

Department of Distance and Continuing Education University of Delhi



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Semester - I

Course Credits - 2

Skill Enhancement Course (SEC) - English

**COMMUNICATION IN
EVERYDAY LIFE**

As per the UGCF - 2022 and National Education Policy 2020

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1st edition: 2022

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Published by:

Department of Distance and Continuing Education under
the aegis of Campus of Open Learning, University of Delhi

Printed by:

School of Open Learning, University of Delhi

Communication in Everyday Life



Table of Contents

S. No.	Title	Pg. No.
Unit-I	Theory of Communication	01
Unit-II	Reading Skills	22
Unit-III	Writing Skills	38
	For Practice Sessions: Speaking Skills	62

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Communication in Everyday Life

Unit-I

THEORY OF COMMUNICATION: AN INTRODUCTION

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Objectives
- 1.3 Defining Communication
- 1.4 Process of Communication
- 1.5 Function of Communication
- 1.6 Effective Communication
- 1.7 Types of Communication
- 1.8 Barriers to Communication
- 1.9 7 Cs of Effective Communication
- 1.10 Exercise
- 1.11 Further Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The word “communication” is used to mean any activity in which information, emotions and feelings are conveyed from one to another. The word “communication” is derived from the Latin word “*communicare*” which means ‘to share’, that is, to share information, ideas, emotions, knowledge amongst people - to share meaning. It is also thought that the Latin word “*communis*” which means ‘commonness’ is another root word for communication. Communication is the commonest thing that each of us share with fellow human beings. So from that perspective both words “*communicare*” and “*communis*” are significant in providing meaning to the idea of communication.

Whether we communicate or miscommunicate, communication has a significant role in our everyday life as we spend a lot of time communicating. We communicate with our friends, family, relatives, colleagues, employers, and with many people we may not know very well and even with perfect strangers. It is only through communication that we fulfill



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our different needs - whether they are personal, emotional, psychological, educational, social, financial, professional or cultural. We cannot think of our lives without communication. It is essential to our existence. Hence, we should be able to communicate effectively in a coherent, clear and concise manner as success in our life depends on effective communication.

Even in our professional life, our success depends on effective communication. It is through communication that information is disseminated, distributed, shared among people; it is through communication that important decisions are taken, shared and made known to people within and outside organizations. Moreover, companies communicate about their products or services to consumers through advertisements. Thus, without communication no business organization can survive. But communication in general and communication in professional world are different as the objectives are different. For example, in today's world, we communicate a lot over our mobile phones. When we talk to our friends, relatives and near and dear ones, we communicate for hours where the communication is not that of need, but of everyday things which make the bonding between the communicators strong. But in case of a professional world, it is diametrically opposite, as we need to talk sense in a clear, concise, logical and coherent manner if we want to make a mark. Suppose you are in an office meeting, if you are not able to present your thoughts in a coherent, logical manner then the chances are that your ideas will not have any audience.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to understand:

- The concept of Communication
- Functions of Communication
- Effective Communication
- Barriers to Communication
- 7 C's of Communication

1.3 DEFINING COMMUNICATION

The word "Communication" has many definitions. In 1970, communication theorist Frank Dance counted more than a hundred distinct definitions of communication proposed by experts in the field. In the years since that survey, even more definitions have surfaced. By



Communication in Everyday Life

drawing from these multiple definitions, we can define communication as a systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols to *create and interpret meanings*.

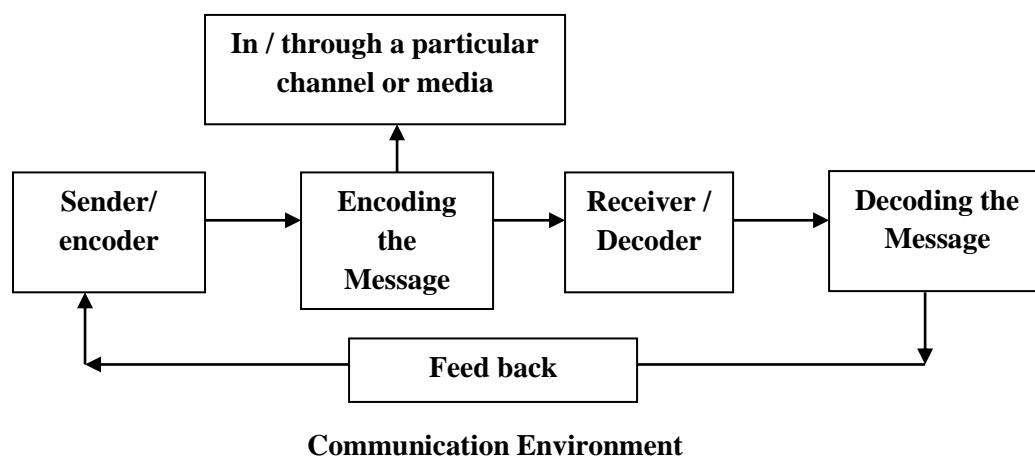
Generally, we define communication as the process of transfer of information between two sources with the information being understood by both.

- According to MT Myers and GE Myers, “Communication refers to special kind of patterning, which is expressed in a symbolic form. For communication to take place between or among people, two requirements must be met:
 1. A symbolic system must be shared by the people involved (we need to speak the same language or jargon or dialects); and
 2. The associations between the symbols and their referents must be shared.”
- According to Fearing, “It is a two-way process which cannot be adequately understood in terms of simple engineering or mechanical analogies. It is uniquely a human relationship from which, emerge all civilizations and culture without which, man as we know him, could not survive”.

Check Your Progress

1. Define Communication.
2. Explain the importance of effective communication.
3. What are the two essential requirements for any kind of communication.

1.4 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION





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Communication is a process in which at least two individuals are involved – **Sender or the encoder of the message** and **the receiver or the decoder**. The sender has an idea/ need/ motivation / desire to communicate to the listener/s and s/he encodes the message in language (it can even be a gesture or paralanguage) and sends the message using a **particular medium/ channel** (such as oral or written or electronic) to the receiver/s. The receiver tries to decode so that s/he comprehends what the encoder means/ intends. If the encoder and the decoder share the same basis of encoding and decoding the sounds and symbols, then the communication succeeds. But if the **semantic base** of the sender and the receiver is different, then it leads to miscommunication. Miscommunication or hampered communication can also happen if appropriate channel or media is not used or if the **communication environment** is noisy (we will deal with Noise at greater length while discussing Communication Barriers). This is only one aspect of communication. Communication is complete only when the decoder sends **feedback** to the encoder which tells the sender whether her/his message has been grasped or not.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the process of communication with the help of a diagram.

1.5 FUNCTION OF COMMUNICATION

The function of communication differs from context to context:

1. In the individual context:

- It provides knowledge
- It gives way to commercial success.
- It enforces and adjusts behavioral patterns.
- It helps in socialization and building relationships.
- It creates legends.

2. In the social context:

- It educates people and makes them capable on various fronts.
- It persuades the targeted subjects to buy products and/or services.
- It generates enthusiasm in the minds of the targeted subjects to develop or modify views on particular issues



Communication in Everyday Life

- It dissuades them from eschewing some habits, products or services that are harmful to them or to the society in general.
- It provides in social revolution and transformation.
- It helps in social revolution and transformation
- It performs incidental neutral functions.
- It builds an image of individuals or of non-business organisations in the minds of the masses.

3. In the organisational context:

- It serves as an essential tool
- It assists in decision making
- It keeps the employees enlightened.
- It informs the employees informed about their obligations.
- It builds good employer-employee relations.
- It facilitates the basic management process.
- It directs with finesse.
- It interacts with the members of the external environments.
- It co-ordinates employees' actions.
- It promotes leadership effectiveness.
- It gives feedback of the lower cadres.
- It evaluates performances for control.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the function of communication in the social context?
2. What function does communication fulfil in the context of an organization?

1.6 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

To be an **effective communicator**, certain significant things should be kept in mind –

- We must know what the objective of our communication is. Without an aim, we can be good at saying things in an informal setting (like talking to our friends or relatives), but for formal communication, such as in an office meeting or in a seminar or while talking to



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the boss in office, we cannot merely blabber for no reason at all, we need to have a concrete aim or objective in mind.

- When the objective is set, then the next step is to present our thoughts, emotions, feelings, etc. with clarity and integrity. If we are not able to present our thoughts clearly, then how can we expect the listener/s to understand and respond?
- The medium chosen for communication should be one both the parties are conversant with. For example, we must make sure that we communicate in a language in which the listener/s is/are comfortable. Moreover, we should also choose the medium depending on whether it is written or oral communication.
- An appropriate environment is also necessary for proper delivery of message. Without a proper environment there is always a chance that the message will be misunderstood or not properly understood.
- Paralinguistic features such as tone, pitch voice, pronunciation, appropriate gestures and postures, facial expressions, eye contact, dressing, etc. affect the oral communication process.

No communication is complete without a feedback. Only when we receive a feedback we know whether whatever we intended has been comprehended by the listener/s or not. Feedback may not always be in the form of a verbal response. If you are presenting a paper and see your listeners nodding their head then you understand that they are agreeing to what you are saying, but if a majority of them are yawning or fidgeting with something or the other, then it is evident that they are bored. The nodding of the head and yawning are examples of body language through which we get feedback of how effective we are in communicating our ideas orally.

Check Your Progress

1. If you wish to be an effective communicator, what are the things you should pay attention to?
2. What do you understand by 'feedback'? Why is it important?

1.7 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication can be classified into the following kinds –

- Verbal and non-verbal



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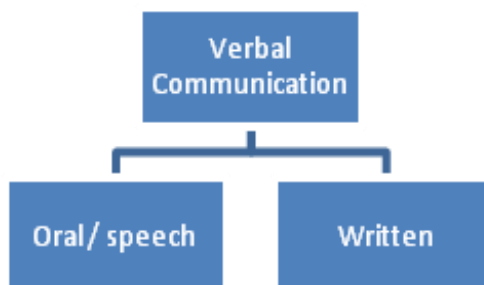
- Formal and informal
- Oral and written

1.7.1 Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Communication can also be divided into categories like verbal and non-verbal. Whereas verbal communication includes both oral and written communication, non-verbal communication includes any communication which is neither oral nor written, and includes modes such as postures, gestures, dressing, etc.

Verbal Communication

In verbal communication, language is used according to the established rules of grammar/syntax to communicate emotions and feelings, and to share information and meaning. Depending on the way we use words, by speaking or by writing, verbal communication is divided into two categories – Oral and Written.



Oral communication or speech is the more frequently used medium of communication. There are reasons for it to be so. Some of these reasons are:

- We need not be literate to speak as is needed in written communication. All human beings have the competence to speak one or more languages. And to achieve it, he or she does not need to be taught in a formal educational environment.
- Human beings are born with a language acquisition device (LAD) which disposes them to learn a language when they grow up in a socio-cultural environment. A child learns spoken language naturally just by imitating the elders around him or her.
- We speak more than we write as it is a faster, and a more spontaneous and economical medium of communication.



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Non-Verbal Communication

In many cases, no words are exchanged, yet communication happens as we can also communicate through our body language which is a non-verbal communication. It is perceived that non-verbal cues form a major part of communication process (93%) therefore it is significant that we focus our attention to this aspect of communication. The non-verbal cues are Kinesics, Proxemics, Chronemics, Haptics, Paralanguage, Silence and Sign language.

Kinesics

Kinesics is the study of body's physical movements for the purposes of communication, that is, the way our body communicates without words, through various movements of its parts. For example, nodding one's head communicates acceptance. Some body movements during communication are conscious, whereas others we do unconsciously. The unconscious body movements are very significant pointers in interpreting messages.

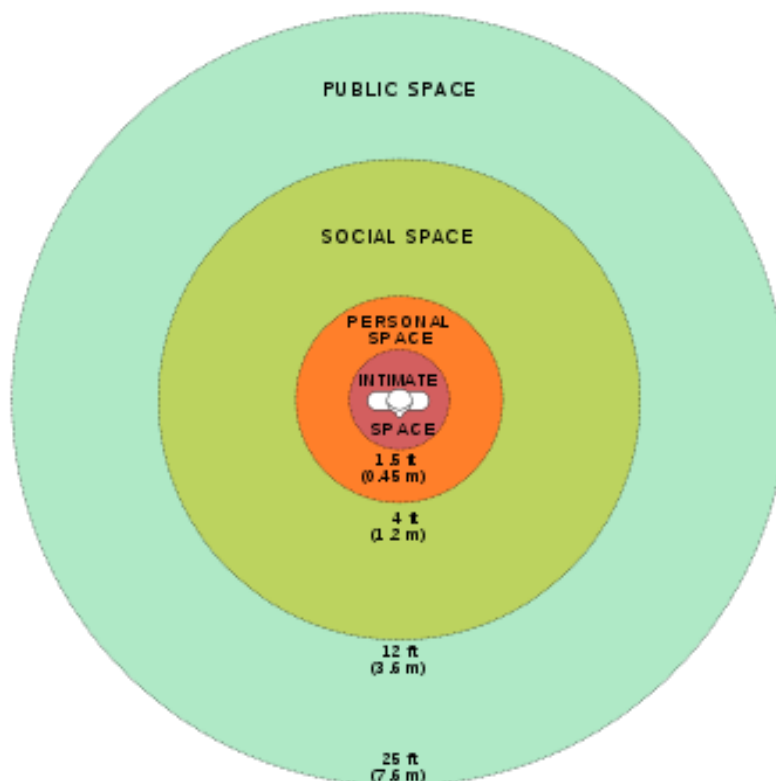
- (i) **Personal Appearance:** Our first impression matters a lot. Before someone starts communicating, others form an opinion about her/him just by perceiving how the person has tried to present herself/ himself. Appearance includes clothes, hair, accessories, and cosmetics and so on. In today's context, the purpose of clothing has changed from fulfilling a basic need to expressing oneself.
- (ii) **Posture:** Posture refers to the way we hold ourselves when we stand, sit, walk, talk or choose not to talk. Our postures change according to circumstances. When one is nervous, one usually starts fidgeting with something or the other like mobile phones.
- (iii) **Gestures:** Gestures are movements made by hands, head or face. Appropriate gestures supplement verbal communication and are also communication in their own right.
- (iv) **Facial Expressions:** Facial expressions communicate to the receiver the intent of the message.
- (v) **Eye contact:** Often our eyes communicate better than the words we utter. Words become more powerful when the speaker makes eye contact with the listener/receiver of the message.

Proxemics: Space or lack of it between the sender and the receiver of the message also speak volumes. When one hugs someone, though no words are exchanged but the warmth of the relationship can be felt by both. This is communication. The study of physical space in



Communication in Everyday Life

interpersonal relations is called Proxemics. Edward T. Hall (1966) divides the communication space into four distinct zones –



- **Intimate:** The Intimate zone extends just to 18 inches (one and a half feet). Members of family, lovers, spouses, relatives, and parents usually communicate in this zone. A handshake, a pat on the back or a hug are some of the examples of communication in the Intimate zone.
- **Personal:** The Personal zone stretches from 18 inches (one and half feet) to 4 feet. Close friends, colleagues, peers, communicate in this zone. This zone is personal and is quite a relaxed and casual place.
- **Social:** Social zone is in the radius of 4 feet to 12 feet. In this zone, relationships are more formal and official. The distance between you and the interviewers in an interview is an example of social zone.
- **Public:** Public zone starts from 12 feet and may extend to 25 feet or to the range of eyesight and hearing. Events are formal in this zone. For example, When the Prime



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minister or the President of India addresses the masses, they usually keep a distance from them for security reasons. It is an example of public zone.

Chronemics: How we manage our time communicates a lot about the kind of person we are. The study of the use of time to communicate is known as Chronemics. In the professional world, time is a valuable resource. When we are late for an appointment, people react negatively. If we arrive early, we are considered over-eager.

Haptics: Language of Touch: We also communicate with our sense of touch, which is known as Haptics. The way we communicate by our physical contact or by touching the other person is known as Haptics. Kissing, slapping, or shaking hands are ways of Haptics.

Paralanguage: Paralanguage is the way meaning is conveyed by how we say things while speaking. When a telephone bell rings and you pick up the receiver and hear the word “hello” it not only greets you, but also tells you about the gender of the person, the voice is of someone familiar, and the sociolinguistic and educational background of the person calling. All these are not contained in the word “hello” but are manifest in the way the word is spoken. Paralanguage consists of various aspects – Vocalizations of Words. There are different dimensions of it based on–

- a) **Volume Variation**
- b) **Speed of Speaking**
- c) **Pauses**
- d) **Word Stress**
- e) **Inflections** (Inflections are the small bits of sounds that are attached to utterances.)
- f) **Non-fluencies** (sounds such as “ummm” or “errr”. These sounds are called non-fluencies.)

Sign Language

Sign language refers to symbols which are commonly used within a particular community or communicative group to mean something that is constant for all the members of that community. For example, Traffic signals are signs or symbols that are common all over the world. These signs are abstractions which people agree on the meanings to make it work. Other examples of signs are road signals, graphs, maps, alarms, sirens, etc.

- **Audio Signs**



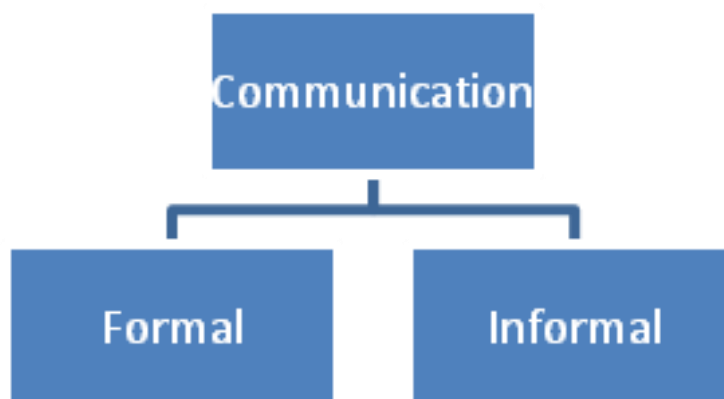
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- Visual Signs
- Audio-visual signs

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Kinesics, Haptics, Para-language and Sign language.

1.7.2 Formal and Informal Communication



Depending on the circumstance and the person/s one is interacting with, one chooses whether to communicate formally or informally. In that sense, communication can be categorized into formal and informal. *Grapevine* is the other name for informal communication. Mostly in the professional world, we tend to communicate formally as the occasion demands it; but in our personal life we are usually informal.

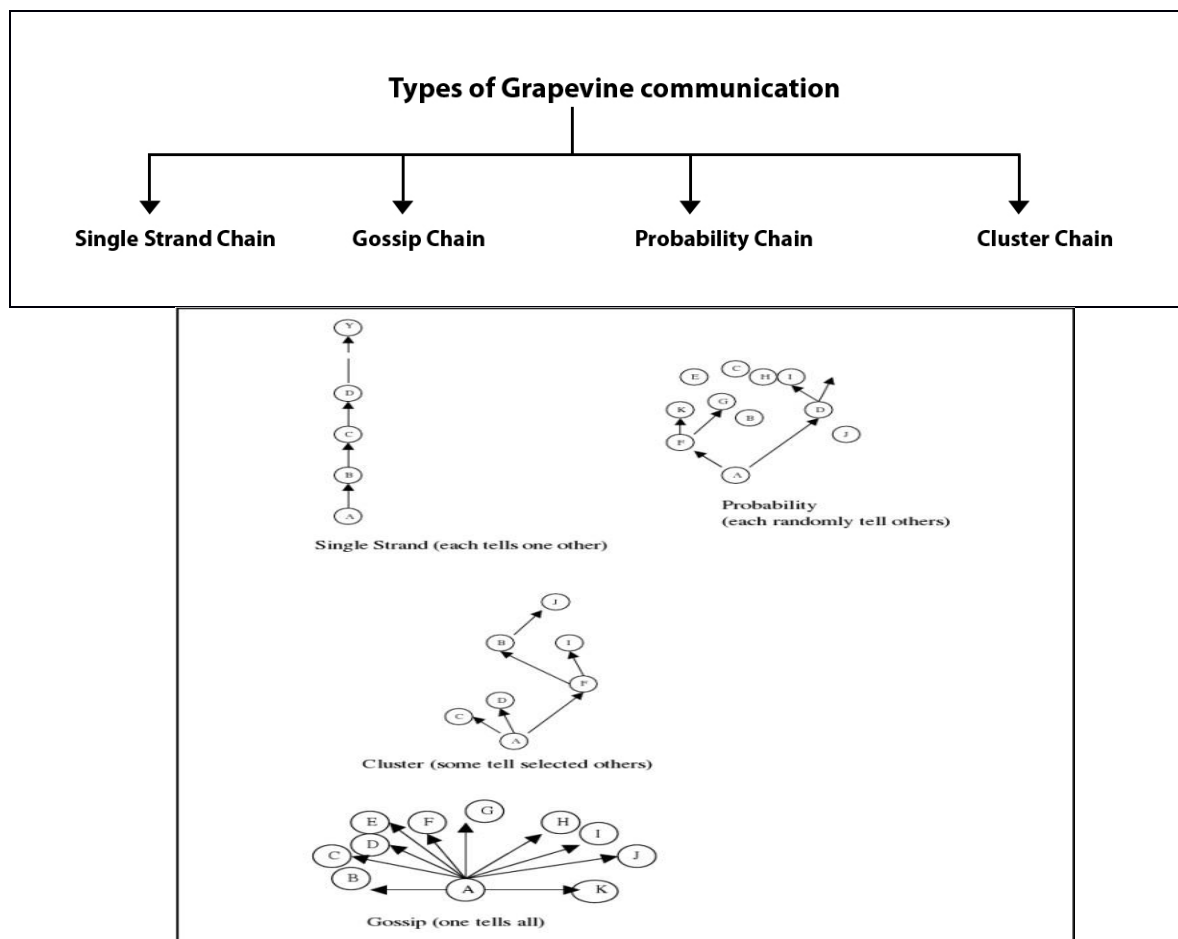
Informal Communication or Grapevine Though members of an organization communicate at a formal level, but that does not satisfy the human hunger for interaction and building interpersonal relationships. We all tend to communicate personally with some members of our organization beyond our professional obligations. Hence, there is a need for informal communication, also known as Grapevine.



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Grapevine Chain

Keith Davis (1980) points out that there can be four possible configurations of Grapevine–



- **Single Strand Chain** – where information passes from A to B and then B from C and so on. In this case there is very little chance of verification of information.
- **Gossip Chain** – where person A sends information to all others in the group.
- **Probability Chain** – where person A sends information randomly without specifically choosing a recipient of the message.
- **Cluster Chain** – Person A sends message to B and C and each of them then conveys it to a cluster of others. The sender is selective about the receiver when s/he sends the message, and then the receiver takes up the role of the sender and sends it to multiple people.

As mentioned, the Grapevine can be misused in the following ways –



Communication in Everyday Life

- The information passed on or circulated can be inaccurate and sometimes can have a malafide intention.
- Messages can easily be distorted as there is no written document for reference.
- It is usually difficult to find out the origin of the message as information is anonymous, often leading to spread of rumours.

Grapevine can also be effectively used by organizations as –

- The channel is speedy and spontaneous.
- It is primarily an oral medium and consequently inexpensive.
- The network is multidirectional and therefore the flow of information is flexible.
- It can be used as an important feedback channel.
- Grapevine can also help in participatory decision-making.
- It can be used as a parallel channel by organizations to complement the formal channel.
- It can help in building interpersonal relationships within an organization and hence can create a harmonious work environment.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Grapevine communication?
2. How can it be misused?

1.8 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Communication is a smooth transmission of information, ideas, emotions and feelings (and more importantly transmission of meaning) from one to another where the intended message encoded by the sender is grasped by the receiver and s/he responds accordingly. But in many cases we fail to communicate the desired information, knowledge or emotion as some barrier crops up between the sender and the receiver which prevents successful communication, distorts the message or hampers the process and makes communication meaningless. For example, when we are communicating orally it may happen that the communication environment is noisy and consequently the receiver of the message is not able to hear us clearly. The noisy environment is a barrier to communication. It may also happen that two unknown persons accidentally meet and want to communicate but do not have a common



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language that can be the medium in which they can communicate. Or maybe when we are writing if our handwriting is illegible or we use very subject-specific jargon which the receiver has no knowledge of, then the communication would not achieve its desired goal. In these cases, illegible handwriting or the highly-specialized-jargonized language are barriers to communication. In short, it can be said that barriers to communication can simply be defined as anything that prevents the smooth exchange of meaning between a sender and receiver.

In the field of business communication, the communication barrier or any unwanted interference between the speaker/encoder and the receiver/decoder which hampers the communication flow is termed as Noise. Noise here does not merely refer to the physical noise but to any barrier that prevents the flow of communication. If the barrier or the noise is of a technological nature then it can easily be avoided as technical snags can be corrected easily. Suppose, you are in a basement of a building where the reception of a mobile network is not very good and you receive a call, it is always advised that you move out of the basement to let the communication be smooth. But if the noise or the barrier is due to some human error, then it takes a long time and sustained effort to correct as the human errors are linked to one's habits and psychology. For example, if one has a problem of always assuming a sense of superiority whenever communicating, then it can easily become a deterrent for others to be attentive to her or his thoughts and emotions. The person's sense of superiority can lead others to feel that they are deliberately and consciously being underrated, leading them to be detached or indifferent to the message being communicated.

1.8.1 Classification of Barriers to Communication

Noise or barriers can be of two kinds:

- 1. Channel Noise**
- 2. Semantic Noise**

The difference between the Channel Noise and Semantic noise can be summarized as – Channel Noise develops externally (that is, external to the message) whereas the Semantic Noise is internal to the message.

Channel Noise

When there is any unwanted interference or snag in the medium of communication process it is termed as channel noise, for example, a noisy market place and illegible handwriting can be termed as channel noise as in both the cases the factors that create communication failure are not an intrinsic part of the message – in one case it is the communication environment



Communication in Everyday Life

which is not suitable for communication and in the other the medium of communication, i.e. writing, is not readable. There can be many kinds of channel noise.

Below are some of the causes with examples of Channel Noise:

- **Physical Noise in the Channel:** Undesirable physical noise is a great barrier to communication. Any physical noise which is not related to the communication process can cause a barrier.
- **Use of Inappropriate Media:** Inappropriate selection of media to communicate messages can lead to miscommunication or may not have the desired result. For example, you are the manager of a company which is bidding for a tender; will it be possible to bid for tender using oral communication? Oral communication is an inappropriate media for a bid for tender.
- **Multiple Transfer Stations:** If a clerical staff of an organization figures out a mistake in some document and wants to communicate it to the Director and informs her/his higher official who then informs her/his superior and then her/his superior to the Director, then it may happen that because of the Multiple Transfer Stations, the content of the message is lost. It may also happen that the message changes in its tone and meaning because of it being transferred too many times which hampers the communication.
- **Information Overload:** A message should only provide that much information as is required to understand it. Too much of information can lead to a situation where the intended message is lost.
- **Fear of Superiors:** It often happens that one wants to pass on some information to one's superior, but s/he cannot do it as s/he feels that the senior/superior would get offended. Often the way superior would react makes us not to communicate what we truly feel or think which can be a major barrier to smooth functioning of an organization.
- **Negative Presuppositions:** One usually has a feeling that a memo is always issued to seek clarification or to warn or to inform, whereas a memo can also be issued to congratulate someone. People have a negative presupposition about memos. So when someone gets news that her or his friend got a memo, s/he starts feeling bad without any reason.
- **Communication Selectivity:** When we are selective in our listening, it can be a barrier to communication. It also can be a significant barrier when one decides to read only parts of a document.



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- **Poor Listening:** If one is a poor listener than it can itself be a barrier to communication. Listening is a significant thing in the process of communication.

Semantic Noise

Semantic Noise can be defined as noise or barrier that is generated from within a message. As language is connotative, that is, meaning of a word is not always stated directly and can also be implied; therefore the communication process fails many times as the same word is interpreted differently by different people. For example, if someone says that ‘the bark is strong’ then the meaning of the sentence will depend on the context in which it is spoken. In one context it may mean a dog’s bark and in another the bark of a tree. So if the context is not given to us then the meaning becomes inaccessible. Sometimes ambiguity in the language may also cause semantic noise, for example, if one says – “I saw Ravi going with some old men and women”, one is not sure whether the adjective ‘old’ applies only to the men or also to the women. There can be numerous such examples of semantic noise.

Below are some of the causes with examples of Semantic Noise.

- **Limited Vocabulary:** Limited vocabulary can become a significant barrier to communication as it can create not only a problem in understanding things, but also may lead to a situation where the person is not able to express what s/he intends to express. One also has to keep in mind that having an extensive vocabulary does not always ensure that one would be a good communicator. For effective communication, one should know which words to use in which circumstances. Moreover, words have their literal meaning (denotative) as well as symbolic (connotative) meaning. One should have knowledge about both to use them in right situations and also to comprehend them when they are used by others.
- **Incompatibility between Verbal and Non-verbal Language:** We communicate not only with our words, but also with non-verbal cues – dress, eye contact, physical touch, facial expressions, gestures, postures, etc. Often we use non-verbal cues or body language consciously, but many a times the non-verbal cues are unconscious. It is essential that our gestures and postures are compatible with our words. Whenever it is not so, we are misinterpreted or misunderstood.
- **Varied Perception due to Different Backgrounds, such as Cultural:** Each one of us perceives the same incident or entity in a different way which can lead to communication failure. For example, the librarian of your college called a library committee meeting to discuss the issue of books being stolen from the library. The chairperson of the committee came to the meeting and pointed out that stealing of books suggests that the students are



Communication in Everyday Life

interested in gaining knowledge and recommended that all books to be replaced and at the most security measures can be tightened. Many others in the meeting felt that this was not the solution, yet they did not say anything as they did not dare to oppose the Chair. This is an example of varied perception because of the ways in which we try to look at the world. Our background decides the way we interpret a message. To a poor person who is suffering from hunger, the beauty of a full moon does not appeal. Our social, cultural, financial, educational and psychological background decides the way we try to make sense of the things around us, including words. Thus while one communicates, if s/he does not keep in mind the background of the audience or the receiver and communicate accordingly, then there is always a chance that s/he will be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

- **Wrong Assumptions and Inferences:** Wrong Assumptions can often lead to miscommunication. Suppose there is a string of letters that are written by two departments regarding a certain issue and one department writes a letter to the other department without referring to the earlier communications in this regard when the Head of the other department has changed. There is always a chance that the letter would not serve its purpose.
- **Blocked Categories/Categorical Thinking:** In general, we react positively to an information only if it is in consonance with our own views and attitudes. Conversely, when we receive information that does not conform to our personal views, habits, and attitudes, or appears unfavorable to us, we tend to react negatively or even disbelieve it. Rejection, distortion, and avoidance are three common, undesirable, and negative reactions to unfavorable information. For example, you think that you can never deal with matters related to accounts as you are very poor in that field. So whenever any document reaches you from the Accounts section, you immediately pass on the work to someone else thinking that you will not be able to handle it. This is an example of blocked categories.
- **Emotional, Psycho-social Unsettled State:** It is true that none of us can be unemotional, as emotions are an integral part of human life, but when emotions are not moderated, they can become a barrier to communication. It can lead to a situation where one reacts negatively to situations which can act as barriers to communication.



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Check Your Progress

1. What are the two kinds of Barriers/ Noise?
2. Explain the difference between the two.
3. What are the main causes for the occurrence of these Barriers?

1.8.2 Strategies to overcome Barriers to Communication

If one desires to be an effective communicator then one needs to learn ways to avoid barriers or noise so that communication failures do not happen. When a particular communication fails to evoke any response or the desired response because of some noise or barrier to communication, then the following steps can help solve the problem:

Identify the problem – Find the cause or barrier – Work on alternative solutions – Opt for the best solution – Follow up rigorously

The first step is to identify the problem. When we can identify the problem, then we can find a solution for it. To identify the problem, it is necessary that one analyzes the feedback or the lack of it carefully. Once the barrier is located, then one can figure out easily the cause of the barrier and can look for all possible solutions. The best solution should then be opted for and then followed consciously so that the barrier does not crop up again.

1.9 7 CS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

It is thought that for effective communication there is a need to follow certain norms which are known as “**7 Cs of Effective Communication.**”

These norms apply both in written as well as oral communication.

The 7 Cs of communication are–

1. **Completeness** - Any communication must be complete, in the sense that a message should convey all the facts required for the comprehension of the message.
2. **Conciseness** – Conciseness refers to the fact that while communicating one should try to make a message as short as possible to make it effective. Conciseness in communication not only saves time but is also cost effective and highlights the message making it more appealing and comprehensible for the audience/reader.
3. **Consideration** – Consideration in communication implies that the sender of message steps into the shoes of the audience/readers in terms of their viewpoints, background,



Communication in Everyday Life

mind-set, education level, etc. to ensure that the message sent is comprehended properly by the receiver(s).

4. **Clarity** – Clarity in communication implies that the message should be as clutter free as possible and that it is easily understandable. To put a message across with clarity, one needs clarity of thought. And when one has clarity of thought one can use exact, appropriate and specific words to express oneself.
5. **Concreteness** – Concreteness in communication implies being particular and clear rather than fuzzy and general. One should be specific in terms of quoting figures and facts as it makes communication effective and trustworthy and there is less chance of the message being misinterpreted.
6. **Courtesy** – Courtesy in communication implies that the sender should respect the receiver/s in terms of being polite, judicious, reflective and enthusiastic. It creates a positive atmosphere for communication and leads to effective communication.
7. **Correctness** – Correctness in communication implies that there are no grammatical errors, no dubiousness in facts and figures. Correctness in communication builds up trust between the sender and the receiver and makes communication effective.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain in brief the 7 C's of effective communication.

1.10 EXERCISE

- **Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below:**

From *A Long Walk for Bina*, by Ruskin Bond

Bina had been going to school in her own village of Koli, on the other side of the mountain. But it had been a Primary School, finishing at Class Five. Now, in order to study in the Sixth, she would have to walk several miles every day to Nauti, where there was a High School going up to the Eighth. It has been decided that Sonu, her younger brother, would also shift to the new school, to give Bina company. Prakash, their neighbour in Koli, was already a pupil at the Nauti School. The children spoke often about the fun they would have walking to and fro.

Pranab has mischievous nature, which sometimes got him into trouble, had resulted in his having to repeat a year. But this didn't seem to bother him. 'What's the hurry?' he shrugged as he spoke, his tone careless and carefree. He had told his indignant parents, 'You're not sending me to a foreign land when I finish school. And our cows aren't

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running away, are they?’ They are still angry about what he had said, but his voice rose in amusement as he told Bina about the conversation.

‘You would prefer to look after the cows, wouldn’t you?’ asked Bina seriously, with concern in her eyes, as they got up to continue their walk.

“Oh, school’s all right. But there’s more to life ... Hey! Do you know, there’s a new teacher this year, Miss Ramola. She’s very young, they say, just out of college. Everyone in school is talking about her – I wonder what she’ll be like.”

Bina looked up, excited at this new piece of information. Her eyes shone as she thought about all the questions she wanted to ask, all the new things she might learn.

Bina walked faster and Sonu had some trouble keeping with them. She took his hand and helped him along, walking close to him, her hand on his shoulder often. She was thrilled about the new school and the prospect of different surroundings. She had seldom been outside her own village, with its small school and single ration shop. The day’s routine never varied – helping her mother in the fields or with household task like fetching water from the spring or cutting grass and fodder for the cattle. Her father, who was a soldier, was away for nine months in the year and Sonu was still too small for the heavier tasks.

As they neared Nauti village, they were joined by other children coming from different directions. Even where there were no major roads, the mountains were full of little lanes and short cuts. Like a game of snakes and ladders, these narrow paths zigzagged around the hills and villages, cutting through fields and crossing narrow ravines until they came together to form a fairly busy road along which mules, cattle and goats joined the throng.

- (a) Find examples of non-verbal communication in the passage.
- (b) Find examples of effective communication by the pitch of the voice in this speech.
- (c) Where do we find feedback to the speech in this passage? What is the feedback?
- (d) Listening is as important as speaking. List examples from the above passage to show that the children are alert listeners.
- (e) Define ‘Grapevine’ and locate relevant example(s) in the passage.
- (f) Define ‘Social Space’ and locate relevant example(s) in the passage.
- (g) Semantic noise is defined as barrier that is generated within a message, and is caused by factors such as limited vocabulary, cultural differences, and blocked categories. Find an example of semantic noise in the passage and explain why you think it occurs here.



Communication in Everyday Life

- (h) The 7 Cs of effective communication are Completeness, Conciseness, Consideration, Clarity, Concreteness, Courtesy and Correctness. Find examples of any three of these in the passage above.

1.11 FURTHER READINGS

- Malhotra Perna, Deb Dulal Halder, (2019) *Communication Skills: Theory and Practice*, Eighth Edition, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
- Halder, Deb Dulal, Anjana Neira Dev, Perna Malhotra, (2012) *Technical Writing: Theory and Practice*, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
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READING SKILLS

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Learning Objectives
- 2.3 Reading
- 2.4 An Approach to Deal with Comprehension Passages
- 2.5 Comprehension Passage Analysis
- 2.6 Exercises
- 2.7 Further Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process which one acquires as soon as one tries to get literate, but reading is not an easy task, as reading simultaneously involves understanding and interpretation. What you are reading is written by you or someone and therefore a communication is taking place in your act of reading. This communication can be successful and effective only when one reads properly and understands what the writer of the piece you are reading has tried to mean or hint at. So, understanding what you are reading is a very significant process which we will be dealing with in this chapter.

2.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you should have learnt about:

- Reading Skills
- Reading techniques: skimming, scanning, intensive reading, extensive reading



Communication in Everyday Life

2.3 READING

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four main skills required to master a language. Those good at reading, become good listeners, speakers and writers. Nonetheless, the fact remains that no single skill is learnt in isolation, most of the times it is a combination and integration of skills. Why do you read and how to read - these are the two significant parts to be discussed in detail for attaining a good proficiency in reading. One must know the purpose of reading a piece (literary or non-literary) before plunging into it and after knowing the purpose, a strategy of reading should be evolved.

Reading is for Pleasure, examination, general information, specific knowledge, problem solving, draw logic, etc.

2.3.1 Reading Techniques

In the age of Internet and information overload, what to read and what not to read is a big question and some clarity about it is extremely crucial. Reading techniques help in dealing with such situations.

It is pertinent to know WHY one is reading before going into the details of HOW (Reading Techniques). Is the target common, is it specific? Once this question is answered, only then the reading strategies can be decided for particular cases.

There are four main reading techniques which are used for specific situations:

1. **Scanning** is reading with a specific purpose in mind for specific information. When one reads an entire text/document quickly while looking for specific information, it is called scanning. For example: Going through an entire newspaper and looking for specific news related to India-Pakistan cricket match. You scanned to get specific information about Delhi University admissions and cut-offs.
2. **Skimming** is speed reading for cursory overview for general information. Going through an entire newspaper quickly through the headlines is an example of skimming. Going through a data-table quickly to elicit an overall idea of the topic on which data is presented is an example of skimming technique of reading. Do not expect a deep comprehension of the written text after skimming. Reading only the headings of chapters is skimming.
3. **Intensive/close reading** is of a specific written piece for a specific purpose. It is going into the minutest details of a particular word/phrase/line/para, etc. For example,



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“The woods are lovely, dark and deep

But I have promises to keep

And miles to go before I sleep

And miles to go before I sleep”

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

To answer a question like, ‘what is the meaning of woods’ in the poem, one will adopt intensive reading technique.

Intensive reading is very crucial for language learners as they pick up vocabulary, focus on structure and syntax while doing intensive reading.

4. **Extensive reading** is a kind of general reading for general information. Generally, this technique is used for pleasure reading, like reading a novel for pleasure. One does not mind certain difficult terms or expressions and goes on without stopping for their clarification until they become a hindrance in overall understanding.

For example, if one is asked to read a chapter before discussing it in class, one goes for extensive reading to get a general idea of the piece. Unlike intensive reading which is for specific purpose, it is for a generalized understanding of a piece of writing. For example, while doing an unseen passage for comprehension, one does extensive and intensive reading both. For dealing with specific vocabulary related or other specific questions, intensive reading is required, but the initial first reading is taken for general idea of the passage.

Check Your Progress

1. Briefly explain the four reading techniques commonly used.
2. In what situations and to achieve what target are these techniques employed?

2.3.2 Reading Skills

Process of Reading

Effective reading involves proper planning of reading so that the objectives of reading are successfully met. First of all, a reader must know her/his purpose of reading, specific or general, and then accordingly choose the appropriate strategy for the same.

A. Pre-reading Activities: Pre-reading activities work better at the initial stages of learning a language, but nevertheless, they are fruitful otherwise at later stages of reading too. For



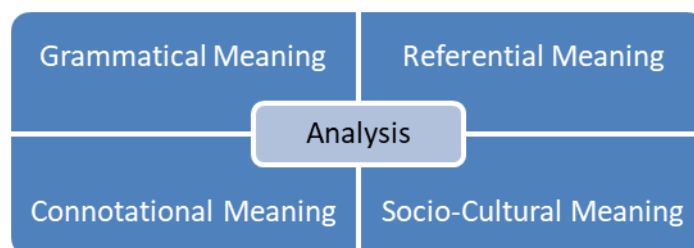
Communication in Everyday Life

example, before reading a story/essay, talking about the title, sub title, sections, sub-sections and guessing the main idea and sub-ideas of it; warming up readers by asking them questions related to the theme, writer, writing technique, genre and past knowledge of the topic, etc. prepare a reader well for the main reading. Vocabulary and basic questions related to the topic also work effectively.

- B. While-reading:** Multiple readings and in between stopping by a reader to check whether the purpose of reading is being fulfilled: if it is for pleasure, is s/he getting the story line properly; if for a specific purpose like getting the main idea of the content, has s/he got it; is s/he able to comprehend what was expected after a reading, etc.
- C. Post-reading Activities:** After reading, a reader may ask oneself certain questions or some questions may be posed by a teacher in case of guided reading so that the reader is able to form an opinion about the content and can rewrite or present it.

Process of Analysis

A careful analysis of any literary text would involve looking at multiple aspects of the text.



Let us look at these briefly. Analysis of **Grammatical meaning** would be entirely linguistic in nature. This would involve carefully looking at the different sub parts constituting a sentence, the word order and other grammatical signals. For instance: the difference in meaning of the following three phrases- ‘Throw in’, ‘Throw a ball’, ‘A good throw’-is not lexical in nature, but a result of grammatical structure. Now to look at **Referential meaning**, which pertains to extra-linguistic features, let us consider a specific reference to an event. “The Home Minister wrote to the Defense Minister about the recent spate in terrorist activities in Mumbai. He stressed on the need for improving patrolling around sensitive areas there.” “He” in the second sentence refers to the Home minister and not the other; ‘there’ refers to a specific location in Mumbai. **Connotative meaning** would refer to the abstract value associated with a certain word. For instance, the word “fire” while actually standing for a physical event that burns, might be used to connote the ideas of “intensity” or “ambition”. Similarly, the color “white” may connote “innocence, purity or peace” depending upon its context. Finally looking at the **Socio-cultural meaning**, which is basically social and cultural



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significance attached to a certain word or expression, for instance, the color “white” (discussed above) when used to describe a Hindu woman’s clothing would refer to her state of being a widow. This meaning will not be available to, say, a person from western culture where a woman gets married wearing white attire.

Hence, we can say that a careful observation and analysis of words/phrases/expressions is of primary importance in the analysis of a text.

Check Your Progress

1. What aspects should you pay attention to while analyzing a literary text?

2.4 AN APPROACH TO DEAL WITH COMPREHENSION

One of the main objectives of learning English is to understand the language. What we call ‘comprehension’ exercises are, in fact, a test of this understanding. A comprehension exercise consists of a passage on which questions are set to test a pupil’s ability to understand the content of a given text and to infer information and meanings from it.

Here are a few points to be kept in mind while attempting a comprehension exercise:

1. **Read the passage quickly once to get a general idea of the theme.** When you do this do not be preoccupied with answering particular questions.
2. **Read the passage again slowly and carefully, so to know the details.** If you come across a word you don’t know, try to work out its meaning through the context.
3. **After reading the questions read the passage again.** Look at the questions and work out mentally the location in the passage where the information required for each answer lies. Do not start writing immediately. The most useful work is done while you make yourself familiar with the passage and the questions.
4. **Make sure that you understand the questions.** Re-phrase the questions in simple terms. Very often the students just glance through the questions without trying to understand their full implication. Consequently, they fail to give complete answers to the questions.
5. **Make sure what you write is relevant.** Answer to the point and then stop. Refer back to the question to make sure that your answer contains the information that is asked for and nothing more.



Communication in Everyday Life

6. **Use your own words as far as possible.** However, it may not be always possible to use completely different words when technical terms are involved or words used in the passage are simple enough. But, as far as possible, use your own words and structures. The purpose of setting a comprehension exercise is to find out whether a student understands the passage or not. If you merely copy the exact set of words from the passage you do not show that you understand the passage.
7. **Keep to the facts given in the passage.** You may have a lot of information from various sources on the theme of the passage set for comprehension. Your answer must be based on the facts given in the passage, unless you are directed to give information which is not given in the passage, like giving your opinion, arguments, etc. To emphasise once again, the purpose of comprehension exercises is to show that you understand the given passage and not to show how much you *know about the theme* from other sources.
8. **Answer in complete sentences unless you are told not to do so.** Sometimes, you could present the information in a single word; but you are required to express yourself clearly in good English, that is in a complete sentence.
9. Answer in the same tense as that of the question; e.g.,
What does he see? = He sees
What did he see? = He saw
10. When you have written your answer, you should always refer back to the question and check whether your answer is relevant and complete in all respects.

2.5 Comprehension Passage Analysis

The suggestions given at the end of the following comprehension exercise should serve as guidelines while answering questions.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer, as far as possible, in your own words, questions that follow. Before reading the suggested answers given at the end of the exercise, you should answer the questions yourself. Then compare your own response with the suggested answers.

My life was fulfilled on my fourth birthday. By which I mean everything that has happened since has been an anticlimax and has failed to match the joy and satisfaction I experienced on that day. My mother had taken me for a holiday to Bishop's Hull, a small village outside Taunton. A farm labourer, who lived in an adjoining cottage and who had lost

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an arm in the war offered to take me fishing. I had been fishing before but only for sharks from the upturned kitchen-table. I had never held a real rod or had my hook dangling in genuine water. Now, the prospect alone of this expedition made me so excited that I ran a temperature and did not sleep at all the night before. I even forget the grey hunter which I had discovered stabled in a pub opposite. The shutter of my mind must have been full open that day, for every detail of the river still remains in sharp focus. My cousin and I followed the man along the river-bank. It was my first river, then he stopped at a deep pool by a weir; it was my first pool; deep, bottomless. Branches of ash reached out so that half was in the shade; the sunlight shone on the other half, and on the whole it was so still that flies could walk upon the invisible skin of the water.

I watched the fisherman take from his pocket a small tobacco-tin full of worms. Then breathlessly I saw him hold his rod against his body with his iron arm and watched him dexterously fix a worm on the hook with the other. Then he cast his line, and for the next half-hour I sat too excited to speak, my eyes riveted on the scarlet float almost unmoving on the still water. But we caught nothing.

That evening, I could not even eat my supper; I was too possessed. My mind was completely filled with the images of fish swimming beneath the water. I felt resentment against them for avoiding being caught. I lay in bed imagining I was a fish to find out how long it would be before hunger made me take the temptation of the hook.

That problem was promptly resolved the next morning by my mother who took me into Taunton to buy me a fishing line and one or two other pieces of necessary equipment. As soon as she got off the bus, I raced her towards the pool, found a worm and cast the float on to the water. Then I closed my eyes and prayed ‘Dear God, please make the trout hungry. Dear God, please make them like worms, not any worms, but my worm which I’ve put on that hook, for Thine is the Kingdom forever and ever, Amen.’

I have never prayed so fervently or succinctly. It was not a particularly odd prayer. As a child, I always imagined God as a grocer, order-book and pencil in hand, giving me the courtesy due to a customer. I sat willing the fish towards the worm. My whole soul was screwed up into my eyes riveted on the float. I did this for half an hour or so, till my mother asked me to go and pick her some cowslips from the meadow behind her. Grudgingly I complied, running back with the flowers.

‘Why don’t you see now if you’ve caught a fish,’ my mother suggested casually. ‘It seems to me your float’s quite low in the water.’

‘Yes, it is,’ I cried, hauling in, nearly falling into the water.



Communication in Everyday Life

I can state, but I cannot express the pleasure I felt as a great fish broke the water.

‘You’ve never seen a trout as big as that, have you?’ I asked my mother confidently.

‘Never,’ she said truthfully.

‘I shall eat it for supper,’ I said, ‘and perhaps I’ll give you a bit for buying me the line. But tomorrow you can have all the fish. There’s bound to be another tomorrow.’

That evening I broke my fast and ate the whole of the fish. There was another fish on my hook the next day. And for everyday that week. I never suspected that there was any coincidence in the fact that the fishes took my bait only while I was off picking flowers.

No doubt my mother’s subterfuge was justifiable. I never suspected it and was seventeen before she punctured my boast about the trout I used to catch, by telling me they were herrings. But it was too late then. Consequently, I have gone through life always sublimely confident that wherever I flung my hook an obliging fish would swallow it. And the incident has had other psychic repercussions. (RONALD DUNCAN, *All Men are Islands*)

Questions

- (a) How old was the author when he first fished in genuine water?
- (b) The fisherman with whom the author had gone for fishing is said to have an *iron arm*. What do you understand by *an iron arm*?
- (c) How did the fisherman come to have an *iron arm*?
- (d) What were the feelings of the author towards God?
- (e) Carefully explain in your own words the exact meaning of the following phrases or words as they are used in the passage:
 - (i) an anticlimax (line 2)
 - (ii) dexterously (line 17)
 - (iii) too possessed (line 20)
 - (iv) fervently (line 30)
 - (v) complied (line 35)
 - (vi) repercussions (line 51)
- (f) What were the feelings of the author when he had caught the fish for the first time?



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- (g) Write a paragraph of not more than 70 words to make clear what the mother's plan was, why she considered it to be justifiable, and what effect, the author feels, it has had upon him.

Suggested Answers

Question (a) This question requires from you a fact that is mentioned in the passage. It is a simple question to begin with so that it puts you at ease to go ahead with self-confidence.

- (i) The author was four years old when he first fished in genuine water.

Question (b)

- (i) "By iron-arm I understand that the fisherman did not have a real arm." This answer is negative and vague. What type of an arm did he have?
- (ii) Therefore the correct answer is : "By an iron arm, I understand that the farm-labourer had a false arm made of some metal. Furthermore, I understand that his false arm was very strong as it is compared to iron."

Question (c) Here you are required to find the fact from the passage.

- (i) A candidate may just answer this question in the following way:
- "The fisherman lost his arm during the war." Many lose arms during the war. Though this candidate has the correct clue to the answer, he does not answer the question.
- (ii) A second candidate may answer:
- "Since during the war, the fisherman lost his arm, it was replaced by an iron arm in the hospital." This answer brings in the "army" and the "hospital" which are not in the passage.
- (iii) The correct answer is:
- "The fisherman came to have an iron arm because he had lost his real arm in the war."

Question (d) Here are three possible answers.

- (i) He thought that God was like a grocery man with an order book and pencil ready to note down anything he wanted and get it from him.
- (ii) He believed in God as anything or anyone who could help him.
- (iii) He considered God as a convenience who should serve him (the boy). He thinks of God as a shopkeeper who should always keep him (the customer) happy by doing what he wants.



Communication in Everyday Life

The two important ideas to be contained in the answer are the prayer and the image of God as a grocer. Answer (i) above has too many of the original words from the passage; and thus it does not prove to be the candidate's own answer. Answer (ii) is very much confused. Answer (iii) is the correct one expressing both the key ideas involved.

Question (e)

- (i) an anticlimax is something that does not match up to previous expectation.
- (ii) dexterously means with great skill in the use of the hands. In the context, it means that he fixed the worm with great expertise.
- (iii) too possessed means involved to an excessive extent.
- (iv) fervently means marked by a great warmth of feeling.
- (v) complied means acted in accordance with someone's wishes.
- (vi) repercussions means indirect effects of an act.

Question (f) Answer to this question is not directly found in the passage; therefore you have to read between the lines to deduce feelings and attitudes from actions and comments. Some of the possible answers are given below :

- (i) The boy considered the trout as a reward for his work and fulfilment of his ambition. When he catches the fish he feels he got the reward for the day and therefore he can stop fishing for the day.
- (ii) He regards that the purpose of trout's existence is to be caught by fishermen. He also thought that since he had prayed to God the trout should take the bait.
- (iii) The boy's attitude towards the trout is selfish. He thinks that the purpose of the trout's existence is to be caught by him; and he tries hard by prayer and will-power to lure the trout on to his hook.

The main ideas of the answer are the boy's prayer to God and his wish that the fish should be caught in his hook. ("I sat willing the fish towards the worm.") Against this background, answer (i) is vague and (ii) is more or less satisfactory; but it is not related to the boy himself. Answer (iii) is the best answer, because it refers to the clues in the passage.

Question (g) This question again demands looking for facts and interpreting them.

The trick played by the mother was that she put a herring on the fishing line when her son was picking flowers. She did this to save her son from being disappointed if he did not catch



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a fish. The author considers that these events made him to expect to be lucky and always to get what he wanted. This incident has also caused other differences in his outlook towards life.

2.6 EXERCISES

1. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow.

With eager anticipation we awaited the next stage. A tailor was called in to measure us, five boys and one girl, Mary Lila Rao, for the sports kits. I was filled with happiness, just like a child who had been given a bag full of candy. After all, I would be fulfilling my dream to wear a blazer with INDIA written on it!

A week later, we left for Australia. The night before we left I could not sleep. My small suitcase has been packed with my kit and bedding and I waited for the sun to rise. Excited by the prospect of what lay ahead, we boarded the train to Bombay, the first lap of our long journey across the seas to far-off Australia. When we reached Bombay's Churchgate station, we were taken by bus to the Astoria Hotel. It was the first time that I had seen such a grand place, and I could barely believe my eyes. What was I, a simple village boy doing in such a different world? While we were at the Astoria, Commander Rekhi, our manager, showed us how to knot a tie and gave us lessons on table manners.

When we reached Santa Cruz, the entire atmosphere at the terminal seemed unreal its bright lights, the strange sounds, the rush of people. Except for Mary Lila Rao, none of us had flown before. I was scared and confused. I had no bedding and no food. Where would I sleep? What would I eat? How would the plane take off with so many people, their luggage and other cargo? Would it crash under so much weight? I followed my companions towards the huge monster that awaited us, and blindly climbed up the ramp into the cabin. I was asked to fasten my seatbelt, but naturally I did not know what to do and was fumbling with the straps when the air-hostess kindly helped me.

When the plane started to taxi along the runway, I closed my eyes and prayed to my God. I had butterflies in my stomach as the plane ascended. And then we were airborne. When I looked out of the window I saw smoke pouring out of the engines, and raised an alarm, thinking that the plane was on fire. The air-hostess calmed me down, patiently explaining that it was only the fuel burning. I felt very foolish and laughed with relief.

(Adapted from the Autobiography of Milkha Singh)

Attempt the following questions on the basis of the passage you have read.



Communication in Everyday Life

- a) Why couldn't Milkha Singh sleep a night before they left?
 - b) How many people had flown earlier?
 - c) What made the atmosphere of Santa Cruz seem unreal?
 - d) Give any two reasons responsible for Milkha's worry or confusion?
 - e) According to him what was a huge monster?
 - f) Why was he fascinated by the hotel?
 - g) Why did the air-hostess need to help him?
 - h) Why did he pray to his God?
 - i) Identify and name the figure of speech in para-1?
2. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow.

The news media are in crisis across the developed world. Journalism as we know it is being described, obviously with some exaggeration, as 'collapsing', 'disintegrating', in 'meltdown'. In this digital age, there is gloom in most developed country, or 'mature', media markets over the future of newspapers and also broadcast television. Two decades after a call issued from a conference in Windhoek, Namibia for the establishment of World Press Freedom Day, 'the arrival of the digital revolution – the evolution of the Internet, the emergence of new forms of media, and the rise of online social networks – has reshaped the media landscape and made "the press" of 2011 something that those gathered in Windhoek in 1991 could not have imagined'. There is a strong sense that 'the news industry is no longer in control of its own future' and that it is technology companies like Google and the social media that lead the way and look set to hegemonize the public space that once belonged to the news media.

The global financial crisis and economic slowdown of 2008-2009 sent several western media organizations into a tailspin. Advertising revenues, the lifeline of the newspaper industry, took a body blow during this period. Many big newspapers, whose strengths had been sapped and whose situational advantages had been undermined over the years, went into bankruptcy or protection against bankruptcy. *The New York Times* was bailed out by an emergency loan of US \$250 million from Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim: 'to help the newspaper company finance its business.'. Tens of thousands of journalists lost their jobs in the United States, where newsrooms are 30 per cent smaller than in 2000 (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 2011), and across Europe.



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There has been some recovery, or to be more precise, a slowdown in the decline beginning mid-2010. But printed newspaper circulation and readership are in irreversible decline across the developed world; they have been in steady, longterm, secular decline much before the recent recession hit these countries and their news media. ‘Circulation is like the sun. It continues to rise in the East and decline in the West’, Christoph Riess, chief executive officer of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), told those assembled at the World Newspaper Congress and World Editors Forum in Vienna in October 2011. His presentation of *World Press Trends 2011*, the annual survey done by WAN-IFRA, focused on ‘six key areas’: the media consumption shift; economic developments; newspaper circulation and number of titles; advertising expenditure by media; newspaper revenue; and internet versus mobile.

There was a clear sense in the Vienna gathering that a historical era for the news media was coming to an end and they had entered, even if differentially across the world, an indeterminate period of uncertainty. With the changes in audience behaviour and news consumption accompanying the migration to the web and to mobile platforms gathering pace, the big challenge for the traditional news business is *engagement* of the audience that is getting away, with grim financial implications. ‘We have always been extremely efficient in using the time of our readers’, Riess told his audience in Vienna. ‘But now we are in a more challenging environment, because readers are more promiscuous, they have more choices, they read newspapers with less frequency. We have to do more to attract them find new ways to garner loyalty.’

These industry-wide trends, and the accompanying stresses, pessimism, and disarray, have already taken a big toll of independent and resourceful journalism in the developed world. According to a report titled *The Reconstruction of American Journalism*, commissioned and published by the Journalism School of Columbia University, New York, ‘the era of dominant newspapers and influential network news divisions is giving way to one in which the gathering and distribution of news is more widely dispersed’ and the economic foundation of U.S. newspapers is ‘collapsing’. Newspapers, ‘the country’s chief source of independent reporting, are shrinking – literally’, with fewer journalists ‘reporting less news in fewer pages’ The situation and prospects of broadcast television, which still commands a big audience across the world and remains the world’s premier advertising medium, do not seem much brighter.

1. The word ‘hegemonize’ means –

- (a) Dominate



Communication in Everyday Life

- (b) Overturn
 - (c) Lack
 - (d) None of the above.
2. Which of the following statements are true –
- (i) Economic slowdown impacted news room.
 - (ii) Social media has taken over public space.
 - (iii) Rise of online social networks have helped the news media.
- (a) (i) and (ii) (b) (ii) and (iii) (c) (i) and (iii) (d) All of them
3. According to Christopher Riess, what has impacted the media most?
- (a) Economic Slowdown
 - (b) Impact of Cyber Media
 - (c) Loss of Advertizing Revenue
 - (d) All of them.
4. Which of the following statements are true?
- (i) The developing world also saw similar fate of media as the developed world.
 - (ii) Internet has made it possible for the media to reach larger number of people.
 - (iii) The economic foundation of the US media is collapsing.
- (a) (i) and (ii) (b) (ii) and (iii) (c) (i) and (iii) (d) All of them.
5. The state of the Audio-visual media, especially television, is similar to that of the other traditional media.
- (a) True
 - (b) False
 - (c) The passage does not give any concrete detail for the same.
 - (d) Television is one of the audio-visual media under threat.

1. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Is Anybody Inside?

(Author and publication details unknown)

The old man pressed his granddaughter's face against the chest.

'Quiet', he whispered urgently, 'Don't move. If you do, we are lost.'



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The mob came rushing down the road, shouting slogans.

The Old man drew his arm protectively around the little girl's shoulders. 'Don't cry,' he whispered, 'They will not find us here.'

Suddenly someone kicked the door open. It banged against the cement wall. Framed in the open doorway, against a red sky, stood two men. Behind them houses burned and the sky was thick with smoke.

'Can you see anyone?' asked the shorter of the two. 'Not yet,' was the reply.

A torch flashed. Its beam pierced the semi-darkness of the shed. The old man shrank back against the stacks of firewood, hoping that the empty drums in front would hide them from the searching light. Eyes wide with terror, he watched the light sweep over the piles of wood. Probing the piles of charcoal, drawing closer and closer, the powerful beam hit him in the eyes. His eyes caught the face of the tall, dark man. For a moment, their eyes met and held. He knew the man, he knew him very well. His neighbour's son, his friend. But that didn't seem to matter. Not now, not any more. What mattered now was religion. To share the same belief in the same God. The old man closed his eyes, and turned his face away. Trapped! Caught! Too late to run. Too late to pray. Too late for anything. Time to die.

'Do you see anything?' The shorter pushed past. 'Is anybody inside?'

The old man held his breath. With his eyes shut, his heart thumping wildly under his sweat-stained shirt, he waited. After what seemed an eternity, the tall man's words reached him, They came from far away. 'No, let's go. There is nobody here.' And the shed plunged into darkness once again.

1. At the beginning of the story, what makes the old man feel that he and his granddaughter are safe?
1. How does the grandfather comfort his granddaughter?
2. In your own words, describe the atmosphere of fear in the story.
3. What is the significance of the 'red sky', burning house, and a sky that was 'thick with smoke'?
4. Why does the old man not feel any relief when he recognizes his best friend, who is also his neighbour's son?
5. What is the significance of the last paragraph of the story? What does it suggest about human relations?



Communication in Everyday Life

6. Use any 5 of the words given to write a descriptive paragraph of 50 -80 words.

Mob, light, eyes, charcoal, powerful, closer, eternity, stained.

2.6 FURTHER READINGS

- Malhotra Perna, Deb Dulal Halder, (2019) *Communication Skills: Theory and Practice*, Eighth Edition, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
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- Bell, Roger T. (1991) *Translation and translating: Theory and Practice*. Longman Group, UK.
- Gargesh, Ravinder and Goswami, Krishna Kumar (Eds.) (2007) *Translation and Interpreting: Reader and Workbook*. Orient Blackswan, New Delhi.



WRITING SKILLS

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Writing: An Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Objectives
- 3.3 The Writing Process
- 3.4 Note Making
- 3.5 Paraphrasing and Summarising
- 3.6 Letter Writing
- 3.7 Report Writing
- 3.8 Exercises
- 3.9 Further Readings

3.1 WRITING: AN INTRODUCTION

As has been discussed in the initial units, writing is an essential human activity which came into existence much later than speech as writing is a graphical representation of speech, though the rules of writing are often different from that of speech. We also need to remember that speech is a distinguishing characteristic of every human being, but it is only the literates who can write. In other words, literacy is a prerequisite for writing. In this Unit, the focus is on various aspects of writing – such as Note-making, Letter Writing and Report writing. It is not that writing is limited to only these activities. There are various other kinds of writings such as academic writing, technical writing, writing for the media, creative writing, official writing, etc. But for the present purpose, that is, according to the scope of the syllabus, we will limit ourselves to only specific kinds of writing practices.



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3.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you in the following writing skills:

- Academic writing
- Taking notes
- Writing letters
- Writing short reports

3.3 THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a competence which can be inculcated with practice. When one writes an assignment or a term paper, one does it because of an academic necessity. While writing an assignment or an academic paper not only you should know about the subject on which you are asked to write on or have chosen to write, but should also have some basic idea about the format of how to write an assignment or academic paper. In Academic writing, it is necessary that we approach it as a craft and learn it. Academic writing is a response to a necessity; therefore writing should be approached as a process.

As writing is a process, therefore it usually follows a particular sequence:

Prewrite → Write → Rewrite

1. Prewrite – Prewriting is a process which comes before the actual writing begins. While writing any assignment or term paper, it is presumed that there must be something very significant that needs to be written. Therefore, one must ponder over certain significant aspects before one begins writing. They are:
 - One should figure out the aims and goals of writing. In other words, one must make sure that one knows why one is writing. If you are writing an assignment, your approach will be different from that of an answer you are preparing for the examination.
 - One should gather all the available information and data on the subject one decides to write on, that is, one needs to do the required research on the topic and figure out the available literature on that topic.
 - One should then determine the style, that is, the way one arranges one's words and



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sentences into a cohesive piece of writing. The same data can be used by different individuals to produce different arguments even though they may intend to write for the same audience. Therefore, before getting into writing one should also decide on and choose one's style of writing.

- Moreover, while writing an assignment or a project, there is a deadline that is given to us and we need to plan our writing in such a way so as to meet the deadline. It is assumed that during our college or university days, there is not a single assignment or project to be done, but many. Therefore one needs to plan all assignments together and make sure that deadlines for each of them are met. Therefore, it is significant that we chalk out a plan.
 - Very often, in writing assignments and projects for academic purposes, a word limit is also set by the instructors / teachers / evaluators. One should limit oneself within the word limit and therefore while arranging the facts and arguments, give more importance to the facts and arguments which are primary to support your topic. Thus, one needs to plan or chalk out a rough plan or structure of how one will progress with the process of writing.
2. Write – Once the relevant information and data has been gathered and a rough structure of the argument is decided; it is the time to launch oneself into the actual process of writing. In this phase of writing, one should organize the writing in such a manner that it is easily comprehensible. Therefore, it is very important to ascertain a logical sequence in writing.
 3. Rewrite – Rewriting is the final step of the writing process, and one that is essential to successful writing. This step requires that one revises the rough draft and edits it. Revision allows you to perfect your assignment, project or any other writing.

Check Your Progress

1. How is writing different from speech?
2. What is the process you should follow to write a term paper or an assignment?

3.3.1 Features of Academic Writing

If you are reading a newspaper or a magazine, would you carry on reading any news item even if you find the first sentence or the first paragraph boring, providing you with no new detail, idea, information or news and views that you are not already familiar with. In most cases, the answer would be no. Many a times we tend to overlook or not take a person



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seriously if s/he is not dressed according to the occasion. Looks, dresses, etc. – the first impression, matters.

In the same way in most kinds of writing, a good introduction is a must since

- It gives reader(s) an idea / suggestion /scheme of what the rest of the writing will be dealing with.
- It provides a reason for readers to keep reading, in the sense; it evokes the interest in the reader(s).

This is why journalists are so worried about writing the perfect lead sentence (the first sentence), because if the lead sentence is not interesting, no one will bother to read or listen to the news. Therefore, there is not only a focus on writing the perfect lead sentence, but a good introductory paragraph. It is not always true that the introduction should be a single paragraph. There are cases where there are introductions which run into several pages. If you are writing a report, the introduction can run into several pages

The introduction of any writing usually includes –

- A background or history for the topic
- Definition of the term, phrase, or central concept to the writing
- A clear and specific **thesis statement**, which usually comes at the end of the introduction. If the introduction is of one paragraph, usually the thesis statement comes as the last sentence of the first paragraph.

Ways of Writing an Introduction:

- Formulate a question which will evoke readers' interest and engage them
- Provide data, statistics, etc. that will surprise the reader or unsettles their common beliefs
- Provide an interesting anecdote or story related to the topic
- Start with an interesting and relevant quotation
- Provide an unusual or unexpected comparison and contrast

What Not to Do in an Introduction:

- Avoid stereotypes, clichés, jargons and boring constructions
- Avoid dictionary and encyclopedia definitions if possible and explain in your own words
- Avoid writing the introduction till you have finished writing the draft.

Make sure that the readers now know enough to follow your paper, but not too much that



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they lose the focus of your paper.

Paragraph

A paragraph can be defined as a group of sentences that expresses a single idea, supported by facts, evidences, examples, anecdotes, quotations, etc. Paragraphs primarily indicate the beginning and end of a new idea to the reader(s). Thus it helps the reader(s) in assimilating the contents in an organized manner without much difficulty. In paragraph writing, therefore the writer can develop just one idea. When one is writing something longer like an essay or a report, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade.

Writing good paragraphs is essential for two reasons:

1. It helps one as a writer, as one remains focused while writing.
2. It makes the writing more readable, and the reader can easily figure out that a new idea has been introduced.

Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs can be written in many ways, depending on your purpose. However, each paragraph should have one point which supports the thesis statement. Most body paragraphs will have:

1. A Topic Sentence

The first sentence in a paragraph is usually known as the **Topic Sentence** and it introduces the main idea of the paragraph. In other words, it is a sentence in which the main idea of a paragraph is summarized so that the readers can figure out what they can expect in the rest of the paragraph. Though this may not always be true, as the Topic Sentence can also be elsewhere in the paragraph, depending upon the demand of the writing. One should keep in mind here that the topic sentence should relate to the thesis statement and in some way should uphold the thesis.

The following points should be kept in mind while writing the topic sentence –

- The topic sentence should connect to the previous paragraph, so that the readers do not lose focus.
- The topic sentence is not about just stating a fact; but it is about a point of view. A point of view that the writer is about to develop in the rest of the paragraph.
- Every sentence in the paragraph should aim to support the topic sentence.



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Activity

Take any an essay or an article or a chapter from any newspaper or journal or any book and try to figure out the topic sentences of each paragraph.

2. Supporting Sentences

Supporting sentences are sentences which support or uphold the topic sentence and make the body of a paragraph. The supporting sentences support by providing facts, details and examples to logically present the argument.

One should keep in mind to provide specific details to show how the ideas are valid.

- While stating facts, examples, studies, experts' opinions, etc. be specific.
 - Use the experts' names and other details.
 - Examples should also be specific in terms of their names, places, dates, etc.
 - Use specific numbers and dates.
 - In case of scientific studies, explain in short how the study was done.
 - Use vivid descriptions to provide details.
- One should make sure that all the details provided in the supporting sentences are relevant; otherwise, the reader may lose interest and focus with unnecessary digressions.
- Try to explain things in detail so that the readers do not have to think too hard to figure out the significance.
- Supporting sentences should not be used to merely repeat your topic sentences, but they should be the explanations, justifications, interpretations and analyses of the topic sentence.
- One should also make sure that all the supporting sentences are in a logical order.

3. Concluding sentence

The last sentence of the paragraph is termed as the concluding sentence which is usually a review of the paragraph. It should emphasize on the main point or the topic sentence. It is advisable not to end the paragraph therefore with a quotation, but to end with your own



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words and idea.

An illustrative example

The Right to Information Act

Before getting into the writing about The Right to Information Act one needs to get all the required information regarding The Right to Information Act, such as the historical and the legal background to such an act, the need for such an act, the history of the enactment of the Act, the details of the act, the use of the act for the benefit of the citizens, etc. When all these details are collected then one needs to put them in proper logical perspective so that when the readers read it they can have a clear notion about what the act is all about.

The following outline was made before the actual writing –

The Thesis statement – The Right to Information Act opened up the door of information for the individual citizens and in the process empowered them.

The Body paragraphs –

Paragraph I – the factors that impaired free flow of information,

Paragraph II – legislation of the Act,

Paragraph III – some important provisions of the act.

The Conclusion – the needs and benefits of the Right to Information Act.

The Right to Information is one of the basic human rights in a democratic society and is indispensable for free flow of information. If a democratic society has to function properly then it is essential that it has informed citizens. But many a times it happens that the government does not share all the information with the citizens in the name of Official Secrets Act and such other legal provisions. In such a situation what was necessary was to bring about a legal provision which would make citizen's access to information easier. **The Right to Information Act opened up the door of information for the individual citizens and in the process empowered them.**

But before one goes into the ways in which the Right to Information Act has enabled free access to information what **one needs to know the factors that impaired free flow of information.** It is usually thought that there are three factors –

- a. The legislative framework includes several pieces of restrictive legislation,



Communication in Everyday Life

such as the Official Secrets Act, 1923;

- b. The pervasive culture of secrecy and arrogance within the bureaucracy; and
- c. The low levels of literacy and rights awareness amongst India's people.

(http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/rti_dh.htm)

The Right to Information Act came into effect only after a lot of pressure was given to the government to legislate such an act. The demand for the right to information gained momentum in India in the last three decades. The pressure from the mass led to the draft bill of Right to Information being introduced to the Indian Parliament in July 2000. It came into effect on 12th October 2005. Under this law, information has become a fundamental right of the citizen.

According to the act, the government bodies and government funded agencies are liable to share any information that the citizens ask for. Under this law all government bodies or government funded agencies have to designate a Public Information Officer (PIO) whose role would be to ensure that information sought for is disclosed to the petitioner within thirty days. Information means any material in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form, etc. According to this act citizen also has firstly, the right to inspection of work, documents, records; secondly to take notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records; thirdly to take certified samples of material; and finally to obtain information in the form of diskettes, floppies, tapes, video cassettes or in any other electronic mode or through printouts where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device.

In conclusion, it can be said **that any healthy democracy requires an informed citizenry and transparency of information** which are vital to its functioning and also to contain corruption and to hold governments and their instrumentalities accountable to the governed. Consequently, it can be said that **Right to Information is essential as it gives citizens the chance to get any information** (barring some which are official secrets for various reasons) **and help them make political, social and financial decisions.**

- The first paragraph is the **Introduction** which provides the necessary background for Right to Information Act. The last line of the first paragraph is the **Thesis Statement** – **“The Right to Information Act opened up the door of information for the individual citizens and in the process**



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empowered them.”

- Each paragraph starts with a **Topic sentence** which sums up the theme of that paragraph. For example, in the second paragraph the topic sentence is “**one needs to know the factors that impaired free flow of information.**” All the other sentences after the topic sentence go on to support the topic sentence. These sentences are known as **the Supporting sentences**.

Check Your Progress

1. Briefly explain the main components of Academic writing.
2. What is body paragraph? What does body paragraph consist of? Explain in detail.

3.3 NOTE MAKING

Note making is an exercise that we need to do as it is a key to success in academic as well as professional fields. Suppose you are given a topic to research and write on. As you do your research a plethora of information comes to you – some of them are useful, some very significant, some rubbish and some which you can neglect. While gathering all the information if we do not keep proper notes and think that you will be able to retain everything in your mind, then you are mistaken as it may happen that you may miss some important information while writing or may miss an important argument. Therefore, it is always better that we make notes, which can then be used while we start writing or preparing for the examination or use for future reference. Therefore, note making is an essential part of many English language syllabus as it helps us in our writing process.

3.4.1 Why Note-Making?

Note-Making is significant academic exercise for the following reasons–

- (a) Today when there is plethora of information available on any topic because of the spread of digital information therefore it is significant that one takes down notes of whatever one reads so that it can be used in future; otherwise the person may have the tendency to forget many things that he or she has read.
- (b) The notes can be used for future reference.
- (c) By note making one can filter the key ideas from what one has read and can do away with information and analyses that are not so useful.



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(d) It can be helpful in revision work.

3.4.2 Techniques of Note-Making or How to make notes?

- The first significant thing about Note-making is that the reader should read or go through the **reading** or the passage very carefully and try **to figure out the key ideas**, main theme, key arguments of the reading / passage.
- The Note-maker should then put the main idea of the passage as heading of the passage – **the heading** should be short and easy to understand (usually of three to four words) and usually written on the top middle of the page. Moreover, it should be so that it evokes the interest of the other readers and also makes you again go through it.
- Under the heading of the passage, the **sub-headings** should come in. sub-headings are the subordinate or associated ideas that come under the heading, that are used to develop the heading or the main idea of the reading or passage.
- Once we are through with the subheading it is essential to write the **points under each subheading** which goes on in support/ against/ to uphold/ to argue in favour or against/ to provide the details/ etc. of the sub-heading. It should be kept in mind to properly indent (space suitably and provide them numbers of put them in bullet form) the points.
- Other significant things –
 - There is no need to write full sentences in Note-making – one can just write in the form of just the necessary words which can be understandable.
 - Abbreviations should be used as much as possible (and a list of abbreviations should be provided at the end of Note-Making for other readers)

Abbreviations
Some Popular and standard Abbreviations
a. Capitalized first letters of words U.S.A., U.K., U.S.S.R., W.B., U.P., etc.
b. Common abbreviations c. Sc. (for science), Mr., Mrs., Dr., Govt., etc
d. Common symbols e.g., : \, ∴, +ve, -ve, ® (leading to), ↑ (rising), ↓ (falling), =, etc.
e. Measurements and Figures 100', 100", 100 kg, 1000 mm, 100ml, etc.



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Making own abbreviations

Such as, edn. (education), prog. (programme), prog've (progressive).

We are all accustomed to doing it as we use such abbreviations usually when we write SMS or while writing informally WhatsApp messages.

Since notes are prepared for one's own use, one has the flexibility to use a format which suits the most, yet the following format may be conveniently used by all, though there could be other customized formats according to one's needs and preference.

Heading:

Point 1.

1.a Sub-point.

1.b Sub point.

Point 2.

2.a Sub point.

2.b Sub point.

Abbr. used

Check Your Progress

1. Why is Note Making important?
2. Write a short note on essential Note Making techniques.

3.5 Paraphrasing and Summarising

Summarising and Paraphrasing are very useful skills because they allow us to use the work of authors whom we wish to cite, while using our own words and thus not turning our paper into a copy-and-paste from other works. These skills help us demonstrate our understanding of a text, and showcase our original analysis and use of what we have read.



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In Short
Paraphrasing means putting a piece of writing in new words, so that most of the language or expression is different, while the content or idea is retained.
Summarising means reproducing the main points of a piece of writing while substantially cutting down its length.

Paraphrasing means changing the words in which something you have read has been expressed. The result of paraphrasing should be significantly different from the original source, so that as far as the expression goes, it counts as your original writing. At the same time, because you will be giving credit to the original author of the text you have read, s/he must not be misquoted. Therefore, the meaning must NOT be changed.

Consider the following sentence: “There has been much debate about the reasons for the industrial revolution happening in eighteenth-century Britain, rather than in France or Germany.”

This could be paraphrased: “Why the industrial revolution occurred in Britain in the eighteenth century, instead of on the continent, has been the subject of considerable discussion.” (Bailey, 50)

The above paraphrase is a good example because it:

- Uses a different sentence structure than the original,
- Mostly uses different words,
- BUT retains the same meaning as the original, and
- Does not try to forcibly replace the words or phrases that are in common use, or have no effective substitute, or whose replacement would make the statement clumsy or unclear, e.g. ‘industrial revolution’ or ‘eighteenth century’.

Passage for Paraphrasing:

The information that Columbus wanted most was: Where is the gold? He had persuaded the king and queen of Spain to finance an expedition to the lands, the wealth, he expected would be on the other side of the Atlantic – the Indies and Asia, gold and spices. Spain was recently unified, one of the new modern nation-states, like France, England, and Portugal. Its population, mostly poor peasants, worked for the nobility, who were 2 percent of the



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population and owned 95 percent of the land. Like other states of the modern world, Spain sought gold, which was becoming the new mark of wealth, more useful than land because it could buy anything.

Paraphrased Passage:

According to Howard Zinn, the rise of modern nation-states like France, England, and Portugal created a demand for gold because it had the advantage of being usable for exchange. Spain, which had been recently unified, was one of these new countries in which gold was replacing land as the symbol of prosperity. Most Spaniards were impoverished and worked for the nobles, who despite being a tiny minority owned most of the land. Against this backdrop of economic change and inequality, the rulers of Spain funded Columbus' transatlantic voyage in the hope of gold and spices from the Indies and Asia. Therefore, for Columbus, finding gold was the most pressing task. (Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*)

Taken from book on *Academic Writing*, edited by Deb Dulal Halder from the chapter on 'Summarizing and Paraphrasing' by Sumati Dwivedi.

Summarising means giving a brief statement of the main points of a text, in one's own words, while maintaining the meaning of the original.

As you can see, summarising has two key characteristics in common with paraphrasing: **originality of expression**, and **preservation of content**. In practice, the two techniques are typically used together, though this Chapter is discussing them separately for clarity. In summarising something you've read, you will probably find yourself using all the paraphrasing skills you developed in section 3 of the Chapter. In this section, the aim is to add a further skill – that of **brevity**, i.e., compressing your paraphrase into fewer words than the original. This must be done without losing essential information.

You have most likely summarised things often in your daily life – such as a conversation, the plot of a film or novel, instructions you are asked to pass on to a third person, etc. For instance, after watching a three-hour film, you may tell your friend something like: "It's basically a love story in which the hero is involved in a gang war which is only resolved in the last scene in the courtroom, after which he marries the heroine and lives happily ever after". Or when asked by a family member how a meeting with a friend went, you may condense a long conversation into: "I told her all about my summer job, but she hadn't done anything much over the vacations so she told me her plans for the winter



Communication in Everyday Life

holidays, when she might do an NGO internship or study music. I told her why I preferred the music idea, and we finished by catching up on the books we've each read."

You may also have performed similar operations at school if a question or assignment asked you to sum up, condense, write a *précis*, encapsulate, outline, make a synopsis, briefly discuss, etc.

3.5.1 Step by Step Paraphrasing and Summarizing:

1. Read the original text for a cursory reading. The second reading can be specific and close, looking for better understanding of the text.
2. You can underline the main thoughts. Also mark the supporting arguments.
3. Make note of the important points. While making notes try not to copy words from the original until there is no substitute for them.
4. Now keep aside the original matter and write on all the important points of the original in your own language
5. Compare your version with the original to see whether all important points have been included
6. If you find any unique word in the original which you wish to retain, then you can also use it in quotes to show the borrowing from the original.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the difference between Paraphrasing and Summarizing?
2. What steps should you follow in both these activities?

3.6 LETTER WRITING

Letters can be broadly classified into formal, semi-formal and informal letters. As the name itself suggests, formal letters are used for formal purposes and situations like those at the workplace, etc. whereas informal letters are personal letters used in informal situations, like letters sent to friends, relatives, etc. The examples of formal letters are applications, letters to editors, job related correspondence, letters to editors, complaint letters, suggestion letters, persuasive letters and many other types of official letters.

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3.6.1 Example of a Formal Letter

<p style="text-align: center;">Needles.com Industrial City, Delhi Ph. 1234 567 890; Website: www.needles.com Email: contact@needles.com</p> <p>Ref. No. MC/Admn/2019/702 Date: 10 Decmeber 2019 The Insurance Manager</p> <p>State Insurance Company Rajendra Place, New Delhi</p> <p>Subject: Request to Get Annual Car Insurance Renewed vide Policy No. 15456977</p> <p>Sir/Madam</p> <p>Our Company had purchased Maruti Ertiga Petrol Version (DL 14CH 2435) on 21 December 2018 and had got the insurance done through your company vide Policy No. 15456977. The policy is expiring on the 21st December 2019. We wish to get the policy renewed by your Company only as we are satisfied with the services.</p> <p>Please let us know the details of the Terms and Conditions of Insurance, the premium liability, the insurance cover, the no claim bonus and the documents required for insurance. Please send an insurance representative to our office on any working day between 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM during this week to explain the related details with required documents.</p> <p>Please feel free to contact us for any query. Looking forward to an early response. Sincerely</p> <p><i>Rajinder Kumar</i> Rajinder Kumar Director</p>

3.6.2 Format: Parts of a Formal Letter

- 1. Heading:** The name and address of the sender comes at the top of the letter whether it is an individual or an organisation. In the case of organization's name and address, generally printed letter-heads are used where this part is printed in the centre. This part is also termed as 'Return Address' which means the receiver of letter knows whom and where to respond.
- 2. Reference No.:** It is the number which is specific to a letter. It helps in locating the letter at a later stage. This number, along with date, makes it a very specific identity of a letter.



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3. **Date:** In the age of global businesses and multi-national communications between companies, different formats of date writing are used in various countries but for our context in normal usage we follow ‘dd/mm/yyyy’ format of date but for official purpose we adopt any one of the following styles for date writing:

- ✓ 28 September 2019
- ✓ September 28, 2019
- ✓ 28th September 2019

All these styles are correct but the first one is more prevalent these days.

It can be left aligned or right aligned as per the format chosen.

4. **Inside Address:** It is the name and address of the receiver of the letter. These days organizations use cover envelopes with cuts at the place of inside address and the paper is folded in such a way that the inside address becomes the outside address also.
5. **Subject line:** It is a brief one line about the subject of the letter whether it is applying for a job or complaint of a damaged product or submission of a proposal. The subject line should convey the purpose of the letter at the first glance.
6. **Salutation:** Commonly used ‘Sir/ Madam’ (when there is no previous interaction) or ‘Dear Sir/Dear Madam (when there is previous interaction) (No ‘mam’ please).

If the writer knows the receiver, then the address like ‘Dear Mr. Khanna’ or ‘Dear Ms. Malik’ can be used for Rajiv Khanna and Namya Malik respectively. When you are using the name of the addressee, please address by the first name (Surname) only as given in the examples. Do not write as ‘Dear Mr. Rajiv’ or ‘Dear Ms. Namya’.

Note: These days it is more customary to use ‘Ms.’ for any woman- married or unmarried’ in place of the distinct address ‘Miss’ and ‘Mrs.’.

7. **Body of the Letter:** In fact, the body of any letter can be divided in three parts:
- a. **Introduction or Opening Para:** Where you write about the context/background of the letter and introduce the topic of correspondence.
 - b. **Details of Body or Main Para:** This is the main part of the body where the writer can give the details of the content to be conveyed. This is also the part where the writer has the maximum choice to showcase his/her talent of writing.
 - c. **Conclusion or Closing Para:** This is the section of body where the writer focuses on the action required from the recipient of the letter- early reply, meeting in



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person, consider as a candidate, sanction the leave, and approve the proposal and so forth. Closing should be very effective to get the desired action done.

8. **Complimentary Close:** After the closing para, the letter does not end abruptly rather the phrases like 'yours sincerely', 'yours truly' are used before the signature slot. Salutation and Complimentary Close are related. If the salutation has been at a more personal level, like Mr. Jacob' the complimentary close will also be more personal like 'Truly' or 'Yours truly'. (Only the first letter of the first word is written capital.)
9. **Signature Slot:** This part carries the signature, name and designation of the sender. This part provides authenticity to the content and fixes accountability on the writer. The parts after 'Signature Slot' are not compulsory parts of a letter. They can be used, if required.
10. **Reference Initials:** Some organizations prefer the signatures of other personnel involved in dictating or typing of a letter which helps them to locate easily in future who typed, etc. It increases accountability.
11. **Enclosures (Encl.):** They are just like attachments in e-mails. Any additional documents attached with the main letter are listed in this part.
12. **Courtesy Copies (C.C.):** When copies of letter are sent to more than one recipient (the addressee), it is detailed in this part. The name and designation of the person is written. In the days of use of carbon papers for making copies, they used to be carbon copies. Sometimes the word 'Distribution' is also used followed by 'To' in the next line and then the names and designations of other recipients like the following:
Distribution
 - i. Mr.Kamal Nagpal, Administrative Officer
 - ii. Mr. Pankaj Dua, Accounts Officer
13. **Post Script (P.S.):** As the words indicate, it is the 'script' written after the letter has been completed. When the writer of the letter realises that s/he has completed the body but some vital information is left out, it can be written in P.S. as is in the following example:

P.S.: The timing of the meeting has changed from 11:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 17 November 2015.



3.7 REPORT WRITING

Although reports can be of various types, yet when it comes to writing there are two broad categories under which reports are written- a short report and a long report. All Project Reports, Field and Visit to industries and business concerns are long reports. First we begin with the format of short report writing and then will move on to long reports, including field and visit reports:

Writing a Short Report

A short report can be submitted in a letter or a memorandum format whereas a long report can be submitted in a combined structure.

1. Memorandum Format

Here is an example of a periodic quarterly report of a company:

MYIDEA.COM

New Delhi

No.: MIC.ACC./2020/02

Date: 15 January 2020

To: Ms. Gayatri Singh, Accounts Manager

From: Tanmay Chaudhary, Accounts Officer

Subject: Submission of Quarterly Expenditure Report

As per your instructions given in the meeting of 7th January 2020, following is the detail of the expenditure incurred on research related activities under the non-plan head during the quarter September-December 2019:

S. No.	Name of Head	Amount Spent in Rs.
1.	Expenditure under the head 'Salaries'	81, 24,350
2	Expenditure incurred on maintenance of building and infrastructure	3,25,987
3	Conveyance, TA to staff	94,250
4	Contingency	1,45,000



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Grand Total= Rs.86,89,537/-

The report is submitted for information and further action.

Signature

Tanmay Chaudhary

2. Letter Format

As Director of MYIDEA.com, you were working on the idea of opening a subsidiary company at Ludhiana, Punjab. You assigned the task of finding an appropriate location to Mr. Raj Kumar, the HR Head of your company. Mr. Kumar prepared the following feasibility report and submitted it to you

MYIDEA.COM

New Delhi

No.: MIC.ACC./2020/02

Date: 15 January 2020

Dear Ms. Gayatri Singh,

Subject: Submission of Quarterly Expenditure Report

As per your instructions given in the meeting of 7th January 2020, following is the detail of the expenditure incurred on research related activities under the non-plan head during the quarter September-December 2019:

S. No.	Name of Head	Amount Spent in Rs.
1.	Expenditure under the head 'Salaries'	81, 24,350
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4	Contingency	1,45,000
Grand Total= Rs.86,89,537/-		

The report is submitted for information and further action.



Communication in Everyday Life

I would be happy to provide more details if required.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Tanmay Chaudhary

Report Writing: Some Preliminary Facts

- While writing a report, one must read the instructions carefully on the basis of which the report is to be prepared. It is like reading a question paper thoroughly before writing an answer in an examination. Instructions set the design and content of the whole structure of the report.
- Next step is to collect appropriate material required including facts and data to prepare a report. Even in a short report, one must plan for the report and give a thought to the supporting document/s or argument/s.
- Then the outline of report is prepared. Once the outline is ready, one has to fill the relevant details.
- After the writing task is done, still much needs to be done. Reviewing and editing is as crucial as writing. Keeping the purpose and reader/s of a report in mind, review it for the content.
- The next thing is to look for grammar, spelling and expression accuracy and organization of content. Finally the formatting and the report is ready.

Step by Step Writing of a Report

Writing mainly consists of three steps: Planning, Writing and Completing. The general three steps of writing can be put to best use for report and proposal writing as well:

• Stage-1 Planning

Planning is a crucial stage of writing even if writing involves a short message as one must know about what to write, whom to write to and how to write. In a formal piece of writing like that of a report, specifically a long report, planning becomes all the more significant. One should not have to keep going to the purpose of the report after writing some pages of the same. Similarly while writing an essay, it would be very tedious if one had to keep referring to the thesis statement.

1. Be clear about the **purpose of report writing**. Once **what, for whom and how** of a report are understood by the writer, s/he is able to prepare the work plan



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2. Once one knows the target audience, one can **gather information** according to the needs of the audience. Relevant information in the form of facts, data or case studies can be gathered and studied beforehand.
3. Once the basic material has been collected one must **think about the medium rather media of presentation** since a combination of various media can make the presentation more effective.
4. Next stage is the **organisation of information**. One must **prepare an outline** in the form of an appropriate structure so that at the actual writing stage one knows how to structure the material collected.

• Stage-2 Writing

1. Following the format of a short report or a long report, **write the report with the specific purpose and specific audience in one's mind.**
2. **Choose simple words** over jargon and complex words.
3. **Proper headings and sub-headings with short simple paragraphs** make a report more effective.
4. Check it for **proper citations** for the resources used.
5. **Objectivity** is the key to report writing. Logically driven facts and figures can lead to logical conclusions.
6. Do not include anything irrelevant. It will make the report incoherent. **Be specific.**
7. The **selection of words, tone and voice** must be audience and purpose specific.
8. Incomplete reports will not serve their purpose. Make them **authentic and complete.**

• Stage-3 Completing

By now the first draft is ready but it will not be presentable. Only after editing and revision, can one get the final presentable report.

1. Time to go back and **revise the content**. Is the content appropriate, is it presented appropriately, is the sequence fine, is it readable, is it serving the purpose etc. should be your questions to **assess the content and the medium**. You can review and reframe accordingly.
2. **Are the graphics and other media used appropriately**, are they adding to the effectiveness of the report. Re-look at the whole for writing as well as other media.



Communication in Everyday Life

3. **Language and grammar accuracy** cannot be underestimated. Go through the whole presentation again to **check for errors of spelling, structure or mechanics**. One wrong spelling at the beginning is enough to play game spoiler. Proofread and correct.
4. For the **delivery of the report** choose the appropriate medium.

3.8 EXERCISES

1. Write a letter to your mother explaining to her why you did not expect good results in the exams you have just given.
2. Write a letter to the Chief Minister stating the ways in which he should try to deal with Air Pollution in Delhi.
3. As the President of the Students' Union of your College, write a Report to the Principal of your college providing details of the present state of the canteen and the suggestions for improvement. (Report in Letter Format)
4. Write a short report of the field visit to a factory that your team has recently undertaken.
5. Make notes and then paraphrase the following passage.

Punctuality is a most important characteristic that everyone must have to be a successful person. It makes a person capable enough to complete all the required tasks at already decided time. The word meaning of punctual is 'on time'. It is very necessary for everyone to be on time. What will happen if a doctor gets late to the operation theatre, student gets late to the examination hall, etc. Everything will get messed up, a student can be out of examination hall and a patient can be dead.

It is very necessary for a student to be punctual all time in order to achieve what he/she wants in life. It is one of the noblest virtues which make students more civilized and cultured. Students need this quality to develop as a habit to do things in correct time. Being punctual proves this proverb 'A stitch in time saves nine' means doing tasks within time saves time and unnecessary troubles.

Punctuality is of great values to the students as it teaches them discipline also. Using this, students can be on right time everywhere such as in school, in lab, in class, in library, at home, in examination hall, in project, etc. They can perform better at both place home and school. It helps in removing laziness and negative attitudes of the students. A disciplined and punctual student always gets respect, recognition and



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social acceptance in the school and society. They appreciated a lot by the teachers and parents.

Punctuality is the key to success for all the punctual students. Students should follow all the great world leaders to achieve fame and success. It provides students various golden opportunities to do better in life in many areas. No one of us has born with the virtue of punctuality; everyone has to develop it on their own. It makes certain the path of success.

Punctuality is a necessary trait for all. It needs to be developed by all especially youths of the nation as they are future and have to lead their country. The rate of development in any country depends on how people of that country are punctual and disciplined to their job. So, punctuality is a key to success for everyone.

6. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Chief Seathl's Letter

In 1855, the Native American Chief Seathl of the Suwamish people wrote a letter to the President of the United States of America in response to the President's demand to forcibly buy the tribal land.

How can you buy or sell the sky – the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. We know that the White man does not understand our ways ... The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father's graves behind and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children. He does not care. His fathers' graves and his children's birth right is forgotten. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover. Our God is the same God. You may think now that you own him as you wish to own our land. But you cannot. He is the God of all men. This earth is precious to him. And to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator. The whites shall pass – perhaps sooner than other tribes, Continue to contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste. When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the sacred corner of the forest heavy with scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket?



Communication in Everyday Life

Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift and the hunt – the end of the living and the beginning of the dying.

Answer the following questions:

- (1) Analyse the difference between the ideas of the white man and the native/tribal people as seen through Chief Seathl's letter. Can you propose a middle path between the two contrasting views of how the earth should be used?
- (2) Chief Seathl wrote this letter 165 years ago, using terms and a style that are not used in our time. Paraphrase the above passage in not more than 75 words in contemporary language and style.
- (3) Expository writing calls for logical analysis. Using material from Chief Seathl's letter, write an expository essay on the following topic: Europeans' (the white men's) idea of development was completely different from that of the tribal people, and it has ultimately led to the destruction of the planet as the Chief predicted.
- (4) What kind of person do you think Chief Seathl is based on this letter? How would you interpret his value and goals?
- (5) The above passage is an extract from Chief Seathl's letter to the President of the United States. Based on this letter, write a letter from Chief Seathl to his children in which he explains to them what will happen to their way of life once their land is gone.

3.9 FURTHER READINGS

- Halder, Deb Dulal, Ed. *Academic Writing and Composition: A Handbook* (2016) Book Age Publications, New Delhi.
- Malhotra Prerna, Deb Dulal Halder, (2019) *Communication Skills: Theory and Practice*, Eighth Edition, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
- Halder, Deb Dulal, Anjana Neira Dev, Prerna Malhotra, (2012) *Technical Writing: Theory and Practice*, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
- Kaul, Asha, (2012) *Effective Business Communication*, PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi.



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For Practice Sessions

SPEAKING SKILLS

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Objectives
- 1.3 Features of Oral Communication
- 1.4 Monologue and Dialogue
- 1.5 Group Discussions
- 1.6 Facing Interviews
- 1.7 Public Speech / Presentation
- 1.8 Further Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We communicate orally all the time along with some nonverbal cues, unlike written communication for which one needs to be literate. Literacy is a prerequisite for writing (though if paintings and carvings are taken to be writing, then it is not so), but each one of us are born with LAD (Language Acquisition Device) which makes us acquire language and use it orally. Whereas for writing one needs to put in conscious effort; but for acquiring the first language (usually one's mother tongue), we do not need to put in any such conscious effort; as we learn our mother tongue quite instinctively.

Some forms of Oral Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Face-to-face conversation• Telephonic conversation• Meetings• Seminars• Conferences



Communication in Everyday Life

- Dictation
- Presentations
- Group discussions
- Interviews (employment, press)
- Video-conferences
- Chit-chats

Though oral communication has been one of the most used means of communication; but it is not true that oral communication is always informal. Often oral communication is formal – such as public speech, interview, presentation, group discussion, etc. which are as formal as written communication. Though at the same time, it can also be said that written communication sometimes is not so formal, such as when you write messages in WhatsApp or when you wrote some posts in Facebook or make others posts in Social Media sites. In this chapter we will focus on the formal oral communication though before doing so let us focus on the general features of speech or oral communication. Again, parts of this chapter are taken from the book *Communication Skills: Theory and Practice*. This Unit has shortened the chapters and it is advised that you consult the book to have an enhanced understanding of the different oral communication needs and practices.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit deals exclusively with Oral communication which by its very definition is meant for practice. It will help you in preparing for oral presentations, group discussions, interviews etc. The following topics have been dealt with in this unit:

- Oral Communication – its strengths and weaknesses
- Monologues and Dialogues
- Participating in Group Discussions
- Facing Interviews
- Giving Public Speech / Presentations



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1.3 FEATURES OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

Before going further in our understanding of what is Oral communication, It is essential that we understand the specific features of Oral Communication so as to make ourselves thorough with our understanding of Oral Communication.

- Oral Communication is mostly spontaneous, though there are oral communications that are well thought out. It is a saying that one should think before speaking. But if one thinks too much then s/he will not be able to speak at all. Therefore there is a need to strike a balance between spontaneity and planning. Most good speakers plan their speeches and yet they appear to be spontaneous in their speech.
- As Oral Communication is mostly spontaneous, therefore it has its corollary effects such as– the communication is faster and dynamic; and feedback instant in comparison to written communication.
- As there is a pressure of thinking faster in Oral Communication therefore there are lots of hesitations, fillers and repetitions. There are lots of “ummm” and “eerrr” sounds between words and sentences spoken (Non-fluencies). Often we repeat words and clauses while communicating orally as it gives us time to organize our thoughts.
- No two persons speak a language in the same way. Oral Communication or Speech varies across gender, class, region, economic and educational background, etc. Moreover, the same person does not always speak in the same way. With different people and differing circumstances, the speech of a person varies as s/he adapts to the situation and modifies her/his speech.
- Oral communication is usually thought to be casual or informal in the sense that most casual communication happens in the oral mode. In that sense, Oral Communication or speech is very significant in forming interpersonal relationships. In other words, it serves the phatic function in terms of chit-chats, casual conversations, etc.
- Oral communication or speech is loosely structured in the sense that while speaking we do not tend to follow the grammatical rules all the time as the main objective of oral communication is not to present the thoughts in a structural and grammatical way, but to put across the information, idea, emotion of the speaker to the listener in an effective way so that it is easily understood by the listener(s).
- In speech or oral communication, the non-verbal cues are very significant. The meaning of what we say also depends on the tone, pitch, rhythm, tempo, volume, gestures, postures



Communication in Everyday Life

and other body movements accompanying speech. These non-verbal elements become significant in adding meaning to the words that we speak.

- It is a great advantage of oral communication that the listener can interrupt, if required, and clarify her/his doubt whenever he wants to.
- Pauses and silences are pregnant with meaning in oral communication. When one pauses in speech, s/he pauses either to organize her or his thoughts, or to provide the listeners adequate time to assimilate / comprehend whatever s/he is saying. Timely pauses make speech dramatic and persuasive, enhancing the effect of communication.
- In informal oral communication slang is acceptable. In all our communication with friends and peer group it comprises a significant part as it helps in building interpersonal relationships.
- In oral communication we use lot of elisions and contractions, such as “wanna” for “want to”, “don’t” for “do not”, etc.
- Oral communication is ‘time bound’, in the sense that the sounds we produce during speech fade away rapidly (if not recorded electronically). Before it fades away the listener must grasp the sound to figure out what is being said.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Oral Communication or Speech	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster and spontaneous • Feedback instant • Clarification can be asked immediately • Can be used with Non-verbal language to facilitate communication. • Can be corrected mid-way to take a different approach. • Economical and less time consuming • Helps in building interpersonal relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be documented (except electronically) and therefore does not have legal validity. • There is limited time for formulation of ideas • Success depends on the listening and attentiveness of the decoder. • One can get diverted from the topic • One needs to have good memory for retention of messages.



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As mentioned earlier, oral communication we do all the time; but when it comes to communicate orally for the public or to address a mass, many find it hard to do as it makes them conscious of their own communicative means and makes them fail miserably. But one has to remember that oral communication is the way to deal with the world and moreover, the professional world. Without sound oral communication competence, one cannot think of excelling academically and professionally in today's world. Therefore it is essential that along with other things we also focus on bettering our oral communication proficiency. Which are the areas do you think you should focus on for developing your oral communication skills? Let us delve into it for the time being, in short.

1.4 MONOLOGUE AND DIALOGUE

Conversation is a part and parcel of our everyday life. In the last chapter we have figured out how communication has been an integral part of our life. We have also read how there are different kinds of communication. In this section we will focus on Monologue and Dialogue as means of communication and emphasize on the significance of each of these and the differences between them.

A monologue, as the term suggests, is an oral communication which is conveyed by one person, or it may also be a long one-sided conversation. The Greek origin of the word means “speaking alone” in the sense when one person does all the talking. It can be said that when a speaker monopolizes any conversation because of his or her ideas and knowledge or for any other reason which puts him or her in a privileged position of making others listen to her or him, then it is a monologue. Usually it is thought that monologue is boring in nature as it is a kind of communication when the person speaking is in some way superior to the listeners – either in age, or in rank, or in knowledge, etc.; but it is not always true. Think about your classroom situation when a teacher enters a class and gives a lecture on a new topic. What s/he may do is to give a lecture where there is no space for the students to put up questions to him or her as it may be a very large class where there is no scope for dialogues or for any other reason. Or think about a video lecture in which there is no scope for interaction where the lecturer speaks and others just listen. Or think about a situation when the Prime minister of a country gives a speech in radio or television, it is a monologue where the citizens listen to it to get information or some directive. Similarly in an office set up, a boss in an office may give some instructions in the form of monologue. In all these above examples we see that the speaker has some privileged position which makes him or her say things which others just listen.



Communication in Everyday Life

As a monologue is when a single person does all the talking, therefore it is essential that the monologist or the speaker is well prepared, logical, coherent and listener-friendly in what s/he says, otherwise it will tend to be boring. When we speak, it fades away fast; therefore it is important that the speaker keeps in mind that he or she is not very fast and uses vocabulary which is easily understandable and links ideas in such a manner that the listeners find it logical.

In many of Shakespearean plays we see him using a lot of soliloquies and they are of immense dramatic value as they not only present the inner dilemma of the protagonist, but at the same time are immensely rhetorical and poetic. When one is rhetorical in the right sense of the term, half the work is already done as how one says things is more significant than what one says. So the style of expression is of supreme significance for a speaker when s/he is engaging in a monologue.

Whereas certain occasions make it inevitable that a speaker enters into a monologue; but often the means of communication is dialogue where two or more people take turns to put forward their points of view, along with non-verbal cues, to often reach a conclusion. Think about a class room situation when the teacher enters the class and starts a topic with few general questions for the students. Students respond to the question and then the teacher sums up the discussion along with his or her point of view. It is an example of a dialogue. Or you are going for an interview and there you are asked questions on your subject, on general topics, on your strengths, your career plan, etc. It is a dialogue between you and the panelists in the interview board. Or think about a Board Meeting, where different members are discussing things according to the agenda of the meeting so as to reach a conclusion, it is an example of dialogue. Or as you finish your classes, two of you are discussing about going for a movie, it is also an example of a dialogue. Or suppose the President of a nation has visited India and is engaging with some bilateral treaties with the Indian counterpart, then it can only be possible through dialogues.

Thus dialogues can be of various kinds depending on the context. But what is significant in a dialogue is that each party that enters into the field of communication in a dialogue has the space and time to put forward his or her point of view. In that sense, dialogues are democratic in nature, where individuals get chance to have their say unlike a monologue where a single person takes over the talking because of his or her privileged position and others are mere receptors of the communication.

The most important facet of a dialogue is to taking turns – that is, the speaker is not always a speaker; but speaks for a while and then let the other person come up with his or her ideas, queries, responses, etc. Dialogue is a democratic means to come to a conclusion. These



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days we see that a lot of emphasis is also put forward by different institutions and companies to initiate dialogues with their customers / prospective customers as it is beneficial for a company or an institution to do so.

1.5 GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group Discussion is used extensively these days along with personal interviews for the selection of candidates for jobs. Written test, experience, qualification and academic credentials often are not the only criterion that the employers are looking for in today's competitive world. What they want is that the applicant should have leadership qualities, can handle problems easily and can manage human resources. Academic credentials are required, but all these are also of consequence in the professional world. Therefore in many occasions, Group Discussion (GD) is an integral part of the selection process.

One can say that GD is nothing but a test of personality, in the sense that whether a person applying for a job will be able to handle the professional situations or not. It is to be remembered here that one of the significant ways in which human resources can be managed is through effective communication and therefore any employer will like to have effective communicators in his or her institution / company. Leadership is a pre-requisite; but all leaders are at the same time effective communicators. Group Discussion is a significant device to test the communication skills and the leadership qualities of applicants, as well as how well one can manage others' views.

As in a GD, all the participants, are vying for the post therefore unlike an interview, therefore there is a spirit of competition when one is trying to prove himself or herself better than the rest. In a personal interview, one's personality is assessed through questions, but in a GD, the candidates are observed in action and thus it is a very significant way to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates. Therefore it is essential that while one is preparing to be employed one prepares oneself mentally and psychologically for a GD. The following are the aspects that the participant of a GD should keep in mind --

- Leadership is a must in a professional world. Leadership does not only mean that one is ahead of the others; but it suggests how one can accommodate the interests of as many people as possible and steer the boat forward.
 - In a GD, in most cases, the participants would be eager to create the right initiative. It is true that a leader initiates the discussion. But along with speaking what you think on the given topic, it is also important to listen to what others have to say about the topic so that discussion continues. It is not that one needs to be always speaking. One



Communication in Everyday Life

should say things in clear, concise and straightforward manner and then look for others' responses and opinions on your view and if necessary, ready to defend your point.

- In a GD, it is evident that there will be many views which will be diametrically opposite to each other; and the leader will be the one who will be able to comprehend these views together to come up with a possible direction for the discussion.
- There may be some participant(s) in a GD who is/are not so vocal as the rest, a leader would also ask for their opinion(s), so as to make them a part of the discussion.
- In other words, a leader's role in a GD is to control the discussion and give it a direction by accommodating others' views and reach a conclusion.

Some Suggestions for Group Discussion Topics

- Secularism and communalism in our country
 - Population explosion is the biggest problem of our country but given less attention than corruption
 - Can Google replace teacher?
-
- It is true that one needs to lead a group of participants in a GD, but that can happen only when one has a thorough knowledge about the subject on which the discussion is taking place. It is true that with one's rhetorical power one can conceal one's lack of knowledge; but that can happen for few moments. Rhetoric is an important ally in oral communication but it can help only when one has thorough knowledge about the subject. Usually in a GD, the topic is of general nature and/ or about the recent happenings around the world. If one is acquainted with the general knowledge about recent happenings then one would not have to think too much to initiate a discussion on the topic. One should do the following –
 - Think and speak rationally / logically
 - Able to think instantly
 - Speak in a simple, straightforward language.
 - Clarity of ideas and presentation skills is a must in a GD. One should be able to quickly make a distinction between core and non-core ideas/ issues in the discussion and focus on the core issues.
 - Analytical abilities are also looked for in a GD. One should be able to analyse a topic in its minutest details. Theoretical knowledge is good; but till the time it cannot be



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applied to practical use then it is not of any use. Often topics in GD are such that it is expected that participants are able to instantly analyse the topic in detail.

- Non-verbal communication is also significant in a GD. Our body speaks more than our speech. How one maintains oneself in a GD through his or her body language is of concern as it is the body language which will show one's conviction in what s/he is speaking, how attentive one is to others' views, how flexible one is to others' opinions and views, etc.

1.6 FACING INTERVIEWS

The term “Interviews” probably rings the prospect of employment to our minds. But apart from that there are many other kinds of interviews, interviews for getting in premier academic institutions, interviews that we read in newspapers or watch in television or internet, etc. But for the present context we will restrict ourselves to facing interview for academic and professional excellence. Interviews can be termed as an oral tool to test the academic and non-academic credentials for employment or entry to an academic institution. Usually any employer would like to figure out before employing anyone whether the person is suitable for employment and whether he or she will serve the purpose for which s/he will be recruited. Similarly, an academic interview tries to find out if the applicant is suitable for pursuing a particular course or if the student has put in efforts to get the diploma or degree for a particular course, if the interview is for the purpose of evaluation. Thus whatever be the purpose of the interview, the interviewer purports to find out your competence about your subject, your communicative competence, your excellence in fields related to the job, your personality, your attitude and aptitude, etc. Usually interviews are taken by a panel of experts and it is essential that one maintains an eye contact with almost all members of the panel.

It is to be kept in mind here that in an interview it is essential to focus on your positive areas so as to create an impact on the people interviewing you. Following things should be kept in mind while facing an interview.

- (a) We all know that we should attire ourselves according to the occasion. Similar holds true for interviews too. As interview is a formal occasion, therefore you must try to put forward attire which is formal and give a nice impression about you.
- (b) It is essential to have the etiquette to wish the people in the interview board / panel and not to do anything that would make them feel that you are rude or over-confident or a fool.



Communication in Everyday Life

- (c) Mostly, the questioned in an interview are related to your subject of specialization; therefore it is a prerequisite that you know your subject well and is able to deliver responses to the questions put forward by the interviewer(s).
- (d) Often interviewers ask you questions about your personal life which should be answered tactfully without divulging much of your personal life, and at the same time, by not
- (e) Questions which are of general nature needs to be answered with confidence and it is essential as interviewers try to figure out if you are aware about things apart from your subject.
- (f) Your communication should show your confidence and conviction in what you speak.
- (g) Your non-verbal cues should match your words and at no time you should show with your gestures or facial expressions that you are getting irritated or bored or aloof to what the interviewers are enquiring about. Moreover, your non-verbal communication should reflect your enthusiasm and interest in the prospective job.
- (h) Before facing the panelists of an interview for employment, you should ask yourself three things which would be helpful in your performance. They are–
 - (1) Do you know yourself?
 - (2) Do you know about the company / institution?
 - (3) Do you know the Job Profile?

Do you know yourself? – Before going for an interview you should determine your strengths and weaknesses are as it is a topic that you may not only be asked on; but also the panelists on the interview board will be eager to figure out. So you should do a self evaluation before you walk in for an interview; so that you are not faced with an embarrassing situation or are jolted by questions from the panelists.

Do you know about the company / institution? – It is important to know about the company or the institution for which you have made up your mind to work for and is facing the interview. A little bit of work norms and ethics, their business and other concerns, their opportunities, etc. will help you to answer questions in a much more definite way.

Do you know the Job Profile? – It is also important to know the job profile as that would make you justify why you want to join for such a job. In other words, how your career goal matches with the profile of the job and how both you and the institution will benefit if you are given a chance to serve the institution or company.



1.7 PUBLIC SPEECH / PRESENTATION

Public speech or Presentation is one such forms of mass communication where one addresses a (large) gathering of people. Giving a speech is a craft that one needs to inculcate in oneself so in professional life it may come to much use. It is not that only a political leader needs to know the craft of addressing large audience, but there are various kinds of jobs throughout the world where the art of addressing mass is a prerequisite. Think about a situation when you are heading an institution or you are the Public relations officer or the media coordinator of an institution, it becomes essential for you to address large audience. Moreover, think about you making a presentation for a company, aren't you addressing public? So, public Speech / presentation are significant in our professional life.

Public Speech is different from Presentations in the sense that in Public Speech one is speaking to divergent mass whose background one is not aware of, whereas in presentation one is speaking to a select group of people whose academic and professional background are more or less similar to you and who have (more or less) similar interests. So a presentation is of a different nature than that of a Public Speech, but in both forms of oral communication what is needed is to catch the attention of the people which can be done either by speaking something new which the audience is not aware of or by saying things in such a manner which catches the attention of people. New ideas, new information is something that makes people attentive to the listener, but in all contexts it is essential that one needs to use a language which is the audience will be accustomed with. For a presentation one can and one should use a subject-specific language (register), as the select group of audience is aware of such subject specific terminologies; but when it comes to a Public Speech it is essential that one uses as simple and straightforward language as possible.

In Public Speech, one has to rhetorical to catch the attention of the audience. It is very important to gauge the pulse of the audience as soon as possible and then react according to it. When one is a public leader, one has to figure out what are the expectations of the audience and one needs to present oneself according to those expectations. But at the same time one needs to go beyond those expectations to mark oneself as a good speaker.

In a presentation whether in a classroom or an office or a boardroom, etc, one has to keep in mind various things. They are–

- **Time Limit:** Usually in a presentation there is a time limit given and one should try to wrap up one's presentation within that time as there should a discussion post-presentation about what you presented. Moreover, keeping within the time limit is necessary as the audience's time should be valued.



Communication in Everyday Life

- Prepare yourself by writing: though in a presentation one speaks as one does in an extempore, but it is to be kept in mind that presentations are to be prepared beforehand and if possible even rehearsed so that you do not miss anything. Often it is good to write down the presentation and if not write down the whole thing then atleast make a structure in a piece of paper so that you have a framework ready. Examples, anecdotes, etc. should also be noted so that it is helpful during the presentation and one does not miss anything.
- Often the framework of the presentation is circulated within the audience so that they are aware of the framework one is following during presentation. These days, people often take help of multimedia devices during presentation to make things clear.
- Non-verbal cues are very important during presentations as one's body language, facial expressions, postures, etc. speaks a lot about what one intends to say. The conviction and confidence in what one is saying is brought forward in one's presentation through the body language. Moreover, keeping an eye contact with the audience is a must as it ensures that your words are meant for them and it also helps in understanding their responses so as to mould the presentation accordingly. If one's gaze is constantly fixed at the written document from where you are presenting, then it may cause boredom in your audience. Never read the presentation, but speak from it.
- It is important often to provide an overview about what you are presenting as it makes it easier for the audience to follow it.
- It is also important that you emphasize what your main points are and where you are digressing as well as give them a summary of your presentation as the end of the talk.
- A presentation ending with a bang always is significant as it makes the audience have a strong impression about you as well as your presentation. At the end it is also important to ask audience for their comments, queries, suggestions, etc.

1.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Malhotra Prerna, Deb Dulal Halder, (2019) *Communication Skills: Theory and Practice*, Eighth Edition, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
- Halder, Deb Dulal, Anjana Neira Dev, Prerna Malhotra, (2012) *Technical Writing: Theory and Practice*, BookAge Publications, New Delhi.
- Kaul, Asha, (2012) *Effective Business Communication*, PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi.

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Disclaimer: The present study material is an edited version of an earlier study material from the Choice Based Credit System.