

Unit Six: Writing For Social and Personal Purposes

Objectives of this unit:

At the end of this unit, the students will be able to:

- write journals
- write diaries
- condense e passages to shorten ones
- expand short passages to extended ones
- write minutes of meetings
- write different kinds of letters
- write curriculum vitae (CV) or resume

One of the primary goals of this course is to expose you to the practices of different aspects of written communication which will enable you to be effective in your academic endeavors. However this success will ultimately help you benefit in the outside world where you practically use your written communication skill for different social and personal purposes. Perhaps the way you can best prove your ability to accept different responsibilities is through your communication capacity. By your facility in expressing ideas, you can convince others of your merits. Hence, in this unit you will practice different aspects of writing which are more aimed at enhancing your communicative ability in social and personal relations. They include: journal and précis writing, minutes writing, letter writing.

6.1. Writing Journals and Diaries

6.1.1. Writing Journals

"There is no perfect time to write.

There is only the present."

Barbara Kingsolver

“It seems a shame to teach students the whys and wherefores of varied vocabulary, organization, support, logical thought, thesis sentences, punctuation and grammar, and never to create moments when all that learning can be used to write, just write for its own sake.”

Anonymous

Activity 5.1. Brainstorming

1. Have you ever written something of non-academic purpose; for example, on an issue which interested you, or something that caught your attention?
2. Imagine that you want to write about what is going on in this class now. What would you do? Where should you start?
3. What do you think is journal and/or diary writing?

Since writing is a skill, it makes sense that the more you practice writing, the better you will write. One excellent way to get practice in writing is to keep a daily or almost daily journal. It is an excellent way because it exposes you to one of the best practices- *free writing* in a relatively free situation!

Elbow (1973) explained what free writing is and how it can help you to find something to say about your subject. Free writing is writing about a subject without restriction, writing whatever comes into your head, without concern for grammar, spelling or organization. It is not prepared writing; it is not intended for a reader. Its only purpose is for you to explore on paper whatever thoughts and feelings you might have about your subject. If practice is the key for success in effective writing, writing whatever comes to you about the subject you are writing –free writing is an essential step for those who aim to be effective writers.

Look at the following example free writing by a student who was given a lemon and asked to write whatever came into his head about it (the lemon).

Lemon- a yellow lemon, the color of my bright yellow sweatshirt the color of yellow taxi cabs the color of the sun in a kid's coloring book my yellow paper in my test bananas are yellow. It feels smooth but has a soapy or waxy texture. The lemon Ice King has good lemon ices. Lenny used to work at the Lemon ice. Lemons are yellow I had a yellow car that was a lemon. Bobby's father used to call Bobby a lemon. He is a lemon driving in his Monte Carlo. I like lemons I hate the people who passed the lemon to me I don't want to see it I like lemons; I like lemons in my iced tea. I like lemons over chicken cutlets, I like lemons raw, I like to take the lemon right out of the pitcher of iced tea and eat it raw. I love the sour taste; I love the expression on someone's face when they bite into a very sour lemon. I like lemon on seafood. My favorite is freshly squeezed lemon over freshly crumbed and baked shrimp or over shrimp or over filet of any fish. Some lemons are round, others oval- shaped most lemons have a nipple at either end which is very small. One way to use a lemon (probably the most common way) is to slice it in half and to squeeze it. Another way which is better is to first squeeze the lemon before you cut it open and roll it on a flat surface.

Notice how this writer has relaxed and let his mind wander in any direction that the lemon has taken him: *he touches on the appearance, the taste, and the feel of the lemon; its uses; and its emotional associations for him in the past and even in the present as he is writing. (Notice also that he has omitted much punctuation, perhaps in order to encourage the flow of his thoughts.)*

Free writing can serve as a way of generating ideas once your imagination has really expanded, for you can discover ideas about subjects that you never realized were even in your mind. Peter Elbow said, "Free writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking." By examining the free writing that you do in class and at home in your journal, you can find thoughts or feelings to expand into prepared essays for different purposes. In general free writing is often a productive way of recalling personal experiences. It is also a good technique for getting down on paper all the material on a recently studied topic. It is a useful antidote to writer's block, or the "I

don't know where to start" syndrome. If you have given considerable thoughts to, and perhaps even done some research on, an assigned topic but do not know where to begin in writing about it, free writing of your thoughts or your recollections of what you read will get your material on paper.

Activity 6.2. Practice free writing

You have seen that the student has written whatever came to his mind after he was given the lemon and to write about it. Now look at the things around you. Let's say you are now studying this module with your friends (*females and males*), *your module*, *pen etc. on the desk*, *the place where you are sitting* and *many other things*. Choose any one of these things and start writing about it. Just see how much you can write continuously for 7-10 minutes.

Look at the beginning of a free writing by a student who wrote about the impersonal object- pen.

Pen is an object, invented and created by man. It can make peace or start wars with just a simple wave from its point. It can teach people and help write important papers it can invent books, technology and create a picture of the universe. But yet we see what is a simple object which permits us to write as a worthless thing when really it holds the destruction of man or the creation of peace and love in the world in a small little tip.

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NB. *Don't worry about your grammar, diction etc. as it can block the free flow of your ideas. Just write whatever comes to your head about it. After you finish writing for 10 minutes, exchange it with a friend next to you and check how s/he has done her/ his own.*

We have said that keeping a daily journal is the best way to take writing as a habit as it exposes you to this kind of free writing where you can find yourself at most benefits. But the question here is, how do you start writing your journal?

What do you write about first? The answer of course, is whatever you want. Still it may be helpful to take a look at how others have gotten started.

Often in starting journals, writers focus first on themselves as writers, on how they feel about keeping a journal or about writing in general. Here are early entries from the journals of two students.

Notice that each entry has the feel and appearance of a piece of free writing.

An entry from Student A's journal

Feb.4

10:00 P.M. -- You know, I've always wanted to keep a diary but always put it off. Sometimes you have just more things to say than others. I think it could be interesting to read something you have written a long time ago. Surprisingly enough, you might even find certain values and attitudes have changed about yourself. Diaries are good for letting out your feelings. Writing them down, knowing no one will ever read them, is a good release. Diaries trace a person's emotional development.

An entry from Student B's journal

Feb. 5

The teacher says to write and practically all the kids cringe about it." Oh no, we have to write!" Writing-- I love too write! Sometimes writing is the only way I can express something or get some understanding. The words just flow faster than I can get them on the paper; there is so much to write about... The most wonderful thing about writing is that you can write any thing about, absolutely anything, and the paper doesn't talk back--moving along--to me, this journal is no hassle. In fact it will probably help....I will just

write how I feel when I feel it, and then I will try to make sense of what it is I wrote later on.

Reminder to students

Since keeping a journal is one of the best practice activities that university students can freely try out and develop their writing skill, you have to keep your own journal from this time on. Since you will write in a very relaxed situation, this will give you the best opportunity to check how much your writing skill progresses through time.

At some point during the day- perhaps in a study period after your last class, perhaps before dinner or perhaps before going to bed- spend some minutes writing in your journal. Keep in mind that you do not have to prepare what to write or be in the mood or worry about making mistakes; just write down whatever words come out as the student did.

Now it is your turn to write

Activity 6.3

* You remember how student A & B were writing about themselves as writers.

When you come to writing your journal, there are a number of possible issues that you can start with.

For example;

1. You may write about what you felt when the teacher told you regarding the importance of keeping a journal through out the semester.
2. This may later take you to another feeling; for example, that once you wanted to start keeping a diary but you were not successful because whenever you start writing the

first word on a page, your mind has been bogged down by the question of what and how to write first and the diary book remained all with white pages.

- 3 -It may also take you to another memory; for example, the time when you read someone's diary secretly and you were amazed by the things you read and many other things.

The entry from student A's journal above was an entry that was written by the student as an expression of his previous dissatisfaction for he couldn't write his journal easily but in expressing this feeling he is actually writing it now.

This shows us that we can even write about our previous experience of writing and many other things.

Let me tell you what came to my mind when my Advanced Composition teacher had told the whole class that we had to keep a diary in our class in the semester. I knew that there were a thousand and one things in my mind that I could write about, but the question that struck my mind was: had I to put (in my diary) only the issues I could share with people or everything (in case the teacher reads my diary at the end of the semester)?

It was the expression of this feeling that took the first page in my diary. Wouldn't it sometimes be good to write about questions of what to write?

Open your journal and start writing about anythinganything you want!

Since journal writing is writing about everything, you can take issues other than those raised so far (things around you).

Consider the following list of teacher-tested journal topics to help you get started in your journal writing routine:

- What do you like to do at recess?
- Do you think boys or girls have it easier?

- Do you think you have too many chores? If you could choose whichever chores you want, which ones would you prefer to do?
- What would you do if everyone in your family forgot your birthday?
- If you could travel in a time machine and go any distance into the past or future, where would you decide to go? Why?
- What makes our class special?
- If you could be invisible for a day, what would you do?
- If you could choose any bedtime you wanted, what time would you pick?
- Pretend that you were already grown up with children. How would you treat them differently from the way your parents treat you?
- Would you like to have an identical twin? What would be the best thing about it? What would be the worst thing about it?
- Are you excited to grow up? What does it mean to be "grown-up" and what do you think will be the best thing about it? What about the worst thing?

Others

- * Is your job sex-stereotyped? Write about that.
- * Imagine that you woke up one morning to discover that your race or sex (or both) had altered. What has changed for you? How would your life be different? Why? Write about a day in your (new) life.

You can take any one of these points from the list to start writing your journal.

6.1.2. Guidelines to write journals

- Start each entry with a notation of the date, the time and even the place
- The regularity with which you write in your journal is important
- Don't worry about your grammar, punctuation, spelling, organization, or even necessarily about making much sense
- To make your journal writing a productive experience, write freely and honestly no matter what your subject.

- Use your journal as a notebook in a class or when you read so that you can add your comments and questions about what you are learning
- Read back you're your entries at periodic intervals and write your thoughts and feelings about what you find there. Some writers even leave blank pages in their journal, so that when they do go back and read previous entries, they have the open space in which to write their comments and reactions.
- You don't have to write every single day; avoid making your journal writing into a chore. Instead keep a small pocketbook by your bedside and at the end of the day, just scrawl down a few notes of the day's events that will bring them back to you when you sit down to write.

6.2. Writing Diaries

Diary is defined as a book with a separate space or page for each day, in which you write down your future arrangements, meetings, etc. or one used to record your thoughts and feelings or what has happened on that day. It is also a personal daily record of one's life.

Your diary can include thoughts, feelings, reactions, dreams, experiences and interests. Sometimes you may want to include poems and jokes you have heard, photographs, mementos or souvenirs in your diary. Your diary, if used in this way, can also be called a *journal*. So what is the difference between journal and diary?

Although journal and diary seem to be interchangeable terms, they do have some differences.

Journal is a record of accounts written in a more coherent fashion, whereas diary can be a collection of pieces that may not follow a reasonable order. In other words although diary can contain thoughts, feelings, reactions, dreams, experiences and interests as journal does, it is not that concerned with correct structure, e.g. , paragraphs or full sentences (it could include such pieces as future arrangements, meetings, etc.)

Diary is written;

- * Usually day to day in time order
- * Using simple language and a casual style
- * Using short sentences
- * Using the words "I" or "ME"
- * Not concerned with correct structure, e.g. , paragraphs or full sentences
- * Using abbreviations or symbols.

6.3. Précis Writing and Expansion of Passages

6.3.1. Précis Writing

As serious academic writers, you will have to read and remember large amounts of prose (and poetry) along with scientific and social-studies articles as well. In many of your college courses, you are probably able to memorize facts and key statements with relative ease, but in English courses and others which also require close, critical reading, you are asked to go a step further, i.e., to present the informing argument of, let's say, an article and to reproduce the logical development of the argument in as cogent a form as possible in *your own words*. In order to demonstrate that you have assimilated the central argument and proof of another scholar's critical interpretation, you must be able to summarize and even compose a précis of an argument. In most cases people use the terms summary and précis interchangeably though there are minor differences. To clearly see what they are and how they are related, let us see them in relation to another valuable writing strategy- *paraphrasing* that you studied in the previous writing course- *Intermediate Writing Skills* .

Paraphrase, Summary, and Précis

Paraphrasing, summary and précis are the three writing strategies that will help you understand what you are reading.

Activity 6.4

Based on the information you have from your study of the stated course-*Intermediate Writing Skills*- and what you have just read, what do you think do these three tasks require the writer to do?

Remember that these three strategies are seen with some original material in mind. Therefore consider the information in the original material and the words you use to write paraphrase, summary and précis out of the same material. What do these three tasks do to the information in the original material and the words you use in writing them?

Paraphrase

When you paraphrase, you are explaining your source's argument, following its line of reasoning and its sequence of ideas, in your own words. The paraphrase should give the reader an accurate understanding of the author's position on the topic. The purpose of a paraphrase is to convey the meaning of the original message and, in doing so, to prove that you understand the passage well enough to *restate* it. Remember, your job is not to prove yourself correct, but to uncover and explain all the facts and arguments involved in your subject.

To paraphrase, first substitute synonyms for the passage's more important terms. These synonyms should be accurate both in denotative and connotative meaning. It does not matter yet whether you agree or disagree with the passage; it only matters that you comprehend and understand what the passage says.

This restatement preserves both the original meaning of the passage and the author's position on the matter, but it may be difficult to read at some points. Fine-tune the sentence construction, possibly even adding a phrase here and there to illustrate a point more clearly or show a connection between two ideas.

The paraphrase alters the wording of the passage without changing its meaning. It retains the basic logic of the argument, its sequence of ideas, and even the examples used in the passage. Most importantly, it accurately conveys the author's meaning and opinion.

Summary

A summary restates only the author's main ideas, omitting all the examples and evidence used in supporting and illustrating those points. The function of a summary is to represent the scope and emphasis of a relatively large amount of material in an efficient and concise form. In your own words, state the thesis, main arguments and conclusion of the original. In both the paraphrase and summary, the author's meaning and opinion have been retained. However, in the case of the summary, examples and illustrative elements of the passage are omitted. Because they can be used to encapsulate everything from a long narrative passage of an essay, to a chapter in a book, to the entire book itself, summaries can be tremendously helpful.

Précis

Précis (pronounced pray-see) is a French word meaning precise or exact. It comes from the Latin word *praecidere* which literally means cutting short. In English, however, this word has come to be used in both the senses to mean the art of cutting short a piece of writing to make it precise and definite. Précis writing has been defined by Sir Joshua Fitch in his famous 'Lectures on Teaching' as "the condensation into a few sentences, the main drift and purport of a letter, an essay or a formal document." It is a type of summarizing that insists on an exact reproduction of the logic, organization, and emphasis of the original texts. It is of particular use in situations in which you want to detail the relative order, proportions, and relationships of the original parts of a text. An effective précis retains the logic, development, and argument of the original in much shorter form. Thus, a précis is useful when you are dealing with lengthy passages that demand careful attention to the logic and organization of an argument.

The following has been excerpted from Warriner's English Grammar and Composition: Complete Course.

A précis is a brief summary. Writing a précis is valuable training in composition. Since the writing requires you to be clear and concise, you must choose your words carefully and arrange them skillfully to get the maximum amount of meaning into the minimum space.

In addition to its value as a writing exercise, *précis* work is excellent reading practice. In order to summarize another's ideas in your own words, you must understand the idea thoroughly.

In school and in life after school, there are many situations that call for the writing of a brief, accurate summary of reading. You are frequently asked to prepare a summary of what you have read in your textbook or in the library. Answers on examinations often require a brief summary. People in business, in club work, and in social work must prepare short digests of articles and reports.

A. Facts about *précis* and the basic steps in writing.

1. *A **précis** is a short summary.* It is not a paraphrase, which merely says in different and simpler words exactly what the passage being paraphrased has to say. A paraphrase may be as long as the passage itself. A *précis* rarely is more than one-third the length of the original selection and may be only one-fourth as long.
2. *A **précis** gives only the "heart" of a passage.* It omits repetition and such details as examples, illustrations, and adjectives unless they are of unusual importance.
3. *A **précis** is written entirely in the words of the person writing it, not in the words of the original selection.* Avoid the temptation to lift long phrases and whole sentences from the original.
4. *A **précis** is written from the point of view of the author whose work is being summarized.* Do not begin with such expressions as "This author says" or "The paragraph means." Begin as though you were summarizing your own writing.

B. Purpose for writing *précis*

Good *Précis* writing skills are essential to success in college and in the real world. You will use them to:

- Condense different reading assignments in a course and to integrate these with each other and with class notes

- You will also use these skills to prepare to write research papers. You need these skills because summarizing is efficient –to save you time – and because used it helps you distinguish between more and less important material.
- Your teachers require you to write summaries, either as homework or on essay tests because they know that you can't summarize material until you understand it fully. They also know that this skill is an important skill for success in all fields.

C. Guidelines/hints on writing précis

- i) Read carefully and thoroughly, sentence by sentence, the passage to be summarized in the first reading. Try to grasp the writer's main point. Spotting the topic sentence will help. Look up in the dictionary any words whose meaning is not absolutely clear. As you read, take brief notes to be used in your writing. You may also underline the important points on the original itself.
 - * While doing this do make a special note of the names of persons, places and times concerned with the passage.
- ii) When you have finally decided what the author's main point is, write it out in your own words. Do not use the wording of the original except for certain key words which you may find indispensable. If you cannot translate the idea into language of your own, you do not understand them very well. Be especially careful not to rely too much on the topic sentence. Do not add any opinions or ideas of your own.
- iii) Ignore all the illustrations, quotations, examples, idioms, similes, and other figures of speech. Also ignore the explanations and any rhetoric.
- iv) What will be left after the examination at c), is likely to be about half of the original length. Now reduce this balance to one third by,
 - a. Using your own words as far as possible.
 - b. Reproduce only the main points leaving aside the supporting points if any.
 - c. Write this part in third person as 'reported speech'.

Revise your writing until you are sure that you have given an accurate summary.

- v) Write a rough draft first. Usually you will find your précis is too long. If it is more than one-third the length of the original, continue your revision until you have reduced the précis to the proper length. In this careful revision lies the principal value of the précis as a composition exercise.
- vi) Compare the first draft with the original to check that no important points have been omitted.
- vii) Finally when satisfied, give a title to your précis.
 - Don't try to get the précis into a single sentence unless the passage is very short.

Like in any type of writing, writing out précis also needs practice so that you grasp the techniques of summarizing, condensing without losing the essence of the matter.

Study the following examples about how sentences can be condensed (how to put a long winded sentence into a short form using your own words):

D. Omit unimportant ideas

E.g. Original: *The prosperity of England received a great stimulus from the greatest event in the national life of the country in the in the Nineteenth Century- the Industrial Revolution that ushered in a new era of progress.*

Abridged: *The prosperity of England received a great stimulus from the Industrial Revolution.*

E. Omit figures of rhetoric

E.g. Original: *He has passed his three score years and ten.*

More brief: *He is over 70.*

Original: *We stood like a rock.*

More brief: *We stood firm.*

F. Do not repeat words of the same meaning.

E.g. “It is much *plainer* and *easier*, much the *safer* and *more secure* way of dealing with the world: it has less of trouble and difficulty of *entertainment* and *perplexity*, of *danger* and *hazard* in it.”

To make it brief *omit either of the words in italics.*

G. Use a general expression in place of a list.

E.g. Original: *His collection included weapons of every description, from the rifles, revolvers and bayonets of modern European warfare to the Tomahawks, spears, and poisoned arrows of primitive and savage life.*

Précis: *He collected every kind of weapons ancient and modern.*

H. Omit all quotations

E.g. Original: *Most great men have been known to be great readers. It is hardly possible to acquire a fair degree of success without this important habit of reading. You must have a wide and thorough study of valuable books if you would make your mark in life. No genius, no power of inventing or creating though can never make up a deficiency in this respect. Bacon says: " Reading makes a full man; conversation a ready man; and writing an exact man." (80 words)*

Precis: *The habit of wide reading is essential to success in life. No man of genius or of inventive and creative talents can shine without this habit. (26 words)*

Activity 6.5

Practice on condensation

A) Now try to condense the following long sentences into short ones without losing their meanings. Write your answer in your exercise book. The first one is done for you.

1. **Original:** Mani was hard up for money and yet he was ordered to return the loan within a week by the money lender.

Condensed: Mani hadn't sufficient money to clear his loan.

2. The witness gave such a ridiculous statement that the spectators burst into laughter.

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3. The speaker was a person with unlimited energy in his throat; what one would say in 3 words he would in 50.

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4. In what places and at what time did he pay a visit to you?

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5. The elephant was of greater utility in times that are passed than it is at the present time.

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6. From the replies that he made we drew the conclusion that he was not the person on whom we can rely.

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B) Condense the following paragraphs into minimum number of sentence(s). The first has been done for you as an example

1. **Original:** Economic power is not difficult to achieve. As far as nation is concerned, its economic conditions can be improved through hard work of every individual and of course motivated by good leadership. (33 words)

Condensed (Précis): Economic excellence is achieved through hard work of every citizen of the country. (12 words)

2. **Original:** Isn't this an age of machines? Machines do help and do increase our productivity. But then, do we pay the machines for doing the work? If a work had been performed by human hands, they are paid wages and the wages help a man look

after his family. Logically speaking, machines can replace men in every sphere but, are we a nation of men or machines?

Additional example of précis

1. It is sometimes said that the pleasure of giving is peculiar to the rich, and no doubt the pleasure of giving is one of the greatest and purest which wealth can bestow. Still the poor also may be liberal and generous. The widow's mite so far as the widow at any rate is concerned, counts for as much as the rich man's gold. Moreover, as regards kindness and sympathy which are far more valuable than money, the poor can give as much as , perhaps even more than the rich. Money is not wealth. There are those whom we look down on as poor, who may be in reality as rich as any millionaire. That which is of most value in life is exactly what can neither be bought nor sold. A proverb says—"A man's true wealth is the good he does in the world." When he dies, men will ask what property he has left behind him, but angels will enquire, "What good deeds hast thou sent before thee? (170 words)

***Hints:** In this passage one idea follows another in close connection and rather proceeds from it as a matter of logical sequence.*

"The pleasure of giving is not confined to the rich alone." Why? Because money is not the only form of gift." Then, what else? "Kindness and sympathy are more valuable than wealth and the poor can show them as much as or even more than the rich." What then is real wealth? "A man's true wealth" as the proverb says, "is the good he does in this world, and that is the only wealth he will carry beyond the grave."

Now based on this analysis the précis can be written like:

Title: True Wealth

***Précis:** The pleasure of charity is enjoyable even by the poor, for money is not the only form of gift. Kindness and sympathy are superior to wealth. The poor can show*

them as much as the rich. True wealth is the good he does in this world, and that is the only wealth one will carry beyond the grave.

Activity 6.6

Write a précis out of the following passages.

1. Many students look up on history merely as an account of events which happened in the past, and they try to remember the dates and other facts connected with those events simply because they are facts, or perhaps because they wish to pass an examination. But a fact which happened in the past is not worth remembering unless it can be shown to have some connection with what is happening to us, now and here in our present life; and history is not merely an account of past events; it is an account of past events which are closely connected with one another and with our present life. What we are, or hope to be to day depends very largely upon what men were, or tried to be, in the past. It is therefore, we wish to know about the past, and what the history of India should teach is about just those great events in the past which explain the present because they are so closely connected with each other and with it. (172 words)

The précis

Title: *Importance of History*

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2. Our heart is a garden which the good God has given us to cultivate. It is necessary that we should always apply ourselves to grow the good and weed out the evils which might take root there. Otherwise, it is but fallow ground. But let us carefully fulfill these two duties, and to this end let us beg the assistance and blessing of that God who makes the sun shine, the dew and rain fall, the plants grow, and fruits ripen.

Then will our heart be a most beautiful garden, and we shall possess a paradise within ourselves. (99 words)

The précis

Title : *A Paradise within*

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Activity 6.7

Read the following paragraph two or three times. Then read the four faulty précis of it given below. According to the qualities of effective précis writing discussed each of them illustrates one major error. Identify these errors and on the spaces provided against the four faulty précis explain what these errors are.

Original Paragraph

The first thing that strikes the critical minority, as it looks at the whole cultural picture, is that ours is a nation of new-rich people, well washed, all dressed up, rather pathetically unsure just what it is washed and dressed up for; a nation convinced that a multitude of material goods, standardized, furiously and expensively advertised by appeals to greed and vanity, will in themselves make life worth the living. Because we are new-rich, we overvalue possessions. Almost any individual who makes a great deal of money very rapidly supposes that mere possession of wealth is evidence of worth. He also is apt to imagine that with his means he can buy happiness. These mistakes usually seem folly to the old-rich, to one who was born to poverty, whose father and mother were bred with it. Such a one knows that merely because he or his friends have it, it is no sign that they are worth it, but quite commonly the contrary. He has learned through experience that money is not in itself very valuable stuff. Happiness, which is what all men desire, cannot be

purchased; it is an illusive something not for sale. The old-rich know these things well enough, but the new-rich rarely discover them until they have grown accustomed to possessions. So it seems to be with our society. We go in, almost without question and in all classes, for the sordid nonsense of supposing that externalities possessed ennoble the owners, that a full fist invariable indicates a fine spirit.

Faulty précis

Faulty précis 1:

Ours is a nation of new-rich people convinced that material goods will in themselves, make life worth the living. Any individual who makes a great deal of money rapidly supposes that wealth is evidence of worth. He imagines that with his means he can buy happiness. These mistakes seem folly to one born to property. He knows that because he or his friends have it, it is no sign that they are worth it. Happiness, which all men desire, cannot be purchased. We go in for the nonsense that a full fist indicates a fine spirit.

[96 words]

The error

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Faulty précis 2:

On the whole we are a nation of new-rich people who are well washed and well dressed, but we don't know what we're washed and dressed for. Our material goods are all standardized and expensively advertised. Advertisers appeal to our greed and vanity. We think these material goods are the means to wealth and happiness. The old-rich know that their friends aren't worth the money they have, but the new-rich don't know this until they have been rich for a while.

[81 words]

The error

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Faulty précis 3:

First, the critical minority says that we are a nation of new-rich people all dressed up with no place to go. We think the material gods advertised by appeals to our greed and vanity are what makes life worth living. Anyone who makes a lot of money thinks his money shows his worth and believes that it will make him happy. The old-rich, however, think that these ideas are foolish. Born into a rich family with property, these people know that money and property don't make them any better people. They know that the opposite is frequently true. They know that money in itself isn't worth much and that it won't buy happiness, which is the thing everyone wants. The new rich however, don't know these things until they have been rich long enough to find them out. Almost everyone, regardless of social class, believes that possessions make their owners better, and the more you have the more worthy you are. This is nonsense.

[163 words]

The error

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Faulty précis 4:

The critical minority says we are a nation of new-rich people who are victims of newspaper, magazine, and television advertising which, by appealing to our greed and vanity, tries to convince us that all we need for happiness is a lot of possessions. We don't need most of the advertised stuff like appliances, big cars, and fur coats, but the rest of the world judges our worth by what we have. In many other countries, people don't have the material goods we have. We can't all be as lucky as the old-rich, who don't have to worry about money because they already have it.

[104 words]

The error

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Activity 6.8

Now read the original material once again and write your own précis which you think is free from the problems you identified in the above four précis. Write your answer in the following space.

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Précis of Longer Texts

How have we condensed the sentences and paragraphs in the examples and activities that have been dealt with so far? We have extracted out the heart of the matter, that's all. This is not to say that the explanatory words for the heart are unimportant. When we want to economize on the words used, (same as producing a précis) we have to cut out all the peripherals. That's what a précis writing is all about- identify the heart of the matter and express it with very little clothing over it.

You might say, the methodology is OK for long sentences and short paragraphs, but what about a matter that runs into a page or pages? Let's consider an example. Here is a description of a "windy day" a writer had experienced. How to condense this?

1. Poets and prose writers are experts in describing different phenomena of nature to add color to their writings. Charles Dickens describes a storm in eloquent words in his book *DAVID COPPERFIELD*. Shelly's *ODE TO THE WEST WIND* is a re-creation of a stormy west wind he himself had witnessed in Italy. **(50 words)**

2. The terrible dust storm of last summer is still fresh in my mind. It took place on a hot and dry day in the month of May. There was possibly a vacuum in the air occasioned by the heat. The dust wind from all around this bowl of vacuum rushed in naturally to fill the emptiness. The wind also carried with it much sand and dust and what not. All at once, there was a semidarkness. One couldn't see anything clearly due to the dusty haze savored by a wild wind. **(91 words)**

3. I saw the western horizon. It was going to red slowly. An old man, himself groping his way through, touched me and said, " Son, get inside some house lest you are carried away by this great wind." I ignored the elder's advice and kept standing on the road very bravely as if to make known to the world that I wasn't scared of any kind of storm. **(66 words)**

4. Then I heard a terrible noise some 200 hundred meters away. It was due to a whirl wind. I saw papers and plastic cups fly up in the air and fall down a little beyond. The

whole road was covered with a thick layer of dust. Visibility was low though the time was only 2 p.m. **(53 words)**

5. The dust storm lasted just about 5 minutes. People took cover inside their home or shops or under some roof to escape the fury. **(24 words)**

6. A little later there was a sudden downpour. It rained for about 2 minutes as if to drive the dust on to the road. All became calm when the rain stopped. **(31 words)**

7. The brave 'me' was fully drenched in the momentary rain. But the rain water could not wash away the dust layer settled on my shirt and trousers. **(27 words)**

Let us take paragraph by paragraph and condense it keeping in mind all the rules of writing a precise out of a paragraph.

Paragraph 1 falls under the category "explanation" of the wind. Is this necessary in a précis? No. So, cut it out completely. Thus we have saved 50 words.

Paragraph 2: The writer is talking about how a stormy wind is generated on a hot day. Are there any rhetorics and explanations here? The first sentence is rhetoric. So we can cut it out. Is it important to state the science behind formation of a local storm? So leave out sentences 3 (There was possibly.....heat) and 4 (The wind from all around.....the emptiness) The other description could be shortened in own words. Thus paragraph 2 could be condensed like this:

A sudden dust storm on that hot day in May carried with it much sand and dust making the area semi dark. One couldn't see anything clearly due to the haze and a wild wind. **(35 words)**

Paragraph 3 could be shortened without leaving any content like this,

The western horizon went red slowly. Ignoring the advice of an old man to take shelter somewhere, I stood there bravely defying the storm. **(24 words)**

Paragraph 4: “200 meters away” and “a little beyond” are unnecessary details. This paragraph could be condensed as shown below:

Papers and plastic cups flew up wards in the noisy whirlwind and fell down. The road was dark due to heavy dust at 2 p. m. 924 words)

Paragraph 5 and 6 could be combined with lesser number of words to express the same details like this:

The 5 minute long storm drove people indoors. Then a 2 minute long rain lowered the dust carpet on the surface and an instant calm prevailed. (24 words) and

Paragraph 7 could be reduced like this”

Though drenched fully, the rain couldn’t wash off the dust settled on my dress.(14 words)

Hence after all the condensation is made we can have the **first draft** like the following:

A sudden dust storm on that hot day in May carried with it much sand and dust making the area semi dark. One couldn’t see anything clearly due to the haze and a wild wind. (35 words)

The western horizon went red slowly. Ignoring the advice of an old man to take immediate shelter, I stood there bravely defying the storm. (24 words)

Papers and plastic cups flew upwards and fell down. The road was dark due to heavy dust t 2 p.m. (23 words)

The 5 minute long storm drove people indoors. Then a 2-minute long rain lowered the dust carpet on the surface and an instant calm prevailed.(24 words)

Though drenched fully, The rain couldn’t wash off the dust settled on my dress. (14 words)

Total 121 words

Read the first draft carefully. At this stage, don't compare this draft with the original. If there are repetitions (there could be , you know!) remove them. If a group of words could be summarized in phrase form, do so. You may also cut out any irrelevant details or what look like irrelevant in the first draft. Underline all such words. Use a better and more effective word where necessary.

Now we are ready for the final draft. The original contained 342 words. Hence the final draft should not have more than 114 words. The first draft has 121 words. Therefore we still have to save about 7 words. Keep this in mind while arriving at the final draft.

Here is the **final draft** with the title: THE STORMY WIND

THE STORMY WIND

A sudden dust storm one hot May day carried much sand and dust making the area semi dark. One couldn't see anything clearly due to the haze. (27 words)

The western horizon went red slowly. Ignoring the advice of an old man to take shelter somewhere, I stood there bravely. (20 words)

Papers and plastic cup flew upwards in the whirlwind and fell down. Due to the heavy dust, it looked like evening though the time was only 2 p.m. (27 words)

The 5-minute long storm drove people in doors. Then a 2- minute long rain lowered the dust carpet on the surface. An instant calm followed. (22 words)

Though drenched fully, the rain couldn't wipe out the dust coating on my dress. (24 words)

(Total 110 words)

Activity 6.9

Make a précis of the following short passage and give it a title.

When England was at war with France a young English sailor was captured and put in prison. After a time he succeeded in escaping from imprisonment and reaching the coast near Boulogne. The young man longed very much to cross over the English Channel to his home in England, but found no means of escape. At last one morning he saw an empty cask come floating from the sea towards the shore. He hid it in a cave and worked hard at it till he made out of it a frail boat. Upon this sorry float he was about to put out into the stormy channel. But the Frenchmen caught him and brought him before Napoleon.

‘Did you really intend’, asked Napoleon, ‘to brave the terrors of the ocean in so frail a boat?’

‘If you grant me permission’, said the young man, ‘I will embark at once.’

‘But makes you risk your very life?’

‘I wish ‘, replied the noble sailor, ‘to see my mother. She is aged, poor and infirm.’

The heart of Napoleon was touched. He gave orders that the young man should be sent to England at the first available opportunity.(169 words)

Answer:

Possible précis

Title:
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6.3.2 Expansion of Passages

This exercise is the exact opposite of précis writing. In précis writing we have to compress; and in these exercises we have to expand. A sentence or a short passage has to

be enlarged into a paragraph by the fuller and more elaborated expression of its meaning, or by adding illustrations, details or proofs to a simple statement. Such exercise practically amounts to the writing of miniature essays on the subject of the original sentence or passage. No strict rule can be laid for the length of the expansion; it must not be too short, or it will scarcely be an expansion, or so long as to become an essay. On the average, eighty to one hundred words should be aimed at.

A. Purposes for expansion

- This practice will be useful for the purpose of examinations. This is to mean that the practice of expanding texts will enable you to tackle questions which need elaborations, explanations,
- It will also enable you to develop sound arguments as argumentative writing usually requires the presentation of proofs and careful consideration of the meanings the given statement (proposition) can imply.
- This skill can also help learners in situations where some outline which is intentionally kept incomplete is given to exercise their imaginative faculty and to complete the outline.
- this skill is also what you commonly use when you are asked to write a paragraph or essay on some specified topic and for some purpose

B. Method of Procedure

1. Carefully read the original sentence or passage, until you feel that you clearly understand its meaning. (It is a good practice to try to express the main idea in a word or phrase; e.g., the real subject of the second specimen is , “ Pride in One’s Work.”)
2. Having grasped the subject and meaning of the passage, proceed to expand it by adding details, illustrations, proofs, examples etc. until it is a tiny essay only long enough to make a paragraph.
3. The expansion must contain all that was in the original passage; and more can be added, so long as it is strictly relevant to the subject.

4. The sentence for expansion is a conclusion or finished product: and it is your work to trace the steps by which this thought has been arrived at.
5. If it is a metaphor, explain its full meaning in plain language, and give reasons to support it.
6. Your expansion should read as a complete piece of composition, expressed in good English; so that it can clearly be understood apart from the original passage. So, when you have written it, go over it carefully to see that nothing essential has been omitted or left obscure. In spelling, grammar and punctuation.
7. correct all mistakes

Look at the following example expansions

Example 1:

Original:

A great deal of talent is lost in the world for the want of little courage

Expanded version:

Timidity and self-distrust are almost as great faults as conceit and over-confidence. There are many people who have real talent in different lines, and yet who never accomplish anything, because they are afraid to make the first venture; and in this way good and useful things are lost to the world. A reasonable amount of confidence in one's own powers is necessary for success.

When you see this expansion the writer has taken main idea of the original and explained it through details which include:

- mentioning timidity and self distrust as similar faults to what is stated by the writer as a failure for many people in the world- losing their talent,
- the reason why such people lose talent and
- what the writer felt is necessary. (N.B. The writer's final comment is not wholly a new addition, rather it was implied in the original sentence.)

Activity 6.10

The information contained in the following sentence lends itself to elaboration if it is written with details and proofs of the meaning it conveys. Read the sentence carefully and see if you can expand it with relevant information.

Original: However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names.

While expanding try to answer the following questions:

1. What are people's reactions when they feel their life is mean (when they feel life is unpleasant)?
2. What does the writer want these kinds of people to do?

Now taking these and other related questions develop an expanded version of the original idea

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The following is the suggested expanded version. Read it and compare it with your own work.

Title: **Making the best of life**

Men who are always grumbling about their poverty, complaining of their , difficulties, whining over their troubles, and thinking that their lot in this world is mean and poor,

will never get any happiness out of life or achieve any success. However mean our life may be, if we face it bravely and honestly and try to make best of it, we shall find that after all it is not so bad as we thought; and we may have our times of happiness and the joys of success. There is nothing common or unclean, until we make it so by the wrong attitude we adopt towards it.

Example 2:

Original: *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.*

Expanded version:

What one really has in his possession may not be a big amount and may even be small or limited. But this actual possession is certainly preferable to the uncertain possession of a much bigger amount. People often grumble at their small or moderate earnings and lose them by running after uncertain wealth; very often their hopes for future gain are not fulfilled. So a little amount of which they were sure is lost in trying to gather larger amounts. They are lured by the prospect of being rich and do not hesitate to spend their small resources on deceitful plans. Often bad men come to simple-minded persons and offer to double their wealth by secret methods. Their false friends throw dust in their eyes and somehow manage to disappear with the good money or ornaments of the simple folk. So it is always better to depend on what a man actually has than waste his little in pursuit of uncertain wealth.

A good example of this saying is the story of the dog that lost the piece of meat in his mouth by jumping at its shadow in a clear water stream.

Activity 6.11

Read the following sentences carefully and expand them into paragraphs

1. A little learning is a dangerous thing

2. Charity begins at home

We have said that one of the purposes of developing the skill of expanding sentences or texts is to enable learners use their imaginative faculty to develop a simple outline into a complete whole and shape. This is especially helpful to write a short story with limited number of words and sentences on the basis of a given *story outline*.

As this is an advanced writing course you should practice the art of writing short and simple stories in your own words in an interesting manner. In this practice you will once again be exposed to a more relaxed writing that you have been trying out in journal writing where you were writing everyday happenings which have a related touch.

Look at the following examples of *story outlines* and the complete stories made out of them:

Example I

Outline

Two Women Claiming a Baby

Long ago in a far-off land lived a wise king named Solomon-two women with a baby came to his court-each woman claimed it as her son-Solomon thought for a while and ordered the child to be cut in two and each half to be given to each woman-the first woman prayed in tears not to kill the child but to give it to the other woman-the second woman wanted half the body-Solomon decided in favor of the first woman.

Now look at how this simple outline is made a complete story with a plot clear enough to follow:

The story completed and expanded

Once there lived a good wise king named Solomon. One day two women came to his court with a new born baby, each claiming it as her own. Even Solomon was at a loss

how to decide who the real mother was. He thought a while and asked for a sword. It was brought and he ordered the executioner to cut the baby in two and give a half to each woman.

At this the first woman exclaimed in tears,” For God’s sake, don’t kill the child.” “Your Majesty is quite right”, said the other woman, “cut the child into two and give me my half.” The first woman sobbed aloud. “Pray don’t put it to the sword. Let that wicked woman have it.” Now King Solomon knew beyond doubt who the real mother was. It was the first woman who could not bear to see the child killed. So he gave it to her and punished the other woman. (15 sentences: 150 words)

There is nothing like mother’s love!

Example II

Outline:

False Alarm

A shepherd boy makes fun of his neighbors crying ‘wolf! Wolf!’ when there is no wolf; one day a wolf comes, the shepherd cries but no one believes him; the boy’s sheep are devoured.

The story completed and expanded

Once a boy used to graze his sheep upon the hillside. Feeling very tired of looking after them he wished to have some fun. So one day , when all was quite , he saw the villagers ploughing. He shouted, ‘wolf!, wolf!’ On hearing his shouts, all the villagers rushed to the boy’s help; but they found no wolf, and they were quietly grazing. They were very angry that the boy had played a trick on them. One day, however, the wolf did really come. It fell upon the sheep and began to devour them. The boy ran about in great fear and shouted for help, but this time nobody came. The villagers thought that he was only shouting for fun. A good many of his sheep were killed, and he learnt never to raise false alarms again.

(150 words: 15 sentences)

Nobody trusts a liar even when he speaks the truth!

Activity 6.12

Now it is your turn to expand the following two story outlines into complete stories by using limited sentences.

N.B. You don't have to know the story previously. What you have to do is take the theme of the story from the outline and add all the necessary details to make the story complete. In doing this first jot down the details and then write the first draft of the story and finally consider the language-grammar, word choice, spelling , punctuation and write the complete story.

1. Outline**The Ant and The Dove**

- An ant fell into a river
- was saved by a dove that dropped a leaf from a tree on the bank
- a hunter came
- about to shoot the bird
- the ant bit him in his foot
- the hunter missed his mark-the dove escaped.

The story completed and expanded**The Ant and the Dove**

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Virtue brings its own reward!

2. Outline

The Hare and the Tortoise

- A hare taunts a tortoise for his slow pace
- The hare and the tortoise agree to run a race
- The hare trusts to his swiftness and sleeps on the way
- The tortoise jogs on slowly but steadily
- The hare wakes up and rushes
- The tortoise reaches the goal earlier and wins the race

The story completed and expanded

The Hare and the Tortoise

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Slow and steady wins the race!

6.4. Writing Minutes of Meetings

Nearly every business has a number of committees that meet periodically, perhaps weekly, biweekly, or monthly. In addition, special meetings are called from time to time for the purpose of settling important matters that arise. In most cases, a written record-called minutes- of the proceedings is required. The minutes serve as a permanent record of the decisions reached and the actions that are to be taken and inform those who were not present at the meeting about what took place. Nearly every business employee, at one time or another may serve as secretary to a group or committee and thus be responsible for keeping an accurate set of minutes.

The accurate recording of the proceedings of all meetings is an important function, for the minutes usually serve as the only historical record of a meeting.

There is probably no one best way to record what happens at a meeting. The secretary of the meeting must be the judge of what is unimportant (and hence not worth recording). If an agenda of the meeting has been prepared beforehand, the secretary should receive a copy. The agenda lists briefly the issue to be entertained and acts as a guide to the person who presides at the meeting. The agenda also helps the secretary check to be sure that all scheduled items are accounted for in the minutes. Much of the success of good note-taking revolves around the personal efficiency of the secretary.

A. Tips for Writing Minutes of meetings

These days, many of us find ourselves in the position of taking minutes without a clue of how to go about it.

Have you ever been asked to take the minutes of a meeting yet were not sure how to begin? Are you an expert at taking minutes but would like to learn some new tips? Then take a look at the following important tips for Writing Minutes of Meetings.

- **Identify what the meeting is about.**

Review the agenda including the names of attending participants in order to become familiar with the context of the meeting. The more you know about the upcoming discussions and participants, the more effective your notes will be.

- **Use the agenda to format the minutes.**

Before the meeting begins, prepare a template with the agenda and leave plenty of space for notes. Remember to include all pertinent information, the date and time, agenda,

participants, time adjourned, next meeting date, etc. Prepare an attendance checklist especially if you are not familiar with the group or committee.

- **Where possible, the note taker should not be a participant.**

Be impartial and objective. It is very difficult to take minutes of a meeting that you are expected to participate in. As note taker you are not in charge of the meeting, the chairperson is. Your focus must be on capturing the discussion of the meeting, not on leading the discussion.

- **Writing minutes is not the same as transcribing.**

Keep your minutes brief and to the point. The minutes of a meeting should be a snapshot of discussions and decisions. Effective minute taking does not mean you are recording every word that was said, this could lead to missing important points.

- **Attach any documentation given out at the meeting.**

If any materials or brochures were distributed at the meeting, include copies with the meeting notes.

- **Type up minutes as soon as possible.**

It is good practice to put together a draft of the minutes as soon as possible, while it is still fresh in your mind. The longer you put this first draft off, the greater the probability of forgetting something crucial.

- **Proofing**

Be sure to check and double-check your draft before sending to the participants. Keep all rough notes until the minutes have been approved.

- **Record meetings if possible.**

If possible, use a tape recorder to record the meeting and then prepare your notes from the recording.

To avoid wasting your time spent in meetings, be sure your notes and minutes answer these 10 questions:

1. When was the meeting?
2. Who attended?
3. Who did not attend? (Include this information if it matters.)
4. What topics were discussed?
5. What was decided?
6. What actions were agreed upon?
7. Who is to complete the actions, by when?
8. Were materials distributed at the meeting? If so, are copies or a link available?
9. Is there anything special the reader of the minutes should know or do?
10. Is a follow-up meeting scheduled? If so, when? where? why?

Distribute (by email) the agenda *before* the meeting, so that members of the group have a chance to prepare for the meeting.

Include an item "AOB" (Any Other Business) at the end of the agenda as a place to include last-minute items.

Keep the minutes short and to the point. Don't waffle. If you want to record every word said, you might consider a tape recording to *supplement* the minutes.

Where a member of the group is asked to perform a set task, record an "Action" point; this makes it easy to read through the minutes at the next meeting and "tick off" the action points.

Either write the minutes as the meeting happens (if the minutes secretary is a fast typist!), or immediately after the meeting. The sooner they are done, the more accurate they are.

Do's and Don'ts:

Do write minutes soon after the meeting--preferably within 48 hours. That way, those who attended can be reminded of action items, and those who did not attend will promptly know what happened.

Don't skip writing minutes just because everyone attended the meeting and knows what happened. Meeting notes serve as a record of the meeting long after people forget what happened.

Don't describe all the "he said, she said" details unless those details are very important. Record topics discussed, decisions made, and action items.

Don't include any information that will embarrass anyone (for example, "Then Terry left the room in tears").

Do use positive language. Rather than describing the discussion as *heated* or *angry*, use *passionate*, *lively*, or *energetic*--all of which are just as true as the negative words.

Do have a new year filled with productive meetings captured efficiently in crisp, clear meeting notes!

B. What do the minutes contain?

Before each meeting an agenda should be drawn up, detailing the matters to be discussed at the meeting. A set of minutes should normally include the following information:

- time, date and place of meeting;
- list of people attending;
- list of absent members of the group;
- approval of the previous meeting's minutes, and any matters arising from those minutes;
- for each item in the agenda, a record of the principal points discussed and decisions taken;
- time, date and place of next meeting;
- name of person taking the minutes.

C. Format of Minutes

Various formats are used for the minutes of a meeting. The secretary's main job, however, is to make sure that all the essential information appears in a neat, well arranged form. Some organizations prefer to emphasize the main points on the agenda by using a standardized format.

The minutes **example format A** below illustrate an acceptable format. Notice the standard pattern and the topical headings that are used for all meetings and the way in which the motions and discussion are concisely summarized.

Others use a more traditional format in which the proceedings of the meeting are written out in rather complete detail. The **example format B** illustrates this style.

Example A

EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION OF MIDWEST PRODUCERS, INC. MINUTES OF MEETING OF MARCH 15, 19--

TIME, PLACE, The regular monthly meeting of the Employees' Association of
ATTENDANCE Midwest Producers, Inc., was held in the Board of Directors' room
at 5:30 p.m. The president, Jan Dixon, presided. All members and
officers were present, with the exception of Ila Torgeson, Vice
president.

MINUTES The minutes of the last meeting, February 15, 19---, were read and
approved.

OFFICERS' REPORTS Treasurer: The treasurer reported receipts of \$450,
disbursement of 150 and a balance of 967 as of March 1, 19--.
Tony Valenti moved the acceptance of the report. Anne Terry
seconded the motion. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS Chairperson William Ferris presented the report of the nominating committee. The nominees are:

President: Alice Foster

Vice President: George McFee

Secretary: Andrew Scott

Treasurer: Harriet Sorga

The president called for nominations from the floor. Since no additional nominations were made, Rosa Sanchez moved that nominations be closed and that a unanimous ballot be cast for the slate of officers presented by the committee. The motion was seconded by Yamen Abdulah. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS Preliminary plans for the annual Retirement Dinner to be held June 30 were discussed. Tory's Inn and Edwin's were suggested for this event. The president is to appoint a committee to look into the possibility of holding the dinner at either of these places and to report to the group at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS The president reported that the Board of Directors is considering a policy change regarding tuition reimbursement to employees for college courses taken. The change would involve getting approval for the course in advance. There was considerable discussion regarding this change, some of the group feeling that sometimes it is not possible to get the approval in advance. The feeling of the group was to recommend to the board that the words, "unless prior approval is not feasible is not feasible," be added to this change in policy.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Meteya

Karen Meteyak

Example B**MINUTES OF THE MEETING****Of the Board of Directors****Midwest producers.Inc.****March 1, 19—****Presiding:** Rita Chambers**Present:** Frank Kapa

Andrea Maez

Theresa Morgan

Lawrence Rogers

Morgan Yang

Absent: Louis Ulrich

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Ms. Chambers. The principal topics for discussion concerned recommended changes in two company policies, one related to donation to charitable organizations and the other related to reimbursing employees for tuition for college courses.

With reference to donations to charitable organizations, Ms. Morgan proposed that all donations be limited to a maximum of \$ 250. After some discussion, the Board concurred and voted unanimously to add this limit to the present policies concerning charitable donations.

Mr. Rogers proposed that tuition reimbursement should be made only if the employee has received prior approval of the course submitted for tuition reimbursement. The present policy does not require that approval be given in advance. Mr. Yang was opposed to the change and suggested that this proposal be tabled until the next meeting. In the meantime, employee opinion regarding the change should be sought. The Board voted to table the proposal until the April meeting and asked Mr. Yang to consult with the Executive Board

of the Employees' Association regarding pros and cons of this change. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Frances R. Post
 Frances R. Post, Secretary

In any format of minutes the following items are usually included:

Minutes of the last meeting

Matters arising from the last minutes

The agenda of the meeting itself

Any Other Business (AOB).

Minutes also show who is responsible for carrying out an action decided in a meeting. In a column on the right-hand side, you can put person's initials in bold to show the he or she will perform the action. This can take the following form:

Example of Minutes Form

Name of Organization:			
Purpose of Meeting:			
Date/Time:			
Chair:			
Topic	Discussion	Action	Person Responsible
1.....			
2.....			
3.....			
4.....			

Minutes also need headings so that readers can skim for the information they need.

Your template may include these:

Topics :

Decisions :

Actions Agreed Upon:

Persons responsible:

Deadline:

Next Meeting:

Date and Time:

Location:

Agenda Items:

Reporting what was said

When you take 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 speech verbs.

Here's a list that you might find useful:

suggested = "CA suggested raising the budget."

promised = "MB promised to find out more."

discussed = "Three issues were discussed."

decided = "It was decided to delay action until the next meeting."

agreed = "Everyone agreed on the proposal." "LS agreed to get further information."

"Everyone agreed with the chairman."

brought up = "The issue of pay was brought up."

mentioned = "RJ mentioned the possibility of extra funds."

reported = "The Sales Manager reported on the results of the trade fair."

asked = "The Chairman asked to see a copy of the report."

wondered = "DM wondered if there would be extra funding."

recommended = "Five strategies were recommended."

explained = "SB explained the reason for the delay."

emphasised = "TA emphasised the necessity of a new product range."

stressed = "RR stressed his commitment to the project."

complained = "TM complained about the delays."

Activity 6.13

- A. The following is a sample minutes form by a secretary (minutes person) of The Department Appeals Committee. In pairs, study the form carefully and identify the parts included in the minutes.

Minutes of Department Appeals Committee

Minutes (date)

The Department Appeals Committee met on -----at (time) in (building and room)

Members Present: -----

Members Absent: -----

1. The meeting was called to order to consider an appeal of a grade by----- per his/her request, an open/closed meeting was held.
2. -----was appealing the grade of 'C' he received in Course number-----, (name of course) during Semester-----, 2006-2007.
3. -----presented the rationale for his appeal and responded to questions from Committee members.
4. Professor-----enumerated the grading criteria she used in the class and the basis for the grade given to ----- Professor----- responded to questions from Committee members.
5. Moved by (name of professor) and seconded by (name of professor) that in accordance with The University Legislation, section 19.85 (1) (a), the Committee convened in closed session for the purpose of deliberations and action on the appeal submitted by----- The motion was approved unanimously.

5. The following motion was made by (name of professor) and seconded by (name of Professor):

The (name of committee), the designated academic appeals committee of the Department of -----, concludes that there is sufficient /insufficient evidence to suggest that -----was graded in Course Number-----, (name of course), by procedures other than those stated in the course syllabus and subsequently modified by Professor-----. The committee, therefore, does/does not recommend any change of grade or course status as requested by-----
-----.

Motion passed: -----yes; -----no; -----abstain.

6. The meeting was adjourned at (time).

-----.

Respectfully submitted

(Signature)

(Name of minutes Person)

- A. Now in groups of four write the minutes of this meeting of the Department Appeals Committee in full form.

Activity 6.14

In groups of four assume that you are the secretary of the Students' Union Association, charged with the responsibility for taking minutes at all meetings and distributing copies to each member. From the following information prepare in concise form the minutes of the latest meeting:

1. The Meeting, held in Room 5A, Administrative Building was called to order by president of The Students' Union- Asfaw Gashaye at 5:30 p.m., Sept.,12,2007.
2. Correction in minutes of preceding meeting (August 12) approved.

3. Binyam Teklu who was the chairperson of Income Generating Committee has reviewed the strategies suggested to strengthen the financial capacity of the association- preparing exhibitions, preparing Beauty Contest programs etc.
4. From twelve attendants of the meeting ten have warmly accepted the idea. However the other two members- Ali Mohammed and Fantahun T/Mariam have expressed their suspicion if there is no a clear procedure concerning the practicability of the things suggested. And this motion was taken by all the members as of a primary concern.
5. An agreement has been reached by all the participants that a workable procedure should be prepared and brought to the next meeting (October 12,2007) and a special committee having four members is nominated so with the responsibility to prepare the procedure.
6. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m., with the understanding that the next meeting would be at the same place and, to begin at 6:30 p.m.

6.5. Letter Writing

Introduction

Letter writing is part of our daily life. We write letters for different purposes. Writing letters, reports, notes and other communications are important skills for business and personal life. Good letters help to get results, where poor letters fail. People judge others on the quality of their writing, so it's helpful to write well. The letters which we write can be broadly divided into two types as:

5.5.1. Social Letters:

These are letters which are written to accomplish a certain social need. The letters which can be included under this category are greeting letters, love letters, congratulatory letters, invitation letters, and other personal letters. These letters are written to satisfy a certain social need such as, to greet somebody, to express love to somebody, to invite somebody or simply to share some information.

Regarding their format, social letters are usually written by using informal language.

Congratulatory Letters

Job promotions, honors bestowed by groups or organizations, appointments or elections to office, and other achievements of a business or of its employees are all appropriate occasions for writing congratulatory messages. In fact, such occasions are excellent opportunities. Since everyone wants to be respected and admired, a cordial letter of congratulation on such important occasions will always build the reader's goodwill toward the writer, and such goodwill, of course, is a valuable asset to businesspeople.

Examples: Congratulating Individuals:

Suppose that you are a business executive and you read in the local newspaper that a fellow member of the Administrative Management Society has just been promoted to an important position in her company. As a thoughtful person, you might write a congratulatory letter like the following:

Dear Meg,

I was delighted to see in yesterday's Times the story about your promotion to Chief Engineer at Continental Shelf Mining Company, I know that you earned the promotion through years of hard work. I also know that such good things couldn't happen to a nicer person.

It is always a pleasure to see someone's true ability win recognition. Congratulations and best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

Suppose that you want to write a letter of congratulations for a friend who graduated from some university. You can write a letter like the following:

Dear,

You tried really hard and there is no doubt it has been a struggle- you've had to make sacrifices and at times you must have wondered if it was worth all the effort-but you didn't give up and your success is an impressive reward. May the degree that you've received be a key...to open doors and make your dream become a reality, to lead to the fulfillment of the things you've planned to do, and bring you satisfaction in the years ahead of you.

Once again congratulations on your achievement!!

Melese Girma

Activity 6.15

Imagine that Getachew was a classmate of yours in a college. You read in a newspaper that Getachew, after only three years of service at the National Bank of Ethiopia has won a full scholarship to pursue his study in the U.S. Discussing in groups of three on what to include, write a letter of congratulations to Getachew on his achievements.

6.5.2. Business Letters

These letters are written for a certain business purpose. They are written between organizations or between organizations and people. Because of this, they are also called official letters. Since these letters are written for organizations and offices, they are written by using a formal language.

The business letter is the basic means of communication between two companies. It is estimated that close to 100 million *Business Letters* are written each workday. It is a

document typically sent externally to those outside a company but is also sent internally to those within a company.

Most business letters have a formal tone. You should write a business letter whenever you need a permanent record that you sent the information enclosed. Because you generally send business letters to other professionals, always include a formal salutation.

Writing a business letter is like any other type of technical communication. First you have to analyze your audience and determine your purpose. The typical audience is other professionals. However, you might also write business letters to your co-workers. These audiences generally require you provide a detailed background about your purpose.

Because a business letter is a communication from one person to another, a letter must convey a courteous, positive tone. Look at the situation from your reader's point of view and adjust the content and tone to meet the audience's needs.

A. Purpose of a Business Letter

You will write business letters 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 even function as advertisements at times.

Business letters can be challenging to write, because you have to consider how to keep your readers' attention.

Writing business letters is like 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.

B. Points to be considered in writing Business Letters**Keep it short and to the point**

Letters involving business (personal or corporate) should be concise, factual, and focused. Try to never exceed one page or you will be in risk of losing your reader.

A business letter should be clear and concise. To achieve this, you should plan before starting to write. If you plan ahead, this will save time for you for writing. During the planning stage, ask yourself a few simple questions. Jot down your answers to create an outline before you start writing. The following are some of the questions which one should ask.

Who am I writing this letter to? (Identify Your Audience)**Focus on the recipient's needs.**

While writing the letter, focus on the information requirements of your audience, the intended addressee. What essential information does that person need to know through this communication? What will be their expectations when they open the letter? Have you addressed all of these?

Identifying your audience always comes first. Are you writing to more than one person, to someone you don't know, or to someone you have known for a long time? This will help you determine how formal the letter needs to be. You may need to introduce yourself briefly in the letter if the recipient does not know you. You may also need to find out the updated address and title of the recipient. This is a good time to confirm the correct spelling of first and last names.

Why am I writing this letter? (Purpose for Writing the Letter)

The main reason for the letter should be understood from the subject line and first few sentences. You may cover more than one thing in one business letter, but there will almost always be a general reason for the letter. Identify your main goal and what you hope to accomplish.

How can I organize my points logically?

Think about how you would organize your thoughts if you were speaking rather than writing to the recipient. First, you would introduce yourself. Second, you would state your concern or reason for writing. After the main content of your letter, you would include information on how you can be contacted. The end of the letter is also a place to express gratitude, wish good-luck, or offer sympathy.

Whenever you are writing, try hard to use simple and appropriate language. Your letter should use simple straightforward language, for clarity purposes. Use short sentences and don't let paragraphs exceed three or four sentences. As much as possible, use language and terminology familiar to the intended recipient. Do not use technical terms and acronyms without explaining them, unless you are certain that the addressee is familiar with them.

Proofreading a Business Letter (Re-read and Make the Necessary Revisions)

It is advisable that you should proofread your letter. "Proofread" means to read a text carefully to check it for errors and general tone. You should always proofread a business letter before sending it. Do a first draft of the letter, and then carefully review and revise it. Put yourself in the place of the addressee (receiver). Imagine yourself receiving the letter. How would you react to it? Would it answer all of your questions? Does it deal with all of the key issues? Are the language and tone appropriate? Sometimes reading it

out loud to one's self can be helpful. When you actually "hear" the words, it is easy to tell if it "sounds" right, or not.

You should check the spelling and grammar of what you have written. A letter is a direct reflection of the person sending it, and by extension, the organization that person works for. When the final content of the letter is settled, make sure that you check its spelling and grammar. Sending a letter with obvious spelling and grammar mistakes looks sloppy and unprofessional. In such cases, the recipient can't really be blamed for seeing this as an indication as to how you (and your organization) probably do most other things.

If possible, ask another person to double-check your letter.

A summary of this section could keep your letter short, factual, and to the point. Don't write it more than one page in length, unless there is some reason to make it longer.

You should know that business people are so busy that they do not like to read beyond the first page. If your letter is longer, there is a good chance it will be thrown away into some basket, and thus, it may not get a chance to be read.

Remember, when letter writing, detailed information can be included in attachments that can be referred to by name in the body of the letter. Stick to the absolute essential facts in the main letter.

C. Parts of a Business Letter

A **business letter** is more formal than a personal letter. There are **six** parts to a business letter.

1. **The Heading.** This contains the return address (usually two or three lines) with the date on the last line. In other words, this part contains the address of the writer and the date on which the letter is written.

Sometimes it may be necessary to include a line after the address and before the date for a phone number, fax number, E-mail address, or something similar.

This part is usually written at the top right corner of the paper. (Remember, there are also other formats).

2. **The Inside Address.** This is the address you are sending your letter to. Make it as complete as possible. Include titles and names if you know them.

This is always on the left margin, just below the heading.

Skip (jump) a line after the heading before the inside address. Skip another line after the inside address before the greeting.

3. **The Greeting (Also called the salutation)** The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word "Dear" and the name of the person, or simply it may be written as "Dear Sir, Dear Madam, or Dear Sir/Madam. Remember that every word in the greeting begins with a capital letter.

The greeting in a business letter usually ends in a comma, (sometimes in a colon).

4. **The Body.** The body is just the letter itself. It may be divided into several paragraphs. It is generally recommended that business letters should be written in a simple language and short sentences. A business letter is never hand written. Skip a line between the greeting and the body. Skip a line between the body and the close.

5. **The Complimentary Close.** This short, polite closing (like Sincerely yours, Yours truly, or respectfully yours)) ends with a comma.

6. **The Signature Line.** Skip two lines (unless you have unusually wide or narrow lines) and type out (your) name to be signed.

Some organizations and companies may have formats that vary slightly.

D. Types of Business Letters

There are a lot of kinds of business letters depending on their purposes. These include inquiry letters, claim or compliant letters, adjustment letters, employment letters, letters of order, letters of credit, letters of contract agreement, letters of new business opening, letters of business name change, and so on. Because there are a lot of kinds of business letters, let's have a discussion of only the following.

Letters of Inquiry

A letter of inquiry is a letter which asks someone for specific information. Letters of enquiry describe what the writer wants and why. In some cases, the recipient will have a clear interest in responding to your letter. In other cases, such as a request for specific information on a product, the recipient may or may not be as motivated to respond quickly. Consequently, always make the tone of the letter friendly and make it easy for the recipient to identify and provide the information you need.

At least once in our lives each one of us have felt the need to inquire about one thing or the other. Different people have different ideas about making an inquiry depending upon their convenience. However, inquiry letters continues to be one of the most significant tools of obtaining information. A well written inquiry letter always encourages the recipient to answer the questions but conversely a badly drafted letter will immediately turn off the reader's mood and eventually your chances of getting a reply would go forever. This suggests that the contents of a letter play a significant role in determining the probability of getting a reply. Ensure that you clearly mention the purpose of writing the letter in the beginning only so that the reader can relate the body of the letter without any trouble. Include a list of questions and the information that you would require in a clear and specific easy-to-read manner.

Consider the following points while writing inquiry letters to an individual or for business:

- Always be polite in your writing because by making a request you are asking for someone's time and resources.

- Try not to send an inquiry letter when you have the means to find out yourself.
- Keep your letter as short and simple but make sure that you include everything required to explain what you exactly wish to inquire and what you want the recipient to do in response to your letter.
- At least give the person, company or organization a couple of weeks time to respond to your inquiry before sending him a follow up letter or calling up several times to remind of the letter.
- Do not forget to include your contact details such as your cell phone or landline number, email address in the letter so that the person can contact you as soon as he is able to answer the queries.
- Always be thankful to the person who responds to your inquiries. You can send a note of thanks expressing your gratitude and mention how the information helped or can help you. Besides you can also mention that you would feel honored if you can be of any help to the person concerned.

More often than not, an inquiry letter asks people for specific information such as a request for promotional material. However, while requesting for specific information on a product, the recipient may or may not be as interested to respond quickly. The idea behind writing an inquiry letter is to extract relevant information from a resourceful person and this calls for the right usage of tone (language) of the letter. It is essential to make your letter appear as humble as possible thereby making it easy for the recipient to determine and provide you with the required information.

It is a good idea to start your letter by introducing yourself and giving your current position or status like student, scientist, teacher and the like. Do not forget to mention how you came to know about the person or the entity you are writing to. Do not deviate from the central purpose of your letter and clearly mention by what date you would like to get the response that you are requesting. Try not to sound aggressive and always allow your words to reflect respect for the recipient's time and effort.

Following tips would help you greatly while responding to an inquiry letter:

- Express your appreciation for the person's interest and faith in you.
- Try to personally respond to the inquiry as you might wish to include reports or other relevant piece of information along with the response letter.
- In case you cannot personally respond to the person's queries, always inform the person about it. You can also suggest someone who can answer his or her queries in an appropriate manner.

If you could answer the inquiry letter then close it by mentioning that you would be happy to help the reader in the future whenever, he/she requires any further help. You can also wish him or her good in his/her future endeavors.

Format of a Letter of Inquiry

Follow this format in writing a letter of inquiry:

1. In the first paragraph, identify yourself and, if appropriate, your position, and your institution or firm.
2. In the second paragraph, briefly explain why you are writing and how you will use the requested information. Offer to keep the response confidential if such an offer seems reasonable.
3. List the specific information you need. You can phrase your requests as questions or as a list of specific items of information. In either case, make each item clear and discrete.
4. Conclude your letter by offering your reader some incentive for responding.

The following letter of inquiry is written by a computer programmer requesting specific information about an upcoming release of a software product.

In other words, an inquiry letter contains the following information.

Subject Heading

This should inform the reader that this is an enquiry or request; e.g.

Enquiry about Textbooks

Request for Brochure

Query about Website

Question regarding Product Components

First Paragraph

This should tell the reader what you want; e.g.

Please send me... (for things that the organization offers to send)

I would be grateful if you could tell me... (for things that are not normally offered)

I am writing to enquire whether... (to see if something is possible)

I would especially like to know... (+ a more detailed request)

Could you also... (+ an additional enquiry or request)

Second Paragraph

This paragraph tells the reader why you are contacting his or her organization, and gives further details of the enquiry. There are two reasons why you may contact an organization:

- You have contacted this organization before, and want to again.
- You have not contacted this organization before, but you have heard about them. You should describe from where, such as from an advert or a recommendation; e.g.

I saw your advert in the HK Daily on Friday, 27 April 2007.

Your company was recommended to me by Ms. Elsie Wong of Far Eastern Logistics.

Last Paragraph

This paragraph should contain a polite expression and/or an expression of thanks to the reader. The degree of politeness (and therefore the length), depends on how unusual or difficult your request is. Possible language includes:

Thanks. (For a very informal and normal enquiry or request)

I look forward to hearing from you.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your assistance.

Thank you very much for your kind assistance.

I appreciate that this is an unusual request, but I would be very grateful for any help you could provide. I look forward to hearing from you.

If you think the reader might have further questions, you can suggest that he or she contact you; e.g. *'If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me'.*

Sample Inquiry Letter

*Golden Gate Engineering
Prince Square, Prince Street,
Kowloon*

27 April, 2007.

*ProSkills Training Center
Jubilee Building
Silver Road
Wan Chai*

Dear Sir or Madam,

Enquiry about Quality Control Course

I am writing to enquire whether your company could offer a course on Quality Control for our managers.

I saw your advert in the HK Daily on Friday, 27 April 2007, and the Quality Control Training Course (Ref.: QC 101) mentioned in the advert might be suitable for us. I would like to know if it is possible for you to offer a 3-month training course starting before or, at the latest, on Wednesday, 16 May 2007, for a group of 20. Could you send us some information about the teaching staff and the possible schedule for this course ?

I am looking forward to receiving your reply.

Yours faithfully,

Chapman Au

Chapman Au

Managing Director

Activity 6.16

Imagine that you are the manager of a private bank called All United here at Bahir Dar and you have read an advertisement in the October 6, 2007 issue of Addis Admas Newspaper that Gate Computer Center gives a six months training on computer courses- *Windows 2000, XL, Access* etc. Write a letter of enquiry on whether the computer center can give a two-month training on the stated courses for six of your new employees. In groups of four look at the sample letter above and make a discussion on what your letter should look like and write the letter including the necessary details.

Claim (Compliant) Letters

A complaint letter, also known as a claim, advises a business that an error has been made or that a defect has been discovered. The **objective** is to provide detailed information regarding the error or defect. It also serves as a legal document notifying the recipient that a correction or adjustment is being requested.

In order to get your problem resolved, put your complaint in writing! A respectful, yet firm, complaint letter may help you accomplish what you want.

Complaint letters can be a very effective way of making your voice heard.

Keep in mind that your reader is most likely a trained customer service professional and not the person responsible for the error or defect. Rather than being angry, use a firm but polite tone when stating your complaint.

The scope of a complaint letter should include only the relevant facts validating your claim and a request that appropriate corrective steps be taken. The scope may also detail the options that you are willing to accept in satisfaction of the claim.

Consider the following tips to keep in mind as you plan your complaint/claim letter:

- Assume the problem was an accident(Keep in mind that most errors are unintentional)
- Do not write at the height of your anger.
- Assume the person you are writing will respond positively to your request.
- Request specific action.
- Provide all relevant details.
- Be courteous; avoid threatening statements.
- Be brief. Keep your letter to one page, and write short paragraphs, rather than long ones.
- Be honest and straightforward, and include sufficient detail to back up your claim and to show that you have thoroughly researched the subject. However, omit irrelevant details. Keep your letter concise and professional.
- Maintain a firm but respectful tone, and avoid aggressive, accusing language.
- Send only photocopies of receipts and other documents, and retain all **originals**. Keep a copy of the letter for your records.
- If a company has repeatedly given you bad service and refuses to correct the situation and you feel that your only recourse is to pursue legal action, voice your feelings in a tactful but firm way. However, don't threaten legal action unless you are willing to follow through with it.
- If your letter focuses on a single individual, avoid making generalizations about the company or organization.
- If you need to make a complaint to or about people that you will still have contact with on a regular basis, your letter needs to accomplish its purpose without destroying the relationship. Use tact, and be direct, but respectful.
- Include your contact information (name, address, phone number, and e-mail address), if desired, so that the person(s) can reach you to discuss any questions or concerns.
- If a first letter does not bring action, assume a stronger but still respectful tone in the next one. If two or three letters do not resolve the problem, send one to the president or CEO of the company or entity. In each case, be firm but polite.

Sample Complaint Letter

Notice of Claim of Defective Goods

Date.....

To.....

We have purchased a product sold or manufactured by you described as:.....

One of our customers has advised us of a product defect in the following particulars:

Name of customer-----

Approximate date of purchase-----

Nature of defect-----

In the event suit is brought against us arising from Breach of Warranty of Merchantability, we shall in a like manner look to you for full reimbursement.

This letter is provided to give you earliest possible notice of a potential claim.

Very truly,

.....

Adjustment Business Letter

Here you respond to a claim letter and tell the customer how you plan to handle the situation. Regardless of what your final decision is, your purpose remains the same: show that you value the customer's business and concerns, and that your company is fair and reasonable.

If the customer's complaint can be resolved, simply express your regret about the situation, state the correction you will make, and end on a positive note by encouraging future business with your company.

If you cannot solve the customer's problem, then the letter becomes more difficult. In this situation, the letter will have four parts:

- *attempt to meet the customer on some neutral ground:* consider an expression of regret but not an apology, perhaps even thanking the customer for bringing it to your attention.
- *explain why your company is not at fault:* explain the steps that led to the dissatisfaction clearly and concisely.
- *try to create goodwill for future business transactions:* offer a special discount on a future transaction.

Sample Adjustment Letter

Apology and Replacement of Damaged Goods

Dear.....

It was distressing to learn that the chocolate we shipped to your firm last week arrived in bits and pieces. Per your request, a new shipment for 30 lbs. left our dock this morning and is scheduled for afternoon delivery to you on May 26th. Please turn over the damaged goods to the driver at the time of delivery.

I am sorry that this unfortunate incident occurred and I sincerely appreciate your continued patronage.

Yours sincerely

Activity 6.17

Being in pairs, imagine that you are Ato Yilma Kassahun- an owner of a private furniture company named *General Furnitures Company* and you have received the following items from another business organization called OFP on October 13, 2007:

125 arm chairs

67 tables

40 cabinets

And you have learnt that 45 arm chairs which were sent had not been with the type you had wanted.

1. Write a complaint letter to OFP.
2. Imagining that you are the manager of OFP write another letter of adjustment to Ato Yilma.

Application Letters

The letter of application is essentially a sales letter in which you are marketing your skills, abilities, and knowledge. Remember that you may be competing with many other applicants. The immediate objective of the application letter and accompanying **resume/CV** is to attract the attention of the person who screens and hires job applicants. Your ultimate goal is to obtain an interview.

The successful application letter accomplishes three tasks: It catches the reader's attention favorably; it convinces the reader that you are a qualified candidate for the job, and it requests an interview.

When you are writing a letter of application, do the following:

- Identify the job by title and let the recipient know how you heard about it.
- Summarize your qualifications for the job, specifically your work experience, activities that show your leadership skills, and your education.
- Refer the reader to your enclosed resume.

- Ask for an interview, stating where you can be reached and when you will be available.
- If you are applying for a specific job, include information pertinent to the position that is not included in your general resume.

Those who make hiring decisions review many letters of application. To save them time as well as to call attention to your strengths as a candidate, you should state your objective directly at the beginning of the letter.

I am seeking a position as a manager in your Data Center. In such a management position I can use my master's degree in information systems and experience as a programmer/analyst to solve business problems.

In the succeeding paragraphs, expand on the qualifications you mentioned in your opening. Add any appropriate details, highlighting experience listed on your resume that is especially pertinent to the job you are seeking. Close your letter with a request for an interview. Prepare your letter with utmost care, proofreading it carefully.

Sample application Letter

Woreda 15 Kebele 2
House No 333
P.O.Box 40

June 15, 2006

Mr. Asfaw Zekarias, Editor
Readers Review Magazine, Inc.
P.O.Box 1000
Addis Ababa

Dear Mr. Asfaw,

I am applying for the position of administrative assistant that was called to my attention by the Placement Office of your organization. I am confident that you will find my qualifications for this position merit your serious consideration.

A summary of my qualifications is enclosed. You will find that my college training provides an excellent foundation for the position for which I am applying. I have always been interested in writing, and you will see from my resume that I have concentrated heavily on English and the communication arts. I have held editorial positions in both high school and college. Furthermore, my skill in shorthand and typewriting has been used in these positions, as well as in part-time jobs I held while attending college.

As an administrative assistant, I would welcome the opportunity to assist in an editorial capacity as well as to use my secretarial skills in performing my duties as your assistant. I have had experience in both proofreading and layout. My secretarial skills are well above average, and I enjoy working with others. You will find that I am eager to learn and happiest when I keep busy.

If you wish to telephone me to arrange a personal interview, you can reach me at 0911-976744 between 3 and 5:30 p.m. any weekday. I can make arrangements to come to your office at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,
Girma Menan

Enclosure

6.6. Writing Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Resume

A resume is an outline or summary of a job applicant's background and qualifications for a job. The way in which it is prepared and the information it supplies help determine whether the applicant will be requested to appear for a personal interview. Poorly prepared resumes usually wind up in the wastebasket. Therefore, your resume should be prepared with great care and should emphasize your qualifications that best meet the requirements of the job you are seeking. During the interview, the resume may serve as an agenda of topics to be discussed. Prepare a cover letter or letter of application to mail with your resume.

Because you may apply for several job openings, it may not be practical to type an original copy of a resume for each job. On the other hand, a carbon copy

If you are looking for a job, then it is very important that you understand how to offer yourself in the best way to an employer. This is done by writing a 'CV' (curriculum vitae, = 'life story' in Latin), called in some countries a 'resume'.

Different countries may have different requirements and styles for CV resumes. So you must follow the correct practice for your culture and country. However, there are some important principles which are forwarded by different writers.

A. *WHAT IS A CV FOR?*

A CV is quite simply an 'advert' to sell yourself to an employer. You should send a CV to an employer when they ask for one in a job advert, or when you are enquiring if any jobs are available. So the purpose of your CV is to make you attractive, interesting, worth considering to the company and so receive a job interview.

An employer may have several hundred enquiries about a single job; he or she will only choose a few people who appear suitable for interview.

A CV or Curriculum Vitae is:

- Your Life History
- Your Job History
- Your Achievements
- Your Skills

A **CV** or **curriculum vitae** is a marketing tool. With your *CV* you will be able to promote yourself. Imagine the CV as being a brochure that will list the benefits of a particular service. The service being your time and skills! When writing a CV look at it from your employers point of view. Would you stand out against the competition (the other candidates) and would the manager want to talk you for a possible **job**? You have to ask yourself these questions when writing your CV or curriculum vitae.

Remember a CV is usually your first contact with potential employers and will open the door. If you are invited for an **interview** you would then be in a position to explain and expand on what is in your CV.

A CV is an essential tool in your **job search**. When applying for a vacancy you generally first have to send your CV to present yourself to the prospective employer.

B. WHAT TO INCLUDE

Although one resume may vary from another in organization and lay out, most are commonly divided into the following sections:

Personal details

Name, home address, college address, phone number, email address, date of birth, marital status, nationality, If your name does not obviously show if you are male or female, include this!

Education

Give places of education where you have studied - most recent education first. Include subject options taken in each year of your course. Include any special project, thesis, or dissertation work.

Pre-college courses (high school, etc.) should then be included, including grades. Subjects taken and passed just before college will be of most interest.

Work experience

List your most recent experience first. Give the name of your employer, job title, and very important, what you actually did and achieved in that job.

Interests

They will be particularly interested in activities where you have leadership or responsibility, or which involve you in relating to others in a team. A one-person interest, such as stamp-collecting, may be of less interest to them, unless it connects with the work you wish to do. Give only enough detail to explain. (If you were captain of a sports team, they do not want to know the exact date you started, how many games you played, and how many wins you had! They will ask at the interview, if they are interested.) If you have published any articles, jointly or by yourself, give details. If you have been involved in any type of volunteer work, do give details.

Skills

Ability in other languages, computing experience, or possession of a driving licence should be included.

References: You should include some individuals who can witness about your abilities if the organization towards which you are applying requires more information. The individuals could be your instructors, your advisor, your former employers, etc.

Look at the following Resume (CV) for the above applicant

1. Personal Data

Name: Girma Menan
Date of birth: June 14, 1971
Place of birth: Woldya
Marital status: Single
Nationality: Ethiopian
Address: P.O.Box 40
Addis Ababa
Tel. 0911-976744

2. Educational Background

<i>Year</i>	<i>School</i>
<i>1978 - 1985</i>	<i>Goh Elementary and Junior School</i>
<i>1986 - 1990</i>	<i>Kokebe Tsibah Senior Secondary School</i>
<i>1991 -1994</i>	<i>Addis Ababa University</i>

3. Work Experience

July, 1995- Sept. 1997 : *Center Furniture Manufacturing Company, Addis Ababa*

Duties: *General secretarial work in sales department, including taking and transcribing dictation; accounting; filing;*

Sept 1997 to present: *Assistant editor of Addis Zemen newspaper.*

4. Language

Good command of written and spoken English

5. Special Skills

Computer literate

6. References

(*with permission*)

1. Mr. Feleke Hailu, President

Center Furniture Manufacturing Company

Woreda 10

Tel. 0911 543323

2. Ato Kedir Shenkute

Addis Ababa University

Tel. 0911 323344

Activity 6.18

Imagine that you are recently graduated from Bahir Dar University and you have got your B.Ed in English. While you are reading newspapers you find an advertisement on The Ethiopian Herald issued on Sept. 20, 2010 that Addis Ababa University needs to employ a new English instructor as a graduate assistant as per the salary rate of the Ministry of Education.

1. Apply for this position stating the necessary details
2. Write a brief Resume (Curriculum Vitae) including your personal details, educational background, experience, qualification, references etc.

6.7. Check list






Dear students,

You have now completed "Unit Six" of the Module and we would like you to reflect on your skills and knowledge about the topic under discussion. We have provided a set of questions and if you have a good understanding and skills, please underline "Yes", and if you need further revision and clarification, underline "No".

From what I have read and done in unit one I can:

* Keep journals and/or diaries	Yes	No
* Condense passages or extended texts in fewer words and sentences	Yes	No
* Expand short texts into detailed forms	Yes	No
* Record minutes of different minutes based on some clear format	Yes	No
* Write letters of different purposes	Yes	No
* Write Curriculum Vitae which I can use when I apply for a job	Yes	No

REFERENCES

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-  Ghosh, R.,P.(1997). Good English, Spoken and Written: A text Book of English Grammar and Composition. Calcutta: Modern Book Agency Pvt. Ltd.
-  Jayakaran, I. (2nd ed.) (nd.). Everyone's Guide to Effective Writing. Chennai: Chennai Microprint (P) Ltd
-  Zimmr, S. (4th ed.) (1982). College English and Communication. USA: McGraw-Hill, Inc.