
UNIT 9 PRESENTATION SKILLS-II

Structure

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- 9.10 Summary
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9.0 OBJECTIVES

In the previous Unit the focus was on introductions and outlines. This unit takes you forward and introduces you to

- commonly used structures of presentations
- using visual aids
- language associated with visual aids
- summaries and conclusions
- question/answer sessions at the end of the presentations
- practicing presentations

9.1 WARM UP

Engaging the interest of the audience is central to the success of a presentation. Read these statements about the audience. To what extent do you agree with them? Discuss with a friend or a colleague at the Study Centre.

- Effective presenters recognize that communication is both intellectual and emotional. Organizing your ideas is part of the task. The other is to gain and maintain attention.



- Listeners listen only 25 to 50% of the time.
- The audience will forgive a lot if the speaker is enthusiastic. But don't confuse enthusiasm with loudness.
- Compose for the Ear, not for the Eye.

9.2 READING: STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

Structures of Presentations

Once you know what you want to say, you need to consolidate the materials into a meaningful message. When organizing your ideas begin by placing your topic in context.

The commonly used structures in presentations are:

1. Topical: This is when you have several ideas to present and one idea seems naturally to precede the other. This is one of the most common types of patterns, and it is especially useful for informative presentations.
2. Chronological: This uses time sequence for a framework. This structure is useful in informative and persuasive presentations, both of which require background information.
3. Classification: Puts things into categories. For example you might want to talk about three aspects of a product- finance, marketing and production.
4. Problem/Solution: This is used mostly for persuasive presentations. The first part of the speech outlines a problem and the second part presents a solution.
5. Cause/Effect can be used for persuasive speeches. The first part describes the cause of a problem and the second describes its effect.

Check Your Progress 1

The structure of a presentation is outlined at the outset. Here are three such outlines. Match them with the appropriate structures listed above. Check your answers with the Answer key.

- A. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I'm here to talk to you about lack of efficiency in the Marketing division. Firstly, I will spell out specific areas where there has been laxity.

Secondly, I will share with you what I believe to be the reasons for low performance in this division. Thirdly, I will suggest solutions for tackling this problem. At the end of my presentation we will have a discussion where you can express your views about the problem.

- B. This morning I am going to talk to you about our new policy on personal loans. I will begin my presentation by outlining the main features of this policy. I will then go on to highlight the major employee benefits of this new policy. Next I will talk you through the new procedure for availing these loans. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.
- C. I'm here to make a presentation on Netlinks Worldwide. I shall begin with a brief history of the company, after which I will present a brief profile of its present status. Next I'll go on to talk to you about our major products and services. I will then focus on specific products and services which could meet your needs and enhance your output. I will conclude my presentation with a 10 minute film on useful packages for your company. In all, my presentation will take 30 minutes.

9.3 STUDY SKILLS: VISUAL AIDS

Using Visual Aids



A variety of visual aids like flip charts, line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, tables, diagrams, photographs, etc. can be used for presentations. Visual aids are commonly used in presentations to present information which is complex or statistical in nature.

Visual aids can make a presentation more interesting and easier to understand. They also help you to cut down on the amount of talking you have to do.

However, you must ensure that your visuals are relevant, appropriate and clear. You must never overload them with information. Effective presenters introduce and highlight visual information briefly and clearly, making

sure they allow their audience time to absorb the information.

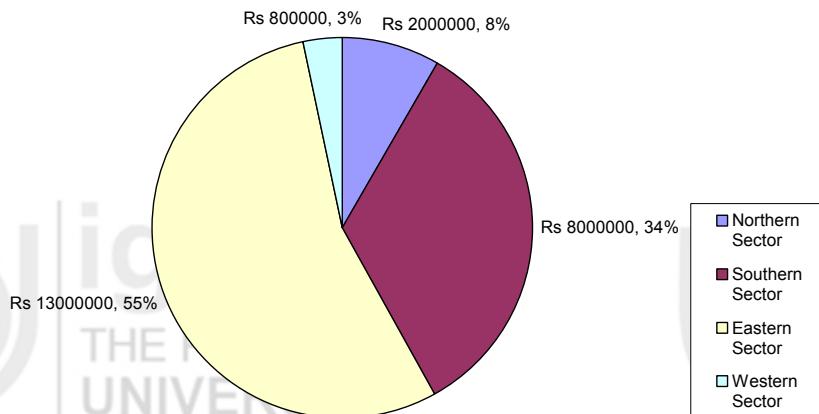
Use visuals to reinforce and clarify, and not to overwhelm the audience.

Here are three samples of visuals commonly used for presentations – a pie chart, a table and a bar graph. In order to be able to talk about them you need language which is specifically used to describe visuals.

Let us recap the useful expressions for introducing visuals which you learnt in the last unit and apply them to the given visuals. The expressions are highlighted in bold. In addition, you will also be introduced to some more formulaic language useful for describing visuals.

- I. **I'd like to show you** a pie chart that will give you a clear picture of our sales in the four sectors in the last quarter. **As you can see**.....

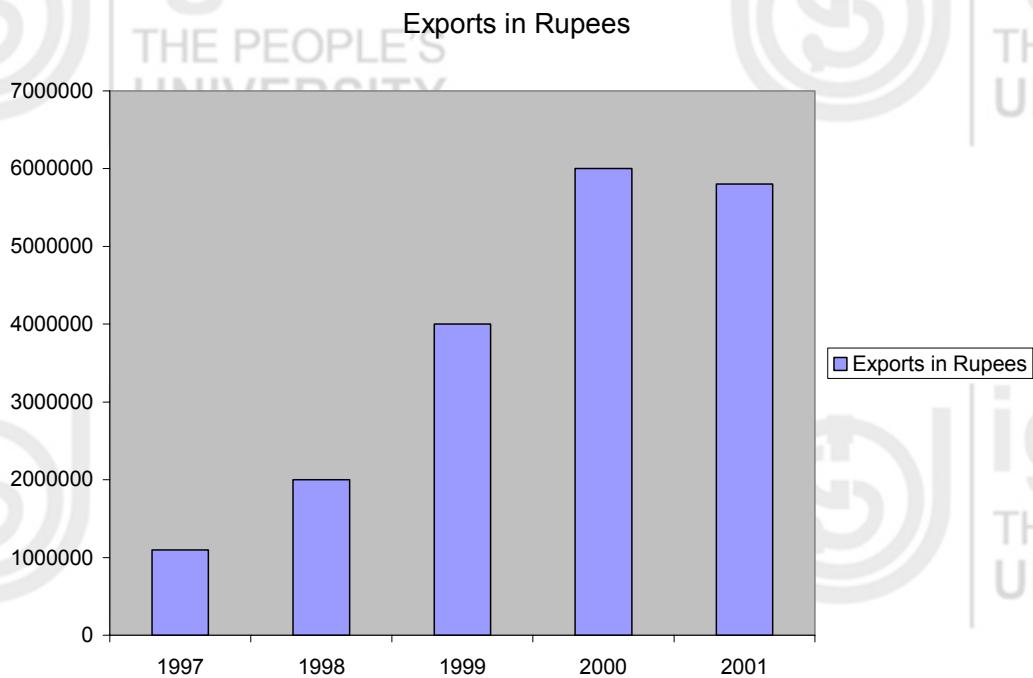
Sectorwise Sales



II. Have a look at this table. It shows the number of students enrolled for our different courses in the last five years. As you will notice the demand for our.....

| Courses | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| General English | 200 | 180 | 160 | 100 | 50 |
| Business English | 35 | 80 | 140 | 140 | 210 |
| English for Information Technology | 20 | 60 | 150 | 80 | 60 |
| English for the Hotel Industry | 40 | 45 | 35 | 45 | 50 |

III. This bar graph shows / represents our exports in the last six years.



1. **Here we can see.....**
2. **Let's look at this.....**
3. **As you can see in this bar graph**

Check Your Progress 2

How would you talk about the visuals given in exercises I, II and III? Practice and record your presentation. Now listen to the three sample tape scripts.

Listen to the tape scripts again and write down the terms used to describe trends in the graph. Check these with the tape script given in the key where these have been underlined for you.

9.4 ENDING THE PRESENTATION

Summaries and Conclusions

Make sure you summarize.

A summary restates the main points and emphasizes what the audience must remember. It should be brief and must not contain any new information.

Create an Effective Conclusion.

Don't just present data or summarized results and leave the audience to draw its own conclusions.

You need to state the logical consequences of what you have said. The conclusion may often contain recommendations. However, the conclusion must also be brief.

Read the two texts that follow: 1 is the summary, and 2 is the conclusion. In the summary we highlight the salient points, while in the conclusions we give recommendations.

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. I'd like to end by emphasizing the main points <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contrary to our expectations our exports have not risen• This is mainly due to our inability to handle foreign buyers• Our Marketing and Sales division has faced various difficulties in overcoming cultural and communication barriers | 2. So what do we conclude from this? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We must have specific training in communication skills for those who are dealing with our foreign customers• We must also give them exposure to the culture of our foreign buyers by sending them to International Trade Fairs• Encourage overseas visits for those who deal directly with the foreigners |
|--|--|

Questions? Discussion



During a presentation you are required to give the audience a chance to ask questions. Your policy on questions must be stated right at the outset. While presenting the outline you should let the audience know whether they can interrupt you with questions in the course of the presentations or you would like them to ask questions at the end of your presentation. Alternatively you can invite the audience to a discussion.

Remember that when members of the audience ask you questions, it means that they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat this as an opportunity to get your message across better.

Here are some helpful clues for handling questions:

- try to anticipate questions and prepare responses in advance
- rehearse answers to difficult questions
- listen very carefully – avoid the temptation to interrupt
- make sure you understand the question - paraphrase it if necessary; repeat it if needed
- give yourself time to think
- **be Honest:** if you can't answer the question, say so
- keep control over the audience and don't allow any chaos
- ensure that you entertain only relevant questions
- keep a lookout for time – don't allow the question /discussion session to linger interminably
- **be polite**
- don't forget to thank the audience at the end

Check Your Progress 3

Here are possible ways of dealing with some of the situations mentioned in the clues above. Can you match these with the appropriate clues? Confirm your answers by looking at the Key.

- i. If I understood you correctly, you want to know whether this method of working has been used by any other organization. Is that correct?
-

- ii. I'm afraid I don't see the connection.
-

- iii. To be honest, I don't have that information with me.
-

- iv. Can we ensure that we speak one at a time please?
-

- v. I'm afraid that's all we have time for today.
-

- vi. Thank you for coming and for being such enthusiastic participants.
-

9.5 LANGUAGE FOCUS: TALKING ABOUT INCREASE AND DECREASE

Most visuals used for presentations represent some kind of change or trend – an increase or a decrease. Some of them make comparisons. Be clear about whether you need to talk about the quantum of increase / decrease or the speed at which the increase / decrease has taken place. This will help you to choose the right language.

Here is language that can help you to describe these accurately and appropriately.

When you wish to describe the quantum of increase or decrease you could use the following expressions:

1. There was a **marginal fall / rise** in sales or
Sales **rose / fell marginally**.
2. There was a **nominal increase / decrease** in expenditure on overheads or
Expenditure on overheads **increased / decreased nominally**
3. There was a **considerable improvement** in savings or
Savings **improved considerably**.
4. There was a **significant rise** in production or
Production **rose / went up significantly**.

Words like **slight, marked, dramatic** are also used to describe changes or differences.

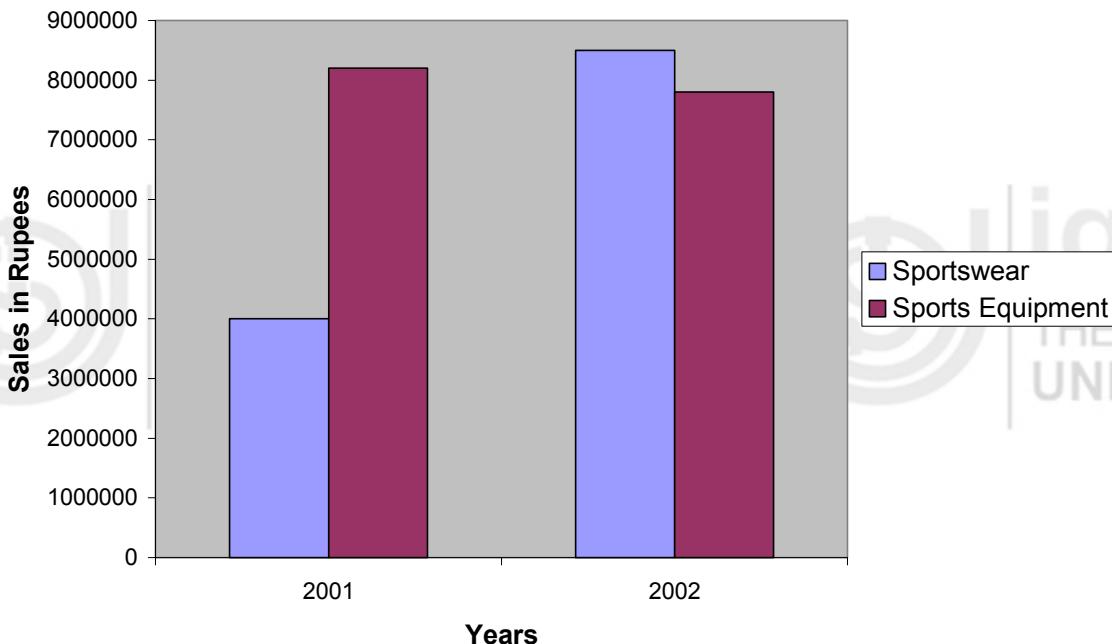
The speed of increase / decrease can be talked about with the help of these expressions:

1. There was a **slow increase** in the sale of televisions or
The sale of televisions **increased slowly**.
2. There was a **gradual improvement** in the interest rates or
The interest rates **improved gradually**.
3. There has been a **steady improvement** in the skilled labour situation over the last five years
or
The labour situation has **improved steadily** over the last five years.
4. There has been a **rapid rise** in the cell phone market **or**
The cell phone market has **risen rapidly**.
5. There was a **quick decline** in the share market.
The share market **declined / deteriorated / went down quickly**.

Check Your Progress 4

Here is a visual on sales figures of sportswear and sports equipment in the last two years. Complete this write up on the visual making use of suitable words from above:

Sales Figures of Sportswear & Sports Equipment



The bar graph shows the comparative sales figures of Sportswear and sports equipment in the years 2001 and 2002. In the year 2001 our income from sale of sportswear was _____ of the income from sale of sports equipment. However, there was a _____ of more than 40000000 in the sale of sportswear in the year 2002. On the other hand, the sale of sports equipment _____ in 2002.

Check your answers with the key. Remember that a variety of expressions can be used to describe this graph. What is given in the key is one possible way of doing this.

9.6 GRAMMAR: PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions play an extremely important role in talking about visuals. If you say '*The sales rose to Rs. 300000*' instead of saying '*The sales rose by Rs 300000*', the entire meaning of your text will be changed. So it is very important to use the right prepositions.

Check Your Progress 5

Complete this text by inserting the appropriate prepositions from the box. You may use some of the prepositions more than once:

| | | |
|----|----|------|
| to | on | from |
| at | by | of |

I'd like us to look _____ this part of the graph in more detail. As you will notice, we started this year _____ a weak note with sales at the _____ Rs. 51000 mark. However, as you can see, sales rose dramatically by the end of the first quarter _____ Rs. 51000 _____ Rs. 100000, which means they rose _____ Rs. 490000 – an increase _____ almost 100%. I would also like to draw your attention _____ our performance in the second quarter where the sales have dropped marginally _____ Rs. 700000. If we don't focus our attention _____ the northern sector, chances are that we may have a further decline in our sales.

9.7 LISTENING: PODIUM PANIC

Before doing a listening task, you must take care of the following:

- See that your equipment is in order
- Read through the questions quickly
- Listen to the tape and answer the questions-as much as you can.
- Listen again, to complete answering as well as to check any mistakes.

Check Your Progress 6

Listen to this audio on podium panic and answer the questions that follow. Remember to choose your answers on the basis of the logic used by the speaker.

- i. The speaker suggests that
 - a. almost all speakers suffer from fright
 - b. few speakers suffer from fright
 - c. fright can be totally overcome
- ii. The audience is forgiving when your mistakes are

- a. because of inadequate preparation
 - b. out of nervousness
 - c. few
- iii. Sharing your fears with friends helps you to
- a. speak better
 - b. relax and overcome your anxiety
 - c. find solutions to your problems
- iv. Learning your introduction helps you to
- a. make a good first impression
 - b. to control the audience better
 - c. to feel more confident

9.8 SPEAKING

Plan a complete presentation with outline, introduction, the body - which must include at least one visual, and the conclusion. Also don't forget the question /answer session. The topic could be one that is relevant to your company or interests. In case you can't decide about a topic on your own you may choose one of these:

1. Your Favourite sport
2. Holidays
3. Tourism
4. The Structure of your Company / Department
5. Training facilities in your company
6. Customer service
7. Overcoming job stress

Make the presentation before your friends / study partners and ask them to give you a feedback in the following areas:

1. Content
2. Structure
3. Rapport with audience
4. Body language
5. The quality and use of visual aids
6. Language – grammar & vocabulary

Alternatively, record your presentation. Listen to it and assess yourself on the basis of the above mentioned criteria. Take it to the Study Centre, play it to your colleagues for their comments.

9.9 PRONUNCIATION : EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANT WORDS IN CONTEXT

Stressing the right words is an important aspect of Presentation Skills.

Can you underline the words that you think should be stressed more in the given sentences?

1. Sales have increased from last year. But the profits have hardly moved at all.
2. It's hard to enter the Middle East market. But its harder still to break into the European market.
3. There are three points I'd like to make. And all three are about our recent advertising campaign.
4. We haven't made big gains yet. But what we've achieved is quite significant.
5. We've made inroads into the East zone. But the North zone is still lagging behind.
6. Tourist facilities in the region have improved considerably. But we still have a long way to go.
7. Better training facilities are not just important. They are an absolute must.
8. Customers have a right to expect follow up. We are the ones who have failed them
9. The market may be growing. But our market share certainly isn't.
10. We need to give more paid leave to our employees. That's the only way to ensure they have adequate time to distress.

9.10 SUMMARY

In this unit, we further developed the ideas we had introduced in the previous unit on Presentations. In the Reading Section we introduced you to the most commonly used structure of Presentations.

In the middle of a Presentation, we often need to use visual aids, especially when the information is complex or statistical in nature. In the section on Study Skills, we give you language which helps you in introducing and talking through pie charts, tables and bar graphs. We also show you ways of ending a Presentation. This would include a recap of the salient points, some recommendations on given situations and the fielding of questions with politeness and honesty.

In the section: Language Focus and Grammar, we have again emphasized on language used in visual aids.

In the Listening section, we have turned to the psychological frame of mind of the Presenter. In the Speaking section, we encourage you to write and practice your own Presentation.

9.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Goodale, M. *Professional Presentations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Hollett, V. *Business Opportunities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

9.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Reading: Structure of Presentation**Check Your Progress 1**

- A. 4 Problem - solution
- B. 1 Topical
- C. 2 Chronological

**Study Skills: Visual Aids
Using Visual Aids****Check Your Progress 2**

Tape scripts

- I. As you can see, the Eastern sector registered the highest sales amounting to Rs 13000000, which was followed by the Southern sector at Rs 8000000. These two alone account for 89% of our sales. The sales figures of the Western and Northern regions are extremely worrying. The western sector's sales figures were disappointing at Rs.2000000 while the Northern sector performed dismally with just 3% of total sales in the last quarter. This is a matter of serious concern and we.....(fade out).
- II. As you will notice the demand for our Business English courses has seen a quick an phenomenal rise in the five years. On the other hand, the registration for our General English course which was the most popular in 1999, has declined dramatically to 1/4th by 2003. The English for Information Technology which peaked at 140 in 2001, has declined surprisingly. This is amazing because the number of students enroling for the IT courses is on the rise. We must see how we can promote this course more aggressively. The number of candidates for the Hotel Industry course has been fluctuating between 40 and 50 in the last five years. In keeping with these trends
- III. As you can see in this bar graph, we've had a steady and fairly dramatic rise in our exports from just Rs 1100000 in 1997 to Rs 6000000 in 2000. However, there was a slight drop in 2001. We now need to ensure that.....(fade out)

Questions / Discussion**Check Your Progress 3**

- i. If I understood you correctly, you want to know whether this method of working has been used by any other organization. Is that correct?
Answer: make sure you understand the question - paraphrase it if necessary; repeat it if needed
- ii. I'm afraid I don't see the connection.
Answer: Ensure that you entertain only relevant questions
- iii. To be honest, I don't have that information with me.
Answer: Be Honest: if you can't answer the question, say so
- iv. Can we ensure that we speak one at a time please?
Answer: Keep control over the audience and don't allow any chaos
- v. I'm afraid that's all we have time for today.

Answer: Keep a lookout for time – don't allow the question /discussion session to linger interminably

- vi. Thank you for coming and for being such enthusiastic participants.
Answer : Don't forget to thank the audience at the end

Language Focus: Talking about Increase or Decrease

Check Your Progress 4

The bar graph shows the comparative sales figures of Sportwear and sports equipment in the years 2001 and 2002. In the year 2001 our income from sale of sportswear was **half** of the income from sale of sports equipment. However, there was a **dramatic increase** of more than 40000000 in the sale of sportswear in the year 2002. On the other hand, the sale of sports equipment **fell marginally** in 2002.

Grammar: Prepositions

Check Your Progress 5

Complete this text by inserting the appropriate prepositions:

I'd like us to look **at** this part of the graph in more detail. As you will notice, we started this year **on** a weak note with sales at the Rs 51000 mark. However, as you can see, sales rose dramatically by the end of the first quarter **from** Rs 51000 **to** Rs 100000, which means they rose **by** Rs 490000 – an increase **of** almost 100%. I would also like to draw your attention **to** our performance in the second quarter where the sales have dropped marginally **to** Rs 700000. If we don't focus our attention **on** the northern sector, chances are that we may have a further decline in our sales.

Listening: Podium Panic

Tape script

Everyone experiences stage fright, speech anxiety, or talking terror. Surveys show that fear of speaking in front of groups is one of the greatest fears people have. Some surveys find people actually claiming that the thought of giving a speech is more frightening than falling off a cliff, financial difficulties, snakes, and even death.

I'd like to share with you some techniques people use for coping with fright. Remember that your audience understands your nervousness; they know what you are feeling and will forgive it; similarly they will forgive honest mistakes.

Also nervousness is usually invisible; most will not notice the small changes in your voice or occasional mistakes; most speakers who describe themselves as nervous appear confident and calm to the audience.

All you need to do is be yourself; let the real you come through. Don't be afraid to hesitate when you speak, but just make sure you pause at the right places. A certain amount of hesitation is quite natural.

You can help yourself further by beginning in your comfort zone; practice with friends; share your fears with them.

Another way to counter fright is to begin with a slow, well-prepared introduction. Memorize your introduction, so that when you begin you will feel confident and in control. Also ensure that you have a confident and clear conclusion.

However, the most important thing is to be well prepared and practice.

Check Your Progress - 6

- i. a
- ii. b
- iii. b
- iv. c

1.9 Pronunciation: Emphasizing the important words in context

1. Sales have increased from last year. But the profits have hardly moved at all.
2. It's hard to enter the Middle East market. But its harder still to break into the European market.
3. There are three points I'd like to make. And all three are about our recent advertising campaign.
4. We haven't made big gains yet. But what we've achieved is quite significant.
5. We've made inroads into the East zone. But the North zone is still lagging behind.
6. Tourist facilities in the region have improved considerably. But we still have a long way to go.
7. Better training facilities are not just important. They are an absolute must.
8. Customers have a right to expect follow up. We are the ones who have failed them.
9. The market may be growing. But our market share certainly isn't.
10. We need to give more paid leave to our employees. That's the only way to ensure they have adequate time to distress.

UNIT 10 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Warm up
- 10.2 Reading
- 10.3 Language Focus: Idiomatic Expressions
- 10.4 Study Skills: Process of Negotiations
- 10.5 Grammar: Phrasal Verbs
- 10.6 Listening: Effective Negotiations
- 10.7 Speaking
- 10.8 Writing
- 10.9 Summary
- 10.10 Suggested Readings
- 10.11 Answer to Check Your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit you will learn -

- the essentials of successful negotiations
- the stages of negotiation
- how to negotiate successfully
- the language of negotiations
- how to follow up an oral negotiation with a letter

10.1 WARM UP



Negotiations can be a nightmare if they are not handled properly.

What do you think makes a good negotiator?

Discuss with a friend or a fellow student at the Study Centre.

10.2 READING

Although ‘negotiation’ may be intimidating, this is a skill we have already used to albeit unconsciously, and more times than we realize. How many times have you been in one of the following situations? You want to convince your boss for a salary increase; you want to convince a son or something they may not

sound rather which most of some degree probably many. How many or more of the need to ask increase; you daughter to do what you wish to do.



The stakes may be different in each case, but the common thread running through them is the need for negotiation skills. Negotiating is an activity that all managers engage in to some degree, perhaps dozens of times every day.

Typically, negotiation takes place informally: on the telephone, at a quickly called meeting, or during an impromptu conversation with someone in the lobby. Sometimes negotiation can take place abruptly, when you are least prepared, and be concluded in a matter of seconds.

Regardless of the form negotiation takes, it is very important to have a well-developed set of negotiation skills in order to run your business successfully. Even if you feel you already have a talent for negotiating, there are always ways to develop and continuously improve your negotiation skills.

To develop these skills and use them effectively, you must know:

- what negotiation means and the various forms it can take
- that negotiating, in the fullest sense, means forging long-term relationships
- the role that the individual personalities play in negotiating

Here is a list of qualities that a negotiator must have.

Good negotiators:

- i. Create a friendly atmosphere
- ii. Build up good rapport with the individual / party that they are negotiating with
- iii. Are firm about their stand
- iv. Keep the interest of both sides in mind
- v. Look for immediate gains
- vi. Are willing to make concessions
- vii. Are persuasive
- viii. Are articulate
- ix. Are good listeners
- x. Frequently check to confirm that everything has been correctly understood by both parties

Check Your Progress 1

1. Here are some statements that are based on the above given text. State whether they are True or False
 - i. We negotiate consciously all the time.
 - ii. One often has to negotiate for a salary increase.
 - iii. Negotiation skills have to be formally learnt.
 - iv. Regardless of individual differences we all negotiate in the same way.

2. **Can you pick out any attributes that should not be included in the list of qualities all negotiators must have? Check your answers with the Answer key.**

10.3 LANGUAGE FOCUS: IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Study the idiomatic expressions in the speech balloons and see if you can relate them to Negotiating situations.

I'm sorry but I don't see eye to eye with you!

I'm willing to come half way!

You are our most valued customer!
Have it your way!

I'm afraid that's as far as we can go!

We'd be happy to accommodate you!

Aren't we splitting hair here?

Check Your Progress 2

1. Match the meanings with the expressions in the balloons.

- i. We are willing to make part of the adjustments
- ii. We have already stated to what extent we can accommodate your point of view.
- iii. We are willing to do anything you want us to do.
- iv. Are we not being unnecessarily over critical.
- v. We will adjust with what you say gladly.
- vi. We have a totally different point of view about the matter.

2. Answer the following questions:

- i. Would these expressions occur more in some cultures than others?
.....
.....

- ii. Do they represent attitudes that are too soft or too rigid? Which ones of these suggest rigid attitudes?

- iii. Would they be appropriate for a letter or for a phone conversation? Which of these would you use in a letter?
- iv. Which ones of these could lead to good business relations, and which ones might backfire?

10.4 STUDY SKILLS: PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

There are four main phases in a negotiation:

1. **The preparation phase:** this is where you identify your purpose and set your priorities. You must also decide in advance what is the lowest deal or offer that you will be willing to accept. Have all information that you are likely to need available with you.
2. **The debating phase:** negotiation is a process of give and take where you give a little and get a little at the same time. Here you try to find out what the person or party you are negotiating with wants. During this phase you must state what you want but do not spell out all the conditions yet. Use open questions and be willing to listen to the other person too. Try to find out how much the other person is willing to move from his/her stand.
3. **The proposal stage:** This is where you suggest the concessions you are willing to make. Formulate your proposals with *if....., then.....*. Listen to the other side's proposals too. Build on common ground.
4. **The bargaining phase:** This is the part where you spell out what it is that you will actually trade. Accept and confirm details agreed upon by repeating them. Summarize the proposal in a few words. End positively by looking ahead.

Check Your Progress 3

Match the formulaic language on the right with the different phases of the negotiation on the left.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------------|---|---|
| i. | Welcoming | a | That seems acceptable |
| ii. | Stating your aim | b | We should meet again soon. |
| iii. | Bargaining | c | I don't think it would be possible for us to..... |
| iv. | Making concessions | d | Can we run through the main points again? |
| v. | Accepting | e | I'd like to begin with..... |
| vi. | Rejecting | f | I'd just like to check what we've said..... |
| vii. | Confirming | g | I'm sure we will have a productive meeting..... |
| viii. | Summarizing | h | We can agree to that if..... |
| ix. | Looking Ahead | i | Would you be interested in..... |

The correct answers are given in the Answer key

Here are some more expressions that could be extremely helpful during negotiations:

Welcoming: Good to see you.
I'm sure our meeting will be useful

Stating your aim: We'd like to let you know that.....
We want to clarify our position on.....

Making concessions: If you are willing to.....we could.....

We could offer you.....

Accepting: That seems alright
We agree.

Rejecting: I'm afraid we can't.....
Unfortunately this won't be possible.

Confirming: Let me just repeat what we've agreed upon.
Can we just run through that again?

Summarizing: Just to recap the main points.....
Let just summarize what we've agreed upon.

Looking ahead: So the next step will be.....
So when do we meet next?

10.5 GRAMMAR: PHRASAL VERBS

Phrasal Verbs

There are some verbs and prepositions which have a special meaning when they are used together. In this way they function like idioms. These combinations have to be memorized like irregular verbs. When the phrases are spoken the stress falls on the preposition. These are called phrasal verbs.

Check Your Progress 4

Complete the sentences below by using the appropriate form of the given phrasal verbs. You will need to use one phrasal verb twice. You may check out the meanings and answers in the key.

1. Sorry to keep you waiting. We got _____ in a traffic jam. That's why we are ten minutes late.
2. Can we _____ with the meeting.
3. Mr Mittal hasn't _____ yet.
4. I'd like to _____ our main proposals.
5. I'm sorry I didn't _____. What did you say?
6. We cannot possibly _____ what you have proposed.
7. If you can _____ with something that suits both parties, we don't mind.
8. We must _____ something that is mutually acceptable.
9. Can we _____ the main points again.
10. Somebody should _____ whatever we have agreed upon.

10.6 LISTENING: EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS

Check Your Progress 5

Listen to a talk on Effective Negotiations and complete the given text by inserting the missing words. Listen to it again in case you have missed out some words. Check your answers with the Key.

Now read the completed text for some more information on effective negotiations.

Effective negotiation skills are an important 1 _____ in today's business environment. Therefore it is necessary to make proper 2 _____ to ensure that negotiations run 3 _____. First of all one must 4 _____ out the negotiation in detail. This can be done well only if you find out as much as possible about the 5 _____ and the 6 _____ with which the negotiation is to take place. Sometimes it's hard to create a 7 _____ situation in negotiations, in spite of good preparation.

The 8 _____ of the negotiation must be clearly defined at the outset. Also identify the 9 _____ that you can offer in the course of the negotiation. You must also keep in mind that you cannot hope to push your 10 _____ at the cost of the other party. Therefore decide in advance what you should state and to what extent you can 11 _____ your demands to accommodate the other party's interests.

Both parties must strive to create a 12 _____ atmosphere at the very start. Establishing a good rapport at the outset creates a 13 _____ environment of 14 _____ respect and trust for the negotiation. Clear communication, mutual respect, and trust can get things going in the right direction.

10.7 SPEAKING

Check Your Progress 6

Practice one or both of these negotiations with one or more partners at your study centre. Refer to the Answer Key and tape script for a suggested version.

- i. Imagine a situation where you are a seller who is negotiating with a buyer. The buyer is asking you for a 10% discount whereas you have already agreed to give him a 5% discount.
Try to negotiate and settle for 7%. In return for this concession ask for the credit limit that you have given to your buyer to be reduced from 40% to 35%.
- ii. You are making arrangements for a wedding to be held in your family. Negotiate with the caterers to reduce the cost of food per plate from Rs. 350 to Rs 300.

10.8 WRITING

Check Your Progress 6

Refer to Task 1 of 10.7 You have successfully negotiated the deal with your buyer. Write a letter to him confirming the agreement reached at the end of the negotiation.

Compare your answer with the one provided in the key.

10.9 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have briefly touched upon the skill of Negotiation which we not only require in our business transactions but in our day to day life as well. While you may be an excellent negotiator in real life, we have given you some steps so that you are systematically aware of what you are doing. We have also provided you with tape scripts of actual negotiations. This will help you become even better at negotiations.

Phrasal Verbs are often used in negotiations, especially in ‘spoken’ English; we have therefore given you some practice in their use.

Finally, after a negotiated settlement, there is often a letter written to confirm the negotiation. We have given you practice in writing such a letter.

10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Rodgers, D. *English for International Negotiations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sinha, K.K. *Business Communication*. Delhi: Galgotia Publishing Company.

Tull, G and Lannon, M. *Insights into Business*. London: Longman.

10.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Reading

Check Your Progress 1

State whether these statements are True or False

- | | | |
|------|---|-------|
| i. | We negotiate consciously all the time. | False |
| ii. | One often has to negotiate for a salary increase. | True |
| iii. | Negotiation skills have to be formally learnt. | False |
| iv. | Regardless of individual differences we all negotiate in the same way. | False |
| 2. | The following two qualities are not desirable in negotiators. | |
| iii. | Are firm about their stand – good negotiators need to be flexible and not rigid about their stand. They must be willing to make certain adjustments as it is in their interest to ensure that both parties are satisfied. | |
| vi. | Look for immediate gains – good negotiators always keep the long term interest in mind. A long term association with customers and business associates is the need of every organization. | |

Check Your Progress 2

- | | |
|------|---|
| i. | We are willing to make part of the adjustments <i>I'm willing to come half way!</i> |
| ii. | We have already stated to what extent we can accommodate your point of view. <i>I'm afraid that's as far as we can go!</i> |
| iii. | We are willing to do anything you want us to do. <i>You are our most valued customer! Have it your way!</i> |
| iv. | Are we not being unnecessarily over critical. <i>Aren't we splitting hairs here?</i> |
| v. | We will adjust with what you say gladly. <i>We'd be happy to accommodate you!</i> |
| vi. | We have a totally different point of view about the matter. <i>I'm sorry but I don't see eye to eye with you!</i> |

- 2.
- i. Would these expressions occur more in some cultures than others?
Yes, that's true. In some cultures people need to be very careful about what they say. They cannot afford to be direct as they might annoy their customers.
 - ii. Do they represent attitudes that are too soft or too rigid? Which ones of these suggest rigid attitudes?
'C' and 'E' represent soft attitudes. 'A' shows rigidity.
 - iii. Would they be appropriate for a letter or for a phone conversation? Which of these would you use in a letter?
You could use 'B' and 'E' in letters.
 - iv. Which ones of these could lead to good business relations, and which ones might backfire?
'B', 'C', and 'E' could lead to good business relations whereas 'A', 'D' and 'F' could backfire.

Check Your Progress 3

Match the formulaic language on the right with the different phases of the negotiation on the left.

Answers:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| i. | g |
| ii. | e |
| iii. | h |
| iv. | i |
| v. | a |
| vi. | c |
| vii. | f |
| viii. | d |
| ix. | b |

Check Your Progress 4

Grammar

Complete the sentences with suitable phrasal verbs.

work (something) out – find a solution or a way out

turn up – arrived

jot down – write down

go with – agree with

catch on – understand

hold up – delay

go over – look into, repeat

get on – go ahead

come up – suggest

1. Sorry to keep you waiting. We got held up in a traffic jam. That's why we are ten minutes late.
2. Can we get on with the meeting.
3. Mr Mittal hasn't turned up yet.
4. I'd like to go over our main proposals.
5. I'm sorry I didn't catch on. What did you say?
6. We cannot possibly go with what you have proposed.
7. If you can come up with something that suits both parties, we don't mind.
8. We must work out something that is mutually acceptable.
9. Can we go over the main points again.
10. Somebody should jot down whatever we have agreed upon.

Listening Tape script

The answers are highlighted in bold.

Check Your Progress 5

Effective negotiation skills are an **important** ingredient in today's business environment. Therefore it is necessary to make proper **preparation** to ensure that negotiations run **smoothly**. First of all one must **plan** out the negotiation in detail. This can be done well only if you find out as much as possible about the **people** and the **organization** with which the negotiation is to take place. Sometimes it's hard to create a **win-win** situation in negotiations, in spite of good preparation.

The **objectives** of the negotiation must be clearly defined at the outset. Also identify the **alternatives** that you can offer in the course of the negotiation. You must also keep in mind that you cannot hope to push your **interests** at the cost of the other party. Therefore decide in advance what you should state and to what extent you can **roll back** your demands to accommodate the other party's interests.

Both parties must strive to create a **harmonious** atmosphere at the very start. Establishing a good rapport at the outset creates a **conducive** environment of **mutual** respect and trust. for the negotiation. Clear communication, mutual respect, and trust can get things going in the right direction.

Speaking

1. **Imagine a situation where you are a seller who is negotiating with a buyer. The buyer is asking you for a 10% discount whereas you have already agreed to give him a 5% discount.**

Try to negotiate and settle for 7%. In return for this concession ask for the credit limit that you have given to your buyer to be reduced from 40% to 35%.

Sample Answer:

The sample answer begins with small talk which must take place between the buyer and seller before they actually begin to negotiate the deal. Take note of the language used in negotiations. The formulaic language is underlined for your benefit.

Seller: It's so good to see you again.

Buyer: Yes, it's been a long time.

Seller: So, how are you?

Buyer: Very fine, thank you.

Seller: I hope you are happy with the last consignment of office equipment we sent you?

Buyer: Yes, it was quite all right.

Seller: I'm here to follow up on your interest in our new filing cabinets. They are better than anything you have seen before. And what's more, although they are very reasonably priced, we have made you an offer for a 5% introductory discount.

Buyer: Yes, I understand that, but if you could make that 10% we would consider the offer seriously.

Seller: Unfortunately, that's going to be not just difficult but impossible, considering that this is an introductory offer and so we have priced the cabinets very reasonably and the profit margins are already very low.

Buyer: Perhaps we could both come half way and settle for something that would be agreeable to both.

Seller: In that case we could make it 7k%on the condition that you will accept a credit of 35% in place of 40%, which means you will make a down payment of 65% on receipt of goods.

Buyer: That seems acceptable.

Seller: Alright then, you can now work out the details of your order and send it over to us as soon as it is ready. We look forward to it.

Buyer: That's it Good Bye.

Seller: Good Bye.

Writing

Check Your Progress 6

Mr J Wadhwa
Anant Textiles
267 Court Road
Meerut, UP

Dear Mr Wadhwa

This is a written confirmation of the agreement we reached on the supply of your Order Number 2198/03. We are glad to offer you 7% discount.

Your credit on the order will now be 35% in place of 40%. These details will also be included in your invoice.

You will receive the goods by 15 December, the agreed deadline. We hope you are satisfied with this agreement.

We look forward to serving you in the future.

Yours Sincerely

Mr R K Gupta

ABS Industries
154 Govindpura Industrial Estate
Bhopal 462026

25 November 2003

UNIT 1 THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction: What is Communication?
- 1.2 The Process of Communication
- 1.3 Barriers to Communication
- 1.4 Different Types of Communication
- 1.5 Written vs. Oral Communication
- 1.6 Different Types of Face-to-Face Interactions
- 1.7 Characteristics and Conventions of Conversation
- 1.8 Conversational Problems of Second/Foreign Language Users
- 1.9 Difference between Conversation and Other Speech Events
- 1.10 Summary
- 1.11 Suggested Readings
- 1.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will introduce you to some basic concepts in communication, its importance in business organizations, different types of communication, different modes to be used, and their comparative advantages and disadvantages. We shall also give you insights into strategies that are used for effective face-to-face communication.

1.1 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

We all engage in communication with others right from our birth. When we interact with others we are communicating with them. Right now I am communicating with you through this unit and while you are reading it you, too, are in fact communicating with me through this text.

It is often said that we live in an age of communication characterized by speed, efficiency, and the ability to transcend physical or geographical limitations. But what does it mean to communicate? The dictionary definition is ‘to exchange (thoughts) or make known (information or feelings) by speech, writing or other means, to transmit’. Communication is more than just messaging or swapping information. It involves not just words, but the use of all our senses. With face-to-face dialogue, our facial expression, tone, body language, ability to listen with patience, all contribute to the conveying of messages and information between people.

For example, the written word, whether in books and magazines, e-mails or texts, can convey more than just the writing. It can inspire, elevate and encourage if that is the intention of the writer. It can also confuse and exasperate if we are not careful! Lynne Truss, in a recent book on punctuation, pointed out how easily the meaning of the written word can be altered just by rearranging the punctuation. She invites us to compare the following two sentences; ‘A woman, without her man, is nothing’, and ‘A woman: without her, man is nothing’!

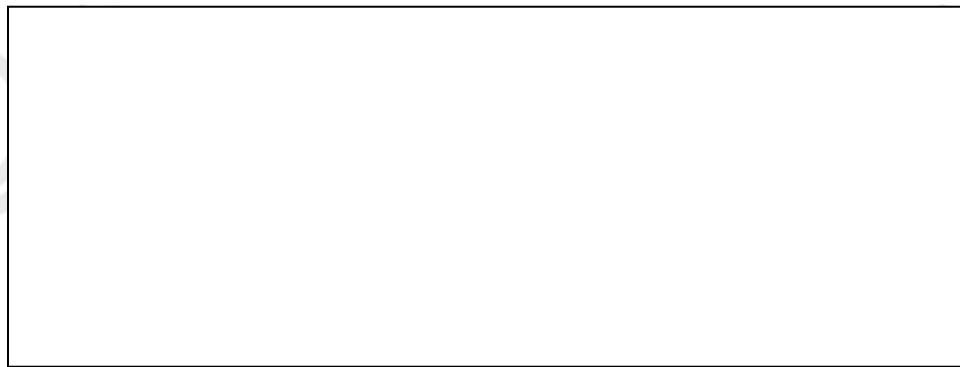
As human beings we have the ability to express ourselves and share our thoughts and feelings in many ways. We could live in isolation, never communicating with another person, but that would not create value. We can keep feelings to ourselves or we can share them. Each person has his or her unique view of things, and each perspective is valuable. Through sharing these individual ideas or views with each other, global solutions may be found.

Someone may share an idea that the other person may not have even considered. These differing views could be compared to a jigsaw puzzle, where each person has their own piece, and when the pieces fit together, the full picture emerges and a solution is found that may not have been considered previously. Certainly increased communication that uses technology can be enormously valuable. Being able to share information quickly between people has meant that a disaster in one part of the world can be responded to in another; it has led to the fall of corrupt governments, as people have been able to unite in challenging authoritarian regimes. People in remote areas fighting injustice have linked up with people on the other side of the world who can support their cause. As with everything, new technologies such as e-mail and text messaging have the potential to be positive or negative.

So don't you see the value of communication!

1.2 THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The following figure gives a simple model of the process of communication:-



Check Your Progress 1

Look at the figure given above and try to answer the following questions:

1. At least how many persons do you need for communication to take place?
2. Can two people communicate if they do not share the same language?
3. If your answer to Q2 above is 'yes', then explain how they will communicate.
4. A saint sitting with his eyes closed says he is communicating with God. Do you think it is an example of communication? Give reasons for your answer.

5. A person was lost in his thoughts with his eyes closed. When asked he said that he was communicating with self. Would you term it as communication? Discuss with others in your study center.

Elements of Communication

If we look at the figure given above we can derive the elements of communication as follows:

1. Communication involves at least two persons (a) The addresser and (b) the addressee.
2. The topic: the contents of the message.
3. The channel: the medium through which the message travels, e.g. letter, telephone,e-mail etc.
4. The code: the language of the message e.g. English, French, Hindi, etc.
5. The message form: the selection of particular grammar and lexical choices of the message.
6. The setting: the social and physical setting.

Check Your Progress 2

Look at the figure once again. Can you write a paragraph now explaining the process of communication?

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The Role of the Decoder

The process of decoding by the addressee is not passive as some people think. His/Her role is an active one. Language, it is said, does not have meaning; it has potential for meaning and it is the decoder who is actively engaged in making meaning on the basis of his/her background knowledge and the context of communication e.g. the knowledge of the subject, topic, addresser-addressee relationship, knowledge of the code, the physical and social context, etc.

Let us consider the following utterance:
“Mr. Gupta is not coming”.

The textual meaning of the sentence is not difficult; it is quite clear-but do we know what the speaker wants to convey? Is it a statement for our information? Is it a warning for the hearer? We

can understand this text only if we know what the context is, i.e. who is the addresser; whom is s/he addressing; when, where and in what context. Suppose the addresser is the Managing Director (MD) of a company; and the addressee is his Secretary; the MD utters these words on arriving in his office and going through a fax message; Mr. Gupta is a consultant with the foreign collaborators of the company; and he was due to arrive that day for a meeting with the MD and other officials of the company. If we possess this background knowledge, we will be able to understand the meaning of the sentence uttered by the MD. This sentence can now be called an utterance in this context. The secretary can interpret the utterance to mean: ‘The meeting will have to be cancelled and the officials informed accordingly. Arrangements such as sending the car to the airport, hotel reservation, etc., if any, made for Mr. Gupta, will have to be cancelled’, etc. etc.

When we make an utterance we always do something; we use language to perform some function, e.g. to inform, warn, promise, persuade, etc. and the hearer or the reader can derive the meaning of the utterance only through actively processing the utterance in the context in which it is made.

Check Your Progress 3

Can you think of some of the functions of language? One can be to ‘inform’ someone; or to ‘warn’. Think of some more functions and compare your list with that drawn up by others in your study centre.

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Macro Functions of Communication

The macro functions of communication are listed below:

1. **The emotive function:** to communicate the inner states and emotions, e.g. Oh no!
2. **The directive function:** seeking to affect the behaviour of others, e.g. Close the door, please.
3. **The phatic function:** opening the channel or checking that it is working, e.g. Hello, is it Thomas Cook? or Can you hear me, Mrs. Gupta?
4. **The poetic function:** the particular form chosen is the essence of the message. This refers to the aesthetic function of language.
5. **The referential function:** to carry information.
6. **The metalinguistic function:** focusing attention on the code itself, e.g. ‘the use of both *will* or *shall* is correct in modern usage.’
7. **The contextual function:** creating a particular kind of context, e.g. Right! Let’s start the meeting now.

Check Your Progress 4

Which of these functions are often performed in business situations? Give examples to support your answer.

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1.3 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

It is said that communication can never be hundred per cent complete. Many factors are involved in the process of communication and something can always go wrong with one or more of these. From your own experience, make a list of some of the factors that can impede communication.

Let us now consider some of these barriers:

- a. **Code**, i.e. the addresser and the addressee may not share the same language between them. The addresser is speaking in French and the addressee does not know French.
- b. **Vocabulary**: *The market declined under persistent bear hammering*. One who is not familiar with the vocabulary of the stock market may not understand what is meant.
- c. **Concept**: Technical and subject specific concepts may not be understood by all. For example, a *black hole* is simple language, yet the concept may not be understood by many.
- d. Background knowledge and shared assumptions e.g. a Victorian style mansion may not be understood by those living outside England.
- e. Pronunciation, intonation, accent and stress in spoken language. Sometimes may not be understood.
- f. Culture specific communication may cause misunderstanding.
- g. Physical environment: Noise and other environmental disturbances or even physical distance between the addresser and the addressee can impede effective communication.
- h. Affective factors: personal factors e.g. anxiety, fear, attitude, motivation, beliefs, values, lack of mutual trust, lack of time or pressure of work, lack of attention, and personal rivalries. All these factors impede communication.

Check Your Progress 5

How can the barriers to communication be removed? Discuss with others in your group or class.

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1.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication may be classified into several categories on the following bases:-

Expression: Written, oral and gestural

Flow: Internal (Vertical & Horizontal) and external

Relationship : Formal and informal

Various Media of Expression (Written, Oral & Gestural)

Communication can be achieved through various media, such as writing, speech, gestures and actions. One can use written words or draw pictures or one can use speech sounds. Speech is primary, writing secondary, that is, speech came first and the writing system was developed later on. There may still be some languages which are spoken but not written. In fact, several of the tribal languages do not have any script. Deaf and dumb people use actions and gestures in order to communicate with each other—this is also a form of communication, but they can communicate with ordinary people only by using commonly understood actions and gestures e.g. asking for water by cupping your hand near your mouth.

In business, communicating in writing is the most popular form of communication. It can take various forms such as letters, circulars, office memorandums, telegrams, fax messages, newsletter, brochures, bulletins, reports, manuals, house journals, magazines, etc. You are already familiar with some of these.

This does not mean that oral communication is not used in business transactions. Speech is also used and quite often. It takes the form of face-to-face interaction, telephone conversations, lectures and talks, meetings and discussions, etc.

Expression through body language is known as gestural communication. Who is not familiar with the nodding of the head from side to side to say ‘no’ or up and down to convey ‘yes’? Parents often use this means of communication with their children if they tend to be naughty in the presence of guests and it is often used in business situations as well in similar circumstances or when verbal communication is impossible e.g. in the factory where the noise of machinery makes verbal communication difficult.

Check Your Progress 6

Can you think of a situation when gestural communication would be more effective than oral communication? What kind of messages can be communicated through gestures? Give some example from your own experience.

Pictures, charts, diagrams are also used either on their own or in combination with written or oral communication for greater effect and better understanding. Business houses make use of them in their illustrated catalogues and brochures meant to promote their product.

Downward, Upward & Horizontal Communication

Companies have to communicate with outside agencies and other companies, government and private bodies, newspapers, advertisers, manufacturers of machinery, builders, suppliers of goods and services, clients and customers, etc. But there is also the need to communicate within the company itself, e.g. communication between a superior and a subordinate, i.e. from higher to lower levels of authority. This is an example of *downward communication*. There are also occasions when communication flows from a subordinate or subordinates to a higher authority. It may be a report, suggestion, opinion or a charter of demands from the workers. We call this *upward communication*. Both these are forms of vertical communication.

Communication between officers working at the same level of management is called *horizontal* or *lateral communication* e.g. interaction between manager (Production) and Manager (Marketing). It involves exchange of ideas, information, opinions or seeking clarifications, etc. between personnel of the same rank.

Formal & Informal Communication

In business, these two terms are used in a slightly different sense than what we generally understand by them. Communication done through the chain of command is known as *formal communication*. It involves the transmission of official message in the formal organization structure. Such communication is planned and established by management and clearly indicates the authority relationships involved and these generally are in writing e.g. orders, decisions, instructions, etc.

Informal communication does not flow through the official channels of communication. It involves the spontaneous expression of reactions and ideas and is usually done orally. Hence it may carry incomplete or incorrect information.

The words *formal* and *informal* are also used to indicate change in form and language of communication according to change in relationship between the addresser and the addressee and the context of situation. For example, you will use informal language while talking to your brother at home. But if your brother also happens to be your boss in office and a formal meeting is going on in office, you will address him in a different way, i.e. in formal style.

1.5 WRITTEN VS. ORAL COMMUNICATION

When we speak of language as a tool for communication, we mean both spoken and written forms of the language. Both these modes can be used for communication. While they perform the same functions, their form and manner of use differ in many respects. For example, one makes use of sounds, other of symbols. The speaker has available to him/her the full range of voice quality effects, as well as facial expressions, postural and gestural systems, but these paralinguistic features are denied to the writer. The writer, on the other hand, has typographical

variety at his/her disposal. The speaker is face-to-face with hearer while the writer writes for an absent reader who may also be far away in space and time.

These different features have their own advantages and disadvantages. In oral communication the speaker, being face-to-face with the hearer can monitor and match the reactions of the hearer. At the same time s/he can simultaneously plan his/her next utterance and fit it in the overall pattern of what s/he wants to say. S/he must keep on talking during the period allotted to him/her; s/he must decide when to take his/her turn, how to interrupt his/her interlocutor, how to hand over the turn--in fact s/he must be in command of all the conversational skills. S/he has certain advantages as well; s/he can observe his/her interlocutor and, if necessary, modify what s/he is saying. Oral communication is quicker, more economical and more effective than written communication. Doubts and misunderstandings can be cleared on the spot as immediate reaction and response is available.

But it has certain disadvantages also. There are variations in spoken language and also in the way it is delivered. These could be on account of geographical or social and cultural differences. There are dialectical differences, accent differences and also differences in the use of paralinguistic features and body language. Speech is less organized than written language; it contains many incomplete sentences; often it contains simply sequences of phrases. These features may easily create misunderstandings. Oral communication is less reliable because it is not available in future; it is also affected by the attitudes and personality, self-interest, beliefs, values and prejudices of the sender as well as the receiver and also the time and circumstances of the communication. Oral communication is also not suitable for lengthy messages to be communicated to distant and widely scattered people.

Similarly the written mode gives the writer certain advantages as well as disadvantages over the speaker. Since the writer is writing for an absent reader, s/he may look over, reflect, and edit what s/he has already written, with no fear of being interrupted by his/her interlocutor; s/he can take his/her own time in choosing a particular word, even looking it up in the dictionary, if necessary, reorder what s/he has written, and even change his/her mind about what s/he has to say. S/he is under no pressure to keep on writing; she can even destroy what s/he has written and throw it into the dustbin without fear of offending the reader. But the writer has disadvantages too: s/he has no access to immediate feedback and simply has to imagine the reader's reactions. This non-reciprocal nature of written communication makes it more difficult to learn.

Written communication ensures the transmission of information in a uniform manner and there is little risk of unauthorized alteration in the message. Since it is put in black and white, it provides a permanent record for future reference. Written communication tends to be complete, precise and unambiguous. The message can be repeated at regular intervals and lengthy messages can be sent to widely scattered readers. But written communication is time-consuming, expensive and rigid and it becomes difficult to maintain secrecy.

In the business world, face-to-face and telephone communications are generally confirmed in writing by post or e-mail, particularly when the communication is with the world outside. Why do you think is it necessary to do so? Discuss with others in your Study Centre the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the telephone mode of communication over face-to-face interaction.

Check Your Progress 7

1. Which mode of communication would you adopt in the following cases:-

- (a) The message is very urgent.
 - (b) The message is important and lengthy.
 - (c) The message sent should be available in the records.
 - (d) The information is to be sent to all employees in different branches.
 - (e) You have to consult your boss, who is out of town, urgently and take a quick decision.

2. You are the Marketing Manager of a firm. You want to hire a sales supervisor. Which form of communication would you use to communicate your requirement to the Manager (Personnel)? Would you prefer to talk to him personally, over the phone, write a letter or memo? Give reasons for your answer.

1.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

Brown & Yule (1983) use two terms to describe the major functions of language. The function of language where the transfer of information is involved is called *transactional*, and that function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes is called *Interactional*.

- (1) (a) A: There's no message for you (Transacionl)
B: OK.
(b) A: How are you? (Interacional)
B: Fine, thank you.

In the world of business one has to make use of language for performing both of these functions. In business transactions, different situations may arise when one has to use language for different types of face-to-face interactions: (1) conversation for establishing social contact, performing various functions such as introducing oneself and others, making inquiries, giving and seeking information, giving instructions, reporting conversations, giving the company's profile, describing persons, places and processes, developing relationships, getting people to do things, offering help, seeking help, apologizing, persuading, elaborating, arguing a point, explaining a situation, comparing two products, negotiating business deals, asking for and giving advice, etc. (2) participating in discussions, (3)taking part and conducting meetings and interviews, (4) lecturing (5)demonstrating company's products, (6) talking about where you work, describing simple and everyday operations, describing work and business operations, describing office working conditions, consulting and reporting to superiors, asking for and giving advice, talking

about problems at work, etc. Most of these encounters will be transactional while some of these will be interactional.

Conversation

You are already aware of social interaction in business i.e. meeting and greeting people in business, and developing a conversation. From your observation, can you recall/derive some rules of face-to-face conversation? Do you think there are rules for conversation in every language of the world? Native speakers learn naturally as part of their growing up in that society and follow these rules in their conversation with other native speakers. Discuss this with others in your Study Centre.

Human beings spend a large part of their lives engaging in conversation and for most of us conversation is among our most significant and engrossing activities. We have already described the importance of communication, particularly face-to-face communication. Researchers from several academic disciplines have looked at conversation as an object of inquiry and come up with fascinating findings. Our understanding of how people conduct conversations has been enriched by observations made by psychologists and linguists, among others.

Before we describe the rules of conversation, let us be clear about the term *conversation*. As Richards and Schmidt point out, the term conversation is used somewhat ambiguously in current literature. It is used sometimes to refer to any spoken encounter or interaction and sometimes, more restrictedly, to:

“...talk occurring when a small number of participants come together and settle into what they perceive to be a few moments cut off from (or carried on to the side of) instrumental tasks: a period of idling felt to be an end in itself, during which everyone is accorded the right to talk as well as to listen and without reference to a fixed schedule; everyone is accorded the status of someone whose overall evaluation of the subject matter at hand... is to be encouraged and treated with respect; and no final agreement or synthesis is demanded, differences of opinion to be treated as unprejudicial to the continuing relationship of the parties.” (Goffman 1976)

All talk, it is pointed out, is rooted in its surroundings. But conversation in this more restricted sense is not very firmly rooted to the world as other kinds of utterances. The activities which are directly governed by norms for the use of speech are termed *speech events*. As speech events, conversations can be contrasted with other types of speech events such as lectures, discussions, interviews, debates and meetings.

1.7 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONVENTIONS OF CONVERSATION

The Cooperative and Politeness Principle

Conversation is more than merely the exchange of information. When people take part in conversation, they bring to the conversational process shared assumptions and expectations about what conversation is, how conversation develops, and the sort of contribution they are each expected to make. When people engage in conversation they share common principles of conversation that lead them to interpret each other's utterances as contributing to the conversation.

One of the assumptions we make when we take part in conversation is that if I ask you a question, whatever you say will somehow be interpretable as constituting an answer to my question. Consider the following example:

- (2) A: Which generator did you buy?
 B: It is a Honda.

Let us now consider the following:

- (3) A: Which generator did you buy?
 B: You could have killed it.

In this latter case the speaker B does not seem to have followed the principle described above and hence the resulting exchange is uninterpretable.

The philosopher Grice has described four Maxims or Principles of Cooperative Behaviour which speakers observe in conversation. These are:

1. Maxim of Quantity : Make your contribution just as informative as required.
2. Maxim of Quality : Make your contribution one that is true.
3. Maxim of Relation : Make your contribution relevant.
4. Maxim of Manner : Avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Be brief and orderly.

Conversation is more than a series of exchanges; it consists of exchanges which are initiated and interpreted according to intuitively understood and socially acquired rules and norms of conversational cooperation. These can in turn be manipulated to create a wide range of meanings beyond the level expressed directly by the utterances in the conversation themselves. Consider the following example:

- (4) A: It is very hot in here.
 B: I'll open the window.

We can infer the meaning of B's response. The room is hot, probably because the windows are closed, so if the window is opened cool fresh air will come in and cool the room. B's response is thus quite relevant and interpretable.

Check Your Progress 8

1. What do you think can be the relationship between A& B?
-

We also know that the rules of conversational implicature, dependent on manipulating the four maxims, can be used to express sarcasm, irony, criticism and a range of other types of inferential meaning. Consider the following exchange:

- A: How is the food?
B: There is plenty to fill your belly.

B is manipulating the maxims of conversational implicature to suggest that the other qualities of the food are not worth mentioning.

However, in the business world the emphasis is on *clarity of communication* and indirect speech acts and manipulation of maxims are generally avoided.

The relevance of Grice's Maxims to conversation in a second/foreign language is dependent on the degree to which such maxims are universal or language specific. In Indian culture, for example, even during an interview for a job, candidates are very modest while talking about themselves and their achievements; while in the European context the tendency is to display oneself to an extent which an Indian might term 'boasting, or 'bragging'.

Adjacency Pairs

One way in which meanings are communicated and interpreted in conversation is through the use of what have been called *adjacency pairs*. Adjacency pairs are utterances produced by two successive speakers such that the second utterance is identified as related to the first as an expected follow-up. The two form a pair, the first utterance constituting a first pair part and the next utterance constituting a second pair part. Adjacency pair is described as the *basic structural unit in conversation* consider the following examples of adjacency pairs:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| (a) Greeting-Greeting | A: Hi |
| | B: Hi |
| (b) Compliment-Acceptance | A: That's nice hat. |
| | B: Thanks. |

The basic rule of adjacency pair operation is that when a speaker produces a recognizable first pair part, s/he should stop talking and the conversational partner should produce a recognizable second pair part. Adjacency pairs thus provide for turn-taking, and also prescribe the type of talking that the next talker can do.

Check Your Progress 9

1. Supply appropriate adjacency pairs for the following:-

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Summons-answer | Mother: Johny! |
| | Johny: |
| Farewell-Farewell | A; O.K. See you. |
| | B: |
| Question-Answer | Customer: Do you have fresh apples? |
| | Shopkeeper: |

For some adjacency pairs, there is much more freedom for conversationalists responding to first pair parts, with several options available as second pair parts:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Complaint | A: Who took away the keys of my car? |
| Apology | B: Sorry. |
| Denial | B: No, I didn't. It must have been Surindra. |
| Justify | B: I needed them to bring the baby back from school. |

Excuse B: You shouldn't have left them here.
Challenge B: So what?

Check Your Progress 10

Produce appropriate second part adjacency pairs as shown in the brackets for the following:

| | | |
|---------------|----|------------------|
| Compliment | A: | That's nice hat. |
| (Acceptance) | B: | |
| (Agreement) | B: | |
| (Rejection) | B: | |
| (Topic shift) | B: | |
| (Return) | B: | |

Openings and Closings

Conversations, it is pointed out, do not simply begin and end. The openings and closings of conversations and other types of speech events are organized and orderly. All transitions from a state of non-talk to talk or from talk to non-talk, require engineered solutions. Openings and closings are problematic for the native speakers as well and have to be learnt like other social behaviours. For non-native speakers it is an area which needs special attention.

Openings and closings are speech event-specific. For a formal meeting, for example, there is an initial summons (a memo, circular along with the agenda, etc.) We will talk about this topic in some detail when we discuss below different types of face-to-face interaction.

A conversation is quite different from many other speech events in that it has no specified setting, no time or place, no required roles other than ‘persons’ involved (though some external roles such as boss/secretary may not be shed), no pre-specified agenda, and a quorum of simply two or more. Like other speech activities, however, conversations must be opened, and commonly this is done through the use of an adjacency pair such as Greeting-Greeting, Request-Grant, Question-Answer, or Statement-Response as in the following speech event:

- A: Good morning

B: Morning. Can I help you?

A: I want to see Mr. Bhatnagar.

B: Which Mr. Bhatnagar do you want? We've two Bhatnagars in this office.

A: Mr. Mukul Bhatnagar. He's Director Finance.

B: Do you have an appointment?

A: I'm afraid not.

B: Let me check if he is free. You are Mr.?

A: Mr. Malhotra. Deepak Malhotra from ABC. (Mr. Malhotra takes his seat after a few minutes in the waiting room).

B: I'm sorry he's in meeting.

A: When is the meeting likely to be over?

B: No idea. Can I take a message?

A: Will you tell him I came to see him?

B: I will, certainly

A: Thank you.

B: You're welcome.

Topic Development

Another important dimension of conversational organization is the way topics are selected for discussion within and the strategies used by the speakers to introduce, develop, or change topics.

within the conversation. Coherent conversations respect norms concerning choice of topics, for example, in a business meeting members will take turn to speak only on “the items on the agenda notified in advance and from among these only on that item which is being discussed at the moment.”

Topics may develop in a recognizable structure as, for example, the language of buying and selling, court trial, doctor and patient conversation, etc.

Check Your Progress 11

Write a short conversation between a car dealer and a customer looking for a small family car. Discuss in your study centre the structure of this conversation in the light of the points made above.

Turn Taking

Conversation by definition involves two or more people. But the distribution of talking among the participants is not merely random. It is governed by turn-taking norms, conventions which determine who talks, when, and for how long. One who talks too much and does not allow time for others, or one who contributes nothing to the conversation arouses negative evaluations.

Rules for turn-taking differ according to the type of speech event. In the classroom, for example, students generally raise a hand to take a turn to talk.

Repairs

The process of conversation involves monitoring to ensure that the intended messages have been communicated and understood. This involves correction whenever it is suspected that the message has not been received as intended. The term-*repair* refers to the efforts by the speaker or the hearer to correct trouble spots in conversation. Repairs may be initiated by either the speaker or the hearer:

- A: Mr. Malhotra isn't in his office.
- B: Sorry!
- A: Mr. Malhotra is not in his office at the moment.

1.8 CONVERSATIONAL PROBLEM OF SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE USERS

The maxims and rules for conversation differ from culture to culture and hence pose problems for non-native speakers. There may be different conventions operating in the mother tongue and target language. We have already hinted at some of the problems while describing the maxims and rules above. Let us consider some more problems and how we can overcome them.

Can you recall what we said above about non-native use of maxim of quantity. Non-native speakers may provide less information than is expected of them. Another crucial problem could be to interpret the intended speech act appropriately. Consider what is wrong with the following interaction:

- A: Hello!
B: ABC Distributors. Good Morning.
A: Can I speak to Mr. Malhotra?
B: Yes, you can.

Evidently B has misunderstood A's question as a question rather than a request to bring the person on the line. What do you think would be the right response?

Check Your Progress 12

Supply an appropriate response for the following:

- A: Would you mind closing the door please?
B:

Adjacency pairs is another crucial area which poses problem. Questions, particularly yes/no type questions are not always *Requests for information* but may be *requests for action*. The problem arises because you are taught to reply to yes/no questions with yes or no plus repetition of the verb or auxiliary used in the question, e.g.

- Customer: Do you have oranges?
Shopkeeper: Yes, I do.

The response may be grammatically correct but does it sound natural to you? Practicing only yes/no plus repetition of the verb/auxiliary often leads to such short stilted replies which while grammatically correct may be conversationally inappropriate. What you need is a large stock of adjacency pairs and practice in using them in a wide range of situations.

Think for a moment how the inquiry in your mother tongue would have been responded to by the fruit seller. What you require is to practice other adjacency pairs, such as Request-Grant/Challenge, etc:-

- Customer: Do you have oranges?
Fruit-seller: Here they're. How many do you want? All fresh and Cheap too. The likes of these you'll get nowhere in the market.

Native speakers often consider non-native speakers overly passive in conversation. There are two reasons. One that nonnative speakers tend to provide only second pair parts leaving all first pair parts to their interlocutor, answering questions with 'yes' and 'no' e.g.

- A: What is your name?
B: Mohan. Mohan Srivastava. (Silence follows)
A: Are you working with ABC company?
B: Yes
(Again long stretch of silence)

This leads to non-native speakers initiating all questions which rarely happens in natural social conversation. Instead of simply answering a question, you must learn to answer a question, give some extra information and ask another question as in the customer-fruit-seller's conversation given above.

Openings and closings are also problematic for foreign language learners. The learner may not know what to say and hence may just transliterate from his/her own mother tongue as in the following example:

(Context: A customer comes into the store and seems to be looking for something. The shop assistant comes to him to help him)

Shop Assistant: What do you want, Sir?

The customer does not seem to feel pleased and leaves the store.

What do you think has offended the customer? What should have the shop assistant said to help the customer?

Another important and very difficult area for the second/foreign language learner is topic development. Here you must practice nominating or introducing topics about which you are prepared to speak. You ought to practice predicting questions: elaborating topics, seeking clarifications, shifting topic, undertaking repairs through words and gestures, and several other conversational skills. We will come back to these skills in subsequent pages.

1.9 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONVERSATION AND OTHER SPEECH EVENTS

Hymes uses the term *speech event* for activities that are directly governed by norms for the use of speech. As speech events, conversations can be contrasted with other types of speech events such as lectures, discussions, meetings, interviews, debates, etc. We recognize each of these speech events as distinct by virtue of differences in the number of participants who take part in them, as well as through differences in the type and amount of talking expected of the participant, the setting, quorum, if any, required, etc. Speech events, like conversations, as shown above, also have identifiable rules for proper beginnings, middles and endings. Violations if noticed, are frowned upon.

Openings and closings, as already said above, are speech event-specific. For many speech events, there is an initial summons, e.g. a memo/notice calling for a meeting and participants assemble over time before the occasion actually begins. There may be a specified setting (e.g. hall,

classroom) and the persons who assemble are oriented to as specified category members (e.g. members of the club, union, students faculty at a college lecture). Some events, such as a formal meeting (e.g. the Annual General Body Meeting of the Company) require a specified number of participants before the events may properly be seen as beginning, such as a quorum at a meeting.

Some speech events may not begin as soon as the required persons are present. These may require formal markers before the event properly begins. When the audience assemble for a lecture, there may be background noise and conversation may be in progress at different corners in the room, but the lecture itself has not properly begun until an authorized person uses some sort of attention-getter, saying 'Right, or O.K. It is time to begin,' etc.

We will be talking about interviews and meetings in subsequent units when we will illustrate in detail how these two specific speech events differ from conversation. Here we propose to consider another feature in which lecture differs from conversation.

While talking about the differences between spoken and written modes we said that one of the differences between these two modes of communication is that writing is an activity that is non-reciprocal in nature. Can you recall what we meant by this term non-reciprocal? Lecture, whether written or spoken from notes, tends to be non-reciprocal in this sense. In other words, there are no adjacency pairs, no turn taking, no immediate verbal feed-back as we have in conversation (though in the classroom lecture, the teacher might get feedback from expressions on students faces, raising of hands, uneasy movements, etc.) so s/he has of necessity to propel the communication on her/his own. This, however, does not mean that lecture (or written discourse) is not an interactive process of negotiation. It is interactive but this interaction is conducted by the speaker himself/herself by enacting the roles of speaker as well as of audience. Since there is no immediate reaction s/he has to anticipate what it is likely to happen and provide for any possible misunderstanding and unclarity arising from the lack of shared knowledge.

In the words of Widdowson, the act of lecturing is the enactment of an exchange, with the speaker taking on the roles of both interlocutors. But whereas in spoken discourse (conversation) this process of negotiation is typically overt and reciprocal, in lectures and written communication it is covert and non-reciprocal. Because of the absence of immediate verbal reaction from her/his audience the speaker has a basic conveyancing problem: S/he has a certain message to impart and s/he has to prepare the ground and set up conditions favourable to the reception of such information. S/he does this by continually shifting her/his function from speaker to hearer, enacting the interaction by playing the role of each interlocutor as in the following example:-

Yesterday I spoke to you about Canada. Today I shall talk about Australia which happens to be the next topic. Australia is a land of contrasts. It is geologically one of the oldest of land masses, yet it ranks as one of the youngest of nations. It is half a world away from Europe, but its people are largely of European descent and they follow a Western lifestyle.

If we look at the above text we find that the speaker makes an assertion in the first sentence and the subsequent sentences are then said to support what s/he says in the first sentence as if to answer the question of the listener, How can you say that? Can you give proof? We can write this text as follows:

Speaker: Australia is a land of contrasts.
Listener(s): How can you say that? Can you give some proof?

- Speaker: It is geologically one of the oldest of land masses, yet it ranks as one of the youngest of nations.
- Listener(s) Can you give more examples?
- Speaker: Yes. It is half a world away from Europe, but its people are largely of European descent and they follow a Western lifestyle.

A lecture, like written discourse, thus involves non-reciprocal interaction and the result of this is a text. The audience must interpret this text to reconstitute the interaction as it does not reveal the second person's (or the audience's) reactions which the speaker (and the writer) anticipates by enacting the other participant's role. It is in this sense that lecturing is covert and non-reciprocal and differs from conversation which is overt and reciprocal.

1.10 SUMMARY

In this unit we have tried to understand what communication is and defined it as the process of meaningful interaction between two or more persons with a view to arriving at a common meaning and understanding. Communication can be achieved through use of language, written or spoken, and gestures. There are different types of communication and these are used on different occasions. Each of these mode of communication has its own advantages and disadvantages. Communication may involve repeated interactions or negotiations of meaning and the addresser and the addressee play active roles in this process. Effective communication in business is as important as the blood circulating in the human body and hence managers do their best to overcome all barriers to communication.

Further, we also described different types of face-to-face interactions, especially conversation, its main features and how to develop it to make it meaningful. We have also described briefly some other types of face-to-face interactions and how they differ from each other and from conversation.

1.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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1.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Two Persons
2. Yes.
3. Limited communication is possible through gestures
4. No We'll not term it as social communication.
5. Same as 4.

Check Your Progress 2

On the left is the addresser. S/he can choose to write his/her message or equally well speak it. So we can use the more general word **encoder** for him/her. The **encoder** has a message. It may be news, an idea, a feeling. S/he wants to convey this message to somebody. To make this possible s/he must first put it into words, i.e. s/he must **encode** it. Once it is encoded, it is available outside his/her mind as a text (written or spoken). The text is accessible to the mind of another person who hears or reads it, that is, who **decodes** the message the text contains. Once it is decoded, the message enters the mind of the **decoder** and communication takes place.

Check Your Progress 3

Open ended

Some points given in Macro Function of Communication.

Check Your Progress 4

Open ended

Check Your Progress 5

Barriers in communication can be removed by the following:

1. The interlocutors should share the same code (language)
2. If the interlocutors speak the same language but different dialects, the dialects should be comprehensible to all.
3. Often affective factors can cause misunderstanding. It is, therefore, important to dialogue without rivalry or tension and with a sincere motive to listen to one another.
4. Shared knowledge is another important factor for intelligent conversation.

Check Your Progress 6

In fact, all normal conversation requires gestures to be effective. "Yes" and "No" are very common messages through gestures.

(You could suggest other messages from your own experience).

Check Your Progress 7

1. (a) Telephone conversation
 - (b) written (e-mail attachment, fax)
 - (c) written
 - (d) e-mail, written (memo)
 - (e) Telephone Conversation
2. Open-ended depending on your situation. Preferably a memo should be sent.

Check Your Progress 8

It can be anything where B would like to oblige A, e.g. guest/host, boss/secretary, wife/husband, etc.

Check Your Progress 9

- Coming mom.
- Bye. (So long).
- Yes. Brought three boxes only this morning. Here you are. See how fresh they're.

Check Your Progress 10

- Thank you.
- It's quite nice, isn't it?
- Well. I think it makes me look old.
- Vanita found it for me.
- Thanks. I like yours too.

Check Your Progress 11

Open ended

Check Your Progress 12

- Not at all. (Closing the door)

UNIT 2 TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Warm Up
- 2.2 Speaking and Listening: Commonly Used Phrases in Telephone Conversations
- 2.3 Reading: Conference Calls
- 2.4 Vocabulary
- 2.5 Writing and Listening: Leaving a Message
- 2.6 Grammar and Usage: The Perfect Tenses
- 2.7 Pronunciation: Contracted Forms
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Suggested Readings
- 2.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit

- We will show you the difference between face-to-face and telephone conversation; and telephone conversations and conference calls
- We will introduce you to certain commonly used words and phrases while telephoning as well as certain conventional expressions which you may learn
- Since we often need to ask questions in a telephone conversation, we will revise wh-questions with you.
- In the Pronunciation section, we deal with contracted forms.

2.1 WARM UP

Look at the pictures below:



Can you identify what is happening in each of them? Discuss with a partner the differences between face-to-face communication and telephone conversation. Re-arrange the following features in the respective tables.

Check Your Progress 1

Face to face

We make eye contact

- We speak slowly
- We can't see our partner
- We use our hands to show directions
- We speak casually
- We say "May I take a message"
- We say "Hello!"

On the Telephone

Effective telephone conversation comes only with practice but it is possible to acquire the skills

We shake hands

- We smile
- We guess the other person's reactions
- We can see our counterpart's reactions
- We speak carefully
- We speak a little loudly since the other person may not hear us
- We try to be brief

needed to make successful telephone calls in all situations.

The language used on the telephone is specialized but it is easy to acquire the most common expressions used in various situations. Once you have mastered the expressions used while making/receiving a phone call, planning your phone calls in advance and preparing notes for them can control the rest of the conversation, so that you don't fumble on the phone.

2.2 SPEAKING & LISTENING: COMMONLY USED PHRASES IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS

There are a number of phrases and idioms that are commonly used when telephoning. Let's take a look at a dialogue:

- Operator: Hello, Bulchand & Brothers, **can I help you?**
- Amit: This is Amit Kumar. **Can you get me extension 4200 please?**
- Operator: **Certainly**, hold on a minute, **I'll put you through...**
- Kamla: Hari Singh's office, Kamla Jagannathan speaking.
- Amit: This is Amit Kumar calling, **is Hari in?**
- Kamla: **I'm afraid he's out at the moment. Can I take a message?**
- Amit: Yes, **Could you ask him to call me at 914-5136031?** I need to talk to him about the Digam contract; it's urgent.
- Kamla: **Could you repeat** the number please?
- Amit: Yes, that's 914-5136031, and this is Amit Kumar.
- Kamla: Thank you Mr. Kumar, **I'll make sure Mr. Singh gets this message.**
- Amit: Thanks, bye.
- Kamla: Bye.

Study the expressions in bold above, and those in the speech balloons below.

This is Amit...
Amit speaking...

May I know who is
speaking/calling?
Excuse me, who am I

Can/could I speak to...?
I'd like to speak to...

Hold on a moment please...
Putting you through...

Please connect me
to...

I'm sorry he is not
available...

Could you tell me
when he is
expected/will be
back?

Not until this
evening, I'm
afraid. How can I
help you?

Can you please
ask him to give
me a ring/call me
back?

Is there anything I
can do?

Thank you very
much/thanks for
the help

Sure, I'll give him
the message as
soon as he gets
in...

Check Your Progress 2

Now work with a friend or partner sitting back to back and participate in the following phone conversations. Use the expressions that you have studied above:

1.

- A: Hello...(introduce yourself and give the name of the bank/firm you work for)
B: This is...(introduce yourself and ask to speak to the manager)
A: I'm sorry...(say that your manager is not available right now—offer to take a message)
A: Yes please ... (accept the offer; ask the manager to give you a ring)
B: Certainly...could you give me...? (Agree and ask for the phone number)
A: (give your phone number and the time when you would be available)
B: (repeat no; assure him/her that you would pass on the message)
A: Thank you, bye, etc
B: Goodbye.

2.

- A: Good morning, Airport Enquiry,
B: Good morning, what time is the flight from (ask for the time of arrival of the Indian Airlines Flight from Bangalore)?
A: (give the scheduled arrival time and the expected time of arrival today)
B: I see. And what about (ask for the scheduled departure of the Jet Airways flight to Jaipur)
A: (Give the time and add that it is available only on two days in the week)
B: Oh... Could you tell me (find out which days it operates)?
A: Yes it operates on...(Tuesdays and Fridays)
B: Thank you.

3. Fill in the blanks in the following dialogue using the words in the box below:

extension, thank you, give, speaking, hold,
available, bad connection, number, call back,
message

- A. Hello, Ajay _____, can I help you?
B. Hello, I can't hear you at all; this seems to be a _____.
B. Can you get me _____ 457 please? I'm calling from CMC.
A. Sure, could you please _____ the line?

A. I'm sorry Mr. Biswas is not _____ right now; can I take a _____?

B. Yes please, can you ask him to _____ me _____? My telephone _____ is 011-3547663. Tell him it's regarding my meeting with him. I won't be able to make it tomorrow.

A. OK, and your name is...?

B. Mohan Gadgil—M----- G -----

A. All right, I shall _____ this message to Mr. Biswas.

B. _____, Goodbye.

A. Goodbye.

Now role-play the above dialogue sitting back to back with your partner.

4. When Mr. Biswas returns Ajay gives him Mohan's message. Now try to simulate Mr. Biswas's and Mohan's conversation and **write** out a dialogue. You might find the following expressions useful.

- ...You wanted me to...
- Thanks for returning my call
- There is a problem with the ...
- Let's do this:
- Ok that's settled then
- See you later ...

Using Polite and Friendly Expressions

This task is to make you aware of the importance of using Polite and Friendly expressions while speaking on the telephone. Apart from the expressions that we use, the tone of voice also plays an important role in creating an impression over the telephone. Keep this in mind while practising the role-play activities in the sections that follow.

Speak out the following expressions with your partner and you alternating between the two columns below. Use a brusque or rude voice for the expressions in Column I and a polite tone for those in Column II. Consider what effect the pairs of expressions would have on the person at the other end of the telephone line:

| Column I | Column II |
|---------------------|--|
| Hello, who is this? | Ronald here, may I know who is speaking? |
| Hold on... | Could you please hold the line while I look for him? |

| | |
|--|---|
| Spell your name, will you. | Could you spell your name, please? |
| He is not here right now. Call later. | I'm afraid Dr Das is not available right now—would you like to leave a message? |
| Mr. Gray is not here. | I think Mr. Gray is not here at the moment. Is there anything I can do for you? |
| Put me through to the Manager. | Can I speak to the manager, please? |
| Tell him that tomorrow's meeting is cancelled. | Could you take a message for him? Please inform him that tomorrow's meeting is cancelled. |

Check Your Progress 3

You'll hear a woman ordering food from a restaurant through the telephone. Listen carefully to the cassette and state whether the following statements are true or false.

1. The name of the restaurant is The Continental Inn.
2. The woman orders only Chopsuey.
3. The restaurant offers free drinks with her meal.
4. The woman orders only one serving of Manchurian.
5. The woman wants to make sure that Ajinomoto is not used in any dish.
6. The woman chooses Kulfi for her dessert.
7. The restaurant offers dessert free of charge with a Chinese meal.
8. The restaurant would take half-an-hour to deliver the meal.

There are a number of situations in which we use the telephone. In the tasks that follow we shall practise a few of them. If possible, role-play the conversations using polite and friendly greetings. Speak clearly and slowly. Repeat numbers and figures wherever necessary.

These role-plays should help you to practise a variety of expressions used on the telephone as also giving you an opportunity to employ a friendly and polite tone.

- A: You need to receive your friend at the New Delhi Railway Station. He is arriving on the Rajdhani Express from Mumbai tonight.

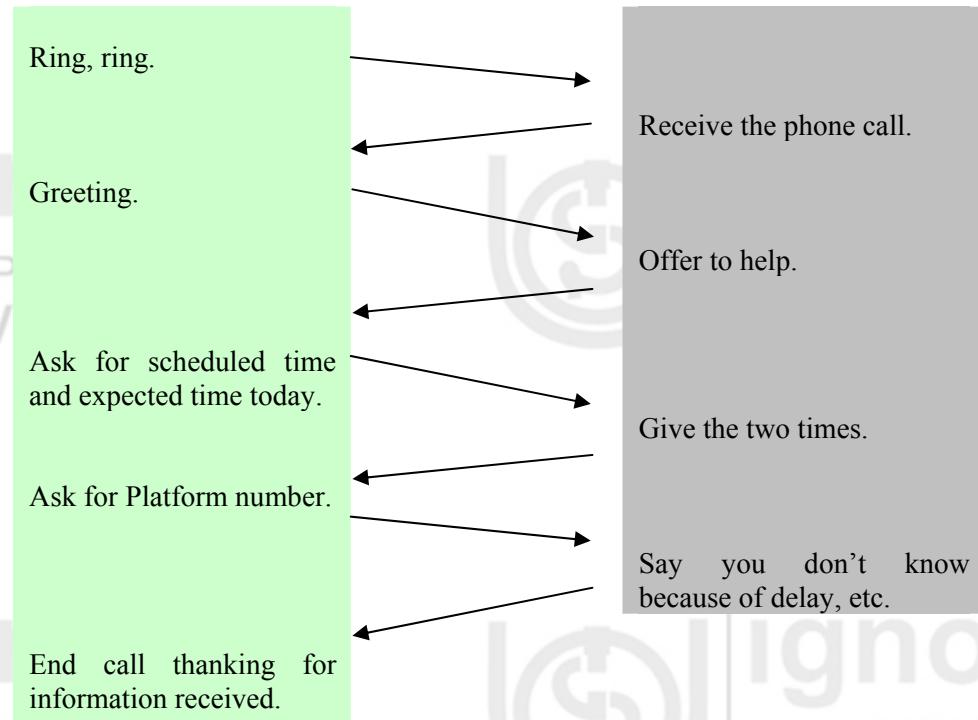
Call the railway enquiry to find out the following:

- What time the train arrives normally
- What time it is expected to arrive today
- The platform on which the train is expected to arrive.

B: You work at the railway enquiries desk at New Delhi Railway Station. Receive A's call and answer the questions using the following information:

- The Rajdhani Express is scheduled to arrive at 9.30 PM but it is running late and is expected to arrive by 11.30 PM tonight.
- The train usually arrives on Platform No. 11 but you can't really say where it might arrive today due to the delay.

Use the following flow chart to make the phone call:



A: You need to make three telephone calls inviting B, C and D for your daughter's birthday party.

Call each one inviting their families to attend the party. Give each of them the following details. Some of the dialogues are given below to help you.

- Your daughter's name,
- Date and time of the celebration
- Place where you are holding the party (your home or a hotel for instance).

B:

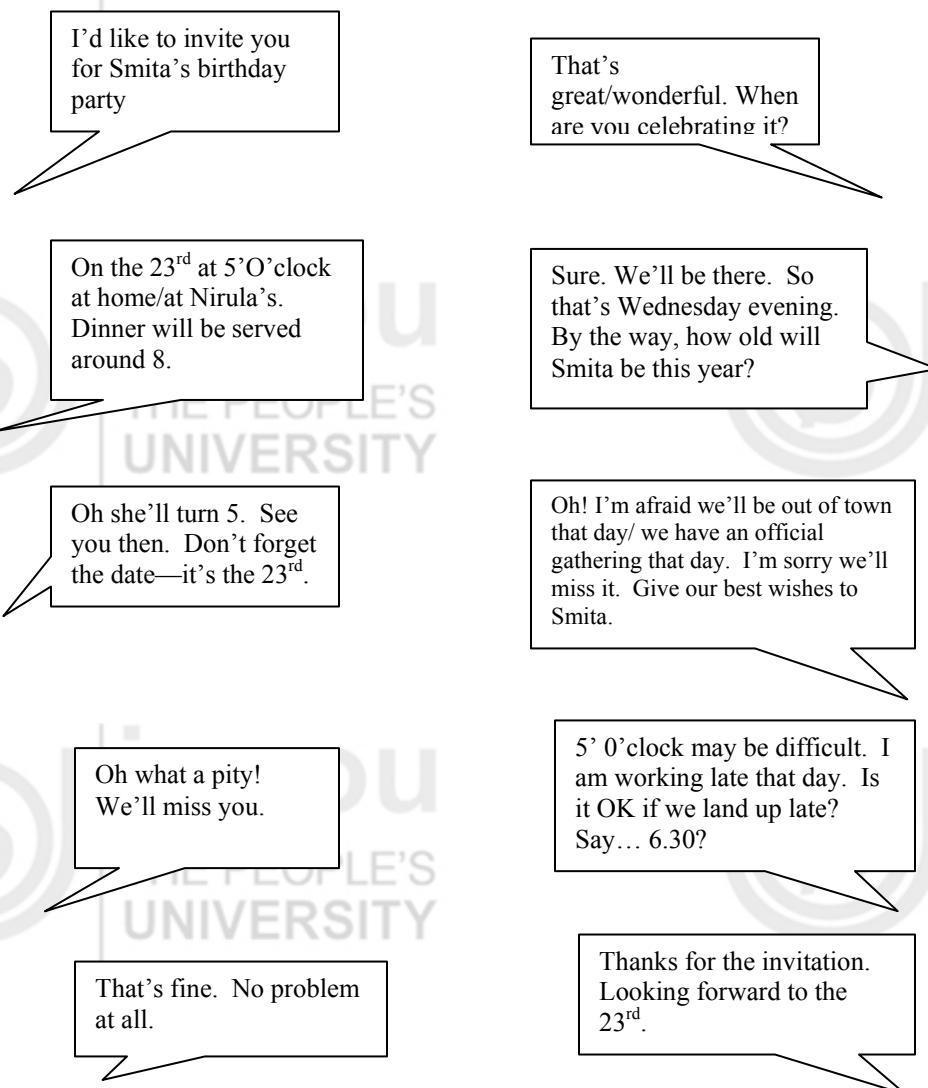
- Politely accept the invitation.
- Say that you are looking forward to the party.
- Get all the details, confirm the date and time and (Try to find out the age of the girl indirectly.)

C:

- Receive the invitation.
- Politely express your inability to attend the party giving a suitable reason (like you might be out of town on the said date).
- Wish your friend a great party and convey your regrets.

D:

- Politely accept the invitation.
- Add that you would be reaching late because of a prior commitment.
- Make sure that it is okay to go late.



Telephone Techniques

Check Your Progress 4

1. You need to buy six new computers for your office. Call Susheel Computer Manufacturers and ask for the following information:
 - Current special offers on computers
 - Computer specifications (RAM, Hard Disc, CPU)
 - Guarantee
 - Discount prospects for an order of six computers
2. You work in the Sales division of Susheel Computer Manufacturers. Answer A's questions using the following information:
 - Two special offers: Multi Media D686 with Pentium 4 CPU, 256 RAM, 40 GB Hard Drive, Monitor included for Rs 80,000 and

- Multimedia D130, Intel Pentium CPU, 64 RAM, 10 GB Hard Drive, Monitor not included for Rs 38,000
- Six months guarantee on all computers
- Discount of 5% on orders for more than 5 computers

For the above task, try to use the expressions you have learnt so far to compose a dialogue in writing. You should later practice the dialogue with a partner. Make sure that the points in the rubric are all covered and that you are clear and polite. Use the following hints:

The caller who is making the purchase enquiry would have to ask for the marketing/sales department

Introduce themselves: name and the firm he/she is working for

State the subject—we would like to buy....

Ask for information on points in the rubric—could you tell me whether/what-----

Is there any discount/ can you give us a discount if-----

Feel free to use informal expressions like “what about discount?” or “tell me one thing...” “I hope there is a guarantee...” etc.

B should be able to convince the caller about the deal that is being offered; here again, you could be informal and innovative: “this is best offer in the market today”, “we’ll give you a discount on a large order”/ “satisfaction guaranteed,” etc.

2.3 READING : CONFERENCE CALLS

A conference call is a telephone call by which a caller can speak to several people at the same time. These calls have become more and more relevant in present day workplaces where a lot of work is conducted long distance. A conference call is like holding a meeting on the telephone and the ground rules are the same as that for a meeting. In addition to the etiquette followed at a meeting we need to take care of some technical aspects as well. Here are some points about the rules to be observed while participating in a conference call. **Read carefully and answer the questions that follow.**

Learn How to Make a Conference Call

In today's business world, keeping in touch with remote locations is critical. In fact, not only are intracompany calls becoming ever more popular, but intercompany conference calls are becoming a viable meeting venue. Team or trade decisions can now be made by phone, and critical information can be disseminated quickly, cheaply, and securely.

Do your best to minimize background noise and interruptions. Turn off the ringer or any other phone line in your vicinity. Do not breathe into the mouthpiece of your phone, as it is disruptive. If you will be taking notes via a computer keyboard that could be heard by others, be sure you have a mute button on your phone and use it. If you have call waiting, disconnect it before calling. Use a land telephone line (corded phone) to call in. Be sure to TEST the working condition of your equipment beforehand.

Important:

- Avoid computer-or Internet based dial-up methods

- Avoid speakerphones. Use the hand-held receiver for speaking.
- Avoid cell phones. Do not call from a moving vehicle, whether or not you are the one driving. If you must use a cell phone, use it from a parked location with a strong signal and automatically mute yourself.
- If you use a cordless phone, stay close to the base to avoid static.

Call the given conference call line number at the exact time you are scheduled--if you call in too early, you may interrupt another group's conference call.

Introduce yourself when you begin speaking. Others may not know your voice!

When you call, you may hear others on the line. Wait to be greeted before introducing yourself. If you are late to a call, dial in and be silent until you are clear about what is going on in the call or for someone to greet you. If you leave the call early, do not announce you are leaving. Just hang up.

Try to stay on schedule. Stick to the topics laid out in your agenda, and be respectful of others' time! End the call clearly.

Find out if there are special rules for your organization's conference call.

Check Your Progress 5

Tick the right option

1. It is best to use this for a conference call
 - A. Cordless phone
 - B. Cell phone
 - C. Land telephone
2. The following can cause disruption while making a conference call
 - A. Land telephone
 - B. Muting the telephone
 - C. Another phone nearby
3. We need to introduce ourselves in a conference call because
 - A. We are talking to strangers
 - B. Others may not recognise our voice.
 - C. It is just a formality
4. If you are late to a conference call
 - A. Be silent till you are greeted or until you are clear about what is going on
 - B. Apologise to the others
 - C. Hang up and leave
5. We respect others' time by
 - A. Keeping to the agenda
 - B. Being polite
 - C. Ending the call early
6. If you have to leave the call early,
 - A. Take permission
 - B. Say goodbye
 - C. Leave silently

2.4 VOCABULARY

Check Your Progress 6

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| after | back | calling | hold the line | in |
| moment | reach | ring up | see | checked |
| confirm | dialled | directory | extension | mobile |
| phone | stand | bothered | | |

1. Choose the missing words from the box.

1. Hello, who's that _____?
 2. Just a _____, please.
 3. I'll _____ if she's here.
 4. I'll get the information you want; _____, please.
 5. You asked me to _____ when I was in town again.
 6. Sorry, he's not _____ at the moment.
 7. You can _____ him any evening _____ six o' clock.
 8. Well, I can ring _____ later if it's convenient.
 9. Isn't that 1421? That's what I _____, I think.
 10. No, this is the wrong _____. I'll put you on to the switchboard.
 11. Sorry to have _____ you.
 12. He's not in the office at the moment. But I can try to find him on the _____.
 13. I haven't got the new number. Shall I call _____ inquiry?
 14. This is how things _____ at our end. I'm afraid there's nothing we can do about it.
 15. I've _____ up on the prices you asked about.
 16. Now I can _____ the arrangements we made.
2. Use the following phrasal verbs to fill in the blanks below:

Call back, get through, hang up, cut off, hold on, looked up, putting through, picking up

1. Sheila couldn't _____ to Ramesh on the intercom; she dialed 01 to get a call back from his phone once it was free.
2. The secretary kept calling the Chamber of Commerce; no one was _____.
3. The operator asked Sudhakar to _____ as the MD's line was busy.
4. Anita could not find the restaurant's number in her telephone diary; she _____ the city telephone directory.
5. The sales people at the local supermarket are very rude. They _____ on you even before you finish enquiring.
6. Krishna could not complete his conversation with his mother since the line was suddenly _____.
7. Pratap's girl friend was not available. He left a message with her mother asking her to _____ him _____.
8. Can you get me the manager please?" "Yes sir, _____ you _____."

2.5 WRITING AND LISTENING: LEAVING A MESSAGE

Check Your Progress 7

When someone you have called is away, you may decide to leave a message for him/ her.

Look at the following message:

1.

Mr. Bhalla or Bali had called about some party—wants you to call him back.”

Now listen to the recording and decide what is missing in the message. Write the message.

2. In the recording you will listen to Neelam Sinha calling the office of Spectrum Magazines to enquire about the status of her subscription for two of their magazines. Listen and fill in the message form given below:

|  Message form |
|--|
| Message for: |
| Name of the Caller: |
| Time of Call: |
| Subscription Number: |
| Phone number: |
| Nature of Query: |
| Message: |

Leaving a Message on the Answering Machine

Sometimes we may have to leave a message for someone on an answering machine. Here we need to record our own message. Consider how this message would be different from the messages we covered in the previous sections. The difference between the two kinds of messages would be that while one is written giving the factual details only, the message for the answering machine is like recording a one-sided conversation, and requires continuous speech.

When we are confronted with an answering machine instead of a person at the other end, we have to record our message and since the other person cannot get feedback from us, it is

doubly important that the message be clear and accurate. So perhaps it might be safer to hang up, prepare the message and then ring again, once we are well rehearsed with the message. Consider the points that you would need to cover in the message. Look at the following:

Introduction: "Hello, this is Anita", or more formally, "My name is Anita Thakur".

State the time and the reason for your call, "It's ten in the morning, and I'm calling to find out if...", "I'm phoning to see whether..." "I'm ringing to tell you that..." etc.

Make a request: "Can you call me back?" "Would you be able to...?"

Leave your telephone number: "My number is..." " You can reach me at..." "You can call me at..."

Conclude: "Thanks a lot, bye". "Talk to you later, bye".

Attempt the task below:

3. You want to find out if your friend Raghunath, is interested in going to the gym this evening at 6.00 pm.

Leave a message on his answering machine, asking him to call you back before 3pm on telephone number 584-6454. Mention the time at which you are calling.

Telephone: (*ring, ring, ring*) "Hello, this is Raghunath, I'm afraid I'm not in at the moment...Please leave a message after the beep...(beep)

You: ...

You could begin like this:

Hello, Raghunath, (your name) here. I wanted to find out if...

2.6 GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Asking Wh-Questions:

Examples:

You want to know where the nearest payphone is.

Where's the nearest payphone?

Find out how she spells her name.

How do you spell your name?

Check Your Progress 8

Now make questions in a similar ways.

1. Find out when Mr. Ragavan will be back.
2. You'd like to know why the sales office hasn't called.
3. Find out when he normally arrives at the office.
4. You want to know why the consignment has been delayed.
5. Find out what you dial for directory inquiry.
6. You're interested in knowing where he's phoning from.
7. You need to know where you could reach him.
8. Find out what the number of the Managing Director is.

Perfect Tenses:

The **Present Perfect Tense** is used to indicate

1. Something that has happened in the past but has an impact on the present.
e.g. Anil has gone to the market. (He went to the market and so he is not available right now.)
2. Something that has begun in the past and continues to the present moment.
e.g. “ I have tried your number many times since morning. (“I have been trying your number and am doing so even now”).
3. A past event that has news value.
e.g. Mohan has received a call from Amitabh Bacchan on KBC.
4. Something that has happened in the past but the time is not specified.
e.g. I have seen him before. (I have definitely seen him before the present moment but I am not sure when that was.)

The **Past Perfect Tense** is used to indicate something that has happened before a specific time in the past. It is used to refer to the earlier of the two events both of which have taken place in the past.

e.g. The phone had stopped ringing when Amit entered the room. (The phone was ringing until Amit entered the room but stopped just short of his entry. Notice that the perfect tense relates the two events.)

Check Your Progress 9

Fill in the correct form of the verbs given in brackets at the end of each of the sentences below.

1. The boss _____ just now. There's an urgent message for you. (has arrived, had arrived)
2. “Hello, hello, could you tell me when...oh no, they _____ (have hung up, had hung up)
3. “Hi, Meeta here. When I tried your phone this morning, no one _____ (has picked up, had picked up)
4. “ I left a message with Amit as you suggested. He _____ yet. (has not called back, had not called back)
5. “Hello, is Rajesh in? This is Subhash speaking.” “ No I'm afraid he is not in, he _____ can a message for you”(has left, had left)
6. Rani couldn't complete the conversation with her mother. The operator _____ before she finished. (has disconnected, had disconnected)
7. By the time Suresh came, we _____ our lunch. (have had, had had)
8. I _____ Gopi a couple of minutes ago. (have seen, had seen)
9. The World book Fair began on 28th January. Today is the 30th and we still _____ to see it. (haven't gone, hadn't gone)
10. The President _____ the crowds before he entered the stadium. (has greeted, had greeted).

2.7 PRONUNCIATION: CONTRACTED FORMS

Study the following sentences. They are examples of spoken English. In each case there is a contraction of the auxiliary or the be-verb as the case may be

I'll put you through (I + will)

I'm afraid he's out at the moment (I + am)

These are called contractions, and are an essential part of spoken English. The negation 'not' and the pronoun 'us' are also contracted sometimes in spoken English. Now read out the above sentences aloud making sure that you are pronouncing the contractions correctly, that is, as they are written and not in their expanded form. Here are some more sentences spoken in this unit. Can you say what the following contractions stand for? Say the sentences aloud using the contracted forms. Now listen to the tape.

1. I can't hear you at all.
2. I won't be able to make it tomorrow.
3. I'd like to invite you...
4. That's fine (with me).
5. Why don't we meet?
6. We're four adults.
7. Sheila couldn't get through to Ramesh.
8. I haven't been receiving any issues of the magazine.

2.8 SUMMARY

In this unit, we introduced you to the sort of English that will help you make a phone call or answer a phone call in general and for business purposes.

We, perhaps, take this skill for granted. However, after going through the unit, you would have realized that to make an effective phone call you require a different style and a special language. We have tried to introduce you to this language.

Conference calls, leaving messages on the answering machine are some of the new developments in "Telephoning". We have touched on these aspects as well.

In Grammar, we have revised wh-questions and Present and Past Perfect tense.

In the pronunciation section we deal with contracted forms. Practice them on the tape by repeating after us.

2.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Jean Naterop and Rod Rexell, 1987, *Telephoning in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leo Jones and Richard Alexander, 1996. *New International Business English* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

Warm Up

- It is difficult to communicate on the telephone, as we cannot see the other person or his/her reactions while speaking. Further, we might have to deal with bad lines.
- We need to be careful about what we say and how we say it.
- Personal interaction involves the use of body language, which is absent on the telephone.
- As we cannot use gestures etc, it is essential to speak loudly and clearly on the telephone.
- Smiling would be classified under face-to-face communication. However, it is helpful to smile while on the telephone as well, because it makes one *sound* friendly, although the other person cannot see your smile.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Here are samples of the two conversations. Remember that there can be several variations.

A: Good morning, Amit Kumar, Bank of India.

B: Good morning. This is Anita Sinha. Can I speak to the manager please?

A: I'm sorry he is not available right now. Can I take a message?

B: Yes, please. Could you ask him to give me a ring?

A: Certainly. Could you give me your number?

B: My number is 264-5677 and I am available after 5.30.

A: All right, that's Anita Sinha, 2-6-4-5-6-7-7 and any time after 5.30 PM. I shall give him the message as soon he gets in, ma'am.

B: Thank you, bye.

A: Goodbye.

2. A: Good morning, Airport Enquiry...

B: Good morning. Could you tell me what time the Indian Airlines flight from Bangalore is arriving?

A: It is scheduled to arrive at 11.00 AM sir, but it is running late today. It is expected to arrive at 11.30.

B: I see. And what time does the flight to Jaipur take off?

A: The flight to Jaipur leaves at 1.15 Sir, but it is available only on two days in the week.

B: Oh... could you tell me which days it operates?

A: Yes sir, Wednesdays and Fridays.

B: O.K. Thank you.

3. Here is the dialogue with the blanks filled.

A: Hello, Ajay speaking, can I help you?

B: Hello, I can't hear you at all; this seems to be a bad connection.

A: Can you get me Extension 457 please? I'm calling from CMC.

B: Sure, could you please hold the line?

A: I'm sorry Mr. Biswas is not available right now; can I take a message?

B: Yes please, can you ask him to call me back? My telephone number is 011-354766
Tell him it's regarding my meeting with him. I won't be able to make it tomorrow.

A: OK, and your name is...?

B: It's Mohan Gadgil—M-O-H-A-N G-A-D-G-I-L.

A: All right, I shall give this message to Mr. Biswas.

B: Thank you, Goodbye.

A: Goodbye.

4. Here is a model dialogue. Of course, other versions are possible.

Mr. B. Hello, Amit Biswas here. You wanted me to call you...

Mohan: Thank you for calling me back, Mr. Biswas. There is a problem with the workers here and I am not able to attend tomorrow's meeting. How about next week?

Mr. B. Oh, I see. That's unfortunate. Let's do this: Why don't we meet before the AGM (Annual General Meeting) next Wednesday? Are you going to attend?

Mohan: Yes Mr. Biswas, I'll be there.

Mr. B: OK, that's settled then. See you later.

Mohan: Yes, Good-bye.

Mr. B: Good-bye.

Tape script of Check Your Progress 3

Waiter: The Copper Chimney. How can I help you?

Woman: Uh . . . I'd like to place an order for a home delivery.

Waiter: Okay. What would you like?

Woman: Umm. I'll take Chinese.

Waiter: Would you like Chowmein or Rice or both?

Woman: I'd like Chowmein.

Waiter: How many meals would you like to order?

Woman: We're four adults.

Waiter: So that's four orders of Chowmein. And what would you like with your noodles?
Would you like Mixed Vegetable, Manchurian or Chilli Paneer?

Woman: I'd like Manchurian but give us Chilli Paneer to serve one person.

Waiter: Right. That's three orders of Manchurian and one Paneer. OK madam and would you like something to drink?

Woman: Yes. Could I have Coke?

Waiter: I'm sorry. We only have Pepsi or Sprite.

Woman: Well, in that case, uh, I'll have Sprite.

Waiter: Okay. Shall I give you a 2-litre bottle of Sprite?

Woman: Yes please. Would you be able to tell me what would be the ingredients in the Manchurian?

Waiter: It is 100% vegetarian. We use white flour, soy sauce, vegetables and spices.

Woman: That's all right. I hope you don't use Ajinomoto in any of the dishes.

Waiter: Don't worry, madam. We no longer use it in our cooking since it has been banned. What kind of dessert would you like with your meal? It comes free with Chowmein.

Woman: What desserts do you have?

Waiter: We have Chocolate Ice cream, Date Pancake and Kulfi.

Woman: Oh! We'll have Date Pancake, please.

Waiter: Would you like anything else?

Woman: No, thank you.

Waiter: All right madam, that's Rs 240. Can you give me your address?

Woman: Yes. It's 20/340, Sunder Nagar. Our house is right next to the Mother Dairy booth.

Waiter: Very good madam. Our man will be there in thirty minutes.

Woman: Thank You.

Check Your Progress 3

5, 7 & 8 are TRUE

1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are FALSE

Check Your Progress 4

Open ended

Check Your Progress 5

1.C 2.C 3.B 4.A 5.A 6.C

Check Your Progress 6

1.

1. calling
2. moment
3. see
4. hold the line
5. ring up
6. in
7. phone, after
8. back
9. dialled

10. extension
11. bothered
12. mobile
13. directory
14. stand
15. checked
16. confirm

2. Here are the sentences with the blanks filled.
 1. Sheila couldn't get through to Ramesh, on the intercom; she dialed 01 to get a call back from his phone once it was free.
 2. The secretary kept calling the Chamber of Commerce; no one was picking up.
 3. The operator asked Sudhakar to hold on, as the MD's line was busy.
 4. Anita could not find the restaurant's number in her telephone diary; she looked up the city telephone directory.
 5. The sales people at the local supermarket are very rude. They hang up on you even before you finish enquiring.
 6. Krishna could not complete his conversation with his mother since the line was suddenly cut off.
 7. Pratap's girl friend was not available. He left a message with her mother asking her to call him back.
 8. "Can you get me the manager please?" "Yes sir, putting you through"

Tape script:

Caller: Hello, may I speak to Mr. Ghosh please?

Secretary: Oh, he is not here right now, any message?

Caller: Yes, please. My name is Bali, that's B-A-L-I, and I wanted to discuss with him the details of the farewell party for our Chairman. Can you please ask him to call me at 543-3434 before this evening?

Check Your Progress 7

1.

Message for Mr. Ghosh.

Caller: Mr. Bali Date:

Message: Wants to discuss details for farewell party; Mr. Ghosh to call him back at 543-3434 before this evening.

Tape script:

Caller: Hello,

Operator: Good morning, how can I help you?

Caller: Good morning. Is this Spectrum Magazines? Er... I have a subscription enquiry...

Operator: Yes, madam putting you through...

Preetam: Hello...

Caller: Hi my name is Neelam Sinha; I have an enquiry regarding my subscription for two of your magazines... I have paid the subscription for two years but there is a problem...

Preetam: I'm afraid Ms Shalini Kumar the person concerned is not available right now? Is there anything I can do for you?

Caller: Could you take a message?

Preetam: Yes ma'am. Could you give me your name again, please?

Caller: Neelam Sinha.

Preetam: Can you give me your subscription number?

Caller: Oh yes, it is K-10770.

Preetam: Hmm... yes, you have subscribed for A&M and Design Digest... you have a valid subscription.

Caller: But I haven't been receiving any issues for the last three months...

Preetam: I see. OK, I shall pass on the message to Shalini when she gets back.

Caller: Could you ask her to call me back? My number is 5687687. Tell her it's urgent—my subscription expires in April...

Preetam: Yes Ms Sinha. I shall give her the message. Good-bye.

Caller: Thank you, Good-bye.

The completed message form is provided below.

| Message form | |
|---|--|
|  | |
| Message for: Shalini | |
| Name of the Caller: Neelam Sinha | |
| Time of Call: | |
| Subscription Number: K10770 | |
| Phone number: 5687687 | |
| Nature of Query: Didn't receive A&M and Design Digest for 3 months. | |
| Message: Call her urgently—subscription expires in April. | |

Check Your Progress 8

- a. When do you think Mr. Ragavan will be back?

- b. Why hasn't the sales office called yet?
- c. When does he normally come to office?
- d. Why has the consignment been delayed?
- e. What is the number of directory enquiry?
- f. Where are you phoning from?
- g. Where can I reach you?
- h. What is the number of the Managing Director?

Check Your Progress 9

- 2. has arrived
- 3. have hung up
- 4. had picked up
- 5. has not called back
- 6. has left
- 7. had disconnected
- 8. had had
- 9. have seen
- 10. haven't gone
- 11. had greeted

UNIT 3 JOB APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Warm up
- 3.2 Reading
- 3.3 Vocabulary: Apply for a Job
- 3.4 Curriculum Vitae
- 3.5 Language Focus: Some Useful Words
- 3.6 Study Skills: Preparing for an Interview
- 3.7 Listening
- 3.8 Speaking
- 3.9 Writing
- 3.10 Summary
- 3.11 Suggested Readings
- 3.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to learn:

- how to write applications for jobs
- how to write an effective Curriculum Vitae
- how to prepare for job interviews
- about useful vocabulary for CVs and interviews
- about the kind of questions asked at interviews

3.1 WARM UP

1. Read the advertisement below and answer the questions as quickly as possible:

Sales Executives (North)
For a
Leading Multinational Company

We are looking for excellent sales people with a proven track record for selling our full range of Consumer Durable products.

The position is based in Chandigarh and the candidate will be responsible for sales in Punjab and Haryana.

Experience of selling similar products is essential.

Remuneration is comparable with the best in the industry, and will be linked to performance.

Apply to Mr. Sudir Taneja
Personnel Executive,
XYZ Co.
P.O.Box: 3675

- a. What is the job mentioned in the advertisement?
- b. What is the salary being offered?
- c. Where is the job located?
- d. What kind of company is it?
- e. What qualities is the company looking for?

3.2 READING

You are Sudhir Taneja, Personnel officer at XYZ Company. You've received a Memo from your Manager Ms. Renu Bhardwaj, giving you guidelines for screening the application letters you have received. Read Salil Mishra's Application Letter and CV and makes a preliminary assessment along the lines of the questions in your manager's memo.

Memo from Ms. Renu Bhardwaj.

XYZ Company

Internal memorandum

To: Sudhir Taneja (Personnel Officer)
From: Renu Bhardwaj (Manager,HRD)
Date: 27th March,2004
Subject: Recruitment of Sales Executive (North)

When you look at the applications for the Sales Executive (North), please make notes on the following questions:

- Where do they live? (We need a local person)
- How old are they? (We need seasoned but energetic people)
- Do they have the right kind of work experience?
- Can they move quickly?
- Why do they want to change jobs?
- Do you think they will fit our work environment?

Letter of Application

5, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Chennai,
India

Mr. Sudhir Taneja
XYZ Co.
P.O.Box: 3675
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Taneja,

I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Sales Executive in last week's Asian Times.

I am 26 years old. I have a B.Com. degree and Diploma in Sales and Marketing Management. I live in Chennai and speak excellent English and Hindi and a little Tamil.

I have two years experience of selling consumer goods in a well-established firm in Chennai. I am very hard working and enjoy traveling and meeting people.

I am very interested in working for an MNC. I assure you that if you give me a chance, I will perform to your full satisfaction.

Please find enclosed my CV.

I will be grateful if you give me an opportunity for an interview.

Yours truly,

Salil Mishra

Your will now read a Curriculum Vitae-you have to decide how to improve it.

Curriculum Vitae

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Name: | Salil Mishra |
| Date of Birth: | 09-04-1976 |
| Marital Status: | Unmarried |
| Father's Name: | Shri Radhey Shyam Sinha |
| Father's Occupation: | Loan Officer, Regional Office Allahabad Bank, Gaya |
| Family Background: | I belong to a family of educated, well placed Kayasths. My two uncles are officers in Nationalized banks. My elder brother is a Lecturer in Govt. college. My two younger brothers are studying. One is in college and the younger one is in school. |
| Address for Correspondence: | 5, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Chennai, India |
| Present Address | c/o Shri Radhey Shyam Sinha, Gali No. 15 Khari Baoli, Gaya, Bihar India |

Education

| Degree/Diploma | Name of School/College | Subject | Division |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| High School | D.A.V School, Patna | All subjects | High 2 nd Div. |
| AISSC | -do- | Commerce | 1 st Div. (among Top 10 in Class) |
| B.Com. Diploma in Computers | Patna Govt. College Aptel Computers Centre | Commerce MS Office incl MS Word, Excel &Power Point | 2 nd Div. |
| Diploma in Marketing & Management | AIMIM | Management with Spl in Sales and Marketing | High 2 nd Div. |

Work Experience

1. Sept. 1999-May 2000: Salesman with M/s Purohit Trading Company, which is a leading showroom in Patna for selling all Electrical goods like Fridge, Geyser, TV, etc.
2. July 2000-continuing - Sales Manager with M/s Venkatraman & Company. This is a Dealership for all leading Photocopier and Fax machines. I am doing very well and am expecting a promotion soon.

Hobbies: Cricket and Singing.

Do you think Salil Mishra has written a good CV? Consider the following points in your answer:

- Is the presentation good?
- How can it be improved?
- Is all the relevant information included?
- Is there any thing you would like to add or delete?

1. Share your assessment of Salil Mishra's candidature with your friends at the study centre.
2. Make notes and share with the class the three most significant improvements you will make to the CV.
3. Make a list of the information you would like to include in a letter of application.

3.3 VOCABULARY: APPLYING FOR A JOB

Check Your Progress 2

Complete this application letter using the correct form of the following words:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Interest | outline | employ | complete | match | learn |
| deal | ability | appreciate | enclose | qualify | |

246 Mahavir Apartments
Malviya Nagar
Bhopal 462014

8 August 2003

Mr Vishal Garg
Manager HRD
Maurya Travels
256 Nehru Nagar
New Delhi

Dear Sir

I am a post graduate in Travel and Tourism, _____ in the post of Sales Executive in your Marketing Division advertised in The Times of Delhi.

I am currently _____ as a Management trainee at Golden Tours and Travels, Bhopal where I have _____ one year. Having worked in the travel industry for a year, I believe I have _____ the basics and I now wish to go into International travel and tourism. Maurya Travels is a known name in this field and I am sure I will find the work at Maurya both challenging and satisfying. You are looking for an executive who can help promote foreign travel and that is my specific area of interest. The profile of your company _____ many possibilities for growth which I find most interesting. The job you are offering _____ my personal and professional interests.

As you will notice in my _____ C V, I have combined my specialization in Travel & Tourism with a diploma in Marketing, which gives me an advantage in _____ with customers and promoting goods and services and further _____ me for consideration. I have also had some experience dealing with international business travelers in my present job.

I am a conscientious, hard working and responsible worker. My colleagues often _____ my sense of humour and my _____ to get along with all kinds of people. I am sure my socializing skills along with my ability to communicate

effectively in English and Hindi would be extremely relevant and suitable to the needs of your organization.

I look forward to meeting with you and discussing my qualifications in more detail.

Yours faithfully,

Dhara Taneja

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3.4 CURRICULUM VITAE

The Curriculum Vitae or personal bio data is a statement of facts which includes a summary of your educational and academic backgrounds research experience, work experience, awards, honours, affiliations, skills, interests and other details. A good Curriculum Vitae should be:

- Clear - well-organized and logical
- Concise - relevant and necessary
- Complete - includes everything you need
- Consistent - doesn't mix styles or fonts
- Current - up-to-date

Check Your Progress 3

Can you fill up suitable subtitles in the Curriculum Vitae that follows? They are given below in jumbled order

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Interests | Work experience | Personal | Education |
| References | Skills | Co-curricular activities | |
| Job objective | Extra curricular activities | Projects | |

Curriculum Vitae

1 _____

Name: Dhara Taneja

Date of Birth: 8 September 1980

Nationality: Indian

Address: 45 A sector, Shakti Nagar, Bhopal, 462022

E mail: dhara.taneja@hotmail.com

Telephone: 0755 2586456

2 _____

To become a successful Senior Executive in a large Travel & Tourism Company

3 _____

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| 2000 -2002 | Post Graduation in Travel & Tourism | Excel Institute | Ist Div. |
| 2000 – 2001 | Diploma in Marketing Management | St Teresa's Institute,Bhopal | IIInd Div. |
| 1997 – 2000 | BBA | RBT College | Ist Div |

4 _____

2002 to the present -working as Management Trainee with Golden Tours & Travels, Bhopal.
-Handling prospective customers.
-Conceptualized, creating and distributing brochures.

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Skills Needed at the Workplace-I

- Supervising the maintenance of records of customer queries.
- Attending to customer queries

5 _____

Projects: 1. won special appreciation for project on **International Travel Options for Middle Income Groups**

6 _____

organizational skills
strong customer relations
interpersonal skills
computer proficiency

7 _____

Debates & public speaking
Member of Organizing Committees for several cultural Events

8 _____

Sports: swimming, badminton
Cultural : Member of Spic Macay – an organization that promotes traditional art and culture

9 _____

1. Ms Anila Lal, HOD Travel & Tourism, Excel Institute, Bhopal 462012; Tel : 0755 2457903
2. Mr R Andrews, Principal, St Teresa's Institute, T T Nagar, Bhopal 462005; Tel : 0755 2488345

Don't you think this is a better CV than Salil Mishra's? Why do you think so?

C.V. OF EXPERIENCED APPLICATION

The format for Curriculum Vitae given above is suitable for first time job applicant or those who have very little job experience. However, once you have some years of work experience behind you, it is advisable to format your CV differently making sure that you emphasize your work history, career skills and career achievements. Here is one such sample CV.

Mr Arun Nagpal
243 Sector II, Gulmohar
Indore, M P
India
Phone numbers: 0433 2568342; 9826045632

Education

| | | |
|------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| MBA | Marketing | Devi Ahilya University, Indore 1997 |
| MA | Economics | Rani Jhansi University 1995-1991 |
| B.A. | Economics | -DO- |

CAREER PROFILE

- 1999 till date Till Date: Senior Manager (Marketing)
Gateway Motors, New Delhi.
1994-1999: Manager (Sales) Swift Motors, Chennai

1990-1994: Executive (Sales and Marketing) Balwant Electronics, New Delhi

CAREER SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE

- Advertising
- Market positioning
- Product testing
- Media handling
- Staff supervision
- Budget management
- Marketing strategies
- New product introduction
- Oral & written presentations
- Pricing strategies
- Facilities management

CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

- As Senior Manager Marketing for Getaway Motors, initiated and executed aggressive new product introductions for national market
 - Co directed product development, packaging, market positioning, advertising and testing of two new vehicles launched by the company
 - Was a member of the core team which re designed and launched a highly successful advertising campaign with a new face, for the company's old products
 - Assumed a central role in the company's turnaround to profitability after a lean period of eight years
 - Formulated strategies to resist and overcome stiff competition from rival brand
 - Earned two promotions in the high flyer category in the last seven years

References Provided Upon Request

Check Your Progress 4

Now write out your own CV by substituting the information given under different heads with information about yourself? If you have only just completed your studies, use the first sample and substitute the given information with your own bio data. In case you have more than five years of job experience we would advise you to use the second format.

3.5 LANGUAGE FOCUS: USEFUL WORDS

Here are some more words that could help you to describe your work better. Remember that these words could also be extremely helpful in talking specifically and appropriately about your work during the interview.

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Achieved | researched | organized | coordinated |
| managed | supervised | classified | conceptualized |
| prepared | investigated | expedited | controlled |
| implemented | programmed | facilitated | forecasted |
| analyzed | assisted | broadened | overcame |
| created | designed | developed | established |
| scheduled | undertook | generated | presented |
| proposed | formulated | handled | integrated |
| staffed | published | sponsored | optimized |
| maintained | devised | administered | allocated |

Check Your Progress 5

Action verbs can help you to describe your participation in work experience. Out of the given choices identify the suitable action word to complete the given sentences.

1. While at work I _____ new challenges .
a. encourage b. maintain c. enjoy d. optimize
2. I _____ several important company functions and events.
a. created b. controlled c. developed d. organized
3. In the general office the secretaries _____ all word processing and typing.
a. handle b. expedite c. assist d. organize
4. I can _____ with difficult customers without losing my patience.
a. deal b. handle c. look after d. cope
5. As Manager HRD I _____ a 10% reduction in absenteeism by creating healthier employees through providing a gym in the company premises.
a. gained b. achieved c. made d. optimized
6. I _____ advanced technologies in teleconferencing to facilitate better communication across distances.
a. generated b. created c. implemented d. started
7. I _____ a central role in the company's turnaround to profitability by helping to cut down on production costs.
a. acquired b. assumed c. enjoyed d. managed
8. I _____ tens of thousands of Rupees by cutting down on wasteful expenditure.
a. generated b. produced c. devised d. optimized
9. I _____ powerful company resistance to break into the international market where we now have our biggest buyers.
a. opposed b. managed c. controlled d. overcame
10. I _____ aggressive new product introductions in keeping with the demands of the changing market.
a. started b. initiated c. assessed d. produced

3.6 STUDY SKILLS : PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

We give below some tips to help you prepare for an interview. You may add some more.

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A

- Go through the copy of your application carefully before the interview. The interview panel is likely to ask specific questions about it.
- Be ready to provide examples and specifics and to elaborate on information on your resume and application.
- Be open and honest.
- If you have filled up a statement of purpose as part of the application, be ready for some probing questions based on this.
- Ask questions, since the interview is as much an opportunity for you to learn about the college as for the college to learn about you.
- Watch your nonverbal clues, such as eye contact, posture, gestures and fidgeting.
- Be courteous to the administrative staff, since how you treat them can have an impact (positive or negative).
- Make a rational assessment of yourself before you go for the interview. Know your strengths and weaknesses.
- Do some homework on the company and get as much information as possible about it.
- Find out details about the available position in advance. This will help you to relate your skills to the position.
- Review skills and abilities questions. Brainstorm issues.
- Give a positive first impression which could include a warm handshake and a pleasant smile.
- Show enthusiasm and interest. Your body language can help you do this.
- Be as natural as possible.
- Listen attentively and concentrate. Do not ever interrupt the interviewer before he / she has completed the question.

3.7 LISTENING

You will now hear an audio on types of interviews.

Check Your Progress 6

Listen to the audio carefully and state which of these three summaries best describes the audio on types of job interviews?

1. The traditional interview examines the qualifications, experience and skills of the candidates. On the other hand the behavioural interview assesses their psychology and attitude.

2. The major difference between the two kinds of interview is that in the traditional interview applicants are asked general questions whereas in the behavioural interview they are asked personal questions.
3. While the traditional interview assesses the skills and abilities of candidates through general questions, the behavioural interview focuses on questions related to specific situations in which the applicants actually made use of these skills to achieve something or to solve a problem.

3.8 SPEAKING

Here are some samples of questions asked during job interviews. Think about possible answers. Record your answers and listen to the recording and assess your responses. You could also practice them with your study partner.

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Do you have any hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?

Education

1. How do you think your education has prepared you for this position?
2. What were your favorite subjects/activities at school?
3. Why did you choose your major subject?

Team work

1. What are the characteristics of a successful team?
2. What qualities do you have that make you an effective team player?
3. Do you work better by yourself or as part of a team?
4. What can you contribute to establish a positive working environment for our team?
5. What type of people do you work best with?

Strengths

1. What are your three greatest strengths?
2. What can you contribute to our organization?
3. What are your strong points and how have they helped you in your performance/studies.

Success / Achievement

1. How do you determine or evaluate success?
2. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
3. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
4. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
5. Describe the most rewarding experience of your career thus far.

Analytical Skills

1. Are you analytical? Give us one example of your analytical abilities?
2. Tell us about a particularly difficult problem that you analyzed and what was your recommendation.

Motivation

1. What motivates employees?
2. Name some of the ways that a supervisor can demotivate staff.
3. What are some of the ways in which a supervisor can motivate staff?

Career Goals

1. Where do you want to be 5 years from now in your career?
2. What are your long term career goals?
3. What prompted you to take your current job?
4. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

Leadership

1. What is your strongest leadership skill and how will it assist you for this job?
2. Provide us with an example of your leadership ability.

Communication

1. How do you effectively communicate with others?
2. How important is listening to effective communications?
3. What are some of the characteristics of a good listener?
4. Tell us about a situation where you demonstrated good communications skills.

Miscellaneous

1. What new skills or capabilities have you developed recently?
2. Give me an example from a previous job where you've shown initiative.

Here are clues for some of these questions:

Tell me about yourself.

This is perhaps the most frequently asked question during interviews. It is a question asked at the beginning of the interview and gives the applicant an opportunity to make an opening statement about himself / herself. You can use this to state a summary of your goals, overall professional capabilities, achievements, background (educational and family), strengths, professional objectives and anything about your personality that is relevant and interesting. This question represents an opportunity to lead the interviewer in the direction you want him/her to go e.g., your specialization or whatever else you may wish to highlight.

Remember that the first impression you create will go a long way in the ultimate selection. However, most candidates who are asked this question just blurt out their schooling, college, marks and qualifications. All this is already there in the CV. Why tell the interviewer something s/he already knows?

Emphasise upon the unique characteristics that you possess while answering this question. All of us are unique in our own way. And that is the catch. Actually, everybody has something special and what one needs to do is, to probe into one self and answer the question.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

This is a rather deceptive question and should be prepared carefully. To prepare for this question one should ensure that one makes an objective self assessment of oneself before the interview. Identify and define your strengths and weaknesses. Think about your personality traits that help you to perform better as your strengths, and weakness as what hampers your performance. Be positive: turn a weakness into a strength. For example, you might say: "I often worry too much over my work/ assignments."

What are your hobbies? Do you play any sports?

Through such questions the interviewer may be looking for evidence of your job skills outside of your professional experience. For example, hobbies such as chess or bridge demonstrate analytical skills. Reading, music, and painting are creative hobbies. Individual sports show determination and stamina, while group sort of activities may

indicate you are comfortable working as part of a team. Your awareness of the objectives behind such questions can help you answer appropriately.

Also, the interviewer might simply be curious to know whether you have a life outside of work. Employees who have creative or athletic outlets for their stress are often healthier, happier and more productive.

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?

The ideal answer is one of flexibility. However, be honest. Give examples describing how you have worked in both situations.

Asking Questions during a Job Interview

At most interviews, you will be invited to ask questions of your interviewer. This is an important opportunity for you to learn more about the employer, and for the interviewer to further evaluate you as a job candidate. It requires some advance preparation on your part.

Here are some guidelines for asking questions:

• Prepare five good questions, with the understanding you may not have time to ask them all.

- Ask questions concerning the job, the company, and the industry or profession.
- Your questions should indicate your interest in these subjects and that you have read and thought about them. For example, you might start, "I read in Economic Times that ... I wonder if that factor is going to have an impact on your business."

Check Your Progress 7

Pick up a job advertisement relating to your field of study / interest. Imagine that you have been called by the advertiser for a job interview. Make a list of at least three questions you could ask at the interview.

.....
.....
.....
.....

3.9 WRITING

Check Your Progress 8

Asking for Reference

Write a letter to a professor asking him / her if you can mention him / her as a referee in your CV and whether he / she will be willing to provide a reference for you when needed. Include the following points:

- a reminder of who you are (professors teach hundreds of students and should be able to place you)
- request for permission to name him / her a referee

- inform them about where you are applying – it could be an Institute of Higher Education or a business organization

Now compare your letter with the sample given in the key.

Check Your Progress 9

Replies to Letter of Appointment

Here is an appointment letter from a company where you appeared for a job interview. Write a reply.

Maurya Travels

256 Nehru Nagar
New Delhi 110019
Tel: 91 011 26018563
E mail: maurya.travels@sancharnet.in

8 September 2003

Dear Ms Dhara Taneja

Thank you for attending the interview on 3 September 2003. I am pleased to offer you the post of Sales Executive in our Marketing Division at a starting salary of Rs 15000 per month. You will be required to join duty on 1 October 2003.

As discussed with you, the office hours are from 9.30 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday. You will be entitled to 2 weeks of annual paid holiday.

Please confirm acceptance of this appointment in writing and that you can take up this duty from 1 October.

Yours Truly

Ashwinder Singh
G M, HRD

3.10 SUMMARY

Writing an effective letter of application for a job and a neat and meaningful CV are difficult skills to acquire. In this unit we have tried to make you aware of the following:

- What employers want from the résumé's/CV's they receive.
- How to select and organize information in a C.V.
- How to create an attractive format

We have also given you models of application letters and acceptance letters.

In an application letter:

- You should provide concrete evidence of your skills and ability to perform the job you are applying for
- Do not repeat your C.V., but subtly persuade the company that they need your skills.

3.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

Batteiger, R.P. *Business Writing: Process and Form*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Lannon M, Tullis G and Troppe T, 1993. *Insights into Business*. Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

3.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

2. Salil Mishra's C.V. could be improved
 - i. He could delete information on family background. The employer is not interested in what his brothers and uncles are doing.
 - ii. One 'heading' for address is enough –and that should be the address where you want the reply to reach you.
 - iii. Instead of hobbies he could use the word **interests**.
 - iv. He needs to write a little more about his current responsibilities in the present job.
 - v. In terms of Presentation –the heading should have been in Bold and in a separate line in all instances.
 - vi. These could be some mention of Referees.
3. A letter of application should have the following information
 - Where did you learn about the position?
 - Which job are you applying for?
 - Refer to your CV in the letter-Explaining how your experience and skills qualify you for the job.
 - Ask for an interview.

Check Your Progress 2

Dear Sir

I am a post graduate in Travel and Tourism, interested in the post of Sales Executive in your Marketing Division advertised in The Times of India.

I am currently employed as a Management trainee at Golden Tours and Travels, Bhopal where I have completed one year. Having worked in the travel industry for a year, I believe I have learnt the basics and I now wish to go into International travel and tourism. Maurya Travels is a known name in this field and I am sure I will find the work at Maurya both challenging and satisfying. You are looking for an executive who can help promote foreign travel and that is my specific area of interest. The profile of your company outlines many possibilities for growth which I find most interesting. The job you are offering matches my personal and professional interests.

As you will notice in my enclosed C V, I have combined my specialization in Travel & Tourism with a diploma in Marketing, which gives me an advantage in dealing with customers and promoting goods and services and further qualifies me for consideration. I have also had some experience dealing with international business travelers in my present

job. I am a conscientious, hard working and responsible worker. My colleagues often appreciate my sense of humour and my ability to get along with all kinds of people. I am sure my socializing skills along with my ability to communicate effectively in English and Hindi would be extremely relevant and suitable to the needs of your organization.

I look forward to meeting with you and discussing my qualifications in more detail.

Yours faithfully,

Dhara Taneja

Check Your Progress 3

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Personal | 2. Job Objective | 3 Education | 4. Work Experience |
| 5. Projects | 6. Skills | 7. Extra curricular activities | |
| 8 Interests | 9 References | | |

Check Your Progress 4

Open ended.

Check Your Progress 5

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1. c | 2 d | 3 a | 4 a | 5 b |
| 6 c | 7 b | 8 a | 9 d | 10 b |

Tape script

Types of Job Interviews

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

The two styles of interviewing used by several companies today are the traditional job interview and the behavioral interview. The traditional job interview uses broad-based questions such as, "why do you want to work for this company," and "tell me about your strengths and weaknesses." The interviewees' success or failure is more often than not based on the ability of the job-seeker to communicate with confidence than on the truthfulness or content of their answers. Employers are looking for answers to three questions: does the job-seeker have the skills and abilities to perform the job; does the job-seeker possess the enthusiasm and work ethic that the employer expects; and will the job-seeker be a team player and fit into the organization.

The behavioral job interview is based on the theory that past performance of the job – seeker is the best indicator of future behavior, and uses questions that probe specific past behaviors, such as: "tell me about a time where you confronted an unexpected problem and how did you resolve it," "tell me about an experience when you failed to achieve a goal," and "give me a specific example of a time when you managed a difficult colleague successfully." Job-seekers need to prepare for these interviews by recalling scenarios that fit the various types of behavioral interviewing questions. Job seekers should expect interviewers to have several follow-up questions and probe for details that explore all aspects of a given situation or experience. Recent college graduates with little work experience should focus on class projects and group situations that might lend themselves to these types of questions. Your hobbies and any volunteer work you might have done also should provide examples you could use.

Job-seekers should frame their answers based on a four-part outline:

(1) describe the situation or experience truthfully

- (2) discuss the actions you took
- (3) relate the outcomes of the actions
- (4) specify what you learned from it so that you could use the experience in the future.

Home Page: <http://www.quintcareers.com/>

Email: randall@quintcareers.com

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Check Your Progress 6

Answer : Summary number 3

Check Your Progress 7

1. Could you tell me what my job responsibilities are likely to be?
2. I've read in *Economic India* that some countries are considering a ban on outsourcing. Is that going to effect your business?
3. Could you tell me about the salary structure of the job?

Check Your Progress 8

Write a letter to a professor asking him / her if you can mention him / her as a referee in your CV and whether he / she will be willing to provide a reference for you when needed.

Dear Ms Nandita Rao / Dear Madam

I am a former student of your faculty of Business Management. I was an Under Graduate student at the RNT College from 1999 to 2001. You may recall that I was in constant touch with you during my BBA and also did my project under your guidance in my Final Year of BBA.

I wish to name you as a referee in my Curriculum Vitae and would like to request for your permission to do so.

I have now completed my Masters in Business Administration and I am applying for jobs in Marketing.

I look forward to your positive response to my request.

Yours Sincerely

Amit Sen

Check Your Progress 9

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 8 September offering me the job of a Marketing Executive at Maurya Travels. I am delighted to accept this position.

I will report for duty on 1st October at 9.30 am.

I really look forward to working in your company.

Yours Truly

Ms Dhara Taneja

UNIT 4 GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Warm up
- 4.2 Reading
- 4.3 Writing Skills
- 4.4 Listening: How to be Successful in a Group Discussion
- 4.5 Study Skills
- 4.6 Language Focus
- 4.7 Vocabulary
- 4.8 Speaking
- 4.9 Grammar: Connectives
- 4.10 Pronunciation
- 4.11 Summary
- 4.12 Suggested Readings
- 4.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

Group discussions are part of the admission procedure in many Institutes of Higher Education. Besides, they also play a major role in the recruiting process for various administrative and high level posts in Business organizations. The objective of this Unit is to find answers to questions like:

What is it that makes Group Discussions an important tool of assessment?

- What is a Group Discussion?
- What does Group Discussions assess?
- Methods and procedures in Group Discussions.
- Group Discussion skills.
- Language for Group Discussions.
- Assessment Criteria

4.1 WARM UP



How efficiently and effectively people get along with one another, respect each others' ideas, and resolve their inevitable professional and linguistic differences is going to result in success or failure.

To what extent do you agree with the above statement?

4.2 READING

Check Your Progress 1

Complete the following text on Group Discussions by inserting the appropriate sentences from the ones given below the passage in jumbled order.

Skills Needed at the Workplace-I

The 21st century has witnessed an increased focus and dependence on technology. Consequently we spend a lot of time in front of our computers.

1.

_____. Regardless of the use of Information technology, major decisions and sales are made on the basis of interpersonal communication.

2.

In the world of Sales, it's often said that people don't just buy products; they buy concepts sold to them through the ideas and feelings of their salesperson.

3.

_____. Some of the most important interpersonal communication skills necessary to communicate effectively face-to-face include speaking and listening, establishing rapport, and understanding and accommodating differences when communicating across personality, gender, and cultural lines.

4.



A Group Discussion is a test of the interpersonal communication skills of a candidate.

5.

_____. It assesses the capacity of a person to interact constructively as member of a group and to make a meaningful contribution to the discussion. You can do so only if you have a good knowledge base, the ability to structure your arguments logically and the skill to communicate your ideas effectively.

- A. Plain and simple, people like to do business with people they like.
- B. Hence the importance of interpersonal communicative skills cannot be overstated.
- C. These precisely are the skills required for Group Discussions.
- D. It is often used as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of a person in a group activity.
- E. If we're not careful, we may lose the ability to communicate effectively face-to-face.

Now check your answers with the Answer key.

Types of Group Discussions

1. A topic is given to the group by the GD Coordinator and the participants are asked to discuss it for a duration of 15-20 minutes. Sometimes participants are asked to decide a topic by themselves. They are then given 3 – 5 minutes to think about the topic before the GD actually starts.
2. A printed case study is given to the group and the candidates are given time to read the case before they actually begin the discussion. In this method of group discussion the following procedure is recommended:
 - Enumerate the facts of the case
 - Define symptoms
 - Identify problem
 - Suggest solution / solutions

Check Your Progress 2

Which one out of the two types of discussions would require more preparation time and why?

Check your answer with the Answer Key.



Some more Food for Thought

- Be assertive but not aggressive
- Ensure you get enough airtime
- Build up a good knowledge base
- Structure your ideas logically - convey your ideas convincingly
- Contribute meaningfully to achieve the right consensus
- Speak first only if you have something sensible to say
- Display leadership by
 - Initiating discussion, interpreting topic, carrying discussion forward
 - Not allowing high performers to overshadow non-performers
 - Giving a patient ear to dissenting views
 - Not allowing the group to drift away from the main topic
- Avoid verbosity and wordiness
- Give examples to illustrate and substantiate your arguments
- Use a conversational style & be friendly – interact constructively
- Be attentive throughout the GD – be a good listener
- Help restore order in times of chaos
- Provide a fresh direction when the group is floundering
- Try to resolve contradictions
- Synthesize arguments
- Summarize the discussion at the end
- Give the right signals through your body language – show attentiveness by looking into the eyes of the speaker, lean forward to listen
- Address the speaker, not the moderator
- Thank the moderators while walking out of the hall
- Do not ask them to comment on your performance

Check Your Progress 3

Read the above mentioned do's and don'ts carefully again. Pick out the 5 don'ts from these given tips. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. *Do not be aggressive.*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

4.3 WRITING SKILLS

Check Your Progress 4

Elaborate upon the following tips listed above by explaining them in your own words. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. Be assertive but not aggressive
State your ideas and views clearly and emphatically without allowing others to dominate you or prevent you from asserting yourself. Be an active, vocal participant and not a mere listener. But at the same time do not go overboard and become condescending or contemptuous. Nor should you prevent others from stating their viewpoints. That would be aggressiveness.
2. Ensure you get enough airtime.
3. Build up a good knowledge base.

Now check what you have written with what is given in the Answer Key.

4.4 LISTENING: HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A GROUP DISCUSSION?

Listen to a speaker telling you about how to be successful in a group discussion.

Check Your Progress 5

On the basis of what the speaker says, state whether the following statements are True or False:

1. You must contribute towards reaching a consensus.
2. In order to be heard you must speak for at least 15 minutes.
3. You can make a meaningful contribution even if you do not know much about the topic being discussed.
4. A fish market scenario is one where each one tries to talk at the same time and emphasize his/ her point of view.
5. If you fail to contribute towards reaching a consensus it means you are not very good at team work.
6. A good listener agrees with what others say.
7. In the end you must summarize only your own point of view.
8. You must feel free to express your disagreement if you do not see eye to eye with another participant.

Check your answers with the Answer Key.

4.5 STUDY SKILLS

As you are aware, Group Discussions are often used as part of selection/ recruitment procedure by Institutions and Business Organizations.

Here is a list of some of the abilities that the evaluators look for in participants. Do you think you can add at least two more to the list? You may get some clues from the section ‘Some Food for Thought’.

- Intelligence
- Depth of understanding
- Ability to think independently
- Ability to articulate thoughts
- Ability to appreciate another’s point of view
- Ability to relate to other people

Assessment Criteria



The participants of Group Discussions are evaluated by a panel of experts. Here are most of the areas on which they would mark you on their evaluation sheets. It would be extremely helpful to keep these in mind when you participate in Group Discussions.

- Command over spoken English – it should be logical, coherent, correct, appropriate

- Knowledge base – authentic information – genuine facts and figures
- Convincing power – cogent, decent and constructively forceful attitude
- Discourse management – coping with twists and turns of arguments
- Body Language – eye contact, body posture, attentiveness
- Maturity – candidate must not ‘bully’ others or take undue advantage to prove himself/herself a ‘leader’.
- Listening – intelligent and analytical
- Supplementing – responding and adding to what another has said before initiating a fresh turn
- Initiative and Assertiveness

Beneficial Team Behaviour

- Initiate discussions
- Seek information and opinions
- Suggest procedures for reaching a goal / consensus
- Clarify or elaborate ideas
- Summarize
- Act as a gate-keeper, direct conversational traffic, avoid simultaneous conversations
- Subdue dominant talkers, make room for reserved and shy people
- Keep the discussion from digressing
- Be flexible and creative in resolving differences

A consolidated task based on the inputs given in this section is given in the speaking section.

4.6 LANGUAGE FOCUS

Here is some helpful language for group discussions:

- **Stating an opinion**
 - It seems to me....
 - In my view...
 - I tend to think...
 - Its obvious that...
 - I believe....
 - Clearly,.....
- **Interrupting**
 - Excuse me, may I ask for a clarification on this...
 - If I may interrupt...
 - Sorry to interrupt but.....
- **Handling Interruptions**
 - Sorry, please let me finish.....
 - If I may finish what I am saying.....
 - Could you please allow me to complete what I’m saying.....
- **Moving the discussion on**
 - Can we go on to think about.....
 - I think we should now move on to consider.....
- **Expressing Agreement**
 - I totally agree
 - I agree entirely
 - I quite agree

- I couldn't agree more
- Absolutely / precisely /exactly
- I think you're right

■ **Expressing disagreement**

- I don't agree at all
- I totally disagree
- I think quite differently on this
- I don't really think so
- I'm afraid I can't agree with you there

■ **Checking comprehension / reformulating**

- To put that another way...
- If I follow you correctly...
- So what you're saying is...
- Does that mean...
- Are you saying...

■ **Making a suggestion**

- I suggest that....
- We could.....
- Perhaps we should...
- It might be worth....
- What about.....?
- Why don't we.....?

4.7 VOCABULARY

Check Your Progress 6

Read the text and use the right form of the word at the end of each line to form a word that fits in the numbered space in the same line. The first one is done for you as an example.

The 1 **surest** way of antagonizing others in the GD as well as the examiner (**sure**)

is to appoint yourself as a de facto 2 _____ of the group. Do not try to (**chair**)

impose a system whereby everyone gets a chance to speak in turn. A GD is meant to be a free 3 _____ discussion. Let it proceed naturally. Do not (**flow**)

ever try to take a vote on the topic. A vote is no substitute for discussion.

Do not address only one or two persons when 4 _____. Maintain eye contact (**speak**)

with as many members of the group as possible. This will involve others in what you are saying and increase your 5 ____ of carrying them with you. (**chance**) Do this even if you are 6 _____ a specific point raised by one person. (**answer**)

Word Collocations

In the English language many words occur in groups or pairs naturally or habitually. These are called word collocations. Example: *a quick temper*. The exercise that follows has collocations with verbs. The first one is done for you as an example.

2. Combine the words in the two columns to make word collocations.

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Build | eye contact |
| 2. Restore | arguments |
| 3. Take | ideas convincingly |
| 4. Resolve | contradictions |
| 5. Synthesize | dissenting viewpoints |
| 6. Accommodate | responsibility |
| 7. Maintain | a consensus |
| 8. Summarize | order |
| 9. Provide | decisions |
| 10. Convey | a fresh direction |
| 11. Accept | your objective |
| 12. Define | the discussion |

Answer: 1. Build a consensus

4.8 SPEAKING

Practice your group discussion skills by arranging to meet with your study partners. Select any of these topics and conduct your discussion. Remember to apply the tips we have given you, the do's and don'ts as well as the formulaic language given in the unit. Ask someone to assess you on the basis of the assessment criteria given in the unit. Some excerpts of a possible model are given for the first topic.

1. What ails Indian sports?

Speaker 1: *There is no doubt about the fact that Indian sports has come a long way from what it was in the early days of Independence. However, we also cannot deny that looking at our population and potential, we Indians have not achieved much in the area of Sports. I am of the view that lack of infrastructure is the biggest problem that we face. This is particularly true of smaller towns and the countryside.....*

Speaker 2: *I quite agree with what you say about the lack of facilities in small places. But don't you think that a lot of the facilities available in the bigger towns are underutilized?.....*

Speaker 3: *I'm afraid I don't really agree with you there. Many children wish to make use of the infrastructure but the professional sports persons and sometimes the administrators do not really allow everyone to make use of the facilities. Besides the fee for some of these stadiums is.....*

Speaker 4: *If I may add here, that besides lack of infrastructure, there is also a great deal of political interference in sports. On many occasions the deserving players are not selected. For example take the case of*

2. Is coalition politics here to stay?
3. Should colas be banned for the safety of public health?
4. The cable TV invasion.
5. Education and success – is there a correlation?

4.9 GRAMMAR:LINKING WORDS

This passage on whether it is a good strategy to be an opening speaker in a group discussion has some important linking words missing. These may be relative pronouns, conjunctions, conditionals or determiners.

Check Your Progress 7

Complete the paragraph with the words from the box.

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----|
| Therefore | otherwise | or |
| who | and | if |

In most GD's the opening speaker is the person 1_____ is likely to get the maximum uninterrupted airtime. The reason is simple. At the start most other participants in the GD are still trying to understand the basic issues in the topic, 2_____ are too nervous to speak 3_____ are waiting for someone else to start. 4_____ the evaluators get the best chance to observe the opening speaker. Now this is a double-edged sword. 5_____ the opening speaker talks sense, naturally he will get credit because he opened and took the group in the right direction. 6_____ on the other hand, the first speaker doesn't make too much sense, he will attract the undivided attention of the evaluators to his shortcomings. He will be marked as a person 7_____ speaks without thinking merely for the sake of speaking. He will be seen as someone who leads the group in the wrong direction 8_____ does not make a positive contribution to the group. So remember, speaking first is a high-risk high-return strategy. It can make 9_____ mar your GD performance depending how you handle it. Speak first only 10_____ you have something sensible to say. 11_____ keep quiet and let someone else start.

Confirm your answers by checking with the Answer key.

4.10 PRONUNCIATION

Here are some more collocations. You can hear them on the tape. Repeat as you hear each one.

1. cost control
2. market share
3. express an opinion
4. draw a conclusion
5. break the deadlock
6. illustrate the point
7. beside the point
8. made any headway
9. reach a compromise
10. for the time being

4.11 SUMMARY

In this Unit you learnt about:

1. What is a Group Discussion?
2. The importance of GD as a tool for assessment
3. Types of Group Discussions
4. Assessment criteria for GDs
5. Language used in GDs
6. Do's and don'ts for GDs
7. How to take part in an actual group discussion
8. Word collocations

4.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. M V Rodrigues, *Effective Business communication*. Concept Publishing Company
2. Lyn R Clark, Kenneth Zimmer, Joseph Tinervia. *Business English and Communication* McGraw Hill International.

4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Reading

Check Your Progress 1

The 21st century has witnessed an increased focus and dependence on technology. Consequently we spend a lot of time in front of our computers. **E. If we're not careful, we may lose the ability to communicate effectively face-to-face.** Regardless of the use of Information technology, major decisions and sales are made on the basis of interpersonal communication. **B. Hence the importance of interpersonal communicative skills cannot be overstated.**

In the world of Sales, it's often said that people don't just buy products; they buy concepts sold to them through the ideas and feelings of their salesperson. **A. Plain and simple, people like to do business with people they like.** Some of the most important interpersonal communication skills necessary to communicate effectively face-to-face include speaking and listening, establishing rapport, and understanding and accommodating differences when communicating across personality, gender, and cultural lines. **C. These precisely are the skills required for Group Discussions.**

A Group Discussion is a test of the interpersonal communication skills of a candidate. **D. It is often used as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of a person in a group activity.** It assesses the capacity of a person to interact constructively as member of a group and to make a meaningful contribution to the discussion. You can do so only if you have a good knowledge base, the ability to structure your arguments logically and the skill to communicate your ideas effectively.

Check Your Progress 2

Types of group discussions

More preparation time will be required for the Case Study based group discussion because the candidates need to be given time to read and understand the case before they begin their discussion.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Do not be aggressive.
2. Do not allow high performers to overshadow low performers.
3. Do not allow the group to drift away from the main topic.
4. Do not be verbose and wordy.
5. Do not ask moderators to comment on your performance.

Writing

Check Your Progress 4

2. Ensure you get enough airtime

It is for you to make sure that you take the opportunity to present your viewpoints and arguments and speak for enough time to make a creative and meaningful contribution to the discussion. The airtime is the amount of time you speak.

4. Build up a good knowledge base.

Building up a wide knowledge base means increasing your knowledge and general awareness so that you are well equipped with information and viewpoints. This can be done by doing a lot of general reading from newspapers, magazines and books. Listening to or watching programmes on current affairs, social welfare, economics, commerce, environment, etc can also be extremely useful.

Listening

Tape script

In order to succeed at any unstructured group discussion, you must define what your objective in the group is. A good definition of your objective is - to be seen to have contributed meaningfully in an attempt to achieve the right consensus. The key words in this definition are 'seen', 'meaningfully', and 'attempt'.

Let us understand what each of these imply in terms of action points :

The first implication is that merely making a meaningful contribution in an attempt to achieve consensus is not enough. You have to be seen by the evaluator to have made a meaningful contribution in an attempt to build the right consensus. In other words, you must ensure that you are heard by the group. If the group hears you so will the evaluator. You must get at least some airtime. If you are not a very assertive person you will have to simply learn to be assertive for those 15 minutes.

The second important implication is that making just any sort of contribution is not enough. Your contribution has to be meaningful. A meaningful contribution suggests that you have a good knowledge base, are able to structure arguments logically and are a good communicator. These are qualities that are desired by all evaluators.

One way of deciding what sort of contribution is meaningful at what point of time is to follow two simple rules.

First, in times of chaos, a person who restores order to the group is appreciated. Your level of participation in a fish market kind of scenario can be low, but your degree of influence must never be low. In other words, you must make positive contributions every

time you speak, and not merely speak for the sake of speaking. The second rule is applicable when the group is floundering. In this situation a person who provides a fresh direction to the group is given credit.

The third implication is that you must be clearly seen to be attempting to build a consensus. Nobody expects a group of ten people, all with different points of view on a controversial subject to actually achieve a consensus. But did you make the attempt to build a consensus? The reason why an attempt to build a consensus is important is because in most work situations you will have to work with people in a team, accept joint responsibilities and take decisions as a group. You must demonstrate the fact that you are capable and inclined to work as part of a team. What are the ways that you can try to build consensus?

Firstly, you don't just talk. You also listen. You must realize that other people also may have valid points to make. You should not only try to persuade other people to your point of view, but also come across as a person who has an open mind and appreciates the valid points of others.

You must try and resolve contradictions and arguments of others in the group. You must synthesize arguments and try and achieve a unified position in the group. Try and summarize the discussion at the end. In the summary do not merely restate your point of view; also accommodate dissenting viewpoints. If the group did not reach a consensus, say so in your summary. You must carry people with you.

One last point. You must not agree with another participant in the group merely for the sake of achieving consensus. If you disagree, say so. You are not there to attempt to build just any consensus. You have to attempt to build the right consensus.

Check Your Progress 5

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. You must contribute towards reaching a consensus. | TRUE |
| 2. In order to be heard you must speak for at least 15 minutes. | FALSE |
| 3. You can make a meaningful contribution even if you do not know much about the topic being discussed. | FALSE |
| 4. A fish market scenario is one where each one tries to talk at the same time and emphasize his/ her point of view. | TRUE |
| 5. If you fail to contribute towards reaching a consensus it means you are not very good at team work. | TRUE |
| 6. A good listener agrees with what others say. | FALSE |
| 7. In the end you must summarize only your own point of view. | FALSE |

Check Your Progress 6

Vocabulary

1. The **surest** way of antagonizing others in the GD as well as the examiner is to appoint yourself as a de facto **chairperson** of the group. Do not try to impose a system whereby everyone gets a chance to speak in turn. A GD is meant to be a free **flowing** discussion. Let it proceed naturally. Do not ever try to take a vote on the topic. A vote is no substitute for discussion.

Do not address only one or two persons when **speaking**. Maintain eye contact with as many members of the group as possible. This will involve others in what you are saying and increase your **chances** of carrying them with you. Do this even if you are **answering** a specific point raised by one person.

2. Word Collocations

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Build | a consensus |
| 2. Restore | order |
| 3. Take | decisions |
| 4. Resolve | contradictions |
| 5. Synthesize | arguments |
| 6. Accommodate | dissenting viewpoints |
| 7. Maintain | eye contact |
| 8. Summarize | the discussion |
| 9. Provide | a fresh direction |
| 10. Convey | ideas convincingly |
| 11. Accept | responsibility |
| 12. Define | your objective |

Check Your Progress 7

Linking Words

In most GD's the opening speaker is the person 1 **who** is likely to get the maximum uninterrupted airtime. The reason is simple. At the start most other participants in the GD are still trying to understand the basic issues in the topic, 3 **or** are too nervous to speak 4 **and** are waiting for someone else to start. 5 **Therefore** the evaluators get the best chance to observe the opening speaker. Now this is a double-edged sword. 6 **If** the opening speaker talks sense naturally he will get credit because he opened and took the group in the right direction. 7 **If** on the other hand the first speaker doesn't have too much sense to say, he will attract the undivided attention of the evaluators to his shortcomings. He will be marked as a person 8 **who** speaks without thinking merely for the sake of speaking, as someone who leads the group in the wrong direction 9 **and** does not make a positive contribution to the group.

So remember, speaking first is a high-risk high return strategy. It can make 10 **or** mar your GD performance depending how you handle it. Speak first only 11 **if** you have something sensible to say. 12 **Otherwise** keep quiet and let someone else start.

Pronunciation (tape script)

1. 'cost con'trol
2. 'market 'share
3. ex'press an o'pinion
4. 'draw a conc'lusion
5. 'break the 'deadlock
6. 'illustrate the 'point
7. be'side the 'point
8. make any 'headway
9. reach a 'compromise
10. for the 'time 'being

This is where the stress would be in any sentence with these collocations.

UNIT 5 MANAGING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Warm Up: Ability to Influence and Lead
- 1.2 Reading: The Role of a Manager
- 1.3 Vocabulary: Leadership
- 5.4 Speaking and Listening
- 5.5 Language Focus: Degree of Probability
- 5.6 Grammar: Modals
- 5.7 Writing: Reports
- 5.8 Pronunciation
- 5.9 Summary
- 1.10 Suggested Readings
- 1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

Managing organizational structures primarily involves a relationship between the leader and the team. In this unit you will learn about:

- managing people at all levels of organization.
- motivating teams
- dynamics of leadership
- managing conflicts
- taking and implementing decisions

5.1 WARM UP: ABILITY TO INFLUENCE AND LEAD

Read the following statements and rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the following statements. (1 = Not strong in this area, 5 = Very strong in this area).

1. Competence

- the ability to do a job successfully 1 2 3 4 5

- doing the job better than expected 1 2 3 4 5

2. Discretion

- ability to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong 1 2 3 4 5

3. Attitude

- ability to maintain a positive attitude in negative situations 1 2 3 4 5

4. Honesty and Openness

- ability to stand for principles 1 2 3 4 5

- appreciate and disapprove without bias/prejudice 1 2 3 4 5

5. Communication

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| - effective communication ability so that everyone understands | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| - convey decisions without being rude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| - listen to everyone without hierarchical blockades | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| - deal with everyone sensitively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Honestly rate yourself by counting the points.

If you score between 10 and 20 – You need to develop certain skills for effective leadership.

If you score between 30 and 40-You already have skills to lead effectively except for a few things which need improvement.

If you score 50 it means you would be successful in achieving personal as well as organizational goals.

5.2 READING:THE ROLE OF A MANAGER

The passage below tells you about the role of a manager. Read it carefully and then answer the questions given at the end of the passage:

The role of a manager is closely related to the powers that are given at different levels of the organization – top level, middle level and lower level management. The function of a manager can be divided into formal and informal aspects. Formal functions are to win contracts, delegate duties, express opinion and takes judicious decisions. Informal functions of a manager are related to personal style, ability to influence/charisma, concern for colleagues at all levels i.e. – the way a manager interacts with other people.

A manager leads the team with example and takes the business towards the goals inspite of expected or unexpected changes. In the process s/he achieves personal as well as the company's objectives.

A manager should be able to deal intelligently with tricky situations keeping in mind existing conflicts of interest in the organization. For this the executive should be able to resolve or manage his/her inner conflicts so that his/her decisions are strongly grounded in reality. Greater attention must be given to the organizational structure and creating a strong feeling of security or the organization will greatly suffer.

Check Your Progress 1

Can you answer the given questions on the basis of your reading of the passage? Write out your answers in your own words. Check your answers with the key.

1. In how many aspects are the functions of a manager divided?

.....

2. How does a manager lead a team?

.....

3. How should an executive deal with a tricky situation?

.....

4. What should be done to avoid loss in an organization?
.....
.....
5. Name two duties that come under formal and informal functions of a manager.
.....

5.3 VOCABULARY: LEADERSHIP

Check Your Progress 2

1. Insert suitable words from the box to complete the following text on Leadership. Check your answers with the Answer key.

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------|
| credibility | shared | relationships | rank |
| commitment | profit | violated | trust |
| company | expenditure | led | |

There are many aspects that bind employees and corporations together but it is a leader who builds _____. He or she is not primarily a _____ generating robot or someone who ensures that the _____ should survive and prosper at any cost. Such leaders are themselves _____ by _____ and not principles. They abandon their policies as soon as profit graph changes. Their _____ to the organization takes a new turn as the profit dips. They talk about controlling the _____ but keep drawing astronomical salaries for themselves whereas equality and opportunity rights are _____ for junior staff.

Today Leaders in industrial organizations must understand that leadership is not a position or a _____; it is primarily and fundamentally a relationship of _____ between leaders and other employees. The more the leaders honor this trust, the greater will be their _____ with their staff and the more effective will be the ability to build and achieve a _____ vision.

2. Here is draft of a memo. In an advertisement agency, groups of people operate as teams. One of the groups has been a troublemaker who refuse to improve. Even the verbal warnings have had no effect. The GM writes a memo to the Creative Head. Fill in the words from the box to complete the text.

MEMORANDUM

From : The General Manager To : The Creative Head
Subject: Disciplinary Action Date : 18/4

A number of _____ have been made against the Visualizing Department. There have been reports of unnecessary delay in completing the _____ tasks.

The Marketing Head has provided _____ where three crucial presentations were cancelled due to the carelessness of this department.

The Finance Department has already voiced _____ over the probable loss to the organization due to _____ of two contracts. Inspite of _____ warning on 16.01.2003 and _____ of improvement nothing has changed. Therefore you are requested to give a clarification within three days or face disciplinary _____ as per the company rules.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| action | concern | assigned | presentation | complaints |
| clarification | verbal | assurance | instances | cancellation |

5.4 SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1. Listen to this conversation carefully. Here workers are discussing the work environment of their organization. Practice the dialogue with your friend.

Worker A: We can come and go to our work as we please. You know, we follow flexi-timing.

- B: It can't be possible. There should be registers where the workers check-in and check-out.
- A: Would you believe this? We may even be asked to decide how much of the profit to share with our employers and how much to invest in the company.
- B: You must be joking..!
- A: No, the employers feel that the workers must participate in the profit sharing of the company and be stake-holders.
- B: That's amazing!
- A: The workers will soon decide their own salaries soon. In this way, we will try and deserve our salaries.
- B: Your company must be the only one with such a democratic structure!

Check Your Progress 3

1. Here are prompts for 5 pairs of discussion and responses. Write them down and then check your answers with the audio/transcript.

A: It shouldn't /happened. There/ways/asking/people/go.

B: Jenny couldn't keep/office/policy. She/corrected. More/once.

.....
.....

A: I/really/excited/get /job. I/going/part/organization/has/international reputation.

B: Yes, they/structured team/salaries/good. Work/routine/different/interesting

.....
.....

A: I can't cope/gadgets. I can get training /competent teachers but management/ feels/expensive

B: No, negotiations are going on /training colleges/reducing/cost. Now/ department/arrange/training.

.....
.....

A: It/me/hour/reach/work. I/tired/boss does not /understand.

B: Have/spoken/him/this? Does he/ about/problem?

.....
.....

3. Write out the following jumbled speech in the right order. Listen to the audio cassette and check if you have got the sequence right.

1. Of equal importance will be the continued focus on development financing.
2. Friends, after bailing out of the first quarter successfully.
3. First operation turn around and its timing and sequence.
4. Heads of the units are requested to form core teams.
5. Each unit will frame action plans and set targets
6. Today let us pledge to work towards reaching the top together.
7. The targets will have to be achieved within a defined period.
8. There are two issues which take top priority.
9. Thirdly, we are preparing a blue print to revitalise the ailing units.

5.5 LANGUAGE FOCUS:DEGREE OF PROBABILITY

1. Situations often require that the speaker express their meaning with precision. The degree of probability has to be defined.

| | | | |
|------|----------|------------|--|
| 100% | - | Certain | I am certain of the profit. |
| 75% | - | Likely | It is likely to be installed today. |
| 50%- | Possible | | It is possible that targets may not be met this quarter due to floods. |
| 25% | - | Unlikely | It is unlikely that he would be called for an investigation. |
| 0% | - | Impossible | It is impossible that she will be called again. |

Check Your Progress 4

Use the suitable degree of probability to complete the sentences. Check your answers with the key.

1. His crime is such that it is _____ that the management will let him continue as supervisor.
 2. The changes in the purchase department will make a definite mark, I am _____ of it.
 3. The new manager has sent in his letter of acceptance. He is _____ to join tomorrow.
 4. We understand your situation, it is _____ that you may get leave.
 5. It is _____ that we will get permission to buy new furniture for our department.
2. Here are some ways which you could use to get people to do things.

Requesting

I'd like you to _____ please.

Could you ask _____ to _____ for me?

Could you _____ please?

Do you think you could _____?

Would you mind _____ ing _____?

Granting Permission or refusing

Sure, go ahead.

By all means

I'm afraid that's not possible, because _____

I won't be able to _____, because _____

I'm sorry but _____

No, I'm afraid you can't, because _____

Criticising/Complaining

I'm sorry to have to say this but _____
I think you may have forgotten _____
It may have slipped your mind, but _____
There may have been a misunderstanding about _____
I'm afraid norms have been forgotten _____

Appreciating/encouraging

Thanks for your co-operation, without it _____
I would like to extend my personal appreciation _____
We could do it because of team effort _____
Each member contributed beyond _____
We are back in business because of _____

Check Your Progress 5

Which of the above expressions will you use in these situations?

1. Voicing your concern for staff conflicts
2. Refusing permission of leave.
3. Thanking staff for the support.
4. Requesting staff for the extra work.
5. Negotiating differences.
6. Reminding of pending work.
7. Granting permission to purchase material.
8. Make people work for you.
9. Reminding norms of organization.
10. Paying compliment.

5.6 GRAMMAR: MODALS

The **modal verbs** are a special group of **auxiliary verbs**. We use them **before other verbs** to express certain meanings-for example **permission**, **ability**, **possibility**, **certainty**.

We list below some of the modals and their functions.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Can | = (ability; requests; permission) |
| Could | = (ability, possibility; polite requests) |
| Would | = (polite request) |
| Will | = (offer) (expressing the future) |
| Shall | = suggestion, offer |
| Should | = advice |
| May | = possibility |
| Have got to | = obligation |
| Must | = obligation |
| Need | = necessity |

Check Your Progress 6

Underline the correct option. The first one is done for you.

May/should/mustn't I help you?

1. If you travel to U.K. you *can/should/must* have a visa.
2. You *shouldn't/don't have to/couldn't* laugh at old people.
3. Passengers *must/must not/should not* smoke in the toilets.

4. I think you *should/must/may* eat less and exercise more.
5. You *mustn't/may not/needn't* tell me if you don't want to.
6. You *may/have to* *should* drive on the left in Britain.
7. She makes new clothes every week. She *can/could/must* have plenty of money
8. She doesn't answer the phone. She *mustn't/can't/shouldn't* be in her office.

5.7 WRITING: REPORTS

Check Your Progress 7

Imagine that your Director has asked you to find out the precautions and preparations needed to arrange for the disaster management provisions in your company.

These are the notes you've made. Draft a report to your director by expanding the notes into paragraphs.

Identified Dangers

1. Fire-particularly in areas where a lot of paper is stored
2. Earthquake – cracks due to previous earthquake.
3. Lightening – inadequate safety measures

Proposals

1. Fire frightening equipment to be maintained regularly
2. Fire fighting training to the support staff.
3. Display of safety regulations in the area.
4. Hooters to be installed –signal warning
5. Exit outlets to be highlighted
6. Important telephone numbers-Hospital, Fire Brigade, Doctors, officials.
7. Action committee to be formed.

Begin your report as follows:

To : Mr. Sunil Sen, Director
From : (Your name)

Date :

Before you write your report we would like to offer a few suggestions.

Steps In Writing Reports

Before you begin writing a report, you must ask yourself a number of questions: what is the purpose of the report? What problem or problems are you expected to solve? Is it to pass on information, or persuade someone to take a particular course of action? Or to answer a question? Who are your readers? When is the report due? etc.

After you have a clear idea of the kind of problem that you are expected to investigate, you may begin the actual work of research and collection of facts. It may be a good idea to write down your statement of purpose; it will help you to be precise and remind you of your focus. The procedure leading to the writing of the report would involve six distinct stages:

1. investigating the sources of information
2. taking notes
3. interpreting and analyzing the facts
4. writing the outline of the report
5. writing the actual report
6. editing and revising the report.

The Format of the Report

Most reports have at least three and sometimes four parts. These include: Introduction, Body, Conclusion, and Recommendations. The introduction should

state the subject and the purpose of the report. It may also include any background information that is necessary for the reader to follow the report. The introduction is often a good place to refer briefly to any conclusions that may be drawn.

In the body of the report, the writer must include a clearly organized account of the subject of the report, e.g. the results of the survey carried out, an account of the fire in the factory and the damage to life and property.

The conclusion of the report contains a summary of the findings and their significance.

Finally, in the recommendations are included any suggestions that the writer may make-based on the facts of the situation. The recommendations indicate any practical course of action that may be taken. These are often the most important part of the report, and their adoption or rejection depends on how they are presented.

5.8 PRONUNCIATION

These are some of the words which occur in the unit. Listen how these words are pronounced. Now practice saying the words:

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| A. 1. Product | 2. Accounts | 3. Problem | 4. Purchase |
| 5. Research | 6. Dispatch | | |
| B. 1. Employee | 2. Organise | 3. Department | 4. Develops |
| 5. Customer | 6. Marketing | | |

5.9 SUMMARY

In our professional life, we often have to work in teams, perhaps take up the leadership of a team. In this unit, we tried to give you linguistic competence in managing various levels of the organization, participating as a team member as well as a and a leader.

5.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Adelstein, M.E. and Sparrow, W.K. (1983) **Business Communications**. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Rai, U. and Rai, S.M. (1989) **Business Communication**. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House

Sharma R.C. and Mohan, K. (1978) **Business Correspondence and Report Writing**. New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill.

Thill, J.V. and Bovee, C.L. (1993) **Excellence in Business Communication**. New York: McGraw Hill.

5.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Reading

Check Your Progress 1

Possible answers to the questions.

- 1 The functions of a manager can be divided into formal and informal aspects.
- 2 A manager leads the team by example.
- 3 An executive should resolve his/her inner conflicts so that his/her decision are strongly grounded in reality.
- 4 Greater attention must be given to the organizational structure and creating a strong feeling of security or the organization would suffer.
- 5 Formal duties- delegate duties and win contracts
Informal duties – Charisma and concern for colleagues.

Check Your Progress 2

1. There are many aspects that bind employees and corporations together but it is a leader who builds relationships. He or she is not primarily a profit generating robot or someone who ensures that the company should survive and prosper at any cost. Such leaders are themselves led by policies and not principles. They abandon their policies as soon as the profit graph changes. Their commitment to the organization takes a new turn as the profit dips. They talk about controlling the expenditure but keep drawing astronomical salaries for themselves whereas equality and opportunity rights are violated for junior staff.

Today Leaders in industrial organizations must understand that leadership is not a position or a rank; it is primarily and fundamentally a relationship of trust between leaders and other employees. The more the leaders honor this trust, the greater will be their credibility with their staff and the more effective will be the ability to build and achieve a shared vision.

2. complaints; assigned; instances; concern; cancellation; verbal; assurance; action;

Check Your Progress 3

1.
A: It shouldn't have happened. There are ways of asking people to go.
B: Jenny couldn't keep up with the office policies. She was corrected for indiscipline more than once.

A: I am really very excited about getting this job. I am going to be part of an organization that has an international reputation.
B: Yes, they have structured terms, and their salaries are good. And the work is not routine and boring, but different and interesting..

A: I can't cope with gadgets. I can get training from competent teachers but the management feels its expensive.
B: No, negotiations are going on with training colleges for reducing the cost. Now the department will arrange for the training.

A: It takes me an hour to reach to work, I get tired but the boss does not understand my problem.
B: Have you spoken to him about this? Does he know about the problem?

2. 2, 8, 3, 1, 9, 6, 7, 8, 9

Check Your Progress 4

1. His crime is such that it is unlikely that the management will let him continue as supervisor.
2. The changes in the purchase department will make a definite mark. I am certain of it.
3. The new manager has sent in his letter of acceptance. He is likely to join tomorrow.
4. We understand your situation, it is possible that you may get leave.
5. It is unlikely that we will get permission to buy new furniture for our department.

Check Your Progress 5

(Expressions to be used in various situations)

1. Voicing your concern for staff conflicts/Negotiating differences/Reminding norms of organization/Reminders of pending work.
 - I am sorry to have to say this but.....
 - I am afraid norms have been forgotten.....
 - It might take alarming shape if
2. Refusing permission of leave
 - I am afraid that's not possible, because
 - I won't be able tobecause.....
 - No, I am afraid you can't, because.....
3. Requesting staff for extra work/make people work for you.
 - I'd like you toplease.
 - Could you.....please?
 - Do you think you could.....?
 - Would you mind.....+ing.....?
4. Thanking staff for support/showing appreciation
 - Thanks for your co-operation, without it.....
 - I would like to extend my personal appreciation.....
 - We could only have achieved our target because of team effort.....

Check Your Progress 6

1. Must
2. Shouldn't
3. Must not
4. Should
5. Needn't
6. Have to
7. Must
8. Mustn't

Check Your Progress 7

To : Mrs. Sunil Sen, Director

From : Your Name

Date : 25th November 2003

After the survey it was found that we need protection from three possible dangers - Fire, Earthquake and lightening. The warehouse is the most sensitive area because of the large amount of paper stored and inadequate safety measures. The cracks of the last Earthquake have widened and the trees around the factory have been burnt by the lightening.

As we are placed in the area which is prone to the above mentioned dangers, the following precautions and improvements are necessary to avert major disasters.

Fire fighting equipment should be maintained regularly and staff should be trained to handle them. Safety regulations should be displayed at various places.

At the time of any disaster, hooters should be sounded to signal warning and exit outlets to be highlighted for safe evacuation of the people.

Important telephone numbers such as those of Hospitals, Five-Brigade, Doctors, Company Officials should be displayed at various places.

Last, but not the least, an Action Committee should be formed and trained to handle the situation calmly.

xyz
Manager.

UNIT 6 MEETINGS

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Warm up
- 6.2 Reading: A Successful Meeting
- 6.3 Speaking: One to One Meetings
- 6.4 Language Focus: Opening, Middle and Close
- 6.5 Study Skills : Editing
- 6.6 Listening: Criteria for Successful Meetings
- 6.7 Vocabulary
- 6.8 Grammar: Reporting Verbs
- 6.9 Writing: Memos
- 6.10 Pronunciation: Stress According to Part of Speech
- 6.11 Summary
- 6.12 Suggested Readings
- 6.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

Conducting or participating in meetings is an important business skill. In this Unit you will learn

- about formal and informal meetings
- about the process of business meetings
- the role of the chairperson and participants
- how to express your ideas and views
- how to make suggestions,
- how to express agreement and disagreement
- how to write agendas, and follow up memos
- to practice the language of meetings

6.1 WARM UP

Have a look at these pictures which suggest two kinds of meetings. What do you think are the major differences between the two kinds of meetings? Write down at least three possible differences.



Check Your Progress 1

Match your points on the differences in the two kinds of meetings with the one's given below:

- Group meetings are generally more formal than one to one meetings.
- Group meetings are more structured and planned and generally last longer.
- They involve a large number of people and must be chaired by somebody.
- They also follow the procedure of agenda and minutes, which may not be the case with one to one meetings.
- However, one to one meetings are not chance conversations but meetings with a purpose where certain objectives need to be achieved. Hence some kind of planning also needs to be done for such meetings to ensure the desired outcome.
- The language of group meetings is also more formal than one to one meetings.

6.2 READING: A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

The passage that follows tells you how to have meetings that are both effective and fruitful.

Read the following passage and discuss the questions that follow.

How can you make Meetings work for you?

Meetings are central to most organizations for people need to take decisions based on shared information and opinions. How well you present yourself and your ideas, and how well you work with other people is crucial to your career.

Conducting a Meeting

Call a meeting only when it is essential and be very clear about its purpose. Meetings called on a routine basis tend to lose their point. If you are sure you need to call a meeting, circulate a memo several days in advance, specifying the time, place and objectives, issues to be discussed, other participants and preparation expected.

Meetings should be short, not more than an hour. Six is the optimum number of participants for a good working meeting. Larger meetings can be productive as brainstorming sessions for ideas, provided participants can speak freely without feeling they will be judged.

A successful meeting always leads to action. Decisions should take up the bulk of the minutes of the meeting, including the name of the person delegated to each task, and a deadline for its completion. Make sure you circulate the minutes after the meeting and then again before the next one.

Draw out quieter members of the group. Encouragement helps create a relaxed and productive atmosphere.

Attending the Meeting

Even if the meeting is informal, it is always advisable to prepare a few key points in note form to put across or discuss. Don't memorize notes or read them out like a sermon. This inhibits your natural gestures: the eye contact and body language is essential for effective communication. If you cannot answer a question don't be afraid to say you don't know.

Phrase your criticisms and proposals positively. Try to offer solutions rather than to complain.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Answer these questions on the basis of what you read in the passage. Write out your answers in your own words as far as possible. Check your answers with the Answer key.

- i. Why are meetings necessary?

.....
.....

- ii. What should you do when you decide that a meeting is necessary?

.....
.....

- iii. Name five things that should be taken care of by the person who chairs the meeting.

.....
.....

iv. What should be done once a decision is taken?

.....
.....
.....

v. Name three things that participants should keep in mind.

.....
.....
.....

2. Here are some terms associated with formal meetings. You were introduced to most of these in the above passage. Complete the sentences that follow by inserting them.

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| Minutes | arrangements | agenda | conduct | participants |
| circulate | items | consensus | memo | venue |

- i. The chairperson or his/her secretary sends a _____ to invite participants to a meeting.
- ii. The _____ for the meeting is also mentioned in the memo.
- iii. The _____ of the previous meeting are circulated to participants
- iv. The organizer or his/her staff makes all the _____ for the meeting.
- v. The chairperson _____ the meeting.
_____ take part in the meeting.
- vi. The _____ is discussed _____ by item.
- vii. _____ is arrived at on issues under discussion
- viii. _____ of the meeting are jotted down during the meeting and then sent to all participants and concerned persons.

6.3 SPEAKING: ONE TO ONE MEETINGS

Arranging to Meet

Listen to this conversation where two persons are making an arrangement for a meeting. Pay special attention to the underlined expressions which highlight the language used in such situations. Say them aloud for practice.

- A. How about meeting at The Moti Mahal?
- B. That should be fine. What time?
- A. What about after the conference?
- B. Would you like to meet for dinner?
- A. That would be great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan.
- B. Let's say 7 pm.
- A. Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye.
- B. Bye.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Here are prompts for 5 pairs of suggestions and responses. Write them out and then check your answers with the audio cassette. The tape script is given in the Answer Key.

- A How about / meeting / lunch / today?
B Not convenient / tomorrow?
-
.....

- A Would you / go / the electronics exhibition / Saturday?
B Ok / 4 pm.
-
.....

- A Could we / meet / a restaurant / Friday evening?
B Yes / Mc Donald's, C P.
-
.....

- A Would you / watch / the cricket match / on Sunday?
B Yes / great.
-
.....

- A Should we / a movie / this weekend?
B Not possible / next weekend.
-
.....

2. Write out the following jumbled conversation in the right order. Listen to the audio cassette and check if you got the sequence right. Practice saying it with a friend. The tape script is given in the Answer key.

- i. Mr Bakshi : 6th November, 7 o'clock then..
 - ii. Ms Jain : Hello Mr Bakshi, this is Sunidhi Jain from Bhopal. How are you?
 - iii. Ms Jain : Fine, thank you. I'm coming over to Delhi in the first week of November for the Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan. Will you be in Delhi at that time?
 - iv. Mr Bakshi: Yes sure. In fact we are participating in the Trade Fair this year.
 - v. Mr Bakshi : Just a minute, let me check my diary.OK, That should be fine.
 - vi. Ms Jain : That's great. I suggest 7 o'clock in the restaurant.
 - vii. Mr Bakshi : Gautam Bakshi speaking.
 - viii. Ms Jain : Oh good! How about a meeting on 6th evening at The Village?
 - ix. Ms Jain: Thanks a lot. See you then.
 - x. Mr Bakshi : Yes, looking forward to meeting you. Bye then.
 - xi. Ms Jain : Goodbye.
 - xii. Mr Bakshi : Ms Jain! It is good to hear from you. I'm fine thanks, how are you?
-
.....
.....
.....

6.4 LANGUAGE FOCUS: OPENING, MIDDLE AND CLOSE

Here is a commonly used method of opening meetings along with some standard / formulaic language:

Opening a Meeting : The 4 step method

Step 1 : Open the meeting. Tell everybody that you are going to begin

Thank you for coming. It's ten o'clock. Let's start.
OK, shall we begin?
Right then, can we get started?

Step 2 : Explain the objectives. Tell them why you are having the meeting

We're here today to discuss.....
What we want to do today is reach a decision..
Our aim is to.....
The purpose of this meeting is to.....

Step 3 : Present the agenda. Tell them in order what you are going to discuss.

On the agenda you'll see there are three items.
Have you all seen a copy of the agenda?
I suggest we take the next item on the agenda.

Step 4 : Get initial contributions. Ask someone to begin the discussion.

I'd like to ask Sunidhi to.....
Can we hear from Mr Bakshi.....
Can we have Ms Verma tell us about.....

Check Your Progress 4

Practice the expressions in the speech balloons by applying them to these situations. Assume the role of the chairperson.

You are meeting to discuss / decide about

- i. a welcome party for a new colleague
-
-
-

- ii. a new product that your company is launching
-
-
-

- iii. an important business visitor
-
-
-

- iv. a trade fair in which your company is participating
-
-
-

Now listen to one possible way of how a chairperson could open the meetings in these situations.
You may refer to the tape script in the Answer Key.

Middle and close of a meeting

Here is a language checklist which you can use in a meeting:

Stating an opinion

| |
|-----------------------|
| It seems to me..... |
| In my view..... |
| I tend to think..... |
| Its obvious that..... |
| I believe..... |
| Clearly..... |

Asking for an opinion

Could we hear from.....
What do you think about.....
What's your view?
Any comments?

Interrupting

Excuse me, may I ask for a
clarification on this.....
If I may interrupt.....
Sorry to interrupt but.....

Handling Interruptions

Yes, go ahead.....
Sorry, please let him finish.....
Can I come to that later, please.....
That's not really relevant at this stage.....

Moving the discussion on

Can we go on to think about.....
Let's move on to the next point.....
Now we come to the question of.....

Closing the Meeting

I think we've covered everything.....
So we've decided.....
I think we can close the meeting now.
That's it then. The next meeting will be.....

Check Your Progress 5

Which of the above expressions would you use in these situations?

- i. Preventing someone from interrupting
-
- ii. Stating your opinion
-
- iii. Asking to interrupt
-
- iv. Closing the meeting
-
- v. Asking for a clarification
-
- vi. Inviting someone's opinion
-
- vii. Asking for comments
-
- viii. Moving on to the next point on the agenda
-

Expressing Agreement/Disagreement

During meetings you often express **Agreement** or **Disagreement**. Here is language that could help you do so more appropriately.

| Agreement | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| STRONG | NEUTRAL |
| <i>I'm in complete agreement</i> | <i>I agree</i> |
| <i>I quite agree</i> | <i>You're right there</i> |
| <i>I couldn't agree more</i> | <i>I think you're right</i> |
| <i>Yes definitely</i> | <i>Yes and.....</i> |
| <i>Exactly</i> | <i>That's true....</i> |
| <i>Precisely</i> | <i>That's right.....</i> |

| Disagreement | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| STRONG | NEUTRAL |
| <i>I disagree completely.</i> | <i>I don't agree.</i> |
| <i>That's out of the question.</i> | <i>That's not how I see it.</i> |
| <i>I wouldn't say that at all.</i> | <i>I wouldn't say that.</i> |
| <i>Of course not.</i> | <i>I think you are wrong.</i> |
| <i>That's ridiculous.</i> | <i>I disagree.</i> |

Check Your Progress 6

Role Play

Work with a friend or by yourself to complete these short dialogues. Take it in turns to read the first statement and to reply according to the instructions.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| i. | I think the report is too long. | (disagree strongly). |
| ii. | It's too late to make any changes. | (agree). |
| iii. | I feel we all need to work together. | (agree strongly) |
| iv. | In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. | (disagree) |
| v. | We must wait till next year to start this project. | (disagree, state the opposite opinion) |

Listen to the tape script for model answers.

6.5 STUDY SKILLS: EDITING

Whenever you write a piece of text, it is always important to edit what you read. You may say of course we do that. But what do you think we must be careful about? We must be careful about mistakes of grammar, spelling, punctuation and so on. In the text below we have extrapolated some extra words in the text. Your knowledge of grammaticality should help you spot them.

The text below is about Meetings. There are 9 lines out of which six contain mistakes: an extra word in the line. Find the extra words. Cross them out and write them in the column on the right. Put a tick mark for the lines that have no extra words. The first two lines have been done for you as examples.

Check Your Progress 7

- i. Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting meeting this morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with _____
- ii. everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking _____ that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing _____
- iii. work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though _____
- iv. that we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce _____
- v. takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't _____
- vi. be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a foodie lover, _____
- vii. ix. so we'll probably go to a nice restaurant. _____

2. Find the meanings of these words in the dictionary. Some of these words are new and you might find them more easily on the web. If you still have problems, have a look at the answer key but only after you have been unsuccessful with the other resources.

- i. teleconference
- ii. hot-desking
- iii. outsourcing

6.6 LISTENING CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

You were taught to **read** and **write** in school. But did you ever have a listening comprehension class? Most of you would say ‘no’. **Listening comprehension** has indeed been a neglected area in English language teaching. Teachers have imagined that we just pick up ‘listening’ in the course of our student life. But don’t you think that you would have been better off if you had been trained? It is never too late! Let us practice the skill of listening. This would help us in our overall proficiency in the language.

Read the questions given below. Listen to the tape carefully and make notes as you read. Listen to it again and complete your notes. Spend some time completing your answers. Do they match with those given at the end of the unit?

Check Your Progress 8

Listen to this recording on Meetings and answer the following questions:

- i. Why does the speaker find meetings bothersome?

.....
.....
.....

- ii. Why is it necessary to look at meetings as a means rather than an end?

.....
.....
.....

- iii. How can a meeting achieve its desired result?

.....
.....
.....

- iv. What do you understand by

- v. *Pet peeves*

In the driver’s seat

To map possible routes

You may now check your answers by comparing them with sample answers given in the key.

6.7 VOCABULARY

Confidence in a language is often a result of having a large vocabulary. And confidence leads to fluency. In each unit, we have given you several exercises in vocabulary development. Do complete them carefully, and use these words in real life.

Check Your Progress 9

1. Insert suitable words from the box to complete the following text on **Decision Making Meetings**. Check your answers with the Answer key.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Needs | organization | ideas | effective | support |
| decision | facilitate | participants | team effort | design |
| | | discuss | | key issues |

Secrets of Better Decision Making Meetings

While _____ meetings are essential to any _____ and to getting work done, most meetings leave us still looking for a _____ and tired. A good meeting should _____ decision-making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the _____, and contribute to building _____ within the organization.

Successful meetings are ones where attention is paid to three areas; content, _____ and process. Selection of content is crucial. All too often meetings are called to _____ issues which would be better resolved with a couple of phone calls while at the same time core issues remain unmentioned. The key is to focus meetings around _____.

Secondly, the design of the meeting can hinder or _____ the decision making, problem solving or the informational task at hand. In designing, attention needs to be given to idea generation methods, decision processes, agenda, time frames, problem-solving steps, etc.

Third, and most often ignored, is making sure the individual and group _____ of the participants are met. Are people participating, included, feel that there is room for their _____? Are dysfunctional behaviors openly dealt with, is there positive energy in the group, are people committed to the task at hand and enthused about the way the group is working to complete the task?

2. Here is the beginning of a meeting. Can you complete the text by using suitable words from the box?

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| improve | comments | begin | agenda discuss |
| decline | meeting | remarks | clear |

Chairperson: 'Right then, I think we should _____ now, it's ten o'clock. We're here today to _____ some of the reasons for the _____ in profits which has affected the company. At the end of the _____ we should have a _____ idea of what measures we should take to _____ the situation. You've all seen the _____. I'd like to ask if anyone has any _____ on it before we start.'

Voice: 'No / its fine / etc.'

Chairperson: Can I ask Ms Anand to start with his _____.

6.8 GRAMMAR : REPORTING VERBS

1. Reporting Verbs

Reporting what was said

When you write minutes of a meeting, it is useful to report the ideas, rather than every sentence. To do this, you need to use a variety of reporting verbs. Here is a list that you might find useful:

C A : ‘*I think we should raise the budget.*’

CA **suggested** raising the budget.

M B : ‘*I assure you I will find out more.*’

MB **promised** to find out more.

R J : ‘*It might be possible to arrange extra funds.*’

R J **mentioned** the possibility of extra funds.

D M : ‘*I am not so sure if there will be extra funding.*’

DM **wondered** if there would be extra funding.

Here are some more examples of the use of reporting verbs while writing or speaking about a meeting.

Three issues were **discussed**.

It was **decided** to delay action until the next meeting.

Everyone **agreed** to the proposal.

The issue of salary was **brought up**.

The Sales Manager **reported** on the results of the trade fair.

Five strategies were **recommended**.

SB **explained** the reason for the delay.

Check Your Progress 10

Can you report the following statements? You may invent the names of the speakers. The first one is done for you as an example.

- i. “The report will definitely be in by tomorrow.”
Ans: *Mr Singhal assured us that the report would be in by the next day.*
- ii. “What are the sales figures of last week?”
- iii. “You still haven’t gathered the feedback from your department. Please do so by the end of the week.”
- iv. “The delegation is expected to arrive next week.”
- v. “Is it necessary to make the scheme compulsory for all employees?”
- vi. “I don’t think the new flexi-timings are acceptable to all our employees.”
- vii. “Why don’t we ask an advertising agency to design our campaign?”
- viii. “Can someone give me an update on the progress of construction work at our new site?”
- ix. “I am not happy with the people coming late for the meeting.”
- x. “Can I see the absentee record of the Sales department?”
- xi. “It is absolutely essential to dispatch the goods this weekend.”
- xii. “We have gained two important clients through the Trade Fair.”

6.9 WRITING: MEMOS

A very important customer is going to visit your city for a weekend. You need to prepare for his visit. He is visiting your city for the first time. Imagine that a meeting has been held to discuss the issue on the basis of the agenda given below.

AGENDA

1 Hotels

- Which hotel should you reserve? Why? Who should make the reservation? How can you make sure that his stay is comfortable?

2 Airport

- Who should meet the visitor at the airport?

3 Lunches and dinners

- Where should you take your visitor for lunch and dinner? Should you check first to see what kind of food he likes?

4 Entertainment

- Where should you take him in the evenings?

5 Gift

- What kind of gift should you buy him? When should you give it to him?

6 Welcome letter

- What advice would you give him about your city and visit by way of helping him to prepare for his visit.

7 AOB – Any Other Business

The Minutes of the Meeting are also given. We will discuss Minutes in detail in the next Unit.

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2003 to plan for Mr. Sampath's visit to the city

The Following members were present:

Mr. Dinesh Mehra

Mr. Vikas Puri

Ms. Deepti Sinha

Ms. Harvinder Kaur

Mr. Joseph Stephen

Ms. Salma Sheikh

Ms. Shilpa Gupta

Mr. Sunil Rawat could not attend the meeting as he was on leave.

Mr. Sampath's visit was discussed in detail and the following decisions were taken.

Hotel Reservation: Mr. Vikas Puri will book accommodation for Mr. Sampath at the Park Royal hotel in Nehru Place.

Airport: Vikas will also receive the guest at the airport and bring him over to the hotel personally.

Meals: On 1st July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal and on 2nd July the GMs will have lunch with him at the Taj. We will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience. Ms. Deepti Sinha will take care of this

Entertainment: Since this is Mr. Sampath's first visit to Delhi, it was presumed that he might be interested in sightseeing and shopping. Deepti and Vikas will arrange for the tour and accompany him.

Check Your Progress 11

Now write a memo to your boss with your suggestions. After you have written the memo, compare it with the one provided as a sample memo in the Answer key.

Writing Memo

Before you write the Memo, we will show you the format of the Memo, its functions and chief characteristics.

As the dictionary definition states, a memo is a message in writing sent by one person or department to another ‘within the same business organization’. This is the reason why a memo is sometimes also described as an **inter-office memo**: a message sent from one office to another (of the same company).

Memos are used for a variety of purposes: from making a brief announcement to submitting or circulating an in-house (=within the organization) report. Among the main uses of the memo as a carrier of internal messages are the following:

- Making announcements, requests, policy statements, notices, reminders, suggestions, acknowledgements, congratulations, informal invitations, thank you's, etc.
- Confirming decisions arrived at (or points settled) face to face meetings or telephone conversations with colleagues, workers, etc.
- For submitting or circulating in-house reports, e.g., preliminary survey reports, progress reports, recommendation reports, investigation reports, evaluative reports, and so on. Such memos may run to several pages and use the convention of formal reports like headings, graphics, tables, appendices, etc.

These purposes, for which memos are mainly used, can be seen as falling into the following functional categories:

1. **To inform:** Announcements, policy statements, notices and reports fall in the category. No immediate response is required, but the receivers are expected to note the information and conform to its requirements in their future behaviour, wherever applicable.
2. **To elicit a quick and definite response:** Suitably drafted memos can help elicit quick and definite responses where requests or notices are involved.

3. To confirm the decisions/conclusions arrived at a face to face meeting, or in a telephone conversation, and to create a permanent record of the decisions/conclusions.

Style of Memos

As one of the main instruments of communication at the workplace, workaday memos have gradually evolved a distinctive style. They are written by persons in a hurry for persons who are probably in a greater hurry. Hence, an ideal memo should reveal its message to the reader at one quick glance. What is even more important is that the **memo should have an appearance** which will tell the receiver that it can be read quickly. If, for example, the memo looks like several paragraphs of closely typed English prose, it is likely to be put aside to be read later or not read at all. So, if your memo is not a report, **make it brief** and **make it look brief**. Given below is the format of a memo.

| | |
|--|------------|
| MEMORANDUM | Date: 19/5 |
| From: MD TO: Managers (Sales, Prod, Fin, Exp., Q.C.) SUBJECT: Export batch No. DO-9951 (To Indonesia) | |
| Matra Importers, Jakarta, have informed us that the last batch of scooters exported to them has the following problems: | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rear-view mirrors have been supplied though they were included in the order Base plates of 32 scooters were found to be loose 32 scooters have been supplied in sports grey colour though this colour was not included in the order 16 scooters had no tool kits. <p>Please come to my office at 11 am tomorrow to discuss the matter. I will expect the concerned managers to bring with them explanations as well as remedies.</p> | |

To Sum Up:

1. Get to your main message directly.
2. Cut out every sentence, in fact every word, that does not contribute to your message.
3. Make your sentences short and simple.
4. Always think of the reader's time
5. State your 'subject' very precisely
6. Itemize the points
7. Pay attention to the Layout

Now write the memo on the basis of the agenda given above—the answer is given in the answer key.

6.10 PRONUNCIATION: STRESS ACCORDING TO PART OF SPEECH

Look at the following words which can be used both as nouns and verbs. The stress falls on the first syllable if it is a noun and the second if it is a verb. Now listen to the audio cassette and countercheck your pronunciation.

For example

| <u>Noun</u> | <u>Verb</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
| Increase | increase |

Can you mark the stresses in the following words and read them out aloud:

| <u>Noun</u> | <u>Verb</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
|-------------|-------------|

Present present

Export export

Record record

Import import

Desert desert

Decrease decrease

Progress progress

Refund refund

Process process

6.11 SUMMARY

In this unit, through various activities and exercises, we have guided you through the following aspects of meetings:

- the difference between formal and informal meetings
- the format of meetings
- the formulaic language which is required for opening, middle and closing of meetings
- criteria for a successful meeting (a listening activity)

In the Grammar section, we give you practice in **reporting verbs** which are required when you write minutes of meeting.

As a follow up to a meeting, we may have to write a memo to the staff. We have given you the format and style of a memo. We have also given you practice in writing a memo.

6.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

Jones, L and Alexander R, Comfort, J. 1996. *Effective Meetings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. New International Business English. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Sweeney, S. *Communicating in Business*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 2

Note: Answers to questions iii & v provide more points than the questions ask for. This is for the learner's benefit.

1.
 - i. Why are meetings necessary?
Meetings provide you with a platform where you can share your views and ideas with other people in the department / company and take decisions based on these shared ideas and opinions. Hence they are a necessary tool for communication and decision making.
 - ii. What should you do when you decide that a meeting is necessary?
Once you decide to call a meeting, you must circulate a memo to all those who are expected to be present for the meeting, well in advance. The memo must state the time, place and venue of the meeting. It must also have information on the issues to be discussed, what will be expected by way of participation from those who are to attend the meeting as well as which members have been called for the meeting.
 - iii. Name five things that should be taken care of by the person who chairs the meeting.
 - call a meeting only when absolutely necessary
 - set clear objectives for the meeting
 - circulate a memo with necessary information well in advance
 - do not call more than six people unless necessary
 - keep the meeting short – not more than an hour
 - encourage all members to participate, especially the quieter ones
 - ensure that decisions are taken
 - circulate minutes of the meeting
 - iv. What should be done once a decision is taken?
Once the chairperson of the meeting has taken a decision, s/he should assign responsibilities to the members and then set deadlines for the completion of the assigned work.
 - v. Name three things that participants should keep in mind.
 - prepare a few key points before the meeting and take them along to the meeting
 - don't memorize information – speak as naturally as possible
 - don't be afraid to admit if you do not know something that you are asked
 - be positive in your criticism
 - offer solutions
2.
 - i. The chairperson or his/her secretary sends a **memo** to invite participants to a meeting.
 - ii. The **venue** for the meeting is also mentioned in the memo.
 - iii. The **minutes** of the previous meeting are circulated to participants

- iv. The organizer or his/her staff make all the **arrangements** for the meeting.
- v. The chairperson **conducts** the meeting.
- vi. **Participants** take part in the meeting.
- vii. The **agenda** is discussed **item** by item.
- viii. **Consensus** is arrived at on issues under discussion
- ix. **Minutes** of the meeting are jotted down during the meeting and then sent to all participants and concerned persons.

Tape script

- | | |
|---|--|
| A | <u>How about</u> meeting at The Moti Mahal? |
| B | <u>That should be</u> fine. What time? |
| A | <u>What about</u> after the conference? |
| B | <u>Would you like to</u> meet for dinner? |
| A | <u>That would be</u> great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan. |
| B | Let's say 7 pm. |
| A | Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye. |
| B | Bye. |

Check Your Progress 3

Tape script

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| A | How about meeting for lunch today? |
| B | I'm afraid it is not convenient for me today. Can we fix it for tomorrow, please? |
| A | Would you like to go to the electronics exhibition on Saturday? |
| B | That'll be OK with me. Should we say 4 pm? |
| A | Could we meet at a restaurant on Friday evening? |
| B | Yes, that would suit me. Shall we say Mc Donald's at C P? |
| A | Would you like to watch the cricket match on Sunday? |
| B | Yes, that would be great. |
| A | Should we go for a movie this weekend? |
| B | I'm afraid it won't be possible. Can we keep it for next weekend? |
-

2. Tape script (The correct order)

Mr Bakshi : Gautam Bakshi speaking.

Ms Jain : Hello Mr Bakshi, this is Sunidhi Jain from Bhopal. How are you?

Mr Bakshi : Ms Jain! It is good to hear from you. I'm fine thanks, how are you?

Ms Jain : Fine, thank you. I'm coming over to Delhi in the first week of November for the Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan. Will you be in Delhi at that time?

Mr Bakshi: Yes sure. In fact we are participating in the Trade Fair this year.

Ms Jain : Oh good! How about a meeting on 6th evening at The Village?

Mr Bakshi : Just a minute, let me check my diary.OK, That should be fine.

Ms Jain : That's great. I suggest 7 o'clock in the restaurant.

Mr Bakshi : 6th November 7 o'clock then.

Ms Jain: Thanks a lot. See you then.

Mr Bakshi : Yes, looking forward to meeting you. Bye then.

Ms Jain : Goodbye.

Check Your Progress 4

Tape script

- i. OK, shall we begin? We're here today to discuss about the arrangements for the welcome party for our new colleague Ms Sunanda Varma. I'd like to ask Sunil to begin by telling us what planning he has already done so far.
- ii. Thank you for coming. It is ten o'clock. Let's start. What we want to do today is reach a decision on the deadline for launching our new product. Have you all seen a copy of the agenda? Can we hear from Mr Bakshi about what he thinks would be the suitable date for launching the product?
- iii. Right then, can we get started? The purpose of this meeting is to plan in detail for the visit of our very important customer from Holland, Mr Tillman. Can we have Harvinder tell us what planning he has done so far?
- iv. Thank you for coming. It is two o'clock. Let's begin. Our aim is to ensure that we make proper arrangements for our participation in the Trade fair to be held next month in Delhi. On the agenda you will see there are three items. I'd like to ask Sunaina to say something about the first item that deals with the products that we will be displaying at the Fair this year.

Check Your Progress 5

- i. **Preventing someone from interrupting** – Sorry, please let him finish.
- ii. **Stating your opinion** – In my view.....I believe.....
- iii. **Asking to interrupt** – If I may interrupt..... Sorry to interrupt, but.....
- iv. **Closing the meeting** – I think we've covered everything. That's it then. The next meeting will be held on Friday the 20th of June.
- v. **Asking for a clarification** – Excuse me, may I ask for a clarification on this?
- vi. **Inviting someone's opinion** – Could we hear from Puneet? ... What do you think about?
- vii. **Asking for comments** – Any comments?
- viii. **Moving on to the next point on the agenda** – Let's move on to the next point..... Now we come to the question of.....

Check Your Progress 6

1. I think the report is too long. *(disagree strongly).*
I wouldn't say that at all.
2. It's too late to make any changes. *(agree).*
I think you're right.
1. I feel we all need to work together. *(agree strongly)*
I couldn't agree more.
2. In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. *(disagree)*
That's not how I see it.
3. We must wait till next year to start this project. *(disagree, state the opposite opinion)*
That's out of the question. On the contrary, we should begin working on it as soon as we can.

Check Your Progress 7

- i. Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting meeting
 - ii. this morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with \
 - iii. everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking only
 - iv. that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing be
 - v. work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though, out
 - vi. that we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce \
 - vii. takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't along
 - viii. be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a great food lover, great
 - ix. so we'll probably go to a nice restaurant. \
2. teleconference - A conference held among people in different locations by means of telecommunications equipment, such as closed-circuit television.
- hot-desking - is a way of saving office space in which workers do not have their own desk and are only given a desk when they need it.
- outsourcing – subcontracting work to outside companies

Listening

Tape script

My two pet peeves are being stuck in mismanaged meetings and in traffic jams. Traffic jams are often unavoidable but ineffective meetings are particularly irksome since it is simple to plan and manage successful meetings. Using the tools for creating dynamic and inspirational meetings doesn't require a Ph.D. or months of training. Why then are these simple ideas and tools so often ignored?

Meetings are too often seen as an end unto themselves. I've attended more than my share of meetings where the object was to get to the meeting. Once there, we dutifully filled the time allotted while producing only a minimum of new ideas, plans and action.

Using meetings effectively starts with the understanding that meetings are not the destination but a vehicle for reaching strategic objectives or organizational destinations. With this in mind we can move meetings forward.

Thinking of meetings as vehicles, as the means to an end, clarifies objectives and itineraries. It enables us to get in the driver's seat and focus our attention on the results we want to achieve and the means of achieving them. This requires selecting the appropriate type and structure of meeting, picking a competent meeting leader and facilitator, determining the key participants, and identifying critical steps in order to make the best use of peoples' time and energy.

With a clear destination in mind and key waypoints noted, it is possible to map possible routes and determine when a bike, a bus, a plane, chariot or truck is the appropriate vehicle to get you there quickly. With clear objectives, we can determine how each part of the meeting should be structured and managed to achieve the desired results.

The success of meetings is limited only by our understanding of their purpose and our ability to plan and manage them.

Check Your Progress 8

Possible answers

1. Why does the speaker find meetings bothersome?
Meetings are often mismanaged & ineffective, although you don't need any special qualifications to be able to conduct successful and effective meetings.
 2. Why is it necessary to look at meetings as a means rather than an end?
This will enable participants to achieve the objectives of the meeting better.
 3. How can a meeting achieve its desired result?
 - *by selecting the appropriate type and structure of meeting*
 - *picking a competent meeting leader and facilitator*
 - *determining the key participants*
 - *identifying critical steps in order to make the best use of peoples' time and energy*
1. What do you understand by
Pet peeves – what bothers, irritates or annoys me most
In the driver's seat – in a position of authority or command
To map possible routes – to find out possible ways of doing something

Check Your Progress 9

1. The missing words from the text are in bold.

Secrets of Better Decision Making Meetings

While **effective** meetings are essential to any **organization** and to getting work done, most meetings leave us still looking for a **decision** and tired. A good meeting should **facilitate** decision-making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the **participants**, and contribute to building **team effort** within the organization.

Successful meetings are ones where attention is paid to three areas; content, **design** and process. Selection of content is crucial. All too often meetings are called to **discuss** issues which would be better resolved with a couple of phone calls while at the same time core issues remain unmentioned. The key is to focus meetings around **key issues**.

Secondly, the design of the meeting can hinder or **support** the decision-making, problem solving or the informational task at hand. In designing, attention needs to be given to idea generation methods, decision processes, agenda, time frames, problem-solving steps, etc.

Third, and most often ignored, is making sure the individual and group **needs** of the participants are met. Are people participating, included, feel that there is room for their **ideas**? Are dysfunctional behaviors openly dealt with, is there positive energy in the group, are people committed to the task at hand and enthused about the way the group is working to complete the task?

2. Chairperson: 'Right then, I think we should begin now, it's ten o'clock. We're here today to discuss some of the reasons for the decline in profits which has affected the company. At the end of the meeting we should have a clear idea of what measures we should take to improve the situation. You've all seen the agenda. I'd like to ask if anyone has any comments on it before we start.'

Voces: 'No / its fine / etc.'

Chairperson: Can I ask Mr Anand to start with his remarks.

Check Your Progress 10**Reporting Verbs**

Possible answers:

- i. He/she assured the members that the report would be in by the next day.
- ii. He enquired about the sales figures of the previous week.
- iii. She was reminded to gather the feedback from her department positively by the end of the week.
- iv. He informed the members that the delegation would arrive the next week.
- v. She questioned the necessity of making the scheme compulsory for all the employees.
- vi. She expressed her doubts about the acceptability of flexi-time.
- vii. He suggested that they should ask an advertising agency to design their campaign.
- viii. She asked for an update on the progress of construction work at their new site.
- ix. He expressed his unhappiness with latecomers.
- x. He asked to see the absentee record of the Sales department
- xi. She stressed/emphasized the need to dispatch the goods by the weekend.
- xii. She informed the members that they had gained two important clients through the Trade Fair

Check Your Progress 11

Here is a sample of the Memo you could write to your boss:

Memo

To : Rakesh Menon (GM –Marketing)

From : Shilpa Gupta (HR Department)

Date : 21 June 2003

Subject: Details of Mr Sampath's visit to Delhi

At the meeting held on 20th June 2003 we took these decisions regarding the arrangements for Mr Sampath's visit:

- Vikas will book a room for him at the Park Royal Hotel and also receive him at the airport
- We have made the following lunch arrangements for him and will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience
On 1st July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal
On 2nd July the GMs will have lunch with him at The Taj.
- Since this is his first visit to Delhi, the G M Marketing will take him on a sightseeing tour of Delhi on Saturday, 1st July. Vikas will take him out for shopping on Sunday if he wishes to shop.
- We have decided to gift him a traditional painting from Cottage Emporium.
- Vikas will also be drafting the welcome letter. He will get the letter approved by you before mailing it to him.

Please let us know whether you are satisfied with these arrangements. We look forward to your suggestions.

S/d

Pronunciation

Noun

present
export
record
import
desert
decrease
progress
refund
process

Verb

present
export
record
import
desert
decrease
progress
refund
pr

UNIT 7 TAKING NOTES & PREPARING MINUTES

Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Warm Up
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Taking Notes
 - 7.3.1 The Note-taking Skill: The Essential Components
 - 7.3.2 The Note-taking Skill: An Example
- 7.4 Preparing Minutes
 - 7.4.1 Format of Minutes
 - 7.4.2 Language and Style of Minutes
- 7.5 Grammar: Using the Passive Voice
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Suggested Readings
- 7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

Our objectives in this unit are that after you have worked through it you should be able to

- take notes at meetings where the subject matter is familiar to you, using active listening and correct note-taking techniques
- convert the notes into minutes, using the format, language and style proper to formal minutes

7.1 WARM UP

Get hold of two minutes of meetings, either from your own office or someone else's office. Read them carefully and

- a) write your impressions of the minutes in terms of format, coverage, language and style.
- b) make corrections wherever necessary.

It would be a good idea to work with a partner – either a friend or a colleague at the Study Centre.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

All formal Meetings require that a written record of the meetings – of the discussions held and decisions reached – be prepared and kept on record. This is obviously necessary since if no such record is available disputes can later arise about what exactly was said or decided at the meeting. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that certain meetings, like Annual General Meetings and meetings of Board of Directors of companies, are required by law to keep the minutes of their

proceedings. Even non-formal meetings, like a face-to-face meeting of two officials of a company, may find it necessary to keep at least an informal record of their decisions in the form of a memo. There are several good reasons for this. For example, failure to keep a record of a verbal warning to a subordinate may stall any future disciplinary action against him/her; failure to record which person was decided upon to take which action may make it impossible to fix responsibility in case of a future foul-up. Apart from such considerations, records of meetings also help other people, who need to know but are not required to be present at the meeting, to find out what went on at the meeting.

For these aims to be achieved, it is necessary that the report of the meeting be correct and factual not only in recording the decisions taken, resolutions passed, votes cast in favour or against a resolution, etc. but also in reporting the discussion wherever this is required. In fact, the reporter is less likely to get the factual data wrong than the emphases and biases manifested during the discussion, since there is more scope for disagreement in reporting the latter. To ensure that no inaccuracies in reporting go undetected, the minutes are always presented before the committee at its next meeting for its approval.

The person who records the minutes, therefore, has a serious responsibility. S/he is usually the secretary of the organization, but at informal meetings the Chairperson can request any member to record the minutes. Whoever records the minutes needs to possess the skill of note taking, for all that s/he can do at the meeting itself is to jot down notes on the proceedings. Later, s/he will convert these notes into proper minutes. This means expanding the notes into the language of minutes and putting the whole thing in the minute format. Both stages are equally important. If the notes are incorrect or inadequate, this will be reflected in the minutes, if the format or the language is faulty, again the minutes will be unacceptable.

That is why we have divided this unit into two parts: Note-taking and Preparing Minutes. We will take up note-taking first.

7.3 TAKING NOTES

When you are reading a textbook, or a reference book, especially when you are preparing for an exam, or are planning to write a paper, you make notes. You make notes because you later want to be able to recover the information without having to go back to the book again. The notes are in your own handwriting, and often in a coded form for your own use, and it is difficult for anyone else to recover the information from your notes. You use the code to jot down the important points in an abbreviated and compressed form to save time in copying the entire text. You also use coded symbols, like arrows of different sorts, numbers and letters, trees and rough diagrams, etc. to capture the information.

You have to do something similar when you are listening to various speakers at a meeting. The only difference is that here you make notes from something spoken, rather than from something written. This difference is often expressed by contrasting **note-taking** with **note-making**. You **make notes** from written texts (books, journals, etc.), but you **take notes** from a spoken text (like a speech). In recording the proceedings of a meeting, the skill we need is accordingly that of note-taking.

7.3.1 The Note-taking Skill: The Essential Components

The first essential sub component of the note-taking skill is the listening ability. Just as you cannot **make notes** unless you have the reading ability, you cannot **take notes** unless you have the listening ability. By listening ability we do not simply mean the ability to listen, just as by reading ability we do not mean simply the ability to read. A fifth class student can read, and a kindergarten child can listen, but, even with excellent writing skills, they cannot make or take notes. This is because for making or taking notes you need to be able not only to **understand** but also to **interpret** what you read/hear. You must not only read and listen **attentively** to understand everything, you must also read and listen **actively** to be able to interpret it. By **active reading** and **active listening**, we mean the ability to grasp the points, to distinguish the main points from the supporting points, to make the implicit points explicit in your understanding and to place each point at its correct place in the entire structure of argument/discussion.

There is a difference between listening attentively and listening actively. Attentive listening is mostly passive. You simply imbibe the information you hear e.g., when you are listening to the news on the radio or TV as an average citizen. You tuck away the information in separate chunks in different corners of your mind, and piece them together in a master design only when you are required to do so, or not at all. In active listening, your brain is making a constant effort to see the overall design, to light up the connections between the disparate points, and to see the deeper implications of the things said. Obviously, an active listener also needs to be attentive, but s/he needs to be more than attentive: s/he needs to be thinking actively on what s/he is hearing. It is for this reason that a note-taker should not be burdened with any other duty at the meeting. At some meetings, the Chairperson decides to record the minutes him/herself. This should be avoided.

An important question that each note-taker at a meeting faces is **when** to start noting down what the speaker is saying. Different speakers have different styles. Some speakers start with an introduction and progress slowly to their main point; others start by demolishing the arguments of the previous speakers before coming to their own; for some others, speaking is a process of thinking aloud, and so on. If you wait till the main argument of a speaker becomes clear before you start taking down notes, you may find that you have waited too long and there isn't enough time to complete your notes as the speaker has concluded and another one has already started speaking. If you start taking down early what a speaker is saying, you might later discover that was just an introduction (and therefore not important), or that the speaker was only describing a position which s/he later went on to change. This is the essential difference between making and taking notes. When making notes from a book, you have the entire text before you: you can go back and forth at a leisurely pace, decide what the writer's main argument is, and then start making your notes. But when you are taking notes from a speech, the speech unfolds before you linearly in time, and what has been spoken is no longer available to you (except in your memory), so how do you make sure that you aren't too early or too late?

There are two ways in which this problem can be tackled, though eventually every note-taker has to find his/her own strategies to deal with it. First, the note-taker must, from the very start, listen for the speaker's main point. This is usually a well-formed position, or viewpoint, related to the problem at hand. So long as the speaker does not start making positive observations about the issue in a confident and assured manner, it is too early to start taking down anything: she may only be describing other people's positions, or thinking aloud. Once s/he starts making positive observations confidently, it means s/he has formulated her/his position, or argument. It would be recognizable as different from any other positions already taken, and as soon as this realization occurs, the note-taker can start jotting down the point. Sometimes the speaker also makes it clear that she is now going to state her/his position. After this point, it would still take the speaker

some time to complete her/his presentation and the note-taker will have enough time to take full notes. But if s/he waits for the speaker to complete her/his presentation, and round off her/his position in its totality, the note-taker will find herself/himself caught between two speakers.

The second technique, which must supplement the first one, is the use of codes when jotting down the point. Trying to take down everything in longhand would simply take too long. So, use abbreviations, shortened and syncopated words, pictographs, symbols, arrows and the like to capture the sense as quickly as possible. (We shall illustrate some of these below.) This will help you to keep pace with the speaker. But return to the notes as quickly as possible after the meeting for decoding, or you might forget what the codes stand for.

The second essential of the note-taking skill is that the note-taker should enjoy **thorough familiarity with the subject matter** under discussion. S/he should understand what is being talked about. Both the context and the content of the debates should be known to her/him fully. Only then can s/he take notes of the subject matter comfortably and intelligibly.

Finally, a note-taker needs to be able to jot down the points s/he decides are important in precise and compressed forms. This is essentially a question about **the ability to select key words and phrases to represent the meaning and to use coded symbols to represent relationships**.

Let us now try to illustrate the points we have made above with the help of an example so that you can understand how these principles work in practice. We must of course work within the limitation that the example cannot be a live meeting but must be a transcript of a meeting. While this does affect the utility of the example to some extent, you should at least be able to see what is meant and how to extend the principles to a live meeting when you face one. We have provided you with a tape script and it is better if you listen first and then read the extract of the meeting.

7.3.2 The Note-Taking Skill: An Example

Given below is an extract from a meeting. The item under discussion relates to a proposal to increase the efficiency of the company by revamping its budgetary control system. We would like to see how the components of the note-taking skill we have described above will help us in taking notes of this extract. And to make sure that we ‘take’ notes and not ‘make’ notes, we will treat the extract as a linear one and will be guided only by the clues as they are produced and not all of them together. (Do listen to the tape which contains the extract) To do this task satisfactorily, we should be able to answer these questions.

1. What would active listening yield in this extract which mere attentive listening would not?
2. At what point should the note-taker start taking notes?
3. What advantage would someone who is familiar with the subject matter have over one who isn’t?
4. What should be the language of the notes? What kind of codes or symbols could be used?

THE EXTRACT

CHAIRPERSON : The next item on the agenda is a proposal from the Finance Manager regarding budgetary control. Would you please introduce the item and tell us what it is all about, Mr. Malhotra?

FM : Yes, Mr. Chairperson. As the Board is aware, the Company had last year commissioned a study of our financial management by

Financial Consultants Ltd. They submitted a report which was put before the Board earlier this year. The Board had then asked me to prepare a proposal based on its suggestions about budgetary control, while the other aspects of the report would be taken up for implementation later. The detailed proposal is already with you, and I shall only highlight its main features. What the proposal essentially suggests is that we should do the Company's accounts more frequently.

- MEMBER 1** : But we are already doing the accounts every quarter, aren't we?
- FM** : Yes, but quarterly accounts don't allow us to keep a close enough control. Should the company suddenly make a heavy loss we ought to be able to act quickly. If we don't, say the consultants, we will not be able to prevent the loss from getting larger still.
- Member 1** : But if the accounts show that we are making a loss, we immediately reduce inventory, that is, we cut down purchases, and, if possible, we reduce personnel.
- Chair** : I think it would be a good idea if we first let Mr. Malhotra complete his presentation. Members can then make their points.
- FM** : Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. What Mr. Shukla says is true, but in order to do the things he suggests, we need the information faster than we are getting it at the moment. If profitability goes downthat is profits in relation to capital employed...it may be necessary to raise prices, cut costs and so on. But the right information must be quickly available.
- Chair** : Let's have the proposal, Mr. Malhotra.
- FM** : What the proposal suggests is that we break down the activities of the company into Cost Centres. Each Cost Centre would have its own finance manager of the rank of an assistant Finance manager. Each AFM would be required to forecast, well in advance, the income and expenditure of his centre. We would then put the budgets from all the centres together. After they have been approved, they become the annual budget of the company. If the actual income or expenditure of a Cost Centre varies a lot from the budgeted figure, then the AFM of that Centre would be responsible and would have to explain why his actual figures differed from his forecast, and take appropriate action. Each AFM would prepare monthly accounts and keep track of the income and the expenses. These would be monitored by the Central Finance Office (CFO). In case a decline in sales is noticed, the CFO would then be in a position to set the alarm bells ringing, and the counter measures could be initiated straightaway. In outline, this is the proposal. The details are given in the file that is already with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Chair

: Thank you, Mr. Malhotra. The members can now make their comments. Yes, Mr. Shukla.....?

Let us now try to answer the questions that we posed above:

1. Active listening consists mainly in being able to establish links between the different points that the speaker has made and to figure out the structure of main and subordinate points in the argument. It would be clear to the note-taker at the very start that the main point in the item is the proposal and the minutes must record the main features of the FM's proposal, s/he would be able to see the initial comments of the FM as providing the justification for the proposal, thus establishing a link between the two. There is a certain drawback in the existing system of budgetary control ("too slow") which the proposed system seeks to remedy. When the note-taker records the main features of the proposal, s/he would also try to record how this drawback is sought to be removed in the proposed system ("monthly accounting"). This means that s/he will already have understood the relationship between quicker accounting and a faster response to a heavy loss situation: quicker accounting will provide the company with faster feedback and it will be able to respond to the situation with quicker counter-measures. This and similar connections between the points made will reveal to the minute-reader that the minute-taker has listened actively and not just attentively.
2. Since the note-taker will have identified the FM's proposal as the main point of the item, his/her pen would start moving really fast only when the FM starts describing the proposal, that is, when the FM speaks for the last time. But s/he will already have noted down the reasons for change, which we have mentioned above. S/he will also have noted down already the item under discussion (FM's proposal on Budgetary Control) and the fact that the FM was only going to present the main features of the proposal. But s/he will get his/her clue that s/he must now start moving quickly when the Chairperson asks the FM to skip the preliminaries and get down to the proposal. That's when s/he must start writing furiously so that s/he can also finish writing when the FM stops speaking. Using code language, this should not be too difficult.
3. It should be obvious that a person who is familiar with the background to the matter under discussion would be in a better position to decide what is to be included in the minutes and what can be safely excluded. For example, a note-taker who knows that the members are aware of the present frequency of accounting would not have to be told about it in the minutes, even though it is mentioned at the meeting by a member. To take another kind of example, a person who didn't know what budgetary control was, or had no idea of what inventory reduction was, would remain in doubt whether s/he was right in omitting one or the other from the minutes.
4. As we have said earlier, the language of the notes should be abbreviated, compressed and coded. The reason is simply that, unless one knows shorthand, trying to take notes in full language forms will only mean that you are unable to cover everything you want to cover. The following devices can be used:
 - i. Standard abbreviations (Jan., Feb., Co., etc.)
 - ii. Non-standard abbreviations: (prop. = proposal; CC: Cost Centre); b. = budget; inc. = income, etc.)

- iii. Standard symbols, e.g., = : ‘is equal to’, < = ‘less than’, > = ‘greater than’, ∵ = ‘since’, ∴ = ‘therefore’, etc.
- iv. Non-standard symbols e.g., → = ‘cause of’, ← = ‘result of’, ↓ = ‘falls, declines’, ↑ = ‘rises, grows’.
- v. Syncopated words: y’ly – ‘yearly’, m’ly = ‘monthly’, edu’nl = ‘educational’
- vi. Sentence fragments: e.g., ‘more frequent accounting’, ‘CFO to monitor’, etc.

We give below one possible set of notes which show how the symbols and abbreviations etc. could be used:

Item: *FM’s prop on budg. Control*

FM: *Main features only*

Ess: *more frequent accounting*

qtrly acc. Not quick enough to start prev. meas. ICO heavy loss. Faster f.b. less.

PROP.

Divide co. into CCs

Each CC under an AFM

AFM to forecast inc. & expend. of CC

Aggreg. Of CC budgets = Co. budget

AFM resp. ICO sharp variation from budg. Est.

AFM to prepare m’ly acc.

CFO to monitor

This notetaker makes use of some abbreviations which possibly s/he alone can interpret, but this is no problem because normally no one else would be required to decode them, at least not without help from him/her. In fact, anyone who was present at the meeting would not have a serious problem interpreting them. Nevertheless, here are the explanations.

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <i>ess.</i> | : | <i>essential</i> |
| <i>qtr’ly.</i> | : | <i>quarterly</i> |
| <i>acc.</i> | : | <i>accounting, accounts</i> |
| <i>f.b.</i> | : | <i>feedback</i> |
| <i>CC</i> | : | <i>Cost Centre</i> |
| <i>inc.</i> | : | <i>income</i> |
| <i>expend</i> | : | <i>expenditure</i> |
| <i>aggreg.</i> | : | <i>aggregate</i> |
| <i>ICO</i> | : | <i>in case of</i> |
| <i>resp.</i> | : | <i>responsible</i> |
| <i>m’ly</i> | : | <i>monthly</i> |
| <i>prev.meas.</i> | : | <i>preventive measures</i> |
| <i>budg.</i> | : | <i>budget, budgetary</i> |
| <i>est.</i> | : | <i>estimate</i> |

That the note-taker has listened actively is reflected in the notes. For example, his/her summary of the justification ‘*Quarterly accounting not quick enough to start preventive measures in case*

'of heavy loss' shows that s/he has understood the point well enough to express it in his/her own words. The use of the word '**feedback**' further confirms the point.

Check Your Progress - 1

1. Answer the following questions briefly:

- i) Why is it necessary to keep minutes of meetings? Give at least three reasons.

.....
.....
.....

- ii) Who normally records the minutes?

.....
.....

- iii) What are the two stages in the preparation of minutes?

.....
.....

- iv) How is note-taking different from note-making?

.....
.....

- v) What are the components of the note-taking skill?

.....
.....

2. Read the following extract from the transcript of a meeting. Imagine that you are attending the meeting as its Secretary. Take notes of the meeting. Listen carefully to the cassette.

Chair : Attention, Ladies and Gentlemen! It's 10 am and everyone is here. Let's begun with the first item – the confirmation of the previous minutes. We have received no written comments, but if anyone has anything to say now, they are most welcome..

ALL : No. They are fine.

Chair : OK. In that case let's move on to the next item – exports to South East Asian markets. Mr. Mahajan, Manager, Export Sales will introduce the item. Mr. Mahajan?

Mahajan : Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have already circulated my report to the members. I hope the members have had the time to go through it because I am really looking forward to their suggestions for improvement in what is at present a rather depressing picture. As the report says on the very first page, our exports to South East Asia have declined for the third year

running. We have identified the reasons for this decline but are at the moment rather helpless, as the reasons seem to be beyond our control. We think there are three reasons for the decline: first, of course, is the growing competition from the local manufacturers. Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have all in recent years set up, or are in the process of setting up, their own polyester plants. If we have still been able to sell them our product for so long it is because of the price advantage we have enjoyed so far, and of course because these countries have open economies. However, the price advantage we have so far enjoyed is now being progressively eroded by the inflation at home and the constant rise in wages. That is the second reason. But it is the third reason which has proved to be the most crippling in recent years, and it is the steep rise in the domestic tax rates. Manufacturers of polyester yarn have been representing to the government without much success. Recently the finance minister has given an indication that the tax rate may be reduced in the next year's budget. If that happens, we can look forward to some relief, though I cannot promise that that alone would be sufficient to achieve a turnaround in our sales to South East Asia.

Bagchi

: Can we afford to wait that long? The next budget is still five months away. Moreover, the quantum of relief may not be much. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know how serious the situation is and whether we have thought of any counter measures to prevent the situation from getting worse.

Mahajan

: Mr. Chairman, I quite agree with Mr. Bagchi. We cannot just sit and wait for February 29 for the Minister to announce a tax cut. Irrespective of what the government does, we have to take measures to arrest the declining trend in exports to these countries and to do that we must somehow or the other maintain our price advantage. The question is how to do it. Our technology is the best in the world, therefore there is not much we can hope to do there. The advantage provided by lower wages is being progressively neutralized, though we do still retain some advantage, as the comparative table on p.5 of the report shows. Then there are the high transportation costs. When the transportation costs are added to our wage costs, the wage-cost advantage is completely neutralized. Please see the chart on p.6. – the 80% tax comes on top of this. Compare this with the 15-25% tax in these countries. Is it surprising that we are losing our markets in these countries to the local manufacturers? In fact, if things continue to go the way they have been going, it is only a matter of time before we will have to withdraw from these markets completely. It may well happen three years from now by which time six more manufacturing plants will be going on stream in these countries. That is how serious the situation is, Mr. Chairman, and unless we take some urgent and drastic measures.....

Rahman

: Yes, but what can we do? As you said, all the factors responsible for this situation seem to be beyond our control.

Mahajan

: But neither can we just sit and watch our South East Asian markets being snatched away from us. They are our bread and butter. You know we don't export much to the west.

Chair

: Well, gentlemen, you have heard the Export Manager. Are there any suggestions?

Bagchi

: Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Export manager that none of the factors responsible for the present situation in the South East Asian markets is amenable to our control. In fact, I foresee a steep rise in inflationary pressures, and a further decline in the value of the rupee, both contributing to a rise in costs. Even if the tax rate is cut by the minister, it will never come down to anywhere near the low tax rates in these countries. In such a situation no half-hearted measures will show any results. We have to think bold, and be prepared to take risks, if we are going to survive.

Chair : What do you have in mind, Mr Bagchi?

Bagchi

: We must be prepared to take full advantage of the competitive situation now obtaining in the South East Asian countries, of their open policies and the low tax rates. With our experience in this field, and our technology, I am sure we can do far better than the new units coming up in these countries, if, and it's a big 'if', we move one of our plants to Thailand or Singapore. I know the initial cost will be high, but it will still be less than what the new local plants cost, imported as they all are from the US. Moreover, the higher rated capacity of our plant will mean quicker recovery of the cost. I think we ought to give a lot of urgent thought to this idea, since it seems to be our only road to survival.

Chair : It certainly is a bold proposal, Mr Bagchi. Let's hear what other members have to say about it.....

7.4 PREPARING MINUTES

In the second stage, the notes taken at the meeting are converted into proper minutes. The minutes are prepared in a definite format, therefore it would not do simply to write out the notes in full sentences to arrive at proper minutes. The secretary, or whoever is to prepare the minutes, ought to be familiar with the format, and s/he should have a copy of the agenda before her/him. This is because the minutes follow the agenda closely. Secondly, s/he should be familiar with the language used in the minutes, since there are certain conventions of language that formal minutes follow which are not followed in informal reports of meetings (e.g., newspaper reports of meetings). We shall discuss these two aspects of minute-writing: the **format of the minutes** and the **style and language** used in writing them.

7.4.1 The Format of Minutes

When the minutes are put in their final form the following information appears first and constitutes the HEADING of the minutes:

1. Name of the body; nature of the meeting; day, date, time and place of the meeting.

This information can occur in either of the following forms:

**Minutes of the First Meeting of the Board of Directors of PASHUPATI EXPORTS held on
12 January, 2004 at 5.00 pm in the Board Room**

OR

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FLEXITIME

Minutes of meeting held on May 16, 2003 at 3.00 pm in Committee Room No.2

The piece of information that is given next is the names of the people present with a specific mention of who chaired the meeting. This information is given in the following manner:

- 2. PRESENT :** Pashupati Shah (MD, Chairperson)
Ram Malhotra (Manager, Exports)
Govind Gaitonde (Manager, QC)
Shalini Pande (Manager, Finance)
Malavika Chauhan (Manager, Marketing)
Bharat Mukherji (Manager, Domestic Sales)

In informal meetings, names alone suffice: designations can be dropped. But minutes of formal meetings, particularly those which have to be sent to other organizations and agencies, must include the designations.

Information about people present is not complete without a separate mention of those who are not regular members of the committee but are present in a special capacity, e.g., the secretary, or those who have been specially invited to the meeting to assist the committee by virtue of their special expertise, e.g., an architect, an auditor, or a solicitor. This information is presented as follows:

- 3. In Attendance :** Rajguru Gopal (Secretary)
or
Special Invitees Mohan Bagga (Architect)
Reshma Bajaj (Computer C)

From this point onwards, the minutes will follow the agenda closely. The agenda has the following structure:

Title, date and place of Meeting
Apologies for Absence
Minutes of Previous Meeting
Matters Arising
Items for Discussion
Any Other Business with permission of the Chair
Date, Time and Place of the Next Meeting

The minutes pick up the agenda from the second item: Apologies for Absence, the first item having been already incorporated in the heading. Under this item the minute-taker reports any apologies for absence read out/announced at the meeting. The report takes the following form:

4. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from the following:

S. Bhatia

P. Ahluwalia

The next item in the minutes is **Minutes of Previous Meeting**, which are formally presented for confirmation at the meeting. In actuality, they are often circulated in advance so that members can read them and point out any discrepancies they notice at the meeting. If no discrepancies are pointed out at the meeting, the minutes are approved and signed by the Chairperson. In this case, the minutes record the item as follows:

5. **Confirmation of Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting held on.....were confirmed and signed.

But if any amendments to the minutes are suggested and accepted, they are recorded as follows:

5a. **Confirmation of Minutes:** It was pointed out that Item 3 should read “.....a tax rate of 80%....” in place of “.....a tax rate of 30%.....”

with this amendment the minutes were confirmed and signed.

The next item, **Matters Arising**, refers to any discussion, announcement, etc. that may have taken place at the meeting on a matter arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. The item is sometimes also utilized for reporting action on decisions taken at the previous meeting. The minutes record the matter in the following style:

6. **Matters Arising:**

- (i) Manager (Domestic Sales) reported that the sales figures for the first quarter had been delayed due to computer breakdown but would be made available within a week.
- (ii) Manager (Marketing) informed the members that M/s Media Advertisers had agreed to send a revised plan for the launch of the new line of polyproducts.

The matters so far covered by the minutes are format-related, though that does not reduce their importance. But the really important matters begin only when **Items for Discussion** are taken up. In our specification of the agenda, this represents a cover item, i.e. in an actual agenda, it may cover several different agenda items, each following the other with a different item number. The minutes for each item would appear separately following the order in which they appear in the agenda. For example, for the agenda of the meeting of the Board of Directors of PASHUPATI SCOOTERS which appears in 7.4.2, there will be four different items (Nos. 4,5,6,7) each to be minuted separately, as follows:

7. **(Item 4) Invitation from the Ministry of Industry for participation in the rescue bid for SCOOTERS INDIA LTD.**

(Minutes)

8. **(Item 5) Proposal from Marketing for participation in AUTO EXPO 99 to be held in Milan in Jan.99.**

(Minutes)

9. **(Item 6) Report of the subcommittee on exports to South East Asia**

(Minutes)

10. (Item 7) Review of product prices
(Minutes)

Discussion of some of the items at the meeting may end with some action being assigned to a particular member, or with a subcommittee being set up to do something. For example, in case of Item No.4, the meeting may decide to set up a subcommittee to draw up a set of conditions on which the company will join the rescue bid, or in case of Item No.5, it may assign to the Marketing manager the duty of inviting bids from some European marketing concerns for setting up a display of the company's products at the EXPO 99. ***Whenever such an action is decided on with respect to a particular item, the minutes of the item end with a separate para highlighting the action to be taken.*** Thus the entire minutes for Item No.4 may read as follows:

(Item 4) Invitation from the Ministry of Industry for participation in the rescue bid for SCOOTERS INDIA LTD.

The MD informed the Board that the Ministry of Industry, GOI, was interested in preparing a rescue bid for saving the public sector concern, SCOOTERS INDIA Ltd., and had invited the company to join the bid and submit its terms. The MD felt that though company policy had been against getting involved in such matters, the invitation might also offer an opportunity to acquire a large facility which could be converted into another production base for two and three wheelers with substantial production capacity, provided favourable terms could be negotiated.

After some discussion, the Board decided to accept the Ministry's invitation in principle, but the acceptance would be confirmed only after the terms of participation had been approved by the Board.

Action: A subcommittee consisting of MD (Convener), Manager (Finance), Manager (Production), Manager (QC), Mr. Rohit Desai and Ms. Prema Nath will prepare the terms of participation and submit them for the Board's consideration by 30th September. The subcommittee can employ the services of such experts as it deems fit.

We should however note the **ACTION** is added only when a specific action is recommended by the committee. Otherwise, a paragraph summarizing the discussion is sufficient. The summary of the discussion is of course based on the notes taken at the meeting and includes only the important points. If any proposals are presented at the meeting, their highlights are also included. Names of only those speakers are included who make important suggestions or contributions. But in the **ACTION** part, names of persons responsible for the action, along with the dates by which the action is to be completed, should be stated clearly.

11. AOB (Any Other Business).

If any item is discussed under this heading, it is minuted in the usual way. The **ACTION** para is also added, if required.

In the case of those committees which meet at regular intervals, the last item is

12. Date of the next meeting.

The minutes record the decision of the meeting in this regard.

7.4.2 Language and Style of Minutes

When converting notes into minutes, it is necessary not only to conform to the format of the minutes, but also to use the specific language in which minutes, specially minutes of formal meetings, are written. This language tends to be rather formalized and may remind you of the language of law, though actually it is not as formalized. But it does use certain types of grammatical constructions more frequently than others and shows preference for certain expressions and vocabulary items, which gives to it its special character. In this section, we will describe these special features of the language of the minutes.

Let us first look at some examples of the language of minutes. By looking at these examples closely, we will be able to discover the special features of which we have spoken above.

- a) Manager (Exports) reported that sales to South East Asia had fallen for the third year running and there was urgent need to initiate measures to arrest this trend.
- b) The problem of office security was raised by Mr. Dayal. He suggested that all important papers should be kept in a locked filing cabinet. It was agreed that only three people would have the key: Mr Dayal, Ms. Rohatagi and Mr. Jairam.
- c) It was resolved that a subcommittee be set up to look into the causes of the decline in exports to S.E. Asia.
- d) The minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed and signed.
- e) It is resolved that the Secretary be authorized to draw up the terms of participation in the joint bid.
- f) The chairman referred to the sad demise of Mr. Sushobhan Sengupta and spoke of his services to the Company during its formative years.
- g) The updating of promotional literature to include the new models, PL 40 and PLS 30, was suggested by Mr. Jairam. He point out that many small changes had also been made to other models and these needed to be included in the promotional literature.
- h) **Action:** Mr. Jairam to update the promotional literature and to submit the drafts at he next meeting.

Before we discuss these examples, let us first state **what is required of the language of the minutes:**

- A. The minutes represent a reliable record of the important things said, the decisions taken and the things done at the meeting.; the effort therefore should be to make the language **simple, transparent, free from ambiguity, and precise** so that everyone can understand the contents easily and in the same way.
- B. At meetings, the individual is less important than the collectivity. The decisions taken at meetings are collective decisions. Therefore **the language used should be such that it does not assign decisions to individuals.** Important suggestions and proposals can be ascribed to individual members, but the final decisions are always the collective responsibility.

- C. The minutes record the proceedings as briefly as possible. The language should therefore be **concise**.
- D. Finally, the minutes, being the official record of the meeting, are likely to be consulted and referred to by other agencies and institutions including the law courts in case of disputes. Their language therefore should conform to the standards of **formality and impersonality** that publicly used language generally requires.

Let us now see how the example quoted above, (a-h), show the qualities that are required by the language of minutes.

- i. You will notice that the language used in all the samples above is simple and transparent in the sense that it can be easily understood. It does not use a literary or philosophical style, high-flown words, or poetic flourishes. The words used are common ones (except ‘demise’) and one doesn’t have to look up a dictionary to find out the meanings of any words. There are no double-meaning constructions or words, and the meaning comes through quite clearly. If there are some words that you don’t know (like ‘promotional’), that is an indication that some words common in the world of business are not yet known to you and you must learn them.
- ii. You must have noticed the frequency of verbs in the passive voice in the examples: **was raised, was agreed, was resolved, was suggested, were read**, and so on. As you may know, the passive form of the verb is used when we wish to avoid reference to the agent, either because the agent is not known, is indefinite, or simply because the individual agent is not important. The use of the passive form allows us to eliminate the agent. In writing the minutes, as we said above, reference to individual agents is minimized, since the responsibility is collective. The collective agent (‘committee’) does not need to be mentioned because it is so obvious. You will also notice that where the passive voice is used with an individual agent (as in ‘was suggested by Mr Jairam’) it would make no difference, in fact may even help to simplify the language, if the passive voice is replaced by the active.

The use of the passive voice without the agent also helps the writer to make the minutes impersonal and objective as required in D above.

- iii. The examples above show some constructions which are not very common outside the language of minutes. For example:
 - a) **It was resolved that a committee be set up to look into.....**
 - b) **Resolved that the Secretary is authorized to draw up the terms.....**
 - c) **Mr. Jairam to update the promotional literature and to.....**

The use of constructions such as these, which are not in common use at all but are specific to the language of the minutes, gives to the minutes their formal flavour. This formal flavour is further supported and intensified by the use of more ‘dignified’ and literary equivalents of words in day-to-day use like ‘demise’ for ‘death’. However, in keeping with the first requirement we placed on the language of the minutes, viz. that of simplicity, the current trend is against the use of such words and is in favour of using the day-to-day idiom as far as possible. But simplicity, it should be noted, does not conflict with the use of formalized constructions like the ones we have discussed above to report the proceedings in a precise and concise manner.

iv. Conciseness in minutes is achieved mainly by including only the major points and leaving out everything else. What is recorded in the minutes is

- a. the main points of the discussion
- b. resolutions moved, names of the proposer and seconder
- c. recommendations made and decisions reached
- d. results of voting
- e. tasks assigned to individuals, subcommittees, etc.

This information is then presented using a style and a language in which no unnecessary words or ornamentation are used. Consider, for example, the following version of (g) above:

(G) *Mr Jairam said that the promotional pamphlets, posters and brochures of the company had become out of date as they did not make any reference to the new models the company had brought out since 19..., viz PL 40 and PLS 30. The older models had also undergone modifications and changes which did not find a place in the pamphlets and brochures. Thus while the company was spending lot of energy and expense in updating its products, it was failing to communicate its achievements to the public. As a result, the increased research and development effort was not getting translated into increased sales of our products.*

The main point of this argument is that the promotional literature of the company needs to be updated to incorporate the new products and changes to the old ones, and this is stated quite concisely in (g). (G) states the same thing in a very elaborate manner, which is quite inappropriate to the style of minutes.

Conciseness in minutes is also achieved at times by abbreviating a structure, as we saw above. Thus, in resolutions, '**It is resolved that.....**' Is abbreviated to '**Resolved that**' and, in the **Action** para, '**Mr. Jairam is (requested) to update the promotional literature.....**' is abbreviated to '**Mr Jairam to update.....**', so on.

Finally, minutes can also be made to **look** precise and well-organized by using some well known layout devices. Some of these which are applicable to minutes are the following:

- (a) Each section of the minutes (**Heading, Present, In Attendance, Minutes of Previous Meeting, etc.**) is presented as a separate paragraph and separated by blank double line space; section headings, including the headings of the agenda items to be given in bold letters.
- (b) In each section which has more than one item (e.g. **Matters Arising** may have three separate items), number the items and present each one as a separate paragraph.
- (c) Wherever there is an **ACTION** item, put it as a separate paragraph at the end of the relevant item with the heading **ACTION**.
- (d) In summarizing a discussion, try to itemise the contents. This helps to make the argument clear to you, while also helping the reader to see precisely what the points of the argument were. It also gives a systemized look to your minutes.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Explain what information is to be provided in the following sections of the minutes:
 - a) Matters Arising

- b) In Attendance
- c) Apologies for Absence
- d) AOB

2. Convert into minutes your notes of the (extract of the) meeting which appears in Ex. 2 of **Check Your Progress 1.** Use the following information to give a formal start to your minutes. Your minutes will of course remain incomplete, as the notes cover only one item of the agenda:

Name of Company: PASHUPATI EXPORTS CORPORATION

Body meeting: Board of Directors

Nature of meeting: First meeting for the year 96-97

Day, date, time: Monday, July 15, 11.00 am

Place: Board Room at the Registered Headquarters at Nehru place, New Delhi

Present: S. Bhogle (Chairperson)/R. Mahajan (manager, Exports)/S. Bagchi, V.Rahman, Shefali Ghosh, G.Ketkar, R. Prahlad (all directors)

In attendance: You as Secretary

Apologies: R. Mehta (Director)

3. Draft resolutions on the following subjects to be placed before a committee:
- a) to appoint a subcommittee to suggest measures to reduce the air and water pollution by the Company's manufacturing plant at Renughat
 - b) to appoint Dr. Lekh Raj and Mrs S. Lamba to the Board of Directors of Mahima Plastics Ltd.
 - c) To authorize the Secretary to conduct negotiations with the Secretary of the workers union to withdraw the strike notice issued by it.
4. Given below are verbatim (exactly as spoken) extracts from some meetings. Write summaries of these discussion extracts, as they would appear in the minutes of these meetings:

a) Mrs Narain : I think the main reason why our sales have been going down in the north is that our agents in U.P., Rajasthan, Punjab and Bihar are ineffective. We need new agents there and I suggest our Sales Department find some quickly. We need to give top priority to this job.

Manager (Sales) : I'm afraid I can't agree with Ms. Narain. It would be very, very unwise to change our agents at this point of time. Our competitors are on a sharp lookout for established and experienced agents, and they'd immediately grab our agents. On the other hand, we would be very hard placed to find new agents, because good agents are hard to come by. Even in normal times changing agents is very risky. It disturbs the market. Finding new agents takes time, and even if you succeed in finding new agents, you can never be sure they'll be better than the old ones.

b) Chair : We must do something about our markets in the north. We are in danger of losing them completely.

Manager : I assure the Board that I am aware of the problem. We are right now in the process of reorganising our sales network in the northern states. Where this process has been completed, the results are already beginning to show. In Punjab and H.P., for example, our sales are showing a rise this year. I am quite confident that U.P., Bihar and Rajasthan will also follow suit as soon as we have revived our sales network there.

c) Two companies are negotiating a takeover. HL is the representative of the company which is to be taken over, OL of the company which wants to take over HL's company.)

HL: Before we can give our final consent to the takeover, we'd like to make sure of one more thing.

OL: And what is that?

HL: The interests of our loyal workers.

OL: Though we cannot commit ourselves at this moment, we can assure you we value the services of loyal workers very highly.

HL: Thank you for the assurance, Mr. Lal, but we'd like a more specific assurance. In short, we want a guarantee that no employee will lose his/her job as result of the takeover.

OL: I'm afraid it's impossible to give such a specific assurance, Mr. Lalvani. We are planning to reorganise and modernize the manufacturing units extensively, and it is quite likely that some staff will become redundant as a result.

HL: That, I'm afraid, jeopardizes the whole deal we have worked out. If the workers challenge the takeover in the court, we will be stuck for years.

OL: You needn't worry, Mr. Lal. We will work out a reasonable deal for the employees who are made redundant.

7.5 GRAMMAR: USING THE PASSIVE VOICE

Read the following sentences.

1. In case a decline in sales is noticed
2. The details are given in the file that is already with you.
3. Sales targets are set every year.....

As you can see from the examples, we use the passive in English if we don't want to draw attention to the person who is responsible for a particular action or process. In fact, the passive is

very useful when you want to emphasize the object to which the action or process is happening rather than the person carrying out the action. So the passive is **used to focus on the action**.

Check Your Progress 3

Rewrite each sentence in the passive.

- i. We sent the goods last week, so you should receive them soon.
The goods **were sent** last week, so you should receive them soon.
- ii. We would reduce costs if the workers come on time.
We would **be reduced** if the workers come on time.
- iii. We can master the new software easily in a couple of days
The new software **can be mastered** easily in a couple of days.
- iv. The customer should receive the consignment by Monday.
The consignment **should be received** by Monday.
- v. According to a recent report the group is making similar investments in the USA.
Similar investments **are being made** in the USA according to a recent report.
- vi. We enclose the payment together with our order.
The payment **is enclosed** together with our order.
- vii. We will produce the body of the car at our Rampur factory.
The body of the car **will be produced** at our Rampur factory.
- viii. The space now seems adequate; they have enlarged the premises since my last visit.
The premises **have been enlarged** since my last visit.
- ix. Large companies dominate the economies in many countries.
The economies **are dominated** by large companies in many countries.
- x. Using better-trained staff can increase productivity.
Productivity **can be increased** by using better-trained staff.

7.6 SUMMARY

The main points of this unit are as follows:

- Minutes are written records of the proceedings of a meeting. They are useful as records of decisions, major discussion points, assignment of responsibilities, and for general informative purposes.
- To ensure correctness of minutes, they are taken on record only after approved by the body at its next meeting.
- Minutes are prepared from notes taken at the meeting. Hence note-taking is an important skill for the minute writer.
- Note-taking is different from note-making.
- The first important component of the note-taking skill is active listening. Active listening consists in being able to figure out the structure of main and subordinate points in a speaker's presentation and to establish connections between the different points the speaker makes.
- Note-taking is confined only to major points. A good note-taker knows when to start taking notes so that s/he does not miss anything important and does not end up with a collection of only inessential points.
- A good note-taker makes use of abbreviations, symbols and coded language to keep pace with the speaker.

- Only a person thoroughly familiar with the subject matter of the discussions can make a good note-taker.
- In converting the notes into minutes the minute-taker has to keep in mind (a) the format of the minutes and (b) the language and style of the minutes.
- The format of the minutes includes: Heading; Member Present; Chairperson; In Attendance; Apologies for Absence; Confirmation of Previous Minutes; Matters Arising; Items for discussion; Action Para; Any Other Business; Date of Next Meeting.
- The language of minutes is precise and free from ambiguity; it mostly uses constructions suitable for expression of collective rather than individual responsibility; it makes points in a concise fashion. The style is formal and impersonal.
- Among the grammatical features, which characterize the language of minutes, are the simple past tense, the passive voice and the subjunctive mood.
- The vocabulary of minutes tends to be formal, but now there is a general trend towards informality.
- Layout is also important in minutes. Itemizing and paragraphing increases the readability of minutes.

7.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Hodgson, P. & Hodgson, J. (1993) *Effective Meetings*, London: Century Business.
2. Mack, A. (1970/1989) *The Language of Business*, London: BBC.
3. Rai, U. & Rai, S.M. (1989/1992) *Business Communication*, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House.

7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress - 1

1. i. (a) In case of any future dispute about the decisions of the committee we can refer to the minutes.
(b) If there arises any doubt about which action was assigned to whom, we can remove the doubt by referring to the minutes.
(c) People who were not present at the meeting (including non-members) who need to know what went on at the meeting can refer to the minutes.

- ii. The secretary of the organization
- iii. The two stages are (1) Note-taking at the meeting and (2) Conversion of the notes into minutes afterwards.
- iv. We take notes of a speech; we make notes from a written text.
- v. There are three components: the active listening ability; familiarity with the subject matter; the ability to select key words and phrases and use informal codes and abbreviations.

- 2. The following notes are only suggestive. Since notes are personal to the note-taker, your notes may differ from these, but the minutes should not.

Minutes confirmed

Item 1: Expts. To SE Asia

M: fall 3rd Yr running

Reasons beyond control: Loss of price adv. Due to

- 1. *Growing local comp.*
- 2. *Rising wages at home*
- 3. *Steep tax rate (may be cut in next budg.)*

Urgent c-measures ne'ssary to retain price adv. (Re. Bagchi) vis-à-vis local units.

- better tech.? No. Already the best.
- Lower wage adv.? Neutral. By transpt. costs
- Tax rate: 80% vs. 15-25% in SEA
- 6 new units starting in SEA in 3 yrs

.: expts. To SEA may stop then.

B: Relief at home not likely. .: Think bold

Take adv of

- SEA open policy
- SEA low tax rate

SHIFT ONE PLANT TO SEA

- initial cost comp. (local plants US imported)
- higher rated capacity .: quicker rec. of cost

Check Your Progress 2

1. a. **Matters Arising:** This section, which occurs after the section on **Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**, provides information about any important comments,

announcements or decisions made relating to matters contained in the minutes of the last meeting.

- b. **In Attendance:** In this section, names of those persons attending the meeting are recorded who are not regular members of the body but who are present by invitation to give the body specialist assistance.
 - c. **Apologies for Absence:** In this section are recorded names of those members who were unable to attend the meeting and had sent in their apologies to the Secretary.
 - d. **AOB (Any other Business):** In this section, we record the minutes of any matter(s) discussed under the item of the same title in the agenda. Under this item of the agenda, the Chairperson can permit discussion on any matter not included in the agenda.
2. Only the minutes of the main item are given below:

Item 1. Exports to South East Asia

Mr. Mahajan reported that sales to S.E. Asia had declined for the third year running. He identified three reasons for this decline:

1. Growing competition from local manufacturers
2. Rising wages at home
3. The high tax rate at home

Because of the last two factors the price advantage enjoyed by the company so far had been seriously eroded. All the three factors were beyond the company's control. Some relief could be expected in the next budget when the government is expected to cut the tax rate. Mr. Mahajan however agreed with Mr. Bagchi that the company could not wait for the budget and must initiate counter-measures urgently to retain the price advantage vis-à-vis local manufacturers. No measures were immediately apparent, as

1. there was no scope for improvement in technology since the best technology was already being used
2. the limited advantage of lower wages was neutralized by transportation costs
3. the home tax rate was 80% as against 15-25% local rate

Mr. Mahajan pointed out that six new plants were going to be commissioned in S.E. Asia in the next 3 years. When ready, our exports may stop completely.

Mr. Bagchi warned the Board not to expect any relief at home and think bold. He was in favour of taking advantage of the open policies and low tax rates of the South East Asian countries and shifting one of our plants there. He pointed out that the initial cost would be less than the US-imported local plants, and, because of the higher rated capacity of our plants, would be recovered more quickly.

3. (a) **Resolved** that a subcommittee be appointed to suggest measures.....
- (b) **Resolved** that Dr. Lekh Raj and Mrs. S. Lamba be appointed members of the Board of Directors of Mahima Plastics Ltd.

- (c) **Resolved** that the Secretary be authorized to conduct negotiations with.....
4. (a) Ms. Narain attributed the fall in sales in the northern states to ineffective agents and wanted them to be changed immediately. Manager (Sales) however disagreed and argued that
- established agents were very hard to find
 - changing agents disturbs the market
 - there can be no guarantee that the new agents would be any better
- (b) The Chairperson stressed the need for urgent action in the north. The Manager pointed out that he was trying to re-organise the sales network in the north and expected good results when the reorganization work had been completed. In Punjab and H.P. This work had been completed and sales had already improved.
- (c) Before giving his final consent to the takeover, HL wanted a guarantee that no worker would be dismissed. OL said that such a guarantee could not be given as, following modernization of manufacturing, redundancies were bound to arise. On this, HL expressed the fear that court action by workers could stall the takeover, but OL assured that a reasonable deal would be worked out for workers who are made redundant.

Check Your Progress 3

- The costs **would be reduced** if the workers come on time.
- The new software can be mastered easily in a couple of days.
- The consignment is likely to be received by the customer by Monday.
- Similar investments are being made in the USA according to a recent report.
- The payment along with our order is enclosed.
- The body of our car will be produced at our Rampur factory.
- The space now seems adequate since the premises have been enlarged since my last visit.
- The economies are dominated by large companies in my countries.
- Productivity can be increased by using better trained staff.

UNIT 8 PRESENTATION SKILLS-I

Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
 - 8.1 Objectives
 - 8.2 Reading: Presentation Skills
 - 8.3 Grammar: Verbs often Required in Presentations
 - 8.4 Language Focus
 - 8.5 Listening: Importance of Body Language in Presentations
 - 8.6 Speaking: Preparing an Outline of a Presentation
 - 8.7 Pronunciation
 - 8.8 Summary
 - 8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
-

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Presentations are frequently used in business organizations and educational institutions for communicating ideas and information to a group. In this Unit you will learn how to make effective presentations. You will learn

- how to prepare for presentations
- hints on effective delivery
- preparing outlines of presentations
- use of a variety of presentation verbs
- use of signaling, signposting and listing techniques
- the importance of body language in presentations

8.1 WARM UP

When you give a presentation, just as important as **what** you say, knowing your **audience** are both considerations. Here are some of Can you add some more to the



how you deliver the information is Knowing your **subject** well and very important. But there are other them. What is your opinion on these? list?

| | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Body language voice | notes visual aids | humour | language length | confidence speed |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|

8.2 READING: PRESENTATION SKILLS

Presentation skills are absolutely essential in almost all work areas. In the business world presentations are made to clients, prospective buyers, business associates, seniors, colleagues and subordinates. These days presentations have also become part of the recruitment process. In order to be effective and impressive in your presentations you need to **prepare** the presentation before you actually **deliver** it. Even experts in communication need to plan and prepare their presentations in advance.

Check Your Progress 1

Look at these tips on Presentation skills and decide whether you would put them in **Preparation** or **Delivery**.

- i) If you are not enthusiastic about what you say you cannot expect to generate interest amongst the audience; Adapt to response – don't stick to your plan necessarily. If you find that it is not working, alter it to adapt to the audience
- ii) Check room, seating, acoustics, OHT or Computer (depending on what you decide to use).
- iii) Vary your tone and pitch. Ensure proper modulation. Everything should not be said with equal amount of stress. Certain things need to be emphasized more than others.
- iv) Memorize your introduction. This will help you to sound confident and in control.
- v) Try to involve the audience and respond to their reactions
- vi) Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech
- vii) Never talk down or up to your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.
- viii) Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in.....before you move on.
- ix) Don't put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead projector and read them out.
- x) When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in.
- xi) Welcome questions from your audience. When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.
- xii) Know the size and the knowledge level of your audience. You must not tell them what they already know.
- xiii) Be clear about the purpose of your presentation – is it to inform or to persuade.
- xiv) Key ideas should be emphasized – you must ensure that the importance of your key points is not lost because of over emphasis on sub points
- xv) Don't cram – if you have a lot of information to give you could consider giving some of it through handouts rather than cram all of it into your presentation.
- xvi) You must present an outline in the beginning of your presentation so that your audience knows how your presentation is structured. This should be well prepared in advance.
- xvii) Rehearse your presentation in order to time it, and to become familiar with names and figures as well as any complex information you need to give to the audience.
- xviii) Pay attention to your body language: eye contact; gestures; posture; movement.

| Preparation | Delivery |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| ii) Check room, seating etc. | i) Be enthusiastic |

Now check your chart with the Answer key.

8.3 GRAMMAR: VERBS OFTEN REQUIRED IN PRESENTATIONS

Outlining Your Presentation

It is important to present an outline of your presentation at the very beginning. This helps the audience to understand how you have structured your presentation. A presentation will be much clearer to the audience if the structure is clearly signaled.

The use of a variety of **presentation verbs** can help you to present the outline clearly, specifically and effectively.

Check Your Progress 2

Here are some verbs often required in presentations. Can you complete the outlines of the presentations below by inserting suitable verbs from the box? You may need to use some of these twice.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| talking | discuss | outline | filling | sharing | bring |
| highlight | | tell | report | start | |

- i) Good morning everyone. I am Aditya Sen. This morning I am going to be _____ to you about the Adult Education project taken up by our Institution. So I'll begin by _____ you in on the background of the project and then _____ you up to date on the progress of the project. I'll go on to _____ what I see as the main achievements of the project.

Next I will _____ our plans for further extension of the project. In the end I will _____ you how you can become a part of this project. Please feel free to interrupt me anytime with any questions you might want to ask.

- ii) Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am here to _____ on the results of the market study of our new product in the western zone. I will begin with Mumbai which is our main domestic market in the west. I will then go on to Jaipur and Ahmedabad in that order.

After _____ with you information on the data collected from these cities, I will _____ in depth the implications of this report. My presentation will be followed by an open discussion on our performance in the western zone.

Here are some more ways of signaling the structure of your presentation. Pay particular attention to the verbs in bold.

Introduction

Greeting Good morning ladies & gentlemen / everyone.....

Topic I'd like to **talk** to you about.....

I'd like to **say** a few words about.....

I'm here to **make** a presentation on.....

This morning I'm going to be **talking** to you about / telling you about / **showing** you / **reporting** / taking a look at.....

Outline I'll be **dealing** with three areas.

I've divided my talk into.....

So I'll start off by **filling** you in on the background to / **bringing** you up-to-date on / **giving** you an overview of/ **making** a few observations about / outlining..... And then I'll go on to **discuss** in more depth / **highlight** what I see as the main / **make** detailed recommendations regarding.....

I will conclude with..... / **I will end** my presentation with..... /

At the end of my presentation **I will invite** you to ask me any questions that you may have.

Check Your Progress 3

Join the words in A with the phrases in B to make complete sense:

- | A | B |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| i. reporting | a. you in |
| ii. filling | b. you up to date |
| iii. bringing | c. in more depth |
| iv. discuss | d. the implications of |
| v. talking | e. a look at |
| vi. taking | f. on the results of |
| vii. understanding | g. you through |

8.4 LANGUAGE FOCUS

Signposting

Signposts help to guide the audience through a presentation. Look at the phrases given below. These will help you to guide your audience through a presentation.

*to move on
to expand on
to digress
to illustrate*

*to go back
to recap
to conclude*

*to summarize
to turn to
to elaborate on*

Check Your Progress 4

Choose one of the signpost expressions from above for the following situations:

- | | | |
|-------|---|---------|
| i. | When you want to make your next point | To..... |
| ii. | When you want to change direction | To..... |
| iii. | When you want to refer to an earlier point | To..... |
| iv. | When you want to repeat the main points | To..... |
| v. | When you want to give a wider perspective | To..... |
| vi. | When you want to give an example | To..... |
| vii. | When you want to do a deeper analysis | To..... |
| viii. | When you just want to give the basic points | To..... |
| ix. | When you want to deviate from your plan | To..... |
| x. | When you want to finish your talk | To..... |

More Signposting

Here are some more helpful signposts which you could use in the middle stage of your presentations.

Showing steps

- First of all let's look at.....
Then.....
Next.....
Lastly.....

Visuals too are included in the middle of a presentation. In the next section we discuss ways to present them:

Using Visuals

Visuals like bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, photographs, charts, PowerPoint slides are commonly used in presentations to present statistical information or to make comparisons. These will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

Introducing a visual

- I'd like to show you.....
Have a look at this.....
This graph shows / represents.....
Here we can see.....
Let's look at this.....
As you can see in this graph / table.....

Comparisons

- This compares *x* with *y*
Let's compare the.....
Here you see a comparison between.....

Conclusion

And here is some language input for the end of your presentation.

Closing

Finally, to sum up.....
I'd like to sum up now.....
That concludes my presentation.
To conclude.....

Questions / Discussion

At the end of a presentation you are required to invite the audience to ask any questions that they may like to ask. Alternatively you could also permit them to ask questions whenever they want in the course of your presentation. This has to be told to them in the very beginning.

Inviting questions

Are there any questions?
If there are any questions I'll be glad to try to answer them.
I'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.
Now we could have a discussion on.....

Check Your Progress 5

Cross out the words in italics which are not suitable in these extracts from presentations:

- i) I would like to begin with *a preview / an introduction / an outline* of the main points of my talk.
- ii) The first thing I'll be *saying / telling / talking* about is why we need to change our pay policy.
- iii) I will then go on to *inform / share / confide* with you some of the viewpoints of our senior executives.
- iv) If we could just *draw / focus / attract* our attention on the major benefits of the scheme.
- v) I would like to *inform / state / assure* at the very beginning that this is just a proposal and not a decision.
- vi) But we do need to seriously *ask / address / answer* the question of how we are going to deal with the problem.
- vii) I will be glad to *call / answer / invite* any questions that you may have at the end of the presentation.
- viii) Please feel free to *interrupt / ask / enquire* me with any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.

8.5 LISTENING: IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN PRESENTATIONS

You will now hear some tips on the importance of Body Language in Presentations. Listen to the audio and match the two columns:

Check Your Progress 6

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Slouching | shows that you are friendly & approachable |
| eye contact | helps you to be more clear and effective |
| Smile | make for better understanding |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Gestures | shows disinterest |
| Posture | enhances the comfort level of the audience |
| Proximity | helps counter boredom |
| variation in voice | signals interest in others |

Can you explain what the speaker means by:

- i) smiling is contagious
- ii) invading other's space.

Consult the Answer Key and compare your answer.

- A. Listen to the beginning of a presentation on the introduction of a new course in Cinematics. Do you think it is a good introduction?
- B. Now listen to the beginning of another presentation on the same topic. Which one is better and why?

Compare your analysis with the one given in the Answer key.

8.6 SPEAKING: PREPARING AN OUTLINE OF A PRESENTATION

Now prepare an outline of a presentation on any one of these topics and present it before the mirror or before your friends. If possible you can record the presentation and then listen to it. You can now listen to the tape script and compare your outline with the sample tape script.

1. Your town / city
2. Television as a source of information and entertainment
3. Your favourite book / magazine

Now have a look at two sample outlines given in the Answer key.

8.7 PRONUNCIATION

Here are some words that are commonly used for presentations. Mark the stressed syllable in these words and speak them out aloud. The first is done for you as example. Now listen to the tape and check your pronunciation. You may also refer to a good dictionary for the correct stressed syllable.

1. presen'tation
2. recommendation
3. expansion

4. supervision
5. efficient
6. sufficient
7. strategic
8. systematic
9. analytical
10. economical
11. typical
12. experience
13. inconvenience
14. potential
15. commercial
16. individual
17. essential
18. gradual
19. actual
20. responsibility
21. incredible
22. impossible
23. diversify
24. obvious
25. spontaneous

8.8 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have introduced you to Presentation Skills in terms of -

- how to prepare for presentations
- how to deliver effective presentations
- some linguistic skills for introducing a presentation, signposting, using visuals and concluding.

We have also dwelt on Body language, which is very important when making a Presentation. All these skills are discussed in greater detail in the next unit.

8.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

Preparation

ii), iv), ix), xii), xiii), xv), xvi), xvii).

Delivery

i), iii), v), vi), vii), viii), x), xi), xiv), xviii)

Check Your Progress 2

The answers are given in **bold print**.

1. Good morning everyone. I am Aditya Sen. This morning I am going to be **talking** to you about the Adult Education project taken up by our Institution. So I'll begin by **filling** you in on the background of the project and then I'll **bring** you up to date on the progress of the project. I'll go on to **highlight** what I see as the main achievements of the project.

Next I will **outline** our plans for further extension of the project. In the end I will **tell** you how you can become a part of this project. Please feel free to interrupt me anytime with any questions you might want to ask.

2. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am here to **report** on the results of the market study of our new product in the western zone. I will **begin** with Mumbai which is our main domestic market in the west. I will then go on to Jaipur and Ahmedabad in that order.

After **sharing** with you information on the data collected from these cities, I will **discuss** in depth the implications of this report. My presentation will be followed by an open discussion on our performance in the western zone.

Check Your Progress 3

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| i. reporting | f. on the results of |
| ii. filling | a. you in |
| iii. bringing | b. you up to date |
| iv. discuss | c. in more depth |
| v. talking | g. you through |
| vi. taking | e. a look at |
| vii. understanding | d. the implications of |

Check Your Progress 4

Signpost expressions:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| i. When you want to make your next point | To move on to. |
| ii. When you want to change direction | To turn to |
| iii. When you want to refer to an earlier point | To go back to |
| iv. When you want to recall the main points | To recap |
| v. When you want to give a wider perspective | To expand on |
| vi. When you want to give an example | To illustrate |
| vii. When you want to do a deeper analysis | To elaborate on |
| viii. When you just want to give the basic points once again | To summarize |
| ix. When you want to deviate from your plan | To digress |
| x. When you want to finish your talk | To conclude |

Check Your Progress 5

The suitable options are underlined for you.

- i. I would like to begin with a preview / an introduction / an outline of the main points of my talk.
- ii. The first thing I'll be saying / telling / talking about is why we need to change our pay policy.
- iii. I will then go on to inform / share / confide with you some of the viewpoints of our senior executives.
- iv. If we could just draw / focus / attract our attention on the major benefits of the scheme.
- v. I would like to inform / state / assure at the very beginning that this is just a proposal and not a decision.
- vi. But we do need to seriously ask / address / answer the question of how we are going to deal with the problem.
- vii. I will be glad to call / answer / invite any questions that you may have at the end of the presentation.
- viii. Please feel free to interrupt / ask / enquire me with any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.

Listening Tape script

The Body

Your body communicates different impressions to the audience. People not only listen to you, they also watch you. Slouching tells them you are indifferent or you do not care...even though you might care a great deal! On the other hand, displaying good posture tells your audience that you know what you are doing and you care deeply about it. Also, a good posture helps you to speak more clearly and effectively.

Now let us turn to eye contact. This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. Speakers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.

Facial expressions are equally important. Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So, if you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm, and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and others will react favorably. They will be more comfortable around you and will want to listen to you more.

If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring and stiff. A lively speaking style captures attention, makes the material more interesting, and facilitates understanding.

Attention to posture and body orientation are essential. You communicate numerous messages by the way you talk and move. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates that you are approachable, receptive, and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when you and your audience face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.

Now what about the space we keep from the audience? Notions of proximity vary with cultures. Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading other's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and gaze aversion. Typically, in large rooms, space invasion is not a problem. In most instances there is too much distance. To counteract this, move around the room to increase

interaction with your audience. Increasing the proximity enables you to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for others to speak.

One of the major criticisms of speakers is that they speak in a monotone voice. Listeners perceive this type of speaker as boring and dull. People report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to those who have not learned to modulate their voices.

Adopted from Source: www.nwlink.com

Check Your Progress 6

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| slouching | shows disinterest |
| eye contact | interest in others |
| smile | shows that you are friendly & approachable |
| gestures | make for better understanding |
| posture | helps you to be more clear and effective |
| the right proximity | enhances the comfort level of the audience |
| variation in voice | helps counter boredom |

i. smiling is contagious

When you smile at somebody, chances are that he / she will smile back at you. A smile spreads happiness around you as it makes others smile in response.

ii. invading other's space

Getting so close to somebody that he /she becomes uncomfortable because of your nearness and feels that his / her privacy is being invaded.

Tape scripts

- A. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm glad you are here to listen to me. I'd like to talk to you about our new course in Cinematics. I'm sure you will find the course relevant and interesting. It is very much in demand these days and I'm here to tell you all about it – who can join it and what you can do after a course like this. There are lots of places you can work in after learning Cinematics, but of course I won't have time enough to tell you about all of them. You can also ask me questions about the course if you want.
- B. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being here. This morning I'm going to be talking to you about a new course we have launched in Cinematics.

I'll begin by explaining what Cinematics is. I will then go on to highlight the relevance and scope of Cinematics. Next I will outline the kind of skills that the course could help you to develop. I will conclude by filling you in on information about eligibility and requirements for the course.

You are free to ask me any questions you may have at the end of my presentation.

Answer

The second outline is better because it has a clear structure. The speaker states exactly the order in which he / she will be dealing with the topic, making appropriate use of presentation verbs and connectives. He/she also states his/her policy on questions – the speaker would not like to be disturbed with questions during the course of the presentation and this is made clear at the very beginning.

Speaking

Television as a source of information and entertainment

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. This morning I'm here to talk about the importance of television as a source of information and entertainment. I will begin my talk with giving an overview of the popularity of television as a means of communication.

I will then go on to outline the areas in which it provides invaluable information. Next I will emphasize upon the importance of television as a popular and affordable source of entertainment for all age groups.

My presentation will last for 10 minutes. I will be glad to answer any questions that you may have at the end of my presentation.

My Favourite Magazine

Hello friends. I'd like to say a few words about My Favourite Magazine. I've divided my talk into three parts. Firstly, I will begin by telling you which is my favourite magazine. Secondly, I will highlight the main features of the magazine. In the end I will tell you why I prefer this magazine to other magazines. I will invite you to ask me any questions you may have at the end of my talk.

Note: The second outline is more informal than the first one. This may be used when you make a presentation before an audience where you do not need to be too formal.

Pronunciation – Tape Script

1. presen'tation
2. recommen'dation
3. ex'pansion
4. super'vision
5. e'fficient
6. su'fficient
7. stra'tegic
8. syste'matic
9. ana'lytical
10. eco'nomical
11. 'typical
12. ex'perience
13. incon'venience

14. po'tential
15. co'mmercial
16. indi'vidual
17. 'esential
18. 'gradual
19. 'actual
20. responsi'bility
21. in'credible
22. im'possible
23. di'versify
24. 'obvious
25. spon'taneous