

**MAA OMWATI DEGREE COLLEGE HASSANPUR
(PALWAL)**

Notes

B.COM 1st Sem/BBA 1st Sem

Business Communication

Business Communication: Nature, Process and Basic Forms

■ 1. Introduction

The changing environment and increasing complexity of the 21st century work place essentially necessitates learning of *communication* skills all the more important. The autocratic management model of past generation is increasingly being replaced by participatory management in which effective communication is the key to build trust, promote understanding and empower and motivate others.

An organisation can no longer assume that its employee constituencies are homogeneous. Employees reflect differences in age, ethnic heritage, race, physical abilities, gender and sexual orientation. Diversity is not just a matter of social responsibility, it is also an economic issue. Companies are realizing the advantage of making full use of the creativity, knowledge, talents, experiences and perspective of a diverse employee base. The collaboration that allows organisations to capitalize on the creative potential of a diverse work force depends on *communication*. The ability to compete in the global economy is the single greatest challenge that businesses face today. Organisations will want to negotiate, buy and sell overseas, consider joint ventures, market and adopt products for an international market and improve their expatriates, success rate. All these activities demand effective business *communication* skills. Therefore, effective communication is extremely crucial to business. Specialized business knowledge is important, but not enough to guarantee success. Honing of communication skills is vital and cannot be ignored.

According to **Judy Thomas**, a business communication instructor—*“Depending on the job, communication might be the primary task or it might be the glue that binds a person with the rest of the organisation. Inability to communicate effectively is the biggest reason employees fail to get promoted.”*

So, to communicate effectively means better coordination, and lack of it means disruption. Business is not possible without communication, it is the life line of every business.

If you are in business and you can't communicate effectively, you're as good as not being in business. In the light of these facts, it becomes necessary to understand the meaning of communication and business communication.

2. Meaning of Communication

The term communication is derived from the Latin word "communis" or "communicare" which means to "make common". Thus, communication means to make facts, information, thoughts and requirements common place or make them known. Communication, therefore, is the exchange of thoughts, messages, information etc. by way of speech, signals or in writing.

Definition

The following definition of communication has been given by different scholars:

- (1) According to **Theo Haimann**, "Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.... It is the process of imparting ideas and making oneself understood by others."
- (2) According to **Newman and Sumner**, "Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons."
- (3) In the words of **Louis A. Allen**, "Communication is the sum of all the things which a person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling and listening and understanding."

It is clear from above definitions that there are five aspects of communication:

- (i) A message which is to be communicated.
- (ii) A sender who sends the message.
- (iii) A medium through which a message is sent.
- (iv) A receiver who receives the message.
- (v) A return response or feedback from the receiver.

In fact, every aspect of life whether personal, social, political, business religious, national or international, involves communication. Thus business communication is only a special type of communication. In this book, we shall study the various aspects of business communication.

3. Types of Communication

The classifications of communication include—verbal and non-verbal, technological and non-technological, mediated and non-mediated, participatory and non-participatory. However, the commonly known types of communications are:

(1) **Intra-personal Communication:** The most basic form of communication is intra-personal communication i.e., communication with the self. During intra-personal communication one thinks and introspects. This implies individual reflection, contemplation and mediation. One example of this is transcendental meditation. According to the experts, this type of communication encompasses communicating with the divine and with spirits in the form of prayers and rites and rituals.

(2) **Interpersonal Communication:** This is direct, face-to-face communication that occurs between two persons. It is essentially a dialogue or a conversation between two or more people. It is personal, straight-forward, as well as intimate and permits maximum interaction through words and gestures. Interpersonal communications may be:

- (i) **Focused Interactions:** This primarily results from an actual encounter between two persons. This implies that the two persons involved are completely aware of the communication happening between them.
- (ii) **Unfocused Interactions:** This occurs when one simply observes or listens to persons with whom one is not conversing. Examples of such interactions may be seen at stations and bus stops, streets, restaurants, etc.

(3) **Group Communication:** In group communication you interact with a limited number of others, work to share information, develop ideas, make decisions, solve problems or simply for amusement.

(4) **Public Communication:** Through public communication you inform and persuade the members of an audience to hold certain attitudes, values or beliefs so that they think, believe or act in a certain way.

(5) **Non-verbal Communication:** This includes aspects such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, etc., which also become a part of the communication process; as well as the written and types modes of communications.

(6) **Mass Communication:** This is generally identified with tools of modern mass media, which includes: books, the press, cinema, television, radio, etc. It is a means of conveying messages to an entire populace.

No matter what type of communication channel is used, communicating is an ever-continuing process that is going on all the time. It is as important to human life as is day-to-day existence.

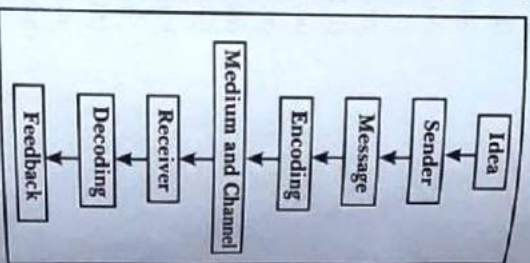
4. Communication Process

Communication is a process of sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages. Communication is considered effective when it achieves the desired reaction or response from the receiver. Simply stated, communication is a two way process of exchanging ideas or information. The process of communication consists of several components. These components are interrelated to form the model of communication. In fact, the communication model explains the interrelationship between several components which constitute the process of communication.

4.1 Main Components of Communication Process

Communication is effective when a concise and clear message is delivered well, received successfully, and understood fully. The process of communication has the following distinct components:

(1) **Idea:** Idea is the simplification and abstraction of reality filtered through the individual mind. Every message whether oral or written begins with an idea. Every idea refers to some context. Context is a broad field that includes external and internal events. Every business organisation has its own convention for processing and communicating information. This is the internal aspect of context. Another aspect of context is the external action that prompts you to communicate your idea. The source of this action may be a letter, memo, fax, telephone call, e-mail, etc. As the source of the message, you need to be clear about why you're communicating, and what you want to communicate. You also need to be confident that the information you're communicating is useful and accurate.



(2) **Sender:** Person sending the message is called sender. The process of communication begins when an idea occurs in his mind. The sender wants to send that idea to another person or organisation to achieve some objective. The sender may be an individual, a group or an organisation. The sender must have a clear picture in his mind about what he wants to communicate.

(3) **Message:** The idea, emotion or opinion transmitted by the sender is called message. Message is an idea transformed into words. The message can be expressed in different ways depending on the subject, purpose, audience, personal style and cultural background of the sender.

(4) **Encoding:** The method by which a message is expressed is called encoding. Message arises in the mind in the form of an idea. That idea is transmitted by the sender to the receiver in the form of words, symbols, pictures, day to day language, etc. Otherwise, it may not be possible for the receiver to understand it. Thus, forming of message in words or in any other way is called encoding. Keeping in view, the purpose of communication, selection of words or symbols for encoding should be such as to make the receiver understand the communication correctly.

Your success in encoding depends partly on your ability to convey information clearly and simply, but also on your ability to anticipate and eliminate sources of confusion (for example, cultural issues, mistaken assumptions, and missing information). A key part of this is to know your audience: Failure to understand who you communicate with will probably result in miscommunication.

(5) **Medium and Channel:** The method and means by which a message is transmitted by a sender to the receiver are called medium and channel respectively. For instance, letter is a medium and postal or courier service a channel. If a message is communicated by telephone, then oral message is a medium and telephone a channel. Thus, there is a difference between medium and channel.

Different channels have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, it's not particularly effective to give a long list of directions verbally. These better be given in writing to avoid any ambiguity.

(6) **Receiver:** The receiver of the communication is a person or a group or an organisation that receives the message. He is the destination of the message. In its absence, the process of communication is incomplete. He may be a listener or a reader or a viewer of the message. He not only receives the messages but also understands what is implied by it. He is a decoder who having understood the spirit of the message responds to it or gives necessary feedback.

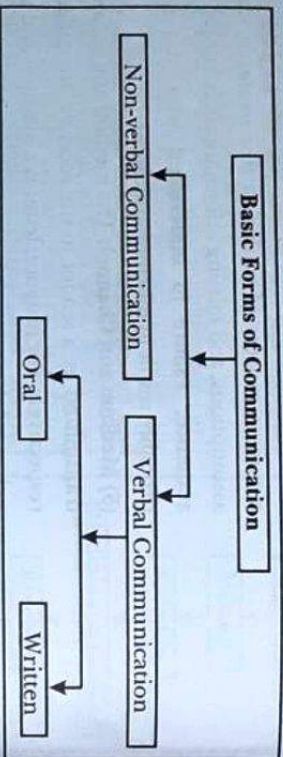
(7) **Decoding:** Decoding is a mental process by which the receiver draws meanings, from the words, symbols or pictures of the message. Receiver does the decoding to understand it. That is the reason he is called

decoder also. If the receiver understands the meanings of the words or the symbols correctly, then his decoding is perfect.

(8) **Feedback:** Feedback is receiver's response to the message. Feedback is the final link in the communication process. Feedback tells the source how the receiver has received and interpreted the message. A message, which conveys lack of understanding, is known as negative message. Positive feedback, on the other hand indicates that the receiver has understood the source's message. An effective communication is always sensitive to feedback and reacts accordingly.

5. Basic Forms of Communication

With a view to learn to communicate effectively, it is helpful to understand something about the basic forms of communication. These basic forms are also known as methods, channels or medium of communication.



5.1 Non-Verbal Communication

The most basic form of communication is non-verbal. The term non-verbal means "without words". Thus, non-verbal communication is the communication without words. Long before human beings communicated with one another by using body language. They gritted their teeth to show anger; they smiled and touched one another to indicate affection. We still use non-verbal cues to express superiority, dependence, dislike, respect, love and other feelings. There are two effective means of non-verbal communication. **Firstly**, non-verbal form of communication includes such things as red and green traffic lights, road pictographs directing traffic, blowing of sirens and the telephone ring. **Secondly**, another means of non-verbal communication is body language. It was originally given the scientific name **kinesics**. Body language or gestures are used in many forms such as nodding or shaking of the head.

raising eyebrows, pointing thumbs up or down, smiling, frowning, glaring, clapping or shaking hands.

Functions of Non-verbal Communication

According to **Thill and Bovee**—"Non-verbal communication has six specific functions:

- To provide information, either consciously or unconsciously.
- To regulate the flow of conversation.
- To express emotion.
- To qualify, complement, contradict or expand verbal messages.
- To control or influence others.
- To facilitate and simplify specific tasks.

Advantages of Non-verbal Communication

- (1) **Reliability:** One advantage of non-verbal communication is its **reliability**. Most people can deceive us with their words than they can with their body language. **Words** are relatively easy to control; body language, facial expressions and vocal characteristics are not. By paying attention to these non-verbal hints, we can detect deception or affirm a speaker's honesty.
- (2) **Efficient:** Non-verbal communication is important for another reason as well. It can be efficient from both the sender's and the receiver's standpoint. You can transmit a non-verbal message without even thinking about it and your audience can understand the meaning unconsciously.
- (3) **Credibility:** Non-verbal communication plays a role in business too. For one thing, it helps establish credibility and leadership potential. If you can learn to manage the impression you create with your body language, facial characteristics, voice and appearance, you can do a great deal to communicate that you are competent, trustworthy and dynamic.
- (4) **Accurate Understanding of Attitudes:** Furthermore, if you can learn to understand other people's non-verbal messages, you will be able to interpret their underlying attitudes and intentions more accurately. When dealing with co-workers, customers and clients, watch carefully for small signs to conclude whether the conversion is going in the right direction or not.

Limitations or Disadvantages of Non-verbal Communication

The limitations or the disadvantages of non-verbal communication are the following:

- (1) Lack of secrecy; (2) Useful only for small pieces of information. (3) Gestures can be misunderstood. (4) Necessary for both the parties to face each other. (5) Lack of written proof. (6) More difficult to study. (7) Fails to discuss past events and ideas.

■ 5.2 Verbal Communication

Verbal communication involves the use of symbols that generally have universal meanings for all who are taking part in the process. It may be (1) Oral or (2) Written.

(1) Oral Communication

Oral communication is that channel of communication in which message is conveyed in spoken form. **The term 'oral' means 'anything pertaining to the mouth'.** There are **two components of oral communication.** In oral communication, the sender and the receiver exchange their ideas through speech either in face to face talk or through some mechanical or electrical device. Thus, there are **two levels of verbal communication.** The first and highest level of communication channel is speaking in person, face to face. This channel rates high because, besides immediately exchanging words, we can see all signs of body language.

The second level of verbal communication includes computer voice mail and telephoning. However, these are not always as completely effective as face to face speaking because of the absence of body language. But they do provide vocal hints and an opportunity of immediate feedback.

Advantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication has many advantages like quickness, economical, flexibility, etc. which are described as follows:

- (1) **Quickness in Exchange of Ideas:** Ideas can be conveyed even to distant places quickly because this medium does not require messages to be written.
- (2) **Quick Feedback:** A response during oral communication helps to understand the extent to which the receiver has understood the message through his feelings during the course of conversation.
- (3) **Flexibility:** Oral communication has an element of flexibility inherent in it. Flexibility means changing ideas according to the situation. It means changing of ideas according to the interest of the receiver.

(4) **Economic Source:** It is an economic source of communication because the message is communicated only orally.

(5) **Personal Touch:** Oral communication has a personal touch. Both the sides can understand each other's feeling, being face to face. The conversation takes place in a clean environment which increases mutual confidence and understanding.

(6) **Effective Source:** Oral communication leaves much impression on the receiver. It is said that sometimes a thing can be communicated more effectively with the help of some signs. The use of signs or gesticulation can only be made in an oral communication.

(7) **Removal of Misunderstanding:** In this method of communication clarification or doubt if any can be removed instantly.

(8) **Motivation:** An element of instant motivation or encouragement exists during oral conversation which can be used to an advantage.

(9) **Increase in Efficiency:** This form of communication consumes less time and energy.

Limitations or Disadvantages of Oral Communication

Whereas on the one hand oral communication has certain advantages, on the other hand, it has its limitations and suffers from the following disadvantages:

(1) **Unfit for Lengthy Message:** Oral communication is profitable in having a brief exchange of ideas only. It is not possible for the either party to convey or remember long messages.

(2) **Unfit for Policy Matters:** Where policies, rules or other important messages are to be communicated, oral communication is of little or no use.

(3) **Lack of Written Proof:** In case of oral communication, no written proof is available for future reference if required. Therefore, one may have to face difficult situations at times.

(4) **Expensive Method:** When less important information is sent to distant places through telephone, etc. oral communication proves costly.

(5) **Lack of Clarity:** Lack of clarity takes place when there is little time for conversation. Something may be altered in a hurry which can lead to negative results.

(6) **Misuse of Time:** Oral communication can be considered a misuse of time especially when during meetings, the conversation is lengthened unnecessarily. Parties involved waste their time in useless talks.

(7) **Presence of Both the Parties Necessary:** In oral communication it is essential for the sender and the receiver to be present face to face, while in written communication presence of only one party is required.

Utility of Oral Communication

Oral communication is useful in the following directions:

- (1) When the information has to be kept a secret.
- (2) When it is not possible to give a written form to the information.
- (3) When some message is to be given to a large group of people.
- (4) When the receiver is illiterate.

Forms of Oral Communication

There can be many forms of oral communication depending upon the requirement of situations as under:

- (i) Face-to-Face Conversation
- (ii) Lectures
- (iii) Meetings and Conferences
- (iv) Interviews
- (v) Telephonic Talk
- (vi) Grapevine
- (vii) Social and Cultural Affairs
- (viii) Seminars
- (ix) Radio
- (x) Television

There is a basic difference between verbal and non-verbal communication. In verbal communication, we generally plan our words. When we say, "Please open the door", we have a conscious purpose. We think about the message, if only for a moment. But when we communicate non-verbally, we do so unconsciously. We have no control over it and sometimes we fail to communicate what we intend to communicate.

(2) Written Communication

Written or printed communication is generally considered the second basic form of communicating. Written communication is that communication in which information is exchanged in the written or printed form. It is the most formal of all types of communication. With the advancement of technology, the scope of written communication has widened. It covers electronic means like e-mail and fax. The written form of business communication facilitates a business firm to keep a record of the communication. Correspondence within a company, contacts

between customers and clients, monthly statements, credit and collection matters, are just a few examples where records might be needed.

Advantages of Written Communication

The chief advantages of written communication are:

- (1) **Suitable for Lengthy Messages:** However, lengthy the message may be, it can be clearly communicated with the help of written communication.
- (2) **Written Proof:** Some documents with regard to some special facts have to be kept for future reference. This is possible only through written communication.
- (3) **Clear Message:** A message may be long or short, it can be made understandable in a written communication. Nothing is omitted.
- (4) **Less Expensive Method:** Messages which are to be sent to distant places and there is no urgency involved, can be sent at a little expense through this method. But if the message is to be sent to a distant place quickly, this method is not useful.
- (5) **Time Saving:** In case of written communication there is no open conversation with a group. Hence, time is not lost in useless talks.
- (6) **Presence of both the Parties not Necessary:** In this system it is not necessary that the receiver should be present before the sender.
- (7) **True and Effective:** Written communication is more true and hence effective. A sender sends the information after careful consideration because of the written proof it carries with it.
- (8) **Communication at Different Places:** When messages have to be sent to different places, written communication proves to be more useful.

Limitations of Written Communication

The limitations or defects of written communication are:

- (1) **Unfit for Uneducated Persons:** Written communication has no significance for the uneducated persons. They can only be made to understand orally.
- (2) **Lack of Secrecy:** Because of the written proof, nothing can remain secret.
- (3) **Wastage of Time:** If, resorted to send small messages or less important facts, then it becomes wastage of time, labour and money.
- (4) **Delayed Feedback:** Some difficulty is felt when the reactions of the receiver are not known immediately. It also becomes difficult to bring an immediate change in the message.

- (5) **Requirement of Materials and Equipments:** We need materials and equipments, say paper, pen, typewriter, computer etc. to send a written message. In the absence of these, it will not be possible to communicate.
- (6) **No Clue about Real Intentions and Emotions:** When we write or receive a written communication we do not get any idea about the real intentions or emotions behind the message. We just read what is written and draw conclusions from the words.
- (7) **Possible Misinterpretation of Words/Language:** We are aware that words have different meanings when used in various contexts. Possibility of misinterpretation exists if not understood in the right context or perspective, leading to confusion.
- (8) **No Immediate Clarification/Explanation Possible:** This perhaps is the biggest drawback of written communication. We need to await confirmation, acceptance or even rejection of the matter/ideas conveyed.

Tips for Effective Written Communication

- (a) Be short and simple. Apply the KISS formula—keep it short and simple.
- (b) Choose correct and positive words.
- (c) Follow the rules of grammar.
- (d) Follow "you" viewpoint—always give importance to others for them to act.
- (e) Ensure proper construction and paragraph sequencing.
- (f) Use active voice.
- (g) Let it be conversational type whenever possible; this is the type used now in computer era.
- (h) Avoid jargons. It simply means that we should not use those words with which the focus group is not aware or familiar with.
- (i) Ensure completeness. We must convey what we wish to convey in simple and positive language—without any ambiguity whatsoever.

Utility of Written Communication

Written communication can be useful in the following situations:

- (1) When the message is of permanent nature.
- (2) When the receivers happen to be at different and distant places.
- (3) When the message is long.
- (4) When the message contains figures and diagrams.
- (5) When it is almost impossible to make the message understandable orally.

Difference between Oral and Written Communication

The written and oral forms of communication have the same basic objective of exchanging information but they have some differences as well. According to **Murphy, Hildbrandt, and Thomas**, the main differences between oral and written communications are as follows:

S.No.	Oral	Written
1.	Immediate feedback.	Delayed feedback.
2.	Shorter sentences; shorter words.	Longer sentences; longer words.
3.	Conversational.	More formal.
4.	Focus on personal relations.	Focus on content.
5.	Prompt action.	Delayed action.
6.	Less detailed technical information.	More detailed technical information.
7.	More personal pronouns.	Fewer personal pronouns.
8.	Uplift for long messages.	Suitable for long messages.
9.	Lack of written evidence; not suitable in future context.	Useful for permanent record; detailed documentation.
10.	More use of imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences.	Less use of imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences.
11.	No possibilities of review.	Possibility of review.

6. What is Business Communication ?

Every business firm whether a sole proprietorship, partnership or company undertakes business with the objective to earn profits. Business is an economic activity undertaken to procure man, machine, material and money to produce goods and services with the objective to sell them to the customers to earn profits. During the course of this process, a businessman consults sellers, buyers, engineers or an accountant and other people; he collects information and also exchanges facts. **The specific communication undertaken by the business firm is known as business communication.** In fact, business communication is a special type of communication undertaken to meet the needs of the organisation.

Definition

In the words of **R. Ludlow**, "Business communication is a process of transfer of information and understanding between different parts and people of a business organisation. It consists of various modes and media involved in communication interchanges."

According to **Dr. Heinz Goldmann**, "Effective communication needs to be built around simple foundation and realization: communication is a dialogue not a

monologue. In fact communication is more concerned with a dual listening process.

In short, we can define communication as a process in which two or more elements of a system interact in order to achieve a desired outcome or goal.

6.1. Functions of Business Communication

In any business, two main functions of business communication are as under:

- (1) Internal Functions
- (2) External Functions

(1) Internal Functions

All the communication that occurs in conducting work within a business organisation is called internal function. It helps increase job satisfaction, safety, productivity and profits and decreases absenteeism, grievances and turnover. Main internal functions of business communication are as under:

- (i) **Information to Management:** Employees make available to the management relevant informations, facts, etc. It is one the basis of such information and facts that management takes those decisions which are helpful to its growth and progress.
 - (ii) **Information to Employees:** The management makes available to the employees relevant information. How a particular task is to be performed, what is required to accomplish it, how the employees will be rewarded on completion of the task, etc. are important information that can be obtained through business communication.
 - (iii) **Improvement in Morale:** By providing detailed information regarding all tasks and individual issues to employees business communication helps improve their morale. Morale of an employee improves only when he is made to feel an integral part of the business. Business communication performs this function very efficiently.
- In short, internal communication helps increase job-satisfaction, safety, productivity and profits and at the same time, it decreases absenteeism, grievances and inefficiency.

(2) External Functions

The work-related interaction that a business does with people and groups outside the business is called external function. Every business is dependent on outside people and groups for its success. And because the success of a business depends on its ability to satisfy customer's need, it must communicate effectively with its customers. In today's complex

business world, business depends on each other in the production and distribution of goods and services. This interdependence requires communication. Like internal communication, external communication is vital to business success. The following are important external functions of business communication:

- (i) **To make Relations with the Suppliers:** Business communication establishes relations with outside suppliers. It is through business communication that suppliers are informed about which raw material is required and when, in what quantity and of what quality the same is required.
- (ii) **Sale of Goods and Services:** A business approaches the prospective customer equipped with information regarding its product, its importance, quality, etc., all through business communication.
- (iii) **Report to Owner-Shareholder:** Shareholders are the owners of the business and so must be kept informed about each and every information of the business. This function is performed efficiently by business communication.
- (iv) **Report to Government:** Business communication is also used to render necessary reports to the government and to render various returns as per requirement of existing law.
- (v) **To Create Goodwill for the Business:** Every business survives and progresses on its goodwill. Business communication performs an important function to create and maintain goodwill for the business.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What is communication?

Ans. It is a process through in which two or more elements of a system interact in order to achieve a desired outcome or goal.

2. What are different types of communication?

Ans. (i) Intra-personal communication, (ii) Interpersonal communication, (iii) Group communication, (iv) Public communication, (v) Non-verbal communication (vi) Mass communication.

3. What is the difference between internal and external functions of business communication?

Ans. All the communication that occurs in conduction of work within a business is called internal function. The work-related communication that a business indulges in with people and groups outside the business is called external function.

4. **What is non-verbal communication?**

Ans. It is the communication without words. We use non-verbal communication to supplement and reinforce our words. Sometimes, non-verbal communication communicates by itself.

5. **What do you mean by verbal communication?**

Ans. It involves the use of symbols that generally have universal meanings for all who are taking part in the process.

6. **What is oral communication?**

Ans. Oral communication refers to messages that are transmitted aloud. Generally, they involve both verbal and non-verbal messages.

7. **What is written communication?**

Ans. In written communication, information is exchanged in the written or printed form. Although, this type of communication is primarily verbal, it also has a non-verbal dimension.

8. **How does feedback affect the communication process?**

Ans. Feedback tells the source how the receiver has interpreted each message. The effective communicator is always sensitive to feedback and constantly modifies his or her message as a result of the feedback received.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. Briefly explain types of communication.

(H.P.U. 2007)

2. Explain oral and written communication.

3. Define business communication. Explain the chief functions of business communication.

(M.D.U. 2007, H.P.U. 2008)

4. What do you mean by communication? Explain basic forms of communication process.

(M.D.U. 2004, K.U. 2007)

5. Explain the communication process. Discuss the various components of communication process.

6. Discuss the phases of communication process. In which phases of the communication process do messages get encoded and decoded?

(K.U. 2004)

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. Distinguish between communication and business communication. Discuss various type of communication.

2. Distinguish between non-verbal and verbal forms of communication. Give advantages and disadvantages of oral and written forms of communication.

3. What is verbal communication? What are its various types? Explain.

(H.P.U. 2009)

4. Explain the functions of business communication.

5. Give five reasons for choosing the oral mode of communication instead of the written form.

2

Role of Communication Skills in Business

■ 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that communication is so fundamental that without it no organisation can exist and function effectively towards achieving its objectives. Communication is the principal means by which members of an organisation work together. It helps to bind them together, enabling them to react to and influence each other. It flows in different directions within the organisation: downward, upward, horizontally and diagonally. No manager can be effective in his job unless he is able to communicate. It is therefore apt to call communication the "life blood" of an organisation. As Sir John Harvey-Jones says, "Communication is the single most essential skill". Professional and result-oriented organisations are always looking for managers who can communicate persuasively and competently. It has been pointed out that about nine-tenths of a manager's time is spent in communicating, one way or the other. It lies at the very heart of management. Powerful concepts in management such as participation, empowerment and involvement revolve around communication. Given below are some of the factors responsible for the growing importance of communication:

(1) **Growth in the Size and Multiple Locations of Organisations:** Most of the organisations are growing larger and larger in size. The people working in these organisations may be spread over different states of a country or over different countries. Keeping in touch, sending directions across and getting feedback is possible only when communication lines are kept working effectively.

(2) **Growth of Trade Unions:** Over the last so many decades trade unions have been growing strong. No management can be successful without taking the trade unions into confidence. Only through effective communication can a meaningful relationship be built between the management and the workers.

(3) **Growing Importance of Human Relations:** Workers in an organisation are not like machines. They have their own hopes and aspirations. Management has to recognise them above all as sensitive human beings and work towards a spirit of integration with them which effective communication helps to achieve.

(4) **Public Relations:** Every organisation has a social responsibility, towards customers, government, suppliers and the public at large. **Communication with them is the only way an organisation can project a positive image of itself.**

(5) **Advances in Behavioural Sciences:** Modern management is deeply influenced by exciting discoveries made in behavioural sciences like psychology, sociology, transactional analysis, etc. All of them throw light on subtle aspects of human nature and help in developing a positive attitude towards life and building up meaningful relationships. And this is possible only through communication.

(6) **Technological Advancement:** The world is changing very fast, owing to scientific and technological advancements. These advancements deeply affect not only methods of work but also the composition of groups. In such a situation proper communication between superiors and subordinates becomes very necessary.

■ 2. Communication: An Art, a Science or a Practical Skill?

Therefore, communication is fundamental to all working relationships; inept or inadequate communication causes more controversy in business and industry than any other single factor.

Communication deteriorates as organisations get bigger. The public sector (government, public utilities, education) and the multinational groups (Ford, Sony) employ millions of people. Lines of communication are stretched; organisation structures become cumbersome; communication is remote, impersonal and anonymous. Technology, where computer speaks to computer, intensifies the trend.

Yet more than ever before people expect to be treated as individuals: to be consulted and informed; to express their views and have them respected.

This conflict between organisational complexity and individual needs can only be resolved by improving communication. Effective communication demands efficient management organisation, understanding of the effects of technological change, comprehensive interpersonal skills and mastery of communication techniques.

It is neither an art nor a science, but a basic practical skill which can be learnt and applied.

■ 3. Why Business Needs to Communicate?

To understand how important communication is to business, note how much communication business requires. For example, a pharmaceutical manufacturer. Throughout the company employees send and receive information. They process information through computers, write messages, fill out forms, give and receive orders, and talk over the telephone. More specifically, sales people receive instructions and information from the home office and send back orders and summaries of their activities. Executives use letters and telephone calls to initiate business with customers and other companies and respond to incoming letters and calls. Production supervisors receive work orders, issue instructions, and submit production summaries. Research specialists receive problems to investigate and later communicate their findings to the management. Similar activities occur in every niche of the company. Everywhere employees receive and send information as they conduct their work.

Oral communication is a major part of this information flow. So, too, are various types of forms and records, as well as the storage and retrieval facilities provided by computers. Yet another major part consists of various forms of written communication—letters, email messages, memorandums, and reports. All of this communicating goes on in business because communication is essential to the organized effort involved in business. Communication enables employees to work together. In a business, it is the vehicle through which management performs its basic functions. Managers direct through communication, coordinate through communication, and plan various activities. Communication is the life blood of any business activity and is an integral part of daily life.

■ 4. Benefit to Business

Many industrialists strongly believe in the importance of business communication training for this. Many private institutions have also come up with communication courses. A student who has already studied college level courses in business communication will have a potential employment advantage over those who have not, and eventually should have a better chance of promotion.

Whenever representatives of multinational companies or industry meet with college educators to determine what courses are most needed by students entering the job market, these representatives overwhelmingly put "need for communication skills" at the top or near the top of their lists of priorities.

A century ago, communication in business was simple because much work was done by hand, and customers were usually personal acquaintances of the craftsman or business person who was selling a product or performing a service. But gradually society and business became more complex, face to face contact between customers and suppliers became more different and time consuming. So, writing business letters, reports and memorandums was a natural development. And communicating by telephone eventually became routine in business.

Today's world has developed rapidly from an Industrial Age to an Information age. In and out of business and industry, computers and other forms of electronic technology obviously help to lead this enriching but jarring-revolution. This revolution has dramatically changed the landscape of business communication today. With the rapid spread of personal computers, software, network system among machines, cellular phones, desktop publishing and more, the choices of communication media have grown explosively.

5. Main Forms of Communication in Business

The importance of communication in business becomes even more apparent when we consider the communication activities of an organization from an overall point of view. These activities fall into two broad categories internal, external and personal.

(1) Internal Communication

All the communication that occurs in conducting work within a business is classified as internal communication. This is the communication amongst the employees to carry out their duties. Internal communication takes many forms. It includes the orders and instructions that supervisors give to their juniors, as well as oral exchanges amongst them about work matters. It includes reports and records employees prepare concerning sales, production, inventories, finance, maintenance, and so on. It includes the memorandums, email messages, and reports that employees write in carrying out their assignments. It can be formal or informal which depends upon variety of issues. Grapevine is a form of informal communication. It is estimated that managers receive over half the

information through grapevine. Its messages may frequently be distorted but at times they are credible and cannot be ignored.

Much of this internal communication is performed orally or in writing as per convenience. Availability of computers makes the task easier. Since the communication can be sent across the globe.

(2) External Communication

The work-related communication that a business does with people outside the business is termed as external communication. This is the business's communication with suppliers, service providers, customers, report to stakeholders, report to government, to create goodwill and present a favourable image of the organisation. This takes the form of brochures, telephone conversation, follow up service calls, advertisements in papers, magazines and the media.

The importance of external-operational communication to a business hardly requires supporting comment. Every business is dependent on outside people and groups for its success. And because the success of a business depends on its ability to satisfy customers' needs, it must communicate effectively with its customers. In today's complex business society, businesses depend on each other in the production and distribution of goods and services. This interdependence requires communication. Like internal communication, external communication is vital to business success.

(3) Personal Communication

Not all the communication that occurs in business is operational. In fact, much of it is without purpose as far as the business is concerned. Such communication is called personal.

Personal communication is the exchange of information and feelings in which we human beings engage whenever we come together. We are social animals. We have a need to communicate, and we will communicate even when we have little or nothing to say.

We spend much of our time with friends in communication. Even total strangers are likely to communicate when they are placed together, as on an airplane flight, in a waiting room, or at a ball game. Such personal communication also occurs at the workplace, and it is a part of the communication activity of any business. Although not a part of the business's plan of operation, personal communication can have a significant effect on the success of that plan. This effect is a result of the influence that personal communication can have on the attitudes of the workers.

The workers' attitudes toward the business, and their assignments directly affect their willingness to work. And the nature of conversation in a work situation affects attitudes. In a work situation where heated words and flaming tempers are often present, the workers are not likely to make their usual productive efforts. However, a rollicking, jovial work situation is likely to have an equally bad effect on productivity. Somewhere between these extremes lies the ideal productive attitude.

Also affecting the workers' attitudes is the extent of personal communication permitted. Absolute denial of personal communication could lead to emotional upset, for most of us hold dear our right to communicate. On the other hand, excessive personal communication could interfere with the work done. Again, the middle ground is probably the best.

6. Variation in Communication Activity by Business

Just how much communicating employees in an organisation should resort to depends on several factors—the nature of the business being one. For example, insurance companies have a great need to communicate with their customers, especially through letters and mailing pieces, whereas housecleaning service companies have little such need. The business's operating plan affects the amount of internal communication. Relatively simple business, such as repair services, require far less communication than complex businesses, such as automobile manufacturers. Also, the people who make up a business affect its volume of communication. Every human being is unique. Each has unique communication needs and abilities. Thus, varying combinations of people will produce varying needs for communication.

7. Communication Skills

Communication is a major part of the work of business. It is so important in business that every business wants and needs people with good communication skills.

In a broader sense communication is the transfer of ideas, messages or information from one person to another. It is effective when it gets the desired action or response. **Basic communication skills** are essential for continued success, whether personal or professional.

Communication skill is the set of skills that enables a person to convey information so that it is received and understood as intended. The success or failure of communication depends upon the tools one is equipped with to communicate effectively on personal front and at work.

Regardless of the size of business one is in—whether a large corporation, a small company or even a home based business—effective communication skills are essential for success. It is all about conveying a message clearly and unambiguously. It is also about receiving information that others convey with no distortion at all. This calls for effort from both *i.e.*, the sender and the receiver. The process is also fraught with errors, with messages muddled by the sender or misunderstood or misinterpreted by the recipient. If not taken care of, this may cause confusion, wasted effort and even a missed opportunity.

In order to maintain healthy communication, the two must go through this process:

From the sender's perspective one needs to have the following skills:

Skills to compose the message
Skills to send the message

From the receiver's perspective one needs to have the following skills:

- without assumptions,
- placing biases aside,
- active listening.

Thus, the elements of effective communication are:

Listening
Verbal skills
Non-verbal skills

Therefore, it is essential for both the sender and the receiver to understand fully the contents of the message for it to be effective. It is for this reason that employers today seek and stress upon their employees to cultivate and hone their communication skills.

7.1 Importance of Communication Skills in Business

Unfortunately, in organisations, need for employees with good communication skills is all too often not fulfilled. Results of extensive studies done in this area are not encouraging. It is observed that graduates and even post-graduates are weak in both oral and especially, written communication. The communication shortcoming of employees and the importance of communication in business explains why you should work to improve your communication skills. Whatever position you have in business, your performance will be judged largely by your ability to communicate effectively.

Improving your communication skills improves your chances for success not only in your official capacity but life in general.

7.2 Effective Communication Skills

Most people consider themselves to be good and effective communicators simply because they feel they can speak fluently. While speaking fluently is an important aspect of communicating, yet it is not the only requirement. One should be able to listen effectively, speak fluently and clearly, write well and read in the language (s) they are familiar with. Apart from these basic aspects of communication, one needs to keep in mind the non-verbal aspects too, in order to be considered adept in communication skills. The fact is that one needs to constantly work towards developing effective communication skills and also need to overcome the barriers to effective communication. And this can be done only when they are aware of the barriers and shortcomings.

The way one communicates does not only have an impact on their own profession and personal relations, but also an effect on others. Those who do not have appropriate communication skills are usually ignored. Whereas those with good communication skills are looked upto and well respected. After all, a good listener and a good orator are popular in their groups—professional and personal.

Tips for Effective Communication

Below are tips to effective communication. But just reading these will not improve your communication skills. You must practice them regularly so that these become your second nature.

- **Pay Attention:** When someone starts to talk to you, stop what you are doing and thinking. Face the person and devote your whole attention to what is being said and how he/she is saying it.
- **Listen, not just Hear:** One of the keys to good communication is the willingness to listen for meaning in what the other person says and not just for the words. Watch facial expressions and body language.
- **Don't let your Mind Wander:** While the person is talking, do not think about your answer or response. Listen until the person has finished, then decide what you need to say.
- **Check for Accuracy:** When the person has finished talking, paraphrase back to the person what he/she said to you. If you heard or understood right, then respond to that statement or question.
- **Be Aware of Other's Needs:** You need to be aware of the needs of the others. Each person has different needs that should be considered and respected. Although each of us has differing needs,

all of us have a need for trust, responsibility, praise, security, sense of belonging, and recognition.

- **Ask, Don't Tell-Demonstrate Equality:** Do this by asking for advice or asking a person to do something. This tells the other person that he/she is respected as a peer or equal. Telling often implies a superior/subordinate relationship, such as boss vs. employee.
- **Keep an Open Mind:** Do not criticize, pass judgment, or preach. It is extremely important to learn to make objective evaluations about ideas, people, and situations. You are making a value judgement when you attach your values, beliefs, or needs to an appraisal.
- **Offer Advice, Don't Give Advice:** Learn to offer insights, advice, and expertise without being forceful. It is wrong to say "this is how you should handle it" or "this is what you should do." It is better to say "what do you think about this way," or "I suggest we ...". However, sometimes it is not appropriate to even soft-pedal advice. You should offer it only when asked for.
- **Develop Trust:** Trust is the product of open and honest communication. So it is important that good communication channels exist. Also, trust is an essential ingredient of teamwork. If trust exists among business associates, teamwork and cooperation are much easier to achieve.
- **Create Feelings of Equality:** People share a sense of equality if all parties are informed, trust exists, and work is based on cooperation. For business ventures to succeed, all the parties must feel that they are equals. If one party feels left out or feels like a subordinate, success becomes less likely.
- **Develop Comfortable Relations:** Tensions and stresses are normal in any relationship. However, the level of tension and stress can be reduced in families that develop teamwork and trust through open and honest communication.
- **Become Genuinely Interested in Others:** All of us have a need to feel important and be understood. One of the ways we feel important is if others are interested in us. So talk in terms of the other persons' interests and try to understand his/her point of view. If we expect others to understand us, we must first understand them.
- **Motivate Others:** There are several ways to motivate people. Both negative and positive reinforcement are effective. But in the long run, negative reinforcement like criticism or punishment often creates a desire for revenge. Too often we think of positive reinforcement as receiving more income, but other positive

reinforcements that require little effort are praise, trust, interest and recognition.

- **Keep a Sense of Humour:** Laugh at the funny things that happen and recognize them. Laugh off little annoyances. Smile at every opportunity. Seeing the humour in a situation can often defuse tension and stress.

Conclusion

In short, management across the various industries have realized that improving communication skills amongst their staff not only helps them in communicating and negotiating better with clients, but also helps in maintaining better interpersonal relations at the workplace, which in turn brings about a harmonious and productive working environment. In spite of the increasing importance placed on communication skills many individuals continue to struggle, unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively—whether in verbal or written format. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to compete effectively in the workplace, and stands in the way of career progression.

Being able to communicate effectively is therefore essential if you want to build a successful career. To do this, you must understand what your message is, which audience you are sending it to, and how it will be perceived.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What is business communication?

Ans. The specific communication undertaken by the business firm is known as business communication.

2. What are the different forms of communication in business?

Ans. (i) Internal communication
(ii) External communication
(iii) Personal communication.

3. What are communication skills?

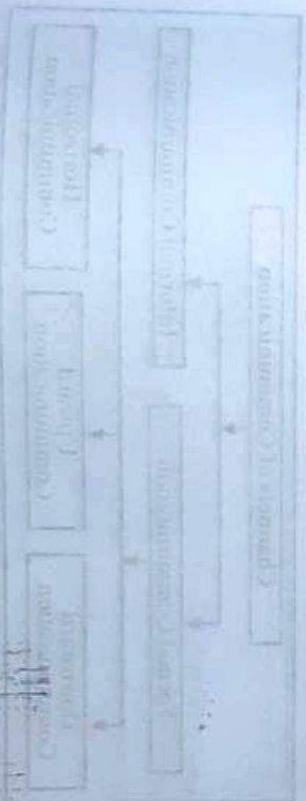
Ans. Communication skills is the set of skills that enables a person to convey information so that 'it' is received and understood as intended.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is business communication? Why does business need to communicate?
2. Briefly explain the forms of communication.
3. What do you mean by communication skills? Why are they necessary in business organisations?
4. Briefly discuss whether communication is an art, a science or a practical skill.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What are the factors that are responsible for the growing importance of communication?
2. Why does business need to communicate? How is communication beneficial to business?
3. What is business communication? Explain different forms of communication.
4. What is effective communication skill? How can you improve your communication skills?



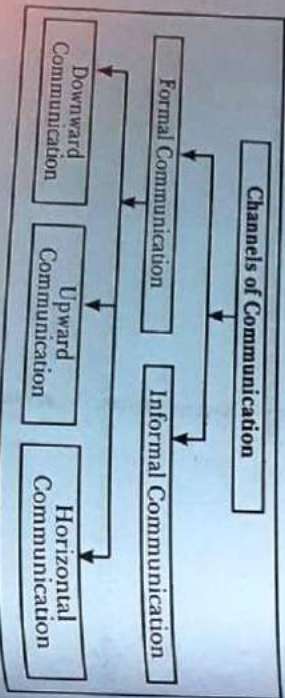
Communication Networks

1. Introduction

A corporate organisation is a little society. Communication is the bond holding that society together, enabling it to function. Through the process of communication, the members of the corporate organisation exchange messages using a common system of symbols, that result at least to some degree, in sharing the meaning of the message among themselves. Thus, communication has two important functions in a corporate organisation: (i) It enables people to exchange necessary information, and (ii) It helps to set members of the organisation apart from non-members.

Most organisations depend heavily on communication to accomplish their objectives. The approach to communication varies from one organisation to another depending upon their different requirements and characteristics. In a small business with only five or six employees, much information can be exchanged casually and directly. However in a giant organisation with hundreds or thousands of employees scattered around the world, transmitting the right information to right people at the right time is a real challenge. It requires a formal channel of communication.

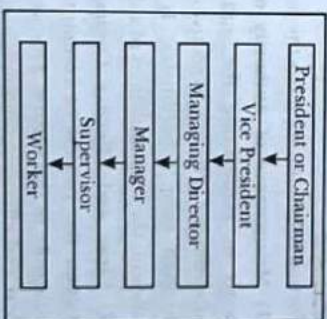
- Thus, there are two types of channel of communication:
- (1) **Formal channel of communication:** Formal channel of communication can be upward, downward or horizontal in direction.
 - (2) **Informal channel of communication.**



2. Formal Communication

Formal communication is that communication which flows along a prescribed network. The members of an organisation desirous of communicating with one another follow the formal communication network. In formal communication network, organisational hierarchical system is followed wherein every employee has a pre-defined position and status. For instance, a shop floor worker cannot speak directly to the managing director. He will speak to his supervisor, who in turn will talk to the manager (production) and the manager (production) will communicate to managing director. The level in hierarchical system increases or decreases depending on the nature and size of the organisation. A large organisation will have more number of hierarchical levels while a small organisation will have less number of hierarchical levels.

In every organisation there is a formal communication channel based on clearly defined rights, duties and responsibilities. Different levels and stages through which communication passes in an organisation is called communication channel. This channel is formed by the rules of the company. Knowledge of the nature and flow of formal communication can be had from the structural pattern of business organisation. This golden formula of communication can be expressed by the clause "Through Proper Channel".



Definition

- (1) In the words of **Thill and Bovee**, "Formal communication is that flow of information which follows an official chain of command."
- (2) "Formal communication is a way of communication which passes through a formal and definite network."

Characteristics

- (1) **Written and Oral:** Formal communication network may be both written and oral. Top level management normally communicates in the written form like memos, reports, notices, etc. While lower level of management adopts oral form of communication.
- (2) **Formal Relations:** In formal communication, there exists an official relationship among the sender and the receiver.
- (3) **Prescribed Path:** The total communication follows a prescribed path and any type of deviation from this path is not allowed. For example, if a shop floor worker wants to communicate something to the general manager (production), the path for the same may be as follows:
Worker → Supervisor → Manager → General Manager.
- (4) **Organisational Message:** This network is concerned with the authorised organisational message only personal messages are out of its jurisdiction.
- (5) **Vertical Communication:** Formal communication is mainly vertical. Vertical communication refers to that communication wherein flow is from superior officer to the subordinates and vice versa.
- (6) **Definite and Direct:** Formal message is definite and direct. It flows through the specific channels as per the rules of the corporation.

Advantages

Formal communication has the following advantages:

- (1) **Maintenance of Authority of Executives:** Formal communication helps in maintaining the authority of line executives over their subordinates. The line executives are responsible for getting work done through their subordinates. If a formal communication system is efficient, the responsibilities of subordinates can be fixed easily.
- (2) **Clear and Effective Communication:** In formal communication system, the process of communication is well defined. There is no ambiguity in this regard. This well defined system helps in carrying out clear and effective communication within the organisation. This helps in reducing the possibility of distortion of communication to the minimal.
- (3) **Orderly Flow of Information:** Under formal communication system, there is an orderly flow of information according to the rules of the companies.
- (4) **Wider Scope:** Formal communication is wide in scope. Branches and centres established in different departments can be easily contacted through it.

- (5) **Filtering of Communication:** Another advantage of formal communication is constant filtering of the messages. Objectionable matter, if any, is deleted by different authorities. Thus, communication becomes clear and understandable.

Limitations

- (1) **Increased Workload:** It increases the workload of the line executives because all communications are transmitted through them. Thus, it consumes much of the time of the superiors and they are left with little time to perform other organisational functions well.
- (2) **Possibility of Leakage and Distortion of Communication:** There is a long line of superiors in formal communication network and this increases the possibility of leakage and distortion of communication.
- (3) **Dilution of Accuracy of Message:** In formal communication there is a chance that accuracy of information may be diluted. It is because of the chances of filtering of the information at a large hierarchical level of communication network.
- (4) **Overlooking by the Officers:** There are more chances of red-tapism and delay tactics in this method because executives generally overlook the interest of the subordinates. Any information upward or downward favouring subordinates is more often suppressed or delayed by the superiors.

■ 2.1 Downward Communication

Downward communication is a network of communication where flow of information is from top to bottom. For instance, when a manager transmits information to a subordinate, communication is flowing downward. The message might take the form of a casual conversation or a formal interview between a supervisor and an individual employee, or it might be discussed with a group through a meeting, workshop, or video tape. On other occasions, the message might be a written memo, a training manual, newsletter or bulletin board.

Merits

- (1) **Explanation of Policies and Procedures to the Subordinates:** Downward communication helps in explaining policies and procedures to the members of the organisation. The superiors perform this job with letters, circulars, house journals, manuals, memorandums, etc.
- (2) **Control:** Downward communication helps in controlling the activities of subordinates. Subordinates are informed by their superiors at regular intervals about the former's performance. If there is any shortcoming in

their performance, subordinates can be asked to improve their performance.

(3) **Planning:** Downward communication helps subordinates understand about their duties. Accordingly, they can plan their activities. Downward communication also puts a check on the unreasonable demands of the superiors.

Limitations

(1) **Loss of Information:** The information in downward communication passes through various levels. It is interpreted and reinterpreted at each level. In the process, the message does not reach the bottom level in a proper way and there is loss of information.

(2) **Delay:** The lines of communication are very long in downward communication. Thus, transmitting messages to the workers at the bottom of the hierarchical level is a time-consuming process.

(3) **Lack of Participation:** Downward communication means lack of participation. It does not allow subordinates to contribute to the communication. They are required to follow what they have been told by their superiors.

(4) **Distortion:** Under downward communication, there are many channels of communication. At every level, it is considered. Consequently, it is distorted and by the time it reaches the receiver, it undergoes considerable change.

(5) **Lack of Feedback:** It lacks feedback. Senior officers never come to know of the reaction of the subordinate employees.

2.2 Upward Communication

Upward communication is a network of communication where flow of information is from bottom to top. In this communication network, information is sought by top management from lower levels of management.

From the organisation's standpoint, upward communication is just as vital as downward communication. To solve problems and make rational decisions, management must learn what is going on in the organisation. Because they cannot be everywhere at once, executives depend on lower-level employees to furnish them with accurate and timely reports.

Merits

(1) **Feedback:** Upward communication provides the top management with necessary feedback. The top management is able to understand whether the directives issued by it to the lower-level workers have been

clearly understood and followed. It also gets a feedback on what the employees think of the policies and procedures formed and issued by the top management.

(2) **Constructive Suggestion:** The lower-level employees know the working conditions of the organisation more closely. In this regard, they can give very constructive suggestions to the top management on how to improve production process, how to avoid material wastage, etc.

(3) **Greater Harmony and Cohesion:** Upward communication develops confidence among subordinates that they can convey their feelings, grievances, complaints, suggestions, opinions, etc. to the top management. This makes the organisational atmosphere more congenial and creates greater harmony and cohesion between the management and the employees.

(4) **Release of Tension:** Under upward communication, subordinate employees succeed in forwarding their grievances to superior officers. When the managers listen to their grievances sympathetically and seek solutions of the same, then the employees are relieved of their tension and feel satisfied. As a consequence, they work hard and efficiently.

(5) **Change:** When employees communicate freely with their superior officers, they do not oppose new ideas. They adopt positive attitude. They not only accept new plans but also endeavour to make them successful.

Limitations

(1) **Possibility of Distorted Message:** In the upward communication the information is sought by top management from lower-level management. The lower-level management, for its own benefit, may furnish wrong or distorted message to top management.

(2) **Proper Channel of Communication is not followed:** In upward communication, managers seek information from lower-level employees. In the process, managers may leave one or two hierarchical levels thus not following the proper channel of communication system.

(3) **Lack of Free Expression:** Often subordinate employees hesitate to converse freely with their superior officers.

2.3 Horizontal Communication

In addition to transmitting messages up and down the organisation, the formal communication network also carries messages horizontally from one department to another. For example, the marketing director might write a memo to the production director, outlining sales forecasts for the coming period.

The amount of horizontal communication that occurs through formal channels depends on the degree of interdependence among departments. If the business requires coordinated action by its organizational units, horizontal communication may be frequent and intense. But if each department operates independently, official horizontal communication is minimal.

Merits

- (1) **Co-ordination:** Horizontal communication helps in coordinating business activities in an organisation. Two managers at the same level may communicate with each other to ensure the success of business activities.
- (2) **Faster Communication:** Due to the absence of superior-subordinate relationship, communication flows faster in horizontal communication network. The existence of equal level of hierarchy makes the whole communication process smoother and faster.

Limitations

- (1) **Difference in Approach:** In horizontal communication, every member involved may have different approaches. They advocate things on the basis of their own thinking. This affects the productivity and efficiency of the organisation adversely.
- (2) **Lack of Motivation:** Due to the absence of superior-subordinate relationship, there is no authoritative figure to control and operate the communication system. This causes lack of motivation among employees and they communicate only when they wish to.
- (3) **Presence of Physical Barriers:** In horizontal communication, physical barriers like noise are always present. Communication being at the same level, these barriers are very difficult to remove and thus distortion of the message is possible.

3. Informal Communication

Parallel to the formal network lies the informal network, a secondary network consisting primarily of personal communication. It comprises thousands upon thousands of personal communications that occur in a business organisation. Such communications follow no set pattern; they form an ever-changing and infinitely complex structure linking all the members of the organisation. As people go about their work they have casual conversation with their friends in the office. They joke and laugh around and discuss many things: their households, their families, common problems, sports, movies, other people in the organisation, etc. Although many of these conversations deal with personal matters, business is often discussed as well. In fact, most of the information that

travels along the informal communication network is not a planned or deliberately created channel of communication. It is free from all formalities. No formal organisational chart is followed to convey messages. It is completely based on the informal relations of the sender and the receiver of the communication. It does not have a beginning or end so it is also called as *grapevine*. *Grapevine, too, does not have a beginning or an end.*

Definition

- (1) In the words of Thill and Bovee, "The informal communication network carries information along the organisation's unofficial lines of activity and power."
- (2) "Informal communication network is a network which works outside the official and formal lines of communication. It is spontaneous and unplanned. No set of rules and regulations are followed in this communication network."

Advantages

- (1) **Speedy Communication:** Communication travels at a faster speed because there is no formal line of communication. People interact in formal groups which makes it possible to spread the message very fast.
- (2) **Multi-Dimensional:** It is multi-dimensional. As the communication takes place in an informal group comprising individuals of varied nature, the topic of communication varies a lot. The communication may go to any extent. All limits with regard to direction and degree of communication are self-imposed.
- (3) **Dynamic:** This system of communication is dynamic and reacts quickly because information channels have their say in the group and developed within the organisation.
- (4) **Supplementary to Formal Channels:** At times, informal channel supplements the formal channel. Certain matters which cannot be communicated through formal channels, are effectively communicated through informal channels. There are various instances where top management has used informal channels of communication to clarify its point of view to the employees which otherwise were creating confusion or were not appealing to the employees.

Limitations

- (1) **Distorted Communication:** This system of communication often carries half-truths, rumours and distorted facts at a very fast pace. This is due to the reason that there is no system of checking the genuineness of the message.
- (2) **Erratic Message:** Informal communication normally carries the erratic messages and thus no action can be taken on the basis of these

messages. Even if the action is taken it may lead the organisation to a difficult situation because responsibility for erratic message cannot be fixed.

Informal communication is a part and parcel of the organisational process. The management cannot check its existence in the organisation. The management can only minimise its adverse effects by controlling the distorted and erratic messages spread by it.

4. Grapevine

Grapevines exist whenever people gather, and one of the ripest seems to be the office grapevine, office gossip. The term "grapevine" originated during the American Civil War after the abundant grapes growing wild in the southeastern part of the country. At first it meant a false report circulated as a hoax. It was then called the "grapevine telegraph".

Every organization has one informal communication network the "grapevine"—that supplements official channels. As people go about their work, they have casual conversations with their friends in the office. They joke, discuss many things; their families, movies, sports, politics, other people in the company.

About 60% of the information that travels along the grapevine pertains to business. Many employees rely on the grapevine as their main source of information about the organization. Therefore, Grapevine means an informal system of communication which has no beginning or end. It is a means of passing an information unofficially.

Definition

In the words of **Keith Davis**, "Grapevine is basically a channel of horizontal communication, for it is only people working at the same level of hierarchy who can informally communicate with one another with perfect ease."

4.1 How does the Grapevine Operate?

Professor **Keith Davis**, who has done good amount of research on Grapevine gave a brief account of how the grapevine operates. The message starts with A. He may tell it to B, who in turn will tell to C, C to D and the message will spread. A may also discuss it with B, C, D simultaneously. Whatever the manner of spreading of message is, communication is completely informal and does not adhere to any rules or regulations.

4.2 Types of Grapevine Chains

Keith Davis identified four types of grapevine chains. These are explained as:

(1) **Single Strand Chain:** It is a serial type of chain. The communication flows in a straight line i.e., A tells to B, B to C, C to D and it goes down the line. This chain is not very much accurate in passing on the information. Fig. 1 shows a single strand chain.

(2) **Gossip Chain:** In Gossip Chain, 'A' tells to 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F', etc. on a non-selective basis i.e., one tells all. The message spreads from one source but determining that source is not an easy exercise.

(3) **Probability Chain:** In this type of chain, one individual passes on the information randomly. He does so with no particular interest in one or the other individual. 'A' may tell to 'B' and 'C', as well as to 'D' as shown in Fig. 3. This chain is based on Probability Theory wherein an interesting information is suddenly passed on. Some people at random get the information whereas the others do not.

(4) **Cluster Chain:** In this type of grapevine, information is passed on to selected individuals, i.e., to those individuals only that one has confidence in. These individuals again pass on the information to those whom they have confidence in and the information flows.

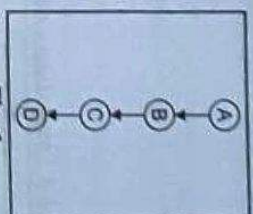


Fig. 1

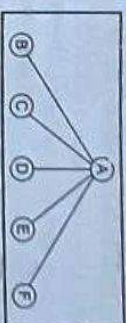


Fig. 2

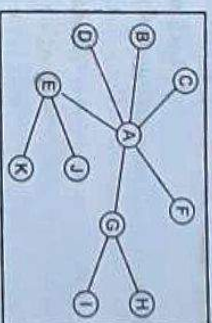


Fig. 3.

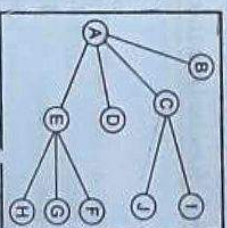


Fig. 4

4.3 Importance of the Grapevine

(1) **A Safety Valve:** Apprehensions experienced by worker on matters like promotions and retrenchments are frequently discussed by the workers. Talking about them may not eliminate their fears, but it certainly provides them with some relief. Thus, grapevine acts as a safety valve for supporting the emotions of the subordinates.

(2) **Organisational Solidarity and Cohesion:** The existence of the grapevine proves that the workers are interested in their associates. The very fact that they communicate with each other helps to promote organi-

rational solidarity and cohesion. The morale of employees can also be raised if the grapevine is used appropriately.

(3) **Quick Transmission:** The information flows in a grapevine with remarkable speed. Organisations normally use a grapevine if they have to spread a message instantly.

(4) **Supplement to other Channels:** Grapevine channel serves as a supplement to formal communication. Formal communication takes long time to pass through different levels. The same communication through grapevine spreads rapidly in the organisation.

4.4 Limitations of Grapevine Communication

(1) **Incomplete Communication:** Grapevine communication is based on hearsay. It is therefore an incomplete communication. It may be described differently by different persons.

(2) **Distorted News:** Oral communication is the source of incomplete communication. It travels through innumerable persons. Every person may add to it something of his own or cut it short. As a result the news get distorted.

(3) **Lack of Responsibility:** Nobody is prepared to own responsibility of rumours. Most of the people deny their oral communication. Consequently, grapevine communication has no reliability.

(4) **Damaging:** Incomplete communication can sometimes prove damaging to the organisation. Incorrect and confusing communication may create difficulties for the employees and the managers. As a result, many baseless things may be said about the organisation.

4.5 How to Use the Grapevine Effectively?

Grapevine is a channel of communication which is far reaching and has a very wide scope. It is also a channel which is capable of producing damaging effects to the organisation. Due to this damaging effect of the grapevine, some managers are highly suspicious of it and want to stop it completely. They do this despite the fact that grapevine can never be stopped. One manager cannot stop its employees to discuss something out of their workplace. Instead, every manager should try to use grapevine in the organisation's interest. The grapevine can be effectively used for the benefit of the organisation in the following ways:

(1) The manager should try to spot the leader. A leader in the grapevine is one who has a good control over grapevine communication channel. He need not be a union leader or a very senior labourer. Spotting the leader has two advantages: (a) harmful

5. Significance of Corporate Communication

The significance of corporate communication becomes clear from the following points:

(1) **Setting goals and objectives:** Most organisations have a variety of formal and informal objectives to accomplish. These goals are established by thinking and talking about them and then committing them to paper. The objective might be defined in terms of financial results, product quality, market dominance, employee satisfaction or service to customers. But regardless of the goal, the fact that someone has thought about it and communicated it, enables every employee to work towards a common purpose.

(2) **Making and implementing decisions:** To achieve their goals, people in business must make and implement many decisions. They must collect facts and evaluate alternatives and they do so by reading, asking questions, talking things over with one another and just plain thinking. Often their deliberations depend on reports that are prepared by others. Then, once a decision has been made, it has to be implemented and this requires more communication. Business people have to explain what needs to be done and in order to implement their decision they need help and support of the other people.

(3) **Measuring results:** As the decisions are translated into action, management needs to determine whether the desired outcome is being reached. Statistics on such factors as costs, sales, market share, productivity, employee turnover and inventory levels are compiled. In larger companies, the data may be put together using a computerized

management information system that prepares reports automatically. In smaller companies, management may obtain the required information through face-to-face contact with lower-level employees or in the form of hand-prepared memos or reports.

(4) Hiring and developing staff: If a company, wants to hire someone, it must first advertise the opening, screen resumes, interview applicants, and eventually make a job offer. Then the new person must be introduced to the organization, instructed about the responsibilities of the position and motivated to perform. As time goes on, the new employee must be given feedback on her or his performance, which involves more communication.

(5) Dealing with customers : All of an organization's interactions with customers involve communication in one form or another. Even the price tags on products are a form of communication. Sales letters and brochures, advertisements, personal sales-calls, telephone solicitations, and formal proposals are all used to stimulate the customer's interest. Communication also plays a part in such customer-related functions as credit checking, billing and handling complaints and questions.

(6) Negotiating with suppliers and financiers: To obtain necessary supplies and services, companies develop written specifications that outline their requirements. They place orders for materials and bargain to get the best price. To arrange financing, they negotiate with lenders and fill out loan applications, or they sell stock to the public, which involves communication.

(7) Producing the product: Getting an idea for a new product out of someone's head, pushing it through the production process and finally getting the product out of the door also requires communication. Designers draw plans, marketing people conduct studies, and product managers develop sale campaigns. When the time comes for full-scale production, the company prepares a manufacturing plan. Supervisors get instructions and pass them on to production workers. As production gets underway, workers report any problems that may arise. Records are kept regarding raw materials, inventory levels, and product quality. Finally, arrangements are made by phone or in writing for shipping the product. All these activities require communication.

(8) Interacting with regulatory agencies: Communication also occurs between businesses and government. With input from companies and the public, government agencies formulate rules and regulations that both protect companies and ensure that they operate in the general interest. Often, companies must then demonstrate their compliance with regulations by preparing reports that describe their efforts to meet such goals as cleaning up the environment or hiring women and minorities.

6. Differences between Formal and Informal Communication

Differences between formal and informal communication are made clear in the following schedule:

Nature of Difference	Formal Communication	Informal Communication
1. Communication Medium	Formal Communication is written.	Informal Communication is verbal.
2. Chain of Communication	Formal Communication is according to definite chain.	Informal Communication is under no definite chain.
3. Nature of Communication	Based on indirect written documents.	Based on gestures and verbal talk.
4. Evidence	Record regarding despatch of communication is kept.	No record of despatch of communication is kept.
5. Relation	It is the result of rights and duties given by the employers.	It is the result of employees internal relations.
6. Possibility of misunderstanding or Grapevine	Written clearly no possibility of grapevine.	Being verbal, more possibility of grapevine.
7. Types	May be of different types i.e. downward or upward.	Cannot be divided into different types.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

- What is formal communication?**
 (H.P.U. 2008)
 Formal communication is that communication which flows along a prescribed network. It functions through rules, regulations and procedures and is characterized by more "formalized" channels of communication.
- What is informal communication?**
 The informal communication is created wherever and whenever people meet and interact. It is a network which works outside the official and formal lines of communication. It is spontaneous and unplanned. No set of rules and regulations are followed in this communication network.
- What is downward communication?**
 Downward communication is a network of communication where flow of information is from top to bottom.
- What is upward communication?**
 Upward communication is a network of communication where flow of information is from bottom to top.
- What is horizontal communication?**
 It is a network where messages carried horizontally from one department to another.

6. **What do you mean by Grapevine?**

Ans. Grapevine means an informal system of communication which has no beginning or end. (H.P.U. 2006)

7. **How many types of grapevine chain, explained by Keith Davis?**

Ans. Keith identified four types of grapevine chains: (1) Single strand chain; (2) Gossip chain; (3) Probability chain; (4) Cluster chain.

8. **How is grapevine used for the benefit of the organization?**

Ans. Grapevine is a potential source of distortion, organizations can limit its negative effects by supplementing it with a free flow of official information.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. **What is corporate communication? Explain the main channels of corporate communication.**

(K.U. 2006)

2. **What is meant by formal communication network? Explain the channels of formal communication.**

3. **What do you think are the main objectives of upward communication? Give the advantages and limitations of upward communication.**

4. **Upward communication is very useful but very difficult. Discuss.**

5. **Define grapevine. How can it be used effectively in the interest of the organisation?**

6. **Explain corporate communication. What is the significance of corporate communication?**

7. **Distinguish between formal and informal communication.**

(H.P.U. 2004, 2007)

8. **Explain types of grapevine chains.**

(H.P.U. 2006)

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. **What is informal communication? Discuss the utility of informal communication for an organisation. What are its advantages and limitations?**

2. **What do you understand by grapevine? Discuss its various types. What is its importance in an organisation?**

Or

What do you understand by Grapevine Process of Communication? What is its importance in our organisation.

3. **"One should feed, water and cultivate the grapevine rather than try to curb its growth." Discuss.**

4. **What do you mean by formal and informal communication? Distinguish between formal and informal communication.**

5. **What is grapevine? How does it operate? Is it necessary to have a grapevine in an organisation?**

(M.D.U. 2003, H.P.U. 2005)

(K.U. 2004)

4

Barriers to Communication or Miscommunication

■ 1. Introduction

Problems with communication can pop up at every stage of the communication process. For our understanding we will term them as barriers to effective communication. These barriers can be either sender oriented or receiver oriented or both. All efforts must be made to ensure that these barriers are removed to achieve effective communication. Let's have a look at some of these barriers, their effects and their remedial measures. These barriers or miscommunications can occur in verbal and written communication.

Definition

"Miscommunication is a ruined form of communication. What is to be communicated, does not get communicated and an obstructed form of the message is transmitted."

■ 2. How does Miscommunication or a Barrier Arise?

The following are the main sources of miscommunication or barriers:

(1) **Problems in Developing the Message:** The first potential source of trouble is formulation of the message. Problems arise due to indecision about the subject-matter of message, lack of familiarity with the subject matter or difficulty in expressing ideas.

(2) **Difficulty in Expressing Ideas:** Lack of experience in writing or speaking can also prevent a person from developing effective messages. Some people may have a limited vocabulary or may be uncertain about use of grammar, punctuation and style. Or perhaps they are simply frightened by the idea of saying or writing something. This barrier is at sender's level.

(3) **Problems in Transmitting the Message:** Communication may also breakdown due to physical barriers, e.g. telephone going out of order; defective telephone connection, dim voice, illegible copy, etc. The barrier

also arises when messages have conflicting interpretation or when messages are received simultaneously. The barrier also arises when messages are transmitted through several persons. Each person interprets the original message in his own way and explains it to others in his own words.

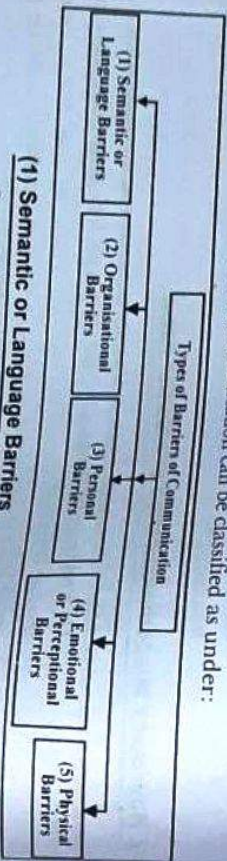
(4) Problems in Receiving the Message: Reception problems relate to the receiver of message. The receiver may be distracted by different sights and sounds, an uncomfortable chain of communication, poor lighting, some other irritating condition. In some cases, the barrier may be related to the receiver's health. Hearing or visual impairment, or even headache can interfere with the reception of a message. Perhaps the most common barrier to reception is simply lack of attention on the receiver's part.

(5) Problems in Interpreting the Message: Differences in background vocabulary, and emotional state can all lead to misunderstanding.

(6) Differences between Sender and Receiver: The biggest problem is the gulf between us and our receiver. In business, we often communicate with an unknown and unseen audience. Even when we know the other party, we may be separated by differences in function, status, age, sex, and allegiance. These differences make communication very difficult, indeed.

3. Types of Barriers

Barriers of communication can be classified as under:



(1) Semantic or Language Barriers

Semantic is the study of words or their meanings. The semantic barriers are those barriers which are related to language. The chief semantic or language related barriers are:

(1) Wrongly Expressed Message: Because of the obscurity of language there is always a possibility of wrong interpretation of the messages. The wrong sequence of sentences and frequent repetitions. In English language, one word may have more than one meaning. For example, the term "run" has 110 meanings in the dictionary. Of these 71 are as verb

35 are noun and 4 as adjective. When the reader or listener draws different meaning of a word than the writer or the speaker, there arises a barrier.

(2) Faulty Translation: A manager receives much information from his superiors and subordinates and he translates it for the concerned employees according to their level of understanding. Hence, the information has to be moulded according to the understanding of the receiver. If there is little carelessness in this process, the faulty translation can be a barrier in the communication.

(3) Unclear Assumptions: It has been observed that sometimes a sender takes it for granted that the receiver knows some basic things and therefore, it is enough to tell him about the major subject matter. This point of view of the sender is correct to some extent with reference to the daily communication, but it is absolutely wrong in case of some special message. Special messages should be made absolutely clear otherwise there is a possibility of some wrong action in the absence of clarification.

(4) Use of Technical Language: Some people like engineers, quality controllers, etc. do technical work. They have their separate technical language. Their communication is not so simple as to be understood by everybody. Hence, technical language can be a barrier to communication. These technical groups include industrial engineers, product managers, quality controllers and laboratory technicians etc.

(2) Organisational Barriers

Organisational structure greatly affects the capability of the employees so far as communication is concerned. Some major organisational hindrances in the way of communication are as under:

(1) Organisational Policies: Organisational policies determine the relationship among all the persons working in the enterprise. For example, it can be the policy of the organisation that communication will be in the written form. If this message can be expressed in a few words, it will take little time. If the message is transmitted in writing it takes some time. Consequently, work gets delayed.

(2) Organisational Rules: Organisational rules become barriers in communication by determining the subject-matter, medium, etc., of communication. Annoyed by the definite rules, the senders hesitate to send some of the messages.

(3) Status Relationship: In an organisation, all the employees are divided into many categories on the basis of their level. This formal division acts as a barrier in communication especially when the communication moves

from the bottom to the top of the organisation. For example, when a lower level employee has to send his message to a superior at the top level there is a lurking fear in his mind that the communication may be faulty and because of this he cannot convey himself clearly and in time. It causes delay in taking decisions.

(4) **Complexity in Organisational Structure:** More number of managerial levels in an organisation results in delay in communication and information gets changed before it reaches the receiver. In other words, negative things or criticisms are concealed. Thus, more the number of managerial levels in an organisation, more ineffective the communication becomes.

(5) **Organisational Facilities:** Organisational facilities mean making available sufficient stationary, telephone, translator, computers etc. Where these facilities are lacking in an organisation, communication will not be timely, clear and in accordance with necessity. In the absence of these facilities frequent communication may not be possible.

(3) Personal Barriers

There are some barriers which are directly connected with the sender and the receiver. They are called personal barriers. From the point of view of convenience they have been divided into two parts :

(i) **Barriers Related to Superiors :** These barriers are as follows :
 (i) **Attitude of Superiors :** The attitude of top level superiors directly affects the flow of communication. If the attitude of superiors towards communication is unfavourable or they give no importance to communication, then it will be a barrier.

(ii) **Fear of Positions:** Everybody desires to occupy a high office in an organisation. In this hope, officers try to conceal their weaknesses by not communicating their ideas.

(iii) **Insistence on Proper Channel:** The top level superiors remain connected through communication with a view to getting their authority implemented. They do not like any irregularity in communication, sometimes it is not possible to follow the proper channel of communication, particularly when the work has got to be done quickly. They consider such a situation against their authority and finally, they become a barrier in communication.

(iv) **Shortage of Time:** The top level superiors feel that they are overburdened with excessive work and because of this they do not pay much attention to communication.

(v) **Lack of Attention:** Sometimes top level superiors do not pay adequate attention to the importance and utility of communication. As a result, the

flow of communication gets hindered. Consequently, work performance gets delayed and the enterprise has to face much inconvenience.

(2) **Barriers Related to Subordinates:** Subordinates related barriers are as under :

(i) **Unwillingness to Communicate:** Sometimes the subordinates do not want to send any information to their superiors. When the subordinates feel that the information is of negative nature and will adversely affect them, an effort is made to conceal that information. If it becomes imperative to send this information, it is sent in a modified or amended form. Thus, the subordinates, by not stating the facts, become a hindrance in communication.

(ii) **Lack of Proper Incentive:** Lack of incentives to the subordinates creates a hindrance in communication. This is because of the fact that their suggestions or ideas are not given any importance. If the superiors ignore the subordinates, they become indifferent towards any exchange of ideas in future.

(4) Emotional or Perceptual Barriers

The importance of communication depends on the mental condition of both the parties. A mentally disturbed party can be a hindrance in communication. Following are the emotional barriers in the way of communication :

(1) **Premature Evaluation:** Sometimes the receiver of information tries to dig out meanings without much thinking at the time of receiving or even before receiving information, which can be wrong. This type of evaluation is a hindrance in the exchange of information and the enthusiasm of the sender gets dampened.

(2) **Emotional Attitude:** Some people are emotional by nature and lose their mental balance quickly and easily. If a superior happens to get agitated quickly, his communication, however authentic it may be, remains ineffective. Similarly, if a receiver of the message is mentally upset or disturbed he will not be able to draw the desired inference out of it. Unfavourable meaning in it.

(3) **Poor Retention of Information:** Poor retention of information means that with every transfer of information its reality gets reduced. According to an estimate, in oral communication there is a loss of 30% in every transfer of information. This is because of our carelessness. Hence, transfer of information being not in its actual reality is a big hindrance in communication.

(5) Physical Barriers

Physical barriers are those barriers which are caused due to the faulty physical conditions. These barriers cause a lot of noise. These include insufficiently insulated rooms from outside noises such as those of traffic filtering through, poor lighting, a typewriter clattering away in a nearby office and such like things as frequent movement of body posture fiddling with a pen in the hand or even the arrival of coffee at a critical stage of an on going communication.

4. How to Improve Communication?

Or

How to Remove Barriers to Communication?

It is essential to remove barriers in the way of communication keeping in view the importance of communication in a business organisation. If these barriers are not removed, the enterprise will be deprived of the advantages of communication. Although complete communication (hindrance-free communication) is not possible, yet efforts should be made to remove these barriers to a large extent so that perfect communication can be established. Following steps are worth taking for the removal of barriers to communication:

- (1) **Think About Purpose and Audience:** The first step is to define goal in communicating. You must create a bridge of words that leads listeners or readers from their current position to your point. Before you can do this, of course, you have to know something about their current position.
- (2) **Tell the Audience What You Expect:** After you have defined your readers' or listeners' needs, you can launch them on their journey towards intended destination. As they travel, you must be their guide, providing them with a map of the territory they will cover. Tell them at the outset what they can expect to gain from the trip. Let them know the purpose of the message (thus helping them recognize the relationship among the ideas you hope to convey), and tell them what main points they will encounter on the way (so that they can organize them into a rational framework). Even if you do not want to reveal controversial ideas at the beginning of the message, you can still give receivers a preview of the topics you plan to cover.

(3) **Use of Easy Language:** The language used in the communication should be simple, understandable and of the level of the receiver. The best way to do this is to balance the general concepts with specific illustrations. At the beginning, state the overall idea; then develop that idea by using

vivid, concrete examples. The most memorable words are the ones that create a picture in the receiver's mind by describing colors, objects, scents, sounds and tastes. Specific details can also be very vivid.

(4) **Stick to the Point:** You can also help your audience by eliminating any information that does not directly contribute to your purpose. Many business messages contain too much material. But most receivers do not need everything. All they need are a few pertinent facts, enough information to answer their questions or facilitate their decisions by eliminating unnecessary ideas, you focus the other person's thoughts on those few points that really matter.

(5) **Connect New Information to Existing Ideas:** By showing the audience how new ideas relate to familiar ones, you increase the likelihood that your message will be understood correctly. The meaning of the new concept is clarified by its relationship to the old. The receiver already has a wealth of information on the subject; all she or he has to do is apply it to the new idea.

Most of us approach anything unfamiliar with caution. When we discover that it is similar to something familiar, we become more confident. We accept this new idea and work on it more carefully.

(6) **Emphasize and Review Key Points:** Call attention to the most important points of the message. You can do this with your words, your format and your body language. Underline key points by calling attention to them visually. Use headlines, body type, and intended lists to emphasize major ideas. Re-inforce the text of your message by using charts, graphs, maps, diagrams and illustrations. If you are delivering the message orally, use your body and voice to highlight important concepts.

Before you conclude your message, review one or two of its essential points. Restate the purpose and then show how the main ideas relate to it.

It is a good idea to provide summaries at the end of major sections of a long message as well as at the end of a document or presentation. Such summaries not only refresh people's memories but also help simplify the overall meaning of complex material.

(7) **Minimize Noise:** To the extent possible, you should try to eliminate potential sources of interference that stand between you and your audience. The key to getting through to the receiver often lies in the choice of communication channels and media. You should choose the method that will most likely attract the receiver's attention and enable him or her to concentrate on the message.

(8) Physically Appealing Written Document: A written document is the best choice. Try to make it physically appealing and easy to comprehend. Use an attractive, convenient format and pay attention to such details as the choice of paper and quality of type. If possible, deliver the document when you know the reader will have time to study it.

(9) Eliminate Environmental Competition: If the message is to be delivered orally try to minimize environmental difficulties. The location should be comfortable and quiet with sufficient lighting and good sound system. Your own personality should be attractive to the audience and influence them. The more people who interfere in your message, the greater are the chances of its getting distorted. Thus, oral messages should have least interference on the part of the people.

(10) Facilitate Feedback: Give the receiver a chance to provide feedback. But one of the things making business communication difficult is the complexity of the feedback loop. If you are talking face-to-face with one person, feedback is immediate and clear. But if you are writing a letter, memo or report that will be read by several people, feedback will be delayed and mixed. Choose a form of communication that suits your needs. Some channels and media are more compatible with feedback than others. For example, if you want to send our message quickly, it is important to the receiver face-to-face or by phone. If feedback is less important to you, you can use a written document or give a prepared speech.

Your goal is to find out whether the people in your audience have understood and accepted your message. If you find that they have not do not lose your temper. After all, the fault is at least partially yours. Instead of saying the same thing all over again, only louder this time, try to find the source of the misunderstanding. Then revise your message. Whether the response to your message is written or oral, you have to encourage people to be open if you want them to tell you what they really think and feel.

In short, business communication is especially prone to misunderstandings because the message is complex, conditions are difficult and psychological or social differences often separate the sender and receiver. To overcome communication barriers, think about your audience, let them know what to expect, use vivid language, stick to the point that connects new ideas to familiar ones, emphasize and review key points, minimize noise, and provide opportunities for feedback.

Barriers to Communication or Miscommunication

Conclusion

A look at the table given hereunder will facilitate understanding of the various barriers through a simple format.

Sender Oriented Barriers

Barrier	Effects	Remedies
Badly expressed message	Loss in impact	Think prior to speaking or writing
Loss in transmission	Ineffective grasp of message	Remove physical noise
Semantic problem	Misunderstood or not understood statement	Use simple language
Over/under communication	Grouping for the right message	Make the quantum of communication just right
"I attitude"	Lack of collaborative effort	Minimise use of 'I'
Prejudices	Biased communication	Formulate message with an open mind

Receiver Oriented Barriers

Barrier	Effects	Remedies
Poor retention	Difficulty in remembering details	Don't leave to memory, it down points
Inattentive listening	Partial grasp of topic	Listen attentively and keep an open mind
Tendency to evaluate	Distancing from the speaker	Delay evaluation, understand fully and then react
Differences in interests & attitudes	Lack of interest in what is being said	Listen carefully and find an area of interest
Conflicting information	Mental turbulence	Check reliability and validity
Differing status/position/self experience	Superior attitude	Listen to ideas they may be helpful
Mental block	Resistance to change	Be open to changes
Retutations and arguments	Lack of provision of correct feedback	Enter into healthy discussions

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. **Define miscommunication.**

Ans. It is a ruined form of communication. What is to be communicated does not get communicated and an obstructed form of the message is transmitted.

2. **Give two reasons of arising miscommunication.**

Ans. Firstly, many times material is complex and controversial and both the sender and the receiver may face distractions and divert their attention. Secondly, problems in formulating your message get communication off to a bad start.

3. **What are the different types of barriers?**

Ans. Barriers of communication can be classified as (1) Semantic barrier, (2) Organizational barrier, (3) Personal barrier, (4) Emotional or Perceptual barrier, (5) Physical barrier.

4. **How does physical barrier arise?**

Ans. Physical barriers are caused due to the faulty physical conditions such as poor lighting, typewriters clattering, etc.

5. **How can we overcome from the problems of communication?**

Ans. To overcome from communication barriers, you should think about your audience, let them know what to expect, use vivid language; stick to the point that connects new ideas to familiar ones, emphasises and review by points, minimize noise and provide opportunities for feedback.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is meant by miscommunication? How does miscommunication or barriers arise? (H.P.U. 2006, K.U. 2007)
2. Explain the main barriers to effective communication. (H.P.U. 2005)
3. "Communication with similar mental filters are more likely to communicate effectively." Discuss. (M.D.U. 2004)
4. How does language act as a barrier to effective communication? (H.P.U. 2009)
5. Explain semantic barriers.

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. Explain the principal barriers to management communication and suggest measures for improvements.
2. What are the barriers to communication? Give suggestions to overcome these barriers.
3. Discuss the methods to remove barriers of communication. (H.P.U. 2004, 2009)

5

Listening Skills

■ 1. Introduction

We have two ears but only one mouth.

This is because God knew that listening is twice as hard as talking. People need to practice and acquire skills to be good listeners, because a speaker cannot throw information at you in the same manner that a dart player tosses a dart at a passive dartboard. Information is an intangible substance that must be sent by the speaker and received by an active listener.

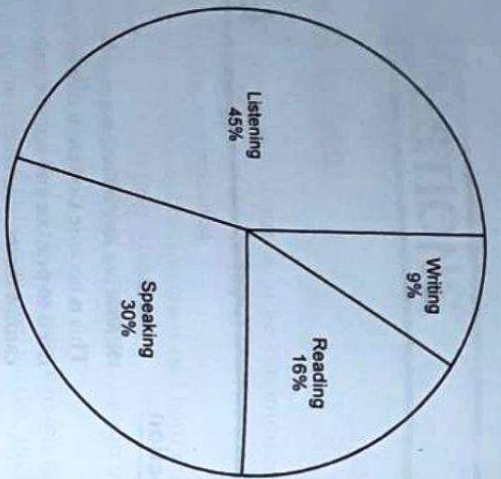
For a common man, listening is same as hearing. But in fact listening is not only hearing, but something more. Hearing which is only one part of the listening process refers to physical act of receiving sounds. Thus, hearing is a physical process. Listening is both physical and mental. It is a series of interrelated processes that includes attending, perceiving, interpreting, assessing and responding. In other words, listening means decoding and interpreting sounds correctly.

Listening provides managers with most of the information they need to do their jobs. In addition, lack of listening ability at all levels is a major source of work-related problems.

Listening means the difference between making or losing a sale, gaining or losing a client, motivating or discouraging a team, mending or destroying an employee relationship. Not a passive state of mind, listening is the precursor to all successful business activity as an owner and manager. "Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly."

■ 2. Importance of Listening

According to a research, an average manager in general spends only 9% of his/her time in writing, 16% in reading, 30% in speaking and 45% in listening, as shown in the following figure.



Listening is important to us in our study of the subject of communication for at least three reasons:

- (i) Listening is the first verbal skill we acquire as we develop the ability to use language, followed in sequence by speaking, reading and writing.
- (ii) Listening accounts for about 45 per cent of our verbal communication time.
- (iii) Listening is an important area of business.

3. Nature of Listening

Generally, we think of listening as primarily the act of sensing sounds. But actually listening is more than sound detection. In human communication, the sounds are mainly spoken words, that can be detected by ears. From a communication standpoint, the listening process involves the additional activities of filtering and remembering.

(1) Sensing: We do not all hear equally well. How well we sense the words spoken around us is determined by two factors:

- (i) *our ability to sense sounds:* how well our ears can pick them up.
- (ii) *our attentiveness to listening:* this is our mental concentration, i.e., our will to listen. This concentration varies from moment to moment and can range from almost totally blocking to concentrating on them very intensely. Most of the time, your listening falls somewhere between these extremes.

4. Types of Listening

Various situations call for different listening skills. The four types of listening differ not only in purpose but also in the amount of feedback or interaction. They entail:

- (1) Content Listening:** The main aim of content listening is to understand and retain information imparted by a speaker. You may ask questions, but basically, information flows from the speaker to you. Your job is to identify the key points of the message, so you concentrate and listen for clues to its structure: previews, transitions, summaries and enumerated points. In your mind, you create an outline of the speaker's remarks; afterwards, you silently review what you have learnt. You may take notes, but mainly you concentrate on the key points. It does not matter whether you agree or disagree, approve or disapprove—only that you understand.
- (2) Critical Listening:** The goal of critical listening is to evaluate the message at several levels: the logic of the argument, strength of the evidence and validity of the conclusions; the implication of the message for you or your organisation; the speaker's intentions and motives; and the omission of any important or relevant points. But absorbing information and evaluating it at the same time is hard, so reserve judgement until the speaker has finished. Critical listening generally involves interaction as you try to uncover the speaker's point of view. You are bound to evaluate the speaker's credibility as well. Non-verbal signals are often your best clue.
- (3) Empathic Listening:** The goal of empathic listening is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs and wants in order to help to solve a problem; the message is only a vehicle for gaining insight into the person's psyche. However, your purpose is not really to "solve" the

problem. By listening, you help the individual vent the emotions that are preventing him or her from dealing dispassionately with the problem. You may be tempted to give advice, but do not. Try not to judge the rightness or wrongness of the individual's feelings. Just let the other person talk.

(4) Active Listening: Active listening is the most important type of listening. The receiver reflects back what has been said to indicate that the feelings of the speaker have been understood. By mirroring what the other person says, we help build a climate in which we can be accepting, non-critical and non-moralising.

The active listener tries to encourage the speaker to express himself. This listener creates an environment in which the speaker feels free to develop his thoughts. He gives neutral summaries to encourage the speaker.

In active listening, we have to concentrate to fully understand what a speaker is saying. So, active listening is hard work. The listener has to put as much energy into listening as the speaker puts into speaking.

■ 5. Why Listen?

One of the questions most often asked by children, teenagers, and adults is: "Why listen?" What they're really asking is: "What's in it for me, if I listen to you?" They're asking their parents, friends, and colleagues to give them incentive to listen. Effective speakers try to provide incentives; however, if listeners expect speakers to motivate them to listen, they may have a long wait. Effective listeners have learned that incentive needs to come from inside themselves rather than from speakers.

■ 6. Costs of Ineffective Listening

When we fail to listen well we incur *costs* through loss of time, money and relationships.

Lost Time: Listening errors cost us one of our most valuable resources, our time. How often have you found yourself in the wrong restaurant, classroom, or hotel? Sometimes because of past associations we make assumptions about where we are supposed to meet friends rather than really listening to what they have to say. Even when we think we are listening carefully, we find ourselves forgetting a number that was just given to us by an operator, or forgetting directions and getting lost in a new city. At other times because of poor listening habits, we make mistakes that cost us both time and money.

Lost Money: One of our greatest motivators is money. We earn it, save it, and spend it. Most of us have been taught to invest and spend our money

wisely but we waste money because of avoidable listening mistakes. The invisible or minor listening culprits are the most dangerous ones. Letters have to be retyped, shipments reshipped, orders replaced, and shelves restocked, all because of small listening errors. In addition to wasting time and money, poor listening habits can also hinder relationships.

Lost Relationships: Poor listening creates friction and misunderstanding in both personal and professional relationships. We seek interactions with others that demonstrate we are valued. When someone doesn't pay attention or listen to our requests, concerns or needs, we often take it personally. It is difficult to believe that others really care when they don't follow instructions in caring for a family pet, forget important dates such as a birthday, or constantly interrupt us when we are talking. When we aren't listened to, we lose trust in the person and the relationship.

One listening mistake can have more than one cost associated with it. Not only do we sabotage our relationships, throw away our money, and waste our time, but we also lose our most precious resource, our energy. When we do realize that we have listened ineffectively, many of us have a difficult time accepting the mistake and moving forward.

■ 7. Poor Listening Habits

Listening well requires clear thinking, patience, high motivation and hard work. To listen well, people need to be open-minded and receptive to improvement. Often we do not want to improve. That is, we smugly assume that our communication efforts are better than those of other people. And those other people, not us, are the ones who cause all the communication problems. We are much less effective in listening than we think we are.

As with other skills, our listening habits are one that have been developed and reinforced through the years. Some habits can actually affect our ability to listen effectively. These habits are:

(1) Avoiding Challenging or Difficult Listening Situations: There are times when we can enjoy and actually need to engage in easy listening situations to replenish our listening energy tanks. But if we find ourselves routinely avoiding challenging listening situations, it may be time for a change.

(2) Tolerating Distractions that can be controlled: Taking the initiative to control distractions can help save listening energy and make relationship more pleasant and rewarding.

(3) **Taking Attention:** Make a commitment to concentrate listening energy on the speaker in important settings in order to overcome the habits of faking attention.

(4) **Criticizing a Speaker's Speaking Style or Personal Mannerisms:** Focusing on the important elements in the communication setting rather than on the speaker's mannerisms is a much more profitable expenditure of listening energy.

(5) **Concentrating Only on Easy-to-remember Facts and Missing the Bottom Line:** Unless we listen with an intent to understand the essence of the message, we may be getting into the habit of picking and choosing only selected tidbits to process and remember. When we put these bits together at the end of the presentation or conversation, we may find that we have a totally incorrect perception of what the speaker was trying to get across.

(6) **Wasting the Thinking-speaking Time Differential:** Most speakers in conversation use 125 to 145 words per minute, we can listen at a much faster rate than others can speak. When a person speaks too slowly, we may get in the habit of day dreaming or doodling rather than using the time to internally anticipate, summarize, evaluate and review what we have heard. In these cases, we run the risk of missing valuable information.

8. Factors Which Influence Listening

Following factors influence listening:

(1) **Stop Talking:** Unfortunately, most of us prefer talking to listening. Even when we are not talking, we are inclined to concentrate on what to say next rather than on listening to others. So, the first factor of listening is that you must stop talking before you can listen.

(2) **Put the Speaker at Ease:** If you make the speaker feel at ease, he or she will do a better job of talking. Then you will have better information.

(3) **Show the Talker Willingness to Listen:** If you can convince the talker that you are listening to understand rather than oppose, you will help create a climate for information exchange. You should look and act interested. Doing things like reading, looking at your watch and looking away distracts the speaker.

(4) **Remove Distractions:** The things you do can also distract the speaker. So do not draw lines, tap with your pencil, shuffle papers or the like.

(5) **Empathize with the Speaker:** If you place yourself in the speaker's position and look at things from the speaker's point of view, you will help

create a climate of understanding that can result in a true exchange of information.

(6) **Be Patient:** You will need to allow the talker plenty of time. Remember that not everyone can get to the point as quickly and clearly as you. And, do not interrupt. Interruptions are barriers to the exchange of information.

(7) **Hold Your Temper:** From our knowledge of the workings of our minds, we know that anger impedes communication. Anger people build walls amongst them.

(8) **Go Easy on Argument and Criticism:** Argument and criticism tend to put the talker on the defensive. He or she then tends to "clam up" or get angry.

(9) **Ask Questions:** By frequently asking questions, you display an open mind and show that you are listening. You are in this way, assist the speaker in developing his or her message and in improving the correctness of meaning.

From the preceding review it should be clear that to improve your listening ability you must set your mind to the task. Poor listening habits are a part of our nature. We can change these habits only through conscious effort.

9. Principles of Effective Listening

Effective listening is based on three principles:

(a) **Comprehension**, (b) **Appreciation**, (c) **Evaluation**.

9.1 Comprehension

The first principle of effective listening is **comprehension**. It requires us to pay attention to the communication.

Good listening is more than merely hearing the speaker. It includes grasping and understanding. To achieve this, we must:

- (i) Make eye contact with the speaker
- (ii) Concentrate on the speaker's ideas
- (iii) Concentration on the speaker's words, help us to hear them above the noise.
- (iv) Likewise, focusing our thoughts on the speaker's expressed ideas help us to grasp them clearly.
- (v) Concentration is partly a matter of attitude. The listener has to adopt positive attitude to understand the message of the sender.

- (vi) If the speaker is difficult to follow, there is a particular need for the listener's determination to concentrate on what is being said.
- (vii) Concentration is helped by alertness. Mental alertness is helped by physical alertness. Good health is important for a listener to be effective.
- (viii) Recognise the speaker's organisation of ideas.
- (ix) Our comprehension of someone else's speech will be increased if we learn to recognise the arrangement of the speaker's ideas. What is the central idea? What are the main points and how are they arranged? What are the minor points, and to which main points they relate?
- (x) We have to learn to listen for the idea structure, noting the relationship of illustrative detail to the main points.
- (xi) Relate the ideas to your own knowledge.
- (xii) Relating what we hear to what we already know helps us improve comprehension. However, we have to avoid letting our opinions prevent us from listening to new ideas. Usually, a receptive, open-minded attitude is most conducive to understanding.

■ 9.2 Appreciation

The second principle of effective listening is to have a positive or appreciative attitude. Some people listen to find mistakes but not listeners in contrast, are most generous. In fact, good listening requires a positive attitude towards the other individual or the situation.

Starting on a negative basis can be counter-productive to the listening process. It closes the mind of the individual to the ongoing proceeding and he practices only passive listening. This is harmful.

Appreciation requires a relaxed, receptive and imaginative attitude of the listener's part.

Appreciative listening requires

- (a) Physical and mental relaxation
- (b) Receptive not critical attitude
- (c) Imaginative projection and empathy

The principle of appreciation requires the following measures:

- (1) Pay attention to the substance of what the speaker says, not his/her appearance or delivery.

Listening Skills

■ 9.3 Evaluation

- (2) Spend your time evaluating what the speaker says, not just planning your criticism.
- (3) Learn something from every speaker; he/she may convey some interesting ideas.

Critical and analytical listening is necessary for evaluation. Evaluation demands more than comprehension. The listener must analyse the speaker's reasoning and judge the value of logic and proof.

To evaluate, we have to listen to the speaker's analysis of problems and the type of reasoning he uses besides recognising the motive appeals he employs and their relation to his reasoning. In addition, we have to pay close attention to the wording used by the speaker and the amount and reliability of his supporting material.

To evaluate the communication one should listen or think for feelings as well as facts. A proper evaluation requires accurate filtering. To do this, you will need to think in terms of what words mean to the speaker who uses them rather than what the dictionary says they mean or what they mean in your mind. You must try to think like the speaker thinks—judging the speaker's words by the speaker's knowledge, experiences, viewpoints as such. Like improving your sensing, improving your filtering requires conscious effort.

One way to be conscious and deliberate in your filtering effort is to realize that you can think (filter) much faster than you can talk—about three to four times as fast. Thus, you should caution yourself about jumping to quick conclusions and interrupting, by rehearsing what you are going to say when the other person quits talking. Instead, you should use the extra mental time to determine the true meaning that the speaker intends.

For example, you should realize that 90 per cent or more of the meaning we receive from a speaker comes from non-word symbols—gestures, the speed/pitch/volume of the voice, facial expressions, as such. As you sense the words of a speaker, you should sense the non-word symbols also. You should be aware that what speakers communicate mirrors the meaning in their minds. So you need to sense and observe the word and non-word symbols being sent. If you focus on the total meaning the speaker conveys, you are practising active listening; that is, you are mentally active in attempting to determine the meaning conveyed in a message.

Thill and Bovee have presented the principles of effective listening in the form of ten keys to effective listening as reproduced below:

S.No	To Listen Effectively	The Bad Listener	The Good Listener
1.	Finds areas of interest	Tunes out dry subjects	Opportunities; asks "What's for me?"
2.	Judges content, not delivery	Tunes out if delivery is poor	Judges content; skips over delivery errors
3.	Holds the fire	Tends to enter into argument	Does not judge until comprehension is complete; interrupts only to clarify
4.	Listens for ideas	Listens for facts	Listens for central theme
5.	Flexible	Takes intensive notes using only one system	Takes fewer notes; uses four or five different systems, depending on speaker
6.	Works at listening	Shows no energy output; fakes attention	Works hard; exhibits an open body state
7.	Resists distractions	Is distracted easily	Fights or avoids distractions; tolerates bad habits; knows how to concentrate
8.	Exercises the mind	Resists difficult material; seeks light, recreational material	Uses heavier material as exercise for the mind
9.	Keeps mind open	Reacts to emotional words	Interprets emotional words; does not get hung up on the words
10.	Capitalizes on the fact that thought is faster than speech	Tends to daydream with slow speakers	Challenges, anticipates, mentally summarizes, verifies the evidence; listens between the lines to tone of voice

10. How to Listen?

Before changing your listening behaviour, it is important to get a picture of yourself as a listener. The goal is to help you see aspects of your listening behaviours and habits. Habits are important to observe because they develop so slowly that you often fail to notice them. The first step towards increasing your awareness is to identify your listening preferences and to observe your listening activities and habits in your immediate environment.

Listening Preferences

Listening habits and preferences do not develop in the same ways for all people. Some people prefer to hear from only credible sources, others want to be entertained, some focus on the other person's needs, and others want a speaker to get to the point as quickly as possible. Listening preferences develop over a lifetime as a function of socialization and reinforcement patterns.

Based on our preferences, unknowingly, we make judgements and decisions that may hinder our communication effectiveness. Similarly, our own preferences influence how we present information to others. The following paragraphs provide general descriptions of the four listener preferences: content-, action-, people-, and time-oriented.

Content-Oriented: Content-oriented listeners have a tendency to critically evaluate everything they hear. At times it is as if they are looking under a microscope to determine weaknesses or inconsistencies in information. While they willingly give time to listening, they prefer to listen to experts and highly credible sources. Content-oriented listeners have the ability to see both sides of issues, enjoy listening to challenging or complex information, and elicit high-quality ideas. Because content-oriented listeners carefully question information, in extreme cases, they may intimidate other people. Used in roles of authority, such as parents, teachers, or bosses, this listening style may hinder spontaneous discussions and creative exchanges of ideas.

Action-Oriented: Action-oriented listeners are very time-conscious when listening and encourage others to be time-conscious as well. They often prefer to listen in outline form and find it difficult to listen to speakers who are disorganized. Action-oriented listeners are appreciated members of most meetings because they encourage others to stay on task, to keep meeting time to a minimum, and to present information in a logical, organized way. At times, however, because they appear to be in a rush, action-oriented listeners come across as impatient and not very interested in building relationships with others.

People-Oriented: People-oriented listeners are most concerned with how their listening influences their relationships with others. They listen to understand both the content and emotional states of others, willingly take time to listen, and usually remain non-judgmental. When confronted with personal problems or crises, we seek out people-oriented listeners. Since they are open to all types of people and topics, they can get overly involved with others. In fact, at times people-oriented listeners can lose their objectivity when listening.

Time-Oriented: Time-oriented listeners are clock-watchers and encourage others to be the same. They are direct in how they value time and often get impatient with others who waste it. While they encourage efficiency and time management, their self-imposed time constraints can limit creativity. Time-oriented listeners must be careful not to interrupt or discount relationships with others.

After reading about these listening preferences, identify your own listening preferences. Think about how it might affect the information you receive and your interactions with others.

To sum up, you can improve your listening behaviour by being aware of your listening energy and habits. The trick is to actually behave appropriately in actual listening situations.

11. Results of Listening

Six benefits will occur if you listen purposefully and positively because such attentive listening:

- (1) Leads to helpful, positive attitudes—by understanding the hindrances that lie in the way of good listening.
- (2) Permits the speaker and listeners to improve communication because each side is more aware of and receptive to the other's viewpoint.
- (3) Indicates by feedback to the speaker that listeners are interested, in turn, the speaker tries harder to give his or her best performance.
- (4) Helps listeners obtain useful information on which they can make accurate decisions.
- (5) Creates better understanding of others and thus helps listeners work with others.
- (6) Helps the speaker (especially in an interview) in talking out a problem a person needs to receive, as well as give, help.

12. Barriers to Listening

There are many possible barriers to listening:

- (1) Your actual physical ability to hear.
- (2) Attention to the speaker's voice; appearance pronunciation, accent, use of grammar – to the exclusion of what the speaker is trying to say to you.
- (3) Discounting and disregarding what the speaker is saying because you do not like his/her physical appearance, voice, pronunciation, accent, etc.

- (4) Listening to words only, not to the underlying feeling behind the words, much of which is communicated by non-verbal methods.
- (5) Allowing emotional feelings about the subject to "turn you off" especially if the speaker uses emotional words.
- (6) Concentrating on note taking to the extent that you lose the train of thoughts.
- (7) Being sure that you already know all there is to know about the subject.
- (8) Inattentive because you do not like to consider unpleasant, complicated or difficult subjects.
- (9) Inattentive because you are tired, sleepy, hungry or want to go home.
- (10) Inattentive because you know that whatever "is said you could say it better."
- (11) Inattentive because you have more important things to think about.
- (12) Boredom because you have already heard too many speeches, lectures, discussions, conversations, and people "talking to you".
- (13) Inability to keep your mind on the subject.
- (14) Inattention to the speaker's words because you are trying to think of a reply.
- (15) Confusion because you don't have the faintest idea of what the speaker is talking about and have never heard the words before.
- (16) If the physical condition such as lecture theatre or tutorial room, etc. are unsatisfactory, they can affect your level of physical attention.
- (17) Your own attitude, positive as well as negative, play an important part in determining how actively you will listen.

Conclusion

Listening is a decoding skill. To listen well, you must receive a message and take it apart to get some meaning from it. In order to make listening effective, concentrate on what you are hearing by trying to anticipate what is going to be said. Listen for major points. Take brief notes if they will be helpful. Ask questions. Consciously block out anything that interferes with your understanding of what is being said.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. **What is meant by hearing?**
Ans. Hearing is only one part of listening process refers to physical act of receiving sounds. It is a passive process that occurs even when we are asleep.
2. **Why is listening such hardwork?**
Ans. Listening is hard work and a dynamic, interactive process involving both speaker and listener. It is both physical and mental. It is a series of interrelated process that includes attending, perceiving, interpreting, assessing and responding. In other words, listening means decoding and interpreting sounds correctly.
3. **What is effective listening?**
Ans. Effective listening is one of the critical skills related to effective communication. It is a developed skill and requires more than merely hearing the speaker. It requires grasping and understanding. It includes active, empathetic and supportive behaviour.
4. **Explain four types of listening.**
Ans.
 - (1) **Content listening** enables to understand and retain the message.
 - (2) **Critical listening** enables to evaluate the information.
 - (3) **Empathic listening** is used to draw out the other person.
 - (4) **Active listening** helps to understand the other person's point of view and resolve conflicts.
5. **What is the goal of empathic listening?**
Ans. The goal of empathic listening is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs and wants in order to help to solve a problem.
6. **Write two benefits of effective listening.**
Ans.
 - (1) Leads to helpful, positive attitudes- by understanding the hindrances that lie in the way of good listening.
 - (2) Indicates by feedback to the speaker that listeners are interested, in turn, the speaker tries harder to give his or her best performance.
7. **Give examples of physical factors that inhibit listening.**
Ans. The physical environment affects the ability to listen. Among the factors that can inhibit, and uncomfortable seating, etc.
8. **Lists some good habits that boost listening.**
Ans.
 - (1) Tolerating distraction that can be controlled.
 - (2) Avoiding challenging or difficult listening situations.
 - (3) Taking attention
 - (4) Focusing on the important elements rather than on speaker's mannerisms.

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9. **Why is it necessary to "stop talking"?**
Ans. Most of us are more prone to talking than listening. Even when we are not talking, we are inclined to concentrate on what to say next rather than on listening to others. So, the first factor of listening is that we must stop talking, before we can listen.
10. **Does making notes influence listening?**
Ans. Good listening includes writing down the main ideas. It helps in recalling points discussed by the speaker. Even an incomplete sentence or single word will later be a memory hint of what was said.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write a short note on
 - (a) "Nature of Listening.
 - (b) Poor Listening habits.
2. What do you mean by listening? Explain different types of listening.
3. What are the essential elements of listening process? (H.P.U. 2007)
4. What are the results of ineffective listening?
5. What is meant by effective listening? Explain the importance of effective listening.
6. What are the principles of effective listening?
7. What is meant by effective listening? What are its main purpose? (K.U. 2003)
8. What six habits can you develop to become a more effective listener? (H.P.U. 2008)
9. What are the guidelines for effective listening?

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Explain factors which influence listening.
2. Why do we not listen? Explain some barriers to listening.
3. What is meant by effective listening? What are its main principles. (H.P.U. 2006)
4. Explain the term "Listening Preferences."

Reading Skills

1. Introduction

Reading can be fun! Reading should engage us, teach us something new, make us think, stir our feelings. The business world produces more paper than ever before. Letters, memos, reports, manuals, policy statements, brochures, pamphlets, fliers, reference guides, order forms, shipping labels, etc. are just a few of the documents that flow into and out of today's offices and plants in a steady stream. You will find many of them in your mailbox. Some will be unimportant, many will be important, and a few will be critical to your success.

How well do you read? Do you apply active reading techniques? Are you able to handle a large volume of daily reading? Do you know how to "read between the lines"? Your answers to these questions will reflect how prepared you are for today's workplace.

We know effective listening is an active process. Effective reading, too, is a complex task, and good reading must be done actively.

2. What is Reading?

Many of us think that reading is a simple, passive process that involves reading words in a linear fashion and internalising their meaning one at a time. But actually it is a very complex process that requires a great deal of active participation on the part of the reader. Reading involves many complex skills that have to come together in order for the reader to be successful.

According to **Dorothy U. Seyler**, "Reading is the process of obtaining or constructing meaning from a word or a cluster of words." This statement gives us three ideas about reading:

- (1) Meaning is found in words or clusters of words, not necessarily in complete sentences.

3. Reading Context

- (2) Reading involves getting meaning from the words. It means understanding the ideas, information, or feelings the words convey, when put together in a particular pattern. If we are not getting a message, we are not reading. Think about it this way: You read with your brain.

- (3) We need to think about the verbs-obtaining and constructing. The task of the reader is to obtain the meaning the writer seeks to convey.

In the reading process, the reader is an active participant. The diagram shows the reading context, a context in which the writer and the written work are significant but incomplete without the reader.

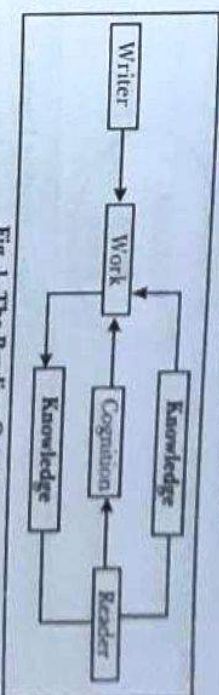


Fig. 1. The Reading Context

Readers bring knowledge and experience, as well as values, beliefs and biases, to the reading experience. Knowledge about the topic aids the reading process. What a reader knows about the writer or written work can make a difference in how a work is read and understood. Before reading, you need to think about each element in the reading context.

- (1) What do you know about the writer or author?
- (2) What kind of work are you about to read?
- (3) What do you expect the work to contain, and how do you expect it to be organized?
- (4) What do you already know about the topic?
- (5) What attitude towards the writer or the subject do you bring to the reading context?

4. Reading Process

A specific strategy will help the reader to be aware of the process of reading. A good strategy will guide them to prepare before reading, to read in ways that will improve comprehension, and then to respond in ways that will help them to complete their reading purpose.

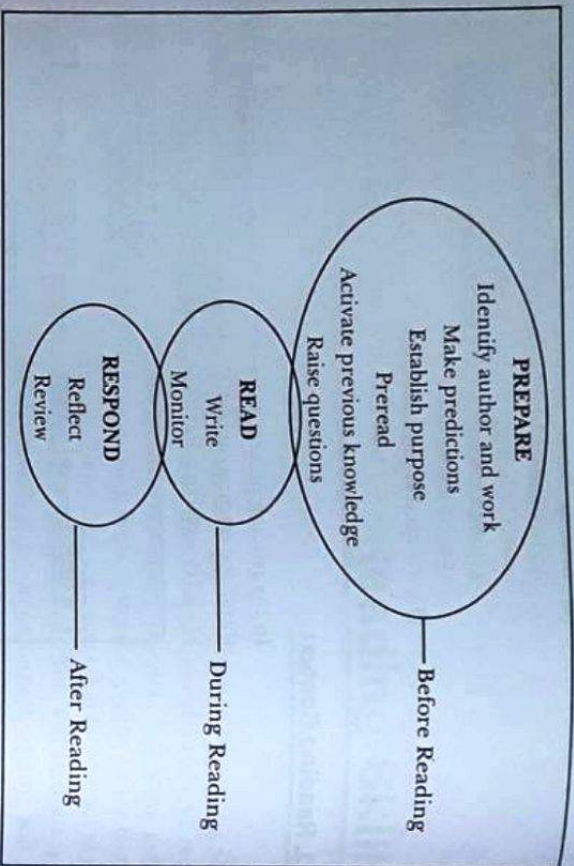


Fig. 2. Steps in Reading Process

The diagram shows three stages: before reading, during reading and after reading. The several activities included under **PREPARE** will help you read with understanding and a clear purpose. Then, as you **READ**, you need to mark the text as a support to reading and you need to monitor comprehension. Lastly, you need to **RESPOND** that is, reflect on what you have read will make the reading more meaningful and will help you along with your review, to remember what you have read. The first and third circles which overlaps the middle circle, tell us that the steps are not separate and distinct. This reading plan is a series of activities that together create an ongoing interconnected process.

(1) Prepare

We need to prepare in specific ways to get the most out of our reading. To prepare well we need to go through each of the following steps:

- (i) Identify the author's work.
- (ii) Anticipate what you will read.
- (iii) Know your purpose in reading.
- (iv) Preread the material.
- (v) Activate your previous knowledge about the topic.
- (vi) Raise questions about the material.

(i) **Identify the Author's Work:** In most books there is an "About the Author" page that provides the author's credentials. If information does not come with the work, ask your instructor, teacher or guide how you can learn about the writer. You always want to think about whose words are you reading.

(ii) **Anticipate What You Will Read:** Anticipating helps you focus and expect certain information. If your expectations are correct, you have a head start on comprehending the written material. If your expectations are incorrect, they help you identify your error quickly and adjust to the new material. Anticipating what you are about to read helps you to define your purpose for reading. Reading with a purpose is important, it allows you to read more efficiently.

(iii) **Establish Purpose in Reading:** When we know why we want to do something, we get more out of the activity. All reading opportunities will become more pleasurable if you prepare before reading and reflect after reading.

(iv) **Preread:** Prereading allows you to see what elements the work contains and how they are put together. Prereading extends your preliminary knowledge of a work. This will help your comprehension when you read the material in its entirety.

(v) **Previous Knowledge:** Studies have shown that knowledge of the topic does more than general reading skill to raise scores on reading tests. An interest in learning about new subjects also helps. What the reader brings to the reading context really matters. The more you know, the better you read. It's that simple and that challenging, because the best way to know a great deal about many subjects is to read. If you can apply the knowledge you already have, you will read with greater comprehension even the material that, on the whole, is new.

(vi) **Raise Questions:** You can become an active reader, as your preread the material and ask yourself what you will be learning by turning titles and headings into questions.

(2) Read

The second step has two connected parts—writing and monitoring.

(i) **Write:** Writing is an essential aid to reading. It helps you to be an active reader. It forces you to make distinctions, to note what is important. It encourages you to read with your brain.

(ii) **Monitor:** While reading, you also need to be thinking about how well you are reading. Are you comprehending? And if not, how are you going to fix the problem? When monitoring your own performance, you can step in and redirect or refocus your attention as problem arises. As an active reader, you are both reader and coach.

(3) Respond

Preparing before you read is just as important as responding after you have read. The best response is to both reflect and review.

(i) **Reflect:** Some readers like to reflect as they read, stopping from time to time to have a conversation with themselves about the material. Others prefer to complete an article or material and then reflect on the work as a whole. If you can connect to what you are reading to something in your life, the material will not seem random. By relating the information to something important, you can improve your chances of remembering what you have read.

(ii) **Review:** The time you spend reflecting is also time spent reviewing. Reviewing what you have read can take a variety of forms. What is critical is that you review *immediately* and then *periodically*. It is the best way to ensure remembering.

5. What are Reading Skills?

Reading skills enable readers to turn writing into meaning and achieve the goals of independence, comprehension and fluency.

Reading skills are specific abilities which enable a reader:

- to read the written form as meaningful language.
- to read anything written with independence, comprehension and fluency, and
- to mentally interact with the message.

Here are some kinds of reading skills:

- (1) **Word Attack Skills** let the reader figure out new words.
- (2) **Comprehension Skills** help the reader predict the next word, phrase or sentence quickly enough to speed recognition.
- (3) **Fluency Skills** help the readers see larger segments, phrases, and groups of words as wholes.
- (4) **Critical Reading Skills** help the reader see the relationship of ideas and use these in reading with meaning and fluency.

(1) Word Attack Skills

Developing word attack skills is necessary to help beginning readers and writers become **independent** and **fluent**.

Word attack skills also known as decoding skills are the ability to convert graphic symbols into intelligible language.

The following factors are responsible for emerging this skill:

- Seeing language as made up of units of sound and units of meaning.
- Seeing print as letters symbolizing sounds, words, and discourse units of language such as sentences, paragraphs and quotations.
- Seeing relationships of ideas and the ability to infer, evaluate, and conclude.

The order of recognition for a fluent reader may go back and forth from recognizing letters to recognizing words, phrases, or even larger segments. For new readers, whether recognition begins with the letter or the word depends on the way they learned to read. As fluency is gained, each reader develops his or her own strategies and interplay of skills. Proficiency in one skill aids proficiency in another.

(2) Comprehension Skills

Everybody in the civilised world reads but not everyone understands what he reads. Communication and information would be much more useful and meaningful if reading comprehension skills are enhanced. In this day and age, when there is a glut of information simultaneously going on around from a wide variety of sources anyone who masters this skill would do well to advance and develop.

Reading comprehension skills lead to being informed correctly. Information is available but the difference lies in the use of information that will benefit the reader most. What could otherwise be useful information is practically nothing if the reader does not grasp it fully. Reading requires understanding, or comprehending, the meaning of print. Readers must develop certain skills that will help them **comprehend** what they read and use this as an aid to reading.

Comprehensibility in writing is related to comprehension in reading. Comprehension skills are the ability to use **context** and **prior knowledge** to aid reading and to make sense of what one reads and hears. Comprehension is based on:

- knowledge that reading makes sense.
- readers' prior knowledge.
- information presented in the text, and
- the use of context to assist recognition of words and meaning.

How to Improve Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension requires motivation, mental framework for holding ideas, concentration and good study techniques. Here are some suggestions:

- **Develop a broad background.**
Broaden your background knowledge by reading newspapers, magazines and books. Become interested in world events.
- **Know the structure of paragraphs.**
Good writers construct paragraphs that have a beginning, middle and an end. Often, the first sentence will give an overview, the helps provide a framework for adding details. Also look for transitional words, phrases or paragraphs that change the topic.
- **Identify the type of reasoning.**
Does the author use cause and effect reasoning, hypothesis, model building, induction or deduction, systems thinking?
- **Anticipate and predict.**
Really smart readers try to anticipate the author and predict future ideas and questions. If you are right this reinforces your understanding. If not, you make quick adjustments.
- **Look for the method of organisation.**
Is the material organised chronologically, serially, logically, functionally or spatially?
- **Create motivation and interest.**
Preview material, ask questions, discuss ideas with others. The stronger your interest, the greater your comprehension.
- **Pay attention to supporting cues.**
Study pictures, graphs, diagrams and headings. Read the first and last paragraph in a chapter, or the first sentence in each section.
- **Highlight, summarise and review.**
Just reading a book once is not enough. To develop a deeper understanding, you need to highlight, summarise and review important ideas.
- **Build a good vocabulary.**
For most educated people, this is a lifetime project. The best way to improve vocabulary is to use dictionary regularly. While reading, use a systematic reading technique like SQ3R.
- **Develop a systematic reading style like the SQ3R method and make adjustments to it depending upon priorities and purpose.**
The SQ3R steps include: Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review. (SQ3R method, we discuss further in this chapter.)
- **Monitor effectiveness.**
Good readers monitor, their attention, concentration and effectiveness. They quickly recognise if they have missed an idea and back-up to read it.
Reading comprehension skills separate the passive unskilled

reader from the active readers. Skilled readers do not just read, they actually interact with the text.

(3) Fluency Skills

Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. It bridges word decoding and comprehension. Comprehension is understanding what has been read whereas fluency is a set of skills that allows you to rapidly decode text while maintaining high level of comprehension. Fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. At the earliest stage of reading development, oral reading is slow and laboured, since an effort is made to 'break the code', so search words to letters and blend them into recognizable words. There is a need to pause appropriately within and at the end of sentences. Fluency changes depending upon what readers are reading, their familiarity with words and a little knowledge about the topic. Even readers who attain fluency through practice, may not be able to read technical material fluently, such as a text book on nuclear physics or an article in a medical journal.

There are two major instructional approaches to achieve fluency. Repeated and monitored oral reading is the first approach. In this, the reader is motivated to read passages aloud several times in the presence of his peers/friends or even family members and receives guidance and feedback from them. Following this practice they become better readers. Repeated oral reading substantially improves word recognition, speed, accuracy and of course fluency. In the second approach, the reader reads silently and independently on his own. The reader reads and rereads a text a number of times until a certain level of fluency is achieved.

Fluency should be the aim of every reading and writing lesson. It should increase as learners progress from beginning to advanced readers and writers. Fluency enables learners to read and write with more understanding. They gain this skill through practice and observation. Fluency skills are the ability to see larger segment and phrases as wholes as an aid to reading and writing more quickly.

(4) Critical Reading Skills

A reader who is constantly looking for new information and inspiration encounters a text with an open mind, but at the same time questions the purpose and content of the text by testing it against his or her previous knowledge and experience. A critical reader also tries to discover the hidden message in the text to find out how the information accords with his or her opinions, values and objectives. A self-improving reader discusses what he or she has read with others, listens to their points of view and finds that their interpretation reveals new dimensions to the

subject which broadens his or her way of thinking about it. This reader reflects these ideas when applying the information in new situations.

The best way to improve critical reading skills is by, well, reading. 'Critical reading' means you read with a purpose—you read as if you are looking for something. You read paying attention to the natural questions that good literature creates. As you read be clear that nothing that happens in a book—especially fiction—had to be there, had to happen in the way it happened, in the place it happened. All stories, all essays are constructed via a series of choices a writer makes. Critical readers will be asking few questions in their heads while reading viz.:

- Why did the author make this choice and not some other choice?
- Why did the character do that and not this?
- Why did this incident happen in this particular location and at this point in the story?
- This word/phrase/sentence/paragraph/scene/chapter seems out of place—why? What is being emphasised here.
- What are you not being told/shown? Why might the author be concealing this information from you?

Critical reading implies that you do not take anything for granted—every word, scene, character and action depicted was chosen by the author to do something in the piece. A critical reader asks why those choices were made and what they contribute to the story.

As reader makes sense of what they read, they use various relationships of ideas to aid recognition and fluency. Critical reading as a goal includes the ability to evaluate ideas socially or politically.

- Critical reading skills are the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize what one reads. They are the ability to see relationships of ideas and use them as an aid in reading. For example,
- seeing questions and expecting answers
 - seeing cause and effect

6. Reading Groups of Words

"The art of becoming wise is the art of knowing what to overlook."

Our eyes can only take in information when they are stopped. What feels like continuous motion is actually a move-stop-read-move-stop-read process. You can easily verify this by sitting face to face with a partner, holding up a book and watching their eyes as they read. The key is to

—William James

minimize the number of stops by maximizing the number of words you see at each stop as shown in the figure below.

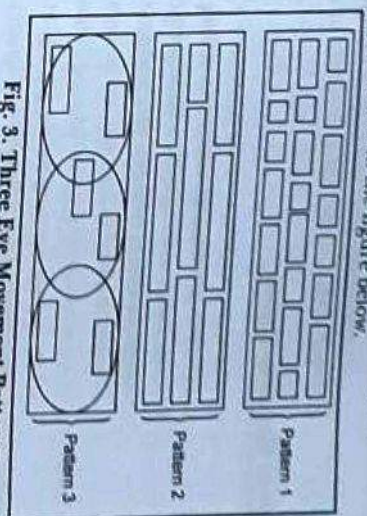


Fig. 3. Three Eye Movement Patterns

The person who uses the first eye movement pattern is actually looking at every word, one at a time. The person who uses the second is still looking at every word, but in groups. The person who uses the third eye movement pattern "notices" only a few key words and does so by reading both horizontally and vertically at the same time.

"Some may be thinking that the first reader is going to comprehend the material much better than the third!" you may be thinking. If the third reader actually uses all three eye movement patterns, using the slower patterns very selectively, then he has a better chance of investing his mental energies on the material of most relevance to him.

The smart reader is one who uses the third technique to scan the entire book (overview) or chapter (preview), and then comes back and uses some combination of the first two techniques to further explore the sections of most relevance.

Getting to both the second and third levels requires a visual reading strategy. You must silence subvocalization and learn to "trust your eyes". This involves shifting your mental reading process from "see->say->understand" to just "see->understand".

One way to stop subvocalizing (saying words in your head while reading) is to increase the rate at which your eyes move across the page to the point where it is impossible to subvocalize. This means switching your reading strategy to a point whereby you notice gulps of words at each eye resting point. These gulps sometimes involve pulling words from multiple lines.

Another way to look at the issue of subvocalisation is that you should develop multiple reading strategies, some of which may include

subvocalisation and some do not. You would not want a car that runs only on one speed. You want to have multiple gears (reading styles) that can be applied based on unique demands of each situation.

7. Efficient Reading Strategy

Efficient reading is about reading in a way that allows you to understand the writer's message without spending too much time in the process. It is also about reading with a clear purpose in mind so that you only read material that is relevant. Efficient reading starts with choosing a strategy to suit the kind of text you are to read because your purpose in reading and the nature of text to be read will determine your strategy.

The main purpose of reading is not to be able to recall whole of the text in your mind, but to be able to extract information that you need. Having an efficient reading strategy will enable you to:

- (i) Select important material and recall it when required.
- (ii) Interpret information and ideas.
- (iii) Make deductions from what you have read.
- (iv) Arrive at general conclusions and judgement.
- (v) Relate knowledge to experience.
- (vi) Think critically.
- (vii) Increase level of concentration.

All the above can be improved by practice.

Smart readers use different strategies depending on *what* and *why* they are reading. Ask yourself this question: *Do I read every word, when I am reading a schedule, summary, or other outlining documents?* The answer is: *No!* This means that it is not always necessary to read and understand each and every word. Four methods for efficient reading are *scanning, skimming, extensive reading* and *intensive reading*.

(1) **Scanning:** Scanning involves searching written materials for a particular piece of information. Instead of reading the page, you let your eyes move quickly, searching for what you need. You scan when you look up a word in the dictionary or a number in the phonebook. To find out precise information you will need to practice the technique of scanning. You may need to find out specific details of a topic for an assignment or a task to be carried out. There is little point in skimming a whole book for this purpose. You need to identify a few key expressions which will alert you to the fact that your subject is being covered and that you are on the right track. You can then run your eyes down the page looking for these expressions in chapter headings or sub headings or in the text itself.

(2) **Skimming:** Skimming is a strategy to get an idea contained in a particular piece of writing. When you scan, you search for specific information; when you skim, you overlook specifics and seek to obtain just the "gist" or basic points of the text. Run your eyes over the text, noting important information. Use skimming to quickly go through the table of contents, the preface and the index, then selecting from chapter headings. You can then read the first and last paragraphs and perhaps the first sentence of each of the other paragraphs. Do keep an eye on any diagrams or figures. You should get about 50% of the meaning from all this and you are then in a good position to see if you need to carry out detailed reading and scanning. It is not essential to understand each word when skimming. For example:

- the newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day)
- magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail)
- business and travel brochures (quickly to get informed).

(3) **Extensive Reading:** In everyday life, to read extensively means to read widely and in quantity. It is generally associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting an overall understanding of the subject. Readers are more concerned with the meaning of the text than the meaning of individual words and sentences. The success of extensive reading depends largely on motivating the student to read. To awaken or encourage a desire to read the texts made available should ideally be as varied as the learners who read them and the purpose for which they want to read. These can be books, magazines, newspapers, fiction, non fiction texts that inform, texts that entertain and general knowledge material. Varied reading material not only encourages reading, it also encourages a flexible approach to reading. Learners are led to read for different reasons *e.g.*, entertainment, information or to pass time.

(4) **Intensive Reading:** Intensive reading is the practice of reading short to medium length passages with the aim of focussing on specific text based elements such as comprehension, vocabulary, etc. It is basically a study technique for organizing reading that will have to be understood and remembered.

Intensive reading follows a set of principles which are:

(i) **Overview:** There are two methods to obtain an overview—surveying and skimming. Both are concerned with reading only the more important parts. With either, you would start with the summary, if one existed, then the headings and skimming with its greater attention to

topic and summary sentences. The principle to guide you is to spend the least amount of time to secure these elements.

(ii) **Planning Purpose:** It implies that you take a few seconds before you begin reading to formalise what you wish to get from the reading. This will give you the most useful 'mental set' for getting the information you need.

(iii) **Questions:** A good time to record questions is after overview and planning purpose. The question should be in the same sequence as they appear in the material. This does not prevent adding new questions, but it does prevent forgetting about an important question that occurs to you during the overview.

(iv) **Reading:** The most important principle and the heart of intensive reading is to read carefully and thoughtfully. This reading is guided by our purpose and questions. Also be sure and read the material you covered while obtaining an overview.

(v) **Summarising:** An important part of summarising is organising the ideas and supporting points. This organising should begin in the reading but should be finalised and expressed in the notes. Another technique commonly used is underlining. This should be resorted to clear, concise definitions or statements.

(vi) **Testing:** The next step is testing yourself. It is vital that you recall rather than just recognise the answers. This can be done by an essay or 'fill in the blank' type of test. This testing fixes the information more firmly in your mind so that you retain it better.

(vii) **Understanding:** The last principle of intensive reading is to be sure that you fully understand every important detail. You may do this by reviewing your summarising notes or by re-reading parts that are not clear.

It is emphasised that intensive reading is required to be done carefully with exact understanding of the text. Intensive reading is necessary for contracts, legal documents, application forms, etc.

■ 8. SQ3R Reading Method

SQ3R is a useful technique for fully absorbing written information. It helps you to create a good mental framework of a subject into which you can fit facts correctly. It helps you to set study goals. It also prompts you to use the review techniques that will help to fix information in your mind. By using this method, you can get the maximum benefit from your reading time.

■ 8.1 How to use SQ3R Method?

SQ3R stands for carrying out reading in five stages *viz.* survey, question, read, recall and review. These stages are explained as under:

(1) **Survey:** The first step in this is to read the title of the chapter which will help you to focus on the topic. Read the introduction and/or summary which orients you to how the chapter fits the author's purposes. Read the headings and sub-headings to create a framework in your mind before you begin to read. Read charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, if any, as these form a significant part of the text. Briefly go through introductory and concluding paragraphs and the summary.

(2) **Question:** Turn the title, headings and sub headings into questions and write them down and keep them handy as to read as you will be looking for the answers to your questions. For example, if you are reading a chapter to help you improve your study skills and the heading is "use a regular study area," the questions you might ask are "why should I have a regular study area", and "where should my regular study area be located", etc.? When your mind is actively searching for answers to questions, it becomes engaged in the learning process.

(3) **Read:** As you read the text, look for answers to your questions and jot them down. Note down more questions if necessary, which may crop up in your mind during reading. Well written textbooks often provide examples to further explain the main ideas. As you read the section, try to separate the details from the main idea but you may use the detail to help you understand the idea better.

(4) **Recall:** As you finish reading each section of the chapter, recall in your mind what you read and also look at the questions which you wrote down. See if you can answer those questions which you had jotted down while reading without looking at the answers. In case you are not able to recall the answers then re-read the section or the part of the section or the part of the section that deals with that question.

(5) **Review:** The review stage helps you to organise the material in your memory. This stage provides another opportunity for repetition of the material and hence will help to recall the information. This is done after you have finished reading the entire chapter using the survey, question, read, recall stages; go back over all your questions. Cover the answers to the questions you have developed and written down and see if you can still recall them. In case you still find it difficult to recall the answers, you need to re-read that section to refresh your memory and continue till such time you feel perfect and satisfied.

SQ3R is an excellent technique to use with text books that provide a lot of information and require you to learn the material in detail. Textbooks in many disciplines such as biology, psychology and sociology fall into this category. This technique is less useful with textbooks that focus on helping you solve problems viz. mathematics.

■ 9. Speed Reading

Speed reading can help you to read and understand written information much more quickly. This makes it an essential skill in any environment where you have to master large volumes of information quickly, as is the norm in fast-moving professional environments. What's more, it's a key technique to learn if you suffer from "information overload," because it helps you to become much more discriminating about the information that you consume.

Key Insight

The most important trick about speed reading is to know what information you want from a document before you start reading it. If you only want an outline of the issue that the document discusses, then you can skim the document quickly and extract only the essential facts. If you need to understand the real detail of the document, then you need to read it slowly enough to gain the full understanding you need.

You will get the greatest time savings from speed reading by learning to skim excessively detailed documents, although the techniques you'll learn will help you improve the speed of all the reading you do.

Technical Issues

Even when you know how to ignore irrelevant detail, there are other technical improvements you can make to your reading style which will increase your reading speed.

Most people learn to read the way young children read – either letter-by-letter or word-by-word. As an adult, this is probably not the way you read now. Just think about how your eye muscles are moving as you read this. You will probably find that you are fixing your eyes on one block of words, then moving your eyes to the next block of words, and so on. You are reading blocks of words at a time, not individual words one-by-one. You may also notice that you do not always go from one block to the next; sometimes you may move back to a previous block if you are unsure about something.

A skilled reader will read many words in each block. He or she will only dwell on each block for an instant, and will then move on. Only rarely will the reader's eyes skip back to a previous block of words. This reduces the

amount of work that the reader's eyes have to do. It also increases the volume of information that can be assimilated in a given period of time. A poor reader will become bogged down, spending a lot of time reading small blocks of words. He or she will skip back often, losing the flow and structure of the text, and confusing his or her overall understanding of the subject. This irregular eye movement makes reading wrong. Poor readers tend to falter reading, and they may find it harder to concentrate, and understand written information.

■ 9.1 How to Use Tool?

Speed reading aims to improve reading skills by

- **Increasing the number of words in each block**
This needs a conscious effort. Try to expand the number of words that you read at a time. With practice, you'll find you read faster. You may also find that you can increase the number of words in each block by holding the text a little further from your eyes. The more words you can read in each block, the faster you will read!
- **Reducing fixation time, that is, the length of time spent reading each block**
The minimum length of time needed to read each block is probably only a quarter of a second. By pushing yourself to reduce the time you take, you will get better at picking up information quickly. Again, this is a matter of practice and confidence.

- **Reducing skip-back to previous sentence(s)**
To reduce the number of times that your eyes skip back to a previous sentence, run a pointer along the line as you read. This could be a finger, or a pen or pencil. Your eyes will follow the tip of your pointer, smoothing the flow of your reading. The speed at which you read using this method will largely depend on the speed at which you move the pointer.

You will be able to increase your reading speed a certain amount on your own by applying these speed reading techniques.

What you don't get out of self-study is the use of specialist reading machines and the confidence gained from successful speed-reading—this is where a good one-day course can revolutionise your reading skills.

■ 9.2 Key Points

By speed reading you can read information more quickly. You may also get a better understanding of it, as you will hold more of it in short term memory. To improve the speed of your reading, read more words in each

block and reduce the length of time spent reading each block. Remember to use a pointer to smooth the way your eyes move and reduce skip-back.

■ 10.3C's of Reading Skill

The ideal reader is the engaged reader. The engaged reader gets top marks for each of the "3C's" as given below:

Commitment: An active desire to read well and benefit from reading. Attitude matters.

Concentration: Active attention to reading, using specific strategies for concentration.

Cognition: Active use of language and reasoning skills to follow the writer's ideas.

(1) **Commitment:** Reading is a skill, just like driving a car or playing a sport. You can improve any skill with the same three ingredients: a desire to improve, some good instruction or advice, and practice, practice, practice! If you seize the opportunity because your commitment to improve is strong, you will succeed.

Commitment is not something you either have or don't have. There are degrees of commitment. Commitment must show itself each day in the way that time and energy and thought are used to produce success. Your commitment to improve reading skills will be measured in how much more time you spend reading. Commitment needs to show itself in action.

(2) **Concentration:** Concentration is also an essential trait of the engaged reader. If you do not concentrate well when you read, then achieving greater concentration will be a necessary step to improving your reading skills. The desire to be more focused is part of the equation, but desire alone won't do the job. Concentration, like commitment requires action.

(3) **Cognition (and Metacognition):** If you are committed to improving reading skills and you concentrate while reading, then you will be able to use your cognitive abilities fully to comprehend what you read. Cognition refers to both what you know or perceive and the process of knowing or learning. So your cognitive abilities refer to your ability to read with understanding and to follow the development of ideas in a written passage.

Much of the time you read and reason 'automatically'. You are not aware of how you are using skills, you just do it. Often with a simple task of any kind, you indicate how easy it is by saying, "I can do this without even thinking." When given a more demanding or complex job, you need to think about how to complete it. This is time for **metacognition**.

Metacognition is made up of two words, *meta* and *cognition*. *Meta*, a Greek word means, 'beyond' or 'behind' or 'above'. The suggestion is of a higher or more general level of cognition, or what stands behind cognition. In other words, metacognition refers to the knowledge of cognition, to knowing what you know and how you know it—to understanding the process of knowing.

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What is reading?
Reading is the process of obtaining or constructing meaning from a word or a cluster of words.
2. What are the three steps in reading process?
(i) Prepare, (ii) Read, (iii) Response.
3. What are reading skills?
Reading skills enable readers to turn writing into meaning and achieve the goals of independence, comprehension and fluency.
4. What is word attack skill?
Word attack skill is the ability to convert graphic symbols into intelligible language.
5. What are comprehension skills?
Comprehension skills are the ability to use context and prior knowledge to aid reading and make sense of what one reads and hears.
6. What is Fluency skill?
Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is reading? Which elements you need to think about before reading in the reading context?
2. What are the various steps of reading process?
3. Explain briefly reading skills.
4. Write short notes on:
 - (i) Word attack skills
 - (ii) Comprehension skills
 - (iii) Fluency skills
 - (iv) Critical reading skills
 - (v) Extensive reading
 - (vi) Intensive reading

5. What is efficient reading strategy?
6. What is speed reading?

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. Explain various steps of reading process.
2. What are reading skills? Discuss.
3. What is comprehension skills? Explain certain points to improve reading comprehension.
4. Explain different eye movement patterns while reading.
5. Discuss efficient reading strategy.
6. What is SQ3R method? Explain how to use SQ3R method.
7. What is speed reading? Discuss various steps of speed reading.
8. Discuss 3C's of reading skill.

7

Speaking Skills

■ 1. Introduction

Communication has been the major ingredient for the upgradation of the apes into human beings. Before language and the science of semantics were developed, facial expressions and body movements were the most sought after means for communication. Slowly the language started shaping up and now we have countless dialects. Language is a medium that binds all human beings. Communication skills are an important forte and add a very significant dimension to the personality. When you communicate clearly and openly, you always make your wants, needs and doubts obvious. This clarity is essential to market and synchronizes yourself with other. You may not be that well qualified, but with good communication skills you can crack your interview and you can sell yourself convincingly. You then don't try to fill in a vacancy in a company but make a distinct place for yourself.

Some of the essential tips for communication include:

- Be clear, concise and straightforward.
- Keep your sentences short. This will avoid grammatical mistakes.
- Look into the eyes of the person you are speaking to. This gives a glimpse of your sincerity and dedication to the other person.
- Even if you slip up somewhere, maintain your calm, apologize and continue. Don't try to reanalyze such slip ups, because we wish to promote ourselves and not demote.

Therefore, communicate clearly, properly and openly, as after all the entire world doesn't know what you need. Does it?

We all know that it is not necessarily the brightest or most capable who gets ahead. Often it is those who make a strong impact on people who end up in positions to buy from them. People who speak well generally are considered more intelligent, forceful, and respectable than their counterparts, who cannot.

Outside the business world, you will continue to find chances to put your speaking skills to use—at club fund-raisers, on political issues, at farewell

gatherings for departing colleagues and friends, and on behalf of nonprofit organizations and causes. Speaking well is no longer just a nice-to-have skill—it is a must for the successful individual and particularly for the successful business owner.

2. Basic Steps

Speaking skills are essential to get that feeling when you know you have connected to your audience. These skills will make you more confident. The first step is—

(1) Know Your Audience

To reach the **audience** will require using a number of techniques and speaking styles.

What is the make up, backgrounds, and interests of the listeners? What keeps the individuals who will be listening awake at night?

It is necessary to understand some generalities and some specifics about those who will be listening. Reaching to those who will be your listeners requires knowing who they are, what their unique needs are and meeting those needs.

Listening Style

(a) **Learn the Listening Styles** of those you speak to. Everyone has different ways they listen. Learn more about these differences to enhance your speaking. This applies to speaking to one or speaking to one thousand people.

(b) **Speak to the Listening Style** of those who will hear you speak. Once you know the ways people listen, learn how to reach their style of listening with the words used in your public speaking.

The goal of these skills are conscious competence in your ability to speak to and reach those who will be listening to your message.

Each and every one of your listeners will be unique. Each will reach you something new. Each will move you towards perfection of public speaking.

(2) Speech Introductions

Speech introductions need to meet four criteria to be effective. They need to be:

- (i) Appropriate in Length
- (ii) Appropriate to the Audience's Understanding and Knowledge
- (iii) Appropriate to the Theme
- (iv) Arouse and Capture the Attention of the Audience

(i) Appropriate Length

How can appropriate length be determined for a speech introduction is one of the crucial points. Factors to consider would be the time allowed for the speech, the reason for the speech, the makeup of the audience. Some points should be considered like:

- Is the speech 5 minutes or 50 minutes?
- Is the introduction the first of a program with several speakers?
- Are other speakers using the same general theme?
- Are you the only speaker or is your part unique if one of several?

Who are your audience and what is their interest level?

As a general guideline, a speech introduction for a five minute speech should be no more than 30-50 seconds. An hour speech should be between 4 and 6 minutes if you're the only speaker.

Speech introduction should blend into the talk so smoothly that it is hard to determine when the introduction stops and the body begins. A speech introduction could be illustrated by a door. You take your audience to the door. This door is open or closed depending on their knowledge of the subject. You proceed to tell them what is on the other side you want to show them. Then you step aside and escort them into the room that is the body of your speech.

As you advance in skill, you will have them inside the room and they will not realize they even walked through the door.

(ii) Appropriate to the Audience's Understanding and Knowledge

Question to ask, is the audience knowledgeable on the subject? Is it a new concept? Is it an issue they agree with or are they opposed? Are you trying to persuade, motivate, or inform?

All of these will determine how you frame your speech introduction. To arouse interest requires meeting the audience on their level of interest. A group of college students will have different interests than a group of seasoned veterans in a particular career field.

In preparing any speech where you want to persuade, motivate or just give information, the underlying motivation of what you're doing is selling. The definition includes "to convince of" and "to be approved of." So a very basic question that begs to be asked, what are you really selling.

(iii) Appropriate to the Theme

Appropriate to theme can refer to being contextually in line with the theme of the speech. You can stretch and make anything analogous to anything else. Choosing to do so could be hazardous to your goal.

Appropriate will also refer to what is socially and culturally acceptable within the audience. If you are going to talk to a group of parents about children, a group more mature in age or high school students, the subject content of the introduction needs to be socially acceptable to the age and group.

Appropriate in subject matter is also important. If the theme is on death and dying, a lively and up beat introduction would not necessarily be respectful or fitting to the purpose or point of the speech.

(iv) Arouse and Capture the Attention of the Audience

The speech introduction needs to arouse and capture the interest of the audience in the subject.

This goal can be attained by showing the audience what's in it for them. Why is the subject of value to your audience? Why should they listen?

Sometimes the benefit is obvious by subject or title. It is still necessary to arouse interest. We have our minds occupied by many things, so by answering why the audience should give their valuable mind time to you (the speaker) in the speech.

The solution was well stated by **Dale Carnegie**, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, said, "The only way to influence someone is to find out what they want, and show them how to get it."

(3) Time

Limiting public speaking time is one of the more obscure speaker skills. It will separate the seasoned professionals from the rookie.

Most programs will have time schedules to follow. No speaker is so important that they should take liberty of the audiences time. So timing is an essential public speaking skill.

(i) Timing and the Introduction: The length of the introduction needs to be appropriate to the length of the talk. The timing of the introduction is determined by the length.

For a 5 to 6 minute talk, the introduction needs only be about a minute. A 15 minute talk could be 2 minutes. A 45 to 60 minute talk could stretch out to 5-6 minutes.

(ii) Timing and the Conclusion: The length of the conclusion is usually slightly less than that of the introduction. So a 5-6 minute introduction will have a four to five minute conclusion.

(iii) Body Timing: If our talk is 45 minutes, the introduction and conclusion take up a combined total of 10 minutes. This leaves 35 minutes for the body.

(iv) How to Manage Timing: When practicing, most speakers find that they have too much material to convey. The easiest solution they resort to

is to talk faster, but this is actually a blunder they commit that comprises effectiveness of their speech. Although people can listen fast, the ability to assimilate the information depends on individual listener.

The very first step is start editing. Cut everything that is extra and not to the point. Make the talk edit tightly focused on your theme and your most wanted response.

Check your timing. You might be right on or a bit over. If a bit more than edit some more.

Like the concept of white space in art and advertising, there needs to be a silent space in your talk. Time to allow reflection and thought on what you are saying. Time to absorb what you share.

Your pauses need only be a few seconds each. Speak with a slower pace, and you may still have too much material. Edit some more.

Now practice, practice, practice. Practice it to get it in your head. More importantly, practice is for getting it in your heart. Practice speaking from your heart to reach the heart of the audience. And for the sake of this skill, practice for limiting public speaking time to the amount allotted for your talk.

(4) Accurate Pronunciation

Proper pronunciation requires use of the right sounds when vocalizing a word and stressing the right syllable. It requires knowing the proper way of saying a word in the region where it is used and accepted by the majority of native speakers.

Proper articulation involves the correct use of sounds for each letter or grouping of letters. The challenge arises when common rules are ignored due to local custom, slang or uneducated pronunciation.

Certain expressions including their mispronunciation become accepted in local language. Since these expressions have a relationship to the way we pronounce words, the question becomes what consideration should be given to using colloquialisms.

Speaking skill requires knowing colloquialisms, local expressions and ways of pronouncing words. It requires knowing their use. Even though you may never say them, the ability to communicate with them may have a profound significance.

(5) Clear Speech

Clear speech is the result of distinct use of the vocal cords. It is essential when giving a lecture. It's also important in our every day conversation. Related to pronunciation, it is the proper use of vocal cords, mouth, tongue, lungs and mind. Indistinct speech can result from slurring

words, speaking in a muffled voice, running words together, dropping endings and just failure to enunciate words or groups of words.

(i) Tense Voice, High Pitch

When we are strained, our vocal cords like other muscles in the body tighten up. The result is a higher pitched voice. Although ours may be technically clear speech, the tension when felt by the audience results in distraction from your message. A tensed voice will sound higher than a normal relaxed voice.

The other end of the spectrum is a distressed voice. Some have developed a habit of speaking in a distressed voice as part of their normal conversation.

It is when you speak with the throat muscles tensed and the voice projected from lower in the neck. It happens when there is not enough air in the lungs to make the speech organs work properly.

The speech rather than resonating in the mouth, comes from the throat and sounds deeper, raspy and forced. So even though you have clear speech, it is indistinct.

Indistinct speech could be caused by failure to open the mouth enough or too much. Rigidity in the jaw muscles and or lips could contribute. This rigidity could come from nervousness or from habit.

Speaking too fast could likewise result from nervousness or from habit. It will make speech difficult to grasp. Unlike playing a recording at a fast speed, it inhibits the ability to enunciate the words and speak clearly.

Slurring words or running them together can be the result of a learned behaviour or cultural behaviour. It also includes dropping syllables indiscriminately or discriminately. These have to be corrected to become a clear speech speaker.

Another clear speech challenge some are faced with are structural defects in the mouth, throat and nose can also result in a lack of clear speech. For some, this is a challenge since birth.

(ii) Try Stretching Exercises

It is good to stretch the facial muscles. When you move your face and jaw muscles in a stretching motion, you loosen them up. Additionally, you send the signal to the brain that they are going to be used. There have been numerous studies on muscle memory. The mind/muscle connection is a powerful tool to use.

Stretch your vocal cords, like a singer warming up, practice your voice range. Instead of singing, you will use words and letters. Start with the vowel sounds. Then progress to brief phrases or sayings. Do these at

warm up prior to your speaking. This will enhance your ability to speak clearly.

Not to be underestimated is the value of taking deep breaths through the nose and exhaling out of the mouth. This floods your brain with fresh oxygen. Clear speech starts in the mind, which feeds on oxygen among other things.

Don't forget, in addition to the vocal cords and tongue, the face, jaw muscles and lips also play a part in speech. Stretch and relax these as well. Make use of tape recorders when self improving.

(6) Fluency

Fluency is the quality of speaking so that words and thoughts flow from your mouth in a gentle stream.

Some of the verb synonyms of fluency are flow, run and pour. Think of the words coming from your mouth in that fashion. It has to do with learning control.

Speaking skills would require learning to have control of what we say and the way we present our message.

Lack of control can be described like a percolator, words bubbling up with brief interruptions grouping for more words. At other times we may be lost for words when the kettle is dry. It results in out grouping for what to say or how to say it. It can happen to the best of speakers. When a lack of this quality develops into a practice, public speaking becomes an impossibility.

(i) Lack of Flow

The cause of a lack of flow can be divided into three areas:

(i) Mental preparation, (ii) Speech preparation, (iii) Delivery.

Most of us can relate to or have seen or been in the need for mental preparation. Have you ever known someone who is always groping for the right words to say? If caught in such a situation you find yourself listening to painfully long explanations. Once the other person is finished if you were able to last that long, you summed it up by saying, "you mean" and then state it in one sentence.

At other times you will impatiently say, "Can you get to the point?" They unfortunately are getting to the point! The solution and how to reprogram them can be learned by from a study of neuro-linguistic programming. The challenge faced is that they are trying to get to the point while expressing themselves. They are just not very good at it.

(ii) The Challenge

Always look at what you say and think of how you could have said it simpler without compromising what you were saying. Lack of a natural flow of speech can come from several causes that could be separated into three general areas.

(i) Mental preparation problems often stem from the use of grammar

(a) It can include inadequate or improper use of punctuation, (b) lack of understanding or misuse of the 8 parts of speech, (c) being unfamiliar with words, (d) lack of clear thinking, (e) timidity and uncertainty.

Reason is the resolutions of these challenges are simply education and/or preparation.

(ii) In the *preparation of a speech*, the ability to be fluent can become a challenge. This is due to (a) not developing the material in a logical manner, (b) unfamiliar terminology, (c) weak vocabulary or use of words not commonly spoken, (d) poor word choice, (e) lack of preparation.

The solution is again better preparation and self education.

(iii) The third area where this public speaker skill could be lost is in the *delivery*. This could be due to (a) lack of preparation, (b) misuse of pausing, (c) improper use of sense stress, (d) word whiskers.

The solution again lies in better preparation (practice) education.

(7) Word Whiskers

Word whiskers are like flies in the soup of your fluid smooth flowing speech. They are called by many names. How can you eliminate these word mannerisms from your vocabulary?

These are the extra little phrases like little whiskers that need to be shaved off from our speech. Words like 'uh', 'an uh', 'now', 'and now', and then, and 'you see, constitute the common word whiskers.'

These are almost unconsciously added to each sentence or phrase. It detracts from the substance of the speech and the effectiveness of the speaker.

We should understand the basic wool cause of why we do it. Our brain is following it's programming. Actually it is a mental programming. It is telling us we must talk all the time. It is like our brain says, "If I am not talking, something must be wrong. Therefore, I must talk, even if I have to say, 'and uh'."

So the very thing we are programmed to do, be fluent, ends up being the cause of losing the smooth flow of thought within our speech.

The slowing down and/or using pausing, will effectively help you replace the uh's, and uh, and other whiskers with a pause. Just pause and breathe when you find yourself wanting to move on to the next thought.

It is physical in that we use muscles of our mouth, face, throat and diaphragm. They too need to be reprogrammed for the speech to flow naturally. That programming comes automatically with the mental programming. Practice mentally giving your lecture. Picture or imagine yourself coming to the end of the phrase or sentence and when you stop, the transition will be a pause where a deep breath is taken.

That pause and deep breath can replace any mistake you make when practicing. Simply stop, rewind the script in your mind, and play it back.

The only thing, that code in your brain needs to be read as pause, deep breath. The pause and deep breath do something for the brain. It makes it feel good.

(8) Pausing

Pausing in a presentation is like a pit stop for the mind. It is a stop for both your mind and the mind of your listeners. It allows you to punctuate what you are saying, transition into new thoughts, emphasize and add drama. It is a way to deal with circumstances and most of all for the audience to have time to mentally respond.

Imagine going on a coast to coast trip, in your car, never stopping to stretch your legs, eat or other necessities. You would not be a very happy traveller. Those breaks, keep you alert and fresh. They prevent blood clots from prolonged sitting without movement.

When we deliver our speech, we take our audience on a mental trip.

(i) A Break for the Mind

A break for the mind could amount to several parts of a second split into a thousand parts. We think at about 400 words a minute. The average rate of speaking is about 125 words a minute. Our think to speak ratio doesn't mean we have a license to talk nonstop. For an informational, motivational, or persuasive speech, the little pit stops allow the mind to stop and smell the roses of your speech. Or it may be stopping to eat a bite of mental food. That brain food it eats, your speech, needs to be digested.

Since the brain is running at 400 words and our mouth at 125 words a minute, our goal is to monopolize on the balance of the remaining 275 words. We want to capture that ability to process those extra words. Remember to eat is not to digest or process.

To be effective, that processing needs to be on our speech. It needs to be processing on the words we use. Otherwise all 400 words will be used up by other programs running in the brain if our talk is of no interest or even boring.

Use the pausing pit stop. Pauses serve several purposes that work as a mental pit stop for both speaker and listeners.

(ii) Reasons for Pausing

- to punctuate
- for transitions
- for emphasis and drama
- for audience to mentally respond
- for circumstances

Pausing to punctuate is a simple grammatical rule. Know the rule and you will know when to pause.

(iii) The Sentence Stop Sign

Period (.) is the stop sign. This is where the voice takes a downward turn in tonality or inflection if you're making a statement. A question would take an upward turn.

The stop sign, is the point to allow your audience to pause. It is slightly more for a general question and less for a general statement.

(iv) Other Sentence Traffic Signs

Comma (,) the pause is more slight allowing for more information of the same thought. Quotations (") tells your audience it is someone's statement. A strong pause should set them off. Many experienced speakers avoid using or gesturing air quotes. Rather they make the quotes with their voice.

(v) Pausing for Transitions

These pauses, usually a bit longer than a punctuated pause, allow for the mental traffic of all that has been said to clear for the next traffic to pass through. The transitions should be few so, these should be too.

(vi) How Long, How Often ?

If the pause lasts too long, it will appear as if you don't know what to say next.

Three seconds for transitions should suffice. You want to get to the point where you can look at the audience and feel what they feel as you speak and as you pause. Also make sure you do not do it too often. It may make the talk drag.

This is where your audience will process what they have heard. Even though we can process 400 words a minute doesn't mean we can remember 400 words. We remember thoughts. As best, your audience will only remember 15-25% of what you say. It benefits your audience by allowing time for the mind to process what is being said. It benefits the speaker too. If asking a question, your stopping allows you a second to look at your audience. It gives you a second to physically and mentally take a deep breath.

The trap—a general human reasoning is that the more we talk, the smarter we sound. That is a fallacy. If what we have to say is important, allow time for it to sink in. So make it stand out. Too many words spoken with out adequate pausing is usually a sign of too much material.

(vii) For Emphasis and Drama

This is a really a long pause. It will be limited to truly significant statements. This is not something that would be used in every speech you give. It allows for anticipation by the audience for something to be said. It also allows the audience to take in what has been said.

(viii) Pausing for Audience to Mentally Respond

The biggest aspect of motivational and persuasive speaking is power statements and power questions. To enhance the informational speech, questions are included to open the storage bins of the listeners mind for the information you wish to place inside. Questions need answers. If you want to give answers, they need to be ready to receive them. You need to allow time for them to process the question. If you give an answer, they need time to process and decide what they will do with it. If we remember 15% of what we hear, of the 400 words we can process a minute, only 60 will be remembered. Allow some time for that to sink in their memory.

(ix) Pausing for Circumstances

You may face interruptions that will require a pause. To keep talking would often be useless as the audience will be distracted anyway. Interruptions may be a baby crying, a loud truck or train passing, a jet flying overhead. Although rare, interruptions do happen. If you cannot raise your voice to compensate, then it is time to pause. Another similar interruption can be cross talking which needs to be stopped.

(9) Volume

Proper public speaking volume is speaking loud enough for your objective, your material, your purpose and your circumstances. Without proper volume your audience will not be able to hear you. Too much will be irritating. There may be circumstances and parts of your

speech that are more appropriate to increase how loud you speak. Done effectively, it can enhance the speech. If at the wrong time, it could make the audience uncomfortable.

(10) Sense Stress

Sense stress is the adding of increased or decreased tonal inflection when speaking. Appropriate sense stress is important to conveying ideas properly. It does more than keep speech from being monotone. It requires the right inflection on the right words or phrases in order to emphasize the message you wish to deliver.

To best understand it, read the example given below notice **how the meaning of the sentence changes** each time you say it.

The given sentences below have the same 8 words within. Read each sentence emphasizing the word in **bold**. Progressively each next word will get emphasized. Notice the change in the meaning.

- I didn't say you stole the candy bar.
- I **didn't** say you stole the candy bar.
- I didn't **say** you stole the candy bar.
- I didn't say **you** stole the candy bar.
- I didn't say you **stole** the candy bar.
- I didn't say you stole the **candy** bar.
- I didn't say you stole the candy **bar**.

Inadequate or improper **sense stress** can result in an obscure meaning of the information you present. The ability to persuade or motivate is severely hampered. Even worse, you may lose the audience when their thoughts go elsewhere.

(11) Voice Modulation

In addition to stressing certain words, coupled with adjustment of pace, pitch, power and volume are also required to be incorporated into another important skill *viz.* voice modulation. It is true and a fact that voice is God gifted. Another fact is that it can be trained as per will. Nobody is a born singer or narrator or voice artist but he/she can be trained enough to modulate, vary and able to perform for the required event or performance.

Modulating to Match Emotions

Properly projecting emotions in a talk requires modulating the appropriate parts of the talk. You should know how to provide variations and modulation in your voice. You should be fluent but not monotonous as this may create boredom in your audience.

Generally speaking, most people know the appropriate tone, pace, volume and power to speak for any given emotion.

Anger, fear, urgency or conviction usually require an increase in power and increase in volume. Some successfully increase the power and lower the volume and effectively move audiences. Although there are no hard and fast rules, the important thing is consistency.

For curiosity/interest slowing down (pace) can build suspense or anticipation.

Disgust might call for increased power and lower tone to make a strong statement or decreased power and higher tone to make it less accusatory.

Sadness may call for a lower tone of voice to share warmth and feeling. Surprise could call for a higher tonal quality equal to the excitement and enthusiasm felt.

(12) Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is an exceptional excitement, interest or devotion expressed through and in the way words are used.

To be excited about your subject will make your speech come alive and capture the attention of your audience. That not only makes you more persuasive or motivational, it makes you a more interesting speaker.

Your audience gets a wonderful experience. You increase your ability to meet or exceed objective of your presentation. This speaking skill is what makes this all possible.

So how do you achieve something great in your speech?

- First consider your audience. Ask yourself:
 - Why does the audience need to hear this?
 - What's in it for them?
 - How will it help them?

If it is relevant, real, and can benefit the audience then sharing your emotional connection with the subject will give you an edge. So share and tell them with passion and excitement.

Enthusiasm is reflected in:

- facial expressions
- voice
- gestures
- the words you use.

Facial expressions—is it exciting, great news, new or beneficial? Let these show in the facial expressions you use in speaking to the audience.

Gestures—this would be the time to be more demonstrative with your gestures. **Words you use**—Use words that show your emotional feeling towards the subjects. Be careful not to be too familiar. Instead of just

saying it to be of incredible benefit, show why it is so beneficial. Subjective expressions like big, fantastic, loud, soft, and so on are all subject to personal interpretation. Share why you find it to be these things based on your personal experience. **Get your emotions involved in the subject of your speech.** Show your excitement, your interest, your devotion, your passion in whatever your subject is.

According to Ralph Waldo Emerson "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

(13) Naturalness

Naturalness is defined as, "Something that is a part of or produced by nature." It would be something inherent, something not produced artificially or conditioned.

This speech skill is not meant to give approval to use slang. Proper pronunciation and diction is still required.

Naturalness is managing balance. Balance of spontaneity, not being overly formal or overly familiar. Balance being alive and fresh with maintaining dignity and proper decorum.

Using appropriate words in the presentation is important to reaching the audience. The challenge lies in giving so much attention to this detail that the speaker becomes stiff, formalistic. It results in some needing to even read the speech with teleprompter. The resulting loss of sound real. The results in a loss of attention of some of the audience. The solution lies in giving attention to the concept and thoughts and not the exact wording. This can be done by using an outline instead of a manuscript or various types of manuscripts we may create. If the areas of your speeches that require exact use of words are few, being natural will be easier to attain. The goal is to be free of artificiality, affectation. So if you do not talk overly precise in ordinary conversation, don't do it during your speech. If you do talk in overly precise in every day speech, then learn to be more natural and don't use it in your public speaking. It may impress a few. If that is your goal, you will have an easy time to reach it. It will be of little lasting value to the audience. If you want to attain perfection, it will take much longer and be more difficult. The rewards will be immense.

Dynamic Dilemma

Some speeches call for dynamics. You may need to have larger than life gestures. You may need to increase pace, pitch or power for some sections. You may want to turn up the enthusiasm and increase feeling. For numerous reasons you may need to raise the volume. Perhaps as the last speaker of the day you might even have to drop a verbal bomb by making an excessively loud statement at some point. Good speakers do

this rarely and effectively when a number in the audience are drawn from a long day of lectures or a big lunch. It requires being able to read the audience and being in tune to the personality of the audience. The most self serving thing you can do is serve others. The most self satisfying thing you can do is be selfless. If your motivation, goal, and desires are to draw attention to yourself, only looking at it from the 'what's in it for me' view point, that is all you will get. If you look at your audience and give yourself selflessly, you will receive far more than you could ever imagine or dream of.

(14) Gestures

Some gestures have one meaning in one country and entirely different meaning in other countries. Sometimes entirely different meanings for each country. Users beware, not only could you alienate and lose your audience, you could lose your life in some countries. It might be good to consider the power of this unique body language. They can move audience and improve your ability to speak. They can enhance your ability to attain rapport with your audience. They can make the words you use have even more power and be significantly meaningful.

(1) **Most Used Hand-Gestures:** Some of the most common hand signals can have catastrophic consequences in other countries. A basic rule of a skilled speaker is there is never a need to use obscene or foul speech. The same goes for speaking with our hands.

(2) **Other Nonverbal-Gesture:** Not all is said with our hands. We can also speak with our arms, face, feet and eyes. As a matter of fact, without even knowing it, you could inadvertently dishonour someone with a very common body posturing.

(15) Public Speaking Mannerisms

Public speaking mannerisms are defined as habitual gestures, a particular way of speaking or an idiosyncrasy. It could be a behaviour or way of thought that others would think peculiar. You may have read studies that say it is impossible to do more than one thing at the same time. Our brains process and perform only one thing at a time. You may feel you cannot do two things at the same time.

Here is the problem with this thinking. Piano players do three things at once. If you count their facial expressions and body mannerism they actually do five things at once. Left and right hand playing keys, foot pumping away and the face and body doing their things.

So if you want to think you cannot do two things then there is no need to read any further. Be positive and think positively.

The key here is not letting the body do something out of nervousness. The goal is to keep the body in control.

(16) Analogy, Stories, Examples and Illustration

Analogy, illustrations, stories and examples are powerful ways to pump up your speech. They can stir the emotions, stimulate thinking, persuade a change in thought and motivate to action. Because of the way our minds work, they are a great tool to enable the audience to remember the speech.

Analogies, illustrations, and examples can be from life or fiction. They work best if they have some emotional or spiritual significance and reach the intellect of the listeners. They go beyond logic in motivating and persuading.

Emotions on the other hand have greater power to move individuals. If both intellect and emotions are addressed, you have a one-two punch that will help you succeed.

(17) Dress

Most people figure that they have to "dress for success" at their speeches, and that's not always the case. Your dress gives you credibility and respect. Your sense of dressing up conveys who you are, that is if you wear the right clothes and wear them wisely. It communicates a message of professionalism, seriousness and sophistication. There are times when you are required to put on your best business suit and if you show up in a battered jeans and a sweatshirt, no one would take you seriously. You should be adequately and appropriately dressed, avoid over dressing or under dressing. Your dress should be according to the climate and season in which you should feel confident and comfortable. Looking the right way also helps to alleviate some stress if you are feeling uptight, at about giving your speech. The fact of the matter is that when you deliver a speech with passion and vibrance your audience will appreciate it and not give the way you look a second thought, but you should look appropriate nonetheless. You must use your best judgement of proper attire.

The effect our dress has on us has to do with the force that actuates your mind. It is renewed or energized with the feeling you get from new clothes. The way you dress will affect the way you perform.

(18) Speech Outline

Rather than writing out the entire speech word for word, an outline is a brief organization of the main thoughts of a speech. Writing an outline is unfortunately, a step many skip. The most common excuse is simply "no time". Whereas time spent on an outline is time well spent. It is necessary

to ensure that you craft a coherent and focussed presentation. An outline is a blue print for your presentation. It highlights the key logical elements i.e., what points are being made to logically support the core message as also the key structural elements e.g., introduction, body, conclusion, stories, personal examples and other concepts. It links these elements in a sequence for smooth flow of the presentation or a speech. In giving a speech from an outline, it allows the speaker to speak from the heart. It prevents the speaker being tied to or even worse reading the speech.

Outline Principles

- (i) **Theme:** A theme or subject is the central idea you want to convey in your speech. A theme may be given or you could be allowed to prepare your own. Thinking about the theme requires thinking of the audience. After all, it is for their benefit and not yours. This is the thread that will run from the introduction to the conclusion of your speech outline.
- (ii) **Research:** With these objectives and needs in mind, research your topic. Gather relevant information. Remember, you are not looking for colourful points to share, you are looking to benefit your audience by fulfilling your purpose. Analyze which of the points when analyzed seem to best benefit the audience within the purpose of your speech outline theme. Some may be supportive of main points. Others may be interesting. A few may be main points. Select separate main and supportive points. Arrange, at this point you can arrange your material in the most appropriate manner. It could be chronological order, or it could be in natural sequential order.
- (iii) **The Introduction:** Next, create an introduction that will capture the attention of your audience. Depending on your purpose, you would use the power words that will help you accomplish your goal here.
- (iv) **Conclusion:** A review of the main points. Most importantly, tell the audience what you want them to do with the information. Motivate them to act and see for themselves that what you conveyed indeed works.

(19) Rapport

Rapport is a process of building a sustaining relationship of mutual trust, harmony and understanding. Rapport is achieved through your ability to be on the same wavelength and to connect mentally and emotionally with persons. Building a rapport does not imply that you have to agree with others' ideas always, but it definitely implies that you need to understand others' view point genuinely and without any ambiguity. You need to take interest in getting to know what's important to the other person. Start to understand them rather than expecting them to understand you first.

To create emotional similarity or natural personal attraction, mirror the style of words they use. Don't use words above or below their socio-economic level. Talk and use the words as if you were one of them. Don't imitate colloquialisms unless you're a native speaker.

Consider the words to use to build rapport with an audience. The ones they will want to hear. But don't over do it so much that you appear familiar unless you are. Act as though you're a guest who has been told to make oneself at home but still recognizing that you're a guest. One caveat, if they are not outgoing and friendly, still use a friendly conversational style. Be friendly but tone it down. Use expressions and words that express the commonality of viewpoints. This is one of the reasons it is important to know your audience.

Building great rapport requires that you pace other people. If you wish to catch a running train, you need to run the same speed at which the train is moving and then jump on it. In the event your speed is less than the moving train, it is likely that you'd fall off. Rapport building is an easy skill to learn and is extremely valuable in both your personal and business life.

(20) Coherence Through Connectives

Coherence is the quality of a text which hangs together in terms of its meaning. In a coherent text, it becomes clear how each part is intended to relate to other parts.

Logical order and good arrangement results in a speech that is easy to follow. It makes it easier to recall the speech and to heed the call to action. Coherence also makes the mind of the audience to stay tuned for text next thought.

When the thoughts of the topic do not blend well with logical development and simple arrangement, coherence through connectives the means to make it logical.

Coherence comes from the root cohere which means to stick or hold together, to be logically connected and to cause or to form a united orderly whole. Coherence, therefore, is defined as the orderly or logical relationship of parts making up the whole.

Connectives are words such as 'but', 'if' and 'therefore' which indicate logical relations between two clauses or sentences. They belong to three different words classes:

- Coordinating conjunctions: *but, and, or*
- Subordinating conjunctions: *if, because, until, etc.*
- Adverbs: *therefore, nevertheless, then, meanwhile, etc.*

For the mind of the audience, the communication of coherence through connectives is the easiest as they simply act as the instrument that splice one thread to the next. Rather than a knot that would create a speed bump for the mind. A splice would allow the smooth transition from one thought to the next.

This thought transition prevents rambling from one disjointed thought to the next. If a speech is coherent, the introduction, body and conclusion will be spliced together. One thread will run from beginning to end.

The thread will have the main points and thoughts spliced as if end to end. Even individual sentences will be connected by transitional expressions or thoughts. The result will be a logical easy to follow thought process. Coherence can be attained by using transitional expressions or words and by bridges of transitional thoughts.

When More than Words are Required

Sometimes more is required than transitional words. Sometimes a bridge is required to connect consecutive thoughts. This the bridge splice that gets from one thought to the next. The transitional bridge can be accomplished in two ways.

The first may require expressing the transition in a sentence or an entire thought.

The second way of transitioning can result from making the application of the preceding thought a part of the introduction of the next thought. Don't just limit it to consecutive thoughts. Remember, coherence through connectives implies a connection from beginning to end.

Then make the end tie into the beginning creating coherence from beginning to end and tying them together.

(21) Profanity

The use of abusive, vulgar or irreverent words in our communication, act or even in our body language is termed as profanity. It is unfortunate that our standards of code of conduct are relaxing to a large extent. Words which were a taboo to be used earlier are now being used without any second thought. Use of these words does not fit into any demographic model. In the past these were used by the poorest and least cultured in society, now these can be heard from all kinds of people including women and children. Originally profanity had reference to blasphemy, sacrilege, and using God's name in vain. Today it also includes derogatory, sexual and racist expressions. It can be referred to as swear words, curse words, dirty words, four letter words.

There does seem to be some correlation with socioeconomic groups and usage. People who watch cable TV, soldiers, people who work as blue collar labour in large cities tend to be among the offenders. It is important to consider and it is absolutely necessary that in our communication we:

- Do not use profanity.
- Do not use swear words.
- Do not use vulgar language.
- Do not use irreverent language.
- Do not use sarcasm.
- Do not use abusive speech.

With the persuasive use of profanity in the world around us, why not be different. Don't use it at all in private speech and especially in public speaking. It will be a benefit in how your audience perceives you and speaks around you.

(22) Dynamic Range in Public speaking

The basic goal of public speaking is to put your thoughts across to your audience for them to listen, assimilate and fully understand that you intend to convey. Once this is achieved then it can be said that you are connected to your audience.

In public speaking dynamic range involves mastering all the speaker skills. Five speaker skills are perhaps the most important.

Pace, Pitch and Power

Volume

Modulation

Pace, Pitch and Power: Pace is how fast you speak or your speaking speed. The goal of mastering pace is to speak at varying speeds depending upon the content, importance and ability of the audience to absorb what is being conveyed. You need to go slow when you are giving out new concepts, emphasise an idea, essential facts and figures, etc. Similarly, you may pick up pace when reviewing familiar material, details or information that can be given out but are required to be covered or information that repeats or points to the same conclusion. Pitch is the intonation given to a word when spoken. It also refers to the overall tonal quality of the voice. The size of our vocal chords determine high or lower tonal quality. Another aspect is smaller the body higher the voice. Using variations in intonations can convey surprise, change a statement into a question or express information flow.

Mastering your public speaking voice power can seem the most different to master of the 3 P's. Think of the time you heard someone screaming. The untrained voice is not able to maintain stability when excess power is used. However, the same human voice can sing in a dynamic range and maintain the audible tonal quality.

To practice pace, pitch and power, read a book out loud. Read a page at a dull, slow monotone. Then read a page as fast as you can while still enunciating the words. A third page reading can include going from the lowest low to the highest high in a wave of high to low to high again. This is just getting you warmed up. This is the pace part of pace, pitch and power.

Next is the Pitch. Read the same page in a slow dull monotone but read it at the high end of your vocal range. Then at the low end of your range. Then like a wave from high to low and back again.

Repeat the process at a moderate pace, going through the three steps of pace, fast, slow and the wave.

Repeat the process at a fast pace. Go as fast as you can, being careful to enunciate each word rather than slurring words.

Next add the power. Reading as slow as possible while still sounding like your reading and not saying a list of words, use your lowest voice add the softest power you can to your speech while keeping your speech above a whisper.

Then read with the same pace and pitch, only add a bit more power. Finally, really bellow it out as powerful as you can without making it sound garbled.

Learn to use power with each of the various paces and pitches available in your vocal range.

Next move the volume from a whisper to as loud as possible while maintaining a natural voice. While giving a speech, you need to adjust the volume of your delivery which is appropriate to the material and circumstances. Care needs to be exercised that your words are comfortably heard by the audience. It should neither be too high nor too low. Before you commence speaking, invariably check from the people in the last row whether or not they are comfortable with the volume of your voice.

Finally, modulation, the hardest to add to the mix. Add it to each of the other speaker skills. Move through your practice reading where appropriate from one pace to another, one pitch to another. Practice varying the power and volume as well.

It is only by working through the progression of range of voice that the muscles in the mouth, larynx, and diaphragm can distinguish the difference and start to learn muscle memory.

Yes, your muscles have a memory. Once they are trained, your talent will be almost subconscious. This does not mean you do not have to practice. This does not exclude you from warming up and getting the muscles feeling normal as they go through the paces.

Learning the speech is not enough. Warm up is essential before every speech you give.

This is what will separate the good from the great.

■ Conclusion

In short, speaking is an important method for communicating knowledge and expressing ideas. It is a primary medium for presenting and selling product and ideas. Being able to verbally communicate effectively to other individuals or to groups is essential in schools, colleges, business as well as your personal life.

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What are the four basic criteria of a speech introduction?

Ans. (i) Appropriate in Length.

(ii) Appropriate to the Audience's Understanding and Knowledge.

(iii) Appropriate to the Theme.

(iv) Arouse and Capture the Attention of the Audience.

2. Define fluency.

Ans. Fluency is the quality of speaking so that words and thoughts flow from your mouth in a gentle stream.

3. What are word whiskers?

Ans. Word whiskers are the extra little phrases like 'uh', 'an', 'uh', 'now', etc. that need to be shaved off from our speech.

4. What is pausing in a presentation?

Ans. It is like a pit stop for the mind. It allows you to punctuate what you are saying, transition into new thoughts, emphasize and add drama.

5. What is sense stress in speaking?

Ans. Sense stress is the adding of increased or decreased tonal inflection when speaking.

6. What is profanity?

Ans. The use of abusive, vulgar or irreverent words in our communication, act or even in our body language is termed as profanity.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. Why is it necessary to know your audience before you are delivering a speech?

2. How time is a major factor in public speaking?

3. What are 'word whiskers' in speaking?

4. "Naturalness" is an art in public speaking. Explain.

5. Write short notes on

(a) Pronunciation in public speaking

(i) Sense stress

(iii) Enthusiasm

(iv) Public speaking mannerisms

(v) Dress, while public speaking

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. Speech introduction is one of the major step of speaking skill. Discuss.

2. How fluency effect your speaking skill?

3. Explain why pausing is so important to your delivery.

4. What do you mean by voice modulation?

5. What is the significant role of 'gestures' in public speaking.

6. Explain the phrase "coherence through connectives".

7. Public speaking dynamic range involves mastering five skills. What are these skills? Explain.

8. Write an essay on speaking skills.

8

Public Speaking, Voice Modulation and Body Language

1. Introduction

Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured deliberate manner intended to inform, influence or entertain the listeners. The purpose of public speaking can range from simply transmitting information or motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. Good speakers are able to change the emotions of their listeners and not just inform them. Public speaking can also be considered as a discourse community. Interpersonal communication and public speaking have several components that embrace such things as motivational speaking, leadership/personal development, business, customer service, large group communication and mass communication. Many times our public speaking skills make the difference between success or failure of our endeavour. Public speaking is an art which can be developed by continuous practice.

Throughout history, public speakers have been keenly aware of the importance of dynamic delivery. Prophets, poets, philosophers and storytellers have practiced through the ages to capture the minds and imagination of their audiences. Even the most powerful speech can be ruined by a poor delivery, whereas a mediocre speech can have the desired effect if delivered in a dynamic way.

2. Understand What You Want to Achieve

Before you start working on your talk or presentation, it's vital that you really understand what you want to say, who you want to tell and why they might want to hear it. To do this, ask yourself: **Who? What? How? When? Where? Why?**

Who are you speaking to? What are their interests, presuppositions and values? What do they share in common with others? How are they unique?

What do you wish to communicate? One way of answering this question is to ask yourself about the 'success criteria'. How do you know if and when you have successfully communicated what you have in mind?

How can you best convey your message? Language is important here, as are the nonverbal cues discussed earlier. Choose your words and your nonverbal cues with your audience in mind. Plan a beginning, middle and end. If time and place allow, consider and prepare audio-visual aids.

When? Timing is important here. Develop a sense of timing, so that your contributions are seen and heard as relevant to the issue or matter at hand. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. It's better to be silent than sing a bad tune.

Where? What is the physical context of the communication in mind? You may have time to visit the room, for example, and rearrange the furniture. Check for availability and serviceability if you are using audio or visual aids.

Why? In order to convert hearers into listeners, you need to know why they should listen to you—and tell them if necessary. What disposes them to listen? That implies that you know yourself why you are seeking to communicate—the value or worth or interest of what you are going to say.

3. Uncomfortable Phase

Believe it or not but public speaking tops the list of phobias. Most people fear not spiders or lights, but to speak in public!

Your body will do all kinds of unpleasant things to you when you have to stand up and face a sea of faces with the hope of getting your message across in a compelling and interesting way. Your hands may sweat and your mouth goes dry, your knees may shake and a quaver affects your voice. Your heart may race and those well known butterflies invade your stomach.

When all that happens most people don't think of getting their message across in a compelling and interesting way, they think of getting off the 'stage' as quickly as possible!

Speaking in public tends to become a rather stressful task for many. In fact, even the best of speakers tend to go through those few moments of anxiety and stage fright just before getting onto the stage or podium to address their audience.

3.1 Stage Fright

Stage fright or speech tension, has for years been defined as a fear of the situation. Today, most communication scholars believe that these physiological responses are caused by anxiety rather than fear. Fear is a spontaneous response, whereas anxiety involves the anticipation of an event. Fear is usually provoked by an outside stimulus, while anxiety stems from insecurities within a person. Before giving a speech many of us feel nervous because we are concerned with and unsure of the outcome. Some of us start to destroy our own confidence before speaking assignments are due by telling ourselves, "I can't do this, no body is interested in what I have to say," etc. We need to find ways to build our confidence instead of tearing it down.

3.2 Signs of Discomfort

Few people can approach an audience without some feeling of discomfort. For others, facing an audience is terrifying. In traditional rankings, speaking before an audience is rated the most fearful thing some people do.

Signs of discomfort are universally experienced. The heart rate increases, blood pressure and body temperature rise, and some say their mouths feel dry. All these signs are internal and none are visible to the audience. What you feel internally is not obvious to listeners. You will also feel as if your voice is trembling and your palms are sweaty. You may be aware of these things, but they are not obvious to the audience.

3.3 The Sources of Speech Anxiety

Not all people have the same reasons for being anxious about speaking in public. Yet, some common sources of these anxieties are:

- (1) Pessimistic attitude towards speaking
- (2) Inadequate preparation and practice
- (3) Negative or insufficient experience
- (4) Unrealistic goals
- (5) Inaccurate perception of the audience
- (6) Negative self-talk.

3.4 Controlling Speech Anxiety

Researchers have learned that anyone can benefit from following certain arousal and anxiety controlling steps:

- (i) Develop an optimistic attitude towards speaking.

4. Basic Principles

In order to make a successful presentation, a speaker should practice certain principles of good delivery.

- (ii) Don't put off preparing your speech.
- (iii) Look for opportunities to gain speaking experience.
- (iv) Set realistic goals.
- (v) Realize the audience wants you to succeed.
- (vi) Practice constructive self-talk.
- (vii) Use visual imagery to enhance performance.
- (viii) Use relaxation techniques.

(1) **Look Natural:** The first principle is to look natural. If you are stiff or artificial, you will look uncomfortable and awkward. The audience may see this as a lack of confidence, which might greatly affect their perceptions of your credibility. At the other extreme, if you seem overly dramatic, you may be perceived as false and insincere. The good speaker strives for a natural, easy-going style of presentation.

(2) **Match Delivery and Content:** The delivery should be carefully coordinated with the content of the speech. Body movement and vocal expression should add to the presentation, not detract from it. Superficial gestures and inappropriate facial expressions can distract the audience's attention.

Although particular gestures are often associated with specific phrases. It is best for us to use a variety of gestures and vocal expressions. A sudden change in volume, a pause in delivery, or a firm shake of the head can all be effective in punctuating a particular idea or argument.

(3) **Speak with Conviction:** Talk as if you really believe in what you are saying. Persuade your audience effectively. The material you present orally should have the same ingredients as that which are required for a written research paper, i.e., a logical progression from **INTRODUCTION** (thesis statement) to **BODY** (strong supporting arguments, accurate and up-to-date information) to **CONCLUSION** (re-state thesis, summary, and logical conclusion).

(4) **Make it Appropriate:** Another principle of good delivery concerns the choice of an appropriate style of presentation. The delivery of a speech must be considered in relation to the audience, the situation and the speaker. An awareness of audience characteristics is important in terms of delivery. For example, the tone of voice used when speaking to an audience of children is quite different from the tone of voice used when speaking to adults.

It is very important to make sure that the delivery is appropriate to the situation. To do this, you must first consider the occasion of the speech. You should also consider the setting for the speech. Your delivery will be influenced by whether the setting is in a small conference room, an auditorium or a large outdoor amphitheater. Your volume must vary according to the size or the acoustics of the setting.

Delivery must be appropriate to the speaker's personal style or manner. The key here is to know your own personality and behave naturally—remember that being a speaker does not mean being an actor. Aim for a delivery style that is consistent with your own personality.

(5) **Do Not Read from Notes:** Reading from notes for any extended length of time takes the interest of audiences away, although it is quite acceptable to glance at your notes infrequently. Speak loudly and clearly. Sound confident. Do not mumble. If you made an error, correct it, and continue. No need to make excuses or apologize profusely.

(6) **Maintain Eye Contact:** Having a sincere eye contact with your audience can make a world of a difference to your speech. Use the 3-second method, e.g., look straight into the eyes of a person in the audience for 3 seconds at a time. Have direct eye contact with a number of people in the audience, and every now and then glance at the whole audience while speaking. Use your eye contact to make everyone in your audience feel involved.

(7) **Speak, Listen, Respond, Adjust and Adapt:** Speak to your audience, listen to their questions, respond to their reactions, adjust and adapt. If what you have prepared is obviously not getting across to your audience, change your strategy mid-stream if you are well prepared to do so. Remember that **communication** is the key to a successful presentation. If you are short of time, know what can be safely left out. If you have extra time, know what could be effectively added. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

(8) **Pause:** Allow yourself and your audience a little time to reflect and think. Don't race through your presentation and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of breath.

(9) **Humour:** Add appropriate humour wherever possible. Keep the audience interested throughout your entire presentation. Remember that an interesting speech makes time fly, but a boring speech is always too long to endure even if the presentation time is the same.

(10) **Audio-visual aids:** When using audio-visual aids to enhance your presentation, be sure all necessary equipment is set up and in good working order prior to the presentation. If possible, have an emergency

backup system readily available. Check out the location ahead of time to ensure seating arrangements for audience, whiteboard, blackboard, lighting, location of projection screen, sound system, etc. are suitable for your presentation.

(11) **Handouts:** Have handouts ready and give them out at the appropriate time. Tell audience ahead of time that you will be giving out an outline of your presentation so that they will not waste time taking unnecessary notes during your presentation.

(12) **Establish Rapport:** If a speaker fails to develop and maintain a positive relationship with the audience throughout the presentation, the purpose of the speech will be lost. Rapport is entirely the result of delivery. It is important because a good speaker-audience relationship can overshadow weak spots in the message itself. Entertainers devote much energy and talent to projecting a feeling of identification with their audience.

(13) **Stopping and Concluding:** Know when to stop talking. Use a timer or the microwave oven clock to time your presentation when preparing it at home. Just as you don't use unnecessary words in your written paper, you don't bore your audience with repetitions or unnecessary words in your oral presentation. To end your presentation, summarize your main points in the same way as you normally do in the conclusion of a written paper. Remember, however, that there is a difference between spoken words appropriate for the ear and formally written words intended for reading. Conclude your presentation with an interesting remark or an appropriate punline. Leave your listeners with a positive impression and a sense of completion. Do not belabor your closing remarks. Thank your audience and sit down.

■ 5. Ways of Delivering the Message

The importance of delivery, goes beyond maintaining audience interest. Delivery affects speaker's credibility, message comprehension and persuasiveness. A speaker's credibility can be established or destroyed during the presentation of a speech. The audience's perception of a speaker as trustworthy and sincere, is greatly influenced by delivery. These audience perceptions are changed by non-verbal cues such as the speaker's appearance, facial expressions, posture and gestures.

Delivery also enhances message comprehension and retention. It does so primarily by eliminating many of the elements that can distract the listener from the message. A speaker has four options, how to deliver the message:

- (1) **Extemporaneous:** It allows a speaker to use notes or an outline. This method is most preferred by audience and speaker. It allows more eye contact with audience, permits you to establish rapport, and enables you to move with ease.
- (2) **Reading:** Political figures and others who do not want to make a mistake read a manuscript. Today a speaker on television often 'reads' from a teleprompter, a device allowing them to read their words directly from a script passing in front of the camera lens. High profile people favour this method.
- (3) **Memorization:** Few speakers today memorize complete speeches. A risk of memorization is forgetting your precise words; groping for words in front of an audience decreases your credibility.
- (4) **Impromptu:** Many of us are called upon at the last moment to offer comments. When you speak, "off the cuff", without preparation, without a forewarning that you will speak, you are speaking impromptu.

6. Consideration of Personal Aspects

A preliminary to good speech making is to analyze yourself as a speaker. In oral presentations you, the speaker, are a very real part of the message. The members of your audience take in not only the words you communicate but also what they see in you. And what they see in you can significantly affect the meanings that develop in their minds. Thus, you should carefully evaluate your personal effect on your message. You should do whatever you can to detect and overcome your shortcomings and to sharpen your strengths. And you should follow the conventions and practices of good business etiquette in meeting the expectations of your listeners.

The following summary of characteristics that should help you as a speaker:

(1) **Confidence:** A primary characteristic of effective oral reporting is confidence—your confidence in yourself and the confidence of your audience in you. The two are complementary, for your confidence in yourself tends to produce an image that gives your audience confidence in you, and your audience's confidence in you can give you a sense of security that increases your confidence in yourself.

Typically, you earn your audience's confidence over periods of association. But there are things you can do to project an image that builds confidence. For example, preparing your presentation diligently and practicing it thoroughly gives you confidence in yourself. That confidence leads to more effective communication, which increases your

listeners' confidence in you. Another confidence-building technique is an appropriate physical appearance. Uplift and ill-fitted as it may seem, certain types of dress and hairstyles create strong images in people's minds, ranging from highly favourable to highly unfavourable. Thus, if you want to communicate effectively, you should analyse the audience you seek to reach. And you should work to develop the physical appearance that projects an image in which that audience can have confidence. Yet another confidence-building technique is simply to talk in strong, clear tones. Such tones do much to project an image of confidence. Although most people can do little to change their natural voice, they can use sufficient volume.

(2) **Sincerity:** Your listeners are quick to detect insincerity. And if they detect it in you, they are likely to give little weight to what you say. On the other hand, sincerity is valuable to conviction, especially if the audience has confidence in your ability. The way to project an image of sincerity is clear and simple. You must be sincere. Pretense of sincerity is rarely successful.

(3) **Thoroughness:** Generally, a thorough presentation is better received than a scanty or hurried presentation. Thorough coverage gives the impression that time and care have been taken, and this tends to make the presentation believable. But thoroughness can be overdone. Too much detail can drown your listeners in a sea of information. The secret is to leave out unimportant information. This, of course, requires good judgement. You must ask yourself just what your listeners need to know and what they do not need to know. Striking such a balance is the secret to achieving good etiquette in your presentation.

(4) **Friendliness:** A speaker who projects an image of friendliness has a significant advantage in communicating. People like simple and friendly people, and they are generally receptive to what such people say. Like sincerity, friendliness is hard to feign and must be honest to be effective. Both are parts of the conventions of business etiquette. Most people are genuinely friendly. Some, however, are just not able to project a genuinely friendly image. With a little self-analysis and a little mirror watching as you practice speaking, you can find ways of improving your projection of your friendliness.

7. Audience Analysis

One requirement of good speech making is to know your audience. You should study your audience both before and during the presentation.

(1) **Preliminary Analysis:** Analyzing your audience before the presentation requires that you size it up—that you search for audience characteristics that could affect how you should present your speech.

For example, the size of your audience is likely to influence how formal or informal your speech should be. As a rule, large audiences require more formality. Personal characteristics of your audience, such as age, sex, education, experience, and knowledge of subject matter, should also influence how you make your speech. They should affect the words, illustrations, and the level of detail you use. Like writing, speeches should be adapted to the audience with every consideration given to good business etiquette. And the more you know about the audience, the better you will adapt your presentation to them.

(2) **Analysis During Presentation:** Your audience analysis should continue as you make the speech. *Feedback* is information about how your listeners are receiving your words. Armed with this information, you can adjust your presentation to improve the communication result.

Your eyes and ears will give your feedback information. For example, facial expressions will tell you how your listeners are reacting to your message. Smiles, blank stares, and movements will give you an indication of whether they understand, agree with, or accept it. You can detect from sounds coming (or not coming) from them whether they are listening. If questions are in order, you can learn directly how your message is coming across. In general, you can learn much from your audience by being alert; and what you learn can help you make a better speech.

8. Appearance and Physical Actions

As your listeners hear your words, they are looking at you. What they see is a part of the message and can affect the success of your speech. What they see, of course, is you and what surrounds you. In your efforts to improve the effects of your oral presentations, you should understand the communication effects of what your listeners see.

(1) **The Communication Environment:** Much of what your audience sees are the physical things that surround you as you speak—the stage, lighting, background, and so on. These things tend to create a general impression. Although not visual, outside noises have a related influence. For the best communication results, the factors in your communication

environment should contribute to your message, not detract from it. Your own experience as a listener will tell you what factors are important.

(2) **Personal Appearance:** Your personal appearance is a part of the message your audience receives. Of course, you have to accept the physical traits you have, but most of us do not need to be at a disadvantage in appearance. All that is necessary is to use what you have appropriately. Specifically, you should dress in a manner appropriate for the audience and the occasion. Be clean and well groomed. Use facial expressions and physical movements to your advantage.

(3) **Posture:** Posture is likely to be the most obvious of the things that your audience sees in you. Even listeners not close enough to detect such things as facial expressions and eye movements can see the general form of the body.

You probably think that no one needs to tell you about good posture. You know it when you see it. The trouble is that you are not likely to see it in yourself. One solution is to have others tell you whether your posture needs improvement. Another is to practice speaking before a mirror or watch yourself on videotape.

In your efforts to improve your posture, keep in mind what must go on within your body to form a good posture. Your body weight must be distributed in a way consistent with the impression you want to make. You should keep your body erect without appearing stiff and comfortable without appearing limp. You should maintain a poised, alert, and communicative bearing. And you should do all this naturally. The great danger with posture is an appearance of artificiality.

(4) **Walking:** Your audience also forms an impression from the way you walk before it. A strong, sure walk to the speaker's position conveys an impression of confidence. Hesitant, awkward steps convey the opposite impression. Walking during the presentation can be good or bad, depending on how you do it. Some speakers use steps forward and to the side to emphasize points. Too much walking, however, attracts attention and detracts from the message. You would be wise to walk only when you are reasonably sure that this will have the effect you want. You would not want to walk away from a microphone.

(5) **Facial Expression:** The most apparent and communicative physical movements are facial expressions. The problem, however, is that you may unconsciously use facial expressions that convey unintended meanings. For example, if a frightened speaker tightens the jaw unconsciously and begins to grin, the effect may be an ambiguous image that detracts from the entire communication effort. A smile, a grimace, and a puzzled frown

all convey clear messages. Without question, you should use these effective communication devices.

Eye contact is important. The eyes, which have long been considered "mirrors of the soul," provide most listeners with information about the speaker's sincerity, goodwill, and flexibility. Some listeners tend to shun speakers who do not look at them. On the other hand, discriminate eye contact tends to show that you have a genuine interest in your audience.

(6) **Gestures:** Like posture, gestures contribute to the message you communicate, just what they contribute, however, is hard to say, for they have no definite or clear-cut meanings. A clenched fist, for example, certainly adds emphasis to a strong point. But it can also be used to show defiance, make a threat, or signify respect for a cause. And so it is with other gestures. They register vague meanings.

Even though gestures have vague meanings, they are strong, natural helps to speaking. It appears natural, for example, to emphasize a plea with palms up and to show disagreement with palms down. Raising first one hand and then the other reinforces a division of points. Slicing the air with the hand shows several divisions. Although such gestures are generally clear, we do not all use them in exactly the same way.

(7) **The Lectern:** Most people find it more comfortable to stand behind a lectern when speaking to an audience. The key word here is stand, not hide. Because body movement is an essential aspect of delivery, you must be clearly visible to the audience. A speaker can use this spatial relationship by moving away from the lectern to develop rapport with the audience or by remaining behind it to preserve formality.

A lectern provides a space for your notes, or outline. An extemporaneous speech, might require notes, especially if the speech is long or complicated. When a speech is to be read, the complete text must be available to the speaker.

In summary, it should be clear that physical movements can help your speaking. Just about which physical movements you should use, however, is hard to say. The appropriateness of physical movements is related to personality, physical makeup, and the size and nature of the audience. A speaker appearing before a formal group should generally use relatively few physical movements. A speaker appearing before an informal group should use more. Which physical movements you should use on a given occasion is a matter for your best judgment.

9. Hints and Tips for Effective Persuasive Speaking

Here are just a few hints, persuasive speaking tips and techniques to help you develop your skills and become far more effective as a public speaker.

- (1) **Mistakes:** Mistakes are all right. Recovering from mistakes makes you appear more human. Good recovery puts your audience at ease—they identify with you more.

- (2) **Humour:** Tell appropriate jokes if you're good at telling jokes. If you aren't good, best to leave the jokes behind. There's nothing worse than a punch line that has no punch. Gentle humour is good in place of jokes. Self-deprecation is good, but try not to lay it on too thick.

- (3) **Tell Stories:** Stories make you a real person not just a deliverer of information. Use personal experiences to bring your material to life. No matter how dry your material is, you can always find a way to make it interesting.

- (4) **How to Use the Public Speaking Environment:** Try not to get stuck in one place. Use all the space that's available to you. Move around. One way to do this is to leave your notes in one place and move to another. If your space is confined (say a meeting room or even presenting at a table), use stronger body language to convey your message.

- (5) **Technology:** Speak to your audience and not your slides. Your slides are there to support you not the other way around. Ideally, slides should be graphics and not words (people read faster than they hear and will be impatient for you to get to the next point). If all the technology on a slide fails, it's still you they've come to hear. You can learn to enjoy public speaking and become far more effective at standing in front of a group of people and delivering a potent message.

When it comes to improving your public speaking skills, we have three words practise, practise, practise!

10. Use of Voice

Good voice is an obvious requirement of good speaking. Like physical movements, the voice should not hinder the listener's concentration on the message. More specifically, it should not detract attention from the message. Voices that cause such difficulties generally fall into these areas of fault: lack of pitch variation, lack of variation in speed, lack of vocal emphasis and unpleasant voice quality. We will examine them here because of their key significance to formal oral communication.

- (1) **Lack of Pitch Variation:** Speakers who talk in monotonous are not likely to hold the interest of their listeners for long. Since most voices are capable of wide variations in pitch, the problem can usually be corrected.

The failure to vary pitch generally is a matter of habit—of voice patterns developed over years of talking without being aware of their effect.

(2) **Lack of Variation in Speaking Speed:** Determining how fast to talk is a major problem. As a general rule, you should present the easy parts of your message at a fairly fast rate and the hard parts and the parts you want to emphasize at a slower rate. The reason for varying the speed of presentation should be apparent; it is more interesting. A slow presentation of easy information is irritating; hard information presented fast may be difficult to understand.

A problem related to the pace of speaking is the incorrect use of pauses. Properly used, pauses emphasize upcoming subject matter and are effective means of gaining attention. But frequent pauses for no reason are irritating and break the listener's concentration. Pauses become even more irritating when the speaker fills them in with distracting non-words such as *uh, you know* and *ok*.

(3) **Lack of Vocal Emphasis:** A secret of good speaking is to give words their proper emphasis by varying the manner of speaking. You can do this by (i) varying the pitch of your voice, (ii) varying the pace of your presentation, and (iii) varying the volume of your voice. As the first two techniques have already been discussed, only the use of voice volume requires comment here.

You must talk loudly enough for your entire audience to hear you, but not too loudly. Thus, the loudness—voice volume—for a large audience should be greater than that for a small audience. Regardless of audience size, however, variety in voice volume is good for interest and emphasis. It produces contrast, which is one way of emphasizing the subject matter. Some speakers incorrectly believe that the only way to show emphasis is to get louder and louder. But you can also show emphasis by going from loud to soft. The contrast with what has gone on earlier provides the emphasis. Again, variety is the key to making the voice more effective.

(4) **Unpleasant Voice Quality:** It is a hard fact of communication that some voices are more pleasant than others. Fortunately, most voices are reasonably pleasant. But some are raspy, nasal, or unpleasant in another way. Although therapy can often improve such voices, some speakers must live with them. But concentrating on variations in pitch, speed of delivery, and volume can make even the most unpleasant voice acceptable.

(5) **Improvement Through Self-Analysis and Imitation:** You can overcome any of the foregoing voice faults through self-analysis. In this day of tape recorders compact discs, it is easy to hear and see yourself

talk. Since you know good speaking when you hear it, you should be able to improve your vocal presentation. One of the best ways to improve your presentation skills is through watching others. Watch your instructors, your peers, television personnel, professional speakers, and anyone else who gives you an opportunity. Analyze these speakers to determine what works for them and what does not. Imitate those good techniques that you think would help you and avoid the bad ones. Take advantage of any opportunity you have to practice speaking.

10.1 Vocal Delivery

Vocal delivery involves the mechanics of vocalization, vocal characteristics and pronunciation. Inexperienced speakers often pay little attention to their vocal delivery, incorrectly believing that the voice cannot be altered in any way.

(1) Vocalization

Voice and speech depend on phonation. Phonation is the process by which air is pushed through the vocal cords, which then vibrate to produce sound. The sound or tones produced in this way are called voice articulation. Articulation is the process by which voice is altered into recognizable speech sounds. The consonants and vowels are formed when sound are produced in the articulators. These include the lips, teeth, jaw, gum ridge and palate in addition to the nose, throat and oral cavities.

Poor articulation is usually the result of misuse of the articulators. Sometimes the problem is not one of carelessness or incorrect use. A person with a defective articulator will have problems producing proper speech sounds. With patience and practice, most people with such problems can improve their articulation to the point that their fault is negligible.

(2) Vocal Characteristics

Vocal delivery involves four vocal characteristics:

- (i) **Pitch:** It refers to how high or low the voice sounds. A variation in pitch adds colour and vitality to a delivery and can also be used as a means of emphasis.
- (ii) **Volume:** It means intensity or loudness. You can adjust volume to add to your overall presentation. Variation in volume makes you sound more dynamic, allows you to emphasize main ideas and helps you under some important arguments.
- (iii) **Rate:** If you talk too quickly, the audience may not be able to keep pace. On the other hand, if your speaking rate is too slow, the audience

may lose interest. Rate also affects an audience's perceptions of speaker competence and attractiveness.

(iv) **Quality:** It refers to the timbre of the voice, the characteristic that distinguishes one voice from another. Voices that are too thin, strident, nasal or breathy, sound unpleasing and should be improved. Voice exercises can improve vocal quality, but it takes time to change something that feels natural to you.

(3) Pronunciation

Standards of pronunciation are often determined by geographical area or imposed by occasion or education. There are several ways you, as a speaker, can improve pronunciation. If you are unsure of the way a word is pronounced, look it upon the dictionary or speech therapist can also help you.

10.2 Factors Influencing Your Voice

In addition to voice exercises, other factors can influence the sound of your voice.

- (1) **Physical makeup:** This factor involves the various parts of the vocal mechanisms—namely, the tongue, vocal cord, larynx and resonating chambers.
- (2) **Psychological factors:** When you are anxious or excited the tension may localize in the vocal cords, creating a higher pitch than normal. If you are relaxed and at ease, your voice will sound much more pleasant.
- (3) **Environment:** Members of the same family often seem to have similar voices. The similarity is partially genetic and partially environment. You pick up inflections from the people around you, including family members, peers, and members of the same ethnic group.
- (4) **Regional dialects:** Different regions of a country have varying speech and voice patterns that make their use of voice and language unique. Regional differences usually affect pronunciation more than voice quality.

10.3 How to Improve Your Voice?

One of the most important components of public speaking is the sound of your voice. It influences the impact of your message, and might even make or break the success of your speech. Fortunately, for many people, good voice quality can be learned.

(1) **Breathe from your diaphragm:** Practice long and controlled exhalations. When you speak, use breath to pronounce your points. For example, take a breath at the end of each phrase whether you need to or not. Use that opportunity to pause and let the listeners absorb what you say.

(2) **Use pitch:** Lower pitches generally are more soothing to hear. However, modulating your pitch for emphasis will keep your listeners engaged. Develop your pitch by practicing humming. Moderate your volume—find out if you speak too loudly or too softly.

When you begin speaking, ask your audience how your volume (a speech situation is different). Try to vary at the appropriate volume throughout your speech.

(3) **Moderate your pace:** This one is also closely related to breath. If you speak too quickly, people can't keep up. If you speak too slowly, people will lose interest. Record your speech to determine if you need to change your pace. Get feedback from others.

(4) **Articulate:** Try exaggerating your lip movements to reduce mumbling. Practice articulating tongue twisters and extending and exaggerating vowel sounds. Become an expert at articulating tongue twisters as quickly and crisply as possible. Focus on the ones you find difficult.

(5) **Practice your speech in advance and determine where you want to pause for a breath:** For more emphasis, pause for more than one breath. Mark your breathing points in your notes.

(6) **Loosen up before you begin:** Look side to side. Roll your head in half-circles and roll your shoulders back. Shift your rib cage from side to side. Yawn. Stretch. Touch your toes while completely relaxing your upper body; then slowly stand up, one vertebra at a time, raising your head last. Repeat as needed.

(7) **Record your voice repeatedly using different ways of speaking:** Determine which one is most pleasing.

(8) **Practice breath control:** Take a deep breath, and while you exhale, count to 10 (or recite the months or days of the week). Try gradually increasing your volume as you count, using your abdominal muscles—not your throat—for volume. Don't let your larynx tense up.

11. Adapting the Style of Delivery

In simple terms, style is the way an individual speaker gives ideas meaning through his or her particular brand of verbal expression and delivery. Style deals with both the wording and the delivery of the message. It includes the speaker's choice of words, the use of language,

sentence structure and the characteristics of delivery. Because style is made up of so many variables, each speaker's style is somewhat different. Various situations call for different speaking styles. Four distinct modes of speech are characterized by change in vocabulary, voice quality and sentence structure:

- (1) **Expressive Style:** It is spontaneous, conversational and uninhibited. We use it when we are expressing our feelings, joking, complaining or socializing.
 - (2) **Directive Style:** It is authoritative and judgmental. We use this style to give orders, exert leadership, pass judgement or state our opinions.
 - (3) **Problem-solving Style:** It is rational, objective, unbiased and bland. This is the style most commonly used in business dealing. We use it when we are solving problems and conveying routine information.
 - (4) **Metal Style:** It is used to discuss the communication process itself. Metal language enables us to talk about our interactions.
- The speaker should aim for a style that is accurate, clear, appropriate to the occasion and setting, economical and striking. Although this may seem a difficult task, the result will be worth the effort.

■ 12. Final Phase

Stand Up! Speak Up! Shut Up!

- (1) **Stand Up:** As a speaker you should stand up comfortably, firm on your feet, showing confidence in your appearance. You should be dressed appropriately for the occasion.
- (2) **Speak Up:** Speak up so that people can hear you and get your message. This is done through many conscious efforts.
 - (i) Speak clearly.
 - (ii) Speak loud enough so that everyone can hear you.
 - (iii) Speak directly to the audience by maintaining eye contact.
 - (iv) Do not speak in a monotone.
 - (v) Avoid annoying mannerisms of action or speech.
 - (vi) Give your audience a chance for input.
- (3) **Shut Up:** The effectiveness of a message can be lost and public relations damaged when a speaker drags on, reducing the audience to fidgeting boredom. Say what you have to say and SHUT UP! President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** said in this way, "Be sincere; be brief; be seated."

In short, know the needs of your audience and match your content to their needs. Know your material thoroughly. Put what you have to say in a logical sequence. Ensure your speech will be captivating to your audience as well as worth their time and attention. Practice and rehearse your speech at home or where you can be at ease and comfort—in front of a mirror, your family, friends or colleagues. Use a tape-recorder and listen to yourself. Videotape your presentation and analyse it to know what your strong and weak points are. Emphasize your strong points during your presentation.

When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an actor is on stage. How you are being perceived is very important. Dress appropriately for the occasion. Present the desired image to your audience. Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant. Remain calm, appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous. Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and show appropriate emotion and feeling relating to your topic. Establish rapport with your audience. Speak to the person farthest away from you to ensure your voice is loud enough to project to the back of the room or hall. Vary the tone of your voice, and dramatize if necessary. If a microphone is available, adjust and adopt your voice accordingly.

■ 13. Body Language

The most basic, forceful, instinctive, and natural form of communication is non-verbal communication. **Non-verbal communication means all communication that occurs without words.** In the beginning of civilization when verbal language was not yet discovered human beings communicated with one another by using signs and signals. Today, in the twenty-first century human civilisation has made tremendous progress. Several modern means of communication are available to it, yet even today, non-verbal communication has considerable importance. That opinion, feeling or message which could not be communicated in hundreds of words, finds, expression in gestures, signals, pictures, etc. in no time. In the words of **Raymond and John**, "All communication that involves neither written nor spoken words but occurs without use of words are termed as non-verbal communication."

Signs of non-verbal communication are the symbols of knowledge, opinions, attitudes, trust and emotions. Their selection, for purpose of communication, is made according to circumstances.

13.1 Kinesics or Body Language

Body language is a prominent and an important medium of non-verbal communication. It communicates very rapidly even the most suitable ideas. Body language expresses internal feelings very clearly. Effect of emotions, ideas, thoughts, attitudes and feelings is reflected in human behaviour.

Non-verbal means like body movement, gesture, posture, eye contact, pitch variation, etc. communicate ideas and messages in an effective manner.

Body language is also called Kinesics. In it a person transmits message by the movement of different parts of his body, such as, face, eyes, shoulders, head, hands, etc. For instance, nodding head up and down conveys agreement; shaking head from side to side means disagreement; movement of hand is a mark of greeting or good bye, affection or annoyance can be expressed by eyes.

Birdwhistell (1970) has embarked on a very ambitious attempt to construct an entire linguistics of body communication called *kinesics*.

Thus, **kinesics is a study of body movements and gestures**. **Birdwhistell** has estimated that no more than 30-35 per cent of the social meaning of a conversation is carried by words and 65-70 per cent by non-words.

13.2 Nature of Body Language

The body language is a self-acquired natural process. It is not completely uncontrolled and it is controlled by social behaviour:

(1) **Acquired with No Formal Training:** People acquire body language without any formal training. We master this language very early in life. Perhaps partly because we acquire body language unawares, we also tend to be unaware that we are using body signals or that we are being influenced by others' use of such signals, the body language goes largely unnoticed, yet has an enormous impact.

(2) **Controlled by Social Norms:** Body languages are completely uncontrolled. On the contrary, social norms can influence their expression: *for example, if delighted at the demise of a foe, we are unlikely to smile at his or her funeral*. There are also individual and group differences, with some people being better than others at noticing and using body signals. For instance, research shows that women are generally more skilled than men at detecting and sending body communications.

13.3 Types of Body Language

Body language may be classified into the following types.

(1) Postures

Physical structure of everybody is nature-bestowed. It can be made more attractive and agile by regular exercise and yoga, etc. Any basic change in nature-bestowed physical structure is not possible.

Since posture is less well controlled than voice, it may serve as a clue to emotional states which otherwise might be successfully disguised. While to some extent posture like facial, legs, too, communicate non-verbal messages. Consider, *for example, a man sitting with his legs stretched out on top of his desk during an interview; a person shifting from one leg to the other in rhythmic motion; or a woman pacing back and forth while speaking*. Posture and movement can convey self-confidence, status or interest. A confident executive may have a relaxed posture and yet may stand more erect than a timid subordinate. An interested listener may lean forward toward the speaker; one who is bored may lean away, slump or glance at the clock.

(2) Gestures

Gestures are physical movements of our arms, legs, hands, torsos and head nods. Through the movement of each of these body parts, we can assert and reinforce our verbal messages. And we can observe how others punctuate their verbal efforts with gestures.

Gestures have a role of their own in communication. In oral communication proper co-ordination of speech and gestures render communication effective manifold. Ordinarily, however, gestures express emotion or describe objects of special shape and appear to be closely coordinated with speech.

According to **Murphy**, hand and arm gestures are used for several reasons:

(i) **To Emphasize;** (ii) **To Point;** (iii) **To Reject;** (iv) **To Describe.**

In fact, gestures change with person and place. With change of time or person, meanings of gestures also undergo a change.

Some gestures have one meaning in one country and entirely different meaning in other countries. Sometimes entirely different meanings for each country. Users beware, not only could you alienate and lose your audience, you could lose your life in some countries. It might be good to consider the power of this unique body language. They can enhance your audience and improve your ability to speak. They can make the words you use have even more power and be significantly meaningful.

(a) **Most Used Hand-Gestures:** Some of the most common hand signals can have catastrophic consequences in other countries. A basic rule of skilled speaker is there is never a need to use obscene or foul speech. The same goes for speaking with our hands.

(b) **Other Nonverbal-Gestures:** Not all is said with our hands. We can also speak with our arms, face, feet and eyes. As a matter of fact, without even knowing it, you could inadvertently dishonour someone with a very common body posturing.

(3) Facial Expressions

The facial expression or the expression of the face is the most important feature of body language. We look at the face to determine much of the meaning behind body language and non-verbal communication. For example, *happiness, surprise, fear, anger and sadness usually require definite facial expressions.* Argyle observes that facial expressions are used in close combination with speech to emphasize or modify meanings and to provide feedback. Vine has observed that a listener signals his response to what is being said by small movements of the eyebrows and mouth, expressing surprise, pleasure, puzzlement, disagreement and other reactions. Similarly, a speaker signals through appropriate expressions the context within which his speech is to be interpreted—whether it is serious, funny, friendly or cold.

The scientific study of facial expression has largely focused on the way in which facial expressions communicate emotions. Darwin believed that there is a small number of universal emotions and associated with these emotions are universal facial expressions. Subsequent research generally identified six basic emotions (happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, disgust and anger), from which more complex or blended emotions are derived. Basic emotions are associated with quite distinctive patterns of facial muscle activity; for instance, surprise is associated with raised eyebrows, dropped jaw, horizontal wrinkles across the forehead, raised upper eyelid, and lowered lower eyelid show posed versions of the six basic emotions.

Some facial expressions are associated with basic emotions appearing to be fairly universal.

(4) Eye Contact

The eyes are often considered to be the windows of the soul and so it is not surprising to learn that people spend a great deal of time gazing at each other's eyes. Eye contact, an older term for this non-verbal channel, refers more precisely to mutual gaze.

The amount and pattern of gazing is a rich source of information about people's feelings, their relative status, their credibility and honesty and their competence and awareness.

Visual interaction in the form of interactions looks, changes in the angle of looks and direct eye contact play an important part in communication. An old cliché says, "Look a person in the eye when you talk to him." This simple means that when you are communicating with others, try looking them in the pupil and let the pupils tell you their real feelings. Under certain conditions, the pupils may dilate or contract in per the attitude and mood of the individual. For example, when one is excited the pupils can dilate up to four-times their normal size. Whereas during fear, frustration, depression or any other negative mood, they are contract. It is only when you see eye-to-eye with a person that real communication takes place.

In fact, the way you establish eye contact with someone speaks volumes about your attitude or the situation in which you are communicating with him. Maintaining appropriate contact will help you speak your attitude the way you want it to be conveyed.

Some studies divide gaze behaviour into three categories

(i) **Formal Gaze:** This is appropriate for boardrooms, business meetings, job interviews, project presentation, public speaking, etc. Here, one should look at the imaginary triangle on the other person's forehead above the area between his eyes. With this kind of gaze, one will be able to control the interaction to an extent.

(ii) **Informal Gaze:** This is suitable for interacting with friends and associates. In this case, let your gaze casually drop between the other person's eye zone forming an imaginary triangle downward on the area between his eye and chin. This will add a congenial in the interface.

(iii) **Lateral Gaze:** This type of gaze is used to convey either your interest or hostility towards the other person or situation. Interest towards the other gender, especially in courtship, can be expressed by smiling and slightly raising the eye-brows.

Kendon has suggested that as conversationless take turns talking, they signal the end of each turn through eye contact. His research indicated that, as the speaker concluded, he looked directly at the listener as if to transfer the lead. As the listener began to speak, he momentarily diverted his gaze away from the former speaker.

North American whites see eye contact as a sign of honesty. But in many cultures, dropped eyes are a sign of appropriate respect to a superior. Puerto Rican children are taught not to meet the eyes of adults. The Japanese are taught to look at the neck. In Korea, prolonged eye contact

is considered rude. The lower-ranking person is expected to look down first. In Muslim countries, women and men are not supposed to have eye contact.

Eye movement and eye contact with complete facial expression convey their messages more effectively.

(5) Bodily Contact

Bodily contact includes hitting, pushing, holding, striking, shaking hands, embracing, touching and a variety of other activities. Their use varies with the type of relation and situation.

Touch is perhaps the earliest form of communication we learn. Long before we learn language, we give and receive information by touch. There are many different types of touch (e.g. *brief, enduring, firm, gentle*) of different parts of the body. The meaning of a touch varies as a function of the type of touch, the context within which the touch occurs. From analysis of fifteen hundred bodily contacts between people, Jones and Yarbrough identified five discrete categories of touch:

- (i) **Positive Affect:** to communicate appreciation, affection, reassurance, nurturance or sexual interest.
 - (ii) **Playful:** to communicate humour and playfulness.
 - (iii) **Control:** to draw attention or induce compliance.
 - (iv) **Ritualistic:** to satisfy ritualised requirements (for example, greetings and departures).
 - (v) **Task-related:** to accomplish tasks (for example, a nurse taking one's pulse, or a violin teacher positioning one's hand).
- To these can be added, *negative affect* (gently pushing an annoying hand away) and *aggressive touches* (slaps, kicks, shoves, punches).

(6) Appearance

Appearance conveys non-verbal impressions that affect receiver's attitudes. Appearance may be of two types:

- (i) **Personal Appearance:** Clothing, hairstyles, neatness, jewellery, cosmetics, posture and stature are part of personal appearance. They convey impressions regarding occupation, age, nationality, social and economic level, job status and good or poor judgement, depending on circumstances.

Local newspapers often include questions about the answers to what to wear in an interview, sales meetings and social gatherings. How you look and what you wear affects listeners.

Terms such as *smart, casual or business casual* are symbols for appearance; it is important that you know what they mean in your particular environment.

- (ii) **Appearance of Surroundings:** Aspects of surroundings include room size, location, furnishings, machines, architecture, wall decorations, floor (carpeted or bare?), lighting, windows, view and other related features wherever people communicate orally. Surroundings will vary according to status and according to country and culture.

(7) Silence

Silences are a natural and fundamental aspect of communication, often ignored. Silences are not absence of communication. They are an integral part of interpersonal communication. In fact, effective communication between people depends heavily on silences because people take turns at talking and at being silent when listening. Silence forms a fascinating part of communication.

There are different types of silences, each with a meaning of its own and different implications and consequences for communication. For example: *Silence when we are worrying about a problem on hand, is different from silence which occurs when we are listening attentively to a speaker or watching a movie.*

Silences cannot be lumped all together. Each must be interpreted on its own. Reaction to each of these silences is different because each means something different.

Our silence stems from different causes which is reflected in our actions, expressions and movements.

Silence may be appropriate or inappropriate depending on the situation. Responding silently to a situation which requires talking and not being silent when we should, is inappropriate.

13.3 Functions of Body Language

According to Peterson, body language or Kinesics can serve a variety of purposes:

- (1) **They can provide information about feelings and intentions**—for example, non-verbal cues are often reliable indicators of whether someone likes you.
- (2) **They can be used to regulate interactions**—for example, non-verbal cues can signal the approaching end of an utterance or that someone else wishes to speak.
- (3) **They can be used to express intimacy**—for example, touching and mutual eye contact.

- (4) They can be used to establish dominance or control—for example, non-verbal threats.
- (5) They can be used to facilitate goal attainment—for example, pointing.

These functions will be evident in our discussion of specific non-verbal behaviours: gaze, facial expressions, body language, touch and interpersonal distance.

13.4 Significance of Body Language

Lesikar is of the opinion that the importance of body language is revealed by the fact that much of what we say to others without using words is sent through the physical movement of our body. The following facts reveal the importance of body language:

- (1) **Reveals the Working of Emotions:** When we wave our arms and fingers, wrinkle our foreheads, stand erect, smile, gaze at another, wear a coat and tie and so on, we convey certain meanings and others convey meanings to us in return. In particular, the face and eyes, gestures, posture, and physical appearance reflect the inner workings of emotions in our bodies.

The face and eyes are by far the most important features of body language. We look to the face and eyes to determine much of the meaning behind body language and non-verbal communication. For example, *happiness, surprise, fear, anger and sadness usually require definite facial expressions and eye patterns.* Thus, you should be aware of these two aspects of body language as you speak and listen to others.

- (2) **Reveals the Status:** The relative status of interactants can be very evident from body language. Higher-status individuals adopt a relaxed, open posture with arms and legs asymmetrically positioned and a backward lean to the body. Lower-status individuals adopt a more rigid, closed and upright posture with arms close to the body and feet together.

(3) **Replaces Verbal Communication:** When verbal communication breaks down, non-verbal communication may serve as a substitute. In fact, Argyle notes that in some countries, such as Greece, a gestural language has developed which is frequently used for everyday discourse even when speech is possible.

- (4) **Sustain Verbal Conversation:** Once a conversation starts, body language helps sustain it by providing a steady stream of feedback information concerning the other person's responses—whether he continues to attend to the message being conveyed through such devices as positive orientation and gaze, reactions, belief or disbelief and smiles.

Body language from posture and gestures may also help sustain communication by emphasizing or illustrating points made in the verbal message. It has already been noted that body language plays an important role in the regulation of alterations in the flow of conversation between persons. Nods of the head, grunts and shifts of gaze or tone of voice are crucial.

- (5) **Reveals a Person's Attitudes and Traits:** Body language provides cues to a person's attitudes and traits and to his identity as a person. It shows intra-cultural differences.

(6) **Reveals the Truth:** Body language reveals the truth. In the words of Nancy Austin, "When people do not know whether to believe what they are hearing or what they are seeing, they go with the body language—it tells the truth. You can play fast and loose with words, but it is much more difficult to do that with gestures."

(7) **Practical Application:** Body language is a very important tool of practical application in real life. According to Marilyn Mappie, "When you can consciously 'read' what others are saying unconsciously, you can deal with *issue-at work and at home—before they become problems.*"

(8) **Proxemics or Space Language, Time Language:** The proxemics is the study of how we use space, time and surroundings in communication. Proxemics involves space and time and how they communicate in speaking and listening.

Conclusion

One strategy for improving communication is to follow the seven steps: (1) determine your purpose, (2) know the audience and occasion, (3) select your main ideas, (4) collect data, (5) organize your material, (6) plan visuals, if needed and (7) rehearse about three times.

Then determine whatever your talk has to inform (make something clear), persuade (get withing acceptance), or entertain (some form of celebratory statement). Once that is determined, most likely you will present the talk extemporaneously, from notes in an outline form. Enthusiasm is a key word in giving variety to the two main parts of delivery. Oral communication involves variety in pitch, rate, volume and pause. Nonverbal communication pertains to posture, movement, gesture and eye contact.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What are the different types of delivering the message?

Ans. (1) Extemporaneous; use notes or an outline.

(2) Reading: reading manuscript.

(3) Memorization: memorize complete speech.

(4) Impromptu: speak without preparation.

2. What are the different signs of physical discomfort?

Ans. The signs of discomfort are universally experienced. The heart rate increases, blood pressure and body temperature rise and some say their mouths feel dry.

3. Write three reasons that arise speech anxiety.

Ans. (1) Pessimistic attitude towards speaking.

(2) Insufficient experience.

(3) Unrealistic goals.

4. Give three ways to control speech anxiety.

Ans. We can control speech anxiety by various ways:

(1) Develop an optimistic attitude toward speaking.

(2) Look for opportunities to gain speaking experience.

(3) Set realistic goals.

5. What are the different styles of speaking?

Ans. (1) Expressive style: Use it when we are expressing our feelings.

(2) Directive style: Use to give order.

(3) Problem solving style: Use in business dealing.

(4) Metal style: Use to discuss the communication process itself.

6. What are the factors that influence your voice?

Ans. (1) Physical makeup.

(2) Psychological factors.

(3) Environment

(4) Regional dialects.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. What are the different ways of delivering the message?
2. Why one should study the audience both before and during the speech?
3. Briefly discuss the various tips for effective public speaking.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What do you mean by the term "stage fright"? What are the sources of speech anxiety and how can we control speech anxiety?
2. What are the basic principles of presentation?
3. Vocal delivery involves the mechanics of vocalisation, vocal characteristic and pronunciation. Explain.
4. Explain the characteristics of good speaker.
5. What is the role of appearance and physical actions of the speaker while delivering the speech?
6. What are the factors that influence your voice? How you can improve your voice?
7. Write an extended note on
 - (a) Speaking skills
 - (b) Body language
 - (c) Vocal delivery.

Written Communication

1. Introduction

Written communication involves any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. It is one of the two main types of communication along with oral/spoken communication. Written communication is very common in business situations, so it is important for business owners, managers and even staff members to develop effective business/written communication skills. Some of the various forms of written communication used internally include memos, reports, bulletins, job descriptions, employee manuals and electronic mails. Examples of written communication resorted to with business clients, vendors and other members of business community include electronic mails, internet web sites, letters, proposals, faxes, contracts, advertisements, brochures and news releases.

Many people are intimidated by writing. Even so, there are times when writing is the best way to communicate and often the only way to get your message across effectively. However, adequate care needs to be exercised with necessary caution. Written communication is more concrete than verbal communication with less room for error and even lesser room for mistakes. You should be mindful of the fact that once something is in written form, it cannot be taken back. It is akin to the proverbial arrow leaving the bow'. Writing is a skill that does not come easily to everyone; some people have a natural writing flow that almost bursts off a page while others stumble or trip over the words they write. If you happen to fall into the second category, don't let that stop you and remember three magic words: these are: practice, practice and practice. There is no short cut at all, howsoever, you may try.

Ironically, the importance of good writing skills in the business world has become more evident even as companies rely increasingly on computers and other new technologies to meet their obligations. Thankfully, today's technology makes memo, letter and proposal writing, etc. much easier by providing reliable tools that check and even correct mis-spelled words

and incorrect grammar use. However, these tools are not fail proof and will require your indulgence and support, thereby, making your knowledge in this area an important one.

2. Fundamentals of Written Communication

(1) Adoption to the Reader

Written communication is the most formal of all types of communication. The tone of your message influences to a great extent the effect that message will have upon the person/s for whom it is intended. It is important to keep in mind the person or people who will read what you have to say. All the readers have the same ability to understand a message. They do not have the same vocabulary, the same knowledge of the subject or even the same mentality. Thus, for your communication to be effective you should know the person/s with whom you wish to communicate. In simple words, your message has to fit the person's mind. This is termed as adaptation. One of the best ways to achieve this is to pretend you are sitting across the table from the person to whom you are writing. Create a mental image of the reader; try to imagine what you would say and how you would say it. Also try and imagine what the reaction would be if you were speaking in person. In general, you consider whatever you believe could have some effect on your reader's understanding of your message. With this in mind, you form your message for effectiveness.

In many situations adapting to your reader means writing on a level lower than the one you would normally use. For example, you will sometimes need to communicate with people whose educational level is below your own. Or you may need to communicate with people of your educational level but are not much aware about the subject of your message. Assume that you need to write a memo to a group of less educated people. You know that their vocabulary is limited. If you are to reach them you will have to use simple words. If you do not then your communication will not be effective. On the other hand, if you had to write the same message to highly educated people, you will have a wider choice of words. These people have larger vocabularies than the first group. In either case, however, you would select words that the intended readers understand.

A stage often arises when you need to communicate with two or more readers with varied levels of educational knowledge of the subject and so on. In this case writing to the level of highly educated would miss those at the lower level. On the other hand adapting your message to the lower level, you run the risk of insulting the intelligence of those at higher level.

Under this situation, it would be best to adopt to lower level and use words such as "as you know", or "as you are aware", and such similar expressions to imply that you know the reader knows what you are writing about.

(2) Word Selection

Selecting the right words is a part of adaptation and has a direct bearing on your ability to use language, your knowledge of the reader and your best judgement. The first and foremost suggestion in this regard is simplicity in writing. Many of us - more often than not, tend to write at too difficult a level. Instead of being ourselves, we change character when we write. Rather than being friendly normal people, we become cold and stiff. We tend to use big and high sounding words and complex structures. Writing is a major means of communication within and outside an organisation. Some estimate that upto 30% of work time is engaged in writing. Thus, it becomes absolutely vital that simple words are used since it clarifies for both, the writer as well as the reader.

The second reason for simplicity is that the writer usually knows the subject of the message better than the reader. Thus the two are not equally equipped to communicate on the matter. If the writer does not work at reducing the message to the reader's level, communication will become difficult and will not serve the desired purpose. Thus, writing slightly below the reader's level of understanding communicates best.

(3) Use Familiar Words

Using familiar words means using the language most of us use in our everyday life. We should avoid the use of stiff or difficult words that the reader is not conversant with. For example, instead of using the unfamiliar word 'endeavour', use 'try', instead of using 'terminate' use 'end'. Similarly, prefer use to 'utilise', 'do' to 'perform', 'begin' to 'initiate', 'find out' to 'ascertain', 'stop' to 'discontinue' and 'show' to 'demonstrate', etc.

The suggestion to use familiar words does not rule out some use of more difficult words. These should only be used whenever their meanings fit your purpose best and your readers understand them clearly. The mistake that many of us make is to use them so much that they interfere with our communication, which resultantly ends up as a miscommunication and does not serve the intended purpose.

The following contrasting examples show the advantages of familiar words over less familiar ones.

Unfamiliar Words	Familiar Words
This machine has a tendency to develop excessive audio symptoms when operated at elevated temperatures.	This machine tends to get noisy when it runs hot.
Thanks a lot for the lavish and sumptuous bill of fare you laid out last night	Thanks for a hearty meal you served last night.
Perusal of pertinent data concludes that a lucrative market exists for the product.	The data studied show that the product is in good demand.
Company operations for the preceding year terminated with a substantial deficit.	The company lost money last year.

The above examples clearly show that familiar words are better and readers do understand them without any problem.

(4) Choose Short Words

Readability studies show that short words generally communicate better than long words. The reason being that short words have fewer syllables, are concrete in nature, used frequently and also easily pronounceable. A heavy use of long words, even if that are understood - leaves an impression of some difficulty that hinders smooth communication. Therefore, an effort needs to be made to use short words than long words which needs to be done with caution. You should use a long word only when you think your reader knows it. Here are a few examples:

Long Unfamiliar Words	Short Familiar Words
Abreviate	Shorten
Accomplish	Do
Approximately	About
Ascertain	Check, Find out
Commence	Begin
Considerable	Much
Determine	Decide
Detrimental	Harmful
Endeavour	Try
Terminate	End, Stop

You will observe from the above that generally shorter words communicate better as they are more familiar and are understood easily.

(5) Prefer the Concrete to Abstract Words

Concrete words form sharp and clear meaning in the mind, whereas abstract words are vague. Concrete words are specific words that refer to definite persons, places or things. The word 'temple' refers to a general type of building, but 'Hanuman Temple' indicates a certain edifice and thus brings to mind a temple that one can see and visit. Abstract words are used to convey general ideas as in the above example. Concrete words refer to objects or events that are available to the senses. Examples of concrete words include, spoon, table, nose ring, green, hot, walking, taste - their meanings are pretty stable. If you ask me what I mean by the word 'spoon', I can pick up one and show it to you. However, same is not the case with abstract words like, love, success, freedom, good, moral, democracy, etc. Take love as an example. You have heard and used that word since you were three or four years old. Does it mean to you now what it meant to you when you were five? When you were fourteen? The word changes its meaning from time to time, although the word remains the same.

Does this mean that we should not use abstract words? No - we do need abstract words. We need to talk about ideas and concepts and we need terms that represent them. But we must understand how imprecise their meanings are, how easily they can be differently understood. Here are a few examples:

Abstract	Concrete
We have found that this technique is successful.	We have found that 90 per cent of those using this technique are successful.
Your department may hire some new employees.	Your department may hire three sales executives.
We will despatch your order soon.	Your order of MDF boards will be despatched by 20 July.
This procedure requires a constant low temperature.	This process requires a constant temperature of 10 degrees centigrade.

Be it concrete or abstract, all words have their use. While writing you are to ensure that you use the words appropriate to the message. If you want to engage the senses, then the choice is concrete words. On the other hand if you want to deal with broad ideas, then abstract words are more suitable.

(6) Prefer the Active to Passive Voice

Writing is more interesting and communicates better when it uses active voice. In active sentences, the thing doing the action is the subject of the sentence and the thing receiving the action is the object. Most sentences are active.

[Thing doing action] + [Verb] + [Thing receiving action]

Examples: Active Form

The professor

teaches

the students.

(subject doing action)

(verb)

(object receiving action)

Kamla

washes

the dishes.

(subject doing action)

(verb)

(object receiving action)

In passive sentences, the thing receiving the action is the subject of the sentence and the thing doing the action is optionally included near the end of the sentence. You can use the passive form if you think that the thing receiving the action is more important or should be emphasised. You can also use the passive form if you do not know who is doing the action or if you do not want to mention who is doing the action.

Examples: Passive Form

The students

are taught

by the professor.

(subject receiving action)

(passive verb)

(doing action)

The dishes

are washed

by Kamla.

(subject receiving action)

(passive verb)

(doing action)

The above examples show the advantages of active voice. Clearly the active voice sentences are stronger and shorter.

(a) Active/Passive Overview

Passive	Active
It is believed that the bill was padded.	I believe he padded the bill.
Your report was read by the president.	The president read your report.
It is desired that every effort be made to have this matter brought to the attention of the manager.	I want you to bring this matter to the attention of the manager.
It is suggested that you clean the element in warm soapy water.	Please clean the element in warm soapy water.

The suggestion that active voice be preferred does not mean that passive voice is incorrect or it should not be used. Passive voice is correct and has

its place. However, caution needs to be exercised while writing that it should not be over used.

(b) Prefer Strong Verbs to Verbs Camouflaged as Nouns

In order to make your written communication effective use strong verbs. When a verb is camouflaged, the verb describing the action in a sentence is changed into a noun. Then action words have to be included to make the sentence clearer and understandable.

Examples:

Camouflaged Verb	Strong Verb
Provide representation	represent
make an observation	observe
engage in negotiation	negotiate
provide information	inform
make a computation	compute
make a classification	classify
Cancellation of order was made on the 12th	The order was cancelled on the 12th
Elimination of deficit was brought about by the change	The change eliminated the deficit
The management of this office is carried out by Mr. Sharma	Mr. Sharma manages this office

From the above examples you will observe that camouflaged verbs are abstract nouns and the words are not concrete in nature. Furthermore, camouflaged verbs frequently require passive voice which you should preferably avoid.

(7) Use of Technical Words and Acronyms

Whenever possible avoid use of technical words that your readers do not know. Every occupation and interest group has special terms. A problem arises when you use technical terms with people outside your field which results in miscommunication. You can avoid such miscommunication by using technical words with extreme caution. If you must use a technical term, define it either by giving a definition or by giving an example. Glossaries are more difficult to use if they are placed elsewhere. In placing a box defining the words on the same page as where the words are first used. To a worker in the social security department, the words covered employment commonly mean employment covered by social security. To some outsiders, however, they could mean working under a roof. When a doctor uses the words cerebral vascular accident with other

doctors, they understand. Most people outside that field would get little or no meaning from these words, but they would probably understand the word a little stroke.

Acronyms are terms made by using the first letter of each word in a phrase. They are useful as a kind of short hand that is recognised by people in the same field. However, indiscriminate use of undefined acronyms causes confusion as many are unfamiliar to those outside a particular speciality.

Words that are so common that many people don't even realize they're acronyms are appropriate for use in any document. If you carry any doubt whether your reader is familiar with the acronym, the best practice is to spell out the words first time you use them and then follow them with initials if required to appear again.

Acronyms that most people recognise as words while still realising that they are acronyms are also appropriate. Often people know what the term means.

Examples:

- Laser : Light amplification by the stimulated emission of radiation.
- FAQ : Frequently asked questions
- Radar : Radio detection and ranging
- CD-ROM : Compact disc read only memory
- BBC : British Broadcasting Corporation
- AI : Air India
- CNN : Cable News Network
- MOU : Memorandum of Understanding
- ATM : Automated Teller Machine
- PIN : Personal Identification Number

Acronyms that would be familiar only to a specific organisation and recognised by few others should be used with caution. Of course, you do not want your reader to grope in the dark to get the meaning.

(i) Avoid Sexist Words

Intentionally or even unintentionally, use of sexist words do creep up in our written communication. This form of discrimination is not appreciated particularly by women. Writers recognise the problem with sexist language, but finding solutions is not always easy. Nevertheless, the solution has to be found for non-discriminatory effective communication. There is no blanket solution. Often the best way to solve a problem is to recast the entire sentence; in other words, find a completely different way to express your idea.

The most easily recognisable form of sexist writing occurs in a sentence such as this:

When a student writes a paper, he must proof read carefully.

Such a sentence assumes that all students are male. To fix the sentence we must include both genders in the category of "student". There are several ways to approach this. An easy solution would be to use "he or she", instead of "he". Let's see what happens to the sentence when we do this.

'When a student writes a paper, he or she should use spell check on his or her computer.'

Though, not wrong, but this cannot be used often as it will make the writing infuriating to read. To solve the problem gracefully, make the subject of the sentence plural:

'When students write their papers, they should use the spellcheck on their computers.' The plural subject "students" now include both genders and the sentence retains its meaning without sounding awkward. You should make an effort to avoid expressions that identify gender in a work role.

Examples:

Lady doctor	:	Doctor
Actress	:	Actor
Authoress	:	Author
Sculptress	:	Sculptor
Poetess	:	Poet

Examples of sexist words are innumerable, but not all of them would be as clear as given above. You need to make a conscience decision which words to avoid and which you use. You are a better judge keeping in mind that words used are fair and that do not offend.

(j) Avoid Words that Stereotype by Age

Words that label people as old or young can arouse negative feelings and reactions. Be sensitive with terms like nature, elderly, youngster, juvenile, etc. It would be better to call an elderly as senior citizen. Be fair, present both the young and the old fairly and objectively when you write.

(k) Avoid Words that Typecast those with Disabilities

The disabled are very sensitive to discriminatory words that describe their disability. They may not take an offence, on the face of it, but they do feel hurt when they are addressed as such. You can always refer to a blind person as visually, impaired or to a deaf person as 'hearing impaired'. You should also avoid degrading terms like 'crippled',

retarded' etc. You need to develop a non biased attitude and show a through carefully chosen words.

Conclusion

The fundamentals of written communication stand above are by no means exhaustive or complete. These are a few of fundamental principles to be kept in mind while writing a communication. These are basic in work tools and will be useful to you if you consciously use them in your writing.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

- How do short words communicate better than long words?
Ans. The short words have fewer syllables, are concrete in nature, used frequently and also easily pronounceable.

- What are concrete words?

Ans. Concrete words are specific words that refer to definite persons, places or things.

- What are acronyms in written communication?

Ans. Acronyms are terms made by using the first letter of each words in a phrase. They are useful as a kind of short hand that is recognised by people in the same field. Example FAQ—frequently asked questions.

Short Answer Type Questions

- Why is the use of concrete words more preferable than abstract words?
- To make written communication effective use of strong verbs are more appropriate why?
- Explain the usage of technical words and acronyms in written communication.

Long Answer Type Questions

- What are the fundamentals of written communication?

Business Letters, Sales Letters and Claim Letters

1. Introduction

In our day to day life we exchange our ideas, thoughts and other information with our friends, relatives and other people. Sometimes we directly talk to them and at times we write letters to them. In letters we express our feelings, ask for information or even write a complaint in connection with our problem. Similarly, businessmen also exchange ideas and information by writing letters. They communicate business information to customers, suppliers and others and at the same time receive letters from them.

When you write letters, however, you will be concerned about communicating more than information. The information you provide in the letter is important of course. In fact it will be the most important part. But you will also need to communicate certain effects - primarily effects that display your good business etiquette. One basic effect that you need to communicate is the goodwill effect. Building goodwill through written messages is good business practice. Business people know and fully understand that the success of their business is affected by what people think about their business - which is influenced by the services they receive, how they are treated the confidence they have and the rapport built over time - in short their human contact with the business. The written word is a major form of human contact.

1.1 Physical Appearance of a Business Letter

Physical appearance of a business letter has a lasting impact on the reader. There are many factors that influence the physical appearance of a business letter namely, quality of the paper used, printing of the letter-head, typing, etc. According to Deskar, "The appearance of a letter or memo plays a significant role in communicating the message." Attractive

presentation of the message projects a favourable image of the writer and his company. They give an impression of competence and care, and they build credibility for the writer. Their attractiveness tells the readers that the writer thinks they are important and deserving of a pleasing document. It reflects the good business etiquette of the writer. On the other hand, a careless work reflects unfavourably on the writer, the company and the message itself. Thus, you should ensure that your message is attractively displayed.

(1) **Stationery:** The stationery or paper is one of the first things that the reader of a business letter notices. The three chief matters that must be settled before the decision is made about the type of stationery to be used for office correspondence are (a) size, (b) quality, and (c) colour.

(a) **Stationery Size:** Most business stationery is of the standard 8.5 × 11 inches. This size of paper fits in standard office file drawers.

Sometimes a special size of paper is used for executive prestige correspondence or for other special mailings. For the sake of appearance, this paper is usually 7.5 × 10 or 6 × 9 inches. However, a disadvantage of the smaller sheets is that they tend to become lost in file drawers built to accommodate standard-size stationery.

(b) **Stationery Quality:** The most common business stationery quality is 16 to 20 pound weight, because it is used on most computer printers. Lighter weight paper usually is not opaque, showing the printing on the sheet underneath. Heavier paper resists wear; therefore, 20-pound bond, might be preferred to 16-pound.

With today's growing international business activity and the sharply increased rates for foreign mail, many businesses stock a good quality onion peel paper for that mail. Letterheads, second sheets and envelopes are all in this lighter-weight paper.

(c) **Stationery Colour:** While most business letters are written on standard white paper with black print, use of colour is a growing tendency. Probably the greatest advantage of using coloured stationery is that it reduces glare.

Black ink on white paper gives great amount of glare and is therefore hardest on the eyes. Accountants have long used accounting papers in soft yellows and greens. Soft shades are preferred, such as pearl, gray and off white or light beige.

(2) **Multiple Page Letters:** The second and following pages of a letter should be of the same quality paper as the letterhead paper. Otherwise, it may appear that you are putting on a false front by having only the first page of top quality. Pages after the first should be numbered and many

businesses also have the date and the name of the addressee on these subsequent headings. This information should begin on the seventh line (leaving a one-inch top margin), and should be followed by a triple space (two blank lines) before the body of the letter is continued. To save space, this information can be shown horizontally in one line too as below:

Dr. S.L. Singla

Page 2

June 17, 2009

(3) **Typing:** Most business documents should be typed or printed on a typewriter-quality computer printer. Typing is usually easier to read than handwriting and is smaller, so more words fit into less space. Some short, informal memos are handwritten. However, it is appropriate to handwritten a note of condolence to a close business associate. The envelope should be handwritten or typed to match the document. Advances in word processing through computers have made the presentation of letters more stylish and attractive.

(4) **Folding:** The letter should be folded neatly because a carelessly folded letter is off to a bad start to the reader. Neat folding will complete the planned effect by (1) making the letter fit in its cover, (2) making the letter easy for the reader to remove, and (3) making the letter appear neat when opened. There are two types of patterns: (i) the two-fold pattern, (ii) the three-fold pattern.

(5) **Envelopes:** The quality of the envelope is just as important to make the first impressions as the quality of the stationery. In fact, letterheads and envelopes should be of the same paper stock, have the same colour ink and be imprinted with the same address and logo. Most envelopes used in business are No. 10 envelopes (9.5 inches long), which are sized to contain an 8.5 × 11 inch piece of paper folded in thirds. Some occasions call for a smaller envelope or for envelopes proportioned to fit special stationery.

Addressing the Envelope: No matter what size an envelope is, the address should always be typed in block form—that is, with all lines aligned on the left—and the lines should be single-spaced. The inside address on the letter and the address on the envelope should be in the same style and present the same information. The order to follow is from the smallest division to the largest: (1) Name and title of recipient;

(2) Name of department or sub-group; (3) Name of organisation;

(4) Name of building; (5) Street address and suite number, or post office box number; (6) City, state or province and PIN Code or Postal Code;

(7) Name of country (if the letter is being sent abroad).

(6) **Memos:** Many companies also design and print standard forms for memos and for reports that are written frequently and that always require the same types of information (such as sales reports and expense reports). These forms may be printed in sets for use with carbon paper or in carbonless copy sets that produce multiple copies automatically with the original.

1.2 Layout or Format of Letters

Layout or format refers to the position of the parts of a letter on a sheet of paper. In the words of Locker, "Format means the parts of a document and the way they are arranged on the page." The appearance of letters depends on the position of each part of the letter on a sheet and of course on the style of typing. Layout accounts for a major part of the impression made by the appearance of the letter. A layout that is too wide, too narrow, too high, too low or off-center may impress the reader unfavourably. The ideal letter layout is one that has the same shape as the space in which it is formed. It fits that space much as a picture fits a frame. That is, a rectangle drawn around the processed letter has the same shape as the space under the letterhead. The top border of the rectangle is the dateline, the left border is the line beginning, the right border is the average line length, and the bottom border is the last line of the notations.

Today, three major letter formats are commonly used:

• **Full Block Format** • **Modified Block Format** • **Simplified Format**

The major differences among these formats are the way paragraphs are indented and the placement of letter parts is done.

(1) Full Block Format

This is the most modern form of layout. Its main characteristics are:

(1) **All lines, including those of new paragraphs, start at the left margin:** This saves the time of setting the machine for various indentions and reduces the chance of error in doing so.

(2) **According to the use of punctuation, the Full Block Format may be of the following types.**

(i) **Mixed Punctuation.** (ii) **No Punctuation.**

(i) **Mixed Punctuation:** In case of standard or mixed punctuation a colon (;) is used after the salutation — (a comma if the letter is social or personal) and a comma is used after a complimentary close.

(ii) **No Punctuation:** In case of open punctuation no colon after the salutation and no comma after the complimentary close is used. In other words, punctuation marks are omitted, except within the paragraphs. This saves the time of the typist.

There is no comma after the salutation and complementary close. There is no comma at the end of the line in the address. Commas within the line, in the address are also omitted in recent practice.

Since every line in the paragraph begins at the margin, there is no way to distinguish one paragraph from the next. It is, therefore, necessary to leave double space between paragraphs. An illustration of the Full Block Format is given in Illustration 1.

There are a few drawbacks in this form of layout. The letter looks lopsided while there is a blank space on the right. This gives the sheet an asymmetrical look. The Full Block Format is also not suitable for filing. When a letter is in the file, its important details like the date, reference number and name of the letter writer, go into the clip of the file. It, thus, becomes necessary to open the file at every sheet to see these details. Many offices, therefore, do not find it convenient to use this form of layout.

(2) Modified Block Format

The date, complimentary close and signature sections begin at the horizontal centre of the page or are placed so that they end near the right-hand margin. Attention and subject lines may be indented, centred or begin at the left margin, where all other parts begin.

Thus, in this format, most parts in this letter begin at the left margin but the date and the complimentary closing and signature lines end at the right margin.

When this letter is filed, it is easy to see the data and the name of the letter writer, by quickly going through the right side of the pages. The page also looks balanced and neat. An illustration of Modified Block Format is given in Illustration 3.

(3) Simplified Format

This format has the following characteristics:

- (i) Like the Full Block Format, each part of a letter is typed at the left margin.
- (ii) After the heading and date, there is no salutation. The body of the letter begins directly after the inside address of the recipient.
- (iii) It often includes the subject in block letters.
- (iv) There is a no complimentary closing. The signature is written directly between the body of the letter and the typewritten name.

An illustration of the Simplified Format is given in Illustration 4. It is also called NOMA format. NOMA stands for National Office Management Association.

This simplified letter not only saves time but also avoids the risk of selecting an inappropriate salutation or using "dear". It is also helpful when you are writing to a department and do not know anyone's name or whether its members include men, women or both.

Specimen of Full Block Format, Modified Block Format and Simplified Format
Illustration 1.

Example of Full Block Letter Format with no punctuation after salutation and complimentary closing. The letter also shows picture frame placement.

Business Writing Consultants

5623/8, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002
Telephone : (011) 25827567 Fax : (011) 27943376

January 15, 2xxx

Rahul

V.K. (India) Enterprises

Bazar Radha Kishan

Ambala

Dear Mr. Rahul

This letter is written in the form that is known as Full Block Format. You will notice that all parts of the letter, including date, inside address, salutation, paragraphs, complimentary closing and signature lines, begin at the left margin. Also, there are no punctuation marks such as a colon or comma after the salutation (Dear Mr. Rahul Jan) or after the closing (Sincerely yours).

The full block letter style shown here with unpunctuated salutation and closing is one of the preferred styles of letters because of its efficiency in minimizing the amount of time it takes for typing. This example uses picture frame placement; that is, the left and right margins are approximately equal and the top and bottom margins are also nearly equal.

Please let me know if you would like any other information on appearance of business communications.

Sincerely yours

Sunil

Writing Consultant

Letterhead

Date Line

Inside Address

Salutation

Body of Letter

Reference initials

Complimentary Closing
Signature lines

Illustration 2.

Example of Full Block Letter Format with mixed punctuation. A colon is used after the salutation – (a comma if the letter is social or personal) and a comma is used after the complimentary close.

Northwest Hardware House

100, Asaf Ali Road
New Delhi

(2 - 6 spaces depending on length of letter)
June 20, 2xxx

Shri Rajiv Shukla,
Accounts Manager
Salt Lake Equipment Rentals
52, Hanuman Road
Hisar.

Dear Raji: (colon in mixed punctuation)

The following items totaling Rs. 500 are still open on your account.
Invoice #01R-784391 (bold heading)

After the bill for this invoice arrived on May 14, you wrote saying that the material had not been delivered to you. On May 29, our Claims Department sent you a copy of the delivery receipt signed by an employee of Salt Lake Equipment. You have had proof of delivery for over three weeks, but your payment has not yet arrived.

Please send a cheque for Rs. 500 to cover these three items and to bring your account up to date.

(2 - 3 spaces)
Sincerely, (common in mixed punctuation)

Rajender Kumar
Manager (Credit Department)
Enclosed: Copy of the voucher

Letterhead
Date Line
Inside Address
Salutation
Body of Letter
Complimentary Closing
Signature line
Reference initials

Illustration 3.

Example of Modified Block Style letter with no punctuation after salutation and complimentary closing.

Business Writing Consultants

5623/8, Anseri Road New Delhi-110002
Telephone : (011) 25827567 Fax : (011) 27943576

January 15, 2xxx

Rahul
V.K. (India) Enterprises
Bazar Radha Kishan
Ambala

Dear Mr. Rahul

This letter is written in modified block format with salutation and closing not punctuated. You can see that like the full block letter in Illustration 1, most of the parts of this letter start at the left margin, including the paragraphs. You will notice that the date in this letter begins at the centre of the page, as do the complimentary closing and the signature lines.

In the modified block letter the date line is sometimes written as this is beginning at the centre of the line, but in this style the date is sometimes centred under the letterhead or typed so that it ends at the righthand margin. Many people like the appearance of this letter style, as it is felt that having parts of the letter begin on the right side balances the page.

In this style of letter, picture frame placement is often used and the margins of the letter should balance top to bottom and side to side.

You will notice that the notation "Enc." for "Enclosures" is typed a double space below the typist's initials. I am enclosing copies of other styles of letters.

Sincerely yours
Sunil
Writing Consultant

Encl: Copies of other styles of letters

Letterhead
Date Line
Inside Address
Salutation
Body of Letter
Complimentary Closing
Signature line
Reference initials

Illustration 4.
Example of Simplified Format with no salutation and no complimentary closing.

Business Writing Consultants

5623/8, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002
Telephone : (011) 25827567 Fax : (011) 27943576

January 15, 2xxx

Rahul
V.K. (India) Enterprises
Bazar Radha Kishan
Ambala

(in Block Letters)

This letter is written in the form that is known as simplified format. You will notice that all parts of the letter, including date, inside address, paragraphs and signature lines, begin at the left margin.

The block letter style shown here with unpunctuated salutation and closing is one of the preferred styles of letters because of its efficiency in minimizing the amount of time it takes for typing. It omits the salutation and complimentary close but to personalize you may, if possible, use the reader's name into the first two or three lines. The subject line in all capitals, omits "Subject" and is typed where the salutation is usually placed.

The signer's name and business title are typed in all capitals, starting at the left margin at least four lines below the last line of the letter body. The typist's initials are at the left margin, two lines below the signer's name. Enclosures and names of persons receiving copies are on separate lines below the initials.

Sunil
Public Relations Director
Signature lines
mo Enclosure CC : Ramesh

Business Communication

Letterhead

Date Line

Inside Address

Subject in Block Letter

Body of Letter

No.

Complimentary Closing

Signature lines

Reference initials

Business Letters, Sales Letters and Claim Letters

1.3 Parts of a Business Letter

Main parts of a business letter are as under:

- (1) Letterhead; (2) Date (at left margin or centred under letterhead);
 - (3) Reference; (4) Attention line; (5) Inside address; (6) Salutation; (7) Subject line (when used); (8) Body of letter; (9) Complimentary close; (10) Signature line; (11) Reference initials; (12) Enclosures; (13) Copy Distribution; (14) Postscripts.
- The following information about some specific letter's parts may be helpful.

A blank line should be left between all parts. To help make a short letter fill a page, extra blank lines can be left between the date line and the first line of the address and an extra blank line can be left between paragraphs. The complimentary close (when used) and signature can also be used as **elevator lines**, that is, extra blank lines can be left between these parts to further balance a page.

All parts of a business letter are shown in the following format.

Format of a Business Letter

(1) Letter-head

Tele. Address -----

Address -----

Telephone No. -----

(2) Date

Code no. -----

(3) Reference No: -----

(4) Attention Line -----

(5) Name and Address (of Receiver)

(6) Salutation

(7) Subject Line -----

(8) Body of Letter

(9) Initial Part

(10) Main Subject Part (iii) Summary Part

(11) Enclosures

(12) Copy Distribution

(13) Postscripts (Ps:)

(1) Letterhead or Heading

A letterhead should show business name, complete address including personal code, telephone number, fax number, including area code, E-mail address and internet number, if you have them. You may choose to include additional information such as names of officers, products or services, organisation's slogan and so forth.

(a) Size and Design

The letterhead should occupy not over 2.5 inches of space from the top, on the standard size of one-fifth of the sheet. Use types of a moderate size and with a modern face. Simple designs like those shown on the next page in line form look best and yet are dignified. Simplicity of design is an essential requirement.

(b) Contents of the Letterheads

The letterhead should contain all the necessary information in a brief form and no more. The essential details required are:

- (1) Name of the concern.
- (2) Address—as complete as necessary.
- (3) Nature of the business.
- (4) Telephone number, fax and E-mail number.
- (5) Sometimes the addresses of branch offices are also given.
- (6) If preferred, a photograph of the building or plant may be used.
- (7) Executive letterhead bears the name of an individual enters in the organisation itself.

Many firms today, have joined the growing tendency to place much of this information on the letterhead at the bottom of the page, where we might call it a **letterfoot**, thus clearing "clutter" from the top of the page. But the firm's name is always at the top. Figure in (next page) shows examples of letterheads, one with letterfoot.

In-house computer-generated letterheads can be updated and changed at little or no cost. With a computer and laser printer, you can prepare your own "classy" or conservative headings as you like them. Then your own designs can be used on envelopes, memos, forms, routing slips, telephone message forms and so forth.

Examples of letterheads of some of today's businesses. One letterhead with letterfoot is shown.

V.K. Publications**Educational Publishers**

Head Office: 5, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi.
Telephone: 23290105

Fax : 23290141

Mobile : 9811174349

Code : A.B.C

Regional Office: Bazar Radha Kishan, Ambala City
Telephone : 2594148

Mercedes Benz

Central Motors Building,

3044, West Grand Road, Kolkata 48302

Enterprises Car Retail Inc.

375, Najafgarh Road, New Delhi.

Telephone: 011-3258327;

Fax : 011-3297906

Kamal Shoe Company

Nehru Market,

Jalandhar

Telephone : 566789

(2) Date

If you are using letterhead paper, the date on which the letter is typed, should be placed at least one blank line beneath the lowest part of the letterhead. Without letterhead, the date is typed immediately below the return address.

There is no full stop after the date in any form of layout. The month must be written in full and never in figures. The year must be written in full four digits. Either the month or the date may be written first. There is a comma separating the year from the month and date.

The use of *st.*, *nd.*, *rd.* or *th.*, after the date, is old fashioned and no longer in use.

The date may be written as follows:

(i) While typing the date, the full name of the month (no abbreviations) is followed by the date (in numerals), a comma and then the year. This is the standard method of writing the date e.g., July 20, 2006.

(ii) In some industries and in government departments however, the date is typed with the day (in numerals) first, followed by the month (unabbreviated), followed by the year—with no comma as 20 July, 2005. The date is rarely typed all in numerals.

(3) Reference Number

Many business organisations give a special reference number in their letters which should always be mentioned when replying. This makes reference to previous correspondence easy and saves much time. Some companies write both, *Our Reference and Your Reference*, which facilitates finding the letter.

The reference line may take any of the following forms :

1. In replying, please refer to M-123
2. In your reply, please refer to File M-18
3. Our Ref. No. M-102
4. Your Ref. No. KP-12

The reference may also be something like this : 56/SA/23

In this the number '56' denotes the number of the department, 'SA' denotes that the letter has been issued from the sales department and '23' denotes the number allotted to the person addressed to.

(4) Attention Line

Attention line is used if the subject matter of the letter is being handled by one particular person. In this case a letter may be directed to a particular individual in a large business organisation either by addressing the letter personally to him or addressing it to the firm but with an attention line typed in the letter and on the envelope. The latter practice is preferred by many for routine letters.

The attention line may take any of the following forms :

Attention: Mr. Navinder, Manager

When the recipient has no official designation or it is not known to the writer, the attention line consists of only the name.

When the name of the recipient is not known and yet the writer wishes his letter to be opened by a particular official or head of a certain department, the designation may be used instead of the name as shown below:

Attention: Publicity Manager or Sales Manager

The attention line may be typed in any of the following places :

- (1) Two single spaces after the last line of the inside address and even with the left margin. It should be between the last line of the address and the salutation.
- (2) In the centre and in the same line as the salutation.
- (3) In

the centre, two spaces above the salutation and flush with the paragraph indentation. (4) Flush with the left margin and two spaces below the salutation.

(5) Inside Address

This is the name and address of the receiver. It is typed two spaces below the date line at the left margin. It is always typed in the block form. Every line of the name and address begins at the left margin. There is no punctuation at the end of the line. It is also not necessary to write a comma within the line, to separate the plot/block number from the building name, as : 27/A Prabhakar Colony
Inside address is written in the following manner:

(a) Individual

It includes different individuals, such as,

<i>Shri R. C. Gupta</i>		<i>Smt. Vinila Kamari,</i>
<i>M. Com.,</i>		<i>22, Jain College Road,</i>
<i>7, Darya Ganj,</i>		<i>Ambala City.</i>
<i>New Delhi.</i>		

(b) Firm

A firm can run its business either in personal or impersonal name. In case the firm is run by males, the name is preceded by "Messrs" and if by females, by "Mesdames". Impersonal firms have "The" before their names. However, if the correspondence is in Hindi, the term "The" is not used.

<i>Messrs. Mohan Lal & Sons,</i>		<i>Mesdames Sheila Kapoor Corp. Planning 74,</i>
<i>Pantnagar,</i>		<i>Chorak Lachman Sar Department</i>
		<i>Jai Airways,</i>
		<i>22, Safdarjung Enclave,</i>
		<i>New Delhi.</i>

(c) Limited Companies and Societies

If these institutions bear individual name, the term "Messrs" is used, such as,
Messrs. Ram Mohan & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd.,
7, Chawnpatee,
Mumbai.

(i) First Line of Inside Address

If you write a letter to a person in his name, let it be prefixed by "Shri" or "Mr.", by "Miss" in case of an unmarried woman and "Srinimai" or "Mrs." for married woman. Where the marital status of a woman is not known, address her as "Ms".

The term "Messrs." is plural of "Mr." and is generally used for partnership firms. However, these days courts and government departments have been addressing limited companies as M/S (but there is no need of using any prefix with Company's name).

Dr. is used while addressing a doctor; the name of the doctor following the prefix i.e. *Dr. Darshan.*

Prof. is used while addressing a Professor of a college or university; the name of the professor following. **Example :** *Prof. S.K. Gupta*

Capt. is used while addressing an individual holding that rank. Similarly, people holding other ranks are addressed by their respective ranks.

It is not necessary to put a full stop after these titles. You must write the first name or at least the initials of the individual before the surname. A person must be addressed in exactly the same way as he writes his name.

The inside address must be written exactly as it is on the envelope. A company, shop or bank must be addressed exactly as it is on its letterhead. Words like "Messrs." or "The" may be used only if they form a part of the registered name of the company.

Prefix "The" is used for impersonal companies.

The Delhi Cloth Mills Ltd.

Najafganj Road,

Delhi.

If the letter is addressed to the office bearer of the company, the term "The" is used before his title:

The Manager

Punjab National Bank

Sirsa.

(ii) Government Department

Official designation must be given along with the name of the department when corresponding with government department:

Director,

Education Department

Haryana,

Chandigarh.

(6) Salutation

Salutation is a greeting to the addressee. It is similar to say 'hello' while communicating face to face or while initiating a telephonic conversation. The commonly used salutations are:

Sir

Madam

Dear Sir/Dear Madam

My dear Ramchander

Dear Mr. Ramchander

Our relationship with the addressee affects the formality of the salutation. If you would say "Mohan" in conversation, your letter's salutation should be *Dear Mohan* followed by a colon. For letters to people you do not know well enough to address personally, you should use the courtesy title and last name followed by a colon. Presuming to write *Dear Ohri* instead of *Dear Professor Ohri* shows a disrespectful familiarity that a stranger may not relish.

The salutation is typed two spaces below the last line of the inside address, at the left margin. The salutation may be very formal, like Sir, or slightly less formal like *Dear Sir* or *Dear Mr. A.B. Shah*, depending on the relationship or acquaintance with the person.

The salutation must agree with the first line of the inside address. If the first line is to an individual by title, the salutation should be in the singular as *Sir*. If it is to a company, the salutation must be plural as *Sirs*. Similarly, if the letter is addressed to a man, the salutation must be in the masculine, as *Sir*, and if it is addressed to a woman, must be in feminine, as *Madam*.

A letter addressed to a lady, by her designation, like *The Manager*, takes the salutation *Madam*. A letter addressed to a ladies establishment, like a women's hostel, takes the plural form of salutation, *Madames*.

Whether you choose an informal or a formal style, make sure you spell names right. A misspelt name is glaring example of carelessness.

Punctuation and Formal of Salutation: As stated previously, a noticeable trend is to have open punctuation in letters, that is, no punctuation after the salutation and complimentary closing. If punctuation is used after the salutation, it should be a colon in a business letter or a comma in a friendly letter. The comma can be used in a business letter when the sender and receiver are well acquainted.

To conform with accepted letter styles, if the letter has a colon or a comma after the salutation, it should also have a comma after the complimentary closing at the end of the letter, to make these two parts match.

If there is no colon or comma after the salutation, there should be no colon or comma after the complimentary closing. As just noted, either

(14) Postscripts

Postscript is something that is written after the letter is ended and signed. If there is a **postscript**, it should start a double space beneath all other information and can be preceded by the initials **PS** or **PPS** (postscript, second postscript). However, the current trend is to omit these initials, second postscript may be signed or initialed.

The postscript is not necessarily an afterthought. The value of occasionally using one intentionally should not be overlooked. A busy person reading mail will often read the postscript while noticing very little else, knowing that here may be found the most interesting tidbit of the letter. Many business people write postscripts for emphasis rather than for afterthoughts and they are frequently used for personal messages in business letters.

2. Sales Letter

A sales letter is a form of Direct Mail may be an e-mail, or printed mail, in which an advertiser sends a letter to a potential customer. A sales letter differs from an ordinary e-mail as it is much more elaborate and eye catching. An e-mail can never achieve the impact and create interest that a well written letter can generate.

The contents of a sales letter should be well planned. This will help in a systematic and useful communication. A very effective way to writing a sales letter is by first jettisoning down the points and then elaborating each one. This is a fair safe method and ensures omission of important highlights. If you are going to be in business, you must know how to sell and an effective sales letter is the first step towards your achievement. When you sit down to write a sales letter, it would be prudent to keep the following essential tips in mind.

(1) An Eye Catching Headline: This is possibly the most important part of a sales letter. The heading needs to be compelling, thereby encouraging the reader to want to read the rest of the letter. Experts in this field suggest that a headline less than 8 words tend to be more effective than a longer one. Place the heading at the top of the page in centre and use a large font and make it bold.

(2) Choose One Benefit to Highlight Above Everything Else: Why should the reader use your product or service? Where and how it will be of substantial help? State your unique selling proposition without any ambiguity and mining words. Choose the most compelling reason and convey the same throughout the letter. Don't worry if your letter gets a

little lengthy - you are, after all, putting your point across having caught the reader's interest.

(3) Ask Questions, But Only in a Subtle Way: Rhetorical questions are an excellent way of getting reader's attention and encouraging them to think about your offer. You need to exercise restraint in asking a question which gives an answer in 'Yes' or 'no'. Since you would like to be in control of the answer, the simple solution is insert 'how before a question.

Example:

"How would you like to learn the secrets of starting a home business?"

(4) Answer Your Question: Never ask a question without putting in an answer. Sales letter are not stories so don't let doubts foster by leaving your readers guessing the answer until the end.

(5) Address Potential Doubts: Many business don't address doubts in a sales letter since they don't want to put negative thoughts in the mind of the reader. This is not a correct approach - people are very sceptical of advertising in general which include sales letter also, so addressing their doubts shows that you understand their concerns.

Phrases such as "sounds too good to be true" and "People are often sceptical at first", work well and often prove your ingenuity.

(6) List the Benefits: People don't read sales letters, generally, in an orderly way, so their eyes will be drawn to the points where they feel they stand to benefit. Therefore, do include a list of benefits or your service and do bullet them, if necessary.

(7) Testimonials: You may shout from a roof top, "I do this", "I do that", but your reader wants to know whether or not you "did it", towards your earlier customer. Giving testimonials is a very powerful way of stating your credibility. People like to know that others are using your product/service. A caution - your testimonials must be believable. You need to give complete details in respect of whom you are giving the testimonials. Be forthright and be specific in this regard. The fact remains that you would like to add a few in your testimonials.

(8) Final Sales Pitch: This should be a powerful one or two lines telling the reader why your product or service is right for them. Relate it back to the one benefit that you have chosen to highlight above everything else.

(9) Tell them What to Do Next: Be specific. Don't leave on the reader as to what he should do next. You are to guide them to the next action. Create urgency. Show them that they are getting into a real bargain. Let your readers know this specific package will not be offered again in near future. A call to action is a fundamental part of a sales letter and you

many don't have one. Try to make the call to action more compelling through including a time sensitive offer.

(10) Forge Connections: Don't get caught up in pushing products or services. You want to develop a long term relationship with the reader, not pressure him into one discounted sale. Use your letter to investigate whether you can solve customer problems or meet their needs. Try and build a relationship that will last into the future.

(11) Hit the Right Notes: Be yourself. Your letter should sound like you - do not use words that convey your mastery over the language. Don't create a stiff pitch letter filled with jargon. Match your letter to the way you do business - simple and straight forward.

The above are just a few tips to keep in mind. Your experience, as you progress, will teach you as to what all you should do or not to do. In this there are no hard and fast rules; but just the basics are to do followed to be effective.

2.1 Foundation of a Successful Sales Letter

The foundation of a successful sales letter are laid by a correct mix of three **P's, product, proposal and price.**

(1) The Product or Services

The first step in planning a sales letter is to study the product or service to be marketed. In order to do this, the person planning the letter should try as much as possible to become personally familiar with the item under consideration. If you are selling books, you should read them; food, you should eat it; wearing apparel, wear it; laundry service, use it. If it is a product that you cannot test yourself, such as children's shoes or dog food, test is as much as possible on other suitable subjects.

When you live with the item you are trying to sell, you may discover facts for promotion that even the manufacturer does not know. Further, you should discover that certain elements can be emphasized and other de-emphasized. The more thorough your knowledge of a product or service, the better equipped you are to write about it. Another important matter to consider is timing. For example, normally you would not try to sell ice cubes in winter.

The chief question to answer is, "Will the people buy it?" People will buy it if they are satisfied they will benefit from its use and if the price suits them.

(2) The Prospects

Once it has been determined that a product or service is worthy of promotion, you should identify the prospects or the target market to

whom the sales letter should be sent. Mailing of sales letters, particularly as postage rates increase are generally sent to a special customers of the market.

(3) Price

Once a product or service has been identified and a prospect list for sending out a sales letter has been selected, the mailing should be prepared only after a price for the commodity is set within which the operation can expect to show a satisfactory margin of profit.

1.2 Planning a Sales Letter

Sales letters are prepared according to AIDA plan used for only persuasive letters.

It means that they start with an attention-getting device, move to what the reader's interest and desire and end with a specific call to action. Special techniques give them added impact. Fig. 1 shows the AIDA 'Selling Letter Plan'.

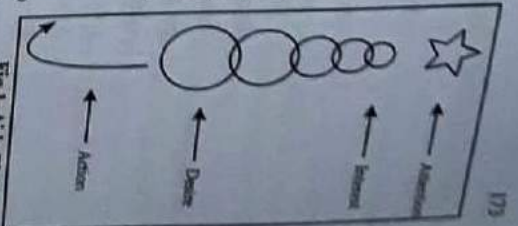


Fig. 1. Aids Plan

(1) The First Section: Attention Letter

The first element of the sales letter, the attention letter must perform both the following functions:

- It must bring importance into the product or service or idea that the letter is promoting.
- It must bring the reader into the picture. Some of the attention getting devices commonly used in sales letters are as follows:
 - ◆ A piece of genuine news: "In the past 60 days, auto manufacturer's inventories have shrunk by 12 per cent."
 - ◆ A personal appeal to the reader's emotions and values: "The only thing worse than paying taxes is paying taxes when you do not have to."
 - ◆ The most attractive feature plus the associated benefit: "New control device ends problems with employee pilferage!"
 - ◆ An intriguing number: "Here are three great secrets of the world's most loved entertainers."
 - ◆ A sample of the product: "Here's your free sample of the new Romantic packing sheet."
 - ◆ A specific trait shared by the audience: "Busy executives need another complicated 'time-saving' device like they need a hole in the head!"

◆ **A provocative question:** "Are you tired of watching inflation eat away at your hard-earned profits?"

◆ **A challenge:** "Don't waste another day wondering how you're going to become the success you've always wanted to be!"

◆ **A solution to a problem:** "Tired of feeling that icy air rush into the cracks around your windows? Stay warm and save energy with Strom Seal Weatherstripping."

To minimise costs in large mailbags, it is helpful to identify the expected 'heavy-users', that is, the segment of the market that would be the main purchasers—and mail letters only to them.

Sales letters prepared by professionals also use a variety of formats to get your attention, including personalized salutations, special sizes or styles of different types, underlining, colour, indentation and so on. But whatever special techniques are used, the best attention-getter for a sales letter is a 'hook' that gets the reader thinking about the needs your product might be able to satisfy.

(2) The Middle Section: Interest and Desire Build up

The build up of both the reader's **interest** in a product or service and the **desire** to own or use it follows the introductory section. This is also the section of a persuasive request where you try to build up the reader's interest by presenting appeals to convince the reader to agree to your request. You should include all the details you decide should be used and follow a good plan. Superfluous details must be omitted, but all necessary information should be included.

There are many ways in which to appeal to the reader's interest, one of which may have been used in the attention-getter.

(a) Identifying appeals that attract prospects: In general, people respond to two basic types of appeals: emotional and rational. For your letter to be successful, study the positive emotional and rational appeals that you can tie in with your product or service.

(i) Emotional appeals: They involve our basic senses of feeling, seeing, tasting, smelling and hearing. Some strong emotional drives appeal to our feelings of love and friendship, pride, fear, pleasure, safety and appearance.

(ii) Rational appeals: They include such matters as making money, saving money, getting more for the rupee spent, maintaining a respectable position among family and friends, doing a good job, saving

time and energy, protecting the environment and getting greater use out of a product.

The following points should be emphasized to build the interest of the desire of the purchaser:

(a) Emphasizing the Central Selling Point: To determine the central selling point, ask **(i) what the competition has to offer,** **(ii) what most distinguishes your product and** **(iii) what most concerns potential buyers.** The answers to these three questions will help you select the single point around which to build your sales message. Make this point a feature of your letter, in the heading or within the first paragraph and make it stand out through typography, design or high-impact writing.

(b) Highlighting Benefits: The selling points plus your attitude constitutes the benefits. Remember that sales letters reflect your attitude through reference to benefits. Some of benefits which may be offered are as follows:

- (1) Promise money, a bonus, a gift or a prize.
- (2) Promise personal safety or property safety.
- (3) Promise economy—a bargain.
- (4) Flatter the reader—appeal to pride.
- (5) Promise their children a better world.
- (6) Appeal to a special interest: Occupation, community service, hobbies, home improvement, etc.
- (7) Appeal to a person's better self—charities, community service, civic responsibility, etc.
- (8) Appeal to the sense of humour - use an appropriate story or cartoon.

(c) Talking about the Price: The price that customers will pay for a product depends on the prices of similar products, the general state of the economy and the psychology of the buyer. Price is therefore a complicated issue and often a sensitive one.

Whether the price of your product is highlighted or downplayed, your entire letter should prepare the reader for it. Such words as *luxurious* and *economical* provide unmistakable clues about how your price compares with that of competitors and help the reader accept the price when you finally state it. **If your price is relatively high,** you should definitely **stress features and benefits of your product that justify it.** **If the price is low,** you may wish to compare the features of your product with those of the competitors, either directly or indirectly.

(d) **Supporting Your Claims:** You cannot assume that people will believe what you say about your product. You will have to prove your claims, especially if your product is **complicated, expensive or representative of some unusual approach.**

Support for your claims may take several forms. Samples and brochures, often with photographs, are enclosures in the sales package but should also be referred to in the letter. In addition, the letter should describe examples of how the product has benefited others, should include testimonials (actual quotations) from satisfied customers or should cite statistics from scientific studies of the product's performance. Guarantees of exchange or return privileges, which may also be given in the letter. In any way, adopt any method to win the confidence of the customer in your product.

(3) **The Closing Section: Motivating Action**

The main purpose of a sales letter is to **get the reader to do something.** Many consumer products sold through the mail simply ask for a cheque—in other words, an immediate decision to buy. On the other hand, big-ticket and more complex items frequently ask for just a small step toward the final buying decision, such as sending for more information or authorizing a call by a sales representative.

As far as possible, the closing section of the letter should do five things. It should :

- (1) **Tell the reader specifically what to do.**
- (2) **Tell how to do it.**
- (3) **Make it easy, or make it sound easy—the word just is often used effectively.**
- (4) **Make the price sound right—perhaps use the word only.**
- (5) **Urge the reader to do it soon (before it is forgotten); sometimes a deadline is given.**

This section is the final part of the letter except for possible postscript closing should be brief, preferably one sentence or a short paragraph fulfills all five specifications.

Sales Letter 1.

Nuchem Weir Limited

20/6, Mathura Road, Faridabad-121006

No : NWL : 2002 : 15

No : NWL : 2002 : 15
January 6, 2xxx

Mr. Raghunath Singh,
Managing Director
Super Auto Ltd.
31/8, Mathura Road
Faridabad

SUBJECT : KRISTAL ULTRA PURE MINERAL WATER

Dear Sir

"Bottled water every where, but which one to drink."

In a market flooded with numerous brands of bottled water, all claiming to be the best, making the right choice is a challenging task.

OUR COMPANY

"KRISTAL" is brought to you by NUICHEM WEIR LTD, Faridabad, a joint venture between NUICHEM LTD and WEIR WEST GARITH LTD, PLC of U.K., world leaders in the field of water purification. NUICHEM WEIR LTD is credited with building and commissioning some of the biggest and most sophisticated water purification plants across the country.

OUR PLANT AND PROCESS

"KRISTAL" is being processed by the company since 1994 in our State of the Art plant. We carry out extensive quality checks to ensure purity in every drop and bottle after bottle. "KRISTAL", therefore is pure water with essential minerals in the right proportion.

OUR QUALITY POLICY

We are committed to produce safe and natural tasting water of international standards to ensure the health of our customers.

We now urge upon you to exercise your right to choose the right bottled water keeping in mind that after all "water is for life." Anything less would be a compromise for you and your family's health.

Yours sincerely

For Nuchem Weir Ltd.

V.K. Mehta

Dy. Manager-Sales

Sales Letter 2.**NUCHEM LIMITED**

E-46/12, Okhla Industrial Area Phase II
NEW DELHI-110022
MDF : MKTG : SALES : 06

June 15, 2xxx
M/s Krishna Enterprises
205 Sadar Bazar
Delhi-110006

Dear Sir,

We are pleased to inform that we have set up India's largest based Medium Density Fibre board plant in collaboration with M/S SUNDS DEFIBRATOR, SWEDEN. Our NUWUD MDF conforms to 1-12406-1988, is a wood substitute finding wide range of applications in housing, furniture and industry. The unbeatable machinability, high internal bond strength, superior mechanical and physical properties and excellent finishes that can be obtained on NUWUD MDF makes it a very suitable material to replace timber in various applications.

NUWUD MDF boards are produced in various grades, thicknesses and sizes to suit customer needs. It's durability, versatility, texture, the sheer richness of its looks will simply delight and amaze you.

It is a matter of satisfaction and privilege to inform that over 10,000 progressive architects and interior designers have already started recommending use of NUWUD MDF for varied applications and have termed it as "MOST INNOVATIVE PRODUCT OF THE YEAR FOR EXCELLENCE IN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN."

We enclose here with our detailed latest catalogue which is self explanatory. However, should you require any further information please feel absolutely free to call on us as per your convenience. We will be happy to make an audio-visual technical presentation, if so desired.

Thanking you and assuring you of our best attention always.

Yours sincerely

For Nuchem Limited
Raj Malhotra
Area Sales Manager

Sales Letter 3.**VS Communications Pvt. Ltd.**

B-13, 2nd Main Street, Ana Nagar,
Chennai

No: VS: Comm : Gen : 15
July 6, 2xxx
M/s Rohas Industries
555, Lal Kuan
Delhi-110006

Dear Sir

It gives us immense pleasure to present to you the SIMPLY DIAL 333 3333 services, a fully computerised telephonic information service working round the clock to provide instant and reliable information about any consumer, commercial or industrial products and services. As a matter of fact, we can safely call our services as "Talking Yellow Pages."

With a view to achieving more business and prosperity through our services, you only need to get yourself registered with us and provide necessary information about your product or service. We, in turn, will give you complete business details and products and services information to the callers and people approaching us. This will enable you to respond at your convenience to your prospective clients for your products or services. These services are available to you at very reasonable rates in the form of membership as per details given hereunder:

- (a) One Year Membership Rs. 6,000 plus Rs. 2000 for 1 year
 - (b) Two Years Membership Rs. 9,000 plus Rs. 3000 for 2 years It may please be observed from the above commercial terms that with a little investment you can expand your network of clients manifold without moving out from your office. Great isn't it?
- We now look forward to your early registration in order to help you increase your business activities by providing information to your prospective clients. SIMPLY DIAL 333 3333 and start smiling.

Yours truly

For V.S. Communications Pvt. Ltd.
Ram Mohan
Manager—Business Development

Sales Letter A**Modern Climate Control Equipments**

52, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Jaipur

January 27, 2xxx

Dear Customer:

YEAR ROUND CLIMATE CONTROL is now available for your home.

Fresh, circulating air keeps your whole house warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Your CLIMATE CONTROL package will also include special low gas rates during the summer months for gas used for air conditioning. And as you know, gas air conditioning is more dependable and lasts longer because it has fewer moving parts.

Right now, and during the next few months, installers are not as busy and can provide you with fast, dependable service. So think ahead and let us help you begin planning your own YEAR ROUND CLIMATE CONTROL now.

Sincerely yours

3. Claim Letters

Delayed shipments, damages to goods, misunderstandings, error in filling orders, equipment gone faulty within the warranty period and other such problems occur even in the most well managed and organised companies/establishments. When such problems arise, you need to express your grievance and make a claim against another firm whether it is for a product or service. However, do keep in mind that you have two objectives in writing a claim letter: to settle the claim to your satisfaction and to preserve the cordial relation.

Make your claim accurately and tactfully. Assume in your letter that your claim will be settled to your satisfaction and the other firm will, as a goodwill gesture make a satisfactory adjustment. In your claim letter, you are to ensure that you avoid accusations, threats or even mention any hints that you will do if the claim is not settled satisfactorily and promptly. If possible, address your claim to a specific person in the company, the head of customer relations or customer service, the sales person who look and delivered your order, the executive who heads the department from where you bought the item or service. At times, you may even address your complaint directly to the CEO of a company. This is an effective strategy if the company is small. The main idea is to approach the source that can provide the most help.

While writing your complaint and asking for a claim, it is pertinent that you give the company accurate and complete information to enable them to investigate the matter and offer a satisfactory adjustment. You are to ensure that you include the following in your claim letter.

- (1) **All pertinent dates:** Indicate your order date, purchase date and shipping date and mention a record of any conversation or correspondence with the company about the item/s in dispute. Include copies of proof of purchase such as invoices or receipts.
- (2) **A description of the problem:** State your observations/points one by one. Bullt them for the right impact. Give all the details such as item, model number, type of service and the like.
- (3) **Explain the implications of the problem for you:** Does it means a loss of business opportunity, interruption in service or operations, inconvenience personal or otherwise, injuries and so on?
- (4) **State what adjustment you would like:** Should the company replace the item/s perform the service again, refund your money, compensate you for your loss of business or even inconvenience that you suffered? Make your claim realistic and look genuine. Don't pad it up unnecessarily. You must realise that people who read your claim are not novices. They will certainly have a sympathetic attitude if they find your demand as genuine.
- (5) **Close by Stating your Confidence that the firm will respond favourably and fairly to your claim:** Be open to negotiation. The company may not be alike to grant everything you request. You need to decide what can be negotiated and what cannot. Always keep in mind your second objective-preserving cordial relations with the other firm, you may need to do business with them again and remember that likewise the firm would not also like to lose a good customer.

Specimen I of Claim Letter

House No. 98, Sector -15
Faridabad - 121 007

July 20, 2xxx

Mr. Ramesh Sharma
Forward Computers Company
11, Jail Road,
New Delhi - 110057

Dear Mr. Ramesh

I am pleased with the Pentium Computer I purchased from you vice your receipt No: 2001 of July 10, 2xxx. However, I have noticed one problem that needs to be rectified immediately.

When I purchased this computer, I distinctly requested for a Matrox Millennium graphics accelerator with a 4 megabyte base board. When I picked up the computer, I was assured by your Mr. Lakshman that computer was configured properly as per my need. I, therefore, signed the statement on the invoice in good faith. However, as you can see from the attached copy of the invoice, it does not make clear how much memory was installed with the accelerator.

Having used the computer in the past few days, I have, unfortunately, discovered that the system has only 2 MB of memory. I am terribly upset about the lack of memory since I am unable to complete the project for which I specifically purchased this new computer with higher memory.

I now need to get the 4 MB memory installed at the earliest. I have already lost few precious days and I cannot afford to lose any further. I will deliver my computer to your office tomorrow itself and would expect you to deliver back the same evening after proper configuration. Please get the work done on top priority.

Yours sincerely,

Nikhil

Encl: Copy of Invoice No. 2001, dated July 10, 2xxx

Specimen II of Claim Letter

House No. 466, Sector -9
Faridabad - 121 007

July 12, 2xxx

The Customer Care Manager
Samsung Service Wing,
12, Okhla Industrial Area,
New Delhi 110014

Dear Sir,

I purchased a Samsung 1.5 ton split air conditioner model No. B-125 from M/s Cheema Enterprises vide receipt No. 00036 dated Aug. 29, 2008. The machine was working properly till November 2xxx.

This year when I started using the machine in June 2009, I observed that water leaks from the indoor unit. A complaint was made to this effect to your service centre and an engineer was deputed promptly to look into the problem. He reportedly carried out some adjustment and left having assured me that I will not face the same problem again.

I switched on the machine after two days and found that the water dripping continues which unfortunately spoiled some of the food stuff which I had prepared for our guests. This proved to be a great inconvenience, to say the least.

I once again contacted your service department on telephone and was informed that another senior engineer would visit soon. It is over four days today but no one has visited so far. Furthermore, I am not able to talk to a responsible person from your department in this regard.

Please do speak to me on my mobile No. as to how you would like to deal with this. I await your call anxiously.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Veena Mehta

Encl: Receipt No. 00036 dated Aug. 28, 2xxx.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. "First impression is the last impression." Explain this term in context of letters and memos.
 Ans. The appearance of a letter or memo plays a significant role in communicating the message. Attractive presentation of the message project a favourable image of the writer and his company. Given an impression of competence and care and build credibility for the writer. It reflects and good business etiquette of the writer.
2. What does letter mean?
 Ans. Letter is a business document which is addressed to people outside a business organisation.
3. What are the three major formats of the letter?
 Ans. (1) Full block format
 (2) Modified block format
 (3) Simplified format.
4. What is the purpose of the subject line?
 Ans. To make both the sender and the receiver quickly identify the subject of the correspondence many office use the subject line in their letters.
5. What do you mean by attention line?
 Ans. Attention line is used if the subject matter of the letter is being handled by one particular person.
6. What are the objectives of writing a claim letter?
 Ans. (a) To settle the claim to your satisfaction
 (b) To preserve the cordial relation.
7. What is the primary aim of writing sales letter?
 Ans. The primary aim of writing sales letter is publicity or to reach out to a large number of people interested in a particular product or service and turn them into buyers.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write a short note on
 (a) Physical appearance of a business letter
 (b) Claim letters
 (c) AIDA formula.
2. Explain briefly different formats of letters.
3. Write briefly the essential tips for writing sales letter.
4. What are 3P's in sales letter? Explain briefly.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What do you mean by a format of a letter? Explain the different types of format of a letter, giving proper illustrations.
 Discuss the different standard parts of a business letter.
 (K. U. 2003, 2007, 2008, H. P. U. 2005)
2. Discuss the various parts of a business letter.
 (H. P. U. 2004, 2008)
3. What are the main parts of a business letter? How a business letter can be made effective?
 (K. U. 2004)
4. What is a business letter? Give its parts. How can it be made effective?
 (M. D. U. 2006)
5. Explain AIDA formula to write a persuasive letter. Write a sales letter to sell pearls.
 (M. D. U. 2003, 2007)
6. What is a sales letter? What points are to be kept in mind while drafting a sales letter?
 Or
 What is a sales letter? How is it drafted?
 (M. D. U. 2006)
7. Explain attention, interest, desire and action formula for writing sales letter.
8. What is a claim letter? What points one should keep in mind while drafting a claim letter?

■ 1. Introduction

Seeking for a job? You need to send a letter to your prospective employer, enclosing therewith your resume and a cover letter.

What is a cover letter? Also known as a letter of introduction, letter of application, transmittal letter or broadcast letter. It is a letter every job seeker must send along with the resume. Few employers seriously consider a resume that is not accompanied by a cover letter, thus, a dynamically written cover letter needs to be a vital part of your job search exercise. A resume is useless to an employer if they don't know what kind of work you excel in and want to do, it tells the employer the type of position you are seeking - and exactly how you consider to be qualified for that position.

A cover letter highlights the aspects of your experience that are most useful to the potential employer. Employers get hundreds of resumes once they advertise for a post position. They are usually busy people and do not have enough time to scan through and read every resume word by word. Your cover letter can call attention to the skills, talents and the experience employer is looking for.

Your cover letter can explain things that your resume can't. If you have gaps in your employment history or you happen to reenter the job market or even plan to change the focus of your career, a cover letter can explain these circumstances in a positive way.

A cover letter can serve the same function as the 'job objective' on your resume and expand upon it. Some applicants are reluctant to limit themselves by putting an objective on their resume. Although it is best for a job seeker to target the type of work considered to be best suited for, but keep yourself open to other similar or near about options.

In fact, a cover letter is a little window about your personality. A good cover letter encourages an employer to think, "I'd like to interview this applicant, sounds like someone I'd like to get to know better. It seems like just the type of person the company needs."

Employment Letters

Since all job openings are not the same. Similarly all cover letters are not the same. Remember there are different medications for different diseases. Only about one-fifth of the job market is what we call 'open'. The main avenue for informing the public about these openings is through advertisement in newspapers, trade magazines, web sites, etc. Employment agencies are another source of open-market positions. A reply to this kind of open market situation should be a cover letter which conforms to the want advertisement. This enables you to respond to the desired requirements of the advertisement and you can then confidently respond if you consider yourself suitable to their requirement. It simply conveys what the advertiser wants in you, respond only if you fit the requirement. Don't waste your time and energy to respond if you do not fit the bill. A no response may cause disillusionment and harassment. Why get it, if you can avoid it.

Another job hunting cover letter is the 'closed' type, meaning you can't find out about the positions unless you dig. Obviously, it means that some job seekers will send out a great deal of their resumes along with the cover letters that we term as 'Uninvited' or cold contact prospecting letter. This uninvited cover letter enables you to take a proactive approach to job hunting instead of the reactive approach in which you answer advertisements confirming to their requirements. However, even in this uninvited approach, everything is not lost. A number of organised companies maintain a data bank with them to consider when an opening occurs. Alternatively, there is also another possibility where in the company you applied to can refer your details to others in the field who might have use for you.

Yet another job hunting cover letter is a very close cousin to the uninvited cover letter. This letter too is uninvited but it has an edge. It prominently displays the name of a person your addressee knows. We call this kind of a cover letter as the referral letter. Referral letters are the product of networking, which many experts say is the most effective way of job hunting. In its simplest form, networking involves using everyone you know as a resource to finding a new job.

Referral letters can come about from a variety of sources. You might talk to someone in a meeting, who tells you about an opening. An acquaintance at a get together might mention of some one she/he knows whose organisation could use your services, etc. The value of the referral letter is in its name dropping. The idea is to grab the attention of the potential employer by mentioning someone he respects in the first line of

the letter, you will gain a terrific advantage. Some examples are given hereunder:

-Rohit Saxra of Technology Unlimited suggested that you might have openings for system analysts."

I met Arun Barar last night and he mentioned that you might have need for some one in publications marketing.

It is stressed that you have to be genuine in writing such cover letters. Do write, what you come across. Don't even try and say something which did not happen.

Remember that a cover letter is perhaps the most important part of a direct-mail sales package. The product is 'You'. As with any other sales letter, you are trying to motivate a specific action. You want that employer, to call you and ask for an interview. A dynamic cover letter can attract the employer's attention and interest.

Your cover letter conveys to employers how well you express yourself. A good cover letter can encourage the recipient to review your resume. A bad cover letter, on the other hand, can nip your chances in the bud. Do write good cover letters and avoid these mistakes.

■ 2. Points to Remember

Remember certain precautions before writing an employment letter—

(1) **Sending your resume without a cover letter.** Although there are some employers that don't read them or place much importance to them. But since you don't know whether the employer you are writing to reads and values your cover letter or not, you must include a letter to be on the safer side.

(2) **Failure to address the letter to specific name of the recipient.** Addressing the letter as "Dear Personnel Manager/HR Manager, To whom it may concern" etc. does not work well. Your approach in this regard should be to find out the name with correct initials. In case, there is any doubt, ring up the organisation and ask who the hiring manager is for a given position. Do it and believe that your effort will be appreciated.

(3) **Tell the employer what you can do for the company and not vice-versa.** The employer is in business to make a profit. They want to know what you can contribute for their bottom line and not what they can do to fulfil your career dreams.

(4) **Don't leave the ball in the employer's court:** Most of the cover letters end with a line like this, "I look forward to hearing from you." Proactive cover letters in which the applicant requests for an interview and follows

it up with a phone call, are more effective. Don't be vague about your desire for an interview. Come right out and ask for an interview. Then take your specific action a step further and tell the recipient that you will contact them in a specified period of time to arrange an interview appointment. Obviously, if you say that you will follow up, then you do so within the time frame indicated.

(5) **Being boring and formula:** Don't waste your first paragraph by writing a boring introduction. Instead, use this paragraph to attract the attention of the recipient. Tell the employer why you are writing and summarise the reasons you are apply qualified for the post.

(6) **Allowing typos, misspellings, or incorrect grammar/punctuation in your letter.** Your letter reflects your ability to write and communicate. Ensure that your document is letter perfect before sending it out. Proof read your letter. Put it down and proof read again after a few hours later with a fresh eye.

(7) **Rehashing your resume:** You can use your cover letter to highlight the aspects of your resume that are relevant to the position. Don't repeat anything in your cover letter. If you do so then you are wasting precious time of the recipient and yours too.

(8) **Failing to specifically tailor your letter to the job you're applying for:** If you are answering in response to an advertisement or online job posting, the specifics of your cover letter should be tied as closely as possible.

■ 2.1 In the Job or Employment Letter, Focus On

- Major requirements of the job for which you are applying.
- Points that separate you from other applicants.
- Points that show your knowledge of the organisation.
- Qualities that every employer is likely to value: the ability to write and speak effectively, to solve problems, to get along with people.
- Every employer wants business like employees who understand professionalism. To make your application letter professional.
- Create your letter on a computer.
- Address your letter to a specific person. If the reader is a woman, call the office to find out what courtesy title she prefers.
- Do not mention relatives' names. It is alright to use other names if the reader knows them and thinks well of them, if they think well of you

and will say good things about you and if you have permission to use their names.

- Omit personal information not related to the job.
- Unless you are applying for a creative job in advertising or Web design, use a conservative style.
- Edit the letter carefully several times to make sure it is perfect.

According to Murphy, the job application letter or employment letter also called contact letter or the resume cover letter has one purpose: *To attract the interest of your prospective employer to give you a job interview.*

Address your letter of employment application to a person by name. Keep the letter short.

3. Characteristics of a Good Employment Letter

(1) All the basic qualities of a good letter apply here. **Appearance** is important, because from this letter a judgement will be made about your personality. Naturally, the letter must be written in a good-will tone. You should show an interest in the firm and have some knowledge about it. In addition, you might show a special interest in the type of position you are seeking.

(2) The tone of the letter should be as **natural** as possible as if you were talking directly to the person who is to read it. However, avoid being too casual or informal.

(3) The clear and complete message that must be given is that you are applying for a position for which you are amply competent and you would like to be **granted an interview** to discuss this matter.

(4) The employment application letter that encloses a **resume should be short**, almost always just one page. Fuller details are set out in the enclosure and you should always mention the enclosure. As far as possible, this letter should have the *you attitude* instead of the *me attitude*.

This way, you stress *how your qualifications can prove to be of an immense use to the employer instead of how you would expect derive to benefit from the employment.*

(5) This letter is about you and use of the words *I, me, my and mine* is necessary.

4. Types of Employment Letters

The employment letters may be of two types:

(1) **Solicited Letter:** A solicited letter is one that is sent in response to an announced job opening. Write a solicited letter when you know that a like company is hiring. You have seen an advertisement, you have been advised to apply by a professor or friend or if you have read in a trade publication that the company is expanding.

When you send a solicited letter, you usually know in advance what qualifications the organisation is looking for in the prospective candidate. However, you also have more competition because hundreds of other job seekers will have seen the advertisement and may be sending applications.

(2) **Unsolicited Letter:** An unsolicited or "prospecting" letter is one sent to an organisation that has not announced any vacancy. Prospecting letters help you tap into the hidden job market. In some cases, your prospecting letter may arrive at a company that has decided to hire but has not yet announced the job. In other cases, companies create positions to get a good person who is on the market. Even in a hiring case, jobs are sometimes created for specific individuals.

In some respects, therefore, an unsolicited application letter stands a better chance of being read. Although it may initially be filed away, it will probably be considered eventually and it may get more individualised attention.

Whether you are sending a solicited or an unsolicited application letter, you should present your qualifications similarly. The main difference is in the opening paragraph. In a solicited letter, no special attention-involving effort is needed because you have been invited to apply. The unsolicited letter, however, must attract the reader's attention and interest.

5. Contents of Employment Letters

The employment letters consist of the following components:

(1) **Opening:** The opening paragraph should aim at seeking attention of the employer.

One way to attract attention in the opening paragraph is to show how your strongest work skills could benefit the organisation. A 20 year-old secretary with 2 years of college might begin like this:

When you need a secretary in your export division who can take shorthand at 125 words a minute and type notes at 70 – in English, Spanish or Portuguese – call me.

State clearly the job that you are applying for. If possible, name some factor that especially qualifies you for the job or that makes you want to work for the firm to which you are applying. Show some specific interest in or knowledge of the firm.

To get attention, the opening paragraph may focus on any one of the following statements :

(1) An attention-inviting letter consists of describing your understanding of the job's requirements and then showing how well your qualifications are suitable the job.

(2) Mentioning the name of a person known to and highly regarded by the reader is also bound to attract some attention.

(3) References to publicised company activities, achievements, changes or new procedures can also be used to gain attention.

(4) In contrast, a solicited letter written in response to a job advertisement usually opens by identifying the publication in which the ad ran and then describing what the applicant has to offer.

The opening paragraph of your application letter should also state your reason for writing: You are applying for a job. It should therefore identify the desired job or job area.

(2) **Middle Paragraph:** The purpose of middle paragraph is interest and desire build up.

The middle paragraph(s) of the application letter should present your strongest points in terms of their potential benefit to the organisation, thereby creating interest in you and a desire to interview you. If your points have already been mentioned in the opening, do not repeat them. This portion of the letter should generally consist of two or at most three paragraphs. In these paragraphs you have to persuade the reader that you have necessary qualification. Therefore, avoid repetition of facts given in the resume. Cover the following points in this portion :

(a) **Education:** Many of you will consider education your most important qualification, especially if you are applying for a first job. But avoid the impression that a college degree (entrepreneur and chairman of Microsoft Bill Gates does not have a college degree) overshadows all achievements.

• Emphasize how your overall education prepared you for the work you seek.

• Show that you have both a broad background in business (and arts and sciences) and depth in certain major courses.

Explain how additional elective subjects supplemented your major data to your resume cover letter. Suggest that in your responsibilities in previous jobs you :

- Gained practical experience to accompany your education.
- Adapted to different work environments.
- Supervised other people with positive results.
- Administered large expendable funds honestly and correctly.
- Negotiated major tender offers with foreign suppliers.

(c) **Personal Attitudes, Interest, Activities and Qualities:** Simply listing your ability is not enough. Show how those abilities relate to the job for which you are applying. In other words, relating your personal attitudes, interests, activities or personal qualities to the job requirements may also be included. Provide evidence of a desirable personal quality as well.

When writing a solicited letter in response to a situation vacant advertisement, fully cover each requirement specified in the ad. If you are deficient in any of these requirements, stress other solid plus points to help strengthen your overall presentation.

Stating that you have all the necessary requirements for the job is rarely enough to convince the reader, so back up your claim by presenting evidence of it.

(3) **Last Paragraph—for easy action:** In the final paragraph you ask for action; here are some suggestions:

- Make the action easy.
- Be precise as to times you can be contacted by phone.
- Include phone number, if you have an answering machine and whether you are available by fax or E-mail.

Employment Letter

Rakesh Sharma
48 C, III Maincross
Vijay Nagar
Mumbai
(011) 5283978

Feb 15, 2000

Mr. Mohan Kumar
Professional Recruitment Counsellor
India Exports-Imports
22, North Park Avenue
Mumbai

Dear Sir,

Your advertisement for Accounting Manager in the Times of India on Sunday, January 26, 2000 interests me considerably. I feel my background is well suited to the post you advertised.

My experience has been very diversified in the following areas :

Staff Accountant /Finance Analysis
Payroll Systems and Payroll Taxation
Accounting and Taxation (problem solving)
Supervision of 10 staff people

I have an M.B.A. degree with merit in International Finance. My experience has been in International Finance for more than five years with computerised systems. I would be happy to negotiate a salary with you.

A resume is enclosed which summarizes my background and experience. I hope to have the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications in a personal interview.

Rakesh Sharma

Sincerely

Enclosure

May 20, 2000
N.K. Tewari
Director of Personnel
Raindew Industries, Inc.
983, Sector 16-D
Chandigarh

N.P. Prabhu
3, Carols Road
Amritsar
(0183)322967

Dear Sir,

Will you please review my qualifications for work in your administrative trainee programme? I base my case on my training, work attitude and personal skills.

My training for administration consists primarily of two of business administration degree I will receive in June has given me a broad foundation of business knowledge. As a general business major, I studied all the functional fields (management, marketing, information systems, finance, accounting) as well as the other core business subjects (communications, statistics, law, economics, production and personnel). I have the knowledge base that will enable me to be productive now. And I can build upon this base through practical experience.

As I am seeking my first full-time job, I must use means other than work experience to prove my work attitude. My grade point record at university is evidence that I took my studies seriously and that I worked hard. My 1st Division average placed me in the top 10 per cent of the university. I also worked diligently in student associations. My efforts were recognised by the special assignments and leadership roles given to me. I assure you that I would bring these work habits with me to Raindew Industries.

Throughout college, I devoted time to the development of my personal skills. As an active member of the student body of the Society for the Advancement of Management, I served as treasurer and programme chairperson. I participated in golf and volleyball. All this experience has helped me to have the balance you seek in your administrative trainees.

These highlights and the additional evidence presented in the enclosed resume present my case for a career in administration. I hope to have an interview to continue my presentation. You can reach me at 201-325-967. I could be in your office at your convenience to talk about working for Raindew Industries.

Sincerely yours,

N.P. Prabhu

Enclosure

QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What is the purpose of employment letter?
Ans. The purpose of employment letter is to get an interview.
2. What is cover letter?
Ans. It is a letter that every job seeker must sent along with the resume.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write a short note on:
(a) Employment letter
(b) Solicited letter
(c) Unsolicited letter.
2. Briefly explain points that one should remember before writing an employment letter.
3. What are the characteristics of a good employment letter?
4. What are the contents of employment letter?
5. What precautions should be taken in writing an employment letter?
6. Write a job application to seek an employment.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What is cover letter? What precautions we should take before writing a cover letter?
2. Explain different types of employment letter. What are the contents of employment letter?
3. Write an essay on employment letter.
4. What is meant by employment letter? Explain the contents of the employment letter.
5. You are Mohan/Anita. Write a letter to ABC Co. Chandigarh for the post of an Accounts Officer.

12

Memos, Circulars and Notice

1. Memo Formats

Memo or memorandum is primarily a written message exchanged by employees in conduct of their work. Thus, memorandum is a letter which goes within an organisation.

Memo is a short form of Memorandum. The term "memorandum" in English is derived from the term "Memoriale" of Latin language, meaning "to tell". Memo or memorandum is a small note which is sent by a superior officer or manager to his subordinate or staff to convey information of some subject.

1.1 Format of a Memorandum

A memo contains neither any salutation (*Dear Sirs*) nor any complimentary close (*Yours sincerely*). The format of a standard memo consists of a heading subject line and body.

Many organisations have memo forms printed, with labelled spaces for the date, the recipient's name the sender's name and the subject. If such forms do not exist, memos are typed on plain paper or sometimes on letterhead.

Memos typed on plain paper or on letterhead should always have a title like *Memo* or *Interoffice Correspondence* (all in capitals) centred at the top of the page or aligned with the left margin.

Headings

What you write after the To, From, and Date will vary with the situation and your organisation's practices; but all are present. A courtesy title such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, before your reader's name may be used depending on your relationship with the reader and the degree of formality within your organisation. You omit the title before your name.

Subject Line

The subject-line of a memo helps busy colleagues find out quickly what the memo is about. Although the subject "line" may overflow onto a second line, it is most helpful when it is short but still informative.

Body

The body of the memo starts on the second or third line below the heading. Like the body of a letter, it is usually single-spaced. Paragraphs are separated by blank lines but may or may not be indented. Lists, important passages, and subheadings may all be handled as they are in letters. If the memo is very short, it may be double spaced.

Unlike a letter, a memo does not require a complimentary close or a signature, because the writer's name is already prominent at the top. However, the memo writer may initial the memo beside the name typed at the top or at the bottom of the memo or even sign his or her name at the bottom, particularly if the memo deals with money or confidential matters.

Memos may be delivered by hand, by the post office (when the recipient does not work at the same location as the memo writer), or through interoffice mail. Interoffice mail may require the use of special reusable envelopes that have spaces for noting the recipient's name and department or room number; the name of the previous recipient is simply crossed out. If a regular envelope is used, the words *Interoffice Mail* should be typed at the place where postage stamp is affixed.

1.2 Conditions for Good Memorandum

- (1) **Identify reader(s)** and write at that level.
- (2) **Appearance:** Less expensive stationery and less expensive means of reproducing can generally be used for memos.
- (3) **Goodwill tone:** It is especially important to check for satisfactory tone in communications to people with whom we work.
- (4) **Message:** Make it clear, complete and especially concise.
- (5) **Check for grammar,** spelling and punctuation

1.3 Types of Memorandums

Most memorandums carry positive messages, routine information, but sometimes they can carry less routine information such as negative messages or messages of persuasion.

(1) Routine Information, "Yes" or Good News Memorandums

Most memorandums fit into this category. Employees are, or should be,

busy. Therefore, the message should be direct and clear.

Example 1. Routine Information Memorandum, a "Good News" Message.

C.LAL & CO.

Darya Ganj, New Delhi
Memorandum

To : All Employees
From : Nikhil Burad

Date : August 15, 2001
Subject : New Parking Spaces

Good news!

In addition to the employee parking lot will be finished by September 1, 2001. No more walking through mud and gunk this winter if you had to park in the old parking area.

Please understand that additional parking facilities were needed because of the successful sales of our refrigerators and the additional staff needed in all departments.

September is nearly here. Just cross your fingers that we don't get a heavy storm in the meantime! Best wishes just a few more days.

(2) Negative Memorandum

For negative message to others in your organization, try to use a touch of humour, if possible. This can give a lift to the reader and writer and can also help develop a positive attitude toward you personally. In case of really bad news, it is inadvisable to use humor. The closing of a business and the possible loss of jobs are typical matters that do not invite humor. Every memos random has a buffer that leads somewhat softly into the negative, giving the bad-news briefly and clearly without dragging in too many details. Then they close with a message that is suitably upbeat.

Example 2. Negative Memorandum

Modern College

Panipat

TO : Business Management Institute

FROM : C.L. Singla

DATE : June 22, 20xx

SUBJECT : Eating and drinking in classrooms

Students are leaving coffee cups, empty cola containers and trash in the classrooms. If you allow eating and drinking in the classroom, please use good judgement and make students clean up after themselves. It may interest you to know that cola spilled on the floor eats off the finish; coffee does not.

I would prefer that you do not allow students to drink cola in the classrooms. The empty containers draw ants and we have enough problems without attracting little creatures who are not interested in an education.

PMP:act

(3) Persuasive Request Memorandums

Sometimes it is helpful or even necessary to send memorandums that attempt to sell others on a certain plan or idea. These memorandums, could be classified as persuasive requests.

This type of message can usually be most effective following this pattern, highlighting the advantages to the firm or individual for whom it is written. Next would be the interest—desire buildup, explaining specifically the advantages of the plan. It should be as brief as possible. The last section of this memorandum—the persuasive request should state clearly what action you want taken.

Example 3. "G" memorandum, a persuasive request to get employees to conform to a dress code.

Mittal & Company

Hissar

TO : All Employees

FROM : R. K. Mittal, President

DATE : June, 20xx

Now, summer is upon us, and a craving to get out of the cocoons of winter is universal. While lighter dresses and suits are certainly necessary and acceptable, could we just be a little more cautious in some choices: no strapless tops; in fact, shoulder lines should be more than a strap. Also, no deep necklines. We feel people should watch their necklines so that others won't.

And a few of you venture some males have been wearing jeans with shirts more appropriate to the sands of Mumbai. In all, could we leave casual dress for casual places.

We all realize that our firm is expected to present a certain businesslike image to our customers and the public, and we will appreciate your cooperation.

Advantages of Memorandum

The chief advantages of the memorandum are as follows:

- (1) **The memorandum invites brevity:** It is a straight forward communication that almost invariably includes the necessary information and nothing more.
- (2) **The memorandum is convenient:** The chief notations at the top of the memo give ready reference to its subject matter and the major area is left free for the message. Although usually typed, these messages can be written in pen or pencil.
- (3) **The memorandum is inexpensive:** Because the memorandum is generally circulated within an organisation, computer memos on a screen or printed memos can be brought out immediately.
- (4) **The memorandum can be used as a record of information to be filed for future reference:** As noted, most memos can be destroyed immediately. At times, however, memo records of day to day transactions in person or by telephone can be very helpful.

People Don't Read

It is a hard fact. **People don't read.** At least most people resist reading. After all your talent and hard work, your memo might not be read.

If it is important make it short, when a memorandum gets to be two, three, four, pages, it tends to get placed in the "Read tomorrow or tomorrow or tomorrow" stack. After you have finished, go back and remove any unnecessary words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Now reread it. The message is clearer? Not only will more people read it, more will understand it.

The French intellectual, **Blaise Pascal**, who was a mathematician, scientist and religious writer, wrote to a friend, "I have made this letter longer than usual because I lack the time to make it short."

Similarities and Differences in Memorandums and Letters

The order and techniques for writing memorandums are much the same as those for writing letters. The reason is that the situations for both are similar. Some memorandums ask for or give routine information, thus, they are appropriately written in the same order and use the same techniques as letters that do the same. The explanation, is that in a very real sense memorandums are letters. They differ from letters primarily

in that they are written to people with in organization rather than to people outside the organization.

Although memorandums are internal letters, they differ from letters in two major ways. First, memorandums are more likely to be written in the direct order, because they concern work information, and such information rarely requires preliminary explanations, justification or persuasion strategies. Most letters also are direct, but an even greater percentage of memorandums are direct.

The second major difference is that the writers of memorandums have less need to be concerned about the effect of their words. That is, tactfulness, negativness, positiveness, your viewpoint, or such usually are not major concerns. It simply means that the people working together in business situations typically want and expect clear, straight forward communication. They are not personally involved in the message, so there is little need to be concerned about their sensitivity to the wording.

■ 2. Circular and Notice

Circulars and Notices form part of intra-departmental communication. Informational messages are transmitted to the members of an organisation through circulars or notices.

The various components of circular or notice are date, day, time and place of the meeting (if any) and purpose.

The notice is generally displayed on a board and the same information is circulated. The tone of both the circular and the notice is always in the form of request, instead of a command.

A/y's Industries

Industrial Area
Azadpur, Delhi

Notice

Members of the sales department are requested to gather for an important meeting on Wednesday, 27 September 2xxx, to discuss about the launch of him product.

A.L. Jain

■ Circular

Main Head

To be Circulated
Reference No:
Circular No:
Date: xx xx xx xx
Subject: XYZ
Dear Sir,

Your sincerely,
XYZ

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. **What do you mean by memos?**
Ans. Memos are those business documents that are addressed to other people in the same business organisation.
2. **Define format.**
Ans. Format means the parts of a document and the way they are arranged on the page.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is a memorandum? How does it differ from a letter?
2. Discuss the different parts of a memorandum.
3. Write short note on "Memo."

(H.P.U. 2004, 2006)

4. Write a short note on
- (a) "People don't read."
 - (b) Circulars and Notices.

■ **Long Answer Type Questions**

1. Give advantages of a memorandum. Explain some important types of memorandum with the help of proper illustrations.
-

■ 1. Introduction

As the business environment grows in its complexity, the importance of skillful communication becomes essential in the pursuit of organisational goals. In addition to the need to develop adequate skills, it becomes necessary to effectively communicate to others the result of your studies. It is of little use to formulate solutions to business problems without transmitting this information to others involved in organisation. The importance of effectively communicating the results of your studies cannot therefore, be overemphasised. Good report writing calls for professionalism, profound knowledge of the subject, attentiveness, and a sound ability to put your ideas, thoughts and findings in writing. By and large, audience for business reports will consist of upper level managers, you are, therefore, required to keep the audience need in consideration while forming your report.

■ 1.1 Reports

The term report is used in different senses. Some define reports to include almost any presentation of information; others limit reports to only the most formal presentations. **A report can be described as a statement prepared to present facts relating to planning, co-ordinating performance, and the general state of work in an organisation. It is thus a summary of managerial performance.**

Definition

In the words of **Lesikar**, *"A business report is an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves a business purpose."*

■ 2. Purpose

Reports communicate information which has been compiled as a result of going deep into an issue. Reports can cover a wide range of topics - your imagination of the area is your limit. However, whatever may be the topic or issue, a report usually focusses on transmitting information, data,

details with a clear purpose meant for a specific audience. The reports are required to be accurate, objective and complete in all respects. They should also be well-written, clearly structured and expressed in a way that holds reader's attention and meet their expectations. A report is a tangible product of hours of hard labour and work and the quality of effort put in becomes apparent from the report produced - its clarity, content and organisation.

Most business decisions involve the cooperation and interaction of several individuals. They strive in unison to realise mutual goals. Your report, therefore, should be to facilitate these efforts. Without communicating ideas and thoughts properly, it would be impossible to identify common objectives and purposes necessary for successful operations.

Often business reports are intended for a wide variety of different audiences. It is therefore, critical that you carefully identify the intended audience for your report, otherwise it is likely that your report will be misdirected and less effective. You need to consider what your readers already know and what they need to know to make logical and uniformed decisions.

Whether you are an accountant, a marketing manager, a production engineer, a stores manager or a sales representative, you will constantly communicate with others to successfully accomplish your objectives. Generally, speaking, the larger the organisation, the greater will be the need to prepare written reports - hence always keep the purpose and audience in mind.

■ 3. Types of Report

While working in an organisation, you may be required to give a report on a number of issues. You think of an issue and a report once asked to gets generated. Here are a few of them:

Types of Report	Description
Incident Report	A report describing something that has happened.
Accident Report	A report describing how something was damaged or someone hurt.
Sales Report	A report describing how many goods or services were sold for reasons for variations, if any
Production Report	A report describing what all was produced during a given period and reasons for variations,

Service Report	A report describing number of calls received, outlining the nature of complaints and action taken there to.
Feasibility Study	A report outlining how practical a proposal is.
Case Study	An academic report on how and why something has undergone a change over time.

Report writing is the result of your researches, analysis and investigations which you present in a written form. This assignment can be categorised into different types.

■ 4. Characteristics of a Report

The characteristics of a report are as follows :

- (1) **Orderly:** A report is prepared carefully and orderly. Thus, care in preparation distinguishes report from casual exchange of information.
- (2) **Objective:** The objective quality of a report is its unbiased approach. Reports seek truth. They avoid human bias.
- (3) **Communication:** The word "communication" has a broad meaning. It covers all means of transmitting message—speaking, writing, drawing, etc.
- (4) **Factual Information:** The basic ingredient of a report is factual information. Factual information is based on events, records, data and the like.
- (5) **Business Purpose:** Not all reports are business reports; research scientists, medical doctors, ministers, students and many others write them according to their need. To be classified as a business report, a report must *serve a business purpose*.

Therefore, according to **Malra Treece**, "an effective business report is an orderly, objective presentation of factual information with or without analysis, interpretation and recommendations, which is planned to serve some business purpose, usually that of making a decision."

■ 5. Objectives or Functions or Importance of Reports

Reports are made having the following objectives or functions in view :

- (1) **Measuring executive performance:** Reports aim at measuring executive performance and how performance can be improved.
- (2) **Help in combating changes:** Since business conditions go on changing, they pose a serious challenge to the existence, prosperity and growth of a firm. Reports aim at analysing the impact of business

dynamics and how best changes can be exploited to the benefit of the firm.

(3) **Information on planning:** Reports are prepared to help the process of planning in an organisation.

(4) **Information for controlling:** In order to exercise control, information is to be collected about performance and is to be sent "upwards." This is also a basic objective of reports.

(5) **Help in co-ordinating:** The act of co-ordinating is best performed with the help of reports.

(6) **Contact:** Another objective of reports is the desire and necessity of being in touch with the customers, shareholders, creditors and the government.

■ 6. Business Reports

Business reports are an essential part of communication process in the Business environment. Business report writing standards grow in complexity to meet the needs of rapidly developing environment. Whether you are writing a financial, statistical or an audit report, you have to determine the scope of your research and isolate the problem to collect relevant data.

Business report writing starts with the executive summary that is written in a non technical manner. You should keep the audience needs in mind since the typical audience for business reports generally have little or no technical knowledge. Be careful with findings and interpretation of the results since your conclusions and future research suggestions are based on this. Therefore, according to Malra Treece 'An effective business report is an orderly, objective presentation of factual information with or without analysis, interpretation and recommendations which is planned to serve some business purpose, usually that of making a decision.

■ 6.1 Types of Business Reports

Main types of business reports are as under:

- (1) **Informational Report:** It provides factual information about a work. It does not give any suggestions.
- (2) **Analytical Report:** This kind of report presents facts and figures relating to the subject under study.
- (3) **Research Report:** These reports carry the results of research.
- (4) **Informal Report:** These reports are written in an informal manner and presented in the form of a letter or memo.

(5) **Formal Reports:** Formal reports are written in accordance with an established procedure and are presented to a particular officer. These are of two types:

(i) **Statutory Report:** This report is written in conformity with a procedure laid down by a particular statute.

(ii) **Non-statutory Report:** Through a formal report yet has no legal backing.

(6) **Routine Report:** Such a report is written to submit routine reports relating to business.

(7) **Special Report:** This report relates to a particular assignment or occasion.

■ 6.2. Qualities of a Good Business Report

All good business reports have these qualities:

(1) **Accuracy:** A good business report must be accurate and state what is correct. To ensure accuracy (a) check the facts, (b) reduce distortion, (c) describe the events in concrete terms, (d) report all the relevant facts, (e) put the facts in perspective, (f) give plenty of evidence for your conclusions.

(2) **Achievement of Objectives:** Report is prepared to achieve certain objective.

(3) **Unbiased and Objective:** Conclusions and suggestions of a good report should be objective and unbiased. It should be based on facts and not personal opinions. To make the report unbiased two main points must be kept in view: (a) It should include facts and only facts. (b) Conclusions should be supported by evidence.

(4) **Good Judgement:** Another quality of a good business report is that it should be based on good judgement. It means that it should include only true facts and avoid incomplete and biased data. A good report contains five things :

(i) Main idea is presented at the beginning of the report.

(ii) The report includes only facts.

(iii) The report reveals the whole story.

(iv) Report is written in the language which the receiver can understand.

(v) The report teaches something new to the manager.

(5) **Complete and Convincing:** A good report should be complete and convincing. It should include all available informations and conclusions.

A complete report should incorporate its objectives, facts, conclusions and suggestions.

(6) **Relevance:** Report should be relevant. It implies that the report should furnish facts relating to its objectives. Irrelevant facts render the report suspect.

(7) **Brief:** Brevity is the key of a good report. Only important facts and figures should be provided. Besides being brief it should also be complete.

(8) **Reader's Friendly:** Regardless of what type of report you are preparing, try to keep the likes and dislikes of your readers in mind. As you make decisions about the content, the needs of your audience should be your main concern and you should exercise your best judgement in trying to meet those needs.

(9) **Friendly Format, Style and Organisation:** Another quality of a good report is that its format, style and organisation should reflect the reader's needs. In making decision about the format, style and organisation of a report format.

For example, an audit report (one that verifies an accountant's inspection of a firm's financial records) must contain a lot of numbers, often in the form of a table. A report from the corporate legal department about the company's privileges would contain many legal terms.

(10) **Relevant to Time:** Monthly, quarterly, annual reports require less introductory and transitional material than do special, non-recurring reports that deal with unique situations. Routine reports are often prepared on preprinted forms, which the writer simply fills in or they are organised in some standard way.

(11) **Distribution or Purpose of Report:** Internal reports, prepared for use within the organisation, are generally less formal than external reports, which are sent to people in other organisations. Many internal reports, especially those under ten pages, are written in memo format. External reports, on the other hand, may be in letter format if they are no longer than five pages, or they may be like a manuscript if they exceed five pages.

(12) **Probable Reception:** When the reader is likely to agree with the content of the report, the material is presented in *direct order*, starting with the main idea (key findings, conclusions, recommendations). If the reader may have reservations about the report, the material is presented in *indirect order*, starting with the details and leading to the main idea.

■ 6.3 Format of a Business Report

It requires effort to produce a good report. The content must be clear concise and accurate. It must convey an image of total professionalism. Although great effort goes into the preparatory work but the 'look' of the document should not be forgotten.

Your report needs a good format or structure, it should include most of the following categories.

Title Section

In a short report this may simply be the front cover. However, in a long report, it will include Terms of Reference, Table of contents and so on.

Summary

Give a clear and very concise account of the main points, main conclusions and main recommendations. Keep it very short, a few per cent of the total length of your report. It is likely that some people, especially senior managers may not read anything else, so write as if it was a stand alone document. Do kept it brief and free from jargon so that anyone can understand and get the main idea. Write this section in the end when you have written other sections of the report.

Introduction

This is the first part of the report. Use it to describe the background to the 'issue' and to motivate the reader why the report is important to them. You may include 'terms of reference', in this section also if not already given in the title page.

Method

This section of your report should explain how the information has been gathered. State the sources from where the information was gathered and if any special tool was applied to get the same.

Results

This section should detail the results of the exercise - the facts. These can be presented in text or tabulation format depending on the content of the report. If the results are quite short they can be presented within the body of the report. If, however, the results are lengthy, it would be advisable to give them as an Appendix Depending on the length, it may have sections or sub sections each with its own subtitle. It is unique to your report and will describe what you found out about the 'issue'. Do remember to arrange the information logically, normally putting things in order of priority - most important first and so on.

Observations

Sometimes presenting factual results only is not enough, there might be other influences that should be mentioned. You might wish to state your own feelings or observations on the subject of the report. Since observations are generally not fact based therefore, cannot be substantiated. Observations are basically how you perceive the issue and are your views.

Recommendations

This section allows you to make recommendations based on the findings of your report. The recommendations could be for:

- * Change
- * Improvement
- * New Ideas

The recommendations should be based on the findings/results detailed in the report.

Conclusion

Present the logical conclusions of your investigation of the issue. Bring it all together and may be often other options for the way forward. State how the implementation of your ideas and recommendations would improve service, productivity and performance. Give your assessment of the outcomes and your evaluation of the benefits.

Appendices

Appendices allow you to add supporting information to your report. You can attach spread sheets, forms, questionnaire tables, chart, articles - infact anything that will support the content of your report. Attaching an appendix allows your report to flow without interruption. Remember to number them in the order they are mentioned in the text.

Tips

- * Expect feedback on your report this could be in writing or verbally. Do number the various sections of your report and paras within the section.

Examples:

1. Introduction

1.1 1st paragraph of the introduction

1.2 2nd paragraph of the introduction

2. Method

2.1 1st paragraph of the method

2.2 2nd paragraph of the method and so on.

- * Make use of writing tools available on your computer viz.

- Spell check
- Grammar Check
- Thesaurus
- Report Templates
- Justify the text to ensure a consistent look throughout
- Check font size, style, colour and headings are consistent.
- * The impact of your report will be dictated by the 'look' - so think about it carefully. The 'look' will help you to create a positive image by 'you'.
- * Using a graphic which is relevant to your report is a good idea.
- * Use bullet points to create interest in a page of text as well as highlight specific points.

Readers of the report expect certain information to be in certain places. A good business report should do just that.

■ 7. Short Report

A **short report is concise, accurate and unbiased**. All inferences depend on supportive evidence to help readers make an informed decision.

Short reports do not need detailed introductions, numerous transitions, abundant visuals, elaborate headings, involved appendices, micro subdivisions and excessive formality. Short reports therefore are often used in business communication; some are even sent via E-mail.

Short reports are presented in a letter or memorandum form.

■ 7.1 Characteristics of a Short Report

The following are the main characteristics of a short report:

(1) **Letter or Memo:** The short report is presented in a letter or memo form.

(2) **Most Common:** Short report forms are by far the most common in business. These are the everyday working reports—those used for the routine information reporting all that is vital to an organisation's communication.

(3) **Less Introduction:** Most of the shorter, more informal reports require little (sometimes no) introductory material. These reports typically concern day-to-day problems. Their lives are short; that is, they are not likely to be kept on file for future readers. They are intended for only a few readers and these readers know the problem. They are likely to need little introduction to it.

(4) **Generally Begins Directly:** Short reports generally begin directly with its most important information—usually the conclusion and perhaps

a recommendation. Business writers use this order because they know that their readers' main concern is to get the information needed to make a decision. It is a way of practising etiquette— of giving the readers what is most important to them. So they present this information in the right way.

(5) **More Personal:** Although writing for all reports is much the same, the short reports tend to be more personal. That is, short reports are likely to use **personal pronouns** *I, we, and you* rather than only the third person.

The reasons for this tendency towards personal writing in short reports should be obvious. In the first place, short-report situations usually involve personal relationships. Such reports tend to be from and to people who know each other and who normally address each other informally when they meet. In addition short reports are apt to involve personal investigations and to represent the observations, evaluations, and analyses of their writers. Finally, short reports tend to deal with day-to-day, routine problems. These problems are by their very nature informal. It is logical to report them informally and personal writing tends to produce this informal effect.

■ 7.2 Organisation or Planning of a Short Report

The organisation of a short informal report consists of the following :

A. Format

- (1) For brief external reports, use letter format, including a title or a subject line after the reader's address that clearly states the subject of the document.
- (2) For brief internal reports, use memo or manuscript format.
- (3) Present all short, informal reports properly.
 - (a) Single-space the text.
 - (b) Double-space between paragraphs.
 - (c) Use headings where helpful but try not to use more than three levels of headings.
 - (d) Call attention to significant information by setting it off visually with lists or indention.
 - (e) Include visual aids to emphasize and clarify the text.

B. Opening

- (1) For short, routine memos, use the subject line of the memo form and the first sentence or two of the text as the introduction.
- (2) For all other short reports, cover these topics in the introduction : purpose, scope, background, restrictions in conducting the study,

sources of information and methods of research and organisation of the report.

- (3) If using direct order, place conclusions and recommendations in the opening.

C. Body (Findings and Supporting Details)

- (1) Use direct order for informational reports to receptive readers, developing ideas around subtopics (for example, chronologically, geographically, categorically).
- (2) Use direct order for analytical reports to receptive readers, developing points around conclusions or recommendations.
- (3) Use indirect order for analytical reports to doubtful or hostile readers, developing points around logical arguments.
- (4) Use an appropriate writing style:
 - (a) Use an informal style ("I" and "You") for letter and memo reports, unless company custom calls for the impersonal third person.
 - (b) Use an impersonal style for more formal short reports in manuscript format.
- (5) Maintain a consistent time frame by writing in either the present or the past tense, using other tenses only to indicate prior or future events.
- (6) Give each paragraph a topic sentence.
- (7) Link paragraphs by using transitional words and phrases.
- (8) Strive for readability by using short sentences, concrete words and terminology that is appropriate for your readers.
- (9) Be accurate, thorough and impartial in presenting the material.
- (10) Avoid including irrelevant and unnecessary details.
- (11) Include documentation for all material quoted or paraphrased from secondary sources, using a consistent format.

D. Ending

- (1) In informational reports, summarize major findings at the end, if you wish.
- (2) Summarize points in the same order in which they appear in the text.
- (3) In analytical reports using indirect order, list conclusions and recommendations at the end.
- (4) Be certain that conclusions and recommendations follow logically from facts presented in the text.
- (5) Consider using a list format for emphasis.
- (6) Avoid introducing new material in the summary, conclusions or recommendations.

I – Specimen of a Short Report

The following is the specimen of a short report written by the Regional Manager of a company to the General Manager, after inspecting the site where an accident had occurred.

MEMORANDUM

To : Mr. Rajesh Sharma (General Manager)
 From : S.K. Gupta (Regional Manager)
 Date : 25th February, 2xxx
 Subject : Fire at Hissar Office Warehouse.

On 22nd February 2xxx, at approximately 1.15 p.m. there was a fire at the Hissar Office warehouse, resulting in loss of company's property worth Rs. 2.08 crore.

We got the information in the Delhi office by telex at 2.10 p.m., the same day. I proceeded to Hissar by train that afternoon and was there on the same evening.

Company's instructions Flouted

While it is difficult to ascertain the cause of the fire, my inquiries revealed that many of the company's standing instructions had been flouted. For example:

- (i) Smoking is strictly prohibited in the warehouse but this rule is never followed.
- (ii) During lunch hour, it is common practice to switch on an electric stove to heat food.
- (iii) Visitors/dealers are often allowed to enter the warehouse and they can even smoke if they wish.
- (iv) There were four fire-extinguishers in the warehouse, besides the eight in the office, but not a single fire-extinguisher was in proper working condition. Fire-extinguishers must be 'charged' every year, but in the case of Hissar Office these had not been 'charged' for nearly four years.

Extent of Damage

No member of the staff was hurt but the total damage to the company's stock-in-trade amounts to Rs. 2.08 crore.

Explanation Asked For

I have called for a written explanation from the Branch Manager and the storekeeper, which I expect to get by tomorrow. Action will be taken after I receive their explanations.

Instructions Given

Meanwhile, I have issued the following instructions :

- (a) The present storekeeper, Mr. Jai Prakash, has been transferred to Accounts and his place is taken by Mr. Ram Singh, who was handling customer ledgers.
- (b) A 'NO ADMISSION' sign has been fixed at the entrance to the warehouse.
- (c) Paper work connected with the warehouse shall be done outside, somewhere in the main office.
- (d) All the fire-extinguishers should be 'charged' immediately.

II – Specimen of a Short Report

There is the specimen of a short report by an office manager regarding a suitable premises where the present office can be shifted. The following report gives the details of the premises recommended, the advantages as well as the disadvantages.

MEMORANDUM

JAIN CLOTH MILL

16, Gopi Tower, Model Town, Ludhiana

To : Mr. T. C. Verma (Managing Director)
 From : D. K. Sharma (Office Manager)
 Date : 7 June, 2xxx

Subject : Report on suitable premises for shifting the office of the company.

Recommendation : That Jain Cloth Mill should purchase Ankur Building in Civil Lines.

As suggested in your letter of 4 May 2xxx, I inspected a number of buildings in Ludhiana. After careful consideration, I recommend Ankur Building, which is situated in Civil Lines.

The building consists of two storeys, and has 15 rooms in all. The rooms are fairly large (30' × 20'), well lit and airy.

The toilet facilities for both men and women are adequate. There are also watchmen's quarters comprising two rooms each.

The only disadvantage that I visualize is that there is not much open space around the building and the parking space may be inadequate for all the cars and scooters. But for the junior office staff, there is a bus stop two hundred yards away.

I have started preliminary negotiations with the owner, Mr. Arun Malhotra. He is likely to accept an offer of Rs. 20 lakhs.

Jai Prakash Associates, our architects, have examined the building in detail. It is in sound condition and needs no major repairs.

■ 8. Long Report

A long report is a formal report. It is that report which includes more detail, more information, more visuals and more supplementary forms of support. A formal or a long report involves greater length and depth of discussion of more complex problems. Some long reports extend from a few pages to several hundred—even into several volumes of information.

Consequently, long reports demand more preliminary collecting, sorting, interpreting, writing and editing and creation of visuals as compared to short reports. Long reports are a mix of informative and persuasive information.

In short, a formal report does not mean more formal language; it means the report is more detailed and more complex in structure.

■ 8.1 Planning of a Long Report

A high office of the company or some external agency is asked to prepare a long report for achieving some definite objective. Prepare the report mainly in the following steps:

A full formal report may contain the following components :

(1) First Step: Define the Problem or Make a Statement of the Purpose

Certainly, the first step in preparing a report is to define the problem.

Many reports are written not to solve a problem but to set out facts or ideas. If your report is of this nature, *make a statement of the purpose of the report.*

Capsulize that problem or statement in as few words as possible, so that it is clear and you can readily recall it to mind. Everything that appears in the report should be pertinent to this announced problem or purpose. As you do your research, you may constantly need to ask yourself, "*Does this relate to my basic problem (purpose) ?*"

(2) Second Step: Keep Notes

Make sure you have notes on everything you have learned on the subject. While you were doing your research, these notes should have been put on cards or pieces of paper. Do not worry yet about good grammar, complete sentences, neatness and so forth. Keep a folder or file box where you can collect all the notes or other relevant material over a period of time.

(3) Third Step: Make a Report Outline

Make your first phase report outline from your list of notes. Remember : Your outline is not cast in concrete. As your work continues, you will probably adjust and change it, adding, subtracting and altering its order. Writing down this first phase report outline with major divisions gives you an outline that you can fill as you complete your research. Also your report may change as you get different information on the ideas you first had in mind. These major report outline divisions could eventually be the headings in the table of contents at the beginning of the report to help readers find specific parts.

The outlines of the report can be written in the following way:

- **Cause → Effect:** Many reports are written in the cause → effect style : *As a result of this, this, and this the following happened (or may happen).*
- **Chronological Order:** This type of report is the easiest to organise but is of course not appropriate to all studies. Matters are related in the order of occurrence.
- **Geographical Order:** Geographical order reports state matters by areas or regions, such as showing activities of various branches of a firm. As much as possible, all matters reported from each area should be given in similar order making them easier to find and compare.

(4) Fourth Step: Identify Your Readers and Write to their Level

Decide how much detail you must include to serve your readers properly.

(5) Fifth Step: As You Work, Check and Change Your Outline

Now, take a good look at your outline. Have you kept your reader or readers in mind so that the report will be understood from the viewpoint of your audience?

Use numbers and/or letters to label parts of the outline. These symbols show the relation of parts of a report to each other and show when you have covered one section or sub-section and are going into another.

Preparing a report outline may seem to be a tedious, unnecessary step. However, having an outline to follow simplifies your writing.

(6) Sixth Step: As You Work, Label Your Research Papers

Label your research cards and notes with tag lines that match major headings in your outline. Then stack cards and notes according to their corresponding position in your outline. At this point, you will probably add or delete some headings or sub-headings in your outline to follow your research discoveries.

(7) Seventh Step: Make a Rough Draft of the Report

Now, referring to your outline and your research papers, start to write your report.

In making your report, never submit the first draft as a final copy. Always prepare a **rough draft** of the entire report. Harry Shaw is an internationally known editor and author who states, "*There is no such thing as good writing. There is only good rewriting.*" Shaw says further that those who are unwilling to revise and rewrite are skipping a major step in becoming better writers.

(8) Eighth Step: Revise your Rough Draft

After the first draft of your report is completed, set it aside for a while, if possible, let it cool off so you can come back to it totally fresh. Now is the time to check meticulously for grammar, spelling and punctuation. Then re-read it, checking closely that it follows the outline. This helps make sure that the report tells what you want it to tell and that your ideas proceed logically from one to another. You will also find it helpful at this point to have someone whose opinion you respect, read it for form and content. Only after a careful re-reading of your own, will you be ready to have the final copy typed or printed.

(9) Ninth Step: Compile and Complete Report

After carefully proof-reading and correcting the body of your report, you are ready to set up the complete report with title page, table of contents and so forth.

From the proper authorities, specific instructions can be obtained for setting up the typing, printing and binding of a business report. A term paper should be typed double spaced with paragraphs indented. If paragraphs are not indented, there should be a triple space (two blank lines) between paragraphs to make the separations clear.

Format of Report:

The format of the report contains three parts

- (1) Prefatory Part
- (2) Text of the Report
- (3) Supplementary Parts

The main items of these parts become clear from the following table:

Prefatory Parts	Text of the Report	Supplementary Parts
Cover	Introduction	Appendices
Title fly	Body	Bibliography
Title page	Summary	Index
Letter of authorisation	Conclusions	
Letter of acceptance	Recommendations	
Letter of transmittal	Notes	
Table of contents		
List of illustrations		
Synopsis or executive summary		

Specimen of a Long Report

Title page of a Report

**COMMUNICATIONS :
BARRIERS AND BRIDGES**

**Presented to
Ranbir Mittal
Associate Professor
Jain College**

**Submitted by
Saksham Mehta
May 4, 2xxx**

**Business Communications
MWF 9:00**

A sample of table of contents page for a Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I INTRODUCTION—SUMMARY	1
What is communication?	1
How do communications succeed?	2
How do communications fail?	3
II COMMUNICATION BRIDGES	4
The feedback bridge	4
The bridge of gearing to the receiver	5
The empathy bridge	6
The planning bridge	6
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The semantics barrier	10
The self-interest barrier	11
The planning barrier	12
IV CONCLUSION	13
V APPENDICES	
A : Grammar, Punctuation, and Style	13
B : Polishing listening habits	16
C : Documentation and Bibliography	17
D : Index	19

An example of the first page of a Report

INTRODUCTION

■ What is communication?

Communication, it has been said, is not a chapter in the book of management, it is the whole book. The ability to communicate effectively is regarded as an essential skill for integrating the company.

Communication is the transmission and interchange of facts, ideas, feelings, and courses of action. Mental or emotional concepts are conveyed by means of symbols from one person to another, each being compelled to think in terms of who says what, to whom, how, and with what effect. Good communication is the result of clear thinking.

A system of communication developed and maintained in a company should keep employees informed. Management can build attitudes.

Continued ...

An example of Appendix**Appendix A****Grammar, Punctuation and Style****I. Grammar**

- A. Dangling Modifiers
- B. Coherence
- C. Parallel Structure

II. Punctuation

- A. Period
- B. Comma
- C. Semicolon
- D. Colon
- E. Dash
- F. Hyphen
- G. Exclamation Mark
- H. Question Mark
- I. Quotation Mark
- J. Ellipsis
- K. Apostrophe
- L. Slash

III. Style

- A. Abbreviations
- B. Numbers as Numerals or Words
- C. Word Choice

Continued ...

An example of Documentation and Bibliography**Documentation and Bibliography****Books**

Burton, Helen. *The City Fights Back*. New York: Citadel Press, 1996.

Caperton, Hudson D. *The Business of Government*. Boston: Sherman-Kaufman Company, 1973.

Kiernan, Gladys M. *Retailers Manual of Taxes and Regulation*. 12th ed. New York: Institute of Distribution, Inc., 1997

Government Publications

U.S. Department of Commerce. *Business Statistics*: 1990. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996.

Survey of Current Business: 1997 Supplement, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997.

Periodicals

Montgomery, Donald E. "Consumer Standards and Marketing." *Journal of Distribution* (May 1997). 141-49.

Phillips, Emily F. "Some Studies Needed in Marketing." *Journal of Marketing* 9 (July 1980). 16-25. _____ "Major Areas of Marketing Research." *Journal of Marketing* 18 (July 1998). 21-26.

Miscellaneous Publications

Bradford, Ernest S. *Directory of Marketing Research Agencies in the United States*. New York: Bureau of Business Research, College of the City of New York, 1996.

Reference Sources on Chain Stores. New York: Institute of Distribution, Inc., 1997.

Smith, Lynn T. *Farm Trade Center in Louisiana, 1901 to 1990*. Louisiana Bulletin no. 234. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1998.

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An example of Index Page**INDEX**

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■ Conclusion

Preparing formal reports requires a team effort. Be sure to allow enough time for the various phases in the preparation process, from planning the document to reproducing the final copy.

In typing the final version, be sure to use the correct format, following company-approved guidelines. Long formal reports have a greater number of separate elements than do short ones. The text of the report (introduction, body, and final summary/conclusions/recommendations) is usually prepared first. Visual aids are frequently included to support the text. Various prefatory and supplementary parts—such as the cover, title page, table of contents, appendices and bibliography—are added as needed, depending on the length and formality of the document.

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. **What is a report?**

(H.P.U. 2007)

Ans. It is a statement prepared to present facts relating to planning, co-ordinating performance and general state of work in an organisation. It is thus the summary of managerial performance.

2. **What is a business report?**

(H.P.U. 2008, 2009)

Ans. A business report is an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves a business purpose.

3. **What are the qualities of a good business report?**

Ans. All good business reports have these qualities:

- (1) **Accuracy:** The information must be correct.
- (2) **Good Judgement:** The content shows good judgement.
- (3) **Formal Style and Organization.**

4. **What do you mean by Short Report?**

Ans. A Short Report is concise, accurate and unbiased. All inferences depend on supportive evidence to help readers make an informed decision.

5. **What is meant by Long Report?**

(H.P.U. 2007)

Ans. A Long Report includes more detail, more information, more visuals, and more supplementary forms of support. It is a formal report means the report is more detailed and more complex in structure.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. What do you mean by report? What is the purpose of writing a report?
2. Briefly explain types of reports.
3. Briefly explain types of business report.
4. What is meant by a report ? Discuss the characteristics and objectives of reports.

Or

What is meant by report? What are the objective of its preparation? Also give the qualities of a good business report. (K.U. 2007)

5. Explain the main qualities of a good business report (H.P.U. 2005, M.D.U. 2006)
6. Write meaning and definition of report writing. Write also its features and explain its importance. (M.D.U. 2007)
7. Explain the organisational planning of a short report.
8. Your water supply is not continuously in order, draft a complaint letter to the appropriate authority. (K.U. 2005)

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. What is a business report. Write the format of a business report.
2. What do you mean by a short report ? Explain the characteristics of a short report. (H.P.U. 2008)
3. What is meant by a formal report ? Discuss the planning of a formal report. (M.D.U. 2005)
4. What steps are to be taken while preparing report? (M.D.U. 2008)
5. What is business report? Explain the various steps to be taken for report preparation. (K.U. 2008, H.P.U. 2009)
6. What do you mean by a business report? Discuss its different forms. (H.P.U. 2006, (M.D.U. 2009)

■ 1. Introduction

In simple words, brochure is a leaflet advertisement that advertise locations, events, hotels, products, services, etc. They are usually succinct in language with an eye catching design.

In today's competitive market, many business organisations find it hard to thrive owing to their incompetence and poor quality. Many others do not succeed because they fail to emphasise their worth to the world. The success of a product does not stop with reaching high standard of production, but in making the product to reach the people.

Generally many business organisations are looking for options to inform the features and benefits of their product to the buyers and for this where the need of brochure fits in. Brochures represent the product in its absence in the best way possible. It provides clear details of the product to a great extent to the prospective customers. The success of brochure lies in the drumming into the heads of the customers that the product is especially made for them. Therefore, it should be crafted in this manner that the reader can easily relate the features of the product to their needs.

■ 2. Types of Brochures

Creating a brochure is part of creating your business identity. A well-designed brochure that's professionally printed can be worth a great deal more than its cost. They can be easily handed out and passed around. The cost is nominal for any size business but they can help increase sales dramatically.

(1) Bi-fold brochure: They are most common type that are found among us everyday. These brochures are economical to print since they are usually a double LTR print folded in half.

(2) Tri-fold brochure: They are thin and convenient to carry and tempt viewers to open it as they cause intrigue.

(3) **Gate fold brochure:** Not very common type, but they produce great impact when they are appropriately used. These types of brochures are usually large and costly, so they are intended for high impacting marketing.

(4) **Z-fold brochure:** They are used when the flow of the reading adapts better to this structure.

(5) **Folder:** They are excellent tools of organisation and are bi-folds and usually have one or many flaps to hold the pieces inside them. These pieces are called inserts.

(6) **Flyers:** They are usually smaller in size, printed in few colours to keep costs down. They are ideal for promotions or campaign.

(7) **Catalogues:** They come in various sizes and formats, usually have minimum of 8 pages.

(8) **Pamphlet:** It is a small book consisting of few sheets of printed papers, usually one or more pages that are stiched together with an unbound paper cover.

(9) **Leaflet:** The term can be used as a synonym of 'pamphlet' or flyer.

(10) **Booklet:** The term 'booklet' usually implies more than one page.

■ 3. Kinds and Objectives of Brochures

All brochures not work equally well in every situation. You want to have the kind of brochure that will work for the purpose for which you want to use it.

(1) **Support brochures:** Though not very common today but you can still see around. Traditionally it was used by salesperson during presentations, to allow presentation viewers to follow along with the salesperson as he/she is speaking.

(2) **Direct Mailing brochures:** If you design a brochure in preparation for sending it to customers through snail mail, then it is a direct mailing brochure. This is one of the most effective marketing tool available to small business.

(3) **Response Brochures:** When a prospective customer shows interest in your company or product and want to learn more, you hand them a response brochure. These brochures are designed to seal the deal and convince the customer that your business is worth investing in.

(4) **Check out Brochures:** When a customer is buying products, they will see the brochure and many times pick one up. So, these brochures are designed to "upsell" the customer and entice him /her to buy more.

(5) **Drop off Brochures:** There will be times when you are around a lot of potential customers, but you can not speak to them. That is a good time to have some drop off brochures at your disposal. They are simply there to pass out to a mass of people that you cannot communicate with directly at the time. These brochures should be designed as sales tools. These are the least effective brochures, because you are usually giving them to people who know little about you and may have no interest in your service.

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. What are brochures?

Ans. Brochures are leaflet advertisement that advertise locations, events, hotels, products, services, etc.

2. Name certain types of brochures.

Ans. Bi-fold, tri-fold, Z-fold, folder, flyer, leaflet, pamphlets, etc.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. Explain briefly different types of brochures.

2. Write short notes on

(a) Direct Mailing brochures

(b) Drop off brochures

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. What are brochures? What are the objectives of different kind of brochures?

2. Discuss brochure, its type and objective.

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Notice, Agenda and Minutes of Meeting

■ 1. Meetings

Meaning and Definition: A 'meeting' is said to take place when two or more than two persons meet. For a meeting to take place, it is essential that two or more than two persons are present because a meeting implies that one person meets another person or persons; but it does not really define the 'meeting' of a company. A get-together of two or more than two persons does not necessarily constitute a 'meeting'. A 'meeting' may be defined as the gathering together of two or more persons by previous notice or by mutual agreement for discussion and transaction of some business.

In the context of a 'company meeting', a 'meeting' is a get-together of the company's members, shareholders, directors and debenture-holders with a previous notice and a time and place previously defined.

The definitions of a 'meetings' are as follows.

"Any gathering, assembly or coming together of two or more persons for the transaction of some lawful business of common concern is called 'meeting'". — P.K. Ghosh

"A concurrence or coming together of atleast a quorum of members by previous notice or mutual agreement for transacting business for a common interest is a 'meeting'". K. Kishore.

From what has been said above, it can be concluded that a meeting is the coming together of two or more persons, or a quorum of members of a company by a prior notice and mutual agreement at an agreed place and time for transacting some lawful business of the company.

■ 1.1 Characteristics of a Company Meeting

From the above definitions, the following characteristics of a meeting are highlighted:

- (1) A company's meeting—except where it is otherwise specified—is a get-together of two or more persons who are members of the company.

- (2) The members of the company get together for discussing and taking a decision on some lawful business of the company.
- (3) Before a meeting is held, the members are given a notice about the meeting.
- (4) A meeting is held at a specific place and time.
- (5) A company's meeting is held according to the provisions of the Companies Act.

■ 1.2 Meetings Documentation

The business at a meeting is said to have been 'validly transacted', if the members of the organisation or body concerned, whether or not they were present, are bound by the decision made thereat. They cannot be so bound unless the meeting is validly held. The essentials of a valid meeting are that the meeting should be:

- (i) **Properly convened** i.e. a proper notice must be sent by the proper authority to every person entitled to attend.
- (ii) **Properly constituted** i.e. the proper person must be on the chair, the rules as to quorum must be observed and the regulations governing the meeting must be complied with.
- (iii) **Properly conducted** i.e. the chairman must conduct the proceeding in accordance with the law relating to general meetings as per the companies Act.

Despite the underbld advantages of face-to-face communication, meetings are time consuming and, thus expensive. Effective drafted documents which prepare and inform people beforehand with help save dicussion adn explanation at the meeting.

All documents must be drafted and circulated in accordance with the 'rules', otherwise the meeting could be invalid. There are three basic documents which we need to be able to prepare.

- (i) The Notice
- (ii) The Agenda
- (iii) The Minutes/report

■ 2. Notice of Meeting

The notice must be given by the proper summoning authority which would normally be the Board of Directors. If however a notice has been issued without authority, the requisite authority may be given by ratification by the proper summoning authority before the meeting is held and notice may thus become good.

Persons entitled to Notice

Notice of the meeting shall be given:

- (i) to every member of the company.
- (ii) to the person entitled to a share in consequence of the death or insolvency of a member.
- (iii) to auditor or auditors.

Requirements of a Notice

(1) Duration of Notice: A general meeting of a company may be called by giving not less than twenty-one days' notice in writing. Such notice is necessary whether it is the company's annual general or its extraordinary general meeting. The duration of notice, i.e. twenty-one days, shall not include the day when the notice is received by the members (or when it deemed to be received) and the day the meeting is to be held.

Where the notice is sent by post, it shall be deemed to have been received by the members to whom it is sent on the expiry of forty eight hours after it has been posted.

In the following circumstance, a meeting may be called by giving a notice which is of shorter duration:

- (i) In case of an annual general meeting, if consent is accorded to such shorter notice by all members of the company who are entitled to vote.
- (ii) In case of any other meeting, if consent is accorded to such notice by members holding 95 per cent of the paid-up share capital of the company (and having the right to vote) if the company has share capital, or in case of a company not having a share-capital, by members holding not less than 95 per cent of the total voting power exercisable at the meeting.

(2) Procedure to Send Notice: A notice may either be delivered in person or sent to the members' registered address. If a member has no registered address in India, the notice must be sent to the address he has given to the company for communication. In case any member has requested the company to send him such notice under certificate of posting or by registered post and has deposited the necessary amount with the company to do so, the company shall send the notice according to the member's instructions.

In case the company does not have the registered addresses of some of its member, it can fulfill its obligation of serving a notice on such members by giving an advertisement in a newspaper which has a wide circulation in the region where the company's head office is situated.

With such advertisement in the newspaper the notice would be deemed to have been served on all its members.

In the case of joint holders of the company's shares, a notice served to person whose name appears first as a joint holder in the company's register of members shall be deemed to be an adequate notice.

It is important to note that no fresh notice is required in the case of a meeting that has been adjourned because, from the legal point of view, such meeting is deemed to be a continuation of the original meeting. But if the meeting is adjourned indefinitely or if some other business besides what was left unfinished in the original meeting is to be transacted in the reconvened meeting, then a notice for such meeting must be served in the same manner as it would be for a new meeting. It is also to be noted that if, for any valid reason, it is not possible to hold the meeting at the appointed place, the meeting may be held at any other place provided the members agree to it, and any business transacted in such meeting would be valid.

(3) Subject-matter of Notice: Every notice issued for a meeting of the company must clearly state the date, day, place and time of the meeting; it must also give a description of the business to be transacted at the meeting. The agenda of a meeting is sent to the members participating in it so that before they attend the meeting they can deliberate on the subject matter to be dealt with in the meeting and decide their course of action. In case some special business is to be transacted by the meeting, then an 'explanatory statement' with regard to the important facts concerning such business must be attached with the notice. Further, in case any director or manager of the company has any personal interest in the business to be transacted, it should be described in the notice. In the notice of a meeting of a company having share-capital, it should be stated that the member is entitled to nominate a proxy (in case it is permitted by the provisions of the Act and the company's articles) and that the proxy nominated need not necessarily be a member of the company. The notice for a meeting must be served to every member of the company. If any member is not given an appropriate notice, he is entitled to challenge the legality of the meeting. But, in case the decisions taken in the meeting do not adversely affect the interests of the member who has not been given notice, the meeting shall be deemed to be valid.

(4) Recipients of the Notice: Notice of every meeting of the company shall be given to:

- (i) every member of the company (in the case of a meeting of the Board of Directors, to every director).
- (ii) the legal representative of a deceased member.
- (iii) the official liquidator in the case of an insolvent member.
- (iv) the auditor or auditors of the company.

(5) Notice of the Meetings of Directors: Notice of every meeting of the Board of Directors of a company shall be given in writing to every director in India and to every other director who is outside India for the time being at his usual address in India. The notice must state the date, time and place of the meeting. It is always a good practice to send such notice to the directors before it is due. It is also to be noted that a company's articles may also state that the meeting of the company's Board of Directors shall be held once a month or after any specified period. In such case, it is not necessary to send any notice. But notwithstanding such provision, a notice is normally sent to all directors for any meeting of the Board.

If a default is made in sending such notice, every officer of the company who is in default can be punishable with a fine of rupees one hundred.

■ 3. Agenda

This is the programme of items to be discussed at the meeting, in the order in which they will be taken. Each item needs a heading and a number. You might use the following sources for your agenda items:

- (i) minutes of the previous meeting
- (ii) items received from members
- (iii) correspondence
- (iv) action and events since the last meeting
- (v) the chairman and other officers.

In addition there are standard items which appear regularly on formal agendas. The first three items on such an agenda will be:

- (i) Apologies for absence.
- (ii) Minutes of previous meeting.
- (iii) Matters arising.

Then follow the special items of business derived from (a) to (e) above and numbered 4, 5, 6, and so on. The final items on the agenda are:

Correspondence (optional).

Date of next meeting.

Any other business (AOB).

The order in which special items are listed on the agenda is important. Urgent matters must obviously appear early. The position of controversial items, where long discussion is likely, need more thought!

It is useless to overload an agenda with more items than can be covered in the time available. Either the members, in an attempt to complete the business, may make hasty or unwise decisions, or they continue the meeting so long that tiredness and frustration lead to the same result. Much better to be realistic and hold matters over to the next meeting.

Members need to be sufficiently informed beforehand to be able to prepare for the discussion by thinking, forming and seeing opinions or collecting information. If they have done this the discussion and decision taking at the meeting will be speeded up so it is important for the agenda to amplify headings sufficiently. Sometimes supplementary documents, agenda papers, are needed.

An agenda is sometimes combined with the notice of meeting, which is both economical and ensures that people do have the opportunity to consider the business prior to the meeting.

Finally, an AGM agenda has its own series of standard items which have to be included. The most common are given below:

Annual General Meeting - Agenda Items

A limited Liability Company	A Club or Society
Directors' Report	Chairman's and Secretaries Report
Annual Accounts	Annual Accounts
Auditor's Reports	Auditor's Report
Appointment of Auditors	Appointment of Auditors
Remuneration of Auditors	
Declaration of Dividend	Subscriptions
Election of Directors	Election of Officers and Committee

Designing an agenda**Traders Limited**

Bharat Committee Meeting to be held on Friday, 10 May, at 1400 in Committee Room A.

AGENDA

Skeleton Agenda	More Informative Agenda
1. Apologies for absence	1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous meeting	2. Minutes of meeting held on 12 March 19.
3. Matters arising	3. Matters arising
4. Paish contract	4. Paish Contract The meeting must agree on a completion date.
5. Proposed extension	5. Proposed extension Decision to be made on Maintenance Workshop location (Area A or Area B on attached plan, Agenda Paper 1.)
6. Improving company communication	6. Improving Company Communication It has been proposed that a series of regular briefing meetings, chaired by a director and attended by representatives from each department should be considered.
7. Date of next meeting	7. Date of next meeting
8. Any other business	8. Any other business

■ 3.1 Agenda Papers

These are any documents sent out with the agenda to supplement its information. They could be statistics, like copies of the balance-sheet, or copies of correspondence. Complicated reports, if given orally during the meeting, are difficult to absorb and are more usefully sent out in advance; so are diagrams, the plan of the proposed extension or whatever. Agenda papers should be clearly labelled and cross-referenced to the relevant agenda item.

■ 4. Minutes of Meeting

A record should be made of almost every meeting and this record circulated among those present to ensure that everyone is aware of, and agreed upon, what took place—something that cannot be taken for granted, however obvious it might seem. This record can also be used to inform others who were not at the meeting of what took place. Such a record may be in the form of notes, a report or minutes.

Minutes are always used for formal meetings and may be legally required (for example, at directors' meetings). They, like less formal records, are the basis for action by the organisation and its members. Since they record past decisions and activities, they also provide precedents and a basis for evolving future policy.

Contents

- (i) **Heading.** The name of the body which held the meeting (this is not needed in a bound minute book, of course): kind of meeting, place of meeting, date (and ,optional, time) of meeting.
- (ii) **Names of those present.** Alphabetical order is the least invidious, but as a courtesy the chairman's name comes first. If the meeting is very large, record the names of officers and committee members, and then the numbers present. Those 'in attendance', i.e. present by invitation, should be listed separately.
- (iii) **Apologies.** Record names only, not reasons.
- (iv) **Minutes of previous meeting.** Minutes are usually 'taken as read' having been circulated previously. (It is time-consuming to read then aloud.) They have to be approved as a correct record by the meeting before the chairman signs the copy in the minutes book. If corrections are necessary, they should be made formally by a motion.

TRADERS LIMITED

Minutes of the Bharat Committee meeting held at 1400 hours on Firday 10 May, 19-- in Committee Room A.

- Present: Mr. Rahul Managing Director (Chairman)
 Mr. Rohit Production Manager
 Mr. Nikhil Maintenance Manager
 Mr. Yogesh Sales Manager
 Mr. Namit Research & Development Manager
 Mr. Lokesh Personnel Manager
 Mr. N.Yadav Union Organiser, in attendance

1. Apologies for absence

An apology was received from J.Smith.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising

It was confirmed that final planning approval for the extension had been received.

ACTION

4. Paish Contract

The Sales Manager reported that unless the contract could be completed by the end of the month there was a danger that Paish PLC would not offer a renewal of contract without a heavy penalty clause. The Production Manager said that this date could not be met without excessive overtime working. The extra cost could be Rs. 85,000.

It was agreed that the Sales Manager should visit Paish PLC and seek their agreement to a completion date in mid June. Meanwhile overtime working at the rate of Rs. 4,500 per week would begin immediately.

SALES MANAGER

(v) **Matters arising.** Only minor items should appear under this heading. Any important 'matters arising' topic from a previous meeting will have its own heading on the agenda and hence its own separate record in the minutes.

(vi) **Special items.** The recording of these items is described by two technical terms, minutes of **resolution and minutes of narration.** Minutes of resolution are the essential content of minutes. They are the record of decisions taken and resolutions passed. They are usually introduced thus:

It was therefore resolved

THAT....or

RESOLVED

But decisions are not taken in a vacuum. They have a context of events, facts and opinions. Minutes of narration are that part of the record which describes the circumstances in which the decision was taken. In the following example the narration, typically, precedes the resolution:

The Secretary reported several recent instances of the difficulties arising from shared club premises and reminded members that similar problems had been experienced for the past two years.

It was therefore resolved

THAT a sub-committee be formed, chaired by Mr. Tuli, to *investigate alternative premises for the club.*

(vii) **Correspondence.** This is an optional item which does not appear on all agendas and, therefore, not in all minutes. Many meetings secretaries sensibly take the view that correspondence should be related to particular items of business, rather than have all letters miscellaneously put together under this general heading.

If the heading is used, the minutes will be drafted as in this example:

The Secretary reported that the following letters had been received:

Letter No. 1234 Mr. Suresh had quoted a price of 25,500 for redecoration and the Secretary was asked to obtain further estimates and report back to the meeting.

Letter No. 1235 A letter of resignation from Mr. Kumar was accepted and the Secretary was requested to acknowledge it.

- (viii) **Date of next meeting.** It is very sensible for members to choose the date convenient to the greatest number when they are all present to agree on it.
- (ix) **Any other business.** This open end to the agenda gives members the chance, if time allows, to settle minor details and to discuss matters arising since the agenda was compiled. If no such items are raised, the topic is omitted from the minutes. any discussion will be given separate headings and minute numbers.
- (x) **Action column.** This is simply a wide right-hand margin to the minutes in which the names of those asked to do something are noted, opposite to the relevant minute. It is a very useful visual prompt to ensure that those concerned read the relevant minute.

Taking notes for minutes

- (a) Summarise as you record what is being said. Leave out any irrelevant discussion.
- (b) Keep your notes as short as possible—but you will need to be able to read them later!
- (c) Use your copy of the agenda as the framework.
- (d) Record the names of persons speaking. They are usually omitted from the minute but make a useful reference point.
- (e) Make a careful record of those present, possibly either by passing round a sheet for signature or recording numbers present.
- (f) Distinguish between items under AOB.
- (g) Use a device such as capitals or underlining so that essential notes and records of decisions stand out.
- (h) Make a careful record of essential detail, dates, numbers, amounts, quantities and the names of those receiving instructions (to be put in the ACTION column).
- (i) If a vote is taken, make sure you note the numbers for the minute thus:

RESOLVED by *x* notes in favour, *y* against, with *z* abstention,
THAT..

■ 4.1 Writing Minutes

Style

Formal minutes must be concise but give sufficient detail to enable someone not present at the meeting to understand fully what took place. They must be factual and written in complete sentences. They must be orderly, and it is often necessary to rearrange the material in one's notes so as to produce a logical account without repetition.

Look back through the minutes book and match your style with that of the previous minutes so as to give consistent reporting. Use the precedent of earlier minutes to decide how much detail is needed and whether or not to include, for example, the names of proposers and seconders and the numbers voting.

Use the past tense and the other conventions of reported speech.

Format

Minutes must be suitably titled and have appropriate headings to individual items. They must also be numbered. There are three methods.

- (i) The minutes are numbered consecutively, starting with number 1 for the first item of each set of minutes.
- (ii) The first set of minutes is numbered as described above. If the last item in this set is number 9, then the first item of the minutes of the next meeting becomes number 10, and so on. Thus no two minutes of the meeting would bear the same number.
- (iii) A similar system to (ii) but the numbers run through one year. At the beginning of the new year the minutes once again start with number 1.

Indexing

As minutes accumulate from year to year it can be useful to have an index to show when subjects were previously discussed and what decisions were made. A convenient method is to give each minute sheet a title and number to which a separate list of topics refers.

■ 4.2 The Minute Book

Minutes may either be kept in a loose-leaf binder or may be written in a bound minutes book. The loose-leaf book has several advantages:

- (i) minutes may be typed and duplicated easily for circulation
- (ii) copies of past minutes may be made quickly
- (iii) reports and other documents can be filed with the minutes
- (iv) corrections may easily be inserted.

It is important to take suitable security precautions such as having numbered pages, lockable binders and fireproof filing cabinets for minutes.

■ General Specimens of Notice and Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Specimen –1 Notice

Notice is hereby given that the 10th Annual General Meeting of the Members of XYZ Ltd. will be held on Thursday, the 15th day of September, 2xxx, at the Registered Office of the Company at Plot Nos. 16-18, New Electronics Complex, Chambaghat, Distt. Solan (HP), at 10.00 a.m. to transact the following business:

Ordinary Business:

1. To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Balance Sheet of the company as on 31st March, 2xxx and the Profit & Loss Account for the year ended on that date and Auditor's and Directors' Reports thereon.
2. To declare dividend for the year ending 31st March, 2xxx.
3. To appoint a director in place of Mr. ----- who retires by rotation and being eligible, offers himself for re-appointment.
4. To appoint a Director in place of Mr. ----- who retires by rotation and being eligible, offers himself for re-appointment.
5. To appoint Statutory Auditors of the company; and fix their remuneration.

Special Business:

6. To consider and, if thought fit, to pass with or without modification(s) the following resolution as an ordinary resolution:
 "The consent of the Company be and is hereby accorded to the re-appointment of and remuneration payable to Mr. P.S. Gill as Managing Director for a period of five years w.e.f. 1st July 2xxx on the following terms and conditions:

(A) **Salary: Rs. 1,50,000 per month**

(B) **Perquisites:**

(i) **Medical reimbursement:**

Expenses incurred for self and family subject to a ceiling of one month salary in a year or three month's salary over a period of three years.

(ii) **Leave travel concession for self and family once in a year in accordance with the Rules of the Company.**

per share on the equity share capital of the company, subject to deduction of tax at source be and is hereby declared for payment to those shareholders whose names appeared on the Register of Members as on 2xxx."

Carried unanimously.

6. Directors

Proposed by Shri

Seconded by Shri

"Resolved that Shri who retires by rotation and is eligible for re-appointment to and is hereby re-appointed a director of the company."

Carried unanimously.

7. Auditors

Proposed by Shri

Seconded by Shri

"Resolved that M/s Chartered Accountants, be and are hereby appointed Auditors of the Company to hold office from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting at a remuneration of Rs."

Carried unanimously.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Dated 2xxx.

Specimen - 3

The National India Rubber works Ltd.

Regd. Office: Katni - 483 501 (M.P)

Telegram: Rubber, Phones : 205406, 653308,

Fax No. 07822-249913

E-mail No. nirwld@yahoo.com

Meeting No. 752

Ref. No. 1/44/624

Dated : 10.06.2xxx

Shri Amrit Lal

Jain Nagar

Delhi - xxxxxx

Dear Sir,

Notice is hereby given that meeting of Board of Directors of the Company will be held at Delhi on Wednesday the 15th July 2xxx at 11.00 A.M. at the residence of Shri Amrit Lal, Jain Nagar, Delhi and Thursday the 16th July 2xxx at 11.00 A.M. and Friday the 17th July at 11.00 A.M. at Nainital. You are requested to make it convenient to be present.

Agenda for the Meeting is as under:

- (1) To confirm the minutes of previous Meeting.
- (2) To approve and adopt Audited Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account for the year 2xxx alongwith Auditors and Directors and Secretarial Audit Report and fix the date and time of Annual General Meeting.
- (3) To consider monthly statement of Accounts for the month of April to June 2xxx.
- (4) Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.

Yours faithfully,

(R.K. Jain)

CONVENER

QUESTIONS

■ Very Short Questions with their Answers

1. Define 'meetings'.

Ans. Any gathering, assembly or coming together of two or more persons for the transaction of some lawful business of common concern is called 'meeting'.

2. What is agenda?

Ans. The person who plans the meeting is usually responsible for issuing in advance what is called our agenda (program) to all invited attendees.

3. What is 'minutes of meeting'?

Ans. Minutes are a gist of the proceeding of a meeting. They constitute a summary of the preceding of a meeting.

■ Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write a short note on: (i) notice (ii) agenda (iii) Minutes of meeting.

2. What is the procedure of sending notice?

3. What is the subject matter of the notice.

4. What do you mean by 'minutes of meeting'?

■ Long Answer Type Questions

1. Explain the term 'meetings'. What are the characteristics of a company meetings?

2. Explain various aspects of minutes of meeting.

3. What is notice? Discuss.

4. What is agenda? Explain with example.

5. Prepare minutes for the first meeting of a sub-committee comprising management and staff representatives set up to advise the firm on the possible production. (for issue to all new employees) of a handbook covering conditions of service, company rules, remuneration, absence and sickness procedures, fringe benefits and other matters. The meeting dealt with (favourable) staff reactions to the proposal and with ways and means of implementing it.
 6. How would you minute the following?
 - (a) a resolution
 - (b) an amendment to the minutes of the previous meeting.
 - (c) a request by one committee member that his dissent be recorded.
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