

## Unit 6

## Business Writing

### Structure:

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### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt to write paragraphs with short and lucid sentences. The flow of ideas should be easy and connected with linkers. This also holds well with the letter writing skills that you will be learning in this unit. To make your writing task easy, you should learn to put yourself in the shoes of the reader of your letter. When writing a letter or report, think of your readers' likely response to the contents, the style and the tone. If your readers are laymen, the technical jargon that you use may not be understood at all. At the same time, if the readers are experts who understand technical language, you should not go on explaining the terms in detail. While concentrating on the style of writing, use formal tone for the business letter and try not to impress your readers with complicated words. The simpler you write, the better it is understood. Or it may just not serve the purpose and land unread in the trash bin. Now we don't want that to happen, do we?!

### Objectives:

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the principles and structure of a business letter
- distinguish between letters and use effective language and style for different letters.

- write an effective covering letter to apply for a job.
- draft an effectual resume.
- write a fax message, telegram and e-mail.

## 6.2 Business Letter Writing

When you enter any profession, you will come across one task that you have to perform which is of utmost importance, writing letters as a part of your routine work. You will be writing letters to other organizations and institutions, customers, clients, suppliers, government officers, credit agencies, employees etc. These letters are commonly called 'business letters.' Business letters are usually written to inform readers of specific information. However, you might also write a business letter to persuade others to take action or to propose your ideas. Business letters can be challenging to write, because you have to consider how to keep your readers' attention. This is particularly the case if your readers receive large numbers of mail and have little time to read.

Writing business letters is like writing any other document: First you must analyze your audience and determine your purpose. Then you gather information, create an outline, write a draft, and revise it. The key to writing business letters is to get to the point as quickly as possible and to present your information clearly. While doing this you should always bear in mind the 'audience' of your letter, the person who is going to read your letter. So your letter should appeal to the reader. Ask yourself "How would I react if I received this letter?" The answer to this question will help you to decide about editing your letter.

### 6.2.1 Principles of writing letters

We have discussed the purpose of writing business letters. Now let us learn how to write them efficiently; we shall find out the principles that should be followed to make our letters effective.

1. Courtesy and Consideration: To build a good rapport with business acquaintances, we should be courteous and considerate. Courtesy is like the oil which removes the friction, it makes life smooth and helps win friends. It softens the sting of an unpleasant piece of information, creates goodwill, and produces a favourable response. Look at the

following sentences that help you word your business letter in a polite manner.

- Thank you very much for your letter of / dated ...
  - We are glad to note that you are now in a position to pay our bill.
  - We appreciate your writing to us so promptly.
  - We regret to inform you that we cannot meet your order immediately.
  - We are sorry that you did not receive your order in time.
2. **Conciseness:** While writing a business letter it is important that your letter be concise and direct. Avoid verbose language and long winded sentences to state simple matters. In the present times, people are very busy and will be easily irritated to read unnecessarily lengthy letters. So you should focus directly on the message to be told.
3. **Clarity and Precision:** Whenever you write a letter, be clear about what you want to say and say it clearly. Use short, simple words and language to relate whatever you want to tell in the letter. Use concrete words – two words in English will have similar meaning – in such cases, use the word which is commonly understood. E.g.: if you use the word 'house' and it conveys the meaning that you intend, don't use the word 'residence', which will make the message more complicated. Avoid long winded sentences (running into five lines and more). Spare your reader the tedious task of understanding your letter and try to make smaller sentences. To make your letter clear, break it into different paragraphs when you have to discuss more than one main point. Finally, you have to understand that writing a good business letter involves a lot of practice, which will gradually enable you to be an effective writer.

### 6.2.3 Structure of a business letter

We have discussed in detail about the language that you should adopt while writing a letter. Now, let us come to the arrangement of a business letter. To make your letter effective, remember that your presentation of the letter also has to be effective. Usually, the letter is drafted in two styles – Blocked and Semi Blocked.

**Blocked** – Every line in this style begins flush with the left hand margin. Paragraphs are differentiated by leaving a blank space in between them.

**Semi blocked** – The first line of each paragraph is indented in this style of writing letters.

You can follow any one style of writing a business letter.

The business letter contains the following elements:

1. Heading: Many organizations use their letter head for writing business letters. This covers one fifth of the total space of the page. The name and address of the organization is centred at the top and other information like the telephone numbers, telegraphic address, etc. are divided in the margin space.
2. Date: This is very important as it might act as a proof that you wrote on a particular date. Type the date two spaces below the last line of the heading at the left hand margin of the letter. E.g.: Remember to give the name of the month. Avoid the form 10/9/2005. In Britain it means 10<sup>th</sup> of September(first date and then month is written) whereas in USA, people understand it as 9<sup>th</sup> of October(first month and then date is written). E.g.: 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1995; 14<sup>th</sup> July 1995; 14 July 1995; July 14<sup>th</sup> 1995, July 14, 1995.
3. Reference: The advantage of writing a reference is that it helps to trace the letter at a later date. Writing reference number is of two types: one indicates the reference number that you allot for the letter that you write; the other indicates the correspondent's previous letter to which you are replying now. This is placed on the left hand side, two lines after the salutation. However, some prefer to write it in the body of the letter. E.g., With reference to your letter no.,..... dated .... **Or** Thank you for your letter no. ....
4. Inside Address: The complete address of the person whom you are addressing should be written. You should place it two line-space after the date. Do not abbreviate or spell wrongly the name of the person. Add Mr before the name of a man, Miss before the name of a woman if she is unmarried, Mrs if she is married. Nowadays, the trend is towards writing Ms before a woman's name irrespective of her marital status. If the lady whom you are addressing to has a special title, such as Dr or Professor, you can mention the titles and put Ms inside the brackets after the title E.g.: Dr (Ms) Anita McGrath
5. Salutation: This is the vital part of the letter which is as good as wishing the person. It is important that you address the name of the person if you know it. E.g.: Dear Mr Blackwell. You may use Dear Sir/

Sirs or Dear Madam only if you do not know the name of the person. In government departments, letters that are addressed by name is known as 'demi-official letters.' They are written to draw the attention of the concerned officer so that prompt action is taken. Sales and circulars are addressed as 'Dear Customer', 'Dear Reader', 'Dear Subscriber' etc. Salutation is written two line space after the last line of the address.

6. **Subject:** This indicates to the reader of the letter what the letter is about. It saves the time of the reader. The subject of the letter is written two line-spaces after the salutation.
7. **Body:** This contains the text of the letter that you write. You should organize the body of the letter into paragraphs depending upon the matter of your communication. In the opening paragraph, indicate reference to any previously corresponded letters. If it is the first letter, then write the intention of writing the letter. The second paragraph should contain the main message and the following paragraphs, further details if any. Finally, while concluding, you should clearly state any action that you would take or expect the reader to take.
8. **Conclusion:** The conclusion is also known as 'complimentary close.' You should always end the business letter with a firm or positive note. Don't be vague in your closings such as, 'Thanking you ...' 'Hoping to hear from you' etc. The close should agree with the salutation that you have written. The following examples will help you decide the correct conclusion.

Salutation	Conclusion
Dear Mr. Rahul (address by name)	Yours sincerely
Dear Sir / Dear Madam /Sir	Yours faithfully / Yours obediently / Yours respectfully / Yours truly
Dear Member / Customer / Subscriber	Yours sincerely

**Note:** Yours obediently is written by a student when he addresses his teacher. Yours respectfully is written if you are addressing a high dignitary (even in business correspondence). Do not put apostrophe after 'r' in the word 'yours'.

9. **Signature:** You should place your signature below the complimentary close. Four line spaces are left after the complimentary close to write your name in full. This space is meant for your signature. Do not write any title (Mr Ms Mrs) before the name. However, a woman may put a title after the name in brackets. E.g.: Kiran (Mrs). Beneath the name you may specify your position – CEO, Manager, etc.
10. **Enclosure:** If you have to enclose any documents along with the letter, you must mention it. The word in abbreviated form encl. is typed two line space below the name/ position that you had specified indicated.

Given below is a sample of business letter. For other samples refer to the appendix.

***(Letter of booking a room in the Hotel for a Guest)***

**Manipal University of Jaipur  
of Health, Medical & Technological Sciences  
Directorate of Distance Education  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Syndicate House, Manipal 576104**

2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2009

Mr. Rahul Srivastava  
Front Office Manager  
Valley View  
Manipal – 576104

Dear Mr. Srivastava

**Sub: Booking of single room (a/c) for 25<sup>th</sup> December**

This letter is to confirm our recent telephone conversation regarding Mr. Kishan Majumdar's stay at your hotel, next week, in connection with the 'The New Media & Freedom of Speech' symposium organized by us. All charges are to be directed to me at the address on our letterhead.

Mr. Majumdar will arrive at the Mangalore airport on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009. He should be checking in around 12.30p.m.

The rate for his room will be Rs.3200 plus tax per day. He will probably be staying for 2 days.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours sincerely

( XXX )  
Symposium Convenor

**Self Assessment Questions**

1. While writing letters, avoid verbose language and long winded sentences to state simple matters. (True/False)
2. While writing letters, you should write as you wish. (True/False)
3. Simple words should be used while writing letters. (True/False)
4. Courtesy should be of prime importance while writing business letters. (True/False)

**6.3 Types of Business Letter**

Letters have to be drafted differently for different occasions. The tone, language and style vary based on the circumstance, which makes you write the letter. The different letters are complaint letter, apology letter and, covering letter for job application. In this section, we shall learn how to write complaint and apology letters. 'Covering letter' has been explained in section 6.4.

**Complaint letter:** Writing a 'complaint letter' is often an undesirable task, but if it is done well, the end result can be very rewarding. Complaint letters can be used for the purpose of having products replaced or money refunded, for changing company policy or government legislation, for influencing the media, and so forth. Often a complaint letter is more effective than a simple phone call or e-mail message. Furthermore, in many cases, the formality of a complaint letter can add seriousness to the situation that will bring results. When writing your complaint letter, identify a definite purpose and outcome that you want to achieve, and indicate those ideas clearly in your letter.

***Points to keep in mind while writing complaint letters***

- Be sure that the complaint you are making is legitimate. Check out the facts of your complaint.
- Let your language be diplomatic. Avoid being sarcastic, angry or threatening even if your complaint is genuine. Remember that the person to whom you address your letter may not, after all be the person responsible for the problem.
- Let your letter be concise and limit it to one page if possible. However, include important dates or places (for example, when and where you bought the product or received the service), and include any additional

relevant information you can (such as the product number or type of service).

- If you have to enclose any documents do so but remember to send only the photocopy and keep the originals with you. Also keep a copy of your complaint letter for your records.

**Apology letter:** An effective apology letter is an important part of the business correspondence that would make your life in work place easy. To err is human, so instead of dwelling on the mistake committed, it is better to act quickly in order to resolve the problem.

***Points to keep in mind while writing apology letters***

- While writing an apology letter, concentrate on the rectification of the error committed than on the problem that you have caused the receiving person.
- If possible along with the apology, state any compensation that you can give to the person who has suffered the damage.
- Take full responsibility on the problem caused.
- Don't be dramatic while apologizing. Your words should express your feelings clearly and simply. The tone of your letter should be considerate and respectful.

## **6.4 Job Application**

Advancement in the career front is the most desired aspect of an individual's life. Writing a job application is the first step towards such goal. A job application is nothing but a medium to sell your services. So it should show all qualities that are required by the buying agent i.e. the employer. Normally a job application contains two parts: a covering letter and a Resume. It is also known as Bio-data or Curriculum Vitae. We will learn in detail the method of drafting the covering letter and a Resume.

**i) Covering Letter:** This is the first paper that is read by a Personnel Manager, which suggests to him whether you are fit or not for the requirements of his company. The covering letter will have the following elements.

- The position you are applying for. You have to give the reference of the post that you have applied for. It is important to indicate where you came



across the advertisement of the job vacancy. Your opening paragraph should be very effective to attract the employer's interest in you.

- Your interest in the job. You should indicate your keenness to get the job.
- Your suitability for the job. Here you can write a brief paragraph about your experience and skills that make you fit for the job. Your most impressive details from the Resume may be included here.
- A statement of your availability for interview.
- Make sure you use good English and do the proof reading before you send the letter with the resume.

**Structure of the Letter:**

1. Address of the applicant and date: This is written on the top of the letter flush with the right margin. It may also be written on the left margin. The address is written first and after two line spaces the date is written. However, some may start with the date and then after two line spaces the address is written.
2. Salutation: Even if you know the name of the person whom you are addressing to, it is better to keep the salutation as 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Sirs.' If you know that you are writing to a lady, make it 'Dear Madam' This is typed two line spaces after the last line of the address written above.
3. Subject: It is better to write the subject, which contains the vacancy you are applying for. This is written immediately below the salutation. Make it bold if you are printing it, or you should underline it in the case of written application.
4. Body: We have already discussed how to write a covering letter. You may follow those hints while writing the job application. Leave two line space after writing the subject to start the body of the letter.
5. Complimentary Close: You can follow the rules given in the unit 'structure of business letter (5.2.3).' Leave four spaces to sign in your name after the complimentary close.
6. Signature: After your signature, don't forget to write your full name clearly below it.
7. Enclosures: This is written two line spaces after writing your name. Write clearly all the documents that you are enclosing with your covering letter.

Check out this sample covering letter, which may help you to make a start in writing impressive covering letters!

Smitha P  
Shri Vilas  
R.D. Road  
Jamshedpur.

May 1, 2009  
The Editor  
'News Today'  
Patna  
Bihar

Dear Sir,

**Subject: Application for the position of Sub Editor**

I am mailing in response to your advertisement in 'The Hindu', dated 29 April, 2009 for the position of Sub editor, in your esteemed Organisation. I have attached my bio data for your consideration

I have obtained my Masters in Journalism from the Manipal University of Jaipur and also a Diploma in Creative Writing from National College, New Delhi. I am working as a trainee from the last six months in The Business India, Ranchi.

I look forward to working with you on your new project.

Yours sincerely,



Smitha. P

## ii) Writing a Resume

When you apply for a job, you should always remember that your application is not the only one which is seen; but your aim is to see that you write a resume that makes you really stand out as a superior candidate for a job you are seeking. So, even if you face fierce competition, with a well written resume you should be invited to interview more often than many people more qualified than you. Such a resume needs conceptualization of

your accomplishments and experiences all into one document. Your focus should be on the requirements of the employer. Therefore, your resume should contain,

- Your aims, goals, work experiences, achievements, qualifications
- Your projects or researches if done.
- Your skill sets
- Your objectives
- References
- Your experience in the previous company
- Your strengths and weaknesses depending on what is the requirement of the job. Be careful while writing the weaknesses; they should appear as if in the long run they are, after all, your strengths!
- Your detailed contact information where the employer can reach you
- Any other information that you feel can be relevant for you to portray yourself to get the job based on your experience and qualification.

All these matters that are the requirements of the vacancy you are applying to should be written in a precise and concise manner. Remember that no employer has enough time to go through extensive and detailed resumes. So your resume should be easy to read and should impress the employer at the first glance.

**Structure of Resume (Ref.: Katharine Hansen)**

1. The 'one-page resume' rule is now outdated. Try to keep your resume very compact and to the minimum required pages. The language should be very official and not general.
2. Include and highlight all important words, so that they stand out and your resume gets recognized among others.
3. Avoid using the personal pronouns – I, You, Me.
4. List your job information in order of importance. In listing your jobs, what's generally most important is your title/position. So list in this preferred order: Title/position, name of employer, City/State of employer, dates of employment.
5. List your jobs in reverse chronological order. Your present job being the first, the previous being second and so on.

6. Education also follows the principle that you followed while listing jobs. Thus the preferred order for listing your education is: Masters, Graduation, Pre-University Exams.
7. Avoid mentioning the reasons for leaving previous job(s), names of former supervisors, specific street addresses or phone numbers of former employers, salary information, the title "Resume," or any information that could be perceived as controversial, such as religion, church affiliations, or political affiliations.
8. **Don't** list references right on your resume. References belong in a later stage of the job search. Provide them only when they are specifically requested.
9. Proof read carefully. Misspellings and typos are deadly on a resume. Grammatical and other mistakes are to be totally avoided since that shows the incompetence of the candidate.

### 6.5 Other Business Communications

We have already learnt certain methods that enable effective communication, such as writing different types of letters. We should now divert our attention to some other mediums of communication that enable the smooth functioning of an organisation. These include short message methods like fax, telegram and more modern style of communication through e-mails.

#### **Fax Message, Telegram and E-mail**

Writing smaller messages depend on the technical instruments that are used while sending the message. Hence, concentration should be on writing short messages. Avoid all words and phrases that do not add significantly to the message that you want to send. Brief reference to the context should be provided to make your message complete. So you may skip writing salutation, complimentary close, etc. But don't forget to include your name at the bottom. Fax and e-mail are used to send formal business letters. E-mail may also be used as informal medium of communication.

While composing a telegraphic message (telegram), only key words and phrases are used. Function words such as articles and prepositions should not be included. If essential, they may be used to a minimum. See the samples given below.

**1. Fax**

Fax from: Beacon Towers  
22 Alma Street  
Sampangi Park 575222  
Fax: 650 325 8723

Fax to: Sanjay Memon, Manasvi Inc.  
Fax no: 235 266 3122  
Date: 17 December 2001  
Subject: Remittance of draft for Registration of classes  
No. of pages including this one: 1  
From: Ashish Jain, Registration Manager

Refer to our telephonic conversation on 15 December. The bank draft for Rupees Seventeen thousand has not yet been received. Please send by return post or by courier.

Ashish Jain

**2. Telegram:**

Training Manager  
Beacon Consultants  
10, Janpath  
New Delhi – 110001

Sixty five copies of Registration form Books sent today by courier.

Buvan Patel  
Manager Logistics

Not to be telegraphed:  
Bhuvan Patel, Manager Logistics  
Accord Company Pvt. Ltd.  
24, Akashganga Marg  
Kolkatta – 432001

### 3. E-Mail

Previous	Next	Reply	Forward
<p>Date: 17 December 2006</p> <p>From: Bhuvan Patel, Accord Company Pvt. Ltd.</p> <p>To: Training Manager, Beacon Consultants</p> <p>CC: General Manager- Training, Beacon Consultants</p> <p>Subject: Despatch of Registration Form Books</p> <p>We have sent today 65 books of Registration Forms by courier. Sorry for the delay.</p> <p>Bhuvan Patel</p>			

#### Self Assessment Questions

5. \_\_\_\_ should not be provided in the resume; it should be provided only on request.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes in the resume shows the incompetence of the writer.
7. While composing \_\_\_\_\_, only key words and phrases are used.
8. While writing \_\_\_\_\_ letter, take full responsibility on the problem caused.

### 6.6 Summary

Writing effectively is an art that needs to be practiced to be perfect. The language used, structure and tone-all reflect the character of the person writing. It is the same with the writing of letters, be it a formal or informal letter. The letters written by you in any position of your career reveals the character of your organization. There are different circumstances that come across when a business letter is written. It may be a letter of booking a room, a complaint letter, an apology letter, business proposal, invitations, accepting the invitation or declining it, a covering letter for a job, a fax, press release, e-mail so on. Though there are many styles and structure of writing such letters, one should follow what is widely practised in the world of business. A successful business letter is one which is courteous, clear and concise. The readers' interest is of prime consideration while writing a letter. This would ensure quick transmission of message and evoke the desired response.

### 6.7 Terminal Questions

1. How can you be 'concise' while writing a business letter?
2. Why do you write 'reference' in a business letter?
3. Name some mediums that you would use to send small messages.

### 6.8 Answers

#### Self Assessment Questions

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. Reference
6. Grammatical
7. Telegraphic messages
8. Apology

#### Terminal Questions

1. Write short and simple sentences. Verbose language should be avoided.  
Focus directly on the message that needs to be informed.
2. With the help of reference, the letter can be traced at a later date.
3. Small messages can be sent through fax, email or telegram.

## REMEDIAL ENGLISH

### Sentence

A group of words that makes a complete sense or gives complete meaning is called a sentence. It expresses the thought of the person who speaks or writes the sentence. Traditionally, a sentence is considered as a largest grammatical unit. A sentence also consists of the choice of right words, proper arrangement of those words according to the prescribed grammatical rules. It is also imperative that a sentence has a verb in it to consider it as a sentence.

### Kinds of Sentences

From the point of view of expression of thoughts, the sentences are divided into four kinds.

1. **Declarative Sentences:** Look at the sentences below.

Tsunami hit the southeast coast of India.

Press is considered the fourth pillar of democracy.

They state or assert certain facts. So they are called declarative sentences. A declarative sentence makes a statement. It begins with a capital letter and ends with a period (full stop).

2. **Interrogative Sentences:** Look at the following examples: -

Where are you going?

Whom did Ajith meet last night?

Notice the question marks in the end of the sentence. This suggests that the sentences are asking questions. Such types of sentences that ask questions are called Interrogative sentences.

3. **Exclamatory Sentences:** Now, look at the sentences that follow-

Wow, what a win that was!

How tragic his life is!

The sentences in the example express strong feelings either of happiness or sadness. The feelings are also sudden. Also notice the exclamatory mark at the end of the sentences. Such sentences are called Exclamatory sentences.

4. **Imperative sentences:** Finally, read the sentences given below.

Go out of the class

Call the electrician, please

May the Lord bless.

The first sentence is an order, the second, a request and the third is a wish. We use the above sentences when we are talking directly to someone. Hence the subject (you) is omitted because it is understood in the meaning. Such types of sentences that are used to express order, request or wish are called as Imperative sentences.

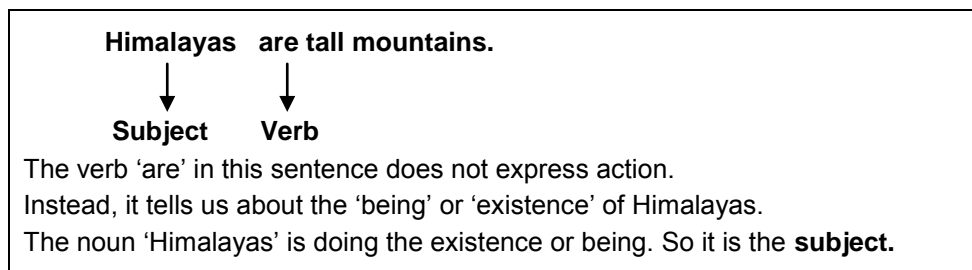
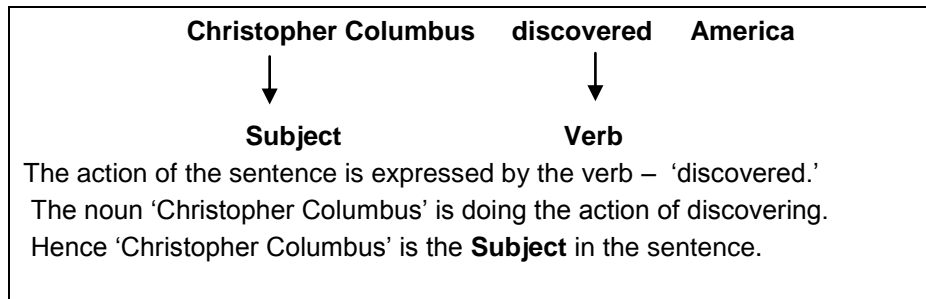
**Exercise 1: Identify the type of sentence**

1. Peel me a grape
2. Zubin sat beside me.
3. Do you like Mexican food?
4. What a bad luck!
5. My car was stolen last week.

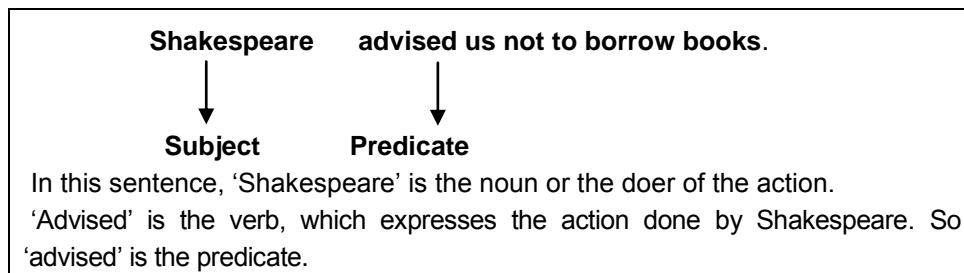
**Subject:**

The complete subject is the **simple subject** (a noun or a pronoun) plus **any words or group of words modifying the simple subject** that tell who or what the sentence is about. Thus, a subject is the person, place, or thing that acts, or is described in the sentence.





Sometimes the verb will express ‘being’ or ‘existence’ instead of action.  
**Predicate:** The predicate is the action or description that occurs in the sentence. Sometimes a verb will express existence instead of an action. Verb is an essential part of the predicate. In other words, we can say that the predicate is the ‘telling part’ of the sentence because it tells us what the subject is doing and to whom.



**Exercise 2: Complete the following with appropriate predicate**

1. Two roses \_\_\_\_\_
2. The copy writer \_\_\_\_\_
3. She \_\_\_\_\_
4. The newspaper \_\_\_\_\_
5. All of us \_\_\_\_\_

**Phrases:** A group of words without a finite verb is a phrase. In other words, phrases are just a group of related words that do not express a complete thought. They also do not have a subject and predicate pair. So, they cannot be considered as a sentence.

The house at the end of the street is very beautiful.

In the example given above, the underlined part is the phrase.

### Clauses

Words and phrases can be put together to make a clause. A group of related words that contain both a subject and a predicate and that functions as a part of a sentence is a clause. A clause is different from a phrase because a phrase is a group of related words which lacks either a subject or a predicate or both. Look at the following sentence

My grandfather snores when he sleeps

In the above example there are two clauses. Only one of them (My grandfather snores) is a sentence. i.e. which can stand on its own to make a complete sense. In other words, it is independent of other words. So it is a **Principal clause**. It is also called **Independent clause**.

The other clause of the above sentence, 'when he sleeps', gives an incomplete thought or idea, one that **cannot** stand by itself, one that needs some more words to make it meaningful. The word 'when' changes the meaning, making the thought incomplete. After reading this clause, we are left hanging.

The clause raises a question → what will happen when he sleeps...?

So, the second clause which depends on the first to give meaning to it is called a **Dependent Clause or Subordinate Clause**

### Subject - Verb Agreement

The subject and verb agreement is an important aspect of the English language. It is very important that the verb and subject agree in number and person.

The two smart girls in the class were chosen to win the award.

In the given example, there are three ways in which the subject (girls) is shown to be plural:

1. the adjective 'two'.
2. the plural marker 's' attached to the subject 'girl'.
3. the verb 'to be' in its plural form 'were'.



\* While trying to determine whether a verb should be in singular or plural form, find the subject and ignore all the words coming after it. If the subject is singular, then the verb is singular or vice versa.

The problems with the student have not yet been resolved. In this example, the subject is 'problems' which is in the plural form. So the verb should be in the plural form. Hence we use the verb 'have' (plural form).

1. When two subjects are joined by 'and', the verb is plural.

John and Jinny are friends.

*Exceptions:*

- When two singular nouns are joined by 'and', but refer to the same person, then the verb is singular.  
E.g.: 1. the secretary and treasurer is on leave. (article 'the' is used only once.)  
2. The secretary and the treasurer are on leave. (article 'the' is used twice).
  - When two different singular nouns express one unit, the verb is in singular. E.g.: Rice and curry is my staple diet.
  - When two singular subjects are practically synonymous, the verb is in singular. E.g.: Peace and Prosperity is the need of the day.
  - When two singular subjects are joined by 'and' which are preceded by 'each' or 'every', the verb is in singular. E.g.: Every man, woman and child has been rescued.
2. The nouns that end in -s (certain countries, fields of study, activities, diseases) take a singular verb.

The United States doesn't have a cricket team.

Mathematics was my favorite subject in school.

The aerobics class is held every Tuesday.

Measles is a serious childhood disease.

3. Most collective nouns take the singular form of the verb.

The committee doesn't have to come up with a solution until next week.

*Exception:* However, the nouns 'people' and 'police' are considered plural, so they take a plural verb.

The police are here to protect us.

The people were happy to see the return of their king.

4. The expression of time, distance, and money are often seen as collective items and hence take a singular verb.

Two miles is too far to walk in this lashing rain.

Five hours has already passed since his surgery ended.

Five thousand rupees is a fair price for such an old painting.

5. When the words 'all', 'most', 'some', and 'any' are followed by a non-count noun, the Verb is singular.

All of the cake has been eaten.

Some fat is good for you.

Most car exhaust contains pollutants that threaten all living things.

*Exception:* However, if the words are followed by a plural count noun, the verb is plural.

All men are created equal.

6. "None" and "neither" always take a singular verb, whether followed by a plural or a non-count noun.

None of the cats belongs to me,

Neither of the women is the one who spoke to me yesterday.

7. When the subjects are joined by "either ...or", "neither ... nor", "not only ... but also" "both ... and", the verb agrees with the subject which is close to it.

Neither the children nor the mother wants to leave.

Either you or I am going to call an end to this charade.

Not only she but all her friends also were in the list of failures.

Both my brother and I am interested in joining the team.

8. When two subjects are joined by 'as well as', 'with', 'together with', 'accompanied by', the verb agrees with the subject mentioned first.

The President of India as well as his secretaries is invited to the function.

Her friends along with Sheela are arriving by the first flight.

9. In sports, while referring to the players, the name of the country is followed by plural verb.  
England have won the world cup.
10. When the percentage or a part of something is mentioned with plural meaning, the verb used is plural.  
30% of the Indian women are literate.
11. "Majority" can be singular or plural.
  - If it is followed by a plural noun, plural verb is used.  
Majority of the pens were blue.
  - If it stands alone, singular verb is used.  
The majority believes in easy work.

**Exercise 3: Correct the mistakes in the following sentences**

1. More must be done to solve that problems of development
2. Many culture from around the world are found in the city.
3. The city have disadvantages such as a high rate of crime.
4. There are bad pollution due to traffic congestion.
5. Neither John nor Wendy want to go dancing

**Answers****Exercise 1: Identify the type of sentence**

1. Imperative
2. Assertive
3. Interrogative
4. Exclamatory
5. Assertive

**Exercise 2: Complete the following with appropriate predicate**

1. were kept as centre piece in the bouquet.
2. proved to be the best what he could get for his agency.
3. is one of the excellent journalists in the industry today.
4. is delivered as a complimentary copy.
5. are creative in our own fields.

**Exercise 3:**

1. those problems
2. cultures
3. has
4. is
5. wants