Personal comments should be attached as an annex. An example of a summary of a file is at Annex A to this task.

Annex :

A. Example of a Summary of a File.

ANNEX 'A' TO TASK-5

EXAMPLE OF A SUMMARY OF A FILE

RESTRICTED

G/481/1/Air

SUMMARY FOR D ENGG ON THE INTRO OF THE TYPE 99 MK 1 CAMERA

DT	SUMMARY	ENCL
27 Apr 90	1. Air HQ told us that the Type 99 Mk 1 Camera was being intro for sqn use soon.	E1 (Flag 1) (1)
1 May 90	2. COAS was anxious to see picture pro by the new camera ASP. He asked this dte to arrange for all photo pers to be instr in loading and instl techs.	M3 (Flag 2) (1) E2 (Flag 3)
3-7 May 90	3. SO 2 (Tech) wrote to all bases and 4 days later, sent them instr diags.	E3 (Flag 4)
10 May 90	4. BAF BSR phoned to say that the camera shutter was defective.	M4 (Flag 5)
11-14 May 90	5. Similar reports fol form all bases in the gp.	E4 (Flags 6, 7)
15-16 May 90	6. SO 2 (Tech) called a conf of all base photo offrs at which a poss remedy was agreed upon.	E5 (Flag 8)
17 May 90	7. SO 2 (Tech) wrote a tech report on the shutter defect and incl his suggested remedy.	E6 (Flag 9)
18 May 90	8. You approved the report and it was sent to Air HQ the same day, but in the meantime	

SULAIMAN MIA
Sqn Ldr
SO 2 (Tech)

Jun 90

RESTRICTED

Note :

1. In this example the prefix 'E' refers to enclosures and the prefix 'M' to minutes.

TASK-6

MOST COMMON ERRORS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

1. Given below are sentences illustrating the most common errors in writing. The examples are given with incorrect constructions and then in each case have added samples of tutor descriptions of the error; such descriptions can be more helpful for writers at times than formal names.

1st Case: Adjective/adverb confusion

2. **Incorrect version**: John felt badly when he received a low grade on the final examination.

3. **Explanation**. The statement means the mechanism that allows you to feel is broken. Feel, smell, taste—the word following these verbs describes the subject (a noun or pronoun),not the verb. "Badly" here refers to the verb "felt," which implies that John's ability to feel is impaired.

4. **Corrected version**: John felt bad when he received a low grade on the final examination.

2nd Case: Pronoun case

5. **Incorrect version**: There are no secrets between Mary and I.

6. **Explanation**. 'Mary and me'—me is the object of the preposition between; prepositions are followed by the object form of pronouns.
You should be able to take out the words "Mary and" and still be able to read the sentence.
Cut out the name; would you use I or me?

7. **Corrected version**: There are no secrets between Mary and me.

3rd Case: Subject-verb agreement

8. **Incorrect version**: One of the many students who come from the Scandinavian countries are enrolled in my composition class.

9. **Explanation**. One is singular; are is plural. A singular subject (one) should be followed by a singular verb (is, not are). Prepositional phrases (of the many students) are not important part of the sentence when looking at verb agreement; the main idea (S + V) is One is enrolled.

10. **Corrected version**: One of the many students who come from the Scandinavian countries is enrolled in my composition class.

4th Case: Double negative

11. **Incorrect version**: Shafiq can't hardly get out of bed for his 8:00 class.

12. **Explanation**. There are two negatives in a row—can't hardly. "Hardly" is already negative—either He can hardly or He can't. The sentence literally (or mathematically) means that Shafiq can easily get out of bed; two negatives = a positive

13. **Corrected version**: Shafiq can hardly get out of bed for his 8:00 class.

5th Case: Dangling construction

14. **Incorrect version**: Entering the bakery, the smell of fresh pastries and coffee overwhelmed her.

15. **Explanation**.It sounds like "the smell of fresh pastries and coffee" is "entering the bakery." As a reader, I am unclear as to what was entering the bakery—a woman or a smell? The actor of the sentence must be at the beginning of the independent clause.

16. **Corrected version**: Entering the bakery, she was overwhelmed by the smell of fresh pastries and coffee.

6th Case: Verb tense shift

17. **Incorrect version**: In Strindberg's Miss Julie an aristocratic woman pays a nighttime visit to the servants' quarters and slept with the family valet.

18. **Explanation**.Pick a verb tense and stick with it; present tense is the standard for writing about literature. Avoid verb tense changes—The woman pays/ The woman sleeps. Verb tenses should stay consistent within a sentence.

19. **Corrected version**: In Strindberg's Miss Julie an aristocratic woman pays a nighttime visit to the servants' quarters and sleeps with the family valet.

7th Case: Sentence fragment

20. **Incorrect version**: The Senator voted for the health care bill to the delight of the opposition. Although he had to admit that there were certain provisions with which he disagreed.

21. **Explanation**. Although indicates that the segment following should be joined to the main clause. Things that sound like afterthoughts or additions are rarely complete sentences. These two ideas can be combined to form one complex sentence; otherwise, the second clause is a fragment.

22. **Corrected version**: The Senator voted for the health care bill to the delight of the opposition although he had to admit there were certain provisions with which he disagreed.

8thCase : Wrong verb form

23. **Incorrect version**: Dairy farmers should of received a larger subsidy from the Federal government because of the increased cost of operation.

24. **Explanation**. This sentence should read "should have" because "of" is a phonetic way of saying "have" in spoken English. Should've = should have. "Of" is a preposition while "should have" is a helping or auxiliary verb.

25. **Corrected version**: Dairy farmers should have received a larger subsidy from the Federal government because of the increased cost of operation.

9th Case: Comma splice

26. **Incorrect version**: Anne rode her bicycle to the meeting in the -40 temperatures, everyone else either drove or stayed home.

27. **Explanation**. A comma doesn't correctly join two sentences (or two independent clauses). You have two complete sentences here; use a semi-colon or a period rather than a comma. There is no putting two sentences together with just a comma.

28. **Corrected version**: Anne rode her bicycle to the meting in the -40 temperatures; everyone else either drove or stayed home.

10th Case: Run-on sentence

29. **Incorrect version**: Warren and Alice spent at least $5000 on their Hawaiian vacation the trip could have been less expensive if they had stayed at hotels away from the beach.

30. **Explanation**.A new subject and a new verb after "vacation" – a new sentence. There are two complete sentences here not separated by punctuation. This sentence contains two complete thoughts without the necessary punctuation.

31. **Corrected version**: Warren and Alice spent at least $5000 on their Hawaiian vacation; the trip could have been less expensive if they had stayed at hotels away from the beach.

11th Case: (Lack of) Parallel construction

32. **Incorrect version**: Ellen quit her job not only because of the long commute but also because she did not respect her supervisor.

33. **Explanation**. If you want to use not only … but also, the word group following each part (phrase or clause) must be parallel in construction. Because + Prepositional phrase is grammatically different from because + S + V. Match the form of items joined by coordinating conjunctions or phrases.

34. **Corrected version**: Ellen quit her job not only because she had a long commute but also because she did not respect her supervisor.

Conclusion

35. The English language is rich and complex. There are many confusing aspects to the rules of grammar and spelling. Many words are quite similar but have very different meanings. It is almost impossible to avoid common errors in English. There are so many rules to remember and so many confusing words. However, if someone is careful about the rules discussed above is likely to prevent common mistakes those we normally do.