EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND WRITING SKILLS

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GES 201: USE OF ENGLISH II

Edited by

M. T. Lamidi

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FOREWORD

This book is the strategic sequel to *English Grammar and Usage*, the first of the collections of essays on aspects of reading, comprehension and writing in English for university students. *Effective Communication and Writing Skills* transcends the teaching of language structure, usage of words, phrases and sentences. It is a hands-on primer on the basic and advanced activity (and interactivity) of language in the service of literature and communication. No doubt, the purpose of this book is the same as described for *English Grammar and Usage*, which is to encourage linguistic competence and sustain the culture of intelligence and appropriateness among users and speakers of the English language. In the manner of advanced study, this book goes beyond the lexis and structure of English, highlighting the intrinsic, extrinsic as well as the contextual aspects of linguistic acquisition and use. The six chapters are composed by some of the best and seasoned lecturers and tutors in the field.

The first chapter by Ayo Ojebode and Yeku James discusses the relationship between Information Communication Technologies (in the form of computer, cell phones and other multimedia devices) and the use of English. The authors present the different features of the ICT, especially the computer, that can enhance users' performance in acceptable written English. These cover grammar, wordiness, punctuation, style/word choice as well as facilities built into the computer to assist language users/learners using them. They suggest online resources for optimal performance in the use of English. Finally, they also alerted readers that, despite the usefulness of ICTs, they can negatively affect one's use of English, especially in the now rampant use of textese found on social networks.

The second chapter, by Adenike Akinjobi, focuses on speaking skills. It presents, systematically, the different sound segments, stress patterns as well as intonation tunes in English. Though an expert in the phonetics and phonology of English, the author is mindful of the fact that the target audience are people with no basic training in it and that they need it for general use after acquisition. Hence, there are no out-of-the-way terms that can obstruct readability and comprehension. Rather, there are examples for practice and test-yourself exercises designed to assist the independent learner.

The third chapter on literary criticism, by Ayo Kehinde, explores the different approaches to reading and appreciating (understanding) written literature. It discusses the general features of literature (figures of speech/rhetorical devices) and goes further to explain the features of the three genres of literature, i.e. poetry,

drama and fiction, and their sub-forms. Tips for analysing these different genres are also provided. The chapter contains a lot of practical examples. It is expected to strengthen students' reading and comprehension skills.

The next chapter introduces the reader to writing skills. Written by the duo of B. R. Ojebuyi and I. E. Olaosun, it presents in a lucid manner the step-by-step processes in writing a good essay. It discusses the general writing process (pre-writing, writing and post-writing), beginning with the topic and how it can be made precise, the outline, organization, the audience and the different parts of an essay. They also discuss paragraph types and thought-flow patterns.

As a follow-up to Chapter Four, Olayinka Egbokhare discusses in Chapter Five, the types of essays such as narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive and argumentative; and forms such as memos, letters, chat room discussions, e-mail, blogs, reviews and reports, especially term paper writing. The author concludes by discussing pitfalls in essay writing and by bringing up problems that students often encounter in their writing exercises.

An author's intended meaning is encoded and decoded through the use of punctuation marks. In the final chapter, Romanus Aboh looks at the major punctuation marks and explains their features and functions as well as contexts of use. He emphasized the correct usage of punctuation to avoid generating unintended meaning which can cause social problems.

In all, writing is an art, or a science if you like, and so is communication. This book satisfies the need of students learning to speak intelligibly and write different types and forms of essays. Both students and general readers are invited to derive maximum benefit from it.

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PREFACE

In the 2010/2011 academic session, the GES 101 curriculum was reviewed and the course was split into two for thorough teaching. These two new units are GES 101: Use of English I, which is principally on grammar, and GES 201: Use of English II, which is devoted to teaching speaking and writing skills. It became necessary, therefore, to have separate books for each of the courses which are scheduled to run at 100 and 200 levels respectively. *English Gramma and Usage* is the first book and it is meant for first year students. *Effective Communication and Writing Skills* is the second book and it is meant for second year students.

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of the authors, who were drawn from the crème of the experts in oral and written communication as well as literature, and the assessors who scrutinized the chapters and offered very useful suggestions. I appreciate my predecessors in office, who initiated the revision of the curriculum, and the incumbent Director, Prof A.O. Dasylva, for bringing it into conclusion. Finally, I thank the Department of English and the Faculty of Arts for giving me the opportunity to serve on the Board of the GSP Unit, and the Board for assigning me the duty of editing the book.

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ICT AND USE OF ENGLISH

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Introduction

ICT is an acronym which stands for information and communication technologies or information communication technologies. ICTs are technological devices for communicating information. Information Technology itself refers to the processing and dissemination of data, using computer hardware and software; so there is indeed a sense in which it is possible to argue that communication is already implied in Information Technology.

These technologies are numerous. Among them are old media devices such as radio and television. They also include more modern devices and applications such as the mobile phone, computers, and the Internet. The Internet enables the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and several other activities including blogging and electronic transactions. The Internet also allows the use of search engines to search its contents. A search engine is a software programme that helps computer or Internet users to find information stored on a personal computer or on the Internet. Data like news, images and pictures, and Internet pages are easily accessible through search engines. Examples of search engines include google.com; juno.com; yahoo.com and mamma.com. These technologies are widely used by many students in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Because these are methods of communicating, they, no doubt, influence the ways we communicate. Their influence is both positive and negative. This book is on the use of English; so our focus is on the English language. ICTs can help you to develop your use of English; but they can also contribute to poor use of English. In this chapter, we attempt to discuss how these two can happen.

How ICT can improve your Use of English

For most students, the mobile phone is meant to be used to exchange information, television is for news and sports, especially soccer leagues, and radio is for music and other forms of entertainment. Not many students think of these media as sources for improving their use of English, but a purposeful use of these technologies can contribute to better use of English. How can this be done?

ICTs can improve your mastery of the grammar of English. Since the 1950's, radio, and later television, have been used to teach English grammar in Nigeria. Examples of such radio and television programmes included *Mind Your Grammar* and *The Grammar Doctor*, two previously prominent English grammar television programmes on the NTA, which once fascinated pupil-viewers in Lagos, and other southwest cities. There are other similar English language-based programmes for radio listeners across the nation. There have also been attempts to teach the pronunciation of English words through cassette players. In this instance, an expert in English speech sounds records the correct pronunciations of these speech sounds, and carefully articulates their representative words in a studio; and then disseminates to pupils.

For users who have access to the BBC, *Professor Grammar* is a very good native-speaker context that can help listeners to improve their use of English through radio. A platform like this provides listeners with an opportunity to be immersed in the natural context in which the language is used. This advantage is particularly significant in relation to the learning of the proper articulation of the sounds of the English language. The University of Ibadan community radio, Diamond 101.5 FM has also recently introduced a programme, *Mind your Language*. It gives listeners the opportunity to improve their pronunciation and spelling of English words.

There are innumerable grammar resources on the Internet besides what is available on radio and television. Some grammar sites include:

- ***Agendaweb*** (www.agendaweb.org): This site has free English lessons to learn English vocabulary, exercises in English grammar, exercises in listening, basic elementary beginners to advanced English exercises, verbs exercises, reading comprehension exercises, English grammar exercises with games, and ESL with free printable worksheets.
- ***English Basics*** (www.rhlschool.com/englishv3.htm): This site has sections featuring original grammar worksheets for teachers and parents to copy for their kids, and useful for teaching, reinforcement and review.
- ***Non-Stop English*** (www.nonstopenglish.com): Here, a learner can practise English grammar and vocabulary skills with interactive tests. Here, you can receive free interactive email tests. If you register and log in, you can see which tests you have taken and how successful you were. Learning English with these free online tests is really motivating. New tests are added every week. Purdue University also has a website which offers handouts and exercises on grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- ***Grammarly*** (www.grammarly.com): This site allows you to paste your text — your assignment or whatever you have written. It then proofreads it for you, showing you where you committed any

grammatical errors. It also checks your spelling and the originality of the text you have pasted – to see if you plagiarised. I pasted the text below in Grammarly.com.

> *The number of men and women that are hungry are increasing all over the world. This are the result of natural and man-made events and decisions. It is not enough to provide food for people; it is also important to ensure that they can eat the food in peace. There are innumerable marauders that make it impossible for people to live in peace these days.*

Then I clicked 'Check Text'. Within a short time, it finished checking the text. It checked it on five points: plagiarism, contextual spelling check, grammar, punctuation, and style and word choice. It gave the following comments:

(1) Plagiarism – the text is original
(2) Contextual spelling check – spellings are correct; commonly confused words are not misspelt
(3) Grammar – subject and verb agreement violated (one error)
(4) Punctuation – correct
(5) Style and word choice – one error (vocabulary use) but writing style is okay

It is important to note that as good as *Grammarly* is, it identified only one case of subject-verb disagreement in the text — but there are two. It missed the one in the first sentence.

In addition, my Ms Word failed to detect the subject-verb disagreement in the following sentence:
Example 1: Rice and beans has been very expensive in recent days.
Example 1 is a clear case of subject-verb disagreement which I expected my computer to detect: the verb should have been *have* (plural); not *has* (singular) since *rice* and *beans* refer to two different items. The computer failed. So, you must be vigilant. We will return to this point later.
Some other free grammar sites include:

- www.Englishteacher.com
- www.studyenglishtoday.net
- www.funbrain.com/grammar
- www.usingenglish.com

You can improve your writing, spelling and diction through a variety of ways. One important contribution of ICTs to literacy development is the new platform it has provided for learners to improve their communication skills. One of the best ways to be a good user of a language is to emulate good users of the language. ICT provides you with opportunities to read the works of great writers. In addition to these, there are websites where you can learn how to write well in English. Examples include www.writingskills.com and www.betterwritingskills.com.

There are several ways you can improve your spelling using ICTs. You need to know that correct spelling is very important to you as a student. If you are a 'nasty speller', your teacher will get the impression that you are an altogether weak student. One of the ways you can improve your spelling is to spell-check your documents before printing them. Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint have good spell-check tools. But you must note that:

(1) You need to first activate the spell check in order to check spelling as you type. To do this, open a word document, click on the Office Button; select 'Word Options', then select 'Proofing'. Then click 'check spelling as you type'.

(2) You also need to deactivate 'ignore words in uppercase'. If you do not, your computer will not show you that you have misspelt a word if the word is in upper case, that is, capital letters. To deactivate this, follow the same steps as the ones mentioned above. When you select 'Proofing', uncheck 'ignore words in uppercase'.

(4) You have to change your default language setting to "English UK". In the University of Ibadan, the acceptable version of English is the British English. Most computers come with the American English as the default language setting. If you do not change this, it will create problems and confusion for you.

(3) You cannot absolutely rely on the spell checker. If you do, you will be misled. A spell-checker accepts a word once it is properly spelt even if it is not the right word for that context. For instance, if you type: "The library is quite", instead of "The library is quiet", your spellchecker will not identify the spelling error — "quite" for "quiet" because both words are English words.

(4) You should not accept every spelling suggestion that Ms Word gives you. You must be sure to pick that one that suits your context. Many times, the checker gives you several suggestions; you must be good enough to make the right selection.

Another way to improve your spelling is to take online spelling tests. There are a lot of websites that offer free spelling training and tests. These help you to master the intricacies of the English spelling 'system'. Some of these sites are free. You can use your search engine (such as google.com; juno.com; and yahoo.com) to find spelling sites.

ICT helps you to develop your vocabulary power. Some years ago, one needed a big bulky book called the dictionary, or a bigger and bulkier book known as the thesaurus to check meanings of words, and find antonyms and synonyms. Things have changed. There are offline and online resources that help you solve your diction problems. For instance, when you type in Microsoft Word, highlight a word, and then press Shift+F7. Wait for a few seconds and on the right side of the page a list will appear. It is the list of synonyms (and most times the antonyms) of the word that you highlighted. I just did it now: I highlighted the word 'highlight' and pressed Shift+F7. On the right side of

the page, a list came up showing the following synonyms of 'highlight': emphasise; draw attention to; underline; stress; show up; underscore; bring to light. It also shows the noun forms of the word: best part; high spot; focus; climax, etc. You do not need to be connected to the Internet to do this. Some online dictionaries like *Merriam-Webster* and *The Sage's English Dictionary* can be downloaded and installed in PCs and handhelds. It is important to learn how to use such tools as an essential part of computer literacy; in other words, computer literacy is now much connected to the learning of English language skills.

Your computer can help you eliminate some of the problems connected with style. These include wordiness, unnecessary passivisation, run-ons, and the use of fragments can be addressed by an appropriate use of proofing tools on your computer. Wordiness is the use of more words than is necessary. Another term for wordiness is verbosity. In academic writing, verbosity (also called redundancy) is not acceptable. ***Wordiness*** makes your writing flabby, boring and longer that it should be. Consider the following examples from the writing website of one of the state universities in North America:

Example 2: In the case of Mais (TC, 1968), the taxpayer was able to exclude from gross income embezzled funds that were repaid during the year the funds were embezzled but the taxpayer was not allowed to exclude embezzled funds to be repaid in a subsequent year.

Example 3: Mais (TC, 1968) allowed the taxpayer to exclude embezzled funds repaid during the same year but not those repaid in a later year.

The first sentence contains 45 words; it is clumsy and tiring. The second contains 23 words; it is tidier and easier to read. Your computer can alert you when you are being wordy. It can also suggest to you better sentence options. When I typed the sentence: Expressions that are wrong should be replaced with correct ones, my computer underlined "expressions that are wrong" in green colour. When I right-clicked on it, it told me 'Wordiness, consider revising'.

Run-ons are sentences that are too long and poorly structured. A run-on sentence is often a set of clauses or simple sentences joined by several commas. Unnecessary passivisation is the use of the passive voice when the active should have been used. The computer can help you detect run-ons and passivisation.

The use of fragments instead of sentences is a major problem among students and many do not know what makes a sentence. Students often need to be reminded that the length of an expression does not make it a sentence. What makes an expression a sentence is the presence of a predicator in the expression. The following expression is a fragment:

Example 4: If the man and his wife were invited and they were told to provide evidence of their children educational qualifications.

If your computer is properly programmed, it would underline the above expression in green.

For your computer to help you spot wordiness, run-ons and fragments, you must first activate the 'Grammar and Style' function of your computer. Follow the following steps:

(1) Open a Word document and click on the Office Button.
(2) Click on Word Options.
(3) Click on Proofing.
(4) Under 'Writing Style', click on the drop-down list and select 'Grammar and Style'.
(5) Click on Settings.
(7) Then select wordiness, fragments, run-ons, passive voice and others about which you want your computer to alert you.
(8) Click 'OK'.
(9) Click 'OK' again.

Once any instance of these (wordiness, fragments, run-ons, passive voice) occurs, your computer will underline it in green. Then you can revisit the underlined expression and rewrite or ask the computer to suggest options. It sometimes does. It also can explain to you what is wrong with the sentence, thus increasing your knowledge of such problems.

It is important to note that in helping you to spot and correct some of these errors, the computer sometimes becomes 'too demanding' and overwhelming. Sometimes, it is better to finish typing before asking your computer to check your work. Still on the negative side, there have been occasions where the computer has underlined expressions that are correct and clean, and have ignored wrong expressions! So, you must be vigilant. Consider this example for instance:

Example 5: Nollywood cinemas is a newly found love among the Nigerian elite.

The computer has underlined the expression above because it constructs *Nollywood Cinemas* as a plural subject, whereas it is a singular concept. Such issues arise because computer programming and software packaging are context-sensitive. *Nollywood Cinemas* is a Nigerian reality which probably does not have a reference within the software.

Computers can, however, increase your vocabulary power. If you are online, you can access numerous online dictionaries and thesauruses. Many cell phones also have tools for synonyms and antonyms. The dictionaries especially help you with the pronunciation of the words. Once your speakers are turned on, and your Internet signal is strong enough, if you click on the word, you hear the pronunciation. In some sites, you click on the symbol of sound (maybe the picture of an ear) to get the sound pronounced.

ICTs, especially the social media, can do a lot more to improve your use of English if you join certain English-enhancement groups. An example is the English Language Clinic, a Facebook forum which Dr Adenike Akinjobi moderates and for which she also provides editorial co-ordination. You can ask members for help or clarification of any sort regarding the use of English.

A post from that group page illustrates what we are saying:

Please, how is the word {prostrate} used? is it prostrate for your dad;
or prostrate yourself for your dad. and why?
(Post: 29 February at 00:18 via Mobile/ www.Facebook.com/English Language Clinic Forum)

The English Language Clinic group is just one of the English-enhancement groups that you can join. Listening to good newscasts, especially network newscasts (minus the correspondents' inputs) can also help with your pronunciation of English words.

How ICTs can Negatively Affect Your Use of English

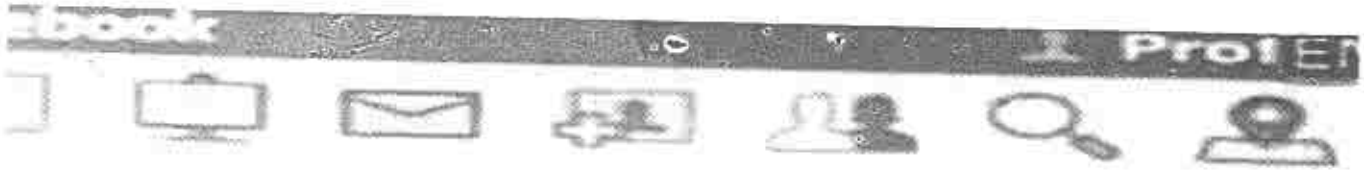
While the profound use of ICT in teaching and learning English is not in doubt, it must be stressed that ICTs can create problems for users of English. One of the major casualties of ICTs is writing, specifically spelling. The incursion of *textese* (that is, the language of text messages) into formal writing is alarming. It is not unusual now to read students' assignments and find expressions like 'd' instead of 'the'; 'b4' for 'before'; and '2u' instead of 'to you'. Many students often forget to mentally migrate from online and SMS mode to the proper writing mode. This failure makes their writing unreadable, and portrays them as extremely unserious. Such students are often duly penalised. It is a misfortune to get so used to *textese* that you are unable to write properly.

With reference to grammar, ICTs are often unwittingly mobilized as a channel of ungrammatical expressions. When broadcasters who have not mastered the details and conventions of the language broadcast on radio and television, they commit many errors. Consider the following ungrammatical expressions heard on some popular radio stations in Ibadan:

Example 6: *The artiste has *sang* well... (Tense problem)
Example 7: *The connection between the oil sector and other sectors were also discussed. (Error of Concord)
Example 8: *The EFCC not only requested for the auditors' report but also evidence of all payments made. (Faulty Parrallelism)

As someone trying to develop his or her use of English, you must, therefore, be on your guard when listening to radio or watching films or television.

Also new media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which are public but virtual spaces for voicing personal opinions, have given many, both old and young, "opportunities" to exhibit their linguistic competence as second language users. Since members of these social network sites are of different disciplinary and professional backgrounds, it is possible for them, especially when they are not inclined to being mindful of their usage of the language, to use English in ways that mock not only themselves but also the institution of formal education, especially in Nigeria. Although comical, and it is okay to laugh at it, the status update of the Facebook user below typifies this reality:



I am full of happy wen i saw your acceptment of My frend request on this facebook it as tey that i wanting to requested you becorse am always see you on oposit My street when you are pass to work am admire u but i can't fit to tell you becorse i am fear for you. God blest u

(From Facebook.com)

There are many reasons spelling errors might have increased in this age. One of them is certainly because of the incursion of ICTs into the language of users; this reality might also be traceable to *textese*. "Fait" for "fight"; "alrite" for "alright"; and "ocasion" for "occasion" are instances of many such words. Students get used to this way of spelling words so much that they write such in examinations and assignments.

ICT can also mislead you in more dangerous ways. We discussed a lot and positively about the use of the spelling and grammar checkers, but you have to be constantly on your guard. Many times, Microsoft Word spell checkers and grammar checkers fail. Ms Word *sometimes* ignores cases of faulty parallelism. For instance, the sentence below is a case of faulty parallelism but my checker did not detect it:

Example 9: He further appealed to the people of Oyo State to join hands with government by promoting positive understanding of the actions of the present

administration and avoid being used by detractors and other enemies of government.

It sometimes fails to detect Subject-Verb disagreement and other forms of violation of concord. We made this point earlier, but thought it was worth repeating here. The grammar field of the MS word software did not detect the SVA problem in the sentence below:

Example 10: *Plot and structure makes up a story.

Ms Word also fails to help in certain instances of wordiness. Take for instance, the Nigerian expression:

Example 11: The snake is green in colour; the earth is spherical in shape.

These are instances of wordiness but Ms Word, as good as we say it is, is unable to detect these expressions as wordy expressions. Could the snake have been green in length? Or the earth spherical in size? It simply is enough to say:

Example 12: The snake is green; the earth is spherical.

Not only does Microsoft Word occasionally fail to identify some language problems, it also complains about expressions that are faultless. This can also be misleading. For instance, if you activate your Ms Word to identify unnecessary passivisation, it then goes ahead to identify every sentence in which you have used the passive voice. This can be not just misleading but also exasperating.

At the level of phonetics, the errors disseminated through broadcast platforms like radio and television are even more apparent. "Acoustics", "surety", "laudable", "champagne", "façade", 'penchant" and "epitome" are some of the words often mispronounced on many radio stations. In some other cases, some words are not correctly stressed while phonetic interferences from the first languages of many users of English as a second language greatly distort correct pronunciations. Apart from articulating /f/ for /p/ in a word like *president*, and /f/ for /v/ in a word like *fever* by some broadcasters from some parts of the country, there are many other incorrect pronunciations that users and learners of English have to contend with on radio and television. It should be said that network news broadcasters in Nigeria articulate English words much more closely to the standard version than do correspondents.

These media are also the tools for the spread of some of the largely bastardized lyrics of some popular music artistes in the country. "You is the one" (for *You are the one*) used to be on many Nigerian airwaves some years ago. "Let me *took* you out on a date" (for *let me take you out on a date*) is another line in a song that is currently being perpetuated on the UI campus through radio stations in Ibadan. This might be seen as a deliberate language humour; yet clearly implied is ICT's collaboration with popular culture forms in the distortion of the English usage of many careless and insensitive Nigerian students.

Worse still, you can become dependent on certain ICT so much that you cannot write or use English confidently without them. An example is the use of spell-checkers. You can become so used to this tool that you cannot write without using them. Instead of learning the spellings of certain words properly by heart, you may always ask your computer to spell-check for you and suggest spellings. This can have grave consequences for you when you are writing an examination or taking an interview in which you are given only pen and paper.

Conclusion

ICT are immense resources for improving your use of English. If all you do with your television set is to watch films and sports; if your computer is just for typing your assignments, watching films and playing games; you are indeed grossly underutilising the devices. You need to explore and utilise the great opportunities that ICTs provide for improving your use of English. To get the most from your ICT, you will need deliberate deployment of the communication devices, vigilance as well as discipline. There are similarly other aspects of ICTs that users of English ought to be familiar with. For instance, the knowledge of "slide" presentations through Microsoft Powerpoint and other similar software is also an indispensable skill in this age.

However, you must note that ICT cannot take the place of the more traditional methods of improving your use of English such as attending classes, reading good language use books, writing, speaking and listening to good speakers of the language. ICT should be made to serve complementary purposes to these older methods; it should not be made to replace them. As a good student, you should master the basic rules of the use of English deeply without depending on ICT. Interestingly, only those who have mastered the rules of the use of English can maximise ICT as a way of further improving their use of English.

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2

ENGLISH SOUNDS, STRESS AND INTONATION

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Introduction

It is good to let you know at this juncture that English is a second language in Nigeria. This means it is a language you learned, apart from your mother tongue, which you acquired. In a context where the language being used is a mother tongue, speaking and listening are natural skills. They are acquired without formal teaching. Did someone teach you to speak? No. When a child is born, if the brain and the organs that are used to produce sounds are normal and he/she lives in a human society, he/she will naturally speak a language. In Nigeria, for example, many people acquire the first language such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Efik and so on that is spoken in their environment. They never go to school to learn it. They start with the babbling sounds that children make. Soon they utter words, and then they join the words together in an incomprehensible manner. Finally, they use the language very adequately. Nobody teaches them how to pronounce the words, how to join the sounds together in the right order, or how to make the sentences meaningful. They just know.

With a second language, as English is to Nigerians, this is not the case. We need to go to school to learn how the words are pronounced, how the letters are joined to form words, how the words can be used meaningfully, and how they can be joined together in sensible ways. Because using English is not so natural with us as our mother tongues are, we face a lot of challenges. Among the challenges are the correct way to produce the sounds, the appropriate syllable to stress in words and sentences, and the right intonation to use in a particular context to make our utterances meaningful.

Apart from the mother tongue interference which we are always quick to mention, English itself as a language has its own challenges that may make it difficult for one to learn it quickly. One of such is that English letters and sounds do not have a one-to-one correlation. One letter may be realized in various ways as different sounds while different sounds also

have different letters and combination of letters representing them. Let us look at the following homophones (Do note that homophones are words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings):

key /ki:/	**quay** /ki:/
ewe /ju:/	**you** / ju:/
knight /nait /	**n**ight /nait/
right /rait/	rite /rait/
waste /weist/	**w**aist /weist/
pray /prei/	**pr**ey /prei/

You must have noticed the outrageous differences between the spellings of the pairs of the words above, especially 'key' and 'quay', which are both English words of different meanings and spellings, but the same pronunciation!

The distinct sounds of any language are called phonemes or segments. They are often collectively referred to as segmentals. On the other hand, stress and intonation are suprasegmental features of pitch used in the English language. Stress affects words (word stress) and group of words (sentence stress), while intonation affects group of words (intonation group) but could be used also on a word functioning as a group. For instance, if I ask the question, 'Will you visit me tomorrow?', and you answer 'yes', it implies 'Yes, I will visit you tomorrow'. 'Yes' could be said in various ways to reflect different meanings. We could say 'yes' with a high and falling pitch, implying 'I'm sure I will visit you'. We could also say it with a low rise, implying, 'I'm not so excited about visiting you tomorrow.' These pitch movements matter in the English language. Unfortunately, most Nigerian languages do not use stress. They also do not use intonation the way English does. This has a lot of implications for Nigerian users of English because English stress and intonation are, in consequence, difficult for them to use appropriately.

Objectives

Students should be able to:

- Describe English consonants and vowels;
- Differentiate English spelling from pronunciation and identify words that are differentiated by phonemes;
- Define stress and distinguish word stress and sentence stress;
- Explain stress, its basic characteristics, phonetic cues, and the levels of stress;
- Describe and differentiate the strong and weak forms of English grammatical words and explain the context for each variant of the grammatical words;
- Define intonation and discuss its components; and
- Discuss the various tunes, their combinations and the functions they perform.

Pre-test

1. List 5 homophones outside the examples given in the introduction to this lecture.
2. Utter the following words aloud and answer the questions after them:

(i) Angel
(ii) Remove
(iii) Father
(iv) Address
(v) Accountant
(vi) appraisal

a. Which syllables sound more prominent than the others in the individual words?
b. Group the words based on the numbers of syllables and the syllables stressed.

3. What are content words? Give 5 examples.
4. What are grammatical/function words? Give 5 examples.
5. Utter the sentence 'John will marry Mary'

(i) as a statement of fact.
(ii) as a question.
(iii) with annoyance.
(iv) with boredom.
(v) with surprise.

PHONEMES/SOUNDS

Though you are not linguists but general users of the English language, it is important to let you know that the spelling of English words may confuse you when you need to pronounce them. It is better to learn how to pronounce English words rather than using spelling as a cue. Letter 'a' could be /eɪ/ as in 'age', /æ/ as in 'pan', /aː/ as in 'class'; while letter 'g' could be /g/ as in 'ago', /ʤ/ as in 'village', /ʒ/ as in 'rouge'.

In addition, the same letter may be pronounced differently even in the same word. Let's look at the word 'gigantic'. In this word, the first letter 'g' is pronounced as / ʤ / while the second letter 'g' is pronounced as /g/. Also, the same word spelt the same way may have different pronunciations depending on whether it is a noun, a verb, an adjective, etc. An example of such is 'august'. When it means 'the month of August', the first syllable is stressed; but when it means 'an important visitor', the second syllable is stressed! The word may even belong to the same word class but have different meanings and pronunciations. For instance, 'aged' is an adjective that can mean 'of the age of' in the sentence 'He is aged ten', where the pronunciation will be /eɪʤd/. It can also mean 'old' in the sentence 'He is an aged man', where the pronunciation will be /eɪʤɪd/. The word is pronounced differently, depending on the meaning.

In a discussion of the phonemes, you need to know the organs of the body that are essential to sound production and the airstream that is employed. Parts of the body such as the tongue, lips (labials),

teeth (dental), teeth ridge (alveolar), hard palate, soft palate (velum), oral cavity, nasal cavity, vocal cords, glottis and the lungs are organs involved in speech production. Also, you must have noticed that when you speak, if you put your hand in front of your mouth, you will feel the air hitting your hand. Air is essential to speech production. There are three airstream mechanisms (pulmonic, velaric and glottalic) and two movements (into the oral cavity or out of the oral cavity called ingressive and egressive respectively) used in human speech production. However, for English, we only make use of the pulmonic egressive airstream. This is the airstream coming out of the mouth from the lungs.

Now, let us look at the simplest non-technical descriptions of English phonemes. English phonemes comprise consonants and vowels. Consonants are sounds produced with an obstruction to the air used in the production while vowels are produced with open approximation (open throat) and free flow of air. Try to produce /g/, and /u:/. You will notice that /g/ has an obstruction to the airstream, but /u:/ is produced with open approximation (without such obstruction).

When describing consonant sounds, we need three parameters which are: (i) voiced/voiceless state of the glottis, (ii) place of articulation, (iii) manner of articulation. Though we may not need the technical description for a course like 'Use of English', we still need to know some basic facts to guide us. One of such facts is that English sounds are differentiated based on voicing. Vocal cords are two elastic tissues found in the larynx (voice box/oesophagus). The space between them is called the glottis. If these cords partially block the glottis such that the body of air forces itself through them and causes them to vibrate in the course of producing a sound, the sound is said to be voiced. If the elastic cords rest apart and the glottis is open such that the body of air could pass through freely, and there is no vibration, the sound is said to be voiceless. You will find most English sounds pairing in terms of voicing such that one is voiceless and the other is voiced. For example, /p/ and /b/ are two English sounds differentiated by voice. While /p/ is voiceless, /b/ is voiced.

Another parameter is the place of articulation, which is where the sound is produced. The sound /m/ is described as bilabial because it is produced with the two lips (bi – two, labial – lips). The manner of articulation (which is the third parameter) has to do with how the sound is produced. Is it produced with total blockage of airstream, followed by a sudden release as we have with /p/ and /b/? Or is the production accompanied with friction noise as we have with /s, z, f, v, h/ etc?

Now, we'll go through a description of the consonant sounds of English based on the three parameters we have just discussed – state of the glottis, place of articulation and manner of articulation:

/m/ bilabial nasal as in *man* /mæn/
/p/ voiceless bilabial plosive as in *pan* /pæn/
/b/ voiced bilabial plosive as in *ban* /bæn/
/f/ voiceless labiodental fricative as in *five* /faɪv/
/v/ voiced labiodental fricative as in *van* /væn /
/θ/ voiceless dental fricative as in *teeth* /ti:θ/
/ð/ voiced dental fricative as in *bathe* /beɪð/
/s/ voiceless alveolar fricative as in *sin* /sɪn/
/z/ voiced alveolar fricative as in *zoo* /zu:/
/t/ voiceless alveolar plosive as in *tin* /tɪn/
/d/ voiced alveolar plosive as in *dance* /dans/
/l/ alveolar lateral as in *late* /leɪt/
/r/ alveolar trill as in *river* /rɪvə/
/n/ alveolar nasal as in *nurse* /nɜ:s/
/ʃ/ voiceless palato alveolar fricative as in *shame* /ʃeɪm/
/ʒ/ voiced palato alveolar fricative as in *television* /telɪvɪʒn/
/ʧ/ voiceless palato-alveolar affricate as in *church* /ʧɜ:ʧ/
/ʤ/ voiced palato-alveolar affricate as in *judge* /ʤʌʤ/
/k/ voiceless velar plosive as in *make* /meɪk /
/g/ voiced velar plosive as in *game* /geɪm/
/ŋ/ velar nasal as in *sing* /sɪŋ/
/h/ voiceless glottal fricative as in *house* /haʊs/
/j/ palatal semi-vowel as in *yes* /jes/
/w/ labiovelar semi-vowel as in *wet* /wet/

You must have noticed that the nasals and the semi-vowels are not described in terms of voice. This is because all nasal and semi-vowel sounds are automatically voiced. Therefore, when you claim that a sound is a nasal or a semi-vowel in English, it is known to be voiced. This implies that such a sound does not contrast with any other sound in terms of voice.

Now, let us look at English vowels and their descriptions. Do not forget that vowels are produced with an open flow of air while consonants are produced with a blockage of air by the articulators. Therefore, it will not be appropriate to use the parameters for describing consonants for vowels, since they have different manners of articulation. We can, therefore, describe our vowels based on the following parameters:

- the height of the body of the tongue;
- the position of the tongue;
- the degree of lip rounding; and
- the length of the vowel.

When we speak, the body of the tongue forms a hump. The height of that hump as well as its position (front or back) is also essential for the description of vowels. The shape of the lips (whether round or spread) while producing the sound and the length of the vowel are also parts of the basics of description for English vowel sounds.

Vowels are also classified as lax or tense. Short vowels are said to be lax while long vowels are tense

Generally, tense vowels are believed to be produced with more muscular tension than that of lax vowels.

Before we list English vowels and their descriptions, we need to know that English vowels may be classified as monophthongs and diphthongs. A third category, known as triphthongs, is sometimes added. Monophthongs are produced at a point of articulation, e.g. /ɪ/ as in 'pin' /pɪn/. Diphthongs involve movements from one point of articulation to another, e.g. /aɪ/ as in 'pie' /paɪ/.Triphthongs will be from a point, to another, then to another, e.g. /a ɪ ɔ / as in 'fire' / faɪɔ/.

Monophthongs

/i:/ Front, close, tense, high and slightly spread as in *bee, teach*

/ɪ/ Front, close, high, lax and slightly spread as in *kid* /kɪd/, *pit* /pɪt/.

/e/ Front, half-open, lax and slightly spread as in *pen, friend, bread,* /pen/, /frend/, /bred/

/ æ / Front, open, low, lax and slightly spread as in *bag, plait,* /bæg/, /plæt/

/a:/ Back, open, low tense, and neutral as in *flask, car, heart, balm,* /fla:sk/, /ka:/, /ba:lm/

/ ɒ / Back, open, low, lax and slightly rounded as in *pot, wasp, tall,* /wɒsp/, /tɒl/, /pɒt/

/ ɔ: / Back, half-open, low, tense and slightly rounded as in *sword, fork, door, talk,* /sɔ:d/, /fɔ:k/, /dɔ:/, /tɔ:k/

/ʊ/ Back, close, high, lax and rounded as in *cook, push,* /kʊk/, /pʊʃ/

/u: / Back, close, high, tense and rounded as in *rule, shoe, two, juice,* /ru:l/, /ʃu:/, /tu:/, /ʤu:z/

/ ʌ / Central, half-open, lax and neutral as in *cup, come, flood,* /kʌp/, /kʌm/, /flʌd/

/ɜ:/ Central, half-close, tense and neutral as in *bird, church, work, learn,* /bɜ:d/, /wɜ:k/, /lɜ:n/, /ʧɜ:ʧ/

/ə/ Central, half-close, lax and neutral, very weak as in *doctor, about, teacher,* /dɒktə/, /əbaʊt/, /ti:ʧə/

The /ə/ sound is weakly pronounced because the tongue lies inert in its production. It is like the sound we make when we hesitate.

Diphthongs (tongue movement from one point of articulation to the other)

/ɪə/ *ear, deer, here,* /ɪə/, /dɪə/, /ɪə/

/eə/ *bear, fare, pair,* /beə/, /feə/, /peə/

/ʊə/ *tour, poor,* /tʊə/, /pʊə/

/eɪ/ *cake, pail, lay,* /keɪk/, /peɪl/, /leɪ/

/aɪ/ *kite, eye, I,* /kaɪt/, /aɪ/

/ɔɪ/ *boy, coil, toy,* /bɔɪ/, /kɔɪl/, /tɔɪ/

/əʊ/ *toe, bone, road, flow,* /təʊ/, /bəʊn/, /rəʊd/, /fləʊ/

/aʊ/ *cow, mouse, browse,* /kaʊ/, /maʊz/, /braʊz/

Triphthongs: tongue movement from one point of articulation to another, followed by another,

/eɪə/ as in *player, slayer,* /pleɪə/, /sleɪə/

/aʊə/ as in *flour, hour,* /flaʊə/, /aʊə/

/ɔɪə/ as in *lawyer, sawyer,* /lɔɪə/, /sɔɪə/

/əʊə/ as in *lower, mower, bower,* /ləʊə/, /məʊə/, /bəʊə/

/aɪə/ as in *higher, fire,* /haɪə/, /faɪə/

A diphthong or triphthong is considered a vowel unit though it seems to consist of more than a segment. For instance, /eɪ/ in the word *eight* is considered a single vowel not as /e/ and /ɪ/.

STRESS

Stress is the prominence given to a particular syllable of a word or group of words. When it affects a word, we are dealing with word stress, but when it affects a group of words, we are dealing with phrasal stress and sentence stress. When an English word is pronounced, a particular syllable of the word is made more prominent than the other syllables in the same word. In the English language, two or more syllables cannot enjoy equal prominence in a word; one must be more prominent than the other or others. This is not the case with the majority of our indigenous languages. This makes stress challenging for most Nigerian speakers of English.

The syllable is the pronounceable unit of the sounds of a language. It is used to refer to the portion of a word you could produce within a breath effort. The English word 'pretend' has two syllables. These are 'pre' and 'tend'. A monosyllabic word (a word of one syllable) often takes the stress on the only syllable it contains. 'Man' /ˈmæn/ is an example of a monosyllabic word where the only syllable available, /mæn/, is assigned the stress. A disyllabic word is made up of two syllables while a polysyllabic word consists of many syllables. 'People' is an example of a disyllabic word, while 'eradi'cation' and 'edu'cation/ where /-kei-/ takes the primary stress, are examples of polysyllabic words.

Now, let us look at the characteristic activities that accompany a stressed syllable. These are called phonetic cues of stress. It simply means what a listener would perceive to know that a speaker has stressed a syllable of an English word. (1) The pitch of the syllable must be made prominent, different from other syllables. This is called pitch prominence. (2) A stressed syllable must be longer than all other syllables in the word. This is called duration. (3) Another cue is loudness. A stressed syllable should be louder than any other syllable in the word. This is called intensity. (4) Also, some consonants are usually dropped off (i.e. elided or removed), while some vowels are reduced in quality to the /ə/ sound when a syllable is not stressed. For instance, 'have' is produced as /hæv/ when stressed; but when unstressed, it loses the /h/ sound and becomes /əv/. Vowels have a tendency to get reduced to the vowel /ə/ or to have syllabic consonants as their peak as in 'conduct (Noun) and con'duct (Verb). The noun form has stress on the first syllable which retains its strong /ɒ / but the first syllable of the verb form contains the vowel /ə / because stress is assigned to its second syllable.

Conduct (Noun) /ˈkɒndʌkt/
Conduct (verb) /kənˈdʌkt/

It is very important to point out the fact that English stress is very complex when compared to other stress systems in other world languages. This accounts for some of the difficulties encountered by second language learners and users of English language. It is good to note that every word in English has a tendency to be learnt with its peculiar stress pattern.

Levels of stress

English word stress and sentence stress come in levels. There is the primary stress which is the most important stress in a word. It is assigned to the more or most prominent syllable in a word. The next level of stress is the secondary stress which is assigned to the syllable that is next in prominence to the primarily stressed syllable. There is another level which is the unstressed. This affects all unstressed syllables which are produced with the least prominence. Let's look at the following example:

Education – polysyllabic word ˌe du ca tion (4 syllables) / edjo'keɪ.ʃn /

The primary stress is assigned to /-keɪ-/, the secondary stress to /e-/ while /-dju-/ and -ʃn / are unstressed.

While dealing with English sentences, however, three levels are also recognized. These are nuclear stress, tertiary stress and unstressed. The nuclear stress is assigned to the last stressed syllable in a sentence while all the other syllables that are supposed to take stress will have all their stresses reduced to tertiary. All unstressed syllables will remain unstressed in the sentence. We should note at this juncture that all monosyllabic words that perform grammatical functions in the sentence are not stressed. These grammatical words are prepositions, auxiliary verbs, articles and pronouns. Examples are 'is, are, will, can, you, me, his, her, the, a, an, in, on, by', etc. Let us look at the following sentence together:

The man returned from Lagos yesterday.

The content words are 'man, returned, Lagos, yesterday' while the grammatical words are 'the' and 'from'. The content words would have the appropriate syllable assigned the stress while the grammatical words would be unstressed and uttered very weakly. Among the content words, the last stressed syllable of the sentence, which will be the 'yes-'of 'yesterday' will have the nuclear stress which will be the most prominent in the sentence. Now let us assign stresses to the sentence above.

The 'man re'turned from 'Lagos 'yesterday.

'Yesterday' will bear the nuclear stress on 'yes-' while the stresses on 'man' and '-turn' of 'return' will become tertiary. The nuclear stress on the 'yes-' of 'yesterday' will make it the most prominent syllable in the whole sentence.

Do not forget that grammatical words such as 'the, and, you, a, an, them, have, had, is, (etc), belonging to the word classes of prepositions,

conjunctions, articles, pronouns and auxiliary verbs should be uttered without stress. They are usually very weakly uttered and quickly run over to get to the next stressed syllable.

Free Versus Fixed Stress

It is good to note at this juncture that English is not the only language that employs stress. Many other world languages also use stress but not in the same way that English does. For some languages, stress is easy to learn because a learner could be given a simple rule to guide him or her in placing stress on the words of that language. For these languages, stress is predictable; so, it is fixed. In Hungarian, the first syllable of a word is usually assigned the primary stress. Therefore, a stress rule in Hungarian will state: Assign stress to the first syllable of every Hungarian word. In Polish, the penultimate syllable, that is the syllable occurring immediately before the last syllable, takes the stress. Therefore, there should be a stress rule in Polish stating thus: Assign stress to the antepenultimate syllable of a polish word. In Turkish and French, the last syllable is assigned stress. These languages should also have a simple stress rule stating that the last syllable should be assigned stress.

On the contrary, English stress does not have such simple rules that would state 'assign stress to the first, second or third syllable'. Assigning stress to English words is too complex to be captured in a simple rule as these. This is because stress in the English language is unpredictable, so it is said to be free. The prominence associated with stress is assigned on different syllables of different words, depending on the nature of each word. Therefore, in English, stress acquires a lexical function since it has to be marked on lexical items. This means, each lexical item should be checked properly for the right placement of stress.

Do note, however, that there are some peculiar cases of some disyllabic noun/verb and adjective/verb pairs in English, where the first syllable is assigned the primary stress in the noun or adjective form and the second syllable in the verb form. In these limited instances, English stress becomes predictable. Do not forget that these words form a close system in English because they are limited in number. Let us look at these pairs together:

Nouns	Adjectives /Verbs
EXport	exPORT
CONduct	conDUCT
PERfect	perFECT
REcord	record
FREquent	freQUENT
CONcert	conCERT

Though, English stress is predictable in the noun/adjective and verb forms in the group, it does not imply that English has a predictable stress pattern. This is because they form a close set since

and so many words are involved. In consequence, there is no basis for such generalization.

Therefore, as learners of Use of English, we must have a pronunciation dictionary, especially the 'talking' type; and when we check the meaning of an English word in any good dictionary, we must endeavour to check the pronunciation of its sounds as well as stress pattern.

Stress on English Compound Words and Phrasal Verbs

It is important for us to take a look at stress placement on words that are used together as compounds or groups. We will now discuss English compounds and phrasal verbs because they are easy to confuse in terms of stress placement.

Compound words are two words that are used as one word. More technically, a **compound** is a word composed of more than one free morpheme. It functions as a noun, that is, it gives a name to a person, an object, a place, etc. Examples of compound nouns are, ***headmaster, grandfather, black board, blackbird.*** A phrase, however, refers to a group of words (Note that a phrase will function as a group of words, not as a word like a compound).

However, stress patterns may distinguish a compound word from a noun phrase consisting of the same words. We can change the meaning of the words that combine to form compound words that give names to people, objects and places by changing the place of the stress. For example, ***'black 'bird*** with the primary stress on the first word 'black----' and the secondary stress on the second word '----bird' is the name of a particular kind of bird. But ***black 'bird*** with the primary stress on the second word '----bird' and the secondary stress on the first word 'black----' means any bird that is black in colour.

This means that when such words give names to people, objects, places (as nouns), you should put the major stress on the first word. But when they have other meanings, you should stress the second word.

Let us take a look at the following table:

As nouns naming people, places and objects (compounds)	'black,bird (the name of a particular bird)	'grand,father your parent's father	'light,ship a ship made like a light house
As a group of words with other meanings (phrases)	black 'bird (a bird that is black)	grand 'father (a father that is grand)	light 'ship (a ship that is light)

Table 1: Stress placement on compound words and phrases

We should note, however, that there are exceptions to this rule. There are some compound words with the primary stress on the second word rather than on the

first. Examples of such words are, ˌdown'stairs, mince-'pie, ˌfull-'grown.

Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs refer to verbs that have two parts or are composed of two elements that can each function as a word if uttered alone. However, when put together as a phrasal verb, both function as a single word. These types of words are often made up of a verb and a preposition.

Stress assignment to phrasal verbs is also very important, especially for phrasal verbs that have compound noun counterparts. In this context, when the phrase is produced as a verb, it has the primary stress assigned to the second element (which is the preposition) while the compound noun counterpart has the primary stress assigned to the first element (which is the verb). Let us look at the following examples together. When you produce the words in the first column, stress the second element because it is a phrasal verb. When you produce the words in the second column, stress the first element because it is a compound noun.

Phrasal Verb	Compound Noun
Stress the second element	**Stress the first element**
let 'down	'letdown
print 'out	'printout
turn 'off	'turnoff
set 'up	'setup
take 'over	'takeover

Table 2: Stress placement on phrasal verbs

Hints on English Stress Assignment

As earlier discussed, there are no fast rules regarding the syllable to be stressed in an English word. A learner of English has to learn the stress pattern alongside the meaning of the words. However, some hints may assist. Please note the following and adhere to them while placing stress on English words.

1. Prefixes and suffixes are not usually stressed, e.g. -ian, -ed, -s, -al, -ic, -less, in-, pre-, etc.
2. Words that end with –ial, -ian, -ic, -ion, often have their stress assigned to the syllable preceding these syllables, e.g. co'lonial, ci'vilian, eco'nomic, edu'cation, pre'vention, he'roic, and dra'conian
3. Words ending with the suffix -ity take their stress on the antepenultimate syllable, e.g. inferi'ority, 'unity, cap'tivity.

Sentence Stress

We have discussed word stress in the foregoing. We now know that one cannot predict where stress will be on an English word with a single simple rule. We also know already that each word has its stress pattern that remains constant. However, it is very important to note that when English words occur in sentences, that is, when they occur as part of a sentence, the stress assigned to the words become gradable. All the stressed syllables of words of an English sentence are not produced with equal

prominence. And, some one-syllable words that are usually stressed when they occur in isolation become unstressed when they occur as part of a sentence. Which words are to be stressed and which are to be left unstressed in an English sentence? All lexical items of the open classes (such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs) should be stressed while those of the close classes (such as pronouns, conjunctions, determiners, prepositions and auxiliary verbs) are often unstressed. Let's look at this sentence together:

Emmanuel is a very handsome man.

In the sentence, *Emmanuel*, *handsome* and *man* will be assigned stress while *is* and *a* will be left unstressed. In addition to this, the stress to be assigned to the three content words will be graded such that *man*, the last stressed syllable in the group, will be assigned the nuclear stress, which is the most prominent stress, while *Emmanuel* and *handsome* will be assigned tertiary stress, a prominence that is not as outstanding as that of *man*.

These one-syllable words of English (referred to here as grammatical words), therefore, have more than one pronunciation – one strong and the other weak. The following are the grammatical words of English in their strong and weak instances of pronunciation, and the environments in which each variant occurs. Please note that the table below is made available for you to study at all times so as to master how they should be produced, and in consequence, improve your communication skills. It is not to be learned by rote towards the Use of English examination! It is meant to be understood and put into practical use.

Table 3: The Strong and Weak Forms of Standard English Grammatical Words

Words	Stressed Strong Forms	Unstressed Weak Forms	Contexts of weak variants
Determiners			
'a' (used only before a consonant sound)	/eɪ/	/ ə /	all weak contexts
'an' (before vowels)	/ æn /	/ ən/ / n̩ /	every weak context except after /t/ or /d/
'the'	/ ði:/	/ ðə /	before consonant
		/ ði/	before vowels
'some'	/ sʌm /	/ səm /	all weak contexts
Conjunctions			
'and'	/ ænd/	/m̩/	after labials e.g. /get ʌp m̩ gəʊ/
		/ŋ̩/	after velar sounds e.g. /bæg ŋ̩ bægɪdʒ /,
		/ənd, ən/	other weak contexts

'that'	/ ðæt/	/ ðət/	all weak contexts
'but'	/bʌt/	/ bət/	all weak contexts
'or'	/ ɔ:/	/ ə /:	all weak contexts
Prepositions			
'to'	/tu:/	/ tɔ /	before consonants
		/tʊ/	before vowels
'for'	/ fɔ:	/fɔ/	before consonants
		/fər/	before vowels
'from'	/frɒm/	/frəm/	all weak contexts
'of'	/ ɒv /	/f/	before voiceless consonants
		/ əv /	all other weak contexts
'by'	/bai/	/bə/	all weak contexts
'at'	/æt	/ət/	all weak contexts
Pronouns			
I	/ai/	/ə/	all weak contexts

'me'	/ mi: /	/mə/	all weak contexts
'my'	/maɪ /	/ mə /	all weak contexts
'you'	/ ju: /	/jʊ/ /jə /	before vowels before consonants
'he'	/hi:/	/ɪ/	all weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hi: / is used
'his'	/hɪz /	/ɪz /	all weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hɪz/ is used
'her'	/hɜ:/	/ə /	all weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hɜ:/ is used
'him'	/hɪm /	/ɪm /	all weak contexts
'their'	/ðeə /	/ ðə/	all weak contexts
'them'	/ðem/	/ðəm/	all weak contexts
'us'	/s/	/əs/	all weak contexts

Auxiliary Verbs			
'shall'	/ʃæl /	/ʃəl, ʃl /	all weak contexts
'should'	/ ʃʊd /	/ʃəd, ʃd /	all weak contexts
'would'	/ wʊd /	/d/	After I, he, she, we. you, they
		/wəd/	every other weak context
'will'	/wɪl/	/əl/	after vowels and /l/
		/l/	after I, he, she, we, you, they
		/l/	after consonants except /l/
'must'	/mʌst/	/məst/	all weak contexts
'are'	/aː/	/ə/	before consonants

		/ər/	before vowels
'were'	/wɜ:/	/wə/	all weak contexts
'was'	/wɒz/	/wəz/	all weak contexts
'is'	/ɪz/	/s/	after /p, t, k, f, θ/
		/z/	after vowels and voiced consonants except /z,ʒ,d /
		/ɪz/	used after / s, z, ʃ,ʒ , ʤ, ʧ /
'do'	/du:/	/dʊ/	before vowels
		/ də /	before consonants
'does'	/dʌz/	/dəz/	all weak contexts
'am'	/æm/	/m/	after I

		/əm/	all other weak contexts
'has'	/hæz/	/əz/	after / s, z, ʃ, ʒ , ʤ ʧ /
		/ s /	after /p, t, k, f, θ, /
		/ z /	all other weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hæz/ is used
'have'	/hæv/	/ v /	after I, we, you, they
		/ əv /	all other contexts except at the beginning of a word where /hæv/is used
'be'	/bi:/	/bɪ/	all weak contexts

'had'	/hæd/	/d/	after I, he, she, we, they, you
		/əd/	every other context except at the beginning of a word group where /hæd/ is used
'can'	/kæn/	/kən, kn/	all weak contexts

It should be noted, however, that though the weak forms are used when these words occur in a group, the strong forms are used in the following circumstances:

- When that word is emphasized in the utterance, e.g. Mary gave it to *her* (not *him*).
- Whenever the grammatical word occurs as the last word in the group, e.g. 'John will'. *Him, his, her* and *us* are exceptions to this because they weaken in word final positions.

Except when used contrastively, the words illustrated above are usually unstressed when they occur in sentences. However, when they constitute the focus of information they get stressed, e.g. I 'put this 'dress **'ON** the 'bed (not **under** the bed), Jide loves '**THOSE** 'shoes (not **these**).

It should be noted here however that contrastive stress as use of stress for focusing on units of special information in sentences does not deal with only grammatical words. Content words may also receive stress contrastively as in the sentence 'KATE borrowed my car'; implying that 'Kate', not 'Mary' or any other person, borrowed the car. If the contrastive stress shifts to 'borrowed' as in 'Kate 'BORROWED my car', the implication will be that Kate did not STEAL the car.

INTONATION

It is good for a learner of the English suprasegmentals to know that the three English suprasegmentals (i.e. stress, intonation and rhythm) function together and are not as distinct units as we learn them. The three English suprasegmentals of pitch are interrelated. Though we study language in portions for ease of learning, it does not mean that when stress is applied, intonation is not, or rhythm is ignored. They all function together. Earlier, we discussed stress. Now we shall discuss intonation. Do not forget that even in our study of intonation, we need our knowledge of stress because intonation relies heavily on stress to perform its functions in the English language.

A very vital characteristic of spoken language is the musical pitch of the voice. When English sentences are made, they are characteristically uttered with variation in pitch (which may either rise or fall). This is referred to as Intonation. It is important that we understand fairly well the intonation system of English because it can lead to misunderstanding if misperceived. When someone says, "It is not what he said that angered me but HOW he said it", the issue is usually an intonation misperception or undertone.

We need to realize at this point that intonation is often an area of difficulty for second language users of English whose mother tongues are tonal. We therefore have to work hard at understanding the basic English

intonation tunes, since English intonation is also as challenging to learn as the stress we earlier discussed. Do note that English intonation is more complex than what you will learn here. However, as a course for non-linguists, the basic tunes and functions we shall discuss here will be adequate for you to cope with the challenges of daily communication in the English language.

English intonation affects grammatical units such as phrases, clauses and sentences. However, do not forget that there are instances where a single word could be functioning as a complete meaningful unit. In this instance, the word will be taken as a tone group. *Yes* as a response to the question 'Are you travelling tomorrow?' is a complete thought. It is, therefore, considered an intonation group.

Consequently, the pitch pattern of an English sentence will be referred to as its intonation. Intonation patterns carry different information about sentences, depending on whether the utterance is a question or a statement, whether or not there is an important word to be emphasized in the utterance, and the attitude of the speaker towards what is being said or the hearer. For instance, 'yes' with a falling tune is emphatic while 'yes' with a rising tune is either a question or a statement containing doubt. Before looking at the various functions of intonation tunes, let us take a quick look at the components of a tone group (TG).

A tone group is the domain of intonation. It may be a lone word utterance, a phrase, a clause or a sentence. Earlier, you came across the example of the word *yes*. *Yes*, when uttered alone could constitute a TG. Other grammatical constituents that usually coincide with a TG are phrases, clauses and sentences. The TG has four components. These are the (optional) pre-head, head, (obligatory) tonic syllable and (optional) tail.

Considering the fact that you need this knowledge for practical purposes rather than technical expertise, we may not discuss these technical terms in details; but we need to highlight the very important one among them, which is the tonic syllable. The **tonic syllable or nucleus** is the last stressed syllable in the group. As the term suggests, it is the only obligatory part of the tone group. Though other parts are optional (not present in all tone groups), the tonic syllable is obligatory and indispensable. It is the tonic syllable that is assigned the pitch direction. If the pitch should fall, it does on the tonic syllable. If it should rise, it does on the tonic syllable. This makes the tonic syllable a very important part of the tone group. Let us look at this sentence:

The 'man re'turned 'yesterday.

The tonic syllable of the sentence above is the 'yes-' of 'yesterday', being the last stressed syllable in the tone group. This means the tune will fall on that syllable since it is a statement. If you want to utter the syllable as a Yes/No question, the tune will rise on that syllable. Always make your tune rise or fall on the tonic syllables of your utterances. The tonic syllables are the last stressed syllables of your tone groups. Let us look at the following sentence:

If you love her, marry her.

There are two tone groups in this sentence. These are, 'If you love her' and 'marry her'. The tune will rise on the syllable 'love' (being the last stressed syllable in the first tone group) and fall on the syllable 'ma-' of 'marry' (being the last stressed syllable of the second tone group).

Intonational Tunes

We will now discuss the intonation tunes and their functions. Though many linguists have proposed different numbers of intonation tunes for English, we will make this easier by proposing that there are basically two intonational tunes used in the English language. These are the rise tune and the fall tune. The difference in the numbers of tunes proposed has to do with the combination of these tunes to perform different functions. The tone groups may be uttered at various pitch levels or combined in various ways to achieve different meanings. Therefore, we could have high-fall, low-fall, high rise, low rise, rise-fall, fall- rise, etc.

Now, let us discuss the various functions these intonation tunes can perform when we produce English utterances. They may perform grammatical functions such as differentiating between types of sentences. Sentences may be statements, wh- questions (which are questions beginning with when, where, what, why, how, etc.), yes/ no questions (technically called polar questions, which require the respondents to either answer 'yes or 'no'), commands and exclamations. Also, they may be used to depict warnings, requests and greetings.

Now that we know there are basically two tunes and that they may be presented or combined in various ways, let us take a look at the functions of the various tunes, starting from the fall tune. The direction of the arrows used in the examples indicates whether the voice goes up (rise) or down (fall).

1. Falling Tune

You may use the fallimg tune to show finality. This implies that there is no other information expected in that utterance. We use the falling tune for the following:

(i) **Simple statements**

Statements, often give the impression of finality. There is often no additional information expected.

1. He married a white lady.
2. Many of them will return after the holiday.
3. She's a good presenter on tele vision.

(ii) **Simple commands**

A command is an order that must be obeyed. This is usually uttered by a superior to someone under his control.

1. Get your bag.
2. Show me your assignments.
3. Return my books as early as possible.

(iii) Wh-questions

Wh-questions are those that start with words such as *what, who, whom, why, where, how*, etc. For this type of question, the tune should fall on the last stressed syllable.

1. What are the names of your friends?
2. Who's hosting the next meeting?
3. Where is the blue pen I gave to Mary?

(iv) Exclamation

An exclamation is something you say suddenly and loudly because you are surprised, excited or angry.

1. Ridiculous!
2. Impressive!
3. Amazing!

These are uttered with the FALLING tune.			
Simple statements	**Simple commands**	**Wh-questions**	**Exclamations**
He married a white lady.	Get your bag.	What are the names of your friends?	Ridiculous!
Many of them will return after the holiday.	Show me your assignments.	Who's hosting the next meeting?	Impressive!
She's a good presenter on television.	Return my books as early as possible.	Where is the blue pen I gave to Mary?	Amazing!

Table 4: Falling Tune

2. Rising Tune

The rising tune is used for polar questions (yes/no) polite requests and changing statements to questions. Let's start with polar questions.

(i) **Polar Questions**

These are questions that require either a *yes* or a *no* response. Let us look at the following:

1. Are the women in the country all educated?
2. Will the people agree with the president on fuel subsidy removal?
3. Do you know the danger in smoking marijuana as a youth?

(ii) Polite Requests

Most of us do not know how to politely or formally ask for something without offending the person we need to address. We use the rising tune to state polite requests. We need to know that when we assign the falling tune to what we intend to state as a polite request, we will utter a command! Therefore, to utter the following as polite requests, use the rising tune:

1. Please call the vendor.
2. Could you get me a pair of socks?
3. Pass the water, please.

(iii) Changing statements to questions

You can use the rising tune to change sentences that have the structure of statements to questions. Let us look at the following pairs:

Statement: You like the design.

Question: You like the design?

Statement: Mary bought a new car.

Question: Mary bought a new car?

The statements are uttered with the falling tune while the questions (still maintaining the same structure) are uttered with the rising tune.

These are uttered with the RISE tune.		
Polar Questions	**Polite Requests**	**Statements to Questions**
Are the women in the country all educated?	Please call the vendor.	Statement: You like the design.
Will the people agree with the president on fuel subsidy removal?	Could you get me a pair of socks?	Question: You like the design?
Do you know the danger in smoking marijuana as a youth?	Pass the water, please.	Statement: Mary bought a new car.
		Question: Mary bought a new car?

Table 5: Rising Tune

3 Combination of Fall and Rise Tunes (rise/fall/, fall/rise).

Earlier, we discussed how the falling and rising tunes are used for different utterances. Now, we shall discuss how to combine the two tunes for various expressions with different meanings. We shall start with the rise and fall tune.

These utterances are uttered with the Rising and Falling Tunes Combined.	
To separate clauses	**Listing items**
Wherever you go, be a good boy. As soon as she arrived, I told her to take her baby and leave. Before he left for Abuja, he sent me a text message.	Mary, John, Peter and Grace. He bought a pair of shoes, some clothes and ties. She got some pencils, erasers and biros.

Table 6: Combination of Rise /Fall Tunes

To separate clauses: The rise and fall tunes are used when there are two or more clauses in a sentence. The embedded part is said with a rising tune while the main clause is said with a falling tune. Let us look at the following complex sentences:

1. Wherever you go, be a good boy.
2. As soon as she arrived, I told her to take her baby and leave.
3. Before he left for Abuja, he sent me a text message.

Listing Items: The combination of the rise and fall tunes is also used when listing items. The rise tune is used on each item until we get to the last item which takes the fall tune.

1. Mary, John, Peter and Grace
2. He bought a pair of shoes, clothes and ties.
3. She got some pencils, erasers and biros.

The falling and rising tunes may also be combined in certain utterances. Let us look at them below:

Tag Questions

Tag questions are formed by adding tags such as 'can't we?', 'wouldn't he?', or 'is it?' to a sentence. When we produce utterances that end with question tags we use the combined fall/rise tune. The falling tune will be on the statement part while the rising tune will be assigned to the question tag, which sounds like a yes/no question. Do you remember that yes/no questions take the rising tune? Let us look at the following tag questions:

Statement: He is very attractive. Fall tune

Question tag (Yes/No question): isn't he? Rise tune

The two tunes have to be combined such that the first part will take a fall tune as statements do and the tag will take the rise tune as yes/no questions do.

1. He is attractive, isn't he?
2. They will play the match, won't they?
3. Simon can play the guitar, can't he?

These utterances are uttered with the Falling and Rising Tunes Combined.
He is attractive, isn't he?
They will play the match, won't they?
Simon can play the guitar, can't he?

Table 7. Combination of the Fall /Rise Tunes

Attitudinal function of Intonation

Sometimes, someone talks to us and we get offended. When we look at the utterance, the combination of words may not be offensive but the way it is said may be the cause of the anger we feel. The problem is often with the intonation. 'Sorry' may be said in a way that angers the person it is said to. Said with another tune, it may make the person forgive easily. Therefore, it is good to note that we can use intonation to show our attitude towards the person we are talking to or what we are putting across. The attitudinal function of intonation is more complex than what is discussed here. But these hints will guide us in learning to use some basic tunes to show our attitude to the speaker as well as what is being said.

Indifference

To show that we are indifferent to what is being said, we may use the low-rise tune. Let us look at the sentences below:

1. I a↗gree.
2. You may↗go.
3. John could drive the↗car.

Surprise

To express surprise, it is good to use the rising tune. Let us look at the following:

1. You're ↗married.
2. The students are on ↗rampage.
3. The principal beat a ↗student.

Uncertainty and doubt

Also, to show uncertainty and doubt, we use the rising tune.

1. She will bring her child for ↗treatment.
2. Dave may choose to ↗help.
3. Mariam may love the ↗meal.

(iv) Warm Greeting

The tune we assign to our greetings determine the reactions we get from the people they are meant for. For warm greetings, always use a high fall tune. The tune will fall, but it will be high. Let's look at the following:

1. Good ↘morning.
2. Good after ↘noon.
3. Good ↘evening.
4. Good ↘day.
5. Nice ↘weather.

Routine greeting

For routine (not warm) greetings, we use the low rise tune.

1. Good↗morning
2. Good after↗noon
3. Good↗evening
4. Good↗day
5. Nice↗weather

Indifference – Low Rise tune	Surprise – Rise tune	Uncertainty and doubt – Rise tune
I agree. You may go. John could drive the car.	You're married. The students are on rampage. The principal beat a teacher.	She will bring her child for treatment. Dave may choose to help. Madam may love the meal.

Warm Greeting – High- Fall tune	Routine greeting (not warm) – low rise tune
Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. Good day. Nice weather.	Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. Good day. Nice weather.

Table 8: Table Showing Different Tune Patterns

We can also use intonation to make a word more important than others in a sentence. For instance in the sentence, 'He bought a car', we can make 'BOUGHT' very important by making it more prominent and assigning the right tune to it. This will be done when we mean 'He did not STEAL a car'. Let us look at this diagram to make this clearer:

He 'bought a 'car

Ordinarily, 'car' being the last stressed syllable of this sentence should be assigned the falling tune, the sentence being a statement. However, if 'BOUGHT' is to be made prominent, (usually for contrastive purposes, as implying that he did not 'STEAL' a car) then bought automatically takes on falling tune.

He 'bought a 'car

*KEY

- • means unstressed
- ● means stressed but not the important (tonic) syllable to be assigned the tune
- ● means important (tonic) syllable to be assigned the tune

Intonation also performs a discourse function on utterances. For example, in contexts such as in the sentence 'I am taking my children to school', 'children' is more likely to be assigned the tune because it is predictable that 'take my children' often collocates with 'school'. If a speaker says "I'm taking my children...",

before he mentions 'school', the listener must have mentally supplied the word. Therefore, 'children' will be assigned the tune. However, in the case of the sentence 'I am taking my children to Lagos', the tune will be assigned to 'Lagos' because it is not often that children are taken to Lagos. This is because, though 'children' and 'Lagos' collocate, the occurrence is not as predictable as 'children' and 'school', since taking children to the Lagos is not an everyday affair.

In this chapter, we have been able to discuss the sounds of English (consonants and vowels) and the difference between the two classes in terms of the nature of pronunciation. Consonants are produced by a radical obstruction of the airstream while vowels are produced with free flow of air which we termed 'open approximation'. We already learned that our knowledge of spelling may hinder the learning of English sounds due to the major challenge that there is no one-to-one correlation of English sounds and letters. We, therefore, should not depend on spelling but look up the pronunciation of English words in the dictionary just as we check the meaning!

We went further to discuss the levels of stress which are 'primary', 'secondary' and 'unstressed'. Primary stress is assigned to the most important syllable; secondary, to the next in prominence; and unstressed, to all other syllables of lower prominence. We have also discussed what fixed and free stress means by differentiating fixed stress as stress systems with predictable stress and free stress as stress systems with unpredictable stress. Languages with fixed stress have a simple stress rule among their phonological rules to guide the speakers while those with free stress have very complex rules with lots of exceptions. We have also learned that English is a free stress system. Explanations have been offered on why English stress system is complex. We have also identified some phonetic cues to stress such as pitch prominence, duration, intensity and segmental quality. Compound and phrasal stress have been discussed and differentiated, while hints have been given on instances where stress could be predicted in the English language.

We have discussed sentence stress, differentiating it from word stress, pointing out the hierarchical nature of English stress which makes it important to re-assign stress when words occur together in a word group. We have learned how to differentiate stressing of content words from grammatical words. We have also addressed the strong and weak forms of English grammatical words and the various contexts for the variants of the weak forms.

Furthermore, we have learned the definition of intonation as the variation of pitch of utterances. We also highlighted the components of intonation as (optional) pre-head, head, (obligatory) tonic syllable and (optional) tail but emphasized the obligatory component of the tone group which is the tonic syllable, explaining that it is on this tonic syllable that the tune, whether falling or rising, is assigned.

In addition, we have discussed the basic intonation tunes and the various functions they perform such as grammatical, accentual and attitudinal functions. The basic intonation tunes are the rise and the fall tunes which have variations such as fall, high-fall, low-fall, high rise, low rise, rise-fall, fall rise, etc. We have learned that the falling tune is used for simple statements, simple commands, wh-questions and exclamations. The rising tune is used for polar questions, polite statements and changing statements to questions. We also learned that the rise /fall tune is combined to separate clauses and list items while the fall rise is used for tag questions.

The attitudinal functions of intonation have also been discussed. The rise tune is used for indifference, surprise, uncertainty/ doubt and routine greeting while the high fall is used for warm greetings. We also discussed the discourse function of intonation.

Post-test

1. Differentiate consonants from vowels.
2. How true is the statement that we must learn English pronunciation with no strong reliance on spelling?
3. List 5 words and their homophones.
4. What is stress?
5. Why is English stress considered complex compared to other world languages that use stress?
6. What are the basic characteristics of stress?
7. Discuss the phonetic cues to stress.
8. Differentiate compound and phrasal stressing.
9. What are weak and strong forms of grammatical words? Why are English grammatical function words reduced in unstressed positions in word groups?
10. Go to the table on the strong and weak forms of English grammatical words. Find a word for each of the contexts and redo a table including your examples.
11. What is intonation?
12. What are the components of intonation? State the obligatory part of the tone group.
13. State at least two functions that the rising tune could perform. Give an example for each.
14. Combine the rise and fall tune in an instance of use.
15. Utter these sentences as commands and as requests, using the appropriate tunes.

(i) Call my driver.
(ii) Drive carefully.
(iii) Use your seat belt.
(iv) Save a copy for me.
(v) Go ahead.

References/Further Reading

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3

LITERARY APPRECIATION

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Do you ever read poems, plays, short stories or novels? You do not necessarily need to be a student of literature to read and enjoy a literary piece; and in fact, people that have orientations other than the those in the humanities faculty (such as T. M. Aluko, Wale Okediran, Mamman Vatsa, and the like) have written literary pieces, even though they are not literary gurus. You too can engage in creative writing at your leisure time. So, this chapter takes a generalist view of literary criticism with a view to showing you the beauty of literary pieces and encouraging you to contribute your quota to literary discourse. When you know the nitty-gritty of writing, you can experiment with different styles and become a renowned author; but first, you need to know the value of literary pieces. In this chapter, you'll be introduced to the three major genres of literature, their general features and the use of rhetorical devices and figures of speech.

Objectives

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe lucidly the meaning, importance and techniques of literary appreciation.
2. Highlight and discuss the major elements of literature, including theme, plot, character/characterization, subject matter and setting.
3. List, discuss and illustrate the functions of major figures of speech/rhetorical devices.
4. Discuss the distinguishing features of the three genres of literature (Drama, Poetry and Prose).
5. Analyse literary texts: Prose, Poetry and Drama.
6. Try your hands in writing in any of the genres

WHAT IS LITERARY APPRECIATION?

Literary appreciation is the art and act of understanding and appreciating literary works. It works towards an understanding of writing styles and the use of literary devices within writings, such as imagery and alliteration. It goes beyond merely appreciating the book or an author; it analyses the work, picking up on subtleties and nuances in the writing, and considering the culture in which it was originally written. Literary appreciation is, therefore, the analysis, criticism and understanding of literature. For example, a poem is a piece of literature; if you discuss its meaning and/ or write an essay analysing it, that is literary appreciation.

In the main, literary appreciation is the ability to:

- Gain pleasure and understanding from literature.
- Understand the value and importance of literature.
- Honour, respect, and/or admire the beauty and complexity of literature.

Elements of Literature

Elements of literature generally refer to the things that make up a literary work and its component parts. They denote the things that are used to make up a work of literature. There are different genres and sub-genres of literature, including novel, drama, poetry, biography, non-fictional prose, essay, epic and short story. All these genres/sub-genres of literature have some elements. To complete a piece of literature, a writer, playwright or novelist needs to use certain elements like plot, character, theme, setting, point of view, and the like. These elements include all that are essential to create a piece of literature. They help a writer to create splendid poetry, superb drama and soul-touching novel. They are used to form the structure of a literary piece.

Literary genres/sub-genres, such as prose fiction, poetry, drama and short story, have some elements. These include

- Plot
- Character
- Setting
- Theme
- Structure
- Point of view
- Conflict
- Diction
- Foreshadowing

Plot: This is the arrangement of incidents, ideas or events in a work of art, following the principle of cause and effect. In literature, the plot encompasses all the incidents and provides aesthetic pleasure. The story of the novel progresses through various plots and conflicts. Plots of drama are divided into "Acts" and "Scenes". Drama has five essential parts. These are:

- Introduction (Exposition) of the play where the characters and setting are introduced
- Rising action (Complication)
- Climax
- Falling action
- Denouement (Resolution)

Playwrights use dialogue to develop their plots. They reveal information about their characters, such as their background and personality, through dialogues.

Character: Character plays a pivotal role in drama, novel, short story and all kinds of narratives. The method of conveying information about characters in literature is called characterization. Characters can be fictional or based on real, historical entities. It can be human, supernatural, mythical, or divine. It can also be an animal or a personification of an abstraction. There are round characters, flat characters, stereotypical stock characters, and the like. In Christopher Marlowe's play, *Dr. Faustus*, Faustus is the protagonist (the main

character) of the play, while Lakunle, the village teacher, is the protagonist of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*.

Setting: It refers to the geographical location of the story; the time/period, daily lifestyle of the characters, and the climate of the story. In a literary work, setting plays an important role. Settings of literary forms have been changing according to the theme of the literary piece. For example, Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies have the setting of palaces and castles, whereas modern and post-modern dramas have the setting of houses of common people. There were supernatural elements in earlier literature, but nowadays, absurdity rules the literature. The setting of a literary work can be a house, a school, a castle, a forest, a hospital or anywhere that the writers want to extend their scenes. Setting, from a temporal perspective, involves the historical time and social circumstances in which the action of a literary work occurs. For instance, the general setting of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is medieval Scotland. The temporal setting of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is the pre-colonial period in the Igboland of Nigeria.

Theme: Theme is another prime element of literature, which is the central idea of all literary forms such as a novel, drama and short story. It reflects innocence, experience, life, death, reality, fate, madness, sanity, love, society, and the like. For example, the theme of Thomas Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is the role of fate in the life of a human being.

Subject Matter: A subject matter is the major highlight of a work of art. In identifying it, one must recognise the topic stages in the development of the plot. In arriving at the subject matter of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, for instance, one must consider the various stages which attract important topics of discussion in Henchard's (the protagonist's) life. These will include the sale of his wife, his wandering about looking for a job, the rise to the position of Mayor, reunification with his wife, his contact with Farfrae to manage Henchard's business, secret love affairs with Lucetta, revelation of how he sold his wife and eventual loss of the exalted position of Mayor, his bankruptcy and eventual death. The plot in this novel is the one that focuses on the effect of actions on character development (plot of character). Thus, the discussion of the character of Henchard will help in arriving at the subject matter. The subject matter will then come in form of a summary of these crucial topic stages.

Point of view: This is the position or vantage point from which the events of a story seem to be observed and presented to the reader. The chief distinction usually made between points of view is that between third-person narratives and first-person narratives. A third-person narrator may be omniscient, and therefore show an unrestricted knowledge of the story's events from outside or above. Limited point of view involves a

narrator who confines the reader's knowledge of events to whatever is observed by a single character or small group of characters. A first-person narrator's point of view will normally be restricted to his/her partial knowledge and experience, and therefore will not give the reader access to other characters' hidden thoughts as in, for example, Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*. Many modern authors have also used multiple 'points of view' in which the reader is shown the events from the positions of two or more different characters.

Conflict: Be it a short story, drama or novel, conflict is an essential element of all literary genres. A plot becomes interesting and intriguing when it has its share of inbuilt conflict and twists. Conflict can be internal or external. It can take place between two men, between the character and his psychology, between the character and circumstances, or between the character and society.

Use of language or diction: Diction is another essential element of literature. It refers to the choice of words, phrases and sentences. A playwright exhibits the thoughts of characters through dialogue. "Dialogue" has come from the Greek word "dialogosa", which means "conversation". Shakespeare used this to portray the thoughts, emotions and feelings of his characters. This also provides clues to their background and personalities. Diction also helps in advancing the plot. Greek philosophers, like Aristotle, used dialogue as the best way to instruct their students.

Foreshadowing/ Prefiguring: Foreshadowing is another important element of literature that is applied as hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in the story. It creates suspense and encourages the reader to go on and find out more about the event that is being foreshadowed. Foreshadowing is used to make a narrative more authentic.

Style: Style refers to the way a literary text is written. It is the arrangement of words in a manner which at once expresses the individuality of the author and the idea or intent on his mind. For instance, poems are written in various styles, such as free verse, ballad and sonnet, which have different meters and numbers of stanza.

Symbol: Symbol represents the idea and thought of a work of art. It can be an object, person, situation or action. For example, a national flag is the symbol of a nation.

Imagery: Imagery is another element of literature, which, however, is commonly employed in poetry. It is often used in poems that appeal to senses. In the age of modernism, T. S. Eliot used images of urban life in his poems. William Wordsworth used nature as poetic image in his poems.

Rhyme and rhythm: Rhyme is an element that is often used in poetry. It is a recurrence of an accented sound or sounds in a piece of literature. Poets and lyricists use this device in various ways to create a rhyme within a

verse. There is internal rhyme, cross rhyme, random rhyme and mixed rhyme. It gives the poem flow and rhythm. It contains the syllables in a poem. Every poem has a rhythm in it. It is about how the words resonate with one another, how the words flow when they are linked with one another in a poem.

Meter: This is an important rhythmic structure of poetry. It is described as a sequence of feet, each foot being a specific series of syllable types - such as stressed/ unstressed, and it makes poetry melodious.

To see how some of the foregoing elements feature in a literary piece, consider the following sample analysis of Lenrie Peter's poem:

An Analysis of Lenrie Peters' "We Have Come Home"

The Poem:

We have come home
From the bloodless wars
With sunken hearts
Our booths full of pride-
From the true massacre of the soul
When we have asked
'What does it cost
To be loved and left alone'

We have come home
Bringing the pledge
Which is written in rainbow colours
Across the sky-for burial
But is not the time
To lay wreaths
For yesterday's crimes,
Night threatens
Time dissolves
And there is no acquaintance
With tomorrow

The gurgling drums
Echo the stars
The forest howls
And between the trees
The dark sun appears.
We have come home
When the dawn falters
Singing songs of other lands
The death march
Violating our ears
Knowing all our loves and tears
Determined by the spinning coin

We have come home
To the green foothills
To drink from the cup
Of warm and mellow birdsong
'To the hot beaches
Where the boats go out to sea
Threshing the ocean's harvest

And the hovering, plunging
Gliding gulls shower kisses on the waves'

We have come home
Where through the lightening flash
And the thundering rain
The famine the drought,
The sudden spirit
Lingers on the road
Supporting the tortured remnants
of the flesh
That spirit which asks no favour
of the world
But to have dignity.

The Poet

Lenrie Leopold Wilfred Peters (or Lenrie Peters for short) was born on 1st September, 1932 in Gambia to a Sierra Leonean Creole father of West Indian or black American origin and a Gambian Creole mother of Sierra Leonean Creole origin. He schooled in Sierra Leone where he gained his Higher School certificate and then got a B.SC from Trinity College, Cambridge. He was awarded a Medical and Surgery Diploma from Cambridge in 1959, and then he worked for the BBC on the Africa programmes from 1955 to 1968.

At Cambridge, Peters baptised himself in Pan-Africanist politics and became the president of the African Students' Union. He also started work on his only novel, *The Second Round*, which he later published in 1965. He served as a member of the Commonwealth Writers Prize Selection Committee in 1996, and a judge in the Africa Region of the Commonwealth Prize for fiction (1995). He served as the head of the West African Examinations Council from 1985 to 1991. Peters is considered one of the most original voices of modern African poetry. He was a member of the African founding generation writing in English and has shown extensive pan-Africanism in his three volumes of poetry. His poetry was mixed with medical terms sometimes, and his later works were angrier at the state of Africa than his first volume of poetry.

He passed away in 2009.

The Theme of the Poem

"We have Come Home" is a poem warning the foreign invaders, possibly the colonial masters, that Africa wants her freedom granted and her dignity respected. The poet openly declares this in lines 7 and 8 of the poem.

Subject Matter

The first stanza is an announcement by the persona (the person speaking in the poem) that some people he refers to as "We" have come home and have come with questions from a war: they came from a bloodless war (Line 2), and this could have been the "war" of colonialism where slaves were exchanged for goods in places with no actual guns fired. This will give Line 5 more meaning when he says they have returned from

"the true massacre of the soul", for what will be more demeaning to a man than the cheapening of his soul and the sale of that into slavery. The persona is talking about a return of some black people to their homeland. If this is true, then it is morose for him to ask in the end of the stanza: "What does it cost/ To be loved and left alone?". We may make further deductions from this question. The slaves were sold in exchange for gunpowder, wine and sugar. Lives were traded for this basic offering, and the persona will question this. How deep is the love that gave them away? Their return is with sunken hearts and only their booths (Line 4) – inner enclosures of their beings- can reserve any pride. The pride is what they feel when Africans return home. But this time, the feelings are mixed, since pride and massacre cannot dwell in one soul and body well.

The persona says that they bring with them "the pledge / Which is written in rainbow colours" (Lines 10-11) for burial. The rainbow is a symbol of equality. Hence, why is the persona bringing home the pledge in rainbow colours for burial? That pledge may yet stand for the acceptance of black equality with white, the disparity of which held for centuries. If so, then the persona speaks on grave matters and only a continued reading will bring us more understanding.

Suddenly he gives up: "It is not the time /To lay wreaths /For yesterday's crimes", and the persona seems ready to forget the misbehaviours of his people who may have sold out their kith and kin. His reasons are clear: that tomorrow doesn't promise anything positive or otherwise: time is an alien, and even night will not permit the slackening upon the midnight dreaming; dreaming upon the wasted years. Drums may have welcomed them home, but he calls their coherent African rhythm a gurgle (Line 20), a bubbling sound, empty, confused, may be hypocritical. But they echo the stars and may be a claim for hope. He brings in his British background unconsciously in Lines 22-24 as he claims that the forest howls as the dark sun appears through the trees. A wolf arising with the full moon. But why a dark sun? The tone is gloomy.

He wanders on in Lines 25-31. The dawn falters, morning brings no hope for them against a dark sun; their songs are alien; their march is of death (death of their real selves and Africanness); and their loves and tears are as random as the spin of a coin. There is a pity here. Hopelessness is the situation they have come to meet at home. The colonialists may be gone, but the sun has not risen well on the morning of our independence as Africans. Notice that the persona has once claimed likeness to Alex Haley, the writer of the all-popular movie, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, in which Haley mixes fact and fiction to trace his lineage to a West African village. This poem gains more significance now.

Their homecoming is to the natural Africa they left behind – mellow birdsong, hot beaches, boats going to sea to thresh it of its fish and the gulls. And though they see little that pleases them outside the natural scenery, they have come home. They have come home

where the lightning flash and the thundering rain, the famine and the drought do not bring down the spirit of the man whose flesh is tortured beyond support but of his spirit. And the reason his spirit lives on is the hope of that eternal cry which Africans still cry today; the cry that rings louder above all else even to the unheeding ears of their own people who have made them suffer ill.

The Poet's Methods

- In this poem, Peters makes effective and efficient use of repetition, with a view to emphasizing self-realisation and the hope of obtaining freedom. In the poem, all opening stanzas, but one, begin with "we have come home"; this is with a view to emphasizing not merely the return of the natives physically but also their sense of self-awareness or self-realisation.
- Also, like many other African poets, in the poem, Peters makes his language very simple for easy reading and understanding. In addition, he makes use of local objects and events around him to illustrate his theme. For example, to convey his themes to the reader, the poet uses such local items as: "The gurgling drums"; "the forest"; "the green foothills"; "the bird-song" and "the thundering rain".
- Moreover, metaphor is brilliantly used for deeper understanding of the poet's intention. For instance, Peters describes the natives' past struggle in the foreign land as "bloodless war".
- The poet uses first person pronouns, not only to emphasise his involvement in the event he writes upon, but also to arouse his reader's sympathy. For example:
- "We have come home/ From the bloodless wars..."
- "We have asked ——to be loved and left alone".
- The tone is pathetic and less optimistic. The natives are still pleading "to be loved and left alone."
- Personification is also used for thematic effect. For example: "The forest howls".
- Alliteration is used for rhythmic effect. For example: "gliding gulls"; singing songs"; sudden spirits".

FIGURES OF SPEECH/RHETORICAL DEVICES

A figure of speech or rhetorical device is a distinctive use of words to achieve a special effect in a piece of writing. Figurative language is often associated with literature - and with poetry in particular. But the fact is, whether we are conscious of it or not, we use figures of speech every day in our own writings and conversations. For example, common expressions such as "falling in love," "racking our brains," "hitting a sales target" and "climbing the ladder of success" are all metaphors—the most pervasive figure of all. Likewise, we rely on similes when making explicit comparisons ("light as a feather") and on hyperboles to emphasize a point ("I'm starving!").

Using *original* figures of speech in our writing is a way to convey meanings in fresh, unexpected ways. Figures of speech can help our readers understand and stay interested in what we have to say. Among the most popular rhetorical devices/figures of speech are the following:

1. **Alliteration**

Alliteration involves the repetition of an initial consonant sound. Examples are: "Round the rock runs the river"; "Mr Michael married my mother's maid".

2. **Anaphora**

This is a figure of speech in which a word or words are repeated, usually at the beginning of successive sentences or lines of verse. Elizabethan and Romantic poets were masters of anaphora, as evident in the writings of William Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney, William Blake and Edmund Spenser. Shakespeare frequently uses anaphora in both his plays and poems. For example, in Sonnet No. 66, he begins ten lines with the word "and". Examples:

- "*I needed* a drink, *I needed* a lot of life insurance, *I needed* a vacation, *I needed* a home in the country. What I had was a coat, a hat and a gun."
(Raymond Chandler, *Farewell, My Lovely*, 1940).

- "*We saw* the bruised children of these fathers clump onto our school bus, *we saw* the abandoned children huddle in the pews at church, *we saw* the stunned and battered mothers begging for help at our doors."
(Scott Russell Sanders, Under the Influence, 1989)

3. **Antithesis**

This is a juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in balanced phrases, stanzas, and the like. Examples are: "One small step for a man, one giant leap for all mankind"; and "To err is human, to forgive, divine".

4. **Apostrophe**

The Apostrophe is a figure of speech in which some absent or nonexistent person or thing is addressed as if present and capable of understanding what is being said or what is happening. In the poem "The Rising Sun" by John Donne, Donne personifies the Sun, and addresses it as if it could respond:

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?

5. **Assonance**

It is the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases and sentences. Examples:

- "the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain" — Edgar Allan Poe.
- "that dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea" - William Butler Yeats.

6. **Chiasmus**

This is a verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed. It involves the inversion of words from the first half of a statement in the second half. Examples:

- "You forget what you want to remember, and you remember what you want to forget."
(Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*, 2006)
- "I lead the life I love; I love the life I lead."
- "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" (J.F. Kennedy).

7. **Euphemism**

Euphemism is the substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit or pleasant. Examples: The man is a gentleman of the road (An armed robber); "Passed away", instead of died; "Correctional Facility", instead of jail.

- **Hyperbole**

An hyperbole refers to the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect. Examples:

- It is going to take a million years to get through Medical School.
- I'm so hungry that I could eat a whole cow now.

8. **Irony**

An irony is the use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. It is a statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.

- He is as smart as a soap dish.
- It was ironic that the fire station burned down.

9. **Litotes**

This is a figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite.

- She's not the brightest girl in the class (She's stupid!)
- He's not the most handsome fellow! (He's ugly!).
- They aren't the happiest couple around (They're unhappy).

10. **Metaphor**

Metaphor involves an implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common. It is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison. Examples:

- "A sea of troubles".
- "Life is a journey; purposes are destinations".
- "Means are routes; difficulties are obstacles".

11. **Metonymy**

It is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated. It is also the rhetorical strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it. One famous example of metonymy is the saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword," which originally came from Edward Bulwer Lytton's play *Richelieu*. This sentence has two examples of metonymy:

- The "pen" stands in for "the written word".
- The "sword" stands in for "military aggression and force".

12. **Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia refers to the use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to. Examples:

- "Chug, chug, chug. Puff, puff, puff. Ding-dong, ding-dong. The little train rumbled over the tracks."
- "Brrrrrriiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinng! An alarm clock clanged in the dark and silent room."
  (Richard Wright, *Native Son*).

13. **Oxymoron**

It is a figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms appear side by side. It is a contradictory term employed to highlight an ambiguous condition. Examples:

- Darkness visible
- Wise fool
- Pretty ugly

14. **Paradox**

The paradox is a statement that appears to contradict itself, but which on a closer look makes sense. It is an apparent contradiction that asserts a truth. Examples:

- I am always impressed by your levity.
- He that saveth his life shall lose it.
- The child is the father of the man.
- Attack is the best form of defence.

15. **Personification**

This is a figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities. Examples:

- The stars danced playfully in the moonlit sky.
- The run down house appeared depressed.
- The first rays of morning tiptoed through the meadow.
- She did not realize that opportunity was knocking at her door.
- He did not realize that his last chance was walking out the door.

16. **Pun**

A pun is a play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words.

- I recently spent money on detergent to unclog my kitchen sink. It was money down the drain.
- Our Social Studies teacher says that her globe means the world to her.
- A jury is never satisfied with the verdict. The jury always returns it.
- Sir Lancelot once had a very bad dream about his horse. It was a knight mare.
- A dog not only has a fur coat but also pants.

17. **Simile**

Simile is a stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common.

- "cute as a kitten" : Comparing the way someone looks to the way a kitten looks.
- "as busy as a bee" : Comparing someone's level of energy to a fast-flying bee.
- "as snug as a bug in a rug": Comparing someone who is very cozy to how comfortable a bug can be in a rug.
- "as happy as a clam" : Comparing someone's happiness to the contentment of a clam.
- "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get": Comparing the uncertainty of life to the uncertainty of choosing a chocolate from a box.

Synecdoche

This is a figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole (for example, *ABCs* for *alphabet*), or the whole for a part ("*England* won the World Cup in 1966"). Other examples:

- "The world treated him badly."

The whole world did not treat him badly only a part. - The whole is used as the part.

- "Twenty sails came into the harbour." Meaning twenty ships came into the harbour. - A part is used for the whole.
- The crown wants to see you.

ANALYSING A PROSE TEXT

Prose refers simply to any written piece of work that is built on sentences (and paragraphs) rather than on lines or verses (like poetry). Prose is a form of writing that is meant to:

i. inform;
ii. entertain;
iii. express opinions; and
iv. persuade.

Features of Prose

There are several features of prose that make it unique from other forms of writing:

Prose works

- Are written in paragraphs;
- May contain dialogues;
- Can be either fiction or non-fiction;
- Can have headings and/or subheadings; and
- Can be accompanied by graphics (charts, photos, and the like).

Forms of Prose

Prose can take several forms, including:

- Biography
- Autobiography
- Essay
- Novel
- Short Story
- Novella
- Article
- Fable

- **Biography:** This is the written account of someone's life written by another person, with attention paid not only to the events but to the character and

personality of the subject. Late in the seventeenth century, Dryden neatly defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives". Biography connotes a relatively full account of a person's life, involving the attempt to set forth character, temperament and milieu, as well as the facts of experiences and activities. Examples include: Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce* and Akin Omoboriowo's *Awoism*.

♦ **An autobiography** is a prose text about the life of a person, written by that person. The word ***autobiography*** was first used deprecatingly by William Taylor in 1797 in the English periodical, the *Monthly Review*, when he suggested the word as a hybrid but condemned it as 'pedantic'. However, its next recorded use was in its present sense by Robert Southey in 1809. The form of autobiography, however, goes back to antiquity. Autobiographers generally rely on a wide variety of documents and viewpoints; an autobiography, however, may be based entirely on the writer's memory.

♦ **Memoir:** Closely associated with autobiography (and sometimes difficult to precisely distinguish from it) is the form of **memoir**. A memoir is slightly different in character from an autobiography. While an autobiography typically focuses on the "life and times" of the writer, a memoir has a narrower, more intimate focus on his or her own memories, feelings and emotions. Memoirs have often been written by politicians or military leaders as a way to record and publish an account of their public exploits.

♦ **Flash fiction** is a style of fictional literature or fiction of extreme brevity. There is no widely accepted definition of the length of the category. Some self-described markets for flash fiction impose caps as low as three hundred words, while others consider stories as long as a thousand words to be flash fiction. In one particular format, established by Steve Moss, Editor of the *New Times*, the requirement is 55 words: no more and no less.

♦ A **short story** is a compact, concentrated work of fiction that is usually written in prose, often in narrative format. This format tends to be more pointed than longer works of fiction, such as novella (in the 20th and 21st century sense) and novels. Short story definitions based on length differ somewhat, even among professional writers, in part because of the fragmentation of the medium into genres. Since the short story format includes a wide range of genres and styles, the actual length is determined by the individual author's preference (or the story's actual needs in terms of creative trajectory or story arc) and the submission guidelines relevant to the story's actual market. Guidelines vary greatly among publishers. Many short story writers define their work through a combination of creative, personal expression and artistic integrity. They attempt to resist categorization by genre as well as definition by numbers, finding such approaches limiting and counter-intuitive to artistic form and

reasoning. As a result, definitions of the short story based on length splinter even more when the writing process is taken into consideration.

♦ Short stories tend to be less complex than novels. Usually, a short story focuses on one incident; has a single plot, a single setting, and a small number of characters, and covers a short period of time. In longer forms of fiction, stories tend to contain certain core elements of dramatic structure: exposition (the introduction of setting, situation and main characters); complication (the event that introduces the conflict); rising action, crisis (the decisive moment for the protagonist and his commitment to a course of action); climax (the point of highest interest in terms of the conflict and the point with the most action); resolution (the point when the conflict is resolved); and moral. Because of their length, short stories may or may not follow this pattern. Some do not follow patterns at all.

For example, modern short stories only occasionally have an exposition. More typical, though, is an abrupt beginning, with the story starting in the middle of the action (*in medias res*). As with longer stories, plots of short stories also have a climax, crisis, or turning point. However, the endings of many short stories are abrupt and open and may or may not have a moral or practical lesson. As with any art forms, the exact characteristics of a short story will vary by creator. When short stories intend to convey a specific ethical or moral perspective, they fall into a more specific sub-category called Parables (or Fables). This specific kind of short story has been used by spiritual and religious leaders worldwide to inspire, enlighten and educate their followers. The earliest examples of the type are those associated with the name of Aesop (sixth century B.C). Aesop was the chief source of the fables of Jean de La Fontaine. Other notable examples are Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale" and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

♦ A **novella** (also called a **short novel**) is a written, fictional, prose narrative usually longer than a novelette but shorter than a novel. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Nebula Awards for science fiction define the novella as having a word count between 17,500 and 40,000. Other definitions start as low as 10,000 words and run as high as 70,000 words. The novella is a common literary genre in several European languages. Famous English language novellas include John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*; George Orwell's *Animal Farm*; Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*; Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*; Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*; Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*; Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*; H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*; Philip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus*; Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; Jack Kerouac's *The Subterraneans*, and Stephen King's *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*.

♦ A **novel** is a book of long narrative in literary prose. The genre has historical roots both in the fields of the medieval and early modern romance and in the tradition of the novella. The latter supplied the present generic term in the late 18th century. The term novel is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of prose fiction. As an extended narrative, the novel is distinguished from the short story and from the novelette by its magnitude. This permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot (or plots), ampler development of milieu, and more sustained and subtle exploration of character than do the shorter, more concentrated, modes (Abrams 1981: 119). A novel is a fictional prose work with a relatively long and often complex plot, usually divided into chapters, in which the story traditionally develops through the thoughts and actions of its characters. The novel is often described as a long work of written fiction.

Most novels involve many characters and tell a complex story by placing the characters in a number of different situations. The term novel is used in its broadest sense to designate any extended fictional narrative almost always in prose. In practice, however, its use is customarily restricted to a narrative in which the representation of character occurs either in a static condition or in the process of development as the result of events or actions.

Because novels are long—generally two hundred pages or more, with twenty thousand words or more, novelists can tell more richly detailed tales than can authors of briefer literary forms such as the short story. Many readers consider the novel the most flexible type of literature, and thus the one with the most possibilities. For example, writers can produce novels that have the tension of a drama, the scope of an epic poem, the type of commentary found in an essay, and the imagery and rhythm of a lyric poem. Over the centuries, writers have continually experimented with the novel form, and it has constantly evolved in new directions.

Like the short story, the novel tells a story, but unlike the short story, it presents more than an episode. In a novel, the writer has the freedom to develop plot, characters and theme slowly. The novelist can also surround the main plot with subplots that flesh out the tale. Unlike short stories, most novels have numerous shifts in time, place and focus of interest. Like epic poetry, the novel may celebrate grand designs or great events, but unlike epic poetry, it also may pay attention to details of everyday life, such as people's daily tasks and social obligations.

TIPS FOR ANALYSING A PROSE TEXT

Analysing a prose text is not very different from analysing a poem. In both, you have to look at literary techniques, language choice, imagery, structure and so

on; but these may be used in different ways to achieve different effects in prose. You may have to read even more carefully when studying prose passages as the techniques used may not be so readily detected.

When writing your commentary on a prose text, you will need to examine closely the writer's style in order to analyse the way the language is used. You will need to be aware of the features to look for and the ways in which the author's choice of style can influence meaning and effect.

In examining writers' styles, you are to think not only about what writers are saying – the content of their work – but also about *how* they write. This means examining the particular combination of literary devices, structures and vocabulary which a writer uses and which go together to form that writer's individual "style". From your own reading, you will know that some writers' work is easy to recognise immediately because they have a distinctive "style". However, it can be more difficult to explain exactly which characteristics make a writer's style recognisable. You should be able to develop the ability to analyse and write about style. One shortcoming often noted by examiners is that students fail to take account of this and do not engage in enough detailed analysis of how texts are written. It is easier to concentrate on the writer's use of language when studying poetry, but it can be tempting, when writing about novels or other longer prose works, to focus on the content or the ideas and neglect other features that make up the writer's style.

Analysing a Poem

Poetry is a form of writing that is meant to

- entertain,
- express,
- inform, and
- teach morals.

There are several features of poetry that make it unique from other forms of writing. These include its uses of:

1. varied length,
2. lines and stanzas,
3. sound devices (rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc),
4. poetic license with space, punctuation, grammar, etc,
5. word pictures used to build sensory impressions and create images, and
6. the sounds of words and the rhymes of phrases.

FORMS OF POETRY

Poetry can take several forms. These are some of them:

♦ **Ballad:** This is a poetic form mostly written in four line stanzas (quatrains) of alternating lines of iambic tetrameter (four pairs of unstressed-stressed syllables) and iambic trimeter (three pairs). Usually, only the second and fourth lines are rhymed (abcb), although there is considerable variation in the form.

Examples of ballads: The Ballad of Moll Magee, WB Yeats, Ballad of the Breadman, by Charles Causley.

- **Blank verse**: This refers to a type of poetry with a regular meter (generally iambic pentameter) but no rhyme.
- **Free verse** or vers libre: A form of poetry without any regular patterns, rhymes or meters. Its form is its irregularity.
- **Heroic couplet**: This is commonly used for narrative poetry; heroic couplets are rhymed iambic pentameter pairs of lines.
- **Sonnet**: This is a poetic form of fourteen lines. It can be rhymed in a number of ways, but the most common are **Shakespearean** and **Petrarchan**. Shakespearean sonnets are rhymed in three groups of four lines rhymed alternately, followed by a couplet – that is, abab cded efef gg. The closing rhyming couplet often sums up the sonnet. Petrarchan sonnets are divided into a group of eight lines, called the **octave,** and a group of six lines, called the **sestet**. The octave is usually rhymed abba abba, and the sestet cde cde. Usually, there is a 'turn' or 'volta' - a change of direction or mood between the octave and the sestet. Traditionally, the octave put forward a proposition and the sestet offered a solution.

  Examples of sonnets: Sonnet 18 by Shakespeare, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"; "Leda and the Swan" by WB Yeats; On His Blindness by Milton.
- **Terza rima**: This is a rhyming verse stanza form consisting of an interlocking three-line rhyme **scheme** –aba bcb cde ded, etc. A ready example is "Acquainted with the Night", by Robert Frost.
- **Villanelle**: This is a nineteen-line poem with a complex scheme consisting of alternating refrains. The best way of describing the form is to look at a villanelle itself. The most famous example in English is "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas

TIPS FOR ANALYSING A POEM

Whenever you study a poem, you will be called upon to analyse it. This means that you will need to know where the poet has used language techniques and how rhythm and meter are being used. You must be careful that in doing this, you do not reduce the poem to individual and unrelated parts. Analysing a poem can be like taking apart a car engine and having learned how each separate part works, then having no idea how to put the engine back together. Whenever you discover a language technique, think to yourself straight away - 'Why has the poet used this technique, this word or this rhythm?' Language techniques are useless on their own; they derive meaning from their context - where, how and why they are used. Analysing a poem you have never seen before under examination conditions need not be a frightening exercise. You can improve through practice and by following these steps:

- First, **read the poem**. It seems obvious, but you'd be surprised how many students dive straight in and begin writing, having only read the title or the first few lines. Take time to read the poem through two or even

three times. Really try and hear it in your head, getting a feel for the sounds and rhythms and noticing any strange rhymes or interesting words. Your analysis should then work through the following:

- Who is the **speaker** in the poem? The voice in the poem isn't necessarily the poet himself – poets often speak through personae, real or imagined, personal or impersonal. Is it in the first or third (or second) person? Is there anything that reveals or implies anything about the speaker? Who are they speaking to?
- What is the poem's **setting**? Where does the poem take place? A poem can be set anywhere, in the past, present or future. How does this setting/location influence the atmosphere of the poem?
- What is the **form** of the poem? Poems can be written in various forms which dictate their length, their layout on the page, the line length, whether they rhyme or not, and how they rhyme (the rhyme scheme), their meter (the rhythmic structure of the line), and the like. Some forms are associated with certain themes or genres – sonnet form, for example, is commonly used for love poetry; ballad form, for narrative (story) poems. Poets make deliberate decisions about which form to choose, and form always interacts with content, whether to reinforce it or to work against it – a sonnet about the end of a relationship might have a particular poignancy, for example.
- The best way to work out and begin talking about the form (and also a good way to calm exam nerves) is to start **counting**. Count the number of stanzas, the number of lines, and the number of syllables in the lines if they are regular or if there is a pattern. Mark the rhymes and the stresses. This should help show up any patterns, and crucially, where the poem deviates from or tries to break away from the pattern. Thinking about **rhyme,** for example – are all the rhymes full/perfect rhymes? (That is, night/light, sky/high) or are there some variations?
- Subject matter – what is the poem about? If you aren't sure, try to describe exactly what is happening in the poem. It is absolutely fine to express a difficulty in understanding as the poet has probably made it intentionally complex, reflecting something about what they're trying to say. The first and probably the easiest part of the process is to determine what the subject or topic of the poem is. This does not need to be the theme or message. It is simply to record what experience, object or feeling that the poet is writing about. This can be as simple as the poet writing about a balloon or a bicycle (objects) or a tenth birthday party or witnessing a person shoplifting (experience). Generally, this topic or subject will be the **springboard** from which the poet develops his/her themes or the muse that inspires the poet to ponder something about life. Consider why the poet has chosen this topic.

- The next step is to determine what the poet is trying to express. This is similar to purpose. You need to think about what the poet wants you to know more about now that you have read the poem or, alternatively, how

the poet wants to make you feel. Many poems do not have a message or point other than to amuse or entertain the reader. You should try not to be too concerned about whether your answer is 'correct' at this point. Keep an open mind, and as you continue to analyse the poem, you may find other messages.

- Look at the **imagery** used in the poem. Poets often use figurative and metaphorical language that take words beyond their literal meanings, and attempt to do so in novel ways. Choose a couple of the most interesting images in the poem and comment on them. Why are they interesting? What is the poet doing? What does the choice of a particular word do to our understanding, or how does an image create an atmosphere in the poem?
- Finally, what does the poem **mean**? You can write an excellent essay covering all of the previous points and ignoring this one, but if you can it is a good idea to end with a summary of what the poem means; what the poet was trying to say, and, perhaps, whether you think he is successful at saying it.
- Don't expect to understand a poem immediately. You will need to read the poem a number of times before you start to get a feel for it. Most of the poems that you will be studying may be relatively short. This will afford you the time for multiple readings. Read the poem without analysing it and think about how it makes you feel, what is your initial response? You should write this down in your notebook or in the margins of the poem.
- Emotion or mood: There are three things that you should look for while deciding upon what to record for this aspect of analysis of the poem. Firstly, what mood dominates the poem? Think about what you have read. Is it sad, bright, gloomy, aggressive, violent, humble or happy? Do you think the mood or tone changes in the poem anywhere? Perhaps the tone shifts from sad to bright or from happy to gloomy? Also, think about what mood or feeling the poet might want to evoke from the reader. This will be **your** impression. Remember to keep an open mind because as you analyse the techniques you may need to add to your list or change your mind completely. At this stage, you will be able to start thinking about how and why the reader has used a particular mood. Here are some examples. If the poet's topic is a ten-year-old's red bicycle, and the predominant mood is bright and happy, this is going to add to a theme that is about the joy of childhood. On the other hand, if the same topic is written with a sad or melancholic mood, this will add to the theme of the pains of growing up.
- **Tone:** In some ways, tone has a similar effect on poetry as do emotion and mood. The tone of the poem will give you an idea about the composer's attitude towards the subject or topic. The tone is the manner of voice that the composer has used. It is a lot easier to understand tone verbally but let's consider the effect of tone through the following examples of the word **great**:

Great!	Good job/well done.
Great!	Not great/bummer (in a sarcastic tone)

Within a text, how do we establish what tone is being used? You will need to consider the context as a whole. Notice in these examples how just a change in emphasis and punctuation changes the tone of the text:

Example 1

Yeah, that sausage *was* great!

Example 2

Yeah, that sausage was great.

ANALYSING A DRAMA TEXT

Drama is a form of writing that is meant to express and entertain.

Features of Drama

There are several features of drama that make it distinct from other literary genres. These are:

- Stage directions,
- Dramatis personae,
- Performance,
- Dialogue, and
- Directions for costuming.

Forms of Drama

Among the famous forms of drama are the following:

Comedy

When we talk about comedy, we usually refer to plays that are light in tone, and that typically have happy endings. The intent of a comedic play is to make the audience laugh. In modern theater, there are many different styles of comedy, ranging from realistic stories, where the humour is derived from real-life situations, to outrageous slapstick humour.

Tragedy

Tragedy is one of the oldest forms of drama; however, its meaning has changed since the earliest days of staged plays. In ancient times, a tragedy was often an historical drama featuring the downfall of a great man due to his tragic flaw. In modern theater, the definition is a bit looser. For instance, tragedy since World War I has been innovative in many other ways, including experimentation with various ancient types. Tragedy usually involves serious subject matter and the death of one or more main characters.

Farce

Farce is a sub-category of comedy, characterized by greatly exaggerated characters and situations.

Characters tend to be one-dimensional and often follow stereotypical behaviour. Farces typically involve mistaken identities, lots of physical comedy and outrageous plot twists.

Melodrama

Melodrama is another type of exaggerated drama. As in farce, the characters tend to be simplified and one-dimensional. The formulaic storyline of the classic melodrama typically involves a villain, a heroine and a hero who must rescue the heroine from the villain.

Musical/Opera

In musical theater, the story is told not only through dialogue and acting but through music and dance. Musicals are often comedic, although many do involve serious subject matter. Most involve a large cast and lavish sets and costume.

It is important to be able to recognize these different types of drama. You should note that in modern theater, the lines between these types of drama are often quite blurred, with elements of comedy, drama and tragedy occurring in the same play.

TIPS FOR ANALYSING A DRAMA TEXT

As opposed to poetry and fiction, drama cannot be considered a purely textual phenomenon. Instead, every analysis of a dramatic text must take into account its multimedia character. Dramatic texts are intended for an institutionally framed collective enactment that can be described in terms of transformation (direction/production) and/or performance.

When one deals with dramatic texts, one has to bear in mind that drama differs considerably from poetry or narrative in that it is usually written for the purpose of being performed on stage. Although plays exist which were mainly written for a reading audience, dramatic texts are generally meant to be transformed into another mode of presentation or medium: the theatre.

For this reason, dramatic texts even look differently compared to poetic or narrative texts. One distinguishes between the **text**, that is, the main body of the play spoken by the characters, and **context**, that is, all the circumstances and background 'surrounding' or accompanying the text. These include the dramatis personae, scene descriptions, stage directions for acting and speaking, and the like.

Depending on whether one reads a play or watches it on stage, one has different kinds of access to dramatic texts. As a reader, one receives first-hand written information (if it is mentioned in the secondary text) on what the characters look like, how they act and react in certain situations, how they speak, what sort of setting forms the background to a scene, and the like. However, one also has to make a cognitive effort to imagine all these features and interpret them for oneself. Stage performances, on the other hand, are more or less ready-made instantiations of all these details. In other words, at the theatre, one is presented with a version of the play which has already been interpreted by the director,

actors, costume designers, make-up artists and all other members of theatre staff, who bring the play to life. The difference, then, lies in divergent forms of perception.

While we can actually see and hear actors play certain characters on stage, we first decipher a text about them when reading a play script, and then at best 'see' them in our mind's eye and 'hear' their imaginary voices. In fact, stage performances offer a multi-sensory access to plays, and they can make use of **multimedia** elements such as music, sound effects, lighting, stage props, and the like; while reading is limited to the visual perception and thus draws upon one primary medium: the play as text. This needs to be kept in mind in analysing dramatic texts, and the following introduction to the analysis of drama is largely based on the idea that plays are first and foremost written for the stage.

The main features one can look at when analysing dramatic texts are the following:

- overall structure,
- space,
- time,
- characters/dramatis personae,
- dialogues,
- types of stage,
- dramatic sub-genres, and
- dramatic techniques.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to conceptualize and explicate the concept of literary with appreciation. This is with a view to imbueing the students the necessary skills for interpreting literary works across the three genres of drama, poetry and prose. In the main, the students are introduced to the meanings, importance and techniques of literary appreciation. Moreover, they are familiarized with the major elements of literature, including subject matter, theme, plot, setting and character/characterization. Also, the students are introduced to the major forms of rhetorical devices; that is, figures of speech. Furthermore, the chapter dwells on the fundamental distinguishing features of drama, poetry and prose as literary genres. Finally, some practical guides for analysing literary texts are highlighted and exemplified.

Post-test

SECTION A

Q1: A poem consisting of fourteen lines, tradi'ionally written in meter, is

(A) a narrative (B) a sonnet (C) an ode (D) an elegy

Q2: The attitude of a writer towards the subject matter is the

(A) tone (B) plot (C) crisis (D) climax

Q3: The recurrent pattern of end rhymes in a poem is called

(A) internal rhyme (B) rhyme scheme (C) rhythm

(D) scansion

Q4: The most exciting and tense part of a story is the
(A) epilogue (B) climax (C) prologue (D)exposition

Q5:Lines of poetry that are organized without meter are known as
(A) blank verse (B) assonance (C) consonance
(D) free verse

Q6: A dramatic performance with only bodily movements and without words is
(A)a mime (B)an aside (C) a soliloquy (D)an opera

Q7: "Mathematics is my Achilles' heel" is an example of
(A) litotes (B) metonymy (C) allusion (D) analogy

Q8: A short poem lamenting the death of someone is a —
(A) lyric (B) sonnet (C) dirge (D) threnody.

Q9: In a story, the adversary of the protagonist is the
(A)hero (B)heroine (C) antagonist (D) foil

Q10: "Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind" illustrates
(A)inversion (B) paradox (C) Humour (D) mood

Q11: The art of giving human attributes to non-human objects is
(A) personification (B) allegory (C) anecdote
(D) allusion

Q12: A long narrative poem which is composed in an elevated style is———————
(A) lyric (B) epic (C) ode (D)euphony

Q13: Astanza of four lines is called
(A)quatrain (B) sestet (C) sonnet (D) couplet

Q14: A literary piece that blends criticism with humour in order to pass a message is called
(A)an allegory (B) a fable (C) a farce (D)a satire

Q15:The story of a person's life written by another is
(A) history (B) autobiography (C) biography (D) anthology

Q16: When characters talk to each other, it is referred to as
(A)soliloquy (B)monologue (C)dialogue (D)recitation
Q17:A folk-tale is a
(A)novel (B) work of fiction (C)biography(D) novelette

Q18:A variable stanzaic poetic form with varying line lengths and intricate rhyme scheme is called
(A) a ballad (B) an epic (C) a dirge (D)an ode

Q19:A literary work in which action and characters represent ideas is
(A)an allusion (B)an epigram (C) an allegory (D) an innuendo

Q20: "Peter's pretty partner paid the bills" is an example of
(A) alliteration (B) rhyme (C) satire (D) digression

Q21: *"O happy torment"* is an example of
(A) oxymoron (B) synecdoche (C) innuendo (D) simile

Q22: A recurring dominant idea in a work of art is called
(A) setting (B) conflict (C) plot (D) motif

Q23:A question which does not require an answer is
(A)discourse (B)rhetorical (C)Ironic (D)flashback

Q24: A literary work written in form of a letter is
(A) creative (B) romance (C) tautological (D) epistolary

Q25: "The lawyer addressed the bench" illustrates
(A) metonymy (B)alliteration (C) simile
(D)oxymoron

Q26: The concluding part of a play where the conflict is resolved is the
(A)introduction (B) enjambment (C)denouement
(D) climax

Q27: A character whose flaws combined with external forces leads to his suffering is a
A) heroine (B) tragic-hero (C) hero (D) protagonist

Q28: Pick the odd item out of the under-listed:
(A) Ode (B)elegy (C) Sonnet (D) simile

Q29: *"Pregnant clouds"* is an example of
(A) cliché (B) litotes (C) personification (D) synecdoche

Q30: A writer's choice of words is his
(A) Diction (B) Mood (C) tone (D) setting

Q31: The art of creating fictional personages constitutes
(A) point of view (B) characterization (C) narrative technique (D) symbolism

Q32: A deliberate use of exaggeration for the purpose of humour/emphasis is
(A) metaphor (B) irony (C) Simile (D) hyperbole

Q33: Drama is meant to
(A)teach manners only (B)criticize (C)educate and entertain (D)be read and acted only

Q34: A piece of writing which teaches morals is
(A) serious (B) didactic (C) playful (D) analytical

Q35: A piece of writing or speech at the beginning of a work or art is the
(A) prologue (B) dialogue (C) monologue
(D) epilogue

Q36: A bitter remark intended to wound the feelings is
(A)a satire (B)an allusion (C) a sarcasm (D) an ambiguity

Q37: "She waited for him for a thousand years" illustrates
(A) euphemism (B) hyperbole (C) assonance
(D)ellipsis

Q38: A literary device which expresses meaning in its direct opposite is
(A) metaphor (B) paradox (C)parody (D)irony

Q39:"They also serve who only stand and wait" illustrates
(A) an epigram (B) a synecdoche (C) a simile (D) an antithesis.

Q40: Pick the odd item out of the options listed: below
(A) Verse (B) Stanza (C) Rhythm (D) Dialogue

Q41: In drama, 'denouement' is the same as
(A) Resolution (B) Climax (C) anti-climax (D) conflict

Q42: "Forty hands descended on the devilish head" illustrates
(A) Epigram (B) synecdoche (C) Metonymy (D) allegory

Q43: Pick the odd item out of the options listed below:
(A) sonnet (B) epic (C) allusion (D) ode

Q44: A deliberate violation of the rules of versification constitutes
(A) imperfect rhyme (B) poetic license (C) verbal irony (D) comic relief

Q45: A praise poem is
(A) a dirge(B) an epic (C) a ballad (D) an ode

Q46: Lines of regular recurrence in a poem constitutes
(A)an alliteration (B) a refrain (C) an assonance (D) a theme

Q47: An individual who acts, appears or is referred to as playing a part in a literary work is a
(A) villain (B) character (C) clown (D) narrator

Q48: A regular group of lines in poetry constitutes
(A) stanza (B) rhythm (C) verse (D) metre

Q49: "A black beautiful brilliant bride" is an example of
(A) Alliteration (B) assonance (C) onomatopoeia (D) pun

Q50: ".....the dragon-fly hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky....." illustrates
(A) simile (B) Litotes (C) Contrast (D) metaphor

Q51:A pause within the line of a poem is a
(A) Zeugma (B) foot (C) Caesura (D) stress

Q52: Unrhymed iambic pentameter lines illustrate a
(A) rhyme scheme (B) heroic couplet (C) blank verse (D) free verse

Q53: The limerick
(A) is written to be sung (B) has a serious subject matter (C) is designed to be comic (D) uses lofty language

Q54: "But at my back I always hear Time's winged chariot hurrying near" illustrates
(A) metaphor (B) apostrophe (C) oxymoron
(D)metonymy

SECTION B

1. Attempt a critical analysis of a poem or a play or a novel you read recently.
2. With generous illustrations, distinguish between:

a) Plot and Setting
b) Theme and Subject Matter
c) Tone and Mood
d) Oxymoron and Metonymy
e) Irony and Paradox
f) Figures of Speech and Elements of literature.

ANSWERS TO THE OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS IN SECTION A

1.	B	**2.**	A	**3.**	B
4.	B	**5.**	D		
6.	A	**7.**	B	**8.**	C
9.	C	**10.**	B		
11.	A	**12.**	B	**13.**	A
14.	D	**15.**	C		
16.	C	**17.**	B	**18.**	D
19.	C	**20.**	A		
21.	A	**22.**	D	**23.**	B
24.	D	**25.**	A		
26.	C	**27.**	B	**28.**	D
29.	C	**30.**	A		
31.	B	**32.**	D	**33.**	C
34.	B	**35.**	A		
36.	C	**37.**	B	**38.**	D
39.	B	**40.**	D		
41.	A	**42.**	B	**43.**	C
44.	B	**45.**	D		
46.	B	**47.**	B	**48.**	A
49.	A	**50.**	A		
51.	C	**52.**	C	**53.**	C
54.	A				

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4

THE ART OF WRITING

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Introduction

Writing is an expressive communication skill used in sharing experiences, feelings, emotions or thoughts through mutually understandable printed codes. Unlike speaking, which we naturally possess, writing—like reading—is deliberately acquired through formal training. As Langan (2003:12) puts it, "a sure way to wreck your chances of learning how to write competently is to believe that writing is a 'natural gift' rather than a learned skill. People with such an attitude think that they are the only ones for whom writing is unbearably difficult." What Langan suggests here is that writing is a skill that can be learned. So, if you want to become a competent writer, you need to develop a positive attitude towards writing and believe you can write perfectly. You should not think that writing is an exclusive talent that you do not possess. Rather, you should strive to acquire the skill by constantly practising writing.

In this chapter, we shall discuss the fundamental skills and concepts you need to learn, and the basic tasks you are expected to perform in order to write effectively especially in examinations and general academic engagements. In other words, this chapter focuses on the general intricacies of writing such as outlining, paragraph types, the thought flow patterns to employ while presenting your points, and the appropriate signal words to use.

Objectives:

After reading through this chapter, you should be able to:

(1) narrow down a broad and unguided question to a workable topic;
(2) determine the primary purpose for a writing exercise;
(3) identify and analyse the people (audience) for whom you want to write;

(4) prepare a good outline as a guide for your writing; and
(5) Write a good, error-free essay that has a logical structure by organising and presenting your thoughts in coherent paragraphs.

Pre test:

1. State any three types of paragraph pattern you know.
2. For each of the paragraph patterns you have identified, list at least six appropriate signal words.
3. Write a good paragraph using any of the paragraph patterns to present your thoughts.
4. Choose any topic suitable for an argumentative essay. Describe briefly, with practical examples, all the tasks you will perform to produce a finished essay on the topic.

1. WRITING AS A PROCESS

Writing is a process; it proceeds from our thoughts, which are the products of the things we hear, read, observe or share from our interactions with other people. In fact, writing is communication. Therefore, the quality of our writing is always determined by the nature of our thoughts and how coherently we are able to structure our ideas and experiences in a manner that communicates effectively. In addition, since writing is a productive skill of language, our background and competence in the use of the English language in particular significantly determine the quality of our writing in terms of economy, simplicity and clarity of expressions.

Effective writing is not done haphazardly; it is a painstaking exercise that requires you to engage in the intellectual procedure where you go through some physical and psychological stages (Trimmer and McCrimmon, 1988). Writing is not as simple as we often believe. Ideas do not always come easily, and when they come, they may be so clumsy and confusing that you find it difficult to identify the most appealing angle from which to begin your writing. At times, you may not discover the most appropriate topic for your writing assignment until you begin to re-organise your conflicting ideas. To produce a finished paper, therefore, you need to take a series of interdependent steps. However, these steps do not often flow in a smooth, linear progression. Soles (2010: 2) describes writing as a recursive process that "is not neat and well organised."

It is not "a linear, step-by-step process." The writing process involves three basic stages—the pre-writing stage (planning), the writing stage (drafting) and the post-writing stage (revising). At each stage of the writing process, you need to perform some tasks, which ultimately lead to the finished paper. In what follows, you will read about these stages and some useful activities therein.

1.1 THE PRE-WRITING TASKS (PLANNING)

To produce an effective written message, you need to plan well. Planning in this context, according to Trimmer and McCrimmon (1988:7), "is a series of strategies

designed to find and formulate information in writing." Writing is like taking a decision. And as you plan your writing, you must always remember that you are "a writer trying to communicate a *subject* to an *audience* for a *purpose*." Therefore, before you begin to write, you need to identify your purpose, sort out the ideas, locate and identify your audience, gather relevant raw materials for your writing and shape the substance of your writing. Let us discuss these pre-writing tasks under the following sub-headings:

1.1.1 Determining the Subject and Purpose

To produce a good essay, you must determine the subject you want to address in your discourse and have a purpose for the essay. If you fail to set the agenda, you will end up rambling. In some cases, it is your duty to determine what the subject and purpose of your writing will be, but sometimes, you are restricted especially in an examination-guided writing task. Therefore, if you are writing as a student, especially under examination conditions, you may be confronted with either of the two types of questions: guided questions and unguided questions. In a guided question, the examiner explicitly names or identifies the subject in specific terms. In this case, your task is less onerous. But in an unguided question when the examiner uses a less restricted term to name the subject, or requests you to determine the subject, you have a complex task before you, and this is perhaps the most terrifying problem in writing. For instance, if the examiner asks you to write a good essay on "Education in Nigeria", your task here is difficult because the assignment is too broad. It does not identify the subject; it only suggests a scope where you can locate your subject. It is left to you to narrow down the scope and decide whether you want to look at the problems confronting education in Nigeria; explore the nature and structure of the system of education in Nigeria; compare and/or contrast University and Polytechnic Education systems in Nigeria; or just focus on the problems confronting University Education in Nigeria, among others.

The second scenario is also applicable if you are writing without any promptings from anyone as is the case when you write to the press. Where you have to choose a topic of your own, bear the following in mind as you decide on what to write about:

1. The occasion- what brought about the need to write?
2. The audience- who will be reading this?/To whom are my thoughts directed?
3. The topicality or immediate relevance of the issue – how current is the issue I wish to write on?
4. The time at your disposal for preparing the write-up – will I be able to do justice to the topic in the given time? Do I have enough time for extensive research?
5. The required length – Is my topic too wide to be covered succinctly in the number of pages required by the exercise? Is my topic so narrow that I will not have enough to say to fill the required number of pages?

In order to select a suitable subject for your writing, especially when you are not writing in an examination, you need to first ensure that you are familiar with the

subject and it is interesting. If you choose a strange subject, you may not be able to structure your writing according to your standpoint and it may be difficult for you to exert reasonable authority in the content. In other words, if the subject is not strange, and is exciting, you will execute it with more passion and it will not bore your audience. Also, to ensure that the subject is appropriate for the purpose of your writing, you should assess the subject against the following questions: Is it significant? Is it interesting? Is it manageable? These questions will always guide you to certify that the subject you have selected can contribute significantly to your knowledge and that of your audience; is capable of evoking your passion and sustaining the interest of your audience; is something you can manage within the specified space and time, and is not too complex or ridiculously simple for the purpose of your writing. Therefore, while selecting your subject, you must be guided by the purpose of your writing as dictated either by you or your teacher or examiner as the situation may be.

It is erroneous to think that your ultimate purpose of writing is to satisfy your audience. For instance, in an examination condition, you may think your purpose is to satisfy your teacher and get a good grade. Of course, if you want to get a good grade, you need to determine and pursue what the writing is intended to do. Is it to teach (explain or expose)? Is it to compare or contrast? Is it to persuade or convince? Is it to narrate? Is it to give a description? One or more of these should guide your writing. Either in an examination situation or outside the examination hall, you can adapt the journalistic **W5 + H1 writing strategy,** which connotes *who, what, where, when, why* and *how*. To pilot the subject and purpose of your writing, you will develop each of the interrogative values into a full interrogative guide as follows: *Who will be reading this piece I am writing? What do they really want from my essay? What specifically do I want to achieve? Where did the central event in my subject take place? When did it take place? Why is this subject significant? How will my audience assess my writing?* While determining the subject and purpose of your writing, you can also engage in what is called *freewriting*, a situation where you continuously jot down in rough, less coordinated sentences or phrases every idea that you can remember about your topic. Later on, you will correct, restructure and coordinate these ideas as they contribute to the development of your topic.

1.1.2 Analysing the Audience

After determining your subject and purpose, your next task is to identify and analyse the people or audience for whom you are writing. If you write without having a definite group of people in mind, you are like a hunter pulling the trigger without sighting the target. You should understand that you are writing for different categories of audience and you are also a part of the first audience. Stop seeing yourself as a writer, but as a reader who stands to benefit from the writing. If your writing reads well, appeals to you and presents new knowledge, then it will definitely do the same to the

general audience. The converse holds if the values for the foregoing are negative. Besides, when you are writing to pass an examination, it is wrong to assume that your teacher or the examiner is your ultimate audience. This is because the primary purpose of your writing is not just to satisfy your teacher, but also to execute the subject and achieve the purpose. The most important audience you are writing for are the readers, who are detached from you, and who expect your writing to tell them the important thing they do not know; or tell them, in a more interesting way, what they already know. You will end up being a bad writer if you fail to understand the peculiar attributes and needs of your audience.

It is, therefore, imperative that you analyse your audience in terms of their demographic and psychographic peculiarities such as their age, educational background, religious inclinations, occupations, economic status, sex, socio-cultural groups, knowledge, expectations, prejudices, emotion, assumptions, values, and attitudes. If you have the knowledge about these peculiarities, you will be able to structure your writing to suit them. You will be able to determine what they expect to learn from your writing, how you can convince them to read your writing, especially if they are hostile, and the appropriate thought-flow pattern you should adopt. In an examination situation where you do not have the luxury of time to do audience analysis, what you need to do is to create an imaginary group of audience. Consider yourself as one of these imaginary readers. If what you write appears significant and appealing to you, it will definitely appeal to the audience.

1.1.3 Getting Materials for Your Writing

The next pre-writing task is to gather the relevant materials for your writing. You cannot write a good piece if you fail to explore the appropriate sources where you can locate the information to beef up the content of your writing. You can get your materials from two major sources. These are the primary sources (personal experiences, direct observation, interviews through discussions or questionnaire, personal files and diaries), and the secondary sources (library materials such as books, magazines, journals, newspapers, online resources, and other public documents). These sources are categorized as (a) something the writer knew (memory/experiences), (b) something the writer had seen (observation), and (c) something the writer learned through someone else (research/discussion). The nature of the subject, purpose and audience of your writing will largely determine the type of information you need. However, there are occasions—especially in examination situations or class assignments—that do not give you enough time to go out and collect materials for your writing. What will save you here will be your past experiences which are relevant to the subject of your assignment. This is why you need to frequently expose yourself to diverse sources of ideas. One of the best ways to achieve this is to be an avid reader. Of course, there is a strong correlation between passionate reading and effective writing.

1.1.4 Outlining

It is not enough that you have collected abundant materials for your writing. In fact, the materials remain a jumble of meaningless information until you sort and structure them to provide a good content for your writing. This process of organising your materials is called outlining. Panes (1972:12) say that "the procedure for outlining involves designating logical symbols to indicate the importance of ideas as well as the relationship among ideas or facts." This means that developing a good outline can help you to understand better the relationship among the fragments of facts or information in your materials and synthesise these facts into a logical whole that makes your essay.

Outlining comes after you must have determined the subject and purpose of your writing, done the *freewiting*, identified and analysed your audience, and collected relevant materials. The ideas you have are of different statuses: some are major, some are coordinate, while some are subordinate in status. You will identify and use some symbolic structure to sort the main ideas, the sub-topics or major details, and the sub-subtopics or minor details. The structure (outline) you generate will, thus, serve as your guide as you embark on your writing.

Outlining helps you to predict the outcome of your writing. It is like the bare bones that you need to cover with flesh. Remember that writing is not a smooth, linear exercise, but a rigorous and zigzag process. Therefore, the outline you are drafting is not sacrosanct; it is tentative. You may adjust it as you do the actual writing.

When we do outlining, we can use some symbols to designate the status of our facts or ideas. Let us adapt Panes' (1972) model to explain the diagrammatic structure of outlining as follows:

(a) Use Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.) to designate main ideas or main topics and signal first ranks of importance.

(b) Use capital letters (A, B, C, etc.) to designate major details or sub-topics and indicate second ranks of importance.

(c) Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to designate minor details or sub-subtopics and indicate third rank of importance.

(d) Use small letters (a, b, c, etc.) to designate details of fourth ranks of importance.

The outline can be diagrammatically represented thus:

I. Main topic or main idea (first rank of importance)
   A. Sub-topic or major detail (second rank of importance)
      1. Sub-subtopic or minor detail (third rank of importance)
         a. Fourth rank of importance
            1) Fifth rank of importance
               a) Sixth rank of importance.

Let us try the outline for an expository essay on this topic: *Causes and Impact of Incessant Industrial Disputes in Nigerian Universities*. We will only prepare a hypothetical outline for the introduction and two transitional paragraphs.

Introduction

I. An interesting topic sentence that stimulates the reader's interest (this may be a powerful quotation, an analogy or an anecdote).

A. Major details to support the topic sentence (e.g. definition or description of industrial dispute).

1. Minor details to support the sub-topic (e.g. references to past industrial disputes in the Nigerian university system, preferably with dates; and reference to countries with stable university education systems)

Causes

I. Sheer neglect

A. Education is not seen as a priority and critical sector by government

1. Appropriation of more resources to political beneficiaries

2. Budgetary allocation to education abysmally below the UNESCO recommendation

B. Critical facilities are not provided

1. Inadequate research grants to universities;

2. Inadequate and obsolete teaching and laboratory facilities in Nigerian universities.

II. Insincerity

A. Government deliberately enters into apparently unrealistic agreements with university workers.

1. Most parts of the agreements are mere political deceptions by government.

2. Negotiations with university workers tarry unnecessarily (deployment of delay tactics).

a. Setting up of irrelevant committees

b. Frequent replacement of committee members

3. Most clauses of the agreements are too ambiguous to interpret for implementation.

B. Government frequently dishonours the agreements it had freely entered into with university workers.

1. Most times the agreements are not fully implemented

2. Government implements only aspects of the agreement that have lesser financial implications.

The foregoing outlining is a mere example to guide you. You can select different symbols to designate the status of your ideas. However, you must always be consistent so that confusion does not arise as a result of duplicated symbols.

2. ACTUAL WRITING TASKS (DRAFTING)

After the pre-writing tasks have been accomplished, the writer now faces the task of the actual writing of the composition. This task requires not only a good knowledge of the grammar of the language used in the composition but also a knowledge of, and adherence to the genre convention as well as conformity to the general rhetorical structure of writing. These tasks are discussed in the order in which we perform them.

2.1 Writing the Introduction

The introduction is the smallest but very important part of writing. It is the starting point of a composition which serves as the signpost (giving direction) to the writer

and intimates the reader with the ideas of the composition. At the introductory part of a composition, the reader forms a particular impression about the writer and may carry this impression to the concluding part. The introduction is comparable to a drop of bile in several pounds of flesh: if it is carefully written, it makes the writing come out fine; if otherwise, it mars the writing and, especially when it is done for an examiner, it is the barometer for gauging the effectiveness of the writing.

Given the significance of introduction as enumerated above, you will always need to be painstaking when writing one. Towards achieving effectiveness in this task, you need a good knowledge of several styles of introduction so that you will be able to choose the one that is suitable to your writing purpose in a particular writing undertaking. You will always sustain the interest of your audience, if you train yourself in such styles of introduction as those you will read about below.

2.1.1 Question Approach

In this style of introduction, the key points of a composition are reduced to rhetorical questions, such that answers to those questions serve as the body of the composition. The style is particularly effectual in expository writings. Study the example below, which introduces the essay topic - *Security Challenges in the Country*.

Example 1

> Nigeria, before now, was regarded as one of the peaceful nations in the world. Foreigners to this country and the native as well had expressed wonders on the high level of unity experienced in the country in spite of her tribal, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversities. In recent times however, the country has been turned to a battlefield—a country where the citizens are not protected and even the security agents are not secure! The questions which loom large in the minds of concerned individuals are: Why is the country no longer secure? Who are the people behind the country's security problem? How can the security conflict in the country be managed? And what measures should be put in place to regain the lost national harmony? This essay will provide answers to the foregoing questions

The introductory paragraph above shows the directions of the composition and properly familiarises readers with its propositions. It clearly maps out the tasks of the writer and makes readers read with concentrated anticipation.

2.1.2 Statement Approach

This approach is the opposite of the approach elucidated above. While in Question Approach the theses of the

writing are reduced to interrogation, in Statement Approach, the theses are directly asserted. Consider the statement version of the above example below:

Example 2

> Nigeria, before now, was regarded as one of the most peaceful nations in the world. Foreigners to this country and the native as well had expressed wonders on the high level of unity experienced in the country in spite of her tribal, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversities. In recent times however, the country has been turned to a battlefield—a country where the citizens are not protected and even the security agents are vulnerable to attacks! Efforts have been made to identify the reasons behind the insecurity situation in the country. Several strategies have been devised for fishing out the agents of the nation's security threats. Within and outside the country, suggestions have also been made on measures to be put in place to restore the country's peace and permanently control the crisis situation.

2.1.3 Definition Approach

In a definition approach, the writer takes off from the definition of an important concept. This approach is appropriate when the essay topic contains an idea or a concept that needs clarifications, perhaps because it is strange or because it is technical. Definition is not necessary only when an idea or concept in the topic is difficult but also when there are several perspectives of it and the writer wants to clarify the sense(s) in which it is being used in the composition. Definition is also necessary when you understand that your readers do not have the same knowledge or understanding that you have of a concept.

2.1.4 Quotation Approach

In this approach, the writer starts off the writing by referring to or quoting the statement of, usually an authoritative person and uses the quote as a take-off ground for the composition. The quote could also come from artistic compositions, such as literary works and music. Such quotes could begin with expressions like: *according to...*(the name of the authority and, perhaps, the date of publication) or *in the words of ...*(the name of the authority and, perhaps, the date of publication). This approach usually gives the impression of a knowledgeable writer and endows writings with a high level of credibility. Study the example below which introduces an informal letter and suggest the subject of the letter after reading the introduction:

Example 3

> In the words of the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, "the greatest glory

is not in never falling, but in rising each time you fall". This statement implies that failure is an inevitable part of man and that one does not succeed at all things at all times. Following this view, failure in a public examination should not be a hindrance to success in life.

2.1.5. Anecdotal Approach

An anecdote is a story that illustrates a point. Anecdotal approach is therefore a narrative approach to introduction. In this approach, the writer tells a story and connects the story to the subject of their essay. Anytime you use this approach, it is important to be sure your anecdote is short, to the point, and relevant to your topic.

The approaches to writing introduction elucidated above are just a few of the several ways you can begin your writings. As suggested by Odekunle (2011:84), "whatever method you employ should be the one you can handle and which is relevant to the topic". As a learner-writer, you need regular reading of the published works of experieneed essayists and creative writers. Through familiarity with these works, you will be able to either adopt or adapt their styles.

2.2 Writing the Body of the Essay

The body of your essay is that portion that stands between the introduction and the conclusion. The body is made of the paragraphs that discuss and connect the various points you use to expand the central theme of your essay. While the introduction and the conclusion are traditionally one paragraph each, there is no prescribed number of paragraphs for the body. What determines the number of paragraphs in the body of your essay is the scope or purpose of your writing. For instance, if you are asked to write an essay on "Corruption in Nigeria" and the specific instructions state that you should discuss three causes of, and three solutions to corruption in Nigeria, technically, the body of your essay should have at least six paragraphs—three discussing causes of corruption in Nigeria, and the other three presenting the solutions. On the other hand, if you are asked to write a petition to the Chairman of your Local Government Area stating five critical things that your community needs, the body of your writing in this case should have at least five paragraphs.

Writing a good essay requires that you acquire the appropriate skills of writing. You should be able to use the suitable paragraph types and thought-flow patterns (paragraph patterns) to organise and develop your thoughts. Also, you should be able to choose the right signal words and discourse markers to indicate the paragraph pattern that you employ in presenting your points. We shall discuss these skills in detail in the latter part of this chapter.

2.3 Writing the Conclusion

The concluding part of a composition is as important as its introductory part. It is the part at which the impression created at the beginning of the writing is

concretized. Most lazy readers judge a piece of writing by the quality of its conclusion. Therefore, writing conclusions demands equal measure of dexterity and training as writing the introduction. Your conclusion can take the forms of suggestions, solutions and recommendations, depending on your topic. You can also review the main points but make sure you are not restating them exactly. Anecdotal method can also be used. Whatever method you choose to use in a particular writing task, make sure such gives your composition a convenient closure.

3. POST-WRITING TASKS

No writing is perfect at first draft, no matter how competent the writer is. Sometimes we think faster than we write and, as a result, may be unable to record many of the ideas we think over. Often, we omit vital words in our sentences, write wrong spellings of words and ludicrously write the opposite of what we intend to write. In view of these, anyone who aims at effective writing should always carry out such post-writing activities as reading the draft over, editing or proofreading and correcting errors.

3.1 Reading over the Draft

After the writing has been done, make sure you read it over. Often times, when we read what we write, we do not discover our errors because we read what is on our minds and not what we actually write. Therefore, for your reading at this stage to serve its purpose, you need to act as a true reader; not the actual personality behind the writing. Read the draft critically as if you were not the writer. This posture will help you carry out your post-writing tasks (as elucidated below) effectively.

3.2 Proofreading

In order to ensure that your essay is devoid of errors, you need to proofread it. Langan (2003:123) describes proofreading as "checking the final, edited draft of your paper closely for typos and other careless errors." Proofreading is done after revision. As suggested by Langan, the best strategy to do proofreading is to start reading your essay backward, from the last sentence to the first one. The reason for this is that if you start from the first sentence, you may be carried away by the flow of the essay, thereby missing most of the small errors or mistakes you are trying to detect. In fact, proofreading is an extension or the final stage of revision. Because of this, apart from checking for typographical errors or errors of omission, faulty grammar and defective mechanics, you still need to make sure that your essay does not contain irrelevant facts, excessive or wordy expressions, non-parallel sentences, dangling modifiers, misplaced modifiers, and other errors that you probably did not detect while you were revising your essay.

Although editing or proofreading is not a one-off exercise—you can do it all over and over again—you must be careful not to over edit your essay. As Trimmer and McCrimmon (1988:100) observe, "sometimes additional revision actually destroys good writing, replacing spontaneous, original insights with self-conscious, overwrought commentary." The implication here is that you must revise and proofread your essay

adequately, but you must not do these excessively so that your essay does not lose its fluency and beauty.

4. WRITING SKILLS

Writing is an art. It is a productive language task that requires several skills and sub-skills. Let us discuss the skills in the following section:

4.1. Linguistic Skills

Writing of all forms requires a good knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of language. In fact, what determines how you present your thoughts and ideas in writing is the level of your linguistic skill. A writer's vocabulary power determines, to a large extent, his/her expressive ability and flexibility in language use. You will be able to communicate clearly, concisely and efficiently if you have abundant wealth of words and if you can form wide-ranging sentences in the language you have chosen for your writing task. Therefore, you need to develop your vocabulary power; learn and properly apply the basic rules of grammar.

Vocabulary development is significant to the achievement of effective writing skills. You need to possess significant knowledge of words and the senses in which words can be put. In this respect, you need more than just the knowledge of words used in everyday communication encounters; you also need to be familiar with words (register) used in several fields, such as teaching, agriculture, mining, journalism, and so forth. This will help you to use the right words with ease in your writings.

Sentence fluency is also important in the writing process. By this we mean that your writing needs to flow smoothly from word to word, phrase to phrase, and sentence to sentence. Your sentences are said to flow perfectly when they are constructed in line with the rules of grammar. You can learn these rules consciously by reading good books on grammar and intuitively by reading what other people, especially published authors, have written. In addition to mastering and applying basic rules of grammar in your sentence constructions, when you write, you should also be able to vary the lengths and structures of your sentences.

Certainly, your writings flow very well when they are constructed with an assortment of simple, compound, complex and multiple sentences. Though they are often regarded as informal, the use of passive sentences is appropriate in descriptive writings. You should therefore possess a good knowledge of active and passive sentence constructions. A blend of sentences of varied structures and styles gives flexibility to your writings.

Parts of the linguistic skill that you should be able to demonstrate in your writings relate to punctuation, correct spelling and usage. No doubt, a practical step to improving your spelling and punctuation competence is by reading. There are books on punctuation and lists of commonly misspelled words; you need to read them to update your skills in the areas. You will also help yourself when you imbibe the habit of looking up words

in your dictionary, especially those words whose spellings you are not sure of.

Also, the knowledge of when to choose between formal and informal language style is an important linguistic skill you should be able to demonstrate in your writings. Informal language is characterized by abbreviations or contracted forms, acronyms and other features of spoken language. This language style is appropriate in such writings as informal letters, debates and informal speeches. Formal language is desirable in official and technical writings such as application/ business letters and articles for publication.

4.2. Rhetorical Skills

4.2.1. Choosing the Appropriate Format

Selecting the appropriate format is an important aspect of the rhetorical skill of writing. A form of writing is distinguished from other forms by its visual appearance, known as layout. Therefore, you should be able to carry out your writing assignments, following their appropriate design standard. By this, we mean that you should always execute every form of writing in compliance with its formats or conventions. For instance, your task may be to write a letter (formal or informal), to write an essay (narrative, expository, argumentative, or descriptive), to prepare a report (progress, routine, proposal, investigative or field trip reports), to write minutes of meetings, to prepare a memo, to write a circular, or to write a news story (straight news or feature). Each of these has its unique features and format.

4.2.2 Achieving Proper Organisation

Any time we talk about effective writing, what we often first think about are elements like *word choice* (diction), *grammar* and *mechanics*, and *content* or *evidence*. But another really significant aspect of effective writing—and effective thinking or speaking, too—is clear, logical organisation of our thoughts within paragraphs that make up the whole discourse. When we present our thoughts in an unorganised manner, it becomes problematic for our audience (readers or listeners) to comprehend our intended messages. Our audience finds it difficult to identify what is important, what to anticipate or what to ignore (Friedlander, 2010).

Consequently, an understanding of what constitutes a good paragraph, types of paragraphs as well as a mastery of how to organise our ideas or thoughts, especially in any formal discourse, becomes very important for us as learners of the English language. Adequate knowledge of these concepts would enable us to effectively write in an intelligible manner. Organisation is an important rhetorical feature of a piece of writing. The way your ideas are structured, presented and related to one another is significant to how readers will perceive and appreciate your writing. You may have good ideas; if they are not well structured, they will not produce desirable effects. Therefore, you need a good knowledge of paragraph structure, types and functions, and how to organise your thoughts using the appropriate paragraph patterns. We shall first focus on these aspects in this section:

4.2.2.1 The Paragraph

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences that discusses one main idea. It is a division of a composition. The central theme of the composition is usually broken down into related units. These related units are the various paragraphs contained in the composition. A good paragraph discusses only one main idea that is presented in the topic sentence and projected in the supporting sentences. That is, the topic/main sentence presents the theme or main idea that the paragraph discusses while other sentences provide details or supporting facts to expatiate on or illustrate the main idea. The supporting sentences form the link between the main idea and the whole body of the paragraph in such a way that **unity**, **coherence**, and **completeness** are achieved within the paragraph.

(a) Unity: Unity is one of the features of a good paragraph. It requires that a paragraph discuss only one main idea. Therefore, all the sentences that make up the paragraph must tend towards discussing the main idea. This means that when a paragraph has more than one main idea, such a paragraph lacks unity, and it is a poor paragraph.

(b) Coherence: Coherence simply means that the writer must arrange the sentences within a paragraph in a logical manner that would not confuse the reader. The sentence that should come first should not come in the middle or come last. The ordering of the sentences should be logical enough to show a sensible relationship among the sentences, and clearly tell the reader what the writer intends to do.

(c) Completeness: Completeness means comprehensiveness. That is, none of the sentences should take the idea contained in a paragraph to another paragraph. A paragraph should be devoted to a main idea which must be exhausted in that paragraph. However, this does not imply that paragraphs within a given composition are independent. In fact, all paragraphs in a discourse should discuss one central theme that the topic of such composition suggests. To show relationship among the various sentences in a paragraph and among the individual paragraphs of a composition, the writer makes use of directional/signal words (words that show transition or indicate thought-flow pattern).

Types of Paragraphs

Basically, across various academic fields, there are seven types of paragraphs—*the introductory, transitional, concluding, explanatory, narrative, descriptive,* and *defining* paragraphs. However, based on how they are used, these paragraphs can be further grouped into two broad types—*the paragraphs that organise the text* and *the paragraphs that expand the composition*. These two broad divisions are discussed as follows:

(A) Paragraphs that Organise the Writing:

The paragraph types that come under this category are the introductory paragraph, the transitional paragraph,

and the concluding paragraph. They are briefly explained as follows:

i. The Introductory Paragraph:

The introductory paragraph is used to preview what the whole composition intends to discuss. It usually comes at the beginning of the essay, and it may be a question, a definition, a controversial statement, or an anecdote to stimulate the reader's interest. Conventionally, the introductory paragraph is one concise paragraph that gives a hint of what to expect in the subsequent paragraphs. It may also establish a link between some related issues that had been previously discussed in a different discourse or chapter, and what is to be addressed in the current discourse. A good introductory paragraph should not leave the reader in doubt as to what the composition intends to address; it must contain the thesis statement of the discourse. An example of the introductory paragraph is presented below.

Example 4

> The issue and concept of development have been so aptly and articulately addressed in some of the chapters of this book that further attempts to dwell on it in this chapter will be superfluous. To that extent, therefore, this chapter will focus on development journalism (DJ) and make only passing references to development as a concept.
>
> (Soola, E.O. (2003) "Perspectives on Development Journalism." In E.O. Soola (ed.) *Communicating for Development purposes.* Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, Pp.157-171)

The example above is an introductory paragraph: It contains the thesis statement which clearly declares what the whole chapter intends to address—to discuss in details the concept of development journalism, but briefly explain the concept of development. This statement alerts the reader to what to expect in the body of the discourse.

ii. The Transitional Paragraph:

It is found in the middle of the discourse between the introductory paragraph and the concluding paragraph. There are, however, some occasions when the transitional paragraph starts the text. As its name implies, the transitional paragraph moves the composition forward by discussing the points or ideas already previewed in the introductory paragraph. It reviews and previews. That is, the transitional paragraphs connect the sundry points discussed in the essay. To do this effectively, the writer employs the *transitional words* (such as *first, second, furthermore, additionally, again, in addition*) to establish connections among the various transitional paragraphs in the text. There is no prescribed number of transitional paragraphs that a composition must contain; the scope of the discourse determines this. However, the transitional paragraph is usually more than one in any good composition.

Presented below are examples of the transitional paragraph where the author uses the transitional word—*additionally*—to introduce the second paragraph and show that the point discussed in the paragraph takes the central theme of the discourse further:

Example 5(a)

> In December 2004, Google announced a book-digitizing partnership with the libraries at Harvard and Stanford universities, the University of Michigan, Oxford University, and the New York Public Library. The announcement raised concerns in Europe that American-based technology, in this case Google's search algorithms, would short-change European materials when users performed a search. By May 2005, the European Commission had announced its own digitizing project (http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do), which included nearly 100 million Euros for research and development of both search engine and digitization technologies. Such differing approaches mirror larger national cultures, Hargittai says. For example, European nations spend much more subsidizing arts and culture, while the US tends to rely on private initiatives such as the Google-library partnerships.
>
> *Additionally*, cultural and political differences have affected American technology companies doing business in China and in nations such as France and Germany, which have attempted to limit access to Web sites connected to far-right wing and neo-Nazi groups. For example, in 2000, French courts banned Yahoo (http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/filtering/google) from allowing French users to visit auction sites that included Nazi memorabilia. More recently, Microsoft's MSN Spaces service on its new Chinese portal prohibits bloggers from entering words such as "democracy" to label their web site.
>
> (Goth, G (2005). "Who—and Where—Are the new Media Gatekeepers?" *IEEE Distributed System Online*. Vol. 6, No. 7,Pp.1-5.)

In some cases, however, the transitional paragraph closes a major phase of the discourse and connects us to the next phase. When this happens, the opening of such a transitional paragraph gives a summary of the preceding section, while its final part tells us what the writer shall discuss in the subsequent section of the

discourse. An example of this type of transitional paragraph is provided in example 5(b) below.

Example 5(b)

> In this section, we have examined the two broad types of human communication; the verbal and the non-verbal. We have also identified and discussed their components and features. we shall now examine language as a means by which communication is expressed.
> (Oyewo, O.O. (2012) 'Human Communication, Language and Culture' in *African Cultures and Civilization,* A publication of the GSP Unit, University of Ibadan. p. 104)

iii. The Concluding Paragraph

The concluding paragraph is the final paragraph of a composition. It is usually one precise paragraph that reviews or restates the points already discussed in the transitional paragraphs. What the concluding paragraph usually does is to impress in the mind of the reader the important issues or points that the text has presented. In the example presented below, the author uses the phrase, *in conclusion,* to alert us to the fact that the paragraph is a concluding one, which gives a summary of the preceeding discussions:

Example 6

> In conclusion, scholarly writing in the social sciences is both a technique and an art. Social science writing is technical because, at its best, it must meet certain minimum formal rules of scientific research such as familiarity with the relevant social scientific literature, empirical data collection, and descriptive and/or causal inference. It is an art because there is so much innovative methodological variety in the field, and many of the rules of successful social science writing are often more implicit than explicit, and depend substantially on individual creativity, ingenuity, and judgement. These two sides to social science writing are inherent in the nature of the field as a probabilistic science, and the aspiring social science writer is encouraged to imbibe and make the best of this duality.
> (Gbadegesin, S.A. and Suberu, R.T. (2006). "Style of Scholarly Writing in the Social Sciences". In Olayinka, A.I., Adetimirin, V.O. and Ojebode, A. (eds.). *Scholarly Writing and Publication Ibadan: The Postgraduate School, University of Ibadan,* pp.84-91.)

It is very important for us to note that the word *conclusively* is not appropriate for concluding our composition. The word—*conclusively*—does not mean *let us summarise* or *let us conclude;* it means *decisively, overwhelmingly, categorically* or *authoritatively*. It suggests finality or irrevocability, technically meaning that no further discussion is allowed on the topic raised in the essay. As shown in the example of a concluding paragraph above, words and phrases that are more appropriate include the following: *all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in conclusion, finally, in the final analysis, in the long run, to summarize, to conclude, in summary, therefore, thus, as a result, to sum up, consequently*

(B) Paragraphs that Expand the Discourse

In this category are defining paragraph, explanatory paragraph, narrative paragraph, and descriptive paragraph. They present the content of the essay.

i The Defining paragraph

A defining paragraph gives meaning (connotation and denotation) of words, concepts or entities. This can be done through *direct definition, naming* and *description* or *attribution*. The paragraph below defines reading:

Example 7

> Reading is the process of communication through which most formal learning takes place. It involves understanding written language. Through reading what an author has written, you (the reader) set out to understand and respond to the author's message. Reading involves the processing of the written material before you against the background of your earlier experience and concepts. This means that when you are reading you should be thinking, predicting, questioning, evaluating, defining, and redefining.
> (James, S. (1984) *Reading for Academic Purposes*. London: Edward Arnold, p. 9.)

ii The Expository/Explanatory Paragraph

It is a paragraph that informs, explains or educates. The writer uses the expository paragraph when the purpose is to increase the reader's knowledge about a person, a subject, a phenomenon, a concept, or an issue. Both the expository and defining paragraphs share similar characteristics because they give more information about concepts. An example of the expository paragraph is as follows:

Example 8

> The advertising market in Africa faces a number of challenges, the most significant being the lack of timely and comprehensive research and monitoring data—required across all media to grow the advertising market in sub-Saharan

> Africa. In broadcasting, current ratings are too blunt to be of value, and overnight figures are only available in South Africa. There is a need to persuade private media institutions themselves of the importance of funding such research and monitoring. Those monitoring companies that do exist, including the Steadman Group (based in Kenya) and Media Marketing Services (MMS) in Nigeria, face a particular challenge in encouraging media organisations to work together to finance large-scale data collection and research. The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) and the Pan African Media Research Organisation (PAMRO) have established a committee with the aim of finding ways of measuring media in a uniform way across the region, and this will be an important step forward.
>
> (Culled from *BBC World Service Trust* (2006) "African Media Development Initiative: Research Summary Report." p.25.)

The paragraph above is expository because it attempts to discuss or explain the challenges facing the advertising market in Africa. The purpose of the passage is to present information that would enable us to have a better knowledge of the situation presented.

iii The Narrative Paragraph

A narrative paragraph is used mostly in creative writing or in reports of an event, a project, or an occasion. It presents facts or incidents in a chronological order that projects logical relationship or connections among fragments of actions that make the whole event being reported. Basically, a narrative paragraph is written in the past tense because it is an account of a past event. It must have **the people** (characters) that caused the event to happen, **the actions** of the characters, **the location** (scene/setting), and **the time** showing the sequence of **the event** (situation). In narrative paragraphs, there are always some elements of description in respect of the characters, the setting, or the actions. An example is given below:

Example 9

> The Assembly was merely a forum for formalizing decisions already taken behind the scenes. Accordingly, various communities sent representatives to consult with Ojukwu and his advisers privately and to bargain for concessions. I was among those chosen to represent the Rivers people in a private interview with Ojukwu at the State House in Enugu on 2 September 1986. Some of the others in the group were N. Nwanodi, Wenike Briggs, Richard Woyike and Chief Harold Dappa-Biriye. We meandered through the

> heavily-guarded gates into the spacious and well-appointed lounge. It was not long before Lt-Col. Ojukwu appeared flanked by his bodyguards. Clasping his hands behind him in the at-ease position, he walked down from one end of the long room with slow measured strides. His chief secretary, N. U. Akpan, was with him. We soon settled down to business.
>
> (Adapted from Amadi, E. (1978). *Sunset in Biafra: A Civil War Diary.* London: Heineman Educational Books, p. 17.)

The paragraph above is narrative because it presents a clear account of what happened shortly before and when Lt-Col. Ojukwu arrived at the venue of a meeting with the representatives from the Eastern region. It presents the people, their actions, the place, and the time of the meeting.

iv The Descriptive Paragraph

It is a paragraph that uses words to paint clear pictures of persons, actions, objects/things, processes locations, or structures. The writer uses words that appeal to the reader's senses, by conjuring vivid mental pictures or images. It is found in creative writings, news stories, court, and police records, among other formats of writing. The paragraph below is descriptive. It gives a graphic picture of a character, Unoka, in Chinua Achebe's popular novel—*Things Fall Apart.* The description in the paragraph is not just about the physical attributes of the character—Unoka. It also highlights his psychographic attributes.

Example 10

> Unoka , for that was his father's name, had died ten years ago. In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow. If any money came his way, and it seldom did, he immediately bought gourds of palm-wine, called round his neighbours and made merry. He always said that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth, he saw the folly of not eating what one had in one's lifetime. Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbour some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts.
>
> He was tall but very thin and had a slight stoop. He wore a haggard and mournful look except when he was drinking or playing on his flute. He was very good on his flute, and his happiest moments were the two or three moons after the harvest when the village musicians brought down their instruments, hung above the fireplace. Unoka would play them, his face beaming with blessedness and peace....

(Adapted from Achebe, C. (1973). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, pp.3-4)

4.2.2.2 Thought-Flow Patterns

Thought-flow patterns are also called paragraph patterns. They refer to ways of organising or developing ideas, thoughts or information in each of the paragraphs that make up a discourse in such a way that our messages or ideas are effectively communicated. They are paragraph development devices. The most frequently used of these thought-flow patterns are (1) whole-part, (2) cause-effect, (3) problem-solution, (4) comparison-contrast, (5) sequence, and (6) generalisation.

It is possible that a paragraph contains more than one thought-flow pattern. What matters, however, is that the reader should be able to recognise the predominant pattern and, possibly, the complementary one(s) in the paragraph. Similarly, no single pattern is necessarily restricted to or is absolutely prescribed for a single paragraph. But, to a large extent, two major factors account for the types of thought-flow pattern you would adopt to organise your thoughts: first is the function or purpose of the paragraph, and second is the subject of the discourse. For example, some thought-flow patterns are more frequently used in science-based discourse than others. Also, some patterns always occur in paragraphs that define while some occur more often in discourse types that narrate or describe. The knowledge of this purpose-driven variation would always assist the reader or listener to anticipate and follow the thoughts of the writers or speakers, and equally help the writer or speaker to employ the thought patterns that match the discourse. The identified paragraph patterns that are usually employed in essay writing are discussed below:

1 **Whole-Part:** This is also called *simple listing* or *enumeration*. It is employed to show how various parts fit together to form the total whole. Whole-part pattern, as the name implies, involves presentation of a major topic, a general statement, a concept, a body of ideas, or a whole entity, and moving ahead to discuss or list a number of facts that support the major topic, or the component parts that make the whole. It is often used in paragraph types that explain or define. James (1984:28) suggests some tips for identifying whole-part or enumeration pattern:

(a) The opening sentence often announces the topic and prepares you (reader/listener) for the sub-topic.
(b) The opening sentence may take the form of a definite statement of fact after which points in support are listed.
(c) A series of points or details are given and a definitive statement (i.e. a generalization) is presented at the end.
(d) The sub-topics, points, or details are usually independent elements of the total picture (i.e. they are related to, but are meaningful on their own without the whole).

Transitional words such as *first, second, third, several, another, then, following* and *also* are found in paragraphs that predominantly use whole-part pattern. An illustration of a paragraph that uses whole-part pattern is given in example 11 below.

Example 11

> The *Amoeba* is the simplest unicellular organism that is heterotrophic. It takes in complex food, digests it in a food vacuole; uses the soluble food for its activities and growth; and gets rid of the undigested food material. It is sensitive to the presence of food in its environment and moves towards it quickly. The *following* features help it to obtain food:
>
> - a sensitivity to the presence of organic substances in its environment,
> - ability to move, using pseudopodia;
> - ability to capture food using pseudopodia, and ingest it into its body in a food vacuole.
>
> An *Amoeba* gets rid of excess water that enters its cell by using a contractile vacuole. The *Amoeba* cell grows to a certain size. *Then*, it stops growing, and reproduces by dividing to form two daughter cells.
>
> (Adapted from Ramlingam, S.T. (2003). *Modern Biology for Senior Secondary Schools*. Onitsha: African First Publishers Limited, p.205.)

In example 11 above, the writer uses the first sentence of the first paragraph to present the general nature of the amoeba—*the simplest unicellular organism that is heterotrophic*. This, of course, is the main idea (the general statement) that the writer expands in the other sentences of the paragraphs where the author gives the other characteristics of amoeba.

2. Cause-Effect: This is a thought pattern that a writer can employ to establish causality. Causality is the relationship between or among the various forces/variables at play in the course of an event. Cause-effect paragraph pattern shows how one thing causes another or what leads to another (i.e. the effect of 'A' on 'B'; how 'A' leads to 'B'; or how 'B' is caused by 'A'). It attempts to answer the questions 'what', 'why' and 'how' (e.g. what were the causes of Nigerian Civil war? What effects did the civil war have on Nigerians? What causes malaria? How does malaria affect proper functioning of the human body system? etc.), and it is mostly used in expository/explanatory paragraphs, argumentative compositions and scientific discourse. It attempts to chronicle the effects of some occurrences in society or nature. To recognise cause-effect pattern in a written text, the reader should (1) look for a direct

statement that the writer may use to set off the premise or introduce the cause(s), (2) look for the cause(s) by asking the questions 'what', 'under what conditions', and 'why', and (3) locate the effect(s). Also, two strategic points the writer has to consider are (1) whether to explore causes or effects or both and (2) what is the order of the causes or effects the writer is to pursue — from the least to the most important, from simple to complex, from specific to general or vice versa. Signal words that always feature in cause-effect paragraph pattern include *thus, if...then, therefore, as a result of, subsequently, due to, hence, because, actually, although, in addition to, finally, for example, thereof, whereof, clearly* and *under these circumstances*. Example 12 below illustrates the cause-effect pattern.

Example 12

> The erosion of the middle of the labour market is easy to misinterpret, *because* its roots are multiple. During the 1970s, the entry into the work force of an unprecedented number of women and of young adults born during the baby boom resulted in too many workers for the jobs available and depressed wages. The decline of the middle also has something to do with the explosive growth in world trade since 1960. As manufacturing technologies have become more mobile and multinational firms more footloose, production jobs have migrated from the U.S. to countries where wages are low. In addition, technology itself has helped to provoke the shifts in the job market. For example, fewer American workers would have been needed to make steel in 1980 than in 1960 even if the pressures of global competition had not been a factor, *because* new machines have made many of their tasks redundant. *Finally*, the high rate of unemployment caused by these trends has tended to drive wages down further, especially at the low end, *since* it forces unskilled workers to compete for their jobs with unemployed people who are willing to do the work for less.
>
> Although demographic shifts, stepped-up world trade, unemployment, and especially the advance of technology all have had an effect on the shape of the job market, middle-level jobs have been disappearing ultimately *as a result of* the ways in which technological gains are being distributed. When a machine replaces a production worker, both the firm and consumers as a group benefit. The loss falls mainly on the worker who is displaced. *If* that loss is generalized to millions of high-paid workers, they suffer as a group and the economy as a whole suffers a loss of worker

purchasing power. *Thus* the lack of a mechanism to distribute some of the financial gains from technology to the work force comes back to haunt the entire economy.

(Adapted from Friedlander, J. (2010) *Principles of Organization*. http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/organization.htm)

In example 12 above, the writer analyses the effects on American workers of an economy that relies heavily and increasingly on technology. With the use of signal words such as *because, if, thus, since* and *as a result of,* the paragraphs project the central focus of the writer—the various causes and effects of the phenomenon being discussed.

3. Problem-Solution: This thought pattern is mostly employed in scientific discourse, instructional manuals, laboratory experiments, and argumentative discourse. Robinson, cited by James (1984:31), says that problem-solution pattern may be presented in any of the following styles:

(a) the problem may be clearly stated and followed by a solution(s) also clearly stated;
(b) the problem may take the form of a question and the solution(s) form the answer to the question;
(c) the problem may be clearly stated followed by hypothetical (not yet empirically proved) solution(s);
(d) the problem may be clearly stated without proffering any solutions; and
(e) both the problem and the solution(s) may not be clearly stated; thus it is the responsibility of the reader to detect and infer the pattern.

Whichever method the writer intends to adopt, what is important is that, at least, one of the variables—problem and solution—must be included in the paragraph(s), either clearly stated or implied. The following are examples of signal words that are frequently used in problem-solution thought-flow pattern: *analyse, examine, why, explore, then, clearly, mix, shake, trace, outline, describe, develop, itemise, juxtapose, demonstrate, evaluate,* and *list*. The pattern is illustrated in example 13 below.

Example 13

Electricity can be dangerous and needs to be treated with a great deal of respect. *Why can electrocution so often prove fatal?* When a person touches a high voltage wire, current will start to flow through the person to earth. The amount of current depends on the resistance offered by the person between the wire and earth. Wearing rubber boots will decrease the current but having wet skin will increase the current (this is why extra care has to be taken with bathroom electrical fittings, which should be

operated by pull-cords so that the actual electrical switch is nowhere near your wet hand).

(Adapted from Nelkon and Parker (1995). *Advanced Level Physics* (7th Edition).New Delhi: CBS Publishers & Distributors, pp. 289.

In example 13 above, the problem is introduced in the first paragraph and it is re-emphasised in a question form in the second sentence—*Why can electrocution so often prove fatal?* The writers go ahead to answer the question by giving more explanation on why electricity is dangerous and electrocution is always fatal. They eventually suggest solution to the danger of electric shock. Thus, the first part of the paragraph raises the problem while second part suggests the solution.

4. Comparison-contrast: This is the thought pattern that presents the similarities (comparison) and differences (contrast) between a set of concepts, entities or personalities either in a single paragraph or across a stretch of paragraphs. Sometimes, especially when the major purpose of the discourse is to compare and contrast, a paragraph may concentrate on the similarities alone or on the differences alone. The pattern is often used in all types of serious or formal writing. Summerset (2010) suggests the following alternatives a writer that wants to use compare-comparison thought pattern may adopt:

(a) *Compare, and then contrast*

Here, the writer first discusses the similarities between two concepts, then proceeds to chronicle their differences. Instead of focusing on each individual aspect, this format brings the discussion over to their actual comparison and contrast, outlining the different features that make the subjects similar and distinct. It is highly advisable that the writer begins with comparison and then moves on to contrast, so that the emphasis will be placed on the contrast. This will allow the differences to be more unforgettable to the reader.

(b) *Describe one idea, and then describe the other*

This is perhaps the most natural way to organise a comparison essay. Most beginner-writers use this format. In this style, the writer discusses the first subject in one section of the discourse, and then discusses the second subject in another section of the discourse. The writer does this by outlining the characteristics that make subjects similar and different, within the respective section.

(c) *Take specific elements and discuss them one at a time*

This is a more advanced form of structuring comparison-contrast paragraphs. The writer discusses characteristics of two subjects, individually, often as one paragraph each. Each paragraph focuses on one particular element, ultimately showing how the two subjects are similar or different.

(d) *Only compare or only contrast*

When the writer wants the essay to particularly tilt towards either of the two subjects' similarities or differences, then, this style is more appropriate. If the writer only wants to compare two ideas, then, he or she briefly contrasts them in the introduction, before proceeding with the rest of the text, fully focusing on similarities. Similarly, he does a quick comparison at the beginning, before proceeding to write an entire discourse on differences if the major purpose is to contrast. Signal words that are commonly used in comparison-contrast paragraph development include *likewise, while, similarly, too, in the same vein, conversely, even then, in opposition, on the one hand, despite the fact that, on the other hand, as well, in contrast, the same way/manner, equally, also, but, in other words, on the contrary, regardless, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, still, though, otherwise, notwithstanding,* and *at the same time*. Example 14 below shows a comparison-contrast pattern:

Example 14

> There are two major types of morpheme: free and bound morphemes. A free morpheme is one that can stand on its own. A free morpheme qualifies as a word. It is the base to which affixes are added...
>
> *Conversely*, a bound morpheme is a morpheme that cannot stand on its own. It is attached to another morpheme. This does not mean that a bound morpheme is meaningless. Bound morpheme bifurcates into derivational and inflectional morphemes. *While* derivational morpheme brings about a change in word class (e.g. noun to adjective), inflectional morpheme does not bring about any change in the word class. *In other words*, the addition of an inflectional morpheme does not change the part of speech to which the free morpheme belongs. Bound morphemes are essentially affixes (SIC). If the morpheme comes before the base, it is called a prefix. If it comes after the base, it is called a suffix or postfix. If it comes in-between the base, it is called infix. This is non-existent in English.
>
> *Unlike* derivational morphemes, inflectional morphemes do not bring about change in the part of speech to which the base belongs. *However*, some derivational morphemes are also class-preserving. *While* they cause change in meaning, they do not change the word class.
>
> (Ogunsiji, A. and Sunday, A. (2008). "Grammatical Units". In Alo, M. & Ogunsiji, A. (Eds.). *English Language Communication Skill for Academic Purposes*. Ibadan: General Studies

Programme (GSP) Unit. University of Ibadan, pp.131-133.)

The writers have combined alternatives *b* and *d*, as explained above (i.e. *describe one idea, then describe the other:* and *only compare, or only contrast*). The writers introduce the basic types of morpheme in the first paragraph. They devote the rest of the paragraph to describing a free morpheme. They use the second and the third paragraphs to discuss a bound morpheme and its variants. However, they discuss only the differences of the morpheme types (i.e. *only contrast*).

5. Sequence: This paragraph pattern is mostly used in literary (narrative) and historical discourse where it is necessary to project an event or a body of thoughts in a sequence or time order. For this reason, the sequence pattern is also called *time-ordered* method. It describes and establishes the connectedness of the various phases/ stages of an event in a logical time and space order. It is also used to present a sequence of steps, guide and processes involved in scientific experiments, technical procedures or instructional manuals. The following are examples of clues (signal words) used to present a sequence: *first, next, then, later, after, moments later, after that, before, earlier, after a while, as long as, in the mean time, at last, at length, further, meanwhile, shortly, lately, now, presently, thereafter, in addition, second* and *simultaneously*. Sequence thought-flow pattern is illustrated in example 15 below.

Example 15

> The drums and the dancing began again and reached fervent heat. Darkness was around the corner, *and* the burial was near. Guns fired the last salute *and* the cannon rent the sky. *And then* from the centre of the delirious fury came a cry of agony and shouts of horror. It was as if a spell had been cast. All was silent. In the centre of the crowd was a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen-year-old son, who with his brothers and half-brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father. Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart.
>
> (Adapted from Achebe, C. (1973). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, p.112.)

In example 15 above, the writer has been able to describe and present the sequence of actions that culminated in the whole tragic event—how, in the middle of a riotous burial traditional rite characterised by shooting and wild dancing, a gun exploded and killed the dead man's son.

6. Generalisation: This mode of paragraph development is usually employed in discussing or proving a scientific theory, a mathematical law, a proposition or a principle which can be subjected to

proof. The pattern may also be used in analytical essays that are based on arguments or philosophical logic. Generalisation, according to James (1984:30) is "a general statement setting forth a principle, a theory, a law, or a hypothesis". Therefore, generalisation, as a thought pattern is different from whole-part. The general statement in generalisation is often a product of a well-proven, accepted theory and scientific principle. The writer may start the paragraph with a hypothesis (general statement) and use the rest of the paragraph to establish the validity of the hypothesis, theory or law, as the case may be. Examples of the signal words associated with generalisation are *therefore, as a result of, subsequently, thus, because, under these circumstances, when* and *hence*.

Example 16

> The *first law of thermodynamics* states that energy cannot be created or destroyed: it can only be transformed from one form into another. All living organisms store energy as chemical energy in their bodies. They use it to do "work". "Work" refers to their metabolic activities. This work is done through the conversion of chemical energy into other useful forms of energy. Thus all living organisms are *energy converters*. This is in accordance with the first law of thermodynamics.
>
> (Ramlingam, S.T. (2013) *Modern Biology for Senior Secondary Schools* Onitsha: African First Publishers Limited, p.38.)

Generalisation pattern is used in example 16 above to prove the *first law of thermodynamics*. The author first presents the law—*energy cannot be created or destroyed*.—and goes ahead to prove the law by explaining how energy changes from its chemical form to another form that can be used to do work.

7. **Analogy:** Analogy is a paragraph pattern that draws a connotative comparison between two entities that are, by their nature, obviously different but have some symbolic similarities. Analogy as a paragraph pattern is employed to teach some moral lessons or emphasise some points in order to persuade or convince the reader to take certain action or believe a cause. It is mostly used in political speeches, argumentative or persuasive discourse. It may appear like the comparison-contrast paragraph pattern, but the two are distinct. While comparison-contrast thought-flow pattern is mostly used to establish the natural differences or similarities between two entities, analogy in essence, is didactic or moralistic, and is used not primarily to establish the obvious similarities, but to metaphorically use two entities to teach some lessons, or make some points. Analogy is used in the paragraphs below culled from a speech delivered by Winston Churchill in 1945 at the Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri.

Example 17

Before we cast away the solid assurance of national armaments for self-preservation we must be certain that our temple is built, not upon shifting sands or quagmires, but upon the rock. Anyone can see with his naked eyes open that our path will be difficult and also long, but if we persevere together as we did in the two world wars—though not, alas, in the interval between them—I cannot doubt that we shall achieve our common purpose in the end.

I have, however, a definite and practical proposal to make for action. Courts and magistrates may be set up but they cannot function without sheriffs and constables. The United Nations Organisation must immediately begin to be equipped with an international armed force. In such a matter we can only go step by step, but we must begin now. I propose that each of the Powers and States should be invited to delegate a certain number of air squadrons to the service of the world organisation...

(Source: Alimole, O. (2002) *Speechwriting: A guide for Diplomats and Public Officers.* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc. P.77.)

In the paragraphs above (example 17), the writer draws some similarities between the American nation and a temple that must be firmly built on a rock in order to remain eternally solid. Also, the author compares the United Nations Organisation to Courts and Magistrates, which cannot function effectively without the services of sheriffs and constables. The paragraph is analogical because it teaches patriotism and determination as basic ingredients for building a strong and united political institution.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have discussed writing as a process which involves adequate planning and organisation. Before you embark on any serious writing, you need to determine the subject (purpose) of your essay, analyse your audience, and consult relevant sources to get the useful materials for your writing. Then, you need to design an outline that will guide you as you write. We have also discussed the various tasks you need to perform as you do the actual writing, and what you should do before you turn in the final copy of your essay. We rounded off the chapter by examining the core writing skills that are essential for a successful writing exercise.

Post-test

Having read this chapter this while, you should now be in a better position to carry out some writing exercises. Attempt the following, therefore:

(1) Select an interesting topic suitable for an expository essay and do the following:

(a) Identify the purpose of your essay.

(b) Do a focused *freewriting* to structure your thoughts/ideas; limit yourself to 10 minutes.

(c) State where and how you will get information (materials) for your essay.

(d) Prepare a hypothetical outline for your essay. Your outline must reflect the core parts of the essay – the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

(2) Yinka, your 45-year-old American-born Aunty, has written to her ancestral family back in Nigeria desperately wishing to adequately understand how some selected Nigerian foods are prepared. The family has commissioned you to write a good *recipe* on one of the local dishes in your village.

(a) What predominant thought-flow pattern(s) would you adopt for this type of writing?

(b) State the reason(s) for adopting the thought-flow pattern(s).

(c) Write the *recipe* you intend to send to the Aunty in America (250 words).

(3) Use expressions or phrases such as *a terrible day indeed, inside the thick smokes, I was lucky to escape the scene without being arrested, I bear the scar till today, I felt a hot grip on my bruised neck, shortly before that time, moments later, and while that was going on* to describe your experience during a deadly mass protest in which you were actively involved.

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5

TYPES OF ESSAYS AND FORMS OF WRITING

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Introduction

The types of written exercises that are required of University students vary. You will be expected to write different forms of assignments, tests, correspondences and examinations. In fact, more than 80% of your examinations may be in the written form. The types of writing differ in subject matter, level of formality, length and other technicalities. Just as students in the Faculty of Arts need writing skills, so do students in the Sciences, Education, Agriculture, Engineering and Basic Medical Sciences. No student, whatever the course of study, can evade written assignments. We can choose to make writing engagements a delight or an ordeal. Writing does not only help us to meet the basic challenges of daily communication as undergraduates, it can also become a form of livelihood when we build careers in journalism, publishing, teaching, research and many other fields.

Objectives

After reading this chapter, you are expected to have learned about

- the different forms of writing;
- the skills required to effectively tackle them; and
- salient problems in writing.

Pre - test

- What types of writing do you often do in your studies?
- What pre-writing activities do you engage in?
- What are the different types of writing you know?
- What difficulties do you face in your writing tasks?

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE WRITING?

Whether the task is a take-home essay, a term paper, an end of semester examination, a long essay or a letter of request, effective writing is that which clearly and purposefully presents the message of the writer. What question are you attempting to answer? Is your purpose to inform, interpret, argue a point or make a submission? Who is/are your reader(s)? Your classmates? A lecturer? Your Head of Department or Dean? In what capacity is the reader assessing or accessing your writing? For examination purposes? As an official transaction? In an informal setting? These are the questions you have to answer while you prepare to write so as to ensure effectiveness in message delivery.

In answering the question, "who are my readers?" you need take into consideration characteristics such as sex, educational background, economic status, values, and religion of the readers. Knowledge of these variables will go a long way to help you to get your message across and cater for the peculiar needs of your readers. Your choice of words, expressions, illustrations and format must reflect a foreknowledge of the readers. It will be out of place to write a term paper with flowery, informal language, well laden with slang.

When writing, you should remember that writing proceeds from thought. Every piece of writing should possess three qualities: economy, simplicity and clarity. Strunk and White (1979) observe that the first quality of every good piece of writing is economy. To them,

> a sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentence, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts.

The point being made by these writers is that every word should count and be a useful part of the whole sentence. A good piece of writing should not be verbose or tedious. Wordiness should not be equated with intelligence; neither should the use of difficult, polysyllabic, and high sounding words be misunderstood as evidence of a mastery of language. In some cases, the use of such rambling words and phrases may be a show of ignorance Your sentences should be simple, straightforward and easy to decode. However, in an attempt to be simple, your sentence construction must not follow a monotonous pattern. You can accomplish this by varying the structure of your sentences, using a mixture of simple, compound and complex sentences. Clarity entails saying what you want to say with precision and certainty. If you find yourself using the same word over and over again, use a thesaurus to find synonyms or antonyms. Your readers are not mind readers, do not leave them guessing and asking: What is the writer trying to say here? Be explicit. It is equally important for you to maintain unity and coherence. All the sentences in each paragraph should be built around a central theme or topic sentence. Do not deviate from the central focus of each paragraph; remember, a paragraph is a collection of sentences built around a main idea.

The Writing Process

To make your writing clear and precise, you may follow the following stages: **pre-writing; writing** and **post-writing**. These have been explained fully in Chapter Four.

TYPES OF ESSAY

There are four types of essay. These are the expository, the narrative, the argumentative and the descriptive types of essay. We shall discuss them one after the other.

The Expository Essay

Exposition is a type of writing that explains. An expository essay answers the following basic questions: (1) How do you do it? (Process analysis);

(2) How is it similar or different from something else? (Comparison and Contrast);
(3) What sub-divisions does it contain? (Classification);
(4) What are its characteristics? (Definition); and
(5) Why did it happen? (Causal Analysis).

When an expository essay defines, it gives meaning or identifies the characteristics of things (especially those that are abstract). It expatiates on an idea or concept using evidence. The definition may simply be the dictionary definition. It may also be de-limited or operationalised, such that it specifies the exact meaning or sense of the word as you wish to use it in your writing. Thus, you emphasise one meaning and exclude others. The expository essay that defines may also use extended definitions that modify/ give examples of important characteristics, history or variations of the term or concept.

The expository essay that analyses may be either a process analysis or an item analysis. In analyzing a process, you give explanations on how a procedure works or an enumeration of how a system operates. For instance, you could write on how to build a local oven. In an item analysis, you look into the reasons for a situation. Here, you investigate reasons or causes of a situation, you may as well discuss the effects that resulted from this situation. In writing an analytical expository essay, you are expected to study the subject closely, explore and interpret the meaning.

When an expository essay gives explanations with the aid of classification, it is important to use broad categories for the various components and the divisions must be clear. The classification must be full or exhaustive, and each unit must be under the appropriate category. When you develop an expository essay using comparison and contrast method, focus on similarities and differences. You may bring out the advantages and qualities of a thing over the other. You may also explain an unfamiliar concept with a familiar one. Remember the comparison of living and non- living things that your integrated science teacher taught you in the primary school? He must have used phrases such as "living things do this, while non-living things cannot do this". To be able to effectively use Comparison-Contrast method to develop an expository essay, the subjects must have enough in common to be compared or enough differences to be contrasted. In other words, there should be sufficient important parallel points to consider.

The expository essay could be about a current issue or the writer's opinion about a topical issue. A piece of writing that is expository in nature will give information assembled in several related paragraphs. The following are some general topics on which you can write expositions-Democracy, University examination, Cancer, True Religion, Investments, Life after Death, Success, Freedom of Information Bill, Plane Crashes in Nigeria, The June 12 Saga, Relationships, Living off-campus, and so on.

Whatever topic you choose to write on or you are given to write on, the first step is to delimit the topic sufficiently for the task required. In other words, from

the general subject, a writer will need to develop a thesis or narrow down his view to specifics. His/her introductory paragraph must clearly state the point he/she wishes to make in his/her essay. The next step is to gather information on the topic. The sources of information earlier discussed in Chapter Four are still very relevant. The choice of secondary or primary sources of information will depend on the length of the essay, level of knowledge of the audience on the topic and the time available to you. (Is it a take home assignment or a class work?) The expository essay benefits a lot from what the writer has been able to learn over time. You become a teacher because you are relaying knowledge about what you have also gleaned on the topic by conducting some research.

In writing the essay, right from the introduction, you must capture the reader's interest. An expository essay must not be dull or boring. You should engage the reader and give him sufficient impetus to read further. The facts and details must be cross-checked and arranged in a logical manner. Where necessary, use examples and illustrations. You must be objective, write without bias and lay emphasis on the topic. Ensure that you begin with a general subject and then narrow it down to the specifics. Remember that an expository essay is more effective when you present information that is new (not common knowledge), relevant and factual. The reader should be able to say after reading: I see, and I now understand better.

The Narrative Essay

In Chapter Three, one of the literary genres discussed is the prose (fiction/non-fiction or narrative). The prose fiction or narrative is a form of writing that tells a story or recounts an event or an experience. It could be a biography, a factual story, a diary entry or a fairy tale. The narrative essay is about events and circumstances as they affect people in places and at a certain time. Unlike other essay forms where topic sentences drive each paragraph, the opening sentence in a narrative essay focuses on the truth or lesson the writer wishes to establish in telling the story. The narrative essay thrives on imagination and ability to weave a tale around the most ordinary of events. It requires some kind of tension in the telling so that the reader has something to look forward to; otherwise there is no story. The narrative is more captivating when it invokes an emotional response in both the writer and the reader.

One effective form of narration is to tell a story in the order in which the events unfold. Usually, one tells a story from what happened first and next in a chronological order which is a progressive order or the sequence in which the events occurred. The use of chronological order does not, however, stop you from using flashback as a story-telling device. The need may arise to take the reader back in time to a past event which explains a present situation. Though the narrative essay is basically story-telling, you still have a need to establish the thesis of your essay and decide what information carries the story forward.

In writing the narrative essay, certain development tools are required. The story is built around a plot, characters, actions, events, conflict and settings. The plot is the storyline or a plan of action around which conflict is built. The plot can also be defined simply as a meaningful and dramatic sequence of actions or events. The conflict may be a controversy, crisis or problem that looms large and requires resolution. Your writing should be such that the reader wants to read further to answer the question: "So what then happened?" The characters should be clearly distinguished and well described. The writer needs to make them real and original. The setting of the story should be established in space and time. In other words, when writing a narrative essay, you should name a place where the events took place as well as the period covered by the story (year or historical period). This makes the story come alive and allows the reader to picture the scenario in which the events took place. When the writer names the place and the period during which the events being narrated took place, readers may be able to better appreciate the circumstances surrounding the narrative.

To ensure unity, you need to keep track of the sequence of the events, the portrayal of the characters and the dialogue. Bear it in mind that everything in the story must tell and fit into the complete picture. Next is the need to have supporting details or information. These are ingredients that will make the telling dramatic and make the reader feel like he is experiencing the event as it happened. One effective way of doing this is to use dialogue. Through dialogue, you can show the personality of the character. Thus, instead of saying Romeo is a wicked man, you can present Romeo's wicked nature through the things he says or what others say about him. In writing the dialogue, you may first introduce the characters who are engaged in the conversation and then set off the dialogue using quotation marks, e.g.

> As Romeo and David drove into the parking lot of their ex-partner, Damian, the car skidded to a halt and the tyres screeched.
> "I am personally going to supervise the handling of that traitor, I will wring every little detail of the transaction from him even if I have to slice his wrists to get him talking", thundered Romeo.
> "You have to calm down, my man, you almost got us killed just now with your reckless driving!", David hissed as Romeo jumped out of the car.

Narratives use pace, which is the speed at which events are narrated. Sometimes narration has to be fast and at other times, slow, so that events can be narrated into details. The writer controls the tempo of the narration through the pace. Also worthy of note is the point of view, which is an establishment of the person or position of the narrator. When the story is told using the pronoun "I" or "we", the story is told from the first person narrative point of view. When the writer uses

this point of view, the narration is limited; it is only from one observer and the writer records only what she/he can see and hear. If the story is recounted saying what "he", "she" or "they" did, the story is being told from the third person narrative point of view. Here, the narrator is omniscient (everywhere) and has a wider scope from which to narrate the events. He can say what each of the characters thinks and does; hence, he can manipulate the telling of the story to suit his/her purpose.

The argumentative Essay

We all hold different points of view and need solid evidence to support what we believe. The argumentative essay is an attempt to convince a reader about a belief or postulation held by the writer. You support this viewpoint with facts and proof based on logical reasoning. An argumentative essay turns a question into a problem and through well informed, reasonable and well thought out submissions, sways the opinion of the reader in support of the view being put forward. The argumentative essay, like the persuasive essay, uses inductive and deductive reasoning. (This will be discussed in fuller details under the persuasive essay). Using tactful, courteous language, you start by finding points on which people from both sides of the argument agree. You acknowledge other viewpoints and, when appropriate, admit the validity of differing viewpoints. When a writer does this, it will be possible to point out problems with the opposing view to show where an opponent's argument breaks down. The argumentative essay also makes use of a rebuttal or refutation. A rebuttal can take two forms:

1. You can first mention all the points raised by the other side and present some of the counter arguments (if you know any) to each of these points.
2. You can take the points, one at a time, and refute them individually.

In writing an argumentative essay, you state objectively and dispassionately, the facts and reasons surrounding your stand or point of view. You need to make a strong case to overcome the objection of the opposing side. Your essay is a justification of your opinion and ideas.

The central point must be established from the beginning of the essay so that the readers know what ideas you are supporting. It is sometimes necessary to give some background information on the topic, define essential or important terms and provide a basis for the point of view you are supporting.

The Persuasive Essay

The major difference between the argumentative essay and the persuasive essay is that while the argumentative essay stops at stating why a writer supports a point of view, the persuasive essay goes a step further to provide logical basis for the reader to have a change of view. In essence, the writer of the argumentative essay gets the reader to say "I see the reason behind your point of view" while the persuasive essay makes him to say, "I see the logic behind your argument and I agree with

you". The persuasive essay goes a step beyond the argumentative essay by making a call for action. The purpose of persuasive writing is to bring about changes of opinion or action in the reader. Not only does the essay make an attempt to convince the reader to accept an idea or policy, it specifies what the reader should do based on conviction from the argument. Some other times, persuasion may be about getting an audience to at least, respect our position on an issue.

There are several forms of evidence that can be used to develop arguments both for the argumentative and persuasive essays. These include

1. Facts and Statistics,
2. Appeal to authority,
3. Appeal to emotion,
4. Examples,
5. Anecdotes, and
6. Logical interpretations or appeal to reason.

In persuasive writing, it is not sufficient to have a lot of good evidence; readers must feel that your argument makes sense before they will buy into it. The following steps are suggested for ensuring effectiveness in writing the persuasive essay:

1. Define the issue and clarify terms.
2. Present reasons and supporting evidence.
3. Connect with audience.
4. Avoid error in logic.
5. Qualify or specify your claims.
6. Counter opposing reasons and audience objection (refute opposing views).

One good way of starting your essay is to point out common grounds (just like with the argumentative essay) and then acknowledge other viewpoints. As you do this, be mindful of the fact that your purpose is to bring about either a change of opinion or action in the reader. Persuasive writing follows a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning. You may apply general principles to a specific situation.

Inductive reasoning is that which expresses a relationship between two statements with the first serving as a reason for the second. In inductive reasoning, a general conclusion is reached at the end of a process in which a whole series of facts or evidence is gathered and weighed. To be able to adopt inductive logic, you should make generalizations based on your own experiences. The conclusion in an inductive argument is carefully worded to reflect the evidence that has been presented and to show that the conclusion is drawn based on the evidence. For an inductive argument to be acceptable, the following requirements must be satisfied

1. The explanation (or conclusion) must account for all the facts.
2. The evidence must be observable and reproducible by others.
3. The evidence must strongly support the conclusion.
4. All other probable explanations must be excluded.

For instance, an inductive argument will make reference to evidence from a survey or a body of facts and not personal opinions. The following words, for example, signal that a conclusion is being drawn in an inductive argument: *therefore, in conclusion, hence, consequently, based on the findings from a survey* and so on. For instance, when writing in defence of breastfeeding as the best feeding options for infants, you can start by saying:

> A survey of five hundred babies between ages 0-3 months shows a pattern of wellness among babies who are fed strictly on breast milk. The babies sleep for longer hours at a stretch and are less colicky than babies fed on infant formula.

While the writer may be able to point at a relationship between breastfeeding option and babies' wellness, she/he cannot categorically state that babies fed on infant formula are always colicky or that the processed milk is responsible for the restlessness observed in the children or that it causes sleeplessness. The use of *always* here is more of an opinion and over-generalization than a statement of fact; so the logic is flawed. To state the reasons on which the conclusions are drawn, writers use words like *first, second, because, for instance* and *as shown by*, among others.

Deductive reasoning begins with a generalization, adds a related statement and ends with a conclusion that is necessarily drawn from the two statements. The three- statement argument in deductive reasoning is called syllogism.

Major Premise: All 100 level students of the University of Ibadan must take GES 101.
Minor Premise: Motunrayo is a 100 level student of the University of Ibadan.
Conclusion: Motunrayo must take GES 101.

Here, we see the argument moving from the general (all 100 level students must take GES 101) to the specific (Motunrayo). The major premise in a syllogism must be true and the argument valid before the conclusion can be justifiable. In inductive reasoning, you gather the fact, weigh the evidence carefully and state the conclusion.

In writing the persuasive or argumentative essay, students should avoid fallacies or errors in logic. These are errors in reasoning which may occur in either inductive or deductive arguments. Some of the fallacies and false assumptions are as follows:

1. **Non- sequitur**: This means an argument that does not follow from the premise or evidence, e.g.
All living things can move.
A car can move.
Therefore, a car is a living thing.

2. **Hasty Generalization**: This refers to a conclusion based on too small a sampling.
Bankers dress neatly.
Thelma dresses neatly.
Therefore, Thelma is a banker.

3. **Stereotypes**: Making an argument based on general assumptions or bias about race, gender, religion, age, ethnic group and other sub-cultures or related variables.

4. **Unreliable authority**: A writer may sometimes quote an authority in support of his/her arguments in an essay. Please note that only authorities that are qualified experts with requisite credentials and sufficient experience on the subject matter may be cited.

5. **Ad hominem**: This is an argument that attacks the person and not the issue. Here a writer faults a motion by drawing on the character of the opponents. He leaves the issue and poisons the mind of the reader by attacking the person who is proposing the view. A statement like "The Local Government Chairman is a political nutcase, so one can understand why he will not advocate free education for the girl-child." In this case, first, the impression is given that the Chairman is an unstable fellow, so the reader may not be allowed to critically consider why he is making a case against free education for the girl-child.

6. **False analogy:** The refers to the idea that some similarities between two things indicate total similarity between the two.

"If Nigeria negotiates with Boko Haram, we will have another civil war on our hands just like when Dimka led the first coup d'état."

Some other faulty arguments include false analogy or wrong comparison.

7. **Begging the question**: This refers to what a writer does when she/he draws a conclusion without providing evidence or reason; or a form of circular reasoning that assumes the truth of a questionable opinion, e.g. "The President's poor relationship with the north is responsible for his lack of concern about the Boko Haram scourge. (Is it true that the President has a poor relationship with the North?)

8. **Bandwagon**: This is an argument based on a premise that everyone is doing something. It involves asking someone to take a viewpoint because the crowd is going in that direction. An example of an argument based on popular belief will start with an expression like "Everyone knows that African leaders are ..."

The Descriptive Essay

The descriptive essay follows a process of relating details to help the reader to see what the writer has seen. It is an attempt at painting pictures with words. It has also been called a written portrait of what the writer saw or observed. A descriptive essay could be of a person, a place, an event or a phenomenon. The descriptive essay communicates personal experiences of the writer and answers the question "what does it look like?"

In writing a description, the author will often choose spatial arrangement. You simply organize details from

one point in space to another so that the reader can easily visualize the scene. Descriptions can go from top to bottom, inside to outside, far to near, right to left, specific to general or vice versa. If you are writing a descriptive essay on a place, at the pre-writing stage, it may be necessary to visit the actual place or examine the object or phenomenon whose portrait you wish to draw with words.

It is also helpful to use a list of the physical dimensions, colours, shape, size, feel, smell, touch, and qualities of the object being described. In other words, the sensory impressions can be very effective in helping you paint a vivid picture with words. A technical description focuses on the visible and verifiable objects. You have to be objective, factual and non-personal because the characteristics of the item being described are visible to all. In essence, in writing the descriptive essay, you have to identify significant features in the object under scrutiny and invoke all the senses in an attempt to give necessary details.

The words used in descriptive writing have to be specific or exact because you cannot afford to confuse the reader about the picture being painted. To improve your descriptive skills you have to improve your observation. A good writer must not be guilty of looking and not seeing. While attempting to paint a picture with words, it is very useful to use analogies so that you can make comparisons with similar subjects with which the readers are familiar. It is not sufficient to say an object is big, but how big? Is it enormous, mammoth? Can it take up the space occupied by a three-storey building? As big as ...? In essence, what metaphor or simile will give the reader an idea of how massive the object really is?

FORMS OF WRITING

Whether the essay is narrative, descriptive, argumentative or expository, it will take a particular shape or form such as letter, report, article, review, and so on. In this section, we will look at each of the different forms an essay can take. Note that elements from narrative, descriptive, argumentative and expository may co-occur in the same form of an essay.

CORRESPONDENCES

a. Memos

Letters, memos, and lately, e-mails are relevant forms of writing. All these forms of writing are referred to as correspondences. A memorandum (plural - memoranda) is a short form of written communication circulated within an organisation and exchanged by employees in the daily conduct of their work. They often contain routine enquiries, routine responses, policy instructions and directives.

The major difference between letters and memos is that while letters are circulated both within and outside an organisation, memos are disseminated only within organisations. Memos may be of the same length, formality of tone, writing style and pattern of organisation as letters, but they differ in their format or mode of arrangement.

Memos omit both salutation and complimentary close. They usually require subject line. A subject line is the title of the document. It serves four purposes:

- It aids in the filing of documents and thus makes retrieval easy.
- It gives the reader a reason to read further
- It provides a framework or delimitation (scope) for the message that follows.

Headings, unlike subject lines are optional in memos. They occur within the body of the memo. Where sub-headings are used, each section must be limited to a point and the point must be exhausted under that heading. Memos never use indented paragraphs. The first letter of the reader's name, the writer's name and the subject phrase are lined up vertically. An inch margin should be observed at the top and bottom of page. When writing a memo, use single space within paragraphs and double space between paragraphs. Use text format for the date, for example, July 1, 2003. Usually, most organisations prefer the one-page memo. However, where the information cannot be squeezed into one page, put the key points on a well designed page, and continue with further information on the second page. No matter how loaded the points are, with careful revision, you can still bring out a one-page memo. For readers who need more information, appendixes can be attached instead of making the memo unnecessarily long.

For organisations that already have letterheads for memos, where Date/To/From/Subject are already printed on the form, the reader's name, the writer name and subject may be set at the main margin to save typing time. Memos are usually signed with the initial letters of the writer's names to let readers know that the writer did write and read the memo, and to ensure that no one sends out a memo in another person's name. In some organisations, employees are required to sign memos rather than just write their initials on them. In such cases, the signature comes after the last line of the memo and starts halfway over the page.

A Sample Memo

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN
FACULTY OF ARTS
INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

From: Faculty Officer (Arts) To: All Heads of Department

Ref: FA.HSD/113
Date: 26/3/2012

Joint Board of Examiners Meeting

I am directed to inform all Heads of Departments that the Joint Board of Examiners Meeting will hold on Tuesday, 30 March, 2012 in Room 32 of the Faculty at 1:00p.m. A hundred (100) copies of the non- final year students' results should be submitted by each Department. These documents should get to the Faculty Officer not less than 24 hours before the meeting.

Thank you.

.....
M.A. Akowe
cc: All Academic Staff
Examination Officer

b. Letters

There are two major categories of letters, the formal and the informal. However, some scholars have carved out a third category: the semi-formal letter. The distinguishing factors among the three types are format and style. The destination of a letter determines its format and the category under which it will be classified. Letters serve different purposes: there are letters to editors, letters of complaints, demands, enquiries, notifications to school authority, and so on.

As a university student, you may have to write a letter explaining why you missed a test or why you have to travel home in the middle of the semester. You may also have to write to protest the non-release of your GES 201 result or a clash in your examination time-table. A discovery that another student is using your matriculation number does not call for panic; rather, all you need is a well crafted letter of complaint to the MIS (Management Information System) Office. Most likely, you may have to write letters to apply for scholarship, accommodation, employment and many other things. Letters are strictly issue-related and the issues covered may not always be positive. However, where the issue is negative (for instance a sack letter), the message can still be skillfully worded to guard against confrontations or ill feelings. In other words, a letter can be strongly worded but not rude.

A business letter has six parts: heading, inside address, salutation, body, closing and signature. The introduction of letters may be direct or indirect. It is logical to begin with a reference to how they originated or what purpose they are meant to serve. Experts believe that the test of a good letter is a simple one. If one seems to hear the writer's voice as one reads, it is a good letter.

There are rules guiding letter writing:

- *The Address of the writer*

This should not include his/her name. However, if there is no letterhead, the writer may include the company's name. For formal letters, the first page should use the organisational letterhead which tells who the writer(s) is/are, their address, phone numbers, fax numbers, name and titles of their offices. The second and subsequent pages should be plain papers (without letterheads)

- The date should be placed below the address of the writer and it should be written in full. The conventional date form presents the month, day and year, e.g. March 4, 2003. When dates are abbreviated (4-03-2003 or 4/3/03) they make the letter appear informal and leave an unfavourable impression.

- The Inside Address/Receiver's Address

This must be written on a line below the date at the left-hand corner of the paper. If the name of the person being addressed is unknown, one may use the title. While some writers are of the opinion that names should always

be used, others maintain that official titles should be used in place of names, e.g. The Chairman, Dean of Arts, etc. The second option is preferable since a letter addressed to an individual can only be treated by that individual.

- ***Salutation or Opening Greeting***

The salutation is written immediately below the last line of the receiver's address. It should align with the receiver's address at the left margin. The choice of words is based on the writer's level of familiarity with the receiver and the formality of the situation. Some authors recommend the use of title plus receiver's last name only. Where abbreviations are used, they should be only commonly abbreviated words (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.). Some gender sensitive organisation use Ms. for all women. They claim that unless the recipient's marital status is of relevance, there is no need to indicate Miss., or Mrs. Here Ms. becomes appropriate because it refers to a female either married or single. Unlike what some people misconstrue, it does not imply that the individual is divorced or separated; it simply does not denote any marital status. Please take note of a punctuation error usually associated with titles: a title should be followed immediately by a fullstop for example Mr., Dr., Prof., Mrs., or Ms.; the reason simply being that all these are abbreviated forms of the titles.
When you do not know the receiver's name or appropriate title, simply say, 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Ma'.

- ***Subject line***

A subject line tells what the letter is about. While memos always carry subject lines, not all letters employ them. A good subject line is specific, concise and appropriate. It should state your purpose and the response you need from the reader. The subject line may contain specific and helpful information: date of previous correspondence, invoice number, order number and so on. If it is a reference letter for employment, you may state the applicant's name and the post applied for. The subject line is placed a double space below the salutation.

- ***Closing***

The common formal signing off greeting or salutation is 'Yours faithfully', 'Sincerely' and 'Yours truly'. Some recent scholars argue that there is no need to add 'Yours' to 'truly', faithfully and whatever other form of salutation you choose. So, simply write: Truly, Sincerely, Faithfully, or Respectfully, as the case may necessitate. Please note that the closing is followed by a comma and only the first letter of the first word is capitalized, for example, "Yours respectfully". However, the writer - reader relationship predicts the closing. Other forms of closing are 'Best regards,' 'Best wishes,' 'Love,' "Regards,' Respectfully yours,' 'Sincerely yours,' 'Take care,' and 'Thank you', just to mention a few.

Signature Block

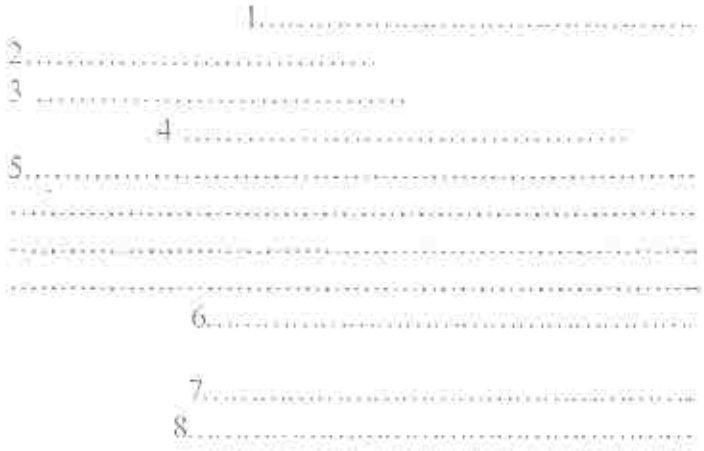
This appears on the fourth line below the closing. First, you have the typed name of the writer and the writer's signature appears in ink just on top of the typed name.

Information Notations

This appears in abbreviated form on the lower left corner of the letter. It may include the initials of the writer and the typist (OAE: rh) Also included are file name notations, enclosures and other offices for which copies are prepared. These notations are, however, optional.

Other rules

a. Punctuation for letters is either mixed or open. In mixed punctuation: a colon follows the salutation and a comma follows the close. In open punctuation, omit all punctuations after the salutation and the close.
b. Be consistent in placing the text of the passage either flush left or indented. Use double space between paragraphs.
c. Avoid clichés or buzz phrases like 'please find enclosed', 'Yours of 22nd April refers...', and so on.
c. Make the contents of your letter clear, brief and straight to the point.
d. Let your opening paragraph establish your purpose.

Fig. 1: Sample Formal Letter Format

Key to the graphic representation in Sample Formal Letter

1. Address of the writer
2. Inside address (Address of the receiver)
3. Salutation
4. Subject line
5. Body of the letter (the message)
6. Complimentary close
7. Writer's signature
8. Writer's typed name

Exercises

1. Why are subject lines important?
2. Mention three conventions (rules) in letter writing.

NEW MEDIA FORMS OF WRITING

a. E-mail

Within the last two decades, communication via the Internet has significantly increased in developed nations. In Nigeria, in the past couple of years, there has been an increase in the use of e -mail, especially in organisational communication. The e-mail can act as a carrier of information as well as an informal message organ. The e-mail format is very similar to the memo format. The advantages of the e-mail are many:

- It is cost effective.
- It reduces paper traffic.
- It acts as organisational memory.
- It reduces geographical constraints.
- It increases the quantity of communication within an organisation.
- It increases the number of communication relationships.

In spite of these advantages, the e-mail may not replace letters and memos in business communication because:

1. It lacks confidentiality and is more open to abuse by fraudsters.
2. It is too informal.
3. There may be information overload; sometimes many people are copied on the same mail so you have to skim through several pages before getting to the message.
4. There may be network or electricity supply outage (power failure).
5. It lacks visual or aural clues.

The e-mail also has its own conventions or what is referred to as netiquettes. Some of these are:

- Focus on purpose and context of your message
- The circumstance where the e-mail is appropriate is specific. You cannot send an employee an e-mail to terminate his/her appointment.
- E-mail is not a private form of communication: messages can be intercepted, so policy issues or company secrets may not be exchanged via e-mail.
- Any information you send via e-mail may be used as evidence in court, so remember that every message is permanent and retrievable.
- You may use a subject line to alert your reader on what to expect.
- Don't use capitals all through your mail; it appears as if you are shouting.
- Any time you have to leave your desk for an extended period, log off your computer. Since e-mails do not come with handwritten signature, a spiteful or aggrieved co-worker may use the few minutes you left your box open to send an incriminating mail from your account.
- Check your box often.
- Target your message to reach its appropriate audience, not everyone on your mailing list.
- Use correct spellings, grammar and familiar abbreviations.

Since most e-mail programs have readymade format, the information on the screen will act as a prompter for

you. Always remember that the e-mail is an evolving medium; so, keep updating your knowledge on its usage and application.

Exercises

1. List the advantages of the e-mail.
2. When is the use of e-mail not appropriate?

b. Blogs

A blog is a piece of writing presented on the Internet as a post. It evolved as a form of online diary or journal where individuals posted updates on their daily lives. Blogging has become such a celebrated art and has assumed a very important position as a form of writing. Bloggers are drawn from all walks of life. The community of all blogs on the Internet is called blogosphere.

Topics covered in blogs are multifaceted; they could be narrow or wide. Blogs are usually in the form of texts but some bloggers may post only art works, photographs, videos, music, audios (podcasting) or videos. When blog postings come as short messages, this is called micro blogging. One thing that distinguishes a blog from a regular piece of writing (take for instance, an article in the newspaper), is its interactive nature such that it becomes a kind of social networking tool. Apart from social networking, blogs have been used in the past for political campaigns and to express personal opinions on social issues.

There are different types of blogs, depending on the nature of content and the way the blog is delivered or written. Some of the types are briefly explained as follows:

- Personal blogs- This is an ongoing diary that showcases individuals' reflections on their lives and daily experience.
- Corporate and organisational blogs- It refers to a corporate post used internally by a group, or externally, to inform others about activities within a corporation. It can be used for marketing purposes.
- [illegible] genre - Blogs can be described by the particular subject which could be health, fashion, education, music, family, art and so on.
- Reverse blog- This type of blog is put together through the efforts of the users rather than a single blogger. There are several contributing authors writing on one topic at a time.

Other categories are blogs classified by media type. For example, there are sketchblogs, photo blogs, vlog (video) and so on.

Here are a few tips on blogging:

- Remember that the contents of your blog are on the Internet; always write with a sense of responsibility.
- You can employ the same sources of information you use for your other writing assignments.
- Unlike newspaper articles, the reactions and comments to your blog post may be immediate.

so you must master how to handle and moderate comments, especially negative ones.
- Identify the genre or scope of your posts and stick with topics you are knowledgeable about.
- Observe all the rules of grammar and the conventions of writing in general.

c. Chat Room Discussions

The chat room is another web based discussion group which is characterized by the exchange of short messages among people who belong to a group. The chatters (those engaged in the chat) often have things in common and are identified by usernames. Chat room discussions are set up for a variety of reasons which range from academic to social. In some instances, the sites are moderated and the discussion thread is controlled. The etiquettes (or "netiquettes") for chat rooms are similar to those of e-mails. However, chat rooms use more of emoticons, abbreviations and short phrases than the e-mail do. Writers are expected to announce their arrival or joining of chats and also disclose when they are getting off. Some people join chats without contributing to the discussion; they are said to be lurking.

The rules of turn-taking in chat room discussions are similar to those of everyday conversation. You have to address the individuals you are chatting with by name so that they will know you are talking to them. Whenever you post a response, make sure it is not longer than three sentences at a time and allow a few moments for people to read and respond to your message before you post again. When your contribution is lengthy, break it into short segments and end each with "more...". Then continue the message in the next post. Write with clarity and conciseness, and seek clarification when you join a discussion and you are confused about what the discussion is really about or what someone else posted. Do not write using capitals all through because it is tantamount to shouting. When you are signing out, indicate that this is your last post.

REPORTS

A report is an article which gives an account or presents information about an occurrence or phenomenon. Lesikar *et al* (2000: 277) define a report as "an orderly and objective communication of information that serves a business purpose." A report is characterized by organisation and purpose. It may not always be tied to a business function: it may be academic in nature. It usually begins with a précis or an executive summary, then it analyses the information, providing reactions, opinions or recommendations. Chappel and Read (1974:138) define it as:

> a document in which a given problem is examined for the purpose of conveying information, reporting findings, putting forward ideas and sometimes making recommendations intended to serve as a basis for action.

The key words in this old but relevant definition are documents, problems, examined, information and solutions. Soola (1998) defines a report as "a specialized, professional and academic writing, structured and presented to aid the decision making process of the authorizing body". The words frequently used in these definitions are structured, orderly, factual, specialized, objective and professional. Reports are usually initiated by an authorizing body whose intention most often is to apply findings from the report to the organisation's policy or decision making process. Formal reports are documents which require comprehensive research and analysis. Often, findings from reports provide information that is employed in solving problems.

Reports vary in length (they may be extensive or short), degree of formality and complexity of data and analysis. Reports may present:

1. Information only,
2. Information plus analysis, or
3. Information, analysis plus recommendation

Types of report include accident reports, credit reports, justification reports, audit reports, trip reports and interim reports. These can be further classified into three broad categories:

Regular and Routine Report

- Periodic Reports
- Progress Reports

Production Reports/Occasional Reports

- Disciplinary Reports
- Situation Reports

Commissioned Reports

- Policy Formulation/Changed Reports
- Consumer Research Reports
- Investigative Reports
- Feasibility Reports
- Proposal Reports

Periodic reports are distinguished by the frequency of publication, e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual, progress, occasional or periodic reports. The report writer should seek answers to the following questions:

- Who are the readers that will most likely be interested in my writing?
- What do my readers know or think they know about my subject? Is the source of their knowledge direct experience, observation, reading or rumour?
- Why will the readers be interested in reading this report? If they know a great deal about the subject, what do they expect to learn from reading my submission? If they know only a few things, what more will they expect to learn about the subject?
- How can I make the readers interested in my subject? If they are hostile, how can I get their attention and convince them to consider my point of view?
- How can I help the readers to enjoy the report? What kind of organisational pattern do I employ? What kind of guideposts and transition markers will they need to follow the pattern?

If you have successfully answered these questions, the next stage in the report writing process is gathering of data. Depending on the nature of the report, the sources of data vary. They could be primary or secondary. The sources available are the same for other forms of writing. They include books, journals, encyclopaedias, statistical sources, the Internet and so on. A survey may also become necessary to supplement and complement findings from secondary sources. The survey instruments of note are interview and questionnaire. In some other instances, a direct observation may be necessary and if the report is being compiled by an administrative or judicial panel, a call for memoranda may be made. You must evaluate sources to determine how reliable and appropriate they are for the assignment.

You must be clear on the objectives or goals of the report. Your goal is to provide very solid and specific information for your readers. Reports are always called for when:

1. The subject matter is complex and technical.
2. There is quantitative material being presented or comparisons of some kind are being made.
3. There are implications or ramifications to the information being presented that may require some additional information or explanation.
4. The materials will be the basis for further study or for decision making.
5. The writer has been asked to provide recommendations or outline a plan of action, and it is necessary to provide the rationale for such decisions.

Exercises

1. What are reports?
2. Identify three qualities of a good report.
3. Write a report on the condition of the rest rooms and conveniences in your hall of residence; evaluate the implications of this for the well being of the occupants of the hall.

REVIEW

A review is an expository essay or critique. The word critique as used here does not mean "to find fault" The Greek root of the word means to separate, discern or choose. A review is a write-up that is based on informed reading; a response to what has been read. It summarises an original piece, drawing references from its main ideas and major support points. It presents the reader's reactions to the material and reasons for those reactions. Writing a review is not all about fault finding, even though the reader may give an opinion on whether the piece is good or bad. Rather, it is an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the work. The writer may make direct references to the original piece and present some extracts or use his/her own words. Book reviews are aimed at evaluating, speculating, separating and reacting to the views expressed by the writer. The work of a reviewer is to assess the various parts of a work or subject and interpret the meaning.

A good review draws a distinction between facts and opinions. A factual statement can be proved or disproved through findings based on experiments, measurements or research. An opinion is an expressed belief about a subject. Before one can write a good review, one needs to carefully read and understand how a material is structured. A review presents the writer's overall opinion of the work. The reviewer needs to highlight aspects that other readers may appreciate. The introduction to a review should present not only the title of the book but the number of pages, name of author, name of publishers, year of publication, genre, name of reviewer, and other relevant background. The three major steps to a review are the preview, the reading and the review proper.

The Preview

The first stage in a review is to preview or scan the material. Is it an essay, a novel, a play, a collection of poems, or what? You can start with a careful consideration of the title; this will reveal significant information about what you are about to read. The genre or field will determine the nature of the review. For a novel, play or other related works of art, five basic elements will be examined. They are plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and theme. In the preview stage, the reviewer may need to dig into the head note or available biographical materials so as to get acquainted with the author's background. The reviewer also needs a foreknowledge of some of the other works of the writer, his/her usual techniques, style and themes. Other things to watch out for at this stage are preface, date of first edition, date of current edition, price (optional), binding: (is it paperback or hardcover?) cover illustration, and so on.

Read

The next important step is to read. The type of reading required here is active, the reading speed is slow. You read with a view to understanding, analyzing, assessing and scrutinizing the content. You assess the claims of the writer and weigh his/her arguments based on reason. As you read, think over what you are reading; add footnotes. Where words or sentences leap out of the page and suggest meaning, underline them or use colour markers to highlight them. Mark transitional statements as well as quotations that emphasize what you are reading.

Review Proper

This is the stage at which you harness your thoughts and present your analysis of the star ideas expressed by the author. It is basically your reaction to the work. The reviewer at this point provides answers to the questions of the '5 w's and 1 h': Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

In your review, note which chapters would make good subjects for deeper analysis. Also, find answers to these questions:

1. Did the book meet my expectation?
2. What did I learn from the book that I did not already know?
3. What is the contribution of the book to scholarship?

Moreover, the reviewer should establish the purpose of the work or its thesis. With brief quotation or illustrations, show how the work fulfils this thesis. In your review, you may pitch the book side by side with another work/other works on the same topic or a similar topic. So, what is your overall opinion of the book? Would you recommend it to other readers? What new things should readers look forward to learning from the book? Your job is to state your opinion of the book. You may also indicate the audience that is best suited for the book. Some reviews indicate how long it took the reviewer to read and information on where the book can be found.

Exercises

1. Suggest three words that can replace "review".
2. Identify the three major steps in writing a review.
3. Attempt a review of the current literary text for GES 201.

RESEARCH PAPER/TERM PAPER

A research paper is an extensive, formal composition, giving information assembled from readings in a number of sources. The purpose of this form of writing is to find out how much a student has discovered and internalised from reading about a particular subject. The paper is a summary of the facts so far gathered by the student on the given topic. Many research papers are purely informative. They are expository in nature although there may be aspects that will require some measure of description and persuasion. Whether the assignment is a term paper or a long research paper, much reading will be required. The paper may need to define concepts, explain processes, defend a point of view or uphold an idea.

In some cases, the subject for the paper is given. However, if the subject is not given, the student should select a subject that he finds interesting and topical (relevant) to the course for which the paper is being written. It is equally important to select a subject that is not too wide for the scope of the assignment so that it can be well treated. Students should choose a subject on which there is no paucity of materials. If you delve deeply into a narrow subject, you will have a better paper than someone who treats a broad subject superficially. Some topics are not researchable because they dwell on subjects that are too biased, too current, too specialised or of a personal nature. Your subject should be appealing to readers and contribute something of value to scholarship.

The next stage in writing the research paper is to draw up a working bibliography. Remember, we said the subject must lend itself to research. Also, sources must be available in the library. You need good books and journals; you may also do an Internet search for books and electronic journals. Sometimes, students get information from personal interviews or correspondence with individuals who are authorities on the subject.

As you read each material selected for the paper, take note of the publication details: name of author(s), title of the material, place of publication, year of publication and page. This should be the first information you write down in your notes. As you

read through the materials, take down information which you think might be usable. You have to decide how much you will write word for word and what you should write in your own words. Remember that a research paper should not consist of a mere list of quotations; you should evaluate the claims or opinions expressed by the authors you are citing. It is expected that you will critically examine your sources, gather facts and ideas and present them in your own words.

However, we should be quick to note here that a serious and common fault in research papers is the use of direct quotation or copying without acknowledging the source. You can be accused of plagiarism! This is the use of the words, data and information credited to some identified scholars as if they were your own. When you write, always give credit to your source of information especially when you are quoting word for word from a material. Set off a copied material, within the text, with quotation marks (if it is less than three lines). When it exceeds three lines, place the extract as an indentation.

After you have gathered sufficient materials on the subject, your next assignment is to arrange the notes you have gathered according to the various relevant sub-headings. Note that some of the notes you have gathered may be discarded. Draw up an outline so as to ensure a proper organisation of your materials as well as a thorough treatment of all facets of the subject matter.

The next step is to prepare your first draft. Do not waste time over getting the right opening sentence or the appropriate words; this is a rough draft. The requirement at this point is for you to put your thoughts together. The final draft can take care of issues of style, transitional words or phrases and layout. Other important considerations in writing the term paper are the use of footnotes, bibliography or reference. If you do not want to clutter your paper with the citations of sources, you can use footnotes. Write a number to the right and above the final word in a quotation or ideas taken from one of your sources. The numbers should follow a sequence showing the order in which the citations appear. Plan each page in a way that there will be space at the bottom to present the footnotes for the sources cited on that page. When footnotes appear together at the end of the paper, on a separate page, immediately preceding the bibliography, they are called endnotes. Students are advised to follow the style specified by the teacher or the department.

The bibliography is the list of all sources used in a paper. It must be prepared with care so that it is complete, accurate and consistent in form. Entries on sources are arranged in an alphabetical order according to author's surnames. If there are co-authors, the first names of the second and third authors are written first. When an item occupies more than one line, the second line is indented. Two popular referencing formats for long essays are the APA (American Psychological Association) and the MLA (Modern Language Association) formats. The University of Ibadan has also developed a format which postgraduate students use in their theses/dissertations.

Some research papers may call for charts, tables, graphs, diagram, illustrations and other graphical presentations. When any of these pictorial presentations is used, the student must make sure that they add to the quality of the paper. In other words, don't just pad up your paper with unnecessary illustrations and diagrams. The figures must be relevant and clearly labelled.

Application

1. Write a letter to the Hall Warden protesting your wrongful suspension from the Hall of residence for an offence committed by one of your room mates. Explain your role in the matter and seek redress. Be factual and courteous.
2. You have been asked to write a report on "Course Registration in the University of Ibadan". How will you go about it?
3. As the coordinator of your Social Club, write a memo informing other members about the line-up of activities for your proposed annual week celebrations.

PROBLEMS STUDENTS FACE IN WRITING

For many students, writing an essay is an ordeal. Like we pointed out in the introduction, the writing assignment need not make a student despair. Many of the challenges faced by students of writing have to do with lack of writing skills. The first recommendation we will make is for you to familiarise yourself with the demands of the various forms of writing and the technicalities involved in each. The General Studies course material on the Use of English is a tool- book for students who wish to improve on their writing.

Another problem which arises is lack of understanding of the writing assignment. You are expected to take good note of the demands of the question. Ask yourself: "What is expected of me? Is this an argumentative or a persuasive essay? If it is a descriptive essay, do I know enough to be able to paint a vivid portrait of the object?" Next, the writer has a need for a brainstorming session or what some writers call ideation. First, jot down all you know about the topic. If time permits, do some research and read up on the topic. Rub minds with others and glean information and ideas from them. After putting these ideas on paper, try to fashion out an outline or skeletal framework of the write-up. Note, not every idea that comes to your head needs to go into the essay.

When you start the actual writing, remind yourself that this is a first draft, one way to avoid staring at a blank page is to free-write. In other words, keep writing whatever comes to your mind, leave the fine-tuning till later. Organise your materials into the three broad divisions: introduction, body and conclusion. Check your paragraphing and ensure that you maintain unity by keeping one unit of thought and related supporting details in each paragraph. Break your submissions into paragraphs and decide what method of paragraph development will be ideal for each point.

The next major challenge students face is that they do not know how to re-write. In addition, language related problems can make writing a nightmarish experience for a student. You must check your essay for correctness, coherence and clarity. Your sentences must be grammatically correct- check for spellings, diction, tenses, agreement between subjects and verbs, appropriate use of words (keep your dictionary and thesaurus handy). Avoid the use of abbreviations and spellings (such as be4, evry1, 'cos, nd, u, luv (love), etc.) associated with writing on some websites. Students also have challenges with punctuation; the question is when do you use a comma, a semi-colon, a colon an exclamation mark and even the full stop? Putting a full stop after a group of words or phrases does not make a sentence. You must ensure that your sentences make complete sense and the meaning is clear and without ambiguity.

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6

PUNCTUATION MARKS IN ENGLISH

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Introduction

Punctuation is very important in encoding and decoding a message. It is a representation of the pauses and gestures we make while we speak. If omitted or misused, punctuation is powerful enough to change the meaning of an entire sentence. Compare the meaning of the two versions of the following sign on a door and people's reaction to the instruction therein:

No Entrance Alarm Will Sound

The absence of the full stop sign makes it sound as if there is no entrance alarm that will sound. Hence, several times, people undermined the warning and triggered the alarm whenever they passed by. The sign was corrected thus:

No Entrance. Alarm Will Sound.

The inserted punctuation mark (periods/fullstops) made a great difference, as passersby avoided the door. The use of the periods brought out the intended meaning of the warning sign. In this chapter, we'll look at punctuation marks and how they're used in sentences.

Objectives:

At the end of this chapter you should be able to:

1. explain what punctuation marks are;
2. identify the various types of punctuation marks in English; and
3. use punctuation marks effectively.

Pre-test

1. What is punctuation?
2. Why do writers use punctuation marks?
3. Can punctuation marks affect meaning(s)?

What is Punctuation?

Punctuation is the system of symbols that we use to separate sentences and parts of sentences, and to make our writings clear, meaningful and interesting. Each symbol is called a punctuation mark. Also, punctuation adds emphasis, information, and pause to a piece of writing. Punctuation marks are like "traffic signs" for readers. They guide us through the network of words and ideas that any piece of writing presents. As writers,

We punctuate written essays or texts for two reasons. First, it is to provide order and structure to disorganised strings of words. Without punctuation marks to indicate starting and stopping points, pauses, and other breaks, most readers would not understand or appreciate the message we are trying to convey. Second, as writers, we punctuate our sentences to add style to our writings. Speech is punctuated, quite often, with gestures, pauses, tone changes, breathing, and facial expressions. Each of these adds a subtle meaning to the spoken sentence that it accompanies, but all of them don't appear when words are written. We sometimes use punctuation marks in place of natural stylings: a comma adds a dramatic pause; an exclamation mark emphasises a crucial moment. A mark of punctuation can serve the same purpose as frantically waving hands to a friend.

Rules of Punctuation

Today, questions about punctuation range from where to put a comma to whether or not the period goes inside or outside of the quotation marks. Much of our punctuation can be explained as part of our grammatical structure. So, when discussing certain marks, one often refers to the grammatical structures that the marks support.

The modern system of English punctuation is by no means simple and straightforward. The following rules and guidelines should illuminate your understanding of the basic structure of contemporary punctuation.

The Period or Full Stop (.)

The period or full stop is used to indicate a major pause. The purpose of the period, as any first-grader should know, is to represent a long pause or a break. There are several uses of the full stop. Some of the uses are discussed below:

a. With Imperative and Declarative Sentences

The period comes at the end of imperative and declarative sentences that are not written or spoken with the force of an exclamation.

Examples:

1. Pass the salt. (imperative)
2. Say hello to my friend. (imperative)
3. The postman always rings twice. (declarative)
4. Oil floats on water. (declarative)

b. With Requests and Questions

The period may end a request, an indirect question, or an imperative sentence phrased as a question.

Examples:

1. Would you please turn your television down. (request)
2. He wonders who she is. (indirect question)
3. Would you stop tapping your foot. (imperative sentence phrased as a question)

c. With Abbreviations

The period appears after some abbreviations and between certain initials.

Examples:

A. D. (Anno Domini)	Mr. (Mister/Master)	Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)
A. M. (anti meridian)	Feb. (February)	Mrs. (Mistress, married woman)
B. C. (Before Christ)	i.e. (That is)	P.M. (post meridian)

You should note that abbreviations and initials are a tricky bunch. Some take the period, while others do not. Acronyms, which are formed by using the initial parts or first letters of a name, word, institution, etc. are some examples of abbreviations that do not take periods: examples include OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). It should be noted that acronyms are pronounced as single words. There are, however, abbreviations that are formed using the initial letters of words that are not pronounced or used as single words. Examples include IBB (Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida), UN (United Nations) and AU (African Union). There seems to be no rule guiding the system. Note also that a sentence that ends with an abbreviation or a set of initials does not require an additional period to mark its end.

Examples:

1. The relics date back to 800 B.C.
2. I will see you at 3 P.M.

However, if the sentence is a question or an exclamation, add the appropriate punctuation mark after the period that ends the abbreviation or set of initials.

Examples:

1. Did he earn a B.A.?
2. He arrived at nine A.M.!
3. I asked him to meet me at seven P.M., but he didn't arrive until eight.

d. With Ellipses

A series of periods, known as an ellipsis, indicates missing words in a quote. Three periods indicate words missing at the beginning of the quote and within the quote, and four at the end of the quote. The fourth ellipsis includes the period that signals the end of the sentence.

> Countries like Brazil have already done this…Brazil has used a mix of regulation and direct government investment to develop a highly efficient biofuel industry…
> (Barrack Obama, 2006, *The Audacity of Hope*, p.169.)

The Comma

The comma is a mark of separation. It may divide items in a series, distinguish subordinate from main clauses, and insert stylistic pauses, among other things. Here are some of the instances in which a comma is used

a. With Adverbial Clauses

Use a comma after an adverbial clause that begins a sentence.

Examples:

1. Until we have your final report, we cannot take a decision.
2. Because we are such great friends, I am asking you this favour.
3. If we diversify our economy, the issue of unemployment will be addressed.
4. When I was a child, I used to dance with my mother.

When the adverbial clause ends a sentence, the comma is omitted.

Examples:

5. We cannot make a decision until we have your final report.
6. I am asking you this favour because we are such great friends.
7. She finds it difficult to go to school whenever it rains.
8. Sade stopped coming to class early since she bought that shirt.

The underlined parts of the sentences from examples 5 to 8 are adverbial clauses. Because they come after their respective main clauses, they do not need any comma.

b. With Verbals

Place a comma after a participial phrase, a simple infinitive, or an infinitive phrase that introduces a sentence.

Examples:

1. Seeing her again, I felt my heart go pitter-patter. (participial phrase)
2. To fly, one needs a strong pair of wings. (simple infinitive)
3. To win this competition, we must trust each other completely. (infinitive phrase)

Do not use a comma after an infinitive that functions as the subject of the sentence. This is because items that function as a subject of a sentence are not separated by commas. If you separate an infinitive that functions as a subject of a sentence with a comma, it will result in a wrong construction and it can alter the meaning of the sentence.

Examples:

1. To drive a Honda would be an exhilarating experience.
2. To sail the River Niger was a childhood fantasy of mine.
3. To eat is desirable.

c. With Prepositional Phrases

Put a comma after a prepositional phrase that begins a sentence if you feel that it can clarify the meaning or make the sentences easier to read. This comma is, however, optional.

Examples:

1. After the concert, we stopped for a cup of coffee.

Or 2. After the concert we stopped for a cup of coffee.

3. In Calabar, we toured the royal palace.

Or 4. In Calabar we toured the royal palace.

d. With Conjunctive Adverbs

Commas are needed to set off a conjunctive adverb from the sentence of which it is a part. If a conjunctive adverb begins the sentence, use a single comma after it. If a conjunctive adverb appears amidst the other words in the sentence, place a comma before and after it.

Examples:

1. Consequently, the ship sank just three miles from its home port.
2. Bunmi said, however, that she could not let these mistakes go unreported.
3. Again, we are forced to the issue of a confederating Nigeria.

e. With Negative and Affirmative Adverbs

Use a comma after a negative or affirmative adverb (no or yes) that begins a sentence.

Examples:

1. Yes, that is Oreofe.
2. Yes, I have set the table.
3. No, I will not buy you a car.
4. No, he did not graduate from New Castle University.

f. With Nouns in Direct Address

Commas are used to set off nouns in direct address.

Examples:

1. Mr. Adekunle, assume the push-up position.
2. I told you, Ms. Achebe, that we no longer sell cow milk.
3. Kazeem, wash those clothes.

g. With Interjections

You need a comma after an interjection at the beginning of a sentence.

Examples:

1. Oh, I didn't expect to see you here.
2. Well, that was certainly an unusual movie.
3. Alas, the man is gone.

h. With Appositives

Where appositives occur in the midst of the words in a sentence, commas are required before and after the appositives.

Examples:

1. That girl, the brilliant one, is my sister.
2. I sent my letter to Prof. Lanre Ebuka, the Head of Department, but I haven't received a response.
3. The Student Union President, Biwom Akande, is of the Department of English.

If an appositive ends the sentence, a comma need only precede it.

Examples:

1. I hugged my best friend, Habiba.
2. That's Spiky, my dog.

3. This is my adviser, Ifeyinwa.
4. She lives in a beautiful town, Obudu.

i. With Three or More Items in a Series

Use commas to separate the items in a series of three or more words, phrases, or clauses. Note that the comma before the conjunction is optional.

Examples:

1. I need you to buy olive oil, sun dried tomatoes, and pepper for me. (series of words)
2. A dank, oily, and grey cloud of smoke bellowed out from the machine's innards. (series of words)
3. We looked around the yard, by the pond, in the cave and along the tracks. (phrases)
4. Ifeyinwa bought a book, Amaka read it, and Ebuka hid it. (clauses)

j. With Adjectives

A comma is required between two adjectives that describe and precede the same noun when no co-ordinate conjunction is present.

Examples:

1. A damp, grey day greeted us this morning.
2. It was a long, tiring lecture.
3. The preacher imagined a bleak, Nigerian future.

A comma is not necessary between two adjectives that modify the same noun when the first adjective modifies the entire idea created by the second adjective and the noun modified.

Examples:

1. The brave young man rode into battle without fear.
2. That tall lanky girl is my younger sister.
3. Her long dark hair shimmers in the sun.

In example 1, the adjective **brave** describes the noun phrase "young man". He is a young man who is brave. In 2, the adjective **tall** describes the noun phrase "lanky girl", and in 3, **long** qualifies the noun phrase "dark hair".

k. With Co-ordinate Conjunctions

Place a comma before a co-ordinate conjunction that separates two main clauses of a compound sentence.

Examples:

1. I saw the game, but I don't remember the final score.
2. She drove us to the market, and I brought another pack of cream soda.
3. Not only am I a teacher, but I am also a singer.
4. Halima loves to cook, but she loves to eat more.
5. I never called her back, nor have I regretted it.

However, avoid a comma before a coordinate conjunction that connects two subordinate clauses.

Example:

6. Because time is short, and because the matter is so urgent, we must act now. (incorrect)

The first comma in the sentence, the one that appears before the conjunction **and**, is unnecessary. The sentence should read as follows:

7. Because time is short and because the matter is so urgent, we must act now. (correct)

l. To Indicate Omissions

To indicate the omission of a word, a comma is needed.
Examples:

1. Frank is a strong man, and Chukwu, a clever man.
2. Agaba did the talking, and Akpana, the smiles.
3. My father gave the money, and my mother, the prayers.

In these examples, the second commas mark the omission of the verbs **is** in sentence (1), **did** in sentence (2) and **gave** in sentence (3). The sentences can be re-written in the following ways:

4. Frank is a strong man, and Chukwu is a clever man.
5. Agaba did the talking, and Akpana did the smiles.
6. My father gave the money, and my mother gave the prayers.

m. To Set off Interrogative Clauses

A comma is required to separate a declarative clause from a question tag that follows it.
Examples:

1. She has beautiful eyes, doesn't she?
2. This is the place, isn't it?
3. This is it, isn't it?

n. With Quoted Material

Use a comma to set off quoted materials from the main part of a sentence that contains a quote. If the sentence precedes the quote, one comma appears between the end of the main sentence and the beginning of the quote.
Examples:

1. Ugar said, "Bring me the flash drive."
2. The speaker wondered, "Do any of you understand what I am talking about?"

If the main sentence comes after the quote, one comma appears immediately after the quote.

Examples:

1. "I am overjoyed," my mother cried.
2. "I think that idea is going to drive me into action", Jumoke said.

But, if the main sentence comes between the pieces of a broken quote, two commas separate the quote from the main sentence, one before and another after.

Examples:

1. "What", she asked, "is the point of this display?"
2. "God", he acknowledged, "is the source of my strength".

o. With Dates

Place a comma between the day and year in a date.
Examples:

a. October 14, 2012
b. August 26, 1998
c. May 1, 1960

Some authors also feel that a writer must always place a comma after the year in a date used in a sentence. It is, however, recommended that such commas be excluded when the date is used as the subject of a sentence.

Examples:

1. On November 4, 1985, a miracle occurred. (date used as **object** of preposition)
2. June 6, 1980 is her birthday. (date used as **subject** of sentence)

p. With Addresses and Locations

A comma is needed between the elements of an address or geographic location.

Examples:

1. His address is 33 Benue Road, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
2. Akanji visited Ikorodu, Lagos, over the weekend.

The commas after **Ibadan** in sentence (1) and the one after **Lagos** in sentence (2) are correct. You need to place a comma after the final element in an address or geographic location when that element falls before the end of the sentence.

q. To Avoid Confusing/Ungrammatical Expressions

Commas are used in sentences when the placement eliminates ungrammaticality. Read the following sentences which are confusing because they lack commas.

Examples:

1. Before Biwom Akande was our accountant.
2. The finer the silk the higher the price.

As they stand, these sentences are a bit confusing. They need commas for their meanings to become clear. The addition of commas in the re-written sentences below makes them readable as well as meaningful.

Examples:

1. Before Biwom, Akande was our accountant.
2. The finer the silk, the higher the price.

r. With Non-restrictive Information

To set off non-restrictive words, phrases, and clauses, commas are mandatory.

Examples:

1. My only sister, Habiba, is coming on a visit next month.
2. Many dogs, such as poodles and dachshunds, do not contribute to home security.
3. The particulars of the game, which I have never learned, are terribly confusing.

Avoid the use of commas to set off restrictive words, phrases, or clauses. Such items define or limit the meanings of their antecedents. The use of commas would indicate that the meanings they provide are not essential.

Examples:
1. My brother Timmy graduated at the top of his class.
2. Times like these test the strength of Nigeria's unity.
3. The man who gave the information cannot be trusted.

The information that the word, phrase, or clause provides in each example is essential and restrictive, so we do not set it off with commas. In the first example, the proper noun **Timmy** identifies which brother graduated at the top of the class. The speaker must have more than one. In the second example, the phrase **like these** limits the definition of the noun **times**. It tells us just what kind of times we are discussing. In the third example, the clause **who gave you that information** tells us which man the speaker is mentioning. Without the noun **Timmy**, the phrase **like these**, and the clause **who gave you that information**, the meanings of the sentences would be different.

The Colon (:)

These two little dots we know as the colon often indicate a strong break in a sentence and mean "as follows". The colon can be used in the following ways:

a. With Appositives

The colon can emphasise an appositive element at the end of a sentence.

Examples:
1. There is only one word that can describe the president's decision: ridiculous.
2. I have only one thing to say to you: "Read your books."

b. With Lists

Use a colon to introduce a list that appears at the end of a sentence.

Examples:
1. Uche asked us to get these things from the grocer's: bread, milk and sugar.
2. Mountainers must come with the following items: torchlight, water, food, camp gas, a six-foot mattress, rain coats and mosquito nets.

c. With Quoted Material

A colon is used to introduce a long quote.

Example:
The first page of the story reads as follows:
"It was a dark and stormy night ...."

d. With Page Specifications

Place a colon to separate the pieces of a page specification.

Examples:
1. John 3:15
2. *The New Republic* 22: 72
3. Chapter 8, sub-section 4: 2 of the Nigerian criminal code.
4. Fasoyin (2010: 55)

e. With Ratios

In terms of separating the numbers in a ratio, the colon is required.

Example:

Combine the three chemicals in a 3:5:1 ratio.

f. With Time

Place a colon to separate the elements in written time.

Example:

By Greenwich meantime, it is 22:34:56:05

g. With Titles and Subtitles

Use a colon to separate the title and subtitle of a book.

Examples:

1. I have just read a book called *Themes Fall Apart: The Centre Holds.*
2. The article, "Literature and Medicine in Nigeria: A Case for a New Discipline", is one of Omobowale's recent contributions to knowledge.

h . With Salutation

The colon is sometimes used after salutation in a formal letter

Example:

Dear Prof. Adie:

This rule does not apply to informal letters. For informal letters, a comma is required as in 'Dear Amodu,' for example.

The Semi-colon (;)

The semi-colon indicates a stronger pause than the comma but a weaker pause than the period. Though a useful tool, the semi-colon must be used with caution. Misused, this mark of punctuation can result in overtly wordy and confusing sentences. These are some of the rules governing the use of semi-colon:

a. With Compound Sentences

The semi-colon may separate main clauses in a compound sentence when no coordinate conjunction is used. However, for the semi-colon to be used effectively, the meanings of the clauses should be closely related. Consider the sentences below:

1. I woke up; I got out of bed.
2. Their house is a mess; their yard is a disgrace.

The semi-colon may also separate main clauses in a compound sentence when a conjunctive adverb introduces the second clause.

Examples:

1. Your plan is insane; nevertheless, it is our only hope.
2. Akpana didn't bring the toys we expected; instead, she brought cream and soap.

The semi-colon may separate main clauses in a compound sentence when one or both of the clauses contain internal punctuation and additional commas would create a muddled sentence.

Examples:

1. Mr. Soyinka, president of this corporation and corporate genius, has predicted a good year; but his reasoning is not beyond reproach.
2. The Chef at this restaurant, who I have never liked, makes terrible fried rice; but we will eat wherever you like on your birthday.

a. With Items in a Series

The semi-colon may separate items in a series when one or more of the items contain internal punctuation. The use of commas as separators in this situation would result in confusion.

Examples:

1. The guest list includes Ipeh, my cousin; Ifeyinwa, my best friend; and Kunle, my class mate.
2. Helon Habila, the novelist; Sam Loco, the movie star; and Jay Jay Okocha, the footballer, have given their best to the country.

The Apostrophe (')

The apostrophe is used to indicate plural and possessive forms of words or to include missing letters and digits. You will be introduced briefly to each use now.

a. With Possessive Nouns

The apostrophe is used to create the possessive forms of nouns. With singular and plural nouns that do not end in **'s'**, place **'s** at the end of the word to create the possessive form.

Examples:

Singular: dog – dog's chef – chef's William – William's

Plural: geese – geese's men – men's feet – feet's

With singular nouns that end in **s**, add **'s**. This is the general rule, and you are advised to stick to this rule.

Examples:

Boss – boss's Jones – Jones's bus – bus's
Lass – lass's class – class's

Please not that there are several exceptions to this rule. Some of these rules include:

- The possessive forms of the names **Jesus** and **Moses** take a simple apostrophe. As in:
  Jesus – Jesus' Moses – Moses'
- The possessive forms of names of more than one syllable that end in s and whose final syllable has an **/iz/** sound take only an apostrophe.

Examples:

Euripides – Euripides' Socrates – Socrates Ramses – Ramses'

Remember, however, that most of these are names of long-deceased Greek philosophers or Egyptian pharaohs and of little concern to the general populace. There are, however, contemporary examples such as:

1. Charles - Charles'
2. Lawrence - Lawrence's

3. Eunice - Eunice's

· When the object of the preposition in the expression *for* something's *sake* ends in **s**, that object takes only an apostrophe.

Examples:
1. For goodness' sake
2. for Jones' sake

To add 's would make it extremely difficult to pronounce.

a. With Plural nouns that end in s, just add an apostrophe.

Examples:

Tigers – tigers'	boys – boys'	heart – hearts'
Rats – rats'	beasts – beasts'	militias – militias'

b. With Plurals of Letters and Abbreviations

The apostrophe is used to create the plural forms of letters and abbreviations. Let us consider some examples:

· To form the plurals of single letters, add **'s.**

Examples:

1. R's, t's
2. Elementary school taught me the three **R's. (Read, Recall and Review)**
3. Cross your t's and dot your i's.

· To form the plurals of abbreviations with internal periods, add **'s**.

Examples:
1. Ph.D.'s M.D.'s
2. My elder brother has two **Ph.D.'s.**
3. Our company recently employed three **M.D.**'s.

Also note that you can have **PhD's** and **MD's**, i.e. without the periods occurring in-between the letters. This is preferred by some authors.

· To form the plurals of strings of multiple letters, add –s without an apostrophe.

Examples:
1. I gave her three **IOUs (I Owe You)**
2. My daughter, Sade, learned her **ABCs.**

· To form the plurals of numbers written as numerals, just add –s.

Examples:
1. My dad loved the **1950s.**
2. I feel safest flying **747s.**
3. The mid **80s** marked the beginning of Nigeria's economic problems.

· To form the plurals of abbreviations that end with periods but have no internal periods, add **–s** before the terminal period.

Examples:
1. eds. (i.e. more than one editor of a book) Nos. (numbers) figs. (figures)
2. There are ten vols. (volumes) in the complete set.

· To form the plurals of abbreviations without periods, just add –s.

Examples:
1. kws (kilowatts)
2. kgs (kilogramms)
3. The tunnel was 20 kms (kilometres) in length.

c. With Missing Letters

Quite often, words are pronounced in some colloquial manner, leaving off a letter or two. When these colloquially spoken words are written, we use apostrophes to indicate the missing letters.

Examples:
1. It's impossible for goats to fly like birds.
2. He's travelled to Ghana.
3. We've won the case.
4. He'd gone early in the morning.
5. I said that we'd sue them.

In the examples above, the apostrophe is used in the contraction to indicate missing letters. In example (1), the apostrophe stands for the missing letter **i**; the same thing applies to examples (2) and (3) where the apostrophe has taken the place of two letters (ha). This is also the case with examples (4) and (5) where the apostrophe has replaced the past participle form of **have** (had) and the modal **would** respectively.

d. With Missing Digits

The apostrophe appears in numbers to indicate missing digits.

Examples:
1991 – '91 1914 – '14 1960 – '60

The Question Mark (?)

The question mark is used to indicate direct questions. Here are the rules that govern the use of the question mark:

a. With Direct Interrogative Sentences

The question mark ends all direct interrogative sentences.

Examples:
1. What did you order?
2. Can I have another plate of rice?
3. Who scored the winning goal for Chelsea?
4. Are you one of those who got the award?

b. With Imperative Sentences Written as Questions

Either a question mark or a period may end an imperative sentence written as a question.

Examples:
1. Will you please stop that noise?
Or 2. Will you please stop that noise.
3. Would you give me that, Ore?
Or 4. Would you give me that, Ore.

c. With Interrogative Sentence Elements

We can place a question mark at the end of a sentence that contains multiple interrogative elements.

Example:
Are you sure of her loyalty, her skill, her determination?

d. To Indicate Uncertainty
Question marks often appear in parentheses in a sentence to indicate uncertainty about some piece of information given.

Examples:

1. King Jaja of Opobo ruled between 1815 (?) and 1830 A.D.
2. Chike Obi, a Nigerian politician, became the first Nigerian and sub-Saharan African to receive a PhD in mathematics in 1950 (?).

The Exclamation Mark (!)
The exclamation mark indicates strong emotion, wish, surprise or urgency. It is used in the following contexts:

a. With Declarative Sentences
The exclamation mark ends any declarative sentence that is written with the force of an exclamation.
Examples:
1. I have never been so disgusted!
2. Deadly trap!
3. Gracious Father!
4. I knew it!
5. What a performance!

b. With Imperative Sentences
An exclamation mark is needed to end any imperative sentence that is made with the force of an exclamation.
Examples:
1. Watch for the tree!
2. Come back here!
3. Never!
4. Look out!

c. With Interjections
We sometimes place exclamation marks after interjections. Often, the sentence that follows is made with the force of an exclamation.
Examples:
1. Ouch! That stings.
2. Pshaw! I don't believe that for a second.
3. Yes! We made it.

d. With Interrogative Sentences
The exclamation mark sometimes ends interrogative sentences that are written as exclamation.
Examples:
1. Do you realise what your actions will do to our department!
2. How can you think I took your money!
3. Have you ever imagined that!

e. With Exclamatory Sentences
The exclamatory mark always ends exclamatory sentences.

Examples:
1. What a weekend we had!
2. How I miss you!
3. Eureka! (I have found it!)

Parentheses/Brackets ( )

Parentheses are also known as brackets. They are used in the following contexts:

a. With explanations or commentary

Parentheses/brackets enclose words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that are included in a sentence as explanations or commentaries but that are main constructions in themselves. The punctuation for parenthetical items remains the brackets/parenthesis. Read the primary portion of the sentence as if the parenthetical portion were not there.

Examples:
1. Ope acted surprised (as if she didn't know) when Amaka told her the news.
2. He promised (he has never kept a promise in his life) to rebuild Nigeria.
3. Those boys (Emeka, Agaba, and Musa) will cause no end to trouble.

b. With Numbers, Letters and Symbols

Parentheses/Brackets often enclose numbers, letters, and symbols that are used as appositives in sentences.

1. The price of *garri* per bag (₦5, 000.00) is outrageous.
2. We will use the ampersand (&) in place of the word **and** in the title.
3. I suggested the third item (c) on the agenda.

c. With Dividers and Sub-dividers

Parentheses enclose numbers and letters that divide and sub-divide items in a sentence.

Examples:
1. The Malian rebels' plans are (1) to take over the television station, (2) to incite the citizens to revolution through hourly broadcasts, and (3) to topple the oligarchic government.
2. The items on the shopping list include (a) milk, (b) wine, (c) tissue paper, and (d) oranges.

d. With Abbreviations

Abbreviations that will subsequently be used in the text are enclosed in parenthesis.

Examples:
1. The African Union (AU) has given North Sudan and Sudan a two-week cease-fire ultimatum.
2. Transformation Generative Grammar (TGG) is Noam Chomsky's outstanding contribution to the study of language.
3. The United Nations (UN) sent 100 men to Syria last week.

The Hyphen (-)

The hyphen is used in the following ways:

a. With Words in a Compound

The hyphen links multiple words into a single expression.

Examples:

1. Don't look at me with that holier-than-thou expression.
2. Ibadan is full of been-tos and wanna-bes.

b. With Prefixes

The hyphen is often placed between the root word and a prefix when the alternative expression (without a hyphen) can be easily misread.

Examples:

1. Despite his bad record, the company decided to re-employ Mr. Lagbaja.
2. The Ibadan City officials are taking a pro-orthodoxy approach to cleanliness.

We place hyphens between root words and prefixes when the unhyphenated alternative expressions can be easily misinterpreted. For instance, the noun meaning "to form again" is spelled **re-formation** while a similar noun meaning "a change" is spelled **reformation.** Similarly, the verb meaning "to form again" is spelled **re-form** while the verb meaning "to change" is spelled **reform.** So, hyphens help to clarify such confusing words.

We also use hyphens between prefixes and root words that are proper nouns or proper adjectives.

Examples:

non-Jewish anti-America pro-Israel.

The initial letter of the proper noun or adjective must be capitalised.

c. With Words Broken over Two Lines

When a word is broken between the end of one line and the beginning of the next, place the hyphen after the first piece to indicate that the reminder will follow on the next line. Notice that such hyphens are inserted along syllable divisions.

Example:

Denis Osadebey and His Royal Band are to perform at the Theatre Arts **audi-**
torium to night.

d. Other Uses of Hyphen

- Hyphens are used to separate the words in the written form of a fraction and compound figures.

Example:

1. He won by a two-thirds majority.
2. She collected twenty-five thousand naira from me.

- Hyphens are also used in compound adjectives. A compound adjective consists of two or more words that are read as one and function as a single adjective. Since the two words cannot be joined together into single word, we place a hyphen between them.

Examples:
1. Those are sweet-smelling flowers you have got there.
2. Thankfully, it was a well-planned meeting.
3. We live in a fifth-floor apartment.

- Some compound nouns are always hyphenated:

1. all forms of **in-laws**: Sister-in-law, Father-in-law
2. all **great** compounds: great-aunt, great-grandma
3. all **elect** compounds: senator-elect, president-elect
4. all **self** compounds: self-employed, self-sponsored

Do not hyphenate

- any **ache** compound: toothache, backache (unless forced to at the end of a line)
- any **book** compound: textbook, notebook (unless forced to at the end of a line)

The Dash (-)

An extended hyphen, the dash (-), is primarily a stylistic mark. It usually sets off words that represent an abrupt change of thought or shift of flow in a sentence. Here are some of its uses:

a. With Parenthetical Material

The dash may set off parenthetical material. With the dash present, the parentheses are excluded. The use of the dash puts more emphasis on the word, phrase, or clause than a set of parentheses would.

Examples:
1. I am sure that the Wizard's force – and the other forces of Evil – will be waiting for our attack.
2. From beneath his jacket he drew forth a device that turned our blood to ice – a nuclear detonator.
3. This boy – I think he is foolish – bought a fairly used shirt for N10, 000, 00.

b. With Afterthoughts

The dash may set off and emphasise an afterthought at the end of a sentence.

Examples:
1. It is possible that we will not see each other for a long while – maybe never again.
2. His father caught him smoking – and you know what that means.

c. To introduce a list of items

A dash can be used to introduce a list of items.

Example:
Adueke bought many things – a whiteboard marker, two writing pads, three file jackets and a flash drive.

Capitalisation

Another important punctuation mark is the capital letter. It is used by writers to warn their readers about the beginning of a new sentence. That is, the first letter of the first word is usually capitalised to indicate the beginning of a new sentence. It is also used to indicate a difference between proper nouns and common nouns.

Consider the following examples:

Proper Nouns	Common Nouns
Violet	violet
Jack	jack
Bush	bush
Ore (a Yoruba name)	ore (metal)
Tiger (a pet)	tiger (a class of wild animals)

Other uses of the capital letter include:

- **Initialisation**

Write in capital letter every first word that begins a sentence.

Example:
This university is the first in Nigeria.

Do also write the first letter of every word in the title of a book in capital letter. This rule, however, applies to content words (nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives), but grammatical words (pronouns, conjunctions and articles) are exempted from this rule.

Examples:
a. *Waiting for an Angel*
b. *Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*
c. *A Concise Introduction to Political Science*
d. *A Mathematical Approach to the Study of Economics*

Note that when grammatical words begin the title of a book, such as the ones we have in the examples above, their initial letters are usually capitalised. You might have also noticed that the above examples are written in italics. This rule of italicisation also applies to titles of newspapers, magazines, movies, plays, television shows and works of art. Let us consider some examples:

a. I have read Achebe's *Arrow of God* ten times. (a novel)
b. I laughed so hard while watching *The Foreigner* that my stomach hurt. (a staged play)
c. *Papa Ajasco* is a popular television programme. (a television programme)
d. I prefer *The Punch* to *The Nation*. (newspapers)
e. You must have seen *Ukwa*. (a movie)

The first letter of subtitles is also capitalised.

Examples:
a. *Meaning in English: An Introduction*
b. *Analytical Chemistry: A Quantitative Approach*

Also, the first word of a quoted sentence which takes a colon, rather than a comma should be capitalised.

Example:
The preacher lamented: "Immorality is ruling our children's heart."

- **Proper Adjectives**

Proper adjectives are so called because they are proper nouns that perform adjectival functions. So, they have to be capitalised even when they occur in-between sentences.

Examples:
1. Sade is a **Nigerian** novelist.
2. My friend prefers **German** cars to **American** ones.

All the words in bold in the above examples have their initial letters capitalised because they are examples of proper adjectives. They qualify the nouns that precede them. Also, remember that words denoting important international, national, festivals or religious days or events begin with initial capital letters.

Examples:
1. Democracy Day
2. Boxing Day
3. New Year Festival
4. Easter Sunday

- **Kinship Terms (words that show family ties)**

Capitalise the first letter of kinship terms that are used as titles before a name, or that are used as names themselves.

Examples:

Uncle Bode	Father
Auntie Rosa	Niece
Cousin Ashi	Mother
Sister Ife	Brother

Note that if these words indicating family ties follow a possessive pronoun or noun, the capitalisation of initial letters do not apply.

Examples:
1. Mark loves his sisters.
2. Folake's uncle is an English teacher.
3. My brother's call-to-bar party will hold to night.

i. All I's standing alone must be capitalised.

Examples:
1. My father and I are graduates of UI.
2. I see a great future.
3. When he mentioned it, I understood.

ii. All pronouns referring to the supreme deity have their initial letters capitalised.

Examples:
a. I thank You God.
b. You are He that saved me. (He refers to God.)

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks come in two varieties: single and double. The more common of the two is the double quotation mark. We will tackle this variety first.

a. Double Quotation Marks with Quoted Material

Quotation marks enclose a quoted material.

Examples:
1. Then, the pig said, "But, we already have a chicken."
2. "Who", she said, "is responsible for this debacle?"

Note that each piece of the broken quote in the second example is surrounded by quotation marks and that only the first word in the quote is capitalised.

b. Double Quotation Marks with Titles

Quotation marks may enclose the title or short works and portions of larger works, such as magazine articles, newspaper articles, essays, short stories, songs, poems, chapters of books, short films, sculptures and paintings.

Examples:

1. Have you read the story "Arrows of Rain" by Okey Ndibe?
2. The film is called "Osufia in London".

Remember that when we discussed capitalisation, we noted that titles of films, books, etc, are italicised. This means that both quotation marks and italicisation can perform the same function. However, both cannot be used simultaneously.

c. Double Quotation Marks with Words that Draw Readers Attention

Writers often enclose words in quotation marks when they want to attract their readers' attention. These include nicknames, slang and coined words or phrases among others.

Examples:

1. The origins of the word "grammar" are quite intriguing.
2. The sentence "He took the time to take my temperature" contains alliteration.
3. The expression "a little to the left, a little to the right" was a popular expression during Babangida's military regime.

Single Quotation Marks

Single quotation marks are used within a quote where a double quotation is already in use.

Examples:

1. I said, "Kunle said, 'You haven't heard the last of the Soyinkas!'"
2. "Don't pronounce 'teacher' as 'teaser'", the teacher corrected him.

Note that the comma and the period go inside the closing quotation marks at all times. There is no exception to this rule.

Example:

"That", she said, is a huge amount."

If the entire sentence, including the material within the closing quotes, is a question, place the question mark outside the quote.

Example:

Have you seen "24"? (a movie)

Since the sentence itself is interrogative, the question mark affects more than just the quoted material and belongs outside the quote.

If only the quoted material is a question, place the question mark inside the closing quote.

Example:

I heard you ask, "When is the match over?"

Here, only the quoted material is interrogative. The sentence as a whole is declarative. Therefore, we place the question mark inside the closing quote.

Post-test

Place the appropriate punctuation marks in the sentences/passage that follow:

1. We don't know if he took his medicine however we hope he did.
2. My sister the medical doctor has travelled overseas.
3. The passage below is badly punctuated. Attempt a proper punctuation of the passage.

   the Olobinrin ile were fetching water for the eight day prayer, when Kudi and her daughter Mulika came Kudi greeted the women; who were arguing that they were senior wives for they were married into the agboole before some others. I don't want to know if you are older than I am! One of the women was shouting all I know is that I was married into this agboole before you (Adapted from Abimbola Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* p. 55).
4. "Iya" she said give your son the water of life to drink.

References/Further Reading

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