UNIT-8 : COMPOSITION

UNIT STRUCTURE

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8.5 Review writing
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8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- familiarize yourself with the skill of column writing
- understand the techniques of science write-ups
- develop strategies of reviewing books and films.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit has been titled ‘Composition’. What exactly is a composition? We can define composition as a continuous piece of writing-varying in form, length and in the treatment of the subject matter. A 500 word column for a newspaper is a composition, a science write up of equal length is also a composition, 100-200 word review of a book or a film is also a composition. In this unit, the word ‘composition’ is used as a super-ordinate term for all

kinds of continuous writing. At a time when there is such a high demand for good newspaper contributions, feature or column writing can be considered one of the most popular forms of writing.

Likewise, we are all aware of the huge amount of books and films coming out everyday. There are more books and films being brought out than one can possibly read or see. But we like to know what a book or a film is about. The print media gives a lot of space for book reviews and film reviews. We should develop the ability to write various reviews of books being published or films being released.

A basic assumption of this course is that if you follow certain practical principles and methods, you can definitely improve your composition skills to perform activities like column writing, science writing and book and film reviewing.

8.3 COLUMN WRITING

Let us begin by asking ourselves what a 'column' is. There are several meanings of this word.

(1) It is a standard vertical division of a newspapers page, hence comes the word 'column' measure.

(2) The vertical division of the news page is usually referred to as a column. A standard size newspaper is divided into five to eight columns.

(3) A signed article of opinion or strong personal expression frequently by an authority or expert is also a column. Thus, we have a sports column, a political or social column and so on.

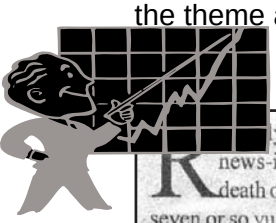
From the word 'column', we get the word columnist. A regular writer on a particular subject is a columnist. He is usually a feature writer.

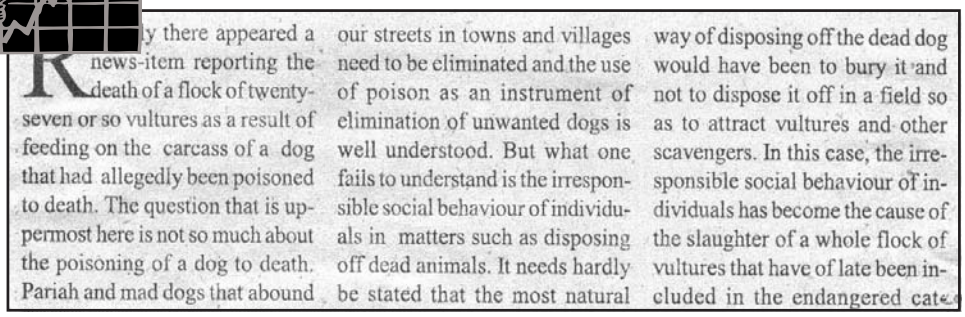
We use the term 'Feature' in the context of column writing to refer to an article emphasizing the human or subjective aspects of a situation. It is differentiated from straight news. That is, a feature is not meant to deliver news first hand. It usually recaps major news that was reported in a previous issue of a newspaper. It can stand alone or be a corollary to the main story published elsewhere.

One of the important points about a feature is its timeliness. A feature to be read and appreciated must have immediate reference to what the reader knows only sketchily. A feature, in the circumstances must fill in the readers with new information of which he has been hitherto ignorant. It must provide him with all that he wanted to know but had not time to enquire about.

As an illustration, let us first of all refer to a news item that had appeared in the Assam Tribune. The news is about the death of a whole flock of vultures for repeatedly eating the carcass of a dog that had been killed by poisoning in Chaigaon area in Kamrup District of Assam. A few weeks after this news item appeared, there appeared a feature article titled "Conservation of Wildlife".

Let us take a close look at the structure of this article which, it is expected, will throw light on the techniques of writing a feature in a column. Perhaps the best way to begin a feature is to focus upon the contemporariness of the theme. The author takes this "timeliness" as the springboard to introduce the theme as illustrated below in the opening section of the feature.





ly there appeared a news-item reporting the death of a flock of twenty-seven or so vultures as a result of feeding on the carcass of a dog that had allegedly been poisoned to death. The question that is uppermost here is not so much about the poisoning of a dog to death. Pariah and mad dogs that abound our streets in towns and villages need to be eliminated and the use of poison as an instrument of elimination of unwanted dogs is well understood. But what one fails to understand is the irresponsible social behaviour of individuals in matters such as disposing off dead animals. It needs hardly be stated that the most natural way of disposing off the dead dog would have been to bury it and not to dispose it off in a field so as to attract vultures and other scavengers. In this case, the irresponsible social behaviour of individuals has become the cause of the slaughter of a whole flock of vultures that have of late been included in the endangered cat-

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. How does the author focus upon the timeliness of the above feature? (Answer in one sentence)

……

……

……

Q. 2. Choose the appropriate answer from the alternatives given

In the opening section of the feature, the author stresses as

(A) the death of a flock of vultures

(B) irresponsible social behaviour of individuals

(C) killing mad dogs using poison

Ans :

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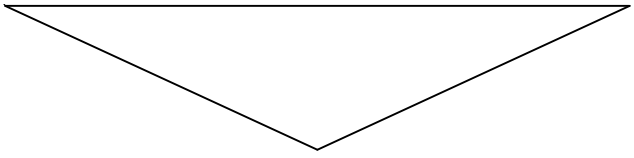
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You will note that in writing a Feature you have to be cautious of the style of presenting of the material. The style is different from – in fact, just opposite to – a news report. Note this difference:

- News-reports are written mostly in the inverted pyramid formal structure and style. On the other hand, Features follow the structures of essays and discussion.
- News-reports do not present the reporter's distinct point of view but a feature does. In a feature, the author presents his / her point of view.
- Unlike news-reports, features are generally longer and are not constrained by a hand news-peg although they still need some element of timeliness.
- While hard news attempts to tell what is happening, features have more room to develop why and how something is occurring and provide more perspective.

Let us ponder for a moment. What is meant by the expression "inverted pyramid". Look at this diagram:



This is a figure of a pyramid turned upside down. A news report follows this structure. It begins with the 'lead' in which the entire news-story is given. What follows after the lead is merely illustration of what has been referred to in the lead; hence, the pyramid structure.

While stating that a feature follows the structure of an essay, it is assumed that the essay has a fixed structure. We shall use that structure for features also. Generally, the Feature follows a linear structure as follows:

- Introduction
- Main body
- Conclusion

If you are given a word limit – say 500 words – you might split it up thus:
Introduction: around 50 words

- Main body: around 300-350 words
- Conclusion: around 100 words

This is quite a sound plan and reflects a logical approach. You might, for example, need to define your terms or to indicate how you intend to tackle the topic. This would provide appropriate materials for an introduction.

In the main body you could deal with three or four main points, ideas, arguments, or aspects together with illustration and examples.
In the conclusion you could make your final point, recall the issues raised in the introduction, indicate a possible area for further study and review any important further implication.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 2

Q. 3. Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences

(i) A news-report follows the structure of _____

(ii) A feature has a _____ structure.

(iii) The structure of a feature can be described in _____ stages.

(iv) The feature provides the writer with a scope to present his / her _____.

(v) A feature is generally _____ than a news-report.

8.4 SCIENCE WRITE- UP

Science and technology is increasingly shaping and revolutionizing our everyday lives. Nowadays, we just cannot possibly think of our lives without the contributions of science and technology. So in that case the common public needs to know what scientists are doing and their inventions and other technological advancements. Science is often hard to comprehend. Science writing is difficult to digest for common people. Most people think that the difficulties of science arise out of necessity and out of the extreme complexity of scientific concepts, data and analysis. Complexity of thought need not lead to impenetrability of expression. As a result, science writing as a different genre has evolved.

Science writing encompasses a wide variety of niches that can include writing for newspapers, mass market magazines, trade publications, university press offices, broadcast media, and newsletters, among many other venues.

Science writing needs special technical skills. The main difference between science writing and writing in other academic fields is the relative importance placed on certain stylistics elements .So in this unit we will look into what is scientific writing and how to write a scientific write-up.

The basic purpose of scientific writing is not the mere presentation of information and thought, but rather its actual communication. It does not matter how pleased an author might be to convert all the right data into sentences and paragraphs ; it matters only whether a large majority of the reading audience accurately perceives what the author had in mind .

There are several different kinds of writing that fall under the umbrella of scientific writing.

- Peer – reviewed journal articles (presenting primary research)
- Grant proposals (You can't do science without funding)
- Literature review articles (summarizing and synthesizing research that has already been carried out)
- Popular Science articles (communicating scientific discoveries to a non –scientific audience)

The main purpose of scientific writing is to present data or ideas with a level of detail that allows a reader to evaluate the validity of the results and conclusions based only on the facts.

Some dos and don'ts in Scientific Writing :

1) **Precision –** You need to be precise in scientific writing. There is no scope for ambiguities as it creates confusion in the minds of the reader.
2) **Clarity –**You need to present your writing clearly .Language should be easy to follow**.**
3) **Objectivity –**Subjectivity needs to be avoided. Any claims that you want to make should be based on facts, not by intuition or emotion.

Certain points that need to be kept in mind while writing a science write up:

1) **Word choice –** Often several words may convey similar meaning, but usually only one word is most appropriate and that needs to be put in the given situation. For example :

"Population density is positively co-related with SARS transmission rate."

"Population density is positively related to SARS transmission rate**."** So you can see that in some contexts, "correlated" and "related" have similar meanings. But in scientific writing correlated conveys a precise meaning because it states the statistical relationship between the two variables. So, simply pointing out that two variables are related is not enough. Our readers want to know more precise relationship between the two. There fore it is important to choose the appropriate word**.**

2) **Phrasing choice**: The above mentioned idea is applicable here also in case of choosing the right phrase. For example, the phrase "writing of an investigative nature" could also be used in sciences. Also it might refer to a police investigation. So in that case a more specific phraseology needs to be used by avoiding ambiguous phraseology. Here it is noticed that repetition is to some extent preferable.

3) **Figurative Language:** Figurative language must be avoided because it is imprecise. For example "experimental subjects were assaulted with a wall of sound" does not convey the precise meaning of " experimental subjects were presented with 20 second pulses of nonspecific mating cells". Exclude similes and metaphors in scientific writing. You just cannot leave anything to imagination.

4) **Level of detail**: You should avoid irrelevant information but do include as much information as required. Whatever information you want to put must be followed by your reader easily without being distracted by irrelevant facts and descriptions.

5) **Quantify:** Whenever possible, use quantitative rather than qualitative descriptions. For instance a phrase like "development rate in the

30C temperature treatment was ten percent faster than development rate in the 20C temperature treatment " is more precise than the phrase "development rate was fastest in the higher temperature treatment . "

6) **Language use:** Complex ideas and concepts must be conveyed in a lucid manner. You need to distill complicated ideas into simple explanations. Use familiar terms rather than technical or obscure terms. Some expressions are given below with their simple alternatives :

COMPLEX	**SIMPLE**
Efficacious	**Effective**
Utilize	**use**
Elucidate	**explain**
Proximal	**close**

There are some situations where the use of a technical or obscure term is justified. For example , in a paper comparing two different viral strains , the author might use the word "enveloped " rather than the phrase "surrounded by a membrane ".

7) **Sentence Structure:** Science writing must always be precise. It should be written in simple sentences rather than complex sentences. Precision requires a fine level of detail. Careful description of objects, forces, organisms, methodology etc can easily lead to framing of complex sentences without pause which may cause difficulty for learners. So usually simple sentence is preferred.

For example :The osmoregulatory organ , which is located at the base of the third dorsal spine on the outer margin of the terminal papillae and functions by expelling excess sodium ions , activates only under hypertonic conditions . This sentence is too long and complex .Learner has to wait a longtime to get the main idea. So instead of that sentence a more simple sentence can be used like "Located on the outer margin of the terminal papillae at the base of the third dorsal spine , the osmoregulatory organ expels excess

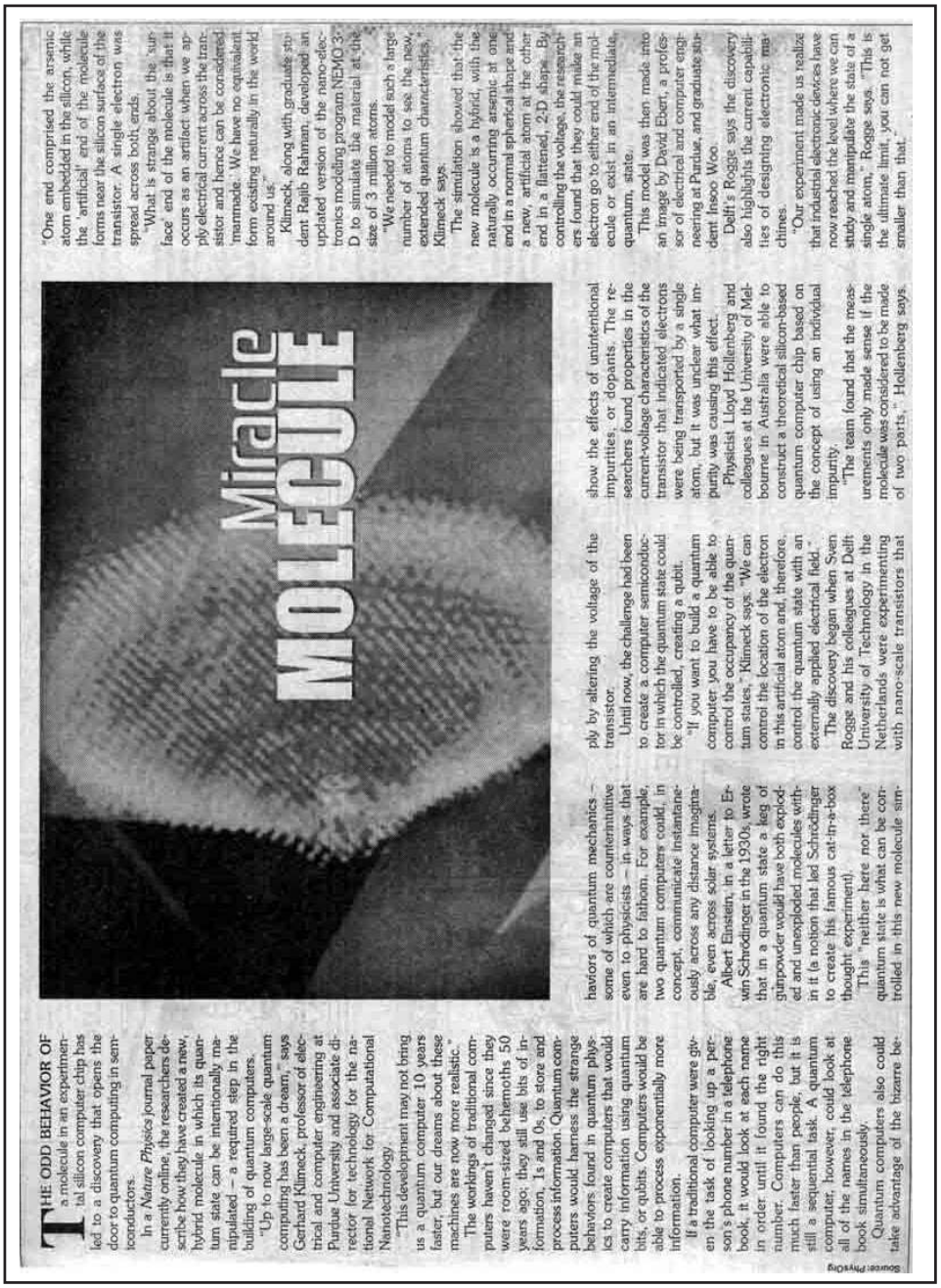
sodium ions under hypertonic conditions . “So you can see that a simpler sentence is easy to comprehend. Hence sentence structure needs adequate care in scientific writing .

8) **Verbosity**: Use concise writing .Most of the scientific writing is space limited.Grant proposals, journal articles, and abstracts all have word limits .So you need to concisely write your scientific writing. Common phrases like “the fact that,” “it should be noted that,” and “it is interesting that “are cumbersome and unnecessary in scientific writing.

9) **Use of Passive Voice**: Generally in science write up passive voice is used to enhance objectivity .But this again depends upon the reviewer who would instruct you whether to use passive voice or active voice. Just follow few guidelines below while using active voice :

- Avoid starting sentences with “I “ OR “WE “ because this pulls you out of the focus from the scientific topic at hand
- Avoid using “I “ OR “WE “ when you are making a conjecture ,whether it’s substantiated or not .Everything that you want to say should follow from logic , not from personal bias or subjectivity. Never use any emotive words in conjunction with “I” OR “WE”. For example “I believe”, or “we believe “.
- Never use “we” in a way that includes the reader.

10) **Use of illustration** : Tables, boxes, figures and diagrams referred to here as illustrations should always be used where they will save words or make your argument clearer



Miracle MOLECULE

THE ODD BEHAVIOR OF a molecule in an experimental silicon computer chip has led to a discovery that opens the door to quantum computing in semiconductors.

In a *Nature Physics* journal paper currently online, the researchers describe how they have created a new, hybrid molecule in which its quantum state can be intentionally manipulated – a required step in the building of quantum computers.

"Up to now large-scale quantum computing has been a dream," says Gerhard Klimeck, professor of electrical and computer engineering at Purdue University and associate director for technology for the National Network for Computational Nanotechnology.

"This development may not bring us a quantum computer 10 years faster, but our dreams about these machines are now more realistic."

The workings of traditional computers haven't changed since they were room-sized behemoths 50 years ago; they still use bits of information, 1s and 0s, to store and process information. Quantum computers would harness the strange behaviors found in quantum physics to create computers that would carry information using quantum bits, or qubits. Computers would be able to process exponentially more information.

If a traditional computer were given the task of looking up a person's phone number in a telephone book, it would look at each name in order until it found the right number. Computers can do this much faster than people, but it is still a sequential task. A quantum computer, however, could look at all of the names in the telephone book simultaneously.

Quantum computers also could take advantage of the bizarre behaviors of quantum mechanics – some of which are counterintuitive even to physicists – in ways that are hard to fathom. For example, two quantum computers could, in concept, communicate instantaneously across any distance imaginable, even across solar systems.

Albert Einstein, in a letter to Erwin Schrödinger in the 1930s, wrote that in a quantum state a keg of gunpowder would have both exploded and unexploded molecules within it (a notion that led Schrödinger to create his famous cat-in-a-box thought experiment).

This "neither here nor there" quantum state is what can be controlled in this new molecule simply by altering the voltage of the transistor.

Until now, the challenge had been to create a computer semiconductor in which the quantum state could be controlled, creating a qubit.

"If you want to build a quantum computer you have to be able to control the occupancy of the quantum states," Klimeck says. "We can control the location of the electron in this artificial atom and, therefore, control the quantum state with an externally applied electrical field."

The discovery began when Sven Rogge and his colleagues at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands were experimenting with nano-scale transistors that show the effects of unintentional impurities, or dopants. The researchers found properties in the current-voltage characteristics of the transistor that indicated electrons were being transported by a single atom, but it was unclear what impurity was causing this effect.

Physicist Lloyd Hollenberg and colleagues at the University of Melbourne in Australia were able to construct a theoretical silicon-based quantum computer chip based on the concept of using an individual impurity.

"The team found that the measurements only made sense if the molecule was considered to be made of two parts," Hollenberg says. "One end comprised the arsenic atom embedded in the silicon, while the 'artificial' end of the molecule forms near the silicon surface of the transistor. A single electron was spread across both ends.

"What is strange about the 'surface' end of the molecule is that it occurs as an artifact when we apply electrical current across the transistor and hence can be considered 'manmade.' We have no equivalent form existing naturally in the world around us."

Klimeck, along with graduate student Rajib Rahman, developed an updated version of the nano-electronics modeling program NEMO 3-D to simulate the material at the size of 3 million atoms.

"We needed to model such a large number of atoms to see the new, extended quantum characteristics," Klimeck says.

The simulation showed that the new molecule is a hybrid, with the naturally occurring arsenic at one end in a normal spherical shape and a new, artificial atom at the other end in a flattened, 2-D shape. By controlling the voltage, the researchers found that they could make an electron go to either end of the molecule or exist in an intermediate, quantum, state.

This model was then made into an image by David Ebert, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Purdue, and graduate student Insoo Woo.

Delft's Rogge says the discovery also highlights the current capabilities of designing electronic machines.

"Our experiment made us realize that industrial electronic devices have now reached the level where we can study and manipulate the state of a single atom," Rogge says. "This is the ultimate limit, you can not get smaller than that."

Source: Physics

SOME GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED WHILE WRITING A SCIENTIFIC WRITING:

There are three fundamental aspects to good science writing –planning the structure, thinking about your reader, and choosing your words.

Always remember the following points when you write a science write up.

- Be concise. Clear thinking and careful planning lead to economy of expression and avoidance of repetition and padding.

- Use simple words. Good style doesn't require you to be pompous or flamboyant.
- Write short sentences. Avoid long sentences as it becomes difficult for the reader to comprehend.
- Take care with your grammar.
- Beware of fashion. Words and phrases can become fashionable and over used, and their meaning often becomes uncertain.
- Use your own words as far as possible so that it because it will be more understandable to readers.
- Use words correctly .Always write with a good dictionary at hand.
- Use words that your reader will understand. Always remember knowledge of technical expressions (jargon) is often limited to a comparatively small group of people.
- Spell correctly. Use a good dictionary.
- Take care with the use of 'I' as I have mentioned earlier.

So by now you must have graduated to the level of becoming a science reporter. Just remember that a science reporter need not necessarily be a specialist in science. What is essential is a background in science and a scientific temperament. A science reporter must update himself with the latest developments of science and be aware of the major scientific research. So your job is to write the highly technical scientific news for common reader in an understandable and readable way. So enjoy writing science write ups.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 3

Q. 4. What are the three fundamental aspects of good science writing?

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Q. 5. What are the different kinds of writing that fall under the umbrella of scientific writing?

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8.5 REVIEW WRITING

A review is a short discussion or a brief critical article in a paper, periodical or journal on a specific topic. The topic is usually a recently published book or a recently released film, a telefilm or even a musical album. The objective of a review is generally to evaluate or judge the qualities, merits or the value of the work under review. The person who does the review work is the reviewer.

In this section of the unit, we shall look at the steps involved in the process of (a) book reviews and (b) film reviews. The basic purpose is to help you to develop certain skills and techniques that are useful in making a critical review of a book that you have read or a film you have seen. The section provides methods and materials to help you make value judgment on the work at hand.

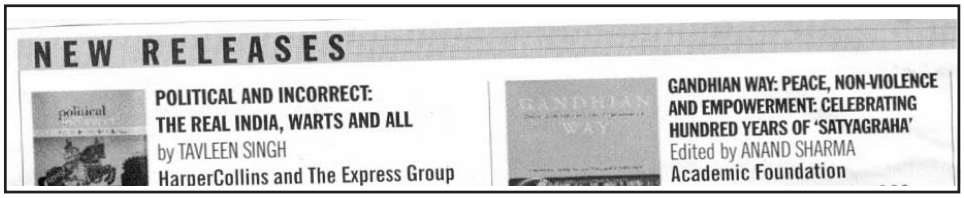
8.5.1 BOOK REVIEW

We all know that there is no end to the publication of books. There have always been more books than anyone could read. It is difficult to state that all the books that have been published are readable. Francis Bacon, (1561-1626) the eminent essayist, in his remarkable essay “Of Studies” says: “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested.”

How would we know which are the books to be ‘Chewed and digested”? It is at this point that the importance of the reviewers is realized. Many people down the centuries had given their views and opinions on the books they thought were worth reading. They made what Mortimer C Adler calls “blue-ribbon lists of books” in which they included both ancient and modern classics. They provide guidance to the new reader to choose between a good book and trash.

The book reviewer has a very important social role to play. He / she introduces a book to the reader highlighting its merits by making a number of considerations: social, moral, ethical, academic, and so on.

Newspapers, periodicals and journals also play a very important role in the society by introducing to the readers the titles of the best books recently released with their ratings. Some publications like India Today do two things (a) They introduce new releases with a print of the cover, the name of the book, the author, the publisher, the price and the number of pages that the book contain. In addition, there is a very brief review of the book in just one or two sentences. Here are two titles introduced by India Today in its January 7, 2008 issue:


NEW RELEASES

POLITICAL AND INCORRECT:
THE REAL INDIA, WARTS AND ALL
by TAVLEEN SINGH
HarperCollins and The Express Group

GANDHIAN WAY: PEACE, NON-VIOLENCE AND EMPOWERMENT: CELEBRATING HUNDRED YEARS OF 'SATYAGRAHA'
Edited by ANAND SHARMA
Academic Foundation

Note how the information about the books are given and how in a single line, each book is introduced.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 4

Q.6. Read the above text of the review of Tavleen Singh's book and answer the following questions.

(a) What political ideology is the thrust of this book?

_____

_____

_____

(b) What is the book about?

_____

_____

_____

Q.7. Read the text of the review of Anand Sharma's book and answer the question.

(a) Who is the author of the book?

_____

_____

_____

(b) What is the theme of the book?

_____

_____

_____

They also present a full length review of a book. For example, the February 11, 2008 issue of India Today presents a review of Manohar Malgaonkar's book The Men who killed Gandhi. What is the approach that the reviewers take while reviewing the book? This point will be clear when we take a close look at the text. Most reviewers have framework in mind while approaching a book. As a general case, the framework could include the following steps:

1. What is the book about? While taking this step, the reviewer introduces the general theme of the book. For example, reviewing Malgarkar's book, the reviewer Dilip Buff, in the opening paragraph states:

"This book is a reprint of the 1978 original ... ... with some rare photographs and documents unearthed by the publishers and not the author Manohar Malgaonkar, now 95 and a virtual recluse."

Dilip Buff has reviewed another book on Gandhi titled Goodbye to Gandhi by Bernard Imhesly (Viking : Rs.425: pp195) where a similar format is followed wherein in the opening paragraph while introducing the theme of the book, challenges the title by ironically suggesting two others and states that the sub-title "Travels in the New India" could have been more than appropriate. For, the author travels to places and cities associated with Gandhi, "to retrace

Gandhi's footsteps, finding echoes of his message and establish whether his ideals are followed.".

Amitabh Mathoo's review of Battle for Peace by Krishna Kumar (Penguin : Rs.175 : pp 152) also follows a similar framework beginning with a brief background followed by the subject matter of the book :

"Krishna Kumar's Battle for Peace is a thoughtful extended essay that explores the apparent Manichean divide between the two countries and the possibilities of a new way forward with skill and in Indian sensitivity."

2. How is the content organized? By 'organizing' is implied the process of arranging interdependent elements into a functional or logical whole. Most reviewers consider this point as the 'body' of the article – the main stage – in which the content of the book is introduced. Amitabh Mathoo, in the work cited above, says about the organization of the content of Battle for Peace as follows:

"In a slim volume, Kumar covers considerable terrain: the partition, episodes of Gandhi and Jinnah, a critique of narrow nationalism and modernity and the challenges of globalization. It is in the education system of the two countries that Kumar finds problems, but also the potential for engineering real change."

It is also possible at this stage to highlight the concerns of each chapter of the book to bring out the interrelation among them. For example Bulbul Sharma in her Shaya Tales (Penguin Rs.200 pp 165) divides the book into seasons so as to bring out the impact of different seasons on the hill folk, the local economy and her surrounding. The reviewer can discover how the author is trying to form a cohesive pattern in the different chapters of a book that contribute to the whole.

3. How is the conclusion drawn ? Finally, let us come to the third step that we can take in reviewing a book – the concluding step. Read the concluding part of a well-written review of Bulbul Sharma's book cited above.

"By the end of the book, a decade later, electricity has changed everything : almost every house has a television set. For jaded urbanites, however, Sharma brings alive the magic of the mountains, the dew on the grass, the freshness in the air, the flowers and the birds and the seasonal colours that surround her private paradise. Only someone with her love of nature and a painter's sensibilities would choose that life but Shaya, for us jaded urbanites, is like a breath of spring, a reminder of simple pleasures, simple people with simple needs and the rejuvenating beauty of the Himalayas."

The above concluding paragraph of the review of Ms Sharma's book makes it clear that a reviewer can afford to give a personal response to a book. One can even afford to suggest to the author other options that would have made the book more comprehensive or thematically more powerful. A very interesting concluding line is Amitabh Matto's review of Sandeep Bamzai's Bonfire of Kashmiriyat where the reviewer suggests to the author :

"Bamzai has promised another book on Kashmiris; therefore a piece of advice: Write like a journalist and think like a scholar and, please, not the other way round."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - 5

Q.8. While reviewing a book, three steps have been proposed. Identify the steps:

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

Q.9. What is the main concern in the first step of reviewing a book?

_____

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_____

Q.10. Several options have been suggested in the second step. Briefly state one option.

_____

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Q. 11. Briefly state what happens at the third stage.

_____

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8.5.2 FILM REVIEW

A film, like a novel or a play, is also a work of art and it can be assumed that the film reviewer nearly follows the same steps while reviewing a film. For example, the first thing that the reviewer attempts to find out is what the film is about?

To illustrate this point, let us take a close look at extracts of a review of J.P. Dutta's film Umrao Jaan starring Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan. The reviewer Anupama Chopra, at the beginning of her review, attempts to find an answer to the question 'What the film is about?' in the following way:

"The film follows Amiran/Umrao's tumultuous life from childhood to old age. Dutta painstakingly recreates the world of the Lucknow Kotha, the artistry of the courtesans and the decadence of the nawabs…"

That is, at the beginning, the reviewer introduces the subject matter of the film.

But what distinguishes a film from a book is its immediate appeal. The screen comes alive with a riot of colours, music, dialogues, songs and dances, fights and so on with such vivid intensity that the printed word hardly succeeds in doing that. The reviewer of Umrao Jaan is overwhelmed by this aspect of the film.

"With its sumptuous intentions, textiles, jewellery and Rai's overwhelming beauty the film is a sensory overload…."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 12. What is the point of similarity between the opening of a book review and that of a film review?

_____

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Q. 13. What makes a film more captivating than the printed word?

_____

_____

_____

It is not that a film in order to be arresting needs good colour, extremely good looking casts and exotic settings. It may interest you to have what Adoor Gopalakrishnan, film maker from Kerala, had said when he saw the 16mm print of Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali without sub-titles or a full understanding of what the characters were saying in Bengali:

"But I was captivated by the spirit of the visuals, the haunting music and the small sound – these bamboo stems creating easily in the scene of the old woman's death!"

The music, the atmosphere and the setting must be appropriate to bring alive the world visualized in the film script. The reviewer of Umrao Jaan finds this aspect to be hopelessly inadequate in the film. "J.P. Dutta doesn't allow his characters room to breathe or grow", as Anupam Chopra observes.

"The performers race from one scene to the next so that Umrao's entire life can fit into the allotted screen time."

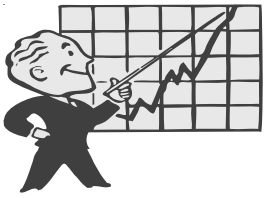
The step followed in a book review – the development of the

theme – is also appropriate for a film review. As in a book, in the film also we look for a totality of experience. Aristotle uses the word Catharsis to describe this experience in a Greek tragedy. Aristotle states:

"Tragedy through pity and fear effect purgation of such emotions."

A good film also provides a similar experience.

Novelist Anita Desai recalled seeing with her children Pather Panchali on a small television screen. She had earlier seen it at a morning show in Old Delhi …" Afterwards we stood on the pavement outside, blinking in the glance of daylight, blinded by tears ……." That is the totality of experience that a film- a good film- can transmit to the viewer.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS- 7

Q.14. What is a tragedy?

_____

_____

_____

Q.15. What according to Aristotle, does a tragedy do?

_____

_____

_____

Q.16. What does a good film do to us?

_____

_____

_____

Most film reviews end with a rating of the film. However, this may not be of much importance if from the beginning we have made an objective assessment of a film. Previewing Pather Panchali the reviewer finds himself overwhelmed by a flood of feelings and a crowd of images – the coming of monsoon rains, Harihar the poor Brahmin coming home, bringing presents for his children, not knowing that his daughter has died in his absence. After depicting these feelings, the rating "very good" is hardly necessary.



8.6 LET US SUM UP

Let us sum up our unit on headline writing with the following points:

- The virtical division of the mews page is usually refered to as a column.
- A regular writer on a particular subject is known as a columnist.
- A feature follows the structure of an essay
- Science writing encompasses a wide variety of miches that can include writting for newspaper, mass market magazines, trade publications and newsletters.
- A review is a short discession or a brief criteal article in a paper, periodical or journal on a specific topic.



8.7 FURTHER READINGS

1. Kamath, M.V. The Journalist's Handbook, *New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House*



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1. The author focuses upon the timeliness of the above feature by referring to the near endangered position that vultures are coming to.

Ans to Q. No. 2. Ans : B

Ans to Q. No. 3.

(i) an inverted pyramid

(ii) linear

(iii) three

(iv) point of view

(v) longer

Ans to Q. No. 4. Precision, clarity, objectivity.

Ans to Q. No. 5.

a) Peer – reviewed journal articles

b) Grant proposals

c) Literature review articles

d) Popular Science articles

Ans to Q. No. 6.

(a) socialism of the 80s.

(b) The book discusses the developments of the country taking place since the 80s to the present time.

Ans to Q. No. 7.

(a) It is a collection of essays by several persons.

(b) The essence of the philosophy of Gandhi

Ans to Q. No. 8.

(a) What is the book about ?

(b) How is the content organized?

(c) How is the conclusion drawn?

Ans to Q. No. 9. Introducing the main theme of the book.

Ans to Q. No. 10. Highlight the concerns of each chapter of the book to bring out the interrelation among them.

Ans to Q. No. 11. At the third stage, the reviewer gives a personal response to a book.

Ans to Q. No. 12. In both a book review and a film review, the writer is concerned with the thematic concern. He/ she tries to state what the book / the film is about.

Ans to Q. No. 13. A film is more captivating than the printed word is the immediate appeal that a film produces by using visuals, music and dialogues.

Ans to Q. No. 14. A tragedy is a play ending with a sad note.

Ans to Q. No. 15. A tragedy, according to Aristotle, purges our emotions.

Ans to Q. No. 16. A good film provides us with a totality of experience.



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

Q.1 : What are the different kindw of writting that fall under the umbrella of scientific writing?

Q.2 : What is the main purpose of scientific writing?

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

Q. 1. Write Feature articles on the following topics.

(a) Global Warming

(b) The Flood problem of Assam

(c) Vocational Education – Issues and Prospects.

(d) Global terrorism and what it means in India.

(e) Tourism and Assam: Issues.

Q. 2. Select any book that you might have read. Write a review of the book.

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

Q. 1. Write a review of a feature film that you might have seen.

Q. 2. Write a science write up of India's space programme.