

**STUDY NOTES ON
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
(MBA Batch 2021-23)
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A. COMMUNICATION BASICS

1. THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

1. COMMUNICATION - PROCESS AND ELEMENTS

The word 'Communication' is derived from the Latin term '**communis**' which means 'to share'. Thus, communication can be simply defined as "the sharing or exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two persons or groups through a common language or code of symbols."

The process of communication requires at least 5 elements:

1. Sender (Encoding)
2. Message
3. Medium or Channel
4. Receiver (Decoding)
5. Feedback

The communication process happens, through the following steps:

Step 1: The sender conceives an idea according to the purpose of communication.

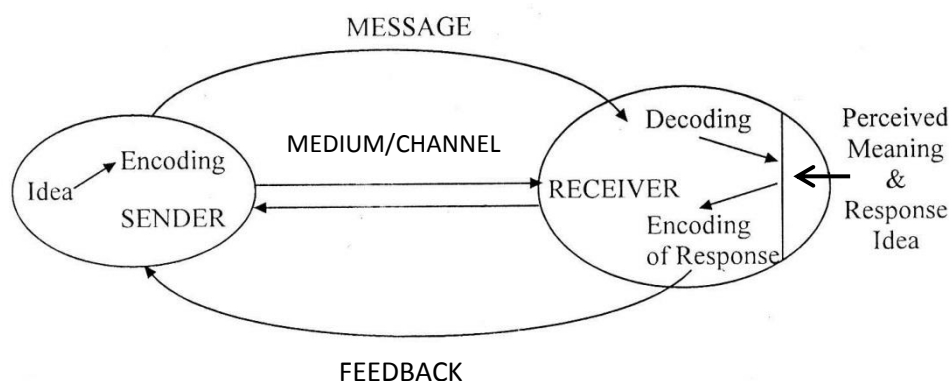
Step 2: The sender chooses a code (= a language) and puts the idea into the code (= encodes the idea) and thus formulates the message.

Step 3: The sender decides the appropriate medium or channel (oral, written or non-verbal) and sends the message through the chosen medium or channel.

Step 4: The receiver receives the message and understands it with the help of the knowledge of the common code (= language).

Step 5: The receiver sends the response and thus communicates to the sender that the message has been understood. This is known as feedback to the sender.

The process of communication represented in the diagram below:



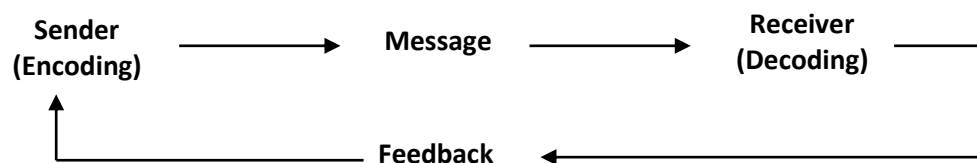
Thus, communication is a 5-step process in which (i) the sender has an idea and encodes this idea into a message, and (ii) the message is transmitted through speech, writing or body language. As the next step (iii) this message is received, decoded and understood by the receiver. (iv) After understanding the message, (v) the receiver encodes a response, and Finally sends appropriate feedback to the sender. This

completes one cycle of the process of communication. Usually communication continues between the original sender and the original receiver who takes turns and co-operate with each other throughout the process of communication.

Advanced Version

The word 'communication' is derived from the Latin word 'communicare' which means 'to share'. Thus, Communication can be defined as "the sharing or exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two persons or groups through a common language or code of symbol."

Process of Communication



The process of communication involves decisions and activities by the two persons involved, the sender and the receiver.

The **sender** begins the process of communication. The sender has to be clear about the **purpose** (or goal or object) of the communication and about the target audience (or receiver) of the communication; that is, the sender decides why and to whom to send a message. Conscious or intended communication has a purpose. We communicate because we want to make someone do something or think or feel in a certain way, that is, influence the person.

The sender has to decide what information to convey, and create the **message** (or content) to be conveyed by using words or other symbols which can be understood by the intended receiver. The process of putting the idea into symbols is called encoding; in order to **encode**, the sender has to select suitable symbols which can represent the ideas, and can be understood by the receiver.

The sender also chooses a suitable **channel or medium** (mail, tele phone, face-to-face talk) by which to send the message. The choice of the medium depends on several factors such as urgency of the message, availability and effectiveness of a medium, and the relation between the two communications. The choice of the medium/channel also influences the shape of the message.

Finally, the sender tries to note the effect of the message on the receiver; he checks whether the receiver has got the message, how the receiver has responded to the message, and whether he has taken the required action; this information about the receiver's response is called **feedback**.

Sender's functions make up half the process of communication. The functions of the sender are:

1. Being clear about the purpose and goal of the communication
2. Finding out about the understanding and needs of the target audience.
3. Encoding the required information and ideas with symbols to create the message to suit the receiver/audience
4. Selecting the medium to send the message
5. Making efforts to get feedback

The **receiver** becomes aware that a message has arrived when he perceives it with his senses(he may see, hear,feel,etc.). The receiver attends to the message and interprets it. The process of translating the symbols into ideas and interpreting the message is called **decoding**. Interpreting is a complex activity; it involves using knowledge of the symbols and drawing upon previous knowledge of the subject matter. The receiver's ability to understand, level of intelligence, values and attitude, and relation with the sender will influence his creation of meaning.

If the sender and the receiver have a common field of experience, the receiver's understanding of the message will be closer to what the sender intended.

The receiver also has a reaction to the message; this reaction may be conscious or unconscious.It may cause some change in the receiver's facial expression. The message definitely leads the receiver to think. The receiver may take some action, if required. He may also reply to the message. The reaction, the response and the reply together form the **feedback**.

The receiver's functions complete one cycle of the process of communication. The functions of the receiver are:

1. Attending to the received message, that is, listening, reading or observing
2. Decoding the received message
3. Interpreting and understanding the meaning of the message
4. Responding to the message
5. Giving feedback to the sender of the message

Thus, communication is a 5-step process in which (i) the sender has an idea and encodes this idea into a message, and (ii) the message is transmitted through speech, writing or body language. As the next step (iii) this message is received, decoded and understood by the receiver. (iv) After understanding the message, (v) the receiver encodes a response, and finally sends appropriate feedback to the sender. This completes one cycle of the process of communication. Usually communication continues between the original sender and the original receiver who takes turns and co-operate with each other throughout the process of communication.

2. Some Concepts in Communication

- (i) **Channel:** Channel is the medium which carries information from the sender to the receiver.

In oral communication, information is carried from the sender to the receiver through sound waves which travel in air and can be heard (auditory channel). Oral communication can be either 'face-to-face' or through a phone.

In written communication, the Sender produces visible marks on paper or an electronic screen which the receiver reads, and thus receives the message through the eyes. Here communication takes place through the visual channel. Gestures also make use of the visual channel.

In some cases, the auditory and visual channels are used together, for example, when a person says 'No' and shakes his/ her head at the same time.

- (ii) **Code:** Code refers to a system of symbols used for the purpose of communicating messages. A symbol is an object which represents a certain meaning. For example, green, yellow and red lights are symbols in the code of traffic lights. Similarly, every language is a code, in which words are symbols representing certain meanings.

Encoding is the process of using a code to create messages. Decoding is just the reverse process; it refers to the process of recovering meaning from a message with the help of a code.

- (iii) **Feedback :** 'Feedback' means the reverse flow of information from the Receiver to the Sender, through which the Receiver indicates that

(s)he has received and understood the message. Without proper feedback the process of communication will break down.

- (iv) **Filters:** Each one of us sees the world through a mental filter based on our personal experience and view of the world. This mental filter also colors our communication. The sender sees the world through one set of filters, and the Receiver sees it through a different set. Each message thus passes through two sets of mental filters. Communication can also be influenced by cultural filters. An American, for example, sees the world differently from an Indian because of cultural filters. A filter can sometimes be so powerful that it blocks or prevents communication altogether. The filter then becomes a **barrier**.

Anything that hinders or obstructs communication is called **noise**. Filters and barriers, whether psychological, cultural or linguistic, constitute noise along with physical noise which obstructs communication.

- (v) **Information Overload:** Information overload describes a situation, where the Sender transmits so much new information to the Receiver that the Receiver has difficulty in getting the message. Very often, communication breaks down in such situations.

In order to avoid information overload, the Sender mixes new information with old information and breaks the information into small parts for quick reception of the message by the receiver. The sender should also seek feedback from the receiver during communication so that (s)he can go for self-correction if there is an information overload.

Information overload can also happen when several different messages are received by the receiver at the same time and (s)he is unable to cope with the information.

- (vi) **The information Gap Principle:** In the process of communication, a Sender transmits information to a Receiver. If the Receiver already knows what the Sender transmits, (s)he will not be interested in the communication. There must be an information gap in the Receiver, which the Sender fills, so that communication can be interesting from the Receiver's point of view, and effective communication can take place between the Sender and the Receiver. This is known as the Information Gap principle, which is an important basis of all effective communication.

Transmission of information is possible only if there is a gap between the information provided by the sender and the information that the Receiver already has. The Sender must therefore make an informed guess about whether the Receiver already has the information which (s)he is going to transmit. The Sender must ensure that every message communicates some 'new' information.

However, if the information is totally new and the Receiver does not have any background knowledge, to which (s) he can relate the new information, (s)he will not be able to understand the message. An effective message should, therefore, be a mixture of 'old' and 'new' information.

3. Types of communication

A. VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Communication by using language is called verbal communication. It can be either oral or written. Communication through the use of signs and symbols is non-verbal communication. Verbal communication can be in the oral or the written form.

(a) Oral communication

Oral communication involves exchange of messages with the help of spoken words. It is most frequently used. It may take place through

- Face to face communication
- Mechanical and electronic device

Advantages of oral communication

- (i) It provides immediate feedback and clarifications. Receiver can immediately ask questions.
- (ii) It builds up a healthy environment by giving a personal touch to the relationship between superior and subordinate.
- (iii) It can be made more effective with supporting gestures and demonstrations.
- (iv) It is time saving and cuts down paperwork.
- (v) It is the most effective tool of persuasion and for resolving conflicts.
- (vi) It is effective for group interaction.
- (vii) It is economical both in terms of money and time.
- (viii) It is flexible as it provides ample scope to the sender to make himself clear and make amendments unlike written message which cannot be changed.

Disadvantages of Oral Communication

- I. It does not always save time and money. Very often meetings go on without results.
- II. It is not always effective since it depends a lot on attitude of sender and receiver.
- III. Limited human memory allows only limited retention of the messages. No records can be maintained.
- IV. In the absence of recorded or taped messages, oral messages do not have legal validity.

- V. Oral communication is not possible when parties who intend to communicate are at distant places and no means of communication is available.
- VI. It is not feasible when the message to be conveyed is very lengthy.

(b) Written Communication

Written communication is transmitted by written words in the form of letters, memos, circulars, bulletins reports, instruction cards, pamphlets, newsletters, handbook etc. It offers several advantages. It is suitable for lengthy messages which are not possible to convey through oral message. It is less likely to get distorted because it is difficult to alter the contents of written matter. The receiver too gets sufficient time to analyse and evaluate the message.

Therefore the response is well thought and records can be easily maintained. It is possible to communicate figures, diagrams etc. better through written communication. It also has certain disadvantages as it is often difficult to make amends once the written message has been dispatched. The efficacy of the message too is largely dependent on the language drafting skills of the sender. It also takes longer than oral communication to convey the message and seek clarifications. It cannot be emphasized upon by the use of non-verbal messages which makes it less rich in terms of the cues present.

B. NON- VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Speech is not the sole means of communication. People communicate even when they choose not to speak. When a person listens to someone speaking he does not merely interpret the words that are spoken to understand the message. He also looks at the person who is speaking and derives meaning from his gestures, the way the words are being said, appearance of the speaker etc. to understand the message in totality. Thus the receiver processes both verbal and non-verbal cues while receiving the message. Communication not involving the spoken word is referred to as non- verbal communication.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

1. Non-verbal communication is less prone to manipulation as it exists at a more subconscious level. Individuals are more often than not, unaware of how they communicate non-verbally.
2. It is more factual/true as compared to verbal communication. Since it is less prone to manipulation, it represents a truer picture of the individual.
3. Non-verbal communication also tends to be less consistent with respect to interpretation. For example the likelihood of a gesture being misinterpreted is very large as different individuals would interpret the same gesture differently.

4. Many non-verbal cues need to be considered perhaps together at times to arrive at an appropriate interpretation. Non-verbal communication may complement or contradict verbal communication.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION:

Communication is categorized as formal or informal according to the situation in which it takes place. In an organization, formal communication is a means of controlling activities through circulation of authoritative policies and procedures stating what is to be done when, where, how and by whom. Formal communication moves along the established “channels” of communication within the organization. It is impersonal (desk to desk) official, and in most cases, written. Formal meetings are documented by writing summaries and minutes.

Informal communication is personal, unofficial and mostly oral. It is based on the realization that personal interaction among employees is healthy for an organization. The purposes of informal communication are to educate through information sharing, to motivate through personal contacts and to resolve conflicts through participation and friendship. It maintains enthusiasm, loyalty and commitment by involving employees in organizational matters.

In formal communication we use the formal style of English, and the informal style is used in informal communication.

Formal English is used in ‘serious’ texts such as official documents, books, news reports, articles, business letters or official speeches. Informal English is used in everyday conversations and personal letters. Example : “*As the price of five dollars was reasonable, I decided to make the purchase without further thought*”. (Formal)

“*It was just five bucks, so I said, ‘Okay’*”. (Informal)

The following are the major differences between Formal English and Informal English:

Formal English	Informal English
1. Used in official, literary or academic writings	1. Used in everyday personal conversations
2. Sentences are longer and more complicated : “Toyotas’ sales bounced back in March as substantial discounts helped to win back customers who had been shaken by the firm’s mass safety recalls”.	2. Sentences are simpler and shorter : “Did you see Toyota’s sales figures ? Looks like discounts have really worked”.

3. The standard of correction is higher. * She's liking it. → (She likes it.) * I feel real good. → (I feel really good).	3. The sentences below are considered correct in informal English : She's liking it. I feel real good.
4. No contractions and few phrasal verbs are used in Formal English.	4. Informal English a) Uses contracted forms : I've seen him. I haven't been there. b) Uses <i>who</i> for formal <i>whom</i> : Whom do you want to meet? (Formal) Who do you want to see ?(Informal) c) Uses a lot of phrasal verbs <u>Looked into</u> for <u>investigated</u> .
5. <i>Precise vocabulary is used in formal English:</i> Fewer mistakes no significant differences Sufficient Demonstrates Dull, depressing Excellent Surely, certainly	5. Precision is not demanded in informal language. I have made less mistakes No big differences Enough It shows that Lousy Cool Sure, I want to leave the house
6. No slang expressions are allowed in formal English. : Chuck : Throw Hang on : Wait A drag : Bore	6. The frequent use of slangs makes informal English vivid and colourful.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Compared to communication that happens generally in the larger environment in society business communication is restricted to communication that takes place among business entities, in markets and market places, within organizations and between various groups of employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and customers, and also between people working in organizations and the media people.

Business Communication refers to "all day-to-day exchange of information and ideas among the employees within a business organization, and by the employees with outside stakeholders and entities, in the course of doing business."

General Communication & Business Communication

GC	BC
1. Broad Scope	1.Restricted scope-hence a subset of GC.
2. Not focused on Purpose and Persuasion	2. More purposeful and persuasive
3. Use of formal or informal language according to situation	3. Generally formal language
4. Less need for structuring	4. Logically organized - strictly follows an appropriate format such as a memo, a letter, an

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

These terms are used to describe the communication in an organization. It includes written, oral and non-verbal communication. Messages that move within the organization, among its members, are internal communication; messages that go out of the organization and are received from outside are called external communication.

Internal communication moves along the lines of authority, upward and downward, and also along horizontal lines among persons of the same status. Organizations have internal media for communication within the organization. Informal communication in the organization is called grapevine and moves mostly horizontally. The style and quantity of internal communication affect the atmosphere in the organization and can have impact on the business because employees who are comfortable and happy work better. Changes can be brought about in the organization's functioning by modifying the style of internal communication.

The style and tone of outgoing external communication affects the organization's public image. An organization needs a carefully considered policy with regard to its communication with the public. The messages which come from outside have to be properly documented passed to the concerned person for action and filed for future reference.

4. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

Verbal communication refers to the communication which occurs with the help of words. On the other hand, non-verbal communication is communication without the use of words. It is

the transmission of messages by some medium other than speech or writing. Thus, Non-verbal communication refers to the transfer of meaning by body language, sign language, space, time, and paralinguistic features of speech.

Aspects of Non-Verbal Communication

I. KINESICS: Body language or Kinesics refers to the movement of a part of the body, or movement of the whole body. Our body movement includes our head, eyes, shoulders, lips, eyebrows, neck, legs, arms, fingers, hands, posture, and gestures. Together these pieces can convey if we are comfortable, unhappy, friendly, anxious or nervous.

(i) **Facial Expression:** Face is the primary site for expressing emotions. It reveals both the type and the intensity of feelings. Facial expressions are usually a reliable indicator of the speaker's inner feelings. A wide range of meanings can be communicated by facial expressions. These are happiness, sorrow, fear, anger, surprise, disgust, interest, confusion and determination.

(ii) **Eye-contact:** Eyes are especially effective for indicating attention and interest, influencing others, regulating interaction, and establishing dominance. Eye contact has a cultural dimension. For example, in the USA, lack of direct eye contact connotes distrust or dishonesty and that the speaker is hiding information, whereas in many Asian countries eye contact is a sign of disrespect.

(iii) **Posture:** The body position of a person conveys a variety of messages. The posture of straight back expresses confidence and readiness to face challenges. Closed Postures, with features such as folded arms and crossed legs, indicate a closed personality and lack of confidence. A leaning posture towards the speaker conveys the listener's interest and attention, while leaning back away from the speaker means that the listener is disinterested and bored. Legs also communicate non-verbal messages. A person shifting from one leg to another while standing expresses nervousness. One needs to keep the legs still in interviews and meetings. One should never cross legs in formal settings.

(iv) **Gesture:** Gestures refer to movement of arms, hands and fingers. Many gestures have a specific and intentional meaning, for example, a wave of the hand means hello or good-bye. Most of us, when talking with our friends, use our hands to describe an event or an object. Ideally, a person's gestures should flow with the vocal channel so as to enhance the effect of verbal communication.

Arms give away clues as to how open and receptive a person is in an interaction. Keeping arms out on the side of the body or behind the back shows that the person is not scared to take on whatever comes his way and that he meets things "full frontal". In general terms, the more outgoing you are, the more you use your arms with big movements. When you want to be seen in the best possible light, you should avoid crossing the arms.

Palms slightly up and outward are seen as a mark of an open and friendly person. On the other hand, palm down gestures are generally interpreted as indicative of a dominant and aggressive person.

Conscious gestures made with fingers are known as emblems. Examples of emblems are the thumb-and-index-finger gesture that signals 'Okay', or the thumbs-up gesture expressing 'You win'.

II. HAPTICS:

Haptics or communication by touch is an important form of non-verbal communication. Although used most frequently during greetings and departures, touching may occur in a variety of circumstances, including a conversation. Touching comes in the form of pats, hugs and handshakes.

Touch is an important way to convey warmth, comfort and reassurance.

It is now well accepted that people greet each other and introduce themselves to one another with a handshake. A firm handshake with upright and vertical hands is the desirable kind, as it shows confidence and keenness. On the other hand, a limp handshake suggests inferiority feelings, and a 'bone-crusher' handshake suggests aggressiveness and a desire to dominate.

III. PROXEMICS: A fascinating area in non-verbal communication is that of proxemics or space relationship. Indians, Russians, Italians and Middle East people maintain smaller distances while making interpersonal communication. In contrast, Americans, Englishmen and Germans tend to maintain bigger interpersonal distances.

Edward Hall defines four primary distance zones by American standards:

- (i) Intimate zone (up to 18 inches)
- (ii) Personal zone (18 inches to 4 feet)
- (iii) Social zone (4 feet to 12 feet)
- (iv) Public zone (more than 12 feet)

Intimate distance is considered appropriate for familiar relationships, and it indicates closeness and trust. Personal distance of 4 feet is the most comfortable distance during business interactions and social functions. The Social zone is used during interactions with strangers and occasional visitors. Public zone is used in situations such as a public speech where two-way communication is not desirable or possible.

IV. CHRONEMICS: Chronemics refers to the use of time as a message system, including punctuality, amount of time spent on a job, and waiting time. Coming in time to office reveals your interest, sincerity and serious attitude towards work. Similarly, being scrupulous about our use of time on the job creates a positive impression about us with our superiors and colleagues.

V. PARALANGUAGE: Language deals with what is said; paralinguage deals with how it is said. Just as we can communicate various attitudes through our gestures and postures, we can express emotions and feelings with the help of different aspects of speech such as voice, tone, inflection, pitch, volume and tempo.

When we receive a call and hear 'Hello', we are able to make out the gender as well as the socio-linguistic and educational background of the caller. We can also identify whether it is a known voice or an unfamiliar voice. None of these meanings are contained in the word 'Hello'. These are all derived from paralinguistic features of the voice.

Tone: Tone is used to convey an attitude. It can be direct, commanding, harsh, soft, gentle, comforting, etc.

Inflection: Voice inflection is the way we change the tone of our voice to emphasize key words. The variation is caused by stressing or stretching a word or phrase and by pausing before a word or phrase.

Stressing: I've got a BIG project.

Stretching: I've got a b – i – g project.

Pausing: I've got a big project.

Pitch: Pitch refers to the rise and fall in tone. Pitch variation allows an oral message to acquire dynamism. It helps to remove the monotony of speech and also make the articulation persuasive. People in higher positions in an organization use high-pitched voice as compared to their subordinates. A high pitch characterizes a person who is emotionally charged, for example, when he is angry.

Volume: Maintaining an adequate volume of the voice is crucial for creating the right kind of impact on an audience. The speaker who speaks at a low volume is likely to be seen as someone lacking confidence and conviction. On the other hand, a speaker whose volume is too high may be seen as arrogant or boorish.

Tempo: Tempo refers to the rate of speaking – the number of words we utter per minute. Speaking too fast shows the speaker's lack of confidence. If the pace of speaking is too slow, the audience loses interest and feels bored. A speaker should, therefore, use a pace that is fast enough to keep the audience interested and to show the speaker's confident knowledge of the subject.

VI. PERSONAL APPEARANCE:

Although an individual's body type and facial features impose limitations, most people are able to control their attractiveness to some degree. Grooming, clothing, accessories, 'style'-all modify a person's appearance. If our goal is to make a good impression, we should adopt the style of the people we want to impress.

It may be noted in conclusion here that some non-verbal cues or expressions are culture-specific, whereas there are a few universal non-verbal cues. For example, direct eye contact in Asian cultures is regarded as disrespectful, whereas it is taken as a sign of confidence in western cultures. However, pointing a finger at someone is taken as an insulting gesture in almost all cultures.

5. COMMUNICATION NETWORK IN AN ORGANIZATION:

“Whether an organization is small or large, it is communication that binds the organization together.” Discuss in detail the flow of communication in an organization in the light of the above statement.

OR

“A free flow of information ensures the success of an organization.” Elaborate this statement in the light of the flow of communication in an organization.

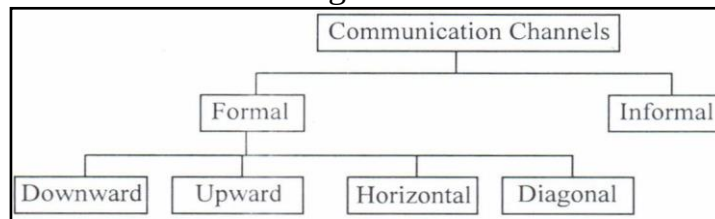
Communication is the life-blood of an organization. As life will come to an end without blood circulation in the human body, similarly an organization will become defunct without circulation of information and ideas among its managers and employees. Thus, an efficient communication network is vital for successful functioning of an organization. Such a communication network consists of various channels of communication in the organization.

Channel refers to the direction of transmission of messages within an organization. First of all, there are formal and informal channels of communication. **Formal Communication Channels** are those channels which are designed by the management to channelize the flow of communication along the formal structure of the organization. Such communication flow

is created along official positions to ensure regular, smooth, orderly, accurate and timely flow of information.

Informal Communication in an organization takes place outside the official channels. It is spontaneous and unofficial. It has no set directions. The informal communication channels in an organization is also called the grapevine, as they extend in various directions like a grapevine.

The communication channels in an organization can be classified as follows:



Formal Communication

Formal channels are structured and predictable. In the rational organisation formal channels are orderly and there are chains of command. Policy information flows downward to inform and transactional information flows upward to inform management of progress. The advantages and disadvantages of formal communication are broadly as under:

Advantages

- Seeks to achieve goals using the most efficient means of communication.
- Responsibility at each level of hierarchy is fixed.
- Ensures direct contact between the sender and the receiver of the message.
- Better relations are established.
- Solutions to problems are easily found.
- System is more effective as a rational mechanism for improving organisational performance.

Disadvantages

- Managers are more concerned with rules, directives, jurisdiction and the like which tend to increase the workload.
- As in bureaucracy, long line of superiors causes delay and consequent frustration.
- No premium is placed on simplifying decisions and ensuring human relationship factors.
- Cares only for limited, organizationally relevant behaviour rather than on the larger social, cultural and technological context of the surrounding environment.

Formal channels consist of the following four categories according to the direction of the flow of communication.

(i) **Downward Communication:** Downward communication refers to the flow of information from the superiors to subordinates in an organization. A communication from the general manager of a company to the branch managers is an example of downward communication. Downward communication is essential for the efficient functioning of an organization.

The first problem associated with downward communication is that information is quite often lost or distorted in its journey down the chain of command. It is time consuming; the more

the levels, the more chances of delay or dilution of information.

(ii) **Upward Communication:** Upward communication is the flow of information in an organization from lower levels to higher levels. As an example, when a Marketing Manager submits a report of a market survey to the Vice President (Marketing), (s)he is using the upward channel to communicate. The main purpose of upward communication is to provide feedback and suggestions on different areas of organizational functioning.

The upward flow of communication often creates a psychological problem. Generally the higher-ups do not like to be 'told' by their subordinates or to take their suggestions. As a result, the employees may feel let down and reluctant to participate in upward communication.

(iii) **Horizontal Communication:** In horizontal communication, messages flow among members of the same work group or among managers at the same level belonging to different departments or divisions. The communication between the Marketing Manager and the Production Manager is an example of horizontal communication. The purpose of horizontal communication is to facilitate co-ordination and harmony among work groups or departments in an organization.

Horizontal communication takes place mostly during committee meetings or conferences where peers interact with one another and take decisions or prepare inter-departmental reports. This channel of communication is necessary for inter-departmental conflict resolution and co-ordination.

(iv) **Diagonal Communication:** Diagonal communication takes place when employees in an organization communicate with one another beyond hierarchical status and established reporting relationships. The Production Manager (higher level) communicating with salesmen(bottom-level employees) of the marketing department to get their suggestions is an example of diagonal communication. Diagonal communication is the result of the growing realization of fraternity and common concerns in the corporate sector. It promotes trust and co- operation among managers and employees and expedites work.

On the downside, however, diagonal communication can encourage indiscipline and power-play among employees. It can also create coteries or favoured groups around a power – loving manager to the detriment of the organization.

Informal Communication:

Informal communication networks are vital in any hierarchical structure. Obviously,, a formal structure is quite rigid and indicates who is responsible for what and who communicates formally to whom. The informal structure is not exactly structured or documented in any organization, but it grows from the self-groupings that people naturally

form. All human beings are social animals. Whenever they come in contact with each other there will be incidental exchange of feelings and information. Such personal communication is a part of the work environment and is integral to the working lives of men and women. Such informal communication channels in an organization are called 'the grapevine' because they extend in all directions like a grapevine.

Advantages

- Speed of communication is faster than formal means.
- It is multi-dimensional.
- Recipients of the message react more quickly.
- It can supplement the existing formal channels of communication.

Disadvantages

- There can be half-truths and misinformation.
- Moves in an erratic manner without firm direction.
- No responsibility is fixed for anyone either as senders or receivers.
- Message changes according to motive of persons involved in the process.
- Difficult to exercise any check in the free flow of messages.

Significantly the informal system of communication can be as important as the formal process in fulfilling the goals of the organisation. In fact, informal channels, spring up by virtue of communication interests between people in organisations, caused by work, social or outside relationships. Not surprisingly, the late Mr. Dhirubhai Ambani (founder of one of India's largest business and industrial conglomerate, Reliance Industries Ltd.) had made a startling comment about the usefulness of the informal channel. He said, "If I plant a rumour I'll get a reaction within a day. If I send a formal memo, it takes three weeks to get a response, that too after a few reminders."

When information is introduced into the grapevine, it tends to travel quickly because it is not restricted by any structural constraint. Managers who stay in touch with the informal networks can use them strategically to expedite decision making in the right perspective. Prof. Keith Davis who made extensive research on organisational grapevine pointed out, "if properly guided, it (the grapevine) can build teamwork, company loyalty, and the kind of motivation that makes people want to do their best."

The Grapevine:

What do you mean by the grapevine in an organization? Discuss its usefulness.

Informal communication networks are known as the grapevine of an organization. They are vital in any hierarchical structure. Obviously, a formal structure is quite rigid and indicates who is responsible for what and who communicates formally to whom. The informal structure is not exactly structured or documented in any organization, but it grows from the self-groupings and interactions that people naturally form. For example, information communication happens around water coolers, in lunch rooms or company canteens, and wherever employees get together.

Within such informal structure, however, a lot of communication occurs but it is

mostly unplanned, oral interactions in organisations. Many such communications, operational or non-operational, are of personal nature. All human beings are social animals. Whenever they come in contact with each other there will be incidental exchange of feelings and information. Such personal communication is a part of the work situation and is integral with the working lives of men and women. Now, the problem comes as to what extent such personal communication should be permissible at workstations.

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The advantages of 'the grapevine' are :

- i) Speedy transmission of information
- ii) Quick and genuine feedback value
- iii) Employees' psychological satisfaction
- iv) Generation of new ideas.

Disadvantages

- There can be half-truths and misinformation.
- Moves in an erratic manner without firm direction.
- No responsibility is fixed for anyone either as senders or receivers.
- Message changes according to motive of persons involved in the process.

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According to Keith Davis, the grapevine transmits information through four kinds of chains:

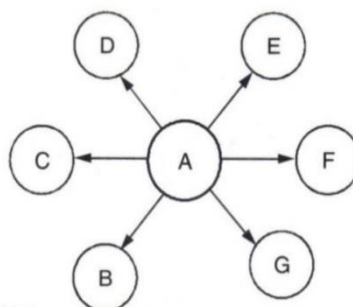
- i) Single strand
- ii) Gossip
- iii) Probability
- iv) Cluster (most popular).

1. *Single strand (one-to-one)*: It is essentially a single strand network. The individual communicates with other individual, that is, one tells another on a selective basis.



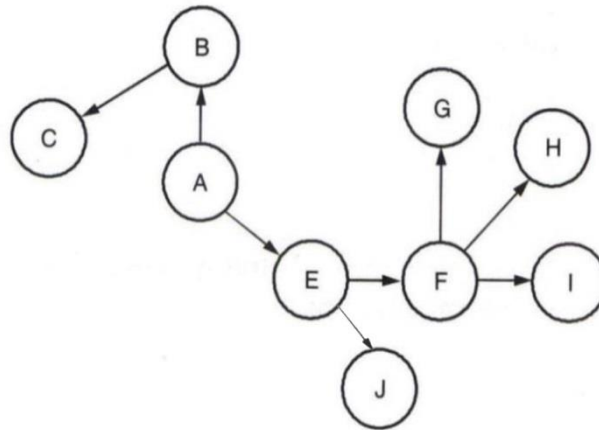
In the process, A tells B, who tells C, who tells D and so on. Many times, it is like one tells one and one tells everyone.

2. *Gossip (one to many)*: A actively seeks and tells everyone

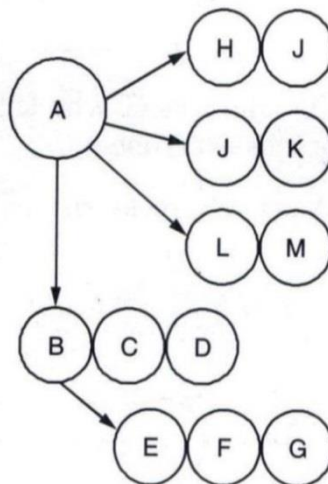


This is like a wheel in which A is at the centre. A passes the information along the spokes of the wheel to others stationed on the rim. Finally, it is a group of people sharing the same information with possibilities of distortion according to motive.

3. **Probability (one to many):** Also known as a **random chain**, here A tells others according to laws of probability. These others tell still others in a similar manner.



4. **Cluster (one to few, few to few):** This is the most popular form of grapevine communication. A tells selected persons who may in turn relay the information to other selected individuals. But group entity is highly noticeable in the cluster process.



In the larger perspective, grapevine is often described as the barometer of public opinion. Therefore, in the organizational framework howsoever well-structured or disciplined it is- the importance of grapevine is a well-recognized truth. Its advantages outweigh its demerits:

- Grapevine acts as a safety valve in time of stress and threat, and provides emotional relief to all those who are a part of the grapevine.
- It can raise the morale in times of difficulties at the personal or group levels.
- Functions in addition to official channels of communication with the distinct advantage of greater speed of transmission.
- Provides much needed feedback to the management when many other channels have dried up.
- If properly used and efficiently handled, the management of an organisation can turn it into a constructive tool.

Effective Use of the Grapevine

Management can use it as a constructive tool in the following ways :

1. Keep the employees well-informed about policy matters and future plans and prospects to check speculation.
2. Organize group activities to enhance knowledge, skills and self-worth.
3. Follow open-door policy without an eye on popularity.
4. Identify leaders and win their confidence.
5. Associate them with the decision- making process.
6. Plant desirable stories in the interest of the organization

How far is it desirable or possible to put a break or control rumours within an organisation? No organisation can ever stop the grapevine fully, and so managers should concentrate on stopping only those rumours which become malicious or destructive. To cut rumours short, disseminate the information that people need or want without delay. Provide full facts clearly and accurately. Additionally, official communication channels must be kept open. Encourage more direct interaction.

Managers must attempt to identify actions or situations which might lead to grapevine. Then, management should hold organised group activities at which key opinion moulders, influential employees and management officials meet to discuss and combat the identified causes and disseminators of the rumours. As counter measures, managers should feed the grapevine with actual information and seek to get the facts through the informal channels of communication.

B. LANGUAGE SKILL – I: LISTENING

Effective listening is the process of analyzing sounds, organizing them into recognizable patterns, interpreting the patterns and understanding the message by inferring the meaning. Listening is not to be confused with hearing. Hearing is a physiological process which involves receiving the sound waves by the eardrum and transferring them to the brain. Listening is more than hearing. It involves the process of interpretation and inference. Listening is extremely important in the communication process. Many of the problems we experience with people are primarily attributable to ineffective listening or lack of listening. Good listening skills are the foundation of effective human relations. Good listeners can be good negotiators and can handle crisis situations successfully.

1. Advantages of Listening

Generally, in organizations, the communication channels defy the hierarchal levels. Under any circumstances, listening has the following benefits:

- Brings relevant information
- Provides a great way to share knowledge and experiences
- Resolves the challenges or issues faced on the personal or the official front.

In many organizations, decisions are often taken on the basis of feedback from the employees secured in direct interaction with them. Interaction with the customers also helps a company take vital decisions. However, many organizations do not take the opinions of customers and employees very seriously. This is a wrong practice.

Consider an example. A company might take a policy decision on, say, the minimum number of hours that employees should put in at work, without consulting the employees. This lack of consultation might turn out to be a cause of concern as the employees might assume that the company 'mistrusts' them. Listening helps to break the barrier between people and prevent revenue loss and time loss, and thereby strengthens the organization.

Corporations exist because of their customers and employees. Employees are the medium through which corporations listen to their customers. If the job of listening is not done well, then the corporation is bound to suffer in the long run. Similarly, since the customers are being served by the employees, it is essential that corporations listen to their employees. Corporations here refer to the top management at the helm of affairs.

All the three stakeholders are interconnected and all of them need to listen to one another. Listening, here, is a three-way process, where corporations listen to customers and employees, and the employees listen to the company's customers. Understanding this fact is important for the company to make progress.

Proper listening amongst corporations, employees, and customers has many advantages. From an organization perspective, listening helps in the following ways:

- *Makes decisions better and faster:* When organizations listen, they are able to understand the process bottlenecks in the organizations and the problems, if any. In addition, if there are any issues that are causing problems to the employees or customers, corrective actions can be taken immediately.
- *Improves policy-making for the employees:* Often policy decisions are taken keeping the employees in mind and to give a sense of direction or structure to the organization. Policies can either be extremely helpful – for example, for giving the employees a clear sense of direction – or can be a hurdle that does not serve the general interest of the company. Before making any kinds of policy decisions, it is important to listen to the employees and grasp the issues. If a policy is planned, it should be open for discussions, and the important issues raised by employees should be addressed.
- *Eases the flow of communication, which makes the organization more open:* Communication is a two-way process. Just as instructions are passed from top to bottom, information moves from bottom to top. Moreover, the employees are the face of the organization and they need to be heard. If the senior management and managers listen to their subordinates, this accommodative spirit creates channels of communication, which ultimately make for open organizations.
- *Improves productivity and nurtures creativity at work:* On the shop floor, many interesting insights can be provided by the technician or foreman at work. Similarly, organizations that employ knowledge workers may find that they have several innovative ideas to offer. A classic example of this is the 3M* Post-it* notes. This product was developed in 3M's lab by an employee. In many companies, employees are asked to give suggestions and these ideas are worked upon. Employees are also encouraged to think out-of-box and improve processes, which, in turn, means time savings and, therefore, cost savings.

Listening also helps employees feel more confident and improves bonding. It helps resolve grey areas that might be troubling the employees. Listening helps understand the customers better.

The success of management concepts are based on the managers' ability to listen. Quality, production, human resources, and marketing are among departments that cannot function without listening. If the process have to be improved, it is essential to listen to the workers. They are, ultimately, the think tanks of any organization.

Listening cannot be a one-way process. As heads of organizations, and also as managers, we must never stop listening to our subordinates. If we do, and keep ourselves away from them, any kind of task that requires teamwork is bound to fail. This communication gap happens in very large organizations, when the span of

control increases and a person has to manage more than 50 or 100 people. The most popular managers are the ones who regularly interact with and listen to their subordinates.

From an employee prospective, proper listening has the following benefits:

- *Helps understand the work better:* Employees are able to do their work more efficiently when they listen to the manager, while the latter is assigning tasks to them. The employees can immediately clarify their doubts.
- *Improves efficiency:* Better listening means better efficiency at work, as it helps understand the task at hand better, Proper execution of work can be ensured.
- *Helps understand the customer expectations better:* Employees who listen to their customers will be able to understand them better and provide solutions that are appropriate.
- *Facilitates bonding with the team members:* Listening to your team members helps them to develop better relationships with you as a person. You will be looked at differently from the rest of the team members who do not listen. Listening helps you become popular amongst your team members.

It is, therefore, clear that listening forms an essential part of the work dynamics. The more interaction you have as a leader or manager, the better would be the work environment, because listening will help the leaders or managers of the organization to feel the pulse of the organization and take corrective actions wherever necessary.

2. TYPES OF LISTENING:

As a listener, the first step that we should take is to understand the different types of listening. This understanding will help mould us as listeners and make us aware which type of listening we should adopt in each particular instance.

Listening could take three forms. There would be situations when we have to listen to get information. Another situation could be that of a person approaching us to discuss a certain situation or experience. The third type would be a situation when you are listening to a product demonstration from a sales, agent, and you need to take a purchase decision that would be crucial to your business. All the three types of listening and the approaches to them are different. As listeners, we often do not realize these differences and are not 'conscious' about the type of listening that we need to adopt.

Content Listening:

Content listening is primarily to receive information, to learn something, or to keep yourself abreast of a situation. Other examples of content listening would be listening to the technical specifications of a product during a product launch in a company or

listening to the highlights of your company's performance during the CFO's live talk on the intranet. While content listening is about getting information, it would not be good on the listener's part to challenge the speakers, as this may often become counterproductive. The focus in this type of listening should be on gathering information, rather than making any judgment. There is scope for arguments and debates in critical listening (to be discussed later).

It is extremely essential to take notes of what is being said. In case any clarifications are required or if the speaker has used a jargon that you do not understand, it is important to ask questions and get the doubts sorted out.

The *three key strategies* to be followed in content listening are as follows:

- Instead of arguing with the speaker, try and focus on what is being said.
- Do not think critically about what is being said.
- Try and listen so as to get the message intended.

The *first step* while listening to content is to get the bias about the speaker out, even before he or she starts speaking. As a listener, you would always be interested to know whether the speaker is credible and whether he or she has the experience to speak. This information can be secured by trying to find out more about the speaker. Generally, the credibility of a speaker is understood by this person's CV or the rank he or she holds in an organization.

The second step in the process is to effectively listen and focus on the content. Before discussing a significant point, the speaker will tell the audience that this part is important' or he or she will repeat the point to indicate its importance. At this time, the listeners need to pay extra attention.

The *third important* step is to take notes, which will help you to recapitulate the information given. In addition, the notes will provide a summary of the content that you have just heard. They will also serve as a strong reference when you need to look back upon what was said.

An additional point in content listening is to interact with the speaker. Interaction means trying to ask questions and clearing any factual doubts. Since content listening is purely based on 'content', there is very little to argue about, assuming that the speaker has the authority and experience to speak on the given subject and that he touches upon only the relevant facts or information. It is better to ask questions if you have any 'specific' doubts. For example, if the sales head in a meeting mentions that the retention percentage for new clients is 30 in Mumbai, a particular doubt that could arise in the listener's mind about the retention percentages in other cities or what could be the reason for such a low retention percentage in Mumbai. Unnecessary critiquing should be avoided as this will make your listening process counterproductive.

Empathic Listening:

The goal of this type of listening is to understand and realize the feelings of the speaker. It is about listening, without any prejudices. Empathic listening may not indicate whether you approve the idea of the speaker, but the purpose is to give a very patient hearing to what is being said. In the previous type of listening, you focused on the content of the speech. However, here you are trying to help the speaker. Empathic listening involves understanding what kind of mental state the 'speaker' is in at the time of the conversation and responding accordingly. In such a situation, it is very important to maintain confidentiality and not disclose any part of the conversation to any other colleague. In a professional sphere, a person may require empathic listening when this person is not happy with the work that he or she is doing, or when this person has been overloaded with work. In addition, there could be personal issues when a person is not able to give 100 per cent at work and needs someone to listen to him or her. The problem need not always be work related, but could also be personal issues or a poor performance appraisal that is affecting this person's performance. It could even be other issues, such as colleagues spreading rumours.

It is extremely important in empathic listening to be sensitive to the emotional trauma that the speaker is going through. Try and approach the speaker with a positive frame of mind, making sure that you do not add to his or her worries. In addition, make sure not to give suggestions until this person asked for them. Empathize with the person and, if possible, help him or her out. The first important step is to make the speaker comfortable by suggesting that it is all right to share his or her worries and apprehensions. Then, listen to the speaker and try and understand the problem. Clarify, if you have any doubts and try to summarize. The next step is to try and solve the problem.

Critical/Evaluative Listening

One has to analyze the situation and the speaker. When an external consultant or a motivational trainer is invited to give some advice, you have to critically analyze the content in order to make best use of it. In many such situations, the logical aspects, evidences, implications, and the intention of the speaker have to be focused upon. For example, when a salesperson gives a demonstration of a product and talks about only the benefits of this product, while at the same time undermining competitors, the listener has to move into the evaluative mode. The listener has to be on the watch for any kind of bias that might come up, for inadequate information, and for the factual correctness of all that is being said. Many speakers try and connect to the emotional side of the listeners and often get away with it. Typically, a salesperson might deliver positive feelings about the product he or she is selling, and try to associate negative feelings with what the competitor has to offer. The listener

should be very cautious of what is being said. In cases of any doubts, clarifications should be sought.

Often, speakers make generalizations, saying, for example, 'All the products that are currently available in the market are of poor quality'. A listener should take such statements with a pinch of salt and ask questions to clarify facts- for example, questions such as 'how do you say that the other products are not good?' or have you done any study that does a critical comparison of the products ?

Whatever is the case, it is finally the listener who decides what needs to be accepted and what needs to be rejected outright. Do not take decisions on the basis of immediate feelings, but rather take your time to come to conclusions. This advice would be applicable in cases when you need to make strategic decisions that are going to cost your company.

Sometimes, when you are listening in the evaluative mode, you may not have the freedom to ask questions or can probably ask only limited questions. In those cases, try and note down points and validate them later to take a decision. For example, imagine that your company hires an influential consultant, who has been working with your company for quite some time now. The consultant has been referred by a senior manager to help your department out, but you do not find the consultant's work convincing enough. In such a situation, you cannot ask too many questions as the consultant is associated with the top brass of the company.

It's however, always very important for listeners to engage the speakers in a mode of active listening.

Active listening:

Active listening means 'actively engaging self and the speaker. Whatever bias a person listening might hold, the listener should hear and understand what the speaker has to say.

- To avoid environmental barriers, adjust the environment to suit the listeners. Avoid scheduling dry subjects or sessions in the afternoon.
- Set down the audience's expectations from the speaker.
- Keep the speaker informed about the audience he or she is going to address, and the level (of the listeners) at which this person needs to speak.

What should the sender of a message do to ensure that the receivers are listening?
The sender has two alternatives:

- Make positive statements and avoid negative ones. For example, if you have to say 'you have done a poor job; you could say there is tremendous scope for improvement'.
- The speaker should explain the context in which he is speaking and should establish personal credibility especially when he or she is speaking in front of an audience of unknown people.

However, personal deficiencies can only be controlled by the listener himself or herself, and nothing external can be done to eradicate them. At an individual level, the listener should try to improve his or her listening skills.

3. BARRIERS TO LISTENING

Listening is the communication skill we use most frequently. Recent surveys have established its importance. 45% of the time of a business professional is spent in listening. Employees come to a manager with inquiries, suggestions, proposals, comments and complaints. This requires effective listening on the part of the manager. The higher a manager is in the corporate ladder, the more time he/she spends in listening to others. The managers who are rated most highly by their subordinates are good listeners. However, most professionals are poor listeners. This is why effective listening is very important for business professionals.

Listening is the process of receiving and interpreting the spoken word. Listening begins with physical hearing or sensing of the oral message. Once the listener is able to recognize the sound patterns, he or she has to decode and interpret the message. After the message has been decoded and interpreted, its truth value and significance are evaluated, and an appropriate response is given by the listener. Thus, the process of listening consists of sensing, decoding, evaluating, and responding.

If we want to improve our listening skill and achieve effective listening, we need to be aware of the major barriers to effective listening. They are :

1. Physical barriers
2. Perceptual Barriers
3. Speaker-related Barriers
4. Listener-related Barriers
5. Linguistic Barriers
6. Cultural Barriers

1. Physical barriers : Environmental distractions and disturbances can easily disturb the process of listening. Noise, physical discomfort or odd time for interaction can become barriers to listening. For example, when a person tries to listen to someone on a running train or in a crowded market, several distractions disturb the listening process. If we want to avoid physical noise during the process of listening, we need to ensure that all channels remain free from noise for the duration of interaction.

2. Perceptual Barriers : These barriers result from the differing perceptions of the speaker and the listener. The perceptual barriers are of the following kinds.

(a) Frames of reference : People perceive the words according to their frame of reference. Although the speaker may want to convey a particular meaning which seems clear from his point of view, it is the listener's individual frame of reference which determines the actual meaning assigned to the message by the listener. Thus, different frames of reference can lead to miscommunication.

(b) Experiences and expectations : Expectations are based on an individual's personality and her experiences in similar situations. Thus, the listener's background can lead her to indulge in 'selective' listening - taking the 'desired' parts and ignoring the 'undesired' parts of the message. She may try to add, subtract, or colour the message according to her experiences and expectations.

(c) Relationship with speaker : The relationship between speaker and listener can become a barrier to listening. Subordinate employees will pay close attention to a powerful and trustworthy superior while they would attach little importance to listening attentively to a superior with low credibility or little authority. Similar is the case of teacher-student and parent-child interactions.

Another common barrier to listening is 'egotism' or self-centred attitude of the participants. If the speaker / listener thinks that his ideas are more important and that he is always right and the other person is wrong, then his mind is closed for the other person's message. As a result, there will be no listening.

3. Speaker-related Barriers : The following are the main listening barriers related to the speaker.

- (i) The speaker may speak **too fast** for the listener to understand or **too slow** for the listener to lose interest. Research in speech perception has arrived at one consistent finding : the best aid to understanding is to use normal speaking speed with a few extra pauses.
- (ii) The loudness of the voice of the speaker may be a cause of the listener's annoyance and a barrier to effective listening.
- (iii) The speaker's mannerisms (habitual peculiarities) and body language may make the listener apathetic and distracted.
- (iv) If there is information overload in what the speaker is saying, the listener has difficulty in processing the information and in retaining attention. As a result listening can become ineffective.

4. Listener-related Barriers

(i) Disinterest : The listener considers the subject of discussion or conversation to be uninteresting and has developed unwillingness to listen right from the beginning.

(ii) Internal rehearsing : The listener in this case is pretending as if (s) he is listening attentively. But in actuality(s) he is waiting to jump in and make his own point without listening to the speaker.

(iii) Interrupting : The listener's impatience and frequent interruptions of the speaker is a big barrier to effective listening.

(iv) Premature judgement : Before the speaker has completed what (s)he wants to say, some listeners jump to conclusions, and thus fail to get the speaker's point.

(v) Listening for a point of disagreement : A listener who loves argumentation very often listens to what the speaker is saying only to find out a point of disagreement and to start an argument. This is an example of 'selective' listening which is a strong barrier to effective listening.

(vi) Multi-tasking : Doing more than one thing while listening is a big distraction. Thus, multi-tasking when one is supposed to be listening is a barrier to listening and can discourage the speaker to continue speaking.

5. Linguistic Barriers : Incorrect message decoding by the listener is a frequent barrier in oral communication. If the listener hears something in a language which (s)he does not understand, e.g. difficult words, jargon, technical terms or ambiguous expression, then a communication breakdown will take place.

Differences between the listener's mother-tongue and English in respect of individual sounds and use of stress and intonation can cause difficulties in spoken-word recognition. Of these 3 components in word recognition, stress is often reported to be the most problematic in listening.

6. Cultural Barriers : Globalization has forced business organizations, with their operations extending beyond local or regional boundaries, to employ people from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

The cultural differences among the employees of trans-national corporations come down to different values and different approaches to listening. For an example, a European or American values time very highly and therefore likes to be quick in talking as well as listening - to business matters. While interacting with Asians, (s) he finds it difficult to listen effectively as Asians spend a lot of time in small talk or tea while talking business matters. Similarly, cultural differences influence the communicator's attitude about silence which is taken as a major part of listening. Europeans or Americans often feel uncomfortable with long silence, whereas the Japanese, the Chinese and the Koreans regard silence as an important part of communication.

Thus, inter-cultural differences can be a potent barrier to listening.

Apart from these six kinds of barriers to listening, certain wrong assumptions regarding communication can lead to poor listening :

(a) that it is the speaker's responsibility to make the listener listen effectively;

(b) that listening is a passive activity in which the listener absorbs information and ideas like a sponge;

(c) that talking people are dominant and powerful, while listening people are weak and powerless.

4. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE LISTENING SKILL

Most of us are poor listeners and active listening requires efforts. But the good news is that we can improve our listening skill. Research at the university of Minnesota shows that individuals who receive training in listening improve their listening skill by 25% to 40%. We can achieve similar results if we think strategically about listening and make a few simple deliberate choices as follows :

(a) Decide what your goals are for the interaction :

Skilled listeners think about the purpose of their interaction and act accordingly. The purpose of oral communication in a business organization include :

- (i) To exchange information
- (ii) To build working relationships
- (iii) To arrive at a decision
- (iv) To feel good
- (v) To make someone feel good

(b) Be aware of your options during the interaction :

If you have the purpose of the interaction in mind, you can then choose when to talk and when to listen during the conversation, when to clarify and when to listen attentively. Good listeners always consciously make a decision when to talk and when to listen. This awareness helps one to keep control over one's listening and speaking.

There are a few effective suggestions on when to speak and when to listen :

(i) Don't assume that you have to talk more : Very often, one who listens more influences the interaction more. So one must stop talking more and then try to listen more.

(ii) Show your interest in the interaction : If the listener gives the impression that (s)he is listening to understand rather than to oppose, this will create a friendly climate for information exchange and co-operation.

(iii) Remove distractions : Certain activities such as playing with a pencil or pen, shuffling papers, looking at the watch and multi-tasking by the listener distract the speaker. In order to get better input from the speaker, the listener should stop doing such things and focus fully on the speaker's words.

(iv) Empathize with the speaker : If the listener places him or her in the speaker's position and looks at things from his or her point of view, (s)he has a better chance to improve his listening ability.

(v) Ask questions : While interruptions by the listener should be avoided, positive interventions by the listener are desirable. The listener should ask appropriate questions at the right opportunity to elicit more information and clarify doubts. In fact, most speakers would welcome this as it not only provides feedback but also provides an opportunity to clarify the message and correct misunderstandings. Asking questions also tells

the speaker that the listener has interest and involvement in the communication process.

(vi) Refocus, when the conversation lags : When the conversation seems to become uninteresting for some reason, it is for the listener to ask the other person questions that will again make the conversation warm, or to talk more about a relevant topic and invite the other person to talk about it.

(vii) Concentrate on contents and listen for signposts : Bring your total focus on the contents of the speaker's input and be aware of the signposts for his / her organization of ideas such as "To begin with ...", "Secondly ...", "On the other hand...", "In conclusion...", etc.

(c) Avoid negative feelings and attitude

(i) Guard against your personal biases interfering with your understanding.

(ii) Refrain from argumentation and criticism.

(iii) Avoid impatience : Patience is an important attribute of good listening. The listener should wait for the speaker to complete his or her part of the talk and avoid derogatory or cynical comments. Every speaker has a train of thought, and gestures of impatience on the part of the listener may disturb the speaker's train of thought.

(iv) Don't lose your temper : Good listening calls for the right temperament. Even if the listener thinks that the speaker is not right, this does not give him or her a right to instant reaction and bad tempers.

The above three strategies with their sub-points, if adopted, has every chance of improving one's listening skill.

C. LANGUAGE SKILL –II: SPEAKING

1. Important characteristics of effective speaking. **(Guidelines for improving the speaking skill)**

Speaking, like listening, is an important skill necessary for effective communication. Speaking may be described as *a purposeful process in which people using sounds communicate meaning to a listener or a group of listeners*. In professional life, one is required to take part in discussions, meetings conferences, seminars, telephonic and face-to-face conversations, business presentations, teleconferences and video-conferences. Therefore, one's success in professional life would depend on one's mastery of oral communication skills.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SPEAKING

1. Clear and Relevant Message

While communicating a message orally, the speaker is concerned with four major processes : (i) Conceptualisation, (ii) Formulation, (iii) Articulation, and (iv) Self-monitoring.

Conceptualisation is about planning the message content. It draws on the speaker's background knowledge of the world, knowledge about the topic, about the audience and about the kind of language to be used. In the formulation stage, the speaker unconsciously finds words and phrases to express the meanings, sequences them and then looks at the pronunciation of the words to be used.

Thus, at the stages of conceptualisation and formulation of the message, the speaker is fully seized with the appropriateness of the message. The speaker should be clear about what message (s)he wants to get across. In order to speak effectively or make the message have 'an impact, the speaker should ensure that the content of the message is clear and relevant to the listener.

2. Audience - Oriented Speech

Familiarity with one's audience is necessary in order to be an effective speaker. Professional situations such as seminars, conferences, meeting, discussions, etc. demand a careful audience analysis so that the speaker can cater to their expectations and needs.

Breath control : Breathing is the energy source of voice and speech. while speaking English or an Indian language, we use the outgoing air to speak words. If breathing is controlled well, the chest muscles, and the diaphragm are used to their full capacity. Drawing in too little breath or too much breath does not help to develop the voice. The voice becomes excessively quiet if one draws in too little breath. If one takes in large gulps of breath, the voice will be excessively breathy.

In order to develop the power of voice, one should habitually breathe in a natural way. If one avoids too deep or too shallow breathing, the outgoing breath is modulated and this gives the voice a consistent tenor.

Pitch control : In order to speak effectively, one should not pitch one's voice too high when one starts speaking. Secondly, sometimes in

order to sound confident, one pitches the voice too low. As a result, the voice sounds forced and unnatural. The right thing to adopt is a middle note which is the natural, habitual pitch one uses when one is relaxed. A moderate lilt (= a pleasant pattern of rise and fall) makes an interesting voice.

3. Voice Quality : It is the speaker's voice that leaves a strong impression on the listener(s). The quality of one's voice and the manner of speaking reflect the whole personality of the speaker. A nervous, halting style of speech reflects the speaker's lack of confidence and annoys the listeners. On the other hand, a confident and friendly style impresses and wins over the listeners.

The first thing to remember is that one's voice should sound natural. Everybody's voice is unique. Nobody should distort it while trying to learn to speak well and should never try to copy the impressive style of speaking of some other person.

4. Rate of Speaking : Deciding how fast to talk is a major difficulty in effective speaking. As a general rule, the speaker should present the easy parts of the message fairly, quickly and hard-to-understand parts at a slower pace. Thus, the rate of speaking needs to vary according to the content of the message. The reason for varying the speed of speaking is rather obvious : easy information presented slowly is irritating and hard information presented rapidly may be difficult to understand.

Another problem related to the pace of speaking is the incorrect use of pauses. Of course, pauses used at the appropriate time during speaking emphasize the upcoming subject-matter and are effective in gaining the listener's attention. Further, pausing at commas and full stops provides the speaker a moment to think and plan what to speak next.

Therefore, an effective speaker should not speak quickly and continuously without pausing. Quickness of speaking shows nervousness, restlessness, over-enthusiasm or onrush of overflowing ideas and annoys the listeners. Slow and ponderous speaking makes the speech uninteresting.

So a speaker should follow the middle path of speaking neither too quickly nor too slowly. In order to be an effective speaker, (s)he should pause to breathe and also to observe the listener's reaction. If (s)he finds that the listeners' attention is wavering, (s)he should try to speed up the pace of speaking to hold their interest.

5. Clear Articulation :

Speaking will be effective only when the listeners hear the words of the speaker clearly. The listeners can hear clearly when the speaker articulates the words clearly. For clear articulation of English speech, the speaker has to produce appropriate sounds, use stress on the right syllables and say the sentences with proper intonation.

In order to improve the articulation, the speaker should know the right pronunciation of words with stress and practise the rhythm of connected speech in English. Clear articulation of words and utterances improves when the speaker is confident of the content and style of speech.

6. Non-verbal signals

Next, non-verbal communication as a contributory factor of effective speaking will be discussed under the following headings :

1. Eye Contact, 2. Facial Expressions, 3. Gestures and Postures

A. Eye Contact : Eye-contact is very important, particularly in face-to-face communication. Raised eyes show dominance and downcast eyes suggest weakness and submission. Direct eye contact between the speaker and the listener(s) at formal meetings communicates honesty, transparency and neutral attitudes.

Eye contact focusing on a few in the audience does not create a good impact, whereas moderate eye contact with different sections of the audience shows that the speaker has confidence and a genuine interest in the audience.

B. Facial Expressions :

Facial expressions form an important part of body language during a speech. As the proverb goes, face is the index of the mind. The mobile features of the face, the lips and the facial muscles express several different feelings. They are used for transparent expressions of thought and genuine feelings. In certain situations, they are also used for deliberate suppression of natural feelings so that others may not know the speaker's real feelings. For example, a frightened speaker may tighten the jaw unconsciously and begin to grin. The effect on the listener(s) may be an ambiguous image that is contrary to the purpose of the communication. A smile or a grim face accompanying the words conveys a clear message. Appropriate use of facial expressions helps one in effective speaking.

C. Gestures and Postures :

Postures or body positions are obvious things that the audience sees in the speaker. Even if listeners are not close enough to see facial expressions and eye movements, they can see the structure and the state of the speaker's body.

For effective presentation, a speaker's posture has a key role. In efforts to improve his / her posture, a speaker should distribute his / her body weight in a comfortable and poised way consistent with the impression (s)he wants to make. (s)he should keep the body erect without appearing stiff and uncomfortable. His/her bearing should be natural, poised, alert and communicative.

Like postures, gestures add to the message which the speaker communicates. The speaker has to ensure that his/her gestures or movements of limbs do not distract the listener. A clenched fist, for example, adds emphasis to a strong point. But it can also show defiance or deal out a threat. And so it is with other gestures as well. They register vague meanings.

Although gestures very often have vague meanings, they are natural aids to speaking. For example, it appears natural to emphasize a point with a finger. It is clear that the speaker's gestures help to make speaking effective.

Which movements of limbs a speaker should use vary from person to person. These movements are related to personality, physical make-up and the size and nature of the audience. A speaker speaking to a formal group should use relatively fewer gestures. A speaker appearing before an informal audience should use more action. On any given occasion, the speaker should use his/her own judgement regarding postures and gestures that should accompany the oral communication.

Thus, the characteristics of effective speaking include planning the speech at the conceptualisation and formulation stage, and clear articulation through improvement of voice quality and variations in the pace of speaking and finally, through the use of appropriate non-verbal cues consistent with different ideas of the oral communication.

2. FEATURES OF GOOD CONVERSATIONS

A conversation is an informal oral exchange of feelings, opinions and ideas between two or more persons. Conversing is an essential interpersonal skill that helps to build a pleasing personality and receive friendly co-operation in social and professional situations.

The following are the main features of a good conversation.

1. *Good conversations are structured* - Conversations are better structured than a casual talk, especially if there is an agenda in place. However, a conversation may drift away from the agenda and tends to go beyond what you wish to discuss. If conversations are meant to discuss important topics—for example, whether the services of an employee should be terminated, and you as the employee's manager are in conversation with the HR team—it is better to arrange for a moderator who can control the flow of the conversation.
2. *All the key people must be involved*- There is no point in having a conversation without involving the key people--the decision-makers and the key input givers. The conversation will be meaningless if they are not involved.
3. *Conversations must be risk-free*-People will express themselves only when they feel that they are risk-free. So, if you want a conversation in which the participants do not feel inhibited, you should provide them with a risk-free environment. Often, people feel that a frank and fair conversation could pose a threat to their job or position and that is probably the reason why they fear to freely express their views.

3. Effective Conversation Management

Conversation is an art that tests your innate ability to engage people in front of you in a meaningful dialogue. You will need to practice this skill over years. If you are in a business, profession, or role where your job is dependent on conversations, you will have to sharpen your conversational skills to impress the diverse and interesting people you deal with.

1. ***Learn more about the other person***-In a formal conversation, it is good to know the person to whom you are speaking--that is, being aware of this person's likes, dislikes, and aspects that are related to work and those that are not .

For example, imagine that your client has told you in your first meeting that his or her daughter is studying law. You may probably ask about the client's daughter casually in the next conversation. Knowing an individual beyond the immediate business concerns helps build a rapport. A word of caution: when you are trying to know people, make sure you do not get too personal or offensive. For example, people of some nationalities are very reserved on family-related issues and would not want to discuss them with someone relatively unknown to them.

2. ***Include all key people*** - Another key point that you should keep in mind while you are conversing is to ensure that all the people necessary for the discussion are included in the conversation. A conversation in which the key people are missing is a waste of time.

During conversations you will be making requests. Ensure that you are clear about what you want. Similarly, when another person is making a request, say 'yes or 'no? Many people have the habit of being non-committal as they find it extremely difficult to say 'no' upfront. Do not be vague by using words such as 'Let us see'.

Conversations form the grounds for good negotiations, and you will be a good negotiator only if your ability to converse is well-developed.

3. Avoid argumentation

We all have our individual views and opinions. When people have differences of opinion, minor conflicts occur. When these conflicts escalate, their conversations turn into arguments.

Arguments stem not only from smaller conflicts but also occur for many other reasons-clash of egos, fight for visibility in the organization, differences of opinion, personal conflicts, forced changes, and invasion of personal space. Arguments are often an extension of conversations, and when ideas clash, a war of words results.

It is important to channelize arguments in the right directions, and in some cases, we need to gracefully exit arguments as they may turn bitter.

Here are a few tips to help you during arguments:

- Try to understand the other person's opinion or point of view. Accept the fact that all of us are different.
- Do not argue to counter each other's point. Arguments for the sake of arguing are dangerous and do not lead us anywhere.
- Try and build your case, backed by suitable data points. Ensure that you argue with the hard facts with you rather than with emotions.
- Never lose your calm. At least one of the persons engaged in an argument has to remain silent and calm. Understand when to exit an argument.
- Never try to use an undue advantage that you have over the other person in an argument-for example, in an argument between you, as the manager, and your subordinate, you should not take advantage of your position as this may make the other person retreat.
- Never push your opinions on the other person. If you do, it will leave a scar on the relationship. People will not like to be associated with you.
- Accept that you may also make a mistake. Do this gracefully and correct your mistake rather than arguing just for the sake of doing so.

In situations at our workplace, we argue when things go beyond our control. It is often our ego that forces us to argue. Sometimes, arguments in organizations take the form of power play and people try to demonstrate their superiority. Arguing only with emotions will not lead you anywhere and will make it tough for you to take the right decision and also leave a bitter feeling amongst people. Remember that you may win an argument, but you may lose the relationship forever. Understand this fact, and plan your exit, when you find that the argument is not taking you anywhere.

4. Apply the Three CS

The final key to becoming a great conversationalist is to practice the friendship factor. The friendship factor is based on the three Cs-*care, courtesy, and consideration*.

You must have heard what is generally quoted to emphasize empathy in human behaviour--- 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.' It is rightly said that whenever you show another person that you genuinely care about him/her, you come across better as a conversationalist and as a friend. Moreover, courtesy is a magic quality that makes people want to be around you. All good conversationalists make others feel calm and comfortable in their presence. They never do or say anything that could hurt or offend the other person in any way. Moreover, if we respect others and are considerate towards them, we are respected and considered highly by other people. Whenever you treat another person as an important and worthwhile human being, you give them a feeling that you value them. This attitude helps you become not just a better human being, but also a better conversationalist.

5. Be Fluent while speaking

Fluency is a much desired attribute of a good conversationalist. Therefore, be fluent while talking to others. Apart from good listening and regular practice at conversations, having a good vocabulary also helps you attain fluency in your expression. So, be a good reader and try to learn more and more words in order to express yourself effectively and successfully.

These are some of the ways in which we can manage our conversation well.

4. CELLPHONE ETIQUETTE

Prepare a set of Power Point slides on “Cell Phone Etiquette” .

Ans. :For a 15-minute presentation, the following are the ten power point slides on the topic ‘Cell phone Etiquette’. It is assumed that each slide, apart from the ‘Title’ slide and the last ‘Thank You’ slide, will take 1.5 minutes on average for explaining.

Slide -1

CELL PHONE

ETIQUETTE

‘A Presentation by X’

Slide - 2

Importance

- ☐ Mobile phones have become indispensable for modern living.
- ☐ However, we should keep in mind some important rules of mobile etiquette for good business relationship.

Slide -3

- Use a cell phone ring tone which is neither loud nor annoying.

Slide - 4

- Take or make your calls without disturbing others.

Slide -5

- When calling on a cell phone, be brief and to the point.

Slide - 6

- Talk in lower tones so as not to bother individuals around you. Do not shout.

Slide - 7

Turn your phone off when you are at a public event/ performance.

Slide - 8

- Keep in mind the fact that you can message a text instead of calling or receiving a call on your cellphone.

Slide-9

- Avoid inappropriate topics of chat and inappropriate pictures for your cell phone address book.

Slide-10

Don't use your phone while driving or attending a meeting. Put it in the silent mode.

5. VIDEO CONFERENCE

What are the important things to remember while video-conferencing?

OR

Write some important rules to maximize the effectiveness of video-conferencing.

Video-conferencing entails the transmission of images (Video) and speech (Audio) back and forth between two or more physically separate locations. It is used for business meetings, interviews, and urgent interactions facilitating quick decision-making. Used effectively, video conferencing gives significant benefits of increased productivity and reduced costs for a business organization.

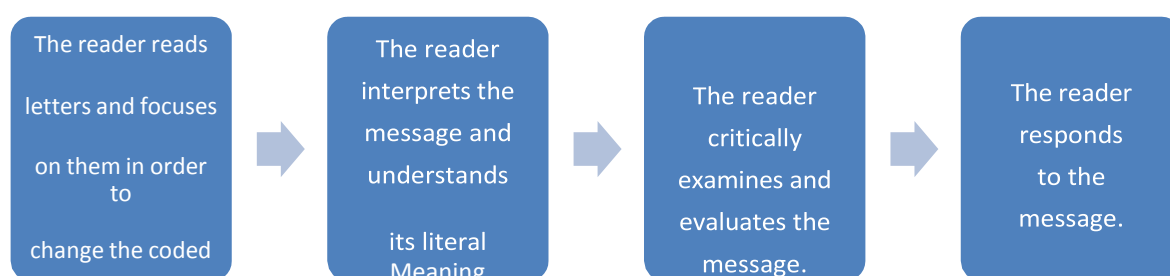
Some of the ways to maximize the effectiveness of video-conferencing are as follows:

1. Room Dynamics : Blue colour should be used as background colour on the wall facing the camera. Curtains should be drawn and doors kept shut while conducting the conference. Lighting should come from overhead, and there should be no bright light behind the participant.
2. Microphones : The microphone should be positioned at an equal distance of about 2 – 3 feet from all participants. One should avoid moving the microphone while conferencing because movement sounds are amplified by the microphone.
3. Clothes and colours: Colours of clothes that work well in video conferences are blue, pink and green. Avoid white and black and stripes.
4. Call preparation : Familiarize yourself with the room, the equipment and its operation. Arrive in advance to check if everything works: from dial-up connection to camera, lighting, and seating arrangements.
5. Meeting etiquette : In a video conference, a protocol may be agreed upon regarding asking participants to raise their hand to speak or ask a question so that people do not talk over each other.
6. Speaking: Wait for the image of the other person and your own image to appear on the screen before beginning the discussion. First introduce yourself and your team. Always try to speak clearly and slowly. Direct your message or question by specifying the person you are addressing. Maintain face-to-face connection as much as possible. And finally, plan for a 10-minute break every 50 minutes.

Module II

THE READING SKILL

Reading is a complex communicative process of receiving and interpreting the written word. It involves recognising what is written and comprehending the matter that is, understands the main and subsidiary points as well as links between different parts of the written material. While receiving and interpreting the written word, the reader is concerned with four factors, that is, decoding, comprehending, text analysis, and response.



Reading Speed

As we have to read both extensively as well as intensively, we cannot afford to read slowly. Extensive reading is a must to broaden our general understanding of a subject while intensive reading is required to get an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the finer details of a subject. Most productive examination demand selective intensive reading of some topics. On the other hand, recognition type examinations such as objective tests (true/false, multiple choice) demand wide extensive reading of a large number of topics. The reading needs may vary but in order to improve reading efficiency reading speed has to be increased.

Reading speed is measured in words per minute (wpm). Casual or general reading such as reading novels, poems, stories, and humorous articles do not require much concentration and, therefore, the reading speed is faster than that of serious reading. However, academic or professional reading such as reading technical texts, articles, and proposals require more concentration and reading speed cannot be increased at the cost of reading efficiency.

The Table below gives a general idea of reading speed for different purposes.

Reading Speed	Casual reading	Academic and professional reading
Very fast	+400 wpm	+350wpm
Fast	300-400wpm	250-350 wpm
Average	200-300 wpm	150-250 wpm
Slow	Less than200 wpm	Less than 150 wpm

READING STRATEGIES

Reading Skills

As a complex process of decoding and comprehending the written message, reading could be quite a challenging activity because the act of understanding is not always simple. Depending on the purpose of reading, the reader will require different reading strategies and skills in order to understand the subject content and language patterns of a message. These skills include vocabulary skills, visual, perceptual skills, rapid reading skills, and intensive reading skills, rapid reading skills include prediction, scanning and skimming skills while intensive reading involves detailed reading, critical reading, and inferential skills.

Vocabulary Skills

- Recognition the definitions of the words being used
- Guessing the meaning of words from the structure
- Inferring the meaning of words from their context

Visual perceptual skills

- Accurate visual perception of words and phrases
- Quick eye fixations

Prediction Technique

- Using index or chapter headings to predict the theme of the text
- Guessing to predict information
- Scanning graphic or non-verbal context such as graphs, diagrams, charts, and so on to predict the nature and scope of content
- Using discourse and linguistic clues

Scanning skills

- Locating specific information

Skimming skills

- Identifying a theme or central idea
- Identifying main ideas
- Identifying Organization Patterns of writing

Intensive reading skills

- Reading for details

- Critically reading a text to
 - Distinguish fact from opinion ,
 - Identify and evaluate a write's attitude

Understand the author's intention.

- Drawing inferences and conclusions

Vocabulary Skills

A good vocabulary is essential for effective reading skills, in order to understand what we read, we need to recognize the meaning of words as well as guess the meaning from word structure and infer the meaning from the contexts. We need to learn and practice these vocabulary skills.

Word Meaning Recognition

Word meaning recognition is the first step towards understanding a written message. We are supposed to perceive the words and phrases used, and recognize their definitions to follow what we read. We may find it difficult to understand a message if we do not know the meaning of the words and phrases used. The following suggestions will help in developing words meaning recognition skills:

- The reader should develop appropriate sight recognition skills so that he/she is able to recognize a word or phrase in a fraction of a second.
- The reader should be able to quickly recall the meaning of the word.
- The reader should not stop reading if he/she is not able to recall the meaning of a certain word or phrase. He/she should continue reading till he/she completes a reasonable portion of the message.
- The reader should not immediately consult the dictionary because it will be time- consuming and will disrupt the reading flow.
- The reader should be able to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word/phrase from the contextual clues.

Scanning Skills

Scanning refers to be the ability to locate specific information or facts as quickly as possible. While trying to look for the meaning of a word in a dictionary or looking for a telephone number in the telephone book is a rapid reading technique, which provides better comprehension while reading a scientific or technical text. It may serve several purposes, which include looking for:

- A specific point or fact in a text,
- a. Relevant graphics details,
- b. A formulae in a text,
- c. A word in a dictionary
- d. Train or television schedules,

- e. Any references or bibliographical listings,
- f. Examination results, or
- g. Any notes/questions/remarks at the end of the text.

We may know how to scan a newspaper or a dictionary but may do it slowly with less accuracy. What is important is to increase scanning speed with accuracy. The following suggestions will help increase proficiency at scanning.

Know what you want to find. In order to scan any reading material, the reader needs to know what he/she wants to find. If he/she should concentrate on the information that he/she needs with his/her eyes only on the particulars word, phrase, and word group or thought unit that he/she is looking for. The attempt should be to perceive word group and thought units quickly.

Use guides and aids Every reading material contains certain guides and aids, which should be used to find what the reader wants.

Skimming Skills

Skimming is a more sophisticated skill than scanning. It refers to the process of reading a text or passage in order to get a rough idea of what the text or passage is all about. It is a rapid reading technique that prepares the reader for detailed reading. As the main objective of skimming is to understand the central idea and the main points of a text, the reader needs to use a reading strategy that involves fast reading and quick analysis.

Skimming also involves discovering the purpose and organization of a text. One of the most important purpose of reading of academic and professional purposes is obtaining relevant information for various purposes. This involves not only the ability to recognize the main ideas and supporting details but also the ability to identify different writing pattern used to develop these ideas. Authors use a variety of discourse patterns in scientific written.

Skimming is essential for better understanding of a text. Skimming should answer the following questions about a text.

1. What is the overall purpose of the text ?
2. What is the central ideas or theme ?
3. What is the logical organization?(general to specific, specific to general, chronological, more important to less important, less important to more important, and so on.
4. What does the author intend to do ? (Describe, instruct, report, narrate, explain, argue, persuade, illustrate, and so on.)
5. What is the main point of the text?

Intensive Reading skills

In comparison to rapid reading skills, intensive reading is detailed reading that demands better concentration and motivation. The three rapid reading techniques or prediction, scanning, and skimming prepare the reader for intensive reading. If these techniques are used correctly and effectively, it will prepare the reader for the contents and provide better comprehension and retention of the information. Using prediction/scan/skim method gives the reader a correct beginning. It helps in concentrating and focusing on the reading assignment, which is essential for academic and professional reading.

Moreover, intensive reading requires text analysis for critical and evaluative understanding of a text. Text analysis is the process of identifying relationships among different units within the text in order to distinguish between.

- Relevant and irrelevant information,
- Facts and opinions,
- Explicit and implicit information,
- Examples and ideas, and
- Draw inference and conclusions.

Drawing Inference and Conclusions

As inference can be defined as a statement that is based on some situations, observations, facts, or specific details. Drawing inferences is the process of knowing the unknown from the known. As science is a process of reasoning, scientists and technocrats have to draw inferences and conclusion based on observations. All the theories and laws of science have gone through the process of induction, which is an important method of drawing inferences. Induction is a reasoning process of drawing general statement from specific observation. All of us draw inference from situation, statement and observations.

Inferences and conclusions can be drawn from the following

- a. Facts
- b. Specific Details
- c. Examples and Illustrations
- d. Factual Observations
- e. Contextual clues

SYNOPSIS

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

(for comprehension with speed)

Reading is visual decoding and processing of information. The purpose of Reading is to extract meaning from a text.

READING STRATEGIES :

1. Previewing :

Previewing refers to reviewing titles, section heading and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading text.

2. Predicting :

Predicting as a reading strategy means using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about the content.

3. Skimming :

While skimming, a reader makes a quick survey of the text to get its main idea or its gist.

4. Scanning :

Scanning refers to the activity of glancing rapidly through a text to search for a specific piece of information.

5. Guessing from context :

- (a) Word attack skill : Using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meaning of unknown words.
- (b) Text-attack skills : Getting the overall meaning and the ideas presented in the text through
 - (i) Structural clues (e.g., the position of the word in the sentence and its relationship with the other words in the sentence)
 - (ii) Morphological information (e.g., the prefix *un-* is the clue that it is opposite in meaning to the word 'happy')
 - (iii) Contextual leads (e.g. Discourse markers such as but, because although etc. tell us how words, sentences or ideas are related to each other in a reading text.)

6. Extensive Reading :

Extensive reading is done when we read longer texts, usually for our own pleasure. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding.

7. Intensive Reading :

Intensive reading refers to reading shorter texts to extract specific information. This is an accuracy activity involving reading for detail.

8. Inferring :

We infer when we come to a conclusion about a question by relating ideas from different parts of a text. Inferring is a sub-skill used to reason out something new,

9. Paraphrasing :

It means stopping at the end of a paragraph/section of a text to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in one's own language.

10. Avoidance of Faulty Reading Habits :

- (a) Sub-vocalising : Forming the sounds of words on the lips and even murmuring them aloud.
- (b) Finger pointing : Finger moves from word to word while one reads a text.
- (c) Regressive Eye-movement : Eyes move back to check previous words instead of steadily moving forward.

Basic Steps to Efficient Reading :

- 1. Before reading, be clear about the purpose of reading a particular text.
- 2. Then decide how deeply to study the material.
- 3. Read actively : Highlight or underline key information and take notes as you progress.
- 4. Know how to adjust your reading speed to the reading purpose.
- 5. Go for concept mapping when you have finished reading.

CRITICAL READING :

Critical reading is the key to success in higher academic courses as well as in life. It refers to reading with the goal of gaining deep understanding of a text and involves the act of analyzing and evaluating the material. When we read critically, we separate the logical from the illogical conclusions and the good evidence from misleading evidence.

STRATEGIES FOR CRITICAL READING :

1. Guard against the writer's assumption.

Watch for broad, unsupported statements. Every time you see a statement ask yourself if the writer provides any evidence to back up his point.

2. Try to understand the implications.

Distinguish facts from opinions and think over what the writer's ideas lead to.

3. Stop at the end of each part/section of the text and allow yourself time to think about the content of the text as well as the opinions of the writer.

4. Ask questions as you read :

- a) What does the title mean ?
- b) Why does the writer begin the text this way ?
- c) Why does he make this argument or use that example ?

Don't stop with what the writer is saying. Ask 'How?', 'why', and 'So What?'.

5. Apply the elements of reasoning to your reading.

Think about :

- a) The writer's purpose/motive
- b) The issue under discussion
- c) The writer's point of view
- d) Concepts presented
- e) Assumptions and implications
- f) The writer's conclusions
- g) The context, and
- h) The alternatives

THE WRITING SKILL

The business world uses various types of written communication as they provide a convenient way of reaching across to people including customers and prospects. Organizations rely on written communication for many reasons. It provides a permanent record, a necessity in these times of increasing litigation and extensive government regulation. Moreover, writing out an idea instead of delivering it orally enables the communicator to develop an organized and well-considered message.

The writing skill contributes to one's success in any profession or business. To become successful in any job, a business executive needs to master the skill of expressing herself clearly and precisely through written messages. Her excellence in the writing skill determines her chances of influencing people, winning friends, and gaining business. Thus, clear, concise and persuasive message writing is essential for a business executive.

However, it is common knowledge that many of those who speak fluently and intelligibly often fail when it comes to writing for well-defined, job-related purposes. College leavers are unable to write applications in response to job advertisements, and employers constantly complain about the poor writing skills of a majority of their younger employees. Perhaps the foremost cause of the poor writing skills is our wrong approach to Writing. Just as communication is a process, so is writing. But, generally speaking, we focus on the product – the finished product of writing – rather than writing as a process.

Contrary to the 'product' approach, **the process approach** focuses on the main elements and aspects of composing by giving the writer supports and procedures for generating an effective piece of writing. In this approach, the writing process consists of five distinct phases of activities: **Pre-writing, Drafting, Revising, Formatting, and Proof-reading.**

Prewriting: This is the planning stage in which you think through your writing assignment and develop a plan for accomplishing it. During the prewriting stage you should:

- Determine your purpose
- Know your readers
- Search and collect data for your message
- Organize and prepare an outline

Determining your purpose There are many different reasons for writing a business message. Think about some of the writing you did at work last week. You probably wrote a combination of e-mails, memos, and letters. Perhaps one message informed employees that their health insurance coverage costs would be changing. Maybe you wrote an e-mail to answer a co-worker's question about a project or perhaps you wrote a letter to a customer who had a complaint about her experience in your store. Each one of these messages had a different purpose. Reporting information, requesting payment, inviting some proposals, asking for an advice, assuring cooperation, recommending changes—any of these may serve as a valid purpose for writing a business message.

To help you organize your thoughts, put together a purpose statement, 'The purpose of this memo is to... and then fill in the rest of the sentence. Using the examples listed above, you could put together different purpose statements:

- The purpose of this memo is to inform employees about the change in health insurance coverage.
- The purpose of this letter is to apologize to a customer.

Keeping your readers in mind

Your message needs to be what people want to know, not just what you want to sell. Position your message from the reader's viewpoint. What is important to your target audience? Include the benefits to the reader. Everyone wants to know what they will gain. A persuasive message is more successful if it appeals directly to the wants and needs of the reader.

The tone in your writing reflects how the reader feels after reading a message. If the words in the message are demanding, authoritative, and harsh, the reader is going to react with anger or refusal to co-operate. Too often you see this type of writing coming from the top of an organization. The management is in charge, so it tends to write from a position of power where their phrasing of the message is from its viewpoint, not the reader's viewpoint. The tone of the message becomes authoritative.

Appealing to your audience Unless you make an effort to connect with your audience, chances are that your message is not going to be communicated correctly. The best way to connect is to create a positive tone in your writing by using the reader's point of view. Emphasize what the reader wants to know, not what you can do for the reader. Completely change your mindset from 'I' to 'you'. Instead of saying, 'I will allow you to take a vacation beginning June 1', say, 'Your vacation will start on June 1'. This is the difference between writing in the 'I-viewpoint' versus the 'you-viewpoint'. Notice how it also gets the reader involved in the message.

The key to keeping a reader's interest is getting the reader involved in the message. Do not just think about what you are going to say, think about how what you are saying is going to affect your listener.

Main points In order to get started on your writing, you need to have an outline of where you want to go. Start by making a list of your main points. Assume that you are writing a memo telling your employees that, during the summer, the company will be working a 7-1 schedule. This is your purpose.

Some of the main points might be: working a 7-1 schedule will decrease the company's utility costs, childcare services will be available on-site, and all departments will be following the same schedule. Now, decide how to organize the main points based on importance.

The main points will be organized based on how the audience is going to react to the message. During the prewriting stage, it is necessary to collect and organize all the supporting points also.

For example, consider the first point in Figure 8.2. You need to collect all detail related to each of the four main points of your business message. You can prepare a complete outline as shown in Figure 8.2 or Table 8.1 before you proceed to drafting your business message:

Drafting How well is your message understood?

Most people tend to ramble on and on when writing a message. The reader becomes confused and communication is lost. You need to find the right balance between the right balance and the right words for the balance.

The Right Balance Good business writing is concise and to the point. The shorter the sentences and paragraphs, the more likely will the message be understood. Studies have shown that as a sentence or paragraph becomes longer, the comprehension starts dropping. Table 8.2 illustrates this point:

Separate your thoughts by writing short sentences. Do not try to string everything together using clauses like and, but, and however. For example, read the following sentence:

'It has come to my attention that the second Thursday of the month is the best opportunity for development to meet with management to review the latest technology advances being made by our competitor and the ways our company is prepared to deal with this direct attack on our company vision of always being the first to introduce products that improve the lives of consumers and make it easier for them to use everyday business products like their computers, PDAs, scanners, faxes, and photo copiers.

It is 85 words and totally off the scale of comprehension. Some words need to be eliminated.

The Right Words Now that we have our two basic ideas, we need to formulate them into a logical, concise paragraph using short sentences. Here is what to write instead: 'Starting from June 2005, the Product Management team will meet on the second Thursday of every month from 1 to 3 pm in room H-108. The topic of discussion for the June meeting will be the recent technological advances made by our competitor.

You now have a 44 word paragraph consisting of two sentences. The first sentence is 26 words and the second sentence is 18 words. According to Table 8.2, the first sentence is a little long. However, every piece of information in that sentence is important to the readers understanding the message. So, we just need to break it up into two sentences.

'The Product Management team will meet on the second Thursday of every month. The first meeting is on 9 June 2005, from 1–3 pm in room H-108. The topic of discussion will be the recent technological advances made by our competitor.'

Tailoring Language to the Audience

In selecting the exact tone and words to use, rely on the relationship with the reader. Write at the level you would use in a face-to-face conversation. Think of your writing as talking on paper, and select the

language level that fits the reader, the subject, and the requirements of the communication. Ask yourself the following:

- Have I expressed my ideas so that the reader will feel that I am helpful, courteous, and human?
- Have I tailored my message to my reader's desires, problems, circumstances, and probable reactions to the purpose of my message?
- Have I emphasized 'you', the reader, instead of 'I' or 'we'?
- Have I expressed my ideas so they reflect good public relations for the company (letters) or good human relations with my colleagues (reports)?
- Have I stressed the positive and avoided emphasizing ideas my reader may view unfavorably?

Revising

In most cases, your first draft may well be your final draft because you may not often have time to do any additional work on the document. Many businesspersons give a final shape to their business documents just on the day on which they are expected to send the document—be it a report, proposal, or letter. However, it is advisable to review your business messages carefully after completing your first draft. Revising is the process of modifying a document to increase its effectiveness. Once you have the raw material—your first draft—in front of you, you can refine it into an effective document, considering its importance and the time constraints under which you are working. Look at each word. Is it the right one? Would another one be more precise? Are there better, more concise ways of structuring the sentence? Did you say what you mean? Could someone read other meanings into the words? Is the chosen organization the best for your situation? Be your own critic.

Challenge what you have done. Look for alternatives. Then ,after conducting a through and critical review, make any change that you think will improve the work. Input from others can also help you refine your writing. It is often difficult to find errors or weakness in your own work; yet others seem to find easily, receive criticism with an open mind; objectively evaluate it and use that which meets your review. In short, revise you document for content, clarity, conciseness, vigour, and readability by using the right words in the right context and with the right tone.

Formatting

As you know, no one format for any type of business document is universally accepted as standard; a fair amount of variation is common in business. But the way ideas are packaged has a lit to with how successful the communication will be. The first thing the readers will notice about message is its appearance. Good looks can help get the message across, especially to busy readers. You can see the most commonly adopted formats for different types of business documents in chapters that discuss them at length.

To some extent, technology is changing the formatting standard. For example although formatting is traditionally the next-to-last step in the writing process, you may in fact, make some formatting

decisions at the planning or drafting stages. You may set your word processing program with default side margins of 1 or 1.25 inches, which are appropriate for most documents.

Use a variety of design elements, such as white space, margins line justification, typefaces, and type styles to make your message look professional interesting, and up-to date. However, be careful not to overdo.

E-mail messages all look like memorandums- whether they are sent to someone inside or outside the organization. They typically contain elements such as to, from, subject, date, etc., just as memorandums do, and they do not contain any inside address as is typical of letters. The important point is to use the format that is appropriate for each specific message.

Regardless of who actually types your documents, you are the one who signs and submits them, so you must accept the responsibility for not only the content but also the mechanics, format, and appearance of your documents. Moreover, the increasing use of word processing means that executives now create/type many of their own documents- without the help of an assistant.

Proofreading

Some tips to help do a better job of proofreading your business messages are given below:

- Do not try to proof a document by reading it on your computer screen, read from a printed copy.
- Proofread after you have composed the first draft of the message.
- Take out the print out in double space. This makes it much easier to read because the added white space helps your eyes rest between all the text.
- Allow time to proofread. When you are rushed, you cannot do a good job of proofreading.
- Reading your message aloud is a great technique for finding errors in construction.
- The final look should be for capitalization, spelling of name, and numbers used in sentences. Double-check all the names because it is so easy to misspell a person's name.

It does take added time to proofread a business message, but it is well worth your time. Remember every single piece of written correspondence you send out is a representation of your company. The errors you missed will be quite obvious to the reader and whether you like it or not, they will judge you, proofread for the finishing touch.

A.TYPES OF BUSINESS MESSAGES:

Most of the written messages in business can be classified as **positive, negative, neutral, and persuasive.**

1. **Positive or good-news messages** are those messages that convey a piece of positive information expressing your goodwill (complying with a request, making a job offer, sending a note of thanks, offering adjustment to a complaint, etc.).

2. **Negative or Bad-news messages** deliver information that is disappointing to the reader. Messages conveying contract denials, job rejection, refusal of a request for adjustment or credit, etc. come under this category.
3. **Neutral or Routine messages** carry important information like positive or negative messages, but their emotional content is lower. Order acknowledgements, inquiries, requests for information, and compliance with requests, sending weekly reports, etc. can be routine messages.
4. **Persuasive messages** try to motivate the reader to agree with the sender and make them act in a desired way. As a business executive, you can write a persuasive message to influence your superior to adopt a particular proposal, to persuade your supplier to replace a defective product, or to convince a prospective customer to buy your new product.

B. DIRECT & INDIRECT APPROACHES

Direct Approach

Most business messages are written using the direct approach. Under this approach, the purpose of writing is to inform, and the sender wishes to transmit what is uppermost in the mind of the recipient. In other words, when the purpose of the message is to convey routine information and the analysis of the audience indicates that the reader will probably be interested in its contents, one can use the direct approach in preparing the message.

The direct approach is also known as the Deductive approach in which the main idea such as a recommendation or a conclusion is stated first, and then explanations and supporting ideas are provided, followed by a friendly closing. This approach is used to convey all positive information that pleases the reader and all neutral messages that have a strong information value.

Indirect Approach

The indirect pattern is more appropriate when you expect the reader to be uninterested, unwilling, displeased, or even hostile. Under this approach, you do not reveal the main idea until after you have offered explanations and evidence. In other words, you explain your reasons for saying 'No' before you say 'No'. Most of the negative and persuasive messages use the indirect approach, which is also known as the Inductive approach. Here, the evidence comes first, and the main idea comes late.

1. Business letters

In business, letters are written to other organizations, employers, suppliers, customers, shareholders, government agencies, etc. These are called business letters. The objective of a business letter is to achieve a definite purpose. It assists in creating and maintaining business relationship. A business letter is formal written message, written in conventional form with the part organized as in the figure below.

Parts of a business letter

	COMPANY LOGO & LETTERHEAD
Dateline	15th January, 2020
Inside Address	Ms. Divya Biswal Manager(Finance) Alfa Computers Pvt. Ltd. Bhubaneswar
Subject	PENDING BILLS
Salutation	Dear Ms. Biswal :
Body	{ → Purpose → Details → Action
Complimentary Close	Yours sincerely,
Sender's Signature	
Sender's Name & Designation	Abhisek Mishra Manager(Sales)
Enclosures	Enc.

PARTS OF A BUSINESS LETTER

1. Letter head

The letterhead is placed at the top centre. It includes the company's name, postal address, contact number, and the e-mail ID of the company/ organization.

2. Dateline : 21 June 2021

Or

June 21, 2021

3. Inside Address: Name and full address of the receiver

4. Subject : To be written concisely in a phrase.

5. Salutation: A greeting used to address the receiver, such as " DearMr/Mrs./Ms./ Dr._____" (Surname)

6. Body: To be organized in at least 3 paragraphs : the first paragraph tells the purpose ; the second and subsequent paragraphs give details; the last paragraph requests action to be taken by the receiver

7. Complimentary Close: A polite way of closing a letter- Yours sincerely/truly

8. Signature of the Writer

9. Name & Designation of the signatory

10. Enclosure(s) :Documents sent along with the letter

Business Letter Formats

1. **Block Format** :All parts begin at the left.
2. **Modified Block Format** :The Dateline, the complimentary close and the signature are at the right margin. All other parts begin at the left.
3. **Semi-Block Format** : The Date line, the Complimentary Close and the Signature are on the right, and the paragraphs in the body of the letter are indented.
4. **Simplified Format** :All parts are in the Block format. The Salutation and the complimentary close are omitted.

There are mainly two types of business letters : Routine and Persuasive. Routine letters are written in a business organization on a daily basis. Persuasive letters are intended to convince the receiver to agree to your point of view or your request. Persuasion is the ability to influence others to accept your point of view. For writing persuasive business letters, you must understand your product or service or idea, know your audience, anticipate arguments from the audience and then have a rational and logical response to them.

The pattern of ideas in routine business letters is: purpose- details- action. The pattern of ideas to be presented in a persuasive business letter is : Attention – Interest – Desire – Action. The writer must motivate the receiver so as to capture his/her attention, arouse his/her interest in the product or idea, whet the desire to own, and finally, make it convenient for the receiver to take the desired action as a result of your persuasion.

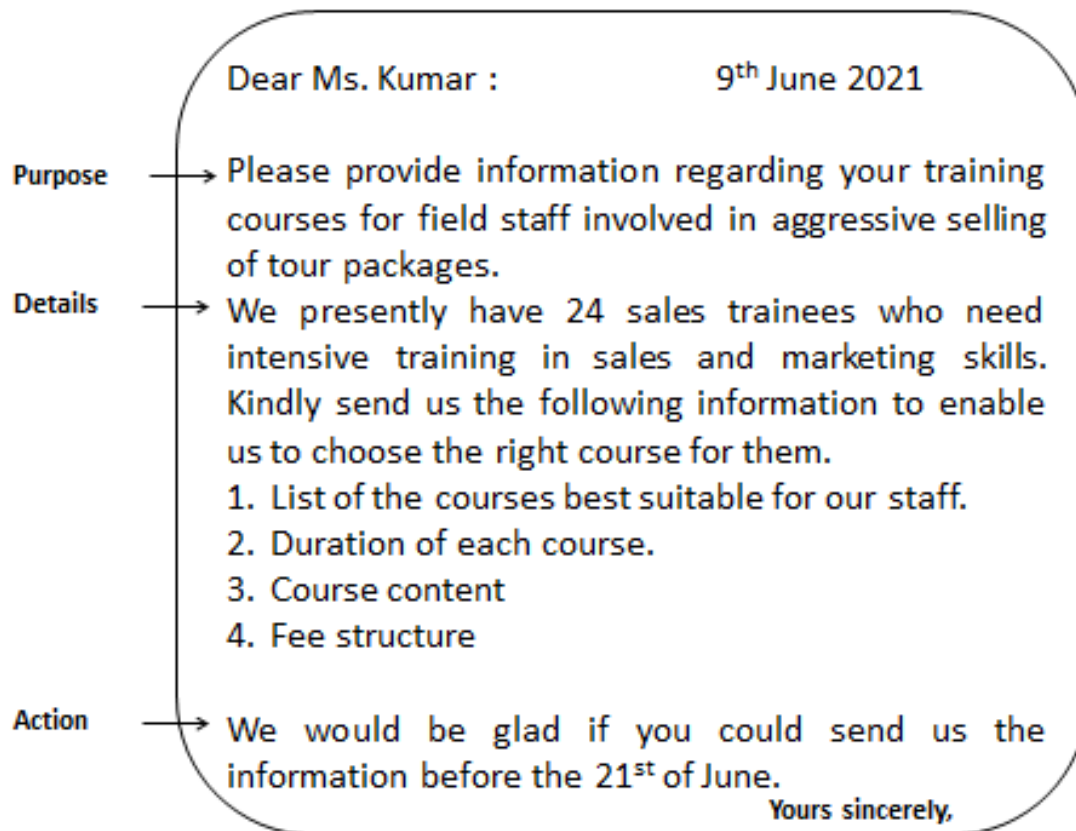
➤ **Routine Business Letters are mainly of 4 types :**

1. Letters of Enquiry / reply to Enquiry
2. Letters placing orders / confirming dispatch
3. Letters of complaint / Adjustment
4. Collection Letters

- **Persuasive Letters:** Sales Letters form the bulk of persuasive business letters.

The sample letters of different types are given below for the purpose of illustration.

A sample letter of Enquiry



A SAMPLE REPLY TO ENQUIRY (POSITIVE)

21st June 2021

Dear Mr. Tripathy,

Opening → We feel privileged that your company has decided to take advantage of our training programmes for sales personnel.

Details of each course, its content & duration along with fees.

Details → I would be glad if you can convey your selection of course for your sales personnel along with details regarding the number of participants and the date on which they can join the training course(s). We have the

Closing → system of advance payment of full course fees before imparting the training programme.

I look forward to a prompt reply.

Yours sincerely,

Pramila Kumar (Ms.)

A SAMPLE REPLY TO ENQUIRY (NEGATIVE)

We appreciate your efforts to improve the professional knowledge and skills of your sales staff, and would be privileged to arrange training courses for reputed companies like yours.

We receive a large number of requests from big companies to organize training programmes for their sales staff. However, we conduct only ten sales training courses in a year. We have already finalized the list of the companies for whom we are going to conduct the courses during 2021. Therefore, we are not in a position to give you the course details, and other related information for this year.

We thank you for your interest in our organization and its training packages. If you wish, we would be glad to include your name in the list of companies for 2022 training year.

With best wishes

Pramila Kumar

Letter Placing an Order

Maria Interiors, Inc
12, Janpath
Ashok Nagar
Bhubaneswar

June 15, 2021

Mr. Rajesh Bhatia
Sales Manager
Silvania Office Products
B-27, Lajpat Nagar
New Delhi

Sub : Order for Office Stationeries

Attention : Order Department

Dear Mr. Bhatia :

Please send me the following office supplies as listed and priced in your summer catalogue 2019 :

1. 8 pkgs D33E-886 Colour-coded files with heavy manila folders – letter size
2. 4 boxes D33E-276 Square box-files – capacity 2
3. 24 pieces D33E-3325 Large capacity 3-ring binders – letter size

Please charge these to the Maria Interiors account. I would appreciate quick delivery of these items. Please ship by the fastest freight available.

Yours sincerely,

Akshay Sharma
Office Manager

Silvania Office Products
B-27, Lajpat Nagar
New Delhi

12th January, 2020

Mr Akshay Sharma
Office Manager,
Maria Interiors, Inc.
12, Andheri West
Mumbai 400012

Dear Mr Sharma,

The following items were shipped to you today by Worldwide Express, rush service:

1. 8 pkgs D33E Colour-coded files with heavy manila folders—letter size
2. 24 D33E-3325 Large capacity 3-ring binders—letter size

Enclosed is the invoice for Rs. 24,000, which includes GST.

Your order for four boxes of square box-files-2 in capacity (D33E - 276) should reach you within 14 days, also by Worldwide Express. Because of the great popularity of these durable, high-capacity hole punchers, they are currently out of stock. A shipment from the supplier is due shortly, and when it arrives, we will fulfil your order immediately.

Thank you for your order, and please let me know if I can be of service in the future. For your convenience, I am enclosing a preview copy of the new catalogue No. 107, which will be mailed to our customers in early July.

Yours sincerely,

Rajesh Bhatia
Sales Manager

Encl. : Catalogue No.107
 Invoice

A SAMPLE LETTER OF COMPLAINT

(Also known as claims letter)

Dear Sir,

We ordered 2000 nos. of 1kg tins of Nihal Baby Food Powder under our order No. M-4006/ FP dated 4 January 2020. Today when the consignment arrived we checked its contents and found only 1500 tins, out of which 45 were badly damaged. It seems one of the cases was not packed properly or some heavy load has been placed over it in transit.

There is a great demand for this powder in the town at this time of the year and we expected to clear the whole stock during the next two months. But it appears that some of our customers will be disappointed. With enormous resources at your command we hope you can save the situation by sending 500 tins immediately by quick transit service.

As regards the damaged tins, we want your advice. There are two alternatives: either you allow us to sell them at a reduced price, in which case we shall send you the total amount realized after deducting our usual commission of 7 per cent or permit us to return them to you at your cost for replacement.

We would very much appreciate an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
R.L. Bagchi
Purchase Manager

A SAMPLE LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT

Dear Mr. Bagchi,

Thank you for your letter no. 1342 of 11th June 2021 . We are very sorry to learn that you have been put to embarrassment and inconvenience owing to our mistake.

Your suggestion for quick shipment of 500 tins is fair and we have despatched them today by quick transit service, as desired by you. We hope they will reach in time for you to keep the dates with your clients. We also agree to bear the transportation cost of damaged tins. Please send them back soon.

We thank you for drawing our attention to this mistake because we have again carefully examined the working of our packing and despatch department and introduced further checks to prevent the recurrence of such mistakes. Rest assured that you will not be put to any such inconvenience in future.

Yours sincerely,
Anjum Azad (Mr.)
Sales Manager

SAMPLE CLAIMS LETTER 2

Dear Sir,

On 6th June 2021, we bought a voltage stabilizer, voltrex for Rs. 3228.56 from your authorised dealer Mr. Shyam Kumar Co., Laxmi Sagar, Bhubaneswar. It bears No. LT 400397A and the guarantee card is numbered VL 4448632.

After we had used it for about a month for regulating current to our computer IBM 1130 it began to produce a loud noise. I sent it to Shyam Kumar Co. They said it was a minor defect and returned it to us after repairs. After about three weeks the same trouble started again. We called an engineer and got our equipment checked. He says that the computer is all right and has advised us against using the stabilizer as it may damage the equipment.

Now we feel reluctant to approach the dealer. They might once again dismiss the trouble as a minor one and return it after repairs. The fact that the stabilizer has developed trouble twice within about seven weeks indicates that there is some manufacturing defect in it.

I, therefore, request you to arrange to replace it immediately by issuing necessary instructions to the dealer. I may add that some other organizations which own your stabilizer have been getting trouble-free service for several years. In fact, their recommendation has prompted us to buy your product.

Yours sincerely,

T. R. Das

Research and Development Officer

SAMPLE ADJUSTMENT LETTER 2

12th June 2021

Dear Mr. Das,

Thank you for your letter no. 4567 dated 9th June 2021, bringing to our attention the defect in your Voltrex. We are sorry that Shyam Kumar and Co. have not been able to provide satisfactory service.

Today we have written to them to send our Delhi-based engineer to you for a thorough on-the-spot check-up of your Voltrex. If it indeed is something which needs a minor repair he will do it and you can rely on his work for he has been especially trained for such tasks. But if it is a manufacturing defect, your voltrex will be promptly replaced by a new one by our dealer.

We are indeed distressed that you have been put to a lot of inconvenience. We shall feel grateful if you drop a line after our engineer has visited you. We would like to know whether you wish us to do anything further.

Yours sincerely,
T.K. Khan
Sales Manager

SAMPLE COLLECTION LETTER 1

Dear Sir,

This is to refer to the outstanding payment from your end. We would like to remind you that after sending the statement of accounts, we also wrote a reminder letter to you. However, we have still not received the payment.

We think, there may be some reason for you to be dissatisfied; hence there has been no payment from your end. If so, could you please intimate us about the matter so that we can take appropriate remedial steps soon.

On the other hand, if you are satisfied with our execution of the order, please send us the payment soon so that we can proceed with your next order.

May we expect your reply within this week?

Yours sincerely,

SAMPLE COLLECTION LETTER 2

Dear Sir,

This is to draw your attention to the outstanding amount that is due to us. I would like to inform you that we have already sent several reminders to you about our payment. We are surprised at your silence, and it is already three weeks since the payment has been due. As you are also in business, you will please appreciate the importance of receiving payment in time.

Hence I would request you to kindly send the money as soon as possible so that we can continue our mutual business relationship.

I will expect the payment as soon as you receive the letter.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely,

Sales Letter

Modern Office Technologies Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
New Industrial Area
33, Vikas Marg, New Delhi - 110023

15th June 2021

Sri Sahas Beniwal
Manager
Beniwal Enterprises
17 Anarkali Road
Gwalior - 474002

Subject:

Dear Sri Beniwal,

Have you ever thought how much time your secretary spends in taking down your dictation? Dictation takes as much as a third of the entire time spent on correspondence. Why not record the dictation on a stenogram so that your secretary can do other jobs while you dictate?

You will be surprised to know how little it costs. For 52 weeks in the year, your stenogram would work hard for you on less than an average month's salary for a secretary. It will take dictation anywhere at any time: during lunch-hour, in the evening at home. You can even dictate while you are travelling or are away from office on business. Simply record and post the recorded message back to your secretary for typing.

Attention

Interest

The master stenogram is efficient, reliable, time-saving and economical. No wonder, it is being used in thousands of offices all over the country. Its reproduction quality is superb and it is unbelievably easy to use. Just press a button and it is ready to record your dictation, interviews, telephonic conversations, reports and instructions. And with our unique after-sales service contract, you are assured of its lasting and efficient operation.

Desire

We could tell you a lot more about our master stenogram but would prefer you to read the enclosed comments from various executives all over the country. These comments really speak for themselves. If you wish, return the enclosed prepaid card and we will arrange for our representative to call and arrange a demonstration for you at your convenience. Or alternatively you may place an order straightaway, using the order form sent herewith.

Action

Yours sincerely,

(K C PATHAK)
Sales Manager
Encl: As above

SAMPLE SALES LETTER 2

Dear Sir:

Attention

A lady called on us the other day and told us the secret of her happy married life. This is what she had to say:

After two years of her marriage she had a baby and began to feel tired, overworked, and sick. Her husband observed this and apart from consulting a doctor and getting her a tonic, he bought her a National Pressure Cooker. Within weeks her health improved and her cheerful disposition lit up the home like warm sunshine. Hers is a happy family now.

**Interest
&
Desire**

Our cooker adds fun to cooking and beauty to the kitchen. It saves both money and time.

In just 30 minutes you can prepare a full meal for your family, thus cutting your fuel bill by 25 percent.

SAMPLE SALES LETTER 2

Dear Sir:

Attention

A lady called on us the other day and told us the secret of her happy married life. This is what she had to say:

After two years of her marriage she had a baby and began to feel tired, overworked, and sick. Her husband observed this and apart from consulting a doctor and getting her a tonic, he bought her a National Pressure Cooker. Within weeks her health improved and her cheerful disposition lit up the home like warm sunshine. Hers is a happy family now.

Interest
&
Desire

Our cooker adds fun to cooking and beauty to the kitchen. It saves both money and time.

In just 30 minutes you can prepare a full meal for your family, thus cutting your fuel bill by 25 percent.

Years of research have gone into making it. It is made of a metal which has been carefully tested to withstand the maximum pressure that can be generated. The lid, though firm when in use, opens easily and the handle is very convenient to hold. It has a double safety device. We also guarantee it for three years against manufacturing defects and offer free repair service during this period at all our authorized retail shops.

At present National Cookers are available in the following four sizes:

Model A404	4 litres
Model A406	6 litres
Model A408	8 litres
Model A410	10 litres

Action

Choose the one that suits you best and mail the enclosed postage-free postcard after filling in the details. In about a week the postman will call on you and deliver it at your door.

Yours sincerely,
P.N. Banerjee
Sales Officer

Apart from routine and persuasive business letters, there are three other types of letters with different patterns of organizations in the message:

1. Good News Letters
2. Bad News Letters
3. Goodwill Letters

GOOD NEWS LETTERS

- Conveys a pleasant message
- Provides
 - Positive news such as requested information.
 - Positive response to requests
 - Job offers
- Structure :
 - Para 1 (opening) 'good news' & Appreciation
 - Para 2 (middle) – details and conditions, if any.
 - Para 3 (closing) reminds of the good news and a future-oriented closing thought.

Dear _____,

I am delighted to inform you that we have accepted your proposal for a grant from the Foundation. Please find enclosed a sheet detailing the terms of your grant, including the total amount, accounting procedures, and how we will assess your progress. Please photocopy the sheet, then sign, and send it so as to reach us by the end of February.

Congratulations on being selected for the grant. We look forward to working with you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

BAD NEWS LETTER

- Conveys an unpleasant message, usually related to the refusal of a request with tact.
- Structure :
 - Para - 1 Opening Buffer – a common ground
Begin with a neutral statement that logically leads to the refusal or bad news.
 - Para - 2 Present facts, analysis, and reasons for the refusal or bad news.
 - Para - 3 State bad news using positive tone and de-emphasize the bad news.
 - Para - 4 Closing: A good-will ending.
Provide information that shifts the focus away from the bad news and to a continuing relationship with the receiver.

Dear _____,

Subject : Travel Request

Thank you for your interest in new, emerging on-line technologies. The Travel Committee reviewed your request to attend the Syllabus Conference in Pune in February.

The University increased its travel budget this year to 12 lac. However, there has been an increase in the requests we have received.

Since we are close to the end of the fiscal year, we have used all our travel funds for the year. As much as we would like to fund your request, we just do not have the money to do so.

If you have departmental funds available, you may use those. You could also check to see if any divisional funds are still available.

I do hope you will be able to attend the conference. Please contact me if you need help in finding another source of funding.

Yours sincerely,

Good-will letter-1

Dear Mr. Dabholkar,

All of us at Patel Transport were extremely sorry to learn this morning that a severe fire had damaged your warehouse, last night.

If there is anything we can do to co-operate with you in overcoming your present difficulties, please do not hesitate to call on us. We have had a long association with you, and we shall be happy to extend a helping hand.

Yours sincerely,

Raman Malgaonkar

Good-will letter-2

Dear Mr. Sethna,

I must express my appreciation of the excellent symposium on Personal Taxation you organised last week. It was highly stimulating as well as informative. I heard several persons who were present say how glad they were that they had attended.

Thank you for the opportunity you gave us to hear the authorities on the subject.

Yours sincerely,

Kamla Hussain

2. Business Memo

A business memo is a formal written message it is written in a conventional form for someone within the organization to solve problems and to act as a means of decision making.

Memos, like business letters, are written to inform and make requests. However, they differ from business letters in these ways:

- I. For internal communication
- II. Different form
- III. Less formal; more conversational tone

PARTS OF A MEMO

(A) **Heading :**
Date :
To :
From :
Subject :

(B) **Opening**
A short paragraph describing the problem

- What is the problem?
- What led to the need for memo?
- What is the purpose of the memo?

I am happy to report that our new product ACT Energizer 3 launched in January this year has been highly successful in the first quarter of its launch. I am sending you the sales report for the last six months.

(C) **Body:** Message of the memo describes, explains and discusses the central idea and includes all supporting details.

(D) **Closing:** Courteous ending, stating what action is to be taken by the receiver.

(E) **Signature**

Sample Memo - I

Syndicate Consultancy Services Pvt. Limited Nayadeep, Andheri West, Mumbai-53

Date : June 11, 2021
To : All Employees
From : Anurag Bhattacharya
 Director (Sales & Marketing)
Subject : New Health Scheme

The company is introducing a new health scheme called SCS health plan. You will receive your new medical plan and the booklet outlining the terms and conditions of the scheme by the end of this month.

The main features of SCS health plan include:

- Medical reimbursement for treatment at private hospitals and clinics.
- Direct payment of medical expenses to AIIMS and other important national hospitals and clinics.
- Medical facilities for retired staff

SCS health plan is compulsory for all the employees of the company. The use of the medical card is mandatory.

I am sure the new health scheme will improve the existing medical facilities and would benefit our employees. We encourage you to use your new medical card whenever you visit the health centre of the SCS hospital.

Your cooperation in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Anurag Bhattacharya

Sample Memo - II

SKP Ship Management Remi Bizort, VD Road, Andheri(W), Mumbai-400053

Date : 10th June 2021
To : Ashish Kumar, Training Manager
From : Jerry Massey, Managing Director
Subject : Special Workshop on Ship Management and Modern Technology

Please refer to your memo dated 3rd June, containing the proposal to organize a special workshop on "Ship management and modern technology" for the Junior executives of our company. I am pleased to inform you that the executive board has approved your proposal. You may send us the final list of resource persons to be invited in the workshop. You may consider including the names of a few senior executives working in the ship management industry. This may help us in making the workshop more focused and need-based.

I would like to express my appreciation for the effort that you have put into designing the structure of the workshop. Keep up the good work and keep these ideas coming.

Jerry Massey

Choose the appropriate heading

Memorandum

To : Frank Gates, Branch Manager, Leeds
From : Derek Hall, Managing Director
Date : June 21 2021
Subject : _____

I will be taking Mr. James Hudson, our new Sales Director to visit all our Northern Branches during the week commencing on 5th of July.

Our visit to your branch will be on Monday, 5 July and we expect to arrive at 10.00 A.M.

Please arrange for a brief tour in the morning followed by a meeting with you. After lunch Mr. Hudson would like to meet all the Sales Staff.

Please confirm the above arrangements as soon as possible.

Derek

Home-work

You work in Bajaj Allianz Insurance Company at Bhubaneswar. The company has recently redesigned all its stationery (writing paper, memo pads, invoices etc.) and these are to be issued to all staff this week.

The Branch Manager Ms. Asha Malik says this to you:

"Could you send a memo to all staff please? Let them know that we will be sending each department a supply of the new stationery this week. If any department does not get it by Friday afternoon, they should let me know.

"Please remind everyone that they have to use the new material immediately, even if they still have a lot of old stationery. I know this means we might have to waste some of the old materials but we could always use them as scrap paper.

"The new material is well designed and I am sure all our staff and customers will like it.

"You had better send the memo in my name."

Write the memo to all staff in the company in about 100 words.

3. Business e-mail

We need effective e-mail writing skills because e-mail can be an important communications channel between us and our peers, subordinates, superiors, other colleagues, customers, and several other people we interact with regularly. We may have to write a number of e-mail messages everyday. As e-mails are faster than letters and memos, they are used for quick transmission of information and ideas. They serve several purposes, which may include:

- conveying routine information, such as new products or services being introduced, new policy changes, introduction of new procedures, new market strategies being followed, and so on;
- requesting information or additional resources;
- inviting the reader to business meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, or symposiums;
- containing proposals or requests for proposals;
- seeking explanations or clarifications;
- describing problems;
- persuading the reader to take an action; and
- giving feedback, suggestions, or recommendations.

Advantages of E-mail

Speed Speed is the main advantage of using e-mail. Unlike regular mail, which may take days or even weeks to reach its destination, e-mail reaches its destination instantaneously. A message can be sent quickly to anyone anywhere in the world. Distance is immaterial. Just type the name/names and e-mail address/addresses of the recipient and click the mouse on the send button, and your message goes.

The advantages of using e-mail include speed, low cost, quick distribution, flexibility, easy attachments, and easy upward communication.

Low Cost Low cost is yet another advantage of using e-mail. As sending e-mail does not involve printing and copying, it is less expensive than any other channel of communication (that is, postal mail, telephone, fax etc.). Ten e-mail messages may be sent in ten minutes and the cost could be as low as five rupees. Moreover, the size of the message or the distance to the recipient does not affect the cost.

Quick Distribution E-mail makes distribution quick and easy. Messages can be sent to more than one person at the same time. There is no wasting of time and no repetition.

Flexibility E-mail allows complete flexibility during composing and drafting. While using e-mail, the sender may edit, revise, modify, and redesign his/her message without printing and copying it. He/She can easily reshape e-mail messages before sending them. Moreover, he/she has the flexibility to receive or compose e-mails as per his/her convenience.

Easy Attachments It is easy to attach files, photographs, clippings, drawings, video clips, sound recordings, and so on to an e-mail. For example, resumes, scanned copies of testimonials, transcripts, and other documents can be attached to job application e-mail.

Easy Upward Communication E-mail is less formal and structured than letters and memos. It is normally in the form of a private dialogue, where the sender wants to say something and expects a response to the message. Thus, e-mail promotes easier upward communication. While using e-mail the sender need not worry about a formal and fixed style of communication. He/She may follow the norms of any set pattern of writing and is free to choose any style or pattern that suits the content.

Characteristics of Successful E-Mail Messages

Professionals need to use e-mail frequently. Infact, the use of e-mail for business and professional communication purposes continues to expand due to its tremendous advantages. It has become the most common professional communication medium. It is replacing printed memos in several organisations by playing a more important role in the dissemination of ideas and information. Good e-mail messages share certain characteristics, which include conciseness, accuracy, clarity, conversational tone, and single theme.

Five characteristics that distinguish successful e-mail messages are conciseness, accuracy, clarity, conversational tone, and a single theme.

Concise Conciseness is the most important characteristic of a successful e-mail message. An e-mail should not contain unnecessary information. Unnecessary explanations, repetitions, wordy expressions, and exaggeration should be avoided.

Ideas should be organised in such a way that the e-mail makes its point with the fewest words possible. The reader may not be interested, or have the time, in a very long and detailed message.

Correct Accuracy is crucial to successful e-mail writing. Correct format and structure should be used. Correct e-mail addresses should be written. Messages may bounce if incorrect e-mail address is written. The content of the e-mail should also be checked for factual accuracy. E-mail messages should be edited for spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes.

Clear E-mails should be simple and clear. An unclear and vague e-mail may be immediately deleted. Simple, familiar, direct and specific words, appropriate linkers, and transitional signals should be used to form short sentences and paragraphs.

Conversational Tone The tone of e-mail messages are usually formal but conversational. It is better to use a tone which gives a personal touch to e-mails. However, one should avoid being too informal or emotional. The challenge is to maintain professionalism without being too formal. Although first person pronouns (that is, I, we) and conversational contractions (you'll, he'll, she'll, can't, don't, doesn't, etc.) may be used, standard writing techniques should be used and professional writing conventions followed.

Single Theme A successful e-mail message deals with only one topic. In order to be purposive, you need to focus on a single theme. Develop a single theme logically, subordinating related ideas.

Rules of Netiquette

Netiquette refers to the formal rules of correct and polite behaviour in respect of e-mails. Some basic rules of Netiquette are as follows :

1. Avoid all capital letters.

Capital letters are reading aids that signal a reader about sentence beginnings, proper nouns, and acronyms such as ASAP. Generally they are used to emphasize the important parts of a text. However, writing a whole word or sentence in caps shows unprofessionalism and lack of e-mail etiquette. Writing in all capital letters is equivalent to shouting in e-mail language.

2. Provide an informative subject line.

If you want your e-mail to be read and have the desired impact, make the subject line specific and compelling. Create an effective informative subject line that allows people to determine priorities from their in-box list.

3. Revise the e-mail before you hit 'send'.

This is absolutely necessary as you might have inadvertently typed words which do not convey your message properly or which may hurt the feelings of the recipient.

4. Respect the copyright on extracts and quotes.

E-mail communication must abide by copyright laws. Be certain to give credit for quoted material and seek permission to use copyrighted text or graphics from printed and electronic sources.

5. Do not make changes in the message being forwarded.

Unless you inform the reader that editing has occurred, do not alter a message you are forwarding or reposting, and be sure to ask permission of the sender before forwarding it.

6. Allow cool-off time for a flame.

Sending a negative message that contains insulting and critical comments is called a flame. Allow cool-off time before sending a flame, or any emotional or angry message.

7. Finally, respond to a message as early as you can.

∴ A Resume is a brief record of one's personal history and qualifications, which is typically prepared by an applicant for a job. It shows show the candidate's education, work experience and achievements have prepared him for the job appliedfor.

Few people are actually hired on the basis of their Resumes alone. However, many people are *not hired* because of their poorly written Resumes. Applicants are generally hired on the basis of their performance during the interview.

Thus the purpose of the Resume is to get you an interview, and the purpose of the interview is to get you a job. It must, however, be remembered that the Resume is crucial in advancing you beyond the large mass of initial applicants and into the much smaller group of potential candidates invited to an interview.

Strategic points about the Resume

1. *Resume Length:* A recruiter typically spends less than one minute to look up each Resume and decide whether to call the candidate for interview or to screen him out. Therefore, most managers prefer a one-page Resume for the entry-level positions, with a two-page Resume being reserved for higher-levelpositions.
2. *Resume Format:* Your Resume must be attractive and easy to read. Choose a simple font style in one or two different sizes. Use a simple format, with lots of white space, short paragraphs and a logical

organization. And your resumes should be free from errors in content, spelling and grammar.

3. *Resume Content:* Every Resume must give the following information about the candidates:

- Name, address, telephone number, and E-mail ID.
- Career Objective
- Educational qualifications
- Job experience: employing company, dates of employment, and job responsibilities
- Special aptitudes and skills.

Therefore, the standard parts of a Resume include Heading, Career Objective, Education, Work Experience, Special Skills and Abilities, Activities and Interests, Achievements, and References, which may be called strategic points in a Resume.

The following is a brief discussion of each of these strategic points.

Heading: The heading of a resume includes contact information, which contains the applicant's name, full postal address with pin code, telephone number with area code, and e-mail address.

Career Objective: Career objective is a special part in a resume. It occurs just above the main experience and education parts. The resume should include the applicant's career objective, which should be tailored to the position he/she is seeking. It should be a specific one-sentence focused statement expressing his career goals in relation to the targeted position. It should convey his/her motivation and interest in the job he/she is seeking. The following are some examples:

- (a) *To obtain a challenging position in a large software consulting organization providing business consulting, application development, and product engineering services, where understanding and experience of business process modelling and organizational change management to suit customer needs can be used to achieve set targets.*
- (b) *To work as a product architect in an innovative software company where I will be able to use my experience in the areas of product and system architecture with expertise in enterprise applications.*

Education: In this part of the resume, specific details regarding the applicant's education and professional training must be included. The name and location of the school / college / university / institute attended, dates of attendance, major areas of study, degrees/certificates received should be mentioned. The applicant's grade point average/class/division may also be mentioned. Relevant training programmes, special

courses, seminars and workshops that the applicant might have completed, attended, or conducted should also be included. Reverse chronological order is used to list educational information that is, starting from the most recent educational information.

Work experience: This part of the resume should provide a brief and specific overview of the applicant's work and professional experience. As prior work experience is a vital part of any hiring decision, the applicant must draft this part of the resume very carefully. If he/she has impressive work experience relevant to the position he/she is seeking, it makes more sense to mention it before providing the educational information.

Work experience should be given in reverse chronological order, by listing the most recent employment first. Title of the position, employer's name or name of the organization/company, location of work (town, state), dates of employment, and important Job responsibilities, activities, and accomplishments should be included. Emphasis should be placed on those aspects of the applicant's experience and employment achievements that illustrate his/her capabilities and positive personality traits such as motivation, willingness to learn, positive attitude, confidence, ability to get along with others, and communication and interpersonal skills.

Special Skills and Abilities: In this part of the resume, the applicant's special skills, abilities and aptitudes that are of significance and of direct relevance to the job applied for are listed. Examples of learned skills include computer programming, computer processing, data processing, foreign languages, machinery operation, consulting, drafting, technical writing, and so on. It is necessary to be selective and specific, highlighting only those skills and talents that are relevant to the targeted job.

Activities and Interests: Extra-curricular, co-curricular, professional activities, and hobbies and interests must be mentioned. These activities must show that the applicant is a dynamic and energetic person who can accept challenges. Companies prefer such people.

Achievements: The applicant's achievements, accomplishments, and awards distinguish him from the rest. They convince the employer that he/she is an achiever and therefore, worth hiring. This part should include scholarships, fellowships, awards, distinctions, commendations, certificates, or anything that shows achievement or recognition.

References: Some employers need references from persons who know the applicant's work or professional competence through formal and professional interaction with

him / her. When applying for a solicited position where the employer wants references, the names of two persons who can give letters of recommendations or references should be mentioned. These persons may be the applicant's previous employer, teacher, immediate supervisor, research guide or colleague. The name of the reference must be mentioned, and his or her designation and full contact address with telephone number and e-mail address should be given.

While preparing a Resume, one should carefully include these strategic prints and follow the principles of clarity, honesty and preciseness in providing information.

BUSINESS REPORTS

NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Whether a person is a low-profile public servant in a government organisation or a high-profile business manager in a multinational company, almost everyone may be asked to write reports at some point of time or the other. Professionals such as administrators, scientists, business executives, and engineers have to write reports for different purposes. A scientist may have to write a technical report that provides scientific data, whereas the sales manager of a company may need to prepare weekly sales reports to answer questions about how effectively sales targets are being achieved. Reports are important because in most organizations executive decision making is based almost entirely on them.

Reports may vary from a one-page informal trip report summarising the events of a business trip to a 250-page formal annual report of an organisation. They may be presented orally, electronically, or in written form. They may also vary in form, content, approach, and purpose. It is, thus, difficult to provide a specific but comprehensive definition of the term 'report'. The literal meaning of the word 'report' is 'a formal or official statement, as of results of an investigation or matter referred' or just 'a statement of facts'.

 A report is a formal document written for a specific audience to meet a specific need. It may contain facts of a situation, project, or process; an analysis and interpretation of data, events, and records; inferences or conclusions drawn from objective data; or suggestions and recommendations. Although reports may include a

A report is a factual and systematic account of a specific business or professional activity.

variety of topics and objectives, they all help in the process of decision making by answering questions and determining ways to improve certain situations. As a common type of communication used during work, reports reinforce, prompt, motivate, and persuade the readers to act. Reports normally move in an upward direction and are used to communicate to the senior levels in an organisations.

Reports help in the analysis of a condition, situation, or a problem for an effective solution.

The importance of reports for any professional lies in the fact that a number of business decisions and research conclusions are made on the basis of information presented or recommendations made in reports. By helping in dissemination of ideas, views, and suggestions, reports develop information and understanding essential for effective decision making.

Thus, reports serve several purposes, which may include:

- presenting data;
- describing problems and suggesting solutions;
- discussing and analysing data;
- recording events and happenings;
- analysing a situation or a condition; or
- giving feedback, suggestions, or recommendations.

Students will be called upon to write project reports, seminar reports, progress reports, research reports, dissertations or theses. Moreover, effective report writing skills are necessary in order to be successful at the workplace. As a person advances in his/her chosen career, he/she may be called on to prepare different kinds of reports more often and more effectively. Periodic operating reports, situational reports, informational routine reports, investigative reports, feasibility reports, compliance reports, and so on are some of different kinds of reports that may have to be prepared.

TYPES OF REPORTS

As summarised in Fig. 25.1, reports can be classified as informational and analytical, according to their functions, as routine or special, as per periodicity, as oral and written, according to their communicative form, and as formal and non-formal, based on their nature, scope, and length. Each of these are now discussed briefly.

Informational, analytical, routine, special, oral, written, formal, and non-formal reports are some of the important types of reports.

Informational and Analytical Reports

An informational report presents facts of a case, problem, condition, or situation without any analysis, interpretations, or recommendations. The function of the writer of an informational report is to collect, compile, and organise facts for the readers. He/she is just a compiler who has to present the data as objectively as possible. In order to write an informational report, relevant information should be gathered and presented in a systematic and organised way. Examples of informational reports include conference reports, seminar reports, trip reports, and so on.

Unlike an informational report, an analytical report presents data with interpretation and analysis. The report writer analyses the facts of a case, problem, condition, or situation objectively and puts forward his/her conclusions, inferences, and recommendations. Apart from presenting the facts objectively, the writer must reflect a broader understanding of the subject in order to comment on various aspects related to the report. In order to write an analytical report, the writer should be able to evaluate

information and make appropriate inferences. Examples of analytical reports include project reports, feasibility reports, market research reports, and so forth.

Routine and Special Reports

All organisations, including companies, institutions, government departments, and research establishments, depend on routine reports for various management decisions. As routine reports are usually prepared on a periodic basis, that is, daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, they may also be called periodic reports. The contents of routine reports may vary from simple production information to complex marketing or research data. Routine reports may be informational or analytical depending on the purpose. Examples of routine reports include daily production reports, monthly sales reports, annual reports, and so on.

Unlike a routine report, a special report is prepared and presented to convey special information related to a single condition, situation, problem, or occasion. Special reports do not contain routine or repetitive information as they are the result of specific circumstances. Some of the most important decisions in an organisation may be taken on the basis of the information contained in special reports. For example, a company might launch a new product based on a report analysing the market demand and presence of competing products in the market. Special reports could be either informational or analytical. Examples of special reports include inquiry reports, research reports, thesis, dissertation, and so forth.

Table 25.1 Types of Reports

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Types</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Function	Informational	Objective presentation of data without analysis or interpretation	conference reports, seminar reports, trip reports
	Analytical	Presentation of data with analysis and interpretation	project reports, feasibility reports, market research reports
Periodicity	Routine	Presentation of routine information	daily production reports, monthly sales reports, annual reports
	Special	Presentation of specific information related to a single condition, situation, problem or occasion	inquiry reports, research reports, thesis, dissertation
Communicative Form	Oral	Face-to-face presentation of information	accident reports, sales reports, joining reports, conference reports
	Written	Presentation of information in written form	project reports, progress reports, research reports
Nature, scope and length	Formal	Long reports with elaborate description and discussion	annual reports, thesis, project reports, technical reports
	Non-formal	Short reports	laboratory reports, daily production reports, trip reports

Oral and Written Reports

Oral reports are informal and face-to-face presentations of information. Examples may include oral reporting of accidents, sales, production, joining, and so on. Oral reports are useful for presenting brief

FORMATS OF REPORTS

As listed in Table 25.2, there are four common formats of reports, that is, printed forms, letter format, memo format, and manuscript format. The choice of format can be made according to the nature, length, scope, and function of the report, and type of audience.

Table 25.2 Formats of Reports

Format	Description
Printed forms	Forms prepared to record for repetitive and routine data
Letter format	Short informal reports to be communicated to someone outside an organisation
Memo format	Short informal reports to be communicated to someone within an organisation
Manuscript format	Formal reports printed on plain paper

Printed Forms

Printed forms are generally used to collect routine information. For example, a company may keep printed forms for recording daily production or monthly sales. Similarly, an organisation may use printed forms for trip reports, conference reports, laboratory reports, inspection reports, confidential performance reports, and so on. Using a printed form is quite simple because the person filling it is just required to fill in the blanks, or tick against the listed items. Detailed descriptions or discussions need not be provided.

There are four formats of reports: printed forms, letter format, memo format, and manuscript format.

There are three main advantages of using printed forms for reporting. Firstly, they are systematic and make for easy reading. The readers can easily locate and identify important information. Secondly, they are more objective and factual with little scope for the writer to be subjective about the content. There is no subjective interpretation of the material used in the report. Facts are recorded quite objectively. Finally, they save time. It is less time consuming to prepare a report in printed form than preparing reports in other formats. Figure 25.3 gives an example of a report in printed form.

TOUR REPORT	
Report on Participation in Professional Conference	
Office order No. 14789/2005 dated 04-01-2005	
Name of the officer:	Kumar Abhishek
Designation:	Senior Marketing Manager
Address:	Regional Office, Syndicate Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd. Nayadeep, Andheri (W), Mumbai-53
Name of the conference:	Emerging concepts in Sales and Marketing
Name of the Organiser:	Indian Management Association
Place of Conference:	Hotel Tajmahal, Mumbai
Duration of Conference:	January 14 – January 18, 2005
Organisation of Conference:	
(a) Sponsors of the Conference:	1. Tata Consultancy Services 2. Air Sahara 3. Reliance Industries 4. Indian Airlines
(b) Number of Participating companies:	25
(c) Number of sessions:	12
(d) Number of presentations:	32
Date: 27th January, 2005	
Signature: Kumar Abhishek	

Fig. 25.3 Printed Form

Letter Format

The letter format may be used for short reports that have to be communicated to someone outside an organisation. A letter format contains all the elements of a letter along with some additional sections such as illustrations, references, and so on. Headings may be used in a letter report. The letter format may be used for informational, analytical, routine, special, or non-formal reports. For example, there is an accident on the shop floor in a company and report has to be sent to the insurance company. Other examples of the letter format include evaluation reports, feasibility reports, survey reports, legal reports, and so on. Figure 25.3 shows an example.

ALPHA CONSULTANCY PVT. LTD.
C-21/12, Ring Road, Delhi-110 052
www.alphagroup.com

January 31, 2005

Mr G Ravi Kiran
Chief Safety Officer
NDP Limited, NDPL Building
37-D, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700 071

SUBJECT: MINE INSPECTION REPORT

Dear Mr Ravi Kiran:

The Alpha Consultancy team inspected the AP section of the IV Seam in NDP Colliery to collect various parameters to determine the Rock Mass Rating (RMR) of the roof. A detailed description regarding different locations visited is given below:

Location J: 10LW/ID near Main Dip

Slips were found.

Location K: 7 LW/IR

Junction was observed for its stability. It was found that the roof was intact with a single wooden prop at the centre.

Location L: Drift from IV to V seam

A downthrow fault was observed. The roof rocks were studied for RMR determination. The roof was found to be dry.

The inspection team included Dr Suresh Patra, Dr Seema Biswas, Mr Animesh Kumar and Mr Mohan Srivastava, all senior consultants at Alpha Consultancy.

We at Alpha Consultancy believe that the findings of the team will help you go ahead with your plan to modernise the support system with permanent roadways.

Sincerely,

Sd/-
A P Khemka
General Manager

Fig. 25.4 Letter Format

Memo Format

The memo format can be used for short reports that have to be communicated within an organization. A memo format should contain all the elements of a standard memo. In addition, it may contain a few extra sections. Like a report in the letter form, a memo report should contain headings for easy reading and reference. The memo format may be used for all types of reports, that is, informational, analytical, routine, special, or non-formal. An example has been given in Fig. 25.5.

Innova Solutions Pvt Ltd	
Interoffice Memorandum	
Date:	February 3, 2005
To:	Ms. Kavita Kashayap Director (Sales)
From:	Afsar Ali Haider Chief Training Manager
Subject:	INTER- ISPL MEET ON TELEMARKETING STRATEGIES – A
REPORT	
Sales managers from all 24 Regional offices of ISPL in India got together between 15 – 20th January 2005, to share their experiences of the use and effectiveness of telemarketing strategies (TMS) in India and to discuss the future plan of action of ISPL in India. There were sessions on Sales Training courses run in the ISPL Regional offices and the activities of the training centres at various parts of India. Ses-	

sions were also conducted on TMS materials produced in different ISPL training centres in India and each representative participant received sets of materials produced by the Corporate training centre in Mumbai.

Eminent sales trainers like Mr Anup Khandelwal, Dr N K Das, Ms Savitha Kumar, Coordinator ISPL TMS Scheme, and Mr Naveen Goswami, Coordinator, ISPL Training Centre Scheme, enlightened the participants through their speech and subsequent workshops. The workshops were highly interactive, and the participants actively participated in the deliberations. The question-answer sessions were particularly very interesting. The level of interest and commitment of the participants was remarkable. The meet was very enlightening and successful.

Recommendations

- Many such interactive meetings are necessary to enliven our capacity as sales promoters and to find some tentative solutions to some of the common problems that ISPL sales managers in India face.
- The Corporate Training Centre in Mumbai should be asked to produce similar TMS materials for sales trainees of ISPL.
- A few seminars and workshops on telemarketing strategies should be organised by the regional offices.

Memo Format

Manuscript Format

The manuscript format can be used for long and formal reports. These reports are divided into sections and sub-sections, each with a clear heading. These headings and sub-headings are organised in a logical sequence. While preparing a report in manuscript form, the writer needs to be careful about its structure and elements. A structured report will help in thinking clearly and deciding where to put each fact or idea. It also makes reading easy and helps the readers find the information they need. The manuscript format is discussed in detail in the next section.

WRITING STRATEGIES

Whether one has to write a short informal report or a long formal report, one needs to adopt effective writing strategies. As reports are systematic attempts to discuss problems, situations, or conditions and stimulate thinking or action in individuals and groups, a systematic plan of writing should be followed.

The following steps will help in organising and presenting the report systematically.

1. Analyse the problem and purpose
2. Determine the scope of the report
3. Determine the needs of the audience
4. Gather all the information
5. Analyse and organise the information
6. Write the first draft
7. Revise, review, and edit
8. Write the final draft

Report writing strategies include analysing the problem and the purpose, determining the scope, determining the needs of the readers, gathering material, organising information, preparing the rough draft, revising, and writing the final draft.

Analyse the Problem and Purpose The process of writing an effective report begins with an objective analysis of the problem that is to be discussed and the objectives of writing the report. In other words, the following two questions need to be answered before beginning to write a report:

1. What do you want to present or discuss in the report?
2. Why do you want to present it?

Answers to these questions will help in identifying the problem that led to the writing of the report and determining the purpose of the report. The problem may be written down in the form of a statement. Expressing the problem in words will provide clarity of purpose and help in writing the report systematically.

Defining the purpose of the report will give it direction and make it focused. Identifying the specific purpose of a report involves identifying an observable measurable action that the readers would do after reading the report. The writer's purpose should match the audience's needs, knowledge, expectations, & interests. It should focus on audience behaviour and restate the theme of the report.

Determine the Scope of the Report In order to keep the report precise and to the point, the amount of information gathered should be limited to the most essential and important facts. It is important to define a reasonable scope of the report. By determining the scope of the report, the writer will be able to decide what should be covered in it, and gather appropriate background information and supporting data. The scope of the report should be narrowed down and made specific so that a reasonable length is maintained.

Determine the Needs of the Audience When a report is being planned, the writer should know who will eventually read it. However, many report writers ignore their readers. A report will be effective only if the writer is able to connect his/her purpose with the interests and needs of his/her readers. When planning a report, the writer should think from his/her readers' perspective. He/she should avoid making false assumptions about his/her readers and should strive to be practical and rational. The following questions are relevant in this context.

- Who is the audience? (age, education, subject knowledge, professional affiliation, status, preferences, biases, attitudes, interests, language level, and so on.)
- How is the report relevant to the audience?
- What is in it for the audience?
- What does the audience expect from the report?
- How much background information will the audience need?

Answers to these questions will provide essential information about the readers that will help the writer to make important decisions about the content, the nature of information that he/she needs, and the level of language that he/she should use in his/her report.

Gather All the Information Once the problem and purpose has been analysed, the scope is defined, and the audience has been analysed, the writer is ready to gather information. As he/she knows what he/she is looking for, he/she may not find it very difficult to gather information. He/she may gather information through primary sources (discussions, interviews, observation, surveys, questionnaires, experiments, and so on) or secondary sources (Internet, reports, books, journals, dissertations, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, and so on) However, it is important to ensure that the information is accurate, bias free, current, and relevant.

Analyse and Organise the Information Once the information has been gathered, the report writer needs to analyse and organise it. Analysis of information involves evaluating the information objectively, making comparative analyses of different sets of information for obtaining new ideas, and interpreting facts and figures for their relative importance. Organising the information involves using an appropriate logical pattern to arrange the information in the report (Refer to Chapter 2). Before actually organising the information, an outline may be prepared by choosing the central idea, main ideas, the major supporting ideas, and developing the details.

Writing the First Draft Once the outline has been prepared and the organisational pattern of the report has been decided, the first working draft can be written. While writing the first draft, the following points must be remembered:

- Focus on the scope and purpose of the report.
- Simple and direct language should be used but perfect expression should not be overstressed.
- A computer should be used for preparing the report.
- The draft should be written rapidly.

Reviewing and Revising Once the rough draft of the report has been written, it should be reviewed, edited, and revised in order to improve the quality of its content and presentation. Reviewing is the process of analysing whether the report achieved its purpose, whereas editing involves correcting its format, style, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Revision focuses on improving the content and language of the report.

Writing the Final Draft Once the rough draft of the report reviewed and revised, the final draft can be composed. When writing the final draft, the following points should be taken care of:

- The report should be simple, clear, concise, direct, and readable.
- Appropriate words, short sentences and meaningful paragraphs should be used.
- Appropriate linking devices should be used.
- Graphic highlighting techniques to improve readability and comprehension should be applied.
- Important points should be emphasised.

A SAMPLE OF SHORT FORMAL REPORT

You are the Sales Manager of a Pharmaceutical company. The demand for your products is declining due to competition from other companies. Prepare a report for your boss explaining the reasons and possible ways to overcome the problems.

Charak Remedies Pvt. Ltd.,

Mancheswar Industrial Estate

Bhubaneswar.

TITLE: A report on decline in demand for Pharmaceutical Products.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Director (Sales) in his memo of 1st. May 2018, requested me to:

- (a) Investigate the reasons for the fall in demand for our pharmaceutical products in January- April, 2018.
- (b) Suggest corrective steps in the light of the findings.

PROCEDURE:

1. The sales records for the period January-April, 2018 were compared with those for the second half of 2017.
2. Recent products of other companies comparable to our Pharmaceutical products and their sales records were inspected.
3. One hundred and five customers were interviewed near different medicine shops.
4. The pharmacy shop managers(27) and sales assistants(80) were consulted.
5. Our sales staff (25) were interviewed.

FINDINGS:

1. A study of the sales records shows that sales fell from a monthly average of 8% (second half of 2017) to an average of 5% during the period January-April, 2018.
2. The sale of comparable products of other companies increased by 4% during January-April, 2018.

3. The customers (105) generally perceived our products as inferior in quality to the products of branded companies. This view was reinforced by poor packaging of our products.
4. The pharmacy shop managers and sales assistants said that they had to dispense medicines according to the doctors' prescriptions, and our products were prescribed by a few doctors only.
5. Our sales staff has been reduced to 25 from the original 40 since 1st January, 2018 and therefore, our contact with doctors and medicine shops has been reduced.

CONCLUSIONS:

The decline in sale of our products has been caused by:-

- (a) poor packaging, and
- (b) lack of adequate sales staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We need to change and improve the packaging to bring it at least to the level of packaging of our competitors.
2. The sales staff should be increased to the original 40, so that we can have frequent contacts with doctors and pharmacy shop managers and influence them to have a preference for our products.
3. We can think of ways of motivating the pharmacy shop managers to use a corner of the shop for exhibiting our major products.

Date: 28 February, 2022.

(Signature).....

Sales Manager

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

TENSES IN ENGLISH

“Time and tense are not the same”. Explain.

Answer :

Time is an essential element in states, actions and events expressed by the verb. The finite verb in a sentence tells us when an action or event takes place with reference to the time of speaking or writing. The time of speaking is Now or the present. We look backwards from the point NOW into the past or look forwards from that point into the future.

Examples :

Sunitahas a headache (now).

Sunitahad a headache (yesterday).

Sunitawill have a headache (tomorrow).

Thus, time which is an element of our experience has three divisions : present, past and future. But in English, there are only two tenses through which we can express actions and events happening in all these three divisions of time.

Tense is a grammatical marker on the verb. In English, there are only two such markers – Present and past.

Examples :

We like ice-cream very much.

We liked ice-cream very much.

English does not have a future tense. The speakers of English use the present tense forms to express future actions and events.

Examples :

It is going to rain tomorrow.

We will visit you next Sunday.

SIMPLE PRESENT & PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

We use the Simple present mainly when we want to talk about:

- 1) An action that someone does regularly. (e.g., *Runu gets up early morning.*)
- 2) An action that is a fact or a general truth (e.g., *Water boils at 100⁰ C.*)
- 3) A future event which depends on a fixed time table
(e.g., *The next train to Puri leaves at 9 P.M.*)
- 4) An action in progress, e.g. in a running sports commentary (e.g. *Sehwag drives the ball straight over the bowler's head for a rise.*)

We use the Present Progressive

1. **to talk about an action that is happening now** (what are you doing now ? – I'm doing my homework.)

2. **to talk about a trend that has started recently.** (e.g. (i) More and more people are becoming unreasonable.
The demand for better living conditions is growing.)

3. **to talk about an action that is planned for the future.** (e.g. Mana is leaving for London next week.)

There are certain verbs, known as state verbs which are **not usually used** in Present Progressive form, because they as such describe a continuing state. They are verbs of mental activity (such as **think, know, realize**), verbs of emotion (such as **like, want, hate**), verbs of the senses (such as **hear, see, smell**), verbs of possession (such as **belong, own, possess**), and other verbs such as **consist, contain, seem**.

Example :

I like this music. (We don't say; * I am liking music.)

However, when a state verb as think/like/have refers to a continuing action, we may use it in the Present Progressive.

Example:

I think (=believe) you're right./I'm thinking about the problem.

I like school./I am liking school a lot better now.

We have (=own) three cars./We are having (=eating) lunch now.

Activity I

Correct the errors, if any, in the following sentences.

1. There are some rose plants growing in my garden.
2. The children are going on a picnic tomorrow.
3. Are you seeing the birds on the branches of those trees ?
4. Why are you not believing what you see ?
5. He is talking to a visitor.
6. The child is resembling her mother.
7. I am feeling cold inside this room.

Activity II

Supply the correct form (simple present or present progressive) of the verbs in brackets :

I _____ (see) that it _____ (rain) heavily outside. This _____ (mean) that I _____ (go) to stay here for sometime. Whenever it _____ (rain) in this part of our country, it _____ (take) many hours to clear. If I _____ (try) to go out while it (rain), it invariably _____ (imply) taking a lot of risk. It may mean staying indoors for hours. I _____ (prefer) this inconvenience to risking my life on the wet roads. While it _____ (still rain), trucks _____ (pass) at 60 kilometers per hour. Quite often they _____ (crush) people to death. Pedestrians _____ (be) the most likely victims of rash drivers. I _____ (have) a scooter and _____ (know) how to drive it. But the roads of our town are infested with careless drivers. I _____ (like) to travel by bus for thus I _____ (be) safe from the rash drivers.

Present perfect & past simple

We use the Present Perfect form
of the verb:

1. To talk about a state or event which started in the past and continues up to the present.

I was here at 3.00 P.M. - Past

I am still here now at 4.00 P.M. – Present

Present Perfect

I have been here for an hour.

2. To talk about a past action which has relevance or a result in the present.

Someone has broken the window.

(=The window is now broken.)

The taxi has arrived. (=The taxi is now here.)

The important thing to remember about the present perfect form is that it is a present tense. It is a bridge that joins the past to the present. But the focus is **on now**, the moment of speaking or writing. We use the present perfect form when we are interested in the present time. The event we are talking about happened at some time in the past but the exact time is not important and is not mentioned. If we give the time in the past, then we are talking about when the event happened, and we have to use the past simple form.

They went to Japan in 1989.

He bought a car last week.

In these sentences we cannot use the present perfect form:

* They have gone to Japan in 1989.

* He has bought a car last week.

GONE TO OR BEEN TO?

Compare:

Minu has gone to Simla.	Minu has been to Simla.
She is having a lovely holiday.	She went there last summer.
[Gone there means she is still there.]	[Been there means that the visit is over.]

Past Simple

We use the Past simple:

(a) To state a fact about the past :

In the past, people believed that the earth was flat.

(b) To talk about an event, something that happened in the past,

something which is finished:

John Loud invented the ball-point pen in 1888.

Marilyn Munroe died in 1990.

(c) To talk about a state or people's habits in the past:

When we lived in Sonepur, we had two cats.

I went to school by bus when I was a child.

Activity - III

Hari is on a visit to the U.S.A. . He writes this letter from New York to his friend Roshan in India. There are several mistakes in the letter. Rewrite the letter, correcting the mistakes.

Dear Roshan,

I have arrived in New York last Sunday. I've been here for about four days now. I saw a lot of things already, but unfortunately I didn't meet any Indians yet. Last night, I have seen a very interesting film. It was about wild life in India. I have enjoyed it very much. Now,I am waiting for a guest who did not come yet. It seems a long time since I have last seen you. I hope you haven't missed me too much.

With best wishes,

Hari

Activity IV

Fill in the blanks with the Past simple or Present perfect form of the verbs in brackets.

There _____(be) a physician who _____(carry) his son with him whenever he _____(go) to see a patient. One day he _____(have) a call from a patient's family. He _____(pack) up his box of medicines and with his son _____(call) on the patient. He _____(feel) the man's pulse and _____(say) : "The patient _____(eat) pomegranates." "Yes, he _____(have) some of that as well."

On the way home, the son _____(ask) his father how he _____(know) that the patient _____(eat) curdled milk and pomegranates. "Nothing could be simpler," _____(say) the physician. "I _____(see) a few pomegranate peels in a corner and I _____(notice) traces of curdled milk in the man's moustache."

Present Perfect Progressive & Present Perfect

Present Perfect Progressive	Present Perfect
- The Present Perfect Progressive focuses on the action going on. Example: <i>I have been washing my clothes.</i> <i>I'm rather wet.</i> - We can use this form for repeated actions up to now. Example: <i>We have been writing letters to the Director of Estates for compensation.</i> - The Present Perfect Progressive is used to talk about how long something has been in progress. Example: <i>I have been walking all morning.</i> <i>Tina has been writing her report since two O'clock.</i> <i>How long have you been living in Bhubaneswar ?</i>	- The Present Perfect focuses on the result of the action. Example : <i>I have washed my clothes.</i> <i>They look clean now.</i> - We use the Present Perfect for a complete series of actions. Example: <i>We have written to the Director three times now.</i> - When we want to say how many, we use the Present Perfect. Example: <i>I have walked ten kilometers so far this morning.</i> Example: <i>Tina has written twelve pages. How many driving lessons have you had so far ?</i>

Activity V

Use the appropriate form (Present Perfect or Present Perfect Progressive) of the verbs in brackets:

- (A) Uma : I feel very tired.
Sumi : It's because you ____ long. [work]
Uma: well, at least I ____ [finish] that report now, and I can have a rest.
- (B) Ali : Someone ____ the ladder outside. [leave]
Bibi : I think, that's Zafar. He __ [paint] the walls.
I don't think he _____ yet. [finish]

Past Progressive & Past Simple

Past Progressive	Past Simple
1. We use the Past Progressive to say that we were in the middle of an action: <i>I was walking across the field.</i> <i>The girls were singing a song.</i> 2. The Past Progressive form can be used to talk about habits in the past. In such cases, we usually add a time adverb such as <u>always</u>: <i>He was always complaining about something.</i> <i>They were always worrying about their telephone bills.</i>	1. We use the Past Simple for a complete action in the past: <i>I walked across the field.</i> <i>The girls sang a song.</i> 2. We normally use the Past Simple for a past state: <i>I was a child then.</i> <i>She had two passions in her young days.</i>

NOTES:

1. We use the Past Progressive and Past simple together in the same sentence when a shorter action interrupted (=came in the middle of) a longer one:

She was walking near her home when it started raining.

I fell asleep while I was watching TV.

The phone rang when the girl was taking bath.

Longer Action

.....***Girl was taking bath***.....

Shorter Action

The Phone rang

2. When two actions went on during the same period of time (i.e. simultaneously), we use the Past Progressive for both:

Tiki was doing her homework while I was washing the plates.

3. We use two Past Simple verbs for one action after another.

When I heard the crash, I ran to the river-side.

4. We can use the Past Progressive to describe the background and the Past Simple for the action while narrating a story:

The crowds were waiting.....The Princess arrived.

Past Perfect & Past Perfect Progressive

We use the Past Perfect Progressive (e.g. they had been searching the room for an hour) to talk about something which has been in progress up to the past time we are talking about (e.g. *when they suddenly noticed the tell-tale marks of digging in a corner*).

More examples:

I had been walking for about an hour when it suddenly started to rain.

I had been working hard all day, so I was very tired last night.

NOTES:

1. We use the past perfect progressive for an action over a period of time and the past perfect for a complete action.

Over a period (had been doing)	Complete action (had done)
Deba had been reading most of the afternoon.	Deba had read five chapters by tea-time.

2. Compare the past progressive and the past perfect progressive:

Past Progressive	Past Perfect Progressive
When I phoned Tapasi, She was having a music lesson. (I phoned in the middle of the lesson.)	When I phoned Tapasi, she had been having a music lesson. (I phoned after the lesson.)

Activity VI

Fill in the blanks with the correct form (Present perfect / Past Simple) of the verbs given in brackets:

Tropical reefs _____(exist) for more than 500 million years. Because lands that once lay in the tropics _____(drift) with time, ancient reefs are often found in regions that are temperate today. In more recent times, changes in sea level _____(affect) reefs. The sea _____(be) at its present level only in the past 5000 years. The sea _____(be) at its present level only in the past 5000 years. 15000 years ago the sea _____(be) 120 meters lower than it is today.

Activity VII

Put in the past progressive or Past Simple form of the verbs given in brackets:

Rinu : What _____(you do) when the lights _____(go out) last night ?

Chinu : I _____(watch) television at the time. The programme unhappy to miss it.

Rinu : Do you know, Mami _____(fall) down the stairs when the lights went out?

Pami : Oh yes, it _____(happen) at the gym. Sanju and I _____(play) table tennis at the time.

Activity VIII

Fill in the blanks, using either Simple Past or Past Progressive forms of the appropriate verbs:

- (a) The telephone _____ which I _____ a bath. I _____ my wife, who _____ our lunch, to receive the call.
- (b) It was early morning. Balu _____ along the road with his flock of sheep when he _____ a field _____ of sweet-smelling grass. The sheep _____ the grass and _____ towards it. While they _____ the grass, Balu _____ down to rest under a tree.

REVIEW : TENSE FORMS FOR FUTURE TIME

1. <u>Will</u> (a) <u>A PREDICTION</u> To talk about what we think or believe will happen in the future: <i>Don't climb up that tree. You'll fall.</i> (b) <u>AN INSTANT DECISION</u> - <i>I feel really ill.</i> - <i>I will call the doctor then.</i> 3. <u>Present Simple</u> A TIME TABLE : <i>The game starts at 4 P.M.</i> 5. <u>Be to</u> AN OFFICIAL ARRANGEMENT <i>The Prime Minister is to visit the United States in November.</i>	2. <u>Be going to</u> (a) <u>A PREDICTION</u> To talk about something in the future which we can see as a result of something in the present: <i>Look out! You're going to fall.</i> (b) <u>A DECISION TAKEN EARLIER</u> - <i>Why have you moved all the furniture out of this room?</i> - <i>I am going to clean the carpet.</i> 4. <u>Present progressive</u> AN ARRANGEMENT: <i>I am playing in the team tomorrow.</i> 6. <u>Be about to</u> THE NEAR FUTURE <i>Hurry up. The programme is about to start.</i>
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Activity IX

Fill in the blanks using the verbs in brackets with be going to or will, whichever is more suitable for the context :

Niti : What about your plans, Iti? _____ (you go home after the exams?)

Iti : I think I _____ (go) back home some time later but first I _____ (visit) my uncle at Puri.

Niti : Oh, that _____ (be) interesting.

Iti : I've already written to my uncle. I _____ (take) Odissi music lessons for a month at Puri. I'm looking forward to it. I'm sure it _____ (be) a good experience. What are your plans ?

Iti : I don't know what I _____ (do). At the moment I am trying to prepare for the exams. May be I _____ (decide) after the exams are finished.

Activity X

Look at the underlined words and decide what each one says :

Example : *Mana is predicting a win for Brazil in their next match.*

Mana : *Brazil will win their next match.*

1. Mr. Das's copy of the train time table says 'Arrival 10.30.'

Mr. Das : The train _____.

2. Dhuna will leave for Bombay in the near future.

Dhuna : I _____.

3. Om intends to get up early tomorrow.

Om : I _____.

4. Mrs. Sahoo has arranged to see her bank manager tomorrow.

Mrs. Sahoo: _____.

5. Sarita's next visit to her aunt is on Sunday, the day she usually visits her.

Sarita : _____.

"Subject Verb Concord".

Concord refers to the agreement of the verb with the subject in a sentence. The finite verb must agree with the person and number of the subject of the sentence.

For example :

*I am a
student.*

He is a student

He comes to college every day.

- Below are some important exceptions to this general principle of subject verb concord :

➤ **A group noun is treated as plural when it refers to its members.**

1. *The committee are divided in their opinions.*

2. *The audience were very noisy.*

- Two nouns joined by and are treated as singular when they refer to a single thing:

- ***Bread and butter is my favourite breakfast.***
- ***Law and order is very important for a fair election.***
- ***Slow and steady wins the race.***

- When two nouns are joined by or/ either..... or, the number of the verb is determined by the number of the last noun:

- ***Either the workers or the director is to blame for the strike.***
- ***Either the director or the workers are to blame for the strike.***

- 'They' is used as the pronoun for everyone/ everybody:

Everyone thinks they know everything.

- If two nouns are joined by along with/together with, the number of the first noun determines the number of the verbs:

The man along with his wife is coming here.

The boys together with their teacher are coming here tonight.

Q1. How do verbs of state differ from event verbs ?

Ans. : In terms of meaning, verbs are classified as verbs of state (= stative verbs) and event verbs (=dynamic verbs). The verbs which describe actions are called event verbs or dynamic verbs. For example, run, throw, fight, write, etc. express actions and are therefore, dynamic verbs. There are certain other verbs, such as be, become, seem, like, love, see, hear, etc. which describe a state, and are called stative verbs. It is noteworthy that stative verbs cannot normally be used in the continuous form, whereas there is no such restriction in the case of dynamic verbs :

- ✓ *He is writing a letter now*
- * *She is loving him.*
- ✓ *She loves him.*

Q2. Correct the errors in the following sentences :

- (i) The owners of all these houses is selling them away.
Ans : The owners of all these houses **are** selling them away.
- ii) She makes lovely chicken curry, isn't it ?
Ans : She makes lovely chicken curry, **doesn't she** ?
- iii) Every file, drawer and bookshelf have been searched.
Ans : Every file drawer and bookshelf **has** been searched.
- iv) Many a computer is in the warehouse.
Ans : Many a computer **are** in the warehouse.
- v) The team captain as well as his players are anxious.
Ans : The team captain as well as his players **is** anxious.
- vi) Mary resembles to her mother.
Ans : **Mary resembles her mother.**
- vii) The jury was divided in its opinion.
Ans : **The jury were divided in their opinion.**
- viii) I, you and he must help that poor man.
Ans : **You, he and I must help that poor man.**
- ix) For achieving success, we sometimes employ means which is unfair.
Ans : For achieving success, we sometimes employ means which **are** unfair.
- x) The informations sent by you are not really sufficient.
Ans : The **information** sent by you **is** not really sufficient.

Q3. Turn the following sentences into the passive.

- a) Geeta will have written a letter.

Ans.: A letter will have been written by Geeta.

b) The committee cut the budget.

Ans.: The budget was cut by the committee.

c) Everyone rejected the bold idea.

Ans.: The bold idea was rejected by everyone.

d) Boat owners considered the bridge to be a menace to navigation.

Ans. : The bridge was considered by boat owners to be a menace to navigation.

e) Raju killed a snake in the garden.

Ans.: A snake was killed by Raju in the garden.

Q4. The Passive

Tense forms	Active	Passive
Present Simple	They wash the car everyday.	The car is washed everyday.
Present Progressive	They are washing the car.	The car is being washed .
Present Perfect	They have washed the car today.	The car has been washed today.
Past Simple	They washed the car yesterday.	The car was washed yesterday.
Past Progressive	They were washing the car when the explosion took place.	The car was being washed when the explosion took place.
Past Perfect	They had washed the car when I arrived.	The car had been washed when I arrived.
Modals	You should throw away the rubbish.	The rubbish should be thrown away .
	They will increase the rent.	The rent will be increased .
	They could have lighted the candles	The candles could have been lighted .

Change into the passive: -

1. The boys have broken the window.
2. Someone stole my purse.
3. They will lock these gates at 10 p.m.
4. People use a thermometer for measuring temperature.
5. The Air Chief gave the pilot a medal.
6. She didn't expect anyone to blame her.
7. I need to redecorate my house.

Answer :

1. *The window has been broken by the boys.*
2. *My purse has been stolen.*
3. *These gates will be locked at 10p.m.*
4. *A thermometer is used for measuring temperature.*
5. *The pilot was given a medal by the Air Chief.*
6. *She didn't expect to be blamed by anyone.*
7. *I need my house to be redecorated.*

Q5. Fill in the blanks with appropriate question tags.

- i) I am on time, aren't I ?
- ii) He is getting married, isn't he ?
- iii) Tulu doesn't walk to work, does he ?
- iv) Switch off the light, will you ?
- v) There won't be any problem, will there ?
- vi) She left the door open, didn't she ?
- vii) Nothing went right, did they ?

Q6. PHRASAL VERBS

1. BREAK

1. **Break down** (fail to work). : Our car broke down on the way.
2. **Break out** (start suddenly) : Dengue has broken out in our locality.
3. **Break into** (enter forcibly) : The thief broke into the house at midnight.

2. BRING

4. **Bring about** (cause) : The new Principal has brought about many changes.

5. **Bring up** (nurture). : After her mother's death, her aunt brought her up.

3. **CALL**

6. **Call on** (visit) : I am going to call on my grandfather on Sunday.

7. **Call off** (cancel) : The match was called off due to heavy rain.

8. **Call for** (demand) : His misbehavior calls for punishment.

4. **KEEP**

9. **Keep on** (continue) : We must keep on doing our duty in spite of obstacles.

10. **Look after** (take care of) : All students should look after their health by exercising daily.

11. **Look into** (investigate) : The police is looking into the case.

12. **Look forward to** (eagerly wait for) : I look forward to my friend's visit next week.

13. **Look on** (stand and watch) : People were looking on without helping the injured at the accident site.

14. **Look up to** (admire) : We look up to our seniors for their useful advice.

15. **Make up for** (compensate for) : The company will make up for the customers' loss by replacing the machines.

16. **Make out** (understand) : I cannot make out what you mean.

17. **Let down** (disappoint) : We must live up to our parents' expectations. We should not let them down.

18. **Put off** (postpone) : The exams have been put off for a week.

19. **Put out** (extinguish a fire or light) : The fire was put out after two hours.

20. **Put up with** (tolerate) : We cannot put up with your insulting behaviour any more.

21. **Take after** (resemble; look like) : The younger girl takes after her mother.

22. **Take off** (not wear) : You are sweating; you should take off your coat.

23. **Turn up** (appear) : She turned up for her presentation at the last minute.
24. **Turn down** (reject) : The manager has turned down our proposal.
25. **Turn out** (prove to be something unexpected) : We thought him to be an expert, but he turned out to be a fool.
26. **Turn off** (switch off) : Please turn off the lights so that we can play the video.
27. **Carry out** (implement) : We carried out our boss's orders immediately.
28. **Give up** (stop) : Rakesh has given up smoking.
29. **Give away** (distribute) : The Minister gave away the prizes to students.
30. **Give off** (emit) : The rotten fruit is giving off a bad smell.
31. **Run into** (have difficulties suddenly) : On the second day of our journey, we ran into trouble.
32. **Send for** (summon) : You look ill; you must send for a doctor.
33. **Set in** (start) : Winter has set in.
34. **Set out** (begin a journey) : We set out for Rourkela in the morning.
35. **Stand out** (be prominent) : The leader stands out from the others.

Q3. What kind of functions/ meanings do the modals express in English ?

The important modal verbs in English are : Can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must, dare, and need.

They express the speaker's attitude in respect of ability, permission, possibility, prediction, desirability, necessity, and obligation.

- i) Ability : Sumi can play the guitar.
I could swim when I was five years old.
- ii) Permission : Can I see the letter ?
May I see the letter ?
- iii) Possibility : It may/ might rain tonight.
Who is knocking ?
It may be Ramesh.
It could be Ramesh.
It should be Ramesh
It must be Ramesh.
- iv) Prediction : Julie has walked a long way. She will sleep well tonight.

- v) Desirability: Every student should / ought to think seriously about a good career.
- vi) Necessity : You needn't carry your umbrella today.
- vii) Obligation: You must finish this assignment today.

Q5. Fill in the blanks with appropriate prepositions.

- i) Applications must reach the Principal's office _____ 31st of May.
- ii) Last Sunday, we went _____ a picnic.
- iii) The Gujrat earthquake registered 8.1 _____ the Richter scale.
- iv) We will see you _____ Christmas.
- v) The patient is being attended _____ by the nurse.
- vi) He is endowed _____ wonderful creative talent.
- vii) Agra is famous _____ the Taj Mahal.
- viii) The old man was hard _____ hearing.
- ix) Will you look _____ our dog in our absence.
- x) Sir, I take exception _____ this decision.

Q6. Supply the right words of the type given in the brackets to fill in the blanks.

- i) _____ I informed her, she did not bother to enquire about your health.
(Conjunction).
- ii) _____ a borrower _____ a lender be. (conjunction)
- iii) When I was young, I _____ swim very well. (Modal)
- iv) _____ you make out what he said ? (Modal)
- v) Give up smoking, _____ face the consequences. (conjunction)
- vi) _____ he pretends to be against hypocrisy, he himself is a hypocrite.
(conjunction)
- vii) Vasla is _____ charming _____ intelligent. (conjunction)
- viii) _____ pleasure _____ popularity can actually redeem your soul.
(conjunction)
- ix) In _____ afternoon, my grandfather often goes to _____ library. (article)
- x) _____ Trojan War has _____ historical significance. (article)

Q7. Choose the right alternatives.

- i) The majority of nurses in our country is / are women.
- ii) Either James or his brothers has / have written the mail.
- iii) Research and development is / are the main focus of our university.

- iv) The foreign delegation comprising many experts is/are likely to visit our university next week.
- v) I can/will/might see a lot of dark clouds in the sky; it may / might / will rain today.
- vi) He will / can / may leave his job any time now.
- vii) Ashima has called up to ask if you will / may / can spare some time for her today.
- viii) Don't worry, I will / shall carry the books for you.
- ix) Will / would you mind opening the door for me ?
- x) When I was a child we must / used to have a flat in Vasant Kunj.
- xi) I can / must leave; I am getting late.
- xii) What's the point in crying over spilt milk? You should / must have listened to us earlier.
- xiii) Even as an old man, he would / should walk for miles together.
- xiv) He said we can / could / would attend the party.
- xv) He could / might / used to come on time earlier.
- xvi) Should/ could / would you see Amrita, ask her to call me.
- xvii) I was scared that if I told her the truth, she must / could / might not trust me ever again.
- xviii) Each and every member was / were aware of the seriousness of the situation.

Q8. Identify the sentences as Compound or Complex :

- i) All are equal but some are more equal than others.
- ii) Show me the place where she was killed.
- iii) When we reached back, it was quite dark.
- iv) You must go or I shall slap you.
- v) Although she has five sons, she can trust none of them for her old age.

Q9. Fill in the blanks with right prepositions.

- i) Don't worry; we are prepared _____ everything.
- ii) She is not capable _____ facing such a trial.
- iii) He is still ignorant _____ reality.
- iv) We pine _____ what is not there.

Q10. Put the verbs in the brackets in their right form.

- i) My mother _____ (buy) vegetables from the Reliance fresh store.
- ii) It _____ (rain) frequently in this place.

- iii) I _____ (work) hard for my exam.
- iv) I am not feeling hungry. I _____ (take) a heavy breakfast.
- v) It is nice to see you again; we _____ (not meet) each other for a longtime.
- vi) Call the doctor, I think he _____ (break) his toe.
- vii) You _____ (grow) so big since we saw you last.
- viii) Since it _____ (rain), we cannot go to the beach.
- ix) I did my homework when I _____ (watch) television.
- x) The function _____ (organize) in the auditorium.

Q11. Correct the following sentences.

- i) Hardly I had entered the room, when the phone rang.
- ii) No sooner we had boarded the train than it started to move.
- iii) Unless you do not work hard, you cannot succeed in life.
- iv) Despite of the fact that he has five daughters, he is not worried.
- v) Neither the parents not their offspring is to blame for the lack of communication.

Q12. Change into the passive.

- i) They did not invite me to the party.
- ii) We advise the patients of swine flu to wear a mask.
- iii) They will organize the function in the auditorium.
- iv) Earlier people believed that Aids spreads by touch.
- v) Fans expected our team to win, but we lost.

Q13. Correct the errors.

- a) Three quarters of the earth are water.

Ans. : Three quarters of the earth is water.

- b) She makes lovely chicken curry, isn't it ?

Ans. : She makes lovely chicken curry, doesn't she ?

- c) One of the pupils is our class own a laptop.

Ans.: One of the pupils in our class owns a laptop.

- d) Twenty miles are too far to walk.

Ans.: Twenty miles is too far to walk.

- e) Bread and butter are all that we eat for breakfast.

Ans.: Bread and butter is all that we eat for breakfast.

Q14. Rewrite the following sentences choosing the correct options.

- i) Diabetes is / are silent killer.
- ii) The jury gave its/ their verdict in an unbiased manner.
- iii) Politics today has / have degenerated awfully.
- iv) For achieving success, we sometimes employ means which is / are unfair.
- v) The information / informations sent by you is / are not really sufficient.
- vi) The leader of this large group of industrialists has / have been carefully chosen.

Q15. Tick the correct verb form in each of the following sentences.

- a) The shorts is / are cheap.
- b) Your new glasses is / are very nice.
- c) The news have / has upset him.
- d) Mathematics is / are not taught in this school.
- e) A number of books has / have been stolen.
- f) The number of girls is / are more than the boys in this school.
- g) Either Sunday or Friday is / are OK for me.
- h) Twenty miles is / are too far to walk.
- i) Not only the girls but also the boy are / is buying the book.
- j) The dogs each have / has to take a bath.

Q16. Fill in the blanks using appropriate form of the verbs.

- i) It is nice to see you again; we have not met (not meet) each other for such a long time.
- ii) I know I have left (leave) no stone unturned to pass the CAT exam.
- iii) The policy has come (come) as a result of the scathing attack from the media.
- iv) I am working (work) hard for my GRE test these days.
- v) We are facing (face) an acute problem in power supply these days.

Q17. Answer as directed.

- i) The tiger is an endangered animal. (Add the missing article.)
- ii) My son lives in the United States. (Add the missing preposition.)
- iii) I met a boy on the street. (Add the missing preposition.)
- iv) Put the correct form of the verb 'call off' in the following sentence.
The strike is over. The workers have called it off.
- v) Fill in the blanks in the sentence below using correct pronouns.
Shyam has brought all his books but Lakshmi has forgotten to bring her books.

Q18. Correct the errors.

- a) One of the pupils in our class own a laptop. (owns)
- b) Ten grams are the smallest quantity they sell. (is)
- c) Some people dislike traveling by sea, as it make them sea-sick. (makes)
- d) Ill news travel fast. (travels)
- e) A lot of time have been wasted. (has)

Q19. How would the following questions be reported ?

- a) Vivek: "Arvind, are you playing cricket this weekend ?"
- b) Raj: "Julu, do you speak French ?"
- c) Vijay : "Ravi, whom have you invited to the party ?"
- d) Mukul: "Have you finished your homework, Ashok?"
- e) Veena : "Where does your sister live, Shakuntala?"
- f) Meera : "Which comes first, Rama – your birthday or your sister's ?"
- g) Om: "What should we do next, Yusuf?"
- h) Anil: "Do you have any brothers or sisters, David ?"
- i) Umesh: "Who did you meet at the party, Badal?"

Q20. Punctuate the following sentence properly.

At the time of independence Jawahar Lal Nehru said at the stroke of midnight hour when whole world sleeps India would awake to life and freedom.

Ans.: At the time of independence Jawaharlal Nehru said, "At the stroke of midnight hour when the whole world sleeps, India would awake to life and freedom."

Q21. Punctuate the following passage using appropriate punctuation marks wherever required :

Running a massive enterprise is a tricky business being a woman and being at the helm of such an empire makes the situation all the more difficult to handle says apoorva tandon the ceo of silkways Designers, new delhi and a premier fashion designer making men believe in womens calibre is the toughest thing in the world they can make errors and still can sound error free whereas even if an efficient woman errs just once she becomes fallen for ever says ms tandon one of the most talked about fashion designers of the last two decades in the country.

Answer key to grammar questions in Long Answers Unit-IV.

- 5. (i) by (ii) on (iii) on (iv) at (v) to (vi) with (vii) for (viii) of (ix) after (x) to
- 6. (i) Although (ii) Neither. ... nor (iii) used to (iv) Could (v) or (vi) Although

- (vii) neither.... nor (viii) Neither ... nor (ix) the; the (x) The ; a.
7. (i) are (ii) have (iii) is (iv) is (v) can ; may (vi) may (vii) can (viii) will
(ix) would (x) used to (xi) must (xii) should (xiii) would (xiv) could (xv) used to
(xvi) Should (xvii) might (xviii) was.
8. (i) Compound (ii) Complex (iii) Complex (iv) Compound (v) Complex
9. (i) for (ii) of (iii) of (iv) for
10. (i) buys/ bought (ii) rains (iii) will work / am working (iv) have taken
(v) have not met (vi) has broken (vii) have grown (viii) is raining
(ix) was watching (x) was organized
11. (i) Hardly **had I** entered the room when the phone rang.
(ii) No sooner **had we** boarded the train than it started to move.
(iii) Unless you **work hard**, you cannot succeed in life.
(iv) **In spite of** the fact that he has five daughters, he is not worried.
(v) Neither the parents nor their offspring **are** to blame for the lack of communication.
12. (i) I was not invited to the party.
(ii) The patients of swine flu are advised by us to wear a mask.
(iii) The function will be organized in the auditorium.
(iv) It was believed earlier that Aids spreads by touch.
(v) Our team was expected to win by fans, but we lost.
19. (a) Vivek asked Arvind whether he was playing cricket that weekend.
(b) Raj enquired of Julu whether he spoke French.
(c) Vijay wanted to know from Ravi whom he had invited to the party.
(d) Mukul asked Ashok whether he had finished his homework.
(e) Veena asked Shakuntala where her sister lived.
(f) Meera asked Rama which came first – his birthday or his sister's.
(g) Om asked Yusuf what they should do next.
(h) Anil inquired of David whether he had any brothers or sisters.
(i) Umesh asked Badal who he had met at the party.
21. Running a massive enterprise is a tricky business. "Being a woman and being at the helm of such an empire makes the situation all the more difficult to handle," says Apoorva Tandon, the CEO of Silkways Designers, New Delhi, and a premier fashion

designer. “Making men believe in women’s calibre is the toughest thing in the world. They can make errors and still can sound error-free, whereas even if an efficient woman errs just once, she becomes fallen for ever,” says Ms. Tandon, one of the most talked-about fashion designers of the last two decades in the country.

MODULE III

BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS

Oral presentations differ from other forms of oral communication such as speeches and debates. Although speeches and presentations share several common features, there is a thin dividing line between the two. Speeches are intended to celebrate an occasion, to felicitate a person, to welcome or bid farewell to someone, or to inaugurate a function, while oral presentations raise a particular issue for discussion.

Importance of Presentation Skills

We may not all be professional public speakers but we may have to make a presentation at some point of time or the other. Whether one is a student, a professional engineer, an academician, or a business executive, one may have to make oral presentations in front of one’s colleagues or professional peers. A professional student may be required to make presentations in the form of progress reports, student seminars, research presentations, and so on. Professionals in different fields, including scientists and engineers, have also to make oral reports, present seminars, deliver project presentations, or present a proposal orally. Similarly, business executives may have to introduce a new product that their company has launched, to present a new sales plan that they want others to know about, or they may just have a brilliant idea that they would like to share with their colleagues.

Thus, of the many skills that contribute to professional success, none is more important than the ability to communicate orally in front of a group of people. Business people rank oral presentation skills among the most important factors responsible for their success. Oral presentation is a tool of professional and business interaction. Infact, in some organisations, institutions, or universities, recruitment is made on the basis of a selection process, which involves oral presentation in the form of seminar presentation, short lectures, business presentations or some other form of oral presentation.

A good presentation can do wonders for a person; it may help in getting a lucrative job offer from the company he/she always wanted to join, he/she may get a big business deal or the promotion he/she had been waiting for. The list is long. On the other hand, a poor presentation of ideas not only reduces the professional image of the person presenting it, but may result in major business or personal loss.

Therefore, the ability to deliver an effective presentation is essential for all of us. We should know how to present our ideas in a persuasive way, how to make our audience interested in our presentation, how to use appropriate visuals during our presentation, and how to reflect confidence while speaking. A person making a presentation should have the ability to begin his presentation in an effective way, develop his/her ideas logically and conclude his/her presentation with something memorable. He/she needs to understand the basic elements of an effective presentation—the 4 Ps, that is, Plan, Prepare, Practice, and Perform.

PLANNING THE PRESENTATION

An oral presentation is the formal, structured, and systematic presentation of a message to an audience and it involves conveying a lot of information in a limited time. It should, therefore, be planned well in advance so that the material is delivered effectively. Planning the presentation is, thus, the most important element. It helps the presenter

- know the audience;
- stimulate the interest of the audience;
- be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the audience;
- strike up interaction with his/her immediate audience in as many ways as possible;
- know his/her purpose;
- analyse the occasion;
- fit the material to the time at his/her disposal; and
- select and narrow a topic for his/her presentation.

Planning a presentation involves defining the purpose, analysing the audience, analysing the occasion, and choosing a suitable title.

Planning an oral presentation, thus, involves purpose identification, audience analysis, analysing the occasion, and the process of selecting and narrowing the topic of presentation. The following suggestions will help in planning well:

I. Define the Purpose

Planning a presentation should start by defining its purpose. What is the purpose of this presentation? This is the most important question that needs to be answered in order to make a presentation focused, with clear objectives. A general purpose as well as a specific purpose should be identified. General purposes include:

- To inform—to share information
- To persuade—to change behaviour, attitude, belief, values, and so on
- To demonstrate—to help listeners know how to do something

Identifying the specific purpose of a presentation involves identifying an observable measurable action that the audience should be able to take, and using one idea that matches audience needs, knowledge, expectations, and interests. It should focus on audience behaviour and restate the speech topic.

Study the following examples:

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will be able to describe three advantages of using HP PrecisionScan LT software.

(Informative presentation)

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will believe that the HP PrecisionScan LT is the best scanning software.

(Persuasive presentation)

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will be able to use HP PrecisionScan LT software.

(Demonstrative presentation)

2. Analyse the Audience

The desired results cannot be achieved from a presentation unless the person making the presentation knows his/her audience well. Audience analysis is an integral part of the process of oral presentation. It includes identifying audience characteristics, analysing audience needs and expectations, and identifying factors for getting and maintaining audience attention.

Lenny Laskowski, an international professional speaker and an expert on presentation skills, has used the word A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E as an acronym, and has defined some general audience analysis categories that all surveys should include. The 'acronym' is reproduced below:

A_udience—Who are the members? How many will be at the event?

U_nderstanding—What is their knowledge about the topic I will be addressing?

D_emographics—What is their age, sex, educational background, and so forth?

I_nterest—Why will they be at this event? Who asked them to be there?

E_nvironment—Where will I stand when I speak? Will everyone be able to see me?

N_eeds—What are the listener's needs? What are my needs as a speaker? What are the needs of the person who wants me to speak?

C_ustomised—How can I custom fit my message to this audience?

E_xpectations—What do the listeners expect to learn from me?

Identify Audience Characteristics In order to know the audience, the presenter needs to identify their basic characteristics. He/she should try to gather as much background information about his/her listeners as he/she can—their age, gender, social, economic and educational background, religion, political affiliations, profession, attitudes (likes and dislikes), beliefs (true and false), and values (good and bad). If these audience characteristics are identified, he/she will be much better equipped to plan and prepare his/her presentation effectively.

Analyse Audience Needs and Expectations Those who will attend and listen to the presentation have their needs and expectations. They will be there for a reason. If the presenter wants them to listen to him/her, he/she has to understand and respond to their needs and expectations. For this he/she should ask the following questions:

- Why will they listen to me?
- Who asked them to be there?
- Is their attendance compulsory?
- What are their interests?
- What ideas or experience do I have that the audience may like to hear?
- What are their needs?
- What do they expect?
- How do my objectives meet audience needs?

Answers to these questions will help him/her make appropriate modification in his/her presentation to suit his/her audience. The presentation must be audience oriented, dealing with the topic from their

perspective. The presenter may not change his/her ideas and facts for his/her audience but he/she may change the way he/she conveys them. He/she may tell them what he/she wants to tell but in a way that appeals to them.

Recognise Factors for Getting and Maintaining Audience Attention Once the characteristics, needs, and expectations of the audience have been identified, factors that meet the needs of the listeners should be determined. Listeners will be more interested in the presentation if it meets their requirements. As a result, they will listen more attentively, understand what is said, and remember the key points of the presentation. The presenter needs to consider the following specific questions in this context:

- How can I relate my presentation to the needs and expectations of my audience?
- What should I do to ensure that my audience remembers my main points?
- What style will appeal to my audience?
- What are the changes that I should make?
- Have I incorporated ways of encouraging my listeners to give feedback and share information that will make my presentation more effective?
- Have I planned strategies for dealing with listeners' communication apprehensions?
- How will I handle hostile listeners or those who are disruptive?

Moreover, more informed decisions can be made about how to best adapt to the varying moods of listeners and how to tap their curiosity, interest, and motivation. Perhaps the best rule to remember in identifying factors for getting and keeping audience attention is to remain flexible. A blend of methods and alternatives to accommodate listeners' perceptions may be the best approach to audience analysis.

3. Analyse the Occasion

The occasion on which the presentation is to be made should be analysed in order to understand the nature of the event or communicative situation. Several aspects of the event like its background, the people involved, the organisations or associations linked to the event, and so on need to be considered. Here are some relevant questions.

- Is my presentation part of a larger event like a national/international seminar with a central theme, or just an internal conference where I am supposed to present my views on a particular topic?
- Am I familiar with the procedures of the event?
- Who are the sponsors?
- Who are the other speakers?
- What is the venue?
- What is the duration of my presentation?

Infact, thinking through the answers to some of these questions ahead of time may ensure that the presentation is effective.

4. Choose a Suitable Title

Generally, a title has to be chosen for the presentation. The title gives the audience the first glimpse of the presentation and they forms their first impressions. Therefore, it is essential that the title is appropriate and conveys the essence of the message. A vague, misleading, and fussy title may confuse the audience.

The process of choosing a title may begin by first identifying a topic. The choice of the topic depends on the occasion, the audience, the type, and purpose of the presentation. A list of topics may be compiled, including potential topics like social, economic, political, technological and environmental problems (for example, poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, corruption, crime, inflation, AIDS epidemic, and so on.); ideas regarding society, education, business and economy, government, technological systems, and so forth, and reactions to debatable issues (for example, universal civil code, Article 370, politics and religion, and abortion). When all the possible topics have been noted, the choices can be evaluated and an appropriate topic may be chosen.

After a suitable topic has been selected for the presentation, it should be narrowed down as per the focus of the presentation in order to phrase a clear, complete, specific, and focused title. In this process, the nature of the general and specific purposes of the presentation as well as audience expectations and rhetorical sensitivity may be considered. For example, if the selected topic is 'pollution', it may be narrowed to any of the following:

- Vehicular pollution hazards in New Delhi (local focus)
- Pollution of the Ganges (national focus)
- CFC's and ozone depletion (international focus)

PREPARING THE PRESENTATION

Once the presentation has been planned, it is time to begin preparing for it. Preparing well is the key to success. Making an oral presentation—whether a seminar presentation, an oral report, a project presentation, or a business presentation—is easier when it is prepared in a systematic manner. Being prepared helps the presenter

- deal with speech anxiety effectively;
- develop the required confidence;
- seek precise and relevant examples and illustrations; and
- check for accuracy, redundancies, and clichés.

Preparing for a presentation involves developing the central idea and main points, gathering relevant supporting material, and planning visual aids.

Develop the Central Idea

The central idea of the presentation is its core idea or thesis statement. It should be a complete declarative sentence that captures the essence of the message. The following are the characteristics of a central idea:

- It restates the presentation topic.
- It is a simple audience-centered idea.
- It is a one-sentence summary of the presentation
- It focuses on the content of the speech.
- It uses specific language.

Preparing for a presentation involves developing the central idea and the main points, gathering supporting material, and planning visual aids.

Develop the Main Ideas

Develop the main ideas for the presentation. The presenter may make a logical division of the central idea, establish reasons for the idea being true, or support the central idea with a series of steps. Choosing one of these techniques will largely depend on the topic of the presentation as well as its objectives. Study the following examples:

- Logical division of the central idea
Example: Central idea: Unemployment in India
Logical divisions: A. Types B. Causes C. Solutions
- Establishing reasons for the central idea being true
Example: Central idea: Education in India needs to be restructured
Establishing reasons: A. Reason 1 B. Reason 2 C. Reason 3
- Supporting the central idea with a series of steps
Example: Central idea: Indo-Pak Relations can be improved
Series of steps: A. Strategy 1 B. Strategy 2 C. Strategy 3

Gather Supporting Material

One of the most difficult aspects of preparing a presentation is gathering relevant supporting information. Information that will be used in the presentation should be carefully selected. This will depend on the scope and length of the presentation.

While gathering supporting information a systematic approach should be adopted. First, the presenter should gather all his/her thoughts on the subject and then recall related information from his/her

personal knowledge and experience. Thereafter, several research resources such as the Internet, library resources, personal interviews, and discussion with experts, colleagues, and special interest groups should be consulted. A list of material to be included in your presentation should be made. The supporting material gathered may include facts, examples, definitions, quotations, and so on.

An outline of the collected material is developed, and reworked until it is in good order. After that, the first draft is written and revised as required. It is important to check for accuracy, redundancies, and clichés. The style of the presentation should be informal, preferably using everyday language and avoiding technical terms and statistics.

Plan Visual Aids

Using appropriate visual aids will increase the effectiveness of presentations. Good visuals may serve the following purposes.

- **They Serve as Speech Notes:** Visual aids may be used as notes to emphasise and clarify the main points of the presentation. Each visual aid may contain a main idea. Effective titles may be used to convey the main message of the visual aid.
- **They Give Confidence:** Using good visuals might increase the presenter's self-confidence because they refresh his/her memory, establish his/her credibility, and show that he/she has planned, is well-prepared, and is professional.
- **They Help Focus on the Theme of the Presentation:** Visuals help the presenter to focus on the theme of the presentation and concentrate on the objectives of his/her presentation. He/she may use effective visuals to highlight the central idea of his/her presentation.
- **They Increase Audience Interest:** Interesting and relevant visual aids make the audience more interested in what is being said. They may force even a hostile and demotivated audience to pay attention.
- **They Give Clarity and Precision:** Visuals make the presentation easy to understand and remember.

Any of the following types of visual aids may be used.

A. Three-Dimensional Visual Aids

- (a) Objects
- (b) Models
- (c) People

B. Two-Dimensional Visual Aids

- (a) Drawings
- (b) Photographs
- (c) Slides
- (d) Maps
- (e) Graphs
 - Bar graphs
 - Pie graphs
 - Line graphs
 - Picture graphs

- (f) Charts
- (g) Overhead transparencies
- (h) Computer generated presentations
- (i) Chalkboard

The following suggestions will help in planning and using visual aids effectively:

- Relevant visual aids must be chosen. The visual aids should match the message. Using a visual that does not match with what is being said is distracting and may confuse the audience.
- The presenter must be familiar with his/her visual aids and rehearse his/her presentation with using the visual aids.
- Computer software programs such as PowerPoint and Corel Presentations may be used to enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. However, special care must be taken while designing electronic presentations or multimedia presentations because making the presentation overly dependent on electronic visuals may create certain handicaps.
- Handouts may be distributed, that is, charts, presentation abstracts, summaries, brochures, pamphlets, outlines, and so on, in order to complement the presentation.
- While using overhead transparencies, eye contact should be maintained with the audience.
- Visual aids must be introduced before actually showing them.

ORGANISING YOUR PRESENTATION

After the central idea as well as the main ideas have been developed, relevant supporting material has been gathered, and appropriate visual aids have been planned, the message has to be organised and structured. Good organisation is essential for effective presentation. The key to good organisation is the repetition of the main ideas of your message. Just remember the three Ts:

Your presentation should be organised into three distinct parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

Tell the audience what you are going to tell.

Tell it.

Tell them what you have told.

Divide the presentation into three distinct parts: the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction

The opening of the presentation should convince the audience to listen to it. It has five functions:

- Get the audience's attention
- Introduce the subject
- Give the audience a reason to listen
- Establish the credibility
- Preview the main ideas

Get Audience Attention The speaker needs to get the attention of his/her audience and hold it until the end of his/her talk. Listeners form their first impression of the presentation quickly, and first impressions matter. Therefore, the opening should capture their attention. Audience attention may be captured in several ways. These techniques include using any one of the following:

- **Startling Statement/Statistics** Say something surprising or unexpected, or give statistics that surprises the audience.
- **Anecdote** Tell a short entertaining account of an event, a short story.
- **Questions** Ask some interesting questions. The question should be rhetorical with an obvious answer.
- **Quotations** Start the presentation with a relevant quotation that throws light on the central idea of the presentation.
- **Humour** Start the presentation with a humorous reference.

Introduce the Subject A statement of the central idea should be included in the introduction. In simple and direct language the audience has to know what the presentation is about.

Give the Audience a Reason to Listen Audience attention should be drawn to the topic of the presentation by showing them how the topic affects them directly. Giving relevant statistics can motivate the audience.

Establish the Credibility The speaker's credibility should be established early in a speech. He/she should be able to convince the audience that he/she is worth listening to. The speaker should be well prepared, appear confident, and strike a rapport with the audience by narrating personal experiences relevant to the topic.

Preview the Main Ideas The audience should be told what they are going to listen to. The preview to the presentation should be given towards the end of the introduction. The preview should include a statement of the central idea and mention the main points of the presentation.

Remember the acronym

KISS

(KEEP IT SIMPLE AND SHORT)

Your audience will understand a simple message easily.

SHORT

Your audience may concentrate better if your message is short.

Body

The body contains the main content of the presentation. Most people fail to make an effective presentation simply because they try to convey so much information and include so many ideas. The speaker may be tempted to include so many points in his/her presentation but it is advisable to focus on a few main ideas, two to four. Each main point should be supported by appropriate details but not excessive data. This will spoil the presentation because it may confuse the audience. In short, the *mantra* is to use a few main points with relevant supporting details. The speaker should concentrate on each main point and use appropriate transitions to indicate a change of point as the audience may not be able to differentiate between the main points and minor points. He/she should ensure that his/her information is accurate, complete, and relevant.

As the body of the presentation is structured, the speaker should choose the sequence he/she will follow from among any of the following organisational patterns:

- Sequential
- General to specific
- Specific to general
- More important to less important
- Less important to more important
- Categorical
- Problem and solution
- Contrast and comparison

REHEARSING THE PRESENTATION

The speaker, having planned, prepared, and organised a presentation well, may feel confident about delivering it without any rehearsal. However, it is important to rehearse the presentation properly because it will give him/her more confidence and avoid any distraction and deviation during actual presentation. Moreover, it will make him/her familiar with his/her message and will give sufficient time to make positive changes in the presentation. Therefore, before giving a presentation, it should be practised several times.

Rehearsal should be planned and conducted properly and systematically.

Before rehearsing a presentation it is necessary to answer a few pertinent questions. Who will the audience be? How many rehearsals are necessary? What would the methods of rehearsal be? Where should rehearsals be held? Should delivery notes be used while rehearsing? What should the duration of each rehearsal be?

The answers to these questions depend on the topic, the speaker's familiarity with the topic, his/her oral communication skills, and objectives.

Specific computer software designed to help with rehearsal of presentations may be used. The presentation graphics package will help concentrate on key points, which may be displayed on the screen. There would be timing and pacing indicators that would help in maintaining an appropriate delivery rate and pauses for effectiveness. However, using computer software for rehearsals may make one computer-dependent.

The following suggestions will help in rehearsing the presentation in a proper and planned way.

Plan the Rehearsal Rehearsals should be planned well in advance, leaving sufficient time between the rehearsal and the actual presentation so that there is enough time to make the required modifications in the presentation. A rehearsal is an opportunity to review and revise the presentation. Hearing oneself speak may also give some new ideas to make the presentation more effective.

Rehearse Before a Live Audience Rehearsals should be held before a live audience, involving them in the presentation. This helps in analysing their reactions and responding to them appropriately, in preparation for the actual presentation. Friends, classmates, colleagues, or roommates can make up the audience. Their responses, comments, and suggestions on your presentation help point out weaknesses and improve the presentation.

Timing During Rehearsal While rehearsing a presentation, particular attention should be paid to timing. Although the rate of delivering the presentation may vary according to the communicative situation, delivery technique and style of speaking, a rate that varies between 120 to 180 words per minute is ideal. The speaker may be tempted to talk too quickly in presentations. However, to be effective he/she should speak slowly and pause appropriately between important points. This speed should be maintained during rehearsal too.

Recreate the Presentation Environment Rehearsal is essential in order to experience the actual presentation. The main purpose of rehearsals is to help learn to make the presentation with confidence in a natural and spontaneous way. The speaker should be his/her natural self while doing rehearsing, and keep practising until he/she is confident of delivering the presentation smoothly.

IMPROVING DELIVERY

Once the presentation has been planned, prepared, organised and rehearsed properly and systematically, it can be delivered. What is important is said in a presentation but how it is said is more important. It is essential to improve delivery in order to give effective presentations. Improving delivery involves understanding several delivery methods, choosing an appropriate method, and controlling and reducing stage fear.

The way a presentation is delivered does influence the way listeners will respond to the message. Thus, the most important element of a presentation is the speaker's performance. It involves choosing an appropriate delivery technique, using speech notes, and deciding the non-verbal behaviour.

There are three delivery methods: the memorising method, reading method, and the outlining method.

Choosing Delivery Methods

There are three basic methods of delivery: the memorising method, reading method, and the outlining method. A speaker may choose a method of delivery that suits his/her content, style, and objectives.

Memorising Method Some people prefer the memorising method, that is, they memorise the entire presentation and present it from memory. This method may be used if the speaker has stage fear and is very nervous about giving the presentation. Learning what one intends to say word for word may develop the required confidence in the person. However, this method has its disadvantages. First, the speaker may forget something in the middle of his/her talk preventing him/her from continuing his presentation. This could be disastrous. Moreover, if the entire presentation is memorised, it may not sound spontaneous and natural creating monotony in the presentation. Finally, if the speaker concentrates more on what he/she is saying, he/she may not be able to involve the audience in his/her presentation.

The following are some suggestions to use the memorising method effectively:

- Plan, prepare, and write out the presentation.
- Do not memorise the entire presentation. Instead, the significant parts of the presentation, such as the opening part, the attention-catching statements, central idea, the main points, and important illustrations should be memorised.
- Rehearse thoroughly before giving the presentation and keep a set of notes ready for reference.
- Try to be flexible and spontaneous.

Reading Method The reading method may be used to deliver presentations, that is, the presentation is written out and delivered by reading from the manuscript. This method is useful while presenting a technical paper or report that may contain complex technical information or statistical data. This method of delivery helps control nervousness during presentation because there is no danger of forgetting anything in the middle of the talk. This gives the speaker confidence. However, specific techniques will have to be used to involve the audience and avoid monotony.

The following suggestions will be helpful in using the reading method effectively:

- Prepare a full script of the presentation. Use capitals, spacing, and underlining to break out important parts and highlight significant points.
- Before giving the presentation, rehearse it before a live audience. Learn to look at long stretches of your presentation so that you may establish eye contact with the audience.
- Use non-verbal signals (that is, facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and so on) and voice modulation in order to maintain the interest of the audience.
- Adopt a conversational tone. Use personal expressions and short sentences.

Outlining Method Presentations may also be given with the help of delivery notes. This is the most effective delivery method as the notes will make the speaker familiar with his/her message and give him/her confidence. He/she is able to establish eye contact with his/her audience because he/she only has to glance at his/her notes for a while and can then concentrate on his/her audience. Moreover, he/she can afford to be flexible and spontaneous. However, the notes should be prepared carefully because the success of the presentation largely depends on the quality and type of delivery notes.

The following suggestions will help use the “notes” method effectively:

- Plan and prepare the presentation carefully and write notes or outlines that contain all the important points, transitions, and illustrations. Use capitals, spacing, and underlining to show important transitions.
- Rehearse the presentation using the outlines. Systematic practice helps develop the required confidence.
- While delivering the presentation notes, the speaker should glance down at each main point, look up at his/her audience, maintain eye contact with them, pause for a moment and then explain the point.
- The speaker should try to be comfortable with the way he/she phrases his/her ideas. He/she may look at the examples and illustrations, but should not pick up the words from his/her notes and just repeat them.
- In order to sound spontaneous and natural, he/she should use the notes just as starting points.

Handling Stage Fright

Everyone who has faced an audience and has made a speech or presentation must have experienced stage fright. Perhaps one of the most difficult things that need to be handled during a presentation is one's first encounter with stage fright. Whenever we are faced with a frightening situation we find difficult to handle, our body responds. This response is in terms of extra energy to deal with the situation. As a result, the heartbeat quickens, breathing becomes more rapid, the mouth becomes dry, blushing occurs, palms sweat, and several other physiological changes occur. We become nervous or anxious and suffer from stage fright. Infact, even very good speakers experience some degree of stage fright when they have to give a presentation before an audience. So, some degree of stage fright is quite normal. However, it is important to learn to handle stage fright and use the extra energy positively to improve presentation delivery.

The following strategies can be used to control and reduce stage fright:

- **Concentrate on the Three Ps: Planning, Preparation and Practice** As discussed earlier, presentations should be well planned, thoroughly prepared, and rehearsed repeatedly. Knowing the purpose, audience, and occasion helps to reduce speech anxiety. Effective preparation familiarises the speaker with his/her message and thus reduces stage fear. Knowing the introduction, body and conclusion well in advance gives the speaker the confidence to control his/her speech anxiety. Finally, practice makes one perfect, if the presentation is well rehearsed. There is nothing to fear and there may be little or no stage fright at the time of presentation because the speaker is familiar with the situation.

Group Discussion:

Group discussion (GD) is basically an interactive oral process. Here, the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and feelings takes place through oral communication. Each member of the group listens to other members as well as gives his or her views orally. He or she has to use clear language, persuasive style, and has to use voice and gesture effectively. This means that participants need to be proficient in oral communication in order to take effective part in a group discussion.

GD is a group process, that is, it involves both person-to-person as well as person-to-group interactions. Every group member has to develop goal-oriented or group oriented interaction. Effective interactions in discussion should lead to unification between the activities of individuals as a work team, and towards the achievement of common group goals. A participant should be concerned with the ego needs of other participants, unity of the group, and the overall objectives of the discussion.

GD is systematic. Each participant knows the topic in advance and has the opportunity to use his/her experience and knowledge to understand and analyse the topic. The exchange of ideas in GD takes place in a systematic and structured way. The participants are seated face-to-face and each participant gets an opportunity to express his/her views and comment on the views expressed by other members of the group. A formal speech making or group procedure may follow in order to ensure optimal participation.

GD is a purposeful and goal-oriented activity. The goals or objectives of a discussion are generally decided before the discussion takes place. This means that each participant is usually aware of the purpose or purposes of the discussion in advance. A GD may help achieve group goals as well as individual needs. Group goals are common and shared by each participant whereas individual needs may be the personal goals of the members of the group.

To conclude, we may define group discussion as a form of systematic and purposeful oral process characterised by the formal and structured exchange of views on a particular topic, issue, problem, or situation for developing information and understanding essential for decision making or problem solving.

Group Discussion and Debate

Group discussion differs from debate in nature, approach, and procedure. Debates are intended to advocate a particular point of view while GDs raise a particular issue for a positive exchange of views. Unlike debate, which is competitive in nature, GD is basically a cooperative group process. A debate follows a limited approach because the speaker must argue either in favour or against a given point of view. On the other hand, in GD the approach is not limited to the support of a single point of view.

Although both debate and GD are formal situations, debate is more formal in procedure than GD. In order to ensure that all facts, viewpoints, suggestions, or solutions are considered before a decision is taken, a flexible procedure is followed in GD. Moreover, decision in a debate depends on voting while a GD is designed to reach group consensus.

Importance of Group Discussion Skills

The ability to take effective part in GD is one of the most important skills that contribute to professional success. Whether one is a student, a job seeker, a professional engineer, or a company executive, one needs effective GD skills. A student may have to take part in academic discussions, student meetings, group deliberation, interactive classroom sessions, or selection GDs for admission to professional courses. A job seeker may be required to face selection GDs as part of the selection process. Professionals in different fields also have to take part in professional meetings and discussions. All these situations

Group discussions aid in problem solving, decision making, and personality assessment.

require the ability to make a significant contribution to group deliberation and help the group in the process of decision making.

The importance of GD has increased in recent times due to its increasing role as an effective tool in (a) problem solving, (b) decision making, and (c) personality assessment. In most of the organisations, companies, and institutions, group discussion aids in problem solving and decision making. When a problem situation arises, the concerned people discuss it. They exchange their perceptions about the problem and its possible solutions. The alternative solutions are discussed and analysed and the best option is chosen by the group. Similarly, whenever there is a need to take a decision in a particular case, the matter is first discussed by a group of people and the different aspects are analysed, interpreted, and evaluated. This leads to effective decisions.

GD is also used as a technique for personality assessment of candidates for job selection or admission to professional courses. Groups of six to eight members are formed, and are given a topic to discuss within a limited time (generally 30 to 45 minutes). The given topic may be an opinion, a problem or a case. The members of the selection committee closely evaluate the different skills reflected by the candidates and those who reflect leadership qualities and emerge as natural group leaders are normally shortlisted for a personal interview.

Thus, all of us need effective GD skills. It can do wonders for us and may ensure academic success, popularity and power in our organisation, a job offer that we always waited for, or admission to a course that is going to change our life. Therefore, it is important to be able take part in a GD effectively and confidently. Participants should know how to persuade their group members, how to reflect confidence while speaking, how to reflect leadership qualities, and how to make the group achieve its goals. They should have the ability to take initiatives during a discussion, present their personal views in an effective way, develop their ideas logically, analyse and respond to the views expressed by other members, and emerge as the natural leader of the group.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Effective group discussions achieve group goals and aid in decision making. However, a large number of group discussions end without a group consensus. It is therefore, important to know the characteristics that make a group discussion successful. Successful group discussions share some or all of the following features:

Successful GDs share some or all of the seven features: agreement on group goals, goal oriented interaction, agreement on procedures, cooperative and friendly atmosphere, use of effective communication techniques, equitable distribution of participation, and shared leadership.

Agreement on Group Goals An effective GD begins with a purpose, which is shared and understood by all the group members. As the participants know why they are taking part in the discussion, they can concentrate better and can be more active in realising the group goals. They can smoothly work from a general purpose to specific goals. Moreover, the agreement on group goals brings clarity and provides direction to the group.

Goal Oriented Interaction Successful discussions motivate group members to have goal oriented interaction. Effective GD members are not only aware of the group goals but also work towards the attainment of these goals. As they are more interested in achieving these group goals than promoting their personal interests,

they develop and promote meaningful interactions that aid in implementing the purpose of the discussion.

Agreement on Procedures Participants of a successful GD develop procedures to guide them. They decide how they will organise the presentation of individual views, how an exchange of the views will take place, and how they will reach a group consensus. In order to ensure attainment of group goals, they may develop norms of interaction. If the participants of a GD fail to do so, there may be anarchy and the more assertive and aggressive members might dominate and monopolise the entire discussion. This may make the entire process meaningless.

Cooperative and Friendly Atmosphere An important characteristic of successful GDs is the development of a cooperative, friendly, and cordial atmosphere where disagreements do exist but they do not lead to serious conflicts. Members cooperate with each other as they understand and appreciate different points of views and try to pool them together in order to develop group consensus. There may be direct but goal-oriented confrontation as each member presents his/her points of view as well as reservations and differences. However, these different positions, opinions, ideas, and approaches enrich the process of discussion and broaden the horizon of the group.

Use of Effective Communication Techniques The success of a GD depends on an effective use of communication techniques. Effective GD members keep the channels of communication open and speak clearly and precisely using simple words, short sentences, correct articulation, and appropriate pronunciation. They are direct and specific and try to avoid and check barriers to group communication. Moreover, they use non-verbal communication tactfully and interpret the body language of other participants. As they are active team listeners, they encourage others to speak.

Equitable Distribution of Participation An effective GD ensures an equitable distribution of participation by all. Each member is important and no one is allowed to dominate or monopolise the discussion. As optimal participation by all is the group-goal, members encourage each other to participate. Reluctant and shy members are drawn into the discussion.

Shared Leadership There is generally no elected or formal leader in a GD. The leadership functions are shared and performed by the various members of the group. As there is a willingness on the part of each participant to reach to a group consensus, they come forward to perform leadership tasks such as starting the discussion, keeping the discussion going, encouraging non-participants to speak, making periodic summaries, checking the group progress, and so on.

SELECTION GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussion has emerged as an effective and potentially powerful technique for evaluating personality traits of candidates for job selection or admission to professional courses. The GD test occupies a major position in the employment procedure of nearly all industrial concerns, public limited organisations, and multinational companies. More than any other selection method, GD tests are relied upon for making hiring decisions. These selection GDs may vary from a brief discussion on a simple topic to an exhaustive interactive discussion of a controversial issue or an actual company problem. However, they all intend to evaluate the depth and range of the candidate's knowledge, his or her ability to orally present that knowledge in a convincing manner, and his/her effective group communication, leadership, and team management skills.

There are four major areas of evaluation in selection GDs: subject knowledge, oral communication skills, leadership skills, and team management.

Subject Knowledge

As all participants must possess a thorough understanding of the topic on which they are supposed to speak, subject knowledge is the first requirement of effective participation in a group discussion. Participants need to have a fair amount of knowledge on a wide range of subjects. They should know all about national and international affairs, burning social and economic topics, scientific and environmental issues, key newsmakers, controversial topics, and a lot more. Although a GD test is not designed to assess the ability of the candidate's general awareness of the environment around him or to test his knowledge of current events, he/she is expected to be aware of such matters of everyday observation or experience as may be expected of an educated person. People with depth and range of knowledge are always sought after in dynamic companies and organisations.

The topics for GD tests may include interesting and relevant ideas pertaining to society, culture, polity, economy, scientific and technical research; social, economic, political or environmental problems; controversial issues; or case studies. The best way to keep one abreast of latest events and national as well as international developments is to read daily newspapers, good magazines and periodicals, watch news bulletins and informative programmes on television. Moreover, we should use the Internet to improve our knowledge about recent developments in different areas. The World Wide Web is a vast database of current authentic materials that presents information in multimedia form and reacts instantly to a user's input.

Subject knowledge also implies the ability to analyse facts or information in a systematic way to correlate them with personal experiences and exposure. It is this ability to analyse existing knowledge and assimilate new ideas that can give birth to bright and brilliant ideas and schemes. In all group discussions, people with ideas carry the day. A person putting forward new ideas that may work, will be accepted as the natural leader of the group. During a selection GD, participants are supposed to analyse the topic and give their interpretation of it. Examiners will evaluate each person's contribution to the discussion or the ideas put forward by them based on its relevance to the topic, original approach, and wide perspective.

Oral Communication Skills

The participants in a group discussion must possess not only subject knowledge but also the ability to present that knowledge in an effective way. As the exchange of ideas in a group discussion takes place

through speech, one of the prerequisites of success in group discussion is the ability to speak confidently and convincingly. Infact, a vital part of every successful group discussion is high quality oral communication. The members of the selection committee closely evaluate the oral communication skills of the candidates. They generally assess the oral competence of a candidate in terms of team listening, appropriate language, clarity of expression, positive speech attitudes and adjustments, clear articulation, and effective non-verbal communication.

Listening Skills As all comments during a group discussion must be heard and understood, listening skills are probably one of the most important communication skills that one needs in order to be successful in a GD. When a person takes part in a group discussion, he/she cannot contribute to the stated purposes of the communication unless he/she is listening properly. By participating as an active listener, he/she may contribute effectively to the groups deliberations. Moreover, active participation as a listener in a group and its discussions and deliberations make a person a successful leader because a good leader is a good listener.

Appropriateness of Language During a GD, the selection panel judges a candidate's grasp of language and ability to use appropriate words and expressions. Appropriateness of language demands that there should be no errors of grammar, or usage and there is precision in the use of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Participants must be certain that they are expressing their ideas precisely and exactly so that their listener is able to understand them without confusion and misunderstanding. They should be simple and concise, avoiding difficult words, unfamiliar phrases, or flowery language.

Clarity of Expression Clarity is the art of making your meaning clear to your audience. The secret of clear expression is clear thinking. Sloppy, illogical, or incomplete thinking may cause lack of clarity during a GD. A confused person is likely to confuse others. So, it is essential to think clearly and positively. In addition, direct, clear and specific language should be used during a GD, rather than round-about constructions, indirect expressions, exaggeration, artificial eloquence, and ornamentation in speech.

Positive Speech Attitudes The selection panel also evaluates speech attitudes and adjustments. Is the participant a responsible group communicator or a careless speaker? Is he/she mature and dignified or immature and apologetic? Is he/she positive towards his/her listeners or antagonistic to them? Is he/she a relaxed speaker or a tense one? Is he/she sincere to other speakers or just indifferent? The examiners closely watch these aspects. So, it is important to reflect positive speech attitudes and adjustments during a GD.

Clear Articulation The quality of a person's voice and articulation plays an important role during a GD. A participant can easily impress the other members of the discussion group as well as the selection panel if he/she has a cheerful voice with good articulation. Avoid a slow or weak voice, a monotonous tone, and indistinct articulation. Do not speak too fast. Be slow, clear, and distinct.

Non-verbal Clues As non-verbal clues such as eye contact, body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and so on can speak louder than words, examiners closely watch the non-verbal behaviour of candidates. They generally evaluate the body language cues of candidates to determine personality factors such as nervousness, cooperation, frustration, weakness, insecurity, self-confidence, defensiveness, and so forth. So, it is important to be careful while using non-verbal messages. However, one should recognise the power of non-verbal messages and use them effectively. A person's body language must reflect his/her self-confidence, cooperation, positive attitude, openness of mind, and sincerity.

Leadership Skills

A candidate's success in a GD test will depend not only on his/her subject knowledge and oral skills but also on his/her ability to provide leadership to the group. The examiners evaluate a candidate's unique set of personal skills, which allow him/her to prove himself/herself as a natural leader in a GD. Thus, it is necessary to reflect the qualities of leadership in order to create the right impression on one's examiners. Adaptability, analysis, assertiveness, composure, self-confidence, decision making, discretion, initiative, objectivity, patience, and persuasiveness are some of the leadership skills that are tremendously useful in proving oneself as a natural leader in a GD.

Leadership functions during a GD include initiative, analysis, assertiveness, self-confidence, objectivity, patience and composure, persuasiveness, and motivation.

In every group discussion, there is an element of leadership. We can define leadership in GD on a functional basis. Thus, anything that contributes to goal achievement can be considered a leadership function. Although leadership functions are shared in GD, each participant should try to be the first one to perform the function whenever a need arises. Leadership functions during a GD include the following:

Initiative Initiative is a vital element that forms the basis of leadership during a GD. As there is no formal leader to conduct the discussion, someone in the group has to take the initiative to perform the required leadership function. A person can display his/her ability to take appropriate initiative by performing the following leadership functions:

- initiate the proceedings of the discussion;
- create an atmosphere in which members feel free to participate;
- promote positive group interactions;
- point out areas of agreement and disagreement;
- clarify points when required;
- keep the discussion on the right track; and
- lead the discussion to a positive and successful conclusion within the time allotted.

Analysis The ability to analyse a situation, a problem, or a condition is the mark of a successful leader. Those who lack an analytical bent of mind and rational thinking cannot be successful in a GD. A leader

should be able to analyse the given topic for discussion in order to develop his/her own point of view. His/her capacity to analyse the subject in a convincing manner and present all the facts logically can help in carrying the rest of the group with him/her. Moreover, the leader should listen carefully to each participant in order to analyse his or her opinions and views. A positive analysis of all the views, suggestions, proposals, and solutions exchanged during the discussion will lead to the identification of common elements that may form the basis of group consensus.

Assertiveness A leader has to be bold and assertive without being offensive, aggressive, and rigid. If a person is mild and weak, he/she will be too eager to give up in the face of opposition and obstacles. In fact, a weak, submissive, and passive person can never be successful as a group leader. Assertiveness is a desirable leadership quality that can make a person successful during a GD. If one is assertive, one can tackle obstacles and handicaps effectively. Assertiveness can help in bringing order to a chaotic group, encourage balanced participation, deal with conflict effectively, and lead the discussion to a positive end. By taking a firm stand, an assertive leader can control members of the group who are more interested in sabotaging the discussion rather than contributing to its success. It is always desirable that the leader does not take a rigid stand but he/she must be able to assert himself during a GD.

Self-confidence Self-confidence is the hallmark of a leader. Selection experts and examiners always look for a candidate with a strong but realistic level of confidence. So, it is important to remember to talk with confidence and self-assurance. A participant's confidence will not only impress the examiners but also help him/her lead the group and instill confidence in each of its members. A leader can tackle problems with confidence and find workable solutions with ease. However, he/she should avoid being boastful and pretending that he/she knows everything and has a solution for every problem. He/she should not forget that overconfidence causes failures whereas under-confidence leads to lack of productivity.

Objectivity Objectivity is the quality of being impartial, rational, and factual. In order to be successful as a group leader, one needs to view a situation or a problem dispassionately and objectively. In other words the leader's approach should be systematic, scientific, and realistic. As group discussion is an exchange of views and opinions on a specific topic, there would be conflicting views and heated arguments. The leader should not become sentimental because if he/she gets emotional and excited, his/her ideas may get jumbled and arguments will become dogmatic and self-appointed. The leader can overcome opposition by adopting a logical, rational, and practical viewpoint, and utilising concrete and foolproof illustrations and examples. As he/she should be rational rather than emotional, irrational ideas and emotional bias should not influence him/her. A leader's ideas and arguments should be fully backed by relevant facts and figures, this will give validity and appeal to his/her arguments.

Patience and Composure Patience is the key to successful leadership in GD. A successful leader never loses his cool and is not easily provoked. Even in the face of extreme provocation, the leader keeps a patient profile. So, during the GD it is essential to keep one's cool and not get provoked. Handling a group of heterogeneous elements requires a lot of patience and composure. It is always difficult to bring a group of people together to discuss an issue amicably because a few in the group would try to monopolise the group and create problems. In such a condition, if the leader wants to bring the discussion to a successful conclusion, he/she has to tackle the situation with tact and patience. His/her ability to keep cool and maintain his/her composure despite provocation will help bring together people with different temperaments and strike a consensus in the GD.

GROUP DISCUSSION STRATEGIES

As group discussion is a systematic and purposeful oral process characterised by the formal and structured exchange of views on a particular topic, issue, problem, or situation, it should be well planned and well conducted. Seven strategies have been described here for participating in group discussions.

Getting the GD Started

As mentioned before, there is generally no elected or formal leader in a GD. So, there is no one to get the GD started. In a selection GD, the group, which may consist of six to ten persons, is given a topic to discuss within 30 to 45 minutes. After announcing the topic, the total GD time, and explaining the general guidelines and procedures governing the GD, the examiner withdraws to the background leaving the group completely free to carry on with the discussion on its own without any outside interference.

Use appropriate strategies for effective participation in group discussions.

In the absence of a designated leader to initiate the proceedings of the discussion, the group is likely to waste time in cross talks, low-key conversations, cross-consultations, asides, and so on. The confusion may last until someone in the group takes an assertive position and restores the chaos into order. It could be you.

In order to get the GD started, the assertive, natural leader will have to remind the group of its goal and request them to start the discussion without wasting time. A few examples of the opening lines are given below:

- Well friends, may I request your kind attention? I am sure all of us are keen to begin the GD and complete it within the allotted time. Let me remind you that we have only thirty minutes to complete the task. So, let us get started.
- My dear friends, may I have your attention please? As you all know, we have to complete the discussion in 45 minutes and we have already used up five minutes. I think we should start the discussion now.
- Hello everybody. I am sorry to interrupt but I have something very important to say. We are here to discuss the topic — “Reduction of IIM fees is a retrograde step”—and the time given to us is just 30 minutes. Let us begin, shall we?
- Hello friends! May I have your kind attention for a few seconds, please? I am sure you will agree that we are here to exchange our views on the reservation policy of the government and we have to complete the discussion within 35 minutes. As we have already used up more than five minutes, we should begin the discussion now. Shall we start?

Once the GD has been successfully initiated, the leader should propose the procedures to be followed during the discussion. The procedures may include time management, order of speaking, length and nature of individual contributions, and nature of group interactions. It is very important to follow a plan that includes time for every individual speaker as well as for the exchange of views, suggestions, and solutions. All members of the group should be in agreement on these pertinent items. While trying to get the GD started, the leader should attempt to create an atmosphere in which all members feel free to participate.

Contributing Systematically

The success of a group discussion depends on systematic contribution by each member of the group. In order to make systematic contributions to the group deliberations, all the group members should understand the process of reflective thinking. They should be able to identify the stage of the discussion (that is, individual stage, where each member has to systematically present his or her views without any disturbance; or group interaction stage, where members have to exchange views and opinions in order to reach to a group consensus) and contribute accordingly. When a participant makes a contribution, he/she should ensure that his/her contribution

- relates to what has previously been said by other members,
- focuses on the theme of the discussion,
- deals with the specific point under consideration,
- is directed towards the overall objective of the GD, and
- is as per the requirement of the particular stage of discussion.

Moreover, contributions must reflect the depth of understanding and knowledge of the subject as well as the participant's ability to analyse it. Each participant must see the topic from his/her perspective so that his/her background and personal experiences give it a new interpretation, which may prove valuable to the group for taking a decision.

Creating a Friendly Cooperative Atmosphere

Creating an atmosphere conducive to positive discussion is the responsibility of each member of the group. A friendly, cooperative atmosphere encourages effective and positive deliberations that lead to successful conclusion. Although a GD is a serious and formal occasion, there is no need to make it too serious and boring. It is desirable to make it an enjoyable experience for all. Members of a group discussion can do much to create a conducive and friendly atmosphere. The following suggestions may be helpful in this regard:

- All participants should help the group to make the discussion lively and pleasurable.
- Participants should develop a consensus regarding group standards early in the discussion.
- In order to maintain friendly attitudes, participants should demonstrate a sense of fair play by treating others as they would like themselves to be treated.
- Participants must conduct themselves with decorum and dignity.
- All participants must show interest in what others say.
- Every participant should make sure that other members feel free to express their views, opinions, comments, and feelings.
- Members must be kept informed of their own progress and they should be appreciated for contributing effectively to the group goals.
- Participants should avoid being too formal with each other.

Moving the Discussion Along

A GD without a leader may drift without a proper direction. A leader should ensure that the GD moves along the right direction so that it is able to complete the task within the fixed time limit. He/she should make sure that every member of the group gets some time to present his/her views and no one member

monopolises the discussion. No one should be allowed to do all the talking because the purpose of a GD is to exchange views, and not to hear just one person. If someone tries to take too much time, the leader may politely thank the aggressive member but firmly ask him/her to give the next person a chance to speak.

It is very important to avoid any digression that may sidetrack the group. The leader may volunteer to avoid digressions and bring order out of chaos by requesting the members to see reason and come to the point. The following are some examples of how to do this:

- I do understand your point but I think we should stick to the main subject at hand.
- I see what you mean but it would be better if we limit our discussion to the given subject.
- That is all well said but I do not find a link between what you want to say and the subject in hand. Could you please return to the main point?
- That is not the main point under discussion. Let us come to the main subject.

The leader may use other techniques to keep the GD on the right track. He/she can emphasise the point that everyone has to keep the objectives of the GD in mind and adhere to the time schedule. He/she may summarise or clarify the points already put forward by the group members and thereby focus their attention on the main objective of the GD and keep the discussion from slowing down.

Promoting Optimal Participation

As the success of a GD largely depends on the involvement of each member of the group, the leader should promote optimal participation. As every member has a resource potential that can be used to make the discussion successful, the leader should encourage non-participants to speak. With patience, restraint, and proper motivation, he/she can inspire even the shy and reluctant members to give their views on the given subject. It will not only reflect his/her leadership qualities but also lead the discussion to a successful conclusion. Leaders may find the following suggestions quite helpful in this regard:

- Make each member feel that his or her contribution is necessary to make the discussion successful.
- Encourage each member to make his or her maximum contribution.
- Recognise members of the group who have not talked and request them to express their views.
- When a member makes a contribution, the leader may request the non-participating members to comment on it.
- Direct some relevant questions related to the topic to reticent members.
- Try to control talkative members.
- Make talkative members take responsibility for getting non-participants to speak.
- Avoid pushing the GD too fast, and take care of slow speakers.

Handling Conflict

One important aspect of participating in any group discussion is dealing with conflict. As a group always tends to be heterogeneous, conflict is natural in any group activity and may sometimes be desirable for the success of a group process. Expect differences of opinions during a GD but do not let these conflicting opinions go against the basic purpose of a GD. Do not be a silent spectator when two or more people are in conflict. Although conflict resolution is a complex art, a leader needs to remember just a few simple tips in order to handle conflict during a GD. The following suggestions will help leaders deal with conflict during a GD:

- Maintain a friendly attitude and try to create an atmosphere in which people respect conflicting opinions as they feel free to express their opinions and expect others to talk freely. This will generate goodwill and take care of conflicts within the group.
- Strictly follow the discussion procedure that has been decided earlier in the discussion.
- Avoid conflicts between persons and not conflict between ideas.
- Clarify conflicting statements given by group members so that they do not lead to personal differences.
- Provide positive guidance to the group by making occasional summaries.
- When two people are in conflict, they should both be encouraged to express themselves completely and then their views can be summarised. This will satisfy the egos of both the group members.
- Help establish an attitude of critical objectivity.

Effecting Closure

In the absence of a designated leader to close the discussion formally, the group is likely to continue until the examiner announces that the time is over. Every member has to see that the GD ends with positive conclusions within the given time limit. In order to complete the GD within the allotted time, the leader has to remind the group of its goal and request them to reach to a group consensus. He/she should do the following himself/herself or get them done by other group members in order to develop group consensus:

- Summarise the progress made by the group.
- Put forward the common points of agreement.
- Indicate the differences that need to be resolved.
- Review decisions/suggestions/views already decided.

Once the closure of a GD is successfully initiated, the leader may propose the consensus views, if any. It is not essential that every GD ends with a consensus but every GD must end with some positive conclusion. The leader must emphasise the points of agreement in order to indicate a common viewpoint regarding the topic.

BEST OF LUCK