

UNIT 1: VOCABULARY

a) PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES

Some words (root words) can have words or parts of words added to the beginning or end that change their meaning.

If you add parts of words to the beginning of a word, it is called a prefix.

If you add parts of words to the end of a word, it is called a suffix.

- 1) The children were unhelpful to their mother
- 2) I ended up repainting the kitchen

Knowing about these parts of words is useful for spelling because they help you break down longer words into smaller parts and they also give you clues about their meanings.

Prefixes

- 1) un- means not or the opposite of the rest of the word:
eg uneaten means not eaten
- 2) dis- also means not:
eg disagreed means not agreed
- 3) re- means again:
eg redone means done again
- 4) pre- means before e.g. predate means to come before

Suffixes

- 1) -s, -es means more than one (plural): eg one book but many books.
- 2) -ing or -ed shows when something happened - in the present (ing) or past (ed) tense: eg I am working there now or I worked there last week
- 3) -er, -est means more or the most of something: eg that drink was colder (more cold) or that was the coldest drink (the most cold)
- 4) -ful or -less shows there is a lot of something (hopeful - a lot of hope) or none of something (hopeless - no hope)

b) SYNONYMS, ANTONYMS AND HOMONYMS

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. Synonyms are words that have the same or a similar meaning. Homonyms are words that are pronounced the same and spelled the same, but have different meanings.

Antonym Examples

An antonym is the opposite of another word. Antonyms can be used to help show contrast between two things or give clues to exactly what is meant. Below are some examples of antonyms:

Achieve – Fail

Idle – Active

Afraid – Confident

Ancient – Modern

Arrive – Depart

Arrogant – Humble

Demand – Supply

Destroy – Create

Divide – Unite

Drunk – Sober

Expand – Contract

Freeze – Boil

Full – Empty

Generous – Stingy

Giant – Dwarf

Gloomy – Cheerful

Guilty – Innocent

Hire – Fire

Include – Exclude

Plentiful – Sparse

Quality – Inferiority

Random – Specific

Single – Married

Strength – Weakness

Vertical – Horizontal

Wax - Wane

Wealth – Poverty

For more examples of antonyms, including graded antonyms, complementary antonyms and relational antonyms read Examples of Antonyms.

Synonym Examples

Synonyms can provide you with variety in speech or writing. There are endless examples of synonyms, making it easy for you to avoid overusing the same word and sounding repetitive. Some examples of synonyms include the following:

Amazing, astounding, surprising, stunning

Annihilation, destruction, carnage, extinction

Benefit, profit, revenue, yield

Brave, courageous, valiant, heroic

Center, middle, inside, midpoint

Cunning, keen, sharp, slick

Destitute, poor, bankrupt, impoverished

Deterioration, pollution, defilement, adulteration

Enormous, huge, gigantic, massive

Evil, bad, wicked, vile, malicious

Fertile, fruitful, abundant, productive

Vacant, empty, deserted, uninhabited

Woman, lady, female, girl

Wet, damp, moist, soaked, soggy

For more examples of synonyms read [Examples of Synonyms](#).

Homonym Examples

Homonyms are words that have the same spelling and pronunciation but have different meanings. The following are examples of homonyms:

Address - manner of speaking to another / Address - description of a property location

Arm – body part / Arm – division of a company

Bat – an implement used to hit a ball / Bat – a nocturnal flying mammal

Bear - an animal / Bear - to tolerate something

Book - to reserve a hotel room or a table at a restaurant / Book – pages of writing bound together with a cover

Bright – very smart or intelligent / Bright – filled with light

Cave - to give in or surrender / Cave – a hole or gap in a rock or in earth

c) STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

An abbreviation (from latin brevis, meaning short) is a shortened form of a word or phrase. It consists of a group of letters taken from the word or phrase. For example, the word abbreviation can itself be represented by the abbreviation abbr., abbrev., or abbrev.

p167 An abbreviation is a shortening by any method; a contraction is a reduction of size by the drawing together of the parts. A contraction of a word is made by omitting certain letters or syllables and bringing together the first and last letters or elements; an abbreviation may be made by omitting certain portions from the interior or by cutting off a part.

adj. - adjective, adjectival

Advoc. - advocate

Agric. - agriculture, agricultural

B.C. - Before Christ

betw. - between

Bibliogr. - bibliography

c. - century

Etc. - extra

d) LINGUISTICS

Linguistics, the scientific study of language.

The part of linguistics that is concerned with the structure of language is divided into a number of subfields:

Phonetics - the study of speech sounds in their physical aspects

Phonology - the study of speech sounds in their cognitive aspects

Morphology - the study of the formation of words

Syntax - the study of the formation of sentences

Semantics - the study of meaning

Pragmatics - the study of language use

Aside from language structure, other perspectives on language are represented in specialized or interdisciplinary branches:

Historical Linguistics

Sociolinguistics

Psycholinguistics

Ethnolinguistics (or Anthropological Linguistics)

Dialectology

Computational Linguistics

Neurolinguistics

e) PHONETICS

Phonetics, the study of speech sounds and their physiological production and acoustic qualities. It deals with the configurations of the vocal tract used to produce speech sounds (articulatory phonetics), the acoustic properties of speech sounds (acoustic phonetics), and the manner of combining sounds so as to make syllables, words, and sentences (linguistic phonetics).

f) NOUN PRONOUN AGREEMENT

The purpose of a pronoun is to take the place or refer back to a noun in a sentence. Just like subjects and verbs, nouns and pronouns should agree in number within a sentence.

Singular Noun, Singular Pronoun

When writing a sentence, using the same word more than once can get repetitive.

Example: Francine edited herpaper because her paper was full of errors. Rather than repeating paper twice, it is possible to use a pronoun.

Revision: Francine edited her paper because it was full of errors.

Since paper is singular (there is only one), use a singular pronoun (it) to replace it.

Plural Noun, Plural Pronoun

When the subject of the sentence is plural, the pronoun in the sentence becomes plural as well.

Example: When students arrive on the first day of school, students need help finding the right classroom.

Since students is plural, use a plural pronoun to replace it.

Revision: When students arrive on the first day of school, they need help finding the right classroom.

g) SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT

Subjects and verbs must agree in number.

If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular too.

Example: She writes every day.

If the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural.

Example: They write every day.

Sometimes, however, it seems a bit more complicated than this.

When the subject of the sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by and, use a plural verb.

Example: The student and the committee members write every day.

Example: The percentage of students who called in sick and the number of students who were marked as truant are proportional to the students' degree of seniority.

When there is one subject and more than one verb, the verbs throughout the sentence must agree with the subject.

Example: Interviews are one way to collect data and allow researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of participants.

Example: Writing is a skill that takes a good deal of practice and is a requirement of most online classes.

When a phrase comes between the subject and the verb, remember that the verb still agrees with the subject, not the noun or pronoun in the phrase following the subject of the sentence.

Example: The people who pursue a PhD degree are few.

Example: The student, as well as the committee members, is excited.

Example: The student with all the Master's degrees is very motivated.

Example: Strategies that the teacher uses to encourage classroom participation include using small groups and clarifying expectations.

Example: The focus of the interviews was nine purposively selected participants.

When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by or or nor, use a singular verb.

Example: The chairperson or the CEO approves the proposal before proceeding.

When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by or or nor, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is closest to the verb. This is also called the rule of proximity.

Example: The student or the committee members write every day.

Example: The committee members or the student writes every day.

The words each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, nobody, somebody, someone, and no one are singular and require a singular verb.

Example: Each of these ideas is good.

Example: Everybody sometimes questions subject-verb agreement rules.

Example: Nobody writes without making errors.

Example: Either answer is correct.

Noncount nouns take a singular verb.

Example: A lot of money is donated to the charity every year.

Example: News is on the radio every day.

Example: Hockey is a popular sport in Minnesota.

Example: Diabetes affects many people around the world.

Example: The information obtained from the business owners was relevant to include in the study.

Nouns such as scissors, shorts, jeans, and tweezers require plural verbs. There are two parts to each of these.

Example: The scissors are in the drawer.

Example: His jeans are too tight.

Example: Her shorts are very comfortable.

In sentences beginning with there is or there are, the subject follows the verb. Since there is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows.

Example: There is a book.

Example: There are many books.

Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but are considered singular and take a singular verb. Some examples are group, team, committee, family, and class.

Example: The group meets every week.

Example: The committee agrees on the quality of the writing.

However, the plural verb is used if the focus is on the individuals in the group. This is much less common.

Example: The committee participate in various volunteer activities in their private lives.

h) MISPLACED MODIFIERS

A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that does not clearly relate to what it is intended to modify. In other words, a misplaced modifier makes the meaning of a sentence ambiguous or wrong.

Examples of Misplaced Modifiers

Here are some examples of misplaced modifiers (shaded):

Andrew told us after the holiday he intends to stop drinking.

(In this example, it is not clear whether Andrew made this statement after the holiday or whether he intends to stop drinking after the holiday.)

Running quickly improves your health.

(In this example, it is not clear if quickly modifies running or improves.)

We will not sell paraffin to anyone in glass bottles.

(Often, like in this example, common sense tells us what the writer meant. Clearly, this is about paraffin in glass bottles not people in glass bottles. However, placing your modifier too far away from the thing being modified will do little to showcase your writing skills.)

Misplaced Modifiers Can Change the Meaning

Sometimes, a misplaced modifier is not a mistake. It just leads to an unintended meaning. Look at these sentences:

He lost nearly \$5,000 in Las Vegas.

(This means he lost just under \$5,000.)

He nearly lost \$5,000 in Las Vegas.

(Here, we don't know how much he lost. He might have lost nothing at all.) These examples demonstrate that a modifier needs to be near whatever it's modifying.

How to Avoid a Misplaced Modifier

You can avoid a misplaced modifier by placing your modifier alongside whatever it's modifying. For example:

Jack can hear Jill when she whispers clearly. (x)

(As the intended meaning is that Jack can clearly hear Jill's whispers, this is a misplaced modifier. It can be corrected by moving the modifier next to the word it is meant to modify.) Here is a correct version for the intended meaning:

Jack can clearly hear Jill when she whispers. (✓)

If the meaning were Jack can hear Jill's clear whispers, then the first version would be correct:

Jack can hear Jill when she whispers clearly. (✓)

Probably the most famous example of a misplaced modifier is not a misplaced modifier at all. Look at this well-known joke by Groucho Marx:

One morning I shot an elephant in my pyjamas. How he got into my pajamas I'll never know.
(Groucho Marx)

This is not a misplaced modifier because the elephant was actually in his pyjamas.

Types of Misplaced Modifiers

There are three types of misplaced modifiers:

(1) Those that modify the wrong thing.

He only eats ice-cream. (x)

He eats only ice-cream. (✓)

These are the classic misplaced modifiers. This error occurs quite often with the word only.

Read more about misplacing limiting modifiers (e.g., only).

(2) Those that could feasibly modify either of two things in the sentence.

Talking quickly annoys people. (x)

These are more commonly called squinting modifiers.

(3) Those that modify nothing.

Having read your letter, my dog will be taken to the vet for a test. (x)

Having read your letter, I will take my dog to the vet for a test. (✓)

These are more commonly called dangling modifiers.

j) ARTICLES

What is an article?

Articles (a, an, the) are determiners or noun markers that function to specify if the noun is general or specific in its reference. Often the article chosen depends on if the writer and the reader understand the reference of the noun.

The articles 'a and an' are indefinite articles. They are used with a singular countable noun when the noun referred to is nonspecific or generic.

The article 'the' is a definite article. It is used to show specific reference and can be used with both singular and plural nouns and with both countable and uncountable nouns.

Many languages do not use articles (a, an, and the), or if they do exist, the way they are used may be different than in English. Multilingual writers often find article usage to be one of the most difficult concepts to learn. Although there are some rules about article usage to help, there are also quite a few exceptions. Therefore, learning to use articles accurately takes a long time. To master article usage, it is necessary to do a great deal of reading, notice how articles are used in published texts, and take notes that can apply back to your own writing.

k) PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words which begin prepositional phrases.

A prepositional phrase is a group of words containing a preposition, a noun or pronoun object of the preposition, and any modifiers of the object.

A preposition sits in front of (is “pre-positioned” before) its object.

The following words are the most commonly used prepositions:

about

below

excepting

off

toward

above

beneath

for

on

under

across

beside(s)

from

onto

underneath

after

between

in

out

until

m) REDUNDANCIES

In English usage, redundancy is usually defined as the use of two or more words that say the same thing, but we also use the term to refer to any expression in which a modifier's meaning is contained in the word it modifies (e.g., early beginnings, merge together—many more are listed below). Think of redundancies as word overflows.

This list is far from complete, and we're developing it organically (i.e., adding redundancies as they come up in our work) rather than compiling the list by stealing from other online sources, which would be too easy. If you feel strongly that any redundancy should be added here, please comment.

Actual fact

Added bonus: A bonus is by definition something added.

Adequate enough: One or the other will work.

After having

Arm's reach: reach or arm's length.

Blatantly obvious: Things that are blatant are obvious.

Blend together

[Adjective]-born: e.g., Brazilian-born, Texan-born. Make it Brazil-born or Texas-born (or Brazilian or Texan).

Browse through: To browse is to look through something, so through is already contained in its meaning.

But yet: As conjunctions (but not as adverbs), but and yet are synonyms

Unit 2. Basic Writing Skills

2.1 Sentence Structures

Introduction: This page contains some basic information about sentence structure (syntax) and sentence types. It also includes examples of common sentence problems in written English. ESL students who understand the information on this page and follow the advice have a better chance of writing well.

Subject/predicate: All sentences are about something or someone. The something or someone that the sentence is about is called the *subject* of the sentence. In the following sentences the subjects are shown in red. Note how the subject is often, but not always, the first thing in the sentence.

- John often comes late to class.
- My friend and I both have a dog named Spot.
- Many parts of the Asian coastline were destroyed by a tsunami in 2004.
- The old hotel at the end of the street is going to be knocked down to make way for a new supermarket.
- Sitting in a tree at the bottom of the garden was a huge black bird with long blue tail feathers.
- The grade 7 Korean boy who has just started at FIS speaks excellent English.
- On Saturdays I never get up before 9 o'clock.
- Before giving a test the teacher should make sure that the students are well-prepared.

The *predicate* contains information about the someone or something that is the subject. The example sentences above are shown again, this time with the predicate marked in green.

- John **often comes late to class.**
- My friend and I **both have a dog named Spot.**
- Many parts of the Asian coastline **were destroyed by a tsunami in 2004.**
- The old hotel at the end of the street **is going to be knocked down to make way for a new supermarket.**
- **Sitting in a tree at the bottom of the garden** was a huge black bird with long blue tail feathers.
- The grade 7 Korean boy who has just started at FIS **speaks excellent English.**
- **On Saturdays I never get up before 9 o'clock.**
- **Before giving a test** the teacher **should make sure that the students are well-prepared.**
- Lying on the sofa watching old films **is my favourite hobby.**

Simple subject/predicate: As you can see from the example sentences above both the subject and the predicate can consist of many words. The *simple subject* is the *main* word in the subject, and the *simple predicate* is the *main* word in the predicate. The simple subject is always a *noun/pronoun* and the simple predicate is always a *verb*.

In the following sentences the simple subject is shown in red and the simple predicate is shown in green.

- My ESL teacher **speaks** a little Russian.
- The young girl with the long black hair **fell** from her bike yesterday in heavy rain.
- At the back of the line in the cafeteria yesterday **was** a large brown dog with a yellow collar around its neck!
- My friend and I **are going** on holiday together this year.
- Your mother or your father **must come** to the meeting.
- **Sitting** in a tree at the bottom of the garden **was** a huge black bird with long blue tail feathers.

From the last three examples sentences above you will notice that the simple subjects and simple predicates can be more than one word.

Advice: To write strong, clear sentences you must know who or what you are writing about (subject) and what you want to say about them or it (predicate). Your writing will be more interesting if the subject is not the first thing in every sentence you write.

Sentence types: One way to categorize sentences is by the clauses they contain. (A clause is a part of a sentence containing a subject and a predicate.) Here are the 4 sentence types:

- **Simple:** Contains a single, independent clause.
 - I don't like dogs.
 - Our school basketball team lost their last game of the season 75-68.
 - The old hotel opposite the bus station in the center of the town is probably going to be knocked down at the end of next year.

- **Compound:** Contains two independent clauses that are joined by a coordinating conjunction. (The most common coordinating conjunctions are: *but, or, and, so*. Remember: **boas**.)
 - I don't like dogs, and my sister doesn't like cats.
 - You can write on paper, or you can use a computer.
 - A tree fell onto the school roof in a storm, but none of the students was injured.

- **Complex:** Contains an independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses. (A dependent clause starts with a subordinating conjunction. Examples: *that, because, while, although, where, if*.)
 - I don't like dogs that bark at me when I go past.
 - She did my homework, while her father cooked dinner.
 - You can write on paper, although a computer is better if you want to correct mistakes easily.
- *Note: A dependent clause standing alone without an independent clause is called a fragment sentence - see below.*

- **Compound-complex:** Contains 3 or more clauses (of which at least two are independent and one is dependent).
 - I don't like dogs, and my sister doesn't like cats because they make her sneeze.
 - You can write on paper, but using a computer is better as you can easily correct your mistakes.
 - A tree fell onto the school roof in a storm, but none of the students was injured, although many of them were in classrooms at the top of the building.

Advice: Writing that contains mostly short, simple sentences can be uninteresting or even irritating to read. Writing that consists of mostly long, complex sentences is usually difficult to read. Good writers, therefore, use a variety of sentence types. They also occasionally start complex (or compound-complex) sentences with the dependent clause and not the independent clause. In the following examples the dependent clause is shown in red:

- Although it was raining, we decided to go fishing.
- If it doesn't rain soon, the river will dry out.
- Because the road was icy and the driver was going too fast, he was unable to brake in time when a fox ran into the road in front of him.

Note: Sentences can also be categorized according to their function.

Note: Independent clauses are also called *main* clauses. Dependent clauses are also called *subordinate* clauses.

Problematic 'sentences': To write a correct sentence, you need to have a good understanding of what a sentence is. Students who don't have this understanding, or don't take care, often include problem sentences in their writing. Native English speakers are just as likely to write problem sentences as ESL students. There are three main types of problem sentence:

- **Run-on sentences:** These are two sentences that the writer has not separated with an end punctuation mark, or has not joined with a conjunction. (Click the following run-ons to see where they should be separated into two sentences.)
 - I went to Paris in the vacation it is the most beautiful place I have ever visited.
 - It's never too late to learn to swim you never know when you may fall from a boat.
 - If you're going to the shops can you buy me some eggs and flour I want to make a cake.
 - I like our new math teacher, she always explains the work very clearly.
 - He was late to school again, his bus got caught in heavy traffic.
- **Advice:** It is helpful to read your written work aloud. When you speak, you will make natural pauses to mark the end of your sentences or clauses. If there is no corresponding end punctuation mark in your writing, you can be almost certain that you have written a run-on sentence.

- **Sentence fragments:** Fragment sentences are unfinished sentences, i.e. they don't contain a complete idea. A common fragment sentence in student writing is a dependent clause standing alone without an independent clause. In each of the following examples the fragment is the second 'sentence', shown in red:
 - I don't think I'm going to get a good grade. Because I didn't study.
 - She got angry and shouted at the teacher. Which wasn't a very good idea.
 - He watched TV for an hour and then went to bed. After falling asleep on the sofa.
 - She got up and ran out of the library. Slamming the door behind her.
 - I have to write a report on Albert Einstein. The famous scientist who left Europe to live in the USA.
 - After riding my bike without problems for over a year, the chain broke. 40 kilometers from my house!
- **Advice:** If your 'sentence' is a dependent clause, or it doesn't contain both a subject *and* a predicate, then it is not a proper sentence. You can often detect fragments if you read your writing backwards sentence by sentence, i.e. from the last sentence to the first one. You can usually correct a fragment by connecting it to the sentence before or after it.
- Good writers, who have a full understanding of the sentence, occasionally choose to write a sentence fragment. So you may see sentence fragments in the fiction or even some of the non-fiction you read. As an ESL student, however, you should avoid fragments (except when writing your own creative stories).

What does writing clearly and concisely mean?

Writing clearly and concisely means choosing your words deliberately, constructing your sentences carefully, and using grammar properly. By writing clearly and concisely, you will get straight to your point in a way your audience can easily comprehend.

Why should I write clearly and concisely?

In order to succeed in your communication task, you need to keep your audience's attention. Writing clearly and concisely is one way to capture and retain their interest. Rambling on, conversely, may lose your audience's attention.

How do I write clearly and concisely?

Several techniques can help you learn to write clearly and concisely in order to motivate your audience to read and respond favorably to your communication.

Choose your words deliberately

The words you choose can either enhance or interfere with your meaning and your audience's comprehension. Follow these guidelines to develop a strategy for choosing the most effective words for your communication task.

Use simple words

Paul Anderson, in his book *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, points to studies that show users comprehend simple words more quickly, even when they're familiar with a more elaborate counterpart [1].

This table shows some commonly-used elaborate words and their simple alternatives [1]:

Elaborate word

Simple word

ascertain	find out
commence	begin
constitute	make up
fabricate	build
initiate	begin
terminate	end
transmit	send
utilize	use

This guideline doesn't mean you should eliminate all elaborate terms.

You may be familiar with technical processes and their related terms. If your entire audience will understand technical terms, use them. If not, either substitute with simple terms instead, or if there are no substitutes, explain the meaning of the technical term using one of these methods [1]:

Use a synonym: “memory” instead of “RAM.”

Describe the term: “RAM allows your computer to run more quickly and efficiently.”

Compare the term with a common concept: “RAM is like having a large desk with numerous drawers for storage. You can quickly and efficiently access your files at a moment's notice” [2].

Define the term: “RAM, or random access memory, is one type of computer data storage systems. It allows your computer to quickly and efficiently access files” [3].

Replace vague words with specific ones

Vague words tend to be abstract and can conceal your meaning. Specific words, on the other hand, precisely and shortly convey your meaning.

For instance, suppose you are describing a new product your company is developing:

Vague: The Acme Corporation is developing a **new consumer device that allows users to communicate vocally in real time.**

Specific: The Acme Corporation is developing a **new cell phone.**

Readers may not immediately understand what the first sentence describes. Is this a brand new kind of device? Or a device they've never heard of? The second sentence, on the other hand, says exactly what the product is, leaving little room for doubt.

Eliminate unnecessary words

Unnecessary words come in many forms. Like vague words, they can conceal instead of reveal your meaning [4].

Excessive detail

Before: I received and read the email **you sent yesterday** about the report **you're writing for** the project. I agree it needs **a thorough, close edit from someone familiar with your audience.**

After: I received your email about the project report and agree it needs an expert edit.

Extra determiners and modifiers

Before: **Basically,** the first widget **pretty much** surpassed the second one in **overall** performance.

After: The first widget performed better than the second.

Repetitive words

Before: The engineer **considered** the second monitor an **unneeded luxury.**

After: The engineer considered the second monitor a luxury.

Redundant words

Before: The test revealed conduction activity that was **peculiar in nature.**

After: The test revealed peculiar conduction activity.

Replace multiple negatives with affirmatives

Multiple negatives require your readers to interpret your meaning. Affirmatives, instead, convey concise meaning that needs no interpretation.

Before: Your audience **will not appreciate** the **details that lack relevance**.

After: Your audience will appreciate relevant details.

Avoid noun strings

Noun strings can confuse readers, as they are difficult to understand.

Before: The Acme Corporation continues to work on the **cell phone case configuration revision project**.

After: The Acme Corporation is developing a redesigned cell phone case.

Sentences express and connect the meaning of your ideas. Follow these guidelines to write clear and concise sentences that your audience can comprehend quickly and easily.

Pay attention to sentence length

In his book, *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, Paul Anderson recommends varying the lengths of sentences. Use short sentences to emphasize a point; use longer sentences to connect ideas [1]:

This report provides operational information about the electrical equipment the Acme Corporation recently installed at their headquarters in Los Angeles (**long sentence**). The equipment will increase energy efficiency by 25% (**short sentence**).

Use the known-new contract

Martha Kolln and Loretta Gray, in their book *Rhetorical Grammar*, define the known-new contract as a reader's expectation "that a sentence will have both known, or old, information as well as new and that the known information will precede the new" [2].

This contract allows users to easily connect what they already know to the new information you're offering them [6].

Before: Support higher data rates for non-voice communication (**new information**) with third-generation (3G) cell phone technology (**known information**).

After: Third-generation (3G) cell phone technology (**known information**) supports higher data rates for non-voice communications (**new information**).

Use the appropriate voice

In the active voice, the subject performs the action of the verb. The focus of an active sentence is the subject:

Gary (subject) threw (verb) the ball (object).

In the passive voice, the subject receives the action of the verb. The focus of a passive sentence is the action:

The ball (object) was thrown (verb) by Gary (subject).

Each type of voice has its place in writing clearly and concisely. Use active voice by default; research shows readers comprehend it more quickly than passive voice [1].

But use passive voice when

the action is more important than the subject, such as when you're describing research or testing you've done: The results generated from the test were telling.

the subject is unknown: Every year, hundreds of people are diagnosed with hearing problems caused by excessive cell phone use; or you don't want to identify the subject, such as instances in which identifying the subject would cause unnecessary embarrassment: The lights in the lab were left on for three nights in a row and the bulb burned out as a result.

However, don't use passive voice to conceal serious responsibility:

Mistakes *were made* that delayed the testing for weeks.

Use active voice instead:

The team *made* mistakes that delayed the testing for weeks.

Use transitions

Transitions are words and phrases that indicate connections between sentences. You should use them at the beginning of sentences to connect ideas by [1]

time: before, after, during, while, until
space: above, below, inside
cause and effect: as a result, because, since
similarity: as, likewise, similarly
contrast: although, however, on the other hand

Monitor nominalizations

Nominalizations occur when a verb is used as a noun:

occur—occurrence,
evaluate—evaluation,
execute—execution.

Nominalizations work well as sentence transitions [5]:

Electrical signals **occur** naturally between devices. These **occurrences** happen only when the device is turned on.

However, nominalizations should be avoided when they hide the action of a sentence:

Before: Employee achievement led to the **creation** of the Engineer of the Year award.

After: The Acme Corporation **created** the Engineer of the Year award to recognize employee achievement.

Avoid using forms of the verb “be”

Forms of the verb “be” (is, am, are, were, was) indicate a state of being rather than an action. They can weaken an active sentence and, in some instances, may indicate passive voice. Use active verbs instead whenever possible.

Before: The report **is waiting** for your approval.

After: The report **awaits** your approval.

Reduce prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases help establish relationships between people and things in a sentence:

Frank drove his car **to work**.

The lab closes **at 7:00 pm**.

Joy had to revise her presentation **for the conference**.

Unnecessary use of prepositional phrases interferes with the clarity of a sentence [7]:

Before: The opinion of the manager.

After: The manager's opinion.

Before: It is a matter **of** the gravest importance **to** the health **of** anyone who uses a microwave and has a heart condition to avoid standing **in front of** the microwave **while** it is running.

After: Anyone **with** a heart condition should avoid standing **in front of** an operating microwave oven.

Revise your sentences using the paramedic method

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The first step is to concretely identify problems in your sentences:

- Underline prepositions (of, about, to, in, across, etc.)
- Circle forms of the verb “be” (is, am, are, were, was)
- Put boxes around action words (verbs like test, result, change; as well as nominalizations like testing, resulting, changing).
- Highlight the person or thing performing the action.
- Bracket wind-up explanations.
- Cross out redundancies.

The next step is to revise the problem areas you have identified:

- Rewrite or delete unnecessary prepositional phrases
- Replace forms of “be” with action verbs.
- Put the action in the verb.
- Put the person or thing performing the action into the subject.
- Delete unnecessary wind-up explanations.
- Eliminate redundancies.

- **Rambling sentences:** A rambling sentence is a sentence made up of many clauses, often connected by a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *or*, *so*.
 - John usually gets up before 7 o'clock, but yesterday his alarm clock did not ring, so he was still asleep when his boss called him at 10.30 to ask where he was and tell him that he would lose his job if he was late again.
 - Although the blue whale has been protected for over 30 years and its numbers are increasing, especially in the North Pacific, where whale hunting has been banned, it is still at risk of extinction as its habitat is being polluted by waste from oil tankers and its main food, the plankton, is being killed off by harmful rays from the sun, which can penetrate the earth's atmosphere because there is a huge hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica.
- **Advice:** A rambling sentence is quite easy to spot. You have almost certainly written one if your sentence contains more than 3 or 4 conjunctions. If you read the sentence aloud and run out of breath before reaching the end of it, you have written a rambling sentence. If your sentence stretches over many lines of writing, you have certainly written a rambling sentence and most probably a run-on sentence too.
- Unlike *run-ons* or *fragments*, rambling sentences are not wrong, but they are tiresome for the reader and one of the signs of a poor writer. You should avoid them.

2.2: Use of phrases and clauses in sentences

The basic unit of English grammar is the **clause**:

[An unlucky student almost lost a 17th century violin worth almost £200,000]

[when he left it in the waiting room of a London station.]

[William Brown inherited the 1698 Stradivarius violin from his mother]

[and had just had it valued by a London dealer at £180,000.]

Clauses are made up of **phrases**:

[An unlucky student] + [almost lost] + [a 17th century violin worth almost £200,000]

[when] + [he] + [left] + [it] + [in the waiting room of a London station.]

[William Brown] + [inherited] + [the 1698 Stradivarius violin] + [from his mother]

[and] [had just had it valued] + [by a London dealer] + [at £180,000.]

We can join two or more clauses together to make **sentences**.

An unlucky student almost lost a 17th century violin worth almost £200,000 when he left it in the waiting room of a London station.

William Brown inherited the 1698 Stradivarius violin from his mother and had just had it valued by a London dealer at £180,000.

6. Techniques for writing precisely

What does writing clearly and concisely mean?

Writing clearly and concisely means choosing your words deliberately, constructing your sentences carefully, and using grammar properly. By writing clearly and concisely, you will get straight to your point in a way your audience can easily comprehend.

Why should I write clearly and concisely?

In order to succeed in your communication task, you need to keep your audience's attention. Writing clearly and concisely is one way to capture and retain their interest. Rambling on, conversely, may lose your audience's attention.

How do I write clearly and concisely?

Several techniques can help you learn to write clearly and concisely in order to motivate your audience to read and respond favorably to your communication.

Choose your words deliberately

The words you choose can either enhance or interfere with your meaning and your audience's comprehension. Follow these guidelines to develop a strategy for choosing the most effective words for your communication task.

Use simple words

Paul Anderson, in his book *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, points to studies that show users comprehend simple words more quickly, even when they're familiar with a more elaborate counterpart [1].

This table shows some commonly-used elaborate words and their simple alternatives [1]:

Elaborate word	Simple word
ascertain	find out
commence	begin
constitute	make up
fabricate	build
initiate	begin
terminate	end
transmit	send
utilize	use

This guideline doesn't mean you should eliminate all elaborate terms.

You may be familiar with technical processes and their related terms. If your entire audience will understand technical terms, use them. If not, either substitute with

simple terms instead, or if there are no substitutes, explain the meaning of the technical term using one of these methods [1]:

Use a synonym: “memory” instead of “RAM.”

Describe the term: “RAM allows your computer to run more quickly and efficiently.”

Compare the term with a common concept: “RAM is like having a large desk with numerous drawers for storage. You can quickly and efficiently access your files at a moment’s notice” [2].

Define the term: “RAM, or random access memory, is one type of computer data storage systems. It allows your computer to quickly and efficiently access files” [3].

Replace vague words with specific ones

Vague words tend to be abstract and can conceal your meaning. Specific words, on the other hand, precisely and shortly convey your meaning.

For instance, suppose you are describing a new product your company is developing:

Vague: The Acme Corporation is developing a **new consumer device that allows users to communicate vocally in real time.**

Specific: The Acme Corporation is developing a **new cell phone.**

Readers may not immediately understand what the first sentence describes. Is this a brand new kind of device? Or a device they’ve never heard of? The second sentence, on the other hand, says exactly what the product is, leaving little room for doubt.

Eliminate unnecessary words

Unnecessary words come in many forms. Like vague words, they can conceal instead of reveal your meaning [4].

Excessive detail

Before: I received and read the email **you sent yesterday** about the report **you're writing for** the project. I agree it needs **a thorough, close edit from someone familiar with your audience.**

After: I received your email about the project report and agree it needs an expert edit.

Extra determiners and modifiers

Before: **Basically,** the first widget **pretty much** surpassed the second one in **overall** performance.

After: The first widget performed better than the second.

Repetitive words

Before: The engineer considered the second monitor an **unneeded luxury.**

After: The engineer considered the second monitor a luxury.

Redundant words

Before: The test revealed conduction activity that was **peculiar in nature.**

After: The test revealed peculiar conduction activity.

Replace multiple negatives with affirmatives

Multiple negatives require your readers to interpret your meaning. Affirmatives, instead, convey concise meaning that needs no interpretation.

Before: Your audience **will not appreciate** the **details that lack relevance.**

After: Your audience will appreciate relevant details.

Avoid noun strings

Noun strings can confuse readers, as they are difficult to understand.

Before: The Acme Corporation continues to work on the **cell phone case configuration revision project.**

After: The Acme Corporation is developing a redesigned cell phone case.

Sentences express and connect the meaning of your ideas. Follow these guidelines to write clear and concise sentences that your audience can comprehend quickly and easily.

Pay attention to sentence length

In his book, *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*, Paul Anderson recommends varying the lengths of sentences. Use short sentences to emphasize a point; use longer sentences to connect ideas [1]:

This report provides operational information about the electrical equipment the Acme Corporation recently installed at their headquarters in Los Angeles (**long sentence**). The equipment will increase energy efficiency by 25% (**short sentence**).

Use the known-new contract

Martha Kolln and Loretta Gray, in their book *Rhetorical Grammar*, define the known-new contract as a reader's expectation "that a sentence will have both known, or old, information as well as new and that the known information will precede the new" [2].

This contract allows users to easily connect what they already know to the new information you're offering them [6].

Before: Support higher data rates for non-voice communication (**new information**) with third-generation (3G) cell phone technology (**known information**).

After: Third-generation (3G) cell phone technology (**known information**) supports higher data rates for non-voice communications (**new information**).

Use the appropriate voice

In the active voice, the subject performs the action of the verb. The focus of an active sentence is the subject:

Gary (subject) threw (verb) the ball (object).

In the passive voice, the subject receives the action of the verb. The focus of a passive sentence is the action:

The ball (object) was thrown (verb) by Gary (subject).

Each type of voice has its place in writing clearly and concisely. Use active voice by default; research shows readers comprehend it more quickly than passive voice [1].

But use passive voice when

the action is more important than the subject, such as when you're describing research or testing you've done: The results generated from the test were telling.

the subject is unknown: Every year, hundreds of people are diagnosed with hearing problems caused by excessive cell phone use; or
you don't want to identify the subject, such as instances in which
identifying the subject would cause unnecessary embarrassment: The lights in the lab were left on for three nights in a row and the bulb burned out as a result.

However, don't use passive voice to conceal serious responsibility:

Mistakes *were made* that delayed the testing for weeks.

Use active voice instead:

The team *made* mistakes that delayed the testing for weeks.

Use transitions

Transitions are words and phrases that indicate connections between sentences. You should use them at the beginning of sentences to connect ideas by [1]

time: before, after, during, while, until

space: above, below, inside

cause and effect: as a result, because, since

similarity: as, likewise, similarly

contrast: although, however, on the other hand

Monitor nominalizations

Nominalizations occur when a verb is used as a noun:

occur—occurrence,

evaluate—evaluation,

execute—execution.

Nominalizations work well as sentence transitions [5]:

Electrical signals **occur** naturally between devices. These **occurrences** happen only when the device is turned on.

However, nominalizations should be avoided when they hide the action of a sentence:

Before: Employee achievement led to the **creation** of the Engineer of the Year award.

After: The Acme Corporation **created** the Engineer of the Year award to recognize employee achievement.

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UNIT 4: LISTENING

Suggestions for improving your listening skills

Before you listen

- Think about the topic of the text you are going to listen to. What do you already know about it? What could possibly be the content of the text?
- Which words come to mind that you already know? Which words would you want to look up?
- If you have to do a task on the listening text, check whether you have understood the task correctly.
- Think about what type of text you are going to listen to. What do you know about this type of text?
- Relax and make yourself ready to pay attention to the listening text.

While you are listening

It is not necessary to understand every single word. Try to ignore those words that you think are less important anyway.

If there are words or issues that you don't understand, use your general knowledge as well as the context to find out the meaning.

If you still don't understand something, use a dictionary to look up the words or ask someone else for help.

Focus on key words and facts.

Take notes to support your memory.

Intonation and stress of the speakers can help you to understand what you hear.

Try to think ahead. What might happen next? What might the speakers say, which words might they use?

After listening

Think about the text again. Have you understood the main points?

Remember the speculations you made before you listened. Did they come true?

Review your notes.

Check whether you have completed your task correctly.

Have you had any problems while listening? Do you have any problems now to complete your task? Identify your problems and ask someone for help.

Listen again to difficult passages.

REFERENCES

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/sentence-structure>

<http://open.lib.umn.edu/businesscommunication/chapter/6-1-organization/>

UNIT 5: READING COMPREHENSION

- 5.1 Note making
- 5.2 Summarizing
- 5.3 Reading aloud

What is reading comprehension?

Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer's words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message.

Different readers will interpret an author's message in different ways. Comprehension is affected by the reader's knowledge of the topic, knowledge of language structures, knowledge of text structures and genres, knowledge of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, their reasoning abilities, their motivation, and their level of engagement.

Reading comprehension is also affected by the quality of the reading material. Some writers are better writers than others, and some writers produce more complex reading material than others. Text that is well organized and clear is called "considerate text," and text that is poorly organized and difficult to understand can be called "inconsiderate text." The more inconsiderate the text, the more work will be required of a reader to comprehend the text. Readers who do not have the background, abilities, or motivation to overcome the barriers presented in inconsiderate text will have more difficulty comprehending these types of texts. What are some examples of specific strategies? Some examples of strategies are listed below:

Before-Reading Strategies

Before Reading Self-questioning

During-Reading Strategies

During Reading Self-questioning

Paragraph Summarization

Section Summarization

After-Reading Strategies

After Reading Self-questioning

After Reading Summarization

The main objectives for reading are:

- ***Read to activate and reinforce other skills*** (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing). In the same way that oral dialogues, short compositions, and listening activities do, reading can put into practice grammatical structures, new lexical items, and elements of pronunciation. Reading can also offer good writing models.

- ***Reading to become a better reader.*** Reading is a skill in itself, and the advantage of working with adult language learners is that they are usually literate in their native language. This means that they are able to transfer advanced reading skills to the second language classroom. Reading in English can activate and develop these skills, making the students better readers in both languages. Reading skills include: skimming, scanning, predicting, and reading for detailed comprehension.
- ***Read to develop critical thinking skills.*** This is important to address because when teaching English for general purposes, it can be easy to dismiss reading as an activity more suited for an academic environment. In all situations, critical thinking skills aid communication. From having a phone conversation to writing a business plan, people need to prioritize, make conclusions, draw comparisons, make inferences, etc. Reading can provide opportunities to utilize and sharpen such skills.
- ***Read for enjoyment.*** Students should ideally discover not only the usefulness but also the pleasure of being able to read in a second language.

NOTE-MAKING

Note making is an advanced writing skill which is acquiring increasing importance due to knowledge explosion. There is a need to remember at least the main points of any given subject. Making notes is a complex activity which combines several skills.

Use standard abbreviations and symbols as far as possible:

Capitalized first letters of words

e.g. U.P., U.S.A., U.K., U.S.S.R., etc.

Common abbreviations

Sc. (for science), Mr., Mrs., Dr., Govt., etc

Common symbols

e.g., : \, ∴, +ve, -ve, ® (leading to), ↑ (rising), ↓ (falling), =, etc.

Measurements and Figures

e.g., : 100', 100", 100 kg, 1000 mm, 100ml, etc.

Making your own abbreviations:

Keep the main sounds of the word. For example, edn. (education), prog. (programme)

Retain the suffix so that later when you are going over the notes you may recall the full form of the word —e.g., ed'nal (educational), prog've (progressive).

Caution

Do not get over-enthusiastic about abbreviations. **You should not** abbreviate every word.

One abbreviation in point is enough.

As a general rule, the heading should not be abbreviated. You may use abbreviations in subheadings.

Summarizing :

Summarizing teaches students how to discern the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information, and how to integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way.

(Summarising worksheets) following EXERCISES

Read Aloud :

- These activities describe different ways you and your students can read text aloud in order to develop your students' feeling for the music of the language.
- Not only individual sounds, but the way words connect, intonation and rhythm are all important in coming across as an effective, natural-sounding speaker of English. It can be helpful for students to have practice in stretching speech, in playing with it, in exaggerating to help them overcome shyness. You can help in this regard by playing with the language yourself, by making fun of it, by putting on different accents, etc, (Materials : Short story , Article reading etc..)

Unit 6: Oral Communication

Definition : **Oral communication** is the process of expressing information or ideas by word of mouth. Oral communication is the process of verbally transmitting information and ideas from one individual or group to another. Oral communication can be either formal or informal. Types of oral communication include:

- Presentations at business meetings
- Classroom lectures
- Commencement speeches given at a graduation ceremony

Examples of informal oral communication include:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Telephone conversations
- Discussions that take place at business meetings

Oral communication is more personal and less formal than written communication.

UNIT 6: ORAL COMMUNICATION

6.1 Pronunciation, Intonation, Stress and Rhythm

Pronunciation: the act, instance, or manner of pronouncing sounds

The Poem (No Good in goodbye Lyrics) EXERCISE

Tongue Twister Pronunciation

Intonation: The rise and fall of the voice in speaking. E.g : ‘*she spoke English with a German intonation*’

Stress is the relative emphasis that may be given to certain syllables in a word, or to certain words in a phrase or sentence. In English, stressed syllables are louder than non-stressed syllables. Also, they are longer and have a higher pitch.

Holiday, alone, admiration, confidential, degree, weaker, nervous, parents (Stressed - words)

Some suggested videos ..

WORD STRESS & INTONATION in English- Improve your English pronunciation | Speak Fluent English

6.2 Common Everyday Situations: Conversations and Dialogues

Exercise : Video recommended

1. (English conversation 40)

6.3 Communication at Workplace

Why is Communication important at work?

Workplace communication is very important to companies because it allows companies to be productive and operate effectively. Employees can experience an increase in morale, productivity and commitment if they are able to communicate up and down the communication chain in an organization.

Video's recommended

- 1.(How To Improve Communication Skills In The Workplace)
2. (Workplace Communication Skills)

6.4 Interview : a meeting of people face to face, especially for consultation.

Different types of Interview:

The Telephone Interview

Often companies request an initial telephone interview before inviting you in for a face to face meeting in order to get a better understanding of the type of candidate you are. The one benefit of this is that you can have your notes out in front of you. You should do just as much preparation as you would for a face to face interview, and remember that your first impression is vital. Some people are better meeting in person than on the phone, so make sure that you speak confidently, with good pace and try to answer all the questions that are asked.

The Face-to-Face Interview

This can be a meeting between you and one member of staff or even two members.

The Panel Interview

These interviews involve a number of people sitting as a panel with one as chairperson. This type of interview is popular within the public sector.

The Group Interview

Several candidates are present at this type of interview. You will be asked to interact with each other by usually a group discussion. You might even be given a task to do as a team, so make sure you speak up and give your opinion.

The Sequential Interview

These are several interviews in turn with a different interviewer each time. Usually, each interviewer asks questions to test different sets of competencies. However, if you are asked the same questions, just make sure you answer each one as fully as the previous time.

The Lunch / Dinner Interview

This type of interview gives the employer a chance to assess your communication and interpersonal skills as well as your table manners! So make sure you order wisely (no spaghetti Bolognese) and make sure you don't spill your drink (non-alcoholic of course!).

All these types of interviews can take on different question formats, so once you've checked with your potential employer which type of interview you'll be attending, get prepare .Here's a list of interview formats that you should prepare your answers for;

Competency Based Interviews

These are structured to reflect the competencies the employer is seeking for the particular job. These will usually be detailed in the job spec so make sure you read it through, and have your answers ready for questions such as "Give me an example of a time you worked as a team to achieve a common goal." For more examples of

competency based questions click here.

Formal / Informal Interviews

Some interviews may be very formal, others may be very informal and seem like just a chat about your interests. However, it is important to remember that you are still being assessed, and topics should be friendly and clean!

Portfolio Based Interviews

In the design / digital or communications industry it is likely that you will be asked to take your portfolio along or show it online. Make sure all your work is up to date without too little or too much. Make sure that your images if in print are big enough for the interviewer to see properly, and always test your online portfolio on all Internet browsers before turning up.

The Second Interview

You've past the first interview and you've had the call to arrange the second. Congratulations! But what else is there to prepare for? You did as much as you could for the first interview! Now is the time to look back and review. You maybe asked the same questions you were asked before, so review them and brush up your answers. Review your research about the company; take a look at the 'About Us' section on their website, get to know their client base, search the latest news on the company and find out what the company is talking about.

General Interview Preparation

Here's a list of questions that you should consider your answers for when preparing...

- Why do you want this job?
- Why are you the best person for the job?
- What relevant experience do you have?
- Why are you interested in working for this company?
- What can you contribute to this company?

- What do you know about this company?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your salary requirements?

6.5 Formal Presentations: Standing up in front of other people and sharing your ideas can be a stressful experience, but also the most satisfying intellectually. ... an individual presentation, in which you present your own work to an audience. a group presentation, in which you collaborate on the work and/or its presentation.

Suggested Video : An easy "presentation example" to introduce your presentation.