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FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

Semester - I

READING AND WRITING SKILLS

Padmanath Gohainbaruah School of Humanities

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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READING AND WRITING SKILLS

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The course titled 'Reading and Writing Skills' provides a general introduction to the learner on the various methods and techniques of approaching various literary forms such as sthort story, poem, prose and play. It presents a detailed study of both reading and writing skills while also taking into account the importance of good communication skills. Thus, the course is designed to ensure that the learner is able to assimilate the provided knowledge and information and thereby, develop his or her reading and writing skills as well as skills of communication and creative expression.

Unit 1 : This unit introduces the learners to some concepts of reading by emphasising on the skill of reading that is required to interpret different kinds of text.

Unit 2 : This unit takes up a story by Guyde Mowpassant titled "The Necklace" and introduces the learners to some important aspects of 'close reading' of fiction.

Unit 3 : This unit presents the text of a poem titled "A Psalm of Life" by H. W. Longfellow. The idea is to introduce the learners to the language of poetry as a different kind of learning experience.

Unit 4 : This unit takes up a prose text by Jawaharlal Nehru titled "A Letter to Indira on Her Birthday" to highlight how a prose text can be approached through one's reading.

Unit 5 : This unit takes up a scene from a play by John Drinkwater titled *Abraham Lincoln*. The scene shows how values of parental love stand through the test of time. Here, the learners find some of the important factors while reading and exploring a play.

Unit 6 : This unit introduces the learners to some concepts in writing and stresses the need for cohesion and coherence in a piece of writing

Unit 7 : This unit takes up the importance and proper use of capital letters and punctuation marks while writing.

Unit 8 : This unit introduces the learners to some of the issues of 'precis writing.' The techniques of intelligent and faster reading is to be developed for precis writing. A discussion on the language of a precis shall enable the learners to develop an understanding of the rules to be followed in precis writing.

Unit 9: This unit introduces the learners to some of the techniques of 'report writing' by emphasising on points such as language and style of report writing, significance of news headlines and illustrates the same with sufficient examples.

Unit 10: The unit discusses how formal letters are written in day-to-day and other official correspondences. Also it takes up the procedure of filing an FIR which is often forgotten in the regular discussions of various writing formats and is much important whenever an unexpected problem arises that needs reporting.

Unit 11: This unit deals with 'communication skills' and encompasses within its scope listening skills, speaking skills and soft skills. It also deals with telephonic conversation, which is one of the skills necessary in the communication process.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in "REFERENCES" which will be helpful for your further consultation.

UNIT 1 : SOME CONCEPTS IN READING

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 The Skills of Reading

1.4 Reading a Text

1.5 The Reading Process

1.6 Key Words

1.7 Let Us Sum Up

1.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

1.9 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss some of the important skills of reading
- develop a sense of readiness in reading
- appreciate the techniques of intelligent reading.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit aims to focus on the development of intelligent reading skills in a second language by introducing you to the key points in analysing any text. In different situations of even for general examination purposes you may be provided with an unseen and unknown text, which you may have to comprehend and even explain. The present unit focuses on quick and effective reading skills which will certainly provide the learner with a rich reading experience. It may interest you to note that the ability to read in English, contributes significantly towards developing an overall competence in the use of the language. This explains why a good reader is also a good user of the language.

1.3 THE SKILLS OF READING

Let us try to examine what 'reading' means.

Look at the some of the following statements :

a. Reading means an ability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases and sentences from the context.

b. Reading means an ability to grasp the ideas contained in a passage.

c. Reading means an ability to locate important facts and ideas.

d. Reading means an ability to infer meanings, ideas and messages in a passage.

e. Reading means an ability to evaluate events, actions, ideas, feelings and views.

All the five statements are correct and tell us something about the reading process. We shall see how these statements help us in our task of reading.

1.4 READING A TEXT

Read the following text:

With the advent of the autumn season, the famous migratory birds, the pelicans, have started coming to the Kaziranga National Park (KNP), adding to its picturesque beauty. To the surprise of many, pelicans have made a new colony on the banks of Koladuar beel in Agartoli range of the KNP. In winter, pelicans give birth to their offsprings and gradually, after their grooming is over, they fly away from the KNP after two or three months.

Pelicans have been building nests in Koladuar beel since 2002 and it is now becoming a permanent colony for the pelicans. Forest department sources said the number of pelicans have been increasing enormously at Agartoli range and thousands of nests have been made by the pelicans at Koladuar beel and Simolukathani in KNP.

The Forest Ranger of Agartoli forest range told The Assam Tribune that from the first week of October, hundreds of pelicans came to different beels of Agartoli range of the KNP. Pelicans extended their colony at Tamulipather and Azi Kati areas and they like to make their nests on tall

trees like simolu, koroi, chatian etc. It is expected that the new colony of the pelicans would surely be a source of attraction for foreign tourists during this current year.

The KNP authorities should create a proper environment for the pelicans so that the tourists may be attracted by these birds.

1.5 THE READING PROCESS

The passage that you have just read is taken from an authentic piece of text, that is, a newspaper report. Can you find out what the passage is about?

This is the first question that should come to your mind. In order to find an answer to this question, you go through the passage rather quickly. This activity is called **skimming**. You should develop the skill of skimming through a passage. A good reader has this ability in him/her and this is an effective way to gain a vague idea of any given text in a short frame of time.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. When you have skimmed through this passage, will be able to form a general idea of what the passage is about. Here are four choices. Which is the appropriate choice?

1. The passage is about
   - (a) the beauty of Kaziranga National Park
   - (b) protection of the environment
   - (c) pelicans inhabiting Kaziranga
   - (d) Agartoli forest range

.....

How did you find out the answer? You made an overall grasping of the entire passage. This kind of comprehension is called global comprehension.

Q.2. Read the passage once more and give a suitable title to the passage in the space below :

Let us get back to the passage above. While reading the passage, you might have come across a number of unfamiliar words. But these unfamiliar words should not pose any problem because the context provides sufficient hints on the meaning of the words.

1. Find a word in the passage which means “arrival”.

   .....

2. Find a word in the passage which means “*travelling from one place to another*”

   .....

3. Find a word in the passage which means “increase in great number”.

   .....

While looking for the word that provides the meaning supplied to you, you find that you have engaged yourself in an activity that requires you to read the text quickly to search for a specific item of information. This activity is known as **scanning**. You have just now scanned the text to find out the word that means “arrival”.

This skill is necessary for you to locate information in a piece of text. The information may be related to content or language.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 3. Give answers to the following questions :

a) Where have the pelicans started to come?

.....

b) What happens to the pelicans in winter?

.....

c) Name some trees that the pelicans love to build their nests on.

.....

While answering the questions above, you read the passage carefully to locate the information. This kind of reading is known as **intensive reading**. The lessons given in this block would require you to read the text closely for an understanding of the text. Note that locating information with some amount of comprehension is **local comprehension**.

Often a text may have a higher demand on your reading ability. You may have to draw inference or draw upon your knowledge or experience to answer a question.

1.6 KEY WORDS

- **Authentic reading texts :** Texts not written or edited exclusively for the purpose of teaching. They are texts found in real-life contexts.
- **Extensive reading :** Reading widely and fluently for enjoyment without external help.
- **Intensive reading :** Reading a text closely and in detail for a thorough comprehension.
- **Scanning :** Reading a text quickly to search for a specific item of information.
- **Skimming :** Glancing rapidly through a text to find out its general content or to receive a gist of an idea.



1.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit introduces the learner to the importance of developing reading comprehension. The unit emphasises on the need to develop an ability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases and sentences from the context so that an unfamiliar word does not seriously affect your reading comprehension. You are now familiar with the process of finding out the general idea of a passage and able to answer the question that asks: What is the passage about? Apart from this, you are now able to locate important facts and ideas leading to local comprehension of a piece of text. Lastly,

the unit emphasises on your ability to infer meanings, ideas and messages contained in a piece of text leading to inferential comprehension.



1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : Pelicans inhabiting Kaziranga

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : 1. advent, 2. migratory, 3. increasing enormously.

Ans. to Q. No. 3 : a) The pelicans have started coming to the Kaziranga National Park.

b) In winter, the pelicans give birth to their offsprings. Gradually after their grooming is over, they fly away in about two to three months

c) Simolu, koroi and chatian are some of the trees that the pelicans love to build their nests on.



1.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: There is a suggestion in the passage about creating “proper environment for the pelicans”. What does it mean?

Q 2: What in your opinion is the reason for the expectation that the pelicans would attract foreign tourists?

Q 3: How is skimming different from scanning?

Q 4: What is meant by intensive reading?

Q 5: Discuss some of the concepts of reading.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 2 : READING A STORY

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Pre-reading Activities

2.4 While Reading a Story

2.5 Post-reading Activities

2.6 Let Us Sum Up

2.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

2.8 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- grasp the meaning of words, phrases and sentences from the context
- locate and gain necessary information from the text
- develop reading skills by observing the discussed techniques.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Reading is a process whereby a person looks at a piece of text and understands what has been written. The word ‘understands’ means finding meaning in the words and sentences in the text.You may not know the meaning of each and every word that you are likely to find in a piece of text. This should not be a cause of worry. The meaning of many words can be derived from the context as well.

Moreover, there are some words that have more than one meaning. For example look at the meanings of the word plain.

Plain 1 (1) a large stretch of flat land

Plain 2 (1) clear

(2) simple

(3) honest

Look at this sentence :

Mrs Loisel then said that the dress would look plain without a piece of jewellery.

In this sentence, the context will tell you that the word ***plain*** means simple. You should be able to look for the meaning from the context.

2.3 PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

The lesson that you will be reading in 2.3 is about a lady named Mrs Loisel and the husband who had serious problems after losing a diamond necklace that they had borrowed from a rich friend Mrs Forestier to go to a party. Before you read the lesson let us look at the following questions :

1. Supposing you are visiting a wedding reception. Which of the following statements will be applicable to you?
   (a) I shall wear a very unusual dress.
   (b) I shall wear a simple dress.
   (c) I shall wear an attractive dress.

   .....

2. Suppose you borrowed some money from a friend for an important piece of work. Which of the things would you like to do?
   (a) I shall return the money.
   (b) I shall not return the money and avoid him.
   (c) I shall try to be very friendly with him so that he becomes embarrassed to ask for the money.

   .....

3. The currency of the US is called Dollar. What is the currency of France called?
   (a) Pound
   (b) Franc
   (c) Yen
4. In the lesson, you will come across a number of words which may appear difficult. Look up the words in the dictionary. A few of these words are given below.

Glossary		
Pictured herself	**:**	imagined herself
Carried away	**:**	overcame
Debt	**:**	a sum of money owed
Garret	**:**	a small room on a roof
Ruined	**:**	spoilt
Stopped dead	**:**	shocked

5. Find out what these people do :

   (a) greengrocer : .....

   (b) grocer : .....

   (c) butcher : .....

   (d) cobbler : .....

6. Supposing you met a friend you have not been in contact with for many years. You recognise the friend but he/she does not recognise you.

   Write an imaginary dialogue between you and your friend. You are 'A', your friend is 'B'

   A : Hello, Meghali!

   B : .....

   A : .....

   B : .....

   A : .....

2.4 WHILE READING A STORY

Read the following story :

*Mrs. Loisel was the wife of a clerk in the Ministry of Education. She was pretty and ambitious and **pictured herself** in the highest level of French society.*

One day Mr. Loisel came home with an invitation to an entertainment from the Minister of Education. Mrs. Loisel refused to go because she did not have a good enough dress. Her husband unwillingly agreed to use the 400 francs he had saved for their holiday to buy one.

Mrs. Loisel then said that the dress would look plain without a piece of jewellery. Her husband could not afford jewels, so Mrs. Loisel went to a rich friend, Mrs. Forestier. She was astonished when Mrs. Forestier agreed to lend her a splendid diamond necklace.

Mrs. Loisel was the prettiest woman at the ball. She was ***carried away*** *by enjoyment and made her husband stay until 4 o'clock in the morning. It was not until they returned home that she made the terrible discovery : the necklace had disappeared. Their efforts to find the necklace were useless; it had gone and they would have to buy another.*

Mr. Loisel found a necklace exactly the same as Mrs. Forestier's. Its price was 36,000 francs. Mr. Loisel collected all his savings and borrowed the rest at high rates of interest. He bought the necklace and Mrs. Forestier did not notice the difference when it was returned. Then the Loisels settled to pay the money back.

Mrs. Loisel now learned what it was like to be really poor. She made up her mind to face it, and played her part bravely. This terrible ***debt*** *had to be paid, and pay it she would. The maid was dismissed; the flat was given up and they moved into a* ***garret****. She did all the rough household work; washed up after meals and* ***ruined*** *her finger-nails scrubbing dirty dishes and pans. She did all the washing and hung it out on the line to dry. Every morning she carried the rubbish down to the street, and brought up the water, pausing for breath at the top of each flight of stairs. Dressed like a working woman, she went with her basket on her arm to the greengrocer, the grocer, and the butcher, bargaining, arguing and fighting for every penny.*

Her husband spent his evenings working at some shopkeepers' accounts, and at night he often copied papers at a few pennies a page.

This life went on for ten years.

At the end of that time they had paid off everything to the last penny, including the interest on the loan.

Mrs. Loisel now looked like an old woman. She had become a typical poor man's wife, rough and coarse. Her hair was neglected, her dress was untidy, her hands were red. But now and then, when her husband was at the office, she would sit by the window and her thoughts would go back to

that far away evening, the evening of her beauty and her success. What would have been the end of it if she had not lost the necklace? Who could say? How strange and varied are the chances of life ! How a small thing can save or ruin you !

One Sunday she went for a walk in the Champs Elysees, and she caught sight of a lady with a child. She recognised Mrs. Forestier, who looked as young, as pretty and as attractive as ever. Mrs. Loisel felt a wave of sadness pass over her. Should she speak to her? Why not? Now that the debt was paid, why should she not tell her the whole story? She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanee !"

Her friend did not recognise her and said, "I'm afraid I don't know you - you must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh, my poor dear Mathilde ! How you have changed !"

"Yes, I have been through a very hard time since I saw you last."

"What do you mean ?"

" You remember the diamond necklace you lent me to wear?"

"Yes, well ?"

"Well, I lost it !"

"I don't understand. You brought it back to me."

"What I brought you back was another one, exactly like it, and for the last ten years we have been busy paying for it. You must understand that it was not an easy matter for people like us, who hadn't a penny. However, it's all over now. I can't tell you what a relief it is."

Mrs. Forestier stopped dead .

"You mean that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes, and you never noticed it ? They were certainly very much alike".

She smiled with pride and satisfaction. But Mrs. Forestier seized both her hands in great distress.

"Oh, my poor, dear Mathilde ! Why, mine was only imitation. At the

most it was worth five hundred francs !"

- Guy De Maupassant (An Adaptation)

2.5 POST-READING ACTIVITIES

A. For completing a sentence or answering a question, four alternatives have been suggested below. Choose the best alternative immediately.

1. Mrs. Loisel settled down to paying the money back
   (a) with determination.
   (b) half-heartedly.
   (c) unwillingly.
   (d) reluctantly.
   Answer: (a)
2. In the end the Loisels paid the debt.
   (a) It took them ten years to repay all the money they owed.
   (b) At the end of ten years they had saved enough to replace the lost necklace.
   (c) After ten years they had paid off their debt except for a few pennies.
   (d) They paid off everything they owed long before the end of ten years.
   Answer: (a)
3. The struggle to repay the money
   (a) made Mrs. Loisel weak and ill.
   (b) failed to affect Mrs. Loisel's appearance.
   (c) made Mrs. Loisel bad-tempered.
   (d) spoiled her good looks.
   Answer: (d)
4. When Mrs. Loisel met Mrs. Forestier, she
   (a) said that she had lost the necklace, but promised to return another exactly like that.
   (b) admitted that she had replaced Mrs. Forestier's diamond necklace with an imitation.
   (c) told her that the necklace she had returned was not the

one she had borrowed.

(d) accused Mrs. Forestier of being the cause of ten years of suffering.

Answer: (c)

5. Mrs. Forestier told Mrs. Loisel that

(a) the necklace she had returned was only made of imitation diamonds.

(b) the necklace she had borrowed was not made of real diamonds.

(c) the necklace she had returned was only worth 500 francs.

(d) the necklace she had lent her was made of real diamonds.

Answer: (b)

6. In the end, we learn that if the Loisels had known that Mrs. Forestier's necklace was made of imitation diamonds

(a) they would not have had to return the necklace at all.

(b) they would not have had to spend ten years saving up to buy a new one.

(c) they would not have had to return one like it.

(d) they would not have had to spend ten years paying the money back.

Answer: (d)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Give brief answers to the following questions :

Q 1: What kind of person was Mrs. Loisel?

Q 2: i) Why did Mrs Loisel refuse to go to the entertainment?
ii) What did Mr. Loisel do then?

Q 3: i) Who is Mrs Forestier ?
ii) Why did Mrs Loisel approach her?

Q 4: i) What was the terrible discovery that the Loisels made on returning from the ball ? ii) What did Mr Loisel do?

Q 5: Whom did Mrs Loisel meet one Sunday in the Champs Elysees?



2.6 LET US SUM UP

After you have finished reading the unit, you have gained ideas on reading skills, especially those skills that need to be developed in connection with a story. You must have observed that while reading a story, emphasis must be on grasping the meaning of words, phrases and sentences first. It is important to pay attention to the implied meaning of the text through an understanding of the information provided in the text itself. The example given in the unit shall help you in developing the skill of reading a story.



2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No.1: Mrs Loisel was pretty and ambitious. She imagined herself in the highest level of French society.

Ans to Q. No.2: Mrs Loisel refused to go to the entertainment because she did not have a good dress to wear. So Mr Loisel bought her a dress for 400 francs.

Ans to Q. No.3: Mrs Forestier was a rich friend of Mrs Loisel. Mrs Loisel approached her with a request to lend her a necklace to wear at the entertainment.

Ans to Q. No.4: The terrible discovery that the Loisels made on returning from the ball was that the necklace that Mrs Loisel had borrowed for the ball was missing. Then Mr Loisel looked for a similar necklace to return to Mrs Forestier. He found one and paid 36,000 francs.

Ans to Q. No.5: One Sunday in the Champs Elysees, Mrs Loisel met Mrs. Forestier, the rich friend who lent her a splendid diamond necklace.



2.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Describe how Mr and Mrs Loisel tried to repay the debt incurred in the purchase of the diamond necklace.

Q 2: Relate the meeting of Mrs Loisel and Mrs Forestier at the Champs Elysees.

Q 3: "Mrs Loisel now looked like an old woman." –Relate what happened in the life of Mrs Loisel to make her look like an old woman.

Q 4: Imagine you are Mrs Forestier. State what you would have done when Mrs Loisel had revealed to you the story of the genuine necklace.

Q 5: Mrs Loisel met Mrs Forestier one Sunday in the Champs Elysees. Mrs Loisel was going for a walk when she met the lady with a child in her arms.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 3 : READING A POEM

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Pre-reading Activities

3.4 Reading the Poem

3.5 Post-reading Activities

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

3.8 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- appreciate the language of a poem
- grasp the key aspects contained in the text of a poem

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to a poem and to some of the ways by which you may approach the poem. Reading a poem is always a delightful experience because poetry provides a different language experience; there is the use of rhyme in some poems and there is rhythm and music in the language.

What is the different language experience that poetry provides? Let us look at a few of them :

1. Poets make use of old-fashioned words.

   Examples include: thee, thou, thine etc.

   Look at the line

   (a) *Dust thou art, to dust returnest.*

   The word ‘thou’ has ceased to be used in modern English. We call such words archaic or old-fashioned.

archaic	**modern**
thee	you
thou	you
thine	your
thy	your

Poets in the past were fond of these words and used them.

2. Poets often take the freedom to replace a letter with an apostrophe in a word.

   Look at these examples :

   (a) Trust no future, howe'er pleasant.

   (b) Heart within and God o'erhead.

   (c) Sailing o'er life's solemn main.

   Expressions like ' Tis' for 'it is', ne'er for never, o'er for 'over' are other examples that poets use. Such use of words is hardly acceptable in modern prose.

3. Poets have a tendency to use sentence patterns which are hardly acceptable in prose. Look at this line:

   (a) *Tell me not, in mournful numbers* .

   In this line 'Tell me not' is not a usual expression. In prose we would prefer the expression "Do not tell me....."

   (b) *Trust no future, howe'er pleasant*.

   In this line 'Trust no future' is not a normal expression. We would prefer the expression "Do not trust the future, however pleasant."

4. Moreover, poets try to achieve a sense of lyrical musicality in the lines of their poems by repeating a particular pattern or a structure:

   (a) Tell me not .....

   (b) Trust no future, howe'er pleasant.

   These techniques help to bring about music in the poem.

3.3 PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

The poem teaches us that life is not an empty dream but a noble adventure.

We must not remain idle but must lead active lives by making the best of the present .

In the poem, you will come across a number of difficult words. Here are a few of them :

Glossary

Psalm	:	hymn, a sacred song
Mournful	:	sad, sorrowful
Numbers	:	verses
Empty dream	:	insubstantial
Slumbers	:	sleeps
arnest	:	sincere
Thou art	:	you are (old use)
Returnest	:	return (old use)
Destined	:	appointed or intended by God
Muffled drums	:	drums covered with black cloth to deaden the sound
Bivouac	:	temporary encampment of soldiers
Strife	:	conflict, clash
Sublime	:	noble, glorious
Forlorn	:	lonely
Up and doing	:	active
Fate	:	misfortune
Achieving	:	doing something noble



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. You know that poets make use of rhyme to bring about a musical effect in their poems. Supply words that rhyme with the following words.

(a) number .....

(b) dream .....

(c) returnest .....

(d) soul .....

(e) sorrow .....

(f) today .....

(g) brave .....

(h) beating .....

(i) beetle .....

(j) strife .....

Q.2. Rewrite the following sentences in plain English

(a) Tell me not

.....

(b) The soul is dead that slumbers

.....

(c) Dust thou art, to dust returnest

.....

(d) Trust no future, however pleasant

.....

3.4 READING THE POEM

Read the following poem titled “A Psalm of Life” written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807- 1882) a major American poet from New England.

Tell me not, in **mournful numbers**,
“Life is but an empty **dream**!”
For the soul is dead that **slumbers**,
And things are not what they seem.
Life is real! Life is **earnest**!
And the grave is not its goal;
“Dust **thou art**, to dust **returnest**,”
Was not spoken of the soul.
Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our **destined** end of way;
But to act, that each tomorrow
Finds us farther than today.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like **muffled drums** are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.
In the world's broad field of battle,
In the **bivouac** of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the **strife**!
Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act, act in the living present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!
Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives **sublime**,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;
Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again,
Let us, then, be up **and doing**,
With a heart for any **fate**;
Still **achieving**, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

3.5 POST-READING ACTIVITIES

After you have finished reading the poem, answer the following questions:

Choose the appropriate answer from the alternatives:

(a) 'And the grave is not its goal' means

A. we should not take our life gravely.

B. death is not the aim of our life.

C. we should be serious in life.

Answer : (B)

(b) 'In the world's broad field of battle' means

A. battles are fought in the world.

B. a great war.

C. the world is compared to a battlefield.

Answer : (C)

(c) 'Footprints on the sands of time' means

A. having fun on the seashore.

B. walking about on the sand.

C. leaving behind some noble deeds in the world.

Answer : (C)

(d) 'A forlorn and shipwrecked brother' refers to

A. Robinson Crusoe.

B. a lost friend or relative

C. a person who is facing troubles in life.

Answer : (C)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3. Does the poet agree with the statement: " Life is but an empty dream"? If not, why?

.....

.....

Q 4. The poet says that neither enjoyment nor sorrow is our destined end. What does he mean by it?

.....

.....

Q 5. What according to the poet should be our aim in life?

.....

.....

Q 6. How, according to the poet, should we face life?

.....



3.6 LET US SUM UP

After reading the unit, you have been acquainted with the way in which a poem has to be read. There are two important points that needs consideration while reading a poem- the language of the poem and its content. As discussed in the unit, poetry uses a different pattern compared to prose, story, etc. In poems, the use of archaic words is seen along with a musical cadence that is known as rhyme scheme of the poem. The example in the unit has led to your better understanding of reading a poem.



3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: (a) slumber, (b) seem, (c) earnest, (d) goal,
(e) tomorrow, (f) way, (g) grave, (h) fleeting,
(i) cattle, (j) life

Ans to Q No 2: (a) Do not tell me.
(b) The soul that sleeps is dead.
(c) You are dust and will return to dust
(d) Do not trust the future, however pleasant

Ans to Q No 3: No, the poet does not agree with the statement that life is but an empty dream. For the poet, life is a noble calling. We must not remain idle but must lead active lives by making the best of our present.

Ans to Q No 4: The poet means that the destined end of our life is neither enjoyment nor sorrow. On the contrary, he asserts that we must act in the living present.

Ans to Q No 5: According to the poet, our aim in life must be to leave behind our footprints on the sands of time. That is, we must leave behind some noble deeds in the world.

Ans to Q No 6: According to the poet, we should face life with a readiness for any situations. We must learn to work hard and work patiently for the result of our work.



3.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give the poet's attitude to the past, present and future?

Q 2: How, according to the poet, can we benefit from the lives of great men?

Q 3: What does the poet mean by leaving behind 'footprints on the sands of time'?

Q 4: What is the poet's message to the people in the poem?

Q 5: Write a short paragraph on 'Great men who have influenced my life'.

Q 6: What are the points one should consider while reading a poem?

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UNIT 4 : READING A PROSE TEXT

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Pre-reading Activities

4.4 While Reading a Prose Text

4.5 Post-reading Activities

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

4.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

4.8 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- reflect on the notions of unity that characterise a good piece of text
- explore some regular activities in relation to reading skills
- develop your skills of comprehension.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The word 'text' in the caption "Reading a prose text" makes one wonder what exactly a text is. In order to gain a better idea you are required to read the following four sentences given in the form of an example:

a) I must not therefore sermonise, but what am I to do then?

b) Later he wrote a book on his travels.

c) In your history books, you read of great periods in the life of nations.

d) I have written a long letter to you.

Now if you write out these sentences in the form of a paragraph by dropping the (1), (2) etc. the paragraph will look like this.

I must not therefore sermonise, but what am I to do then ? Later he wrote a book on his travels. In your history books you read of great periods in the life of nations. I have written a long letter to you.

Though, in appearance what you see above vaguely looks like a

paragraph, it is not exactly a paragraph. In other words, it is not a TEXT. Why is it so?

- In order to be a text there should be inter - connection among sentences. There is no inter-connection among these sentences.
- The first sentence of a text must meaningfully connect itself to the second, the second to the third and so on.

The 'paragraph' given above does not fulfil the norm. When you read the text "A Letter to Indira on Her Birthday", you will see how not only the sentences but also the paragraphs are interconnected. These are features of a good piece of text.

4.3 PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading the text, it is important for you to note that the passage is a letter from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to his daughter on her birthday. A prominent leader of the freedom movement, Nehru was in prison nine times on various charges by the British rulers.

The solitude of prison life enabled Nehru to write two collections of letters to his daughter Indira. His *Letters From a Father to His Daughter* (1930) is a collection of 31 letters which give in simple and lucid language, an account of the early days of the world. His other collection of letters titled *Glimpses of World History* contains 196 letters written between October 1930 and August 1933. The letter that you are going to read is the first letter in this collection.

Nehru has a very lucid style of writing. However, there are some words and phrases whose meanings may help you to understand the text better.

Glossary

Your birthday	**:**	Indira's thirteenth birthday. She was born in 1917.
Naini prison	**:**	Naini is near Allahabad. The letter was written when Jawaharlal was in Naini prison.
Doling out	**:**	distributing

Braving	:	defying
Obstacles	:	problems, difficulties
Sermonise	:	deliver wise lectures
A one - sided affair	:	because the person addressed cannot talk back
Of old	:	of the past
Jeanne d' Arc	:	a French girl of the 15th century who fought and died for her country. She was declared a Saint later.
Daily bread and butter	:	common necessities of life
Great leader	:	Lenin
Endeavour	:	try hard to do or achieve something.
Another great leader	:	Mahatma Gandhi
Shells	:	narrow interests
Making history	:	doing deeds which will be recorded in history
Unruffled	:	without being disturbed in mind
Mummie	:	mother, Kamala Nehru

As mentioned earlier, developing a good stock of vocabulary is always helpful in your understanding of a prose text. Here are one or two activities which you may like to do.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. Match the words in column A picked up from the lesson with their meaning in column B;

A	B
bestow	splitting apart
obstacles	overcoming
bearings	faith
curious	offer
bursting	barriers
braving	strange

Answer : (a) bestow : .....

(b) obstacles : .....

(c) bearings : .....

(d) curious : .....

(e) bursting : .....

(f) braving : .....

Note that synonyms are words having the same meaning. While referring to a book we can say

- It is a good book
- It is a nice book

Here **good** and **nice** are synonyms because the replacing of one with the other does not bring out a difference in meaning.

4.4 WHILE READING A PROSE TEXT

Read the following passage:

On your birthday *you have been in the habit of receiving presents and good wishes. Good wishes you still have in full measure: but what present can I give you from* ***Naini prison****? My present cannot be very material or solid. They can only be of the air and of the mind and spirit, such as a good fairy might have bestowed on you. Something that even the high walls of prison cannot stop.*

You know, sweetheart, how I dislike sermonizing and ***doling out*** *good advice. When I am tempted to do this, I always think of a story of a 'very wise man' I once read. Perhaps, one day, you will yourself read the book which contains this story. Thirteen hundred years ago, there came a great traveller from China to India in search of wisdom and knowledge. His name was Hiuen Tsang and over the deserts and mountains of the north he came,* ***braving*** *many dangers, facing and overcoming many* ***obstacles****, so great was his thirst for knowledge, and he spent many years in India, learning himself and teaching others, especially at the great University of Nalanda, which existed then near the city that was called Pataliputra and is now known as Patna. Hiuen Tsang became very learned himself; and he was given the title of 'Master of the Law', the Law of Buddha and he journeyed*

all over India and saw and studied the people that lived in this great country in those far - off days. Later he wrote a book of his travels; and it is this book which contains the story that comes to my mind. It is about a man from South India who came to Karnasuvarna, which was a city somewhere near modern Bhagalpur in Bihar; and this man, it is written, wore round his belly and waist copper-plates, and on his head he carried a lighted torch. Staff in hand, with proud bearing and lofty steps, he wandered about in this strange attire. And when anyone asked him the reason for this curious get-up, he told him that his wisdom was so great that he was afraid his belly would burst if he did not wear copper round it, and because he was moved with pity for the ignorant people round about him, who lived in darkness, he carried the light on his head.

Well, I am quite sure that there is no danger of my over bursting with too much wisdom; and so there is no need for me to wear copper-plates or armour. And in any event, I hope that my wisdom, such of it as I possess, does not live in my belly. Wherever it may reside, there is plenty of room still for more of it, and there is no chance of there being no room left. I am so limited in wisdom, how can I pose as a wise man to others and distribute good advice to all ? And so I have always thought that the best way to find out what is right and what is not right, what should be done and what should not be done, is not to give a sermon, but to talk and discuss, and from the discussion sometimes a little bit of truth comes out. I have liked my talks with you, and we have discussed many things, but the world is wide; and beyond our world lie other wonderful and mysterious worlds; so none of us need ever be bored or imagine, like the very foolish and ***conceited*** *person whose story Hiuen Tsang has told us, that we have learned everything worth learning and become very wise; for the very wise, if any such there are, must sometimes feel rather sad that there is nothing more to learn. They must miss the joy of discovery and of learning new things the great adventure that all of us who care may have.*

I must not therefore ***sermonise****, but what am I to do then? A letter can hardly take the place of a talk; at best it is a* ***one-sided affair****. So, if I say anything that sounds like good advice do not take it as if it were a bad*

pill to swallow. Imagine that I have made a suggestion to you for you to think over, as if we really were having a talk.

In your history books, you read of great periods in the life of nations. We read of great men and women and great deeds performed; and sometimes in our dreams and reveries, we imagine ourselves back in those times and doing brave deeds like the heroes and heroines ***of old****. Do you remember how fascinated you were when you first read the story of* ***Jeanne d'Arc****, and how your ambition was to do something like her? Ordinary men and women are not usually heroic. They think of their* ***daily bread and butter****, of their children, of their household worries and the like, but a time comes when a whole people become full of faith for a great cause; and then even simple, ordinary men and women become heroes, and history becomes stirring and epoch- making. Great leaders have something in them which inspires a whole people and makes them do great deeds.*

The year you were born in 1917 was one of the great years of history, when ***a great leader****, with a heart full of love and sympathy for the poor and suffering, made his people write a noble and never-to-be forgotten chapter of history. In the very month you were born, Lenin started his great revolution which has changed the face of Russia and Siberia. And today, in India,* ***another great leader*** *also has inspired our people to great* ***endeavour*** *and noble sacrifice, so that they may again be free and the starving and the poor and the oppressed may have their burdens removed from them. Bapuji lies in prison; but the magic of his message steals into the heart of India's millions, and men and women and even little children, come out of their little* ***shells*** *and become India's soldiers of freedom. In India, today, we are* ***making history****, and you and I are fortunate to see this happen before our eyes and take some part ourselves in this great drama.*

How shall we bear ourselves in this great movement? What part shall we play in it? I cannot say what part will fall to our lot; but, whatever it may be, let us remember that we can do nothing which may bring discredit to our cause or dishonour to our people. If we are to be India's soldiers, we have India's honour in our keeping; and that honour is a sacred trust. Often we may be in doubt as to what to do. It is no easy matter to decide what is

right and what is not. One little test I shall ask you to apply whenever you are in doubt. It may help you. Never do anything in secret or anything that you wish to hide. For the desire to hide anything means that you are afraid; and fear is a bad thing and unworthy of you. Be brave and all the rest follows. If you are brave, you will not fear, and will not do anything of which you are ashamed. You know that in our great freedom movement , under Bapuji's leadership there is no room for secrecy or hiding. We have nothing to hide. We are not afraid of what we do and what we say. We work in the sun and in the light. Even so in our private lives let us make friends with the sun and work in the light and do nothing secretly and furtively. Privacy, of course, we may have and should have; but that is a very different thing from secrecy. And if you do so, my child, you will grow up a child of the light, unafraid and ***unruffled****, whatever may happen.*

I have written to you a very long letter. And there is so much I would like to tell you. How can a letter contain it?

You are fortunate, I have said , in being a witness to this great struggle for freedom that is going on in our country. You are also very fortunate in having a very brave and wonderful little woman for your ***mummie****; and if you are ever in doubt or in trouble you cannot have a better friend.*

Good-bye, little one, and may you grow up into a brave soldier in India's service.

With all my love and good wishes.

4.5 POST-READING ACTIVITIES

In the lesson you will find a number of synonyms. Supply one more synonym to each of the following groups of synonyms:

(a) get- up, attire, ...

(b) reside, dwell, ...

(c) dole out, distribute, ...

(d) journeyed, wandered about, ...

(e) mysterious, wonderful, ...

(f) serene, unruffled, ...

Answer: (a) dress, (b) live, (c) give away, (d) travelled, (e) fascinated, (f) calm

Let us now look at the following statements drawn from the text. From your reading of the text, identify the followings statements as either 'True' or 'False'.

(a) In this letter Nehru advises his daughter to learn things from the world.

(b) He reminds her of the lessons taught by Napoleon and Hitler.

(c) He inspires her to bear herself heroically.

(d) It was Indira's thirteenth birthday.

(e) Nehru wrote this letter from Nalanda University.

(f) Hiuen Tsang wore copper plates round his belly and waist.

(g) Indira was born at the same time when Lenin started his great revolution.

(h) Nehru reminds Indira of Lenin and Gandhi.

(i) Nehru advises his daughter never to be afraid.

Answers : (a) False (b) False (c) True (d) True (e) False (f) False (g) True (h) True (i) True



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Give brief answers :

(a) What kind of present did Nehru give Indira on her birthday?

(b) What did Nehru like to do when he was tempted to sermonise?

(c) Who was Hiuen Tsang?

(d) Why did the wise man wear copper plates round his belly?

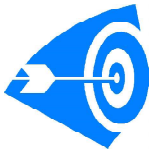
(e) Who was Lenin?

(f) What was Gandhi's aim?



4.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit has acquainted you with the basic ideas that one must focus upon while reading a prose piece. A prose is different from poetry. While reading a prose piece, it is necessary to have acquired the notions of unity as you must have observed while reading the unit. Every writer has a different writing style. Therefore, while reading a prose, it is necessary to emphasise on the style of writing.



4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : (a) offer, (b) barrier, (c) faith, (d) strange, (e) splitting apart, (f) overcoming

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : (a) Nehru gave Indira for her birthday a very special present. It was a present of the air and of the mind and spirit.

(b) When Nehru was tempted to sermonise, he always thought of a wise man.

(c) Hiuen Tsang was a great traveler from China. His travels led him to many places in India. His goal was to search for wisdom.

(d) The wise man wore copper plates round his belly because he thought that his belly was full of wisdom and that his belly would burst if he did not wear copper plates round it.

(e) Lenin was a great leader of Russia. His heart was full of love and sympathy for the poor and the suffering. He started his great revolution which had changed the face of Russia.

(f) Gandhi's aim was to inspire people to great endeavour and noble sacrifice so that they can again be free and the starving people may have their burden of poverty removed from them.



4.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What was the story of the wise man told by Nehru?

Q 2: What, according to Jawaharlal, is the best way to find out what is right and what is wrong?

Q 3: What does history tell us of great periods in the life of nations?

Q 4: What did Lenin and Bapuji do for their own countries?

Q 5: How does Jawaharlal Nehru advise Indira to bear herself in India's struggle for freedom?

Q 6: What are the characteristics of a good piece of text?

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UNIT 5 : READING A PLAY

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Pre-reading Activities

5.4 Reading the Play

5.5 Post-reading Activities

5.6 Let Us Sum Up

5.7 Answers To Check Your` Progress

5.8 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- appreciate the language of conversation
- locate and infer information from the text
- read a play in a better way.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to a scene from a play. We shall call the content of the unit A scene from *Abraham Lincoln* by John Drinkwater. The language of a play can be of interest to you because a play (excluding poetic plays) attempts to capture the features of conversational style. One of the features of conversation used in dramatic texts is 'turn taking'. It means that in conversation, one usually takes turns. When one finishes, the other starts without gap.

Grant **:** *I wasn't expecting you, Sir.*

Lincoln **:** *No, but I couldn't keep away. How's it going?*

Of course in conversation sometimes people interrupt each other. Interruption is when someone intentionally or unintentionally cuts in someone else's speech before the other person finishes what he/she has to say or talking at the same time. Dramatic texts often follow such devices to make the language of the text closer to real life conversation.

5.3 PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading the scene of the play, a little background information on the text can help you to understand the text better. When Abraham Lincoln was the President of America (1861-1865) a Civil War broke out between the Northern States (under General Grant) and the Southern States (under General Lee). The incident about William Scott, which is historical, did not occur at the time referred to here. It took place in 1862, in another field of war. The episode of Scott shows the human touch in the character of Lincoln and his largeness of heart.

In the text below you are likely to find some words that may appear difficult to you. Here are a few of them :

Glossary

Appomattox	:	A village in Virginia, in America
General Grant	:	Ulysses Simpson Grant (1822-85), General of the Union Army, to whom General Robert Edward Lee (1807-70), Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate armies, surrendered in April, 1865. General Grant was the 18th President of America from 1869 to 1877.
Aide-de-camp	:	An officer who helps a superior officer (e.g. General) in the field by bringing news, carrying messages, etc.
Orderly	:	An official of a lower rank concerned with the carrying out of the orders of the superior officers.
All but two miles	:	All except a gap of two miles
Settle it	:	Compel Lee to surrender and end the war
Meade	:	George Gordon Meade (1815-72)
Every minute	:	Any moment
Despatch	:	An urgent official message
It's timed at eight	:	The ten hours' time given to Lee to surrender starts from eight o'clock

That's six o'clock in the morning	**:**	The time of ten hours will end at six o'clock in the morning
We must be merciful	**:**	We must not think of taking revenge on our enemies
The list	**:**	The list of soldiers punished for neglect of duty
Any shootings?	**:**	Was anyone condemned to death?
Volunteered for double Guard duty	**:**	Offered to take up the duty of a guard again after finishing the duty allotted to him
Post	**:**	Place of duty
Court-martialled	**:**	tried in a military court (called court-martial)
Offered	**:**	I did it of my own accord
Vermont	**:**	A state of the USA

5.4 READING THE PLAY

Read the following scene of the play, *Abraham Lincoln* :

*(An April evening in 1865. A farmhouse near **Appomattox**, **General Grant**, Commander-in-chief under Lincoln, of the Northern Armies is seated at a table with Captain Malins, an **aide-de-camp**, Dennis, an **orderly**, sits at a table writing. Enter President Lincoln, Malins rises, and salutes.)*

GRANT : *I wasn't expecting you, sir.*

LINCOIN : *No; but I couldn't keep away. How's it going ? (They sit.)*

GRANT : *Meade sent word an hour and a half ago that Lee was surrounded **all but two miles**, which was closing in.*

LINCOLN : *That ought about to **settle it**,eh ?*

GRANT : *Unless anything goes wrong in those two miles, sir, I'm expecting a further report from **Meade every minute**.*

LINCOLN : *Would there be more fighting?*

GRANT : *It will probably mean fighting through the night more or less. But Lee must realise it's hopeless before the morning.*

*AN ORDERLY : (entering) : A **despatch**, sir.*

GRANT : Yes. (The orderly goes, and a young officer comes in from the field. He salutes and hands a despatch to Grant.)

OFFICER : From General Meade, Sir.

*GRANT : (taking it) : Thank you. (He opens it and reads.) You needn't wait. (The officer salutes and goes.) Yes, they've closed the ring. Meade gives them ten hours. It's **timed at eight**. That's **six o'clock** in the **morning**. (He hands the despatch to Lincoln.)*

*LINCOLN : **We must be merciful**. Bob Lee has been a gallant fellow.*

*GRANT : (taking a paper) : Perhaps you'll look through this **list**, sir. I hope it's the last we shall have.*

*LINCOLN : (taking the paper) : It's a horrible part of the business, Grant. **Any shootings**?*

GRANT : One.

LINCOLN : Why can't you do without it, Grant? No, no. of course not? Who is it?

GRANT : Malins!

MALINS : (opening a book) : William Scott, sir. It's rather a hard case.

LINCOLN : What is it?

*MALINS : He had just done a heavy march, sir, and **volunteered for double** guard duty to relieve a sick friend. He was found asleep at his **post**. (He shuts the book.)*

GRANT : I was anxious to spare him. But it couldn't be done. It was a critical place, at a gravely critical time.

LINCOLN : When is it to be?

MALINS : Tomorrow, at daybreak, sir.

LINCOLN : I don't see that it will do him any good to be shot. Where is he?

MALINS : Here, sir.

LINCOLN : Can I go and see him?

GRANT : Where is he?

MALINS : In the barn, I believe, Sir.

GRANT : *Dennis.*

DENNIS : *(coming from his table) : Yes, sir.*

GRANT : *Ask them to bring Scott in here. (Dennis goes.) I want to see Colonel West. Malins, ask Templeman if those figures are ready yet. (He goes and Malins follows. William Scott is brought in under guard. He is a boy of twenty.)*

LINCOLN : *(to the guard) : Thank you. Wait outside, will you? (The men salute and withdraw.) Are you William Scott?*

SCOTT : *Yes, sir.*

LINCOLN : *You know who I am?*

SCOTT : *Yes, sir.*

Lincoln : *The General tells me you've been* ***court-martialled****.*

SCOTT : *Yes, sir.*

LINCOLN : *Asleep on guard?*

SCOTT : *Yes, Sir.*

LINCOLN : *It's a very serious offence.*

SCOTT : *I know, Sir.*

LINCOLN : *What was it?*

SCOTT : *(a pause) : I couldn't keep awake, sir.*

LINCOLN : *You'd had a long march?*

SCOTT : *Twenty- three miles, sir.*

LINCOLN : *You were doing double guard?*

SCOTT : *Yes, sir.*

LINCOLN : *Who ordered you?*

SCOTT : *Well, sir,* ***I offered****.*

LINCOLN : *Why?*

SCOTT : *Enoch White he was sick, sir. We come from the same place.*

LINCOLN : *Where's that?*

SCOTT : ***Vermont****, sir.*

LINCOLN : *You live there?*

SCOTT : *Yes, sir. My .....We've got a farm down there , sir.*

LINCOLN : *Who has?*

SCOTT : *My mother, sir. I've got her photograph, sir. (He takes it from*

his pocket.)

LINCOLN : (taking it) : Does she know about this?

SCOTT : For God's sake, don't sir.

LINCOLN : There, there my boy. You're not going to be shot.

SCOTT : (after a pause) : Not going to be shot, sir !

LINCOLN : No, no.

SCOTT : Not — going — to — be — shot.

(He breaks down, sobbing.)

LINCOLN : (rising and going to him) : There, there I believe you when you tell me that you couldn't keep awake. I am going to trust you, and send you back to your regiment. (He goes back to his seat.)

SCOTT : When may I go back, sir?

LINCOLN : You can go back tomorrow. I expect the fighting will be over, though.

SCOTT : Is it over yet, sir.

LINCOLN : Not quite.

SCOTT : Please, sir, let me go back tonight let me go back tonight.

LINCOLN : Very well (he writes).Do you know where General Meade is?

SCOTT : No, sir.

LINCOLN : Ask one of those men to come here. (Scott calls one of his guards in.) Your prisoner is discharged. Take him at once to General Meade with this. (He hands a note to the man.)

THE SOLDIER : Yes, sir.

SCOTT : Thank you, sir. (He salutes and goes out with the soldier.)

5.5 POST-READING ACTIVITIES

As you finish reading the scene, you should be able to provide answers to the questions below:

Q 1. Why did Abraham Lincoln visit the Headquarters of General Grant?

Ans. Abraham Lincoln was the President of the United States of

America. During his time there broke out a Civil War between the Northern States and the Southern States. Lincoln visited the Headquarters of General Grant because he was interested in getting the latest information on the war.

Q 2. What was the list that General Grant showed to Lincoln?

Ans. The list that General Grant had shown to Abraham Lincoln was the list of the army personnel who were court-martialled. The list also included the name of William Scott who was to be shot.

Q 3. How did Lincoln read the list that General Grant had shown him?

Ans. Lincoln's immediate reaction was that he would like General Grant to do without shooting. That is, he did not like the idea of court-martialled soldiers being shot. But a moment later, he revised his opinion.

Q 4. Who was Bob Lee that Lincoln was referring to?

Ans. Bob Lee was General Robert Edward Lee, the Commander in Chief of the Confederate armies. Lincoln was friendly with him and so he used the pet name "Bob" to refer to him.'



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How did Scott come to take up guard duty?

.....

.....

Q 2: What was Scott's offence?

.....

.....

Q 3: What did Lincoln do to Scott?

.....

.....

Q 4: What request did Scott make to Lincoln about his mother?

.....

.....

The learner is advised to engage in pre-reading activities and to practice comprehension by taking up any dramatic text for study. A thorough practice will enable the learner to develop fine reading and analytical skills.



5.6 LET US SUM UP

By now, you have been acquainted with how a play has to be read. In plays, it is the dialogues that have to be read. Since plays are conversational in structure, we have to focus our reading on the dialogues exchanged between and among the characters. While reading a play, a brief idea or knowledge on the background or the context of the play is necessary in order to associate and comprehend any given text of plays.



5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Scott had already completed his duty. But, in order to relieve a sick friend, he volunteered to do double guard. The sick friend Enoch White and Scott came from the same place.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: Scott's offence was that he was found asleep on guard. It was a serious offence for which he was court - martialled and was condemned to be shot.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: Lincoln heard Scott's story of volunteering double guard duty to relieve a sick friend. He also heard that Scott had a long march of 23 miles. Then Lincoln wrote the order that Scott was not going to be shot. He was to go back to his regiment instead.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: Scott requested Lincoln not to tell his mother that he was court-martialled. Lincoln was obviously touched by the boy's sincerity.



5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Relate the conversation between Lincoln and Scott.

Q 2: Describe the incident that led to the conviction of Scott for negligence of duty.

Q 3: Write a short note on ‘turn-taking’.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 6 : SOME CONCEPTS IN WRITING I

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Features of Good Writing: Cohesion

6.4 Let Us Sum Up

6.5 Answers To Check Your Progress

6.6 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- develop some of the basic writing skills
- distinguish between a good piece of writing and a mediocre piece of writing.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Writing is a very important skill which all of you must develop. At a basic level, the skill of writing involves an ability to:

- use appropriate words, idioms and structures
- use varied sentences to suit the context or the situation
- use capital letters and marks of punctuation appropriately
- make appropriate use of cohesive devices
- present only relevant facts and ideas
- present ideas logically so as to make the writing coherent
- avoid unnecessary repetition
- organise ideas, facts etc. into a paragraph
- introduce a subject, develop it and end it well
- reflect one's imagination in writing
- follow techniques of different forms and formats of written expression.

Each of the above points contributes towards the development of the skills of writing. For example let us look at the first point :

- use appropriate words, idioms and structures

The statement means that you should have the ability to choose the most appropriate words, idiom and structure to make your writing more meaningful, readable and acceptable. This implies that you should know that in your writing you should be able to distinguish between

a) American spelling system and British spelling system. Your computer may show you words like traveler, labor, meter, color, valor, theater etc. as correct. They are definitely not incorrect. But we use traveller, labour, metre, colour, valour, theatre etc. Consult the ***Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary*** for any doubts.

b) Formal and informal words. You should know that though a sentence like "I reside in Guwahati" is grammatically correct, it would be appropriate to say I live in Guwahati. 'Reside' is a formal word.

There are certain idioms which because of their over use, have become rather stale. Avoid expressions which you know are overused and, hence, have lost their sparkle. Expressions like the following seem to be overused :

- At the very outset.....
- The less said the better.....
- Next to nothing.....
- Busy as a bee.....
- It goes without saying.....

One always should go in for plain and lively expressions.

The use of structures also needs a great deal of care. Depending on the context or the situation, it becomes necessary to modify our structures. For example, look at these pairs of sentences.

a) 1. A boy was run over by a speeding car.
   2. A speeding car ran over the boy.

b) 3. The driver was apprehended.
   4. The police apprehended the driver.

In both the pairs all the sentences from 1-4 are grammatically correct. However, in a newspaper report sentences 1 and 3 would be more appropriate than 2 and 4. You should be able to make such distinctions in your writing.

6.3 FEATURES OF GOOD WRITING : COHESION

All good writings have one quality in common– cohesion or unity. A number of disjointed sentences do not form a piece of composition or a 'text'. Remember, a composition is more than a mere assembly of words and sentences. There should be unity among the words and sentences. To achieve unity you must ensure that :

a) The composition deals with a single subject.

b) The composition has a sense of direction.

c) The composition shows that the writer has a clear mind.

d) The ideas are grouped in a logical manner.

e) Each paragraph contributes to strengthening the main idea.

f) The composition is interesting, informative and satisfying.

We shall look at a piece of composition to illustrate the above points:

Read the following Text:

There are three kinds of book owners. The first has all the standard sets and best sellers - unread, untouched. This deluded individual owns woodpulp and ink, not books. The second has a great many books – a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were bought. This person would probably like to make books his own, but is restrained by a false respect for their physical appearance. The third has a few books or many – every one of them dog-eared and dilapidated, shaken and loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled in from front to back. This man owns books.

—Mortimer J Adler : How to Mark a Book

As you read this paragraph you will be immediately struck by the unity of the words and sentences. The text has a single subject matter - kinds of book owners. There is a sense of direction pointing towards the three kinds of book owners.

	non reader
kinds of book owner	false respect for books
	the true reader

The writer has a clear mind — we can see how he has been able to develop his thoughts in a logical manner, how each point contributes towards strengthening the main idea. At the same time, the composition is interesting, informative and satisfying.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

Of all the inanimate objects, of all men's creations, books are the nearest to us, for they contain our very thoughts, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity to truth, and our persistent leaning towards error. But most of all, they resemble us in our precarious hold on life. A bridge constructed according to the rules of the art of bridge-building is certain of a long, honourable and useful career. But a book as good in its way as the bridge may perish obscurely on the very day of its birth. The art of their creators is not sufficient to give them more than a moment of life. Of the books born from the restlessness, the inspiration, and the vanity of human minds, those that the Muses would love best lie more than all others under the menace of an early death. Sometimes their defects will save them. But the best books drawing sustenance from the sympathy and memory of men have lived on the brink of destruction, for men's memories are short, and their sympathy is, we must admit, a very fluctuating, unprincipled emotion.

Now answer the following questions:

a) What is the subject matter of the passage?

.....

b) What argument does the writer give to support his idea that of all inanimate objects, books are nearest to us?

.....

.....

c) How is a bridge certain of a long and useful career?

.....

.....

d) Why is it that the best books have lived on the brink of destruction?

.....

.....



6.4 LET US SUM UP

After reading the unit, you became aware of the varied skills of writing. Certain points are to be considered while writing such as use of vocabulary, awareness of sentence structure and knowledge of grammar. Good writing comprises the following of proper writing formats, cohesion, expression and persuasion. The unit has provided a detailed idea on these aspects which will enable you to develop your basic writing skills.



6.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : a) The subject matter of the passage is the value of books.

b) They contain our thoughts and ambitions, our indignities our illusions, our fidelity to truth and our persistent leaning towards error. Besides, they resemble us in our grasp on life.

c) A bridge is certain of a long and useful career when the bridge is built according to the rules of the art of bridge- building.

d) The best books are those books that have shown sustenance from the sympathy and memory of men. Yet these books had lived on the brink of destruction because man's memory is short and their sympathy is also fluctuating.



6.6 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Rewrite the following sentences using capital letters and punctuation marks where necessary:

1. are you enjoying yourself he asked
2. ever so she replied with a fervent detached tone
3. its one o'clock he said
4. is it she answered it meant nothing to her
5. you know said he peering up at the boss wonderingly they wont let me touch it at home
6. ah thats where we know more than the ladies he cried
7. getting chilly he smiled we might as well start walking down
8. i went to see him said my friend.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 7 : SOME CONCEPTS IN WRITING II

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Coherence

7.4 Punctuation

7.5 Let Us Sum Up

7.6 Answers To Check Your Progress

7.7 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- discuss the importance of coherence
- develop a good idea on the importance of punctuation in writing.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we had discussed some of the important aspects of writing with a special emphasis on the importance of cohesion in writing. In continuation with it, the present unit takes up a description of coherence in writing together with 'punctuation' which is an essential aspect for any form of writing.

7.3 COHERENCE

Coherence refers to a smooth flow of ideas in a piece of composition. There are two significant parts in common expression, that is, words and phrases; but they give the impression that they belong to a whole.

Coherence shows a relationship between the elements and the construction. It shows how the elements are connected. It is related to cohesion but at the same time quite distinct from it. While cohesion is concerned with 'singleness', that is with the main idea, coherence is

concerned with 'relatedness', that is, how the words, the sentences and the paragraphs are connected.

Just as one word in a sentence naturally leads to another, one sentence in a paragraph should lead to another. At each level there are certain linkers that help us to :

- recall the past
- anticipate the future and
- notice how one idea is related to the other.

These linkers can be either (a) overt or (b) covert.

Overt linkers include words like and, but, or, furthermore, moreover, in addition, not only... but also and so on. The conjuncts play a dominant role as overt linkers. For example :

(i) I had asked everybody to attend the function but only two people came.

(ii) He and his mother went for shopping.

Covert linkers include pronominal forms for antecedent noun phrases as in the following :

An old man was living in this house. He recalled that he lived in it for five years.

The 'he' and the 'it' in the second sentence take us back in the previous sentence to 'An old man' and 'the house' respectively. Thereby, the sentences are linked to one another.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. Read the following passage and list the overt and covert linkers :

Be grateful to your parents. The time was when you were cast wholly on their kindness, when you could neither speak nor walk, when you were only a burden and care to them. But did they forsake you? When you were sick, how tenderly did they hang over you. When you were in want of anything how cheerfully did they toil to supply your need. Surely there cannot be a greater monster than

an ungrateful child. Remember first you must place confidence on your parents. Secondly, you should have no secrets which you are unwilling to tell them. Thirdly, if you have done wrong you should confess it and ask for their forgiveness. Finally, if you wish to undertake anything, ask for their consent.

(a) Overt linkers : .....

(b) Covert linkers : .....

7.4 PUNCTUATION

Capitalisation

There are a few hard and fast rules on capitalisation which a good writer has to follow:

(a) A capital letter is used at the beginning of every sentence.

(b) It is at the beginning of every sentence within quotation marks: He said to me, “Can you come tomorrow?”

(c) It is used at the beginning of every line in a poem.

(d) The personal pronoun ‘I’ is always in capital letters.

(e) The first letter of a proper noun and proper adjective is always in capital letters.

(i) I live in Guwahati

(ii) I have a nice Japanese fountain pen.

(f) The first letter of the name of a day / month / religion / festival / special day or occasion is a capital letter: Sunday, November, Hindu, Diwali, Silpi Divas.

(g) The first letter of the word God / Lord is in capital letter. The pronouns He / His / Him/ referring to God are always in capital letters.

(h) The names of books, journals, newspapers, subject and chapter in a book are in capital letters.

The Gita, *The American Review*, *The Times of India*, Physics, Light.

(i) Capital letters are used for the names of schools, colleges, and other institutions, political parties and other parties.

T.C. Govt Girls’ Higher Secondary school, Indian Institute of Technology, Congress Party.

(j) Capital letters are used for titles/degrees/official designation :

Professor Amaresh Dutta M.A, Ph D.

The Principal

Professor Emeritus



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2. Rewrite these sentences using capital letters where necessary:

a) bibi asked her, “what are you wearing angoori”?

.....

b) “an anklet isn’t it pretty?” she replied

.....

c) the assam tribune is published from guwahati

.....

d) we begin classes on monday the 7th january

.....

e) i left for kolkata by the kamrup express that leaves at 6 a.m.

.....

f) the zoo road is one of the most beautiful roads of the city

.....

Punctuation marks:

The following are the chief marks of punctuation :

(a) full stop (.)

(b) comma (,)

(c) semicolon (;)

(d) colon (:)

(e) ellipses (...)

(f) question marks (?)

(g) exclamation marks (!)

(h) quotation marks / inverted commas (“.....”)

(i) apostrophe (’)

(j) hyphen (-)

(a) Full stop

(i) It is used to mark the end of a statement/command/request/ advice etc.

(ii) It is used to separate hour from minute/date from month/year.
6.30, 19.7.2008

(iii) It is not used in acronyms (i.e. a word formed from the first letters of the word that make up the name of something) pronounced as full words or pronounced as a sequence of letters

LASER, NCERT, KKHSOU

(iv) It is not used in abbreviated form with the first and last letters of a word : Dr Mr Mt St

(v) It is not used in abbreviations of weights and measures / directions / abbreviations formed by omitting one or more syllables from a word : kg, NE, lab, Mon

(b) Comma

(i) It is used to separate more than one word of the same class I bought fish, meat and potatoes

(ii) It is used to separate a name from a degree/title/designation
He is Mr. K. K. Phukan, Advocate, Guwahati High Court

(iii) It is used in the vocative case / between noun / pronoun in apposition / question tag
Rina, come here
Rama, the son of Dasaratha, was a pious king.
You are Dipali, aren't you?

(iv) It is used after words or expressions like however, moreover, luckily, fortunately etc.
Fortunately, I was there to help him with money.

(v) It is used to separate clauses
His father, who is a doctor, left for Delhi.

(c) Semi-colon

It is used to separate main clauses in a sentence
He is honest and hardworking; everyone likes him.

(d) Colon

(i) It is used to introduce a list of items, especially after phrases like as follows, the following, for example etc.

(ii) It is used before a phrase / clause that explains or illustrates what is said in the main clause:

There are two types of connectives: covert and overt.

(e) Ellipses

Ellipses are break or interruption in speech and are indicated by three dots / omission of word or phrase from a quotation. He said, "why don't you..."

(f) Question marks

It is used at the end of a direct question, question tag

You smoke, don't you?

(g) Exclamation mark

It is used at the end of an exclamation

How lovely !

(h) Quotation marks / quotes / inverted commas

(i) Quotes are used to enclose all words and punctuation marks in direct speech. The quotes can be either single quotes or double quotes

He said, "I visited London, Manchester and Leeds."

(ii) Single quotes are used within double quotes

The name of the essay is "On Saying Please"

(i) Apostrophe

It is used to indicate possession / contraction

John's book

I'll do it .

(j) Hyphen

Hyphen is used in compounding / between cardinal or ordinal numbers

dining - room, one - third



7.5 LET US SUM UP

This unit has introduced you to several features of good writing like coherence, appropriate use of punctuation marks, and so on. Also, you have been made aware of the ways by which writing can be more organised and at the same time enjoyable to the readers. Thus the unit in continuation with the previous unit provides you with a detailed idea on various important aspects of writing skills.



7.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : a) first, secondly, thirdly, finally.

b) repeated use of 'when', 'surely', pronouns like 'them' and 'their' etc.

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : a) Bibi asked her, "What are you wearing, Angoori?"

b) "An anklet. Isn't it pretty?" she replied.

c) *The Assam Tribune* is published from Guwahati.

d) We begin classes on Monday, the 7th of January.

e) I left for Kolkata by the Kamrup Express that leaves at 6 a.m.

f) The Zoo Road is one of the most beautiful roads in the city.



7.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Discuss the importance of coherence in writing

Q 2: Write a detailed note on punctuation

Q 3: Write a paragraph on

(a) A rainy day

(b) A morning walk

*** ***** ***

UNIT 8 : PRECIS WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Techniques of Faster Reading

8.4 Writing a Good Précis

8.5 Language Work

8.6 Worked out Examples

8.7 Let Us Sum Up

8.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

8.9 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going trough this unit you should be able to:

- locate the key-words and sentences in a piece of text and identify the main points in a passage so as to provide a title to the given passage in your précis
- differentiate the important points of information from the less important ones
- develop techniques by which a passage or an extract can be shortened without affecting the information
- grasp at the central idea of the piece of text
- write out the précis of the passage in about one third of its length by adding a suitable title.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

A précis is a summary or an abstract of a passage, an article, a speech or a book usually within an approximately stated number of words. In writing a précis, we make a shorter version of a passage, usually one-third of its length. The précis contains all the important points in the passage, but leaves out the less important details.

A précis writing exercise is not done merely for its own sake. It is of great practical importance among which the following may be noted :

- It is a great aid to study: a student can prepare précis of notes, write-ups, articles and so on for his/her future reference.
- It is an effective device for recording minutes/proceedings of meetings, preparing reports for further developments etc.

A précis writing exercise is an activity in which several language sub-skills are involved notably, an ability to :

- read a passage silently in a reasonable speed for comprehension of the passage
- skim through the text to locate information of importance
- write a cohesive piece of text by avoiding words and phrases that are superfluous.

In this unit, you will learn that as a general rule the précis is to be one-third of the length of the original passage. This implies two things :

- You should know what the passage is about and
- You must have a fair idea of the exact number of words in the precis.

Regarding the first point, two or three readings of the passage should give you a fair idea of what the passage is about. However, with regard to the number of words in the passage, you may have the tendency to count the words in the passage by running your finger back and forth in the fear of confusing the total number of words. If you have the time and patience, there is no other full-proof totaling of the exact number of words other than counting every word. You know that 'I' and 'a' are also words. This is how you get the correct word count.

If you find the passage too long to count words in the limited examination time, you may like to try an easier method which will give you to an approximate total. You are to count the total number of words in 5 lines of the passage. You divide this by 5 and multiply it by the total number of lines in the passage including incomplete lines. So, if there are 45 words in the first five full lines, and 26 lines in all, the passage counts as 45 × 26/ 5 = 9 × 26 = 234 words. This calculation, you will find, gives you more or less a close total of the number of words in a passage. You now have a total which you divide by 3 to get an approximate length of your answer.

8.3 TECHNIQUES OF FASTER READING

In reducing a passage to one third of its original length and to decide on a title for the passage, it becomes important for you to know what the central idea of the passage is. For this purpose you will have to read the passage more than once. Remember, you do not have all the time in the world to read the passage at a leisurely pace. Therefore, you should develop the skill of faster reading and that too with comprehension.

In order to develop the skill of faster reading, make sure that you do not do the following things while reading a passage silently.

a) Do not run your finger/pen/pencil along the words or the lines. Such a habit slows down reading.

b) While reading silently, do not make head movement as if you are trying to make your nose point to a word. The eye can easily pass through the lines with speed.

c) While reading silently, do not vocalise or make lip movement. This practice slows down reading and affects comprehension.

d) While reading do not make it a point to regress i.e. go back along a line of print to re-read a word or phrase. This is a sign of poor reading habit. Good readers make very few regressions.

Let your eyes pass over the lines with a rapidity.

8.4 WRITING A GOOD PRÉCIS

In order to write a good précis, first of all, read the passage very carefully in order to grasp the meaning of the subject as a whole. That is, in your first reading you should be able to get a gist of the passage in your mind.

After you have received a gist of the passage in your mind, read it a second time, noting some of the specific points you may like to refer to in your writing.

Now, you are ready to make a précis of the passage. At this stage you will have to take note of the following points:

1. You will have to write out your précis in one third of the length of the original passage. If the passage is 300 words, your précis will be in about a 100 words.
2. Select a title for your précis. In fact, your title is a gist of the passage. It should be a clear and concise statement of what the précis is about. A title is an integral part of the précis you are writing.
3. The précis must be written in the form of reported speech/ indirect speech. You should bear in mind that the writer of the précis is a reporter. He simply reports in a concise, easy, continuous form, the summary of what he has read. So, in précis writing always use the rules of reported speech.
4. There is no scope for the writer to give individual opinion on the original passage. Hence, you should avoid comments, criticism or remarks in a précis.

Now, let us take a passage and see how we can shorten it without dropping any important pieces of information contained in the passage.

Read the passage given below twice:

The process of learning may very well be compared to the undertaking of a journey. The learner or the student is the journey-taker or traveler. Just as a traveler has to undergo all the botherations of buying a ticket, booking his luggage, taking care of his things, engaging a car or a cab, and suffering every other item of tedious journey to reach his destination, so a learner too has to manage his learning affairs himself. It is a laborious process and no one else can do the labour for him as no one else can do a journey for another. Just as a traveler may enquire here and enquire there in case of doubt and difficulty, so can a student take help and advice from guides or teachers whenever in difficulty. But the journey is the passenger's own concern — so is learning of the student on the learner.

The passage contains 148 words. You are to write your précis in about 50 words which of course excludes the words you will be using in the title.

We will break the passage into meaningful units and see how we can reduce the length of each chunk.

Read the first sentence once again :

The process of learning may very well be compared to the undertaking of a journey. (15 words)

Let us break up the phrases and re-write them :

The process of learning : The learning process

may very well be compared to : is like

the undertaking of a journey : a journey

The précis of the first line is : The learning process is like a journey (7 words)

We have reduced a sentence of 15 words to one of only 7 words. Do not worry about one-third measurement at this stage. That you will take care of while you are revising your précis in order to prepare a final version of your writing.

Let us come to the second sentence,

The learner or the student is the journey-taker or traveler. (10 words)

What you can do here, you can link it up with the first sentence which will give you something like this:

The learning process is like a journey undertaken by a student. (11 words)

Thus, we have reduced 25 words to just 11 words.

Let us look at the next few lines :

Just as a traveler..... to himself.

We have 51 words here. Now read the précis of the lines :

Like the traveler facing botherations of buying tickets, booking luggage and hiring cabs to reach his destination, the student has to manage his learning himself. (25 words)

Finally let us look at the remaining lines of the passage

It is a laborious process ..... learner.

We have 72 words here. Let us reduce the lines to the form given below:

Again, like a traveler making enquiries, the student seeks guidance from teachers in difficulty.

We have reduced the extract to mere 14 words.

However, there is one more thing that needs to be done : finding a suitable title for the passage. We can perhaps decide on a title like this :

The learning process

Let us now reconstruct the passage into a real précis.

The Learning Process

The learning process is like a journey undertaken by a student. Like the traveler facing botherations of buying tickets, booking luggage and hiring cabs to reach his destination, the student has to manage his learning himself. Again, like a traveler making enquiry, the student seeks guidance from teachers in difficulty.

Original passage : 148 words

Precis : 50 words



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Reduce the following sentences in as few words as you can without affecting the important information.

a) He confessed that he was guilty of the crime.

b) His efforts were crowned with success.

c) My efforts did not meet with the kind of success that I desired.

d) Let me have an idea as to how much this car is going to cost.

e) There is little hope that he will recover.

8.5 LANGUAGE WORK

Although we consider a précis to be a shortened version of a piece of text, we have to note that it also involves using condensed expressions:

This is a life story of Nehru written by himself.

This is Nehru's autobiography.

We shall not give sentences here. Instead, you will use single words to mean the same thing eg.

(a) Life story of a person written by himself or herself

Ans : autobiography

(b) Science of the behavior of heavenly bodies.

Ans : astronomy



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Give single word expressions :

1. a person who lives on plant food

.....

2. a person who takes animal food

.....

3. an animal that lives on herbs

.....

4. an animal that feeds on flesh

.....

5. a person who believes in God

.....

6. a person who does not believe in God

.....

7. science of the development of mankind

.....

8. science of the human body

.....

9. science of the human mind

.....

10. that which can be seen

.....

11. that which can be moved

.....

12. that which cannot be read

.....

13. that which cannot be corrected

.....

14. that which cannot be heard

.....

15. that which is easily breakable

.....

16. through which light can pass

.....

17. through which light cannot pass

.....

18. written life story of a person

.....

19. medicine that kills germs

.....

20. that which can be corrected

.....

8.6 WORKED OUT EXAMPLES

Read the following worked out examples :

Passage-I

Trees give shade for the benefit of others and while they themselves stand in the sun and endure the scorching heat, they produce the fruits by which others profit. The character of good men is like that of trees. What is the use of this perishable body if no use of it is made for the benefit of mankind ? Sandal wood, the more it is peeled and cut up into pieces, the more juice does it produce. The men who are noble at heart do not lose these qualities even in losing their lives. What matters is whether men praise them or not. What difference does it make whether riches abide with them or not. What does it signify whether they die at the moment or whether their lives are prolonged? Life itself is unprofitable to a man who does not live for others. To live for the mere sake of living one's life is to live the life of dogs and cows. Those who lay down their lives for the sake of others will assuredly do well for ever in the world of bliss.

(184 words)

Précis :

Title : Leading a Meaningful Life

Men are like trees. Trees stand in the sun and give shade and fruit. Similarly, a man who is noble, works for the benefit of mankind. Whatever be his life-span or his financial position, he will find his life to be more meaningful when he lives for others. To live for the sake of living is to lead the lives of dogs and cows.

(63 words)

Passage-2 :

Not much attention has been paid till very recently to the menace of ragging sweeping like an epidemic in the campuses of the educational institutions of the country. Even a section of the guardians at first regarded it as mere innocent mirth indulged in by young people. But later events showed that they were sadly mistaken. It is gratifying to note that the authorities and the thinking public have at last woken up to the danger posed by this 'innocent mirth'. For the last few years the menace of ragging in educational institutions has been assuming alarming dimensions and the Government, educationists and guardians became worried and started thinking 'whither education?' In many institutions the new-comers are subjected to unimaginable torture and humiliation. The evil effects of this savage practice can be judged from the fact that ragging has driven some to suicide and the careers of many brilliant students were cut short. The suicide of an engineering student two years ago so shocked the then President Sri Sanjiva Reddy, that he asked the Government to stop this menace.

(179 words)

Précis :

Title : The Menace of Ragging

Till recently, ragging in educational institutions was not taken seriously. It was regarded to be an innocent mirth of youngsters. But later events have woken up educationists and guardians to the dangers of ragging. In many institutions, new comers are tortured and humiliated. As ragging had led to the suicide of many brilliant students, President Sanjiva

Reddy had asked the Government to stop the menace.

(63 words)

Passage-3

What is it that makes a good school? It must have good teachers, but they do not make the school. You have to learn things in order to train your brains; but that is only a part of education. What distinguishes a good school is what is commonly called its tone; and that is nothing more or less than the mass consciousness of the boys. It is boys who make or mar a school. It is not merely a question of the observance of rules or obedience to orders. It is a subconscious feeling of self-respect among the boys themselves. Certain things are recognised as what we call 'bad form', unworthy of the boys themselves or of their school, and this crystallises into tradition which it requires a great deal of audacity to break. If this feeling of self-respect among the boys is on the right lines, the tone of the school is good, and you will find in later life that you will never lose the feeling of pride in your school and its tone.

(176 words)

Précis :

Title : A Good School

Besides having good teachers, a good school is distinguished by its tone that is set by the mass consciousness of the pupils. Indeed, pupils can make or mar a school. More than observance of rules or obedience to orders, there is the need for self-respect among the pupils for a school to be good. Thus, a tradition is built up.

(59 words)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Read the passage given below followed by the précis. The title is not given. Give an appropriate title to the précis.

In every country people imagine that they are the best and the cleverest and the others are not so good as they are. The Englishman thinks that he and his country are the best; the Frenchman is very

proud of France and everything French. The Germans and Italians think no less of their countries and many Indians imagine that India is in many ways the greatest country in the world. This is wrong. Everybody wants to think well of himself and his country. But really there is no person who has not got some good and some bad qualities. In the same way, there is no country which is not partly good and partly bad. We must take the good wherever we find it and try to remove the bad wherever it may be. We are, of course most concerned with our own country, India. Unhappily, it is in a bad way today. Most of our people are poor and unhappy. They have no joy in their lives. We have to find out how we can make them happier. We have to see what is good in our ways and customs and try to keep it, and whatever is bad we have to throw away. If we find anything good in other countries, we should certainly take it. (218 words)

Q 4: Read the following passage and the précis that follows. Provide a title to the passage.

Conversation is a fine art. It is the art of exchanging thoughts. It is an art which even the least gifted of us can cultivate. Not everybody can paint or play music, but almost every one can talk. Conversation, therefore, is that art which affords the greatest pleasure to the greatest number.

Conversation is indeed the most easily teachable of all the arts. All you need to do in order to become a good conversationalist is to find a subject that interests you and your listeners. There are, for example, numberless hobbies to talk about. But the important thing is that you must talk about the other fellow's hobby rather than your own.

It is just as important to know what subjects to avoid as what subjects to select for good conversation. If you don't want to be regarded as a bore, be careful to avoid certain unpleasant topics. Avoid talking about yourself, unless you are asked to do so. People are interested in their problems, not in yours. Sickness or death

bore everybody. The only one who willingly listens to such talk is the doctor, but he gets paid for it. (191 words)



8.7 LET US SUM UP

As you finish reading the unit, you will be able to point out the basic idea of writing a précis. Precis writing involves developing certain techniques by which any given text or passage can be summarised. You are now aware of the length of a precis which should not exceed one third of the given passage. Also, several techniques have been discussed that will enable you to develop faster reading skill. Lastly, you have learnt that the language while writing a precis should be in the form of reported speech and should avoid comments, criticism or remarks.



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : a) He confessed his guilt.

b) His efforts were successful.

c) My efforts were not successful as desired.

d) Tell me the cost of the car.

e) There is little hope for his recovery.

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : 1. vegetarian 2. non-vegetarian 3. herbivore

4. carnivore	5. theist	6. atheist
7. anthropology	8.physiology	9. psychology
10. visible	11. mobile	12. illegible
13. incorrigible	14. inaudible	15. brittle
16.transparent	17. opaque	18. biography
19.germicide	20. corrigible	

Ans. to Q. No. 3 : **Title :** Taking the Best from Others.

Précis :

People in every country, whether English or French, German or Italian

or Indian think that their country is the best and the greatest. This is a wrong notion because like individuals, every country has some good and bad qualities. We must take the good from others. Our country is poor and its people have no joy in their lives. By taking the best from other countries, we can help to make the country happier and better. (79 words)

Ans. to Q. No. 4 : Title: The Art of Conversation

Précis :

Conversation is the art of exchanging thoughts. It can be cultivated even by the least gifted and it provides great pleasure. Unlike painting or music, conversation is easily teachable. To be a good conversationalist, we need an interesting subject like other people's hobbies. We must know what subject to select, avoiding unpleasant topics like talking about ourselves or our problems which interest the doctor only. (64 words)



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Give the précis of the following passages :

Q 1: Now a days many an educated youth of the middle class in our country is out of unemployment for want of service. The principal reason for this employment problem is the fact that the number of educated men is gradually increasing and yet all the educated men hanker after service. Many again, bearing some prejudice are unwilling to do such deeds. But what is more humiliating than idles? In fact, if this false idea of social labour is not rejected and a conviction of the dignity of labour is not established, there can be no solution of the unemployment problem. There is indeed no humiliation in any work whatsoever. Humiliation lies in idleness and hanging on others.

Q 2: Among the manifold misfortunes that may befall humanity, the loss of health is one of the severest. All the joys that life can give cannot outweigh the suffering of the sick. Give the sick man everything and leave him his sufferings, and he will feel that half the world is lost to him. Lay him on a soft silken couch, he will nevertheless grow sleepless

under the pressure of his sufferings, while the miserable beggar, blessed with health, sleeps sweetly on the hard ground. Spread his table with dainty dishes and choice drinks and he will thrust back the hand that proffers them and envy the poor man who thoroughly enjoys his hard crust. Surround him with the pomp of kings; let his chair be a throne, and his crutch a world-swaying scepter; he will look with contemptuous eyes on marble and gold, and would deem himself happy if he could enjoy, even were it under a thatched roof, the health of the meanest of his servants.

Q 3: Long ago, when men were only just beginning to be human they lived almost like the animals. For shelter they used forests and caves in the rocks. For defence against enemies, they had only their hands and their teeth. For food they gathered fruit and caught what animals and fish they could. The body of a man differs from animals' bodies in many ways. He has a better brain and he has hands. Thanks to his better brain, be can think. Some animals can think a little, but man's power of thought is very much greater than theirs. Again, some animals have paws which are something like hands, but the human hand is very much more useful than any paw. If you look at your hand, you will notice that the thumb can touch each of the fingers. Your hand is so made that you can hold things well and do many things with it. And, of course hands were the first tools men had. So, using brains and hands, men slowly learned to build shelters of stone or wood or earth, to make simple tools and weapons, and to grow food for their own use. But remember that the very first tools that they had were their hands. We still use hands as tools in many ways. For example, the potters still shapes the clay by hand. For many kinds of work, however, hands are not very good. You cannot shape a piece of wood with your hands alone. So, because men were able to think, they made tools to help their hands.

Give one word for each of the following :

1. an assembly of hearers
2. an assembly of people in a prayer meeting

3. the pen name of a person
4. that which cannot be repaired
5. one who looks at the dark side of things
6. one who looks at the bright side of things
7. a man whose wife is dead
8. a woman whose husband is dead
9. science of the earth's surface and atmosphere
10. a government by a few
11. a person who files a civil suit
12. that which cannot be described.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 9 : REPORT WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Language and Style of Reporting

9.4 Headlines

9.5 Writing a Report

9.6 Let Us Sum Up

9.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

9.8 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to :

- write a report on an event or an experience
- become familiar with the style of reporting
- frame appropriate headlines for a report.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

A report is an account of an event or an experience. Reports are of several kinds: newspaper reports, scientific reports or business reports. In this unit, we shall consider newspaper reports. The following are the main characteristics of a report.

1. A report is brief and complete.
2. It is usually written in the third person.
3. It is impersonal in tone. In other words, there are no emotions in the language of reporting.
4. The ideas must be logically developed so that there is no confusion for the reader to understand what is being written.
5. It includes only the relevant points leaving out what is considered to be of less relevance or of less significance.

9.3 LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF REPORTING

Writing reports for newspapers comes under the broad category of what is known as journalistic writing. What is the characteristic feature of this type of writing? Here are a few of them.

1) **Concise style :** The style of reporting is characterised by its concise presentation. The concise form was born of necessity. Newspapers must tell many stories on any given day in a limited space. Hence, there is the need to restrain the use of language by providing a great deal of information in a few words.

2) **Short paragraphs:** Each paragraph in a piece of text is a unit of information. The readers like to get their information in a hurry and do not want to wade through something that looks too long.

3) **Getting to the point in a moment:** Traditionally, this has been done in the first sentence or the first one or two paragraphs known as the lead. There is no time for an elaborate readiness to get to a point in a report.

4) **Using action words:** Active verbs add more interest to an account. It would be better to say that the injured were rushed to the GMCH rather than saying that they were quickly taken away.

5) **Selecting details:** While collecting the information on a particular event, it is possible to come across piles of information. It is important for the writer to be selective; selecting the most significant and interesting details and presenting them in a way that will immediately arrest the reader's attention.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Read the following lines which do not appear to be suitable for reporting as the style is not compact. Rewrite the lines in a compact style in the space provided below :

On Wednesday evening militants launched a grenade attack at Bordumsa market in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district. In that

attack one person was killed and 12 others were seriously injured.

_____

_____

_____

(TO 1-29/11)

While presenting a news report you must note the five W's : what, where, when, why and who. Note this sentence :

One person was killed and 12 others were seriously injured (what/what happened)

at Bordumsa market in Arunachal Pradeshi's Changlang district (where)

on Wednesday evening (when)

when militants (who)

launched a grenade attack (why)

The sequence of the W's given above may be altered to suit your style of presentation. While writing your report, you may note a very important point of style. You must make sure that you are not vague. Where does vagueness creep in? It does so in statements like the following.

A large number of people were injured in a grenade attack by militants....

How much exactly is "a large number of people"? Such expressions are vague. We can say

Ten persons were injured in a grenade attack by militants.

Look at another example :

A militant lobbed a grenade in the market at around 5.30 pm.

What's wrong here? The statement is terribly vague. One would be tempted to ask.

'From where did the person get the information ?' It would be better to write :

According to police sources, a militant lobbed a grenade in the market at around 5.30 pm.

This makes the statement official. We are not convinced about the source of the information These are the things that you must look for.

9.4 HEADLINES

The headline is an important part of a news story. The headline is different from the title of a story. Let us look at the content page of a collection of short stories and note the titles:

(1) The Necklace

(2) A Piece of String

(3) A Vagabond

(4) A Bad Error

(5) A Way to Wealth

(6) A Wedding Night

They are titles from Maupassant's selected stories. By reading these titles we can hardly state what each story is about. But, this is not the case with a news headline. Look at these headlines. They do tell us what each news story is about.

(1) Adivasis attack police station in Sonitpur.

(2) 1 Killed, 12 hurt in grenade attack

(3) Workshop on painting held

What constitutes a satisfactory headline ? We can say a headline is satisfactory when :

1. The headline tells a story
2. It fits the story given
3. It conforms to the paper's standard

A newspaper may be judged accurately by its headlines. If its aim is to amuse and shock its readers first before giving the information, the headlines will be full of shocks and thrills. When a balanced news point of view is the idea, the headlines also will attempt to give the picture in focus.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Read the following news story and supply the headline in the space provided.

Guwahati, Sept. 30 : Two persons were killed and several others seriously injured when a powerful bomb exploded just near the

Hatigaon Police Station at 7 p.m. today. According to police sources the bomb was placed in a travel bag in a scooter which was presumably abandoned by the side of the road near the Police Station. According to an eye-witness, the scooter was parked by a youth who had crossed the street to the paan shop round the corner when the blast ripped off his scooter killing two persons and injuring several others. It was suspected that the bomb was being carried to the railway station, seven kilometres away.

On getting the news, senior civil and police officials rushed to the spot of the bomb blast. The injured were promptly rushed to the Guwahati Medical College Hospital. The deceased have been identified as Imtiaz Ali (34) and Badar Ahmed (32) of Hatigaon area. A vigorous search for the young man riding the scooter is on. A red alert is sounded. However, no arrests have been made till the filing of the report.

Headline : .....

9.5 WRITING A REPORT

A few model reports are given below. Read them carefully:

1. Suppose you are attending a workshop on painting. About 50 prominent artists are participating in it. The place is at Geetamandir, Guwahati-20. Write a report of the workshop for the cultural page of a daily paper.

Workshop on Painting Held

Guwahati, 25 December : A workshop on painting organised by Guwahati Artists' Guild was held at the Geetamandir premises today. About 50 school-children drawn from different schools of the city participated in the workshop.

Inaugurating the workshop, noted artist Sri Sobha Brahma dwelt at length on the rich tradition of Indian painting and urged upon the participants to take painting with a seriousness. Noted artist Sri Nani Borpujari and Sri Harakanta Deka worked as resource persons in the workshop.

The workshop dwelt upon different types of art and painting, notably

landscape painting, portrait painting and abstract painting through the medium of water colours, oils and pencils. The participants thoroughly enjoyed the workshop. They observed that such workshops should be regular features for the benefit of students.

2. A devastating cyclone lashes Dhubri district affecting Dhubri. Write a report highlighting the causes, nature and damages brought about in the disaster.

Devastating Cyclone lashes Dhubri

Dhubri, 3 July : A devastating cyclone lashed Dhubri and its adjoining areas at about 8.30 in the evening today causing massive destruction of houses and resulting in the death of two women and a child. As the cyclone accompanied with heavy downpour of rain lashed the town, the entire area was plunged in darkness due to the disruption of power-supply. Rain water submerged several parts of the town creating panic among the local people.

It has been ascertained that a depression in the Bay of Bengal has been the cause of this severe cyclonic storm and rain. The civil administration has been put on red-alert to cope with the situation. It has been estimated that the total damage caused in Dhubri amounted to more than a crore of rupees. The police and the District Administration have been rendering all possible help to the cyclone affected victims.

3. You have been made aware of the problem of drinking water scarcity in your city. Write a report bringing out the causes and what the people have proposed to do.

Narikalbari : Hit by Water Scarcity

Guwahati, 2 December : Acute shortage of drinking water for the past several months has been reported at Narikalbari area, east of Guwahati. According to the residents of the area, the recent construction of a number of high-rise flats resulting in the rapid growth of population has badly affected the region. It is reported that the construction of deep tubewells in the flats has affected the ground-water level resulting in the drying up of most wells.

The urban water supply scheme that has covered the area has proved to be absolutely inadequate because of its irregular supply and that too for a very brief period of time. Representations to the municipal authorities

are yet to bear positive results as observed by the residents of the area. The Government has been urged to look into the problem.

4. Write a report on a road accident in which one dies and one sustains injuries and the role of the police.

One Dies in Street Accident

Guwahati, 2 December: One person died and another seriously injured when the rickshaw in which they were travelling from Hatigarh Chariali, in Guwahati towards Rajgarh road collided with a taxi coming from Chandmari towards Rajgarh at the 'T' junction of Apurba Path at 10 a.m. today. According to eye-witnesses, the taxi swerved towards the Apurba path at a great speed and in the process collided against the rickshaw killing one of the passengers and injuring the other.

Soon after the accident, a crowd of people assembled at the place raising a hue and cry trying to intercept the driver of the taxi who immediately ran away. The police arrived presently and the situation was brought under control. The deceased was identified as Abdul Ali (32) of Bamunimaidam Railway Colony. The injured Abbas Ali (28) was immediately rushed to GMC Hospital in a critical condition. The driver was arrested by the Chandmari Police near the Chandmari rail gate.



9.6 LET US SUM UP

By now, you must have learnt that a report is an account of an event or an experience. There are different kinds of reports that we have already discussed in the unit. Since reports are usually short and brief, it involves the use of short paragraphs, concise style, using action words, etc. After reading this unit, you have been acquainted with the importance of a headline in report writing. As headlines capture the essence of a news story, it should be written in a crisp form and should conform to the standard of reputed daily newspaper. Now, you are aware of the fact that only the relevant points are to be considered while writing a report that highlights the selection and presentation of significant information in an interesting way.



9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : One person was killed and twelve others were seriously injured when militants launched a grenade attack on Wednesday evening at Bordumsa market in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district.

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : Two killed and several injured in bomb explosion.



9.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Write a report on a bus or a train accident specifying the date, time and place of the occurrence, how it had occurred and what steps have been taken for the accident victims.

Q 2: Write a report on traffic jam in your city/town and the inconvenience it has caused to the general public.

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UNIT 10 : WRITING FORMAL LETTERS & FIR WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 The Structure of Formal Letters

- 10.3.1 The Structure of a D.O. Letter
- 10.3.2 A Sample of a Formal Letter
- 10.3.3 Letters about Jobs
- 10.3.4 Application for Jobs
- 10.3.5 Joining Letters

10.4 A Format of FIR

10.5 Let Us Sum Up

10.6 Answers To Check Your Progress

10.7 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going this unit, you will be able to:

- write different kinds of formal letters, applications for jobs and joining letters for different communicative purposes
- grasp the importance of F.I.R. writing in day-to-day life
- learn the proper format in which an F.I.R. is filed at a Police Station
- analyse what and how the information is to be presented in an F.I.R.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit shall provide the learner with a detailed idea on various types of formal letters. Let us think of some of the purposes for which we write letters:

- to inform someone about something
- to invite someone
- to enquire about something

- to complain to somebody about something
- to congratulate someone on some achievement
- to express sympathy to somebody
- to express feelings about something to somebody

The list can be made longer. You can think of many more purposes for writing letters. Every letter has a writer, a reader and a situation. Depending on the situation, we can think of two types of letters: **Formal letters and Informal letters**. Informal letters are also called **personal letters**. The term "formal letters" is used here to distinguish the letters that are exchanged among relatives and friends from those letters that are written on official, business or other purposes that are not strictly personal.

This distinction between personal letter and formal letter makes it clear that while writing a personal letter we have the freedom to use an informal style or, at the most, a semi-formal style. This will however, depend upon the relationship between the persons exchanging letters. But in a formal letter, you have to restrain your use of language. Imagine you are writing a letter to the Mayor of your city drawing his/her attention to the poor condition of a road in your locality and making requests to take appropriate steps to repair it. This is an example of a formal letter. Here, you will use a formal style of presentation as you will see from the sample of the letter given later in this unit.

What kinds of letters are called formal letters? The answer is any letters that you write to persons other than the members of your family or close circle of friends on some official or business purpose are formal letters. Here are some examples of formal letters.

- Letter to a firm enquiring about a particular issue of importance to him.
- Letter to an official on some official purpose.
- Letter of request/ complaint etc. to some officials in authority.
- Letter to business firms placing orders/cancelling orders etc.

Remember that a formal letter has to adopt the form that is appropriate for such communication. There are three important points that you must bear in mind while writing a letter.

(a) Try to be precise and stick to the point. State clearly what you want to say.

(b) Most formal letters are restricted to one or two main points. Most of them do not exceed one page of type written text.

(c) Avoid unnecessary details in a formal letter.

Also, you will be acquainted with the manner in which an FIR may be filed at a Police Station. As law abiding citizens when anything that is unlawful takes place before our eyes, it is our civic duty to file an FIR (First Information Report) to the local police station to enable the police to take steps on the matter. Both these writing skills are required in our day-to-day lives. All of us write letters for various purposes.

10.3 THE STRUCTURE OF FORMAL LETTERS

In the above subsection, we discussed the structure of personal letter. We noted that the personal letter is structured in terms of the following:

- Heading
- Salutation
- Body of the letter
- Complementary close
- Subscription
- Address

The above terminology also finds place in the format of a formal letter. However, the placement may have slight variation as given in the following description.

HEADING

ADDRESS

DATE

SUBJECT

SALUTATION

BODY OF THE LETTER

SUBSCRIPTION

Let us note the difference in presentation of the information in a formal letter.

(1) **Heading:** The heading of a formal letter is the name and complete address of the writer:

From: Miss Tanya Dutta
35, Karbi Path
Hatigarh West
Guwahati-781021

Note that the name of the sender is clearly given at the top. This is followed by the complete address. It could be your official address or your home address.

(2) **Address:** The address refers to the designation and postal address of the person to whom the letter has been sent

To: The Manager
Oxford University Press,
Y.M.C.A. Library Building
Jai Singh Road
New Delhi-110001

Note that the name of the addressed person is generally not given. Instead, the designation of the person along with the complete address is given in an official letter.

(3) **Date:** There is a format of providing the date in a formal letter. The place where the letter is written is also mentioned in the date.

Dated, Guwahati, the 23rd November' 2014.

The word 'Dated' is written at the beginning. Note the use of the commas in the line.

(4) **Subject:** The formal letter is written with the focus on a particular subject. The subject is given in as few words as possible.

Sub: Enquiring of books

The word subject is clipped and is written as sub:

(5) **Reference:** Formal letters often indicate the reference that prompts the requirement of such a format. It could be a reference to a letter that the author had received earlier and to indicate that the following letter is written in response to that letter as

Ref: Your letter dated 15th November' 07

Often, the official letters contain a Memo No which is also quoted along with the date. For example,

Ref: Your letter No KKHSOU /Estt/01/07/327 dtd 25th January, 08.

These initials and numbers refer to the name of the organisation, the Branch/the File No/the year when the file was opened/ the serial number of the letter in the concerned Branch.

(6) **Salutation:** Formal letters have a very limited choice of salutation. Those that are purely official letters will use only Sir/ Madam. It is customary to write the salutation in this way because we are not sure whether the person concerned is a man or a woman.

There is another variety of formal letter known as **Demi-Official** letter or **D.O. letter** which is exchanged among business associates or among persons who do not share official relationship as such. The salutation in a D.O. letter is generally

Dear Sir/Dear Madam,

A format of D.O. letter will also be given below.

(7) **The Body of the letter:** The Body of the letter begins with an opening line. It may interest you to know that in spite of efforts to bring about plainness written language, formal letters have remained very conventional as these opening lines indicate.

- I have the honour to state that
- I am to state that
- I am directed to state that
- I beg to state that

There are other choices too as you will see from the examples that follow

(8) **Complimentary close and subscription:** It is all right to conclude a letter with 'With thanks'. But it is important to use one of the following two expressions

(a) Yours faithfully,

(b) Yours sincerely,

before signing your name. As a general case when you begin a letter with 'Dear Sir', you conclude with 'yours sincerely'

Dear Sir,

.....

.....

.....

Yours sincerely

(M. Baruah)

You can write 'yours truly' also in such letters.

However, when you begin your letter with 'Sir', you write 'Yours faithfully'.

Sir,

.....

.....

.....

Yours faithfully,

(P. K. Das)

10.3.1 The Structure of a D.O. Letter

A Demi-Official letter exchanged between colleagues takes a different structure as shown below. These letters are generally written in printed letter pads having letter heads in which the name of the sender is already printed on the top left side and the telephone numbers/ Fax numbers etc. with the date on the top right hand corner.

B. K. Barooah IAS

Narikalbari Ph : 2412590 (R)

Guwahati-24

Date …….....

Ref. …….....

Salutation

Body of the letter

Complimentary close

Subscription

Name and

Address of the receiver

(1) Salutation

In a DO letter, it is customary to use the surname of the person to whom the letter is written

Dear Professor Gohain,

Dear Dr. Borgohain,

(2) Body of the letter

The language of a DO letter is less formal than that of an official letter.

(3) Complimentary close

The complimentary close of a D.O. letter generally takes on a personal note. The author is free to make use of expressions like

- With thanks
- With warmest regards

(4) Subscription

The subscription of a DO letter generally takes on the expression "Yours sincerely" after which the letter is signed

Yours sincerely

Sd/-

(D. K. Baruah)

(5) Address of the receiver

The address of the receiver is given at the bottom left hand side of the letter. The name of the person is also to be given with appropriate titles as the case may be.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Here is a letter to the Minister of P.W.D. inviting his attention to the poor condition of your road and requesting him to take appropriate steps for its repair. Read the letter carefully. You will note that the paragraphs of the body of the letter are not in proper sequence. On a separate sheet of paper rewrite the letter correctly in proper sequence.

To : The Hon'ble Ministers of P.W.D

Government of Assam

Dispur, Guwahati -6

Dated, Guwahati, the 30th November 23

Sub : Poor condition of Narikalbari 1st Lane, Geetanagar, Guwahati-24

Sir,

Besides as there are no street lights in this Lane, the road has become very convenient for anti-social elements. Recently two residents of House No.12 and 8 had become the victims of such anti-social elements when their gates were broken and two motor bikes were stolen.

I may state that as there are no drains on either sides of the road, even a small shower floods the road. The road gets filled with slush making it extremely difficult for pedestrians to walk on it.

In view of these problems, I would like to kindly request you to use your good office and instruct the Public Works Department under your kind disposal to take steps to renovate the road for the convenience of the people residing in this area.

I, on behalf of the residents of Narikalbari 1st Lane at Geetanagar, Guwahati-24, have the honour to draw your kind attention to the deplorable condition of the 1st Lane of Narikalbari.

Yours faithfully,

(R. Borthakur)

East Inn,

Narikalbari 1st Lane,

Guwahati-24

10.3.2 A Sample of a Formal Letter

Let us now look at a business letter. Note that a business letter is also a formal letter. Here is a letter to a leading publisher enquiring the availability of two books and requesting him to send the two books by VPP to your address. Look at it carefully and study the notes that go with it .

From : Miss Manjuri Hazarika
36, Karbi Path
Hatigarah West
Guwahati-21

To : The Manager
Oxford University Press
YMCA Library Building
Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001

Dated, Guwahati, the 28th November'07

Sub : Enquiry of books

Dear Sir,

I am to inform you that I urgently require the following two books for my work but they are not available in our city.

1. *Whispering Reeds: An Anthology of English Poetry*
   (ISBN - 019560659 - 0)
2. *On the Threshold: An Anthology of English Prose*
   (ISBN - 019560673-6)

I shall be grateful if you could send these two books by VPP to my above address. If you have problem in sending these books by VPP, please let me know the price of these two books so that I can send a draft in advance drawn in your favour.

Yours sincerely
Sd/-
(Manjuri Hazarika)

Notes :

1. Your personal address with your name should go at the top left hand corner.
2. The address of the company along with the designation of the official should go immediately after your address.
3. The date will follow after the address of the company.
4. The subject of the letter must be given on the top of the salutation and the body of the letter. If there is a reference number, that must also be given after the subject.

5. Women who do not have professional title i.e. Prof., Dr. or a service rank, use Ms. (for both married and unmarried women). If the woman has expressed a preference for Miss or Mrs, in that case honour her preference.
6. The name of the book is underlined .The name of an article is given in inverted commas.

10.3.3 Letters about Jobs

Writing job applications is a very important activity for every educated young man and woman. After completing your course of studies, you first prepare yourself for the professional world by writing a job application. You will certainly want your job application to be free from error and written in such a way that your prospective employee is impressed. Here, we shall look at two formats of writing job applications besides writing joining letters.

When you apply for a post, you often use the following types of formats.

(a) You fill up a 'standard form' that provides all the details about your name, your home, date of birth, address, your qualifications and experiences and so on. This information is called curriculum vitae or CV for short. You also write a standard covering letter which is known as the letter of application. The two are inseparable. The CV is invariably enclosed with the letter of application.

(b) You write an application in which all your details are also provided. It is a one page letter providing all the details about you to support your candidature for the post.

Whatever format you use, your application must be able to achieve the following things:

- it should present a favourable opinion about you
- convince the prospective employees that you are suitable or eligible for the post and
- call you for an interview.

Note that a job application is a formal piece of writing and that you should present your ideas by following a conventional format and style.

Here is a sample of a letter written in response to the advertisement given in the box below :

Urgently require 20 Nos. of smart boys/ girls for Promotional/ Administrative and Marketing Officer below 29 years. Qualification: 10+2/Degree. Apply within seven Days to the General Manager Leo Toys, 2nd Floor, Jyoti Complex, Ulubari, Guwahati.

From : Sri Pratap Ghosh,
Flat No B-2
Glory Apartments
Christan Basti
Guwahati-5

To : The General Manager,
Leo Toys,
2nd Floor, Jyoti Complex
Ulubari, Guwahati-9

Sub : Vacancy for the post of Marketing Officer

Ref : Your advertisement in the Assam Tribune dated 1st Dec'07

Sir,

In response to your advertisement inviting applications for filling up 20 vacancies for the posts of Promotional Officer, Administrative Officer and Marketing Officer, I have the honour to offer my candidature for the post of Marketing Officer of your Company.

My particulars are enclosed herewith in the Standard Form of Application for favour of your kind action.

With thanks.

Yours faithfully
(Pratap Ghosh)
Glory Apartments
Christian Basti
Guwahati-5

Standard Form of Application

The : General Manager,
Leo Toys,
2nd Floor, Jyoti Complex
Ulubari, Guwahati-9

Name of the post : Marketing Officer

Department/Office : Leo Toys.

1. Name in full (Block letter) : PRATAP GHOSH
2. Present Address : B-2.Glory Apartments
   Christian Basti,Guwahati-5
3. Father's Name and Address : Mr. Prabin Kr. Ghosh
   B-2.Glory Apartments,
   Christian Basti, Guwahati-5
4. Place of birth : Amguri, District Sivasagar
   (including Police Police Station : Amguri Station and District)
5. Are you a citizen of India : Yes, by birth.
   and if so how?
   (Copy of citizenship certificate
   should be enclosed where necessary)
6. Educational qualification and also the full address of the educational institution in which read last (copies of certificate should be enclosed)
   1. HSLC 2000 Gopal Boro HSS School, Guwhati-6
   2. HS(Arts)2002 Dispur College, Dispur, Guwhati-6
   (Certificates from SEBA and AHSEC enclosed)
7. Other qualification : Diploma in Computer Application,
   CEC, Silpukhuri, Guwahati.
8. Community : Ahom
   (a) State your religion : Hindu
   (b) Are you a member
   of SC/ST : No
9. Age on the 1st January 2008 : 21 years 10 months

(According to HSLC certificate, copy of which is enclosed)

10. Present occupation if any : Nil
11. Previous appointment held if any : Nil
12. Are you trained in or a member of
    NCC or TA or HG or Civil Defense : Nil

I am a candidate for the post of Marketing Officer and the information given above is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Pratap Ghosh

Note :

The format of the standard form of Application is available in the Assam Gazette which gives some more details about Treasury challan and a few other particulars which have been omitted above as the advertisement does not mention any other requirements.

10.3.4 Application for Jobs

In this section, we shall be looking at few other formats of job application. Here is another advertisement.

Students! Earn your pocket money during the holidays.
Door-to-door consumer survey and canvassing for
fast-moving cosmetic items.

Write a letter of application in reply to the advertisement.

To : The Manager
AVON
Christian Basti
G. S. Road,
Guwahati-781005

Dated, Guwahati, the 3rd December'07

Sub : Consumer Survey and Canvassing

Ref : Your advertisement in *The Assam Tribune*, dtd., 29th Nov.' 07

Madam,

In inviting a reference to your advertisement in *The Assam Tribune* dated 29th November' 07, I have the honour to inform you that presently I am pursuing my studies at the K.K.Handiqui State Open

University. Since there is no regular classroom instruction here, most of my studies take place at home.

In view of the above, I would like to engage myself as a consumer surveyor and canvasser for cosmetic items produced by your esteemed company. My bio-data is enclosed herewith for favour of your kind perusal and sympathetic consideration.

With thanks,

Yours faithfully,
Tina Borborah
8 Sonali Path
Guwahati-3

We shall look at another model now which is generally used by a large number of applicants for jobs. In this model, the entire information is given in a single page without any enclosures expect of course, the testimonials which a candidate is required to provide in any case. This is the model which most of you would like to use in your applications for jobs.

Here is a letter of application to the Director of Elementary Education, seeking employment as a teacher in a primary school. Read the letter carefully and note the format of the letter.

To : The Director of Elementary Education,
Govt of Assam,
Kahilipara, Guwahati -19
Dated, Guwahati, the 3rd December' 07

Sub : Employment as a teacher in a primary school.

Ref : Your advertisement in The Assam Tribune, dtd. 28th Nov. '07

Sir,

In response to your advertisement inviting applications for filling up a few posts of primary school teachers lying vacant under your kind disposal, I would like to apply as a candidate for the same. Necessary particulars in support of my candidature are furnished below for favour of your kind perusal and consideration:

Name : MISS MAMONI KAKOTY

Father's Name : Sri Jadav Kakoty

Age : 20 years

Home Address : C/O Sri Jadav Kakoty
Karbi Path, Guwahati-21

Present address : Same as above

Caste : General

Educational Qualifications :

(a) HSLC Exam in 2005 in 1st Division with 75% marks

(b) HS Arts in 2007 in first Division with letter marks in History and Economics.

Other Qualifications : Completed the Montessori Teacher Training Course offered by Career Guidance Institute, Guwahati-3

Under these circumstances, may I request you to consider my candidature for the post of primary school teacher and oblige.

Yours faithfully
Mamoni Kakoty
Karbi Path
Guwahati-21

10.3.5 Joining Letters

A joining letter is another kind of formal letter that a person who is appointed to a post has to write on the first day of his/her visit to the office. Here is a copy of an appointment letter which a person has received.

Office of the District Elementary Education Officer
Kamrup District Circle
Guwahati-19

ORDER

In pursuance to the recommendation of the Selection Committee for appointment of teachers, Miss Mamoni Kakoty is hereby appointed Assistant Teacher in Bamunimaidan Rly. Colony

LP School, on a consolidated pay of Rs.3,000.00 (Three thousand per month). The job is purely temporary and is terminable without notice.

Sd/-
EEO, Kamrup
Guwahati-19

Memo No DEEO/KDC/1/2007/3,725 Dated 23rd Dec, 07

Copy to :

1. Director of Elementary Education, Kahilipara, Guwhati-19
2. D I of Schools, Chandmari, Guwahati-3
3. Headmaster, Bamunimaidan Rly. Colony LP School, Guwahati-21 for necessary action
4. Person concerned- She is asked to join within 15 days time
5. Guard File

Sd/-
DEEO, Kamrup
Guwahati-19

The person on receipt of the letter drafts the following joining letter :

From : Miss Mamoni Kakoty
Karbi Path
Guwahati-21

To : The Headmaster
Bamunimaidan Rly. Colony L.P. School,
Guwahati-21

Sub : Joining my duties as Asstt. Teacher.

Ref : DEEO's Order No DEEO/KDC/1/2007/3,725 dtd 23rd Dec.'07

Sir,

In inviting a reference to the order on the subject cited above, I have the honour to inform you that I have joined my duties as an Assistant Teacher in this school today, the 3rd January' 08 forenoon.

With thanks,

Yours faithfully
Mamoni Kakoty
Guwahati-21

Copy to : District Elementary Education Officer,
Kamrup District Circle- for information

Mamoni Kakoty
Guwahati-21

10.4 A FORMAT OF FIR

In this section, we will be looking at the details of F.I.R. writing. The full form of the abbreviation F.I.R. is First Information Report which is filed in a Police Station in order to lodge a complaint or report any untoward incident. It is necessary to learn the proper format of F.I.R. writing as it is of utmost importance in case of unforeseen events in our day-to-day lives.

Let us suppose, you have a scooter. It is a Bajaj Scooter of 2004 model, blue in colour. You had parked your scooter in front of your local market and after returning from the market, you find that the scooter had disappeared from the place where you had parked it. You made several enquiries. You learnt from a stationer's shop boy that he had seen two youths trying to open the lock. But, he did not suspect that they were thieves. So he did not pay much attention towards the two youths.

On further probing, you came to know that the two youths were wearing leather jackets, thick sunglasses and one of them had a full mask helmet on. With that amount of information you rush to the police station where you are required to file an FIR. But you know that you have to give your report to the police station in writing and hence, upon meeting the officer-in-charge of the Police Station, you decide to write an application relating the entire episode of the loss of your scooter. This is what you have written.

To,

The Officer-in-charge
Geetanagar P.S.
Zoo-Narengi Road
Guwahati-21

Dated 3rd Dec' 07

Sub: Loss of Scooter

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have lost my scooter today at 5 pm when I had parked it in front of the stationer's shop Bhagawati Book Stall at Hatigarh Chariali. I would like to request you to take steps to recover my scooter. The details of the scooter are as follows:

Make	:	Bajaj 150
Colour	:	Metallic blue
No	:	AS 01 O 9237
Year of purchase	:	2004

Yours faithfully,

(Bijoy Das)

State Bank Colony

Guwahati-24

The officer on duty at the Police Station is not at all impressed by what you have written. He would like the information in specific details. He provides you the following copy of an FIR and asks you to fill it in so that he can take action on the information provided by you.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Read the following copy of FIR and fill in the necessary details from the letter to the Officer-in-charge at 5.1. You are free to provide more details if you think it will help in the work of the police.

FIRST INFORMATION REPORT

(Under Section 154 Cr. P.C.)

1. *Dist. _____ *P.S. _____ *Year _____.

   *FIR No. _____ Date _____.

2. i) *Act : _____ Section : _____.

   ii) *Act : _____ Section : _____.

iii) *Act : _____ Section : _____.

iv) *Other Acts & Sections : _____

3. a) General diary Reference : Entry No. _____ Time _____

b) *Occurrence of Offence: *Day _____

*Date _____ *Time _____

c) Information received Date _____ Time _____ G.D.No. _____ at the Police Station.

4. Type of Information *Written/Oral: _____

_____

5. Place of Occurrence:

a) Direction and Distance from P.S. _____

b) *Address _____

_____

Beat No. _____

c) In case outside limit of this police Station then the name of

P.S. _____ District _____

6. Complainant/Information:

a) Name _____

b) Father's/Husband's Name _____

c) Date/Year of Birth _____

d) Nationality _____

e) Passport No. _____ Date of issue

_____

Place of issue _____

f) Occupation _____

e) Address _____

7. Details of known/suspected/unknown accused with full particulars _____

8. Reasons for delay in reporting by the Complainant/ Informant :

_____

9. Particulars of properties stolen/involved: (Attach separate sheet, if reqd.) : _____
10. *Total value of properties stolen/involved _____
11. *Inquest report/U.D. Case No., if any _____
12. F.I.R. Contents: (Attach separate sheets, if reqd.)

    _____
13. Action taken: Since the above report reveals commission of offence(s) u/s as mentioned. at. Item No. 2, registered the case and took up the investigation/directed*

    _____

_____

_____take up the investigation/transferred to P.S. _____ on point of jurisdiction.

F.I.R. read over to the Complainant/Informant admitted to be correctly recorded and a copy given to the Complainant/Informant free of cost.

Signature of the Officer
In-charge, Police Station with

Signature/Thumb impression
of the Complainant/Informant

* Name _____
* Rank _____

Number, if any _____



10.5 LET US SUM UP

With the examples provided in the unit, you will be clear on the proper structure of a letter, the layouts of formal, informal and demi-official letter. Apart from these, the unit shall provide you with an idea on F.I.R. writing and how information is presented in an F.I.R. Therefore, the unit will be beneficial for the often required exercise of writing crisp and precise letters for various purposes. The learner is advised to practice all the forms of letter-writing in order to none his/her writing skills.

10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1:

(1) examination	(2) I	(3) supplying
(4) materials	(5) that	(6) which
(7) to	(8) University	(9) years
(10) pursuing	11) it	(12) the
(13) by	(14) me	(15) admission

Ans. to Q. No.2: Write out your answer in the following sequence

1. Paragraph 4
2. Paragraph 2
3. Paragraph 1
4. Paragraph 3

Ans. to Q. No. 3: Here is the filled in format of 'Check your Progress' task. Note that only the points you have to fill in are done so. The blank ones are supposed to be filled in by a police officer.

FIRST INFORMATION REPORT

(Under Section 154 Cr. P.C.)

1. *Dist. _____ *P.S. _____ *Year _____
   *FIR No. _____ * Date _____
2. i) *Act : _____ Section : _____
   ii) *Act : _____ Section : _____
   iii) *Act : _____ Section : _____
   iv) *Other Acts & Sections : _____
3. a) General diary Reference : Entry No. _____ Time _____
   b) *Occurence of Offence : *Day _____
   *Date _____ *Time _____
   c) Information received Date _____ Time _____
   G.D.No._____ at the Police Station.
4. Type of Information *Written/Oral : _____
   _____

(a) Direction and Distance from P.S. _____

(b) *Address _____

_____

Beat No. _____

(c) In case outside limit of this police Station then the name of

P.S. _____ District _____

6. Complainant/Information :

a) Name : SRI MRINAL DAS

b) Father's/Husband's Name : SRI JAYANTA DAS

c) Date/Year of Birth : 1st June, 1982.

d) Nationality : Indian

e) Passport No. ___X____ Date of issue ____X_____

Place of issue : _____X_____.

f) Occupation : Service.

e) Address : State Bank Colony, Hatigaon Chari Ali.

7. Details of known/suspected/unknown accused with full particulars :

I do not specifically suspect any one. I was informed that two youths had taken my scooter. But the description that I was given about the youths is vague to suspect any one.

8. Reasons for delay in reporting by the Complainant/Informant :

There was no delay. The only time I took was writing the application and reaching the police station by rickshaw.

9. Particulars of properties stolen/involved :

(Attach separate sheet, if reqd.)

Make : Bajaj 150

Colour : Metallic blue

No : AS 01 O-9237

Year of purchase: June 2004

10. *Total value of properties stolen/involved : Rs. 28,000.00

11. *Inquest report/U.D. Case No., if any _____

12. F.I.R. Contents : (Attach separate sheets, if reqd.) :

I have lost my scooter today at 5 pm. when I had parked it in front of Bhagabati Book Stall at Hatigaon Chari-Ali. I was going to the vegetable market on the opposite side of the road. I had parked the scooter these because I had to visit Bhagabati Book Stall to photocopy a few sheets of paper.

13. Action taken : Since the above report reveals commission of offence(s) u/s as mentioned. at. Item No. 2, registered the case and took up the investigation/directed* _____ _____ take up the investigation/ transferred to P.S. _____ on point of jurisdiction.

F.I.R. read over to the Complainant/Informant admitted to be correctly recorded and a copy given to the Complainant/Informant free of cost.

Signature of the Officer

Bijoy Das In-charge, Police Station with

Signature/Thumb impression *Name _____

of the Complainant/Informant *Rank _____

Number, if any _____



10.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Here is an advertisement in *The Assam Tribune*:

Applications are invited for Asstt. Teacher from Arts Graduates preferably English & Montessori Trained having 50% marks in aggregate from HSLC onwards with relevant documents. Apply to Secy. Assam Sikshatirtha, Salabari, Noonmati, Guwahati- 20, within 10 days. Candidates fulfilling the norms will be called for a written test.

SV/26289/1

Write an application in response to the advertisement. Imagine that you are an Arts graduate.

Q 2: You are quite competent in computer typing. Write a letter seeking a

job by reading the advertisement given below:

Earn Rs. 6000/- monthly by doing simple computer typing at home. Please contact : Ishika Informedia, Kacharibasti, Ganeshguri, Guwahati-05,

Ph : 0361-234207/9854184767,

Web : www.ishikainfomdia.com

SV/P/26294/1

Q 3: Write an application in response to the advertisement given below: Applications are invited for the post of Assistant Teacher. Apply within 15 days to Principal JNB Academy, Mathura Nagar, Dispur, Guwahati-6

Q 4: Write a letter to the Manager of a company seeking details of electrical appliances manufactured by the company and state why you are interested.

Q 5: Write a letter to the Councilor of your Municipal ward/ Panchayat requesting him/her to visit a locality where the roads are bad and need repair.

Q 6: Write a letter to the Private Secretary of the Education Minister to find out whether the Hon'ble Minister would be preseant as the Chief Guest in a College cultural function.

Q 7: Write a letter to the Tourist officer, Kaziranga National Park, Kohora requesting him to book two rooms preferably AC in the tourist lodge on 24th and 25th December for four persons who would be visiting the National Park.

Q 8: Write a letter to a friend inviting him / her to a picnic. Give full information about the date and time of starting, the venue, transport and amusements, and hour of return.

Q 9: Write a letter to your friend describing your life in a hostel.

Q 10: Write a letter to your father describing a disastrous situation you had faced. (Choice: Flood in your area / An accident).

Q 11: Write a letter to your friend informing him / her about the Open University Course that you have offered.

Q 12: Your pocket has been picked in a city bus. Write an FIR in the format

given specifying place of occurence, date of occurence and time of occurence giving a gist of how it had happened.

Q 13: You have lost your HSLC Certificate. Write an FIR in the Format given specifying where you have lost it, when and how you have lost it.

Q 14: While you were travelling by scooter, at the Zoo-Tiniali a Maruti Van hit your scooter. You fell down. However, the Maruti Van sped away. Your scooter is damaged and you are hurt. Write an FIR in the format given specifying the details.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 11 : COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 What is Communication?

- 11.3.1 Listening Skill
- 11.3.2 Speaking Skill
- 11.3.3 Soft Skill

11.4 Face- to Face Oral Communication

- 11.4.1 Oral Communication and Soft skills
- 11.4.2 Non-verbal Communication

11.5 Telephone Communication

- 11.5.1 Formal & Informal Telephone Communication
- 11.5.2 Non- verbal Communication
- 11.5.3 Cutting in a Long-winded Speech

11.6 Analysing Soft Skills

- 11.6.1 Assertiveness
- 11.6.2 Social Graces

11.7 Let Us Sum Up

11.8 Answers To Check Your Progress

11.9 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the concept of communication
- develop a competence in listening & speaking skills
- appreciate the concept of soft skills
- learn the various telephonic communciation skills.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall discuss the concept of communication. As you read this unit, you will be aware of the fact that we are communicating some information and ideas to you. This is a type of communication. We call this written communication (which includes typed and printed materials as well).

In this unit, we are not concerned with issues on written communication, but with those of oral communication. We shall take up two forms of oral communication:

(a) face-to- face communication

(b) telephonic communication

In these two types of oral communication, the language user demonstrates, two types of skills or abilities namely:

(a) the ability to listen to a speaker and to comprehend what the person is saying, and

(b) the ability to speak the language with fluency and to express himself or herself well.

In addition, in this unit we shall acquaint ourselves with the concept of 'soft skills'. We shall identify the components that constitute soft skills and see how they are relevant as a part of the communicative process.

11.3 WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication can be defined as the act of sharing or exchanging opinions, news, information, ideas and so on. When we are concerned with oral communication, it implies that two or more persons are talking to one another, they take turns to listen and then to speak according to the rules of conversational behaviour. Oral communication is essentially a speech act. In a speech act, an utterance (what is written communication we call a sentence) is a functional unit of communication. That is, we make utterances to perform some functions. Let us look at the extract of a conversation between Smita, who is a customer and a book shop assistant

Smita: Excuse me please!

Shop Asst: Yes ma'am ! How can I help you?

Smita: Do you have a copy of *Discovery of India*?

Shop Asst: Yes, I think we have. Can you give me a minute?

Let us go back to the utterances in the conversation. You will see that each utterance is made with a definite function.

(a) Excuse me please: It is an utterance intended to draw the attention of the book-shop assistant.

(b) The shop assistant's words indicate that he is ready to attend to Smita. He expresses this readiness with How can I help you?

(c) Smita asks the question: Do you have a copy of *Discovery of India*? This question is not intended to verify the stock of the book shop but to make a request to make available to her a copy of the book so that she can buy it. The listener understands the implied meaning of the utterance.

(d) The implied meaning is that he/she would require a minute to bring down the copy from a shelf.

The conversation shows that number of functions are involved in the act of communication. We shall examine these functions under the heads of listening skill and speaking skill.

11.3.1 Listening Skill

The skill of listening in the act of communication involves an ability to listen to the utterance of a speaker with understanding. Besides, the listener should be able to interpret non-verbal clues to make connections and draw inferences. At a basic level, a person who listens to his or her partner speaking should be able to understand the meaning of words, phrases and sentences that the speaker had used while talking to him/her. The person should be able to understand statements, questions and instructions and should know how to interpret them.

Imagine a person telling you: "I feel very thirsty". You must understand that the person is not trying to describe to you his physical

state. You must understand that the utterance is a request for something to drink.

The ability to listen to an utterance and to interpret the meaning of an utterance is applicable both in face-to-face and in telephonic conversation. We listen to various things in our real-life situations. Besides telephone conversation, we listen to the radio/ TV broadcast, taped listening material, announcements over the public address system, public speeches, sport, commentary and so on.

11.3.2 Speaking Skill

The skill of speaking is an act of communication which involves an ability to speak fluently by using intelligible English speech sounds in order to express ideas in proper sequence. He/ She should be able to interact with people to perform a number of activities like.

– identifying, describing people and things
– requesting, providing information
– expressing opinion
– suggesting, advising, reminding, warning etc.
– enquiring, providing information etc.

An important aspect of the skill of speaking is the speaker's ability to modify his/her speech to suit the context or the situation. If you are speaking to an elderly or a respectable person, your speech, that is, the style of your speech must be different from the style of speech that you use while talking to a friend, a relative or a close acquaintance. This issue on formal/semi- formal and informal use of language is true both for face-to-face interaction and telephonic conversation.

In order to modify speech to suit different levels of formality, we must have some knowledge of the vocabulary in the language that have both formal and informal forms. For example, father- dad, mother- mom or mum, children- kids, etc.

Levels of formality can also be modified by making a choice of strong and weak forms. We use the 'strong form' only in very careful speech or when the word is stressed. In most informal oral communication, the 'weak form' is preferred.

eg:

(a) Strong form: They have got a boy and a girl

(b) Weak form: They've got a boy en a girl.

It is important for you to brush up your knowledge of the strong and the weak forms of auxiliaries and a few other word classes by referring to grammar book.

11.3.3 Soft Skill

Soft skills is a general term that refers to a cluster of personality traits of an individual. These traits can be identified in a person's social behaviour in different situations. The social behaviour of a person brings out his/her personality. It is the outward appearance or the real nature of an individual. A person may have more than one personality trait. Here are a few personality traits of an individual that go by the term 'soft skills':

(a) **Social grace**: A person who possesses this soft skill
- – is friendly and courteous in behaviour.
- – enjoys being with friends in general
- – makes an effort to win friendship
- – maintains association with people

(b) **Friendliness**: A person possessing this soft skill
- – gives sympathy and comfort to others
- – is helpful
- – caring and sharing

(c) **Managing people**: A person possessing this skill
- – attempts to control the situation
- – influences others
- – is forceful, decisive and authoritative

(d) **Leadership**: A person possessing this skill

– aspires to accomplish difficult tasks

– leads others

– maintains high standards

– is competitive and hard-working

(e) **Intellectually curious**: A person possessing this skill

– seeks understanding in many areas of knowledge

– is reflective and rational

– likes logical thought

(f) **Orderly**: A person possessing this skill

– is concerned with keeping personal effects and surroundings neat and organised

– dislike untidiness, confusion and lack of organisation.

These soft skills enable us to form our individual opinion on the personality of an individual and this in turn would influence our oral communication with that person.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: (a) What is communication?

(b) What are the two types or forms of oral communication taken up for discussion in this unit?

(c) What are the two types of skills or abilities necessary for oral communication?

(d) Interpreting non-verbal clues is a skill. What is a non- verbal clue?

(e) Give the weak form of the following

(i) I have:____ (ii) I cannot_____

(iii) I will not:____ (iv) They have not____

(v) You have:_____ (vi) They had____

11.4 FACE- TO FACE ORAL COMMUNICATION

Face-to-face oral communication skill is a very valuable skill for healthy social living. It is a way of self-expression. It provides us opportunities

for expressing our feelings, thoughts and ideas about something. At the same time, it provides us opportunities of getting to know the feelings, thoughts and ideas about something from the person with whom we are conversing.

Conversation is a two-way interaction that takes place through the rule of turn-taking. The term 'turn- taking' implies that in conversation, the roles of the speaker and listener change constantly. The person who speaks first becomes listener as soon as the person addressed takes his or her turn in the conversation by beginning to speak. It is definitely bad manners to refuse to give a chance to your listener to take his/her turn to speak. There must be a give and take, action and reaction in the process of conversation.

11.4.1 Oral Communication and Soft skills

Sociability, that is, the ability to be sociable is a soft skill that is a desirable social quality. These qualities can be observable when you are interacting with people. But it may so happen that you yourself are often tongue tied- you find it difficult to associate yourself in a conversational situation. You find yourself shying away from such situations.

If you find yourself in a situation of being 'tongue-tied', analyse your experiences in recent conversational situation. It may be that-

(a) You found it difficult to adjust yourself to the speaker

(b) You had the feeling that your communication skills were not up to the mark

(c) You were not sure what to talk about and did not want to cause embarrassment.

But being a good conversationalist is not a very difficult task. You read newspapers daily, probably read a magazine or two, you listen to the radio programmes or watch television, you hear stories from friends; there are so many things that you get to know first hand from the world around you.

As a matter of fact, almost any topic is suitable for conversation. It is a friendly art with a double pleasure- the warmth of sharing your thoughts and ideas with others and the experience that you gain from the thoughts and ideas of others. You must take your turn to listen to others and then to speak and give others the chance to listen to you.

However, there are some points you may note while conversing, that you should avoid. For example, do not give the impression of being too impulsive. Being impulsive is also a soft skill which involves a tendency to

- act or speak on the spur of the moment
- be hasty in making statements or giving opinions that cause embarrassment to others
-be rather rude in making comments

Moreover, you should not give the impression that you are a bore. You become a bore when you do not have a second topic to talk about and play the same record every day. You become a bore when you talk too much about yourself. You also become a bore when you talk ill of others. You must not express your negative opinions on someone too much. Moreover, you should not give the impression of being a Mr Know-All, a person who has all the knowledge under the sun. Nobody is interested in your scholarship except the interviewing committee of a college or university teacher's job.

In the box below, you will find a conversation between two friends Dimpi and Neha. Read the conversation carefully:

Situation: Two friends meet and they talk about visiting a book fair.

Dimpi : Hi Neha !

Neha : Hi !

Dimpi : What are you doing tomorrow?

Neha : Tomorrow? Why?

Dimpi : It's Sunday !

Neha : Yes, it is. Do you have any plan?

Dimpi : Do you know, there's a book fair going on?

Neha : Yes, at Chandmari field

Dimpi : Want to go?

Neha : Oh I'd love to.

Dimpi : We can go tomorrow, say at about 2 o'clock.

Neha : Why so early?

Dimpi : The fair ground is less crowded about that time. The evenings are too crowded.

Neha : I see what you mean.

Dimpi : We can browse through the books leisurely. I'll pick you up at two. OK.

Neha : Fine. See you tomorrow. Bye!

Dimpi : Bye Neha !

This is an example of a face-to-face conversation between two persons- Dimpi and Neha. Note the use of clipped form of sentences that are very natural in oral communication. Note also how they greet each other when they meet and how they part from each other.

Your can also see their of friendliness at work. We see how one shares her feelings with the other. There is good understanding and rapport between them.

11.4.2 Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is a part of oral communication. Oral communication makes use of words; but if also uses non-verbal signs. We gesture with our hands, we shrung shoulders, we raise eyebrows, make facial expressions; we look at someone in the eyes or rapidly look away. These are non-verbal signs that constitute a part of our body language.

A gesture is any action that sends a visual signal to the person with whom the conversation takes place. To be a gesture, a body movement has to be seen by someone else and has to communicate some piece of information. A gesture deliberately sends out a signal.

The hand wave is a primary gesture. It is a piece of communication that can either supplement oral communication or express meaning independently.

However, gestures are often culture specific. While many of us would nod the head up and down to indicate a gesture of agreement- a yes; in South India, the 'yes' is conveyed by the gesture of shaking the head from left to right, which in our case, we interpret as 'no'. Hence, one needs to be familiar with the culture specific non-verbal communication.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: (a) What is turn taking?

(b) What is a soft skill?

(c) What do you mean by 'tongue-tied'?

(d) Think of some of the ways by which you can become a good conversationalist.

(e) Write a paragraph on the art of good conversation.

(No answers are provided to (d) and (c)

11.5TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

Telephone communication skills refer to an ability to perform the following activities:

- answering a personal phone call effectively
- responding to an official or business call in an appropriate way
- making a personal as well as an official or a business call
- cutting off a long-winded caller artfully without offending the person

While making or receiving a telephone call, your voice quality and an ability to express yourself clearly and concisely is of utmost importance. Your listener at the other end will depend on what he hears as he has no access to your gestures and body language that are a part of face-to-face communication.

11.5.1 Formal & Informal Telephone Communication

Telephone styles vary according to the situation- according to whether the call is for a formal purpose or an informal purpose. Official telephone calls demonstrate a very business-like manner. Read this exchange in the box.

KKH : Hello ! This is KKH State Open University.

Smita : I' am Smita Gogoi from Sivasagar

KKH : How can I help you?

Smita : I appeared in the BPP Exam from Sibsagar College Centre.

KKH : The results are already out.

Smita : I passed in the exam. But I am not satisfied with my marks in English

KKH : You can apply for a re-check

Smita : Yes, I' d like to do that

KKH : I suggest you talk to your Centre in-charge. He'll take care of your problem.

Smita : Thank You.

Note, that there is no exchange of pleasantries between the speakers. The exchange takes place in a formal situation. Here's a telephone conversation between two friends. You can see the differences between the two exchanges- the formal and the personal.

Tina : Hi Divya !

Divya : Hi ! How was your exam?

Tina : Not bad. And how was yours?

Divya : I somehow managed to complete the paper. Can't say if I've got all the answers right.

Tina : The paper was rather long, wasn't it?

Divya : Yes, it was !

Tina : Well I'm glad it's over.

Divya : Me too. TV serials were banned for me. I'd love to catch up on them.

Tina : But first thing first. I'll take a long sleep

Divya : Go ahead. But you'll keep in touch, won't you?

Tina : Bye for now

Divya : Bye

This telephone conversation begins with an informal and personal note. The customay 'Hello!' is changed to 'Hi!'. The sentences, at least most of them are clipped. Tag questions which constitute a part of informal conversation are used by both the speakers.

11.5.2 Non- verbal Communication

The telephone is designed to carry your voice at its natural volume and pitch. It is hardly necessary to shout. In fact, shouting only distorts the call. Your normal voice is the sole means of communicating over the telephone. Though your listener does not have any access to your body language, or features of non- verbal communication, it is interesting to note that our non-verbal communicative behaviour certainly affects the way we sound. While speaking if you are in a slumping position, that is, with your head hanging down as if you are sleepy, your voice will often sound tired or breathless. You must keep a bright tone in your voice; smile when talking on the phone. Your posture while speaking, will make a great difference to how you sound on the telephone- whether you are sounding bored or interested, whether you are sounding impatient or friendly.

11.5.3 Cutting in a Long-winded Speech

Often you may find a speaker who is talking to you on the phone is going on-and-on and giving no signs of stopping. The codes of civilised social behaviour prevents you from just pressing the off button or slamming the receiver down.

Under ordinary circumstances, the one who makes the call is the one who ends it. This is all right up to a point. But if the person

drags on his Dr. her conversation like an insurance agent, for example, what do you do? When you have made several tentative attempts to end the conversation without any success, most people prefer to say: “It was nice talking to you. But I’m sorry I have to rush to class” or something like that. You can even say you have a visitor or anything that sounds convincing but does not hurt the caller. It is always nice to behave nicely in society.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: (a) Write a telephonic dialogue on the function of making inquiries.

(b) Write a telephonic dialogue inviting a friend to your birthday.

11.6 ANALYSING SOFT SKILLS

If you go back to the earlier subsections of this unit, you will friend that we had identified soft skills with an individual’s personality traits or qualities that the individual demonstrates in his or her social behaviour. The social behaviour of a person brings out his or her personality. By observing a person’s social behaviour, we often draw conclusions on his or her personality traits.

Thus, assessment of soft skills is focussed on describing and understanding the characteristics of people as revealed in particular situations, at specific points of time. We form individual judgements about the self and others. For example, a student might hold a personal opinion about himself or herself that he or she is too shy to appear in a dramatic production, or a teacher might perceive in a student a lack of respect towards his or her teacher. In this section, we shall look at ways by which we make our assessments of soft skills of certain individuals.

11.6.1 Assertiveness

Assertiveness is an important personality trait or soft skill. The dictionary meaning of assertiveness is having or showing positive

assurance. Before we discuss this soft skill, let us read a fairy tale about the Sleeping Beauty. We shall read only the opening part of the tale which is relevant for us.

The Sleeping Beauty

Once upon a time all the fairies of the country were invited to the christening of a little baby princess. Seven fairies came and they acted as godmothers. A feast was held in their honour.

When the feast was ended, the fairy godmothers came to the little princess and each of them gave her their special gifts. The first fairy bestowed on her the gift of angelic beauty; the second the gift of angelic goodness; the third gave her the gift of intelligence, the fourth gave her the gift of exquisite gracefulness; the fifth endowed her with great sweetness of voice and the last bestowed on her with some other.

The gifts that the fairies had given to the little princess were all personality traits that go by the name of soft skills. You will see that the angels gave the princess so many important gifts, but never assertiveness. This is a gift that the fairies had overlooked. Had the princess been given this gift and a few others like courage and leadership, the tale would have ended in an entirely different way.

The word assertiveness is strongly associated with a sense of self-worth or high self-esteem. In other words, we can say that a person who has assertiveness means that he

- is full of confidence
- feels comfortable with success
- has a high self-esteem

These are behavioural terms which can be assessed. In other words, by breaking up a concept into behavioural statements, it is possible to assess them in a more formal way.

11.6.2 Social Graces

We take social graces as a desirable soft skill. The term means being sociable. What does being sociable mean? What is

its value in our social environment? How can we identify this soft skill in a person's social behaviour? How can it be assessed? In order to find an answer to these questions, let us read this story:

Raja's Problem

Raja was a well-to-do businessman. He lived with his wife and two children. But he was very self-centred. Despite his huge business, he would rarely laugh. He always appeared unhappy. After much persuasion from the family, he agreed to see a doctor.

The doctor examined him thoroughly and then said: ''Raja, to be honest, there is nothing wrong with you. You are physically fit. Your problem is personal. You are heading for a depression.

Raja asked the doctor, ''What should I do ?'' The doctor said, "It is all in the attitude. If you try, you can overcome it. You must try to be sociable.

What are the personality traits of a sociable person? A sociable person

- is friendly and outgoing
- enjoys being with friends in general
- makes an effort to win friendship
- maintains association with people.

Thus, positive soft skills bring a change to a person's personality. This change can be evident in his/her social relationships.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: 'Rita is very supporting. How would you analyse the personality trail of Rita as very supporting?

You have to say: A person who is considered supporting: ..... (spell out features)



11.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the concept of oral communication as an act of sharing or exchanging information, opinion etc. by a speaker with one or more speakers/listeners in a social situation. We examined the distinctive features of two types of oral communication which are face-to-communication and telephonic conversation. The process of effective communication involves the ability to listen and understand the language spoken and ability to speak the language fluently. The unit also stressed upon the importance of non verbal communication- gestures and our body language in both face-to-face and in telephonic communication.

Soft skills in individuals become apparent through general social behaviour and have an impact on an individual's oral communication. An individual's personality is reflected through the way he/she communicates in society. The unit also shall enasle you to distinguish between formal and informal forms of oral communication on the one hand and how non-verbal communication supplements oral communication on the other. Moreover, we learnt some distinctive features of telephone communication skills and ways of organising or planning speech act.



11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1: (a) Communication refers to the act of sharing or exchanging opinions, news information, ideas with others and so on. Communication takes place between two or more persons. In an act of communication, there is at least one speaker or sender, a message which is communicated and a person or persons for whom the message is intended.

(b) face -to-face communication and telephone communication

(c) The two abilities necessary for oral communication are (i) the

ability to listen to a speaker's words and to comprehend what the person is saying and (2) the ability to speak the language with fluency and to express ideas well.

(d) A non- verbal clue is communication that takes place without the use of words. This could be done by gestures or signs that we can make with our hands.

(e) (i) I,ve (ii) I can't (iii) I was't (iv) They haven't (v) You've (vi) They'd

Ans to Q. No. 2: (a) In conversation, the roles of the speaker and listener change constantly. The person who speaks first becomes a listener as soon as the person who has been listening takes his/her turn to speak. This rule of changing roles in conversation is known as turn-taking.

(b) A soft skill is a term associated with a individual's cluster of personality traits like social graces, friendliness, managing people and so on.

(c) Tongue- tied refers to a person's poor communication skill. The person fails to communicate for various reasons.

Ans to Q. No. 3: (a) A conversation between Dhruva Dutta and the house owner in response to a To Let ad.

Dhruva : Hello! This is Druva Dutta speaking.

House Owner : Yes, what can I do for you?

Dhruva : It's about your 'To Let' ad in *The Assam Tribune*

House Owner : You see, I'm letting out a part of my house at Japorigog, close to the zoo.

Dhruva : I'd like to take the house.

House Owner : What's your occupation?

Dhruva : I'm in the tax department?

House Owner : Sorry I couldn't hear you.

Dhruva : Tax- T for Tripura, A for April.

House Owner : Yes I get you. Tax is it?

Dhruva : What is the rent please?

House Owner : We can discuss it if you come over. Besides, you

may like to see the house. Give me a call when you are near the ASEB Office. I'll direct you from there.

Dhruva : Thanks, I'll be there in half an hour.

Note that this is only a model for a telephonic conversation on seeking information. You can think of many other such situations and practice the same, which is also a requirement in our day-to-day communication.

Ans to Q. No. 3: (b) try your self.

Ans to Q. No. 4: see 11.6.2.



11.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What is oral communication?

Q 2: How would you understand the following utterances made to you?

(a) I feel thirsty.

(b) Can you close the window?

(c) Do you have five hundred rupees change?

Q 3: Write a telephonic dialogue between two persons on the following functions (any one)

(a) requesting for information

(b) providing information

(c) making enquiries about something

Q 4: Write a face- to-face dialogue between two friends on any one of the following functions

(a) requesting for a book

(b) inviting for some celebration

(c) informing something

Q 5: What are the personality traits of the following persons (any one)

(a) a person who always supports you in your work

(b) a person who likes to see everything neat and orderly

(c) a person who is very sociable in behaviour

Q 6: What is the importance of 'turn taking' in conversation?

Q 7: What do you understand by telephone communication skills?

Q 8: Discuss the function of gestures and body language in communication.

*** ***** ***



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