UNIT 4 : ELEMENTS OF GOOD WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

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4.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- appreciate the characteristics of good writing
- develop precision and clarity in writing
- think critically before drafting a fully written version of a piece of writing
- develop the ability to critically revise the version in terms of grammar, punctuation, clichés, pacing and use of transitions.

4.2. INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall introduce you to the characteristics of good writing so as to enable you to look at a piece of writing critically and to evaluate its

style and content. You will understand that “good writing” has certain distinctive characteristics. You will discover that a good piece of writing is characterised by cohesion and coherence. We shall look at the techniques by which a piece of writing can be made both cohesive and coherent.

You will also understand that a good piece of writing must have a precision which refers to the quality of being accurate and exact in the use of language. This unit will show you how precision in the use of language involves an ability to select words that are free from those features that make them ambiguous.

Besides, you will understand that a good piece of writing has a clarity which refers to the quality or ability to express oneself plainly that is without any complexity. We shall look at the techniques by which we can make our writing clear and at the same time, logical.

Further, you will understand that a good piece of writing should make use of simple sentences having lucidity in presentation. The unit discusses the different principles of simplicity that distinguishes a good piece of writing. One of the things that we should aim for is coherence – a sentence must have a direct or an indirect relation with the other in a paragraph. In other words, one sentence must lead to the other and one paragraph must lead to the other to make the writing readable. This would require the proper use of transitionals that could be either covert or overt.

Moreover, good writing must be free from grammatical errors which include punctuation as well. Grammaticality must go with appropriateness which involves appropriateness in the use of words and phrases and clauses and sentences. You should be able to identify clichés or stereotype expressions that have lost their freshness due to overuse.

4.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD WRITING

As starting point on a discussion on the characteristics of good writing, it may be helpful to refer to an essay titled “Principles of Good Writing” by the noted ELT scholar L.A. Hill. In the essay Hill makes a number of observations on the characteristics of good writing. One of his observations

is that "*to write well, you have to be able to write clearly and logically and you cannot do this unless you can think clearly and logically."* This observation implies that one of the characteristics of good writing is clarity. Another word that he uses is logicality implying that a piece of writing, in order to be both comprehensible and smooth-flowing has to be logical. Logicality is absent in a piece of writing when it lacks cohesion and coherence.

In the essay, a significant advice that Hill offers is the need for increasing vocabulary and improving the power of expression. He suggests that in order to increase our vocabulary we should "read widely and carefully and keep a note book in which to write down words and expressions that particularly strike us." He refers to the use of a good dictionary as an important tool for a writer.

With regard to improving the power of expression, he suggests that regular and frequent practice is essential. He states, "You learn to write by writing". We must remember that it is no good waiting until we have an inspiration before we write. Writing is 99 per cent hard work and 1 per cent inspiration, so the sooner we get into the habit of disciplining ourselves to write, the better.

Hill believes that one of the characteristic of good writing is that it must make interesting reading. We therefore have to know exactly what type of reader we are writing for, and what kinds of things interest the readers. We must know that before we write we must have a definite subject to write about. If we are writing an article or an essay of about 500 words, our subject must be narrow enough to develop the ideas meaningfully. If we are writing an essay or an article for a newspaper on a current topic, we can hardly say everything that is there to be said on the topic. We have to narrow our topic down to a single controlling idea: what exactly we are going to say and how we are going to say it. In other words, we are to focus on the presentation of the essay.

Generally, an essay can be divided into three parts: the introduction, the body and conclusion. The first paragraph of an essay is the introduction and the last paragraph is the conclusion; the paragraphs in between constitute the body.

Let us look at the introduction of an essay. The introduction serves two purposes:

- to interest the reader and
- to lead him/her into the topic.

The introduction should arrest the reader's attention and show the reader what you are writing about and why. There are different ways by which you can make a presentation of the introduction of the essay. Let us look at a few of them.

1. *Opening paragraph as a direct statement*

   It was midday in a small settlement on the river Ogowe in West Africa. Into the jungle nearby floated the sound of music... (G.F.Lamb)

2. *Opening paragraph as a startling statement*

   August 6, 1945 – the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima – brought home to all of us in a dramatic fashion the significance of science in human life. (Marcel Junod)

3. *Opening paragraph as a vital question*

   'Have you read Epictus lately?' 'No, not lately.' (Robert Lynd)

4. *Opening paragraph as anecdote.*

   Some time ago I was watching what must be the strangest group of refugees in this country... (Gerald Durrell)

On the other hand the body of the essay may consist of several paragraphs and include information that supports the main argument of the essay. It should collect together and present the ideas promised in the first paragraph. It may also give good argument to support the view put forward there. The last paragraph of the essay is the conclusion. The conclusion begins with a restatement of the main argument of the essay.

4.3.1. Cohesion

A good piece of writing is characterized by a cohesiveness or unity between the sentences. Halliday and Hassan (1976) define cohesion as a relation of meaning that exists within and between the sentences which creates a text. We discover that a good piece of composition is marked by certain cohesive links or devices that can be either explicit or implicit. Explicit cohesive devices are also called overt connectives whereas implicit cohesive devices are called covert connectives.

Overt connectives often play the role of linkers in a piece of writing. They are specific devices in writing whose main objective in a piece of composition is to ensure a smooth transition. They can be single words or group of words each performing certain definite function in the composition.

(a) Those that deal with a new aspect of the subject

And so

First,...second,....third,... etc

Next

Then...

(b) Those that reinforce a point already made

Again,

Besides,

For example,

For instance,

Furthermore,

In addition,

Moreover,

(c) Those that introduce a difference or contrast

Alternatively

Although
Conversely
Despite this, however
In comparison
In contrast
In spite of this
Meanwhile,
Nevertheless
On the other hand,
Still
Yet

(d) Those that indicate similarity
Furthermore
Likewise
Moreover
Similarly

(e) Those that indicate result
Accordingly
And so
As a result
Consequently
Then
Therefore
Thus

(f) Those that indicate summary or restatement
In other words
In short
On the whole
To put it differently

Covert connectives are not explicitly stated in a sentence or in a passage. They are stated in so indirect a manner that one has to look for them to discover them. Look at the following few lines and try to discover the covert connectives in the sentences.

Nasruddin borrowed a pot from his friend. The next day, he gave the friend back the pot, plus another smaller pot. The friend looked at the smaller pot and sad, "What's that?"

"Your pot gave birth while I had it," said Nasruddin, "so I am giving you its child."

You will see that the "he" in the second sentence refers back to Nasruddin in the first sentence. The words "smaller pot" in the third sentence refers back to the "smaller pot" in the second sentence. These words covertly build up a web of inter-connection between sentences. This is the objective of covert connectives. Such connectivity characterise a good piece of writing.

4.3.2. Coherence

When we read a passage or a piece of text, we can say that we derive the meaning of the passage or text solely on the basis if the words and structures of the sentence used to convey the message. We can recognize, for example, when a writer has produced a perfectly grammatical sentence from which we can derive meaning. But it may be that we may not have understood the meaning of the passage when we find that the following or preceding sentences do not add up much to the overall meaning. We fail to grasp meaning of a piece of ext when there is no coherence between the sentences. That is there is no logical development between the sentences. The term coherence is used to refer to the relationships which link the meanings of sentences in a piece of text. Coherence shows the relationship between the sentences in a paragraph and between paragraphs in a piece of composition. To illustrate this point read the following passage :

(a) To participate in an Olympics is in itself a great achievement. She was born in Germany in 1966. But Kristen Otto managed it. I am sure you have heard of Kristen Otto, the Swimmer, the first woman to win six Gold medals at the Olympics. She won the medals at the Seoul Olympics in 1988. But to win a gold medal in each of the events you participate in is something that is unthinkable, especially in a world that is highly competitive.

You will find that each of the sentences in the passage is correct. But somehow they do not make sense to you. What is lacking in them is coherence. Without coherence, a piece of writing fails to convey meaning. A good piece of writing is something more than an assembly of words or sentences. There should be coherence between these elements. Coherence between the sentences is missing in the passage above.

Now, look at the passage modified below. It is the same passage with certain modifications. Do they make sense to you in this arrangement?

(b) I am sure you have heard of Kristen Otto, the Swimmer**,** the first woman to win six Gold medals at the Olympics. She was born in Germany in 1966. She won the medals at the Seoul Olympics in 1988. To participate in an Olympics is in itself a great achievement. But to win a gold medal in each of the events you participate in is something that is unthinkable, especially in a world that is highly competitive. But Kristen Otto managed it.

To be a good piece of writing, you must remember that the composition piece must have coherence between the units of composition. Coherence occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the composition is dependent on the other elements. For example, if we look at the word “she” in the second sentence of passage “a” we do not find any inner connection between the first and second sentences. But when you look at the word “she”

in the second passage to find out what the word refers to, we refer back to the first sentence and learn that the word refers to Kristen Otto, the Swimmer. Thereby, we discover an inner connection between the sentences. This is coherence. The first passage is not coherent; it fails as a piece of text – it is a non-text. The second passage is coherent; it qualifies as a piece of text.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.The following is a news story that lacks cohesion and coherence. Rewrite it in proper order.

Nagaon superintendent of police Debraj Upadhaya told *The Telegraph* over phone that there was no casualty.

The grenade, however, did not explode.

A grenade was lobbed at the residence of Union minister of state for railways Rajen Gohain at Itachuli in Nagaon district at 11.35 last night.

Special director general of police (law and order) Kuladhar Saikia and other senior police officials visited Nagaon today and took stock of the situation.

Gohain and his family were not present when the incident occured.

4.4. PRECISION

The term 'precision' in composition refers to the quality of being accurate and exact besides being careful in the use of language. Being accurate and exact in the use of language means to be correct and truthful in every detail. There should be precision in the presentation of the information content of a text which is dependent on the choice of words. Precision in the use of language emerges when we select words that are not ambiguous or too complex. Being accurate and exact in the use of language involves making a choice of words by avoiding those that are confusing or ambiguous. Below we shall look at a few pairs of words that

are rather confusing to the user of the language because they look or sound similar although they may have quite distinct meanings or their meanings are closely linked.

1. **abuse/misuse:** both the words are close in meaning but there is a distinction between them. *Abuse* implies deliberately wrong or improper treatment of someone or something e.g. *child abuse* or *substance abuse* whereas *misuse* describes incorrect or unconventional use e.g. *misuse of the mobile phone (not abuse of the mobile phone)*
2. **adapt/adopt:** these two verbs are similar in appearance though unrelated in meaning. *Adapt* is used to mean 'adjust' as in the case of adapting a novel to suit the level of school children whereas *adopt* is used to mean adopt as in adopting a child by a family.
3. **affect/effect:** These two words have the same pronunciation. However while the word *affect* is generally used as a verb to mean influence or change (e.g. *the match was affected by the rain*), the word *effect* used as verb could mean carry out (e.g. *the decision was effected immediately*) whereas as noun effect is used to mean result.
4. **ceremonial/ceremonious:** The adjective *ceremonial* refers to ceremonies as in ceremonial dress or ceremonial procession whereas *ceremonious* refers to the formal or possibly the over-elaborate way in which something is done.
5. **competition/contest:** These two nouns mean much the same thing. However, *competition* may mean rivalry of virtually any kind (e.g. competition between the two boys) whereas *contest* suggests rivalry with a degree of organization e.g. a shooting contest, a beauty contest.
6. **complement/compliment:** though these two words look similar, they have different meanings. Complement denotes something that ads to in order to complete it as in *The ice-cream is a good complement to the lavish dinner*. Compliment, on the other hand,

describes an admiring or flattering remark as in *She accepted the compliment gracefully*.

7. **critic/critique:** A critic is a person who evaluates a literary or artistic work. *Dr F.R.Leavis is a literary critic.* On the other hand, a critique is a piece of critical writing.
8. **due to/owing to:** The phases mean almost the same thing but they are used differently. Due to is an adjective and is usually used after a verb as in *The decision is purely due to administrative considerations*. Owing to means 'because of' as in *The match was cancelled owing to bad weather*.
9. **historical/historic:** Both the adjectives are closely related in meaning but are not identical. The word historic means important in terms of history as in *a historic event, a historic decision* whereas *historical* means relating to history or to the past.
10. **partially/partly:** Both the words mean 'to a limited extent' or 'not completely'. But partly also has a number of other meanings such as 'concerning one part'.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

2.Frame sentences to distinguish the use of the following pairs of words

(a) deny/refuse
(b) device/devise
(c) childish/childlike
(d) industrial/industrious
(e) popular/populous
(f) motif/motive

4.5. CLARITY

Clarity refers to the quality or ability to express a piece of spoken or written communication with a great deal of clarity. There are three aspects to clear communication.

- Being clear about what you want to say
- Being clear in the way you want to say it, and
- Ensuring that what appears clear to you will be equally clear to the person who receives the message.

(a) Being clear about what you want to say:

Being clear what a person wants to say something implies that before starting to write you should be able to think critically and clearly. This statement implies that thinking is an integral part of the writing process. It becomes easier for you to write something when you have had the time to think clearly about what you want to write and the purpose for which you are writing.

If you are intending to write a material of any length, you will almost certainly have to collect material from outside sources. It is helpful to think of a title for the composition that you intend to write. That narrows down your search for the materials. If, for example, you intend to write about the topic that we had mentioned earlier, “Conservation and Wild Life”, you should look up some materials on government legislation, forest laws and such allied matter that would add authenticity to your composition. Next, you should be able to organize in a logical way the material that you intend to use in writing your piece of composition.

Most importantly, you should make your plan as detailed as possible. You should form an idea as to what you intend to write at each step of your composition. It is more or less an outline of your entire composition.

(b) Being clear in the way you want to say

Being clear in the way we want to write implies that we should be conscious of the techniques of presenting our thoughts with clarity. These techniques include a competence in ordering the words in a sentence. Sequencing of words becomes more important to the meaning of a sentence than anything else. We should be careful of loosely connected words and phrases. In general, descriptive words and phrases will draw meaning from the noun or verb that is nearest to it. Putting words in the

wrong position will cause unintended associations that are either confusing or absurd. Here are two examples :

(i) I saw a dead cow walking on the road.

(ii) Did you see the portrait coming upstairs?

The problem with the first sentence is that it gives the impression that the information in the sentence is absurd. A dead body cannot walk on the road. Hence it becomes necessary to be clear about what you want to say by rephrasing the sentence with the words “while I was” before the words “walking on the road”. Similarly in the second sentence you have to clarify that it is not the portrait coming upstairs but the listener of this question by adding “while you were” before “coming upstairs”.

(c) Ensuring that what appears clear to you is also clear to others

Though your writing appears to be quite clear to you, you can never entirely be sure that it is clear and unambiguous to others too. Our own writing appears quite clear to us. We can understand our writings even when we miss out the linkers or other structural elements. Hence, there is the need for revising what you have written by looking at your writing more critically by ensuring that there are no dangling and misplaced phrases, no redundant words and no vagueness in your choice of words. To illustrate this point, a quote from M.V. Kamath, the celebrated editor of yester-years, is brought in here. Kamath quotes a few sentences from the media to emphasise his point:

(a) The Prime Minister today addressed a <u>massive</u> audience.

(b) The weather was <u>surprisingly</u> warm....

(c) An <u>important</u> meeting was scheduled here...

The underlined words are vague. What exactly is a “massive audience”? It has to be specific. What does the writer mean by “surprisingly warm”? In the third sentence, one needs to be clear what is so important about the meeting. These are pitfalls of clear writing.

4.6. USE OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

Most conscious users of English today are in favour of plain words and clear and simple sentences. A writer's English is said to be good when he or she is able to convey clearly and effectively exactly what he wants to say in plain English. Here are a few techniques that good writers often follow when they write or especially when they revise their writing:

(a) Reduce wordy phrases and clauses to single words and short phrases

Avoid	Prefer
the question as to whether	whether
there is no doubt that	no doubt/undoubtedly
he is a man who	he
in a hasty manner	hastily
the reason for that	because
owing to the fact that	since
call your attention to the fact that	remind you

(b) Avoid long winded expressions

Avoid	Prefer
ahead of schedule	early
at the present time	now
made an approach to	approached
take into consideration	consider
submitted his resignation	resigned

(c) Break apart long sentences into shorter sentences

Unrevised

The word 'revolution' is often used for any radical change in an aspect of government or society but in its strict and more correct historical usage, revolution is the great exception whereas protest which refers to an attack on the prevailing system in an intellectual or organized way is the norm.

Revised

The word 'revolution' is used to refer to any radical change in an aspect of government or society. However, in its strict and more correct historical usage, revolution is the exception whereas protest is the norm. Protest refers to an attack on the prevailing system in an intellectual or organized way.

(d) Weed out unnecessary words

Unrevised

Education has a number of aims of which four are the most important. The first purpose of education is to embellish the personality of a student and to equip him to earn his bread and butter. The second aim of education is to enable him to play his role as a citizen in a democratic set-up. The third purpose of education is to inspire him to develop all his hidden powers and faculties of nature. The fourth aim of education is the character training of an individual. The real education is meant for life. It transforms one's culture and character and makes him fit for the citizenship of the world.

Revised

Education has a number of aims of which the following four are the most important. First it embellishes the personality of students and equips them to earn a living. Secondly, it enables them to play their role as citizen in a democratic set-up. Thirdly, it inspires them to develop their hidden powers and faculties of nature. Moreover, it trains and transforms their culture and character for life making them fit for the citizenship of the world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3.Rewrite these sentences making them simpler by breaking them up into shorter sentences weeding out unnecessary words if any.

(a) The sentences will be shorter, there will be much less subordination and, therefore much more repetition of essential nouns; nearly all sentences will begin with the subject

(b) Timely action is a very important thing in life though very few people realize its significance that many things would not have happened had suitable action been taken at the outset.

4.7. GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

One of the most important features of a good piece of writing is grammatical correctness in the use of sentence structures and marks of punctuation including the proper handling of capitalization as and when required. Correctness refers to whether a sentence structure is formally possible or not. It is concerned with whether the language permits a structure as grammatically possible or rejects it as ungrammatical. It is important to remember that grammar provides the logical framework without which communication in any language would be impossible. Imagine a young news writer covering a fire disaster reporting the incident as follows:

"A massive fire has broken out in the Bamunimaidum area last night. The fire caused a lot of damages..."

The first sentence uses a wrong verb form. When we use the time adverbial 'last night', we cannot use a present perfect tense form of the verb; instead, we use the simple past tense. Secondly, the word 'massive' is inappropriate here. The word does not collocate with fire; the word to use here could be *big/huge/devastating*. In the second sentence, the word damages is not correct. The word 'damage' is an uncountable noun that cannot be pluralized with the plural marker –s. Thus, grammaticality is the permissible ways by which words can be organized in a sentence structure. Hence, along with grammaticality, there is another feature that can be seen as a feature of good writing. It is appropriateness to the context or situation. A sentence can be grammatically feasible and possible but can still be unacceptable if it is not appropriate to a situation. We cannot say

**The road was not large enough for two cars to pass and hence the accident broke out.*

When we are talking about distances from one side to the other, we use *wide* or *broad* but not *large*. The phrasal verb 'broke out' is rather unusual with accident. We say fire broke out, malaria broke out but accident *occurred/took place/happened*.

In order to achieve acceptability, a sentence has to be appropriate both in terms of grammar as to the context or the situation in which the sentence is used. In addition, we need to be conscious of our punctuation and capital letters. Here is an extract from a news item where the punctuation and capital letters are missing. Read the passage:

The cabinet secretariat has recently issued a directive to private secretaries of the concerned ministers in this regard it has been decided that smart phones mobile phones will henceforth not be permitted inside the meeting venues of cabinet cabinet committees it said.

Let us look at another version of the passage with the punctuation marks and capitals incorporated in the passage.

The Cabinet Secretariat has recently issued a directive to private secretaries of the concerned ministers in this regard.

"It has been decided that smart phones/mobile phones will henceforth not be permitted inside the meeting venues of Cabinet/Cabinet Committees," it said.

This version of the passage looks more comprehensible. Indeed, punctuation and capitalization contribute in a big way towards good writing.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4.Rewrite the passages by using capital letters and proper marks of punctuation:

(a) One evening on their way to a remote university einstein said to his driver I wish I didn't have to give my lecture tonight hans I'm so tired but I can't let my audience down can I

(b) On a fine sunday in the late summer of the year 1533 more than four hundred years ago a baby was born in a palace at greenwich on the river thames between london and the sea.

4.8. AVOIDING CLICHES

A cliché is a phrase that has been overused both in spoken and written discourse to the point of losing its original meaning and effect, even to the point of developing a negative attitude towards them. Interestingly enough, most writers find them to be neat, convenient and fairly attractive phrases and prefer to use them both in spoken and written discourse. Their negative attitude towards clichés grows out of the assumption that writers use them too often without caring much about meaning. People tend to look appraisingly on a variety of language that tends to be fresh, imaginative and original.

Nevertheless, if one may venture an opinion, in point of fact, clichés do have their uses or else they would have been dead words by now. (You had noted that the underlined phrases are clichés.) Their value can be seen in their effectiveness in giving expression to an idea in different situations. Life is full of occasions when we cannot all the time show freshness, imagination and originality in our use of English. In one such occasion we gratefully fall back on clichés.

There are scores of situations when we use clichés without which our speech or writing becomes rather unconventional. Let us examine a few of them.

- Our speeches begin with the cliché “at the outset” and end with “last but not the least”.
- Our wedding invitation letters beginning with “The undersigned request the pleasure of your company....” are overused strings of expressions
- Our condolence messages where we mourn the sad demise of some person who had “left for their heavenly abode”.
- Our exchanges to persons we know as we see them in the street, but with no time to stop for a long chat, “Hello! Long time no see.”

- Our exchange of pleasantries and farewells in birthday parties are strings of clichés: “I think I should call it a day”, “in a nutshell”, “everything was spick and span...”
- Our wedding parties are full of ready-made utterances overused to the point of being clichés. “All said and done, a jolly good show, dear...”

These clichés do serve a wonderful social need. That does not mean that every time we lift our pen to write something, we should fall back on the clichés. You will agree that the freshness of expression is rather faded in these expressions. You can visualize such a person using clichés as mentally lazy or routine-bound in his thinking. Hence, avoid them as far as practicable. Here are a few options to the clichés.

in a nutshell	briefly
when all is said and done	lastly
make a mountain of a mole hill	making an issue
beat about the bush	not coming to the point
left no stone unturned	tried my best



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5. Rephrase the sentences below by putting plain expressions to the underlined expressions:

(a) <u>At the very outset,</u> I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to this programme.

(b) The Bihu festival has become <u>a part and parcel</u> of our culture.

(c) I take pleasure in advising you <u>to make hay while the sun shines.</u>

(d) There is <u>a crying need</u> for addressing the drinking water problem in our city.

(e) <u>Last but not the least,</u> I may state that we must address these issues urgently.

4.9. PACING

The term 'pacing' in the present context refers to a technique of presenting the contents in a printed page that focuses on the page lay-out and design. The presentation of the text on a page is never a question of cosmetics or of prettying up the page. The pacing of the information on the page has a significant effect on reading comprehension. A page with not much white space in between, being filled with words and sentences, reduces readability. Two of the most common strategies of pacing are given here.

1. *Breaking apart long paragraphs:*

The basic unit in a piece of composition is the paragraph. The writer builds the total composition part by part through individual paragraphs. The length of a paragraph should not be too long. You will see from your individual writing that each paragraph in the composition contains a central controlling idea and enough particulars to put the idea across. It should not have more than one idea in which case a new paragraph has to be made for the new idea.

2. *Focussing important information in points or numbering them:*

If the central controlling idea contained in the paragraph contains a number of illustrative points these points can be placed in bullets to make the composition more attractive for the reader. To illustrate this point, let us go back to the example given at 4.6.(d) above to show how the information contained in the revised paragraph can be given in bullets.

Education has a number of aims of which the following four are the most important.

- It embellishes the personality of students and equips them to earn a living.
- It enables them to play their role as citizen in a democratic set-up.
- It inspires them to develop their hidden powers and faculties of nature.
- Moreover, it trains and transforms their culture and character for life making them fit for the citizenship of the world.

In this presentation of information, the pacing has made the content more readable, the density of the words and sentences in the page has considerably been reduced.



4.10. LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the following points:

- Good writing has certain distinctive features which a writer has to be familiar with. These include improving the choice of words and enhancing the power of expression.
- Good writing is cohesive in structure. The writer should have the ability to handle both covert and overt cohesive devices in writing.
- A good piece of writing must be coherent in the presentation of ideas. A piece of text that lacks coherence is difficult to comprehend.
- A piece of writing that can be considered to be good must have a precision in the use of language.
- It must have clarity which refers to the quality of a piece of text to be fairly expressive
- Besides, a good piece of text must be characterized by a simplicity of expression and free from grammatical or punctuation errors.
- Moreover, the piece of text must have a freshness of expression and must avoid clichés as much as possible.



4.11 FURTHER READINGS

1. Dowerah, Sawpon. A Students' Grammar of English, Guwahati : Students' Stores,
2. Sarkar, P. K. De. Higher English Grammar and Composition, Kolkata : Book Syndicate.
3. T. Taid and U. Dutta. English for School (A Practical Approach to English Grammer and Composition), Guwahati : Students Stores
4. Wren and Martin. High School English Grammar and Composition, New Delhi : S. Chand & Company.



4.12 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : A grenade was lobbed at the residence of Union minister of state for railways Rajen Gohain at Itachuli in Nagaon district at 11.35 last night.

The grenade, however, did not explode.

Nagaon superintendent of police Debraj Upadhyaya told The Telegraph over phone that there was no casualty.

Gohain and his family were not present when the incident occurred.

Special director general of police (law and order) Kuladhar Saikia and other senior police officials visited Nagaon today and took stock of the situation.

Ans to Q No 2 : Deny: The accused man denied the charge

Refuse: He refused to see him.

Device: This box is designed as a device for catching mice.

Devise: He devised a scheme for making cement bricks.

Childish: I don't like your childish behaviour.

Childlike: Gandhi was admired for his childlike simplicity.

Industrial: This part of the city has become an industrial area.

Industrious: His success is largely due to his industrious nature.

Popular: The Chief Minister is immensely popular.

Populous: Kolkata is a populous city.

Motif: Adventures at sea is the motif of his novels.

Motive: Hatred was his motive for attacking him.

Ans to Q No 3 :

(a) The sentences will be shorter. They will contain much less subordination. Hence, there will be much more repetition of essential nouns. Nearly all sentences will begin with the subject.

(b) Timely action is a very important thing in life. But very few people realize its significance. They do not know that many things would not have happened had suitable action been taken at the outset.

Ans to Q No 4 : (a) One evening, on their way to a remote university, Einstein said, "I wish I didn't have to give my lecture tonight, Hans. I'm so tired. But I can't let my audience down, can I?"

(c) On a fine Sunday in the late summer of the year 1533, more than four hundred years ago, a baby girl was born in a palace at Greenwich on the River Thames, between London and the sea.

Ans to Q No 5 : (a) I must begin by thanking the organizers.....

(b) ... an essential part of our culture.

(c) ... in advising you to make good use of your opportunities.

(d) There is an urgent need....

(e) Finally, I may state that...



4.13. MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What does clear and logical writing depend on?

Q.2 : How can we increase our vocabulary and expression?

Q.3 : What is the function of an opening paragraph in a piece of writing?

Q.4 : What are the three parts of an essay?

Q.5 : What is cohesion?

Q.6 : What is coherence?

B. Short questions (Answer each question in about 150 words):

Q.1 : Write an essay on one of the following topics:

(a) Social media

(b) Environment degradation

(c) Conservation of wild life

C. Long questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words):

Q.1 : Write a review of a book that you have read commenting on the use of language by the author in terms of precision, clarity, etc.