

English Communication Skills

EENG139

Edited by
Dr. Ajoy Batta



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Unit 01: Introduction to Sentence Structure

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Introduction

1.1 How is a sentence different from a clause?

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Objectives

After studying this unit, the students will be able to

- understand the fundamentals of sentence structure in English language
- acquaint yourself with all the parts of the sentence
- construct meaningful sentences so, it will no longer be an uphill task
- know about the different types of sentences,
- add variety to your written and spoken English with myriad kinds of sentences

Introduction

Sentences are the building blocks of every language. The study of syntax is crucial to the understanding of different types of sentences, along with an overview of verb forms and the knowledge of tense usage.

What is a sentence?

If you flip through the pages of the Oxford dictionary, a sentence refers to a set of words expressing a statement, a question or an order. In simple words, a sentence is a meaningful collection of words.



Examples of sentences are as follows:

- I met him at a bookstore.
- She is late for the meeting.
- What a pleasant weather!
- Do you like tea?

- My friend is not diligent.

1.1 How is a sentence different from a clause?



Look at the following set of words and try to spot the differences:

- When he came here
- She is honest.

If you notice carefully, there are differences between (i) and (ii).

The former set of words is a clause while the latter set of words is a sentence.

Clause	Sentence
It is a group of words having one subject and one verb always.	It is a group of words having one or multiple subjects and one or multiple verbs.
It may or may not be complete in itself.	It is always complete in itself.
It is of two types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent clause • Dependent clause 	Based on the structure, it is of four types : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple • Compound • Complex • Compound Complex
Examples : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> When he came here if you do not eat 	Examples: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The children sing a song. She is beautiful.

1.2 How is a sentence different from a phrase?



Look at the following set of words and spot the differences:

- His tail between his legs
- On the table
- I believe in magic.
- The student is late for the class.

If you examine carefully, you will notice that (i), (ii) and (iii), (iv) differ in many ways.

The former sets of words refer to as phrases while the latter sets of words are defined as sentences.

Phrase	Sentence
It is a short group of words.	It can be a short as well as a large group of words.
It cannot stand on its own.	It can stand on its own.
It has no grammatically accurate meaning.	It has a completely grammatically accurate meaning.

For example, i. Fool's paradise ii. Flick of a wrist	For example, i. I met him at a party. ii. He is a diligent student.
--	---

1.3 Basic Structure of a sentence

Subject + Predicate

For example, Children play in the ground.

↓ ↓
SUBJECT PREDICATE



A subject in the sentence can be a noun, pronoun, phrase and a clause.

A predicate in the sentence is the remaining part of the sentence

Children play in the ground.

↓ ↓
Subject Predicate
↓ ↓
NOUN play in the ground
 ↓ ↓
 Verb Object

1.4 Types of sentences

Importance

Before understanding the different types of sentences, you should be well acquainted with the importance of learning about varieties of sentences. It is essential because they:

- add value to your academic answers
- help you experiment with the language
- leave an indelible imprint on the reader or the listener
- augment your grammatical skills
- foster effective communication in English language

Based on the structure of the sentence, they are categorized into four main types:

1. Simple Sentence
2. Compound sentence
3. Complex Sentence
4. Compound Complex Sentence

1.5 Simple sentence

Interestingly, it is not as simple as it sounds for you always have to follow the correct grammatical structure.

A simple sentence has one independent clause.



One Subject + One Verb



Following are the examples of simple sentences:

1. The train was late.
2. The child opened the door.
3. I am sorry.
4. He drives to work.
5. She is beautiful.
6. He is handsome.
7. I have two pet dogs.
8. Honesty is the best policy.
9. Sarah is my best friend.
10. Michael was late for the meeting.



Although most of the simple sentences have a subject and a verb, there are some verbs which are complete sentences in themselves.

For example,

- Run!
- Listen!

1.6 Compound sentence

A compound sentence has at least two independent clauses which are joined by coordinating conjunctions like for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) or by a semicolon. Conjunctions are linking words that join parts of a sentence. A coordinating conjunction is a word that joins two elements of equal grammatical rank and syntactic importance.

Following are the examples of Compound Sentences:

1. I want to see him soon, for he has been in Australia for two years.
2. The students finished the class and went for lunch.
3. He is a hard working student but he could not succeed.
4. He was suffering, yet he refused to see a doctor.
5. The whole town was flooded; people used boats.
6. She is quite affluent, yet she is miser.
7. My friend finally quit gambling because he ran out of money.
8. I never wrote him a letter, nor did I call him.
9. Sarah can travel by bus or travel by car.
10. I trusted him; however, he broke his promise.
11. I attended the meeting and went for lunch.
12. The table is made up of wood while the chair is made up of plastic.
13. Thomson reads novels and newspapers.
14. My friend likes to play basketball but I like playing football.
15. I prefer drinking tea; however, my husband likes coffee.

1.7 Complex sentence

A complex sentence is the one that contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses which are joined to each other by subordinating conjunctions. A subordinating conjunction is a word or phrase that links a dependent clause to an independent clause. This word or phrase indicates that a clause has informative value to add to the sentence's main idea, signaling a cause-and-effect relationship or a shift in time and place between the two clauses.

Following are the examples of complex sentences:

1. Although my friend is intelligent, he could not pass with flying colors.
2. When my friends visit me, we have a gala time.
3. If he continues to disobey his parents, he will suffer in the future.
4. Many people enjoyed the film; however, Michael did not.
5. Unless you practice good hygiene, you cannot maintain good health.
6. If it continues to rain, I will miss the train.
7. Although his family was quite wealthy, he was still not content.
8. Whenever there is a hike in the fuel prices, people start using the public transport.
9. Take out the cake from the microwave when it develops a lustrous brown color.
10. If you had started the treatment on time, he would have been alive.

1.8 Compound Complex sentence

A compound sentence combines the elements of both compound and complex sentences. Such kind of a sentence is longer than other kinds of sentences. Hence, it needs to be punctuated correctly and carefully. If the rules of punctuation are flouted, it can alter the meaning of the sentence.

You will always have an edge over others if you are well acquainted with the construction of a compound complex sentence.



Following are the examples of a compound complex sentence:

1. Though James prefers watching football, he started enjoying cricket because he understood the rules of that sport.
2. Sarah received the invitation for the party but despite being disinterested in going, she chose to honor the invitation.
3. Her parents encouraged her to balance studies with extracurricular activities; however, they scolded her when she went on a trip with her friends.
4. My nephew does not like cartoons since they are loud, so he does not watch them.
5. Even though I was exhausted, I knew I had to accomplish the task, so I worked on the project even at night.
6. Usually I go for a walk every morning while the sun rises, but it was raining cats and dogs today.
7. My cousin likes to doze off in the afternoon but she can stay awake if she has some work deadlines to meet.
8. My pet dog jumped onto the couch and started playing with the TV remote just when I was reaching for the remote control.
9. The temperature has soared and it's humid outside, so stay hydrated.
10. When I grow up, I want to become a doctor and serve the mankind.

1.9 Transformation of sentences

Transformation of sentences refers to the conversion of sentences from one kind to another. This exercise will eliminate your doubts and help you understand the various types of sentences in a comprehensive manner.

Simple to Compound sentence

1. Besides being intelligent, she is diligent. (Simple)
She is not only intelligent but also diligent. (Compound)
2. Despite being poor, he is content. (Simple)
He is poor but content. (Compound)

Simple to Complex sentence

1. His opinion did not matter. (Simple)
What he opined did not matter. (Complex)
2. A true friend is hard to find. (Simple)
A friend who is true is hard to find. (Complex)

Compound to Complex sentence

1. Get two dresses and get one free. (Compound)
If you get two dresses, you get one free. (Complex)
2. You will have to hurry or you will miss the train. (Compound)
If you do not hurry, you will miss the train. (Complex)

Simple to Compound to Complex sentence

1. Buy three shirts to get one free. (Simple)
Buy three shirts and get one free. (Compound)
If you buy three shirts, you get one free. (Complex)
2. He is too weak to handle the situation. (Simple)
He is very weak so he cannot handle the situation. (Compound)
He is so weak that he cannot handle the situation. (Complex)

Summary

A sentence is a meaningful collection of words. A sentence differs from a clause and a phrase. A clause can be further divided into a dependent clause and an independent clause. A phrase cannot stand on its own. It is imperative to study the different kinds of sentences. Based on the structure, there are four types of sentences. A simple sentence has one subject and one verb. A verb takes different forms like present, past and future in different sentences but it does not change the structure of the sentence. A compound sentence has two independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions. A complex sentence has one independent clause and dependent clause joined by subordinating conjunctions. A compound-complex sentence has both the elements of a compound and a complex sentence.

Key words

- **Conjunction:** Conjunctions are words that link other words, phrases or clauses together.
- **Coordinating Conjunctions:** Coordinating conjunctions are words that join words, phrases and clauses of equal grammatical rank in a sentence.
Examples of coordinating conjunctions include for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so.
- **Correlative Conjunctions:** Correlative conjunctions are referred to as a pair of conjunctions that are always said together or used in combination.
Examples of correlative conjunctions include either/or, neither/ nor, not only/ but also.

- Subordinating Conjunctions: A subordinating conjunction is a word or phrase that links a dependent clause to an independent clause. This word or phrase indicates that a clause has informative value to add to the sentence's main idea, signaling a cause-and-effect relationship or a shift in time and place between the two clauses.

Examples of Subordinating conjunctions include after, although, as, as if, as long as, as much as, as soon as, before, even though, even if, only, since, unless, until, till, when, whenever, whereas, while etcetera.

Self Assessment

1. On the basis of structure, how many types of sentences are there?
 - A. 2
 - B. 6
 - C. 4
 - D. 8
2. _____conjunctions are used to construct compound sentences.
 - A. Subordinating
 - B. Coordinating
 - C. Correlative
 - D. None of these
3. A sentence is a _____ collection of words.
 - A. arbitrary
 - B. unique
 - C. meaningful
 - D. absurd
4. 'I am a sincere child' What is 'I' in this sentence?
 - A. clause
 - B. phrase
 - C. predicate
 - D. subject
5. 'She is beautiful' is an example of a _____ sentence.
 - A. compound-complex
 - B. simple
 - C. complex
 - D. compound
6. A complex sentence contains _____.
 - A. three independent clauses
 - B. five independent clauses
 - C. one independent clause
 - D. two independent clauses
7. 'When I came here' is a _____.

- A. sentence
 - B. phrase
 - C. verb
 - D. clause
8. Complex sentences are constructed using _____ conjunctions.
- A. subordinating
 - B. correlative
 - C. coordinating
 - D. adverbial
9. 'Get two pens and get one free' is an example of a _____ sentence.
- A. complex
 - B. compound complex
 - C. simple
 - D. compound
10. A phrase _____
- A. can stand on its own.
 - B. is similar to a clause.
 - C. cannot stand on its own.
 - D. is similar to a sentence.
11. 'A true friend is a blessing in life' is an example of a _____ sentence.
- A. complex
 - B. simple
 - C. complex
 - D. compound-complex
12. 'Although' is an example of _____ conjunction.
- A. adverbial
 - B. coordinating
 - C. subordinating
 - D. correlative
13. Clauses are of _____ types.
- A. 5
 - B. 2
 - C. 4
 - D. 3
14. A clause has _____.
- A. one subject and one verb
 - B. multiple subjects and verbs
 - C. two subjects and three verbs
 - D. one subject and four verbs
15. 'If she continues to bunk her classes, she will fail' is an example of _____ sentence.

- A. compound
- B. simple
- C. compound-complex
- D. complex

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 C | 2 B | 3 C | 4 D | 5 B |
| 6 C | 7 D | 8 A | 9 D | 10 C |
| 11 B | 12 C | 13 B | 14 A | 15 D |

Review Questions

1. Transform the following simple sentences into complex sentences:
 - i. Shutting the door, I went back to the park.
 - ii. He is too naïve to see through the trap.
 - iii. We eat to enjoy.
 - iv. I saw a sparrow flying.
 - v. It was a white skirt.

2. Transform the following complex sentences into simple sentences:
 - i. I should hold responsibility for what I do.
 - ii. All that glitters is not gold.
 - iii. You may complete the task when you please.
 - iv. I have a shirt which is red in color.
 - v. Because he was unwell, he did not attend the party.

3. Transform the following simple sentences into compound sentences:
 - i. Besides a helpful advice, my friend gave me financial assistance.
 - ii. He possessed all the qualities to pass the test except sincerity.
 - iii. You must eat a balanced diet to maintain your weight.
 - iv. Despite the bad weather, they went on the trek.
 - v. Finding the light poor, the officials decided to call off the game.



Further Reading

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Unit 02: Grammar

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2.1 What are Articles?

2.2 What are the differences between indefinite and definite articles?

2.3 Rules for using 'a' and 'an' in English language

2.4 Rules for using 'the' in English language

Summary

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- become efficient in the use of articles of English grammar
- realize how these articles appear quite simple yet their usage is cumbersome
- write and speak grammatically correct sentences without any flaws in the usage of articles
- employ 'a', 'an' and 'the' in your English sentences without feeling perplexed
- acquaint yourself with the general rules of using articles along with introduction to certain exceptions

Introduction

2.1 What are Articles?

Articles fall under the category of determiners in English grammar. They are used in the beginning of a noun phrase in a sentence.

They are further divided into two types:

- (a) Definite Articles
- (b) Indefinite Articles

2.2 What are the differences between indefinite and definite articles?

Indefinite Articles	Definite Articles
They are used with singular countable nouns.	They are used with all nouns whether countable or uncountable and singular or plural.
They are used for a non specific person or a thing.	They are used for specific people or things.

They are used while talking about something or someone in general.	They are used while talking about something and someone in particular.
'A' and 'an' are the indefinite articles.	'The' is the definite article.

2.3 Rules for using 'a' and 'an' in English language

Rule 1: It is imperative to use a/an before a singular common noun.

If you do not follow this rule, then the text written or spoken in English will be both grammatically inaccurate and incomplete.



For example,

1. He carried a bag to the school.
2. I have a pen.
3. My friend lent me a book.
4. The child was excited to see an airplane.
5. Sarah ate an egg for breakfast.
6. The child saw a dog.
7. She is just creating an issue.
8. My room was a mess.
9. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
10. My father is an inspiration for me.

Rule 2: We use the article 'a' before the words that begin with a consonant sound.

What is a consonant sound?

According to the Cambridge English dictionary, it is a speech sound produced by human beings when the breath that flows out through the mouth is blocked by the teeth, tongue, or lips.

Except for the vowels in English – a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y – all the letters are consonants.



Look at following examples.

1. She is a photographer by profession.
2. The parents gifted a toy to their child.
3. The girl carried a basket of fruits.
4. Max gave a beautiful watch to his sister.
5. Maria bought a red dress for herself.
6. He is a good boy.
7. She is a beautiful girl.
8. I have a basket of fruits.
9. I have bought a new water bottle.
10. The child threw a stone in the pond.

Rule 3: We use the article 'an' before the words that begin with a vowel sound.

What is a vowel sound?

According to the Cambridge English dictionary, it is a speech sound produced by human beings when the breath flows out through the mouth without being blocked by the teeth, tongue or lips.

The vowels in English are a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y.



Look at the following examples.

1. Mary carried an umbrella to the school.
2. Her friend is an obedient woman.
3. I do not have an iota of doubt in his abilities.
4. The child was scared to see an eagle in the sky.
5. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
6. It was an astounding revelation.
7. My sister is an amazing dancer.
8. The teacher demanded an answer from the student.
9. She put the letter in an envelope.
10. My parents played an instrumental role in my success.

Observe the following sentences:

1. The child had a box of chocolates.
2. He is an honest person.



1. Even though chocolates denote a plural noun, we have used 'a' because box denotes a singular noun.

You might say that the 'h' is a consonant but when you carefully listen to the

Pronunciation of 'honest', you will hear the vowel sound.

2. You might say that the 'h' is a consonant but when you carefully listen to the pronunciation of 'honest', you will hear the vowel sound.



Observe the following sentences:

1. He is honest.
2. She is beautiful.
3. She works efficiently.
4. He is swimming.
5. I admire him.

You might wonder as to why we have not used any articles in the previous sentences. The reasons are as follows:

- In the 1st sentence and 2nd sentence, honest and beautiful are adjectives and not noun phrases.
- In the 3rd sentence, 'efficiently' is an adverb and not a noun phrase.
- In the 4th sentence, swimming is a verb and not a noun phrase.
- In the 5th sentence, 'him' is a pronoun and not a noun phrase.

Hence, we use the articles 'a' and 'an' only before a noun phrase.

2.4 Rules for using 'the' in English language

Rule 1: We use 'the' when we mean something in particular.



The examples are as follows:

1. I like your garden. The flowers are beautiful.

(The flowers = the flowers in your garden, not flowers in general)

2. All the students in the class like their teacher.

(the students = the students in that particular class)

Rule 2: 'The' is used with the names of rivers, seas, oceans, bays, banks, hotels, musical instruments, mountain ranges, municipal or government departments, substances in particular sense.



The examples are as follows:

1. Rivers : The Ganges , The Amazon
2. Seas : The Red sea, The Black sea
3. Oceans : The Pacific ocean, The Atlantic ocean, The Indian ocean
4. Bays : The Bay of Bengal
5. Banks : The State Bank of India
6. Hotels : The California hotel, The Leila, Mount View, Shivalik View
7. Musical Instruments : the piano, the guitar, the violin
8. Mountain Ranges: The Aravalli
9. Municipal or government departments : The Ministry of defense, The Sydney Opera House
10. Substances in particular sense: The gold mined here is of poor quality.

Rule 3: 'The' is used before the superlative degree of the adjective.



The examples are as follows:

1. She is the best in her field.
2. India is the second largest country in the world.
3. Sarah scored the highest marks in the class.
4. Oscar is the tallest boy in his class.
5. My friend is one of the most intelligent students in her group.
6. She is one of the most beautiful women I have ever met.
7. My friend is the most efficient teacher in the school.
8. He cooks the most delicious lasagna.
9. He was successful in solving one of the most difficult problems.
10. He ate the smallest portion of the pizza.

Rule 4: We use 'the' with ordinals.



The examples are as follows:

1. Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the moon.
2. We had to walk up to the sixth floor of the building as the elevator broke down.
3. He is the first doctor in his family.
4. The restaurant was on the second floor of the mall.
5. I could not reach the top floor of the hotel.

Rule 5: We use 'the' with words like 'king' or 'queen'.



However, we do not use 'the' if the word 'king' or 'queen' is followed by the name of the king or the queen.

For example,

1. The king ruled in favor of the masses.
2. Queen Victoria ruled over England for 63 years.

Rule 6: We do not use 'the' when we mean something or someone in general.

For example,

1. Flowers are beautiful. (flowers = not any particular group of flowers)
2. I am afraid of dogs. (dogs = not any dogs in particular)
3. Do you collect stamps? (stamps = not any stamps in particular)

Rule 6: We do not say 'the' with the names of continents.



For example, it is Africa and not the Africa, Europe and not the Europe, North America and not the North America.

Rule 7: We do not usually use 'the' names of states and countries.



For example, France, Japan, Nigeria, Australia, India, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh



However, we use 'the' with the names that include, 'kingdom', 'republic', 'states'.

For example, The United States of America, The United Kingdom, The People's Republic of China.

Rule 8: We do not use 'the' with the names of cities, towns or villages.



Exception: The Hague (in the Netherlands)

Rule 9: We do not use 'the' with the names of lakes.

For example, Lake Victoria.



Exception: Although we use 'the' with names of the regions, for example, the Middle East, the Far East, but we say northern France, western Canada.

Since the difference between 'something in general' and 'something is particular' is not always apparent, we can observe the following examples to understand it well.



The examples are as follows:

1. I like working with people. (people in general)
2. I like working with people who are lively. (not all people but people who are lively is still a very general idea)
3. I like the people I work with. (a particular group of people)
4. Do you like coffee? (coffee in general)
5. Do you like strong black coffee? (not all coffee, but strong black coffee is still a very general idea)
6. Did you like the coffee we had after dinner? (particular coffee)

Summary

Articles are a type of determiners in English grammar. 'A' and 'An' are called indefinite articles and are used before singular countable nouns. 'A' is used before consonants. 'An' is used before vowels. 'The' is a definite article which is widely used and has many exceptions. 'A' and 'An' are called indefinite articles and are used before singular countable nouns. 'A' is used before consonants. 'An' is used before vowels. 'The' is a definite article which is widely used and has many exceptions. More often than not, 'the' is used before someone or something in particular. 'The' is also used to lay emphasis and give a special status.

Self Assessment

1. How many articles are there in English grammar?
 - A. 5
 - B. 3
 - C. 2
 - D. 4
2. 'A' belongs to the category of _____ articles.
 - A. indefinite
 - B. definite
 - C. possessive
 - D. common
3. I would like to buy _____ new bag.
 - A. the
 - B. an
 - C. a
 - D. none of these

-
4. I met ____ Michael today.
- A. an
 - B. the
 - C. a
 - D. none of these
5. I went to ____ library. ____ library is beautiful.
- A. a, an
 - B. the, a
 - C. a, The
 - D. an, the
6. I am planning to visit Mumbai ____ next week.
- A. the
 - B. a
 - C. an
 - D. none of these
7. She is doing ____ honorary job.
- A. the
 - B. an
 - C. a
 - D. none of these
8. She went to ____ circus for the first time and ____ circus amused her.
- A. the, a
 - B. a, the
 - C. the, an
 - D. an, the
9. My father is ____ tallest in our family.
- A. the
 - B. a
 - C. an
 - D. none of these
10. She is ____ obedient girl in the class.
- A. an most
 - B. the most
 - C. a most
 - D. none of these
11. Which of the following is a definite article?
- A. the
 - B. with
 - C. to

D. an

12. She lives in _____ Kolkata.

A. a

B. an

C. the

D. none of these

13. Would you like to have _____ cup of coffee?

A. an

B. the

C. a

D. none of these

14. She is _____ more hardworking than her sister.

A. the

B. a

C. an

D. none of these

15. Would you like to give _____ opinion on this?

A. an

B. a

C. the

D. none of these

16. Would you like to have _____ coffee?

A. a

B. the

C. an

D. none of these

17. The world is _____ happy place.

A. an

B. the

C. a

D. none of these

18. Where is _____ scarf I bought from London?

A. the

B. an

C. a

D. none of these

19. Iron is _____ useful metal.

A. the

- B. an
- C. a
- D. none of these

20. He came back home after _____ hour.

- A. a
- B. the
- C. an
- D. none of these

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 2. A | 3. C | 4. D | 5. C |
| 6. A | 7. B | 8. B | 9. A | 10. B |
| 11. A | 12. D | 13. C | 14. D | 15. A |
| 16. D | 17. C | 18. A | 19. C | 20. C |

Review questions

1. Define articles.
2. Differentiate between definite and indefinite articles.
3. What are the rules of using 'the' in English language?
4. Are there any exceptions in the usage of articles? Discuss.
5. Give examples of sentences that do not require articles.



Further Reading

- Eastwood, John. Oxford Practice Grammar. India, Oxford University Press
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Unit 03: Grammar

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the basics of English grammar and composition
- strengthen your foundation to improve written and spoken English
- focus on the practical application of all parts of speech along with their theoretical definitions
- eliminate all types of doubts and problems you face while communicating in English

Introduction

3.1 What are Parts of Speech?

Words are divided into different kinds or classes, called Parts of Speech, according to their use, that is according to the work they do in a sentence. Each part of speech performs a unique function which helps to establish its identity.

Following are the eight parts of speech:

1. Noun
2. Pronoun
3. Verb
4. Adverb
5. Adjective
6. Prepositions
7. Conjunctions

8. Interjections

3.2 Nouns

A noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or thing.



For example,

1. The sun is blazing hot.
2. He gave me a flower.
3. She filled the bottle with water.



In the definition of noun, the word 'thing' includes

1. all objects that we can see, hear, taste, touch or smell
2. something that we can think of but cannot perceive by the senses.

Types of Nouns:

Nouns are divided into following different types:

1. Common Noun
2. Proper Noun
3. Collective Noun
4. Abstract Noun

Common Noun:

A common noun is a name given in common to every person or thing of the same class or kind. (Common here means shared by all) For example, words like city, bus, school, pen, paper, book et cetera.



Let's have a look at the examples:

1. I met a boy at the library.
2. Cups are placed on the table.
3. I ate an orange in the morning.
4. My mother asked me to buy a new bag.
5. I carried a basket of fruits.

Proper Noun

A proper noun is the name of some particular person or place. (Proper means one's own. Hence, a proper noun is a person's own name).



- Proper nouns are always written with Upper case (Capital) letters in the beginning.
For example, Sarah and Jacob are childhood friends.
- Proper nouns are sometimes used as common nouns.
For example, Kalidas is often called the Shakespeare of India.
(Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist.)

Let's have a look at the examples :

1. *India* is the seventh largest country in the world.
2. *Jessica* studies at a university.
3. *Nate* went on a trip to *Delhi*.
4. The *Taj Mahal* is a symbol of grandeur.
5. *Jaipur* is called the pink city of *India*.

In the above examples, the italicized words belong to the group of proper nouns.

Collective Noun

A collective noun is the name of a number (or collection) of persons or things taken together or spoken as one whole as crowd, mob, flock , herd, army , fleet et cetera.



Look at the following examples:

1. The fisherman caught a *shoal* of fish.
2. A *herd* of cattle was grazing in the field.
3. The *choir* sang a melodious song.
4. I gave a *bouquet* of flowers to my friend.
5. A *troupe* of dancers was invited to perform in the cruise.

In the above examples, the italicized words belong to the group of collective noun.

Abstract Nouns

An abstract noun is usually the name of a quality, action or state considered apart from the object to which it belongs, as:

- Quality: Goodness, kindness, whiteness, darkness, honesty, wisdom, bravery
- Action : Laughter, theft, movement, judgment, hatred
- State : Childhood, boyhood, slavery, sleep, poverty

Abstract Nouns are formed

- From Adjectives

As 'kindness' from 'kind', 'honesty' from honest.

- From Verbs

As 'obedience' from 'obey'

- From Common Nouns

As 'childhood' from child, 'slavery' from 'slave'



Look at the following examples:

1. *Honesty* is the best policy.
2. *Friendship* is one of the greatest virtues of *mankind*.
3. The boy took many stupid decisions in his *youth*.
4. *Beauty* is in the eyes of the beholder.
5. The soldier received many accolades for his *bravery*.

In the above examples, the italicized words belong to the group of abstract nouns.

The nouns can be classified into two types on the basis of number:

1. Countable nouns
2. Uncountable nouns

Countable nouns (or countables) are the names of objects, people, etc that we can count

For example: book, pen, paper, table, bottle etc.

Uncountable nouns (or uncountables) are the names of things which we cannot count. They mainly denote substances and abstract things. For example: oil, sugar, honey, honesty etc.

3.3 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun. Since we cannot repeat the nouns in a sentence and further, in a paragraph, we have to substitute it with the pronouns.



Look at the following examples:

John is absent because *he* is ill.

The books are where *you* left them.

The italicized words are referred to as pronouns.

Types of Pronouns

Personal Pronouns

They are used to substitute people or things. They can be either singular or plural, depending whether they refer to one or multiple nouns.

For example, 'I', 'me', 'we' and 'us'

They are either the subject of the sentence or the object. They have different forms for they perform different functions in a sentence.



Look at the following examples

If the writer is referring to himself/ herself in a sentence, it is written or said using 'I' if he/ she is in the subject position.

For example, I met my friend at the restaurant.

In the above example, 'I' is the subject of the sentence.

If he/she is in the object position- My friend met me at the restaurant.

In the above example, 'me' is the object of the sentence.

Possessive pronouns

They indicate possession of something besides being personal pronouns.

For example, 'my', 'mine', 'our' et cetera

Observe the following sentences:

- a. My car is red in color.
- b. The brown bag is mine.
- c. It is our responsibility to preserve our environment.

Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are the ones that begin with a clause. The examples include 'who', 'that', 'which'. They can also fall into the group of other kinds of pronouns.

For example,

1. I watched the film that you had recommended.
2. Sarah is the one who likes eating chocolates the most.

Reflexive pronouns

Reflexive pronouns: When a subject performs an action on itself, the sentence uses a reflexive pronoun after the verb. Reflexive pronouns include: myself, himself, themselves, and herself.

For example,

1. He did the homework himself.
2. She choreographed the performance herself.
3. He bought himself a new tablet.

4. I have told that myself a couple of times.
5. We must realize our responsibility towards climate change ourselves.

Intensive Pronouns

They are similar to reflexive pronouns, however, they perform a different function in a sentence. It is not a significant part of a sentence and is only used to emphasize its antecedent.

For example,

1. I myself like a little stroll after dinner.
2. We went to hear the man himself speak.
3. The author approved the book cover herself.

Indefinite Pronouns

Like personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns refer to people or things, but they don't have a specific person or thing to reference.

Examples of indefinite pronouns include some, anyone, and everything.

Demonstrative pronouns

They point out or modify a person or thing. There are four demonstrative pronouns:

This and that (for singular words)

These and those (for plural words)

Interrogative pronouns

Interrogative pronouns begin questions.

For example, in "Who are you, the interrogative pronoun 'who' starts the question. There are five interrogative pronouns: who, whom and whose (for questions that involve people), and which and what (for questions that involve things).

Reciprocal pronouns

Reciprocal pronouns are similar to reflexive pronouns, but they involve groups of two or more that perform the same action with one another. There are only two reciprocal pronouns: each other (for groups of two) and one another (for larger groups).

Distributive pronouns

A distributive pronoun refers to one person, animal, or thing at a time. These pronouns include each, neither, and either, which should be paired with plural nouns and singular verbs.

Here's one example:

Each of the dogs had a bath today.

Or

Neither of the packages arrived on time.

3.4 Verbs

A verb is a word used to express action or state; as

1. The girl *wrote* a letter to her cousin.
2. Kolkata *is* a big city.
3. Iron and copper *are* useful metals.

A verb is the part of a sentence that tells us what the subject performs. Verbs are the hearts of English sentences.

Types of Verbs

Finite Verbs

They are the actual verbs which are called the roots of sentences. It is a form of a verb that is performed by or refers to a subject and uses one of the twelve forms of tense and changes according to the number/person of the subject.



For example,

Alex went to school.

(Subject – Alex – performed the action in the past. This information is evident only by the verb ‘went’.)

Non finite Verbs

They are not actual verbs. They do not work as verbs in the sentence rather they work as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Non-finite verbs do not change according to the number/person of the subject because these verbs, also called verbals, do not have any direct relation to the subject. Sometimes they become the subject themselves.

The forms of non-finite verbs are – infinitive, gerund, and participle (participles become finite verbs when they take auxiliary verbs.)

Action Verbs

They indicate what the subject of a sentence performs. Action verbs can make the listener/reader feel emotions, see scenes more vividly and accurately.

Action verbs can be transitive or intransitive.

Transitive Verbs

They must have a direct object. A transitive verb demands something/someone to be acted upon.



For example,

I painted the car. (The verb ‘paint’ demands an object to be painted)

Intransitive Verbs

They do not act upon anything. They may be followed by an adjective, adverb, preposition, or another part of speech.



For example:

She smiled. (The verb ‘smile’ cannot have any object since the action of ‘smiling’ does not fall upon anything/anyone)

I wake up at 6 AM. (No object is needed for this verb)

Linking Verbs

A linking verb adds details about the subject of a sentence. In its simplest form, it connects the subject and the complement – that is, the words that follow the linking verb. It creates a link between them instead of showing action. Often, what is on each side of a linking verb is equivalent; the complement redefines or restates the subject. Generally, linking verbs are called ‘be’ verbs which are - am, is, are, was, were. However, there are some other verbs which can work as

linking verbs. Those verbs are: act, feel, remain, appear, become, seem, smell, sound, grow, look, prove, stay, taste, turn.

Some verbs in this list can also be action verbs. To figure out if they are linking verbs, you should try replacing them with forms of the 'be' verbs. If the changed sentence makes sense, that verb is a linking verb.



For example,

1. She *appears* ready for the game. (She is ready for the game.)
2. The food *seemed* delicious. (The food was delicious.)
3. You *look* happy. (You are happy.)

Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are also called helping verbs. An auxiliary verb extends the main verb by helping to show time, tense, and possibility. The auxiliary verbs are – be verbs, have, and do. They are used in the continuous (progressive) and perfect tenses.



Linking verbs work as main verbs in the sentence, but auxiliary verbs help main verbs.

'Do' is an auxiliary verb that is used to ask questions, to express negation, to provide emphasis, and more.

Examples:

1. Alex is going to school.
2. They are walking in the park.
3. I have seen a movie.
4. Do you drink tea?
5. Don't waste your time.
6. Please, do submit your assignments.

Modal Verbs

A modal verb is a kind of an auxiliary verb. It assists the main verb to indicate possibility, potentiality, ability, permission, expectation, and obligation. The modal verbs are can, could, must, may, might, ought to, shall, should, will, would.

Examples,

1. I may want to talk to you again.
2. They must play their best game to win.
3. She should call him.
4. I will go there.

3.5 Adverbs

An adverb is a word or phrase that modifies or qualifies an adjective, verb, or other adverb or a word group, expressing a relation of place, time, circumstance, manner, cause, degree, etc. (e.g., gently, quite, then, there).



For example,

.

- Abruptly: I thought the movie ended abruptly.
- Beautifully: The beautifully painted landscape is a wonderful addition to my living room decor.
- Delicately: Grandma's crystal vase is a priceless antique that must be handled delicately.
- Delightfully: Her outfit showcased her delightfully quirky personality.
- Firmly: The teacher firmly disciplined the students for their misbehavior.
- Lightly: She lightly dusted the brownies with a layer of powdered sugar before serving.
- Truthfully: She truthfully answered the police officer's questions.
- Quickly: Quickly finish the grocery shopping so we can get to the party in time.
- Wearily: At the end of a long day, she wearily headed to bed.
- Willfully: I sent my son to bed early for willfully refusing to eat his vegetables.

Adverbs tell us how it happened

1. Briskly: Kristen briskly walked to the library, eager to complete her homework.
2. Brutally: It was brutally clear he was not interested in hearing my opinion.
3. Cheerfully: April cheerfully greeted Mark each morning.
4. Expertly: Adam expertly maneuvered the components of the machine into their proper positions.
5. Randomly: I love to randomly share interesting trivia with my friends and family.

Adverbs tell us where it happened

1. Downstairs: The public library often holds meetings downstairs.
2. Everywhere: Jack looked everywhere for his missing keys.
3. Here: She will plant her garden here.
4. In: We stayed in to watch a movie instead of attending the party.
5. Inside: When it's hot and humid, Anna likes to read inside.

Adverbs tell when it happened

1. Early: She arrived early for the meeting.
2. First: When I bake, I make cookies first.
3. Last: When I clean, I do laundry last.
4. Later: I will stop by later to see how you are doing.
5. Never: He never wants to go to the park with me.

Adverbs tell the extent of Action

1. Almost: I almost stopped at McDonald's for lunch, but I was running late.
2. Also: A talented singer, Jamie also enjoys playing the saxophone.
3. Enough: Daniel is finally tall enough to ride the roller coaster.
4. Only: I only take the bus to work on Mondays.
5. Not: He is not running that race today.

Adverbs are Intensifiers

1. He literally wrecked his car.
2. I am certain of the facts, for sure.

3. You simply don't understand.
4. I really don't care what you think.
5. I heartily endorsed the new restaurant.

3.6 Adjectives

It is a word that describes a noun or pronoun. Adjectives are one of the four major word classes, along with nouns, verbs and adverbs.

Examples of adjectives are: big, small, blue, old, rich and nice. They give us more information about people, animals or things represented by nouns and pronouns.

The three degrees of an adjective are positive, comparative and superlative.

A positive adjective is a normal adjective that's used to describe, not compare.



For example: "This is good soup" and "I am funny."

A comparative adjective is an adjective that's used to compare two things (and is often followed by the word than).



For example: "This soup is better than that salad" or "I am funnier than her."

A superlative adjective is an adjective that's used to compare three or more things, or to state that something is the most.



For example: "This is the best soup in the whole world" or "I am the funniest out of all the other bloggers."

These three degrees only work for descriptive adjectives.



If a descriptive adjective has one or two syllables, you can turn it into its comparative and superlative forms by adding -er and -est.

Types of Adjectives

Descriptive Adjectives: A descriptive adjective is probably what you think of when you hear the word "adjective." Descriptive adjectives are used to describe nouns and pronouns. Words like beautiful, cute, silly, tall, annoying, loud and nice are all descriptive adjectives. These adjectives add information and qualities to the words they're modifying.

Examples:

"The flowers have a smell" is just stating a fact, and it has no adjectives to describe what the flowers or their smell are like.

"The beautiful flowers have a nice smell" gives us a lot more information, with two descriptive adjectives.

You can say "The cat is hungry," or "The hungry cat." In both cases, the word hungry is an adjective describing the cat.

Quantitative Adjectives

They describe the quantity of something. In other words, they answer the question "how much?" or "how many?" Numbers like one and thirty are this type of adjective. So are more general words like many, half and a lot.

Examples:

1. "How many children do you have?" "I only have one daughter."
2. "Do you plan on having more kids?" "Oh yes, I want many children!"

3. "I can't believe I ate that whole cake!"

Demonstrative Adjectives

A demonstrative adjective describes "which" noun or pronoun you're referring to. These adjectives include the words:

1. This — Used to refer to a singular noun close to you.
2. That — Used to refer to a singular noun far from you.
3. These — Used to refer to a plural noun close to you.
4. Those — Used to refer to a plural noun far from you.

Examples:

1. "Which bicycle is yours?" "This bicycle is mine, and that one used to be mine until I sold it."
2. This shark is pregnant.
3. That lady looks worried.
4. Take these ones away.
5. Put those tins in the cupboard.

Possessive Adjectives

They describe to whom a thing belongs. Some of the most common possessive adjectives include:

1. My — Belonging to me
2. His — Belonging to him
3. Her — Belonging to her
4. Their — Belonging to them
5. Your — Belonging to you

Interrogative Adjectives

Interrogate, meaning that they ask a question. These adjectives are always followed by a noun or a pronoun, and are used to form questions. The interrogative adjectives are:

1. Which — Asks to make a choice between options.
2. What — Asks to make a choice (in general).
3. Whose — Asks who something belongs to.

Other question words, like "who" or "how," aren't adjectives since they don't modify nouns. For example, you can say "whose coat is this?" but you can't say "who coat?"



Which, what and whose are only considered adjectives if they're immediately followed by a noun. The word which is an adjective in this sentence: "Which color is your favorite?" But not in this one: "Which is your favorite color?"

Distributive Adjectives

They describe specific members out of a group. These adjectives are used to single out one or more individual items or people. Some of the most common distributive adjectives include:

1. Each — Every single one of a group (used to speak about group members individually).
2. Every — Every single one of a group (used to make generalizations).
3. Either — One between a choice of two.
4. Neither — Not one or the other between a choice of two.
5. Any — One or some things out of any number of choices. This is also used when the choice is irrelevant, like: "it doesn't matter, I'll take *any* of them."



These adjectives are always followed by the noun or pronoun they're modifying.

Examples

1. Every rose has its thorn."
2. "Which of these two songs do you like?" "I don't like either song."
3. Either of these movies would be interesting to me.
4. Either title is age-appropriate, but I suggest the former.
5. Neither pen will do, as I need to sign in pencil.

Articles

Although articles are their own part of speech, they're technically also adjectives. Articles are used to describe which noun you're referring to.

1. A – A singular, general item.
2. An – A singular, general item. Use this before words that start with a vowel.
3. The – A singular or plural, specific item.

Simply put, when you're talking about something general, use a and an. When you're speaking about something specific, use the. "A cat" can be used to refer to any cat in the world. "The cat" is used to refer to the cat that just walked by.

3.7 Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word that connects words, phrases, and clauses to construct a sentence.

1. Sarah and Max are childhood friends.
2. Do you like tea or coffee ?
3. Although she is diligent, she could not get a good score.

Types of Conjunctions

Coordinating Conjunctions

The job of a coordinating conjunction is to join two words, phrases, or independent clauses, which are parallel in structure. There are seven coordinating conjunctions which are by far the most common conjunctions: and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet.

For example,

We went to the stadium and enjoyed the cricket match.

Do you want an ice cream or chocolate?

Correlative Conjunctions

A correlative conjunction uses a set of words in a parallel sentence structure to show a contrast or to compare the equal parts of a sentence. The words of correlative conjunctions have a special connection between them. The correlative conjunctions are not only - but also, either- or, neither - nor, both - and, not - but, whether - or.

Subordinating Conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction joins elements of an unparallel sentence structure. These elements are usually a dependent clause and an independent clause.

Examples

1. Before we left home, I had had my breakfast.
2. Provided they come, we can start the class on Tuesday.

3.8 Prepositions

It is a word in grammar that is used before a noun, a noun phrase, or a pronoun, connecting it to another word. We commonly use prepositions to show a relationship in space or time or a logical relationship between two or more people, places or things.



Prepositions are most followed by a noun phrase or pronoun.

Prepositions explain relationships of sequence, space, and logic between the object of the sentence and the rest of the sentence. They help us understand order, time connections, and positions.

Types of Prepositions

Prepositions of time: They show the relationship of time between the nouns to the other parts of a sentence.

On, at, in, from, to, for, since, ago, before, till/until, by, etc. are the most common prepositions of time.

For example,

1. I started working at 10 AM.
2. I'll see her on Friday.
3. I will get a holiday in December.
4. I worked there from 2010 to 2017.
5. They will not return until Friday.
6. Alex has been in the village since Sunday.
7. I will work with them for a year.
8. I want to leave before lunch.
9. I want to leave after lunch.
10. They don't talk during dinner.

Prepositions of place: They show the relationship of place between the nouns to the other parts of a sentence.

Common prepositions of places & direction: On, at, in, by, from, to, towards, up, down, across, between, among, through, in front of, behind, above, over, under, below, etc. are the most common.

Prepositions of Agents or Things: They indicate a casual relationship between nouns and other parts of the sentence.

Of, for, by, with, about, etc. are the most used and common prepositions of agents or things.

Phrasal Prepositions: A phrasal preposition is not a prepositional phrase, but they are a combination of two or more words which functions as a preposition.

For example,



Along with, apart from, because of, by means of, according to, in front of, contrary to, in spite of, on account of, in reference to, in addition to, in regard to, instead of, on top of, out of, with regard to, etc. are the most common phrasal prepositions.

3.9 Interjections

It is a word or phrase that is used as a short, sudden expression of emotion.



For example,

Hey!" "Ouch!" and "Cut that out!" are interjections.

Rules for using Interjections:

Rule 1: Interjections express a sudden mood, emotions, and feeling with emphasis. There are also many taboo words that are usually used in everyday conversation but not in formal aspects. These words fall into the category of interjections.

Examples,

1. Wow! That's an amazing scene.
2. Aw, I did not want him to come

Rule 2: Some interjections interrupt a conversation or a thought or hold someone's attention for a moment. These are just sounds, not words because these sounds do not make any sense.

Examples,

1. Your, um, shirt has a stain on the back.
2. I want to, uh, ask you out on a date.

Rule 3: Some interjections express only yes or no.

Examples,

1. Yes! I will most definitely do it.
2. Nah, we are not going.

Rule 4: Some interjections are used to get someone's attention.

Examples,

1. Yo, Alex! Get in the car!
2. Hey! Will you give me that ball?

Examples of Interjections for Greeting:

1. Hi! How is your health now?
2. Hello! How are you, Peter?
3. Hey! Where are you going?
4. Hi! How's your business going on?

Examples of Interjections for Joy:

1. Hurray! My team has won the tournament.
2. Wow! The scenery is so eye-catching.
3. Yippee! We are going for a picnic.
4. Hurray! I have won the first prize.

Examples of Interjections for Surprise:

1. What! You have broken the showpiece.
2. Eh! You have done a mess.
3. Ah! What have you done?
4. Oh! What a hot and humid day!

Examples of Interjections for Grief/Pain:

1. Ah! Our team lost the match.

2. Alas! John's father died yesterday.
3. Ouch! I hurt my ankle.
4. What a pity! You have lost your tab

Examples of Interjections for Approval

1. Bravo! John has taken a wicket.
2. Well done! You have done a good job.
3. Brilliant! Your article is so helpful.
4. Splendid! I like your work.

Summary

There are eight parts of speech in English grammar. Each part performs a distinct function. English grammar and composition is incomplete without the usage of parts of speech. Interestingly, there are some words in English language which perform the function of two different parts of speech. A noun refers to a name given to any person, place and thing. A pronoun is used in place of a noun in a sentence. A verb is referred to action performed in a sentence. An adverb helps to modify the verb in a sentence. Adjectives qualify nouns and pronouns in a sentence. Conjunctions link the two words or clauses in a sentence. Prepositions join the two parts in a sentence. Interjections are the words used to express emotions.

Self Assessment

1. I go to college daily. The underlined word is a _____.
 - A. proper noun
 - B. adjective
 - C. common noun
 - D. verb
2. Which of the following is not an abstract noun?
 - A. honesty
 - B. beautiful
 - C. unity
 - D. friendship
3. The fishermen caught a shoal of fish. What is 'shoal' in this sentence?
 - A. adjective
 - B. collective noun
 - C. proper noun
 - D. abstract noun
4. I am eagerly waiting to meet Sarah. _____ is arriving tomorrow.
 - A. Him
 - B. His
 - C. She
 - D. He
5. Could you please pass me the bowl? The underlined word is a _____.

-
- A. noun
B. pronoun
C. modal verb
D. adjective
6. The girl walked briskly. The underlined word is a/an _____.
A. adverb
B. verb
C. noun
D. pronoun
7. The student solved the sums himself. The underlined word is a _____ pronoun.
A. possessive
B. reflexive
C. indefinite
D. interrogative
8. I went _____ the market.
A. at
B. on
C. to
D. of
9. My friend _____ I went to a concert.
A. or
B. also
C. with
D. and
10. I will see you _____ Saturday.
A. on
B. at
C. in
D. for
11. We drove _____ the tunnel.
A. with
B. in
C. on
D. through
12. _____ swimming, I also like dancing.
A. With
B. Because
C. As
D. Besides

13. A word or a phrase that is used as a short, sudden expression of emotion is called _____.
A. a noun
B. a pronoun
C. an adjective
D. an interjection
14. I will sit in the library. The underlined word is _____.
A. a verb
B. an adjective
C. a noun
D. a pronoun
15. Oh my God! You look gorgeous. The underlined phrase is _____.
A. an adjective
B. an interjection
C. a preposition
D. a conjunction

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 2. B | 3. B | 4. C | 5. C |
| 6. A | 7. B | 8. C | 9. D | 10. A |
| 11. D | 12. D | 13. D | 14. C | 15. B |

Review questions

1. Define a noun and give suitable examples.
2. Discuss different types of verbs.
3. How are adjectives different from adverbs?
4. Discuss different types of prepositions.
5. Write 10 sentences using interjections.



Further Reading

- Eastwood, John. Oxford Practice Grammar. India, Oxford University Press
- Wren & Martin. High School English Grammar and Composition. India, Oxford University Press
- Carter, Ronald & McCarthy, Michael. Cambridge Grammar of English. India, Cambridge University Press



Web Links

- <https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/parts-of-speech.htm>
- <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/parts-of-speech/>
- <https://www.english-grammar-revolution.com/parts-of-speech.html>
- <https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/parts-of-speech>

Unit 04: Grammar

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- rectify the common grammatical errors
- understand the rules that govern the nuances of English grammar
- enhance confidence level in spoken as well as written English
- add value to your academic answers along with improvements in the general English usage

Introduction

As they say, 'To err is human', it is absolutely normal to commit mistakes in English grammar. In the words of Denzel Washington, 'rules are there to be broken'. However, this adage should be followed only to take risks in the professional world and not be the modus operandi for English grammar.

Even if in your formative years of learning, you could not build a rock solid foundation, you need to keep the three R's in mind to become a grammarian:

1. Revise the rules
2. Rigorous practice
3. Remember the exceptions

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. I would like to visit their.
2. It is difficult to complete they're project.
3. There are invited to the party.

Have you got the hang of the errors in the previous statements?

The correct answers are:

1. I would like to visit there.
2. It is difficult to complete their project.
3. They're invited to the party.

Explanation:

1. In the first sentence, 'there' signifies a place which is not here.

2. In the second sentence, 'their' refers to possession or that it belongs to someone.
3. In the third sentence, 'They're' is used as the contracted form of they are.
4. In the first sentence, 'there' signifies a place which is not here.
5. In the second sentence, 'their' refers to possession or that it belongs to someone.
6. In the third sentence, 'They're' is used as the contracted form of they are.



Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:

1. Is this you're bag ?
2. Your responsible for your result.
3. I am all you're.

The correct answers are:

1. Is this your bag?
2. You're responsible for your result.
3. I am all yours.

Explanation:

1. In the first sentence, 'your' indicates possession or that something belongs to you.
2. In the second sentence, 'You're' is used as the contracted form of you are.
3. In the third sentence, 'yours' is a possessive pronoun.

More examples

1. Is it not your favorite ice cream ?
2. You're going to perform at the party.
3. This bag is yours.
4. Your attendance has not been marked.
5. You're beautiful.
6. This new room is all yours.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. Its your fault.
2. I have a bag. It's color is black.
3. Its our responsibility to conserve the environment.
4. The cow that the farmer has, it's legs are white.

The correct answers are:

1. It's your fault.
2. I have a bag. Its colour is black.
3. It's our responsibility to conserve the environment.
4. The cow that the farmer has, its legs are white.

Explanation:

1. In the first sentence, 'it's' is the contracted form of It is.
2. In the second sentence, 'its' indicates possession or that it belongs to something.

3. In the third sentence, 'it's' refers to the contracted form of It is.
4. In the fourth sentence, 'its' signifies possession or that it belongs to something.

More examples

1. It's my bag.
2. Its color is red.
3. It's made up of leather.
4. Its leather is of fine quality.



Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:

1. There are less cakes now.
2. I would like to have tea with fewer sugar.
3. The salt is fewer in the cooked vegetable.
4. I can see less glasses on the table.

The correct answers are:

1. There are fewer cakes now.
2. I would like to have tea with less sugar.
3. The salt is less in the cooked vegetable.
4. I can see fewer glasses on the table.

Explanation:

1. In the first sentence 'fewer' is used because cakes are countable.
2. In the second sentence, 'less' is used because sugar is uncountable.
3. In the third sentence, 'less' is used because salt is uncountable.
4. In the fourth sentence, 'fewer' is used because glasses are countable.



Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:

1. She is better then him at studies.
2. I will go to the baker first, than the coffee shop.
3. It is more then enough.

The correct answers are:

1. She is better than him at studies.
2. I will go to the baker first, then the coffee shop.
3. It is more than enough.

Explanation:

1. The word 'than' is a preposition as well as a conjunction which is used to draw comparisons.
2. The word 'then' is used as an adverb which means 'next or after that'.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. A large amount of people have gathered outside the temple.
2. You need to add a huge number of sugar to your tea.
3. I would like to buy a good amount of books.
4. Add a good number of rice to your dessert.

The correct answers are:

1. A large number of people have gathered outside the temple.
2. You need to add a huge amount of sugar to your tea.
3. I would like to buy a good number of books.
4. Add a good amount of rice to your dessert.

Explanation:

1. In the first sentence, 'number' is used because people are countable.
2. In the second sentence, 'amount' is used because sugar is uncountable.
3. In the third sentence, 'number' is used because books are countable.
4. In the fourth sentence, 'amount' is used because rice is uncountable.

More examples:

1. The train carried a great number of travellers.
2. Would you like to add some amount of sugar to your coffee?
3. My friend has a huge amount of money.
4. The number of languages spoken in London is astonishing.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. I will listen too you carefully.
2. She is to naïve to see through his plan.
3. I have too books.

The correct answers are :

1. I will listen to you carefully.
2. She is too naïve to see through his plan.
3. I have two books.

Explanation:

1. In the first sentence, 'to' is the preposition that links the words 'listen' and 'you'.
2. In the second sentence, 'too' indicates that she is very naïve.
3. In the third sentence, 'two' refers to the number of books under consideration.

More examples:

1. I bought two new dresses.
2. She travelled from Mumbai to Goa.
3. He is too good to be true.
4. She will travel to London the next week.
5. I will get two chocolates for her.

Observe the following sentences and phrases to spot the errors:



1. The horse's are in the field.
2. Pen's for sale
3. In the 1980's
4. Janes horse is over there.
5. The girls dresses are ready for them to collect.

The correct answers are:

1. The horses are in the field.
2. Pens for sale
3. In the 1980s
4. Jane's horse is over there.
5. The girls' dresses are ready for them to collect.

Explanation

Misplaced apostrophes: Apostrophes are not difficult to use once you know how, but putting them in the wrong place is one of the most common grammar mistakes in the English language. Many people use an apostrophe to form the plural of a word, particularly if the word in question ends in a vowel, which might make the word look strange with an S added to make it plural.

Observe the following sentences and spot the error:



1. We could of gone there today.
2. I would of done it sooner.
3. You should of said.

The correct answers are:

1. We could've gone there today.
2. I would have done it sooner.
3. You should've said.

Explanation:

This common mistake arises because the contracted forms of 'should have', 'could have' and 'would have' sound a bit like should of, could of and would of. This mistake is made across all these kinds of words.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors.



1. Me and John are off to the circus.
2. Me and my friends are going to a party.
3. Myself and John are going into town.
4. Give it to John and I to look after.

The correct sentences are:

1. John and I are off to the circus.
2. My friends and I are going to the party.
3. John and I are going into town.
4. Give it to John and me to look after.

Explanation:

1. When referring to yourself and someone else in the sentence, put their name first in the sentence.
2. You have to see what suits more 'I' or 'me' while referring to yourself.
3. In the sentence, John and I are off to circus, you cannot use John and me or Me and John.
4. You will only use 'myself' if you have used 'I' in the sentence before which makes you the subject of the sentence.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. I have not responded to her invite yet.
2. She sent me an invite.
3. I would like to invitation her.
4. She has been invitation to the party.

The correct answers are :

1. I have not responded to her invitation yet.
2. She sent me an invitation.
3. I would like to invite her.
4. She has been sent an invitation for the party.

Or

She has been invited to the party.

Explanation:

1. This is probably one of the most common mistakes made by English language users.
2. 'Invite' is a verb (to invite) .It refers to the act of inviting someone.
3. 'Invitation' is a noun (an invitation). It refers to the actual message in the invitation.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. Who shall I invite ?
2. Whom is responsible?
3. He was the only person that wanted to help me.

The correct answers are:

1. Whom shall I invite?
2. Who is responsible?
3. He was the only person who wanted to help me.

Explanation:

1. 'Who' refers to the subject in a sentence and 'whom' refers to the object in a sentence.
2. 'Who' and 'whom' work in the same way as 'he' and 'him' or 'she' and 'her'.
3. In the sentence, 'Who is responsible?', the answer could be He/ she is responsible. Hence, 'who' should be used.
4. In the sentence, 'Whom shall I invite?', the answer could be 'You should invite him/ her.' Hence, 'whom' fits perfectly in this interrogative sentence.
5. In the last sentence, it should be noted that we use 'who' or 'whom' while referring to a person and 'that' while referring to things.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors



1. Pollution has a negative affect on the environment.
2. This problem does not effect me.
3. A healthy lifestyle effects our life expectancy.
4. Her presence does not effect me.
5. Global warming has many negative affects.

The correct answers are:

1. Pollution has a negative effect on the environment.
2. This problem does not affect me.
3. A healthy lifestyle affects our life expectancy.
4. Her presence does not affect me.
5. Global warming has many negative effects.

Explanation:

1. 'Affect' is a verb- 'to affect' - meaning- to have influence or have an impact on something/ someone.
2. 'Effect' is a noun- 'a positive effect, a negative effect, effects', referring to the result of being affected by something.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. He liked many different kinds of cheese, i.e. cheddar, parmesan and mozzarella cheese.
2. He objects to the changes-e.g.- he would not be accepting them.

The correct answers are:

1. He liked many different kinds of cheese, e.g. cheddar, parmesan and mozzarella cheese.
2. He objects to the changes, i.e. he would not be accepting them.

Explanation:

1. 'i.e.' comes from the Latin words 'id est'
2. It means 'that is' or 'in other words'.
3. 'e.g.' comes from the Latin expression "exempli gratia".
4. It means 'for example'.
5. Many users of English language use them interchangeably. However, their usage is quite different.
6. These both are used in informal English writing.

Observe the following sentences and spot the errors:



1. It has been raining from morning.
2. I have been studying here from 2019.
3. I have not seen him since two days.
4. We have been married since 22 years.
5. He has been absent from June.

The correct answers are:

1. It has been raining since morning.
2. I have been studying here since 2019.
3. I have not seen him from two days.
4. We have been married for 22 years.
5. He has been absent since June.

Explanation

1. We use 'since' in front of a finished point in time in the past.
2. We use 'since' in the present perfect to describe an action or situation that began in the past and continues in the present.
3. We use 'for' with a period of time.
4. We use 'from' when we are talking about a finished point in time which is not specified.
5. For example, we don't know which two days the speaker is referring to in the sentence.

Is the sentence 'Every students likes the teacher' correct?

No, the correct answer is :



Every student likes the teacher.

(Explanation: 'every' is a singular subject.

So, the verb should be in the plural form.

Look at the following set of sentences in which an incorrect sentence is followed by its correct version:

1. Although it was raining, but we had the picnic.
Although it was raining, we had the picnic.
2. I enjoyed from the movie.
I enjoyed the movie.
3. I look forward to meet you.
I look forward to meeting you.
4. I like very much ice cream.
I like ice cream very much.
5. My husband is engineer.
My husband is an engineer.
6. I came Australia to study English.
I came to Australia to study English.
7. It is more hot now.
It is hotter now.
8. You can give me an information?
Can you give me the information?
9. They cooked the dinner themself.
They cooked the dinner themselves.
10. The life is hard!
Life is hard!
11. How many childrens you have?
How many children do you have?
12. My brother has 10 years.
My brother is 10 years old.
13. I want eat now.
I want to eat now.
14. You are very nice, as your mother.
You are very nice to my mother.
15. She said me that she liked you.
She said to me that she liked you.

Summary

It is common to commit mistakes in English grammar. Some errors are bound to happen if exceptions in the rules of grammar are not remembered. In the grammar, exceptions are as important as the rules. 'There' signifies a place which is not here. 'Their' refers to possession or that it belongs to someone. 'They're' is used as the contracted form of they are. 'There' signifies a place which is not here. 'Their' refers to possession or that it belongs to someone. 'They're' is used as the contracted form of they are. 'i.e.' comes from the Latin words 'id est'. It means, 'that is' or 'in other words'. 'e.g.' comes from the Latin expression "exempli gratia". It means 'for example'. Many users of English language use them interchangeably. However, their usage is quite different.

Self Assessment

1. 'The sceneries of Meghalaya are changing' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____
 - A. The sceneries of Kashmir is changing.
 - B. The scenery of Kashmir is changing.
 - C. The sceneries of Kashmir are being changing.
 - D. The sceneries of Kashmir were changing.

2. 'Good girls do not move in bad companies' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____
 - A. Good girls do not move in bad company.
 - B. Good girls do not move with bad companies.
 - C. Good girls do not move for bad companies.
 - D. Good girls do not move on bad companies.

3. 'I shall see them in there house soon' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____
 - A. I shall see there in them house soon.
 - B. I shall view them in there house soon.
 - C. I shall see them in their house soon.
 - D. I shall be seeing them in there house soon.

4. 'He did not brought any gift for you' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____
 - A. He did not brought no gift for you.
 - B. He does not brought any gift for you.
 - C. He has not brought any gift for you.
 - D. He did not bring any gift for you.

5. 'The boy does not sings a song' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____
 - A. The boy does not sing a song.
 - B. The boy did not sings a song.
 - C. The boys does not sings a song.
 - D. The boy does not sang a song.

6. 'I have not met her from 2020' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. I had not met her from 2020.
 - B. I has not met her for 2020.
 - C. I did not met her from 2020.
 - D. I have not met her since 2020.
7. 'She shall revert back' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. She shall back revert.
 - B. She shall revert.
 - C. She will revert back.
 - D. She could revert back.
8. 'It has been raining from afternoon' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. It have been raining from afternoon.
 - B. It is raining from afternoon.
 - C. It has been raining since afternoon.
 - D. It was raining from afternoon.
9. 'Me and my friends likes to visit the beach' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. My friends and I like to visit the beach.
 - B. Me and my friends like to visit the beach.
 - C. My friends and me likes to visit the beach.
 - D. My friends and me likes to visit the beach.
10. 'He belongs to United States of America' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. He belongs to a United States of America.
 - B. He belongs to the United States of America.
 - C. He belongs to an United States of America.
 - D. He belongs in United Sates of America.
11. 'Children is playing in the ground' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. Children was playing in the garden.
 - B. Children has playing in the garden.
 - C. Children are playing in the ground.
 - D. Children has playing in the ground.
12. 'Her opinion does not effect me' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.
- A. Her opinion did not effect me.
 - B. Her opinion have not effect me.

- C. Her opinion has not effect me.
D. Her opinion does not affect me.

13. 'She is my cousin sister' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.

- A. She is my cousin.
B. She is my sister cousin.
C. She is the cousin sister.
D. She is a cousin sister.

14. 'She eats the orange daily' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.

- A. She eats orange daily.
B. She eats a orange daily.
C. She eats an orange daily.
D. She daily eats orange.

15. 'He jumped in the river' is an incorrect sentence. The correct sentence is _____.

- A. He jumped at the river.
B. He jumped on the river.
C. He jumped in a river.
D. He jumped into the river.

Answers for Self Assessment

1	B	2	A	3	C	4	D	5	A
6	D	7	B	8	C	9	A	10	B
11	C	12	D	13	A	14	C	15	D

Review questions

1. Differentiate between the usages of the words effect and affect.
2. Differentiate between the usages of the words then and then.
3. Explain with examples some common grammatical errors in English.
4. How important is punctuation in writing correct sentences?
5. Differentiate between the usages of the words letter, later and latter.



Further Reading

- Eastwood, John. Oxford Practice Grammar. India, Oxford University Press
- Wren & Martin. High School English Grammar and Composition. India, Oxford University Press
- Carter, Ronald & McCarthy, Michael. Cambridge Grammar of English. India, Cambridge University Press

**Web Links**

- <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/30-grammar-mistakes-writers-should-avoid/>
- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/common-grammar-mistakes-list>
- <https://www.engvid.com/english-resource/50-common-grammar-mistakes-in-english/>
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Unit 05: Listening Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- acknowledge that listening is not a passive activity
- understand that listening skills significantly contribute to effective communication skills
- establish key differences between hearing and listening

Introduction

5.1 What are listening skills?

As per the Oxford dictionary, listening refers to the ability to pay attention to and effectively interpret what other people are saying. "Listening is a skill that we're in danger of losing in a world of digital distraction and information overload", writes Seth S. Horowitz in 'The Science and Art of Listening.' He continues, "And yet we dare not lose it because listening tunes our brain to the patterns of our environment faster than any other sense, and paying attention to the non visual parts of our world feeds into everything from our intellectual sharpness to our dance skills."

"You never listen!" is not just the complaint of a problematic relationship; it has also become an epidemic in a world that is exchanging convenience for content, speed for meaning. The richness of life doesn't lie in the loudness and the beat, but in the timbres and the variations that you can discern if you simply pay attention.



In the words of Stephen R Covey, "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the intent to reply".

5.2 What are the differences between hearing and listening?

Hearing	Listening
1. Hearing refers to one's ability to perceive sounds, by receiving vibrations through ears.	1. Listening is something done consciously, that involves the understanding and analysis of the sounds you hear.
2. It is ability.	2. It is a skill.
3. It is of a primary and continuous nature.	3. It is of secondary and temporary nature.
4. It is a physiological act.	4. It is a psychological act.
5. It involves the reception of the message through ears.	5. It involves the interpretation of the message received by ears.
6. It occurs at a subconscious level.	6. It occurs at a conscious level.
7. It is a passive bodily process.	8. It is an active mental process.
9. It is because we are neither aware nor we have any control over the sounds we hear.	10. We listen to acquire knowledge and receive information.
11. Concentration is required.	12. Concentration is not required.



In the words of Mark Twain, "Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would rather have talked."

5.3 Characteristics of listening

1. Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.
2. It's how we make sense of, assess, and respond to what we hear.
3. Listening is a key to all effective communication.
4. Without the ability to listen effectively, communication erodes, a breakdown general ensues and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.
5. Listening is a "soft skill" that is embedded into the most relevant qualifications employers look for in candidates.

5.4 Plight of listening

The cacophony of modern life discourages listening. Noise levels in restaurants make diners strain to hear one another. Offices are open design so every keyboard click, telephone call and post-lunch belch makes for a constant racket. Traffic noise on city streets, piped music in shops and the bean grinder at your local coffeehouse exceed the volume of normal conversation by as much as 30 decibels and can even cause hearing loss. All this when listening is arguably more valuable than speaking. Wars have been fought, fortunes lost and friendships wrecked for lack of listening.



The American president Calvin Coolidge said: "No man ever listened himself out of a job." It is by listening that we connect, comprehend, co-operate, empathize and develop as human beings. It's fundamental to any meaningful relationship – personal, professional or political.

5.5 Principles of listening

1. A good listener will listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said.
2. Effective listening therefore involves observing body language and noticing inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages, as well as just what is being said at any given moment. For example, if someone tells you that they are happy with their life but through gritted teeth or with tears filling their eyes, you should consider that the verbal and non-verbal messages are in conflict. Maybe they don't mean what they say. Listening is therefore not just a matter of using your ears, but also your eyes.
3. Stop Talking: This implies that one must not always talk. One should listen as well. When somebody else is talking, listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them. Stop, just listen. When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.
4. Prepare Yourself to Listen and relax.
5. Focus on the speaker.
6. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time do I need to leave to catch my train, is it going to rain – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.
7. Put the Speaker at ease by helping the speaker to feel free to speak. Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact but don't stare – show you are listening and understanding what is being said.
8. Remove Distractions and focus on what is being said. Don't doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, pick your fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviors disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.
9. Empathize and try to understand the other person's point of view. Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas. By having an open mind, we can more fully empathize with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with, then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.
10. Be Patient. A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished. Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.
11. Avoid Personal Prejudice. Try to be impartial. Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

12. Listen to the Tone. Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying. A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.
13. Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words. You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces. Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.
14. Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication. Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important. We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.



In the words of Mark Twain, “If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear.”

5.6 HURIER Model of listening

H – Hearing

‘Hearing’ is used here in a very broad sense. Not only does it refer to the physical act of hearing, but also to picking up on non-verbal and other signals; tone of voice, body language and facial expressions, for example.

U – Understanding

Once the message has been ‘heard’, the next step is to understand. This means tying together all the elements of ‘hearing’ to create a coherent understanding of what was communicated. Factors like language and accent may affect your understanding.

R – Remembering

Remembering requires focus. An effective listener needs to be able to remember the message they are receiving in its entirety.

I – Interpreting

Interpretation of the message builds on, and enhances, understanding. Interpretation means considering factors such as the context in which the message was sent. Importantly, here the listener also needs to be aware of, and avoid, any preconceptions or biases that they may hold that may affect how the message is interpreted.

E – Evaluating

Evaluating requires that the listener keeps an open mind on the messages they are receiving and doesn't jump to conclusions about what is being said. Evaluate all the information and only then start to formulate a response.

R – Responding

Finally, your response should be well-measured and demonstrate that you have understood what was communicated. It may be necessary to use techniques such as clarification and reflection as part of the response.

Highlights of HURIER Model of listening:

1. The HURIER model can be a useful way to describe and remember the key components of effective or active listening.
2. It is important to understand, however, that the processes involved do not happen in a linear way.
3. An effective listener needs to be able to simultaneously hear, understand, interpret and evaluate the message to be able to formulate a clear understanding and an appropriate response.

5.7 Active Listening



How to become an Active listener?

It takes a lot of concentration and determination to be an active listener. Old habits are hard to break, and if your listening skills are as bad as many people's are, then you'll need to do a lot of work to break these bad habits.

Pay Attention

Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly. Look at the speaker directly. Put aside distracting thoughts. Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal! Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations. "Listen" to the speaker's body language.

Show That You're Listening

Use your own body language and gestures to show that you are engaged. Nod occasionally. Smile and use other facial expressions. Make sure that your posture is open and interested. Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and "uh huh."

Provide Feedback

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect on what is being said and to ask questions. Reflect on what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is..." and "Sounds like you are saying..." are great ways to reflect back.

Defer Judgment

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message. Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions. Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

Respond Appropriately

Active listening is designed to encourage respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting her down. Be candid, open and honest in your response. Assert your opinions respectfully. Treat the other person in a way that you think they would want to be treated.

5.8 Types of Listening

When we engage in listening, we are doing so for many different reasons depending upon the goals in which we are trying to achieve. There are four different types of listening that are essential to know when deciding what your goal as the listener is.

Appreciative Listening

When you listen for appreciation, you are listening for enjoyment. Think about the music you listen to. You usually listen to music because you enjoy it. The same can be said for appreciative listening when someone is speaking. Some common types of appreciative listening can be found in sermons from places of worship, from a motivational speech by people we respect or hold in high regard, or even from a standup comedian who makes us laugh.

Empathetic Listening

When you listen empathically you are doing so to show mutual concern. During this type of listening, you are trying to identify with the speaker by understanding the situation in which he/she is discussing. You are stepping into the other's shoes to get a better understanding of what it is he/she is talking about. Usually during this type of listening you want to be fully present in the moment or mindfully listening to what the speaker is saying. Your goal during this time is to focus on the speaker, not on yourself. You are trying to understand from the speaker's perspective.

Comprehensive Listening

If you are watching the news, listening to a lecture, or getting directions from someone, you are listening to understand or listening to comprehend the message that is being sent. This process is active. In class, you should be focused, possibly taking notes of the speaker's main ideas. Identifying the structure of the speech and evaluating the supports he/she offers as evidence. This is one of the more difficult types of listening because it requires you to not only concentrate but to actively participate in the process. The more you practice listening to comprehend, the stronger listener you become.

Critical Listening

Have you ever had to buy an expensive item, such as a new appliance, a car, a cell phone, or an iPad? You probably did some research beforehand and listened closely to the salesperson when you went to compare brands. Or perhaps your best friend is telling you about some medical tests he/she recently had done. You listen closely so you can help your friend understand her results and the possible ramifications of the findings. Both of these scenarios are examples of critical listening. Critical listening is listening to evaluate the content of the message. As a critical listener you are listening to all parts of the message, analyzing it, and evaluating what you heard. When engaging in critical listening, you are also critically thinking. You are making mental judgments based on what you see, hear, and read. Your goal as a critical listener is to evaluate the message that is being sent and decide for yourself if the information is valid.

5.9 How can one become a good listener?

It seems that we're talking more than ever. And it's true that we have more platforms for connection and communication than ever before. But what feels like conversation is actually just talking. Conversation – the exchange of ideas and thoughts between two people in which both understand one another and respond to each other – is disappearing underneath the mountains of tweets and posts, texts and emoticons.

1. The first barrier to listening is the phone that's either in your hand or close enough for you to reach. Research shows it's distracting, as part of your grey matter is occupied thinking about whether it will ping. So, the first step is not to put the phone down, but to put it away.
2. Next, stop avoiding conversations you think might lead to an argument and instead learn to have the discussion without arguing. You do that by choosing to learn from the conversation instead of teach. Don't try to educate the other person, prove them wrong or change their mind, because that probably won't happen.
3. In order to listen effectively, you have to allow thoughts to enter your head and then let them flow right back out so you can return to listening. That's a discipline and an exercise in mindfulness. It's not easy, but it's necessary if you hope to really hear and understand what another person is saying.
4. We have all become very adept at expressing our own thoughts and feelings, and social media gives us endless methods for publishing them. But in all this talk, we aren't listening.
5. Talking teaches you nothing, and so it's no surprise when we learn nothing about each other and find it hard to empathize with those who disagree. We've stopped listening and therefore stopped learning.
6. While this all may feel like a homework assignment that you dread, learning to listen is an intensely rewarding experience. The people around you, even strangers, have secrets and hidden talents. If you haven't heard them, you've missed out on a lot of fascinating stories and helpful advice.
7. So, put your mobile down and look at the people around you. Take a chance and ask someone a question, and then really listen to their answer. You might be surprised by the change in your perspective.

5.10 Importance of Listening

Key to communication

Listening is an important part of any conversation. It helps to understand the view point of the other party or the speaker in a better way. More than half of the conversation or communication is paying attention to and understanding the other side.

Builds relationship

Communication is the basis of any relationship. Active and effective listening helps with communicating and as a result, leads to better relationships and friendships.

Shows maturity and respect:

It shows maturity and respect to the speaker or the other parties involved in the conversation. Constantly interrupting without listening never leads to a meaningful and enlightening conversation.

Personal development:

Being a good listener leads to a more complete day-to-day life. A good listener always comes across as a wise person, who can understand and empathize with others. The good listening skills lead to more meaningful relations and less frustrating situations in our daily life.

Resolves issues:

Good listening skills help with resolving issues. Many of the problems can be solved by understanding the viewpoints of everybody involved.

Career enhancement:

Being a good listener at work-place is very important. It helps establish positive working relationships with bosses, clients, as well as colleagues at work. Good listening can help us establish a good image and help separate us from average contributors.

Summary

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. It's how we make sense of, assess, and respond to what we hear. Listening is a key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, communication erodes, a breakdown general ensues, and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. Listening is a "soft skill" that is embedded into the most relevant qualifications employers look for in candidates. Although listening is often confused with hearing, yet they both are actually quite different from one another. While hearing is ability, listening is a skill that is acquired with consistent practice. HURIER model of listening incorporates the elements of hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, and responding. Active listening involves removing all distractions, listening to speaker's signs and sounds and feeding back whatever one has understood. There are different types of listening depending upon the aim and context behind listening. Since the importance of listening can never be undermined, it is imperative to become follow all the principles of listening.

Self Assessment

1. A study in the UK a few years ago showed that the mere presence of a _____, even one that didn't belong to the people talking, made those involved in a chat more likely to see the other person as unfriendly and untrustworthy
 - A. camera
 - B. phone
 - C. iPad
 - D. computer
2. Good listening skills do not lead to _____.
 - A. arguments
 - B. intelligence
 - C. personal development
 - D. diligence
3. Critical listening is the listening to _____ the content of the message.
 - A. evaluate
 - B. ignore
 - C. impress
 - D. none of these
4. How many principles of listening are there?
 - A. 5

-
- B. 8
C. 4
D. 10
5. A good listener will also listen to _____ messages besides verbal messages.
A. impressive
B. written
C. non-verbal
D. personal
6. Listening is not just a matter of using your ears, but also your _____.
A. nose
B. eyes
C. tongue
D. hands
7. Hearing is _____.
A. a chore
B. a hobby
C. an ability
D. a skill
8. Listening is _____.
A. a skill
B. a hobby
C. a chore
D. an ability
9. In the words of Stephen R. Covey, most people do not listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the _____.
A. intent to fight
B. intent to reply
C. intent to ridicule
D. intent to avoid
10. Which of the following is not a principle of listening?
A. Empathy
B. Patience
C. Impartiality
D. Intelligence
11. In order to become an active listener, one needs to defer _____.
A. judgment
B. emotions
C. gestures
D. observations

12. How many types of learning are there?
A. 8
B. 4
C. 2
D. 1
13. If you try to listen by putting yourself in the speaker's shoes, then you are _____.
A. an appreciative listener
B. a critical listener
C. a comprehensive listener
D. an empathetic listener
14. _____ is an active mental process.
A. Hearing
B. Talking
C. Listening
D. None of these
15. Does active listening indicate moving while listening?
A. No
B. Yes
C. Sometimes
D. Can't say

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | B | 2 | A | 3 | A | 4 | D | 5 | C |
| 6 | B | 7 | C | 8 | A | 9 | B | 10 | D |
| 11 | A | 12 | B | 13 | D | 14 | C | 15 | A |

Review Questions

1. Differentiate between listening and hearing.
2. Discuss the importance of listening.
3. Explain different types of listening.
4. Explain active listening and give suitable examples.
5. Discuss the HURIER model of listening.



Further Reading

1. Leonardo, Nixaly. Active Listening Techniques. Rockridge Press
2. Burley-Allen, Madelyn. Listening: The Forgotten Skill: A self-teaching guide. Wiley



Web Links

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jan/25/its-time-to-tune-in-why-listening-is-the-real-key-to-communication>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jan/20/how-to-be-a-good-listener-my-mission-to-learn-the-most-important-skill-of-all>
3. <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html>

Unit 06: Listening Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the meaning and importance of informational listening, critical and empathetic listening
- discuss the differences between various types of listening
- become a good listener
- improve your listening behavior to enhance communication skills

Introduction

Different situations require different types of listening.

We may listen to:

- obtain information
- improve a relationship
- gain appreciation for something
- make discriminations
- engage in critical evaluation

While certain skills are basic and necessary for all types of listening (receiving, attending and understanding), each type requires some special skills. Since each type of listening entails a different skill set, it is imperative for us to understand the basic idea behind a particular kind of listening.



Everything in writing begins with language. Language begins with listening.

6.1 Informational listening

Informational listening is the name we give to a situation where the listener's primary concern is to understand the message. Listeners are successful in so far as the meaning they assign to messages is as close as possible to that which the sender intended. Informational listening, or listening to

understand, is found in all areas of our lives. Much of our learning comes from informative listening. For example, we listen to lectures or instructions from teachers- and what we learn depends on how well we listen. In the workplace, we listen to understand new practices and procedures- and how well we perform depends on how well we listen. We listen to instructions, briefings, reports and speeches; if we listen poorly, we aren't occupied with the information we need.

Variables of Informational Listening

There are three key variables related to informative listening. Knowing these variables can help you to begin to improve your informative listening skills; that is, you will increasingly become more successful in understanding what the speaker means.

Vocabulary

The precise relationship between vocabulary and listening has never been determined, but it is clear that increasing your vocabulary will increase your potential for better understanding. It's never too late to improve your vocabulary.

How can you improve your vocabulary?



1. Have a genuine interest in words and language
2. Make a conscious effort to learn new words
3. Break down unfamiliar words into their component parts

Besides these, there are many other ways with the help of which one can improve their vocabulary and augment the informational listening skills inadvertently:

1. Be sensitive to the context in which words are used.
2. Sometimes, unfamiliar words appear with synonyms. For example, 'Her attractive winsome personality won us over'.
3. At other times, a contrast is drawn. For example, 'He is usually quite energetic, but today he seemed lethargic'.
4. Occasionally, an unfamiliar word is used to summarize a situation or quality.
For example, He passed for over 200 yards, ran for 50 more and his three punts averaged over 45 yards; he turned in a stellar performance.

Concentration

Concentration is cumbersome. You can remember times when another person was not concentrating on what you were saying – and you probably can remember times when you were not concentrating on something that someone was saying to you.

Following are the reasons behind why people don't concentrate while listening:

1. Sometimes, listeners try to divide their attention between two competing stimuli.
2. At other times, listeners are occupied with something other than the speaker of the moment.
3. Sometimes, listeners are too ego involved or too concerned with their needs to concentrate on the message being delivered. Or perhaps, they lack curiosity, interest or energy.
4. Many people have simply not learned to concentrate while listening.
5. Others just simply refuse to discipline themselves, lacking the motivation to accept responsibility for good listening.
6. Concentration requires discipline, motivation and acceptance of responsibility.

Memory

Memory is an especially crucial variable to informational learning. You cannot process information without bringing memory into play. More specifically, memory helps your informational learning in three ways:

1. It allows you to recall experiences and information necessary to function in the world around you. In other words, without memory, you would not have any knowledge bank.
2. It establishes expectations concerning what you will encounter. You would be unable to drive in heavy traffic, react to new situations or make common decisions in life without memory of your past experiences.
3. It allows you to understand what others say. Without simple memory of the meaning of the words, you could not communicate with anyone else. Without memory of concepts and ideas, you could not understand the meaning of messages.



How to become a better informational listener?

1. Paraphrase what was said
2. Watch for your own confirmation bias
3. Realize that what you believe is not necessarily accurate
4. Listen more for substance than style
5. Ask questions to yourself while listening to the speaker

Barriers to Informational listening

When listening to a person's message, it is common to overlook aspects of the conversation or make judgments before all of the information is presented. This lack of effective listening is detrimental to communication and is illustrated effectively by several specific obstacles. Chief among these obstacles are confirmation bias and the vividness effect, both of which distort the speaker's message by severely affecting the perception of a particular topic.

Confirmation bias

Confirmation bias is the tendency to pick out aspects of a conversation that support one's own beliefs and values. This psychological process proves to have a detrimental effect on communication for several reasons. First, confirmation bias tends to become involved in conversation before the speaker finishes his/her message. As a result, an opinion is formed without first obtaining all pertinent information. This, in turn, leads to uneducated thinking and fallacious judgments that could later affect others. Second, confirmation bias detracts from a person's ability to be open-minded.

For example, when listening to a statement, an individual may hear something at the beginning of the conversation that arouses a specific emotion. Whether this is anger or frustration or anything else, it could have a profound impact on that person's perception of the rest of the conversation. If they were to become angry about a statement the speaker made early in the conversation, they would likely be averse to accepting arguments presented later in the discourse.

To combat this bias and its consequences, an individual must be aware of it and its effects. With this knowledge, an individual can learn to critically judge both sides of an argument before coming to a conclusion.

Vividness effect

The vividness effect explains how vivid or highly graphic and dramatic events affect an individual's perception of a situation. This phenomenon has been amplified by the media in recent decades. With the use of media technology, graphic images can be used to portray an event. While this makes the process of receiving news easier and more enjoyable, it can also blow a situation out of proportion.



One year after the Columbine High School massacre, about 60 percent of the people who responded to a survey by USA Weekend said that they felt a shooting was likely at their own school. The reality was much different; in fact, the likelihood of a school shooting is negligible across America.

The vividness effect was only amplified by the media. It existed long before the advent of television or radio. When observing an event in person, an individual is automatically drawn toward the sensational or vivid aspects. Thus, a person becomes quick to believe that all aspects of an event are bad if they only remember the vivid parts that offended them.

To counter this, an individual must be aware of and deal with the inclination to the dramatic and offensive, act accordingly. One must resist the temptation to jump to conclusions and instead weigh all facts before judging.



Examples of Informational listening are as follows:

1. Watching news to acquire information and understand it
2. Listening to directions while learning to drive
3. Attending a lecture
4. Watching an instructional video
5. Attending a workshop
6. Listening to a news broadcast
7. Listening to an instructional podcast.

6.2 Critical listening

Critical listening is listening to evaluate the content of the message. As a critical listener, you are listening to all parts of the message, analyzing it, and evaluating what you heard. When engaging in critical listening, you are also critically thinking. You are making mental judgments based on what you see, hear, and read. Your goal as a critical listener is to evaluate the message that is being sent and decide for yourself if the information is valid.



1. Have you ever had to buy an expensive item, such as a new appliance, a car, a cell phone, or a laptop? You probably did some research beforehand and listened closely to the salesperson when you went to compare brands.
2. Your best friend is telling you about some medical tests he/she recently had done. You listen closely so you can help your friend understand her results and the possible ramifications of the findings

Both of these scenarios are examples of critical listening.

Critical listening in this context means using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. It can be learned with practice but is not necessarily easy to do. Some people never learn this skill; instead, they take every message at face value even when those messages are in conflict with their knowledge. Critical listening in this context means using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. Critical listening can be learned with practice but is not necessarily easy to do. Some people never learn this skill; instead, they take every message at face value even when those messages are in conflict with their knowledge.



For example, a city treasurer giving a budget presentation might use very large words and technical jargon, which make it difficult for listeners to understand the proposed budget and ask probing questions.

Improving Critical listening

Recognize difference between Facts and Opinions

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is credited with saying, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts". Part of critical listening is learning to separate opinions from facts, and this works two ways: critical listeners are aware of whether a speaker is delivering a factual message, or a message based on opinion, and they are also aware of the interplay between their own opinions and facts as they listen to messages. This is not to say that speakers should not express their opinions. Many of the greatest speeches in history include personal opinions. Consider, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he expressed his personal wish for the future of American society. Critical listeners may agree or disagree with a speaker's opinions, but the point is that they know when a message they are hearing is based on opinion and when it is factual.

Uncovering Assumptions

If something is factual, supporting evidence exists. However, we still need to be careful about what evidence does and does not mean. Assumptions are gaps in a logical sequence that listeners passively fill with their own ideas and opinions and may or may not be accurate. When listening to a public speech, you may find yourself being asked to assume something is a fact when in reality many people question that fact. When listening to a public speech, you may find yourself being asked to assume something is a fact when in reality many people question that fact.



For example, suppose you're listening to a speech on weight loss. The speaker talks about how people who are overweight are simply not motivated or lack the self-discipline to lose weight. The speaker has built the speech on the assumption that motivation and self-discipline are the only reasons why people can't lose weight. You may think to yourself, what about genetics?

By listening critically, you will be more likely to notice unwarranted assumptions in a speech, which may prompt you to question the speaker if questions are taken or to do further research to examine the validity of the speaker's assumptions. If, however, you sit passively by and let the speaker's assumptions go unchallenged, you may find yourself persuaded by information that is not factual. When you listen critically to a speech, you might hear information that appears unsupported by evidence. You shouldn't accept that information unconditionally. You would accept it under the condition that the speaker offers credible evidence that directly supports it.

Differences between Facts and Assumptions are as follows:

Facts	Assumptions
1. Facts are verified by clear, unambiguous evidence.	1. Assumptions are not supported by evidence.
2. Most facts can be tested.	2. Assumptions about the future cannot be tested in the present.

Be open to new ideas

Sometimes people are so fully invested in their perceptions of the world that they are unable to listen receptively to messages that make sense and would be of great benefit to them. Human progress has been possible, sometimes against great odds, because of the mental curiosity and discernment of a few people.

In the late 1700s when the technique of vaccination to prevent smallpox was introduced, it was opposed by both medical professionals and everyday citizens who staged public protests (Edward Jenner Museum). More than two centuries later, vaccinations against smallpox, diphtheria, polio, and other infectious diseases have saved countless lives, yet popular opposition continues.

In the world of public speaking, we must be open to new ideas. Let's face it, people have a tendency to filter out information they disagree with and to filter in information that supports what they already believe.



Nicolaus Copernicus was a sixteenth-century astronomer who dared to publish a treatise explaining that the earth revolves around the sun, which was a violation of Catholic doctrine. Copernicus's astronomical findings were labeled heretical and his treatise banned because a group of people at the time were not open to new ideas. In May of 2010, almost five hundred years after his death, the Roman Catholic Church admitted its error and reburied his remains with the full rites of Catholic burial (Owen, 2010).

While the Copernicus case is a fairly dramatic reversal, listeners should always be open to new ideas. It is not suggested that you have to agree with every idea that you are faced with in life; rather, at least listen to the message and then evaluate the message.

Rely on reason and common sense

If you are listening to a speech and your common sense tells you that the message is illogical, you very well might be right. You should be thinking about whether the speech seems credible and coherent. In this way, your use of common sense can act as a warning system for you. If you can make effective comparisons while you are listening, it can deepen your understanding of the message. If you can provide those comparisons for your listeners, you make it easier for them to give consideration to your ideas.

Take Notes

Note-taking is a skill that improves with practice. You already know that it's nearly impossible to write down everything a speaker says. In fact, in your attempt to record everything, you might fall behind and wish you had divided your attention differently between writing and listening. Careful, selective note-taking is important because we want an accurate record that reflects the meanings of the message. However, much you might concentrate on the notes, you could inadvertently leave out an important word, such as not, and undermine the reliability of your otherwise carefully written notes. Instead, if you give the same care and attention to listening, you are less likely to make that kind of a mistake.

It's important to find a balance between listening well and taking good notes. Many people struggle with this balance for a long time. For example, if you try to write down only key phrases instead of full sentences, you might find that you can't remember how two ideas were related. In that case, too few notes were taken. At the opposite end, extensive note-taking can result in a loss of emphasis on the most important ideas. To increase your critical listening skills, continue developing your ability to identify the central issues in messages so that you can take accurate notes that represent the meanings intended by the speaker.

Listen ethically

Ethical listening rests heavily on honest intentions. We should extend to speakers the same respect we want to receive when it's our turn to speak. We should be facing the speaker with our eyes open. We should not be checking our cell phones. We should avoid any behavior that belittles the speaker or the message.



Examples of Critical listening are as follows:

Many people are keen on losing weight. So, they attend a seminar on weight loss. They keep a focus on the statements made by the speaker. Furthermore, they also concentrate on listening to understand weight gain. The speaker starts introducing products for weight loss. But the participants might think that are these products reliable? Besides, if they are critical listeners, then they might note unwanted assumptions. Especially made towards the products and the line of treatment. Thus, this attitude urges to probe questions, helping in clarifying doubts.

Several people are fond of attending a public speaking event. No matter what the event might be, a listener always focuses on attempting to understand. Especially about the motto behind the event. However, not everything stated in the speech might be true. But how to confirm that? That's when a critical listener steps in to assess the message. He/she analyzes the speech and figures out the context, to evaluate its authenticity.

6.3 Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening is a structured listening and questioning technique that allows you to develop and enhance relationships with a stronger understanding of what is being conveyed, both intellectually and emotionally. As such, it takes active listening techniques to a new level.



In the words of Stephen Covey, "In emphatic listening you listen with your ears, but you also, and more importantly, listen with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behavior. You use right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel.'...'You have to open yourself up to be influenced.'

If you know someone who is a good listener, they will likely have many friends. People like to be around others that listen to them. In a world of change and pressure, it takes real effort to take time to listen to others. Empathetic Listening is a method of listening that increasing your ability to understand other people. This type of listening emphasizes the other person's point of view. It provides a higher level of understanding of how others feel. Empathetic listening takes effort. It also involves some risk. The risk comes from a chance of being hurt. Putting aside your own needs to listen to another's and enter into another's thoughts and feelings requires a certain degree of vulnerability. But this risk is worth it. You will never be able to see the world as others do until you learn the skills needed for empathetic listening.

Techniques for developing empathetic listening

Develop good listening habits

To become an empathetic listener, you first must develop good listening habits. Listening is such a common activity that we sometimes forget how important it is. For example, I'm sure you can think of a time when you thought you were listening, but as soon as the person finished talking to you realized you had no idea what they said.

Start by mastering these simple good listening habits and you will be one step closer to becoming an empathetic listener.

1. Let the person speak without interrupting or breaking in.
2. Don't say, "I know how you feel."
3. Show your interest in what's being said.
4. Try to understand what the person is saying.
5. Try not to think about what you're going to say while the person is still talking.
6. Don't judge what the person is saying.
7. Keep an open mind.

Listen to understand

Most of us do not listen to understand, we listen only enough to reply with our own thoughts and opinions. While the person is talking, we are thinking about what we are going to say next. This is dangerous because it causes us to respond based on our own thoughts and feelings. When you listen to understand, you pay attention to the thoughts and feelings of the person speaking. Empathetic listening gives us the tools to see a problem, understand the effect it is having, and find a solution. In order to help someone, we must first understand the problem from his or her point of view. As Stephen Covey puts it, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." When we set

aside our own thoughts and opinions, we begin to learn what others are thinking and feeling. Then, and only then, can we begin to help someone in need.

Practice the four stages of empathetic listening

Alright, so we know that empathetic listening requires good listening habits and the ability to understand other people. But what is empathetic listening, really? Empathetic listening can be broken down into four stages, or steps.

Stage 1:

Copy what is being said. Simply repeat what you hear in order to get further understanding. Repeat it exactly as you think you heard it.

Stage 2:

Say what you hear. Repeat the words that were said without adding anything new.

Stage 3:

Reflect on the feeling. Try to understand the feeling expressed in what was said, going beyond what you think you heard.

Stage 4:

Restate what was said and think about the feeling. This combines stages 2 and 3 in order to understand the message.

Avoid Misunderstandings

While empathetic listening takes time and work, it does not take nearly as much time and effort as it does to correct a misunderstanding. A misunderstanding happens when a person fails to understand correctly the meaning or intent of another person's words or actions. Or, more simply put, the message meant to be sent is different from the message received. We've all been involved in misunderstandings. Maybe you thought you heard someone say one thing, but they actually meant something else. The trouble with a misunderstanding is that you can't begin to correct it until you realize that there has been a misunderstanding. Empathetic listening can help prevent or keep misunderstandings from happening. The better you listen and the harder you work to understand what others are thinking and feeling, the less likely you are to misunderstand them. Luckily, listening is a learned skill. If you don't practice empathetic listening already, it's not too late to start. Many people worry that they won't know what to say after they listen. Try not to worry about that, just listen and let others talk.

Follow the rules of empathetic listening

One of the most important jobs of a friend is to be a good listener. Most people are more interested in talking than they are in listening. Instead of really listening to what the other person is saying, we just wait for your turn to speak.

To get you started, try following these rules of empathetic listening:

1. Pay attention to the feelings that others express—verbally and nonverbally. Try to understand the message behind the words and actions.
2. Don't put your own feelings in place of another's. Put aside your own needs and ideas long enough to listen to the other person's point of view.
3. Communicate in a more responsive way. Respond or give answers to the messages you receive to show you understand them.
4. Do not interrupt or break in. Let speakers finish what they are saying before you talk.
5. Ask questions for more information. If you still don't understand, ask questions until you do understand.



In the words of Carl Rogers, "We think we listen, but rarely do we listen with real understanding, true empathy, yet listening of this very special kind is one of the most potent forces for change that I know."



Example of Empathetic listening is as follows:

As a manager, John prides himself on being there for his team members, and he maintains an open-door policy. He feels that he knows each team member quite well and regularly engages in "personal" conversations with them, staying up to date with the events in their lives, both at work and outside of work.

A few more weeks go by and still not satisfied with her performance, John continues to become more concerned for Natalie. Previously, she'd been the backbone of a thriving team.

To get to root of the issue, John uses empathic listening techniques to discover the source of Natalie's uncharacteristically poor work performance.

Qualities of an empathetic listener

Presence

More than just be physically in the same space with the speaker, presence entails being focused closely on the conversation. To be present, it is important to minimize external distractions and refrain from planning your responses while the other person is talking.

Compassion

The main component to being an empathic listener is identifying with the other person's emotional experience. Even if you haven't experienced the same situation as the speaker, you can try to find similarities anyway. For instance, if a coworker states that they are having trouble adjusting to an increased workload, you may identify by thinking of a time when you had more chores at home.

Wisdom

If someone is sharing something emotionally important with you, it's likely because they trust your judgment and experience. Wisdom includes both understanding the speaker's input and examining the circumstances around the problem to better grasp all the factors involved. For example, if one of your colleagues is having a conflict with another person in the department, you can acknowledge one person's stress while also considering that the other party has their own challenges and is likely not trying to be offensive.

Non-judgment

An important part of listening empathetically is to refrain from criticizing the other party, either out loud or to yourself. You may find that you disagree with something the speaker has said, but consider they have their own reasons for acting how they do.

Summary

Informational listening is the name we give to a situation where the listener's primary concern is to understand the message. Listeners are successful in so far as the meaning they assign to messages is as close as possible to that which the sender intended. Informational listening, or listening to understand, is found in all areas of our lives. Much of our learning comes from informative listening. Critical listening is the process a listener goes through using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a speaker's message makes sense in light of factual evidence. When listeners are not critical of the messages they are attending to, they are more likely to be persuaded by illogical arguments based on opinions and not facts. The role of an empathic listener is to be supportive, kind and caring. Listen carefully and without judgment. Interject occasionally to show

that you've understood what's being said. Where appropriate, repeat key phrases to encourage the speaker to open up. Pay attention to what's not being said, too. Take note of the speaker's emotional state, their tone of voice, and their body language. And, when you successfully win their trust and confidence, make sure that you respect it.

Self Assessment

1. In the words of Stephen Covey, "In empathetic listening, you listen with your ears, but you also, more importantly, listen with your _____ and your _____."
 - A. nose, throat
 - B. eyes, heart
 - C. tongue, brain
 - D. eyes, mind

2. Empathetic listening provides a higher level of understanding of how others _____.
 - A. feel
 - B. think
 - C. speak
 - D. read

3. Which of the following is not a technique used for developing empathetic listening?
 - A. Avoid misunderstandings
 - B. Develop good listening habits
 - C. Flout the rules of empathetic listening
 - D. Listen to understand

4. Which of the following is the Stage 1 of empathetic listening?
 - A. Say what you hear
 - B. Copy what is being said
 - C. Reflect on the feeling
 - D. Restate what was said

5. Which of the following is not a quality of an empathetic listener?
 - A. Patience
 - B. Presence
 - C. Compassion
 - D. Pride

6. Critical listening is about _____ the content of the message.
 - A. understanding
 - B. evaluating
 - C. admiring
 - D. criticizing

7. If someone is listening critically, then he/she is also _____ critically.
 - A. thinking

- B. speaking
 - C. reading
 - D. writing
8. Assumptions are not supported by _____.
- A. emotions
 - B. experiences
 - C. evidence
 - D. philosophy
9. Which of the following is not a way to improve critical listening?
- A. taking notes
 - B. being open to new ideas
 - C. relying on reason
 - D. optimism
10. In the words of Jeanette Winterson, 'Everything in writing begins with _____ which begins with _____.
- A. language, listening
 - B. emotions, reading
 - C. vocabulary, listening
 - D. knowledge, reading
11. One can become a better informational listener by listening more for _____ than style.
- A. substance
 - B. tone
 - C. accent
 - D. intonation
12. _____ and _____ are the two barriers to informational listening.
- A. Patience, diligence
 - B. Confirmation bias, vividness effect
 - C. Intelligence, composure
 - D. Concepts, ideas
13. Confirmation bias is the tendency to pick out aspects of a conversation that support one's _____ and _____.
- A. thoughts, feelings
 - B. culture, tradition
 - C. beliefs, values
 - D. customs, habits
14. Confirmation bias detracts from a person's ability to be _____.
- A. happy
 - B. courageous
 - C. dumb

D. open minded

15. Which of the following is not an example of informational listening?

- A. Attending a lecture
- B. Attending a workshop
- C. Listening to a friend who is upset
- D. Listening to a news broadcast

Answers Self Assessment

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|
| 1. | B | 2. | A | 3. | C | 4. | B | 5. | D |
| 6. | B | 7. | A | 8. | C | 9. | D | 10. | A |
| 11. | A | 12. | B | 13. | C | 14. | D | 15. | C |

Review Questions

1. Discuss informational listening.
2. Explain critical listening with relevant examples.
3. What are the barriers to informational listening?
4. How can you develop good empathetic listening?
5. What do you understand by listening ethically? Give examples to support your answer.



Further Reading

1. Leonardo, Nixaly. Active Listening Techniques. Rockridge Press
2. Burley-Allen, Madelyn. Listening: The Forgotten Skill: A self teaching guide. Wiley



Web Links

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jan/25/its-time-to-tune-in-why-listening-is-the-real-key-to-communication>
2. <https://in.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/types-of-listening>
3. <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-types.html>
4. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-listening-styles-help-you-communicate#7-types-of-listening-styles>

Unit 07: Listening Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand the meaning of dialect in language
- become cognizant of dialectal variations in English language
- find solutions to the problems faced while listening to varied dialects

Introduction

Listening entails the knowledge of different dialects in every language. Unless and until one is well versed with myriad dialectal variations in a language, there will be umpteen numbers of problems in interpreting and understanding the text that one comes across. Therefore, it is imperative to not only know about varieties of dialects but also to understand the subtle differences between dialects of the same language. As per the Cambridge dictionary, a dialect is a form of the language that is spoken in a particular part of the country or by a particular group of people. There are many different dialects of English, and they have different words and grammar. Most learners of English learn the standard dialects of the language. There are many different forms of standard English: for example, standard British English, standard American English, standard New Zealand English, standard Indian English.

When foreign learners of English first come to the British Isles, they are usually surprised, and often dismayed, to discover how little they understand of the English they hear. For one thing, people seem to speak faster than expected. Also, the English that most British or Irish people speak seems to be different in many ways from the English the visitor has learned. While it is probably differences of pronunciation that will immediately strike them, learners may also notice differences of grammar and vocabulary. Their reactions to this experience will vary. They may conclude that most of the English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish people that they hear do not – or even cannot – speak English correctly. In this they would find that many native speakers agree with them. They might even be told that, since learners of English as a foreign or second language have usually studied English in a formal way, they should know better than would native speakers what is ‘correct’.

Another reaction on the part of learners who fail to understand what is being said may be to think that perhaps what they learned in their own country was not ‘real’ English. Fortunately, this is increasingly unlikely to be the case. Although the English they have learned is real enough, it will

tend to be limited to a single variety of the language, a variety chosen to serve as a model for their own speech. It will usually be the speech variety of a particular group of native speakers as that variety is spoken, slowly and carefully, in relatively formal situations. Given limitations of time, of teachers' knowledge, and of students' aspirations and attitudes, this restriction is entirely reasonable, at least as far as speaking is concerned. Though learners may sound a little odd at times, they will usually be able to make themselves understood. But such a restriction as far as listening comprehension is concerned is less easily justified. While native speakers may be able to decode the learners' messages, they may lack the ability or the inclination to encode their own messages in a form more comprehensible to learners. In many cases, of course, native speakers will simply not be aware of such difficulties. Even when they are, a common strategy is to repeat what has just been said, only louder, or to revert to 'foreigner talk' ('me come, you go - OK?'), usually making understanding even more difficult. It seems to us, then, that exposure to a number of varieties of English, and help in understanding them, can play an important and practically useful part in the study of English as a foreign language.

Even when learners with comprehension problems recognize that English, like their own language – indeed, like every living natural language – is subject to variation, that variation can be so complex and at times so subtle that it is usually a long time before they begin to see much order in it. And native speakers, even those who teach the language, are often hard put to explain the things that puzzle learners.



The standard dialects of the language are used by governments, in the media, in schools and for international communication.



Examples of dialect forms in British English are:

1. I ain't going to school today. (standard form: I'm not going to school today.)
2. She don't understand. (standard form: She doesn't understand.)
3. Would you like a cheese cob? (cob is a dialect word in parts of the north of England and means 'bread roll'.)



Standard dialects are not better than other dialects, but we don't use dialect words or grammar in an essay, during an interview or in other formal contexts.



A dialect is not the same as an accent. An accent refers to the way we pronounce words and the standard dialect of a language can be spoken with different accents.

A dialect is chiefly distinguished from other dialects of the same language by features of linguistic structure – i.e., grammar (specifically morphology and syntax) and vocabulary.

In morphology (word formation), various dialects in the Atlantic states have *clim*, *clum*, *clome*, or *cloome* instead of *climbed*, and, in syntax (sentence structure), there are "sick to his stomach," "sick at his stomach," "sick in," "sick on," and "sick with."

7.1 Varieties of Dialect

On the level of vocabulary, examples of dialectal differences include American English *subway*, contrasting with British English *underground*; and *corn*, which mean "maize" in the United States, Canada, and Australia, "wheat" in England, and "oats" in Scotland. Nevertheless, while dialects of the same language differ, they still possess a common core of features.

Geographic dialects

The most widespread type of dialectal differentiation is regional, or geographic. As a rule, the speech of one locality differs at least slightly from that of any other place. Differences between neighboring local dialects are usually small, but in traveling farther in the same direction, differences accumulate. Geographic dialects include local ones (e.g., the Yankee English of Cape Cod or of Boston, the Russian of Moscow or of Smolensk) or broader regional ones, such as

Delaware Valley English, Australian English, or Tuscan Italian. Such entities are of unequal rank; South Carolina English, for instance, is included in Southern American English. Regional dialects do have some internal variation, but the differences within a regional dialect are supposedly smaller than differences between two regional dialects of the same rank.

Social dialects

Another important axis of differentiation is that of social strata. In many localities, dialectal differences are connected with social classes, educational levels, or both. More-highly educated speakers and, often, those belonging to a higher social class tend to use more features belonging to the standard language, whereas the original dialect of the region is better preserved in the speech of the lower and less-educated classes.

Educational differences between speakers strongly affect the extent of their vocabulary. In addition, practically every profession has its own expressions, which include the technical terminology and sometimes also the casual words or idioms peculiar to the group.

Slang

Slang too is characterized mainly by a specific vocabulary and is much more flexible than an ordinary dialect, as it is subject to fashion and depends strongly on the speaker's age group. Slang—just as a professional dialect—is used mainly by persons who are in a sense bidialectal; i.e., they speak some other dialect or the standard language, in addition to slang. Dialectal differences also often run parallel with the religious or racial division of the population.

Standard languages

Standard languages arise when a certain dialect begins to be used in written form, normally throughout a broader area than that of the dialect itself. The ways in which this language is used—e.g., in administrative matters, literature, and economic life—lead to the minimization of linguistic variation. The social prestige attached to the speech of the richest, most powerful, and most highly educated members of a society transforms their language into a model for others.

In most developed countries, the majority of the population has an active (speaking, writing) or at least passive (understanding) command of the standard language. Very often the rural population, and not uncommonly the lower social strata of the urban population as well, are in reality bidialectal. They speak their maternal dialect at home and with friends and acquaintances in casual contacts, and they use the standard language in more formal situations. Even the educated urban population in some regions uses the so-called colloquial language informally.

7.2 Variations within Standard English

The Standard English dialect itself is subject to a certain amount of variation. Some of this is regional: educated people in different parts of Britain do vary to a certain extent in the way in which they speak, and even write, English. (These differences normally involve features which are also found in the regional non-standard dialects.) And some of it is to do with age, all languages and dialects change, and Standard English is no exception.

1. Speakers of Standard English in the south of England tend to use contracted negatives of the type

I haven't got it She won't go Doesn't he like it? The further north one goes, the more likely one is to hear the alternative type: I've not got it She'll not go Does he not like it? This is particularly true of Derbyshire, Lancashire, Cumbria and Scotland. In Scotland, forms of this type are used particularly frequently. Elsewhere, it is more a matter of tendencies than of absolute rules. Southern English speakers use the northern-type contraction in I'm not, since I amn't does not occur in Standard English, although it does in other dialects, such as those spoken in Scotland. Southern English speakers also quite frequently use the you're not ~ we're not ~ they're not forms alongside the more typically southern-type forms with aren't. Part of the reason for this may lie in the stigmatised non-standard usage of this form with the first person singular, I aren't.

2. In most grammatical descriptions of Standard English it is stated that the indirect object precedes the direct object

She gave the man a book She gave him it She gave him the book If the preposition to is employed, however, then of course the direct object can precede the indirect object: She gave a book to the man She gave it to him She gave a book to him She gave it to the man In the south of England, the forms with to seem to be the most common, particularly where the direct object is a pronoun like him, her, it, them and so on. However, in the educated speech of people from the north of England, other structures are also possible, as demonstrated in the following: (a) She gave it him is very common indeed, and is also quite acceptable to many southern speakers. (b) She gave it the man is also very common in the north of England, but is not found in the south. (c) She gave the book him is not so common, but it can nonetheless be heard in the north of England, particularly if there is contrastive stress on him. (d) She gave a book the man is not especially common, but it does occur in northern varieties, particularly again if man is contrastively stressed.

3. There are regional differences in which participle forms are used after verbs such as need and want

<i>Southern England</i>	I want it washed
	It needs washing
<i>Parts of midland</i>	I want it washing
<i>and northern England</i>	It needs washing
<i>Scotland</i>	I want it washed
	It needs washed

4. There are a number of regional and age-group differences in the use of the verbs must and have to.

These can be demonstrated with reference to Table given below. The forms in the negative modal column have the meaning 'he is not compelled to do it (but he can if he likes)', while the forms in the negative main verb column have the meaning 'he is compelled not to do it'. The epistemic uses (rows 2 and 4) are those where inferences are being drawn: 'it is certain that he is in (because I can hear his radio)' and so on. It can be seen that in Standard English in the south of England (the variety most often described in grammar books) only must appears in (c) and only have to or have got to in (b). It will also be seen that 3(c) and 5(c) are blank, because there is no way of saying 'he must not do it' in the past or future: one has to use constructions such as 'he wasn't allowed to do it' or 'he won't be allowed to do it'. In the north of England, however, these gaps are filled. At 1(c), in these areas, it is possible to have he hasn't to do it (and, for some speakers, he's not got to do it or he hasn't got to do it - which are therefore ambiguous in a way they are not in the south of England) with the additional meaning he mustn't do it. Similarly, with the past, 3(c), educated northern English can have he hadn't to do it, as well as he didn't have to do it and he hadn't got to do it or he'd not got to do it, which are again ambiguous. And for the future, 5(c), northern speakers have he'll not have to do it or he won't have to do it (which are ambiguous) and even he'll haven't to do it. At 2(c) and 4(c) the usual northern forms are he mustn't be in and he mustn't have been in. And for many younger speakers in both the north and the south, probably as the result of North American influence, have to and have got to have also acquired epistemic use, particularly in positive, present tense usage. Thus he must be the greatest player in the world can now also be he's got to be the greatest player in the world or he has to be the greatest player in the world.

		(a) positive	(b) negative modal	(c) negative main verb
non-epistemic	(1)	he must do it he has to do it he's got to do it	he doesn't have to do it he hasn't got to do it	he mustn't do it
epistemic	(2)	he must be in		he can't be in
non-epistemic	(3)	he had to do it he'd got to do it	he didn't have to do it he hadn't got to do it	
epistemic	(4)	he must have been in		he couldn't have been in he can't have been in
	(5)	he'll have to do it	he won't have to do it	

5. It is possible to divide English verbs into two main classes according (among other criteria) to whether or not they employ auxiliary do in negatives and interrogatives

He walked.

He didn't walk.

Did he walk?

He laughed.

She didn't laugh.

Did she laugh?

She can leave.

She can't leave.

Can she leave?

He will go.

He won't go.

Will he go?

Verbs of the second type (without do) come into the category of modals and auxiliaries.

(a) The verbs 'ought to' and 'used to' are often described in English grammars as coming into this second category, and indeed are employed in this way by some older speakers:

He ought not to go.

Ought he to go?

They used not to go.

Used they to go?

With younger speakers, however – and this is particularly true of the interrogative form, especially with used to – these verbs are being reclassified in the first category:

He didn't ought to go.

Did he ought to go?

They didn't use to go.

Did they use to go?

In examining this variation, it is necessary to distinguish between stative meanings of the verb to have and dynamic meanings. With stative meanings, we are dealing with some kind of stable quality or state of affairs, where to have means something like 'to be in possession of'. With dynamic meanings, we are dealing with some kind of activity or temporary state of affairs, where the verb means something like 'to consume', 'to take' and so on. Thus, I have some coffee in the cupboard involves stative meaning, whereas I have coffee with my breakfast is dynamic. In English, until relatively recently, the verb to have required do-support – that is, it was treated like a full verb – in the case of dynamic meanings only. Thus:

Does she have coffee with her breakfast? No, she doesn't.

They didn't have a good time last night.

With stative meanings, on the other hand, it was treated as an auxiliary and did not require do-support. Thus:

Have they any money? No, they haven't

They hadn't any coffee in the cupboard

In American English, on the other hand, do-support is required in both cases, so the verb to have is treated as a main verb regardless of whether it has dynamic or stative meanings. Thus:

Does she have coffee with her breakfast? No, she doesn't.

They didn't have a good time last night.

Do they have any money? No, they don't.

They didn't have any coffee in the cupboard.

In Scottish English and to a certain extent in the north of England as well as in many parts of Ireland, we find the opposite situation – there is no distinction between dynamic and stative meanings, the verb to have being treated as an auxiliary in all cases. Thus, in addition to saying: *Have they any money? No, they haven't*

They hadn't any coffee in the cupboard

In Scottish English one can say:

Has she coffee with her breakfast? No, she hasn't.

They hadn't a good time last night.

Though this is probably used more rarely by younger Scottish people than it is by people of their grandparents' generation. This difference in the status of have is also demonstrated by different possibilities of phonological contraction (only auxiliary have can be contracted). Thus:

US English	<i>I have no money.</i>	<i>I had a good time.</i>
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English English	<i>I've no money.</i>	<i>I had a good time.</i>
-----------------	-----------------------	---------------------------

Scottish English	<i>I've no money.</i>	<i>I'd a good time.</i>
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In both American and British English, it is also very usual with stative meanings in more informal styles to use the have got construction, for example:

Have they got any money? No, they haven't.

They hadn't got any coffee in the cupboard.

There is also the further complication that the American-style lack of grammatical distinction between stative and dynamic meanings has had an influence on the English of England, particularly among younger southern speakers. This means that in southern England English we now have the possibility, with stative meanings, of using three different types of construction:

Have you got any money? (informal)

Have you any money? (formal, older)

Do you have any money? (newer)

It is well known that certain verb-particle constructions in English have alternative forms as follows:

(a) <i>He turned out the light.</i>	<i>Put on your coat!</i>	<i>She took off her shoes.</i>
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(b) <i>He turned the light out.</i>	<i>Put your coat on!</i>	<i>She took her shoes off.</i>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------

There is, however, regional variation with respect to this usage in Britain. All speakers will accept both (a) and (b) as normal English, but speakers in the south of England are more likely to employ the (b) forms in their own speech, whereas Scottish speakers very frequently use forms of type (a).

6. Like

Like is becoming increasingly frequent in the speech of younger British and Irish people, regardless of whether they speak standard or non-standard dialects. Like fulfils several functions: it can function as a pause filler, as in *Are you, like, coming to the cinema tonight?* as well as an intensifier, serving to draw attention to a following piece of information:

It was like the funniest film I've ever seen.

It can also function, with the verb be, as a means of directly reporting speech (equivalent to said, etc.) or a person's (unverbalised) emotional status, as in:

They were like, 'I hate this place' but she's like, just shut up both of you.

This last function of like is termed quotative (be) like (see Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999; Dailey-O'Cain 2000; Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2009), and it is thought to have been imported fairly recently into British English from North America. Note that several of the speakers on the website recordings use like frequently for all three functions, and they are not necessarily the younger ones (e.g. the London and Aberdeen speaker). The quotative system in contemporary English is highly complex, and new forms are being adopted with amazing rapidity. Cheshire et al. (2011) give an account of a new quotative this is + speaker in the speech of young Londoners, for example:

This is them 'What area are you from, what part?'

This is me 'I'm from Hackney.'

7.3 Traditional dialects

Traditional dialects are those conservative dialects of English which are, for the most part, spoken in relatively isolated rural areas by certain older speakers and which differ considerably from Standard English, and indeed from one another. Traditional dialects are what most British people think of when they hear the term 'dialect' used in a non-technical way. They correspond to those varieties which are known as 'patois' in the French speaking world and 'Mundart' in German-speaking areas.

- a) Grammatical features which are typical of certain traditional dialects include the following: (a) In most Scottish dialects, negation is not formed with not, but with no or with its more typically Scottish forms nae /ne/ or na /na/. Thus we find forms in Scottish English such as:

He's no coming.

I've nae got it.

I cannae go.

We do na have one.

- b) In large areas of the north of England, including urban areas of Yorkshire, as well as in many areas of the rural south-west of England, the older distinction still survives (though it is now rare) between the informal singular second person pronouns thou, thee, thine and formal and/or plural you ~ yours. In the north of England, the usual subject and object form of this pronoun is tha, while in the south-west it tends to be thee. The system operates very much as in modern French, with friends and family being referred to as tha and people who one does not know so well being called you. It is also sometimes the case that distinct verb forms associated with second person singular still survive; for example, tha cast 'you can'.

- c) In large areas of the south-west of England, including Devon and Somerset, a system of personal pronouns exists in which the form of the pronoun is not, for the most part, determined by subject versus object function, but by weak or strong stress position. For example:

strong	weak
<i>you</i>	<i>ee</i>
<i>he</i>	<i>er (subject), 'n (object)</i>
<i>she</i>	<i>er</i>
<i>we</i>	<i>us</i>
<i>they</i>	<i>'m</i>

Thus: *You wouldn't do that, would ee?*

He wouldn't do that, would er?

No, give 'n to he.

She wouldn't do that, would er?

No, give 'n to she.

We wouldn't do that, would us?

No, give 'n to we.

They wouldn't do that, would 'm?

No, give 'm to they.

- d) In many traditional dialects of the south-west of England, the gender system operates in a manner unlike that existing in Standard English, in that mass nouns such as water and bread are usually referred to as it, while count nouns such as hammer and tree are referred to as he, er or 'n. Thus one would say:

Pass me the bread. It's on the table

but

Pass me the loaf. He's on the table.

7.4 Problems in listening to unfamiliar dialects

Despite our growing awareness of variation and its role in second-language acquisition, and the recent attention given to variability in the learner's inter-language (see Ellis, 1986), much current research and pedagogy presumes a single dialect of the target language as a baseline for the analysis of the learner's comprehension and production.

The limitations imposed by such an assumption are particularly inappropriate for the consideration of second-language acquisition in urban centers, which are likely to contain speakers representing a range of social and regional dialects. Hyltenstam (1981) and Kachru (1982) have emphasized the fact that many learners must communicate in an environment that involves contact with speakers of diverse target-language varieties. In the process of second language acquisition or learning a foreign language like English, listening to this language is imperative to improve the reading, writing and speaking skills. However, a listener might face a set of problems that inhibit the process of listening comprehension. Since every speaker has a different style, pronunciation and dialect of speaking in English, the listener must be made cognizant of the dialectal variations along with other disparities.

To make words serviceable to the end of communication, it is necessary that they excite in the Hearer, exactly the same idea they stand for in the mind of the speaker. Without this, men fill one another's hands with noise and sounds; but convey not their thoughts and lay not before one another, their ideas which is the end of Discourse and language.

John Locke's conception of the nature of verbal communication and listening comprehension may seem both perceptive and contemporary to today's second language acquisition researchers and teachers, but such a view of human understanding was neither original to Locke nor novel to his time. A number of countries are English-speaking: England, America, Australia...even Ireland and a few others have native English speakers. Inside each of these countries there are even more dialects. Someone from New York sounds very different from someone from Texas.

The following are the problems you might face as listener:

1. Unfamiliar dialect
2. Different spellings in different dialects
3. Variation in Pronunciation of words
4. Inability to understand the context in case of a different social dialect

According to Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014), there are a lot of difficulties that learners may encounter in the listening comprehension processes and the purpose is to be aware of these problems and try to solve them. Some of these problems are as follows:

Quality of Recorded Materials

In some classes, teachers use some recorded materials that do not have high quality. The quality of sound system can impact the comprehending of learners' listening.

Cultural Differences

Learners should be familiar with the cultural knowledge of language that has a significant effect on the learners' understanding. If the listening task involves completely different cultural materials, then the learners may have critical problems in their comprehension. It is the responsibility of teachers to give background knowledge about the listening activities in advance.

Accent

Munro and Derwing (1999) expressed that too many accented speech can lead to an important reduction in comprehension. According to Goh (1999), 66% of learners mentioned a speaker's accent as one of the most significant factors that affect listener comprehension. Unfamiliar accents both native and non-native can cause serious problems in listening comprehension and familiarity with an accent helps learners' listening comprehension. Buck (2001) indicated that when listeners hear an unfamiliar accent such as Indian English for the first time after studying only American English will encounter critical difficulties in listening. This will certainly interrupt the whole listening comprehension process and at the same time an unfamiliar accent makes comprehension impossible for the listeners.

Unfamiliar Vocabulary

According to Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014), when listening texts contain known words it would be very easy for students to them. If students know the meaning of words this can arouse their interest and motivation and can have a positive impact on the students' listening comprehension ability. A lot of words have more than one meaning and if they are not used appropriately in their appropriate contexts students will get confused.

Length and Speed of Listening

Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, and Tugrul Mart (2014) stated that the level of students can have a significant role when they listen to long parts and keep all information in their mind. It is very difficult for lower-level students to listen more than three minutes long and complete the listening tasks. Short listening passages make easy listening comprehension for learners and reduce their tiredness. According to Underwood (1989), speed can make listening passage difficult. If the speakers speak too fast students may have serious problems to understand L2 words. In this situation, listeners are not able to control the speed of speakers, and this can create critical problems with listening comprehension.

7.5 Solutions to the problems associated with dialect

1. Attain background knowledge and linguistic knowledge, such as complex sentence structures and colloquial words and expressions, as needed.
2. Try to get, as much feedback as possible. Throughout the course, the teacher should bridge the gap between input and students' response and between the teacher's feedback and students' reaction in order to keep activities purposeful.
3. It is important for the listening-class teacher to give students immediate feedback on their performance. This not only promotes error correction but also provides encouragement. It can help students develop confidence in their ability to deal with listening problems. Student feedback can help the teacher judge where the class is going and how it should be guided.
4. Students should develop the skills of listening with anticipation, listening for specific information, listening for gist, interpretation and inference, listening for intended meaning, listening for attitude, etc., by providing varied tasks and exercises at different levels with different focuses.

Summary

English language is a complex language as it is a blend of myriad dialects and accents. Owing to the diversity of dialects and other variations in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and accent, learners can face a lot of issues in the understanding after listening to unfamiliar dialects in English. A dialect is chiefly distinguished from other dialects of the same language by features of linguistic structure—i.e., grammar (specifically morphology and syntax) and vocabulary. The most widespread type of dialectal differentiation is regional, or geographic. In many localities, dialectal differences are connected with social classes, educational levels, or both. Slang—just as a professional dialect—is used mainly by persons who are in a sense bidialectal; i.e., they speak some other dialect or the standard language, in addition to slang. Standard languages arise when a certain dialect begins to be used in written form, normally throughout a broader area than that of the dialect itself. Traditional dialects are those conservative dialects of English which are, for the most part, spoken in relatively isolated rural areas by certain older speakers and which differ considerably from Standard English, and indeed from one another.

Self Assessment

1. Slang is used mainly by persons who are _____.
 - A. bidialectal
 - B. polyglot
 - C. lexicographer
 - D. linguist

2. Educational differences between speakers strongly affect the extent of their _____.
 - A. culture
 - B. vocabulary
 - C. thoughts
 - D. ideas

3. In order to solve the problem of listening to unfamiliar dialects, _____ knowledge is needed.
 - A. particular
 - B. social
 - C. linguistic
 - D. scientific

4. A dialect is chiefly distinguished from other dialects of the same language by features of linguistic structure like _____, _____ and syntax.
 - A. pronunciation, intonation
 - B. style, thought
 - C. grammar, morphology
 - D. style, intonation

5. The American English word 'subway' is called _____ in British English.
 - A. hallway
 - B. attic
 - C. lane
 - D. underground

6. The British English word 'corn' is called _____ in American English.

-
- A. maize
B. wheat
C. oats
D. barley
7. Yankee English is an example of _____ dialect.
A. social
B. geographic
C. occupational
D. class
8. Standard languages arise when a certain dialect begins to be used in _____ form.
A. spoken
B. cryptic
C. written
D. native
9. Which of the following is not a problem while listening to unfamiliar dialects?
A. Unfamiliar vocabulary
B. Accent
C. Cultural differences
D. Speaker's attire
10. The word 'dialect' comes from the ancient _____ language.
A. Latin
B. Greek
C. French
D. Egyptian
11. We use standard dialects in _____ contexts.
A. formal
B. informal
C. vernacular
D. colloquial
12. A dialect is a form of the language that is spoken in a particular part of the _____ or by a particular group of _____.
A. country, people
B. people, country
C. city, men
D. city, women
13. Most learners of English learn the _____ dialects of the language.

- A. particular
- B. standard
- C. common
- D. popular

14. An accent refers to the way in which we _____ words.

- A. study
- B. read
- C. pronounce
- D. understand

15. The standard dialect of a language can be spoken with different _____.

- A. languages
- B. styles
- C. tones
- D. accents

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | A | 2 | B | 3 | C | 4 | C | 5 | D |
| 6 | A | 7 | B | 8 | C | 9 | D | 10 | B |
| 11 | A | 12 | A | 13 | B | 14 | C | 15 | D |

Review questions

1. Explain geographical dialects with examples.
2. Discuss social dialect.
3. What kind of problems is faced while listening to unfamiliar dialects?
4. Differentiate between dialect and accent
5. How can a dialect become a standard language?



Further reading

1. Hughes, Trudgill, Watt. English Accents and Dialects, Routledge
2. Burley-Allen, Madelyn. Listening: The Forgotten Skill: A self-teaching guide. Wiley



Web Links

1. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101226.pdf>
2. https://valrc.org/trainings/courses/ESOLBasicsdocs/Listening_a.pdf
3. <https://www.eslbase.com/teaching/language-learners-listening-comprehension>

Unit 08 Speaking Skills

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Summary

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand the meaning and aspects of pronunciation, vowel and consonant sounds in English language
- become well versed with the peculiarities of English pronunciation, classification of vowel and consonant sounds
- get an overview of the rules and exceptions in English pronunciation, articulators involved in the production of vowel and consonant sounds

Introduction

Language is an organization of sounds, of vocal symbols-the sounds produced from the mouth with the help of various organs of speech to convey some meaningful message. Language has a very important social purpose, because it is mainly used for linguistic communication. It is the most powerful, convenient and permanent means and form of communication. A language can be used in two ways for the purposes of communication. It can be spoken or written but the medium of speech is more important than writing. This is because speech comes first in the history of any language community - in fact, it came centuries before writing in the history of any language community. Secondly, speech comes first in the history of any individual. We started speaking long before we started writing. Speech as a medium of communication is used much more than the medium of writing. In every language, a letter of the alphabet represents a particular sound. Lastly, modern technology has contributed tremendously to the importance of speech- modern inventions like the telephone, the radio, the tape recorder and several such devices have raised problems of communication primarily concerned with speech.

Pronunciation means how we say words. Most people speak the dialect of Standard English with an accent that belongs to the part of the country they come from or live in. Learners of British English commonly hear *RP* (Received Pronunciation), which is an accent often used on the BBC and other news media and in some course materials for language learners, but it is also common to hear a variety of regional accents of English from across the world. According to the Cambridge English dictionary, pronunciation is the way in which a word or letter is said, or said correctly, or the way in which a language is spoken. How we use spoken stress and rhythm is also an important part of pronunciation. For example, it is important to know which syllables in a word are stressed and how different patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables are pronounced. There are also common patterns of intonation in English which enable us to give special emphasis to particular words, phrases and sentences.

Syllable

A syllable is a single unit of speech, either a whole word or one of the parts into which a word can be separated, usually containing a vowel.

8.1 Aspects of Pronunciation

Aspects of pronunciation refer to all those elements of English pronunciation that carve the stencil for correct English pronunciation. Each aspect is interlinked to the other aspect and knowledge of every element is a pre requisite to hone the skill of correct English pronunciation.

The aspects of English pronunciation are as follows:

1. Vowels
2. Consonants
3. Voicing
4. Aspiration
5. Assimilation
6. Elision
7. Word Stress
8. Sentence Stress
9. Intonation

8.2 Vowels

A vowel is a speech sound produced by humans when the breath flows out through the mouth without being blocked by the teeth, tongue, or lips. A vowel is also a letter that represents a sound produced in this way:

The vowels in English are: a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y.



1. The word *louea* (a genus of sea sponges) contains all five vowels and no other letters. (Being the name of a genus (i.e., a proper noun), it is written with a capital letter. Also of note, it is the shortest word with four syllables.)
2. The words *abstemious* and *facetious* contain all five vowels in order.

Classification of Vowels

The most generally used description of vowel sounds is based on a combination of articulatory and auditory criteria, and takes into account the following physical variables:

1. Tongue shape
2. Lip shape

3. Whether tongue and/or lip shape are held constant or undergo change (i.e., is the vowel a steady-state vowel or is it a diphthong?)
4. Position of the soft palate (nasal or non-nasal) Finally, we have a non-physical variable which operates in a large number of languages
5. Duration



Change in the shape of the tongue is perhaps the most important of all these factors.



1. Say the English vowel /a:/, as in palm. Put your finger in your mouth. Now say the vowel /i:/ (as in fleece). Feel inside your mouth again. Look in a mirror and see how the front of the tongue lowers from being close to the roof of the mouth for /i:/ to being far away for /a:/. Now you know why doctors ask you to say 'ah' when they want to see inside your mouth; the tongue is at its lowest when you say /a:/
 2. Now say these English vowels: /i:/, as in fleece, /ɛ:/, as in square, /æ/, as in trap. Can you feel the tongue moving down?
 3. Then say them in reverse order: /æ/, /ɛ:/, /i:/.
- Can you feel the tongue moving up?

As the tongue lowers, the oral cavity opens and increases in size. Consequently, the oral cavity is bigger for /ai/ than it is for /ii/, and as a result it produces a lower pitched resonance.

Vowels traditionally have been specified in terms of the position of the highest point of the tongue and the position of the lips.

Front Vowels

The highest point of the tongue is in the front of the mouth for the vowels in 'heed', 'hid', 'head', and 'had'. Accordingly, these vowels are classified as front vowels.

Back Vowels

The vowels in 'hod', 'hawed', 'hood', and 'who'd' are classified as back vowels.



Close Vowels: The tongue is highest in the vowels in 'heed' and 'who'd', which are therefore called high, or close, vowels.

Open Vowels: The tongue is lowest in the vowels in 'had' and 'hod', which are called low, or open, vowels.

Mid Vowels: The height of the tongue for the vowels in the other words is between these two extremes, and they are therefore called mid vowels.

Lip positions may be described as being *rounded*, as in 'who'd', or *unrounded* or *spread*, as in 'heed'. Because of the difficulty of observing the precise tongue positions that occur in vowels, a set of eight vowels known as the cardinal vowels has been devised to act as reference points. This set of vowels is defined partly in articulatory and partly in auditory terms.

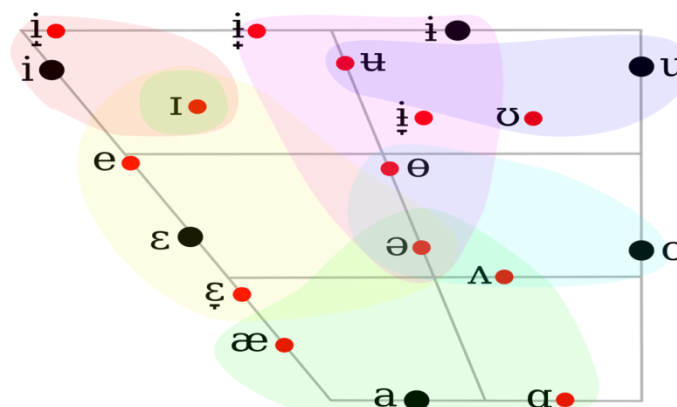
Lip shape Change of lip shape is also a significant factor in producing different vowel qualities. The main effects of lip-rounding are:

1. to enlarge the space within the mouth;

2. to diminish the size of the opening of the mouth.

Both of these factors deepen the pitch and increase the resonance of the front oral cavity. The lip shapes of the primary CVs follow the pattern typically found in languages worldwide. Front and open vowels have spread to neutral lip position, whilst back vowels have rounded lips. (The UPSID survey of world languages, carried out by the University of California, has shown that over 90 per cent of front and back vowels are unrounded and rounded respectively.)

Cardinal Vowels



It was not until early in the twentieth century that a reasonably accurate system of describing and classifying vowels was devised. In 1917, the British phonetician Daniel Jones (1881–1967) produced his system of cardinal vowels (often abbreviated to CVs), a model which is still widely employed to this day. For any vowel, the tongue must be arched into a hump (termed the tongue arch).

We can always distinguish the highest point of the tongue arch for any vowel articulation. There is an upper vowel limit beyond which the surface of the tongue cannot rise in relation to the roof of the mouth – otherwise friction will be produced. The vowels at the upper vowel limit are the front vowel and the back vowel.

There is also a lower vowel limit beyond which the tongue cannot be depressed. This gives us two other extreme vowels – a front vowel [a] and a back vowel [ɑ].

Phoneticians who have been trained in the cardinal vowel system are able to make precise descriptions of the vowels of any language in terms of these reference points.

Monophthongs

A monophthong is where there is one vowel sound in a syllable, and a diphthong is where there are two vowel sounds in a syllable. Say the word ‘funny’ out-loud. As you can hear, in ‘funny’ we have two vowel sounds: ʌ and i which are divided into two syllables by the consonant sound n. So, we can say that ‘funny’ contains two monophthongs: ʌ and i.

Diphthongs

To put it simply, a monophthong is a single vowel, and a diphthong is a double vowel. Say the word ‘guy’. Here, we have the same two vowel sounds but this time they are stuck together in one syllable, without any consonant dividing them. So we can say that ‘guy’ contains one diphthong /ai/.

There are 8 IPA symbols for English Diphthong vowels. The IPA for English Diphthong vowels are: /eɪ/, /oʊ/, /aʊ/, /ɪə/, /eə/, /ɔɪ/, /aɪ/, /ʊə/.

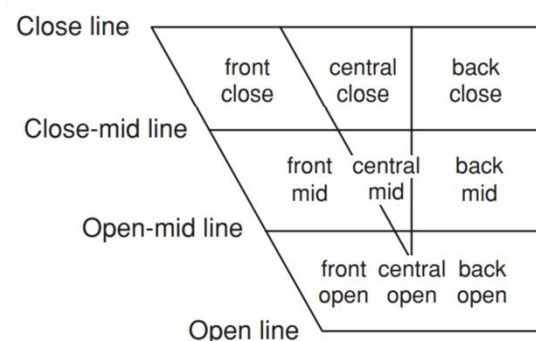


/eɪ/	-	place /pleɪs/	late /leɪt/	dangerous /ˈdeɪ.ɹəs/
/oʊ/	-	home /hoʊm/	phone /foʊn/	global /ˈɡloʊ.bəl/

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/aʊ/	-	mouse /maʊs/	brown /braʊn/	accountant /ə'kaʊn.tənt/
/ɪə/	-	clear /klɪə/	fear /fɪə/	career /kə'reɪə/
/eə/	-	care /keə/	wear /weə/	declare /dɪ'kleə/
/ɔɪ/	-	boy /bɔɪ/	toy /tɔɪ/	enjoyable /ɪn'dʒɔɪ.jə.bəl/
/aɪ/	-	find /faɪnd/	bite /baɪt/	tiger /'taɪ.gə/
/ʊə/	-	tour /tʊə/	pure /pʊə/	mature /mə'tʃʊə/

The following system can be used for vowel description. The areas of the vowel diagram are designated in the way shown in the following diagram:



International Phonetic Alphabet

Learners of foreign languages use the IPA to check exactly how words are pronounced. Each IPA symbol represents a sound. For example, a learner of English can use the IPA to find out exactly what sounds are in a word and where the word stress is. It is an extremely helpful tool for people learning to speak another language. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is very important for learners of English because English is not a phonetic language. The spelling of an English word doesn't tell us how to pronounce it. In English, several different letter combinations can be used to spell the same sound and there are silent letters. The IPA tells us the correct sounds and word stress for pronouncing English words.

Short Vowels

A short English vowel is noticeably shorter than a long vowel. An English short vowel is made with only one mouth position. One mouth position is represented by one IPA symbol (every sound /mouth position has a different IPA symbol). The weak vowel schwa is the most common vowel in English.

There are 7 IPA symbols for English short vowels. The IPA for English short vowels are: /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /ɒ/, /ə/



/ɪ/	fit /fi:t/	pick /pi:k/	difficult /'dɪ.fɪ.kəlt/
/e/	pet /pet/	sent /sent/	attention /ə'ten.ʃən/
/æ/	pat /pæt/	flat /flæt/	family /'fæ.mə.li/
/ʌ/	cut /kʌt/	jump /dʒʌmp/	cover /'kʌ.vər/
/ʊ/	put /pʊt/	book /bʊk/	cushion /'kʊ.ʃən/
/ɒ/	pot /pɒt/	dog /dɒg/	hospital /'hɒs.pɪ.təl/
/ə/	about /ə'baʊt/	system /'sɪs.təm/	complete /kəm'pli:t/

Long Vowels

English long vowels have two dots like this - /:/ after the vowel symbol. If it has /:/ after it, you know it's a long vowel. English long vowels are noticeably longer than short vowels. Distinguishing between short and long vowels is very important in English because they mean

different words. There are 5 IPA symbols for English long vowels. The IPA for English long vowels are: /i:/, /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/, /ɜ:/, /u:/.

For example, 'ship and sheep', 'wick and week'.

An English long vowel is only one symbol in the IPA because it is one mouth position.



/i:/	week/wi:k/	feet/fi:t/	media/'mi:.di.jə/
/ɑ:/	hard/ha:/	park/pa:k/	article/ɑ:.tɪ.kəl/
/ɔ:/	fork/fɔ:k/	walk/wɔ:k/	August/ɔ:ˈgʌst/
/ɜ:/	heard/hɜ:d/	word/wɜ:d/	surface/'sɜ:.fis/
/u:/	boot/bu:t/	group /gru:p/	beautiful /'bjʊ:.tɪ.fəl/

8.3 Consonants

Consonant is any speech sound, such as that represented by *t*, *g*, *f*, or *z*, that is characterized by an articulation with a closure or narrowing of the vocal tract such that a complete or partial blockage of the flow of air is produced.

Classification of consonants

Consonants are usually classified according to:

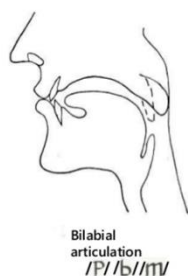
1. place of articulation (the location of the stricture made in the vocal tract, such as dental, bilabial, or velar)
2. the manner of articulation (the way in which the obstruction of the airflow is accomplished, as in stops, fricatives, approximants, trills, taps, and laterals)
3. the presence or absence of voicing
4. nasalization, aspiration, or other phonation

Place of articulation

It tells us where the sound is produced. If we classify them according to the organs which articulate them, we distinguish six main classes.

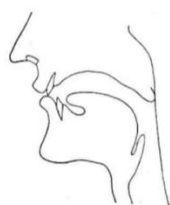
Labial or lip sounds, which may be sub-divided into:

Bi-labial sounds, viz. sounds articulated by the two lips: examples *p*, *m*, *v*.



Bilabial sounds are produced when the lips are brought together. Examples are /p/, which is voiceless, as in *pay* or /b/ and /m/ which are voiced, as in *bay*, *may*.

Labio-dental sounds, viz. sounds articulated by the lower lip against the upper teeth: example *f*.



Labiodental
/v/ /v/ /f/

Labiodental sounds are made when the lower lip is raised towards the upper front teeth. Examples are /f/ *safe* (voiceless) and /v/ *save* (voiced).

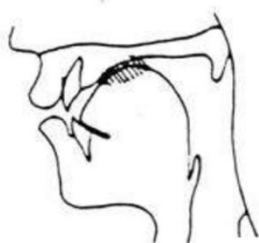
Dental sounds

Sounds articulated by the tip or blade of the tongue against the upper teeth or teeth-ridge. It is often convenient to sub divide these into two classes.

1. Pre-dental sounds, viz. sounds articulated by the tip or blade of the tongue against the teeth: example *Θ*, French *t*.
2. Post-dental, or alveolar, sounds, viz. sounds articulated by the tip or blade of the tongue against the teeth-ridge: examples *z*, *f*, and the English *t*.

Palatal sounds

These sounds are articulated by the front of the tongue against the hard palate: example *j*.

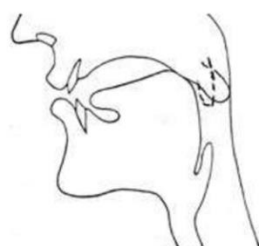


Palatal
/j/

Palatal sounds are very similar to palatoalveolar ones, they are just produced further back towards the velum. The only palatal sound in English is /j/ as in *yes*, *yellow*, *beauty*, *new* and it is voiced.

Velar sounds

These sounds are articulated by the back of the tongue against the soft palate: examples *k*, *ŋ*.

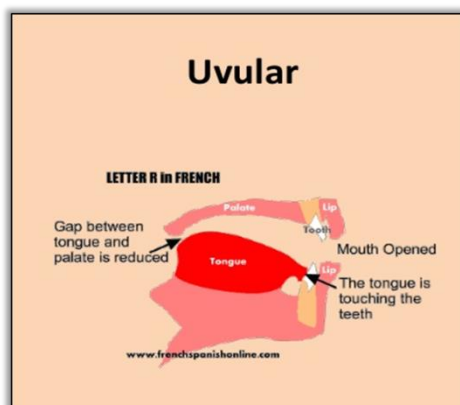


Velar articulation
/k/ /w/ /ŋ/ /g/

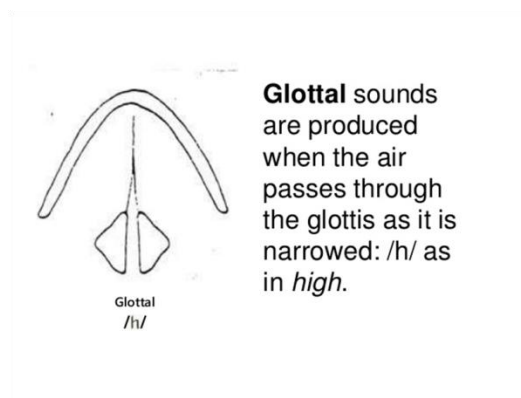
Velar sounds are made by raising the back of the tongue towards the soft palate, called the velum. Examples /k/ *back*, voiceless, and /g/, /ŋ/ both voiced *bag*, *bang*. /w/ is a velar which is accompanied with lip rounding.

Uvular sounds

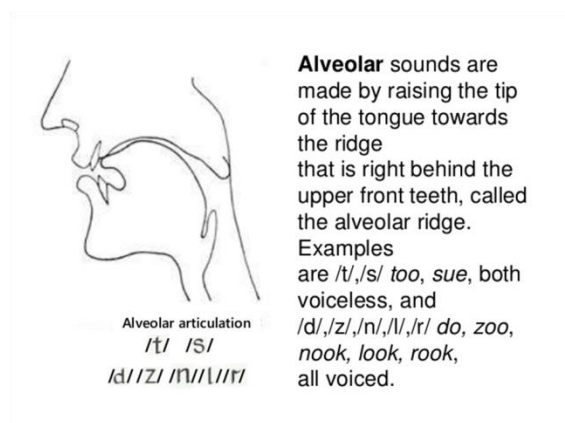
These sounds are articulated by the back of the tongue and the extremity of the soft palate or the uvula: example R.

***Glottal sounds***

These sounds are articulated in the glottis.

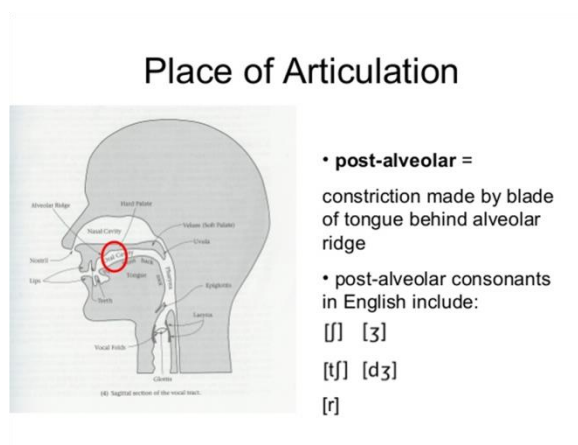
***Alveolar sounds***

In an alveolar consonant, the tongue tip (or less often the tongue blade) approaches or touches the alveolar ridge, the ridge immediately behind the upper teeth. The English stops [t], [d], and [n] are formed by completely blocking the airflow at this place of articulation. The fricatives [s] and [z] are also at this place of articulation, as is the lateral approximant [l].



Post alveolar

In a post alveolar consonant, the constriction is made immediately behind the alveolar ridge. The constriction can be made with either the tip or the blade of the tongue. The English fricatives [ʃ] and [ʒ] are made at this POA, as are the corresponding affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ].



Retroflex

In a retroflex consonant, the tongue tip is curled backward in the mouth. English [ɻ] is a retroflex approximant -- the tongue tip is curled up toward the postal veolar region (the area immediately behind the alveolar ridge). Both the sounds we've called "postal veolar" and the sounds we've called "retroflex" involve the region behind the alveolar ridge. In fact, at least for English, you can think of retro flexes as being a sub-type of post alveolar, specifically, the type of post alveolar that you make by curling your tongue tip backward. In fact, the retro flexes and other post alveolar sound so similar that you can usually use either one in English without any noticeable effect on your accent. A substantial minority North American English speakers don't use a retroflex [ɻ], but rather a "bunched" R -- sort of like a tongue-blade [ʒ] with an even wider opening. Similarly, a few people use a curled-up tongue tip rather than their tongue blades in making [ʃ] and [ʒ].)

Manner of articulation

In articulatory phonetics, the manner of articulation is the configuration and interaction of the articulators (speech organs such as the tongue, lips, and palate) when making a speech sound. Homorganic consonants, which have the same place of articulation, may have different manners of articulation.

If we classify consonants according to the manner in which the organs articulate them, we distinguish six main classes.

Plosive consonants

They are formed by completely closing the air passage and suddenly removing the obstacle, so that the air escapes making an explosive sound: examples 'p', 'd', 'g'. These sounds are called stops by many writers. In the stop [t], the tongue tip touches the alveolar ridge and cuts off the airflow. In [s], the tongue tip approaches the alveolar ridge but doesn't quite touch it. There is still enough of an opening for airflow to continue, but the opening is narrow enough that it causes the escaping air to become turbulent (hence the hissing sound of the [s]).

Fricative consonant

In a fricative consonant, the articulators involved in the constriction approach get close enough to each other to create a turbulent airstream. The fricatives of English are [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], and [ʒ].

Nasal consonants

They are formed by completely closing the mouth at some point, the soft palate remaining lowered so that the air is free to pass out through the nose: examples m, n. (The nasal consonants are the only English sounds in which the soft palate is lowered.)

Lateral consonants

They are formed by an obstacle placed in the middle of the mouth, the air being free to escape at the sides. These sounds are sometimes called divided consonants or side consonants.

Rolled consonants

They are formed by a rapid succession of taps of some elastic organ: example rolled r. These sounds are often called trilled consonants. V. Fricative consonants, formed by narrowing the air passage at some point so that the air escapes making a kind of hissing sound: examples f, z.

Semivowels or vowels are used in the capacity of consonants, example 'w'.

Affricates

An affricate is a single sound composed of a stop portion and a fricative portion. In English [tʃ], the airflow is first interrupted by a stop which is very similar to [t] (though made a bit further back). But instead of finishing the articulation quickly and moving directly into the next sound, the tongue pulls away from the stop slowly, so that there is a period of time immediately after the stop where the constriction is narrow enough to cause a turbulent airstream.

Approximants

In an approximant, the articulators involved in the constriction are further apart still than they are for a fricative. The articulators are still closer to each other than when the vocal tract is in its neutral position, but they are not even close enough to cause the air passing between them to become turbulent. The approximants of English are [w], [j], [ɹ], and [ɻ].

VOWELS	monophthongs				diphthongs		Phonemic Chart voiced unvoiced		
	i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ			
	sheep	ship	good	shoot	here	wait			
	e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ			əʊ
	bed	teacher	bird	door	tourist	boy			show
CONSONANTS	æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ		
	cat	up	far	on	hair	my	cow		
	p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g	
	pea	boat	tea	dog	cheese	June	car	go	
	f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	
fly	video	think	this	see	zoo	shall	television		
CONSONANTS	m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j	
	man	now	sing	hat	love	red	wet	yes	

The 44 phonemes of Received Pronunciation based on the popular Adrian Underhill layout

adapted by EnglishClub.com



1. There are 44 sounds in English language.
2. Out of the 44 sounds, 20 sounds are vowel sounds.
3. Out of the 20 vowel sounds, 12 are monophthongs and 8 are diphthongs.
4. Monophthongs are also referred to as pure vowels.
5. Out of the 44 sounds, 24 sounds are consonant sounds.
6. All sounds except vowel sounds are consonant sounds in English language.

8.4 Voicing in Pronunciation

Voice, also called Full Voice, in phonetics, is the sound that is produced by the vibration of the vocal cords. All vowels are normally voiced, but consonants may be either voiced or voiceless (*i.e.*, uttered without vibration of the vocal cords). The liquid consonant *l* and the nasal *m*, *n*, *ng* (as in “sing”) are normally voiced in English, and the stops, fricatives, and affricates characteristically possess both voiced and voiceless forms. In English, for example, *b* is a voiced bilabial stop, whereas *p* is a voiceless bilabial stop. Of the other stops, fricatives, and affricates, *v*, *d*, *th* (as in “this”), *z*, *zh* (the sound of the *s* in “pleasure”), *j* (as in “jam”), and *g* are normally all voiced sounds; while *f*, *t*, *th* (as in “thin”), *s*, *sh*, *ch*, and *k* are all voiceless sounds.

8.5 Aspiration

Aspirate is the sound ‘*h*’ as in English “hat.” Consonant sounds such as the English voiceless stops *p*, *t*, and *k* at the beginning of words (*e.g.*, “pat,” “top,” “keel”) are also aspirated because they are pronounced with an accompanying forceful expulsion of air. Such sounds are not aspirated at the end of words or in combination with certain consonants (*e.g.*, in “spot,” “stop”). The voiced stops *b* and *d* in Sanskrit and Hindi also have aspirated forms that are usually transliterated as *bh* and *dh*.

8.6 Assimilation

Assimilation, where, as a result of phonetic conditioning, one phoneme is effectively replaced by a second under the influence of a third, we term the process assimilation. Take the English word broadcast, which in careful pronunciation is /brɒdˌkɑːst/, but in connected speech may well become /brɒdˌkɑːst/. Here, one phoneme /d/ has been replaced by a second /g/ under the influence of a third /k/.

8.7 Elision

Elision: A change from the ideal form in connected speech may involve the deletion of a phoneme, *e.g.* English tasteless

ˈteɪstləs/ → ˈteɪsləs/.

The phoneme is said to be elided and the process is termed elision. Frequently, assimilation processes also involve elision, *e.g.* English mind-boggling :

ˈmaɪndbɒɡlɪŋ/ → ˈmaɪnbɒɡlɪŋ/.

8.8 Word Stress

In English, four phonetic variables appear most significant as indicators of stress:

intensity,

1. pitch variation,
2. vowel quality and
3. vowel duration.

Intensity in physiological terms is the greater breath effort and muscular energy associated with stressed syllables. It’s closely related to what is perceived by the listener as loudness.

Pitch variation appears to be, as far as English is concerned, the most important single factor in determining stress. In English, higher pitch tends to be associated with stronger stress.

Vowel quality, i.e. whether a vowel is central or peripheral, also determines stress. Take the English vowels in the noun present /'present/ as opposed to the verb (to) present /pre'zent/. The stressed syllables contain the peripheral vowel dress /e/, whereas the unstressed syllables have a central vowel /ə/. (Note that in the first word it is possible for the vowel in the unstressed syllable to be further reduced to a syllabic consonant /n/; in the second word some speakers may use another non-peripheral vowel, kit.) Diphthongs have a less clearly discernible glide.

The strongest stress is primary stress (indicated by 1 in the example); the next level, secondary stress (indicated by 2) – anything else is treated as unstressed. Primary stress is normally shown by a vertical mark ['] placed above the line. Where it's necessary to show a secondary stress, this is shown by a vertical mark below the line, thus:

For example, eccen'tricity, expla'nation, 'cauli,flower, 'goal,keeper, etc. Note that unstressed syllables are left unmarked. For most purposes, it is sufficient to show only primary stress, and from now on we shall normally ignore secondary stresses and also leave them unmarked, e.g., cate'gorical, 'cauliflower, etcetera

8.9 Intonation

Intonation, in phonetics, is the melodic pattern of an utterance. Intonations are primarily a matter of variation in the pitch level of the voice but in such languages as English, stress and rhythm are also involved. Intonation conveys differences of expressive meaning (e.g., surprise, anger, wariness). In many languages, including English, intonation serves a grammatical function, distinguishing one type of phrase or sentence from another. Thus, "Your name is John," beginning with a medium pitch and ending with a lower one (falling intonation), is a simple assertion; "Your name is John?", with a rising intonation (high final pitch), indicates a question.

Rules of using Intonation

It's divided into phrases, also known as 'tone-units'. The pitch moves up and down, within a 'pitch range'. Everybody has their own pitch range. Languages, too, differ in pitch range. English has particularly wide pitch range. In each tone unit, the pitch movement (a rise or fall in tone, or a combination of the two) takes place on the most important syllable known as the 'tonic-syllable'. The tonic-syllable is usually a high-content word, near the end of the unit. These patterns of pitch variation are essential to a phrase's meaning. Changing the intonation can completely change the meaning. Intonation and stress are closely linked. In fact, it's impossible to dissociate them. They go hand in hand.

Intonation is about how we say things, rather than what we say, the way the voice rises and falls when speaking, in other words the music of the language.

Falling Intonation (↘)

(The pitch of the voice falls at the end of the sentence.) Falling intonation is the most common intonation pattern in English. It is commonly found in statements, commands, wh-questions (information questions), confirmatory question tags and exclamations.

Statements

1. Nice to meet ↘you.
2. I'll be back in a ↘minute.
3. She doesn't live here ↘anymore.
4. Dad wants to change his ↘car.
5. Here is the weather ↘forecast.

Commands

1. Write your name ↘here.
2. Show me what you've ↘written.

3. Leave it on the \desk.
4. Take that picture \down.
5. Throw that \out.

Exclamations

1. How nice of \you!
2. That's just what I \need!
3. You don't \say!
4. What a beautiful \voice!
5. That's a \surprise!

Rising Intonation (↗)

(The pitch of the voice rises at the end of a sentence.)
 Rising intonation invites the speaker to continue talking.
 It is normally used with yes/no questions, and question tags that are real questions.

Yes/no Questions

(Questions that can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'.)

1. Do you like your new ↗teacher?
2. Have you finished ↗already?
3. May I borrow your ↗dictionary?
4. Do you have any ↗magazines?
5. Do you sell ↗stamps?

Questions tags that show uncertainty and require an answer (real questions).

1. We've met already, ↗haven't we?
2. You like fish, ↗don't you?
3. You're a new student ↗aren't you?
4. The view is beautiful, ↗isn't it?

We sometimes use a combination of rising and falling intonation in the same sentence.

The combination is called Rise-Fall or Fall-Rise intonation.

Rise-Fall Intonation (↗ ↘)

(The intonation rises and then falls.)

We use rise-fall intonation for choices, lists, unfinished thoughts and conditional sentences.

Choices (alternative questions.)

Are you having ↗soup or ↘salad?

Is John leaving on ↗Thursday or ↘Friday?

Does he speak ↗German or ↘French?

Unfinished thoughts (partial statements)

In the responses to the following questions, the rise-fall intonation indicates reservation. The speaker hesitates to fully express his/her thoughts. Do you like my new handbag? Well the ↗leather is ↘nice... (but I don't like it.) What was the meal like? Hmm, the ↗fish was ↘good... (but the rest wasn't great). So you both live in Los Angeles? Well ↗Alex ↘does ... (but I don't).

Conditional sentences

(The tone rises in the first clause and falls gradually in the second clause.)

1. If he ↗ calls, ask him to leave a ↘ message.
2. Unless he ↗ insists, I'm not going to ↘ go.
3. If you have any ↗ problems, just ↘ contact us.

Fall-Rise Intonation (↘ ↗)

(The voice falls and rises *usually within one word*. The main function of fall-rise intonation is to show that the speaker is not certain of the answer they are giving to a question or is reluctant to reply (as opposed to a falling tone used when there is no hesitation). It is also used in polite requests or suggestions.

Hesitation/reluctance:

1. So, you'd be willing to confirm that? ...Well ... I ↘sup ↗pose so ...
2. You didn't see him on Monday? I don't quite ↘re ↗member ...

Politeness-Doubt-Uncertainty: (You are not sure what the answer might be.)

1. Perhaps we could ↘vis ↗it the place?
2. Should we ↘cop ↗y the list?
3. Do you think it's ↘al ↗lowed?

Summary

Vowels are voiced sounds produced with a stricture of open approximation without any obstruction, either partial or complete, in the passage of air. Such a definition can help us to distinguish vowels from consonants (in which there is a partial or complete obstruction in the flow of air) but cannot help us to distinguish one vowel from another. For this, we have to set up criteria for the description and classification of vowels. All vowels are normally voiced. We have to understand two types of differences found in vowels – vowel length and vowel quality. Consider the English words hit and heat. The vowel sounds in these words differ only in their relative length. In heat, the vowel sound is longer than in hit. The second difference to consider is the quality of vowel as is exemplified in the words pool and peel. The vowel in pool is a long, back, high vowel and in peel, it is a long, front, high vowel. Other important aspects of pronunciation include consonants, word stress and intonation which play a significant role in the speaking skills.

Self Assessment

1. Changing the _____ can completely change the meaning of a sentence.
 - A. assimilation
 - B. elision
 - C. aspiration
 - D. intonation
2. Intonation indicates the _____ of a speaker.
 - A. mood
 - B. style
 - C. personality
 - D. knowledge

-
3. All _____ sounds are voiced.
- A. consonant
 - B. allophone
 - C. fricative
 - D. vowel
4. _____ is a result of phonetic conditioning where one phoneme is effectively replaced by a second under the influence of a third.
- A. Assimilation
 - B. Elision
 - C. Intonation
 - D. Aspiration
5. How many consonant sounds are there in English language?
- A. 44
 - B. 24
 - C. 20
 - D. 25
6. How many pure vowels are there in English language?
- A. 10
 - B. 6
 - C. 12
 - D. 8
7. Which physical variable is not taken into account for the description of vowels?
- A. Body language
 - B. Tongue shape
 - C. Lip shape
 - D. Position of the soft palate
8. The tongue is at its _____ position in the pronunciation of the vowel sound in the word 'heat'.
- A. lowest
 - B. highest
 - C. middle
 - D. none of these
9. The tongue is at its _____ position in the pronunciation of the vowel sound in the word 'mad'.
- A. middle
 - B. highest
 - C. lowest
 - D. none of these

10. The diphthong /aɪ/ is present in the word _____.
A. letter
B. better
C. shut
D. crime
11. The diphthong /eɪ/ is present in the word _____.
A. rain
B. key
C. fly
D. show
12. The diphthong /ɔɪ/ is present in the word _____.
A. mat
B. toy
C. car
D. love
13. Which of the following is not taken into account while classifying consonants?
A. Color of tongue
B. Place of articulation
C. Manner of articulation
D. Voicing
14. The sounds 'p', 'b' and 'm' are classified as _____ sounds.
A. labio-dental
B. bilabial
C. palatal
D. velar
15. Velar sounds are articulated by the back of the tongue against the _____.
A. hard palate
B. teeth ridge
C. soft palate
D. roof of the mouth

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 2. A | 3. D | 4. A | 5. B |
| 6. C | 7. A | 8. B | 9. C | 10. D |
| 11. A | 12. B | 13. A | 14. B | 15. C |

Review Questions

1. Discuss vowels.
2. Discuss consonants.
3. What are cardinal vowels?
4. Explain voicing in pronunciation.
5. Define assimilation.



Further Reading

1. Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary. Cambridge University Press
2. Brown, Adam. Pronunciation and Phonetics. Routledge



Web Links

1. <https://www.cambridge.org/gb/cambridgeenglish/catalog/grammar-vocabulary-and-pronunciation/pronunciation>
2. <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/adam/files/phonetics.ppt.pdf>
3. <https://www.londonschool.com/blog/phonetic-alphabet/>

Unit – 09 Speaking Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand the meaning and importance of fluency, intelligibility, non- verbal communication and business communication in English
- become well versed with the problems faced in every aspect of speaking skills
- get an overview of the ways by which you can improve all the essential speaking skills

Introduction

The British Council reckons that English is spoken at a useful level by some 1.75 billion people, a quarter of the world's population. It is taught from primary level up in all China's schools; it is the working language of the whole European Union. Beyond doubt, the use of English is greater than ever, and far more widespread than any other language in the world. All non-English-speaking powers of our globalised world recognize it as the first foreign language to learn; it is also, uniquely, in practical use worldwide. Communication is an important aspect of quality of life, and speech is the primary means of human communication. In adults with intellectual disabilities (ID), speech communication is often troubled by disordered speech production and/or impaired hearing, resulting in miscommunication and consequently impairing social interactions, possibly behavioral problems and isolation. As the significance of the English language is unparalleled, it becomes imperative to excel in the art of speaking English. Speaking skills consist of fluency, intelligibility, non-verbal and business communication. Every component entails thorough practice and revision of rules that govern it.

9.1 Fluency

Introduction to Fluency

As per the Cambridge English dictionary, fluency in any language is the ability to speak or write a language easily, well and quickly. Speaking fluency is one of the major components in second language learning. As a result, students need to understand it and speak fluently in order to express their speaking proficiency.

Many researchers have an explanation of the meaning of fluency as follows:

Fluency is considered as similar to overall speaking proficiency. Fillmore (1979) states four ways that help to determine a speaker's fluency. A speaker must have:

1. the ability to speak with few pauses
2. the ability to speak consistently using semantically dense sentences with few unnecessary words
3. the ability to know what to say in various contexts and unfamiliar situations
4. the ability to create speech for communication

According to Cohen (1994), speakers should have fluency in the language and use vocabulary and structure in suitable situations. For Beardsmore (1972), oral fluency needs communicative competence to formulate more than one sentence with accurate and proper pronunciation in real time. Adding details of sentence structures, choosing and inserting words or vocabulary are required as well. He states that each sentence has to be combined into connected speech.

He explains the specific criteria for oral fluency, consisting of:

1. fluency (ability to show speakers' communicative proficiency and to speak naturally and continuously)
2. accuracy (structural and lexical)
3. relevance, intelligibility, pronunciation, variety of structures and words

Fluency is a way that students will be able to speak easily and flowing when compared to native speakers. Day and Shapson also give more explanations of fluency at four levels. They are:

1. stopping, slow speech, noticeable pauses between words, use many attempts
2. uneven speaking, some noticeable pauses between words, seems to require effort, sometimes stopping, tend to but not necessarily have slower speech rate than level three
3. relatively smooth and easy speech but speech rate slower than native or recognizably non-native
4. relatively smooth, native-like speech rate

Problems in achieving fluency

There are perceived obstacles which are faced by students when they try to achieve fluency in English language. Perceived obstacles refer to students' recognition and understanding of problems that block them from speaking English fluently. Students who learn to speak the English language unavoidably experience the same difficulties. Regarding this, there are many barriers that have an impact on students' fluency in speaking English.

Knowledge of vocabulary

It is accepted that vocabulary knowledge is one of the major factors for successful communication in language and many researchers have similar For Diamond and Gutlohn (2006), vocabulary is defined as the knowledge of words and their meanings. They say that if learners lack a strong vocabulary base first, they will not be able to accomplish understanding and use of language. So, learners should be able to remember words, and know their meanings and definitions about vocabulary. Wilkins (1972) states that "...while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." This means that a student cannot communicate effectively because of their weakness of vocabulary knowledge. On the contrary, lacking knowledge of grammar, he/she can communicate, even though not effectively. Moreover, vocabulary helps students produce language. According to Hubbard et al. (1983), a student who knows a large number of word meanings can express accurate meanings as he/she wants to. Similarly, Cardenas (2001) indicates that vocabulary is used as an important tool to find out how much a student can communicate successfully. Stewick (1972) mentions that vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important things in learning a new language. Students who succeed in learning a

foreign language are required to have the ability to know the sound system for speaking clearly and understandably, use correct grammar, and adequate vocabulary. The fundamental unit in communication is the word. Knowing the estimated 1,000 most frequently used words will satisfy three-quarters of communicative needs. Two methods to memorize new vocabulary are jotting down the new words and translating them into the mother language and guessing the meaning from the context and using a dictionary to find out the different meanings of unfamiliar words.

Knowledge of grammar

It is one of the key components of speaking English for language learners. Many students who lack grammar knowledge may feel reluctant to speak English with others. In other words, limited grammar forms can make a speaker less confident while speaking English. Therefore, the researchers illustrate similar ways of knowledge of grammar. Hurd et al. (2005) indicate that grammar knowledge is very important as well, because grammar is a combination of words into a larger form and a sentence.

Thus, users have to mainly focus on the grammatical structure so as to convey the correct meaning of what they say because grammar has an effect on meaning. Additionally, Kianiparsa and Vali (2010) mention that lack of grammatical structure knowledge is one of the obstacles of language learners as they will be unable to understand each other when communicating in a foreign language without grammatical rules. Apart from the speaker and the listener, messages come from 9 words combined by using nouns and verbs, and correct grammatical structures are necessary for communication. Students' needs to arrange a correct sentence to communicate are in line with Heaton (1978), who suggested students must have the ability to manipulate structure and discriminate appropriate grammatical forms in appropriate ones. Learners have to learn correct grammar rules for use in oral and written forms.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to producing the sounds of speech, including utterance, stress, and intonation in response to some standard of rightness or acceptability. Gerard (2000) mentions that pronunciation is the phonological process which enables students to generate clearer spoken language. It involves grammatical elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and patterns in a language. Pronunciation consists of phonemes and supra segmental features. A speaker who fails to pronounce accurately in a range of phonemes has difficulty to make other people understand what he or she wants to communicate. According to Varasarin (2007), students with accurate and clear pronunciations can make it easier for people to understand what he or she wants to communicate, and pronunciation is considered as essential for language learning. Additionally, Liu (2007) points out that if students' pronunciation is poor, others will be unable to clearly understand what they said. So mainly focusing on this linguistic aspect like pronunciation is also vital for students. Mispronunciation can become students' obstacle to speak.

Listening ability

Speaking is always closely related to listening, therefore for people who learn to speak the English language it is necessary to practice listening skills at the same time. Good listening will be able to help learners improve their English speaking more effectively. Doff (1998) states that if we develop listening skills, speaking skills can be developed. To achieve successful communication, students have to understand what is said to them. In Krashen et al.'s (1983) view, competent speaking is combined with listening. Speakers can speak fluently in a second language after they have received productive and understandable input.

Anxiety

It is regarded as a very negative factor in learning a second language or a foreign language, especially in learning to speak the language. That is students feel nervous, apprehensive or worry that disturbs their speaking performance either before or while practicing English speaking in class. In the explanations of anxiety, there is a difference in meanings between general anxiety and specific anxiety. General anxiety is part of the personality of individuals who feel worried in various situations, while specific anxiety means one's anxiety which occurs only in specific circumstances, for instance language learning. Additionally, when anxiety is limited to language

teaching or learning, it is categorized as specific anxiety. Broadly speaking, anxiety means individual feelings of stress, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with a stimulation of the autonomic nervous system, whereas anxiety is a major barrier to conquer when people are learning to speak another language. Macintyre and Gardner (1991) say that students with anxiety will face the problem of learning the language in class, resulting in ineffective performances. Consequently, they do not want to participate voluntarily in class because of nervousness, apprehension, and even fearfulness. With such conditions, worried students have no chance to practice the language. Thus, anxiety has become the major obstacle in developing language skills, particularly in speaking. They also tend to make more mistakes and fail to perform well in speaking skills when they are nervous. For Macintyre (1999), language anxiety is the worry and negative emotional reaction stimulated when learning or using a second language. The mentioned definitions appear to be widely accepted by many researchers.

Ways to improve fluency in English

Think in English

Sometimes, the difficult thing about English speaking isn't the language itself, but how you think about it. If you think in your native language and then try to speak English, you'll always have to translate between languages. Translating isn't an easy thing to do! Even people fluent in two or more languages have trouble switching between languages. The solution is to think in English. You can do this anywhere, anytime. Try to use English when you're thinking about your day, or when you're trying to decide what food to order. Even try to use an English-to-English dictionary to look up words. That way, you never have to use your native language and translate words. You'll notice that when you think in English, it's easier for you to speak in English.

Pay Attention to Stressed Sounds

English uses stresses in words and sentences. That means when you speak English you'll need to stress, or emphasize, certain words and syllables (sounds) to give words and sentences different meanings. Listen to where native speakers place the emphasis when they speak. Try to repeat it the same way to improve English stress in your own speech. This won't only help you speak English well, it might even reduce misunderstandings. Sometimes, placing the stress on the wrong syllable completely changes the word. The word ADdress, for instance, isn't the same as the word addRESS. ADdress refers to a physical location where someone lives, and addRESS means to formally speak to a group of people. Learn to hear—and make for yourself—the difference! In fact, mastering stressed sounds is essential to making yourself understood and excelling in Business English. If you can say what you mean in a precise, clear and concrete way, you can succeed in any job interview, business meeting or presentation.

Talk to Yourself

Whenever you're at home (or alone somewhere else) you can improve English speaking with your favorite person: yourself. If you're already thinking in English, try speaking your thoughts out loud. Read out loud, too. Practice is practice, and even if you don't have anyone to correct your mistakes, just the act of speaking out loud will help you become more comfortable speaking English.

Master English Registers

In order to communicate effectively in English, you need to know the different English registers that exist. A register is a different set of words and phrases that you use depending on the situation you find yourself in. For example, the way you speak English to a friend is different from the way you would speak to a child and that would be different from the English you would speak in a business meeting. In order to improve your speaking, you need to move effortlessly between all registers of English. This means you should know what register of English to use with your friends, at work and with people you meet for the first time.

Use a Mirror

Whenever you can, take a few minutes out of your day to stand in front of the mirror and speak. Choose a topic, set a timer for two or three minutes and just talk. The point of this exercise is to watch your mouth, face and body language as you speak. It also makes you feel like you're talking to someone, so you can pretend you're having a discussion with a study buddy.



Shakespeare added over 1,000 words to the English language.

1. Addiction – Being psychologically or physically dependent on something, usually a drug.
2. Cold-blooded – Either an animal with cold blood (like a reptile) or a way to describe someone who's cruel and indifferent to emotion.
3. Swagger – To walk in a way that shows you're boasting or disrespectful.
4. Break the ice – To relieve the tension or silence in a conversation by talking.
5. English has more words than most languages.
6. The most commonly used letter in English is "E."
7. The most commonly used adjective is *good*.
8. The most commonly used noun is *time*.

9.2 Intelligibility**Introduction to intelligibility**

Speech intelligibility can be defined as how clearly a person speaks so that his or her speech is comprehensible to a listener. Reduced speech intelligibility leads to misunderstanding, frustration, and loss of interest by communication partners. Recent perspectives on pronunciation teaching have been shifting from native-like pronunciation to intelligibility due to the internationalization of English. Despite a number of research studies exploring intelligibility, defining intelligibility has still remained varied. Many researchers have agreed upon the complex nature of ESL learners' intelligibility resulting in challenging their studies. As one of them, Zielinski describes the difficulty of conducting research on intelligibility, saying "previous research findings related to L2 learners' intelligibility are sometimes difficult to interpret and compare because intelligibility has been defined in a range of different ways in the literature. Much earlier, Smith and Nelson (1985) also reported the difficulty in distinguishing between intelligibility and comprehensibility. In an attempt to clarify the terms, they defined intelligibility as the extent to which the listener is able to recognize words /utterances whereas comprehensibility was the listener being able to understand their meaning. They, however, admitted the interchangeability of intelligibility and comprehensibility at certain points. Cutler argues that listeners first perceive the phonology of the speech they hear rather than its lexicon and grammar. In proposing her English as an International Language, or English as Lingua Franca, standards for pronunciation, Jenkins calls intelligibility 'phonological intelligibility'. More specifically, she defines intelligibility as 'the production and recognition of the formal properties of words and utterances and, in particular, the ability to produce and receive phonological form. Similarly, Field defined intelligibility as 'the extent to which the acoustic phonetic content of the message is recognizable by a listener'. He argues that intelligibility 'forms part of a wider construct of comprehensibility'.

Factors affecting Intelligibility**Background**

Researchers on intelligibility have held some different opinions about how L1 background affect L2 speakers' developments in different ways. On the one hand, Derwing and Munro imply that different L1 backgrounds should not be considered as a major inhibitor of intelligibility. In their study, they further expanded their 1995 study with Mandarin speakers by varying L1 backgrounds and proficiency level. Accentedness, perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility including accent familiarity ratings, were measured with 48 L2 speakers of Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish backgrounds. Rating scales were used to measure accentedness and comprehensibility while calculating accuracy rate in listeners' orthographic transcriptions was measures for

intelligibility. The speech materials were excerpted, ranging from 6 to 19 words from continuous speech. On the other hand, there are the studies indicated that speakers with different L1 backgrounds differ from speaker to speaker in terms of the intelligibility of their speech.

In Gallego's study with Korean, Italian and Hindi ITAs, he attributed the perceived unintelligibility of the Korean TA to the linguistic distance between English and Korean.

Proficiency

Munro and Derwing (1995) found that segmental errors, intonation, grammar, and the length of utterance were found to be related with the listener's perception on accentedness. They also found that not segmental errors but nonstandard intonation and ungrammatical phrases affected perceived comprehensibility. Meanwhile, Derwing and Munro (1997) noted that none of the segmental errors, intonation, grammar, and the length of utterance were found to be significantly correlated with accent rating. The different results of the two studies implied that participants' different proficiency levels may have caused inconsistent results.

Ways to improve Intelligibility

Record your speech

Making a recording can be a good way of getting a clear picture of someone's current manner of speaking and understanding in what ways their intelligibility might be improved. You can do this using a cell phone or laptop computer either in class or out of it. Answer an open question, talk for a minute on a topic that you are passionate about or simply tell your friends what you did at the weekend. Listen to the recordings and analyze your speech. Identify parts with low levels of intelligibility. This may be related to their pronunciation, how fast you are speaking, the amount of hesitation, repetition etc. You could even take this a step further by asking another native-level speaker to listen to the recording and give honest feedback about which parts they found difficult to understand.

Listening and Shadowing

Listening is a very important part of intelligibility. After all, students have to be able to hear a word before they can actually say it. Listening also takes focus away from how words are written on the page. This is key because English speakers blend words together, so pronouncing each word perfectly in isolation is not a good goal to have – this kind of practice just reinforces pronunciation habits that take us further away from good intelligibility. Shadowing is a useful listen-and-repeat activity that students can practice almost anywhere. First select some audio for yourself. It should be under five minutes in length and only be based on the speech of a single proficient English speaker. TED.com could be a good place to start for more advanced students, with the student choosing a topic that they are already familiar with, and which is of interest to them. Listen to the audio to once quickly just to get used to how the speaker sounds. You should pay attention to the speaker's rhythm, accent, and pace of speaking. You should be able to understand most of what is being said.

Target the problem sounds

Throughout the lesson, as you listen to others speak, identify a number of words that reflect the pronunciation challenges your students face. Write the words on the board and group the words by phoneme, for example:

/i:/ Heat, Sheep

/ɪ/ Hit, Trip

Next, identify the vowel sound in each word and write their phonemic symbols on the board. Drill the sounds and then the words until you are confident you can repeat them successfully. There are a number of phonemic charts online, that can help you identify the phonemes and model the sounds. Then test yourself by calling out a corresponding name after listening to the related

number. Then call out a word and get them to tell you the number. Deal with any problems that arise.

Transcribe and drill new vocabulary

While problems with individual sounds may occasionally impede understanding, we should also focus on other aspects of pronunciation such as word stress, sentence stress and intonation. Keep a note of any new vocabulary that comes up during your class. At the end of the lesson, take five minutes to review it. Write each new word on the board and record the word stress using the oO method: Use 'o' to highlight unstressed syllables and 'O' to highlight stressed syllables. For example, the stress is on the second syllable of the word "behavior",

Be-hav-ior = oOo.

This has the advantage of recording unstressed as well as stressed syllables. Next, drill this new vocabulary until you get the hang of it. To make drilling more interesting, you can also add an element of drama! Say the words while expressing different emotions. Choose an emotion (e.g. angry/happy/sad/excited), then have the others guess it.



In the words of Rob Brown, "If you can speak, you can influence. If you can influence, you can change lives."

Focus on saying all your speech sounds – particularly at the end of words

One standard measure of intelligibility is the percentage of sounds you get right. Leaving sounds out – particularly at the end of words and phrases – makes it much harder for listeners to understand what you are saying. This is one reason strangers find it hard to understand children with speech disorders and many adults who speak English as a second language. It's also why speech pathologists often target patterns of missing sounds first, and then "wrong sounds" when treating people with speech disorders and helping people to modify their accents and improve their communication.

Learn about and apply the basic rules of speech "prosody"

A focus on prosody – things like speech stress, rhythm and intonation – can lead to greater comprehensibility than a focus on speech sounds. Sentence stress is probably the most important thing to get right for intelligibility. This is simply making important words – especially words that convey new or essential information – longer and louder than the words around them. For example,

1. I want to go to the BEACH (not the office).
2. They're coming TOMORROW (not today).
3. The BLACK shoes are missing (not the blue ones).
4. The black SHOES are missing (not the black socks).
5. The black shoes are MISSING (not here).

Smooth out the rough edges

Hesitations, awkward pauses and repetitions can all hurt your intelligibility – especially if they make it hard for listeners to tell where different thoughts start and end. Reducing the "ums and ahs", and pausing between thoughts at grammatically correct times can increase your intelligibility dramatically – even if you make the same number of sound errors.

Increase your volume

Many speech treatments, notably LSVT LOUD, are based on the simple idea that increased volume will help increase intelligibility. Increasing volume not only makes you louder. It's also been shown to increase articulatory precision and breath control. This applies both for people with neurological diseases like Parkinson's Disease as well as to chronic mumbles.

Look after your voice

Voice quality and resonance can also affect your intelligibility. It can be almost painful listening to someone with a very rough, strained, breathy or monotone voice. At best, it's distracting.

Slow down

Rate control has been described as the most powerful single, behaviorally modifiable variable for improving intelligibility. However, it's easier said than done.

Pretend you are speaking into a microphone

Sounds silly, I know. But there's evidence to say that some speakers perform better when placed in front of a microphone. It's called a "performance effect". (Incidentally, it's one reason speech pathologists can over-estimate a client's intelligibility when they conduct formal assessments, usually with the client seated in front of a microphone).

Don't multi-task while speaking

Studies of people speaking while balancing a tray, walking around obstacles, standing on tiptoes or sorting out buttons consistently show that dual or competing tasks negatively affect intelligibility. Focus on what you are saying!

9.3 Non-Verbal communication

Introduction to Non-verbal communication

When we talk about 'communication', we often mean 'what we say': the words that we use. However, interpersonal communication is much more than the explicit meaning of words, and the information or message that they convey. It also includes implicit messages, whether intentional or not, which are expressed through non-verbal behavior.

Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, gestures displayed through body language (kinesics), the physical distance between the communicators (proxemics). These non-verbal signals can give clues and additional information and meaning over and above spoken (verbal) communication. Indeed, some estimates suggest that around 70 to 80% of communication is non-verbal! Anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell's study of kinesics found that over 65% of communication is nonverbal. Nonverbal communication, also called manual language, is the process of sending and receiving messages without using words, either spoken or written. Similar to the way that italicizing emphasizes written language, nonverbal behavior may emphasize parts of a verbal message.

Types of Non Verbal communication

Judee Burgoon (1994) has identified seven different nonverbal dimensions:

1. Kinesics or body movements including facial expressions and eye contact
2. Vocalics or paralanguage that includes volume, rate, pitch, and timbre
3. Personal appearance
4. Our physical environment and the artifacts or objects that compose it
5. Proxemics or personal space
6. Haptics or touch
7. Chronemics or time

Kinesics

The word kinesics comes from the root word kinesis, which means “movement,” and refers to the study of hand, arm, body, and face movements. Specifically, this section will outline the use of gestures, head movements and posture, eye contact, and facial expressions as nonverbal communication.

GESTURES

There are three main types of gestures:

1. Adaptors
2. Emblems
3. Illustrators

Eye contact

We also communicate through eye behaviors, primarily eye contact. While eye behaviors are often studied under the category of kinesics, they have their own branch of nonverbal studies called oculusics, which comes from the Latin word oculus, meaning “eye.” The face and eyes are the main point of focus during communication, and along with our ears our eyes take in most of the communicative information around us. The saying “The eyes are the window to the soul” is actually accurate in terms of where people typically think others are “located,” which is right behind the eyes. Certain eye behaviors have become tied to personality traits or emotional states, as illustrated in phrases like “hungry eyes,” “evil eyes,” and “bedroom eyes.”

Facial expressions

Our faces are the most expressive part of our bodies. Think of how photos are often intended to capture a particular expression “in a flash” to preserve for later viewing. Even though a photo is a snapshot in time, we can still interpret much meaning from a human face caught in a moment of expression, and basic facial expressions are recognizable by humans all over the world. Much research has supported the universality of a core group of facial expressions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. The first four are especially identifiable across cultures. Getting to see the pure and innate expressions of joy and surprise on a baby’s face is what makes playing peek-a-boo so entertaining for adults. As we get older, we learn and begin to follow display rules for facial expressions and other signals of emotion and also learn to better control our emotional expression based on the norms of our culture.

Haptics

Think of how touch has the power to comfort someone in moment of sorrow when words alone cannot. This positive power of touch is countered by the potential for touch to be threatening because of its connection to violence. We probably get more explicit advice and instruction on how to use touch than any other form of nonverbal communication. A lack of nonverbal communication competence related to touch could have negative interpersonal consequences; for example, if we don’t follow the advice we’ve been given about the importance of a firm handshake, a person might make negative judgments about our confidence or credibility. A lack of competence could have more dire negative consequences, including legal punishment, if we touch someone inappropriately (intentionally or unintentionally). Touch is necessary for human social development, and it can be welcoming, threatening, or persuasive.

There are several types of touch, including functional-professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth and love-intimacy. At the functional-professional level, touch is related to a goal or part of a routine professional interaction, which makes it less threatening and more expected. For example, we let barbers, hairstylists, doctors, nurses, tattoo artists, and security screeners touch us in ways that would otherwise be seen as intimate or inappropriate if not in a professional context.

Vocalics

Paralanguage refers to the vocalized but nonverbal parts of a message. Vocalics is the study of paralanguage, which includes the vocal qualities that go along with verbal messages, such as pitch,

volume, rate, vocal quality, and verbal fillers. Pitch helps convey meaning, regulate conversational flow, and communicate the intensity of a message. Even babies recognize a sentence with a higher pitched ending as a question. We also learn that greetings have a rising emphasis and farewells have falling emphasis. Paralanguage provides important context for the verbal content of speech.

For example, volume helps communicate intensity. A louder voice is usually thought of as more intense, although a soft voice combined with a certain tone and facial expression can be just as intense. We typically adjust our volume based on our setting, the distance between people, and the relationship. Speaking rate refers to how fast or slow a person speaks and can lead others to form impressions about our emotional state, credibility, and intelligence. As with volume, variations in speaking rate can interfere with the ability of others to receive and understand verbal messages. A slow speaker could bore others and lead their attention to wander. A fast speaker may be difficult to follow, and the fast delivery can actually distract from the message. Speaking a little faster than the normal 120–150 words a minute, however, can be beneficial, as people tend to find speakers whose rate is above average more credible and intelligent.

Proxemics

Proxemics refers to the study of how space and distance influence communication. We only need look at the ways in which space shows up in common metaphors to see that space, communication, and relationships are closely related. For example, when we are content with and attracted to someone, we say we are “close” to him or her.

Chronemics

Chronemics refers to the study of how time affects communication. Time can be classified into several different categories, including biological, personal, physical, and cultural time. Biological time refers to the rhythms of living things. Humans follow a circadian rhythm, meaning that we are on a daily cycle that influences when we eat, sleep, and wake. Remember that early morning conversations and speeches may require more preparation to get yourself awake enough to communicate well and a more patient or energetic delivery to accommodate others who may still be getting warmed up for their day.

9.4 Business Communication

Introduction to business communication

Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within and outside a company. Effective business communication is how employees and management interact to reach organizational goals. Its purpose is to improve organizational practices and reduce errors.

Types of Business Communication

Internal Business Communication

Upward communication: Any communication that comes from a subordinate to a manager or from another person up the organizational hierarchy.

Downward communication/Managerial communication: Communication that flows from a higher level in an organization to a lower level is a downward communication. In other words, communication from superiors to subordinates in a chain of command is a downward communication.

Lateral communication/Technical communication: Internal or cross-departmental communication between coworkers: Communication that takes place at same levels of hierarchy in an organization is called lateral communication, i.e., communication between peers, between managers at same levels or between any horizontally equivalent organizational member.

Diagonal Communication: Communication that takes place between a manager and employees of other workgroups is called diagonal communication: It generally does not appear on organizational chart. For instance - To design a training module a training manager interacts with Operations personnel to enquire about the way they perform their task.

External Business Communication

External business communication is any messaging that leaves your office and internal staff. It involves dealing with customers, vendors, or anything that impacts your brand.

All communication in this spectrum is of four types:

1. Getting and receiving instructions and assignments both upward and downward.
2. This includes an effective delegation from one person to another.
3. Most problems in business begin with unclear communications in this area.
4. Sharing and discussing information, including information sharing that goes on in meetings.

When communication fails in this area, it causes tasks to be done improperly or not at all.

Summary

As the significance of the English language is unparalleled, it becomes imperative to excel in the art of speaking English. Speaking skills consist of fluency, intelligibility, non-verbal and business communication. Every component entails thorough practice and revision of rules that govern it. Fluency in any language is the ability to speak or write a language easily, well and quickly. Speaking fluency is one of the major components in second language learning. Speech intelligibility can be defined as how clearly a person speaks so that his or her speech is comprehensible to a listener. Reduced speech intelligibility leads to misunderstanding, frustration, and loss of interest by communication partners. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, gestures displayed through body language (kinesics), the physical distance between the communicators (proxemics). These non-verbal signals can give clues and additional information and meaning over and above spoken (verbal) communication. Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within and outside a company. Effective business communication is how employees and management interact to reach organizational goals. Its purpose is to improve organizational practices and reduce errors.

Self- Assessment

1. According to Beardsmore, oral fluency needs _____ competence to formulate more than one sentence.
 - A. communicative
 - B. social
 - C. behavioral
 - D. religious
2. Day and Shapson give more explanations of fluency at _____ levels.
 - A. five
 - B. four
 - C. two
 - D. three
3. _____ mentions that pronunciation is the phonological process which enables students to generate clearly spoken language.
 - A. Wordsworth

- B. Shelley
 - C. Gerard
 - D. Shakespeare
4. Which of the following is not a problem in achieving fluency in English?
- A. Anxiety
 - B. Listening ability
 - C. Pronunciation
 - D. Sartorial sense
5. A _____ is a different set of words and phrases that you use depending on the situation you find yourself in.
- A. register
 - B. phoneme
 - C. language
 - D. précis
6. According to Smith and Nelson, _____ is defined as the listener's ability to understand the meaning of utterances.
- A. comprehensibility
 - B. intelligibility
 - C. knowledge
 - D. aptitude
7. Cutler argues that listeners first perceive the _____ of the speech they hear rather than _____ and grammar.
- A. style, tone
 - B. phonology, lexicon
 - C. syntax, lexicon
 - D. semantics, phonology
8. What is intelligibility according to Jenkins?
- A. Syntactic intelligibility
 - B. Semantic intelligibility
 - C. Phonological intelligibility
 - D. Grammatical intelligibility
9. Which of the following does not affect intelligibility?
- A. Proficiency
 - B. Background
 - C. Phonology
 - D. Sartorial sense

10. _____ involves trying to say the same words as the speaker at about the same time or as fast as possible.
- A. Shadowing
 - B. Imitating
 - C. Singing
 - D. Cramming
11. In the words of Rob Brown, 'If you can speak, you can _____. If you can influence, you can _____ lives.'
- A. listen, change
 - B. influence, change
 - C. understand, change
 - D. influence, ruin
12. Any communication that comes from a subordinate to a manager is referred to as _____ business communication.
- A. upward
 - B. downward
 - C. diagonal
 - D. none of these
13. Group meetings are an example of _____ business communication.
- A. upward
 - B. downward
 - C. lateral
 - D. none of these
14. Non-verbal communication does not include _____.
- A. sartorial sense
 - B. facial expressions
 - C. gestures
 - D. proxemics
15. 'Emblems' fall under the category of _____.
- A. proxemics
 - B. illustrators
 - C. gestures
 - D. none of these

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. B | 3. C | 4. D | 5. A |
| 6. A | 7. B | 8. C | 9. D | 10. A |

11. B 12. A 13. B 14. A 15. C

Review Questions

1. Explain fluency in a language.
2. How can you improve fluency?
3. Differentiate between fluency and intelligibility.
4. Explain different types of non verbal communication.
5. Is non verbal communication as important as verbal communication? Give reasons to support your answer.



Further Reading

1. Oxford English Listening and Speaking. Oxford University Press. January, 2017
2. Pease, Barbara and Allan. The Definitive Book of Body language. RHUS, 2006



Web Links

1. <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/fluency>
2. <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/how-to-speak-english-well-fluently/>
3. <https://www.etprofessional.com/what-does-it-mean-to-be-fluent-to-the-english-language-teacher>
4. <https://www.speechnet.com.au/what-is-speech-intelligibility/>
5. <https://www.verywellmind.com/understand-body-language-and-facial-expressions-4147228>

Unit - 10 Reading Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

1. realize the significance of reading skills
2. become well versed with the problems faced in interpreting different kinds of texts such as narrative, descriptive and extrapolative texts
3. get an overview of the ways by which you can improve your reading skills

Introduction

Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Reading is making meaning from print. It requires that we identify the words in print which is a process called word recognition, construct an understanding from them – a process called comprehension, coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate – an achievement called fluency. Sometimes you can make meaning from print without being able to identify all the words. Remember the last time you got a note in messy handwriting? You may have understood it, even though you couldn't decipher all the scribbles. Reading is fundamental to writing and research at University, but often gets overlooked – lecturers assume that students know how to read, and students assume there's only one way to read – but neither of these things is necessarily true. There are ways to read that can improve information processing, can help with building an argument, and importantly for many students, can save lots of time. "Reading" is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. When we read, we use our eyes to receive written symbols (letters, punctuation marks and spaces) and we use our brain to convert them into words, sentences and paragraphs that communicate something to us. Reading can be silent (in our head) or aloud (so that other people can hear). Reading is a receptive skill - through it we receive information. But the complex process of reading also requires the skill of speaking, so that we can pronounce the words that we read. In this sense, reading is also a productive skill in that we are both receiving information and transmitting it (even if only to ourselves).

10.1 Importance of Reading

You probably know that even in your own language, reading is regarded as important because it can be entertaining and educational, can open up new worlds and enrich your life, and can

improve hand-eye co-ordination and enhance social skills. But for learning a foreign language like English, reading in that language has additional important benefits that can help you learn the language faster and more completely. Reading is an essential skill for language learners. When your reading skills improve, your listening, speaking and writing skills improve too. The constant repetition of words and patterns in reading helps you learn and remember vocabulary and grammar structures. Reading helps you become familiar with the rhythm of English. Over time it will start to feel natural, and you will notice when a sentence or phrase doesn't seem right. Unlike conversation, reading is something you can do on your own. Reading is not expensive, often free. Good reading skills can improve your other language skills. You need to learn to read before you can write. Reading is the best way to learn and remember the proper spelling of words. Listening as you read aloud can help you improve your pronunciation skills.

10.2 Reading Skills

The four main types of reading skills are:

1. Skimming
2. Scanning
3. Intensive
4. Extensive

Skimming

Skimming is sometimes referred to as gist reading where you're trying to glance over the material to grasp the main idea. The way you do this is to read the first and last paragraph and check for any dark headings. Skimming may help in order to know what the text is about at its most basic level. You might typically do this with a magazine or newspaper and would help you mentally and quickly shortlist those articles which you might consider for a deeper read. You might typically skim to search for a name in a telephone directory. You can reach a speed count of even 700 words per minute if you train yourself well in this particular method. Skimming will certainly save you a lot of time as you grasp the main idea of whatever you are reading, but do not expect your comprehension to be high during the process. However, skimming is useful when your goal is to preview the text to get a better idea of what it's about. It will help prepare you for deeper learning.

Scanning

Picture yourself visiting a historical city, guide book in hand. You would most probably just scan the guide book to see which site you might want to visit. Scanning involves getting your eyes to quickly scuttle across sentence and is used to get just a simple piece of information. You'll be searching for specific words or phrases that will give you more information and answer questions you may have. Interestingly, research has concluded that reading off a computer screen actually inhibits the pathways to effective scanning and thus, reading of paper is far more conducive to speedy comprehension of texts. Something students sometimes do not give enough importance to is illustrations. These should be included in your scanning. Pay special attention to the introduction and the conclusion.

Intensive reading

You need to have your aims clear in mind when undertaking intensive reading. Remember this is going to be far more time consuming than scanning or skimming. If you need to list the chronology of events in a long passage, you will need to read it intensively. This type of reading is indeed beneficial to language learners as it helps them understand vocabulary by deducing the meaning of words in context. Moreover, it helps with retention of information for long periods of time and knowledge resulting from intensive reading which persists in your long-term memory. This is one reason why reading huge amounts of information just before an exam does not work very well. Students tend to do this, and they undertake neither type of reading process effectively, especially neglecting intensive reading. They may remember the answers in an exam but will likely forget everything soon afterwards.

Extensive reading

Extensive reading involves reading for pleasure. Because there is an element of enjoyment in extensive reading, it is unlikely that students will undertake extensive reading of a text they do not like. It also requires a fluid decoding and assimilation of the text and content in front of you. If the text is difficult and you stop every few minutes to figure out what is being said or to look up new words in the dictionary, you are breaking your concentration and diverting your thoughts.

10.3 Components of Reading

Akin to other skills in language learning, reading also has essential components. Without these components, the reading process is rendered incomplete. You might observe that these components are common to all language skills.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonological awareness is an umbrella term that includes three developmental levels:

1. Word awareness
2. Syllable awareness
3. Onset-rime awareness

Phonemic awareness is the understanding that spoken language words can be broken into individual phonemes—the smallest unit of spoken language. It is not the same as phonics—phonemic awareness focuses on the individual sounds in spoken language. As students begin to transition to phonics, they learn the relationship between a phoneme (sound) and grapheme (the letter(s) that represent the sound) in written language.

Phonics

Phonics is the relationship between the letters (or letter combinations) in written language and the individual sounds in spoken language. Phonics instruction teaches students how to use these relationships to read and spell words. The National Reading Panel indicated that systematic phonics instruction enhances student's success in learning to read, and it is significantly more effective than instruction that teaches little or no phonics. Phonics is "a system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations". Decoding is the process of converting printed words to spoken words. Readers use phonics skills, beginning with letter/sound correspondences, to pronounce words and then attach meaning to them. As readers develop, they apply other decoding skills, such as recognizing word parts (e.g., roots and affixes) and the ability to decode multi-syllabic words. Students also learn to apply decoding skills to irregular words that are almost decodable.



Phonemic awareness and phonics are not the same, but instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics tends to overlap. As students begin their transition to phonics, they learn the relationship between a phoneme (sound) and grapheme (the letter(s) that represent the sound) in written language. Phonemic awareness instruction improves phonics skills, and phonics skills improve phonemic awareness.

Fluency

Fluent readers are able to read orally with appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression. It is the ability to read as well as we speak and to make sense of the text without having to stop and decode each word. The National Reading Panel's research findings concluded that guided oral reading and repeated oral reading had a significant and positive impact on word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension in students of all ages. Fluency is the ability to read "like you speak." Hudson, Lane, and Pullen define fluency this way: "Reading fluency is made up of at least three key elements: accurate reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody or expression." Non-fluent readers suffer in at least one of these aspects of reading: they make many mistakes, they read slowly, or they don't read with appropriate expression and phrasing. For many years, educators have recognized that fluency is an important aspect of

reading. Reading researchers agree to this. Over 30 years of research indicates that fluency is one of the critical building blocks of reading, because fluency development is directly related to comprehension. Many researchers, including Breznitz, Armstrong, Knupp, Lesgold, and Pinnell, have found that fluency is highly correlated with reading comprehension—that is, when a student reads fluently, that student is likely to comprehend what he or she is reading. Why are reading fluency and reading comprehension so highly correlated?

Dr. S. Jay Samuels, a professor and researcher well known for his work in fluency, put forth a theory called the automaticity theory. According to Dr. Samuels, people have a limited amount of mental energy. If you want to multitask or to become proficient at a complex task such as reading, you first need to master the component tasks so you can do them automatically. For example, a reader who must focus his or her attention on decoding words may not have enough mental energy left over to think about the meaning of the text. However, a fluent reader who can automatically decode the words can instead give full attention to comprehending the text. To become proficient readers, our students need to become automatic with text so they can pay attention to the meaning.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is closely connected to comprehension. The larger the reader's vocabulary (either oral or print), the easier it is to make sense of the text. According to the National Reading Panel, vocabulary can be learned incidentally through storybook reading or listening to others, and vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly. Students should be actively engaged in instruction that includes learning words before reading, repetition and multiple exposures, learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology. According to Steven Stahl (2005), "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world." We continue to develop vocabulary throughout our lives. Words are powerful. Words open up possibilities, and of course, that's what we want for all of our students. Incidental Vocabulary Learning: Most students acquire vocabulary incidentally through indirect exposure to words at home and at school—by listening and talking, by listening to books read aloud to them, and by reading widely on their own. The amount of reading is important to long-term vocabulary development. Intentional Vocabulary Learning: Students need to be explicitly taught methods for intentional vocabulary learning. According to Michael Graves (2000), effective intentional vocabulary learning includes: Learning specific words (rich, robust instruction) to support understanding of texts containing those words., promoting the development of word consciousness and using word play activities to engage in learning new words.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the complex cognitive process readers use to understand what they have read. Vocabulary development and instruction play a critical role in comprehension. The National Reading Panel determined that young readers develop text comprehension through a variety of techniques, including answering questions (quizzes) and summarization (retelling the story). Comprehension, or extracting meaning from what you read, is the ultimate goal of reading. Experienced readers take this for granted and may not appreciate the reading comprehension skills required. The process of comprehension is both interactive and strategic. Rather than passively reading text, readers must analyze it, internalize it and make it their own. In order to read with comprehension, developing readers must be able to read with some proficiency and then receive explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategy.

Strategies to improve comprehension

Use Prior Knowledge/Previewing

When students preview text, they tap into what they already know that will help them to understand the text they are about to read. This provides a framework for any new information they read.

Predicting

When students make predictions about the text they are about to read, it sets up expectations based on their prior knowledge about similar topics. As they read, they may mentally revise their prediction as they gain more information.

Identifying the Main Idea and Summarization

Identifying the main idea and summarizing requires that students determine what is important and then put it in their own words. Implicit in this process is trying to understand the author's purpose in writing the text.

Questioning

Asking and answering questions about text is another strategy that helps students focus on the meaning of text. Friends can help by modeling both the process of asking good questions and strategies for finding the answers in the text.

Drawing inferences.

In order to make inferences about something that is not explicitly stated in the text, students must learn to draw on prior knowledge and recognize clues in the text itself.

Visualizing

Studies have shown that students who visualize while reading have better recall than those who do not. Readers can take advantage of illustrations that are embedded in the text or create their own mental images or drawings when reading text without illustrations.

Spelling

Research has shown that learning to spell and learning to read rely on much of the same underlying knowledge—such as the relationships between letters and sounds—and, not surprisingly, that spelling instruction can be designed to help children better understand that key knowledge, resulting in better reading. Catherine Snow et al. (2005, p. 86) summarize the real importance of spelling for reading as follows: "Spelling and reading build and rely on the same mental representation of a word. Knowing the spelling of a word makes the representation of it sturdy and accessible for fluent reading."

10.4 Different types of texts

Narrative Texts

Narrative text is to amuse, entertain and deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways. Narrative text also has a powerful story to entertain readers. According to Knaap, narrative is not simply about entertaining a reading audience, although it generally always does so. It means narrative is any written English text in which the writer wants to amuse, entertain people, and to deal with actual or vicarious experience in different way. According to Knapp, the generic structure of the narrative text is as follows:

- Orientation: sets the scene and introduces the participants, time, and place
- Complication: sets off chain of events that influences what will happen in the story
- Resolution: in which the characters finally sort out the complication

Knapp stated that there are some language features of narrative text. When sequencing people and events in time and space, narrating typically uses action verbs. For example: went, collecting, saw, coming. It can also employ temporal verbs; for example, then, after. In action sequences, mainly action verbs are used, while in reflection/ evaluations, mental verbs (*italicized*) predominant, example: *didn't know*, *wondered*. Narratives often use action verbs metaphorically to create effective images.

Features of Narrative texts

1. A narrative text tells a story from a particular point of view and can be presented using words, images or/and sounds.

2. Its purpose is to narrate the events, entertain and engage the reader in an imaginative experience.
3. Narratives can also be used to teach, persuade or inform the reader.



Folktales, Fairytales, Traditional tales, Aboriginal dreaming stories, Myths and legends, Ballads, Play scripts, Picture books, Short stories, Mysteries, Science fiction stories, Adventure stories

Linguistic features of a Narrative text

It is important while writing a narrative to develop a 'personal voice' or unique style. This involves making language choices that help to convey new and interesting plots, characters and events. When writing a narrative, the author must decide how to use language to develop the subject matter and storyline and focus the audience's attention. For example, by choosing an interesting sequence of events and gradually revealing relevant details and drawing together elements of the storyline at a particular moment in an original way.

Types of Narrative texts

Descriptive narrative

Descriptive narrative connects imagery, ideas and details to convey a sense of time and place. It has two key purposes that is to create a sense of setting, of time and place and to convey the mood and tone of said time and place (e.g. threatening, peaceful, cheerful, chaotic). When we describe a pastoral scene in a rural setting, for example, we might linger on specific images (such as a wide, empty field, an abandoned tractor) to build up an overarching mood (such as peaceful simplicity).



The city, his city, stood unchanging on the edge of time: the same burning dry city of his nocturnal terrors and the solitary pleasures of puberty, where flowers rusted and salt corroded, where nothing had happened for four centuries except a slow aging among withered laurels and putrefying swamps. In winter sudden devastating downpours flooded the latrines and turned the streets into sickening bogs.

Viewpoint Narrative

Often, the express purpose of a section of narration is to help us understand the views and feelings of the narrating character or 'viewpoint narrator'. Point of view or POV is thus a key element of narration. Viewpoint narrative presents events or scenes to us so that we see understand them through narrators' feelings, desires, beliefs or values. In omniscient narration, the narrator is able to share multiple characters' private thoughts, even in a single scene. In limited narration, by contrast, we can only see events through a single person's eyes at a time. Viewpoint narrative has power. We might interpret story events the way the narrator does because we don't have a different viewpoint for comparison, or because their voice is strong, self-assured. Yet the viewpoint narrator in a scene may be unreliable (they could lie about what truly happened, or gloss over details that, for example, make them look worse to others). Authors like Vladimir Nabokov have written novels featuring protagonists who are unethical or even abusive. In novels such as Nabokov's *Lolita*, the reader has to remember that the narrating voice has its own agenda.



'Human nature, in short, was on him – the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils. Holmes was on him. Dr. Holmes came quite regularly every day. Once you stumble, Septimus wrote on the back of a postcard, human nature is on you. Holmes is on you. Their only chance was to escape, without letting Holmes know; to Italy – anywhere, anywhere, away from Dr. Holmes.' 'But Rezia could not understand him. Dr. Holmes was such a kind man. He was so interested in Septimus. He only wanted to help them, she said.'

Historical Narrative

In genres such as biography, autobiography and various historical subgenres (e.g. historical romance or WWII fiction), a lot of narration recounts events in the past. Of course, the author may choose to tell a war story in a tumultuous present tense. There's no single way to narrate the past. One thing common to historical narrative in different genres is it shows historical process. It links causation from event to event, showing the chain reactions that lead to how things pan out. This is why in historical narrative, such as narration sharing a character's back story, we often have words showing order of events.



'Rahel was first blacklisted in Nazareth Convent at the age of eleven, when she was caught outside her Housemistress's garden gate decorating a knob of fresh cowdung with small flowers. At Assembly the next morning, she was made to look up depravity in the Oxford Dictionary and read aloud its meaning.'

Descriptive Text

A descriptive text usually focuses on describing a single location, object, event, person, or place. It endeavors to engage all five of the reader's senses to evoke the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feel of the text's subject. Descriptive text shows, through careful observation, how a thing is done (a place, a person, an animal), highlighting the features, qualities, distinctive aspects, in order to furnish a clear and complete conception. The main objective of the descriptive text is to inform: it is the case of technical descriptions in scientific encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, guides. This kind of text can also express, through a description, feelings, emotions or moods, in this case serves an expressive purpose. This kind of text is widespread in all areas of social life. They are often placed within a narrative, expository or argumentative context. Any text, be it journalistic writing, advertising, scientific manual, etc contains one or more descriptive parts. Descriptive texts, although with some variation depending upon the object described, the communication, situation and the purpose for which they are produced, have, in their structure, some general characteristics.

Structure of a descriptive text

The referent is the thing, person or animal described. The quality and the parties are the elements of the referent listed in the description. To provide a clear picture of the object, it is necessary to make specific references. Description can be done in a personal or impersonal manner. The former is called subjective description. The latter is called objective description. In subjective description, authors propose the referent of the description from their points of view; giving a representation filtered through their particular ways of seeing and feeling the reality around them. This is done in order to arouse similar emotions in the reader. The main purpose of this kind of descriptive text is persuasive or emotional. In an objective description, an author does not express emotions or personal judgments, introducing the referent in an impersonal and objective way. The primary purpose of this kind of text is informative.

Linguistic features of Narrative text

The main characteristics of a descriptive text from a linguistic point of view are as follows:

1. The use of spatial indicators: adverbs, prepositions, adverbial phrases (front, back, bottom, top, right, left, etc) which are essential in the description of a place, a person, for the placement of an object in space for the definition of the parts that make it up.
2. The use of adjectives, indicating the quality of the contact person.
3. The use of short sentences, for clarity of description.
4. The use of verbs, in simple present and past forms.
5. The richness and variety in the use of terms, which is essential to provide a clear, accurate and representative conception of the referent and its components.

Techniques in a Descriptive Text

Depending on the subject to describe the purpose and referent, techniques also vary for the same description. A discriminating factor is surely the point of view from which you choose to observe and describe reality (a window onto courtyard, the top floor of a palace, the center of a square). You can choose a particular criterion of order, spatial or hierarchical, according to which you can set the description.

Features of a good narrative text

It is concrete. Descriptive writing has to offer specifics the reader can envision. Rather than “Her eyes were the color of blue rocks” (Light blue? Dark blue? Marble? Slate?), try instead, “Her eyes sparkled like sapphires in the dark.” It is evocative. Descriptive writing has to unite the concrete image with phrasing that evokes the impression the writer wants the reader to have. Consider “her eyes shone like sapphires, warming my night” versus “the woman’s eyes had a light like sapphires, bright and hard.” Each phrase uses the same concrete image, then employs evocative language to create different impressions. It is plausible. Descriptive writer has to constrain the concrete, evocative image to suit the reader’s knowledge and attention span. “Her eyes were brighter than the sapphires in the armrests of the Tipu Sultan’s golden throne, yet sharper than the tulwars of his cruelest executioners” will have the reader checking their phone halfway through.” “Her eyes were sapphires, bright and hard” creates the same effect in a fraction of the reading time. As always in the craft of writing: when in doubt, write less.

Writing a descriptive text

- SELECT A TOPIC
- Generally, descriptive texts are narrow in focus. This allows for an in-depth exploration of the subject.
- If ever the old adage shows, don’t tell applied to a writing genre, descriptive texts are it.
- Be sure that the topic is something that can sustain your interest, as well as the reader’s interest.
- Descriptive essays require the writer to go into great depth to evoke the person, place, or thing. If the writer doesn’t care about the topic, then for sure the reader won’t either.
- A good starting point for many students is to write about something that is very personal to them.
- For example, childhood memories, embarrassing moments, or a favorite holiday all make for good topics.
- As the purpose of a descriptive text is to describe something so vividly, and to express emotion so clearly, that the reader can feel it too, personal topics can provide the perfect material for this type of essay.
- It is easier for us to describe those things we have intimate knowledge of.
- This is why memories make such rich fodder for this type of essay.
- We can think back to what things looked like, sounded like, smelled like, tasted like, and felt like.
- We can conjure in our mind’s eye what it was like to experience that memory at the time, making it easier for us to recreate it again in the minds of our readers.
- It is worth investing some time to select a suitable topic for a descriptive text.
- A well-chosen topic can go a long way to kick starting some good writing.
- To avoid this, it is essential that you narrow down which aspects of your selected topic your essay will concern itself with.
- An effective means of doing this is by writing a thesis statement.
- The thesis statement lays out the specific purpose of the text and usually it is embedded in the introductory paragraph.



Example of Descriptive Text about Experience in Waterfall

Lembah Pelangi Waterfall sounds unfamiliar for either local or foreign tourists. The soft flowing gurgling waterfall sounds is like a chant of nature which can remove the tiredness of the long trip to go there. In this place, you will be shown a panorama of natural beauty which is very interesting for every pair of eyes seeing it.

Extrapolative Text

An extrapolation is kind of like an educated guess or a hypothesis. When you make an extrapolation, you take facts and observations about a present or known situation and use them to make a prediction about what might eventually happen. Extrapolation comes from the word extra, meaning “outside,” and a shortened form of the word interpolation. Interpolation might sound like a made-up word, but it’s not. An interpolation is an insertion between two points. So, an extrapolation is an insertion outside any existing points. If you know something about Monday and Tuesday, you might be able to make an extrapolation about Wednesday. To extrapolate is to use facts already known from a piece of text for another situation. This situation may be outside the text, but the text will provide you with a springboard to make use of the information. Extrapolation means to make inferences and assumptions based on the given information. Sometimes the answer to a question is not directly stated in the text. In such cases, you should read the text carefully and then make an inference based on what you have read. To extrapolate is to take what you learn in one place or one text and apply it to a different context, one that perhaps seems to bear little resemblance to the original context.

Strategies to decode an extrapolative text

You can adopt inferential comprehension in order to understand an extrapolative text in a better way. Inferential comprehension is the ability to process written information and understand the underlying meaning of the text. This information is then used to infer or determine deeper meaning that is not explicitly stated. Inferential comprehension requires readers to combine ideas, draw conclusions, interpret and evaluate information, identify tone and voice. A higher and more complex level of comprehension involves critical analysis which requires readers to be critical, form opinions, identify authors' points of view and attitudes, identify and consider the authority of texts and their messages, infer motives of characters and themes.



In the words of Barack Obama, “Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible.”

Summary

"Reading" is the process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. When we read, we use our eyes to receive written symbols (letters, punctuation marks and spaces) and we use our brain to convert them into words, sentences and paragraphs that communicate something to us. A narrative is a spoken or written account of connected events; a story, the practice or art of telling stories and a representation of a particular situation or process in such a way as to reflect or conform to an overarching set of aims or values. Reading helps you become familiar with the rhythm of English. Over time it will start to feel natural and you will notice when a sentence or phrase doesn't seem right. Unlike conversation, reading is something you can do on your own. Reading is not expensive, often free. A descriptive text usually focuses on describing a single location, object, event, person, or place. It endeavors to engage all five of the reader's senses to evoke the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feel of the text's subject. Extrapolation means to make inferences and assumptions based on the given information. Sometimes the answer to a question is not directly stated in the text. In such cases, you should read the text carefully and then make an inference based on what you have read.

Self Assessment

1. Reading is a _____ skill.

- A. receptive
 - B. resistant
 - C. humorous
 - D. monotonous
2. Which of the following is not a reading skill?
- A. skimming
 - B. calligraphy
 - C. scanning
 - D. intensive reading
3. Which of the following is a developmental level of phonemic awareness?
- A. Fluency
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Syllable awareness
 - D. Calligraphy
4. Phonics is the relationship between the _____ in written language and the individual _____ in spoken language.
- A. sounds, letters
 - B. numbers, names
 - C. numbers, sounds
 - D. letters, sounds
5. Which of the following is not a component of the generic structure of a narrative text according to Knapp?
- A. Music
 - B. Orientation
 - C. Complication
 - D. Resolution
6. A _____ ties up loose ends in a narrative text.
- A. plot
 - B. coda
 - C. verse
 - D. couplet
7. Which of the following components of a narrative structure drives the story forward from beginning to end?
- A. Coda
 - B. Climax
 - C. Plot
 - D. Character

-
8. Short stories often start with a dramatic element that is known as a _____.
- A. orientation
 - B. resolution
 - C. coda
 - D. narrative hook
9. _____ narrative connects imagery, ideas and details to convey a sense of time and place.
- A. Descriptive
 - B. Viewpoint
 - C. Historical
 - D. Linear
10. The main objective of a descriptive text is to _____.
- A. entertain
 - B. inform
 - C. delight
 - D. amuse
11. _____ refers to the thing, person or animal described in a descriptive text.
- A. Coda
 - B. Character
 - C. Referent
 - D. Object
12. Subjective description in a descriptive passage is _____.
- A. impersonal
 - B. extrapolative
 - C. emotional
 - D. personal
13. A descriptive text endeavors to engage all _____ of reader's senses.
- A. five
 - B. three
 - C. two
 - D. six
14. Inferential comprehension does not require readers to _____.
- A. combine ideas
 - B. draw silly conclusions
 - C. evaluate information
 - D. identify tone and voice
15. Which of the following is not used as a strategy to decode any text?
- A. Be critical

- B. Form opinions
- C. Skimming
- D. Identify author's points of view

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. B | 3. C | 4. D | 5. A |
| 6. B | 7. C | 8. D | 9. A | 10. B |
| 11. C | 12. D | 13. A | 14. B | 15. C |

Review Questions

1. Define reading.
2. Explain the different types of reading skills with suitable examples.
3. Discuss the different types of texts.
4. How is an extrapolative text different from a descriptive text?
5. How can you decode an extrapolative text?



Further Reading

1. Williams, Adrian J. Reading Comprehension. Amazon Kindle
2. Cain, Kait. Reading development and Difficulties. BPS Blackwell



Web Links

1. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-improve-reading-skills>
2. <https://www.monash.edu/rlo/quick-study-guides/efficient-reading-strategies>
3. <https://tv-english.club/articles-en/education-en-2/what-are-the-types-of-reading-in-english-2/>
4. <https://www.literacyideas.com/different-text-types>

Unit 11: Essential Skills for Reading Comprehension

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand and use the essential skills of decoding, fluency, vocabulary, reasoning and background knowledge in reading comprehension
- become well versed with the rules of decoding, improving fluency , enriching vocabulary and building background knowledge while reading different kinds of texts
- get an overview of the solutions by which you can improve your reading skills

Introduction

Reading should not be an academic task but a habit, especially for budding learners of English language. Reading comprehension entails a myriad of skills which are imperative for the successful interpretation of texts. The skill set comprises decoding, fluency and vocabulary that helps to get rid of many hurdles faced during the comprehension of any kind of text. When readers are able to inculcate this skill set in their everyday reading, the reading becomes a pleasant experience instead of a mechanical process. Most of the avid readers implement these skills rigorously so that they can not only read properly but also effectively.

11.1 Decoding

What is decoding?

Decoding is a key skill for learning to read that involves taking apart the sounds in words (segmenting) and blending sounds together. It requires both knowledge of letter-sound relationships, as well as an ability to apply that knowledge to successfully identify written words and make meaning. Decoding is essential to reading. It allows students to figure out most words they've heard but have never seen in print, as well as sound out words they're not familiar with. The ability to decode is the foundation upon which all other reading instruction—fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, etc are built. Decoding is the process of translating print into speech by rapidly matching a letter or combination of letters (graphemes) to their sounds (phonemes) and recognizing the patterns that make syllables and words. There is an area in the

brain that deals with language processing and does this process automatically. Unfortunately, about 30 percent of students do not access this part of their brain and therefore must be taught decoding strategies very explicitly and systematically, meaning that we start with the simplest sound/letter concept and build to the more complex. This method of phonics instruction has been proven to be the most effective in helping students gain decoding skills. Adapted in the early stages of reading, decoding is one's ability to phonetically understand what they are looking at as far as the written language goes. Improving decoding ability is the best way to improve a beginner's reading skills. This encompasses "sounding-out" basic letters and word sounds and is largely done through the application of knowledge regarding letter-sound relationships through speaking them out loud, and in your head.

Decoding is done through demonstrating such skills as knowledge of letter patterns (how letters sound when placed next to each other, which varies widely under their chosen language or dialect), knowledge of common words, vs. words which need to be sounded out, and common patterns within new words such as the use of the c-h sound, the s-h sound, and the e-a sound, and so on -- at least in the English language. To decode is to make sounds to figure out what a word (especially a new one) says. Decoding becomes more difficult as readers encounter words that might sound different from what a beginner might expect given any of the individual letters by themselves.

Decoding is a reading skill that encompasses all the strategies which are used in the cognitive process to correctly pronounce written words-- from sounding them out to understanding the letter-sound relationship and letter pairing dynamics.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness is a student's ability to hear, identify, and when speaking - to manipulate the smallest parts of sounds in a word that might make a difference to a word meaning. Those learning to read print will need to become more aware of how the sounds in each word work, including their similarities and differences regarding the new sentence context. In order to sound words out more easily, developing phonemic awareness will be vitally important, because it is an important part of the process discussed previously; the process of decoding. Those learning to read must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes, as they are called, in order to progress their abilities. Hence, the terminology Phonemic Awareness.

How can one improve phonemic awareness?

One can practice the following ways to improve the phonemic awareness:

1. Identify and categorize sounds.
2. Blend sounds to form words.
3. Delete or add sounds to form new words.
4. Substitute sounds to make new words.
5. Learn root words, as well as prefix and suffix words, as well as affix words which are common to your primary language.

Improving Decoding Skills

Build a strong foundation for phonological awareness

The first thing to keep in mind is the importance of a strong foundation of phonological awareness. Students need to be able to hear the differences between two sounds, break a word into its individual sounds and blend those sounds. Research has shown us that effective phonological awareness instruction not only involves instruction in advanced phonemic awareness concepts such as manipulating phonemes but learning these phonological skills to the point of over learning and automaticity is significant.

Learn Syllable Types and Syllable Division

When you face an unknown word, this decoding strategy should be your first step. By locating vowels, then syllable divisions and determining syllable types, students are able to break a word into bite size pieces. This is an area in which many interventions fall short. Students learn to break a word into syllables orally, but not how to divide the printed word.

Marking vowels

The vowels are the trickiest parts of most words for most students. By locating and marking the vowels, it not only facilitates syllable division, but also pronunciation and decoding. It is often useful to learn the breve and macron markings so that you can mark vowels with the correct sound. Saying the vowel sound before attempting to blend the word is often also helpful.

Looking for familiar spelling patterns

Looking for familiar spelling patterns such as digraphs, blends, or chunks is also a key skill to aid when decoding words. Students may make connections from known words to new words that share the same spelling pattern.

If a student is familiar with the word cold, it will assist them in reading a word like withhold or golden. It is also helpful if students recognize patterns like silent letters, as in the word write, gnome or knight, as a predictable pattern.

Segmenting and blending

It is important for students to be proficient at both segmenting and blending as a phonemic awareness skill done orally before different spelling patterns are introduced. If a student does not know how to blend, they will not have the necessary skills to decode unknown words. Similarly, the ability to segment a word into sounds is crucial for spelling.

Identifying Affixes, base words and roots

In addition to breaking a word into syllables, the ability to locate and understand affixes, base words and roots is a critical part of reading and spelling more complicated words. This understanding is very often a key not only for spelling, but also for pronunciation of words and word parts. This is especially helpful for decoding multisyllabic words.

Reinforce the use of meaning clues to self-monitor and confirm

Even the most proficient reader when decoding words is going to need to use context clues to read and understand heteronyms, words that are spelled the same but pronounced differently and with different meanings. Examples include: sow (female pig, plant seeds), wind (breeze/roll up), bow (ribbon, front of a boat).

Use your fingers to mask words and word parts

Although marking up a word with pencil or even colour is undoubtedly helpful, there are times in every student's life when this sort of text marking is not an option. Covering suffixes or syllables with your fingers is an excellent substitute that makes decoding instruction more multisensory and less visually overwhelming.

Trace unknown syllables or tricky word parts

If you are struggling with decoding a particular word part, trace that part on the table or desk as they say the sounds. Not only does tracing make the word part more memorable, but the act of tracing triggers the kinaesthetic and sensory pathways you utilized when you initially learned a word or phonogram.

Importance of Decoding

Since decoding involves phonics and phonemic awareness, let us first understand the benefits we reap out of phonics. Phonics is important in learning to read and write because letter-sound knowledge is the foundation needed to build up reading and writing abilities. Written language is like a code that kids must crack and phonics is the key to cracking it. Research clearly shows phonics to be a cornerstone of effective early reading instruction. Phonics enables beginning readers to decode unknown written words by sounding them out, which is an essential skill for independent reading. This is especially important given that most all printed words are unfamiliar to beginning grade learners. Knowing the sounds of letters and letter combinations also helps students to know which letters to use for the sounds they hear in words they want to write. The National Reading Panel explains the goal of phonics instruction as providing students with the knowledge and ability to use the alphabet to make progress in learning to read, write, and comprehend. Phonics instruction helps the learners to decode words by associating sounds to letters and letter patterns, increases fluency and reading accuracy, boosts reading comprehension. It helps to increase vocabulary.

11.2 Fluency

What is fluency?

Fluency is defined as the ability to read and comprehend with some speed, accuracy, and proper expression. As such, it is an extension of reading comprehension in a way, though it is a little bit narrower in definition. In order to understand all of what you read while reading quickly, you must be able to read fluently - and the language you are using must begin to come naturally to you. In order to assure that this happens is a matter of a few disciplines which can be practiced every day (reading signs, reading newspapers or book titles out loud, and under the supervision and so on) and being asked questions about what you read. If you struggle, this means you are not yet fluent. The more common vocabulary you develop, and the more you are able to communicate what you've read, the more fluent you are becoming. Just keep practicing, and fluency will eventually arrive for most students through repetition. When calling the names of things they've read out, you will often have fun. Lessons must be taken in sequence, regardless of where they come from, and the more enjoyable you find them, the related repetition of material, the better you will take on lessons by yourselves, especially later in life. Students who do not read with fluency sound choppy and awkward. Those students may have difficulty with decoding skills or they may just need more practice with speed and smoothness in reading. Fluency is also important for motivation; students who find reading laborious tend not to want read. As readers head into upper college grades, fluency becomes increasingly important. The volume of reading required in the college/university years escalates dramatically. Students whose reading is slow or labored will have trouble meeting the reading demands of their grade level.

Problems associated with fluency

Students will usually express their frustration and difficulties in a general way, with statements like "I hate reading!" or "This is stupid." But if they could, this is how students might describe how fluency difficulties in particular affect their reading:

1. I just seem to get stuck when I try to read a lot of the words in this chapter.
2. It takes me so long to read something.
3. Reading through this book takes so much of my energy, I can't even think about what it means.
4. You know how to read words but seem to take a long time to read a short book or passage silently.
5. You read a book with no expression.
6. You stumble a lot and lose your place when reading something aloud.
7. You read aloud very slowly.
8. You move your mouth when reading silently (sub vocalizing).
9. Your results on words-correct-per-minute assessments are below grade level or targeted benchmark.

10. You have difficulty and grow frustrated when reading aloud, either because of speed or accuracy.
11. You do not read aloud with expression; that is, you do not change your tone where appropriate.
12. You do not "chunk" words into meaningful units.
13. When reading, you do not pause at meaningful breaks within sentences or paragraphs

Improving fluency in reading

1. Track the words with your finger as a parent or teacher reads a passage aloud.
2. Then you read it.
3. Have a parent or teacher read aloud to you.
4. Then, match your voice to theirs.
5. Read your favorite books and poems over and over again.
6. Practice getting smoother and reading with expression.
7. Three techniques can be used very frequently with a variety of texts to help maintain and develop students' reading fluency:
8. Choral reading, cloze reading, and partner reading.
9. All of these procedures can be used with readers at any grade level, with small or large groups, and with fiction or content-heavy nonfiction materials.
10. Two additional techniques can also be considered for use:
11. Readers' Theater and poetry readings
12. For choral reading, the teacher and students read aloud together, following the teacher's pace-so students get the benefit of a model while they practice reading aloud.
13. The teacher can stop at any time to ask questions, comment on the text, discuss a vocabulary term, or remind the class that she expects everyone to be reading.
14. If choral reading is used with heterogeneously grouped students, it is possible that the lowest performing students may have difficulty keeping up with even a moderate pace.
15. However, they can follow along, participating when they can, and still hear the text being read accurately and with good pacing and phrasing.
16. If choral reading is used with heterogeneously grouped students, it is possible that the lowest performing students may have difficulty keeping up with even a moderate pace.
17. However, they can follow along, participating when they can, and still hear the text being read accurately and with good pacing and phrasing.
18. Choral reading works best if the teacher directs all students-regardless of age or ability level-to use a marker or finger to follow along in the text as they read.
19. Cloze reading is similar to choral reading, except that the teacher does most of the oral reading while the students read along silently.

11.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. Educators often consider four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we hear. Speaking vocabulary consists of the words we use when we speak. Reading vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we read. Writing vocabulary consists of the words we use in writing. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader's comprehension. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Students learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Other words are learned through carefully designed instruction. Vocabulary is

crucial to reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As students learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary. The scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that most vocabulary is learned indirectly and that some vocabulary must be taught directly. Thus, research supports using a combination of both indirect and direct approaches.

Indirect vocabulary learning

Students learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language. Students learn word meanings indirectly in the following three ways:

1. They engage daily in oral language
2. They listen to adults read to them
3. They read extensively on their own

Direct Vocabulary Learning

Although a great deal of vocabulary is learned indirectly, some vocabulary should be taught directly. Direct instruction helps students learn difficult words, such as words that represent complex concepts that are not part of the students' everyday experiences. Direct instruction of vocabulary relevant to a given text leads to better reading comprehension. Direct Instruction Includes. Providing students with instruction in specific words that are important to students' content learning or understanding of a particular text. Teaching students more general word-learning strategies that they can apply to a variety of words, such as analyzing parts of words (e.g., root words). Students will usually express their frustration and difficulties in a general way, with statements like "I hate reading!" or "This is stupid!". But if they could, this is how students might describe how their vocabulary difficulties affect their reading: I heard my friend tell what happened in the movie but I didn't really understand what he said about it. I feel like I just use the same words over and over again in my writing. I don't like to read on my own because I don't understand lots of the words in the book. You have questions about a lot of word meanings in a grade appropriate text. You seem to have a weak vocabulary. You are not able to make connections among words in various texts. You are often not able to find the right word to describe something.

Improving Vocabulary

Word Learning Strategies

Of course, it is not possible for teachers to provide specific instruction for all the words their students do not know. Therefore, students also need to be able to determine the meaning of words that are new to them but not taught directly to them. They need to develop effective word-learning strategies. Word-learning strategies include:

1. How to use dictionaries and other reference aids to learn word meanings and to deepen knowledge of word meanings;
2. How to use information about word parts to figure out the meanings of words in text; and
3. How to use context clues to determine word meanings.

Using Dictionaries and Other Reference Aids

Students must learn how to use dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses to help broaden and deepen their knowledge of words, even though these resources can be difficult to use. The most helpful dictionaries include sentences providing clear examples of word meanings in context.

Using Word Parts

Word parts include affixes (prefixes and suffixes), base words, and word roots. Affixes are word parts that are "fixed to" either the beginnings of words (prefixes) or the ending of words (suffixes). The word disrespectful has two affixes, a prefix (dis-) and a suffix (-ful). Base words are words from which many other words are formed. For example, many words can be formed from the base word migrate: migration, migrant, immigration, immigrant, migrating, migratory. Word roots are the words from other languages that are the origin of many English words. About 60% of all

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English words have Latin or Greek origins. Knowing some common prefixes and suffixes (affixes), base words, and root words can help students learn the meanings of many new words. For example, if students learn just the four most common prefixes in English (un-, re-, in-, dis-), they will have important clues about the meaning of about two thirds of all English words that have prefixes. Prefixes are relatively easy to learn because they have clear meanings (for example, un- means "not" and re- means "again"). They are usually spelled the same way from word to word; and, of course, they always occur at the beginnings of words. Learning suffixes can be more challenging than learning prefixes. This is because some suffixes have more abstract meanings than do prefixes. For example, learning that the suffix -ness means "the state or quality of" might not help students figure out the meaning of kindness. Other suffixes, however, are more helpful, for example, -less, which means "without" (hopeless, thoughtless); and -ful, which means "full of" (hopeful, thoughtful). Latin and Greek word roots are found commonly in content-area school subjects, especially in the subjects of science and social studies.

As a result, Latin and Greek word parts form a large proportion of the new vocabulary that students encounter in their content-area textbooks. Students should teach the word roots as they occur in the texts they read and likely to see more often.

Using context clues

Context clues are hints about the meaning of an unknown word that are provided in the words, phrases, and sentences that surround the word. Context clues include definitions, restatements, examples, or descriptions. Because students learn most word meanings indirectly, or from context, it is important that they learn to use context clues effectively. Some contexts give little information about a word's meaning. An example of an unhelpful context is the sentence, "We heard the back door open, and then recognized the buoyant footsteps of Uncle Larry." A number of possible meanings of buoyant could fit this context, including heavy, lively, noisy, familiar, dragging, plodding, and so on. Instruction in using context clues as a word-learning strategy should include the idea that some contexts are more helpful than others.



In the words of Aldous Huxley, "Every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting."

Building up your vocabulary is one of the key things to further improving your general reading comprehension. The more you read, the better you get at understanding the context in which the words are used. And to understand the context is far more important to proper comprehension than going through the dictionary and memorizing mechanically all the words that you probably will never use or ever see them written somewhere. Using big and fancy words wrongly might even destroy your reputation in front of other people and make you appear like a real clown. Leave that to the writers and the people who actually know what they're talking about. Language is a tool that was invented to communicate clearly with each other, to share ideas, and to solve problems. There is no point in complicating the way you speak or write, just to appear that you have a rich vocabulary. Improving your vocabulary takes a lot of time and a lot of reading. While reading, take notes of the new words that appear often and don't just memorize them; study the context in which they are used deeply. What do they mean? Where and when can we use these new words? Is it necessary to use this new word instead of an easier synonym in order to make a clear point?

To appear that you have a rich vocabulary,

Read

Instead of watching that soap opera or talent show, grab a good book and sit down for a few hours. Put away all the stuff that distracts you such as your laptop, phone, or the TV. Highlight the words that you don't understand so that you can come back at them later on.

Keep Notes

Whenever you find interesting words that are used in order to describe something more easily, write them down somewhere (have a notebook just for new words). Writing the words down will help you remember them.

Write

When you're put into a position where you have to explain something or communicate ideas, you're forced to use new words in order to be clear and help other people understand you. Start writing about something that you're passionate about and use new words that you've stumbled upon before.

Get Interested In New Things

Many of the new words that you probably don't know are related to some specific fields or topics so try and explore different areas that you don't know anything about. You will learn lots of new words and, even better, you'll gain knowledge on a topic previously unknown to you. A good vocabulary is fundamental to reading comprehension and effective written and oral communication. Adults who improve their vocabulary will be able to write more precisely and clearly communicate their ideas. Improving vocabulary is as easy as reading and doing some pleasurable activities like word puzzles. Adults with a good vocabulary read faster than those who have a more limited vocabulary. Reading and writing skills will improve as well, which can be beneficial in your job. Do crossword puzzles to improve vocabulary. Crossword puzzles are available for free download at a number of sites on the Internet. Bookstores offer crossword puzzle books and most newspapers print a daily or weekly crossword puzzle. Use a dictionary and a thesaurus when reading. When you read a new word, immediately look it up in the dictionary. Next, use the thesaurus to find synonyms and antonyms for the word. By using a thesaurus in addition to the dictionary, you will increase your vocabulary by learning several new words at once. Write down new words as you learn them. You may want to keep a notebook especially for new words and their definitions. List synonyms and antonyms across from or beneath the new word for additional improvement in your vocabulary. Use new words you have learned in your writing and conversation when appropriate. Dictionaries provide pronunciation guides to help you pronounce new words properly. Online dictionaries frequently provide a link to a verbal pronunciation of words. Determine to learn a new word every day. Use a notepad or a calendar that is large enough for you to write a word and its definition. Select a new word each day from your dictionary. Write the word on your calendar or notepad and use the word in a sentence. This method is effective in improving vocabulary, but requires dedication. Read something new every day. Set aside a time each day to read an article in the newspaper, on a website, or in a magazine. The more you read, the more words you will encounter, which will improve your vocabulary.

11.4 Reasoning and Background knowledge

Background Knowledge Enables Readers To Choose Between Multiple Meanings of Words. For example, think about the word operation. If you were to read the word in a sports article about the Yankees, you might think about Derek Jeter recovering from his latest baseball injury. Reading and listening require readers to make inferences from text that rely on background knowledge. Even the most immediate oral language exchanges, like "What do you say?" to a young child who just received some Halloween candy, require some level of inference. From infancy on, oral language comprehension requires children to actively construct meaning by supplying missing knowledge and making inferences. This, of course, becomes even more complicated when we turn to written texts, since it may require students to make inferences based on limited information in the text itself. In fact, many of our greatest writers engage readers through their writing to think beyond the text. Background knowledge acts as a road map for students, allowing them to stay on target despite the interesting details. This suggests that once print has been decoded into words, reading comprehension and listening comprehension requires the active construction of inferences that rely on background knowledge and are implicit in the text. Deductive reasoning is what many teachers consider "higher order thinking skills." The student has to use at least two facts, rules, or laws and to draw a valid conclusion based on the information given. Deductive reasoning is sometimes presented so that it appears to be more complicated than it actually is. The fact that deductions are sometimes called logical syllogisms and taught as part of university philosophy courses in logic allows them to be considered more complex than is necessary to understand them.

Summary

Reading comprehension entails a myriad of skills which are imperative for the successful interpretation of texts. The skill set comprises decoding, fluency and vocabulary that helps to get rid of many hurdles faced during the comprehension of any kind of text. Decoding is a key skill for learning to read that involves taking apart the sounds in words (segmenting) and blending sounds

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together. It requires both knowledge of letter-sound relationships, as well as an ability to apply that knowledge to successfully identify written words and make meaning. Decoding is essential to reading. It allows students to figure out most words they've heard but have never seen in print, as well as sound out words they're not familiar with. Fluency is defined as the ability to read and comprehend with some speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency is also important for motivation; students who find reading laborious tend not to want read. As readers head into upper college grades, fluency becomes increasingly important. Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. Educators often consider four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Reading vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we read.

Self- Assessment

1. Decoding is a key skill for learning to _____.
 - A. read
 - B. write
 - C. speak
 - D. none of these

2. Decoding is the process of translating _____ into _____.
 - A. speech, print
 - B. print, speech
 - C. sounds, letters
 - D. none of these

3. Graphemes refer to _____.
 - A. sounds
 - B. numbers
 - C. letters or combination of letters
 - D. none of these

4. _____ awareness is a student's ability to hear, identify and when speaking- to manipulate the smallest parts of sounds.
 - A. General
 - B. Social
 - C. Economic
 - D. Phonemic

5. Which of the following is not a way to improve decoding skills?
 - A. Build a strong foundation for phonological awareness
 - B. Learn syllable types
 - C. Looking for familiar spelling patterns
 - D. Good handwriting

6. Fluency in reading is defined as the ability to comprehend with _____.
 - A. speed
 - B. knowledge

- C. logic
 - D. awareness
7. Which of the following is not a technique of reading for improving fluency?
- A. Choral reading
 - B. Skimming
 - C. Partner reading
 - D. Cloze reading
8. What is the full of WCPM?
- A. words -coded- per- minute
 - B. words- calculated- per- minute
 - C. words- correct- per- minute
 - D. word- count- per- minute
9. The Read naturally strategy was developed by _____.
- A. Noam Chomsky
 - B. William Shakespeare
 - C. G.B. Shaw
 - D. Candyce Ihnot
10. Does reading fluency help in achieving motivation?
- A. No
 - B. Can't say
 - C. Sometimes
 - D. Yes
11. There are _____ types of vocabulary.
- A. 4
 - B. 5
 - C. 8
 - D. 10
12. The scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that most vocabulary is learned_____.
- A. directly
 - B. indirectly
 - C. advertently
 - D. willingly
13. Which of the following is not a part of the word?
- A. Prefixes
 - B. Suffixes
 - C. Adjective

D. Base word

14. What is the base word for the word 'migration'?

- A. Migratory
- B. Immigrant
- C. Migrant
- D. Migrate

15. Background knowledge enables readers to choose between_____ meanings of words.

- A. multiple
- B. important
- C. scattered
- D. similar

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 2. B | 3. C | 4. D | 5. D |
| 6. A | 7. B | 8. C | 9. D | 10. D |
| 11. A | 12. B | 13. C | 14. D | 15. A |

Review questions

1. What is decoding?
2. Explain phonemic awareness with suitable examples.
3. What is the role of background knowledge in the interpretation of a text?
4. What are the problems associated with fluency?
5. How can you improve decoding skills?



Further Reading

1. <https://www.planetspark.in/blogs/types-of-reading-skills>
2. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-improve-reading-skills>
3. <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/english-language-learners-and-five-essential-components-reading-instruction>

Unit -12 Writing Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand the meaning and importance of writing skills, cohesion, coherence and sentence expansion
- become well versed with the different aspects of the aforementioned aspects of writing
- get an overview of the ways in which you can perfect the art of effective written communication

Introduction

Writing skills include all the knowledge and abilities related to expressing ideas through the written word. The ability to clearly communicate ideas through writing is in high demand for employers in any industry. Well-written documents, emails and posts can persuade customers to purchase a product or convince investors to partner with a company. Technical knowledge about writing conventions, style guides and formatting for different situations are also an important part of writing skills. Knowing what situations call for different styles of writing and being able to set an appropriate tone over text are both important writing skills that any person can use at work. Writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. You may fancy communicating your ideas online via a blog and, of course, a well written CV or résumé with no spelling or grammatical mistakes are essential if you want a new job. Today, when anyone can be their own publisher, we see more and more examples of poor writing skills both in print and on the web. Poor writing skills create poor first impressions and many readers will have an immediate negative reaction if they spot a spelling or grammatical mistake. As just one example, a spelling mistake on a commercial web page may cause potential customers to doubt the credibility of the website and the organization.

12.1 Writing Skills

Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation

Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are important in written communications. The reader will form an opinion of you, the author, based on both the content and presentation, and errors are likely to lead them to form a negative impression. If you are unconvinced about the importance of accurate writing, think of the clues we use to identify spam emails, “phishing” websites, and counterfeit products: poor grammar and spelling. Similarly, some employers state publicly that any CV or résumé containing spelling or grammatical mistakes will be rejected immediately, whilst a BBC news article quotes research that calculates spelling mistakes cost online businesses “millions” in lost sales. Checking for poor writing and spelling mistakes should be seen as a courtesy to your readers since it can take them much longer to understand the messages in your writing if they have to think and re-read text to decipher these. All written communications should therefore be re-read before sending to print, or hitting the send button in the case of emails, as it is likely that there will be errors. Do not assume that spelling and grammar checkers will identify all mistakes as many incorrect words can indeed be spelt correctly (for example, when “their” is used instead of “there” or “principle” instead of “principal”) or entire words may be missing. If at all possible, take a break before re-reading and checking your writing, as you are more likely to notice problems when you read it fresh. Even if you know spelling and grammar rules, you should still double-check your work or, even better, have it proof-read by somebody else. Our brains work faster than our fingers can type and accidental typographical errors (typos) inevitably creep in.

12.2 Different types of writing

Introduction

Whether you write essays, business materials, fiction, articles, letters, or even just notes in your journal, your writing will be at its best if you stay focused on your purpose. While there are many reasons why you might be putting pen to paper or tapping away on the keyboard, there are really only four main types of writing:

1. Expository
2. Persuasive
3. Descriptive
4. Narrative

Each of these four writing genres has a distinct aim, and they all require different types of writing skills. You may also have heard them referred to in an academic setting as modes of discourse or rhetorical modes. Institutions of higher learning teach nine traditional rhetorical modes, but the majority of pieces we are called upon to write will have one of these four main purposes.

Expository Writing

The word expository contains the word expose, so the reason expository is an apt descriptor for this type of writing is that it exposes, or sets forth, facts. It is probably the most common writing genre you will come across throughout your day. In an expository piece, a topic will be introduced and laid out in a logical order without reference to the author’s personal opinions.



For example, Textbooks, Journalism (Except for Opinion and Editorial Articles), Business writing, Technical writing, Essays, Instructions

Descriptive writing

The aim of descriptive writing is to help the reader visualize, in detail, a character, event, place, or all of these things at once. The author might describe the scene in terms of all five senses. Descriptive writing allows the writer a great deal more artistic freedom than expository writing does. Descriptive writing can be found in fiction, poetry, advertising, journal and diary writing.



For example,

The children pedaled leisurely down the Happyville Bike Trail, their giggles and whoops

reverberating through the warm spring air. Sweet-scented wildflowers brought an array of color to the gently undulating landscape, tempting the children to dismount now and then so they could lay down in the springy, soft grass. Through description, this passage paints a vivid picture of a scene on the new bike trail.

Persuasive writing

The aim of persuasive writing, or argumentation, is to influence the reader to assume the author's point of view. The author will express personal opinions in the piece and arm him- or herself with evidence so that the reader will agree with him or her. Persuasive writing can be found in advertising, opinion and editorial pieces, reviews and job Applications.



For example,

The bike trail is the glittering gem of Hapeville's new infrastructure. It winds through sixty-two miles of lush landscape, dotted by clean and convenient facilities. If you haven't experienced the Hapeville Bike Trail yet, ditch your car and head outside! Could life in Hapeville get any more idyllic?



A number of statements in this paragraph are opinion rather than fact:

- that the bike trail is a glittering gem, that the facilities are clean and convenient, and that life in Hapeville is idyllic.
- Clearly, the author's aim here is to use these depictions to persuade readers to use the bike trail.

Narrative writing

The purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story, whether that story is real or imaginary. Pieces in a narrative style will have characters, and through the narrative, the reader learns what happens to them. Narrative writing can also include dialogue. Narrative writing can be found in all types of fiction, biographies, human interest stories and anecdotes.

12.3 Components of the writing process

Regardless of the type of writing you hope to do, it's important to make sure you understand the components of the writing process. There are five major components of the writing process.

Prewriting

Prewriting is the process of gathering ideas and information for your project. This could include general brainstorming, doing Background research at the library or online, conducting Interviews, writing character sketches, making an outline.

Writing

After you've thought about what you hope to accomplish with your project, it's time to start actually writing the first draft. Every writer has a unique routine for this part of the process. Some write in the morning, while others write just before they go to sleep at night. Some people prefer to write in a home office, while others work best in a coffee shop surrounded by other people. Many writers prefer to write on a daily schedule to keep them motivated, but there are also a number of writers who only work when inspiration strikes. Regardless of your particular writing routine, remember that writing requires both concentration and energy. Even experienced writers can seldom manage to write for hours at a time. It's perfectly acceptable to allow yourself a small break after an hour of uninterrupted writing.

Revising

Many novice freelance writers make the mistake of thinking that once they've finished a first draft, their work is complete. Unfortunately, your first draft is seldom representative of your best work. Every writer understands that rewriting is one of the key parts of the writing process. Rewriting may include: adding sections to provide more detail where it is needed, removing sections that are repetitious or unnecessary, replacing sections with more vivid prose and rearranging parts of the piece to improve the overall flow. Revising is often where critique groups can come into play, especially if you're working on a longer project such as a book proposal. As a writer, it's natural to be attached to your project. However, what seems like brilliant prose to you may very well be confusing to the reader. Having a group of people review your work will give you new insights into what needs to be changed or improved. Even if some of the criticism is hard for your ego to take, this will make you a much better writer in the end.

Editing

Editing involves checking over the smaller details that you've ignored until now in favor of focusing on the overall structure of your work.



During the editing process, you are evaluating grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice and formatting mistakes.

Most writers simply edit their own work before they attempt to submit it for publication, since it will undoubtedly be edited again before it is released to a wider audience. However, if you really struggle with the mechanics of the English language, you may want to consider hiring a freelance editor to assist you with this part of the process. Brilliant prose is unlikely to impress your reader if it is littered with spelling and grammatical errors.

Publishing

Publishing simply involves distributing your work in its finished format. For a freelance writer, this is generally interpreted as distributing the project to the client, sending off a query letter, or submitting a book proposal. While the goal is to have your work met with enthusiastic reviews, rejection is often one of the components of the writing process. A client may not like the way you handled his press release or a magazine may feel your idea isn't suitable for their audience. Don't let this keep you from pursuing your dream of a freelance writing career. Consider their suggestions, revise your work, and try again. In the end, your persistence will pay off.

Ways to improve writing skills

Sometimes, it looks like students' writing evolves naturally: from a few squiggles, to random strings of letters, to increasingly conventional writing, and eventually progressing to well-crafted essays. But just like learning to read, learning to write is not a natural process. To ensure that you become skilled writers, you need to learn in a systematic way combined with many opportunities to write and to receive feedback. Basic writing skills: These include spelling, capitalization, punctuation, handwriting and keyboarding, and sentence structure (e.g., learning to eliminate run-ons and sentence fragments). Basic writing skills are sometimes called the "mechanics" of writing. Generating text: Text generation involves putting our thoughts into words, what might be thought of as the "content" of writing. Text generation includes word choice (vocabulary), elaboration of detail, and clarity of expression. Planning and editing: Especially after the earliest grades, good writing involves planning, revising, and editing your own work. These skills are indispensable in becoming a good writer, and increasingly so as students advance into the middle and secondary grades. Writing knowledge includes an understanding of discourse and genre – for example, understanding that a narrative is organized differently than an informational text. Students also need to learn that they are writing for an audience so they need to convey meaning clearly to the people who will be reading their work. Professional writing is a complex process that involves different skills for planning, drafting and editing. Great writers must be able to quickly learn new concepts and translate ideas into original content. Some areas of writing are highly specialized and require extensive knowledge in a single area, like scientific or legal writing. Others use broad soft skills to relate to an audience through creative writing or blogging. Some of the best writing skills include research, outlining, editing, reading comprehension and time management.

Research

Research allows writers to find accurate information and best practices related to writing in a particular style or about a particular piece of content. Writers often have to write about subjects that they are not familiar with, so finding quality sources quickly is an important skill.

Outlining

Outlining is creating a plan for the structure and flow of a piece of writing. Good writing needs to have a logical structure in order to make sense to a reader. Your ability to organize sentences and paragraphs in the most compelling way influences how others perceive you and understand the point of your writing.

Editing

After writing the first draft of your piece, you need to be able to edit. From checking an email for spelling errors to re-writing a grant proposal, all writing should undergo some level of editing. Editing involves reading your own writing from another perspective and considering how well it suits your goals. When editing your own work, think about your word choice and tone, removing any irrelevant phrases.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension skills help you respond to prompts, reply to messages and learn about new content. People use reading comprehension skills to assess the tone and main idea of a piece of writing. Having good reading comprehension also helps you edit your own work by determining if your point comes across from the perspective of a reader.

Time management

Time management is key when writing anything beyond a simple message or email. You should be able to spend your time efficiently when writing and accurately plan for how long it will take to write and edit your piece. Many writers over-edit their work and end up wasting time without improving the quality of their writing, so a good writer must recognize when to step away from a piece of writing.

Take grammar quizzes

Even the most experienced writers have trouble with grammar, and taking grammar quizzes or playing games online is a great way to hone your knowledge of spelling and sentence structure.

Know your audience

Practice writing one prompt for different audiences and notice how your tone shifts. Before you begin writing, consider what your audience values and how you can use your word choice and sentence structure to appeal to them.

Read your writing aloud

Read your writing aloud during the editing process to catch any errors that you might not have noticed otherwise. Reading aloud also helps you hear any awkward phrasing and get an idea of your overall tone and effectiveness.

Vary your sentence structure

As you write, try to vary your sentence structure to give your writing rhythm. A mix of short and long sentences with different literary devices can keep the reader interested and create a natural flow that guides them through your writing.

Practice daily

Even if you don't have to write at work everyday, practice writing in some way every day. Focus your time on the types of writing where you most need to improve. Give yourself writing prompts and challenge yourself to try out different skills.

Read regularly

One of the best ways to improve your writing is to read a variety of writing styles daily. The more exposure you have to quality writing, the better you will be able to produce great writing yourself. Reading helps you understand how to apply the writing skills you have learned.

Give your writing a structure

It's fine to rattle off a stream of consciousness when you're writing in your journal, but if you actually want to communicate with others you'll need to bring some order to those rambling thoughts.

Anticipate your reader's questions

Improving writing involves putting yourself in your readers' shoes. Do they have enough context to understand what you've written for them? If not, fill in the blanks.

12.4 Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion refers to the many ways (grammatical, lexical, semantic, metrical, alliterative) in which the elements of a text are linked together. Cohesion differs from coherence in that a text can be internally cohesive but be incoherent – that is, make no sense. Here is a text that is grammatically and lexically cohesive, but not very coherent:

An octopus is an air-filled curtain with seven heads and three spike-filled fingers, which poke in frills and furls at ribbon-strewn buttons.

Grammatical cohesion

The clause-structure obeys normal English grammatical rules (which is itself a form of cohesion):

***Anaphoric reference***

which poke refers back to the fingers

Lexical cohesion - semantic fields:

heads, fingers (body parts)

curtain, frills, furls, ribbons,

buttons (haberdashery)

However the text only makes sense if we invent some kind of other-world context. Notice how our tendency is to want to make sense of it, to find some kind of science-fictional or poetical circumstance whereby it could make sense.

When it comes to planned, non-spontaneous texts including written discourse and speeches, the manner in which the text is put together can be explained by elements of coherence and cohesion. While spontaneous discourse will also display coherence and cohesion, it is emphasized in planned texts because there is a greater deal of thought and intention behind the use of cohesive ties and devices of coherence. Coherence is defined as the quality of being logical, consistent and able to be understood.

Imagine coherence as a building (It's an analogy, go with it. Cohesion on the other hand refers to the act of forming a whole unit. It is effectively a subset of coherence. Picture cohesion as the bricks and cement which make up the building. Bricks and cement can be put together to create any form of structure. However, it is only when they are laid together properly that they form a building. Similarly, a text will be cohesive if cohesive ties are used however it will only be coherent if the cohesive ties are used appropriately to create meaning. You can have cohesion without coherence but you cannot have coherence without cohesion. The picture does not make sense unless the correct pieces are placed in the correct order, even if certain pieces may be the same size and shape.

Cohesive devices effectively help the discourse flow. They include:

- Collocations
- Lexical repetition
- Linking adverbials
- Substitution
- Ellipsis
- Conjunctions
- Synonymy/ antonymy
- Hypernyms /hyponyms
- Referencing (anaphoric, cataphoric, deictic).

These devices create physical links between the words in a discourse.

Coherence which we previously defined as understanding can be achieved through devices such as,

- Cohesive ties
- Formatting techniques
- Inference
- Logical ordering of information
- Semantic patterning
- Consistency

These all enhance the ability of a text to be successfully interpreted and understood. Recipes, terms and condition documents, informative brochures all make use of formatting in the form of headings, bolding, underlines etc. to emphasize certain aspects of the text and draw audience attention to the most important elements. The focus of coherence factors is determined by the social purpose of the text. Is the text made to entertain? Inform? Persuade? Celebrate? If so, why? What is the overarching intention of the text? Answering such questions can help explain the purpose of coherence factors and cohesive devices within a discourse. The focus of coherence factors is determined by the social purpose of the text. Is the text made to entertain? Inform? Persuade? Celebrate? If so, why? What is the overarching intention of the text? Answering such questions can help explain the purpose of coherence factors and cohesive devices within a discourse. Lexical choices which require outside inference would be included if it can be reasonably interpreted that the intended audience would be aware of their meaning. Finding examples of inference in texts can be useful in identifying the social purpose of the text. Cohesive devices, sometimes called linking words, linkers, connectors, discourse markers or transitional words. Cohesive devices are words or phrases that show the relationship between paragraphs or sections of a text or speech. Cohesive devices are words like 'For example', 'In conclusion', 'however' and 'moreover'.

Anaphoric reference

Anaphoric Reference means that a word in a text refers back to other ideas in the text for its meaning. For example:

'I went out with Jo on Sunday. She looked awful.' 'She' clearly refers to Jo, there is no need to repeat her name.

Cataphoric References

Cataphoric reference means that a word in a text refers to another later in the text and you need to look forward to understand. For example: When he arrived, John noticed that the door was open'.

Exophoric Reference

Exophoric reference refers to an idea outside the text. This is a reference to world knowledge shared by the reader. For example,

"The Prime Minister responded quickly to the threat."

Here we are expected to know who the Prime Minister is.

Tense Agreement

Tense agreement refers to the way that writers use tenses to make a text hang together.

For example, "She knew then that he... "had found her letter" is a logical ending to the sentence. We are not surprised to see past perfect after simple past in a narrative sentence."

Linkers

Linkers refers to words or phrases that describe the relationship between ideas in the text

For example, "And, but, therefore, first of all"

Substitution

Substitution or Ellipsis refers to replacing words, or leaving them out- this is how writers reduce repetition in a text. For example, "Now we're finishing our essays. I know you want to go out, but before you can do that, please finish. 'do that' avoids a repetition of 'go out'. Instead of repeating 'finish our essays' 'our essays' is dropped from the sentence"

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have essentially the same meaning, and they provide some variety in your word choices, helping the reader to stay focused on the idea being discussed.

12.5 Sentence Expanding**What is sentence expanding?**

Sentence expanding is the process of adding one or more words, phrases, or clauses to the main clause (or independent clause) to do just that: expand your sentences. Sentence-expanding exercises are often used in conjunction with sentence combining and sentence-imitation exercises. Together, these activities may serve as a supplement or an alternative to more traditional methods of grammar and writing instruction. The primary purpose of using sentence-expanding exercises in composition is to enrich a student's thinking and attention to detail in storytelling while heightening his or her awareness of the variety of available sentence structures. All together, it gives students the ability to paint a more vivid picture and express a more complex thought.

Summary

Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. You may fancy communicating your ideas online via a blog and, of course, a well written CV or résumé with no spelling or grammatical mistakes are essential if you want a new job. It is important for the parts of a written text to be connected together. Another word for this is cohesion. This word comes from the word cohere, which means 'to stick together'. Cohesion is therefore related to ensuring that the words and sentences you use stick together. The words 'cohesion' and 'coherence' are often used together with a similar meaning, which relates to how an academic text joins together to make a unified whole. Although they are similar, they are not the same. Cohesion relates to the micro level of the text, i.e. the words and sentences and how they join together. Coherence, in contrast, relates to the organization and connection of ideas and whether they can be understood by the reader, and as such is concerned with the macro level features of a text, such as topic sentences, thesis statement, the summary in the concluding paragraph (dealt with in the essay structure section), and other 'bigger' features including headings such as those used in reports. Coherence can be improved by using an outline before writing (or a reverse outline, which is an outline written after the writing is finished), to check that the ideas are logical and well organized. Asking a peer to check the writing to see if it makes sense, i.e. peer feedback, is another way to help improve coherence in your writing.

Self Assessment

1. Which of the following is not an important aspect of writing skills?
 - A. Intonation
 - B. Grammar
 - C. Spelling
 - D. Punctuation

2. There are mainly_____ types of writing.
 - A. 5
 - B. 4
 - C. 2
 - D. 8

3. Expository writing cannot be found in_____.
 - A. essays
 - B. instructions
 - C. poetry
 - D. textbooks

4. Persuasive writing can be found in_____.
 - A. essays
 - B. instructions
 - C. poetry
 - D. advertising

5. _____writing can be found in poetry.
 - A. Narrative
 - B. Persuasive
 - C. Descriptive

D. Expository

6. Cohesion refers to the many ways in which the elements of a text are _____ together.

- A. linked
- B. studied
- C. read
- D. spoken

7. Can a text be internally cohesive but incoherent?

- A. No
- B. Yes
- C. Can't say
- D. None of these

8. Which of the following is not a cohesive device?

- A. Collocations
- B. Lexical repetition
- C. Accent
- D. Substitution

9. Which cohesive device can you use to introduce an item in a series?

- A. However
- B. Therefore
- C. Meanwhile
- D. First

10. Which cohesive device can you use to draw a comparison in a text?

- A. Nevertheless
- B. Finally
- C. Consequently
- D. Moreover

11. Which of the following is not a way to expand a sentence?

- A. Add phonetic code
- B. Add adjective clauses
- C. Add adverb clauses
- D. Add absolute clause

12. Should you add many adjectives, verbs and connectors to expand a sentence?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Can't say
- D. None of these

13. A prepositional phrase often appears_____ the word it modifies.
 A. before
 B. near
 C. after
 D. none of these
14. An_____ is a word or group of words that identifies or renames another word in a sentence.
 A. adjective
 B. adverb
 C. axiom
 D. appositive
15. _____ appositives begin with a word such as not, never or rather than.
 A. Negative
 B. Positive
 C. Unrestricted
 D. None of these

Answers for Self Assessment

1. A 2. B 3. C 4. D 5. A
 6. A 7. B 8. C 9. D 10. A
 11. A 12. B 13. C 14. D 15. A

Review Questions

1. Define cohesion and coherence.
2. How can one improve one's writing skills?
3. Discuss the differences between cohesion and coherence.
4. What is an Anaphoric reference? Give examples.
5. What is a Cataphoric reference? Give examples.



Further reading

1. <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/writing-skills.html#:~:text=Writing%20skills%20are%20an%20important,to%2Dface%20or%20telephone%20conversations.>
2. <https://in.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/writing-skills>
3. <https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/elor/lo/cohesion/index.html#:~:text=Definition%20of%20the%20terms%20Cohesion,that%20is%2C%20make%20no%20sense.>
4. <https://www.slideshare.net/huuphuoc12a2/cohesion-and-coherence-16234181>

Unit 13: Writing Skills

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Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- learn different ways of arranging sentences to construct a meaningful paragraph
- revise the rules of rearrangement of jumbled sentences
- become well versed with different aspects of constructing a paragraph
- understand the rules of writing a paragraph in English
- able to employ effective tools for writing a well organized paragraph

Introduction

What is rearrangement?

Rearrangement of jumbled sentences into a meaningful paragraph entails knowledge about cohesion and coherence. Rearrangement means the process of changing the order of a set of different sentences to establish the central idea of a paragraph. The sentences should be arranged in such a way that the paragraph is in accordance with the syntaxes and semantics. Generally there is a central idea, thought or some personality description on which a paragraph is written. Try to locate the sentence which contains such matter. Mostly such a sentence forms the first or the last sentence of the paragraph. There are two methods to describe the central idea. First in the opening sentence a central point is mentioned. Thereafter, the sentences following that give logical description or details of that and to elaborate the same, some examples are given. In the second method, some facts are given in the opening sentences of the paragraph and their result is given in the concluding lines. Try to find out the sentence containing the central idea and arrange the remaining sentences accordingly. Sentences containing proper nouns i.e. names of people, places or buildings etc or abstract nouns like qualities i.e. goodness or beauty etc come in the opening line or in the few starting lines of the paragraph. Sentences containing pronouns like he, his, him, she, her, they, their, them or first or last part of a name come in the subsequent part of the paragraph. Pronouns like it, this that, these or those show that these mention about the topic already detailed in the sentences preceding them. So, these sentences generally do not form the first line of the paragraph. Sentences containing words like therefore, but, and, accordingly, or resultantly etc. come in the central part of the paragraph. The first sentence of the paragraph may contain introductory details of something and the last line of the paragraph contains conclusions of some logical details given in it. Sometimes, words like initially, eventually, finally, hence, ensuing, proceeding, following or mentioned below or above in the sentence also indicate the location of that particular sentence in the paragraph. In some paragraphs, there are sentences giving statements in

favor of or against an argument. Try to sort out and arrange sentences of both types separately. This helps in framing the paragraph. Initially, it may not be as easy as stated, but a little practice makes it very easy.

13.1 Strategies for sentence rearrangement

- Ignore reading the sentence, over and over, it just take your more often than not
- Survey the choices; if each of the choices begins with different letters, pick the sentence to begin the gathering prompts the right answer
- In choices that are almost related, pick an compulsory pair of sentences
- Pay special mind to quick bits of data, for example, pronouns, conjunctions
- At the primary spot of sentences to offer you some help with setting up a gathering
- Pay special mind to quick bits of data, for example, pronouns, conjunctions
- At the primary spot of sentences to offer you some help with setting up a gathering

13.2 Components of a good paragraph

A good paragraph has three important parts. A Topic Sentence tells about the limited topic of a paragraph and expresses the focusing idea or conveys the main point of the paragraph. It provides the idea to the reader what she or he is going to read after that. Supporting Sentence provide detailed information to the readers from which they become able to understand the topic sentence. The Concluding Sentence ends the paragraph and by completing a full circle comes back to that idea which was introduced by the topic sentence. Try to find out the topic addressed by the paragraph. This can be done by looking for the words that are repeated often in the given sentences. If a particular word is repeated in more than one sentence then the sentences can be placed one by one in the paragraph. If a sentence starts with a 'name' of a person, then that sentence will definitely be the 1st sentence in the paragraph to be formed. If a sentence starts with pronouns other than 'I' and 'You', then that sentence will not be the 1st sentence of the paragraph. The sentences starting with the words 'That', 'These', 'Thus' and 'Those', then those sentences will not come 1st in the paragraph. If an article namely 'a', 'an' or 'the' is present at the starting of a sentence. Then the chances of that sentence being the 1st in the arrangement are more.

If all the articles (a, an, the) are present as the starting words of different sentences then they are arranged as follows:

1. The sentence starting with 'A' comes first
2. The sentences starting with 'An' and 'The' will follow the sentence starting with 'A' according to their content
3. If there are 3-sentences starting with the words 'But', 'So' and 'Now' respectively.

Then those 3-sentences will be arranged in the following order

1. sentence starting with 'But'
2. sentence starting with 'So'
3. sentence starting with 'Now'

If the given set of sentences consists of simple, compound, and complex sentences they are arranged in the following order

- Simple sentence – a sentence that consists of basic elements like a subject, a verb, and a completed thought

For example, Arun waited for the bus.

- Compound sentence – a sentence that consists of 2-independent clauses connected to one another with a conjunction

For example, Arun waited for the bus, but the bus was late.

- Complex sentence – a sentence that consists of an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses connected to it

For example, Arun realized that the bus was late while he waited at the bus stop.

Or

While he waited at the bus stop, Arun realized that the bus was late.



If a sentence starts with the words 'Hence, Finally or Therefore', then that sentence comes last in the arrangement.

13.3 Paragraph Writing

Paragraphs are distinct blocks of text which section out a larger piece of writing—stories, novels, articles, creative writing or professional writing pieces—making it easier to read and understand. Good paragraphs are a handy writing skill for many forms of literature, and good writers can greatly enhance the readability of their news, essays, or fiction writing when constructed properly. A good paragraph is composed of a topic sentence (or key sentence), relevant supporting sentences, and a closing (or transition) sentence. This structure is essential to keep your paragraph focused on the main idea and creating a clear and concise image. While creative writing does not necessarily follow the traditional paragraph structure, it's more about scene building and continuing a narrative. Efficient, well-written paragraphs are a staple of good flash fiction and short fiction writing, as short stories need to stay more focused on a central idea. As long as your sentences form cohesive ideas and connect to one another, you can write a good paragraph.

How to structure and write better paragraphs?

- Whether you're writing a short paragraph or a long paragraph, each should follow the same basic rules of structure.
- While this format is not as rigid when writing fiction as it is for non-fiction, the information or story you craft must logically or sequentially relate to the next paragraph.
- These elements help the coherency of your body paragraphs, tying them together to unify around an idea, or set up a narrative story.
- Make The First Sentence of your topic sentence.
- The first line of your first paragraph sets up what information is to come as your audience reads on.
- Even in fiction, the introduction of a paragraph either establishes an idea or scenario or continues one from the paragraph before.
- Regardless of what format or genre you're writing for, every good paragraph starts with a central focus that the rest of the paragraph will aim to support.
- Provide support via The Middle Sentences.
- These sentences include follow-up information to your key sentence or previous paragraph.
- Whatever idea you aim to convey, these sentences are where you convince your reader to believe or envision what you do, and give them everything they need to see your point of view.
- Make your Last Sentence a Conclusion or transition.
- Even if it's not at the end of the piece, a conclusive sentence can refer to the last line of its own paragraph, which concludes a particular idea or train of thought before moving on to start a new line for the next paragraph.
- This next paragraph can continue on the same idea, but the ending of each paragraph should briefly summarize the information that was provided before moving on.
- Know when To Start A New Paragraph.

- A paragraph break is necessary when starting a new topic, introducing a new speaker, contrasting other POVs or ideas, or providing white space to give readers a pause from a longer paragraph.
- For example, in a novel, you may start a new paragraph when bringing in a new character, or specify when a different character is speaking, which can help the reader separate action text from dialogue more readily.
- Paragraph breaks can control the pacing of your writing, and generate particular feelings or moods for your reader.
- While there is no set amount of sentences required per paragraph, in some instances, a single paragraph may consist of a single sentence, but it is acceptable as long as it supports your central idea, and doesn't overwhelm your audience with too much information.
- Use Transition Words.
- Transition words help tie together separate paragraphs, connecting them to form a coherent idea.
- Phrases like "in addition" or "moreover" can help readers track your ideas and understand how they relate to each other, making for a smoother, more pleasant reading experience.
- This is especially useful for essay writers and bloggers, who often focus on a singular idea at a time to share with their audience.
- Before you can begin to determine what the composition of a particular paragraph will be, you must first decide on an argument and a working thesis statement for your paper.
- What is the most important idea that you are trying to convey to your reader?
- The information in each paragraph must be related to that idea.
- In other words, your paragraphs should remind your reader that there is a recurrent relationship between your thesis and the information in each paragraph.
- A working thesis functions like a seed from which your paper, and your ideas, will grow.
- The whole process is an organic one—a natural progression from a seed to a full-blown paper where there are direct, familial relationships between all of the ideas in the paper.
- The decision about what to put into your paragraphs begins with the germination of a seed of ideas; this "germination process" is better known as brainstorming.
- There are many techniques for brainstorming; whichever one you choose, this stage of paragraph development cannot be skipped.
- Building paragraphs can be like building a skyscraper: there must be a well-planned foundation that supports what you are building.
- Any cracks, inconsistencies, or other corruptions of the foundation can cause your whole paper to crumble.

Every paragraph in a paper should be:

- Unified: All of the sentences in a single paragraph should be related to a single controlling idea (often expressed in the topic sentence of the paragraph).
- Clearly related to the thesis: The sentences should all refer to the central idea, or thesis, of the paper.
- Coherent: The sentences should be arranged in a logical manner and should follow a definite plan for development.
- Well-developed: Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be adequately explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea.

Organizing a paragraph

There are many different ways to organize a paragraph. The organization you choose will depend on the controlling idea of the paragraph.

Narration: Tell a story. Go chronologically, from start to finish.



One North Carolina man found quite a surprise last year while fishing in the Catawba River: a piranha. Jerry Melton, of Gastonia, reeled in a one pound, four ounce fish with an unusual bite. Melton could not identify it, but a nearby fisherman did. Melton at first could not believe he had caught a piranha. He said, "That ain't no piranha. They ain't got piranha around here." Melton was right: the fish is native to South America, and North Carolina prohibits owning the fish as a pet or introducing the species to local waterways. The sharp-toothed, carnivorous fish likely found itself in the Catawba River when its illegal owner released the fish after growing tired of it. Wildlife officials hope that the piranha was the only of its kind in the river, but locals are thinking twice before they wade in the water.

Description: Provide specific details about what something looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or feels like. Organize spatially, in order of appearance, or by topic.



Piranhas are omnivorous, freshwater fish, which are mostly known for their single row of sharp, triangular teeth in both jaws. Piranhas' teeth come together in a scissor-like bite and are used for puncture and tearing. Baby piranha are small, about the size of a thumbnail, but full-grown piranha grow up to about 6-10 inches, and some individual fish up to 2 feet long have been found. The many species of piranha vary in color, though most are either silvery with an orange underbelly and throat or almost entirely black.

Process: Explain how something works, step by step. Perhaps follow a sequence—first, second, third.



You can safely swim with piranhas, but it's important to know how and when to do it. First, chose an appropriate time, preferably at night and during the rainy season. Avoid piranha-infested waters during the dry season, when food supplies are low and piranhas are more desperate. Piranhas feed during the day, so night-time swimming is much safer. Second, streamline your movement. Wild or erratic activity attracts the attention of piranhas. Swim slowly and smoothly. Finally, never enter the water with an open wound or raw meat. Piranhas attack larger animals only when they are wounded. The presence of blood in the water may tempt the fish to attack. If you follow these simple precautions, you will have little to fear.

Classification: Separate into groups or explain the various parts of a topic



Piranhas comprise more than 30-60 species of fish, depending on whom you ask. The many species fall into four genera: Pygocentrus, Pygopristsis, Serrasalmus, and Pristobrycon. Piranhas in the Pygocentrus genus are the most common variety, the kind you might find in a pet store. Pygopristsis piranhas are herbivores, feasting on seeds and fruits, not flesh. In contrast, fish in the Serrasalmus genus eat only meat, and their teeth are razor-sharp. Pristobrycon are the least friendly of all piranhas; they often bite the fins of other fish, even fish of the same species. The label piranha, then, refers to a wide variety of species.

Illustration: Give examples and explain how those examples support your point. Let's walk through a 5-step process for building this type of paragraph. For each step, there is an explanation and example. Our example paragraph will be about human misconceptions of piranhas.

Step 1

- Decide on a controlling idea and create a topic sentence
- Paragraph development begins with the formulation of the controlling idea.
- This idea directs the paragraph's development.
- Often, the controlling idea of a paragraph will appear in the form of a topic sentence.

- In some cases, you may need more than one sentence to express a paragraph's controlling idea.
- Controlling idea and topic sentence: Despite the fact that piranhas are relatively harmless, many people continue to believe the pervasive myth that piranhas are dangerous to humans.

Step 2

- Elaborate on the controlling idea
- Paragraph development continues with an elaboration on the controlling idea, perhaps with an explanation, implication, or statement about significance.
- Our example offers a possible explanation for the pervasiveness of the myth.
- Elaboration: This impression of piranhas is exacerbated by their mischaracterization in popular media.

Step 3

- Give an example (or multiple examples)
- Paragraph development progresses with an example (or more) that illustrate the claims made in the previous sentences.
- For example, the promotional poster for the 1978 horror film *Piranha* features an oversized piranha poised to bite the leg of an unsuspecting woman.

Step 4

- Explain the example(s)
- The next movement in paragraph development is an explanation of each example and its relevance to the topic sentence.
- The explanation should demonstrate the value of the example as evidence to support the major claim, or focus, in your paragraph.
- Continue the pattern of giving examples and explaining them until all points/examples that the writer deems necessary have been made and explained.



None of your examples should be left unexplained. You might be able to explain the relationship between the example and the topic sentence in the same sentence which introduced the example. More often, however, you will need to explain that relationship in a separate sentence.

Explanation for example: Such a terrifying representation easily captures the imagination and promotes unnecessary fear.

Step 5

- Complete the paragraph's idea or transition into the next paragraph
- The final movement in paragraph development involves tying up the loose ends of the paragraph.
- At this point, you can remind your reader about the relevance of the information to the larger paper, or you can make a concluding point for this example.
- You might, however, simply transition to the next paragraph.
- Sentences for completing a paragraph – While the trope of the man-eating piranhas lends excitement to the adventure stories, it bears little resemblance to the real-life piranha.
- By paying more attention to fact than fiction, humans may finally be able to let go of this inaccurate belief.

Finished paragraph

Despite the fact that piranhas are relatively harmless, many people continue to believe the pervasive myth that piranhas are dangerous to humans. This impression of piranhas is exacerbated by their mischaracterization in popular media. For example, the promotional poster for the 1978 horror film *Piranha* features an oversized piranha poised to bite the leg of an unsuspecting woman. Such a terrifying representation easily captures the imagination and promotes unnecessary fear. While the trope of the man-eating piranhas lends excitement to the adventure stories, it bears little resemblance to the real-life piranha. By paying more attention to fact than fiction, humans may finally be able to let go of this inaccurate belief.



Notice that the example and explanation steps of this 5-step process (steps 3 and 4) can be repeated as needed. The idea is that you continue to use this pattern until you have completely developed the main idea of the paragraph.

Characteristics of an effective paragraph

- It presents a single idea.
- It begins with a topic sentence that makes this single idea evident.
- It contains support in form of sentences that convey this single idea.
- It is Strategically Organized To Maintain Flow
- It maintains Your Essay's Objective
- It informs And Entertains Your Reader About Your Paper's Overall Idea

13.4 Common mistakes in paragraph writing**Stylistic/ Technical mistakes**

- Italicize the title of a major work (novel, play, movie)
Example: *The Merchant of Venice*
(if you are writing it out, you underline the title)
- Put the title of short works in quotation marks (essays, short stories, poetry)
Example: "The Fall of a City"

Structural continuity

- The way your thesis is written dictates the order your essay will follow.
- If your thesis says "Teddy is kind, imaginative, and intelligent" your first body paragraph will discuss kindness, second imagination, and third intelligence.
- Also, when you restate your thesis in the conclusion, it must be written in the same order.

Language

Stay consistent in the present tense or past tense whenever possible. Example of events that happen during the story:

Antonio lends money to his best friend Bassanio. He is sure that his ships will return in time to repay Shylock. Not Antonio lent money to his best friend Bassanio. He is sure that his ships will return in time to repay Shylock.

Ambiguous Pronoun Reference

When discussing a character you must always refer to that character using his or her name at least once in a sentence, sometimes more (especially when discussing two or more characters of the same gender in one sentence).



Incorrect example,

Antonio would do anything for Bassanio because he loves him like a brother.

In the above sentence, it is unclear who loves who like a brother.

Correct example,

Antonio would do anything for Bassanio because he loves Bassanio like a brother.

Incorrect example,

She agreed to marry whoever solves the riddle correctly.

Who is this sentence referring to?

Correct example,

Portia agreed to marry whoever solves the riddle correctly

Always use formal language

- No slang
- No contractions (it's; he's; that's; etc)
- Only use the third person (No first person "I" "me" and No second person "we" "us.")
- Do not refer to your essay or any part of your essay.



Incorrect examples,

This proves my thesis because...

This quote shows that...

In my next paragraph...

As I stated in my introduction...

Therefore, my essay has proven that...

Transition from one idea to the next

Use transition words or phrases to connect ideas between paragraphs.

For example, Bassanio's friendship with Antonio is one of loyalty, even to the point of death. Nevertheless, Bassanio is committed to Portia as his wife and faces a conflict of interest when Antonio encourages him to give away his ring.

13.5 Structural mistakes

- Always relate your point back to your thesis at the end of a paragraph.
- The risk which Antonio took for Bassanio demonstrates that true friendship is based on supporting each other, no matter the circumstance.
- Always analyze your quotations; NEVER assume your reader will understand. Use the PEE strategy (Point Evidence Explanation)

Summary

A good paragraph has three important parts. A Topic sentence tells about the limited topic of a paragraph and expresses the focusing idea or conveys the main point of the paragraph. It provides the idea to the reader what she or he is going to read after that. Supporting Sentence provide detailed information to the readers from which they become able to understand the topic sentence. The Concluding sentence ends the paragraph and by completing a full circle comes back to that idea which was introduced by the topic sentence. Try to find out the topic addressed by the paragraph. This can be done by looking for the words that are repeated often in the given sentences. The fact of the matter is that although you may have numerous valid facts or descriptions related to your paragraph's core idea, you may lose a reader's attention if your paragraphs are too long. What's more, if all of your paragraphs are long, you may lose opportunities to draw your reader in. Journalists, for example, know that their readers respond better to short paragraphs. News readers generally lose interest with long descriptions and even one-sentence paragraphs are considered both acceptable and impactful. When it comes to maintaining a reader's attention, a good rule of thumb might be to avoid writing more than five or six sentences in a paragraph before finding a logical place to break. That said, remember that the idea behind a paragraph might be short and sweet, or it might merit deeper explanation. There are no strict rules about how many words or lines your paragraphs should be, and there's no need to lock your doors if you occasionally write long or short ones. The grammar police aren't coming for you.

Self Assessment

1. _____ and _____ are required to rearrange the sentences into a meaningful sentence.
 - A. Cohesion, coherence
 - B. Knowledge, confidence
 - C. Intelligence, confidence
 - D. Cohesion, knowledge
2. The sentences should be arranged in such a way that the paragraph is in accordance with the syntaxes and _____.
 - A. vocabulary
 - B. semantics
 - C. intonation
 - D. coherence
3. If a sentence begins with word 'initially', it is most likely to be placed at the _____ of a paragraph.
 - A. end
 - B. middle
 - C. start
 - D. none of these
4. If a sentence begins with pronouns like 'you' or 'I', it is not likely to be placed in the _____ of a paragraph.
 - A. middle
 - B. end
 - C. nowhere
 - D. beginning

5. If a sentence begins with 'a', 'an' or 'the', can it come at the start of a paragraph?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Can't say
 - D. None of these

6. Which of the following is not required to construct a good paragraph?
 - A. Body language
 - B. Topic sentence
 - C. Supporting ideas
 - D. Closing sentence

7. Phrases like 'in addition' are referred to as _____ words.
 - A. clausal
 - B. transition
 - C. key
 - D. causal

8. A working _____ functions like a seed from which your paper and your ideas will grow.
 - A. formula
 - B. conclusion
 - C. thesis
 - D. paraphrase

9. What is called as the 'germination process' in paragraph writing?
 - A. Writing an introduction
 - B. Building body paragraphs
 - C. Giving illustrations
 - D. Conception of ideas

10. Who among the following have devised rules for the length of a paragraph?
 - A. Strunk and White
 - B. Lee and Shaw
 - C. Shelley and Yeats
 - D. None of these

11. Which of the following is not a rule in paragraph writing?
 - A. No use of contractions
 - B. Use of slangs
 - C. Use of third person
 - D. None of these

12. 'Sarah would do anything for Susan because she loves her like a sister.' This above sentence is an example of _____.

- A. Ambiguous noun reference
 B. Ambiguous adjective reference
 C. Ambiguous pronoun reference
 D. None of these
13. The natural genius of the _____ structure was favorable to paragraph writing.
 A. Roman
 B. German
 C. French
 D. Anglo-Saxon
14. The paragraph as we know it comes into something like settled shape in _____.
 A. Sir William Temple
 B. Lord Macaulay Temple
 C. Wordsworth Memorial
 D. None of these
15. 'Hence, I cancelled the meeting.' Where will you place this sentence in a paragraph?
 A. Beginning
 B. End
 C. Middle
 D. None of these

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | A | 2 | B | 3 | C | 4 | D | 5 | A |
| 6 | A | 7 | B | 8 | C | 9 | D | 10 | A |
| 11 | B | 12 | C | 13 | D | 14 | A | 15 | B |

Review Questions

- Define a paragraph.
- What are the characteristics of a good paragraph?
- What are the different ways of organizing a paragraph?
- Discuss the common mistakes in paragraph writing.
- What factors are kept in mind while rearranging sentences to form a paragraph?



Web Links

- <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-perfect-paragraph#quiz-0>
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/paragraph-composition-term-1691565>
- <https://www.time4writing.com/writing-resources/paragraph-writing-secrets/>
- <https://byjus.com/govt-exams/sentence-rearrangement/>

Unit 14: Composition

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Objectives

- understand the rules of letter writing, notice writing and conveying sympathies in English language
- realize the importance of letter writing, notice writing and conveying sympathies
- become well versed with different aspects of letter writing, notice writing and conveying sympathies

Introduction

Letter writing is an essential skill. Despite the prevalence of emails and text messages, everyone has to write letters at some point. Letters of complaint, job applications, thank you letters, letters requesting changes or making suggestions – the list goes on and on. Encouraging students to write letters from an early age will improve their communication, social and handwriting skills, and teach them what they need to know about writing and structuring letters. Letter writing encourages good manners, especially writing 'thank you' letters. Students can write invitations. Students can write letters to friends and relatives. Pen pals are always popular, giving insights into other students' lives, especially overseas. Quite apart from curriculum requirements, being asked to write letters is a task that will appeal to students. The sheer fun of sending and receiving letters appeals to everyone. There is something special about putting letters into the post box and then having letters delivered by the postman... the brightly colored stamps, seeing your name on the envelope and knowing that inside is a long awaited letter from a friend or member of the family. It shows someone cares and has taken the time to sit down and think about you. Handwritten letters have a charm of their own. You can take time to think about what you want to say. You can keep letters to read again and again. You can admire the handwriting; share dreams and thoughts. Responding by letter is very different to the immediacy of a text message or an email. Before the advent of modern technology made communication so easy, the art of writing a letter was considered an important requirement. Even today a letter is an important means of communication in both the workspace as well as our personal lives. So, let us educate ourselves with the nuances of letter writing.

14.1 Letter writing

A letter is a written message that can be handwritten or printed on paper. It is usually sent to the recipient via mail or post in an envelope, although this is not a requirement as such. Any such message that is transferred via post is a letter, a written conversation between two parties. Now that E-mails and texts and other such forms have become the norm for communication, the art of letter writing has taken a backseat. However, even today a lot of our communication, especially

the formal kind, is done via letters. Whether it is a cover letter for a job, or the bank sending you a reminder or a college acceptance letter, letters are still an important mode of communication. That is why it is important that we know the intricacies of letter writing.

Types of letters

Let us first understand that there are broadly two types of letter, namely Formal Letters, and Informal Letters. But then there are also a few types of letters based on their contents, formalities, the purpose of letter writing etc. Let us have a look at the few types of letters.

Formal letters

These letters follow a certain pattern and formality. They are strictly kept professional in nature, and directly address the issues concerned. Any type of business letter or letter to authorities falls within this given category.

Format of a formal letter

Sender's address
Date
Receiver's address
Subject
Salutation
Body of the letter
Complimentary closure
Signature line
Sender's name, Signature and designation

- **Sender's address:** One of the most essential components, also known as the return address. It is the mailing address of the sender. The address and contact details of the person sending the letter are written here.
- **Date:** Immediately after the sender's address comes the date on which the letter is written. Candidates, while writing the letter in the exam, can follow any of the formats to write the dates: DD/MM/YY OR MM/DD/YY.
- **Receiver's address:** The corresponding address, i.e. the address of the recipient of the mail is written here. Candidates must start with the receivers' designation followed by the name of the organization and then the full address, Pin code and country (if the information is known).
- **The subject:** This highlights the aim of writing the letter. The subject of the formal letter should be very brief (6 to 8 words) and must be preceded by the word 'Subject'. The receiver, through the subject, understands the purpose of the letter at a glance.
- **Salutation:** This is a customary greeting to the recipient of the letter. If the name of the recipient is known, the salutation starts with 'Dear' followed by Mr/Mrs/Miss, etc. If the person is unknown or even the gender is not known the recipient can be addressed as Dear Sir/Dear Madam.
- **Body:** The most important element of any letter. It furnishes the reason behind writing the letter. For formal letters, candidates should use short, clear, logical paragraphs to state the subject matter. The body of the letter is generally divided into 3 paragraphs:
 - Introduction that states the main point.
 - Middle part: Supporting points and details to justify the need and importance of letter writing.
 - Conclusion: Request for some action or what is expected.

- **Complimentary Closure:** This is to end the letter with respect in a polite manner such as 'yours faithfully', 'Yours sincerely', etc.
- **Signature Line:** This is the last part where the sender of the letter signs off with his first or last name. The signature line may also include a second line for the title or designation of the sender.



- Use of colloquial words, short forms, slang language and abbreviations are restricted.
- The letter must be to the point, precise and clearly indicating the message.
- The subject line is very important in Formal Letters.

Informal letters

These are personal letters. They need not follow any set pattern or adhere to any formalities. They contain personal information or are a written conversation. Informal letters are generally written to friends, acquaintances, relatives etc.

Format of an Informal letter

Sender's address

Date

Salutation

Body of the letter

Sender's name and signature

- **Address:** The sender's address is important in informal letters. Since informal letters are personal letters and sent to acquaintances or people who are known, the receivers' address is only mentioned on the envelope carrying the letter.
- **Date:** Same as in a formal letter format.
- **Salutation** in informal letters can be Dear/Dearest/ Hi/Hello followed by the first name/nickname of the recipient.
- **Body:** The body in the informal letters can be long and detailed containing diverse feelings, experiences, advice, news, etc.
- **Sender's name and signature** are the same as in the formal letters.



- The subject line is not required in an Informal Letter.
- No prescribed format has to be strictly followed.
- The usage of language must be friendly and casual.
- The letter can have extra information, as per the sender's choice.

Business letters

These letters are written among business correspondents; generally contain commercial information such as quotations, orders, complaints, claims, letters for collections etc. Such letters are always strictly formal and follow a structure and pattern of formalities. A business letter is professional correspondence. That means it follows a set format and a professional, formal tone. You'll use this format frequently throughout your job search, from cover letters to thank you notes. A business letter includes contact information, a salutation, the body of the letter, a complimentary close, and a signature.



- There are rules for everything, from how wide the letter's margins should be to what size font to use.

- In general, it's wise to keep the body of your business letter direct and brief.
- Explain why you are writing in your first paragraph.
- Provide more specifics in the next paragraph.
- Use your closing paragraph to reiterate your reason for writing.
- Thank the recipient for reading, and possibly mention follow-up plans.

Today, a printed letter is usually reserved for important professional communications, such as recommendation letters, job cover letters, resignation letters, legal correspondence, and company communications. Since a letter is a formal mode of communication, you'll want to know how to write one that is professional. Correct formatting is especially important if you're sending a hard copy to the recipient rather than an email because the letter needs to fit the page and look good

Format for a business letter

Date

Contact Information

(The person or company you are writing to)

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, State Zip Code

Greeting

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Use a formal salutation, not a first name, unless you know the person well. If you do not know the person's gender, you can write out their full name. For instance, "Dear Pat Crody" instead of "Dear Mr. Crody" or "Dear Ms. Crody."

Body of Letter

The first paragraph of your letter should provide an introduction as to why you are writing so that your reason for contacting the person is obvious from the beginning. Then, in the following paragraphs, provide specific details about your request or the information you are providing. The last paragraph of your letter should reiterate the reason you are writing and thank the reader for reviewing your request. If appropriate, it should also politely ask for a written response or for the opportunity to arrange a meeting to further discuss your request.

Closing

Best regards,

Signature

Handwritten signature (For a hard copy letter, use black or blue ink to sign the letter.)

Typed Signature

To make sure your letter looks professional, follow these tips:

- Your letter should be simple and focused; make the purpose of your letter clear.
- Left justify your letter.
- Single space your letter and leave a space between each paragraph.
- Use a plain font such as Arial, Times New Roman, Courier New, or Verdana.
- The font size should be 10 or 12 points.
- Leave a blank line after the salutation and before the closing.

- Business letters should always be printed on white bond paper rather than on colored paper or personal stationery.
- Check for Formatting Errors and Typos
- Once you have written your business letter, proofread it and spell check it on the screen.
- Then print it out and read it through at least one more time, checking for any errors or typos.
- This is important as it's often easier to spot errors on a hard copy.
- Reading it out loud is a good way to catch a mistake.
- Be on the lookout for formatting errors, such as two paragraphs that don't have a space in between them or lines that are indented incorrectly.
- Then, before putting your letter in an envelope, sign above your typed name using black or blue ink.
- If you are using Microsoft Word or another word processing program to write your letter, there are templates available that can help you format your letter correctly.

Official letters

These types of letters are written to inform offices, branches, subordinates of official information. It usually relays official information like rules, regulations, procedures, events, or any other such information. Official letters are also formal in nature and follow certain structure and decorum.

Social letters

A personal letter written on the occasion of a special event is known as a social letter. Congratulatory letter, condolence letter, invitation letter etc are all social letters.

Circular letters

A letter that announces information to a large number of people is a circular letter. The same letter is circulated to a large group of people to correspond some important information like a change of address, change in management, the retirement of a partner etc.

Employment letters

Any letters with respect to the employment process, like joining letter, promotion letter, application letter etc.

Letter of Appeal

In detailing something negative happening in your workplace and asking for redress, letters of appeal have to strike a careful balance. It is important to state the problem and the desired response clearly and confidently. At the same time, you have to be sure your criticism is constructive and your tone civil.

Letter of Appeal for School Admission

The Principal,
Modern Public Academy,
Ap #130-1685 Ut Street
Tyler KS 73510

Date: 02-02-2005

Dear Sir,

My name is ABC, and I am employed with the Central Government's financial. I was recently transferred to this city. While making inquiries about a good school for my son, I was referred by almost everyone to your institution. So I approached your admission department. My son appeared for your entrance examination on DD/MM/YY and passed it with 95% marks. However, he was still denied admission. On meeting personally with the Admissions In-Charge Mr. K, I was informed that this was because the school session has already started. I tried to explain Mr. K and would also appeal to you to consider the fact that this situation arose because of my sudden transfer. Also, as his examination marks show, my son will quickly catch up with the curriculum.

Therefore, I request you to kindly consider this as a special case and allow him to be admitted to your school.

Thanks.

Best Regards
Ina Burt



Letter of Apology

Apologies are always hard. Believe it or not, knowing how to write a formal letter can actually make them easier. Get the do's and don'ts of apology letters to help get you through this challenging situation. These include expressing your remorse, taking responsibility, offering amends and vowing to not repeat the mistake.

Apology Letter To Boss For Mistake

To,
Project Head
Research & Development
Ap #345-3847 Metus Road
Independence CO 30135

Subject: Letter with an apology.

Dear Sir/ Ma'am,

I am writing this letter to accept my mistakes (that I have misplaced the samples and didn't remember) and to apologize for being so irresponsible. I will surely change my working strategy and will definitely keep everything noted for future references.

Please forgive me and provide me another chance to prove myself. I shall be very grateful to you for your kindness and consideration.

Thanking you.

Sincerely,
Hiram Mullins
754-6427 Nunc Ave
Kennewick AL 41329
(716) 977-5775

**Letter of Complaint**

Like letters of appeal, letters of complaint have to strike a balance between a firm statement of the problem and laying the groundwork for a constructive response. When writing a letter of complaint, it's important to record the event in a concise manner and address the letter to the correct party.

Professional email

A letter doesn't stop being formal just because it's transmitted electronically. For a professional email, it's important to keep your tone professional and not get overly long. You want to be clear, concise and to the point. However, it's also important to make sure to include the name, greeting, body, and salutation, including your credentials.

Letter of Resignation

Another kind of business communication is the resignation letter. It's important to think of this letter, not as your final message to your current workplace, but as the starting-off point for a new opportunity.

Formal Resignation Letter

[Your Name]
[1234 Street Address]
[City, State, Zip]

[Today's Date]

[Company Name]
[1234 Street Address]
[City, State, Zip]

Dear [Supervisor's Name],

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation from my position as [Position Name] at [Company Name], effective from two weeks from today's date, [Current Date].

I appreciate the opportunities for growth and development you have provided during my tenure. Thank you for your guidance and support.

Please let me know how I can be of help during the transition period. I wish you and the company the very best going forward.

Sincerely,

[Your Signature]
[Your Name]

Cover letter

Along with your resume, your cover letter will often be the first thing a potential employer sees. Make sure to keep your tone light and professional and highlight your experience.

Letter of Recommendation

In many cases, the job hunt is less about what you know than who you know. Learn all the components for how to write a recommendation to increase your chances of success. It's important in a letter of recommendation to highlight the details and verify relevant skills they have for the job.



How to write a recommendation letter?

- Explain your relationship to the applicant
- Evaluate applicant's skills and qualifications
- Include specific examples that illustrate the applicant's strengths
- Summarize why you would recommend the applicant

Tips for writing letters

Now that we have learned the basics of communicating via letters and the types of letters as well, let us focus on some tips for the actual letter writing.

Identify the type of letter

This obviously is the first step of the letter writing process. You must be able to identify the type of letter you are to be writing. This will be dictated by the person the letter is addressed to and the information that will be conveyed through the letter. Suppose you were writing to the principal of your college to ask for leave, this would be a formal letter. But say you were writing to your old college professor catching up after a long time. Then this would be a personal (informal) letter.

Make sure you open and close the letter correctly

Opening a letter in the correct manner is of utmost importance. Formal letters open with a particular structure and greeting that is formal in nature. Informal letters can be addressed to the person's name or any informal greeting as the writer wishes. Even when closing the letter, it must be kept in mind what type of letter is being written. Formal letters end respectfully and impersonally, whereas informal letters may end with a more personal touch.

Establish the main intent of the letter

Once you start writing, make sure to get to the point as soon as possible. Especially in formal letters, it is important to immediately make clear the purpose of the letter.

Be careful of the language

A letter is always supposed to be polite and considerate. Even if it is a complaint letter, the point must be made in a careful and courteous manner. So, it is necessary to use polite expressions and civil language in all types of letters.

Length of the letter

Another important factor to be considered is the length of the letter you are writing. It should be kept in mind that formal letters are generally to the point, precise and short. Lengthy formal letters tend to not have the desired effect on the reader. The length of an informal letter is determined by the message in the letter and the relation to the recipient.



Letters from the famous composer Ludwig Van Beethoven, the author Ernest Hemingway and King Henry VIII still exist today, providing us with glimpses into their personal lives.

Importance of letter writing

Letter Writing Requires Thought

Opposed to texting or even talking on the phone, letter writing allows the writer to have time to think about the content they are writing. One of the best features when it comes to writing a letter is being able to sit down and process your thoughts before actually putting pen to paper. For someone who is not quick on their feet, writing a letter allows ample time to make sure you are saying exactly what you want to say. If you make a mistake, you can scrap my thought and start over again.

Penmanship

Many schools no longer teach penmanship and cursive, so I would argue letter writing is the closest we can get to practice our handwriting. Since we are constantly typing on our cell phones or computers, we very rarely get to write, at least for an extended period of time. It's amazing how out of practice we are when it comes to handwriting, and how few young adults can actually sign their name because of the lack of penmanship classes in schools today. Letter writing is an easy way for us to practice our handwriting, whether in print or cursive.

Tangible communication

Unlike a text message or a phone call, a letter is a tangible piece of communication. We can actually hold on to the pen and paper, and we can read the letters we have received over and over again without the fear of them being deleted or forgotten. We also have more control in how we communicate with our letters.

There's no frustration spurred from autocorrect or accidentally hitting send when we are not finished with our thought.

Countless memories

Letters can be kept forever! One of the favorite activities is reading letters friends and family have sent to you over the years. You might have letters that you have kept since you were a child, and many of them are sentimental because the people who wrote them are no longer living. Grab a pen and some paper and get to writing. Write a note to a friend telling them how much you appreciate them or send a thank you note to someone! The content doesn't have to be fancy; it just has to be from you. Though it may be a lost art, letter writing will never go out of style.

14.2 Notice writing

A notice is a formal document that aims to communicate or display information to the public or a specific group of people. Usually, notices are often displayed in public places, educational institutions, and government offices or even in newspapers. However, advancements in modern technology have enabled notices to move from notice boards to digital platforms such as websites, texts and emails. However, the process of writing a notice has remained relatively unchanged. Apart from the traditional sense, notice is also a concept that has legal implications and is often used in the context of laws (such as legal notice, actual notice, constructive notice etc.) However, we shall explore the concept of "notice" from an educational perspective.

Important points in notice writing

- The title must clearly mention "Notice" in caps
- The name of the organization that issues the notice must be mentioned
- A short heading must also be included.
- It must be indicative of the content to be mentioned
- The date must also be mentioned
- The body of the notice must briefly state the purpose of the notice, its conditions, relevant information or other details.
- Moreover, it must be concise, yet comprehensive.
- The notice must end with the name, sign and designation of the writer/ person-in-charge of issuing the notice.
- Other details – such as the date of the event, place of the event, eligibility, process or other details must not be omitted.
- Ideally, the reader must understand what the notice is about at first glance and then plan a course of action (if required).
- Lastly, proofread the draft for spelling or grammatical mistakes.
- Also, ensure that the contents of the notice are unambiguous.

Format of a notice

Name of the Entity/ Organization Issuing the Notice
NOTICE
Heading of the Notice
Body of the notice
Name
Signature
Designation

For example,

You are the president of the Residents Welfare Association and you are organizing a “Holi Bash” in your area. Draft a notice informing the residents of your area of the same. Include details which you deem necessary for the purpose.

<p>Greenpark Residents Association</p> <p>NOTICE</p> <p>Holi Bash 2021</p> <p>Date: 1-03-2021</p> <p>Greenpark Residents Association is organizing a grand Holi Party in the colony on 28-03-2021. The celebrations will begin by 4 pm onwards. The residents are requested to join the celebrations and make it a grand bash. On an additional note, residents are required to wear masks at all times during the celebrations. We will also ensure all precautionary measures are taken against COVID-19 through thorough sanitization of the venue.</p> <p>John Doe (Signature) President of Residents Welfare Association</p>

14.3 Conveying sympathies

Writing a condolence message can be difficult because of the deep emotion involved. You want to offer comfort and support, but not say something that will further sadden the recipient. Having a few examples of condolences by your side will help you get started. Add your own sense of sincerity thereafter. It's common to feel at a loss for words when someone you know has experienced the loss of a loved one. It can be hard to craft words of condolence that express your thoughts. These example condolence messages will help you express how you feel and bring comfort to those in need.



- Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.
- Words seem inadequate to express our sadness over the passing of ____.
- May the love of those around you help you through the days ahead.
- We are deeply sorry to hear about the passing of ____.
- ____ brought so many gifts to our life. We will never forget ____.
- May you take comfort in knowing an angel is watching over you now.
- Words cannot even begin to express our sorrow. You are in our prayers.

Formal ways of conveying sympathies

- Please accept my deepest condolences on the loss of your beloved _____. You are now and will remain in my thoughts and prayers.
- Hold tight to memories for comfort. Lean on your friends for strength. And always remember how much you're loved.
- Although no words can ease the loss you bear, know you're very close in our thoughts and prayers.
- May the peace that comes from the memories of your love comfort you now and in the days ahead.
- Please accept our heartfelt sympathies for your loss. Our thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time.

Summary

A letter is a written message that can be handwritten or printed on paper. It is usually sent to the recipient via mail or post in an envelope, although this is not a requirement as such. Any such message that is transferred via post is a letter, a written conversation between two parties. Now that E-mails and texts and other such forms have become the norm for communication, the art of letter writing has taken a backseat. However, even today a lot of our communication, especially the formal kind, is done via letters. Whether it is a cover letter for a job, or the bank sending you a reminder or a college acceptance letter, letters are still an important mode of communication. That is why it is important that we know the intricacies of letter writing. A notice is a formal document that aims to communicate or display information to the public or a specific group of people. Usually, notices are often displayed in public places, educational institutions, and government offices or even in newspapers. However, advancements in modern technology have enabled notices to move from notice boards to digital platforms such as websites, texts and emails. Writing a condolence message can be difficult because of the deep emotion involved. You want to offer comfort and support, but not say something that will further sadden the recipient. It can be hard to craft words of condolence that express your thoughts.

Self- Assessment

1. There are broadly _____ types of letters.
 - A. 2
 - B. 4
 - C. 6
 - D. 8

2. Business letters fall under the category of _____ letters.
 - A. informal
 - B. formal
 - C. personal
 - D. none of these

3. Which of the following is a social letter?
 - A. Business letter
 - B. Joining letter
 - C. Condolence letter
 - D. None of these

4. Informal letters are also known as _____ letters.
 - A. Personal
 - B. Social
 - C. Employment
 - D. None of these
5. Which of the following is not included in the format of a formal letter?
 - A. Sender's address
 - B. Best wishes
 - C. Receiver's address
 - D. Subject

-
6. _____ is a customary greeting to the recipient of the letter.
- A. Subject
 - B. Best wishes
 - C. Salutation
 - D. None of these
7. A_____ is a formal document that aims to communicate or display information to the public or a specific group of people.
- A. notice
 - B. telegram
 - C. poster
 - D. none of these
8. Which of the following is not included in the format of a notice?
- A. Name of the organization
 - B. Salutation
 - C. Date
 - D. A short heading
9. How should the notice end?
- A. Name of the person-in-charge
 - B. Signature of the person-in-charge
 - C. Designation of the person-in-charge
 - D. All of these
10. A_____ letter is a type of letter written to address any type of wrong doing.
- A. complaint
 - B. social
 - C. personal
 - D. none of these
11. The tone and content of a complaint letter should be_____.
- A. informal
 - B. formal
 - C. personal
 - D. none of these
12. Which of the following is a complimentary close in a complaint letter?
- A. Yours lovingly
 - B. Dear Sir
 - C. Yours sincerely
 - D. Signature of the complainant
13. The word condolence comes from the Latin word_____.

- A. condolere
- B. condolencere
- C. condolence
- D. none of the above

14. Besides sending a condolence message, which of the following things can you do to convey your sympathies?

- A. Making repeated calls to the bereaved
- B. Sending flowers with a sympathy card
- C. Posting multiple pictures on social media
- D. None of these

15. A letter of _____ is a letter written by one party to another to thank the former at a personal level.

- A. appreciation
- B. condolence
- C. complaint
- D. none of these

Answers for Self Assessment

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | A | 2 | B | 3 | C | 4 | A | 5 | B |
| 6 | C | 7 | A | 8 | B | 9 | D | 10 | A |
| 11 | B | 12 | C | 13 | A | 14 | B | 15 | A |

Review Questions

1. Discuss the tenets of letter writing.
2. Write the format of a business letter.
3. Define a notice.
4. Give examples of condolence messages in a formal situation.
5. What are the characteristics of a good notice?



Further reading

1. Wren & Martin. High School English Grammar and Composition. S. Chand Publishing. 2017
2. Gupta, SC. English Grammar and Composition. Arihant Publications



Web Links

1. <https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/writing/how-to-write-a-letter.html>
2. <https://lettersamples.net/1/types-of-letters-with-examples>
3. <https://www.toppr.com/guides/english/writing/letter-writing/>

4. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/types-of-business-letters>
5. <https://byjus.com/govt-exams/letter-writing-format/><https://www.learnbse.in/notice-writing-class-12/>
6. <https://www.successcds.net/learn-english/writing-skills/notice-writing-format-examples-and-topics.html>

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