BED-E-32/BED-SE-32
Teaching of English

Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University

Block
1

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. R.N. Mehrotra
Former Head and Dean
Department of Education (CIE)
University of Delhi, Delhi

Prof. P.R. Nair
Former Dean
University of Mysore, Mysore

Prof. Lokesh Koul
H.P. University, Shimla

Prof. B.K. Passi
Indore University, Indore

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CASE, M.S.. University, Baroda

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Vice-Chancellor, Osmania University, Hyderabad

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NEHU, Shillong

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YCMOU, Nasik

Dr. K. Ayyakkannu
Director, Correspondence Course
Annamalai University, Annamalai

Prof. A.K. Sharma
Director
NCERT, New Delhi

Prof. V.K. Sabharwal
Deptt. of Education (CIE)
Delhi University, Delhi

Prof. M. Miyan
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Prof. C.L. Anand
Former PVC, IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. M.B. Menon
IGNOU
New Delhi

Prof. L.C. Singh
Formerly Consultant
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. M.C. Sharma
Programme Coordinator-Theory
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Sohanvir S. Chaudhary
Programme Coordinator-Practicals
IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE TEAM

Course Contribution
Ms. Neeti Sharma
University of Delhi, Delhi

Ms. Gopa Biswas
National Open School
New Delhi

Prof. Jacob Tharu
CIEFL, Hyderabad
Hyderabad

Ms. Chetna Bhatt
Guru Harkishan Public School
New Delhi

Content Editing
Prof. V.K. Sabharwal
University of Delhi, Delhi

Ms. Gopa Biswas
National Open School
New Delhi

Dr. Anju Sahgal Gupta
IGNOU
New Delhi

Language Editing
Ms. Poonam Bhushan
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Anju Sahgal Gupta
IGNOU, New Delhi

Course Coordination
Ms. Poonam Bhushan
IGNOU
New Delhi

This Programme has been developed in collaboration with the School of Humanities.

PRODUCTION

Pro V.S. Prasad
Pro-Vice Chancellor & Director I/c
School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

K.G. Sasi Kumar
Section Officer (Publication)
School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE ES-344 TEACHING OF ENGLISH

ES-344   TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Introduction to the Course

This Course on the 'Teaching of English' is basically an attempt to enhance the teachers understanding of their learners, the learning process, the nature and structure of language and the teaching of it in terms of more effective methodologies of teaching and valuation. The assumptions behind developing this course are :

i)   to gain insights about the language learner, not only as a cognitive entity, but as a social being functioning in a multilingual environment;

ii)   to understand the nature of language as a dynamic entity, subject to variation and change;

iii) to critically reflect over their classroom experience and innovation teaching strategies so that they may more effectively teach the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing; and

iv)   to upgrade themselves in the new issues related to the learners, the learning process, classroom management, methodology of teaching and evaluation.

The course takes into consideration the practical problems of the teacher in the classroom while giving it a theoretical perspective.

The   crucial factor in the language learning process is, of course, the learner, and specifically the learner factors that affect second language acquisition. These factors include, aptitude for language, attitude, motivation, age, sex, nature of previous experience of learning and so on. The first Block while keeping the learner centre-stage, discusses the role of the teacher in transmitting effectively interaction leading to language acquisition.

The second Block deals with development of skills in teaching-learning situations. There is an attempt to understand the nature and need of listening and speaking activities for the learners while forging links between curricular and real-life situations for a sustained understanding. There is also an advertent emphasis on developing necessary skills in the teacher so that she can perform her role as a facilitator in such situations. There is a discussion on assessment and evaluation in these two areas while specifying skills to be tested conditions in which the test is taken and also the criteria of assessment of different tasks.

The third Block 'Reading Comprehension' focusses on teaching reading comprehension and attempts to understand the nature of the reading process the characteristics of reading as an activity and thereby highlighting the skills necessary to make reading a meaningful activity.

The last Block namely 'Teaching Writing and Grammar'. The main emphasis in the Block is on two issues namely 'writing' and 'grammar' and the teacher's role in facilitating these in teaching-learning situations. For this, writing is viewed as a process incorporating a conceptual framework rather than as an end product. Both these aspects namely, writing is a process and as an end product envisage different roles for a teacher. In the former case, she is expected to give a constructive feedback and in the latter, award marks/grades so the students know where the stand and what they have achieved. With regard to the other issue, namely teaching grammar it is emphasised that grammar needs to be taught covertly rather than as a set of mechanical rules so that the learner finds grammar learning enjoyable. Evaluation practices that take testing of grammatical competence into account have also discussed.

The Course is an attempt to understand the learner as an individual who brings with him/her preferred learning styles, degree of intelligence, aptitude for language learning and attitude and your role as a teacher to make your learning more learner centred by providing learners with more efficient learning strategies and developing their skills in self-evaluation. The course also aims at enhancing the teachers proficiency in English by giving them a perspective on the organisation of language beyond the level of the sentence.

BLOCK 1 INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Block Introduction

To intervene meaningfully in the process of language learning, we need to understand the nature of language and language acquisition. The first Block 'Instructional Planning in Teaching of English' attempts to take into consideration issues directly related to teaching methodology in English language teaching while focussing on the nature of learners and learner factors.

The first Unit examines the crucial link between the needs/motivations of learning English in our country and its influence on the objectives and nature of English Language teaching in India. It also aims to highlight the role of the teacher in learning situations where access to the language is very limited.

The second unit titled 'Who are the Learners of Language' is not interested in presenting a profile or data of learners in terms of their boys/girls, urban/rural, monolingual/bilingual characteristics but lends an insight into exploring the capabilities and resource that language learners in general have.

The third Unit ' Approaches, Methods and Techniques in English Language Teaching' takes off from the discussion in the first two units, namely on the nature of language and how languages are learnt . Logically, a discussion on different ways of teaching language (the method) is in place here. The presumption here is that a teacher who has a rich repertoire of techniques to teach different skills and sub-skills is more likely to succeed in this objective than one who has a limited number of techniques at command.

The last Unit ' Daily Lesson Plans : Strategies for Classroom Transaction' focusses on the lesson plan as a reflection of the thinking and decisions of a teacher for effective teaching. The unit emphasis the need for planning lessons while being realistic about the possibility of not rigidly sticking to the plans while transacting them in the classroom.

UNIT 1 NATURE, NEED AND OBJECTIVES

Structure

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The nature of teaching-learning of any language in the world will always remain deeply connected to the 'need'/motivations of the learners to acquire that language. For example,

i)   A Bengali child in Hyderabad is likely to pick up Telegu because that is the language spoken by his peers. The child's need to communicate with his peers motivates him to learn the language.

ii)   A child who has Hindi as her mother tongue (MT) may learn English because it is a compulsory part of her school curriculum.

iii)   A street vendor, selling handicrafts on the pavement may pick up enough English to be able to sell his wares to foreign tourists.

In this unit we will attempt to examine the link between the needs/motivations of learning English in our country and its influence on the objectives and nature of English language teaching in India in formal settings such as schools, colleges and other English language teaching institutes.

Language is a means of discovery : discovery of the self and of the world. The human urge to share with others or express one's thoughts and desires drives the learning of a language.

Talking about the 'functions' of language, F. Newmeyer (1983) says :

> Obviously, communication is a function of language – perhaps, according to some plausible but still indevised scale, the most important function. But communication does not appear to be the only function of language. Language is used for thought, for problem solving, for play, for dreaming, for displays of group solidarity, for deception, for certain specialized literary modes such as represented speech....., and possibly to fulfill an instinctive need for symbolic behaviour.... .

As language teachers, it is important for us to remember the natural functions of language. In order to let this functionality remain intact in formal language learning situations, opportunities to 'communicate' or 'use' the language must form the core of any language learning programme. It is thus that teaching of English in India is becoming increasingly 'skill' based in its attempts to make the learner acquire the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) to enable the learner to become an effective and autonomous communicator.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to:

- assess the status of English language both within the formal educational set up (in your state/city) as well as outside the classroom;

- understand the inter-relationship between the status of English within the classroom and the status of English outside the classroom;

- get some insight into the role of the teacher in teaching English in learning situations where access to the language is very limited.

1.3 THE STATUS AND NATURE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDIA

According to the constitution of India, English is a second language. But what is it in fact?

Activity A

Think about how English is used in your state. Does it have the status of a second language or a foreign language?

Educators define a 'foreign' language as one which is studied for the insight it affords into the life of another nation, and a 'second' language, as one which is studied for more utilitarian purposes, because of its direct value to the spearker or writer as a citizen of his own country. This is by no means an absolute distinction (Pride, 1971, 22-23)

To answer the above question you should think about the purposes for which you and the people you know use English.

1. What language is most commonly used in offices?

2. What percentage of people (approximately) read newspapers (a) in English and (b) in the regional language/MT (Mother tongue)?

3. Which language do people generally use in restaurants, at railway booking counters, when shopping, etc.?

4. When people meet people from other states do they use English/Hindi/some other language?

5. What is the language you find used most often in advertisements and hoardings in (a) towns and (b) in cities?

6. What are some of the most popular T.V. programmes? Which language(s) are they in? Has the Cable T.V. become popular among people? If yes, what are the most popular channels? If people watch programmes in English, do they have any difficulty in understanding the language?

7. To what extent does the man in the street use and understand English? For example, if you asked an autorickshaw driver or a shopkeeper in your town a question in English would he be able to understand it easily/with difficulty/not at all? Would he be able to answer in English? Generally/occasionally/not at all?

Answers to these questions will help you to build up a picture of what the status of English is in your state, its importance, and normally, then the extent to which its development is possible.

The question of the status of English in India is important if you want to think about your teaching situations 'effectively' because your language teaching situation cannot be separated from the language learning environment outside the classroom. We need to consider the language environment if we are desirous of making a change in the classroom.

Discussion

Be realistic about the general English learning environment faced by your learners, and then you will find your teaching of English will be much more effective. You should think of using all your resources, and supplementing these resources, if necessary.

For example, you may make effective use of newspaper clippings, magazine advertisements official forms (rail reservation form, money order form, telegram form), billboard messages to motivate the learners to use English in authentic/real life situations.

The nature of English language teaching in India is an outcome of the status of English within the formal learning curriculum as well as its presence in the real world outside. Though English does not have a uniform status in various parts of our country the following are some of the common 'roles' or functional capacities in which 'English' is present in India:

English is the associate official language in our country. It is taught as a part of school curriculum for 6 to 12 years, either as a subject or both as a subject and a medium of instruction.

In context of a global society and especially since the opening of the Indian markets to foreign investment, competence in the use of English has become the passport not only to higher educational opportunities but also to better economic gains. As a library language it wields considerable presence in the arena of higher education. It is thus that in school the emphasis has shifted from learning the content of the English lessons to trying to acquire the language skills which will enable the learners to 'use' the language.

1.3.1   The Status of English within the Formal Instruction System

In Activity A, you examined the status of English in your state; now let us examine the status of English language which is set within a formal instruction system. However, before examining a formal language learning situation, let us attempt to look at an informal language learning situation. An informal language learning situation is one when language is not taught or learnt for grammar but for communication. For example, a young child learns to use language functionally, i.e., to get things done or to express himself/herself. This expression could be transactional or self-expressive in nature. Through play and chat, which constitute easy, spontaneous use of language, the child develops language skills. Thus by using language, the child develops language skills, i.e., he/she learns to speak, read, listen, write effectively and independently.

The formal instructional system is, however, very different. Here we are referring to organized learning on a large scale, with the instructional system providing certification at the end of a learning programme.

We must examine carefully the differences in the teaching and learning of languages in formal and informal situations. Early language learning involves learning of the MT (mother tongue) or L1 (first language). Learning English for most Indians is learning a second language (L2)

	Informal Language Learning	Formal Language Learning
1. Language taught	MT, L1	L2, L3, etc. from class I (English medium)
2. Age	From birth onwards, in informal situations of language learning	From class III, IV, V,VI (vernacular language medium)
3. Use of Language	Functional	More formal language descriptions, formal grammar learnt
4. Treatment of errors	Parents repeat, encourage and correct	Teacher may comment, focus on errors or sometimes reprimand
5. Exposure	Oral	Predominantly in the written form

However, these 'characteristics' of formal and informal language learning situations should not be seen as exclusive to each other. Modern language learning pedagogy, in fact, attempts to organise second language learning situations as closely as possible to its language acquisition so that the second language is learnt as 'naturally' as possible and enables the learner to become an independent user of it.

9

Activity B

What is the status of English in your state in the formal language situations? Answer some of the questions below and see if you can get a picture.

a) What is the pass mark in your school/college? Is English medium compulsory at college?

b) Are other subjects taught in English? If not, in which class does English instruction begin?

c) What does the language exam test, competence of language skills (reading, speaking, writing, listening) or content of the language text (If so, in what percentage)?

d) What do you teach while teaching a language, say English? Grammar or the use of language or something else?

e) Do you let your students make errors? How do you deal with their errors?

f) What percentage of your learners show interest in using English within/outside the classroom?

g) What percentage of students in your class have access to English in the speech communities of their home?

Discussion

Answer these questions one by one. These answers will give you a picture about the needs and objectives of teaching English within your classroom. If you gear your teaching to the actual needs of your learners, they would be far more motivated to learn the language. A need assessment of your learners may be undertaken by finding out, where and when your learners use/would like to 'use' English. Questionaire I given at the end of this unit can help you undertake this activity. This kind of assessment will not only help you utilize all possible resources to facilitate language learning but also enable you to pitch your classroom activities at the appropriate level, keeping in mind the English language competence of your learners and the role that it plays in their lives.

It has been very often seen that grammar teaching or even knowing grammar rules need not lead to correct language use. This is so because an average Indian learner does not get enough exposure to English to internalise its rules as a native speaker would.

In this kind of language learning environment where exposure to the target language is very limited (Acquisition-poor environment) the language class needs to provide opportunities to the learners to use/experiment with the language. The learners should not be spoon-fed answers to exercises at the end of each lesson. They should be allowed to struggle to express themselves, so that they learn to use the language. They should be encouraged to speak to each other and the teacher in English so that the sense of hesitation and anxiety that they feel in using the language gradually disappears. Each and every error of the learner need not be corrected. The habit of peer or self correction should be inculcated so that the learners can monitor and help each other correct their use of English.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Does the language teacher need to assess the need(s) of the language learners to learn the language? Give reasons for your answer.

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1.4 THE NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING ENGLISH

n a vast and heterogeneous society like ours, the needs of the learners for learning English ill not be uniform.

s teachers we should be able to identify the requirements of various groups of students elated to the English language precisely and try to provide for each such group the pattern of ourses which will be relevant to the needs of the learners (Verma, 1994, 98-99).

ssessment of the English language needs of the learners when translated into the goals/ bjectives of the language programme would make the language learning situation - sensitive nd responsive to the differences in the speech communities of the learners. This would ·cilitate language learning by ensuring sustained learner interest and a high degree of otivation.

espite the heterogeneity of English language learning situations, the English learning nvironments may be classified into two categories

) **Acquisition-rich environments** are language learning environments where besides the rmal language learning in the classroom, the learner has access to English in the speech ommunity of his/her home and immediate neighbourhood especially peer group.

˙or example for a young child in an urban, educated upper middle class home, the preferred ·nguage of communication at home with parents and siblings may be English. In this nvironment, the chances that the child acquires fluent command over English are far higher ecause the learning of English is not restricted to the classroom/school. Opportunities for iewing various TV programmes and movies in English are also a part of acquisition-rich nvironments.

his, however, is an exception and not the normal situation in the context of English language ·arning in India.

) **Acquisition-poor environments** are those language learning environments where exposure to e target language (here English) is limited to the classroom and the language is absent in the eech community of the learner's home or his immediate neighbourhood especially peer group. such an environment opportunities of learning the language are severely limited and occur only the formal educational setting. For example, for a child from a lower middle class background in ur country, exposure to English is restricted to the English textbook. This makes the learning of ιe language far more difficult. Majority of English learning situations in India are of this kind. In ese situations the teacher needs to be specially sensitive to the motivation/need of the learners for arning the language so that he/she may adapt the materials and organise the learning environment fulfill the learners' needs.

cite an example, for a learner enrolled in an English language programme at the university, motivation for learning English will be much higher if the course concentrates on the teaching ˙ study skills, reading, comprehension techniques, note-making, writing term-papers, etc., cause these are the skills that a university graduate requires.

a country like ours where the learners differ considerably with reference to their needs for arning English as well as their competence in the language, an omnibus (i.e. broad-based clusive) curriculum cannot be relevant. There is a need not only to develop different English arning modules keeping in mind the vast variety of learner needs, but also to train the language acher to adapt the given material. The teacher should also attempt to use the socio-cultural ilieu of the learner as a storehouse of materials and utilize it optimally for language learning. r example

to practice adjectives the teacher may ask the learners to gather familiar objects around their houses bring them to class and describe them.

learners may be taught how to give direction by drawing up a map from school to their homes and telling their peers how to get there.

familiar and simple cooking recipes may be utilized to develop the skill of giving instructions.

11

1.4.1 Why do we Teach English?

Activity C: Let us examine our teaching priorities.

1. Do we teach English so that students can pass examinations based upon the content of the textbook(s)?

2. Do we view English as a medium for mastering language skills?

Discussion

In case you say that your objective is (1) you are addressing only short-term goals an therefore being unfair to the learners. Though the immediate need of passing the exams is being fulfilled, the learner is not being trained to become an autonomous user of language

Objective (2) helps the learners acquire the skills of the language and any meaningful languag programme must prepare the learners to use the language as a medium for communication and not as a content based subject. Also, fulfilment of objective (2) automatically ensure success at objective (1), i.e. if the learners develop language skills they are sure to succeed ir the examinations.

In our country too, we can see a shift from content-based teaching to skill-based teaching ir schools where interactive learning materials are in use. These materials focus on developin various language skills in English. However, these efforts need to be stepped-up. They shoulc also be extended to lower level, i.e. the elementary, and the primary.

1.4.2 How do we Teach English?

Language skills can be developed in the learners by providing them opportunities for activel processing and using the language on their own. The focus must be on the learner – how ofter and how well he/she can use English. The teacher needs to function as an organizer and a facilitato in the classroom and provide the learners opportunities for language use. For example :

i) For a group of mother tongue medium beginner level learners the teacher may point ou and name in English the various objects in the environment. She may later ask the learner: to name a few objects in English.

ii) The teacher may demonstrate how to greet others and introduce oneself and ask each o the learners to do this one by one. In this way the teacher can help the learners develo oral skills in an authentic communicative context.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2. What is the link between need for learning a language and its teaching objectives. Explain with an example.

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

The nature of English language teaching in India is an outcome of the status of English within the formal learning curriculum as well as its presence and role in the real world outside. The following are some of the common functional capacities in which English is present in India:

— as an associate official language;

— as a library language;

— as a passport to higher educational opportunities and better economic gains; and

— as a part of the school curriculum for 6 to 12 years.

Language teaching programmes must be oriented towards catering to the needs of the learners so that in an acquisition-poor environment, the learning of English is facilitated by the intrinsic motivation and interest of the learners. Any language programme must aim at making the learner an autonomous and efficient user of the language. The teacher can facilitate this process by providing opportunities for active language-use to the learners.

1.6 KEY WORDS

foreign language	:	a foreign language is one which is studied for the insight it affords into the life of another nation (Pride, 1971).
second language	:	a second language is a language other than one's first language. It is learnt for utilitarian reasons because of its direct value to the speaker or writer as a citizen of his own country (Pride, 1971).
acquisition-poor environment	:	a language learning environment where access to the language is restricted to the classroom, thus making acquisition of a specific language difficult.
acquisition-rich environment	:	a language learning environment, where besides formal language learning in the classroom, the learner has access to the target language in the speech community of his home, making acquisition easier.
content-based teaching	:	a language learning programme where the learners are taught and examined on the content of the textbook(s).
skill-based teaching	:	a language learning programme where the learners are given opportunity to develop their language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and examined in terms of their competence in these skills.

1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The language teacher not only needs to assess the need of the language learners to learn the language but also needs to evaluate their existing competence in the target language in order to be able to organize the language learning activities and materials to fulfil these needs. If these needs are catered to, the learners will be extremely motivated to learn the language.

2. The objectives of a language learning programme should emerge out of the need(s) to learn that language. For example, a senior secondary learner from a vernacular medium school, who plans to enrol in an English medium bachelor's degree programme in Commerce will need to be familiar with the English terms used in Commerce. He/she will also need to be trained to acquire study skills like note-making, reading comprehension techniques, etc.

If a learner needs to learn English only because it is a compulsory part of the school curriculum and if the evaluation pattern in a school concentrates primarily on writing and reading, the teaching of these skills will gain importance over the other two (especially speaking). So the learner may not make sustained effort to speak the language.

Questionnaires - 1

NAME: ....

AGE: ....

CLASS: ....

ADDRESS: ....

MOTHER'S PROFESSION: ....

FATHER'S PROFESSION: ....

A. When do you use English?	Tickmark in the appropriate column		
1. In the Classroom :	Many Times	Sometimes	Never
a) When talking to friends			
b) When talking to the teacher			
c) During the English period			
2. At Home :			
a) When talking to your brother or sister			
b) When talking to friends			
c) When talking to guests			
d) When talking to your mother			
e) When talking to your father			
f) When talking to neighbours		.	
3. When talking to the shopkeeper			
4. When asking for information at the Bank or Post Office, etc.			

B. Can you read, speak or write any other language besides Hindi and English?

Answer : ....

C. Which language do you use the most?

i) At home..

ii) In school...

iii) With friends... .

D. Which books and magazines do you read?

i) In Hindi   ii) In English

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E. Which newspaper(s) do you read?

Tickmark in the appropriate column		
Everyday	Sometimes	Week ends

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F. Which T.V. programmes do you watch?

i) In Hindi   ii) In English

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1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 2 WHO ARE THE LEARNERS OF LANGUAGE?

Structure

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with **learners of language**. Before we enter into a serious discussion of the teaching of languages, we need to try and understand some things about learners: their capabilities and motives and expectations. When we think of education and instruction and especially of designing syllabuses and training teachers, we have an image of learners, especially children in our minds. This image tends to present them as passive **receivers** of whatever we provide as **inputs** through lessons and courses. Psychologists have conducted hundreds of experiments (using both humans and animals as 'subjects') and have discovered or formulated various general 'laws' of learning. Curriculum specialists have tried to apply these laws or principles to 'design' an effective curriculum – one that is likely to be successful and efficient. The most important consideration in the success of a curriculum is of course whether the learners (or pupils) have learnt all or most of whatever they were **supposed to learn**.

As we will see later in this unit, a great deal of learning takes place even without any planned and deliberate teaching. This learning includes not only purely physical activity like walking or swimming or riding a bicycle, but also matters which involve the 'mind'.

The learning of the first language without much obvious evidence of 'teaching', by nearly every young child in every human community, is perhaps the best example of this.

The knowledge that societies have accumulated and which various adults (specialists) have mastered needs to be passed on to the young. Children are not born with this knowledge. Most of it has to be passed on through the process of education in which this knowledge is packaged in the form of school 'subjects'. And most school subjects have to be **taught** by teachers in the formal school, at least to begin with, and usually for many years. **Language**, especially the mother tongue, is a striking exception to this general rule. As already mentioned, children learn to speak their mother tongue (at least) long before they enter formal school. Also, many persons who have dropped out of school, and even those who have never been to school at all, are quite fluent users of the language (sometimes languages) of their particular communities. Of course such people may not be able to read and write (i.e. handle the **written** form of the language); but they have mastered most of the complex grammar, an extended vocabulary, and important aspects of organization, and even style of the language they speak.

The principle that emerges from these facts is that the **learning of the languages commonly spoken in the community** in which individuals live is a **much wider process** than what is prescribed and taught in school or college. Since there is no clearly identifiable agency 'outside' the school that is doing any 'teaching' of language, we must conclude that human learners of language have some **special capacity to learn language**.

Beginning with this first unit, we will try to understand something about this powerful capacity to learn language that seems to be a part of human nature. We will focus on learners of language – their abilities, their styles of learning, their sources of motivation, etc. We should be able to use these ideas in the 'language syllabus design and language teaching methodology' we want to formulate. Language instruction can be made highly effective if we are able to tap the rich resource represented by the human learner's tremendous capacity to learn language, and build on it.

This unit has the question 'Who are learners of language?' as its title. We are not interested here in factual information of the type that goes into individual bio-data sheets or survey reports – boys/girls, urban/rural, English medium/Regional language medium, monolingual/bilingual and so on. Such characteristics are of course important, especially when we are planning instruction for particular target groups. Here we are more interested in the capabilities and resources that language learners in general have. We shall begin by reviewing the role of language in human affairs and go on to look at the learning resources that members of the human society have.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

Our aim in this unit is to give you insights about:

● the central role of language in human society;

● the role of the learner's environment in the learning process;

● the role of different contexts and settings for human learning;

● different types of language learners and their personal attributes affecting language acquisition;

● the attributes of learners can be exploited for designing the curriculum as well as evolving certain teaching strategies.

2.3 THE CENTRAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN HUMAN SOCIETY

The use of language as the primary means of communication is one of the defining characteristics of the human species. Many animal species also use signs of various types to communicate or convey information (see unit 5 of this course). But these sign systems are very simple and inflexible. They are very far removed from the **complexity** and **versatility** and **creativity** that goes with human or natural languages. The primary position of language

17

(especially speech) in the life of mankind is highlighted by the expression 'talking animal' that is sometimes used to describe humans.

This central role of communication through natural language in human social life is made possible by the fact that all human individuals are able to handle or operate the language (or languages) of their societies. This is so obvious that we simply take it for granted. But it is useful to note that there is an important principle here. Nearly everyone in any society is a competent and effective language user. This applies to all normal human beings. Only that tiny proportion of the population of any country with major physiological handicaps (brain damage, mental retardation, deafness and dumbness) remain unable to use language. The learning of the mother tongue or first language (L1) is a slow and long drawn-out process. It is difficult to say when a person has fully mastered his/her L1 and so has finished learning it. Further, many people learn more than one language. This is especially true of multilingual societies like ours; and with modern communication breaking down national/linguistic boundaries, learning foreign languages is also becoming increasingly common. These additional languages too are learned slowly (even if there is a crash course) and like the L1, complete mastery is never attained. Thus it is possible to say that for practical purposes, everyone is a language learner.

2.3.1 Socialisation : The Learning of Language and Culture

The growth and developement of the human child into an adolescent and later an adult involves two parallel and interlinked processes. One is physiological growth or maturation. This is supported mainly by nutrition and exercise (the ingredients of good health) and protection from physical harm. The second and more complex process is the psychological growth of the individual. This is an important aspect of social development: the process whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes an independent and actively participating member of his/her community. A functioning member of human society is an individual who is able to interact and communicate effectively with others – both directly with individuals, and more indirectly with the community in general. This is made possible by the use of language. Thus one major requirement that must be met as the child grows is the learning of the L1. A member of society is also a **person** – an individual with a unique combination of characteristics that make up his/her personality. Among these characteristics are personality traits, interests, abilities and talents. (Remember that we often refer to a small baby as 'it' even when we know whether it is a boy or a girl. This is because we have not yet begun to 'see' this child as a person).

The long and slow process of psychological and social development of the child is called **socialization**. Man is often described as a social animal. One very obvious reason for this is that human beings usually live together in families and wider communities. But this is not always true. Remember here that in the folklore of most communities there are important characters who are wanderers and hermits and outcastes. These are individuals who do not have any link with or claim to belong to a particular community. And we find such people in modern societies too. The more important and interesting aspect of man's social nature is related to how it is formed. An individual's personality and behaviour patterns are determined to a large extent by the **culture** in which his/her early socialization took place. The human infant is born with the **potential** for developing in a vast number of different ways. The culture into which s/he is born functions as an environment which provides the **opportunity and support** for learning various things associated with being a person and member of society. At the same time it restricts what is learnt by the child. Thus the language the child is exposed to in the home and neighbourhood becomes the L1, and the culture of that particular community is what the child learns and accepts as his/her own. Thus the language and culture of the community in which socialization takes place, influences the social nature and identity of the individual in important ways. A child has very little choice in these matters. It is only after we have become socialized and learnt how to live in society (how to operate the system, in other words) that we can begin to rebel or become reformers.

A remarkable feature of the process of learning the L1 is that it occurs quite naturally and is managed with a high level of effectiveness. This strikes us as truly amazing when we note that this learning of language takes place without any conscious planning and effort going into teaching" it. Various persons around the child – both adults and other children – help and support this L1 acquisition process, but there is no systematic teaching. We can state another principle now. Every child learns to speak his/her L1 quite effectively, even without planned and organised teaching. Of course after the child goes to school, a great deal more learning

takes place under 'instruction', especially reading and writing. But this curriculum-based teaching is based on what was learnt earlier through the natural process of socialization. We should also remember here that not everyone goes to school, and of those who do start, quite a few do not stay there more than a few years. Even so, such persons with little or no schooling are quite effective users of the spoken form of their L1. It is worth noting here that is many societies, and this is especially true of all parts of India, children grow up in communities where more than one language is commonly spoken.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. a) The two processes in the growth and development of a child into an adult are:

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   b) The process of socialisation involves:

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2. What is L1? How is it 'learnt' by a child?

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2.4 DIFFERENT CONTEXTS AND SETTINGS FOR HUMAN LEARNING

The total process of socialization as mentioned above is very long-drawn-out and slow, and it covers a complex and comprehensive set of activities. Through these activities the culture of the society — customs, values, attitudes, language(s), folklore, knowledge and skills/technology, etc. — is passed on to each new generation. These ongoing and naturally occurring activities form the most common context for human learning. Children are involved in these activities, but many of them are not specially designed for children - young children and teenagers and adults all take part. These largely informal social activities can be contrasted with the more planned and organized operations associated with **schooling or formal education.**

Schooling, especially because it is spread out over many years is, of course. a part of the broader process of socialisation. The overall purpose and effect of both are virtually the same. But the organized and consciously implemented activities of schooling can be placed in a separate category because of certain special characteristics they have. One obvious feature of schooling is that a few specially designated persons function as **teachers** and children (**learners**) go to specially set up places called **the classroom** where teaching-learning is expected to take place. In the context of school, children have a special opportunity (and responsibility) to learn. They are expected to pay attention and be serious and try hard and so on. This school-related image of the child is indicated by the term **pupil**. This is a useful label, and we shall use it here to distinguish between two roles that children usually have. They are always 'learners' in general because they are involved in the processes of socialisation. Sometimes they are also 'pupils'- who are learning from teachers in class.

A second important aspect of schooling is that only some specific types of knowledge and skill (selected from the total cultural heritage of the society) are covered in the programme of instruction followed there. These selected areas constitute the **curriculum**. Certain other types of activity are treated as extra-curricular. As we all know, quite often these are things that

19

of activity are treated as extra-curricular. As we all know, quite often these are things that children find more meaningful and interesting than what is in the curriculum or 'portions to be covered'. The formality of schooling requires that what is in the syllabus/timetable has to be 'done' on a given day, not what seems more interesting and enjoyable for the pupils. And then there are many things which are always treated as **outside** the concerns of the school. Learning in these areas is taken care of by the agencies of socialization, or special school - like institutions.

Schools and colleges (especially their classroom and laboratories) represent a very highly structured formal context for learning. There are other contexts where the degree of organization and formality is lower. We find these in the extra-curricular activities of school and in similar activities related to the home and neighbourhood. Some examples are: sports and games, cultural programmes, guides and scouts activities, excursions, visits to museums and exhibitions. These activities are seen as broadly educative: there is the hope that children will benefit (learn) in various ways. But there is not a deliberate plan to 'teach' (and test) following a syllabus, as in the classroom setting. Further, these activities are not compulsory. Children's interests are taken into account.

There is a third type of context we are all familiar with, where there is conscious effort to learn and something we would call 'instruction' is taking place, but the 'arrangement' are highly informal. A family friend (not a professional) functioning as a music teacher or sports coach or driving instructor would come under this category. What is significant is that someone with more skill or knowledge is trying consciously to help and guide a learner with less ability initially to gain more of it, with the cooperation of this learner. An older child trying to 'teach' a younger one how to fly a kite, or ride a bicycle or to play cards would be good examples of this type of highly informal but purposeful and effortful setting
for learning. The individual practising something (cycling, singing, reciting) or doing home-work or revising for a test, is also learning in this informal but planned and serious manner.

We have briefly looked at the variety of contexts and settings in which learning takes place. What is of interest is that learning seems to occur quite successfully in all of them. We have another principle to record now. Human learning takes place in a wide variety of ways. (There does not seem to be any basis for saying there is a best context and method or even that some are better than others). Making fine distinctions between schooling and socialization, or between formal and informal settings is not of any importance in itself. These categories were used as a means of clarifying some ideas in the discussion above. In fact, as our experience tells us, any real or natural learning situation will have some formal and some informal aspects. We need not worry about placing them neatly into one category or the other.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. Human learning takes place in a wide variety of ways.
Discuss three contexts in which children formally learn certain skills.

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2.4.1   The Versatility of the Human Learner : The Crucial Role of Learning in Development

One of the points that came up in our earlier discussion was that the child is born with a potential to learn. The environment — representing **opportunity to learn** — plays an important role in determining how this potential is fulfilled. The best example of this is how the linguistic environment of the child determines which one (among the hundreds and thousands of languages this or any child could learn) comes to play the role of the L1. It is possible to respond to this pessimistically by saying that we are victims of fate, and that there is no real human freedom. But surely the more interesting and exciting principle we find here is that human nature is highly plastic and adaptable, and not pre-determined as is in the case with animals. Most animal behaviour is instinctive or biologically pre-determined. All members of a species will show the same patterns of behaviour if development has been normal. For human beings, on the other hand, variability and individual differences in psychological and social behaviour are the norm. We are born with potential which develops in widely differing ways for each of us. It is only at the physical or physiological level that behaviour patterns are essentially alike. Nearly all that goes into our human nature - ideas, beliefs, attitudes, likes and dislikes, hopes, fears, mental and physical abilities, and so on - is the result of learning in interaction with the environment.

A very important point here is that the environment that helps to shape the nature of the person is not fixed. Both the physical and the social environment of an individual can and does change. A young child's family can move from one linguistic community to another, or from living as a small single child family into a large joint family set up, or from a small village to a large impersonal urban centre. The possibilities are virtually infinite and many actual changes do keep occurring. The young child especially has to be able to adjust - which means learn - to new physical and social surroundings. Thus the important principle relating to the environment and learning is that humans have a tremendous capacity to learn and keep learning. This versality and flexibility is crucial for our survival in drastically changing environments. If we relied largely on fixed and instinctive behaviour patterns we would be unable to cope with new surroundings by changing our behaviour. This is why the plasticity of human nature is so important. It is the essential foundation on which the diversity and richness of what we call human civilization has developed. The capacity to learn mentioned above is also very effectively applied or utilized by nearly all human beings of all ages. (We are not only talking here of a vague hope like "A large country like India has the potential to win 20 gold medals at the Olympics".)

As we look at language teaching more closely in later units of the course, we will find many references to the problems and difficulties that learners have, and the challenges these pose for teachers and curriculum developers. It might be useful then to recall this powerful idea : learning is going on all the time and in various ways and for most learners it is quite successful.

2.4.2   The Learner's Role in Learning : Personal but not Fixed Characteristics

Two very general principles which emerge from the earlier discussion are that human learning is very effective and that learning is based on interaction with the environment. This might lead us to think that learning is entirely managed or controlled from the 'outside'; or, in other words, that nearly anything can be taught to human beings by providing the necessary 'teaching inputs'. These inputs are the models for imitation, the illustrations and demonstrations, the explanations, etc. that the typical teacher provides to a class of pupils. But such a view of learning ('controlled from outside') would be quite inaccurate. Learning is NOT simply a matter of absorbing what is made available as inputs, like a sponge soaking up water. The learner is a key factor in determining what is learned, how it is learned and how fast. There are various principles or laws which have been found to apply to the processes of learning. Here we shall just note that various characteristics of the learner will influence what and how he or she learns in a given learning situation or when faced with a set of inputs. Every teacher finds out very soon that this is true. When something is taught or presented to a class, all the pupils do not 'take it in' or learn it in the same way or to the same extent. The nature of the individual pupil seem to be an important factor. Another general fact about learning (that teachers know only too well) is that 'what is learned' is not quite the same as 'what is taught'. Thus learning is strongly influenced by the unique individual characteristics of the learner. This applies both to informal learning and to formal learning. The implications of this 'learner factor' is that we

21

cannot understand the process of learning without a fairly adequate picture of the individual learner.

In other words, we cannot hope to make planned instruction very effective if we do not match it with the pupil's capacity to cope with the new 'item' of learning and his/her receptivity to it. We shall use the term **readiness** for specific new learning here to denote this combination of ability and attitude that the learner brings to each new learning situation. Judging the readiness of pupils with sensitivity and tailoring instruction to fit well with it constitutes the central challenge in syllabus construction and in teaching.

A very important feature of this 'learner factor' is that it is based on the very large store or reserve of **learnt** abilities and attitudes and interests that every learner has. We are not dealing here with the general and stable characteristics of individuals that we are more familiar with, such as body build, general health and mental ability (intelligence). These characteristics do affect learning, but only in a general and predictable way. Our concern here is not these features, but knowledge, abilities and attitudes and interests that have developed and continue to be developed **as a result of exposure to the environment and the learning this generates.** The large and constantly expanding store of such items represent a learner's special resources - or readiness - for new learning in particular areas.

Sometimes, when a new topic is the focus of learning, there might be in the learner's background store, a small cluster of specific items of knowledge and skill, and high interest, which can be of help and provide a boost to learning in this particular area. For example, a child who is exposed to the tools and procedures of carpentry in the home or neighbourhood might pick up some highly specific knowledge about sizes and shapes and also develop an interest in this broad area. Some time later when certain topics in geometry are being taken up in class, this child will be a 'good' learner even if s/he is generally 'weak' in subjects like algebra and physics. Here we can say the child's **specific readiness** for the topics in geometry have acted as a special advantage and given the learning process a boost.

It is easy to see that this can happen in relation to a wide range of areas in which there is a learning requirement. Thus we can think in terms of a large variety of possible specific readiness. The store or reservoir of abilities and attitudes which is the basis of readiness is built up slowly and steadily as exposure to the environment leads to learning. Its size and richness is not linked to general characteristics like intelligence in any important way. In fact the resource represented by readiness can help a learner be quite successful in learning at least in some areas, even when his/her general progress at studies not very good.

A word of caution is necessary here. The learner's past experiences (which make up the store we have talked about) will not necessarily be an advantage in every case. Sometimes there may be nothing that is of any special help to make a given item easier to learn. Sometimes, the individual's background might even be a disadvantage. This happens when an individual lacks some specific item of knowledge or skill which individuals of that age or in that class are assumed to have. Clearly this is a matter of chance to a large extent, as it is the exposure or opportunity to learn that is the cause of the deficiency. If an individual does not know something many others happen to know, this cannot be treated as a reliable indication of his/her being unintelligent or a poor learner.

There is a second way in which the learner's background store can have a negative influence. This is through the development of a negative attitude (for example, a lack of interest) towards certain activities or topics as a result of 'unhappy' earlier experiences. Many of us would know of cases where an individual's interest in something has been 'killed' by an uninspiring or insensitive teacher, perhaps even a harsh and mean one. The general principle here too is that the individual's personal pattern of learnt knowledge and attitudes can affect future learning. On the whole however, we can say that the variety of specific elements that go into the store of resources of each individual is more helpful and advantageous than harmful, as a factor in the learning process.

To sum up, the learner factor we have discussed above is a highly flexible and changing one. It is personal, but it is only marginally related to stable qualities like intelligence and personality type. (These qualities appear to be strongly influenced by heredity, and so are considered to be relatively unchanging). What matters most as far as effect on learning is concerned is the wide (and ever-increasing) range of items — abilities and attitudes — that have been learnt. This influence of past learning on new learning is a principle that helps us to understand why human learners are so versatile. In many new and challenging situations, the learning of each

individual is supported by the store of resources built up in the past, not only by the 'inputs' provided. An important consequence of this is that an individual's learning pattern is highly personalized, but it is also dynamic as the resources for learning are constantly developing. This is something we need to remember while planning a curriculum.

Check Your Progess

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4. 'What is learned' is not quite the same as 'what is taught'. As a teacher, what are the learner factors that you notice that influence learning?

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5. What is 'readiness'? What are the ways in which this factor can be used effectively by the teacher in the learning process?

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6. How are the learner's past experiences both advantageous as well as disadvantageous to the learning process?

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2.5 DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNERS

As we have noted earlier many learners of language are not in school or college. So it is not very useful to categorize them mainly in terms of their class or level in the formal system of education. Rather than this administrative aspect, features which can directly affect their attitude and motivation are more relevant. These are listed below.

a) Stage of development in mastering the language

There can be young learners who are quite advanced or skilled, and older learners who are only beginners. Learning a language is a slow and long-drawn-out process. Learners can be at many different stages of progress towards high proficiency or mastery. Obviously the way of learning, the need for teacher support, the capacity and willingness to do certain tasks will vary with the stage of progress. So a broad category like 'young learners' can include a variety of types based on how far they have progressed.

b) The degrees of dependence on externally planned instruction

The general (formal vs. informal) context of learning a language is another factor that has a strong influence on the learner's motivation and involvement. When language is being learnt informally (especially through the process of socialisation) the learners may not even be aware that s/he is 'learning' the language. This is because the focus of attention when there is interaction in natural or real-life situations is **communication** — sending and receiving messages by **using language.** Conscious attention to learning the 'rules' of language is not usual or typical here. As we saw in Unit 1, this mode of language learning is very effective. But, we are forced to admit, many procedures and principles that we associate with 'learning in class' do not seem to be relevant or make much sense in this natural setting. The fact that informal learning is taking place is important when we are considering the teaching of the L1 (or a locally used L2). Alongside the classroom based learning of language, the natural processes of using it are also going on. The formal syllabus usually 'recognizes' only what goes on in class. But learners, especially younger ones, are very unlikely to keep 'language use' in watertight compartments as the saying goes. As we will see in Course 3, the teacher cannot afford to ignore what the learner-user is doing happily and successfully outside the class. The learner's contact with real and meaningful use of the target language (L1 or L2) represents a valuable opportunity that should be exploited imaginatively by the teacher.

c) Degree of compulsion in the study of language

Let us consider planned and formal instruction in a target language. This is what we have described earlier as the context for studying in the role of a pupil. Two broad institutional contexts are possible. In the first case, the student is taking a prescribed language course because it is part of the formal syllabus requirements for the matriculation or intermediate certificate. Here, final examination marks can become very important to the student, and the examination scheme will usually determine what is seen as significant and worthwhile among the topics and activities of the curriculum. The second context for formal study is the one in which the student makes a conscious decision to take a language course, even though it is not required. The best example of this free choice is enrolment in a part-time language course as an additional activity.

2.5.1 The Effect of Learning Contexts on Learners

In the section above we have seen some of the different contexts in which a person could be in the role of learner (of a particular language). All these contexts represent conditions 'outside' the learner. They are not related in any way to the learner's personal qualities such as health and stamina, mental ability or educational qualifications. Anyone could be at any stage of progress towards mastery of the target language; anyone could be studying a foreign language through a part-time evening course. The interesting point about these contexts is that they can influence the general attitude and motivation of the individual in his/her role as **learner**. Each context in a very general sense can be linked to a certain type of learner approach. The combination of attitudes and motivation that goes with each type is relevant to our discussion because this can affect the **level of effort** on the learner's part; and this can, as we know, influence how 'successful' learning is.

It is easy to see that a person who has made a conscious decision to try and become proficient in using a language (even though it is not required) will have a favourable attitude and be highly motivated. We would all agree perhaps that teachers of such students are very fortunate.

On the other hand, it is true that many students are caught up in situations (especially in formal education) where they have to study a language, simply because it is a requirement in the +2 or degree syllabus. They may not have any genuine interest in learning the language, beyond passing the examination. A teacher with many such pupils does face a discouraging situation. However, it is important to see this in the context of formal education. Here a major part of any programme is made up of compulsory courses - which all students have to study, whether they are really interested in or like all the subjects and topics. So this problem is one that all teachers face. The need is to make the curriculum in operation — the actual activities in the classroom — interesting to the pupils. In one sense the language teacher, especially the teacher of English in India, has certain advantages. Language is something that children are always 'using'. Further English is fairly widely seen as an asset because of its association with job opportunities and social prestige. So the English teacher is better off than the teacher of compulsory mathematics or compulsory geography.

The general principle we need to note here is that the context of learning is linked to 'expectations'. Those students who are mainly concerned about meeting examination related requirements will want to 'see' evidence of teaching or classroom activity that they feel is going to be useful in this respect. These learners may not readily put in a lot of time and effort related to extra activities, even though these are seen by the teacher (and curriculum designer) as desirable. Similarly, learners who are very keen on learning to 'speak' well and with confidence may be quite resistant to grammar exercises or indepth discussions on the views of some essayist or poet. The teacher needs to be aware of the **learners' expectations.** But of course a curriculum cannot be reduced to only those things learners clearly want. This is where the teacher's resourcefulness in motivating students becomes important.

Activity

1. As a teacher of English, list at least three ways in which you can use the 'informal' language learning context of the learners for teaching in the classroom.

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    ii) ....

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    iii) ....

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2. If you were to design a syllabus, how would you include learner expectations in it?

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2.5.2   Personal Qualities of Learners

In the section above we have focused on the contexts in which a person relates to a target language as a **learner,** and seen how this factor influences the attitudes and motivation of learners. The same person can be a learner of two different languages at the same time, and have a different general approach in each context. Here we see that a general 'rule' about 'the learner' need not always be applicable even to the same individual. We shall now turn to look at some of the more personal qualities of individuals that seem to be relevant to their behaviour as learners of language.

a) ˙ General scholastic ability

Difference among pupils in the speed and effectiveness of learning school subjects is something

25

we are all familiar with. The general mental ability that underlies scholastic success is loosely called **intelligence**. The terms 'bright' and 'clever' are also used to indicate a high level of mental ability. The notion of intelligence is strongly linked to the capacity 'to think', 'to reason logically', 'to solve abstract problems' and so on. It is true that this capacity is very useful in coping with schoolwork and doing well in formal written examinations. But we must remember that intelligence in this narrow sense is not absolutely essential for gaining proficiency in a target language. This is the significance of the fact that we noted in Unit 1 that persons who never went to school and are illiterate can still be quite skilled and fluent users of a language in its spoken form. Such persons would not normally do well in conventional intelligence tests. Even so, their language development seems quite satisfactory. The point to be noted here is, that the so-called 'bright' pupils who get high marks in most examinations, need not be the best language learners. Other pupils who are probably classified as 'average' by teachers might prove to be very good at language learning. We must be careful not to underestimate their ability.

b) Cognitive style

One of the interesting findings of research into human mental or cognitive processes is that individuals have certian typical or preferred styles of perceiving the environment, thinking and problem solving. These individual differences are **not** differences in the level of cognitive ability, which would make some persons more successful in learning than others. These styles are genuinely alternative patterns — something like being left-handed or right-handed. The research done in the area of cognitive style and its impact on language acquisition/learning is discussed in Unit 4 of this block. A few of these possible style variations will be noted here:

i) Reflection vs. impulsiveness

Some persons are relatively quick in coming to a conclusion or taking a decision, when faced with an open-ended situation. Others tend to pause and reflect and consider various possibilities fairly thoroughly before coming to a decision. Obviously both styles have advantages and disadvantages. Examples of classroom situations where these differences might show up are

— selecting a question or an essay topic when a choice is provided;

— suggesting solutions or approaches during the discussion of some problem.

Any class will have a few pupils of both types. Pupils who are impulsive rather than reflective will probably make more mistakes. But they may also learn more because they are more active.

ii) Risk-taking vs. cautiousness

This dimension is related to how much confidence about 'winning' or 'being correct' a person needs in order to act decisively. Risk takers are those who are prepared to 'take a chance' even when they are not very sure they are going to be correct. They are not very anxious about being 'wrong' sometimes. Persons who are cautious on the other hand, will not act or move forward unless they are quite sure they will be correct or successful in doing something. They seem to be more concerned about avoiding failure or defeat than in gaining **some** successes at least. Pupils of both types are found in the typical class. Obviously the ways in which they tackle the same situations and problems will be different.

iii) Field-independence vs. field-dependence

This dimension of difference among individuals is linked to their way of perceiving and responding to the situations which they have to attend to. Some persons take in the whole stimulus situation (or field) and respond to this overall impression, without paying much attention to components and details. They also tend to be sensitive to the attitudes and opinions of the people around them. Such persons are called **field-dependent**. Those whom we call **field-independent** are more likely to analyse a given situation and see parts and relationships among parts. They pay less attention to the overall picture or field. They are likely to be more interested in the practical and technical aspects of problems to be tackled than in working with others and making teamwork their priority.

Pupils who are more field-dependent usually need more structuring and guidance from the teacher. The relatively field-independent ones are more able to break down a general requirement or job into smaller parts and start working towards these short term goals. For instance, when a project or assignment is suggested, the latter type may be able to pick up a general idea and begin to develop a plan more or less on their own. The others may need more

26

guidance from the teacher about such a plan of action; they may also need more support and reassurance from the teacher while working on the plan. It is important to note here that these pupils are not 'weak' learners who need a lot of spoonfeeding. They too can think on their own and produce high quality work like their more field-independent peers. It is only their style of getting started and working that is different.

iv) Divergent thinking vs. convergent thinking

This dimension is based on the distinction that is sometime made between intelligence and creativity. Some psychologists have suggested that there is a significant difference between solving given problems directly in an expected or recommended manner and taking a fresh look at the nature of the problem itself. In the former case, the framework of the problem as given (or commonly understood) is accepted and the correct or best solution is pursued in a logical and systematic way. This type of problem solving is what we associate with intelligence. The style is called **convergent thinking**, because the process seems to be one of narrowing down and gradually reaching the correct solution. The second style involves raising questions about the problem itself and the way it has been presented. This approach may lead to reframing and reformulating the problem and this makes unexpected or unconventional – or creative – solutions or approaches possible. The term **divergent thinking** is used because of the process of opening up (rather than narrowing down) that is involved here. Many important discoveries or formulations of new theories in various fields have been associated with 'leaps of the imagination' or breaking out of the conventional way of approaching problems.

It is easy to see that divergent thinking is what leads to new or original interpretation of literary and other texts, and throws up the ideas or images that go into artistic production. On the other hand, where the problems are such that 'rules' have to be followed rather than broken, convergent thinking is more appropriate.

c) Personality disposition

The qualities mentioned above are linked to ways of perceiving and thinking. An individual's personality as we usually think of it has more to do with ways of behaving and ways of relating to the social environment. Some of these dimensions of personality or 'nature' are:

i) Outgoing (extroverted) vs. withdrawn (introverted)

ii) Active and energetic vs. lethargic and sluggish

iii) Positive self-concept vs. negative self-concept.

These dimensions do not indicate neat categories. The nature or personality of individuals can be more in one direction than in the other. Various dispositions, such as these will influence the way pupils behave or participate in class. They will make certain types of activity or social situation more comfortable or acceptable to the individual, and similarly certain other activities might be difficult or unpleasant. It is important to remember here, too, that these are only different (and natural) ways of behaving; they are not directly linked to high or low ability or capacity to learn.

d) Handicapped learners

A significant number of pupils in schools have handicaps of various types. Some of them, especially poor hearing can interfere considerably with the learning process.

2.6 LEARNER FACTORS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The emphasis of theory and practice of second language learning in the late nineteenth and greater half of the twentieth century was mainly on the behaviourist ideas of association between stimulus and response. It viewed the human mind as a blank slate and considered language learning as a mechanical process of habit formation. The greatest advocate of this view was the American psychologist B.F. Skinner. This view was challenged by the revolutionary ideas of Noam Chomsky in 1959. He felt that behaviourism simplified the learning process and underestimated the role of **creativity** of the human mind. He asserted the remarkable capacity of the child to "generalize, hypothesize and process information in a variety of very special, apparently highly complex ways... which may be largely innate, or may develop through some sort of learning or through maturation

of the nervous system (p.158)". This shift had a tremendous impact on research in both the first and second language learning. The learner, rather than the teacher or the materials, became the focus of study. The learner began to be viewed as an active participant in the process of learning. In teaching, more and more emphasis began to be given to those exercises in teaching which would help the learner to induce the language system and internalise the rules that govern the target language. However, focus on the learner gradually led researchers such as Widdowson, Morrow and others to look beyond the linguistic needs to the **communication** needs of the learners. Another important consequence of the increasing focus on the learner was that the output of the learner began to be considered independent of the learner's first or target language. This output began to be called 'transitional competence' (Corder 1971), 'approximate system' (Nemser 1971) and 'interlanguage' (Selinker 1972).

This shift from the teacher and the teaching materials to the learner, his/her needs and his/her linguistic output has also led some researchers to look into the learner characteristics in greater detail and identify those characteristics that appear to be more responsible for success or failure in second/foreign language learning. Significant among the learner characteristics identified so far, include the learner's age, intelligence, aptitude, motivation, attitude, personality and cognitive style.

2.6.1 Age

Most people, including some psychologists and linguists, believe that children are better at learning second languages than adults. Penfield (1953) argued that the human brain loses its plasticity after puberty. He stressed that children relearn their language after injury or disease. Lenneberg (1967) suggested that lateralization made the brain functions become specialized in the early teens. Another explanation for this apparent decline in adult language acquisition was that the adult's abstract mode of thinking interfered with natural language learning process. Yet another explanation for the decline in adult learners is that they generally do not have the same peer group pressure, the intensity of motivation and attitude towards the target language and culture that children have. Seliger (1978) points out that there is much evidence to show that children acquire the phonological system of another language much better than adults, and proposes the concept of 'multiple critical periods' correlating with localization and the gradual loss of plasticity. It appears that language acquisition abilities are not lost at once. There is only a gradual reduction of such abilities. Whitaker (1978) points out that though there is evidence that under unusual circumstances language acquisition may occur after puberty, possibly through the right hemisphere of the brain, it is neither as rapid nor as successful as normal acquistion.

However, several researchers have shown that adults are actually better learners than children. Cook(1991) refers to the research carried out on the English-speaking adults and children who had gone to live in Holland. He reports that Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) found at the end of three months that the older learners were better at all aspects of Dutch language except pronunciation.

2.6.2 Sex

Several studies of first/second language acquisition have shown girls to be better learners than boys. Trudgill (1974) showed that women used the prestige linguistic forms more frequently than men, and related this phenomenon to female social insecurity. Trudgill argued that women are socially and economically less secure than men and compensate. for it linguistically. Society expects women to be more correct, discreet, quiet and polite and increases the pressure on them to use more 'correct' and prestigious linguistic forms than men. In a study of Panjabi migrant children in Englind learning English as a second language, Agnihotri (1979) showed that girls assimilated the prestige linguistic variants faster than the boys while resisting the stigmatised variants. Another researcher, Satyanath (1982) found that Kannadiga women in Delhi showed a higher percentage of assimilation of linguistic features associated with Hindi (the language of the host society) and a higher degree of usage than men. He found that younger women assimilated the host society's language and culture maximally. Unlike Trudgill (1974) who considered social insecurity to be responsible for higher use of prestige forms, Satyanath explained this in terms of the socio-cultural aspects of the Kannadiga community in which women negotiate a greater part of the interaction with the host society.

However, in the field of formal foreign language learning there are only a few studies investigating sex as a variable. Even in these studies, several investigators generally found

girls to be better learners. Burstall (1975) pointed to an interesting possible relationship between sex differences and socio-economic status. NFER study revealed that the most marked sex differences occurred in the secondary schools where the students were predominantly from the lower socio-economic strata.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
       b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

7. Who, according to research, are better language learners, boys or girls? Why?

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Activity

3. Have you ever consciously tried to notice any difference in language learning habits of girls and boys? Make a list of the differences. If you have not noticed these things before, observe 2-3 boys and 2-3 girls in your class for a month or so, and make a list of differences in their learning habits. Also take a note of what language features each of the sexes tries to learn faster than the other.

i) ....

ii) ....

iii) ....

iv) ....

v) ....

2.6.3 Intelligence

What is intelligence?

Intelligence is usually conceived of as the ability to understand, to learn and think things out quickly, especially compared with other people, and consists of verbal ability, reasoning ability, concept formation ability, etc. Carroll (1965) conceived of intelligence as the learner's capacity to understand instructions, and to understand what is required of him/her in the learning situation. It is a talent for not getting sidetracked or wasting one's efforts.

Intelligence Tests

Most of the intelligence tests measure a number of abilities simultaneously. The most commonly used individual intelligence tests include Stanford-Binet test, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC). Some of the group tests of intelligence are Army Beta Test, Army Alpha Test, Army General Classification Test (AGCT), etc. The Stanford-Binet test is used for children from two to sixteen years of age and puts heavy stress upon verbal ability. It can't be used with children who are illiterate. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) consists of the following verbal and performance (non-verbal) subtests.

Verbal Subtests	Performance (non-verbal) Subtests
Information	Picture arrangement
General Comprehension	Picture Completion

Memory Span	Block design
Arithmetic reasoning	Object assembly
Similarites	Digit symbol
Vocabulary	

The group text, **The Army Beta Test**, meant mainly for illiterates and foreigners not proficient in English, emphasizes non-verbal problems for which simple instructions can be given orally.

The **Army Alpha Test** designated for the typical individual who can read and write, include some of the problems like the following:

A. If 5 1/2 tons of bark cost $33, what will 3 1/2 cost? (   )

B. A train is harder to stop than an automobile because
   (   ) it is longer, (   ) it is heavier, (   ) the brakes are not so good.

C. If the two words of a pair mean the same or nearly the same thing, draw a line under same. If they mean the opposite or nearly the opposite, draw a line under opposite.

comprehensive	restricted	same	opposite
allure	attract	same	opposite
talent	hidden	same	opposite
deride	ridicule	same	opposite

D. If, when you have arranged the following words to make a sentence, the sentence is true, underline true; if it is false, underline false.

people enemies arrogant many make	true/false
never who heedless those stumble are	true/false
never man the show the deeds	true/false

E. Underline which word is appropriate.

| The pitcher has an important place in | tennis | football |
| | baseball | handball |

F. Underline which word is appropriate.

| Dismal is to dark as cheerful is to | laugh | bright | house | gloomy |

Role of Intelligence

All these tests may be useful as measures of mental ability of either an individual or a group of individuals. But these scores cannot be treated as sure predictors of success in a foreign/second language. Nor can they be considered as a reflection of abilities to acquire language. Pimsleur et. al. (1962) reported on a large number of studies examining the relationship of intelligence with foreign language learning. Though some of the studies gave evidence for the positive relationship between intelligence and success in a foreign language, most of the studies were skeptical of such relationship. Carroll and Sapon (1959) noted that very few of the abilities measured in an intelligence test were found relevant to foreign language learning, and it was for this reason that there was very insignificant relationship between the scores on an intelligence text and a foreign language test. More research is needed to identify those abilities that match significantly with foreign language scores. Incidentally, these abilities have been called by many researchers as language aptitude abilities. We shall look into these abilities in the next section.

2.6.4 Aptitude

What is Aptitude?

Aptitude for a particular job or skill is the ability to learn it quickly and easily and to do it well. What people generally call a 'knack for languages' is nothing but aptitude for languages. But it is very difficult to determine what this knack is. It is certainly more than 'having an ear' for languages because everyone learns his/her first language.

It is popularly believed that some people have more aptitude for learning second languages

than others. This observation has generally been made in connection with classroom learning, and not learning in real-life situations.

Aptitude Measures

The two best known measures of FL (foreign language) aptitude for native speakers of English are the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) developed by Carroll and Sapon (1959) and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (LAB) (1966). MLAT incorportes four main factors that predict a student's success in the classroom. This consists of:

i)   phonemic coding ability: student's ability to use phonetic scripts to distinguish phonemes in the language.

ii) grammatical sensitivity: student's ability to pick out grammatical functions in a sentence.

iii) inductive language learning ability: student's ability to generalise patterns from one sentence to another.

iv) rote learning: student's ability to remember vocabulary lists of foreign words paired with translations.

These components were eventually measured in the following five subtests of MLAT:

Part one: **Number Learning**: The respondent is taught, on tape, the Kurdish number system from 1 to 4, plus the 'tens' and 'hundred' forms of these numbers, then tested by hearing numbers which are combinations of these elements, e.g. 312, 122, 41, etc. The test aims at measuring associative memory.

Part two: **Phonetic Script**: This subtest measures phonemic coding ability. The respondent learns a system of phonetic notation of some English phonemes. S/he is then tested on this, e.g. 'Underline the word you hear: Tik; Tiyk; Tis; Tiys'.

Part three: **Spelling Clues:** This is a speed test that measures both native language vocabulary and phonemic coding ability. The respondent is given clues to the pronunciation of a word, e.g. 'luv' for 'love' and is then asked to choose a synonym from a list of alternatives:

A.   carry
B.   exist
C.   affection
D.   wash
E.   spy

In this case C. **affection** corresponds most nearly in meaning to 'luv'.

Part four : **Words in a sentence:** This tests grammatical sensitivity. The respondent is given pairs of sentences. In the first sentence (key sentence) in each pair a certain word or a phrase is underlined, and the respondent is asked to tick ($\sqrt{}$) one of the five underlined words or phrases in the second sentence that functions most nearly like the word or phrase in the key sentence in the pair. As you can see, in the following pairs of sentence:

London is the capital of England,

He liked to go fishing in Maine

the word 'he' in the second sentence performs the same function as 'London' in the key sentence.

Part five : **Paired Associates:** The respondent studies a written Kurdish - English vocabulary list, practices the stimulus - response pairs seen, and is then tested by means of multiple-choice items. This is a test of associative memory. For instance, the respondent is asked to decide which word of English has the same meaning as the Kurdish word roo.

Example

roo
    a) art
    b) draw
    c) run
    d) ask
    e) camel

The correct choice is a

There are several slightly different forms of MLAT available. The MLAT itself is for use with people of 14 years of age and above. There is also an elementary form (EMLAT) for use with

children between the ages of eight and eleven. There is also a short form of the test for use when the time is limited.

Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (LAB) is appropriate for children aged 13 to 19. It emphasises inductive language learning capacity and auditory ability. Pimsleur et. al. (1966) suggested that 20 to 30 per cent of chilren underachieve in foreign language learning because they have poor auditory ability.

Review of Research on Aptitude

Most research in language aptitude since then has been either in validation of the existing tests, or developing aptitude batteries for use in particular countries. For instance, the York Language Analysis Test has been developed and has been widely used in Britain. The most important research aimed at the production of a new test battery has been carried out by the American Armed Forces. This was the result of dissatisfaction felt with MLAT for not being able to discriminate at higher levels. Another type of research has examined the component for aptitude in greater depth. Skehan (1980-1982) examined the memory component in detail. He hypothesized that an ability to analyse text, to extract its propositional content and remember such content would be related to greater foreign language learning success (Skehan 1989 : 31). Jakobovits (1970) suggested that sub-contents of FL aptitude may be exploited usefully in foreign language teaching. The teacher who has the information about the aptitude of his/her students can modify his/her instructional materials accordingly. This information can also be used to stream students into different classes with different goals. It can also help to advise students whether s/he should set a particular target in a given time frame.

2.6.5 Cognitive Style

What is Cognitive Style?

It refers to an individual's typical way of organising his/her universe, and reflects his/her personality or preference and not his/her ability or intelligence. For example, two boys Anwar and Kanwal, look at two different kinds of cars but their responses are quite different. Anwar thinks of how comfortable each car is, whereas Kanwal comments on each car's engine, its capacity and how each car is designed differently. These responses of Anwar and Kanwal show that Anwar focuses on the usefulness of the car and Kanwal on the technical aspects. The former therefore is a functionalist and the latter an analyser. Both the responses reflect different styles of learning or cognitive styles.

Types of Cognitive Styles

a) Field-independence – Field-dependence

Researchers have broadly identified three different cognitive styles, which they call **field-independence/field-dependence, reflection-impulsivity,** and **categorization styles**. The cognitive style called **field-dependence** is defined by a person who cannot consider an object or event separately from the context in which it appears. The context in which an object appears is its field. On the other hand, the **field-independent** persons have the capacity to process information or consider an object or event independent of the context. For example, when a person with a field-independent cognitive style looks at a painting he has no difficulty in finding the central motif of the painting and relating the details to the central motif.

Researchers have related this concept of field-independence/field-dependence to second language learning. Skehan (1989) noted that the field-dependent persons would have greater communicative competence, greater conversational resourcefulness, greater negotiation skills, all of which should be beneficial for exposure to language and therefore to language development through interaction (p.111). One research group noticed that field- independence helped the learners with conventional classroom learning. Another research group found a very significant relationship between field independence and performance on a French oral production test and on a French listening comprehension test. On the other hand, some other researchers did not find any significant difference in how much the learners spoke and how well they spoke among the learners with either the field-dependent or field independent cognitive style. These and many other researchers suggest that there is at best, a weak relationship between field independent cognitive style and second language learning.

b) Reflection - impulsivity

The cognitive style that refers to the degree to which children reflect upon a problem is called **reflection - impulsivity**. One of the tasks used to find to find out whether a particular individual is reflective or impulsive is to ask him/her to choose a picture or design that is similar to the standard picture or design. This method is known as Matching Familiar Figure Test.

Here is an example of an item taken from the Matching Familiar Figures Test. The child is asked to find out which of the following six pictures on the bottom is exactly the same as the 'standard' on the top.
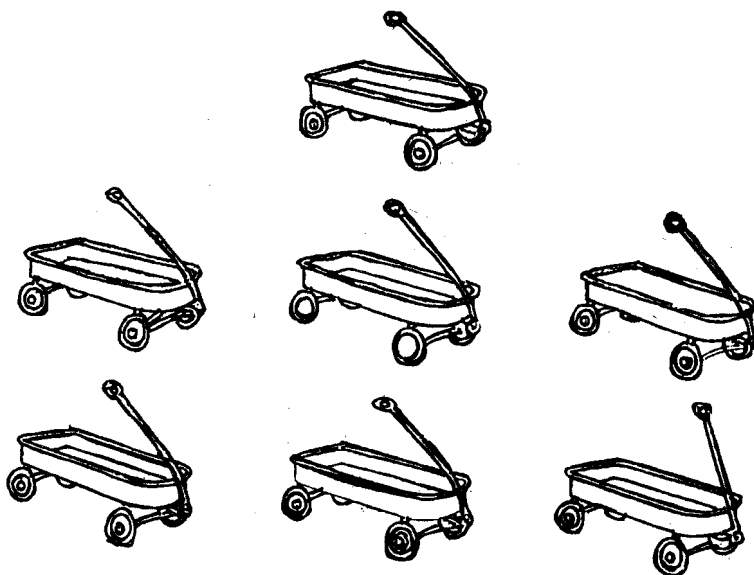
The learners who are faster and less accurate are called impulsive, and those who are slower and more accurate are called reflective. Researchers have shown that learners after the age of eleven are better able to answer with greater speed and more accuracy. The tendency to be reflective/impulsive is not fixed and therefore can be altered with training.

c) Categorization styles

The cognitive styles broadly called categorization styles refer to how an individual classifies or arranges information, things or objects. They have been sub-divided into three types:

i) descriptive - analytic style

ii) categorical - inferential style

iii) relational - contextual style

A **descriptive - analytic** cognitive style concentrates on a single detail common to all objects. A **categorical - inferential** style focuses on the class of objects, whereas a **relational - contextual** focuses on a common theme or function.

Each of these cognitive styles may have its effect on second language learning. Though the field-independent/field-dependent cognitive style has been explored in detail in relation to second language learning, other cognitive styles need to be studied in detail in this context. It is felt that a difference in the cognitive style of a learner may make a significant difference in success in second language learning. It is also important to remember that since these differences are highly individual they should be kept in mind at the time of selecting teaching strategies and developing any educational curriculum.

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

8. What is a cognitive style? How is it different from intelligence? Make a list of the cognitive styles listed by researchers. Illustrate all of them with at least one example each.

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9. Which of the cognitive styles do you think is more important for developing communicative skills in second language learning?

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10. 'Learners have different cognitive styles'. How is this observation useful for classroom teachers and material writers?

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2.6.6 Personality

Review of Research on the Role of Personality

Several researchers (e.g. Pimsleur et. al. 1964, Smart et. al. 1970, Bartz (1974) have emphasized the importance of personality in foreign/second language learning. Pimsleur et. al. (1964) compared average achievers and underachievers in high schools and noted that a successful learner was invariably found to have personality traits such as **social conformity, extroversion, flexibility** and **tolerarance for ambiguity.** Smart et. al. (1970) on the other hand, showed that higher achievers received significantly lower score on social spontaneity scale than others, and were found to have introvertive tendencies. Bartz (1974) found that introversion, soberness and self-sufficiency were strongly correlated with oral components of communicative competence. He further demonstrated that students with traits of imagination, placidness and

low anxiety tended to score higher on the written components of communicative competence test. Genessee and Hamayan (1980) failed to find any positive relationship between personality variables and achievement. Even Strong (1983) working on a group of kindergarteners in a California school did not find any relationship between a measure of extroversion and various measures of structure, vocabulary and pronunciation of the target langauge. Thus, it is evident that the question whether certain personality traits help language learning is still an open question. Skehen (1989) suggests that future research must firstly attend more vigorously to contextual factors such as the age of the extroverts learning a second language and the environment in which it is learnt. For instance, extroverts in the younger age group may have different correlationship with language proficiency as compared to the older extroverts. Similarly, extroverts learning a second language in a formal situation may not have the same set of correlations with proficiency in the second language as the extroverts learning it in a naturalistic environment. Secondly, future research must also try to improve the definition of the trait-contrast as used in language learning. For example, a construct like extroversion may have certain meaning as it is used in psychology, but it may have a restricted meaning in second language learning. Thirdly, the instruments used to measure personality traits need to be more systematic and reliable.

How is Personality Measured?

Personality traits in a person have been elicited by psychologists in a number of ways. Most commonly, a questionnaire consisting of several statements is given and the subject is asked to agree or disagree with them on a 5-point scale, ranging from 'not at all' (scored '1') to 'very often' (scored '5'). The aggregate score on the statements is regarded and score for the trait measured. Not all traits are assessed by agreement or disagreement to verbal statements. For example, in the technique called Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) the subject is presented with a number of pictures usually of people involved in somewhat ambiguous situations, and is asked to write a story about each. These responses are analysed to find out the personality traits of the subject.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
  b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

11. What are the main personality traits explored in the foreign/second language research?

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   ....

   ....

   ....

12. Which of the personality traits is found to have more influence on second/foreign language proficiency?

   ....

   ....

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2.6.7 Attitude

What is Attitude?

According to Allport (1954 : 45), 'an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related'. In operational terms an individual's attitude is according to Gardner (1985) 'an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, infered on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent (p.9)'.

Review of Research on the Role of Attitudes

The nature of attitude of a second language learner can vary from the attitude towards the teacher or the language itself or the group that speaks the language. It may also refer to more general dispositions such as **ethnocentrism, authoritarianism** or **anomie.** Attitudes towards

learning the second language and the second language community have received more attention than other factors in second language research. Some researchers support the belief that measures of attitudes towards learning a second language and the second language community correlate significantly with achievement. For example, Lambert and his associates at McGill University conducted a series of studies (Gardner & Lambert 1972) to investigate the role of attitude in second language learning and came to the conclusion that 'a friendly outlook towards the other group whose language is being learnt can differentially sensitize the learner to the audio-lingual features of the language, making him more perceptive to forms of pronunciation and accent than is the case for a learner without this open and friendly disposition'. (Gardner & Lambert 1972 : 134)

Spolsky (1969) argues strongly that 'one of the most important attitudinal factors is the attitude of the learner to the language and to its speakers' (p. 274). In an investigation of 315 foreign students from 80 different countries living in the U.S.A., he found significant association between the perception of similarity between self and English speakers and grades in English. Similarly, Oller, Hudson and Liu (1977) found achievement in the second language correlating highly significantly to evaluative reactions to the target language group. Burstall (1975) quotes several studies which show a positive correlation between attitudes and achievement. But she is skeptical about the causal relationship between the two. She quotes the NFER evaluation which shows that an early achievement in French affected later attitudes towards and achievement in French to a significantly greater extent than early attitudes towards French affected the subsequent development of attitude or achievement. The initial success or failure in language learning may thus be a powerful determinant of linguistic attitudes.

Research in second language learning has also shown that success or failure in a second language is also related, though weakly, to general disposition of the learners such as **ethnocentrism** or **authoritarianism.** Gardner and Lambert (1972) believe that:

'Learners who have strong ethnocentric or authoritarian attitude or who have learned to be prejudiced towards foreign peoples are unlikely to approach the language learning task with an integrative outlook (p.16).'

Authoritarianism refers to anti-democratic feelings and is generally measured through respect for authority, use of force, nationalism, etc. Agreement or disagreement with some of the following statements may elicit the second language learners' authoritarian/democratic disposition:

1. Children should always obey their elders.

2. Eve-teasing or rape is a serious crime; the culprits should be hanged in public.

3. If people would talk less and work more, everybody will be better off.

4. What young people need is strict discipline and the will to work for the country.

Ethnocentrism, on the other hand, refers to people who suspect foreign people and ideas and is generally measured through attitude towards the foreigners, preservation of nationality, respect for national symbols, etc. Agreement or disagreement with the following statements can elicit second language learners' ethnocentric tendencies:

1. Certain people who do not salute the national flag should be punished.

2. India is surrounded by enemies on all sides; we should strengthen our armed forces very fast.

3. Epics greater than 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' cannot be written.

4. Indian women are chaster than women elsewhere in the world.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) examined the influence of these dispositions in learning second languages in Maine, Louisiana, Connecticut and Philippines. It is only in the Connecticut study that authoritarianism was found to have significant correlations with achievement variables other than listening comprehension. In Maine, the ethnocentric syndrome is not directly related to any of the French achievement measures. In the Connecticut study, ethnocentrism configurates only with achievement variables of free speech. Similarly, in the Louisiana study ethnocentrism configurates only with one component of listening comprehension. Khanna (1983) working with undergraduates found very significant correlations between achievement in English and authoritarian and ethnocentric tendencies.

Some Unresolved Issues

Research on the relationship between attitudes towards the target language and achievement in it has raised several issues. It has been found that attitudes towards learning languages are more related to language achievement than attitude towards any other school subject. Further, some aspects of attitude are more highly related to language achievement than others. Some research has shown girls to be better second language learners than boys. Attitudes have also been found to be influenced by the students' upbringing. Attitudes towards the target language vary from one geographical area to another. Some research has shown that attitude towards learning a second language becomes less positive with age because learners become more mature and aware. It is also noticed that as learners grow older, the correlations between the attitudes towards the target language and achievement grow higher, though less positive. More research needs to be done on the effect of age and sex on evaluative reactions towards the target language speakers. Research has shown that the learners who had more exposure to the target language also had more exposure to the target language speakers. It has also shown that the learners who had more exposure to the target language also had more favourable attitudes towards it.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
         b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

13. Is attitude towards a thing/person inborn or acquirable?

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14. Is attitude an individual trait or family trait?

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15. Are attitudes static or subject to change. If the latter, what, according to you, can change a person's attitude?

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16. How do you distinguish authoritarianism from ethnocentrism?

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Activity

4. In section 2.6.7 you have been given statements that can be used to elicit authoritarian and ethnocentric attitudes of people. Make a questionnaire using these statements and ask some informants to respond to these statements on a five-point scale as below:

i) Children should always obey their elders.

completely agree	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	completety disagree
5	4	3	2	1

If a person puts a tick (√) at 4 he is an authoritarian, and if s/he ticks (√) at 2, s/he will be called non-authoritarian or democratic.

5. A researcher used the following statements to elicit the informants' attitude towards learning French:

1. Learning French is really great.

2. I enjoy learning French.

3. French is an important part of the school programme.

6. Think of at least four statements that you may like to use to elicit Indians' attitude towards learning English.

i) ....

ii) ....

iii) ....

iv) ....

7. A researcher used the following statements to elicit attitude towards French Canadians whose language was being learned by a group of learners:

1. I would like to know more French Canadians.

2. Some of our best citizens are of French Canadian descent.

3. French Canadians are a very sociable, warm-hearted and creative people.

8. Think of three statements that would elicit Indians' attitude towards English speaking Indian elite.

i) ....

ii) ....

iii) ....

2.7 MOTIVATION

2.7.1 What is Motivation?

The term **motivation** in the second language learning context is seen according to Gardner (1985) as 'referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity (p.10)'. The desire to learn the language, or favourable attitudes towards learning the second language, do not reflect motivation in and of themselves. The individual may wish to learn the second language and may enjoy doing it, but, if this is not accompanied by a striving to do so, then it is not motivation in the real sense. It is only when the desire to learn the second language and favourable attitude towards it are linked with the effort or drive to achieve it, then we can say that the learner is motivated.

2.7.2 Types of Motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) have done pioneering work to explore the nature of motivation specific to language study. They built on Mowrer's (1950) concept of identification, which is the tendency of the child to imitate the parent in first language development. They

considered the extent to which people esteem and want to identify with not only particular individuals but also foreign peoples. Gardner & Lambert suggested that those people who identify positively with the target language group would like to resemble the target language group, understand their culture, and be able to participate in it. This pattern of motivation they call an **integrative orientation.** Gardner & Lambert (1972) contrasted this orientation with **instrumental orientaion** which is characterized by utilitarian objectives such as obtaining admission in a particular course, professional advancement, and so on. The learners' interest in the other group is confined to achieving personal advantages.

In order to elicit these motivational orientations, statements such as the following have been devised.

Integrative motivation

I am studying English because

1. It will help me to mix with English people.

2. It will improve my personality.

3. It will help me to better understand English people.

4. It will help me to read and understand and appreciate English literature, music and films.

Instrumental motivation

I am studying English because

1. It will help me to get a good job.

2. It will help me to become a better educated person.

3. It will help me to get a degree.

4 It will help me travel anywhere without any difficulty.

2.7.3   Review of Research on Motivation

Gardner and Lambert (1975, 1972) showed that success in a foreign/second language learning is likely to be less if the underlying motivational orientation is instrumental rather than integrative. Burstall (1975), however, pointed out, that this hypothesis was examined in the course of NFER evaluation of the teaching of French in primary schools and only a partial support to the view put forward by Gardner & Lambert could be established. Although pupil's attitude and achievement proved to be closely associated, motivational orientation of individual pupils appeared to be neither exclusively integrative nor instrumental. It is interesting to note that in the Philippines study (reported in Gardner & Lambert 1972) the authors' hypothesis was challenged. Their research showed that in settings where there was an urgency about mastering a second language for utilitarian ends, the instrumental orientation to second language learning is very effective. Wong (1982) in fact, did not find motivational orientations of Chinese students learning English correlate with their achievement. A (1988) study gave substantial evidence against the hypothesis that integrative motive was positively related to second language achievement. However, Khanna, Verma, Agnihotri and Sinha (1990) did find significant correlations between the motivational orientations of ESOL learners in the U.K. and the teachers' ratings of their English skills. These studies clearly suggest that a student may learn a second language with an integrative motivation or with instrumental motivation or with both or with some other motivation. The relative importance of these orientations varies from one part of the world to another, and is also dependent on the learner's mental makeup and cultural background.

2.7.4   Is Motivation the Cause or Result of Success?

Another question that has engaged the attention of second language researchers is whether it is the motivation that causes success or vice versa. Burstall (1975) working with primary school children learning French came to the conclusion that it is the achievement which is primary and motivation the consequence. Hermann (1980) too argued that it was the degree of success within the instruction which had produced the different motivational orientations. Similar results have been reported by other researches. However, Gardner (1985) asserts that there is no evidence that differential success influences attitudes and

motivation. In the absence of any conclusive evidence about the direction and nature of relationship between motivation and success, more in-depth research is needed which monitors levels over time in some detail rather than takes the 'snapshot' approach through test administration at the beginning and end of courses.

2.8   LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have noted the great capacity for learning that human beings have. Most human behaviour, especially social and cultural behaviour is the result of **learning:** it is not instinctive and pre-determined. The learning of language (a seemingly never-ending activity) is the best example of the tremendous versatility and vitality of the human learning processes.

We have also seen that learning is a highly individualized process. Each person's unique learning history has a strong influence on what and how s(he) learns from a given situation. The notion of **readiness** for new learning in a specific area is relevant here. A critical feature of readiness in this sense is that it is the **result of learning** and so is constantly changing and developing. This tends to reinforce the differences between individuals (in the same class for instance). An even more important consequence of changing readiness is that the same person may function differently (as a learner) in different situations and as time passes. A pupil's status as a 'good' or 'poor' learner is therefore not fixed and generally applicable. For each new occasion for learning the individual starts with a fresh combination of knowledge, skill and attitude that can make the levels of involvement and success quite different from those of other occasions. This point carries a very important lesson for us. We should not pre-judge a pupil's learning capacity on the basis of his/her past record (or what is more common, 'reputation'.) A pupil who has been weak in some subject area need not remain that way always. As new topics are taken up, the value of that pupil's readiness might change significantly and there could be a spurt of successful learning. The opposite might also happen sometimes.

As we shall see through various units of this course, the learning of language involves a wide variety of tasks and cognitive operations. (This variety is much greater for language than for the typical subjects of the school and college curriculum.) In designing and implementing a syllabus for teaching a language (English), which is one of the main topics of this course, the professional aim is always to adjust teaching inputs to the needs (or readiness) of the learners. We have seen here how difficult it is to pin down learners and arrive at a definite and stable description of their learning ability. There are learning-related differences across individuals and within the same individual. This might seem to be bad news as far as effective syllabus design goes. However, the main point emerging out of this unit is that the capacity to learn languages that human being of all ages have is something truly remarkable, and this is put to good use even when there is no teaching to support it. What we need to do is make the 'situations' of syllabus and teaching-based learning more like the varied natural language learning situations which we know of. We have not come to any definite answers to our 'who' questions. But we have a sense of the capabilities of learners of language in general, even while recognizing their individuality.

2.9   KEY WORDS

attitude	: the attitude which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language. Positive or negative feelings towards a language or a language group may affect a person's ability to learn a language.
auditory	: related to hearing.
authoritarianism	: anti-democratic tendencies.
anomic	: in learning a new language people may emotionally begin to move away from their own language and culture, and at the same time may not be sure about their feelings towards the new language group. This leads to a feeling of insecurity.
behaviourist theory	: a theory of psychology which states that human behaviour should be studied in terms of physical processes only. It led to theories of learning which explained how an external event (a stimulus) caused a change in the individual (a response). This theory had a tremendous impact on language learning.

bilingual	:	a person who knows and uses two or more languages.
cognitive process	:	any mental process which learners make use of in language learning, such as inferencing, generalization, monitoring, memorizing, etc.
cognitive style	:	the particular way in which a learner tries to learn something. In second or foreign language learning, different learners may prefer different solutions to learning problems. For example, some learners may want explanations for grammatical rules, other may not require them.
critical period	:	the theory in child development that says that there is a period during which language can be acquired with greater ease than at any other time.
curriculum	:	an educational programme which states :
	:	a) the educational purpose of the programme (the end to be achieved)
		b) the context, teaching procedures which will be necessary to achieve this purpose (the means)
		c) evaluation procedures to see whether a programme has been successful or not.
ethnocentric	:	the desire to interact mainly with one's own language group. People with such tendencies are convinced about the superiority of their own culture and language.
first language	:	generally a person's mother tongue or the language acquired first.
input	:	(in language learning) language which a learner hears or receives and from which s(he) can learn.
interlanguage/transi-tional competence/ approximate system		the type of language produced by second/foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language.
inductive language learning	:	learners are not taught grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language.
lateralization	:	the development of control over different functions in different parts of the brain.
motivation	:	the desire to learn a second/foreign language, and the effort used in learning it. Two types of motivation are sometimes distinguished:
	:	i) **instrumental motivation**: desire to learn a language because it would fulfil certain utilitarian goals, such as getting a job, passing an examination, etc.
		ii) **integrative motivation**: desire to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it; the desire is also there to identify closely with the target language group.
phonological	:	the establishment, description and arrangement of distinctive sound units of a language.
phoneme	:	the smallest unit of sound in a language.
phonemic	:	the study or description of the distinctive sound units (phonemes) of a language and their relationship to each other.
phonetic notation	:	special symbols which express the sounds of an actual spoken utterance. A transcription of such an utterance in phonetic symbols is said to be in **phonetic notation** or **phonetic script.**
target language	:	the new language which a person is learning.

2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Refer to 2.3.1 for answer.

2. Refer to 2.3.1 for answer.

3. Read 2.4 for answer.

4. Read 2.4.2 for answer.

5. Readiness refers to the receptivity of a learner (in terms of ability, attitude and interest) to learn a new item.

6. Read 2.4.2 for answer.

7. Generally girls are better language learners than boys because of

    — social insecurity which increases the pressure on them to use the more correct forms (Trudgill, 1974; Agnihotri, 1979)

    — greater interaction with the host society (Satyanath, 1982)

8. Cognitive style refers to an individual's typical way of organising his/her universe, and reflects his/her personality or preference.

    Intelligence, on the other hand, is conceived of as the ability to understand, to learn and think things out quickly, especially compared to other people.

    The cognitive styles listed by researchers are:

    i) Field independence - field dependence

    ii) Reflection - impulsivity

    iii) Categorization styles.

9. Of the three cognitive styles listed, it appears that field independence - field dependence best correlates with language learning ability.

10. Read 2.6.5 for answer.

11. The main personality traits explored with regard to foreign/second language research are : social conformity, extroversion, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, self-sufficiency, imagination, anxiety, and so on.

12. All the aspects of the personality mentioned in secion 2.6.7 have not been adequately researched with regard to learning the second/foreign language. Different researchers have come up with different results.

13, 14 and 15. Write your own views.

16. Authoritarianism refers to anti-democratic feelings.

    Ethnocentrism is concerned with insularity, preservation of nationality and a suspicious attitude towards foreigners.

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UNIT 3 APPROACHES, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

Structure

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learnt (the approach) imply different ways of teaching language (the method), and different methods make use of different kinds of classroom activity (techniques). (Longmans Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, 1985).

The objective of any language classroom is to enable the learners to learn the target language and use it. This is done best when they are involved actively in the learning process.

A teacher who has a rich repertoire of techniques to teach different skills and sub-skills is more likely to succeed in this objective than one who has a limited number of techniques at command. He/she will need to function as an informed decision maker in order to judge the needs of his/her learners and decide when to use which technique. By doing this the teacher will be able to not just use appropriate techniques but also be able to provide variety, in order to sustain the interest of the learners.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to:

● differentiate among approach, method and technique in the context of teaching and learning of languages;

● understand the role and rationale behind the various methods used in English language teaching;

● familiarise yourself with some major methodological trends in the history of ELT;

● develop insight into the role of the teacher in using various methods and techniques effectively.

3.3 WHAT IS A METHOD?

The dictionary defines a method as a way of doing things. Methods deal with the 'how' of teaching. Methodology indicates the sequence to be followed in a language task/activity and the role of the learners and the teacher in this sequence. A method can be said to include three components:

a)   Approach

b)   Design

c)   Procedure

3.3.1 Components of a Method

a) Approach

The practices in language teaching are based on the theories concerning the nature of language and language learning. These theories together form the first component of a method. We shall look at these theories in this section. The two main views of language learning are as follows:

The behaviourist view of language learning : Behaviourists believe that learning, both verbal and non-verbal, takes place through the process of habit formation. Learners are exposed to the language in their school/college, family and neighbourhood. They try to imitate the people around them. If the imitation is proper, they are rewarded, which motivates them further for imitation, leading to reinforcement and habit formation. The behaviourists think that learners should be corrected as soon as they make mistakes in order to avoid fossilization.

The congitivist view of language learning : Cognitivists agree with the behaviourists that learners need exposure to language, but they hold that learning does not take place solely by imitation and repetition. Human beings are born with a built-in device in their brains which helps them in discovering the underlying patterns of the language they hear, forming their own hypotheses about the language and constructing new sentences. For them language-learning is exposure to the language, hypothesis formation, confirmation or re-formulation of the hypotheses. Cognitivists look at errors as part of the learning process.

b) Design

The second aspect of a method is Design. In this component the following are clearly spelt out.

a)   objectives of the course;

b)   the syllabus model which the method incorporates;

c)   teaching and learning activities;

d)   roles of teachers and learners.

c)   Procedure

The third and last component of a method focuses on what happens in the actual classroom situation. It includes practices and behaviour that operate during the production, practice and feedback phases of teaching.

A technique refers to the design and procedure components of a method. It may be described as a implementational sub-process of a method. It specifies the teaching- learning activities as well as the roles of the teachers and learners in the language activities/tasks.

Techniques that give the learner greater autonomy in language processing are now in vogue in language classrooms. Some of these are: role play, and simulation, information – gap and opinion – gap activities, language games and puzzles. Techniques for developing the various language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) will be enunciated in detail in the following blocks.

3.4   A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MAJOR METHODOLOGICAL TRENDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Some methods that have been in vogue through the history of the development of English language teaching are as follows:

Method	Features/Pedagogic principles	Rationale or Language Learning Approach
Grammar translation method (This method is now outdated as opinion in ELT has shifted from content-based teaching to skill-based teaching).	• It is a way of learning a language by studying the rules of its grammar and then applying these rules to the translation of sentences and texts from mother tongue to target language and vice-versa. • Vocabulary is taught through bilingual word lists. • The method focuses primarily on reading and writing skills with little attention to listening and speaking. • The syllabus comprises prose, poetry, grammar and written work. • The texts consist of long extracts from the works of the great writers chosen for their intellectual content. The learner is therefore exposed only to literary language. Communication skills are neglected with little attention to pronunciation.	Behaviourist view of language learning.
Structural oral situational method	• It was an outcome of the experiments carried out in the army camps during the World War II. • It involves systematic presentation and practice of carefully selected and graded grammatical structures of the target language in effective and meaningful situations. For example, objects in the classroom such as a desk, the blackboard, pictures, calendar, windows etc. may be utilised to introduce vocabulary as well as grammatical structures such as This is a(n) .... These are........ .That is a(n) .... Those are........ . These structural and vocabulary items are reinforced through oral drills. • The approach is based on the assumption that language learning is a matter of habit formation and thus involves a lot of repetition and conscious drilling of language items. • Language items are first taught orally. Reading and writing follow oral work. The spoken form is given priority.	Behaviourist approach to language learning.

46

	• Language items are graded according to their frequency, usefulness and teachibility. A fixed number of grammatical structures and words need to be mastered at each level.	
Communicative language teaching approach: (Cannot be called a method as it incorporates a variety of ways for facilitating the acquisition of language as a means of communication.)	• The communicative approach is based on a semantic syllabus like the notional-functional syllabus. The concept of a 'notion' is close to that of a 'theme; e.g. transport, food, entertainment, etc. which are chosen keeping the learners' background and age-group in mind. A 'function' may be defined as a 'specific communicative purpose'. e.g. seeking information, giving directions, requesting, describing, recounting etc. • There is no 'one' communicative syllabus only. A communicative approach targets at communicative competence (Littlewood, 1984). Communicative competence may be defined as the ability to autonomously use a language to communicate effectively in authentic (real-life) communicative situations. • The teaching based on the communicative approach is eclectic i.e. it uses a variety of methods. • Language is assumed to be learnt through exposure and use by the learners in authentic communicative situations. The teacher is a facilitator who organizes the language tasks in such a manner so that the learner has to process the language content on his/her own, in order to help him/her become an autonomous language user. Support for performing language tasks may be provided covertly through clues in the content. Demonstration by the teacher, peer, support, etc. help the learner. For example, the learners may first be shown the recording of an interview and then asked to work in pairs, assume the role of a famous personality, list down the kind of questions they would like to ask and then to simulate the interview.	Cognitivist view of language learning.

Development of the humanistic paradigm in psychology has also influenced language learning methodologies. Methods like the silent way, community language learning and suggtesto-paedia are based upon the principles of learner initiative and learning in a relaxed and happy environment where the teacher functions as a counsellor and does not approve or disapprove of learners' performance. Learner errors are dealt through self-monitoring and peer correction.

3.5 ROLE OF THE TEACHER VIS-A-VIS VARIOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Various methods and techniques of language learning are only suggestions to the teacher who should be informed about the rationale behind them and choose or adapt them keeping in mind the level and needs of her learners.

A teacher, teaching English in a vernacular medium school, where exposure to English is limited to the classroom may need to provide great lexical (vocabulary) and linguistic (sentence patterns) support through vernacular examples, pictorial support, demonstration, word lists, etc.

For example, in a beginner level classroom, while asking learners to describe a given picture, lexical support may be offered through an illustrated vocabulary list as given below :

Linguistic support may be provided through a substitution table

I	happy	am
He, She, It	fat	is
We, You, They	thin/sad	are

→ happy

→ sad

→ fat

→ thin
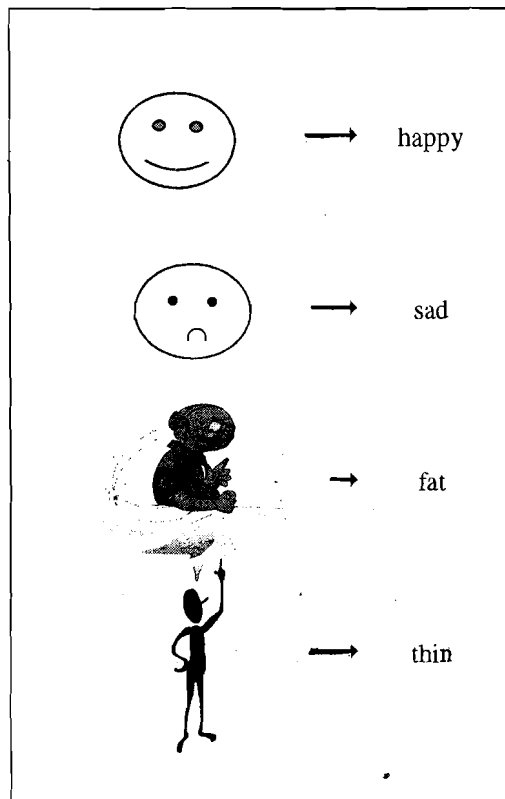
Before asking the learners to describe the picture given to them, the teacher may clarify the task by building up the description of another picture on the board, with the help of the given clues.

Example 2 : To practice adjectives (related to space, size, colour) the child may be asked to collect different kinds of objects (pebbles, marbles, leaves, etc.) in his/her environment and bring them to class. The teacher may put up an illustrated chart exemplifying various kinds of shapes, sizes, colours on the board to provide vocabulary support to the learners.

This activity will engage the interest of the learners as it focuses on the child's natural urge to share his experiences with others and is closely linked to his/her milieu. In the above examples though language tasks are communicative, structural support is also being provided. Thus these examples illustrate the structural-functional approach i.e., practice of a chosen structure (sentence pattern) in the context of a communicative content (here 'Descri-bing').

There are no final answers in pedagogy i.e., no one method/technique can be proclaimed to be the best. Questions arise, even about the most basic issues of teaching, to which solutions will depend on a host of factors such as the learners' language competence, the human and material resources of the classroom, the needs and motivations of the learners to learn the language, etc.

It is the teacher who has to intervene as an informed decision maker and this will become possible only if we as classroom teachers/practitioners familiarise ourselves with not only the wide range of techniques and strategies but also the general language needs of the learners, and their existing level of language competence.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
        b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Clarify the relationship between approach, method and techniques of language learning using a suitable example?

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2. Do you think there is a 'best' method for language teaching? Give reasons for your answer.

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Activity

1. Do you follow the lecture method of teaching? What according to you, are the advantages and disadvantages of the lecture method? Can a language teacher use this method for teaching language skills?

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Discussion

A lecture involves a continuous formal exposition of a discourse on some topic by a single person for the benefit of many (Curzon, 1985). It was the most successful method of teaching when textbooks were in short supply. It is used successfully even today in teaching content-based subjects like sociology and history. It is most economical with regard to the use of time.

However, a language is not a content-based subject. It is a skill-based subject. Skills can be mastered only through practice. For example, if one wants to learn driving, one cannot do so only by watching others drive. One has to drive oneself to learn this skill. Similarly, in order to learn a language one has to use (read, speak, listen, write) it oneself.

When the teacher uses the lecture method, the learners do not get practice in the use of the language. Language skills can be acquired only by active processing of the language by the learners themselves. The lecture method may however be used for developing listening skills but this has to be done in systematic ways through the use of tasks and exercises accompanying the lecture.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

Methods deal with the 'how' of teaching and are based upon one or more approaches to language learning. The behaviourists look upon language learning as a process of imitation and habit formation. The attempt here is to organise the language learning environment in such a way that 'errors' are reduced or avoided. This may be attempted through controlled presentation and practice of language items (structural patterns, vocabulary).

The cognitivists, on the other hand, look upon language learning as a process of hypothesis formation and hypothesis testing by language learners during the course of exposure to the language. Methods following this approach do not emphasise so much on control and 'accuracy' of language production but on autonomous and active processing of language content by the learners. Learner errors are seen as very much a part of the learning process.

Methods and techniques, properly viewed, are suggestions to the teacher. There is no 'best' method. The teacher must be aware of the rationale behind the various techniques and methods so that (s)he can function as an informed decision maker and utilize the various methodologies optimally to facilitate autonomous use of the language by the learners.

3.7 KEY WORDS

method	: a method may be defined as a way of doing things. Methods deal with the 'how' of teaching. The methodology of language teaching indicates the sequence to be followed in a language task/ activity and the role of the learners and the techer in it.
approach (to language learning and teaching)	: A theory about the nature of language and the process of language learning suggests methods and techniques which can lead to effective language learning. Such a theory may be termed as an 'approach' to language learning.
technique	: it refers to the design and procedural components of a method. It may be described as an implementational sub-process of a method. It specifies the teaching-learning practices as well as the roles of the teachers and learners.
grammar translation method	: it is a way of learning a language by studying the rules of its grammer and then applying these rules to the translation of sentences and texts from mother tongue to target language and vice-versa.
structural-oral-situational method	: it involves systematic presentation and practice of carefully selected and grade grammatical structures of the target language in effective and meaningful situations. The language items are reinforced through oral practice.
communicative language teaching approach	: the communicative approach is based on a semantic syllabus like the notional — functional syllabus. It attempts to organise the language classroom so that the learners have to 'use' the target language on their own in authentic communicative situations.

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. An approach is a theory of the nature of language and the process of language learning that suggests an effective framework or method of language learning. The implementational sub-processes to be followed in the classroom may be called 'techniques' of language learning.

    For example, the structural-oral-situational (S-O-S) method is based upon the behaviourist view of language learning. The language learning environment is organised in such a way that it reinforces correct the learning of language patterns by exposing learners to carefully graded and selected language structures in meaningful situations. Correct language habits are to be orally drilled.

implementation of the S-O-S method.

2. There is no best or standard method for language teaching. This is so because language learning situations differ widely with respect to the learners' existing language competence; the material and human resources of the classroom (i.e., availability of paper, pictures, blackboard, etc.) and the language learning needs of the learners.

    Thus the teacher has to step in as an informed decision maker and selects and adapts methods and techniques that will effectively cater to the language needs of his/her learners.

3.9   SUGGESTED READING

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UNIT 4   DAILY LESSON PLANS: STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM TRANSACTION

Structure

4.1   INTRODUCTION

"Successful teachers are effective planners. Therefore, novice and experienced teachers alike must plan and plan well"

Planning of instruction requires a lot of thought and attention. A lesson plan reflects the thinking and the decisions of a teacher for effective teaching. A comprehensive plan encapsulates the instructional objectives, the content outline in the sequence to be presented, the learning activities, resources and materials and evaluation strategies necessary to achieve the best possible results in a classroom. Thus, as the name indicates, a daily lesson plan is a plan to transact a lesson in a class, although it is not always possible to stick rigidly to it.

The individual teacher dealing with her particular class of pupils is, as we know, working within an already prepared framework. This framework represented by the syllabus and materials, is general and common to all classes of a given level. It is easy to see that designers and producers of the common curriculum (especially the course book) do not have access to all this detailed information about every class in every school; and even if they did, they would not be able to include it in a common curriculum in any meaningful way. Thus the prescribed scheme found in the syllabus and materials amounts only to a loose and incomplete framework. The teacher has to fill in the 'spaces' and fulfil the **intentions** of the curriculum planners. She has to develop this scheme (words on paper) into teaching-learning activities that call for attention and effort (cognitive operations) on the part of **real** learners. These activities that make up **lessons** provide learning experiences. These lessons spread over a term or year constitute the major part of the actual **instruction** in given subjects that pupil **receive** in school. They are the building blocks of school based instruction. The simplest way of describing the school teacher's job or profession is to refer to the teaching of 'lessons in the classroom'. Of course the teacher does other things too; many things that happpen outside the classroom are also the concern of the teacher : homework is the best example. But nearly all these outside — the class activities are linked to some specific aspect of lessons in class.

The pre-designed syllabus materials framework as we have seen is general. Lessons occur in particular classrooms and so have to be specific. This means making what happens during the lesson appropriate for the particular group of pupils involved. A 'teacher' giving private (individual) tuition to a pupil tries to match her tutoring to the needs of this learner. She does this partly by adjusting the complexity of presentation, the nature of explanations and illustrations,

the speed or pace of the discussion, the extent of repetitions and review. The classroom teacher faces a similar challenge, but in relation to say, 40 pupils. While paying individual and 'personalized' attention to each one of them is clearly impossible, the teacher has to try and reach as many different types of learners as possible — the eager and the seemingly disinterested, the capable and the weak, those who try hard (even struggle) and those who give up easily, those who cooperate and those who disrupt, and so on. Handling such diversity with sensitivity and imagination is the central challenge facing the teacher. We shall see later in this unit how planning helps in this context.

The size and diversity of a typical class has another important implication. This is that lessons take place in a **social context.** A class is not made up of 40 isolated individuals sitting at their desks and dealing only with the teacher. The pupils form social group: interaction among them is inevitable as they are together for many hours a day. We could treat this as a nuisance; alternatively we could treat it as a valuable resource that can be built upon. We would then see lessons as something learners and teachers work together to create, and not essentially something that pupils sit back and 'receive' like the strangers who happen to go into the same public lecture hall or theatre at the same time. Interaction between members of this learning group is inevitable. We could view this as something undesirable that happens 'when the teacher's back is turned'. Alternatively, we could treat this as a resource, and make the participation and interaction among pupils as a valuable resource that can be made a part of lessons.

What this means essentially is that different pupils could be doing somewhat different things, and some part (at least) of what they say and do contributes to the **public lessons** — and does not remain only a personal learning experience. When individuals interact and collaborate they have different roles and so have to use language for different purposes. This means producing a wide range of **texts.** The 'language' available during a lesson thus does not have to be restricted to what is in the book or what the teacher says. When we discuss language lessons in the next section, we will see that these (potential) inputs from learners themselves can be of great value for language learning.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this lesson, you will be able to:

● explain the need of making daily lesson plans;

● name the three important components of a lesson plan;

● discuss the relevance and significance of the different sections of a lesson plan;

● draft a lesson plan keeping in mind the different sections to be included.

4.3 ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A LESSON PLAN

We have seen how the teacher needs to develop the base material in the syllabus and course book into the processes of lessons. To some extent the nature of the 'subject matter' influences the structure of (suitable) classroom lessons. Here we find that language has certain special qualities. For most school subjects the course book provides, in a fairly detailed manner, the items of *content* (information, definitions, rules, theories) that are to be 'taught'. This involves presenting, explaining, demonstrating, etc. by the teacher so that this content is **transmitted** effectively to pupils and it becomes a part of their knowledge. For language (which we treat as a **skill** subject rather than a content subject), the value of such content (knowledge) in itself is rather limited.

The main objective of the teaching-learning of a living language — like English — is to help the learners to become able to **use** it to communicate with others, by sending and receiving meaningful messages. Formal knowledge 'about' the language is useful, but this cannot be the primary concern of language lessons. This is important for teachers of English. But surely the pupil in Standard VIII or IX does not need to 'know' all this technical information. Similarly, gaining knowledge and understanding of the ideas (content) found in passages, stories, poems, that the course book contains is not a major aim in itself. Learning this content is primarily a **means** to the larger goal of becoming skilled in the use of English.

There is a 'problem' that arises here which we must face. We have seen that neither 'information'

about the English language as a system nor the 'ideas' in passages, poems, etc. form the central core or backbone of the language curriculum. **What does it consist of then?** This is where we have to restate, indeed reaffirm one general principle emerging from our awareness about the nature of language, namely that language is learnt most successfully by **experiencing its use.** This does NOT mean that pupils have to talk and write (produce complex texts) most of the time. What it means is that during lessons they should get a fair measure of exposure to and experience of language in use — similar to what the child acquiring a language 'naturally' seems to get very easily most of the time.

The stories, passages, poems, ... in the course materials are texts of various types. How does the teacher help pupils to engage with texts in such a manner that they experience how meaning is expressed or conveyed through the language they contain? The samples of language available even in a Standard VII or VIII level course books will include a wide range of selections. Among them may be texts carrying descriptions of deeply felt personal experience, accounts of emotionally powerful interactions among persons (characters), expressions (in verse or prose) of joy and zest, or of sadness and weariness, parts of speeches or documents that have inspired and moved people, descriptions or explanations of 'technical' items that are clear and interesting even to the layman, pieces with hidden meanings that emerge only after much reading/re-reading and reflection....

The objective of language teaching (when we have brought learners together in a classroom) is not to 'transmit' the teacher's superior understanding and appreciation of such texts to pupils; it is rather, to help them experience or 'see for themselves' the meanings. Further, we would also want them to see how meaning is related to aspects of language form or structure as demonstrated in the texts. What is interesting about such texts is that they can (with some seriousness and sincerity) be approached from many perspectives. A whole range of 'questions' can be raised directly or indirectly about a text: Who created it? Who is the sender/author? Who is it addressed to? Why was it created? When? In what context/circumstances? Could the same 'message' have been conveyed in some other way(s)? What response might it have generated originally? Will other 'receivers' react in the same way? The point here is NOT that dozens of such trivial comprehension questions must be asked in relation to every 'passage'. These are not 'comprehension' questions as such; they are rather, ways of approaching and responding to texts. For our discussion, these questions/approaches represent the principle that many tasks or activities can be taken up in class, that would carry discussion far beyond the specific and limited aim of finding **the** meaning of the passage.

We should take note here of the special position that the language teacher is in. The teacher of a content subject who has to deal with a chapter with some such matter, **cannot** afford to go into the open-ended questions suggested above, even if pupils are willing. This is because the objective of instruction there is for pupils to get or learn the ideas in the passages. Similarly, in a linguistics class, such selected texts serve as data for studying the rules of the language. However (and here is the important principle), in a language lesson such activities that take off from a given text — re-reading and reflection, dramatization/role-play, rendering as picture/cartoon, composing continuations (story completion is one example), imagining different endings/continuations, etc. — can be of value.They can provide many (perhaps not all) pupils with opportunities to engage and interact with texts following their own interests, attitudes and styles. There are no single 'right answers' to be produced or arrived at by all. Through such explorations pupils might get a 'feel' for how 'language works' to express meanings in a variety of settings. The discussion and collaboration involved in such activities will also provide pupils with opportunities to use language purposefully to negotiate meaning.

The general principle for language instruction that emerges from this discussion is that the language lesson should provide for a variety of open-ended tasks demanding attention and effort and some measure of interaction on the part of all the pupils. Presentation and explanation of 'content' by the teacher (to which pupils 'listen') should be only one of the strands in the processes of instruction in the classroom, but not the dominant one. Possible, it is after this type of effort on the part of pupils, that explanation-analysis by the teacher (good old fashioned pedagogy!) becomes really useful. Language lessons as we think of them now, have learner activity as a major and significant feature, and not merely something to be taken up (time permitting) after the usual presenting-explaining by the teacher has been done.

However, 'learner activity' is not an end itself. Simply reducing 'teacher talk' will not automatically lead to language learning. Good language lessons do not simply happen; they have to be prepared and planned with great care. It is not only the 'what' and 'how' of presentation that has to be planned, but also 'when' and 'how' pupils are to be involved, and how what they do/produce can be built upon to create relevant learning experiences. We turn to some practical suggestions relating to planning classroom lessons with this perspective in the next section.

There is no one prescribed format for a lesson plan, but there are **three** important components in any lesson plan. They are :

a)   The lesson objectives.

b)   The teaching methods, materials, media aids, learning tasks/activities and their organisation.

c)   Evaluative procedures.

Gagne and Briggs refer to these components as 'anchor points' in the design of instruction and comments that constant reference to these components helps a teacher 'to keep the lesson on target'. The same elements can be expressed in forms of questions, e.g.

a)   **Where** am I going? (Objective)

b)   **How** will I get there? (Steps by means of which the objective is achieved.)

c)   How will I know when I have arrived (The use of appropriate evaluative procedures).

If a teacher keeps these anchor points and corresponding questions in mind, s/he is able to develop a course of action that serves as a guide but from which appropriate deviations can be made, if necessary.

We have noted over and over again that the individual teacher is working within the framework represented by the syllabus and course materials. In a typical school the 'academic calendar' for the year (agreed upon at a general staff meeting) will indicate the number of hours/periods for each subject over a term, and during each teaching phase before unit tests, monthly tests, terminal examinations and so on. The broad sequencing and time allocation for major syllabus topics or units is also done at the beginning of the year.

The teacher's work towards planning and preparation for day-to-day instruction begins when the focus narrows down to 'what' will be done in a series of lessons linked to a unit (spread over about a week, say). The 'what' question here covers both topics/content and instructional activity. However elaborate the course book, it will not (and cannot) indicate in detail the transactions involved when forty pupils and the teacher work together to 'cover' the given unit. Working these out in the form of a detailed 'plan' for each lesson and related homework/ assignments is the responsibility of the teacher. It is true that many teachers — especially experienced ones — do not write out detailed plans for every lesson. We might note here, that not having a neatly 'written' plan (which is clear to others) does not mean that there was no planning at all. Experinced teachers can rely more on what they know intuitively and on their store of experience. They are less likely to be caught off-guard if something unexpected happens in class, and are less vulnerable to getting stuck on one or two minor points and neglecting more important matter. Planning is of importance for all teachers, especially for those at the beginning of their career.

Planning as we treat it here should not be seen as a detailed list of things to do in strict order. In some minimal sense, such programming of items in sequence with time allocations is of course useful; but plans must not become burdens. (Imagine a father (or mother) insisting on following a carefully worked out 180 minute plan for a family visit to the zoo, when the children are normal youngsters of primary school age.) The important principle underlying planning, especially of language lessons, is that most of what pupils 'do' and 'experience' during a lesson should be purposeful. The different phases of teaching-learning activity making up the lesson become purposeful when they contribute in some way to the aims and objectives of the lesson and unit. Another way of saying this is that the objectives (learning targets) of a unit call for certain types of learning experiences. The lessons related to this unit should provide them, and this is the task of the teacher.

The term 'learning experinces' refers to what individual pupils might be perceiving, thinking, feeling, intending to do, attempting to do, while a lesson is in progress (and while doing homework, assignments, etc.). Such experiences undoubtedly are personal and private. No one else (like the teacher) can directly control them or order (demand) what they 'should' be. However, it is possible and reasonable to argue that certain types of teaching-learning activities would probably generate certain types of learning experiences.

The course book (materials) represents one strand or layer of activities. Some of the activities commonly indicated in course books are: silent reading of short texts, re-reading of texts with specific purposes in mind, formulating responses to texts (explaining, predicting, relating to life), expressing them in speech or writing, working on language exercises, composing shorter or longer texts (written or spoken). Among the activities that the teacher can add or develop from the materials are : listening to teacher's presentations-explanations, reading aloud, taking down notes (from teacher talk or blackboard work), engaging in a discussion with the teacher (all students can be involved even if only a few actually speak), working on tasks/problems or discussing some issue in pairs or groups.

It is very obvious that the above list is only a sample and many more activities are possible. This abundance of possibilities for classroom 'operations' should remind us that when teacher talk becomes the predominant mode of activity in a lesson many other possible and desirable things are not happening. Similarly if twenty minutes or more are devoted to writing answers or compositions (silently and individually) other possibilities are being set aside. It is the need to choose from this large set of possibilities that makes planning and preparation for lessons virtually unavoidable. Planning by the teacher does not necessarily mean major deviations from the scheme given in the course book. Modern course books are well organized and contain a wide variety of activities. (After all syllabus designers and materials writers have expertise, library resources and time in plenty!) The argument we are considering here is not that the course book is unsuitable, but that it is common and general and hence incomplete.

Given the wide variation in pupil characteristics and classroom situations across schools, some units will not match or suit some groups of learners. This is where the teacher has to make conscious choices and decisions, based on her intimate knowledge about her class — abilities, style, discipline, interest, and above all, their learning history, i.e. what they have and have not already learnt or been exposed to in earlier classes or in other subjects. Planning done with such information in mind will lead to a plan/scheme for a lesson (or set of two or three) that is tailor-made for each particular class. Other teachers also dealing with the very same unit and topic, will develop different plans. Thus the essential part of planning is the selection by the teacher of activities (learning experiences) "most suited to my pupils now" from the large inventory of 'generally' good items available.

One aspect of planning for lessons is the listing of a series of things that the teacher will do and the pupils will do along with the time estimates. This would function like a detailed programme schedule. A second aspect of planning is linked to the emphasis we now place on pupil involvement and participation. As we noted in secion 4.1, some of what pupils do or produce can contribute to the lesson proper. How does this happen? One example can be found in the way composition classes are conducted sometimes. A broad theme or topics is taken up for preliminary discussion. Opinions and suggestions from pupils are invited and put up on the board with only minimal correction or editing. With this pool of ideas as a base, the focus and structure of the piece (paragraph, report, story,...) is agreed upon and the actual writing begins. Now let us look more closely at what happens. Instead of the teacher simply 'giving' a topic and outline of points/hints (such complete writing exercises are found in course books), their ideas and suggestions are made a part of the preparation for writing. An idea that one pupil has is made available to others. Individual pupils thus contribute to the 'inputs' received by others as a part of the lesson —helping the teacher in effect. The point to be noted in relation to planning here is that such a process of participation is open-ended and unpredictable. A class may find the proposed theme very exciting and virtually flood the teacher with their ideas; or they might be quite bored and unresponsive. In the former case the teacher will have to manage the discussion skillfully and move to the next phase at an appropriate time. This has to be done sensitively. After inviting pupils to offer their ideas it is unfair and discouraging to cut short the discussion suddenly, after only a few have spoken. The teacher needs to anticipate what happens and be prepared. This is what lies at the heart of planning.

1 Complete the following sentences:

i)   A daily lesson plan is..

ii)   A teacher may teach the same topic differently in different classes
because...

iii)   The three important components of a lesson are................., ...
and..............................

iv)   Lesson plans are helpful because...

4.4 LESSON OBJECTIVES

The lesson objectives are framed keeping in mind the particular children and their level. These objectives which list the learning intent both in broad and specific terms may be formulated either in non-behavioural or behavioural terms. The behavioural objective explicitly states the **observable abilities** (the behavioural change) the teacher desires the learners to acquire. For example, if you, a language teacher have a prose text on wildlife conservation to teach in Class VIII, your instructional objectives may be as follows:

At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to:

- enumerate the traditions/customs that contributed to wildlife conservation;

- compare and contrast protection of forests in pre-British and British period;

- distinguish characteristics of private hunting reserves of British period and protected national parks and areas of independent India;

- arrive at the meaning of certain phrases like **closed season**, **hunting preserves** using contextual clues.

<div align="center">or</div>

frame the following instructional objectives for a poetry lesson:

At the end of the lesson, the learners will be able to :

- explain the three poetic qualities of Rhythm, Rhyme and alliteration with reference to the poem. 'The West Wind' by John Masefield.

- give examples of alliteration from the poem.

Instructional objectives fulfil a three-fold function. They guide the teacher in selecting and organising learning activities that facilitate effective learning. The objectives also provide a framework for post-teaching evaluation. They also make the learners aware of the skills and knowledge that they are supposed to master.

2. Complete the following statements :

i) Instructional objectives are considered an essential part of a lesson plan because

....

....

ii) It is advisable to communicate the instructional objectives to the learners because

....

....

iii) Behavioural objectives expect the learners to demonstrate

....

....

3. State which of the following instructional objectives are observable and measurable:

The student will be able to:

i) Comprehend the meaning of the poem.

ii) Interpret a graph in a few written sentences.

iii) develop notions about the importance of festive occasions.

iv) organise ideas (generated in a brainstorming session) into coherent paragraphs.

....

....

4.5 INTRODUCING A LESSON

Learning cannot take place, unless a learner is motivated and has interest in what is going on in the class. At the beginning of the lesson, it is therefore imperative to attract students' attention and interest. Although it would depend on the level of the students and the topic to be taught, you can consider some of the following techniques.

a) **By relating the days lesson to what has already been taught before**, the teacher establishes a link between the past lesson and what is to happen today. A teacher may begin with a recapitulation of what was done in the previous class and then explain how the day's lesson takes off from what has already been done.

b) An **overview** of the lesson can be a summary of the content, or by making the learners aware how the new knowledge can be used by them in daily life (e.g. writing a letter of complaint in case a faulty item has been sold to you) or by posing a problem the solution to which is to be gathered from the day's lesson.

c) Ausubel's concept of **advance organisers** is also closely related to arousing student interest. Advance organisers can be generalisations, definitions, or analysis which act as a conceptual bridge between the new and old information. The students also get to know what to look for in the forthcoming lesson.

d) Sometimes a teacher may use the instructional objectives of a lesson as a means to motivate the students. By communicating what the students are supposed to do at the end of the lesson, the teacher builds a 'kind of expectancy' from the day's lesson.

As Moore comments, "Motivating students is not always an easy task.... Let your topic and known student interest provide clues for creating lesson motivators..... Provide a tickler.... Pose a perplexing problem. Share a story. These are all possibilites for setting the stage for teaching".

Check Your Progress

4. State whether **True** or **False**.

i) An introduction to the lesson is optional. (T/F)

ii) Introductions to lessons should be similar. (T/F)

iii) A summary of the content to be taught can be used as an introduction to the day's lesson. (T/F)

iv) Advance organisers help students to remember and apply old information to day's (new) lesson. (T/F)

4.6   PRESENTATION OF CONTENT

Usually a well planned lesson includes not just the content but also the strategy that would be used for the presentation. These days, many of the English readers developed on the communicative approach, indicate the activities that need to be undertaken at particular point of time and whether the activity involves individual work/pair work or group work. Also with a renewed emphasis on integration of skills, a language teacher now has indications in the text book itself in organising a variety of tasks which synthesize both content and communication skills.

As a lesson plan usually indicates the steps you as a teacher would like to follow while teaching a particular lesson, the questions that you intend to ask to check the comprehension of the content presented, the blackboard work you would like to include in the class, are all included in the sequence that you intend to have.

(Before you start writing your lesson plans, you should revise the lessons on teaching Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Grammar, Prose and Poetry — so that you recapitulate how as a teacher you have to act more as a facilitator to learning rather than a transmitter of information. You must remember that your students are to acquire the language skills through active participation and that the tasks and activities that you select and organise for them should help them to master the different skills.

This section of the lesson plan is significant because it indicates how you want to go about teaching the lesson. You must remember that a variety of techniques and reinforcement of the skills are essential for effective acquisition and assimilation of new content.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a)   Write your answers in the space given below.
  b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5.   Choose any lesson of your choice from an English Textbook prescribed for schools in your region. Mention the lesson you have chosen.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

6.   Choose any text — prose, poetry, composition. Mention the lesson you would like to work on.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

7.   List the questions that you would like to pose your students.

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

8.   Is there any scope of pair work or group work in the lesson of your choice? If yes, write in detail how you would go about organising it. (If not, think of a writing task or oral activity which can be related to the theme of the lesson).

   ....

   ....

   ....

59

4.7 FEEDBACK

So far you, the teacher, were involved in presentation, exposition and explanation through oral questioning, discussions and illustrations. You also had to reinforce and consolidate the newly acquired knowledge or skills through practice/use in new situations. But your lesson would be incomplete without determining how well the students have mastered the intended learning outcomes of the lesson. This can be done by you by providing opportunities for the learner to demonstrate what has been learned. Such demonstration of abilities may take a written, oral, creative or practical form and can also be reinforced and consolidated through home assignments.

This stage is important as the teacher tries to find out not only how well his/her learners have acquired the new skill but also if s/he has been able to do what s/he wanted to do.

4.8 POST LESSON REFLECTIONS

Donald Cruickshank (1987) suggests that those teachers who consider their teaching carefully and thoughtfully become better planners and successful teachers. According to Cruickshank, careful reflections on past experiences result in teacher growth and lead to more effective planning and teaching.

Through such reflective teaching the teacher might record any interesting points that came up, any changes s/he had to make in lesson plan in the class, or s/he might examine student satisfaction with the lesson or examine whether all students were actively involved in the lesson or if the group activity did not go on very well what could have been the possible causes.

Such analysis would undoubtedly help in improving classroom practice. In short, both planning and reviewing lessons are necessary and useful for teaching.

4.9 LESSON FORMATS

We have already mentioned that there is no one set lesson format which you can use for all lessons. What you have to keep track of are the three components or anchor points. However, in this section we include for you two formats which you may like to use when you start planning your lessons.

Lesson Plan Format 1

1. Lesson Topic
2. Objectives
3. Introduction
4. Procedures or steps
5. Content Outline:
   a) Key Questions
   b) Possible Answers
   c) Summary
   (Sub-stage 5 to be repeated till the end of the lesson)
6. Recapitulation and Conclusion
7. Assignment

Lesson Plan Format 2

1. Subject		2. Date
3. Class		4. Time

5. Lesson Plan Number
6. Objectives
7. Audio visual aids

Content	Method
8. Introduction	
9. Presentation	
Sub-stage 1.	
2.	
3. etc.	
10. Application	
11. Conclusion	

In Format 2 the teacher indicates in the Method column how s/he intends to teach the expressed content of the lesson. Instead of writing ask questions — the teacher has to write down the question that she/he proposes to ask. The method column may further state how organisational features are to be implemented (individual work/group work or free activity), how the blackboard is to be used, how illustrative material is to be used, details of assignment evaluative techniques and so on.

You may also find the following Table on comparison of teacher-centred and student-centred methodologies helpful to choose your approach.

Table 5.1 : Comparison of Teacher-Centered and Student-Centred Methodologies

Method	Amount of Teacher Control	Intent and Unique Features
Teacher-Centered Instructional Approaches		
Lecture	High	Telling technique. Teacher presents information without student interaction.
Lecture-Recitation	High to moderate	Telling technique. Teacher presents information and follows up with question/answer sessions.
Socratic	Moderate	Interaction technique. Teacher uses question-driven dialogues to draw out information from students.
Demonstration	High to moderate	Showing technique. Individual stands before class, shows something, and talks about it.
Modeling	High moderate	Showing technique. Teacher or individual behaves/ acts in way desired of students, and students learn by copying actions of model.
Student-Centered Instructional Approaches		
Discussion	Low to moderate	Interaction technique. Whole-class or small-group interact on topic.
Panel	Low	Telling technique. Group of students present and/or discuss information.
Debate	Low	Telling technique. Competitive discussion of topic between teams of students.
Role Playing	Low	Doing technique. Acting out of roles or situations.
Cooperative Learning	Low	Doing technique. Students work together in mixed-ability group on task(s).
Discovery	Low to moderate	Doing technique. Students follow established procedure for solving problems through direct experiences.
Inquiry	Low	Doing technique. Students establish own procedure for solving problems through direct experiences.
Simulations/Games	Low	Doing technique. Involvement in an artificial but representative situation or event.
Individualized Instruction	Low to	Telling/doing technique. Students engage in learning designed to fit their needs and abilities.
Independent Study	Low	Telling/doing technique. Learning carried out with little guidance.

(**Source** : *Secondary Instructional Methods*, Kenneth D. Moore, 1994, Brown and BenchMark.)

We also include a few specimen lessons which you may find useful.

Lesson Plan No.1

Topic :	The elements of story writing
Objectives :	Given a picture stimulus, students will be able to write a short fiction story that contains the needed elements for a short story.
Introduction : (set induction)	Read aloud a short fiction story that will be of interest to the class. (*Jumping Mouse*, a short myth, demonstrates the elements in an interesting but condensed form.)
Content :	The elements of a short story

I.   Short story beginning.
    A.   Describes the setting.
    B.   Introduces the main character.
    C.   Introduces the plot (problem or goal the main character attempts to solve or achieve).

II.   Middle story elements
    A.   First roadblock (character's attempt to reach goal).
    B.   Second roadblock.
    C.   Climax of story (character reaches goal).

III.   Story ending
    A.   Make conclusions.
    B.   Wrap up any loose ends.

Procedure :

1.   After the oral reading, ask students to explain when and how the author introduced the main character.

2.   Discuss the promptness with which authors introduce the main character, setting, and plot in short stories. Record responses on the chalkboard using the bell-shaped curve to portray the elements of short stories.

3.   At this point, ask students to summarize the elements needed in a short story's beginning. (They should be able to identify; introduction of the main character, description of the story setting, and introduction of the story plot.) It is important to convey to students that the order in which the elements are introduced is not important; but rather, that the inclusion of these elements is a crucial feature of the short story.

4.   Next, ask students to recall the first roadblock (or difficulty the main character had in attempting to reach the intended goal). Record responses on bell curve and stress that the middle of a story includes the majority of the story – including the story's climax.

5.   As students recall the roadblocks presented in the short book, continue to record these on the bell-shaped curve to demonstrate the rising tension presented in the story.

6.   Ask students to describe how the main character finally confronted and solved the problem presented in the introduction of the story. Explain that this element is called the climax of the story. The climax should be placed at the top of the bell-shaped curve to isolate it as the peak of the story.

7.   Ask students to summarize the elements that constitute the middle parts of a short story. (The bell-shaped curve on the chalkboard should reveal that the middle story elements are composed of roadblocks in the main character's attempt to reach a goal, and the climax or the reaching of that goal.)

8.   Finally, ask students to talk about the brevity the author uses to end the story quickly once the main character has reached his or her goal.

Closure :	Ask students to make an outline of the elements of a short story using the information presented on the bell-shaped curve.
Evaluation :	Consider student's answers to questions during class discussions. Check students' short-story outlines as work is being completed.
Assignment :	Let each student choose a picture from a magazine and instruct them to use the outlines as a guide in writing a short story about the picture selected.

(**Source** : *Secondary Instructional Methods,* Kenneth D. Moore, 1994, Brown and Benchmark)

Lesson Plan No. 2

Class : VIII A

Subject : **English**
Topic   :   Composition

1. Specific Objectives
    a)   to help students write correct expressive English.
    b)   to encourage them to have different and original ways of looking at a subject.
    c)   to show them how to organise their thoughts into a compact whole.

2. Introduction
    "A Visit to the Bazar on a Hot and Rainy Day". Discuss atmosphere. Now I shall read out two extracts on it. Take note of anything that attracts your fancy.

3. Presentation
    a)   Extracts from Gerald Durrell and Priestley with expression, drawing their attention to words that help build up the atmosphere.
    b)   Discussion of extracts in terms of atmosphere.
    c)   Composition — framework is built up with the help of the class. The following is a probable outline.

Outline

1. An overall appearance of Janpath — *Placement*
    — Ramshackle pieces of corrugated steel.
    — Haphazardly put together.
    — An anachronism at the portals of dignified Connaught Place.
    — Modern, sophisticated tall buildings all around.

2. *The Scene*
    Bright splashes of colour.
    Young college girls — their airs.
    Matrons, leisurely walk.
    Hurrying, scurrying passers-by in contrast.

3. *Hawkers and beggars*
    Shrill, piercing cries.
    — children tugging at your chunni.
    — picturesque beggars with grotesque sores.
    — eccentric hippies condescending to ask you to buy a fake watch.

4. *The Shops*
    — Exciting wares, irresistible placards saying "SALE".
    — Clever salesman, baiting unsuspecting fish.
    — Dazzling light, strong odour of perfume.
    — Inviting ice-cream, mod discothoques.

5. *Atmosphere*
    — Pictures
    — Movements
    — Incident, events
    — Noise
    — Life — as it goes by.

(**Source** : *Teaching of English : A Modern Approach,* Dr. K. Bose.)

Activity

1. You have taught a lesson that you had planned. At the end of the class when you start asking recapitulation questions, you find that many students had not understood some portions/teaching points. What would you do?

2. Would you as a teacher like to analyse your lesson after you have taught one? Give reasons for your answer.

4.10 LET US SUM UP

● A lesson plan should provide a structure to a lesson, but one must be flexible.

● The instructional objectives are framed according to the level and abilities of the students.

● Plan interesting ways of introducing your lesson.

● Break your lessons into clear steps or stages. Match teaching strategies to lesson objectives. Include different activities to hold student interest.

● Provide opportunities for practice and reinforcement.

● Review the lesson for feedback on student learning (achievement of objectives) and your own teaching.

4.11 KEY WORDS

lesson plan	:	a proposed course of action that serves as a guide for teaching a lesson.
objectives	:	the specific learning intent of the day's lesson.
introducing a lesson	:	an activity at the beginning of the lesson to attract student attention and interest.
presentation of content	:	a sequential listing of activities (selected to achieve the instructional objectives).
feedback	:	an activity or technique to determine how well the students have mastered the intended outcomes of the lesson.
post lesson reflection	:	analysis of and reflection on one's classroom teaching.

4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.   i)   A daily lesson plan is a proposed course of action to teach a day's lesson.

    ii)   The level, interest and abilities of the student.

    iii)   The lesson objectives, the teaching methods and feedback.

    iv)   It provides the opportunity to plan the activities carefully/prepares a teacher to face a class.

2.   i)   On them depend the activities to be chosen and the procedure for evaluation of the students.

    ii)   The students know what they are expected to master at the end of the lesson.

    iii)   The abilities/skills that are specified for mastery.

3.   (ii) and (iv)

4.   i)   False

    ii)   False

iii) True

iv) True

5. Open-ended.

6. Open-ended.

7. Open-ended.

8. Open-ended.

4.13 SUGGESTED READINGS

Kemp, et. al. (1994): *Designing Effective Instruction*, Macmillan College Publishing Company.

Moore, et. al. (1994): *Secondary Instructional Methods*, Brown and BenchMark.

A Guide to Teaching Practice.

BED-E-32/BED-SE-32
Teaching of English

**Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University**

Block

2

Listening Comprehension and Speaking

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. R.N. Mehrotra
Former Head and Dean
Department of Education (CIE)
University of Delhi, Delhi

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Former Dean
University of Mysore, Mysore

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Director
NCERT, New Delhi

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Deptt. of Education (CIE)
Delhi University, Delhi

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Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

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Former PVC, IGNOU, New Delhi

Prof. M.B. Menon
IGNOU
New Delhi

Prof. L.C. Singh
Formerly Consultant
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. M.C. Sharma
Programme Coordinator-Theory
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Sohanvir S. Chaudhary
Programme Coordinator-Practicals
IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE TEAM

Course Contribution
Ms. Kiran Bhatt
Modern School
New Delhi

Ms. Gopa Biswas
National Open School
New Delhi

Content Editing
Prof. V.K. Sabharwal
University of Delhi, Delhi

Ms. Gopa Biswas
National Open School
New Delhi

Dr. Anju Sahgal Gupta
IGNOU
New Delhi

Language Editing
Ms. Poonam Bhushan
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Anju Sahgal Gupta
IGNOU, New Delhi

Course Coordinator
Ms. Poonam Bhushan
IGNOU
New Delhi

This Programme has been developed in collaboration with the School of Humanities.

PRODUCTION

Pro V.S. Prasad
Pro-Vice Chancellor & Director I/c
School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

K.G. Sasi Kumar
Section Officer (Publication)
School of Education
IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE ES-344 TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Block 1 **Instructional Planning in Teaching of English**

Unit 1   Nature, need and Objectives

Unit 2   Who are the Learners of Language ?

Unit 3   Approaches, Methods and Techniques in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Unit 4   Daily Lesson Plans : Strategies for Classroom Transaction

Block 2 **Listening Comprehension and Speaking**

Unit 5   **Teaching Listening - I**

Unit 6   **Teaching Listening - II**

Unit 7   **Developing Speaking/Oral Skills**

Unit 8   **Speaking Activities**

Unit 9   **Testing Listening Ability and Listening Comprehension**

Unit 10   **testing Speaking Skills**

Block 3 **Reading Comprehension**

Unit 11   The Reading Process

Unit 12   Developing Reading Skills

Unit 13   Reading Comprehension - I

Unit 14   Reading Comprehension - II

Unit 15   Teaching Vocabulary

Block 4 **Teaching, Writing and Grammar**

Unit 16   The Writing Process

Unit 17   Different Types of Writing

Unit 18   Teaching Study Skills

Unit 19   Teaching Grammar : New Type Activities and Games

Unit 20   Improving and Assessing Writing Ability

Unit 21   Testing Grammar and Usage

BLOCK 2 LISTENING COMPREHENSION AND SPEAKING

Block Introduction

The main focus of this Block is to discuss the various aspects of listening comprehension and speaking in teaching-learning situations. The first Unit is an attempt to equip you as a teacher with skills required to impart necessary listening skills to your learners. The unit also highlights the process of undertaking phases activity in this context.

The second Unit introduces the reasons for teaching listening while highlighting the different kinds of listening material and activities that can be used with the learners. The unit also discuss how listening skills can be integrates with speaking, reading and writing.

The third Unit i.e 'Developing Speaking/Oral Skills' focuses mainly on the importance of spoken and oral skills. here your role as a teacher is also brought into light especially for sustaining and enlivening oral skills.

While understanding the nature and need speaking activities for the learner, the fourth Unit, 'Speaking Activities', attempts to focus on the need to forge the link between the curricular to the real life needs of the learners, incorporating real life situations so that the learners can systematically and efficiently acquire a repertoire of oral skills, your role as a teacher, once again is highlighted and emphasised as being centre, stage.

The last two Units namely 'Testing Listening Ability and Listening Comprehension and 'Testing Speaking Skills' deal mainly with student assessment and evaluation in these two areas. There is a discussion on the variety of items that can be used different levels for testing listening comprehension and speaking skills. The task of teachers here is to specify the skills they aim to test, check the conditions in which the test is taken (as this affects the difficulty level of the test) and also help to keep track or even vary the criteria of assessment of different tasks.

UNIT 5 TEACHING LISTENING - I

Structure

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of teaching listening comprehension is to help learners of English develop skills to cope with listening to speech in real life. Listening is an important though difficult skill which is often overlooked in the formal teaching of English as a second language. It needs to be developed consciously and systematically. Learners of English at the secondary stage have to comprehend speech in a variety of situations, such as the following:

- listening to a talk or lecture

- participating in a meeting, seminar, debate or discussion

- participating in a conversation

- listening to announcements at school and at public places outside school

- taking part in a lesson

- participating in a telephone conversation

- listening to recorded/broadcast music, news, sports commentaries, wheather forecasts, etc.

- watching a film, play or TV programme

- being interviewed

- being tested orally in a subject of study.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to :

- identify the various situations where the learner needs to practise and develop listening skills;

- identify and differentiate between the three kinds of listening materials for teaching listening comprehension;
- familiarise yourself with a sample listening lesson;
- understand the chief features of an effective listening lesson.

5.3 DIFFERENT KINDS OF LISTENING MATERIAL/ PASSAGES

There are three main kinds of listening materials that you can use for the listening lesson. They are:

- authentic listening materials
- recorded listening materials
- live listening materials

Each of the above has its own advantages and disadvantages. Let us examine and find out.

5.3.1 Using Authentic Materials

Authentic materials consist of speech recorded in real situations and thus provide learners with real-life listening tasks. The language they hear is real and not rehearsed or artificial.

But learners may find the language difficult to understand. It may be too fast, rambling, repetitive or unclear. It cannot be readily graded and thus may be unsuitable to the learner's level.

One of the ways to overcome this problem is to give the learners notes and undertake some pre-listening task.

Examples of authentic materials can be recordings of announcements in the examination hall, on the school sports field, e.g., a sports commentry, radio recordings, announcements made at the railway station, bus stop and at the airports.

Real life dialogues and discussion can also be used authentic materials.

5.3.2 Using Recorded Listening Materials

Recorded materials are listening inputs which have been specially scripted for teaching purposes. For example, the Class IX CBSE Course A English Textbook *Interact* has recordings of listening inputs which can be used by the teacher to heip develop listening skills in the learner. In addition, many learning material developed for second language learners have accompanying audio casettes and worksheets. Besides this, the teacher can develop her/ his own listening materials in tape.

In using recorded materials there are the following advantages:

1. Learners can get exposure to a variety of voice and a range of accents making it more realistic.
2. It gives them a chance to hear several people participating in discussions or conversations.
3. The teacher or student can stop the tape, repeat and replay the cassette as often (s)he likes.
4. It also gives the learners the option to practise and develop listening skills on their own.

As visual clues are absent in recorded material, it forces the learner to concentrate on tone of voice, type of vocabulary and thus the focus becomes the actual speech/conversation. This gives intensive aural practice to the learner.

5.3.3 Using Live Listening Materials

One of the major advantages of using live listening materials is that it is much easier to control the level of difficulty and formality since here, the teacher herself may be speaking the piece. The teacher can convey the materials meant for listening practice in her own words and can simplify or slow down the listening text to suit her students' level. She can make her own speech natural by using skeletal notes and not a fully scripted listening passage. Some teachers find this difficult to do. They feel over anxious and are unsure about their language competence. But they must remember that they are not supposed to provide a perfect model of the language to their students. In a listening lesson, the principal aim is to strengthen the ability of the learner to understand the spoken message and not to model one's speech on the teacher.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

　　　　　b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Why should we teach listening comprehension in the middle school?

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2. List the names of three kinds of listening materials that can be used by a teacher. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three kinds of listening materials?

....

....

....

Name	Advantages	Disadvantages
a)		
b)		
c)		

5.4 THE LISTENING TASK/ACTIVITY

The listening task can be of two kinds — extensive and intensive. Let us examine these two kinds of tasks and find out their differences.

5.4.1 Extensive Listening

During extensive listening the learner listens to an interesting story, radio programme or anecdote. The listening material may be lengthy. The learner listens for pleasure and is not expected to complete a worksheet or a task. Extensive listening may take place inside or outside the school.

5.4.2 Intensive Listening

During intensive listening, the learner listens very carefully. For example, while listening to directions the listener listens with full concentration. Such listening material is short and has a special task or worksheet designed on it. There is some amount of challenge so that the learner feels motivated to complete the task. It is through the completion of this task that the learner gets practice in specific listening skills. The intensive listening practice takes place

73

in class and should be so designed that it is practical, easy to administer, and can be completed within the time limit of a lesson.

The listening tasks are effective if the learners have a **well designed, interesting** and **carefully graded activity** to complete. Some of these tasks can be to express agreement or disagreement, take notes, make a picture or diagram according to instructions or answer questions.

The task which is set on a worksheet prepares the learner for the kind of information to expect and how to react to it. It helps in contextualising and aids comprehension. Very often the listening task is based on filling in diagrams, grids, maps and tables. It is important to bear in mind that these grids etc. are simple and do not become overelaborate.

The listening material should not be densely packed and go beyond the understanding of the learner. The learner must be able to complete it within a given time. Very lengthy intensive listening practice can de-motivate and frustrate the learner. The task that the learner is expected to do should be simple like making short, intermittent responses by marking, drawing, ticking off or writing one or more words. The task should not require the learner to write or read too much information.

Most learners enjoy working on listening tasks as they are responding actively, provided the listening task is based on interesting themes and the exercise is carefully designed and executed. By the middle school stage, the learners have a wider range of topics and interests and thus the teacher can choose from a variety of listening tasks.

5.5 THE THREE PHASES OF A LISTENING CLASS

There are three phases of a listening class. But a very important phase of the lesson is the preparation that goes before it.

The teacher has to plan a great deal on the physical aspects of the listening class. The size of the class, the arrangement of the furniture, the availability and quality of cassettes and recorder have to be taken care of in advance. The listening material may be excellent, the worksheets well-graded and contextualised but if the physical arrangements have not been planned for in advance, the listening lesson may end in failure.

Let us discuss the three stages of listening with the help of an example.

Read the listening task given below.

5.5.1   The Pre-listening Phase

Asking for directions

Introduction

Today we are going to find out how to ask for directions - and how to follow them. Later on you will have to give directions too. When you go to a new place you have to ask for directions.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- ask for directions,
- follow directions, and
- give directions clearly

At times people are helpful. Sometimes you may ask a person who cannot guide you. Lets see what happens when Muthu reaches Mithapur RailwayStation. He has come to play a cricket match and the teams are staying at the Youth Hostel B-10. on Senapati Marg.

Before listening to the tape look at the map given in the worksheet and study it carefully. See where Muthu has to go.

Muthu	:	Excuse me - can you tell me where the Youth Hostel is?
Stranger	:	I'm sorry I don't know - I'm also new here. Why don't you go and ask the policeman near the gate?
Muthu	:	Thank you. That's a good idea. (Walks up to the policeman) Excuse me. Can you tell me where the Youth Hostel is?
Policeman	:	Which Youth Hostel?
Muthu	:	The one on Senapati Marg.
Policeman	:	That's quite close. Are you going to walk?
Muthu	:	No, I'll have to take an authorickshaw as I have a lot of luggage.
Policeman	:	The autostand is just outside the gate. Take the street exactly opposite. That's Main Street. Don't take the first turning left. Go on till you reach the Clock Tower at the corner. Then turn left. After you turn left, take the second turning right. That's Senapati Marg. The Youth Hostel is the tenth house on that road. It has a large blue and white sign outside.
Muthu:		Thank you so much. You have been most helpful.

Now answer the question of the worksheet. Switch of the tape now.

WORKSHEET

Asking for Directions

1. As you listen to the tape mark the route that Muthu took.
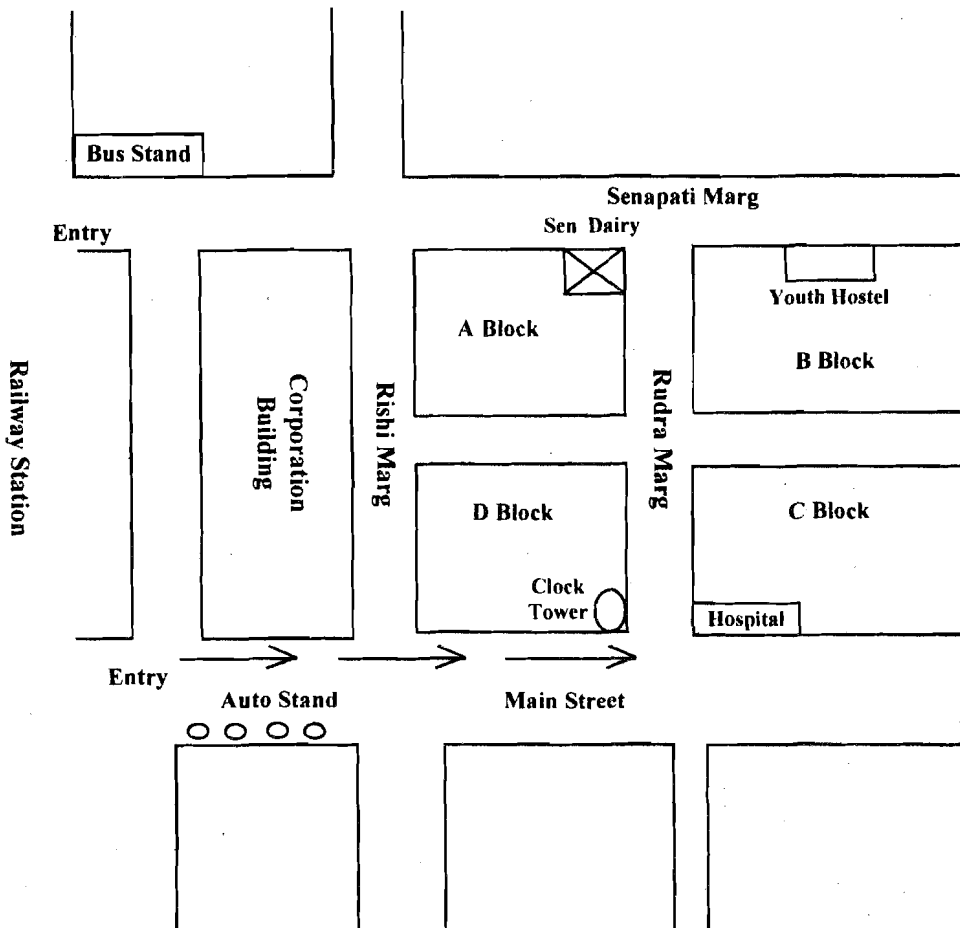
Put a tick (✓) against the correct answer.

2. Muthu has come to Mithapur to

   A. visit his friends. ☐

   B. play a cricket match. ☐

   C. for an interview. ☐

3. Muthu asks the policeman for directions because

   A. he is standing near the gate. ☐

   B. policemen are always helpful. ☐

   C. he lives in Mithapur, so he should know where the youth hostel is. ☐

4. The policeman asks Muthu "which Youth Hostel". This shows that

   A. there is more than one Youth Hostel in Mithapur. ☐

   B. he does not know where it is. ☐

   C. he does not want to help. ☐

5. Muthu should recognise the Youth Hostel easily because

   A. it is on Senapati Marg. ☐

   B. he has been there before. ☐

   C. it has a big sign outside. ☐

6. Muthu decides to take autorickshaw because he

   A. is tired. ☐

   B. does not know the way. ☐

   C. has a lot of luggage. ☐

7. Muthu hurts his hand while playing cricket. He asks the manager the way to the hospital. As the manager of the Youth Hostel, give Muthu directions to go from the Hostel to the Hospital.

   Start like this:

   When you get out of the Hostel turn left._____

Follow up Activity

Practice saying some of these sentences.

1. Excuse me! Can you tell me where the Youth Hostel is? (Where the library is?/Where the office is?/ Where the Accounts Department is?)

1. For the correct way to speak, listen to the tape again.

2. That's very close/near/far.

3. I am sorry I don't know.

(**Source** : *English Audio Lessons Work Book,* Secondary Level, National Open School, New Delhi.)

In this phase the teacher sets up the activity which gives the learner a purpose for listening. A quick look at the listening exercise helps the learner to understand the context and what (s)he has to listen for. The pre-listening activity is a very short phase. At times the learner may be asked to predict what they will hear. For example, for the worksheet given above the students may be asked a few preliminary questions, e.g., what would they do if they go to a new place and have to find out a particular place; if they know how to use a road map to

find a place, etc. The students can also be asked to familiarise themselves with the road map as given in the worksheet and to read through the questions.

5.5.2 The While-listening Phase

During this phase the learner completes the task based on the listening material. The diagram/ map/table helps the student as it gives an idea about the listening passage. It also gives the learners the necessary support as it gives them clues whether the answer is to be given in one word or phrase form and not full sentences. It helps them to concentrate on the listening activity rather than worry about grammar or reading. The learners should be encouraged to gather as much information as they can from the passage while-listening. If they fill in the information later, it would turn into a memory task and not a listening one. The focus of the task is on the message of the listening text.

The while-listening tasks can be graded carefully by the teacher. Gradually, the learners can be asked to jot down more detailed information.

For example, in the worksheet given above, the learners should complete questions 1-6 while they listen to the text, you, as the teacher, must play the listening text two times to allow the students to complete the while-listening tasks.

5.5.3 The Post-listening Phase

This activity occurs after the learners have completed their listening activity. It is in this phase, that the answers to the listening tasks are discussed. If many students get an item wrong, the relevant portion on the tape can be played back once more and the cause of confusion discussed.

In addition the information or completed chart which has been filled can be used for integrating with other skills. For example the learners can be asked to use the completed map to give directions to another student for reaching a particular place (see of the worksheet given above). Thus speaking skills can be integrated with listening. Similarly writing skills may be integrated by asking learners to write an account of their trip, for the school magazine.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

            b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3.   Why is it very important to set a task for the listening activity?

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4.   What are some of the physical features of the listening class that a teacher must prepare for in advance?

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....

5.   What are some of the features of a good listening task?

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6. What are the three stages of the listening lesson? What learner activity takes place in each of them?

Stage in Listening	Learner Activity
a)	
b)	
c)	

7. How can you integrate listening with other skills?

....

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5.6 SAMPLE LISTENING LESSON

In this section we discuss a listening lesson with the help of a tape script and worksheets designed for CBSE Course A Class IX students.

This particular lesson is about kidnapping where details about a persons looks are very crucial. As a pre-listening task, therefore, the students are taken through a task where they try to describe people by looking at some pictures given. This equips them with some necessary adjectives and helps them to discriminate the meanings of certain words.

Let us read the sample listening task very carefully.

5.6.1 The Pre-listening Activity

The Kidnapping of Preeti Duggal

1. We notice lots of details about people and their appearance. But when we need to describe them accurately and vividly (as in a kidnapping), it becomes more difficult.

Look carefully at these pictures. Draw a table like the one below, and fill in appropriate words from the box below it. Then add other words that you think describe the four people.

	A	B	C	D
Face				
Hair				
Dress				
Build				

angular	close-cropped	well-tailored	casual	stocky
elegant	unshaven	ill-fitting	formal	lanky
bearded	sloppy	medium	petite	hefty
balding	slim	plaited	thick	round
open	friendly	sharp-featured	wavy	long
receding	overweight			

2. When we meet people, we notice their face more than anything else. The box below contains words which describe the features of a face. List them under the appropriate headings, then add more words of your own.

twinkling	shifty	neat	discoloured	short
pear-shaped	large	wavy	close-cropped	Roman
protruding	gapped	upturned	thick	pointed
fair	thin	pale	swarthy	staring
long	round	untidy	tidy	close-set
broken	oval	square		

Shape of face	Complexion	Eyes	Hair	Nose	Lips	Teeth

DO THIS EXERCISE IN YOUR NOTE-BOOK

3. Pairwork, then class review, when you complete the table on the blackboard.

	A	B	C	D
face	unshaven round	angular friendly	bearded open	sharp-featured
hair	balding	thick	wavy plaited long	close-cropped receding
dress	sloppy casual	elegant	ill-fitting	formal well-tailored
build	stocky overweight hefty	silm petite	lanky	medium

Encourage students to add further words.

4. Pairwork, then class review, when you complete the table on the board.

Shape of face	Complexion	Eyes	Hair	Nose	Lips	Teeth
Peer shaped round oval square	pale swarthy fair staring close-set	twinkling shifty large cropped tidy short long	wavy untidy close pointed, neat	protruding upturned Roman	thin thick	gapped dis-cloured broken

Encourage students to add further words.

5.6.2   The While-listening Activity

You are now going to listen to an interview between the Police Inspector-in-charge of the case, and Preeti Duggal, in which the Inspector is asking Preeti for a description of one of the kidnappers. As you listen, note down important words giving information about kidnapper in your note book under these headings:

Preeti Duggal's Kidnapper

Build   -
Height   -
Clothes   -
Shape of face   -
Complexion   -
Eyes   -
Hair   -
Nose   -
Lips   -
Teeth   -
Special features -

Tape script

Inspector : Hello Preeti, I'm Inspector Tukaram. I'm in charge of your case. The kidnapping attempt must have been a terrible experience for you.

Preeti : Oh.. yes ... a real nightmare. People like that should be put behind bars for a long, long time.

Inspector : I agree with you. And if you'll help me, we'll catch them and do just that. I believe there were two men, but you only saw one of them. Is that right?

Preeti : Yes, I only saw the one who tried to grab me. The other man was in the car.

Inspector : Now, then, if you're feeling better, perhaps you can help me build up a description of the man who tried to grab you. Let's start with his general size. How tall would you say he was?

Preeti : About as tall as you. No, shorter - about 68 cms.

Inspector : Shall we say 2.10m - 2.20m, then? And what sort of build was he? What was the general shape of his body?

Preeti : He certainly wasn't thin. I would call him stocky, yes stocky. And he had a fat stomach, too.

Inspector : Good, very good. Now Preeti, what about his clothes? What was he wearing? Can you remember?

Preeti : I think ... yes, I remember. He was wearing a striped shirt....

Inspector : A T-shirt?

Preeti : No, not a T-shirt - it had a collar. It was blue and white striped.

80

Inspector	:	Do you remember the colour of his trousers?
Preeti	:	Not really. I just know they were dark - probably black or navy blue.
Inspector	:	Now, his face, Preeti. I want you to concentrate really hard. Tell me about his hair.
Preeti	:	Straight, and getting thin at the sides. Above his eyes he had thick bushy eyebrows, too.
Inspector	:	That's very helpful, Preeti. What about the general shape of his face?
Preeti	:	Round, I would say, and he had dark, staring eyes.
Inspector	:	Glasses? Did he wear spectacles?
Preeti	:	Yes, with a plastic frame, Oh .. and they kept slipping down his nose - He had a sharp, pointed nose. It was bent a bit to oneside - his nose, I mean.
Inspector	:	What else can you remember about him, Preeti? What about his teeth and lips, for example?
Preeti	:	All I can remember about his teeth is that he had one missing, one of his upper teeth - on his right, I think .. yes, on the right. Oh yes, and he had a scar on his upper lip, where the tooth was missing. And his face was sort of bumpy, especially around his eyes.
Inspector	:	Was he clean-shaven?
Preeti	:	Oh, I see. He didn't have a beard, but he did have a moustache.
Inspector	:	Is there anything else you can remember about him, that will help us catch him?
Preeti	:	No, I don't think so.. Yes, there was one thing. He had a mark of some sort on his right arm - a tattoo, I think you call it. The tattoo was in the shape of a snake. That's all I can remember.
Inspector	:	Thank you very much, Preeti. You've been very helpful. With such a good description, I'm sure we'll catch him.

In the post-listening activity discuss the answers of the while-listening activity as given below.

5.6.3 The Post-listening Activity

Answers

Build	:	stocky, fat stomach
Height	:	2.10 - 2.20m
Clothes	:	blue and white striped shirt, with collar, black or navy blue trousers
Shape of face	:	round
Complexion	:	bumpy, especially round eyes; clean-shaven
Eyes	:	dark and staring; thick, bushy eyebrows: spectacles, with plastic frame
Hair	:	straight, thinning at sides
Nose	:	sharp and pointed; bent to one side
Lips	:	scar on upper lip
Teeth	:	one missing (upper right)
Special features	:	tattoo on right arm, in shape of snake

After discussing these answers we can take up some other activities which requires integration of skills like the one given below.

Work in pairs. One of you (A) is Manav Sharma, a student from another school, who witnessed the attempted kidnapping of Preeti Duggal. The other (B) is Police Inspector Tukaram. Inspector Tukaram has to interview Manav Sharma to find out about the kidnapping but Manav Sharma only saw the second kidnapper — the one in the car.

Manav Sharma (student A) — You think you can describe the second kidnapper. Choose one of the faces below. Do not tell student B (Inspector Tukaram) which one you have chosen. Then answer Inspector Tukaram's questions.

Inspector Tukaram (student B) — Some useful expressions for you:

— Can you describe his ...?
— How old was he?
— What kind of a .... did he have?
— What about his ....?
— Did he have a .....?
— What kind of a ....?
— What other special ..... struck you?

When you have both finished the interview, Inspector Tukaram should look at the pictures and try to work out which is the second kidnapper. When both of you agree, decide which features were most important in identifying the man.

Source : *Interact*, English Course A, Class IX, Features Book, CBSE.

5.6.4 Comments on the Lesson

The listening material is recorded. It provides a suitable and realistic range of voices and accents. It is not a reading text spoken aloud but a sample of heard speech. The information is not densely structured. There are deliberate insertions of redundancies, repetitions, clarifications and pauses woven into the speech so that learners get adequate time to do the listening task. The listening passage is motivating, relevant and interesting to the learner's situation and needs.

The task that the learner is required to do simple enough to be grasped at a glance. Writing is kept to a minimum but at the same time the task becomes challenging as the learner has to keep track of names, directions and places.

5.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have looked at the different aspects of listening comprehension. This will help us, as teachers, to impart the necessary listening skills to our learners. We can use recorded listening materials or live listening materials in our teaching practice. We can then decide whether the listening task we set up for our learners is intensive or extensive. Whatever our decision, we need to guide our students through the listening activity in a phased manner. First the student has to be prepared for the exercise — this is termed the pre-listening phase, the second step is the while-listening phase in which the learner completes the task set up as part of the listening activity. The final post-listening phase helps consolidate the learner's comprehension.

5.8 KEY WORDS

extensive listening	:	listening for pleasure, no set task.
intensive listening	:	listening with concentration for specific information needed for a task.
authentic listening	:	listening recordings of natural conversations.
recorded listening	:	listening recording of rehearsed, semi-scripted or scripted speech.
live listening	:	listening speech which is spontaneous/semi-scripted and often read out by the teacher herself.
pre-listening	:	the stage in a listening session when the listening task is introduced.
while-listening	:	the stage in a listening session when the learner attempts the listening task.
post-listening	:	the stage in a listening session when the learner completes the task; clarifies and revises the listening task or does other activities which emerge from the listening task.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. We need to teach listening comprehension in the middle school because our learners need to develop their listening skills to become competent users of the language.

2.

		Advantages	Disadvantages
a)	**Authentic**	• real life listening.	• cannot be graded.
		• challenging for advanced learners.	• too difficult for certain level - perhaps middle school.
		• it is not artificial English.	• speech can be too rambling.
b)	**Recorded**	• learner can stop, replay it many times.	• technical problems.
		• learner can use it independently.	• quality of cassette recorder.
		• more than one voice, accent.	• physical problem of setting up.
		• learner's concentration on listening.	

c) Live

- teacher can grade according to learner's level.

- teacher can slow down or accelerate pace.

- the heard speech is spontaneous and natural.

- it is closer to real life.

- learners can see the person they are listening to (visual clues are helpful).

- cannot be repeated.

- some teachers may be unduly concerned about the quality of their speech.

3. The task prepares the learner for the listening material. It aids comprehension and gives the learner useful clues and support in completing the task. It helps in contextualising the material and facilitates comprehension.

4. The teacher must prepare in advance for the physical aspects of the lesson. Check the quality of audio cassette, recorder, size of room. Pre-set the audio cassette and arrange the students in such a way the audio cassette is audible to all.

5. The listening material should be interesting, graded, contextualised and not densely structured.

    The listening activity should be well-planned and carefully staged.

6. | **Stages of Listening** | **Learner Activity** |
    | --- | --- |
    | Pre-listening the listening task. | Prepares the learner to achieve the most from |
    | While-listening information and message. | Challenges and guides learners to handle the |
    | Post-listening on language of passage. | Feedback given by peer/teacher. Follow-up work |

7. Study the activity closely and relate it to an activity which focusses on speaking, reading or writing. The activity should stem from the listening activity and seem a natural corollary to it.

5.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Anderson, A. and Lynch, T. (1988) : *Listening*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Rixon, S. (1986) : *Developing Listening Skills*, Essential Language Teaching Series, Macmillan.

Ur, P. (1984) : *Teaching Listening Comprehension*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

UNIT 6 TEACHING LISTENING-II

Structure

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Before we proceed to examine a variety of listening activities suitable for learners at the middle school level, it is important to understand the two major reasons for teaching listening.

The first reason is called **listening for perception**. In this the learner is given practice in identifying the different sounds, sound combinations, stress and intonation patterns of spokens English.

The second is called **listening for comprehension**. In this the learner is given practice in developing listening for understanding by using listening materials and conducting listening activities which take into account the real-life needs of the learner.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to :
- understand the two main reasons for teaching listening;
- familiarise yourself with the different kinds of listening materials and activities for classroom teaching;
- understand the procedures for conducting a listening class effectively;
- understand the features of an effective listening lesson;
- integrate listening activities with other skills such as speaking, reading and writing;
- understand how to design your own listening activities effectively.

6.3 LISTENING FOR PERCEPTION

Listening for perception is practised more at the primary/middle school level where learners are introduced to the language. The focus of the listening activity is aural perception. Comprehension is of secondary importance. The listening exercises do not use visuals so that the learners concentrate on the sound of words or intonation patterns. The learner has to rely on his/her ear to repeat these sounds. The methodology involves repetition of short, discrete items. The teacher demonstrates the sounds which she wishes to teach while learners are encouraged to imitate and identify them using drill and choral repetition.

1. Another effective way is to use **worksheets** to give the students more practice. e.g. the teacher wants the students to differentiate the two sounds /p/ and /b/ or /s/ and /S/. She makes the necessary worksheet with the relevant words and ask the students to underline what they hear. e.g.

/p/	and	/b/		/s/	and	/S/
pin		bin		sun		shun
pun		bun		soot		shoot
pan		ban		sin		shin
pit		bit		seer		sheer

(The teacher should underline her own worksheet so that she knows which words she has called out).

Listening for perception can also be taught at the sentence level e.g. the worksheets can have two or three sentences and the student tick marks the sentence she/he hears.

1. I want to get the house painted in light green.

   I want to get the house painted in light cream.

2. Have you locked the car ?

   Have you knocked the car ?

3. Bring the glass here (a teacher to a student)

   Bring the class here (a teacher to student)

The teacher may correct the students where necessary.

6.4 LISTENING FOR COMPREHENSION

Listening for comprehension is more relevant to the teaching of listening at the middle and secondary school level. In this, the listening material is based on a particular context and the learner is given practice in specific areas of listening, which are related to his/her needs. The learner is most often expected to make short, quick responses as part of the listening exercise. Learners usually find these activities challenging, as effective listening activities have an element of game playing or problem-solving built into them. For example learners may listen to a tape script giving details of a kidnapper while they play the role of an inspector or detective, jotting down details of physical description, place of kidnapping, etc. (as given in the sample lesson of the last lesson).

6.5 FAMILIARISATION WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF LISTENING ACTIVITIES

In this section we will introduce you to some of the different kinds of listening activities.

There are listening comprehension activities where a learner may be required to listen and not make an overt response or make a minimum non-verbal response. For example, the teacher may tell a story giving practice to learners in extensive listening where they listen to

large chunks of spoken language. Alternatively she may use a set of pictures which illustrate different parts of the story, asking learners to put them in a sequential order. This would be a non-verbal response.

Another kind of listening activity which is done most often in classes is listening to a text and reading it at the same time. But this kind of exercise does not really develop the learner's skills of listening comprehension. The text that is being heard or read aloud is not the kind of heard speech that the learner will be faced with in listening situations. Besides, it does not develop the learner's reliance on the ear because they have the written text in front of them. It may happen that the written word hampers the learners from understanding accurately what (s)he may hear in a real listening situation. For example, the learner may read aloud or hear the words spoken from a written text all right and fail to recognise these words when heard as part of a spoken discourse. The sound of these words changes when spoken as part of natural colloquial speech.

Now we shall examine specific activities for listening comprehension that we mentioned at the beginning of this section.

6.5.1   Dictation

One of the most common listening exercises which has been practised continually in schools is **dictation**. One of the positive features of dictation is that it involves the learner, who becomes actively involved with the language.

Dictation can become a meaningful and interesting language activity provided the teacher plans carefully. In **Once Upon A Time**, John Morgan, M. Rinvolucri (1983) suggests an interesting activity. The teacher dictates a number of words very quickly, e.g.,

village

emigrate

marriage

absence

pregnant

shame

attack

destruction

birth

deep well

suicide

Students are unable to catch all the words. They are then asked to pool in the words they have written. The complete list is then used to write down a story.

Pair work can be used effectively while using dictation. Students A and B are given copies of gapped exercises.

The students know that each group has half of the text. A dictates and B writes, then B dictates and A writes until the story is complete. So, not only are the students listening, but also writing. You may like to refer to **Dictation** by Paul Davis and Mario Rinvolucri (1988) for interesting ideas for using dictation innovatively.

6.5.2   Listening and Following a Route

In this activity a route map is used and exercises designed to link the spoken description with the map. This activity can be improvised quite easily by the teacher. The route she wishes the learner to mark can be traced on her copy of the map. She can then give the learner

instructions, adding comments and a brief description. A map of a place they would like to visit as part of a class trip can be given. In this way a real life context is introduced and the activity becomes more interesting.

6.5.3   Listening to a Telephone Call and Writing the Message

Learners at the middle school are often required to make telephone calls for formal and informal purposes. Listening forms a key element in telephone skills. In this activity the learner is introduced to a situation where Smita has to give an important message to her friend Manvi. It is the mother, Mrs. Verma, who receives the message. The learner has to jot down the message nothing important details of the school trip. In case you wish to use the word 'itinerary' in the Listening Worksheet, you may wish to deal with it in the pre-listening stage or you may use the word in the listening passage in such a way that its meaning becomes clear. If you find the word too difficult for your learners to grasp, you may not use it at all, and use the term 'Tour Programme' instead. These are decisions you will have to take, keeping in mind your learner's level and experience.

Listening Passage

Listening to a Telephone Call and Writing Down the Message.

Smita	:	Hello.....Is that 677506?
Mrs. Verma	:	Yes, who's speaking please?
Smita	:	Good evening Aunty...this is Smita here. May I speak to Manvi ?
Mrs. Verma	:	She's gone out for a walk. Anything important ?
Smita	:	Yes Aunty, It's very important. You see, Manvi was absent today and our Trip-in-Charge was asking for her.
Mrs. Verma	:	But, I did send the cheque for the trip — I remember signing it yesterday.
Smita	:	No Aunty — it not the cheque — we're all supposed to hand in a consent slip.
Mrs. Verma	:	Really! How careless of Manvi to have forgotten!
Smita	:	Aunty please ask Manvi to get it tomorrow - its the last day. We leave the day after.
Mrs. Verma	:	What about the itinerary?
Smita	:	Well — we leave the day after, that is on 19th July. Its a Monday. Then — on Tuesday we reach Shimla. We have three days at Shimla for travelling and sightseeing. We return on the 23rd evening — that's Friday night.
Mrs. Verma	:	That sounds exciting. Smita, has your teacher given you a list of things to take along?
Smita	:	Yes Aunty. Manvi's got one too. But she's added a few things. You see now we're staying in tents - so we all need to carry a sleeping bag.
Mrs. Verma	:	Yes, just a minute — I'll note down the things. What else ?
Smita	:	Well — we need to carry a torch and — I forgot — it's rained in Shimla. So she said we must carry raincoats.
Mrs. Verma	:	A raincoat — Okay — I've got that. Anything else ?
Smita	:	Yes — an extra pair of shoes too — Yes, Aunty I think that's all she told us.
Mrs. Verma	:	Thank you Smita, you've been a real help.

88

Name of Caller   ....

Person called   ....

Number called   ....

Message   1.   ....

                                  ....

Details of Itinerary

Day & Date of Dep.   ....

Duration of Trip   .... days   ....

Day & Date of Return   ....

Things to carry   1.

                     2.

                     3.

6.5.4 Listening to a Sports Commentary and Completing a Chart

Another interesting context for a listening lesson is provided through listening to a sports commentary. The learner listens to the commentary for specific information. In this the learner uses background sounds for clues, for example, playing of the band for the march past, applause and cheering of the winner's name, and so on.

At times, you may find it useful to use the same listening material for another class by designing a new worksheet based on the listening passage. For example, the chart can now focus on details of individual sportsperson's description, record, etc.

6.5.5 ˙ Listening to Instructions and Marking a Ground Plan

In this activity the learners have to mark a ground plan for the school fete. It is more appropriate for learners at this level to mark diagrams, maps, ground plans and flow charts rather than pictures, which are more suitable to learners at the primary level.

The context in this particular activity is a familiar and relevant one - that of the school fete. One of the advantages of using a ground plan is that it is easy to trace and thus can be reproduced without spending money or photocopying. Learners are given copies of the ground plan.

An example is given below.
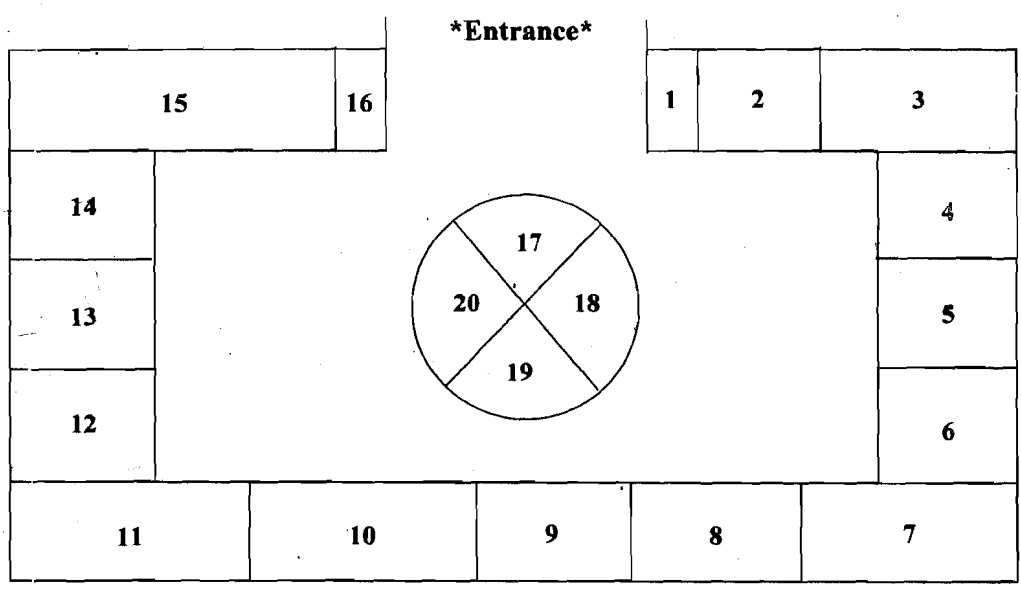
The students are expected to mark out the different stalls as they listen to the teacher calling out the names of the different stalls e.g. in stall number one we will have the Lucky Dip; Ring the Duck is in stall number 2; the Food stalls one from 17 to 20 etc. In the lower classes the names can be called out in sequence and the students given enough time to write down. In the higher classes they can be called out in random order and it is not necessary to call out the names of all 20 stalls. An interesting and real life context can be provided with the Principal giving important information regarding change of stalls over the intercom. e.g. Because of lack of space, we are moving the Lucky Dip stall from stall no: 1 to stall no. 10, stall no: 1 will now be the flower shop etc., where the student has to listen very carefully to process the information.

A similar exercise can be devised with the help of a house plan with accompanying text. An example is given below:
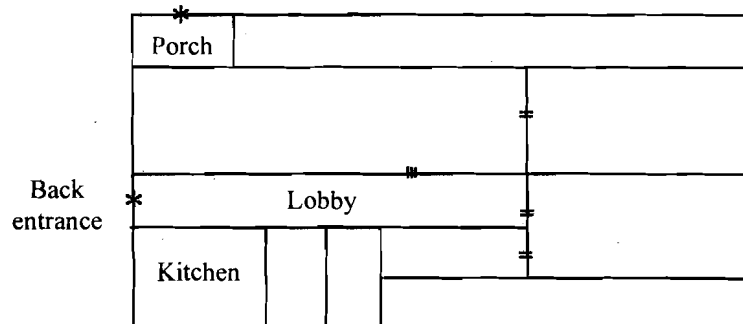
As we enter from the porch we enter the drawing room (Mark the drawing room). The garden runs full length along the outer wall (Mark the garden). Mark Anil's room which can be only be entered from the lobby, etc.

The number of rooms or the complexities of details would naturally depend on the level of the students.

The same ground plan can be used for another listening activity by changing the listening material. For example, the listening material can be based on the setting up of cheering squads for the Annual School Sports Day.

6.5.6 Jigsaw Listening

Another kind of listening activity is called jigsaw listening. In this the teacher divides the class into groups. Each group listens to a part of the story on the audio cassette. In the next stage learners send one or two members from their group to other groups. They will be asked several questions and will have to respond and give information. The various groups thus collect the missing sequences of the story. Now, in their original groups they speculate on the last part or the ending of the story. Usually, a mystery story is most suitable for jigsaw listening. Each group then reports to the class their version of the story what their point of view or conjecture is. Other groups are free to react, question and comment. Finally, the teacher plays the final part of the recording, which resolves the mystery.

Though this is an extremely challenging and interesting activity yet it has some problem areas in its implementation. First of all, the teacher has to make multiple recordings so that the groups can listen to the recording simultaneously. If she has only one recorder then only one group can listen to the recording at a time, in which case, she has to think of techniques of how to occupy the other groups who are awaiting their turn to listen or for others to finish.

This can also be difficult to manage in terms of noise, availability of recorder, etc. One of the solutions, though not an ideal one, is to let the learners listen to the first part of the story. Then they are set a task which involves predicting what is going to happen, or who the murderer is (in a murder mystery). Each group presents its case giving reasons for their 'theory'. They are questioned by other groups. Finally, the teacher plays the final part of the cassette.

6.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD LISTENING LESSON

By now you have become familiar with a variety of listening materials and activities. What are the major characteristics of an effective listening lesson ? Let us first look at the listening material or listening passage.

6.6.1 Listening Material

The listening material or passage for listening comprehension may either be presented live or in recording. The material should have a realistic context which should be interesting and challenging for the learner. The passage should not be a written text spoken aloud but be modelled on heard speech. While scripting the listening material it is important to keep in mind that it is graded in terms of lexis and structural difficulty. The material should not be densely structured but have repetitions built in as they are a part of spoken discourse. This provides valuable time to the learner to complete the task during the while-listening stage. It is important to pace the material at the correct speed, neither too fast and nor unnaturally slow.

On the whole, the material should facilitate understanding rather than block it. Listening activities are aimed at giving practice to learners in areas which pose problems for them. Therefore, it is important that the learner feels successful in doing the activity. If the listening passage or material is too long it will not be able to sustain the learner's interest and concentration. Ultimately it demotivates and fatigues the learner not only for that particular lesson but for the ones to follow. Finally, there should be a realistic range of the accents used in the listening material.

6.6.2 Role of the Teacher

Once you have designed the listening material and worksheet, it is important to plan meticulously for the different stages of the listening lesson. Before the listening session begins, check the following:

- check the quality of tape/recording
- arrange for the recorder in advance
- pre-position the tape
- plan the seating arrangements so that oral presentation of the listening material is audible to all
- plan on reading aloud (if the material is a monologue), in case of power failure.

In the Pre-listening Stage

- ensure all planned physical arrangements, e.g., closing doors, windows, etc.
- introduce the lesson/subject briefly
- deal with vocabulary if any, which might interfere with the success of the listening activity
- ensure that all the learners have the worksheet
- define the task very clearly — clarify any problems relating to the task.

In the While-listening Stage

- ensure that learners are doing the task
- ensure that there is no disturbance made by the students or yourself.

In the Post-listening Stage

- ask students to exchange information in pairs/groups
- replay cassette if students have missed any information
- elicit answers briskly and complete worksheet on blackboard.

6.7 INTEGRATING LISTENING WITH SPEAKING, READING AND WRITING

Listening activities can be integrated with the skills of speaking, reading and writing. As in real life, we listen and respond either through speaking, writing or reading.

Let us examine how the listening activities delineated earlier (6.3) can be integrated with other skills.

You will find that the integration can be done in two ways.

1.   The listening passage can serve an input to another activity.

2.   The listening activity can be used as a stimulus.

6.7.1 Listening as Input

The listening passage can be used as an input. For example, in listening and following a route, the activity described in 6.3.1, the listening material can be used as a model for giving directions. The language forms used in giving directions and the specific vocabulary used can be emphasised in the post-listening stage, and the learners may then be asked to simulate a telephone conversation in which they give directions to a friend on how to reach a particular spot or one's house, etc. You may like to use the location of the school as a context and thus organise the class in pairs wherein one plays the role of a prospective visitor who is being given directions on how to reach the school for its annual day celebration. In this way listening can be integrated with speaking. Similarly listening to a telephone call and writing the message can be used to focus the learner's attention on the use of modals and the use of appropriate forms of language in different contexts. For example, the telephone conversation would have been worded differently if Smita had spoken directly to Manvi. Learners may be asked to role play the dialogue.

You may like to extend this activity and relate it to the writing of an itinerary or planning a class trip. Thus it could entail reading brochures and other tourist information. In this way the telephone conversation can be used as a stimulus for another activity.

Listening to the sports commentary and filling in the chart can be integrated with writing.

Learners can use the completed chart as an input and write a newspaper report on their Sports Day or they may write a more detailed one for the school magazine. It can also be an aural report which can be read aloud for the next day's school assembly.

Learners can also study and analyse the characteristics of a good commentary, and then, in groups build up a commentary of another incident/event.

Listening to instructions and marking a ground plan can be integrated with an interesting role play. Students of classes VI, VII, VIII, may want to be grouped together because seniors bully them, or some classes may want to exchange stalls, request for more than one stall depending on the choice of their game or event. Thus the members of the groups can be given roles of class teacher, class captain, co-curricular activities captain, and class XI representative and so on.

Jigsaw listening is integrated with speaking. You may design activities of an extrapolative kind in which the learners go beyond the text and do a writing task. For example, they may write a diary entry imagining themselves to be one of the characters. They may be asked to write their version of the ending or to dramatise it.

6.7.2 Listening as Stimulus

The listening material can be used as a stimulus, to set the learner thinking along particular lines or put them in a particular mood.

For example, the learners can listen to a passage which declares the Prefect Body for an academic session. The Prefects can make short speeches on what they plan to do as office bearers.

The listening passage can be used as a stimulus for learners to discuss a set of criteria which each group should prioritize and present. They may then move on to writing out a manifesto and making slogans and posters for the election. Similarly one can tape short viewpoints of different people in the school on topics of common concern e.g. **corporal punishment, sports facilities, co-education,** etc. and use the listening material as a springboard for lively discussions. The reporting sessions can be followed by a written report which can be submitted to the relevant authorities.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2.   After you have completed the two tasks in your class (Check Your Progress 1), think of and describe least two activities (other than those in the unit) which integrate them with the other skills.

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93

6.8 HOW TO DESIGN YOUR OWN LISTENING ACTIVITIES?

You will find it interesting, challenging and rewarding to design your own listening activities. The first stage is to identify the learner's need for a particular kind of listening skill in a specific situation. For example, there may be an inter-school quiz taking place in the near future. This would entail the learner's making calls for confirming names of participants, etc. Then you can design listening passages on the situation itself. If you are taking students on a school trip to a historical place, it may be relevant to design a listening activity on a tour guide's commentary. Later, for the actual trip, you could design a worksheet on which learners can jot information such as the following: date of construction, the reason for building, person who built it, and so on.

At times, you may find listening passages whose subject matter is related or suited to your learners' needs, or the topics that you are covering in your main course. This means that you need not go into the problems of recording your own listening material. You may use this readly available material.

The next stage is an important one, in case you are developing your own listening material. You now have to decide on content, length, number of speakers and type of delivery involved in the listening material.

The listening material can now be written in the form of notes or can be semi-scripted. A thorough rehearsal of the script should be done, preferably, taking the help of one's colleagues. The listening material can then be recorded.

Now, you can move on to the next stage which is designing the listening activity. Frame very carefully the listening worksheet that you expect learners to complete. Check how effective it is by trying it on your friends. Also make sure to write the lesson notes for the listening class. Next try it out on several classes. Refine and alter the material and activity as and when necessary. Finally, label, catalogue and store listening material/activity so that other teachers may also use it.

6.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have introduced you to:

● the two main reasons for teaching listening
● the different kinds of listening materials and activities
● the characteristics of a good listening lesson
● the integration of listening skills with speaking, reading and writing
● how to design your own listening activities.

6.10 KEY WORDS

listening for perception   :   listening for sounds or intonation patterns.

listening for comprehension   :   listening for understanding the message.

listening as input   :   the listening material or completed worksheet can be used for another activity.

listening as stimulus   :   the subject of the listening material can be used to motivate learners to think on a particular line.

94

6.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.   Among the different activities listed, you can elaborate on:

i) Dictation and (ii) Listening to instructions and marking a ground plan.

2.   Open-ended.

6.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

Davis P. and Rinvolucri, M. (1988) : *Dictation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1978) : *Variations on a Theme*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Morgan, J. & Rinvolucri, M. (1983) : *Once Upon a Time*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Raterop, B.J. and Revell, R. (1987) : *Telephoning in English*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ur, Penny (1984) : *Teaching Listening Comprehension*, Cambridge University. Press, Cambridges.

UNIT 7 DEVELOPING SPEAKING/ORAL SKILLS

Structure

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Oral skills have two major components. First, there are **motor perceptive skills**. These are the means of perceiving, recalling and articulating in the correct order the sounds and structure of a language. Generally, these are developed at the primary level where learners are put through various **look and say** exercises, or **pattern practice**. Usually, there is no context provided and learners develop these skills through repetition and choral drill. Martin Bygate (1987) likens this stage to 'manipulating the controls of a car on a deserted piece of road far from the flow of normal traffic .. it is like learning to drive without ever going out on the road'.

Concentration on the development of motor perceptive skills led to problems. The learner was not able 'to transfer his knowledge from a language - learning situation to a language - using situation' (Wilkins).

This is what makes the second component of oral skills namely the '**interaction skills**' important. By using this the learner will be able to transfer his/her knowledge from a language learning situation to a language use situation. Interaction skills involve knowing what to say, how to say this and how to establish and maintain contact with the other person. Examples of interaction skills are being able to ask someone the time, describe your flat to a broker, use the telephone to obtain information about train timetables, etc.

In recent years there has been a growing emphasis on the teaching and learning of conversation/oral skills. With the spread of English there is a greater demand for the learner to communicate in the target language rather than acquire a knowledge of correct structure.

For this reason, the controlled exercises used in the language class by teachers, giving practice in structures, have now given way to dynamic and meaningful oral practice.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to:

- understand the two major aspects of the teaching of oral skills;
- identify and distinguish between the needs of learners;
- familiarise yourself with some accepted techniques in teaching oral skills;
- understand and differentiate between writing and speaking activities;
- understand, analyse and evaluate the importance of group work in developing oral skills;
- enumerate and identify the characteristics of an effective speaking class;
- study and analyse the different stages of a speaking lesson;
- examine the role of the teacher in the oral skills class;
- provide remedial instruction in respect of speech error.

7.3 LEARNER NEEDS

Above all, the learner needs to be able to speak intelligibly, using appropriate word stress. Some of the important functions (s)he must be able to perform with the language are:

- greeting friends, superiors, strangers
- making telephone calls, asking for information
- expressing reactions to T.V. programmes, films, plays
- seeking and giving information in class and out of class
- asking questions while playing a game, in class, in a debate
- discussing ideas
- participating in debates and discussions
- conversing with friends, strangers, teachers
- responding to questions
- advising friends, juniors, and younger members in the family
- clarifying meaning or intention
- giving a report of an event.

There could be any number of such functions of language.

7.4 ACCEPTED TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING CONVERSATIONAL/ORAL SKILLS

In recent years, more emphasis has been given to oral skills than in the past. The following are the major techniques of teaching oral skills:

7.4.1 The Conversation Class

One of the accepted ways of teaching speech is to hold a 'conversation class'. The teacher

sits with a group of learners and asks them questions about their home, family, work, etc. It is a question and answer session and is not always very productive of learning as it lacks an interesting and clearly defined topic.

7.4.2   The Topic Based Discussion Class

Another kind of fluency-based activity was the topic-based discussion. The teacher planned discussions on interesting topics. This was an improvement on the conversation class because the discussion was now structured and clear. But it lacked a purpose. Learners were not likely to feel motivated to speak on a topic merely to practise their English. This highlights a crucial fact of learning that learners need a reason to speak more than a topic to speak about.

Another disadvantage in the topic-based discussion was that it was carried out with the whole class. This could be a group of 30-50 students. In a forty-minute period, it is not difficult to calculate the talking time which each student would get. Most often, the discussion would be monopolised by the brighter students while the rest of the class lost interest.

7.4.3   Task Centred Fluency Practice

With the increasing importance being given to Communicative Language Teaching, task centred fluency practice is being used more and more. In this, a group is given a task to perform through verbal interaction. It may be in the form of a group activity or role play. The group has to perform a task which has a tangible output either in the form of giving a group report, a speech or a presentation. This gives the group a concrete task to work with and clear guidelines regarding its scope. It also provides a basis for feedback.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

              b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1.   What are the two major components of oral skills? Which one of these is relatively more important and why?

       ....

       ....

       ....

       ....

       ....

2.   Have you tried the three types of techniques described in section 7.4? Which one did you find most useful? Give reasons for your answer.

       ....

       ....

       ....

       ....

       ....

7.5   DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT FEATURES OF WRITING AND SPEAKING

In order to teach conversation/oral skills effectively, it is important to understand the differences between speech and writing.

The language of speech is not 'spoken' writing. In oral communication we ought not to 'speak like a book'. In speech the kind of vocabulary, the structure of the sentence and its

complexity vary greatly from what would be required as writing. Nor do we necessarily speak in grammatically correct sentences. Moreover, normal speech usually contains a good deal of information that is redundant (i.e. it contains more information than the listener actually needs to understand.) In writing, such redundancy is not desirable.

While speaking, the speaker has to plan, organise the message and also control the language. Repetition and changes in vocabulary and message take place. In understanding oral production, on the other hand, the learner has to process the stream of speech which might be difficult in terms of complexity or pace of speaking. While reading, the reader is in a position to re-read what (s)he has not understood.

Another major difference between speech and writing is that the speech situation requires the presence of a listener. The speaker talks to a listener who generally provides some feedback on agreement or understanding. It is important for the speaker to make sure that communication is taking place, for if not, the message will have to be adapted and adjusted.

In written communication too, a certain amount of reciprocity is needed. The writer has to anticipate the reader's needs and background information and write in such a way that there are no problems in comprehension. Similarly, the reader has to strive to understand the writer's intentions. But (s)he has no way of signalling understanding to the writer. The only feedback (s)he provides is whether (s)he will continue to read or not.

The reciprocity of the act of speech necessitates that in order to maintain the flow of speech the speaker must take notice of the listener, to allow him or her the chance to speak. It requires the speaker to take turns at speech, and also to adjust, adapt, vary the degree of formality employed according to one's need.

7.6   THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUP WORK IN DEVELOPING ORAL SKILLS

Group work has been found especially conducive in the development of oral skills. Research has shown that in a 40 minute class with a strength of 40 students per class a learner gets less than a minute to participate in the speaking activity. Group work provides a framework whereby a learner can have maximum participation. In a teacher-oriented class, the amount of language practice each learner gets, is much less than in a class where learners work in groups.

Group work gives an opportunity to learners to speak in small groups, at times with their friends, and this reduces the hesitation and embarassment which a shy learner may feel. Besides helping learners to get rid of their inhibitions, it also builds up a sense of closeness, owing to the physical proximity and tight structure of groups. Learners feel more motivated, have a sense of belonging, which spurs them on in a particular direction. It helps in establishing a sense of personal rapport. Communication is better when the physical distance between individuals is reduced. In case there are visuals or any other materials to be used they should be accessible and easy to share within the group.

Students can also interact as a group with other groups. This can build an atmosphere of healthy rivalry. The time limit or inter-group competition spurs each group to move ahead.

The teacher is also freed from being at the centre stage and moves freely around the room, giving advice and support when needed. In most schools, teachers need to assess the learner's performance. It also gives them the opportunity to note mistakes for follow-up remedial work and help the slower learner.

Another important feature of group work is that it provides an opportunity for peer teaching. Students are more likely to learn from each other than from the teacher. Mistakes get corrected in a healthy and cooperative atmosphere.

99

The important features of interaction skills such as turn-taking, adjusting one's speech to

what the other person knows and wants to hear also get practised. One of the problems of group work is that students may get overexcited, get out of control and the classes may get too noisy. Teachers also find that the purpose of teaching oral skills is defeated if learners lapse into their mother tongue. At times, some learners fail to get 'involved' despite the best efforts of the teacher. In classes that are very large, the teacher may find herself unable to supervise efficiently.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3.   Describe at least three differences between speaking and writing.

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4   How do you use group work in your classes? Discuss the organisation in terms of the number in the group, arrangement of furniture and movement of students.

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7.7   CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE ORAL SKILLS LESSON

Let us examine the features which constitute a good skills lesson and see whether the problems associated with group work can be overcome by thoughtful and efficient organisation.

Some of the important aspects to keep in mind while planning and working on an oral skills lesson are:

7.7.1   The Simplicity of the Task

The task gives a sense of purpose and direction. It should be interesting and not too complex for the learner. It should be within the reach of most of the class. If the teacher needs to intervene to spell out or explain the task repeatedly then learners would be wasting much of the discussion time in just listening.

7.7.2   Preparation

The task should be easy to prepare. It should not be too complex in terms of typing, duplicating, recording, etc. Teachers may not be able to hold oral skills classes regularly if the task entails too many hours or preparatory work.

7.7.3 Tangible Output or Result

A task must generate thought and its end result must be in the form of a tangible output. The learners may be required to write down the result, give a short talk, make a presentation or report and so on. The tangible output or result helps learners to focus on what has to be done. It provides a clear signal to the teacher, group and others that the task is complete. In addition, it provides a basis for feedback. It is on the basis of the result and the discussions prior to it that the teacher gives feedback to the class, as a group or individually, as the case may be.

7.7.4 Language Practice

The task should be such that it provides for optimum language practice by the learners. If the task is too complex and most of the time is spent in trying to understand it with no speech taking place, then the task is not an efficient one.

7.7.5 Interaction

While planning the task, care must be taken to see that the task chosen is interactive. Tasks which are open-ended, i.e., which involve the learners in brainstorming ideas, giving them the opportunity to use their own imaginative and intellectual resources are better than tasks which are 'closed-ended', i.e. which are limited by having one correct answer alone.

7.7.6 Interest Level

Much of the success of an activity depends on how interesting the task is. If the task is 'interesting' the learner motivation is bound to be high and their performance good.

If the task is too complex or difficult, learners will get discouraged quickly. If the task is too easy, learners get bored. There has to be a combination of challenge and the probability of success; the task must be difficult enough to demand an effort on the part of the group members, but easy enough for it to feel that success is within their grasp.

The subject matter of the oral skills activity should be interesting. It must be within the range of experience of the learners and at the same time not too familiar. However, it may also be argued that the more imaginative or exotic the discussion material is, the more interesting it will seem to the learners.

7.7.7 Organisation

As discussed earlier, group work is most useful in developing oral skills where learners engage in completing tasks which generate interaction.

Most often, group work fails because of lack of proper organisation. The teacher can ask learners to form groups of four by turning around and facing those behind. A few students can be shifted to ensure that groups are heterogeneous of homogeneous. At times, it is a good idea to let the groups be semi-permanent for a set of activities as frequent changes especially in the younger learners may lead to restlessness and indiscipline.

7.8 ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The teacher has an important role in the teaching of oral skills. Although she is not as usual in front of the class, yet the entire activity can fail if the teacher is not clear about her role at the different stages of the activity.

7.8.1 Presentation

The presentation of the task should be made at the very beginning of the class. If it is done

after the groups have been formed, or the materials have been given, it is likely that the learners become too involved, distracted or excited with other things and thus fail to concentrate on what is to be done.

The instructions should be crisp, clear and thorough. In case the learners do not understand what is to be done, a 'trial run' can be conducted especially if the activity is a short one.

7.8.2 Process

The teacher needs to plan out meticulously the various aspects of the process, i.e., the way the discussion is held. At times the group needs to elect a secretary to jot down points. The learners may be required to brainstorm or to jot down their own ideas individually before sharing them with the group. The task has to be planned so that each member of the group gets a chance to contribute. At times the learner may be asked to use certain language forms or structures while participating in the discussion.

While the students are discussing, the teacher can clarify ideas, when necessary. She can join a group and contribute to the content if she finds their interest waning. The teacher should also monitor if all learners are getting a chance to participate in the discussion. The use of the native language should be discouraged.

At the same time the teacher notes down common errors which the learners are making so that they can be dealt with in the feedback session later. She may find that peer-correction is taking place and will have to make her own decision about when and how to correct the errors.

7.8.3 Ending

Some groups may finish earlier than the others. The teacher can ask them to move on to the next stage. For example, if the tangible output is to present an oral report, the speaker can rehearse the oral report in front of his group. Some groups may take too long to complete the task. If the teacher has been careful in specifying the time limit at the beginning, then with a few reminders in between, winding up the activity will not be a problem.

7.8.4 Feedback

Often, the learners as well as the teacher may feel that the activity is over once the learners have completed the task. But the task was only a means of achieving its underlying aim, namely language practice. The activity that the learners have gone through and completed has to be assessed, appreciated, admired and evaluated from the language point of view. This is an integral part of the activity and it can be organised in a number of ways. Learners may be asked to give an oral report, make a display or read aloud. This is done in the whole class mode and rounded off by the teacher with suitable comments.

The teacher also needs to give a feedback on the process. Important aspects such as discussion skills are also commented upon. Students can also join in providing comments on each other's performance.

Lastly, the teacher gives feedback on the language used in completing the task. She has already noted the language errors made while learners were interacting and on the basis of that information she plans her future reinforcement or remedial lessons.

Check Your Progress

Notes :　a)　Write your answers in the space given below.

　　　　b)　Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5.　You have the following oral activities in mind.

　　a)　You have asked your students to get some photographs from their album. Divide the class in groups of four. Make sets of four photographs (preferebly brought by someone other than a group member) and ask students to describe the people/things/scene in the photographs.

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　　b)　You have photocopied and end up the different steps of instructions for a few recipes/ a craft item. Divide your class in groups of four ank ask each group to discuss and put the instructions pack in the proper sequence. Ask a member to report on **how** they figured out the sequence.

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　　c)　You want your students to have a panel discussion in their groups on why homework should be abolished. The panelist in each group are the school principal (who also begins and moderate the discussion), the Maths teacher (who favours giving homework regularly) two student from different classes (who do not want any homework) and a school counsellor (who advocates a schedule of homework to prevent over burdening/overcrowding of subjects on certain days).

　　　　Discuss the three activities in terms of the criterea mentioned in 7.7.

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7.8.5　How to Correct Speech Errors

One of the important roles of a teacher is to correct errors surfacing during oral communication activities. As such there are no hard and fast rules about when to correct students - but many teachers are of the opinion that students should not be interrupted unless there is a total breakdown of communication for the error made. Oral activities should **not** be interrupted for correction of grammatical forms/vocabulary during pair/group work for fluency based activities. However, an accepted strategy is for the teacher to use the correct forms/words by way of confirmation of meaning when she/he goes round the class and talks to different groups without seeming to correct them. Attentive students usually pick up the corrected version. You must understand that the frequent repetition of the correct use of an item will lead to the formation of correct language habit and the continuous corrections as such inhibits the learners.

103

If, however, many students make similar mistakes, it is better to take up a whole class feedback session after having discussed the task which was set for that particular period. If the mistake is of pronunciation or of stress and intonation they can be taken up in short focussed choral activities. Mistakes in grammatical forms, choice of in appropriate words may call for a detailed practice session in the next class. While as teachers, we must draw a line at wholly unacceptable utterances, the degree of error we are prepared to tolerate is bound to alter in accordance with the abilities of individual learners. Defective but effective communication may be a reasonable aim. We must be aware that the learning of a language is slow and cumulative and cannot be mastered in one go.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

6. While going round the class during a group discussion you notice that many of your Class VIII students are making too many mistakes in the use of pronouns, specially reflexive pronouns. When and how will you correct such errors?

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7.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we attempted to make you aware of the need to formally include Spoken English in the language curriculum. We also distinguished between the features of spoken and written English. We emphasized the importance of group work in teaching the spoken skills and suggested some of the features of an effective oral skills lesson. Finally we described the role of the teacher in sustaining and enlivening an oral skills class. We hope you found this unit useful.

7.10 KEY WORDS

fluency	:	being able to use a language spontaneously and confidently, without lots of pauses and hesitations.
motor perceptive skills	:	the skills of perceiving and producing the sounds and structure of a language.
interaction skills	:	the skills related to deciding what to say, when to say it and how to say it.
reciprocity of speech	:	the need to adapt speech according to the listener's responses.
feedback	:	information given about the result of someone's actions to the person responsible.

7.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The two components are **motor perception** skills and the second is **interaction** skills. While both are important for effective communication, the emphasis these days is more on conversation/oral skills. As communication in the target language is more helpful than learning correct structures without being able to use them appropriately.

2. Open ended.

3. Lack of repetition/redundancy in writing. Speech involves a lot of hesitation/regression which is not acceptable in writing. Writing has to be accurate and precise which need not be the case in a spoken activity.

4. Group work is best is used for brain storming/fluency based activities. If furniture is light and moveable/portable - groups may be made to sit in small circles. Otherwise groups may be organised by just turning the chairs and making four students face each other across the table. There should be a minimum loss of time in movements.

5. Open ended.

6. After the main activity is over in a whole class feedback session - the students attention should be drawn to the mistakes they had made. Discuss the kind of mistakes made, ask students to identify errors/give correct answers if possible, explain the reasons thereof, and depending on the kind of mistakes made, have small practice sessions.

7.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bygate, M. (1987) : *Speaking*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1978) : *Drama Techniques in Language Learning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1978) : *Variations on a Theme*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A. Duff, A. and Grellet, F. (1980) : *The Mind's Eye*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ur, Penny (1981) : *Discussions that Worked: Task-centred Fluency Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

UNIT 8   SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

Structure

8.1   INTRODUCTION

In recent years, great emphasis has been placed on the development of oral skills in second language teaching in India. Materials writers and recent textbooks have focussed on the inclusion of interesting and varied activities which require a learner to respond orally. While relating the curriculum to the real life needs of learners, efforts are made by teachers, school authorities and educational system to build into the curriculum various real life situations which will systematically and efficiently help learners to acquire a repertoire of oral skills.

The need for learners to be actively involved in the classroom processes and not remain passive receptacles is nowhere more important than in a speaking activity. Researchers in English language teaching state that in an average English period, the teacher is speaking for 2/3 of the time. Needless to say, the learners, with hardly any opportunities for speaking, may leave school feeling nervous and under-confident about their oral skills.

Changes in the CBSE Course A, Classes IX and X syllabus have given weightage to conversation skills. In Class IX, 20% of the continuous assessment marks are allocated to conversation skills. There is a corresponding need to include the teaching of conversation skills at the primary and middle school level also.

8.2   OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to :

●   familiarise yourself with the learner's needs for speaking skills;

●   understand the nature and details of some major speaking activities;

- understand the role of the teacher in different kinds of oral skills development activities;

- understand the significance of using stories in building oral skills;

- explore a variety of activities which use story-telling such as theme stories, skeleton stories, etc.;

- understand the setting up, conduct and follow-up of activities such as discussion, debate, role play and radio show;

- identify real life situations, both in school and out of school, which can be exploited by the teacher and used for oral skills activity;

- understand the significance of time management in speaking activities;

- understand ways of integrating speaking with other skills.

8.3 LEARNER NEEDS

The specific speaking skills that a learner needs have already been described in Unit 7.

It suffices here to say that learners need to get practice in making short utterances such as a sentence or a few sentences. Teachers can use these utterances to reinforce grammatical structure.

Oral skills, however, concentrate on the learner needs to make longer utterances. Learners need to interact appropriately and competently at different levels and with different people in a variety of situations.

8.4 SAMPLES OF SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

In this unit you'll study samples of different speaking activities.

These are :
- using stories
- participating in a discussion
- participating in a class debate
- participating in a role play
- preparing a radio show.

Each of these activities will be dealt with at two levels viz;

- the description of the activity; and
- teacher's role

8.5 USING STORIES

Story telling is 'the most ancient and compelling of human activities' (John Morgan and Mario Rinvolucri, 1983). Story telling has a special role to play developing oral skills. It is an infinitely more interesting and involving activity than monotonous oral drill and bland role play.

8.5.1 Theme Pictures

The teacher chooses story and narrates it to the class. She then spreads the pictures on a table at the end of the room. Students are then asked to pick pictures that they associate with the story. Each student tells his or her partner or group the reasons for choosing a particular picture.

Teacher's Role

The teacher needs to collect a lot of pictures from magazines and journals. The pictures should be selected carefully. An adequate number of pictures which are related to the story and several others which are unrelated can be compiled.

This activity is interesting and useful. It brings out the fact that each student listens to the skeleton story and then creates his or her version. The personalisation of the story motivates the learners to participate enthusiastically in this activity.

8.5.2 Skeleton Stories

The learners can be given the skeleton form of the stories. The facts given should be clear and simple. Once the learners have heard the story they are asked to give their version of it. The story chosen must be one that can be interpreted in more ways than one.

An alternative is to tell an incomplete story. Students sit in groups of four and after the story-telling session, each gives his or her version of the ending. An example is given below.

A strange/unknown visitor

One of my mother's friends wanted to go for a short holiday – didn't want to leave her house empty and locked - requested my mother to stay for a few days - mother agreed - Saturday evening - mother watching T.V. - knocking on the door - mother opens - find a gentleman outside - he wants to see his daughter - mother explains - refuses mother's requests to come in - friend returns - mother tells her of her father's visit - friend refuses to believe - says her father ....

(Adapted from Mary Underwood (1976); *What a Story*, OUP.).

8.5.3 Using Sound Sequences

In this activity, the teacher plays a recorded sound sequence on an audio cassette. **Sounds Intriguing**, a book by Alan Maley and Alan Duff (1975) has a most stimulating array of sound sequences. The students listen carefully. In groups of four or five, each student tells the group his or her interpretation of the story. The group finally selects the most interesting story and sends one story-teller from the group to tell the story to the whole class. An example from **Sounds Intriguing** by Alan Maley is given below.

Sound script

Cries - snapping - rustling - shouting - steps in water - barking - shot - silence - low whisper - silence.

Possible lines of questioning

—   What is the first sound you hear?

—   Is the incident happening inside or outside.

—   What kind of place is it.

—   How many people are involved.

—   How many types of animals are there.

—   Is all the action happening in the same place.

—   What is the explanation of the sudden loud noise towards the end of the sequence.

—   What kind of an event is going on.

108

In groups of four try to work out a concerning explanation of the incident.

When all the groups have finished, discuss the exercise.

Teacher's Role

The teacher has to make arrangements so that the recording is heard by all. She may like to work on some vocabulary connected with the sounds they would be hearing, without taking away the interest of the task. Vocabulary training as an enabling exercise can be done prior to the listening period to make the students' story-telling more effective.

Students find this an engaging exercise and are most willing to work out a skit, a dialogue based on their group's story.

This activity integrates efficiently with a writing activity.

8.5.4 Dictation

The practice of dictation can be made purposeful by integrating it with an oral activity. In 'Once Upon a Time' Morgan and Rinvolucri (1983) have given the following example :

A set of words such as the following are dictated to the class.

schoolmaster	hypnotise
bachelor	seven roses
mother	throw away
death	improvement
funeral	success
obsession	button hole
psychiatrist	faded

Once the words are dictated, the group appoints one person as the secretary. The words are written on the board. Each group constructs a story from the list, following the order given. Students are then asked to tell their story to the entire class.

Teacher's Role

In case the teacher feels that the class cannot carryout this activity efficiently, then a more 'definitive' version may be given by the teacher. The words can be expanded into short phrases so that it gives more support to learners.

e.g., A man, 38, schoolmaster, self contained

mother dies,

very fond of mother, ---

While compiling the list of words for dictation the words chosen should be rich in content so that students are stimulated to think.

8.5.5 Picture Composition

The teacher draws an incomplete picture on the board. Students are divided into groups. Each group is given a turn to add to the picture. Once all the groups have taken turns at drawing, each group tells their version of the story to the whole class.

Teacher's Role

The teacher can make the first drawing if none of students volunteer. The picture space has to be large so that the different groups can contribute. The drawing should not become too crowded. This activity encourages learners who may not be very good at speaking to make their contribution to the group. It fosters   feeling of confidence which can be nurtured by the teacher.

109

8.5.6 Telling Ancedotes

A popular and natural form of building oral skills is by relating anecdotes. The teacher can incorporate suitable anecdotes in day to day teaching. These help in providing a model for the learners.

Teacher's Role

Practise telling anecdotes effectively. Invite learners to relate their own anecdotes. Some of the possible topics for anecdotes are :

a)   being late for school, losing one's bag, getting caught by the authorities, etc.

b)   fear of things, people, places, imaginary things.

c)   accidents in the house, on the road, etc.

d)   remembering events in the past connected with joining school, transfers to cities, etc.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1.   How can story-telling be used in the development of oral skills ?

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2.   What is the meaning of theme pictures ?

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3.   What does a 'Skeleton Story' mean ?

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4.   What is meant by a sound sequence? How can it be used for developing learners' speech skills ?

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5.   Describe how dictation can be used for story-telling and developing learners' speech skills.

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110

8.6 PARTICIPATING IN A DISCUSSION

Most textbooks incorporate activities which necessitate student interaction whether in pairs, groups or the class as a whole.

At times units are especially designed, to have separate sections for each skill.

Discussion can precede or follow reading texts. In the first case, discussion can prepare students for the reading task. In the second, the reading text can enable learners to delve into the theme and thus participate more effectively in the discussions that follow. The reading text can give a fillip to the imagination of students and also give the less confident learners support in terms of content.

Teacher's Role

The teacher's role, while the discussion is on, is of an observer, a manager and a facilitator. If the speaking activity focusses on the use of specific language structures, then the teacher can direct the attention of learners in advance to these structures. They may be listed in the text. Once the discussion begins, however, the teacher could allow it to develop, rather than arbitrarily call the attention of learners to grammatical details.

The teacher can move about unobtrusively observing and monitoring the groups. Common errors in grammar and usage can be noted for remedial work to be done later on. At times the dominating student can be tactfully advised so that each student in a group gets a turn. The teacher can, if need be, join a group.

The discussion must lead to a clear task. Very often, discussions tend to wilt and collapse, if they are not planned out meticulously. The activity must have a sense of completion. Nothing is more demotivating for learners than to be left to drag on a discussion interminably, without a clear purpose and goal.

The activity or discussion can be rounded off by inviting one member from each group to report on the group's discussion. If sufficient time is not available, then some groups may be asked to put up posters with a summary of their group's ideas. An oral activity which is well planned, organised, executed efficiently, timed correctly, with a feedback and follow up session gives the learners a sense of achievement. This in turn, will motivate them to participate wholeheartedly in the oral activities in future.

8.7 CLASS DEBATE

Most often students' oral skills are assessed in inter-class, inter-school debates. It would be useful to first organise these debates at the class level.

Teachers can take up relevant topics for debates which are linked to the student's life at school and home. As students move into middle school and their knowledge of the words increases, learners can debate on wider issues.

Short reading texts, letters to the editor, a newspaper cartoon and all kinds of verbal and visual stimulus can be used to start off the student's thinking processes.

Teacher's Role

The teacher can involve the learners in not only participating in the debate, but also at the organisational level.

Once the debate is organised, the teacher can include the learners in the panel of judges who will assess the debaters. The criteria of judging a debate can be spelt out, or elicited from the students at the very beginning. The participants can prepare for the debate keeping the criteria in mind. Thus weightage for content, ideas, delivery of speech, intonation and pronunciation can be collaboratively finalised.

Once the debate is over, the teacher can declare the results, Later, useful feedback can be given.

111

6.   How would you organise a good class debate?

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8.8 ROLE PLAYING

The teacher allots a role card to each student. The card has some points which a student can
take up in the course of the activity. It is important to ensure that learners have understood
very clearly what they are supposed to do.

**Initially, a short demonstration in which the teacher and a few students work out some
role play can be useful.**

The information in the role cards is in incomplete sentences or phrases. These are take off
points for students to use while participating in the role play. Students are not strictly bound
to the role card.

While selecting role play tasks, relationship to the learners' experience is important. But it
is equally challenging to have a role play based on a strange and unfamiliar situation.

Teacher's Role

The teacher's role is in clarifying what a role play entails. Some materials have role play
built in along with the themes. But the teacher can select suitable role play from other texts
keeping the difficulty level and interest of her learners in mind.

While the role play is proceeding, the teacher observes and monitors the activity. If she has
designed the role cards herself, then she can take decisions whether the role play cards or
the activity needs to be modified in some way.

8.9 RADIO SHOW

This activity can be planned by tapping various resources for example, television advertise-
ments and radio. One of the most useful resources is the Times FM. It provides a good
model for learners. Of course, the focus being different, the Radio Show prepared by the
learners will have less recorded music.

Very often students may use incidents taking place at school as subjects for reporting for
example, school projects, class projects, school events, inter-school events, sport news,
interviews of teachers and students.

The radio show also enables students who are less confident in contributing to the radio
show by coordinating the music or by playing instruments.

Teacher's Role

The teacher can introduce the radio show by playing an already recorded sample of a radio
show (see Class IX Course A CBSE). The radio show need not follow a rigid or set pattern.

Students are divided into groups. Each student in a group is given an equal chance to

112

participate. The recording can have short excerpts of music, preferably played by the students.

Listening sessions can be held in which students listen to the radio shows recorded by different groups. Before the listening session, students can be asked to comment and give suggestions. Comments on overall performance, presenters and students voice, expression, sense of humour, interest level, clarity of speech can be elicited from the students.

An interesting variation can be asking students to discuss in groups of five or six. What kind of a programme they would like to put up on Teacher's Day / Inter House Competition etc. give a time limit which each group has, ask groups at random to present their items in front of the class.

(You can also set the items that they have to include - like a skit, a joke, a small report on something that happened in school. The students decide on who does what and takes responsibility for the item. The skit can be done by the whole group).

8.10 BUILDING UP A RESOURCE FILE ON SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

Once a teacher has gained insight into the rationale behind organising speaking activities and the tremendous potential in using oral activities to develop learner's skills in the target language, it is not a difficult step to build up one's own resource file on speaking activities.

These activities can be built up by using the following as a stimulus:

- school events, e.g., a fete - allotment of stalls
- interviews for selection as Prefects and Editorial Board Members
- school trips
- current topics of interest at the national and international level
- newspaper clippings/ reports/ letters to the editor/ cartoons/ school trips can be planned having a language focus in advance. For example, the train journey can be used to recite and compose poems on trains bringing out the rhythm of the train's movement. Visuals such as a cut tree can become the focus of a small group discussion and lead students through discussion to compose a poem, voicing their interpretation of what had happened.

Newspaper cuttings can be pasted on a sheet of paper. The steps for the activity can be written out systematically. The activity can then be tried out. Subsequently, necessary changes can be made. The activity is then filed in a **Resource File** under the correct heading. These activities should be easily accessible and can become a resource to be shared by the teachers of the English Department.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

7. Describe how you will organise a role play session as a speech activity with your students.

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113

8. What is meant by a resource file?

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8.11 TIME MANAGEMENT

In organising oral activities one of the major constraints is the break up of an activity into various phases.

In the first phase the teacher sets up the activity. The oral activity may stem from a reading text or listening input. The activity should be clearly defined by the teacher.

It is of prime importance that the teacher calculate realistically the time to be allotted for discussion, role play or any other oral activity.

The time allotted should be specified clearly to all groups. If a group has finished early, the teacher can plan in advance what they should do next.

The pace of the lesson should be active and brisk. The teacher has to be alert, watchful and take decisions quickly.

8.12 INTEGRATING SPEAKING WITH OTHER SKILLS

Speaking activities can themselves arise from reading texts or listening inputs. Once the speaking activity is over, the teacher may find it very useful to integrate the activity with a writing task. The group report can be given to the students as an assignment in the form of a speech to be made in a suitable context.

For example students **read** a small text on problems of wild life conservation in India. They then **discuss** in groups of four how **poachers** and **affluent tourists** pose a threat to wild life in protected areas/wild life reserves. They then **write** down the points they have discussed in two columns under the headings :

a) Poachers
b) tourists.

Next they go around the class and **compare** their points with other groups. In a whole class discussion the teacher **writes** down the important points of agreement on the blackboard.

(**Source** : *Spectrum : Reader* 8; Sultan Chand and Sons, 1997, New Delhi.)

Very often writing assignments are given in isolation without much preparatory work done in class. Speaking activities give impetus and enable learners to write competently on a theme they have collaboratively explored in class.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

9. How will you design speaking activities for your class ?

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114

10. How will you manage time in a speaking activity?

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11. How will you integrate other skills with a speaking activity? Describe with the help of an example.

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8.13 LET US SUM UP

This unit has brought into light the different kinds of speaking activities and the role of teachers in involving the learners in these activities. You as a teacher, can play an important part in organising these activities so that the learners get practice and can actively involve themselves in the classroom processes. The activities mainly discussed are stories, discussions, debates role play, radio shows. At the same time there is a need to integrate speaking with other skills such as reading texts or listening inputs. Time management in this is important because each activity has to be broken up into various phases with appropriate time allotment.

8.14 KEY WORDS

cue cards	:	cards given to learners in a role play game to tell them which role they are to play, and what they are to do (Cue cards are sometimes called role cards).
incomplete story	:	telling a story without completing it, inviting and stimulating students to give their own version of the ending.
radio show	:	a radio show is a programme which is recorded or presented live consisting of contributions made by a group of students — a presenter, items on topics of interest, excerpts of music, advertisements.
resource file	:	a file consisting of newspaper cuttings, cartoons, role cards compiled by the teacher for use in class.
skeleton story	:	giving the main events of the story in telegraphic language to be used by students for building a detailed story.
sound sequence	:	a set of recorded sounds, arranged in a sequence to be used as a stimulus for students to build a story on.
theme pictures	:	listening to a story, selecting pictures, matching it to the story and giving reasons for the choice.

8.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Story telling is an activity which children can relate to most naturally and effectively. It can be used in various ways to build up oral skills for e.g., by telling an incomplete story where students can be asked to provide the ending.

115

2. Theme pictures are a set of pictures, some of which are related, and some not related to the story told by the teacher. Each student gives his/her reason(s) for the choice of pictures.

3. A skeleton story consists of a set of bare facts, in the form of phrases or very short sentences, the students use these as clues to tell their version of the story.

4. A sound sequence consists of a recording of sounds arranged in a sequences. Students listen to the sound and give their own interpretation of what is happening in the form of a story. When students try to explain what each sound means to them, they are compelled to speak.

   Sound sequence can be integrated with speaking because students interpret it to tell their own story. It can later be integrated with writing a dialogue, skit, description or story.

5. The practice of dictation can be made purposeful by integrating it with an oral activity.

6. Class debates can become a rewarding experience if the topic is chosen carefully. The students may themselves suggest a topic that they wish to discuss and make all arrangements with the guidance of the teacher. The class debate has to be organised carefully.

7. Open-ended.

8. A resource file is a file compiled by the teacher in which cartoons, newspaper articles, slogans, posters are systematically arranged. Each of these is mounted on a sheet of paper and the steps of the oral skills activity are written systematically. These activities are used by the practising teacher and shared by other members of the English department.

9. You can design your own speaking activities by being alert and compiling cartoons, newspaper cuttings and building activities on them.

10. Time Management is of crucial importance in Speaking Activities. At times the discussions may continue too long, or may be stopped abruptly if the teacher has not been realistic in her estimate of the time needed for the discussion. Groups need to be made aware of the time allocated for each phase of the activity. If the discussion takes too much time, other important aspects such as feedback and follow up by the teacher will get neglected.

11. Speaking activities are closely linked to listening. Reading and Writing can also be integrated with speaking activities. A debate topic may lend itself to further reading. Writing is an activity which students shy away from in most cases. The speaking activity supports learners by giving content and focus to the writing exercise.

8.16 SUGGESTED READINGS

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1975) : *Sounds Interesting*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1978) : *Drama Techniques in Language Learning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1979) : *Sounds Intriguing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A., Duff, A. and Grellet, F. (1980) : *The Mind's Eye*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1978) : *Variations on a Theme*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Morgan, J. and Rinvolucri, M. (1983) : *Once Upon a Time*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ur, P. (1981) : *Discussions that Work*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

116

UNIT 9   TESTING LISTENING ABILITY AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Structure

9.1   INTRODUCTION

Assessment of the learners at the end of any teaching programme has a two-fold purpose. The students receive a feedback on their learning as well as gaps in learning. The teachers get an opportunity to monitor student progress. It therefore goes without saying that any programme of teaching learners listening skills will be followed by evaluation of the skills taught, e.g.,

● listening for specific information

● obtaining the gist of what is being said

● following directions

● following instructions

● inferring situations, speakers, contexts and even discriminating sounds and words.

In this unit, you will be introduced to a variety of items usually used for testing listening comprehension. These items can be easily divided into two categories — based on their purpose - a) listening for perception (identifying different sounds/sound combinations), b) listening for comprehension (understanding verbal messages, sense of the context, etc.).

In a classroom situation, you as the teacher, can use either recorded voice or you can administer the test yourself. However, if you use a (tape) recorded voice in primary classes, the young learners may find it very difficult to follow the text as they cannot see the speaker. Moreover, if the quality of recording is poor or if the tape recorder is not of a very good quality, aural perception is affected. You may therefore find it easier, in primary and middle school classes, to read out the test yourself. In the secondary and senior secondary classes, you can use a judicious mix of both recorded and spoken material.

9.2   OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

● understand the purpose of different kinds of tests for listening comprehension;

● compare and contrast the merits and demerits of these different kinds of tests;

● devise your own tests for assessing the learners' listening abilities.

9.3 AURAL TESTS OF PERCEPTION

The tests which have been discussed in this section require limited response and are more suitable for beginners or learners from primary classes. These items test the recognition of sounds and words. Let us work at a number of items.

I.   Your students get a sheet of paper on which a series of words are written.

1.   a)   pin   b)   pen   c)   pan
2.   a)   plane   b)   train   c)   tram
3.   a)   ox   b)   box   c)   fox

You read out one word. The student underlines it.

This kind of an item is the opposite of a dictation test, but the learner needs time to read the items.

To frame such items you need words which are similar sounding - but with one difference. You can therefore use books of phonetic drills to get such minimal pairs.

A similar item with more difficult words can be used at the middle school level. e.g.

I.   a)   Conversation   b)   Compassion
     c)   Connection   d)   Conservation

II. A variation of this item is the use of simple line drawings as the cue. The learners get a sheet of a paper where they have a number of simple drawings and a small box in a corner.
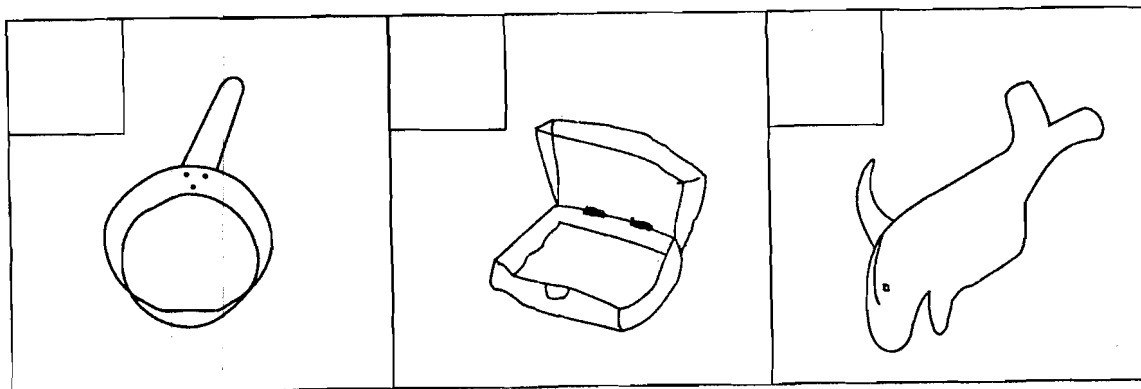
For each picture the students hear three/four words.

1.   a) pin   b)   pen   c) pan
2.   a) ox   b)   box   c) fox, etc.

III. A similar item can be framed at the sentence level. The learners get a sheet of paper with pairs of sentences written on it. They mark with a tick (✓) the sentence they hear. e.g.

1.   a) Can you see the ship over there? ( )

     b) Can you see the sheep over there? ( )

2.   a) Knock the door. ( )

     b) Lock the door. ( ), etc.

In your own sheet, you must already mark those sentences which you want to read out. It's better to read out each sentence twice.

You must be careful to choose short and simple sentences for beginners.

Check Your Progress

> **Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
>
> b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Indicate (with a tick) whether the statements are correct or incorrect.

   a) Tests of listening perception assess students' ability to hear correct sounds. (Correct/Incorrect)

   b) Teachers should never repeat the words/sentences they read out for testing listening ability. (Correct/Incorrect)

   c) In tests of aural perception, students write long answers. (Correct/Incorrect)

   d) Beginners are best assessed through listening perception tests. (Correct/Incorrect)

2. Write down the instructions for a test item in which you want your learners to discriminate a sound (phoneme) of the English language.

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3. Suggest four minimal pairs for beginning learners.

   (A minimal pair of words contrasts two sounds of the language e.g. in the following minimal pairs /æ/ and /ʌ/ are being contrasted.

/ /	/ /
cap	cup
sack	suck
match	much
hat	hut

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4. Write two pairs of sentences in which only **one** word is different. (as in item III).

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9.4 VISUAL MATERIALS FOR TESTING LISTENING

Listening comprehension tests are concerned with communication - understanding specific details, sequence of happenings, etc.

In this section, we will discuss the use of pictures to test listening comprehension.

I. In the first type of item, the learners have a set of pictures marked A,B,C, etc. They listen to descriptions and write the name(s) of what's being described.

Student Worksheet

You will listen to the description of some sea animals. Write the name of these animals which match the description.

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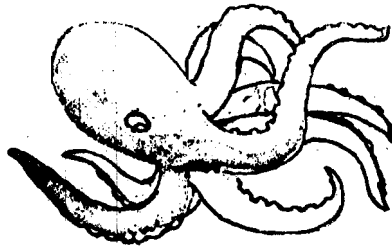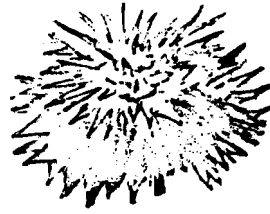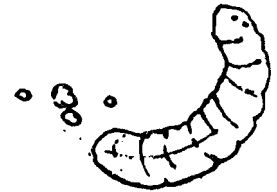
Spoken Test

Lugworm : It looks like a long worm.

Octopus : It has a soft body with eight long, strong arms around its mouth. It looks very strange and frightening.

Starfish : Starfish are mostly all arms and no body. That usually have five arms but some kinds have as many as fifty.

Sea urchin : It is a round animal. Its body is covered with rows of long pointed spines.

(**Source :** Workbook 3, *Spectrum Interactive Series*, Book 3.)

You can frame these kind of items using description of people, places, objects. So keep collecting pictures. If you can make simple drawings, draw them.

II. In this item, the students have a series of pictures marked A,B,C etc. They have to identify the picture which is being described.

Spoken Text

The students hear:

1. Both car doors are open.
2. It's daylight but both headlamps are on.
3. The man who's repairing the car is lying underneath it.
4. Although the girl sees the man working hard, she doesn't help him.

Student Worksheet

You will listen to four sentences, at the end of which you will select (by circling the alphabet) the appropriate picture being described.
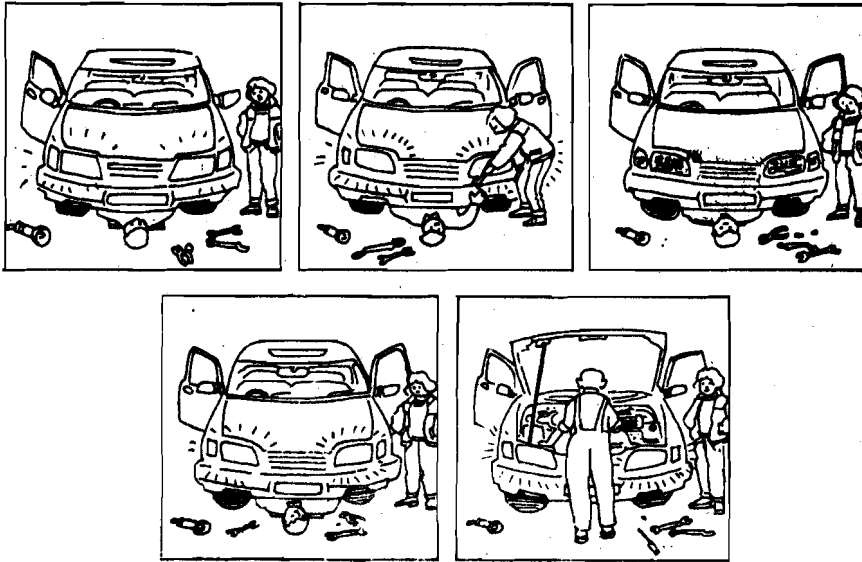
(Notice how the students are able to narrow down the choice available to them as follows.)

1. B C D E   (Only A shows one door open)
2. B D E   (Only C shows the headlamps off)
3. B D   (Only E shows the man standing up)
4. D   (Only B shows the girl helping the man)

(**Source** : Heaton (1998) : *Writing English Language Tests.*)

III.   In this kind of an item a learner gets a number of pictures which are not numbered. You start telling the story and the students arrange the pictures and number them. (Here the pictures are in the correct sequence for you to reconstruct the story).

121

(**Source:** *Spectrum Interactive English Workbook No:2.*)
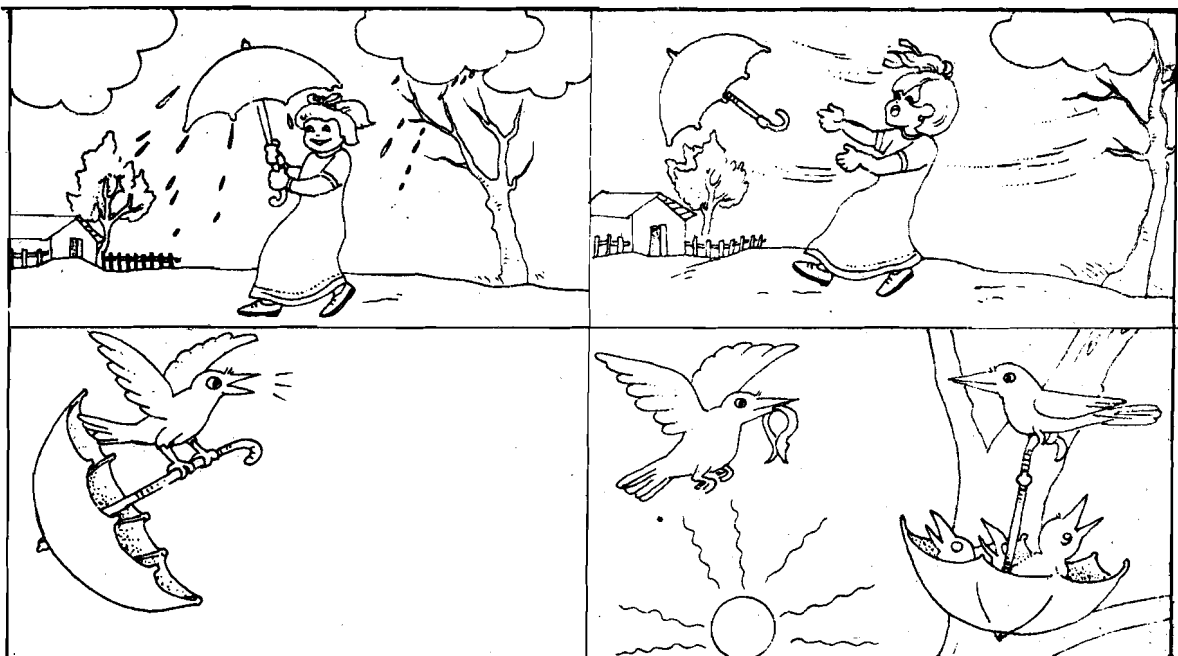
IV. A series of statements, some true some false, are spoken/read out about a picture. The students have the picture which is being talked about. They write True/False against the number of the statement.
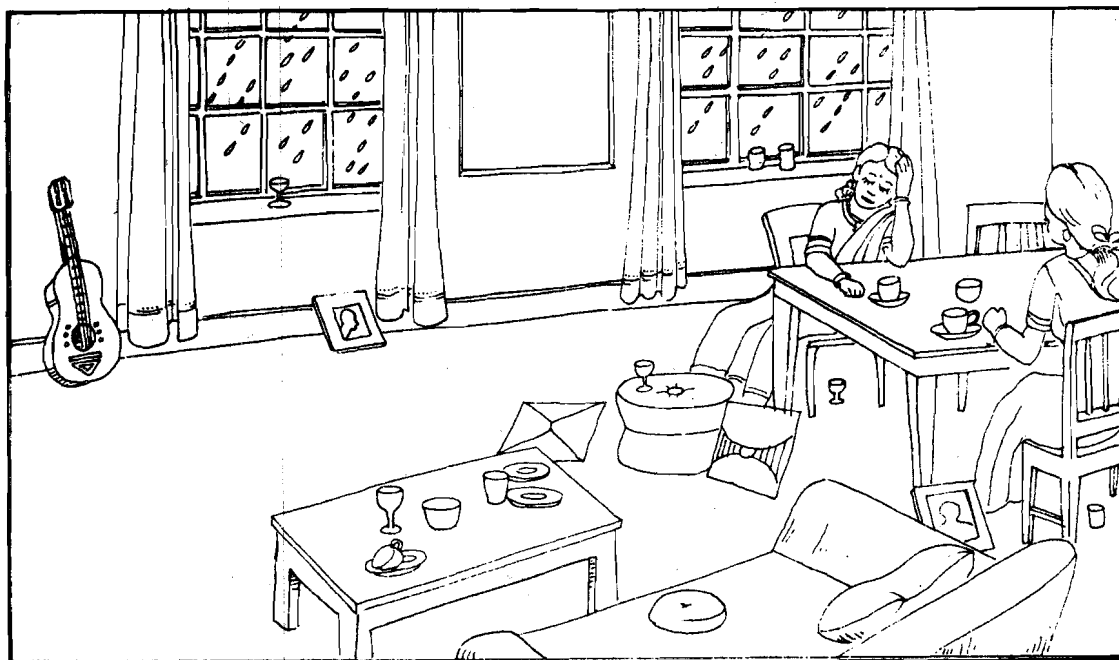
Spoken Text

1. The room is very untidy.
2. There are glasses all over the room — on the table, on the shelves, under the chairs and on the floor.
3. There is a guitar in a corner of the room.
4. A man and a woman are sitting at the table.
5. Outside it is raining hard, etc.

V. You can use simple or complicated road maps to test listening ability. An example is given below.

1. Student Worksheet.

Here is a map of a part of Prem Nagar. You will hear a number of statements. Write True or False for each.

122

(**Source:** *Interactive Spectrum Workbook No.4.*)
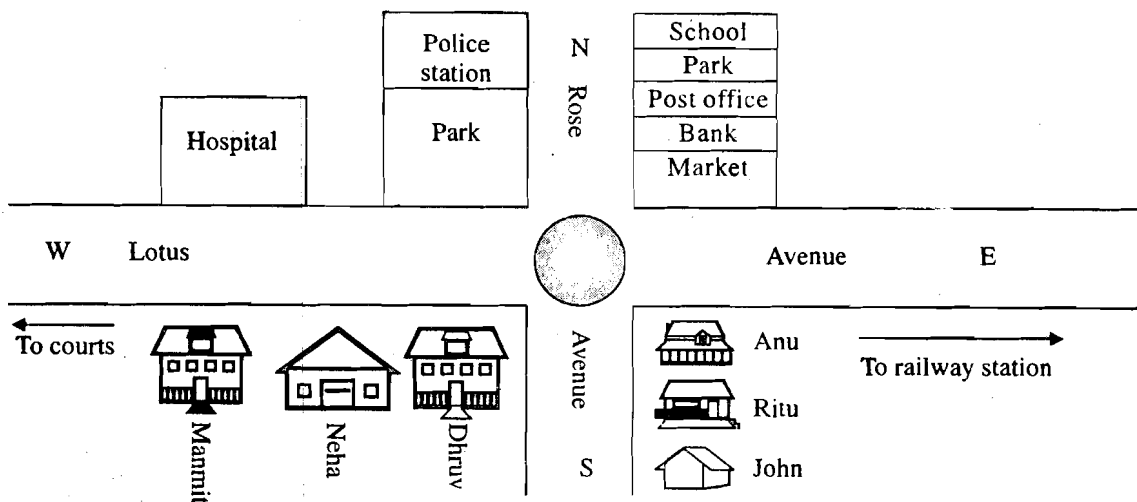
Spoken Text

1. Anu lives nearer to the fountain than Manmeet.

2. John is Anu's next door neighbour.

3. The hospital is on the western side of the city.

4. A straight road runs between the railway station and the school.

The item types described in this section are easy to construct and easier to score. However, you have to look for the right kind of pictures for different levels, keep adequate number of these pictures and worksheets photocopied much before the test. If your school does not have a photocopier, you have to get it done from outside for which you may need the permission of your head.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Draw/find pictures of three persons. Give them names. Write short descriptions which you can read out. Write instructions for your students.

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6. A picture is given below. Frame/write six sentences some of which are correct and some incorrect.

   Design a student sheet complete with instructions.
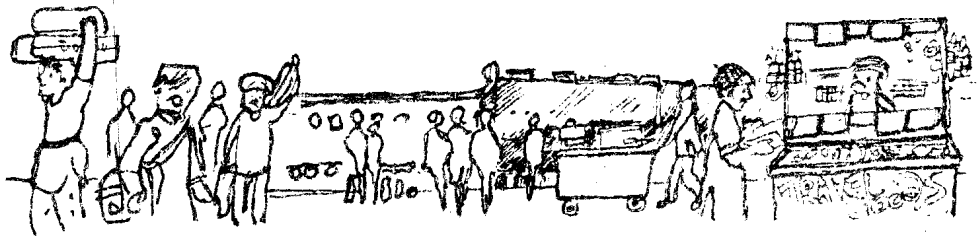
(Source : A.L. Khanna and T.C. Ghai, *English in Use.*)

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7. List the advantages and limitations of using visual material for listening comprehension tests. (**Your hints** : Picture will give a lot of information, items can be framed around them; difficult to find suitable pictures etc.).

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9.5 TESTING LISTENING THROUGH LIMITED RESPONSES

The student's ability to understand what they listen to in the target language can be assessed through a variety of items. This section introduces you to a number of item types that require limited response. (i.e. A student chooses the most appropriate answer from given options or marks a route or building on a given road map).

I. The student has a written sheet with four options. (S)he listens to a question and chooses the most appropriate answer and indicates the choice with a tick mark (✓).

Spoken : When are you going to Bombay?

Student Worksheet:

A. By New Delhi, Rajdhani.

B. Next Saturday, that's the 26th of June.

C. To meet my brother.

D. With my cousin.

II. The student listens to a sentence and chooses from the options on the worksheet the sentence which is closest to it in meaning.

124

Spoken : If I knew Rita was coming, I would have told you.

Student Worksheet :

A. I knew and I told you.

B. I did not know and I did not tell you.

C. I knew but I did not tell you.

D. I did not know but you knew.

III.   The student listens to a small exchange and answers the question which follows.
       The options are available to him/her on the worksheet.

Spoken :   A :   Four tickets for the balcony, please

           B :   All tickets have been sold out.

           A :   Then give me upper stall tickets.

           B :   You get them in two separate rows.

           A :   O.K. I'll take it.

Question : Where are these people?
Student Worksheet:

A   :   At the hospital.

B   :   At the railway booking office.

C   :   At a cinema hall ticket counter.

D   :   At the airport.

(For this kind of an exchange — which you can easily record — it is better to use two different
voices — preferably a male and a female — to avoid confusion).

IV.   A simple road map is given to the students, who listen to spoken instruction on how
      to reach a place. The student marks the route that has to be taken.

The way to my house

There's a bus terminal next to the railway station. Catch a Route 421 or 425 bus from there. Get
off at the Defence Colony bus stop. The conductor will help you. From the bus stop walk past
the General Store (Kwality Store), and take the first turning on the left. Walk along this road.
Cross the first road you come to (School Road), and you'll come to Surya Vithi. No. 79 is the
last house on the right. (The map given below may help you.)
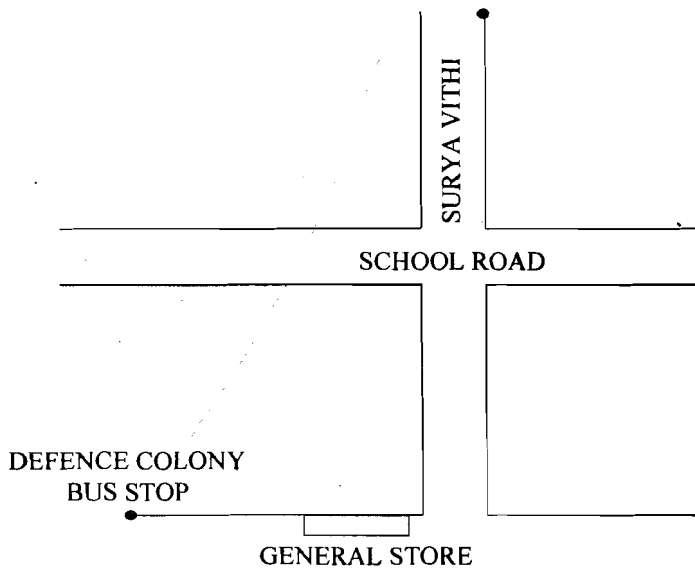
125

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

8. The items suggested in this section focus on meaning. Would you like to use these items with slight modifications for testing reading comprehension? Give reasons for your answer.

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9. Sketch a simple road map with names of roads written on it and a few places/buildings like the bank, post office or grocery shop indicated. Mention where your student is (on the map). Write a small exchange (dialogue) giving directions on how to reach a particular place.

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9.6 LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF EXTENDED COMMUNICATION

The ability to understand announcements, news, informal talks and formal lectures is an important skill for students studying subjects in the medium of English (at inter-mediate and advanced levels) in higher classes.

As a teacher you would be using a lot of news broadcasts ands announcements at different places like railway stations or airports to train your students. Such texts/communications should find a place in assessment also.

I.   The first item is an example of a news broadcast on which a few questions have been asked.

News Item : (Position of Radio Broadcast)

The United States Air Force has admitted that a formation of its fighters and an Air France Concorde recently missed colliding by as little as 10 feet. The Air Force accepts the blame for what was the closest recorded miss in aviation history.

According to the Air Force spokesman, when the Concorde was already 70 miles out over the Atlantic, on a scheduled flight to Paris from Dulles International Airport, Washington, four US Air Force F-15s approached at 0 (zero) speed from the left. The lead plane missed the outside of the Concorde only by 15 feet in the front of the cockpit.

126

Student Worksheet

Try to answer all the questions after listening once. Then listen again and check your answers.

1.   What aeroplanes were nearly involved in an accident recently ?

2.   Where did the incident take place ?

3.   Whose fault was it ?

4.   Where did the passenger plane take off from ?

5.   How many aeroplanes were involved ?

6.   How close did the aeroplanes get ?

Answers

1.   Four U.S. Air Force F-15s and an Air France Concorde.

2.   Seventy miles out over the Atlantic from the United States.

3.   The U.S. Air Force's. (They accepted the blame.)

4.   Dulles International Airport, Washington.

5.   Five.

6.   Ten and fifteen feet.

(**Source:** *Reason for Listening* by David Scarboroug (1984), Cambridge University Press.)

(Remember you are testing listening comprehension so do not deduct marks for spellings and grammatical inaccuracies).

As for your teaching situation, similarly for your testing purposes record the latest radio news possible. Then frame a few questions.

II.   In the next example, you will find a grid has been used to check listening ability. The students listen to the conversation between two friends and fill up the gird. You could either use an empty grid to be filled up or incorrectly filled in grids, which the students have to correct.

Student Worksheet (Use either)

1.   Empty Grid

Name	Appearance	Occupation	Whether married or not
Radha Venkat Sushil Savitri			

2.   Filled up Grid

Name	Appearance	Occupation	Whether married or not
Radha	short and fat	Writer	married
Venkat	no information	Computer analyst	not likely to be married
Sushil	dark and tall	words at Computers India as a Programmer	married
Savitri	tall girl with short hair	Nurse	intends to marry someone who would like to work in a village

127

Listening Passage

Radha	:	Venkat! I can't believe it's you. I haven't seen you for ages. How're things? What are you doing?
Venkat	:	Radha, is that you? I hardly recognized you. You've put on weight.
Radha	:	Come, come, Don't exaggerate. I'm not fat. Besides, I had a baby recently.
Venkat	:	Congratulations! When did you met married? What does your husband do?
Radha	:	Oh, six years ago. My husband works for Computers India as a Hardware Engineer.
Venkat	:	Really? I'd love to meet him. I'm interested in computers too. I've just done a master's degree in computer software.
Radha	:	That's interesting! Where do you work?
Venkat	:	Well, I'm jobless at present. In fact I'm exploring the possibility of starting a consultancy in computer programming.
Radha	:	Sushil would love to meet you. How about having dinner with us one evening?
Venkat	:	I'd love to. When would you like me to come?
Radha	:	Well, I'm busy on weekdays. Will Saturday suit you?
Venkat	:	That'll be fine. By the way, what are you busy with?
Radha	:	I work for a newspaper. At present I'm working on a project on adult education in rural areas. So I have to visit villages on the outskirts of the city. And guess who I met at Kheri?
Venkat	:	Who?
Radha	:	Savitri. D'you remember her?
Venkat	:	You mean that tall girl with very long hair?
Radha	:	Yes.
Venkat	:	What was she doing there?
Radha	:	She's a doctor now. She's opened a clinic there.
Venkat	:	That's surprising. One wouldn't expect a lively city-bred girl like her to work in a village. Is she married to a doctor?
Radha	:	Oh no. She doesn't intend to marry unless she meets a man who is also interested in working in the villages.
Venkat	:	She must have changed so much.
Radha	:	She has. She's very sober now.

III. In the third example the student listens to a formal talk and is then expected to demonstrate his/her comprehension by completing a table. You should perhaps allow your students to read through the questions first, so that they have a rough idea about the kind of information they should look for when they are listening to the talk.

(Also notice that the students are not expected to write any long answers).

Student Worksheet

A passage will either he read to you twice by your teacher or played on a recording. Listen carefully both times and fill in the table.

128

1. Complete the following table by listening to the information about Jupiter:

Appearance	Size	Weight	Gravitational pull	Time of rotation on its axis	Time taken for one revolution round the sun	Atmosphere	Temperature

2. The distance between the Sun and Jupiter is...

3. Why is life not possible on Jupiter ?

4. 'Axis' means: a) a line round which an object spins, b) a point round which an object spins, c) a line along which an object moves.

Listening to the following information on Jupiter.

Jupiter

You must have all heard of the planet Jupiter. It is the largest planet in the sun's family. It looks like a very bright star, a little brighter than any of the real stars in the night sky. The diameter of Jupiter is 87,000 miles, nearly eleven times the diameter of the earth and, Jupiter weighs as much as 318 times as much as the earth. Because Jupiter weighs so much, the pull of gravity there is stronger than on the earth. If you weigh 100 pounds on the earth, you would weigh 264 pounds on Jupiter.

Jupiter turns on its axis very fast. It has the shortest day of any of the planets. Day and night together are only ten hours long. It takes Jupiter twelve of our years to go once round the sun, because it is so far away - 483 million miles, more than five times as far from the sun as the earth is.

The air on Jupiter is very deep. It is composed of gases methane and ammonia, so it would be poisonous to us. There are high winds and many clouds on Jupiter. The temperature of the air is 200 degrees below Fahrenheit. Because it is so cold, and because the air would be poisonous to us, we cannot not live on Jupiter.

IV. The last example of this section, and perhaps the most difficult is from 'Dramatic Monologues for Listening Comprehension' by Colin Mortimer (1988) and are definitely meant for advanced learners. The questions which are asked at the end of the listening passage require the listener to infer the situation, the speaker and the context in which the monologue is spoken. The learner also needs some writing ability as the items require short answers.

Student Worksheet

Listen to the monologue and then answer the questions.

1. In what place is the speaker talking?
2. What did the speaker decide to give up ten years previously?
3. Who is 'he'?
4. 'They went to have a look at them'
   a) What were 'them'?
   b) Where were 'they'?
5. It's for two weeks'. What does 'It' refer to here?

129

6. What do the 'little tickets' signify?
7. 'she's "dying to meet the man"
   a) Who is 'she'?
   b) Who is 'the man'?
8. 'Others know nothing and don't.'
   What does 'don't' mean?
9. In a few sentences say what we know about the listener.
10. Why does the speaker feel 'they really don't seem anything to do with me'?

Monologue : Listening Passage

Frankly, I've been delighted. As you know, I decided to give it up ten years ago. I put them all in the attic — all fifty or sixty of them — to gather dust, and forgot about them. Then I just happened to meet him one day in a bar, entirely by chance, and we got talking about this and that, and, well — to cut a long story short — he went to have a look at them, and this is the result. It's for two weeks. And it's devoted entirely to my work. Doing very well, too, as you can see from the little tickets on about half of them. You know, now that they're hanging on the wall like this, with all the clever lighting, and glossy catalogue, and the smart people, they really don't seem anything to do with me, It's a bit like seeing old friends in new circumstances where they fit and you don't. Now, you see her this? She's already bought three. Heard her saying one day she's 'dying to meet the man'. Afraid she'd be, very disappointed if she did. Interesting, though, some of the things you overhear. Some know something about it. Others know nothing and admit it. Others know nothing and don't. By the way, I heard someone say the other day that the 'Portrait of a Woman' reminded her of you, you know. So you see, you're not only very famous, but — as I keep on telling you — you haven't changed a bit.


Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

10. What according to you, are the different (sub) skills which are assessed through news broadcasts and monologues? List them below.

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11. You have to take a ten-minute listening test for your secondary students. Mention two item types which you would like to use from this section. Give reasons for your answer.

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130

9.7   THE LISTENING TEST : SOME DO'S AND DONT'S

1. The item types used here or given as examples are merely suggestive and not exhaustive. Only by consulting/looking through books available for this purpose, will you be able to get a fair enough idea about the level of passages and the items which you can use with minor adaptations. So do consult the new books (and some of the old ones) that are available.

2. Whatever sub-skills of listening you choose to assess, your students must have had practice in tackling that type/kind of an item. It is unfair to expect students to do well if they are confronted with new kinds of tests in the examination situation. So **do** choose items types to which your students have been introduced already.

3. It is not necessary that all listening passages have to be recorded. Rather students find "live reading" easier to understand. But you must be audible to all your students. So **do** read aloud the passage at normal conversational speed and read it out twice. It would be a good idea to involve other teachers, as well as students in this 'live' listening.

4. If you are using a tape recorder and a tape, **do** check that it is functioning properly. **Do** check the number of worksheets, pictures, pencils (if necessary) you would need. **Do** ensure that no one disturbs while the test is in progress.

5. **Don't** deduct marks for spellings and grammatical errors if you expect/want your students to write short answers. Remember you have other occasions to check spellings and grammar, and finally

6. **Don't** use one item type only. It's always better to have a variety of (small) items (at all the levels) than using one long listening passage. Moreover, you can assess different sub-skills through different items.

9.8   LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to a variety of items you can use at different levels for testing listening comprehension, but you are the best judge and have to choose your listening texts/passages and items with care.

Listening tests are easier to conduct/take than speaking tests and are frequently included in the school programme 'for its baskwash effect on the development of oral skills'.

9.9   KEY WORDS

grid   :   a table used for information transfer exercises.

limited response   :   the learners choose the most appropriate answer (or follow certain directions e.g. mark a road map).

minimal pairs   :   a minimal pair of words contrasts two sounds of a language.

monologue   :   opposite of dialogue; where only one person speaks. In a dialogue there are two people. Conversation can be shared by many.

9.10   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. a) Correct   b) Incorrect   c) Incorrect   d) Correct
2. Open ended.
3. Open ended.
4. Open ended.
5. Open ended.

131

6. Open ended.

7. Easy to construct, easy to score, objective marking, reliable (advantages).

   A lot of time is spent working for pictures, photocopying them and framing proper items.

8. Can be used for reading comprehension as reading is a receptive skill like listening. Moreover they are meaning oriented items and hence checks learners ability to understand structures and situations well.

9. Open ended.

10. News Broadcast : Check factual details and location of specific information; monologues check inference of speaker, situation, tone, etc.

11. Any two would be suitable.

    a) New items followed by questions.

    b) Listening Passage followed by multiple choice item. Passage should not be more than 3 minutes duration when spoken/read aloud.

    c) Completion of Grids/Information transfer after listening to simple description. Can't really use it if students' proficiency level is very low.

9.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

Collie and Slater (1993) : *Listening 3 Cambridge Skills for Fluency*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Harmer Jeremy (1983) : *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Longman, New York.

Heaton, J.B. (1988) : *Writing English Language Tests*, Longman, London.

Hughes, A. (1990) : *Testing for Language Teachers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Madsen, H.S. (1983) : *Techniques in Testing*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Maley, A. and Duff, A. (1983) : *Beyond Words*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Mortimer, C. (1988) : *Dramatic Monologues for Listening Comprehension*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Scarbrough, D. (1984) : *Reasons for Listening*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Spectrum Interactive English Workbooks 1996 - 2,3 and 4, Sultan Chand.

Ur, P. (1984) : *Teaching Listening Comprehension*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

132

UNIT 10   TESTING SPEAKING SKILLS

Structure

10.1   INTRODUCTION

All language teachers agree in principle that testing students' command of spoken language is important to judge their overall language competence. Yet, oral tests have always received less weightage than written examinations in most schemes of examinations in India. Teachers themselves regard the preparation, administration and scoring of speaking tests difficult and challenging.

The most important problem that a teacher faces while testing oral skills is the constraints of time. While it is easy to say that the set tasks should truly bring out the learner's ability and that they should be valid and reliable, the time required for such testing is anybody's guess. By the roughest estimate, a teacher would need about 10 hours to test 40 students for fifteen minutes each. Moreover, one single teacher can pay attention ideally to one or at the most to a group of four or five students at a time if the students have to be taken through a series of tasks. What does the remaining class do? In Indian situations where noise level in the class is the only pointer to teacher control and efficiency, (total silence being most desirable), few would dare to be daring and risk testing large numbers of students. Furthermore, as with writing, the teacher has every chance of acting very subjectively and marking students impressionistically. Although parts of the test can be tape recorded, so that one can check back, if need be, it cannot capture the actual moments/context of the test. (This is not to forget the number of audio cassettes a teacher would need to record the students' response. Very few schools in India can afford such luxuries). The disagreement on what criteria to choose in evaluating oral communication adds to the challenge. Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, appropriacy of expression, coherence of thoughts, application of communication strategies (i.e. circumlocution, turn taking) are all regarded as important and the teacher is always entangled in the fluency versus accuracy controversy.

10.2   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

●   explain why oral production tests are not popular in India;

●   devise a variety of speaking tests for classroom use;

●   compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of different   test items for testing speaking skills; and

● distinguish analytical marking scheme from holistic bands.

10.3 A FRAMEWORK FOR TESTING SPEAKING SKILLS

Cyril Weir (1983) has proposed a three-part framework to test spoken interaction, covering

a) operations

b) performance conditions, and

c) the expected level of performance.

Let us look at these three aspects in more detail.

a) Operations

To speak a foreign language, learners must have adequate vocabulary and some idea of how to put sentences together. The language routines that a learner uses can be broadly classified as **informational** and **interactional**. While information routines take into account ways of presenting information (e.g. description, comparison, instructions, or narration), interactional routines subsume ordered sequences of turns as in telephone conversations, interviews, meetings or conversations. This involves the reciprocal ability to use both receptive and productive skills, i.e. to negotiate meaning, rephrase in case of misunderstanding, take turns, allow others to take turns, etc.

b) Performance Conditions

Set out some of the other parameters of assessment of speaking abilities, viz., the time available, the permissible time lapse between exchanges (as long silences tend to break down conversations), reciprocity or the responsibility for continuing the communication, the number of people involved (whether it is a dialogue or a group discussion), the familiarity of the people involved (known teacher, unknown examiner, peer group), etc.

c) The Level of Performance

This focusses attention on fluency (smoothness of execution), appropriateness (formality required, role relationships), coherence (organisation of discourse in long turns), effectiveness (the ability to meet the demands of informational and interactional routines), accuracy (both pronunciation intelligibility and grammatical correctness) and range of vocabulary.

Evaluation experts are of the opinion that all assessment of spoken language should be based on tasks or activities which the learner performs 'though using the language' (as opposed to drills or substitution tables). Ideally the tasks should be such that learners would be expected to carry out and accomplish in real life.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1.   Your Principal wants to know if oral tests should be introduced as a part of the first term tests. Write your opinion in a paragraph of about 100 words.

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134

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2. Explain some of the reasons why teachers avoid assessing speaking abilities.

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3. Under which **operation** (informational or interactional) would you place the following tasks?

   a) description of a hair dryer. ....

   b) short oral interview ....

   c) telling a story based on pictures ....

   d) role play (customer and receptionist at a hotel counter).

   e) giving instructions on how to put staple pins in a stapler.

   f) group discussion on a given topic ....

4. What do you understand by the following terms — fluency, appropriacy and accuracy this?

   Fluency : ....

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   Appropriacy : ....

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   Accuracy : ....

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10.4 SAMPLE TEST ITEMS

An oral test should not be of less than about 15 minute duration as reliable information cannot be obtained in less time, whereas a 30 minute test would probably provide all the necessary information. To elicit the necessary behaviour of students we should include different items or tasks and activities, so that a student gets as many 'fresh starts' as possible (i.e., a student should not be assessed on the basis of one item only).

In this section we discuss a number of test items, which you may find useful for your classroom use.

10.4.1 Limited Response Items

Such items can be useful for evaluating students with limited speaking skills.

A. The students are given a situation and examples of the response demanded. They then produce the desired response.

135

Example

Mrs. Sen lives in a big city. She doesn't like to live there. She likes to be in a small peaceful village. (Mrs. Sen **wishes** to live in a small peaceful village.)

Similarly : Tony has a small car. He wants to buy a big one. (Tony wishes ....)

Kamlesh loves to travel. She wants to visit Kashmir. (Kamlesh ....)

B. The students make an appropriate response to the cue given.

Example

You want to go to the railway station, but you are lost. Ask someone to direct you.
(Excuse me, could you please tell me the way to the railway station?)

Similarly : You bought a shirt yesterday but you find that it is one size small. Ask the sales girl at the counter if you can change it. (..)

Your younger brother wants you to help him with some sums. Tell him you can do that only after you have washed your bicycle. (...)

Advantage of Limited Response	Disadvantage
A large number of items can be incorporated in a short time.	Output is limited and hence range of criteria used for marking has to be limited.

10.4.2 Information Transfer Exercises

As in all other language tests, in oral production tests, pictures and diagrams can be exploited in a variety of ways to provide ample opportunities to learners to speak. Simple and single pictures as given below can be used for straigthforward descriptions.

*Given below is a picture of a **weekly market scene**. Use this picture to describe the scene.*

136

(Source: A.L. Khanna and T.C. Ghai, *English in Use, Book 3.*)
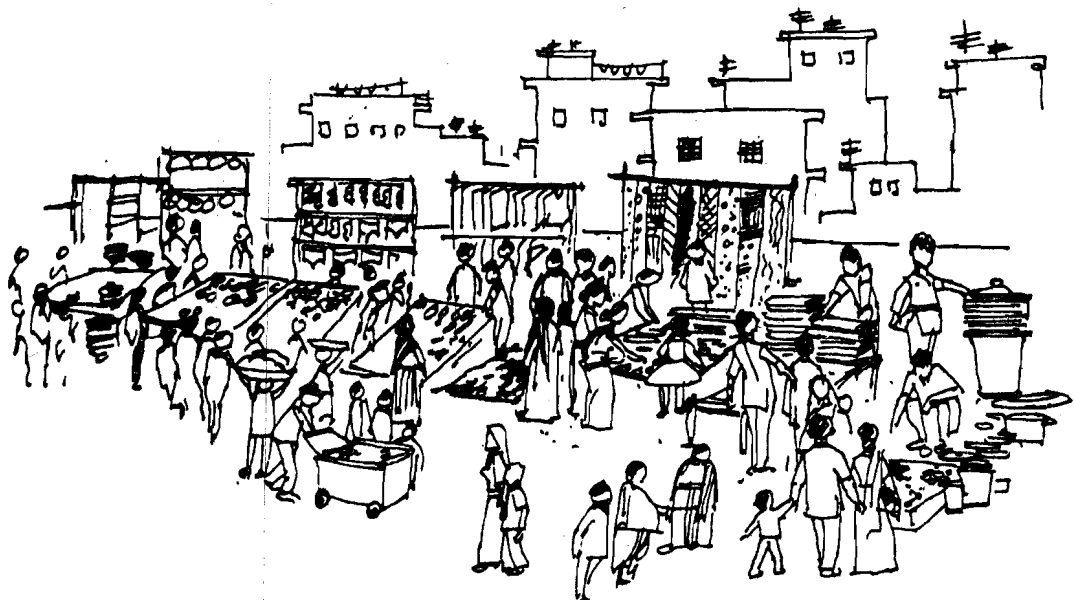
A test can be made slightly more difficult by giving two pictures and asking the student to state the difference between the two. An example is given below.
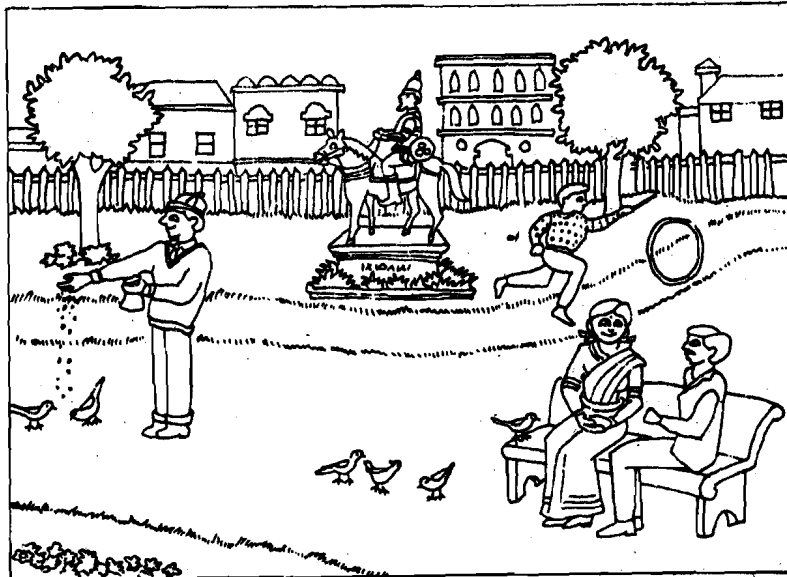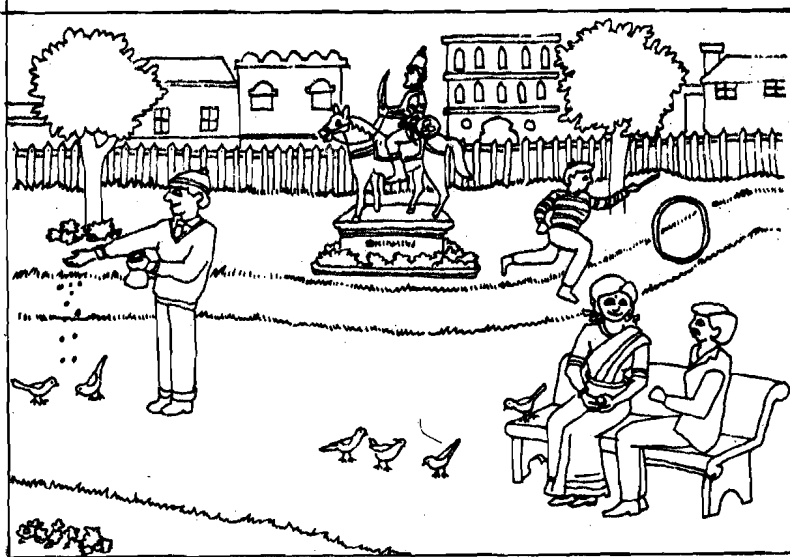
To assess a students narrative skills a series of pictures can be used as given in the example below.

Given below are some pictures of the Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort, Delhi. Using the pictures and some of the words given, describe orally how the Independence Day was celebrated in Delhi this year.

(**Source :** Khanna, A.L. and T.C. Ghai, *English in Use.*)

The same task of narration can be made more challenging by putting the *pictures* in a jumbled order as in the cartoon strip given here. (A group activity can also be devised by giving a picture to each member of the group. The members first describe his or her picture without showing it to the other members. Later the most plausible/correct sequence is worked out by the group.)
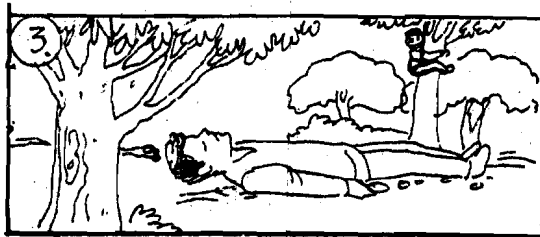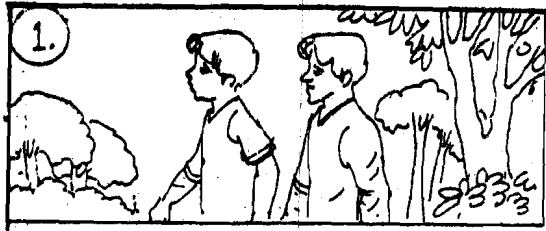
(**Source:** A.L. Khanna and T.C. Ghai, *English in Use, Book 3*)

Diagrams as given later can also be used for testing oral production. The temperature graph and rainfall chart of two places — Delhi and Trivandrum — can assess the student's ability to transfer information from both non-verbal to verbal mode. Also to compare and contrast the given data, the learner has to speak (coherently) at a stretch for some time.

138

(**Source** : *Interact in English Workbook* : CBSE)
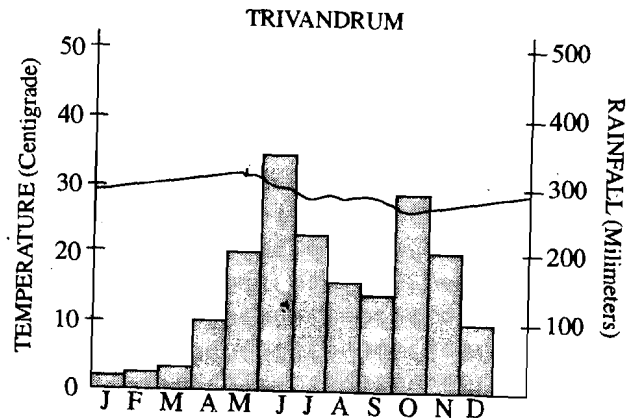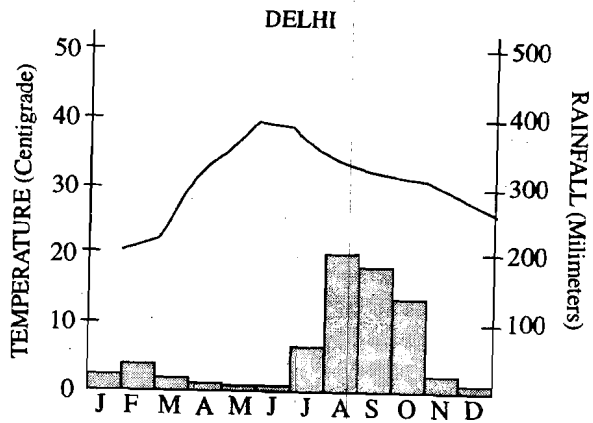
Advantages of using pictures/ graphics	Disadvantages
The technique is straightforward and doesn't require students to read or to listen to anything.	The task is not (always) interactive and students would never do anything like this (except interpreting date from diagrams) in real life.
Gives the student an opportunity to produce a fairly extended sample of connected speech and tests their abilities of narration, description or reporting.	

10.4.3 Information Gap Activities

These are activities in which students are given different bits of information, and by sharing these bits of information they complete a task. This activity can be arranged in pairs and in groups.

The first example on sharing geographical information is designed for pair work - where one student is 'A' and another 'B'. The students ask and answer questions about various towns and cities, their location, population, climate and complete their own information sheet. A time limit should be fixed for each candidate to ask questions and they should be instructed not to show their worksheets to each other.

Student A

	Sydney	Delhi
Country?	Australia	
Population		99 lakhs
Weather		Extreme
Like What?	Modern, busy	
Famous For?	Opera Music	

Student B

Sydeny	Delhi	
Country?		India
Population	3 million	
Weather	Hot and dry	
Like What?		Polluted
Famous For?		Kutab Minar

(You can easily make parallel items by using information on Indian towns and cities.)

The second example can be devised either as a pair or as a group work activity. The task is given below.

Example : Your friend has won Rs. 2000/- in a quiz competition and wants to buy a camera. The two of you/four of you have information on four different cameras. Discuss and decide which would be the best one to buy. Tell your teacher after you have decided. You have six minutes to decide.

(In case of pair work student 'A' has information on 2 cameras and student 'B' has information on the other two. In case of group work each student has information on one camera.)

	Price(Rs.)	Weight (grams)	Size	Flash
Camera A	2000	250	small	+
Camers B	1850	300	medium	+
Camera C	1280	250	small	+
Camera D	1850	550	small	+

Further alternatives can be designed by using information on motorcycles, watches, T.Vs, Walkmans and so on.

139

Advantages	Disadvantages
Covers both information and interactional routines. Students have to use many language functions: questioning, eliciting information, description, making requests, stating preferences, coming to decisions, etc. The task will involve turn taking and giving turns to others.	One student can dominate the entire discussion if the members of the group are not evenly matched.
The students have to solve a problem (as in example 2) which is related to everyday life.	

10.4.4 Free Controlled Interviews

Oral interviews can provide a genuine sense of communication and the student gets an opportunity of actually talking with someone. If the interview is unstructured, more like an extended conversation, in which it is allowed to unfold as it progresses, a student is able to take the initiative/progress change the direction of interaction and introduce new topics.

In a more controlled situation various elicitation techniques can be used by an examiner to gauge the students' language competence, the student doesn't take the initiative in selecting and developing the topics but has an opportunity to perform a variety of informational and interactional routines.

Advantage	Disadvantage
Free interviews are flexible, interactive and take care of both informational and instructional routines.	Time consuming and difficult to administer if there are a large number of students.
In structured interviews all students have the same stimulus. Comparative judgement across performance is possible.	The success of free interviews depends on the skill of the examiner.
	Shy/inhibited students may not do well.

10.4.5 Role Playing and Group Discussion

Role playing and group discussion are two other important techniques for assessing oral production as these activities provide students an opportunity for meaningful and active involvement.

In role play students are given fictitious roles and they are expected to improvise language. Usually for each role a card is given describing what kind of a person (s)he is supposed to be, what point of view/stand should be taken. The students are given a little time (say one minute) to think of the role and then they are ready for interaction.

Read through this example of a role play (The travel agent) given below.

A. The travel agent

In this example students are divided into pairs in which they play the roles of a travel agent and a customer. The latter wants to book a accommodation in a hotel, but insists that the hotel should have a number of qualities (such as the right price, good food, etc.). The travel agent has all the information about the hotels.

Stage 1 : Students are told that they are going to work in pairs.

Stage 2 : Students in each pair are called A and B.

140

Stage 3 : Students are told that A is a travel agent and B is a customer who wants to book a holiday accommodation in Dalhousie.

Stage 4 : The teacher tells the students not to show each other the information she is going to give them, and then gives the following piece of paper to B:

B. Customer

You want:

a) to go to a hotel in Dalhousie for a week and you can spend up to Rs. 1000 on a hotel.

b) to be as near as possible to the town centre.

c) to go to a hotel with a good heating system.

d) there should to be a swimming pool.

e) the hotel to serve good food.

f) a comfortable room (with a good view).

Get all the information from the travel agent and then write down the name of the hotel of your choice.

A gets the following hotel list

A. Travel Agent

Study the following information carefully so that you can answer B (the customer).

	Hilton	Hyatt Regency	Holiday Inn	Taj
COST (double) per night	Rs 40	Rs 60	Rs 75	Rs 35
DISTANCE FROM CENTRE	10 kms	12 kms	20 kms	3 kms
HEATING SYSTEM	Yes	No	Yes	No
RESTAURANT	3***	2***	4*	1**
VIEW		***	*	** *
SWIMMING POOL	1***	2*	1**	1*

Note: Various features (e.g. view, heating system, restaurants, etc.) have been given stars to indicate quality. ***= very good, ** = good, * = fair. As an example we can say that you get a better view if you're staying at the Holiday Inn than if you're staying at the Hyatt Regency.

The students are told to study their information for a short period.

Stage 5 : B is told to select the hotel of his/her choice based as far as possible on the six qualities (s)he is looking for. The activity commences.

Stage 6 : The teacher is informed of the choice.

Generally speaking, the group activity should be so challenging that an individual student finds it difficult to accomplish it alone but not so difficult that the group cannot attempt it. The nature of the task should be such that language is used to solve a problem and reach a consensus through discussion. Given below is an example from J.B. Heaton's (1983); *Writing English Language Tests.*

There has been a massive nuclear accident and everyone on this planet has died. Radio-activity will reach your area in a few hours. There is a small but very safe nuclear fallout shelter nearby, but there is room for only six people out of a total of ten survivors in your area. Which six people from the following list do you think it would be most useful to save in the interests of future generations? List them in order of priority. (**Note:** M = male; F = female.)

141

- a marine biologist, aged 56 (F)
- a physicist, aged 25 (M)
- a famous musician, aged 38 (F)
- a farmer, aged 32 (M)
- an electrician, aged 49 (M)
- an English teacher, aged 34 (F)
- a well-known cricketer, aged 22 (M)
- a doctor, aged 63 (F)
- a university student of history, aged 19 (F)
- a fireman, aged 33 (M)
- a factory worker, aged 28 (F)
- a garage mechanic, aged 27 (M)

Advantages	Disadvantages
A number of students (involved in the group activity) can be evaluated simultaneously.	Great care needs to be taken to ensure equal demands on all candidates.
Tasks which will take long enough to complete can be set and the students feel that what is being done is significant.	Role familiarity (what to do in certain situations) may be a problem with some students.
Spontaneous conversation involving a variety of language functions can be assessed.	

Check Your Progress

Notes : a)   Write your answers in the space given below

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5.   Name three tasks which are interactive (you may include tasks not mentioned here) for testing student's speech skills.

i)   ....

ii)   ....

iii)   ....

6.   Frame the following test items.

a)   Three limited response items of different difficulty level (i.e. easy, average, and difficult)

i)   ....

ii)   ....

iii)   ....

b)   Write atleast ten questions for a structured interview. (Include different response elicitation techniques).

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c) Prepare two role cards for the following situation.

Rakesh's father is very unwell and cannot bear the slightest noise. His neighbour, Brijender usually plays the record player very loudly. At first Brijender is stubborn, later he promises to lower the volume.

Student A: Rakesh Student B. Brijender

(Note: Rakesh has to begin the conversation)

7   Some evaluation experts have advised against using prepared monologues and reading aloud of passages for testing oral abilities. Write the possible reasons why they are against this.

10.5 SCORING PROCEDURES

Scoring an oral test is as challenging as designing appropriate tasks for students. A holistic grading or an analytic marking scheme can be used depending on the level and purpose of testing.

A holistic grade is used when the teacher evaluates all criteria like **fluency, appropriateness, grammatical correctness, vocabulary** and **pronunciation** — at the same time. Such grading is impressionistic and hence subjective. Analytic marking schemes, on the other hand, evaluate the learner separately on each criterion. This marking is more detailed and objective. The following table gives both the **holistic or global impression band scale** and the criteria of assessment in the **analytic marking scheme**.

143

For your purposes, you may adopt the schemes given below.

Interview assessment scale: global impression marking scheme

Band
9. Expert speaker. Speaks with authority on a variety of topics. Can initiate, expand and develop a theme.
8. Very good speaker. Maintains effectively his/her own part of a discussion. Initiates, maintains and elaborates as necessary. Reveals humour where needed and responds to attitudinal tones.
7. Good speaker. Presents case clearly and logically and can develop the dialogue coherently and constructively. Rather less flexible and fluent than Band 8 performer but can respond to main changes of tone or topic. Some hesitation and repetition due to a measure of language restriction but interacts effectively.
5. Competent speaker. Is able to maintain theme of dialogue, to follow topic switches and to use and appreciate main attitude markers. Stumbles and hesitates at times but is reasonably fluent otherwise. Some errors and occasional use of inappropriate language but these will not impede exchange of views. Shows some independence in discussion with ability to initiate.
4. Marginal speaker. Can maintain dialogue but in a rather passive manner, rarely taking initiative or guiding the discussion. Has difficulty in following English at normal speed; lacks fluency and probably accuracy in speaking. The dialogue is therefore neither easy nor flowing. Nevertheless, gives the impression that he is in touch with the gist of the dialogue even if not wholly a master of it. Marked L1 accent.
3. Extremely limited speaker. Dialogue is a drawn-out affair punctuated with hesitations and misunderstandings. Catches only part of normal speech and unable to produce continuous and accurate discourse. Basic merit is just hanging on to discussion gist, without making major contribution to it.
2. Intermittent speaker. No working facility; occasional, sporadic communication.
1/0 Non-speaker. Not able to understand and/or speak.

(Adapted from B.J. Carroll (1980) : *Testing Communicative Performance.*).

Analytic marking scheme (speaking)

Criteria of assessment

Appropriateness

0. Unable to function in the spoken language.

1. Able to operate only in a very limited capacity: responses characterised by socio-cultural inappropriateness.

2. Signs of developing attempts at response to role, setting, etc., but misunderstandings may occasionally arise through inappropriateness, particularly of socio-cultural convention.

3. Almost no errors in the socio-cultural conventions of language; errors not significant enough to cause social misunderstandings.

Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose

0. Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication.

1. Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs; inadequacy of vocabulary restricts topics of interaction to the most basic; perhaps frequent lexical inaccuracies and/or excessive repetition.

144

2. Some misunderstandings may arise through lexical inadequacy or inaccuracy; hesitation and circumlocution are frequent, though there are signs of a developing active vocabulary.

3. Almost no inadequacies or inaccuracies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare circumlocution.

Grammatical accuracy

0. Unable to function in the spoken language; almost all grammatical patterns inaccurate, except for a few stock phrases.

1. Syntax is fragmented and there are frequent grammatical inaccuracies; some patterns may be mastered but speech may be characterised by a telegraphic style and/or confusion of structural elements.

2. Some grammatical inaccuracies; developing a control of major patterns, but sometimes unable to sustain coherence in longer utterances.

3. Almost no grammatical inaccuracies; occasional imperfect control of a few patterns.

Intelligibility

0. Severe and constant rhythm, intonation and pronunciation problems cause almost complete unintelligibility.

1. Strong intereference from L1 in rhythm, intonation and pronunciation; understanding is difficult, and achieved often only after frequent repetition.

2. Rhythm, intonation and pronunciation require concentrated listening, but only occasional misunderstanding is caused or repetition required.

3. Articulation is reasonably comprehensible to native speakers; there may be a marked 'foreign accent' but almost no misunderstanding is caused and repetition required only infrequently.

Fluency

0. Utterances halting, fragmentary and incoherent.

1. Utterances hesitant and often incomplete except in a few stock remarks and responses. Sentences are, for the most part, disjointed and restricted in length.

2. Signs of developing attempts at using cohesive devices, especially conjunctions. Utterances may still be hesitant, but are gaining in coherence, speed and length.

3. Utterances, whilst occasionally hesitant, are characterised by an evenness and flow hindered, very occasionally, by groping, rephrasing and circumlocutions. Intersentential connectors are used effectively as fillers.

Relevance and adequacy of content

0. Response irrelevant to the task set; totally inadequate response.

1. Response of limited relevance to the task set; possibly major gaps and/or pointless repetition.

2. Response for the most part relevant to the task set; though there may be some gaps or redundancy.

3. Relevant and adequate response to the task set.

(Source: TEEP, CALS, University of Reading.)

(Both these tables come from Cyril Weir's (1993); *Understanding and Developing Language Tests*.)

145

10.6   CONTINUOUS EVALUATION OF SPEAKING SKILLS

Hitherto listening and speaking skills were neither consciously focussed or nor formally assessed. Very few schools have some kind of oral test — it may be reciting a poem, reading aloud a passage followed by some questions on texts already read. The weightage given is very little. Yet the effort is commendable as some attempt is made in this direction.

With the new stress on communicative teaching in the CBSE affiliated schools, the teaching of these two skills has received some attention and several integrative activities have incorporated interactive spoken tasks. Nevertheless, practical constraints like administration costs; the sheer logistics of testing a large number of candidates, either individually or in small groups; the problem of training a large number of examiners, the controlling and reduction of intra-and inter-scorer variability have pushed out the assessment of speaking abilities from the course end examination. Conversational skills, however, have been included for continuous assessment scheme at the class IX level. In other words, cognizanse of this important skill has been taken and including it for continuous assessment is expected to have some backwash effect on teaching also.

Brown and Yule (1983) suggest that a taped record of each students' spoken performance be maintained. They are of the opinion that many students forget how they performed a month or two earlier and often feel that they are not making any advances in their use of English. If an earlier (hesitant, ungrammatical or confused) version of story telling can be played back and compared with a more recent (more competent) version, then the student not only gains in confidence but also gets an opportunity for self-assessment. (This kind of tape recorded version of spoken performance is like the **portfolio** that a student maintains of his/her written work). This principle of encouraging the student to pay attention to his/her own performance is being increasingly used even for native speakers of English.

Moreover, if a consistent record of students' spoken performance is maintained, the idea of the once-a-year test may be discarded. A teacher can check for progress, or for performance in a specific type of speech activity (reporting for example) as well as listen to more traditional features such as grammatical accuracy and use of vocabulary.

┌───┐
│ .... │
│ .... │
│ .... │
└───┘

10.7 LET US SUM UP

- Practical problems have relegated assessment of speaking skills to the background.

- A checklist can be devised/developed based on a three part framework for testing spoken skills. This allows teachers to specify the skills they aim to test, check the conditions in which the test is taken (as this affects the difficulty level of the test) and also helps to keep track or even vary criteria of assessment of different tasks.

- Teachers should include a variety of tasks to test the students' speaking ability. A sample of test items are provided.

- Holistic band scales or analytical marking schemes can be used by teachers.

- It is worthwhile to maintain a students' tape (tape recorded performance of each student) for purposes of continuous evaluation by the teacher and self-assessment by the student.

10.8 KEY WORDS

analytic marking scheme	:	lots of separate impressions on predecided criteria of assessment.
holistic bands	:	a general impression of student ability expressed as a number on a point scale.
information routine	:	conventional ways of organising speech, e.g. narration, stating preferences.
interactional routine	:	typical ordered sequences of turns as in telephone conversation, interviews, discussions.
information transfer activity	:	presenting non-verbal data/information in a verbal mode or vice-versa. (e.g. narrate a story looking at a series of pictures).
information gap activity	:	different bits of information have to be shared/pooled into complete tasks.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Some clues : Yes, ideally it should be, but certain conditions have to be met. All teachers of the English Department should be properly oriented/trained in testing oral abilities, and all of them should work as a team to assess all students of a particular section at a time. Proper rooms — where there is no outside disturbance — should be arranged for.

2. Time constraints/logistical problems.

3. a) informational;
   b) interactional (description)
   c) informational (narration);
   d) interactional
   e) informational (giving instructions)
   f) interactional

147

(The language used to describe, narrate or instruct would be different and the information would be arranged differently. Informational operations can be individual tasks. In interactional tasks, on the other hand, more than one person is involved and they take turns in smaller exchanges).

4. **Fluency:** The ability to communicate an intended message cogently and coherently without undue hesitation.

   • **Appropriacy:** Level of formality used and suitability of choice of words in the given context.

   Accuracy: Both grammatical correctness and acceptable/intelligible pronunciation.

5. Interviews, group activities for problem solving; telephone conversations (for giving and taking messages).

6. Prepare a checklist in three parts so that one is clear about the different specifications about the tasks set, the criteria of assessment to be used and the conditions in which the students will perform the task.

7. The tasks will not really indicate the students' command of the language; there will be interference between reading, writing (for preparing monologue) and speaking skills.

8. A teacher can listen to the same recording many times and focus his/her attention to one criteria at a time. Even in case of indecision on one particular criterion, the tape can be replayed and a decision arrived at.

9. A students' tape is useful to study a student's progress in a variety of situations and task types. Although this means that the teacher spends more time on assessing recorded spoken performance, (s)he can provide better feedback to individual students and thus improve on individual weakness and build on particular strengths of each student. Continuous assessment of productive skills is pedagogically sound and acceptable.

10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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BED-E-32/BED-SE-32
Teaching of English

**Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University**

Block

3

Reading Comprehension

September, 2002 (Reprint)

COURSE ES-344 TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Block 1   **Instructional Planning in Teaching of English**

     Unit 1   Nature, need and Objectives

     Unit 2   Who are the Learners of Language ?

     Unit 3   Approaches, Methods and Techniques in English Language Teaching (ELT)

     Unit 4   Daily Lesson Plans : Strategies for Classroom Transaction

Block 2   **Listening Comprehension and Speaking**

     Unit 5   Teaching Listening - I

     Unit 6   Teaching Listening - II

     Unit 7   Developing Speaking/Oral Skills

     Unit 8   Speaking Activities

     Unit 9   Testing Listening Ability and Listening Comprehension

     Unit 10   testing Speaking Skills

Block 3   **Reading Comprehension**

     Unit 11   **The Reading Process**

     Unit 12   **Developing Reading Skills**

     Unit 13   **Reading Comprehension - I**

     Unit 14   **Reading Comprehension - II**

     Unit 15   **Teaching Vocabulary**

Block 4   **Teaching, Writing and Grammar**

     Unit 16   The Writing Process

     Unit 17   Different Types of Writing

     Unit 18   Teaching Study Skills

     Unit 19   Teaching Grammar : New Type Activities and Games

     Unit 20   Improving and Assessing Writing Ability

     Unit 21   Testing Grammar and Usage

BLOCK 3   READING COMPREHENSION

Block Introduction

The Block focuses on teaching reading comprehension. The attempt has therefore been to understand the nature of the reading process, the characteristics of reading as a meaningful activity and to discuss exercise type activities that can be devised in teaching reading comprehension.

The first Unit in the Block views reading as an interactive Process involving decoding of the text and processing of inputs. here the reader's schemata inteacts with the textual input. Reading is purposeful, selective and text base.

The Second unit is on 'Developing Reading Skills' It reiterates the emphasis on teaching reading as a skill in its own right but views it not as a general ability, but a complex phenomenon that embraces a wide variety of tasks activities, skills and mental processes. It also points the teacher's attention to the fact fact that special kinds of introductional help is needed for developing many of the skills of reading and discusses these strategies at length.

The third Unit is an attempt to relate the reasons for reading with appropriate reading styles. The unit on 'Reading Comprehension-II' It also highlights the teaching objectives and principles underlying reading comprehension activities and describes the three phases of a reading lesson discusses the types of reading comprehension exercises which you as a teacher, may use or adapt in your classrooms. Since, an important aid to competent reading is having a good vocabulary, the last section unit discusses the importance of vocabulary in the framework of devising vocabulary games so that teaching and learning of words becomes an enjoyable exercise.

The overall emphasis in this Block is therefore on activities and exercises to be used in classroom contexts rather than on theoretrical issues only.

UNIT 11 THE READING PROCESS

Structure

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit is about reading in a foreign or second language, and particularly about reading in English as a second or foreign language. Some of you are already working as a teachers and the others are probably planning to become teacher's soon. So we shall be dealing mainly with the place of reading in a teaching-learning context and the several ways in which we could, as teachers, develop in our learners the ability to read efficiently.

A lot of research has been done on different aspects of reading, particularly in the last decade or two, but we cannot possibly deal with all of it here. We will discuss some of the current ideas about reading and how they can be used in the second language classroom. Because, in a reading class, it is the teacher's understanding of the reading process that is important – the techniques and methods s/he adopts with his/her learners will depend very much on this understanding. S/he should make sure that the things that happen in the classroom do not interfere with reading but actually promote it.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

With the help of this unit :

- you should be able to have a clearer understanding of the nature of the reading process and, consequently, of the characteristics of reading as a meaningful activity;

- you should be able to realize the implications of such an understanding for developing reading skills in learners.

11.3 REASONS FOR READING

Before we examine the nature of the reading process, we need to ask ourselves why our students need to read in English. The answer often given to this question is that they need to consolidate their spoken language, particularly at the primary and secondary levels.

In many classrooms, therefore, the reading lesson is used as an opportunity to teach pronounciation and to practise a new structure – the structure is first presented orally and then the students read a short text which has been specially written to include many examples of this structure.

For early readers, reading aloud is of course important. Beginners have to discover how writing is related to words in speech which they have learnt to use. But the early reading stage does not last long – two or three years at most. What kinds of reading do they do after that and why?

Short texts of the kind referred to above often contain the same kind of language throughout, whereas 'real' reading texts typically imply a wide range of structures and vocabulary, registers and styles, formats and patterns of organization. The type of reading activity we engage in with such 'real' reading texts is also very different from the traditional classroom approach to a specially written text. 'Real' reading texts demand one or more of different reading skills, such as skimming for the main idea, scanning for specific information, and reading for detail.

Now take a piece of paper and, in about five minutes, list all the different kinds of things you have read during the last ten days or so, in any language - time-table, notices, letters, etc. How many of the things on your list were actually in English ? Now think about the things you have listed. You must have included even things like telephone directory, labels on medicine bottles, engagement diary and instruction leaflets. Why did you read each one? What did you want to get from it ? Were you interested in the pronunciation of what you read ? Or were you interested in the grammatical structures used ? Most probably, you read them because you wanted to get something from the writing : facts, ideas, information, enjoyment, even fellow feeling. You will thus find that you had a variety of reasons for reading, and if you compared notes with other people, you would find different reasons again. All these are **authentic** reasons for reading, that is, reasons that are not concerned with language learning as such, but with the uses to which we put reading in our daily lives outside the classroom.

Can we list some of the reasons why we read in our daily life ? We normally read because

a)   we want information for some purpose, or because we are curious to know about some topic, the answer to a question, or the solution to a problem;

b)   we need instructions in order to perform some task in our work or in our daily life (we want to know how an appliance works or how to make a model airplane, we are interested in a new recipe for baking a cake, we have fo fill in forms);

c)   we want to keep in touch with friends through letters, or understand official correspondence;

d)   we want to know when or where something will take place or what is available (we consult timetables, programmes, announcements, notices, and menus, or we read advertisement);

e)   we want to know what is happening or has happened (newspapers, magazines, reports);

f)   we want to play a new game, do a puzzle, act in a play, or do some other activity which is pleasant, amusing and enjoyable;

g)   we seek enjoyment or excitement (short stories, novels, songs, and poems).

The term 'reading' thus embraces a wide variety of tasks, activities, skills and mental process.

Reading also occurs at different levels. A child may read easy materials fluently and without help. S/he may also read more difficult materials, calling for concentration and special effort. S/he may read materials which requires outside help such as instruction by the teacher.

English at all after they leave school, they may do it in reading, as they have to study text-books written in English in their higher studies, or read newspapers, magazines and journals to keep themselves up-to-date in their job areas, current affairs, social issues, entertainment, etc. It therefore seems that we need to give students real practice in reading rather than use reading only to reinforce and consolidate their oral work.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

　　　　b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the different kinds of materials we normally read in our daily life ?

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2. How is 'reading' traditionally used in the classroom ?

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3. Mention at least five purposes for which we read in real life.

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4. Why, do you think we should teach 'reading' as a skill ?

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11.4   THE READING PROCESS

Let us try to understand what 'reading' means. As a first step, it might be useful to find out what you think about reading. Here are some statements about reading. Which of these statements to you think are true ? Which of them are false ? Can you explain why you think so ?

1. Reading involves looking at a text and saying the words to yourself.

2. Reading involves putting the words in print on the page into sentences and making sense of them.

3. To understand a word, you have to read all the letters in it, to understand a sentences you have to read all the words in it.

4. To understand a text, you need to know the meaning of all the words in the text.

5. The teacher can help students to read a text by reading it aloud while they follow the text in their books.

6. When we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, not every word in each sentence.

7. There are no major differences between how one reads in one's mother tongue and how one reads in a second or foreign language.

What is actually involved in the process of reading ? It is important to understand this if

155

we really want to help our students develop reading skills in a second or foreign language (or in any language for that matter). If we know how 'efficient readers' read, either in their own mother tongue or another language, perhaps we can use some of the techniques employed by these readers to help our learners acquire the reading skills.

In considering the reading process, first we have to distinguish between two quite separate activities : **reading for meaning** (or 'silent reading') and **reading aloud**. Think of your own experience as both a student and a teacher. In many classrooms, the reading lesson is used as an opportunity to teach pronunciation and encourage 'expression speaking', i.e., speaking with feeling and emotion. For early readers, reading aloud is of course an important aid; beginners have to discover how reading is associated with the spoken words they have already learnt to use, and also is different from them. But the early reading stage does not last long – normally, two or three years at the most. Do children have to read aloud after that? If they do, what are the contexts in which they may be required to do it ?

For most of us, once we have passed the early reading stage, reading aloud is not an activity we engage in outside the classroom, unless of course, we are actors/actresses or newsreaders. If you are a teacher, you probably use this technique with students quite a lot, but how much do you use it outside your job ? And how many of your students are going to need this skill in their daily life ?

The purpose of reading aloud is not just to understand a text but to convey the information to someone else who has no access to it, such as reading out parts of a newspaper article to a friend, or reading a notice to other people who cannot see it clearly, or reading to someone who has lost his/her spectacles.

Obviously, **reading aloud** involves looking at a text, understanding it, and also saying it. It is a much more difficult activity than reading silently because our attention is divided between reading and speaking. We often stumble and make mistakes when reading aloud in our own language, and reading aloud in another language is even more difficult. Moreover, it slows down the reading process and may even affect comprehension to a certain extent unless you read a text after several rehearsals.

If you think of the percentage of time usually spent on reading aloud compared with the time spent reading silently, you will realize that you should adjust the proportion of class time spent on each accordingly.

Reading for meaning, on the other hand, is the activity we normally engage in when we read books, newspapers, road signs, posters, etc., it is what you are doing as you read this unit. It involves looking at sentences in a text and understanding the message they convey, in other words, 'making sense of' a written text. It does not normally involve saying the words we read, not even silently inside our heads.

Now read the first part of the text **silently**.

The Discovery of Penicillin

Pasteur discovered germs and Lister killed them. These two men together revolutionised the theory and practice of medicine. Germs can be destroyed by heat. They can be poisoned by certain chemicals called antiseptics. Carbolic acid is one such antiseptic used by Lister. The object of antiseptic method was to stop germs from entering the body. But the cure of disease was a more difficult problem, for here the germs had already entered the body. It means that injecting carbolic acid into the body in as much a dose as would kill all the germs, would kill the patient also. It was a bacteriologist named Matchnikoff, a pupil of Pasteur, who revealed the true nature of the problem. He discovered the white cells of the blood, which are called leucocytes. He showed that these cells run out to join battle with the germs, like soldiers answering a bugle-call. He showed to find something that would attack only the germs and not destory the fighting leucocytes. The man who took up the problem was Alexander Fleming.

Now read the second part **aloud**, or follow while someone else reads it aloud to you.

As luck would have it, Sir Almroth Wright and Fleming worked together. They had some doubts with regard to the efficacy of injecting antiseptics. They felt that the surgeon's aim should be not so much to kill the germs with an outside agent as to help the leucocytes to

156

do their natural germ-killing work. And in 1922, after about 20 years of research, they discovered an antiseptic manufactured by the body. Wright made the discovery by what he modestly called, an accident. He was suffering from Catarrh and began to examine his own nasal secretions, cultivating them on plates spread with agar, a jelly-like substance used as a nutrient in germs culture. In these secretions he discovered the substance that destroyed the microbes in the culture plates. He called it lysozyme. This was the first natural antiseptic that was harmless to the cells of the body; Penicillin was the second.

Another accident helped Fleming discover penicillin. If Fleming had not developed a finer sense of observation and awareness he would missed it. The more a scientist is observant the greater his chances of discovering new things. One morning, as was usual with him, he took out the plates on which had grown colonies of Staphylococcus, a common germ.

Which technique makes it easier to understand the text ?

Which technique is more helpful in developing reading ability ?

Another important aspect of reading is that when we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, nor every word in each sentence. This is because we can guess much of what is said as we read it, provided the text makes sense. For example, if you are given merely a string of words that makes no sense at all like this : [man jumping tiger the on lake help to] then obviously you have to slow down and read every single word, as you can no longer make guesses. But try to read this sentence.

Am -- was walk ---- d--n the s ---- t, c --- r - ing a gr---n----.

Even though more than half the letters are missing, you could probably read the sentence without difficulty, and even guess the last word without the help of any letters. You may also have noticed that as soon as you guessed the second word, it helped you go guess the whole of the first part of the sentence. This example is only an isolated sentence. If you are reading connected sentences in a text, each sentence helps you to guess what the next one will be, and so on through the whole text.

Reading is thus an **active process**. When we read, we do not merely sit as passive receivers of the text. We also draw on our own knowledge of the world and of the language to help us guess what the text will say next.

Look at this very simple mode of the process of communication.
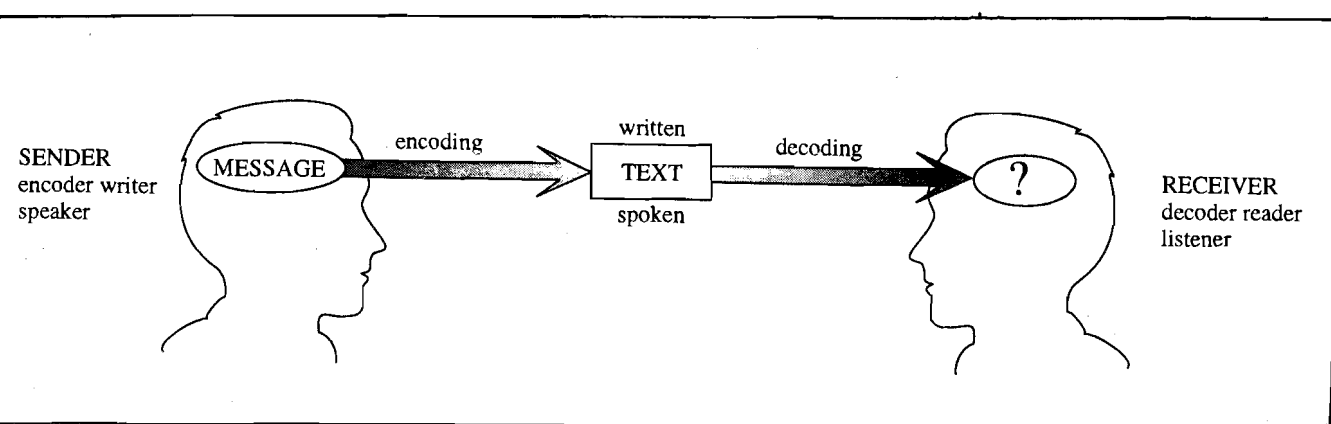
Figure 1 : The Communication Process

We can use the more general term **encoder**. The encoder has a message in his/her mind (it may be an idea, a fact, a feeling, etc.) which s/he wants to communicate to someone else. In order to make this communication possible, s/he must first put it into words: that is s/he must **encode** it. Once it is encoded, in either written or spoken form, it becomes available as a **text** to any other person who reads or hears it, i.e., the person who **decodes**, the message it contains. Once it is decoded, is the message enters the mind of the decoder and it is understood; communication has thus been achieved.

157

Do you think that this model explains the communication process satisfactory ? You will realize that the model is obviously too simple.

Things can go wrong at any stage in the process. For instance, we cannot be sure that the decoder has received the message as it was intended by the encoder. The encoder may not have understood the language and style in which the message has been enclosed, or the encoder may not have encoded his/her message properly, in an organised manner. However, one thing is clear from this model, namely it assumes that reading means getting out of the text as nearly as possible the message that the writer put into it.

This is fairly widely held view of reading. According to this view, the text is full of meaning conveyed through words, and the meaning can be absorbed by the reader's mind like a sponge absorbs water. To put it in another way, the reader's mind is an empty vessle into which the text pours ideas, facts, etc. to be filled. Or it is like a blank slate on which the text imprints the words, the ideas, etc. The writer has done all that is required for understanding his/her message and the reader need not make any effort, but has only to let his/her mind absorb it passively. The reader's role is thus seen to be a passive one.

Obviously, we know that it does not happen like this. All the meaning in the text does not actually get into the reader's mind. We know from our experience of reading that a text which may be easy for one person will be difficult for another.

Problems arise when there is a mismatch between the presuppositions of the writer and those of the reader. The text will, therefore, not be understood by anyone who lacks this knowledge. But is it possible for the writer and the reader to have identical experiences of life ? Not necessarily. Look at the figure below.
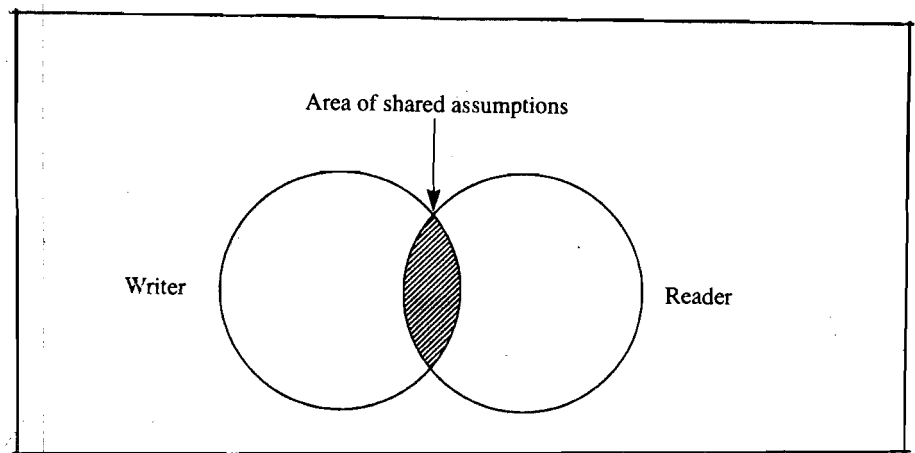
Figure 2 : Presupposition and Communication

The figure shows how two people can have certain things in common, the shaded area where the two circles overlap. This area includes all the knowledge that they share, including knowledge of language, it also includes attitudes, beliefs, values and assumptions that they share. The unshaded areas represent experiences that are unique to each individual.

It is clear, therefore, that the greater the size of the shaded area, the easier the communication. That is, if the writer and the reader are from closely similar backgrounds with similar attitudes, beliefs and assumptions, the reader can interpret the text with apparently no conscious effort. There is, however, the danger that a careless reader may assume that the extent of the shaded area – that common ground – is longer than it actually is. In that case s/he is likely to misunderstand the text, trying to read into it meanings that are not there. Similarly, a writer may assume that his/her reader is likely to share a great deal of his/her knowledge, beliefs, etc. but the reader may actually struggle to make sense of the text.

It should now be clear that the meaning of the text does not merely lie in it, waiting to be passively absorbed by the reader. On the contrary, the reader has to be actively involved in getting the meaning out of the text.

Good readers interact with the texts that they read. They have personal expectations about what they want to get out of a text, and they bring those expectations to bear on what they read. They actually create meaning by constructing, or generating relationships between what they read and what they already know.

In generating these meanings, they draw on their prior knowledge of and beliefs about the subject–their "World knowledge", so to speak that relates to the subject. Readers have networks of prior understanding about a topic, what theorists call **schemata**. In reading, they add to those networks, filling in some of the gaps in what they know, or in their existing schemata : The prior knowledge a reader already has about a subject has as much to do with what s/he gets from a text as the actual words in the text.

A Reader's Prior		
EXPERIENCES WITH	The MEANINGS	The Vocabulary
Life,	a Reader	Ideas,
Language	Constructs in	Syntax,
and	Relation to a Text	and Form of
Literature		a TEXT
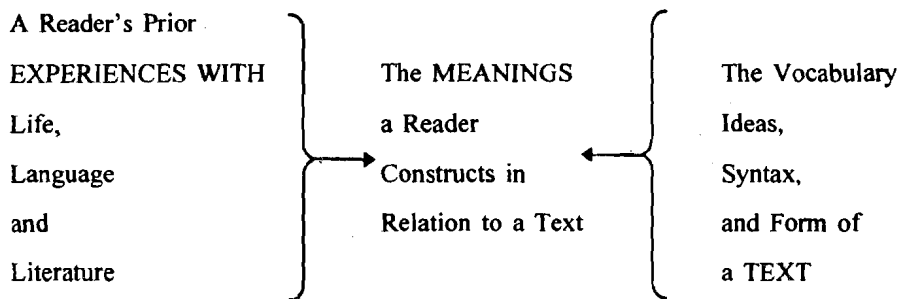
Figure 3. : The Relationships Among Prior Experiences, a Text, and the Meaning a Reader Constructs- Schema Theory in Action.

Figure 3 shows the relationships among prior knowledge, a text and the meanings a reader constructs in relation to the text. It summarizes what is known as **schema theory**. The figure also shows that, in creating meaning, good readers rely also on their prior knowledge of how language works, of how ideas are organised in writing and of how different forms are structured.

Thus schemata are knowledge structures which represent a generalized knowledge about objects or events, or even about a language system, which are activated while processing a text. An important function of schemata is therefore to help readers to match what they know with what the written text tells them, i.e., to monitor their comprehension. If there is some deficiency at the level of analysing print i.e. decoding problems like poor word recognition, the higher-level knowledge of the topic (i.e. schemata) will compensate for the deficiency.

The terms 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' are used in this context to explain the **interactive process** of reading. 'Top-down' processing refers to the use of predictions based on one's prior knowledge, while 'bottom-up' processing refers to the role of the text in providing input through decoding, or letter and word recognition. Reading is thus an interactive process; there is a simultaneous interaction of the reader's prior knowledge and his/her sampling of the text; to put it in more technical language, the meaning of a text is reconstructed through a constant interaction between the information obtained through bottom-up decoding and that obtained through top-down analysis.

Let us see this process at work with a simple example. Here is the beginning of a short text you are required to read :

Keshav was on his way to school last Wednesday.

Who, do you think Keshav was ? How did you arrive at this conclusion ? Was it based on textual information or on your prior knowledge ? Now, the next sentence of the text reads like this :

He was really worried about the English lesson.

Who was Keshav ? Have you now changed your view about Keshav, or not ? Why ?

The third sentence :

Last week he had been unable to control the class.

Are you now sure who Keshav was ? Which part of the text has to be matched with what kind of prior knowledge to help in the inference ?

The foruth sentence :

It was unfair of the English teacher to leave him in charge of the class.

What further changes in your inference have you made ? Why ?

The last sentence :

After all, it was not a normal part of a typist's duty.

Are you now clear in your mind about who Keshav was ?

You will have realized from this short exercise what is actually involved in reading a text and making sense of it.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Distinguish between 'silent reading' and 'reading aloud'.

6. Which of the two techniques of reading is to be preferred for understanding a text ? Why ?

7. What is the role of 'prediction' in reading ? Illustrate it with an example of your own.

8. Explain the importance of shared assumptions between writer and reader.

9. What are 'schemata' ? What is their role in reading ?

11.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF READING

In the very early stage of reading instruction, teachers are generally concerned, with developing the mechanical reading skills. But as soon as they know that their students have these basic skills, they should move on as quickly as possible to developing in students the cognitive skills associated with different types of reading activity. If this kind of work is begun at the elementary level, students are more likely to become efficient readers early on in their life.

What do we mean by efficient reading ? What are the characteristics of reading ?

1. Reading is **purposeful.** That is, there is always a reason for reading. In general terms, we read either for information or pleasure. Your purpose in reading a recipe is obviously different from your purpose in going through a legal document, or in reading a poem. But there is nothing like totally purposeless reading – even when you read a novel during travel, you read it to pass your time, and that is the purpose.

2. **Reading is selective.** That is, the type of reading you do or the way you read a text varies according to your purpose in reading. You quickly scan a page in the telephone directory to locate a name, a telephone number, or an address, but you have to pay careful attention to every word in a legal document. To put it crudely, we scan for specific information, noting only what is relevant to our purpose at the given moment and rejecting or ignoring the majority of what appears on the page because it is irrelevant to our purpose. We skim, attempting to extract the gist of a text. Or we read intensively with the aim of decoding the whole of the writer's message.

3. **Reading speed varies** according to content and purpose. Efficient readers use the minimum number of clues in the text – semantic and syntactic – to extract the information they need. You will agree that you generally read a novel or a short story faster than you read you textbook or study material.

4. Reading is **silent.** Reading aloud is a specialized skill used, for example, by actors and newsreaders, but seldom by the general reader. If it is used, its purpose is to communicate to another person a written message to which that person does not have access. (You will remember that this point has been discussed in the previous section of this unit.)

5. Reading is **text-based.** It seldom involves the mere decoding of individual sentences isolated from context. Look at this set of sentences :

    The mind of a thinker may work in many ways. The experiments proved his theory of ring structure. However, water is only a solvent and not a reagent.

    What is wrong with this ? We cannot make sense of these sentences, because they are together without any relationship among them. They do not constitute a text at all and so we cannot 'read' this set meaningfully.

6. Reading involves **complex cognitive skills.** Readers do not merely decode the message. They make predictions and inferences – they anticipate based on what they read. They build assumptions about the overall content at the macro-level and predict what is likely to come next in the text at the micro-level. That is why reading is called "a psycholinguistic guessing game". Readers may also impose their own organization on the information they extract from a text. At a more sophisticated level, they react to what they read, assessing the accuracy of the facts presented, the value of the opinions stated, or the quality and appropriateness of the style.

7. Effective reading also involves **chunking** of information that the well-developed schema makes possible. When we read, our eyes take in whole phrases at a time which are meaningful; they do not move from word to word in a straight line, but move backwards and forwards over the text. You will understand this if you do a simple exercise. Try covering a text with a piece of paper and reading it literally word by word. Move the paper along the text, revealing only one word each time. You will find that it is almost impossible to read and understand a text in this way. You soon lose track of the meaning and you need to keep looking back across the text to take in whole sentences. Your reading slows down so much in this attempt to read only one word at a time, that you lose these sense of what you are reading.

8. Reading is **based on comprehension**. That is, understanding meaning is integral to reading rather than the result of it. The more we comprehend, the more we can, and tend to, read.

What are the implications of these for reading instruction ?

a) The meaning of a text does not depend on particular words in it. One can understand the meaning of a text, in the sense of getting the gist of it, even without understanding the meaning of all the words in it. Read this sentence : "The Noanama Indians cut their canoes out of tree trunks by using an **adze**."

   i) Try to draw an adze using the information given in the sentence.

   ii) Try to complete these statements : "An adze is a kind of......... . It can be used for.......... .Therefore, it is similar to...................

   – Have you not been able to guess what the sentence means without understanding the precise meaning of the world **adze** ?

b) Comprehension does not entail identifying or examining all the information contained in a text, but involves sampling it, using the minimum of information required to varify or modify one's predictions about the content of the text.

c) Reading is very much an active process, involving the reader's interaction with the text. Meaning does not lie in a text waiting to be absorbed passively; readers bring meaning to the text.

d) There is a distinction between 'signification' and 'value'. The difference between the two corresponds to the difference between a sentence in isolation and the same sentence in context. Until a Sentence is used in a certain context, it has only 'signification'. It acquires 'value' when it is used in that context.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

11. How would you say that reading is 'purposeful'?

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12. How is one 'selective' in reading ?

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13. What does the reading speed depend on ? How ?

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14. In what sense is reading called "a psycholinguistic guessing game" ? Explain.

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15. Distinguish between 'signification' and 'value' with reference to reading, with an example.

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11.6 READING PROBLEMS

Miscues or decoding errors

Through one-to-one oral reading (or individual oral reading), a teacher can identify and interpret a child's miscues, or decoding errors. **Miscue** analysis, or the analysis of a reader's error patterns, provides valuable clues to a reader's interaction with a text. If you study the error patterns systematically, you will realize that all errors are not equally significant. Take, for example, the reading of the sentence : 'He sat on the soaf after supper'. A child who reads it as 'He sat on the bed after supper, has used context clues to decode sofa incorrectly. However, she/he had not distorted the meaning of the sentence in any serious way. In contrast, the child who reads the same sentence as, 'He sat on the soup after supper' has used knowledge of the beginning consonant sounds to come up with another word that distorts meaning significantly.

A teacher should therefore raise these questions in analysing a reader's miscues :

a) How well does the child use phonic information during reading ? If the child says/ rid/for ride and/fum/for fume, s/he knows the intitial and final consonants and uses them approriately, but s/he does not use the final construction to interpret the vowel correctly.

b) How well does the child use syntactic information during reading ? Supposing the text says. 'The boy looked sadly to the right' and the child reads it as, 'The boy looked slowly to the right', the miscue is syntactically acceptable because it is syntactically similar to the text (both the words are adverbs). But if the child reads it as 'The boy looked sound to the right', not only is the meaning of the sentence changed, but the miscue is syntactically unacceptable.

163

c) How well does the child use semantic information during reading ? If the text reads. 'The day was very warm' and the child reads it as 'The day was quite warm', the miscue has not significantly changed the meaning of the text. On the other hand, if the child reads it as 'The day wasn't very warm', the meaning of the text has been significantly changed.

So, analysis of a child's miscues provides the teacher with information on what to emphasize with that child : phoneme - grapheme relationships, use of context clues, or use of prediction based on what one knows about language. In this respect, miscue analysis is a valuable diagnostic tool.

Vision Loss

Sometimes, problems with vision can have an impact on a child's ability to read and interpret texts. Often it is the elementary school teacher who first recognises a possible visual problem. For instance, s/he may observe that a child bends the head down to the desk or holds a book up near the eyes while reading, squints at the board, rubs the eyes, or thrusts the body forward to see. Sometimes, a child may also complaint that s/he cannot see the writing on the board or complain of seeing blurred print while reading. A teacher should refer such children immediately to their parents for an eye examination.

Children with problems, especially a vision loss that cannot be corrected with glasses, can be helped by

a) placing them near the board;

b) giving instruction in small groups, clustered around an easel where words are written clearly in large print;

c) using a reader-mate, who reads the instructions in the exercises given in the book or on the board;

d) preparing special test and exercise materials in large print and dictating test questions;

e) providing large-print versions of written materials.

Neurological problems

Some children have learning problems arising from neurological dysfunctioning rather than from low IQ or poor motivation. The term alexia is used to refer to a reading disability that may be related to the impairment of the central nervous system, such as a lesion in a particular region of the brain. In some cases, a child with alexia cannot grasp a whole word and puts even the simplest words together letter by letter. In some cases, a child with alexia can recognise the meaning of words but cannot read them aloud. The teacher, uncertain about a child who manifests severe problems in reading, should consult a specialist in learning disability, because it is important to distinguish between problems caused by poor motivation and those caused by a disability such as alexia.

Faulty reading habits

Certain faults in reading techniques have been noticed among second or foreign language learners. Many of these might have actually been acquired in L1 reading, for research shows that there is a strong transfer of reading habits from one language to another. Therefore, if bad reading habits had been developed in L1, it may be useful to begin to tackle L1 reading before developing better reading habits in the second or foreign language, at least where a similar writing system is used. Many of these early reading habits, when they continue into the later stages of reading, are known to slow down the reader and the reading process.

a) **Subvocalization**: Subvocalization refers to forming the sounds of the words you are reading and even murmuring them aloud. With beginning readers, this offers the support of the spoken language when they try to interpret the written form. Beginners in L1 reading (and in L2 as well) are often encouraged to make use of it. But reading aloud or subvocalization is much slower than silent reading - our eyes move faster than our tongue - so efficient readers do not subvocalize. If you subvocalize, you will tend to read word by word instead of in sense groups, which slows you down.

b) **Finger pointing**: Another faulty habit that slows down the reading process is finger pointing which children use to fix their concentration on the word they are deciphering. Finger pointing is particularly common when the writing system in the second or foreign language is not the same as the one used L1. One way to help such children

164

to get rid of this habit is to choose texts with large type if possible.

c) **Regressions**: Another reading habit that makes reading slower is the occurrence of regressive eye movements, i.e. the eyes move backwards to check previous words instead of moving steadily forward. Sometimes, even a skilled reader may have to return to earlier parts of a text and reinterpret them in the light of what has followed. In this case, regression may be a sign of an active reader at work. However, children should be trained to eliminate pointless and frequent regression by practising reading and very easy material.

We should make our students aware that efficient readers do not have these faulty habits and explain why. This does not mean that we should punish students who still cling to these habits – they may feel insecure about their command of the language and feel that they still need these props. We should rather attempt other ways of building their confidence so that habits will hopefully disappear in course of time.

Check Your Progress

Notes a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

16. What are the different kinds of miscues or decoding errors in reading ?

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17. What is alexia and how does it affect one's reading ?

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18. Are reading habits in different languages similar or different ?

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19. What is meant by 'subvocalizing' ?

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20. What is 'regression' ? Is it always a sign of faulty reading technique ?

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11.7 LET US SUM UP

Reading is an important activity in our daily life and it is a skill that has to be developed in students earlier in school. We read different types of materials for different purposes. There are many authentic reasons for reading. Recognising words in print is only the initial stage of reading, but learners must be trained to read whole texts and not merely words and sentences in isolation.

Reading for meaning (or 'silent reading') is different from reading aloud. A general reader is seldom required to read aloud. When we read for meaning, we do not need to read every letter of every word, nor every word in each sentence, because very often we guess, anticipate, and predict as we read a text. A writer and his readers share certain assumptions about the world and about the language used for communication. Reading is an interactive process involving both bottom-up decoding of the text and top-down processing. The reader's schemata interacts with the textual input.

Reading is purposeful, selective, and text-based. The reading speed varies according to one's purpose in reading and the content of the text. Reading involves complex cognitive skills. It is called "a psycholinguistic guessing game" because it involves making predictions. The teacher who teaches reading should recognize the learner's reading problems, including faulty reading habits, and should help them to overcome those problems.

11.8 KEY WORDS

Code : A system of signs, such as sounds, letters of the alphabet, words, figures, etc. to which meanings are assigned based on conventions. Both the writer and the reader must agree upon these conventional meanings assigned to the various units of the language they share.

Decode : Convert a message form its coded form to its original form; here recognise letters and words in a text and understand their meaning.

Encode : Put a message in a particular set of signs or symbols (i.e.,words) according to the rules of that particular code (i.e., language).

Message : The information that the writer wants to convey to the reader(s).

Register : A variety of language or a style of speaking or writing that is used in particular circumstances or social situations. For example, when we say 'the register of law' or 'science', we refer to the particular variety of language that is used to talk or write about the subject.

Schemata : The networking of information in the mind which incorporates a generalised knowledge about objects and events and which is activated while a reader reads a text. The schemate include the previous knowledge a person has about topic, his/her knowledge of the world, his/her experiences, beliefs and attitudes. The schemata helps readers to match what they know with what the reading text offers them. Reading is thus an interaction between these two kinds of input : textual and knowledge of the world.

Signification : The dictionary meaning of a word or the meaning of a sentence arrived at by putting together the dictionary meanings of its constituent words. The sentence, for example. *The door is open*, has the signification of a statement of fact that the door is open, not closed.

Text : A set of sentences put together to convey a message in which the relationships or connections between the sentences is clear. The sentences must relate to the same situation, must be sequenced properly, and must be connected by means of linking words like and, but, however, of course.

Value : The significance of a word or a sentence in a particular context. The sentence, *The door is open*, may mean that the speaker wants the listener to close the door, or that she welcomes the listener to enter the room, and so on. A skilled reader grasps not merely the signification of what s/he reads but also its value. This involves understanding the writer's presuppositions, intention, etc. in making a particular statement.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Time-tables, maps, diary, calender, labels, notices, instruction manuals, newspapers, magazines, books, sign boards, forms, and so on - the rangs is very wide.

2. Traditionally, reading is used in the classroom to consolidate the oral work done by students earlier, to make them see the relationships between speech sounds and written symbols, and to answer questions in the examination.

3. We normally read to get information about a topic, to perform a task with the help of instructions or directions, to establish friendly relationships through correspondence, to know about programmes, goods and services, etc., and get enjoyment or excitement.

4. Reading is an important activity in which students are likely to engage themselves in during their study or later in their jobs or even in personal life. So it has to be developed in them as a skill to enable them to cope with these demands.

5. 'Silent reading' is reading for meaning and it is a more common activity than 'reading aloud', which is done in limited contexts. Silent reading is easier and faster than the other.

6. 'Silent reading' is to be preferred because it enables one to read faster and comprehend the text more easily.

7. The ability to predict what will come next in a reading text is central to the process of reading. It helps the reader to monitor his/her comprehension of the text. It also helps the reader to process minimum textual input to arrive at the meaning of the text.

8. The more the shared assumptions, the better the communication. Without shared assumptions, comprehension of the writer's message will be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

9. Schemata are mental structures embodying one's prior knowledge of the world, his/her experiences, and also his/her knowledge of the language in which the message is enclosed. They help the reader in anticipating and predicting what will follow in a text. Textual input is matched against schemata to make sense of the text.

10. Reading is an interactive process involving a simultaneous interaction of bottom-up decoding of a text with the reader's schemata to produce meaning. (See the elaborate discussion of this aspect in the unit to check your understanding.)

11. Reading is purposeful because it is the purpose which dictates and directs the way we read a text and process it. It suggests what strategy or technique of reading we need to employ to satisfy our needs.

12. A reader is 'selective' in reading in two ways. First s/he selects the kinds of texts s/he would be interested in reading. Secondly, s/he selects the minimum clues in the text to arrive at its meaning for his/her purpose without having to read every word in it.

13. Reading speed depends on content and purpose. Reading light fiction is easier, and hence faster than reading a philosophical or scientific text full of jargon. Similarly, if the reader's purpose is only to get the gist of a text, s/he needs, just skim through the text fast. But if s/he wants to read for details, s/he has to read it with concentration and effort.

14. Reading involves basically making guesses and predictions about what might follow in a text, matching these against fresh textual input, and modifying them accordingly. It is in the sense that reading is called "a psycholinguistic guessing game" because the predictions are made possible by the schemata available in the reader's mind.

15. 'Signification' refers to the neutral, dictionary meaning of a word or a sentence without reference to the context of its occurrence. It is fixed, 'Value', on the other hand, refers to the meaning that the word or the sentence takes on by virtue of the context in which it occurs. It is therefore variable. (Any appropriate example may be taken for illustration).

16.   Miscues arising from a misunderstanding of phonic, syntactic or semantic information in the reading text.

17.   Alexia refers to a neurological problem, a damage caused to the central nervous system. It results in a reading disability. A child with alexia cannot grasp a whole word or read words aloud.

18.   There are differences between reading in our own language and reading a second or foreign language. The differences are greater if the other language uses a different writing system. But the characteristics of 'efficient reading' appear to be the same in different languages - for exmaple, reading with purpose, making predictions while reading, etc.

19.   Subvocalization refers to the act of forming the sounds of - 5X the words we are reading and even murmuring them aloud.

20.   Regression refers to the tendency of the eyes to move backwards over print instead of moving forward. No, sometimes, even a skilled reader may do it modify his/her earlier predictions in the light of fresh textual clues.

UNIT 12   DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

Structure

12.1   INTRODUCTION

Unit 11 emphasized the need for teaching reading as a skill in its own right. We should remember, however, that reading is not a general ability, but a complex phenomenon that embraces a wide variety of tasks, activities, skills and mental processes. In fact, we can say that it is as varied as life. Besides, it occurs at various levels and is influenced by several factors like the reader's purpose, his/her interest in the material, and the difficulty of the selection s/he attempts to read. Special kinds of instructional help is needed for developing many of the skills of reading. We cannot think of strategies for the development of reading competence in our students without first specifying the reading skills that need to be developed.

Some children acquire the necessary skills without formal instruction. Given an environment which is conducive to reading in every respect, they learn from the beginning to get meaning from the printed page and almost unconsciously develop the ability to recognise and understand words, to comprehend sentences and even longer units. Most children, however, need to be helped by specific instruction in reading skills. They must be shown how to adapt their speed of reading both to the nature of the material read and to their own purpose. It is no light matter to acquire the wide range of abilities and skills involved in reading, but these skills can be learned through guided practice.

12.2   OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to :

● specify the various abilities and sub-skills involved in reading and understanding what we read, and, consequently, recognise the complexity of reading;

● reflect on the objectives of a programme for the development of reading skills;

● consider the various criteria to be used in selecting materials for reading;

● explore some types of classroom activities to develop reading competence.

12.3   READING SKILLS

Having begun to read, good readers operate cognitively at four highly interrelated and overlapping levels of meaning : the literal, the interpretive, the critical, and the creative. What is involved is understanding meanings at each of these four levels and how teachers can encourage students to think in these ways as they read. Let us find out about these levels:

Literal : Literal comprehension involves the reader in understanding the information stated directly in a text. That information may be facts and details, sequences of events, main ideas and generalizations, causes and effects. The key element in comprehension at this level is that the information is present ''in black and white'' in the text. The reader does not have to dig too deeply to get at it. S/he should be able to state exactly what the passage is saying, to make sure that s/he understands it. For example, if the piece of writing is about someone digging the earth, the reader should be able to state what the person is actually doing-''digging the earth''.

Literal comprehension is of fundamental importance. It requires a thorough understanding of paragraph, sentence and word meanings and is required for higher levels of comprehension.

Interpretive : To read at the interpretive level, on the other hand, is to read 'between the lines', to recognise ideas and information not directly stated. In doing so, the reader must make inferences. S/he may have to infer time relationships - the year, time of day, and season; geographical relationships; cause and effect relationships; the ages, feelings and familial relationships of characters; main ideas and generalizations if these are not stated explicitly in the text. In other words, the reader must study the facts given in the text and put two and two together in making the inference.

Writers do not always state facts directly. They imply emotions and attitudes, and suggest points of view. For instance, an author may not state directly that a particular character is bad, but the words s/he uses do describe that person and the situation s/he present him/her in may convey the author's attitude towards that character. A perceptive reader should be able to recognise this attitude. S/he must be able to get beyond the surface meanings of words and see what the implications of such words are. For instance, the same persons could be called ''terrorists'' or ''freedom fighters'' according to the writer's attitude towards them. Similarly, in describing someone eating, a writer may use the words, ''wolfed down'' ''guzzled'' or ''slobbered''. If the writer is describing a baby eating, these words may be merely a statement of fact, but if they are about an adult, there may well be a suggestion of distaste towards the person who is eating.

Interpretive reading also involves ferreting out meanings expressed through literary allusions, idiomatic, expressions, and figures of speech. The writer who writes of a character, ''He had no heart'', does not mean this literally but is relying on an idiom to communicate meaning. Another author who describes a person as having a Midas touch is communicating something special, something meaningful, only to the reader who recognises the allusion to the king who wanted everything he touched to turn to gold. The poet who speaks of ''crossing the bar'' is referring metaphorically to death; he is not speaking literally of crossing a sand bar. The scientist who refers to the earth as a lifeboat to explain relationships aboard a plant troubled by the problems of limited resources and increasing population is also relying on metaphor to put his/her message across.

One of the most difficult interpretations a reader must make is in terms of these kinds of inferences. The reader must bring to bear his/her previous experiences with language, literature, and life in constructing meanings.

Critical : Critical reading requires making judgements with regard to a text. The reader may judge the accuracy of facts, the validity of conclusions drawn, or the effectiveness of the author's style. The reader may not like the way the author has begun a piece of writing, sentences together, and used language. For instance, a writer may use very flowery language to create an atmosphere, or s/he may write 'tongue in cheek'.

Critical reading also requires giving reasons for the judgement and stating the criteria used in making it, commenting on the views expressed in the passage and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the treatment of those ideas.

Creative : Creative reading calls for the generation of new ideas, insights, applications and approaches. It requires invention, prediction, and use of the imagination. Proposing an alternative conclusion or generalization based on a reading text and suggesting related examples are exercises in creative reading. Composing orally, drawing, and writing stories with the same pattern or same words as in those that one has read are also exercises in creative reading.

A major problem often noticed in the questions that teachers ask as part of reading instruction is the predominance of questions at the literal level. No doubt children must "get the facts straight" before making valid inferences and judgements based on them, but the neglect of questions at the other levels may mean that children do not develop these abilities to the extent that they should. As teachers, we should ask ourselves whether we are giving adequate attention to all the four levels, and also whether the comprehension exercises in the texts prescribed for study do contain questions at all the four levels.

The skills and strategies of reading we hope to develop in our students may be stated broadly as follows :

a)   Skills involving flexibility of technique : variations in reading rate, skimming, scanning, study reading, etc.

b)   Skills of using non-textual information : that is, information that is strictly not part of the text itself : reference apparatus, graphic conventions, illustrations and diagrams.

c)   Word-attack skills : recognising the letters of the alphabet and reading groups of letters as words, understanding the meaning of words by using morphology, contextual clues or a dictionary.

d)   Text-attack skills : interpreting the text as a whole using all the clues available including cohesion and rhetorical structure.

Of these, the text-attack skills are perhaps the most complex in the reading process. To develop these skills, we need to use texts which exhibit the characteristics of a true discourse; that is, texts which have a recognisable content, and are coherent and structured.

What do we understand by flexibility of technique ? One of the main characteristics of a good reader is that s/he varies the speed of his/her reading according to the nature of the text s/he is reading and his/her purpose in reading it. Not only the speed of reading, but even the way s/he reads a text will vary.

Students may read for pure recreation and enjoyment, or they may read to study. They may find pleasure in study type reading too, but their attitude, approach and technique will be different. They may read to find the answer to a question or the solution to a problem, to learn the main idea of a selection or some specific types of information, to discover the result of a series of events or to follow directions in making a doll, a model aeroplane, or baking a cake, or learning the legal implications of an action. For all of these purposes, they employ different methods in their reading. For example, they cannot afford to go through a legal document in precisely the same way as they read a bestseller on a journey. If they do so, they may misinterpret the document or may not fully appreciate its legal provisions.

Many students are used to plodding through all types of text precisely in much the same way, namely word by word. So we must make them understand the need for flexibility in speed and technique of reading. In particular, we must distinguish the technique of **skimming** and **scanning**.

By **skimming** we mean skimming over the surface of a piece of writing, or glancing rapidly through a text, to find out its general content, central idea(s), or gist. We do this, for example, when we want to find out whether a certain article is relevant to our own area of study or research, or when we glance over a page of a newspaper to see if there is anything worth reading in detail, or when we leaf through a book to find out its subject matter.

By **scanning**, on the other hand, we mean darting over much of a text to search for a specific item or piece of information that we wish to discover. This skill therefore also involves the ability to reject or pass over irrelevant information. It is the kind of reading we do when, for example, we read through a biographical account to find out the date on which a certain event happened, or when we go through the table of contents in a book to see whether a certain aspect of a problem has been dealt with in the book, or when we glance through the telephone directory looking for a person's telephone number.

In both these techniques, the reader passes his/her eyes over the text so that they permit him/her to take in only the beginnings and ends of paragraphs, chapter headings and sub-headings, and so on. They enable a reader to focus selectively on parts of a text that are worth spending time on.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

  b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the four levels of comprehension ?

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2. Mention any two interpretive abilities with examples.

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3. What does 'critical reading' involve ?

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4. Give two or three examples of 'creative reading' preferably giving examples other than the ones given in this Unit.

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5. What does flexibility of reading depend on ?

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6. Differentiate between 'skimming' and 'scanning'.

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172

12.4 OBJECTIVES OF A READING PROGRAMME

The general aim of a reading development programme can be stated as follows :

To enable students to read without help unfamiliar authentic texts, at an appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding. Each phrase of this statement has specific implications for teaching.

a) **to enable students** : The teacher can only try to promote the reading ability in the students, because reading is a private activity. In the reading class, therefore, it is what the student does, not what the teacher does, that counts.

b) **to read without help** : We cannot expect the teacher to help with the reading tasks they undertake in real life outside the classroom. Therefore, students have to develop the ability to read on their own. The teacher should gradually 'disappear' from the class - should make his/her own help unnecessary to the students.

c) **unfamiliar texts** : An independent reader must be able to tackle texts s/he has never seen before, and the teacher should equip the students to do so.

d) **authentic texts** : The reading skill will be of some practical use only if it enables students to read texts they actually require for some authentic purpose, or texts they will have occasion to read after they have left the course.

e) **appropriate speed** : A flexible speed is the mark of a competent reader. So we need to train our students to use different reading rates for different materials and different purposes, instead of plodding through every text at the same careful speed.

f) **silently** : People seldom need to read aloud in real life. All readers need the skill of reading silently, which increases one's understanding of a text.

g) **with adequate understanding** : We need to understand enough of the text to suit our purpose, and we frequently do not need to read or understand every word. Students must recognise the need for such flexibility in understanding too.

Before we attempt to specify the objectives of a reading programme, we need to distinguish two kinds of reading described traditionally as **intensive** and **extensive reading** (sometimes also called **reading for accuracy** and **reading for fluency** respectively). The labels indicate a difference in classroom procedures as well as a difference in purpose.

Intensive reading involves the learners working through a relatively short passage under the guidance of the teacher and examining it closely and in detail. The aim is to arrive at a detailed and thorough understanding of the text. Material for intensive reading is chosen with a view to developing the student's powers of judgement and discriminative reasoning of interpretation and appreciation. Students learn to scan for information, to read with careful attention and concentration, and to extract the major ideas and arguments. Attention is also paid to the logical development of ideas and style in writing.

Extensive reading, on the other hand, involves reading in quantity without bothering to check every unknown word or structure. Our main purpose in helping our students with extensive reading should be to train them to read fluently in English for their own enjoyment and without the aid of a teacher. Students are encouraged to read widely on subjects which interest them personally (artistic, political, social scientific) and share what they have enjoyed with their fellow students. They are expected to be able to discuss not only the content but the implications of what they read. Reading now becomes a technique, not an end in itself, and language becomes a vehicle, a tool, and a model. The material that the students are encouraged to read should be more easily and readily accessible in language and content than that which is studied intensively. How about reading in second language? How can we help our students to read extensively in English ?

Extensive reading should play an important part in the process of second language learning for several reasons. First, it is an activity that can be carried out by the students on their own, outside the classroom. It thus complements the learning that takes place in the classroom because it provides valuable reinforcement of language already presented in the classroom as well as gives students useful practice in skills such as inferring meaning from the context when structures and vocabulary are not familiar. Besides, class time is limited

173

and the amount of reading needed to achieve fluency and efficiency is very great. So extensive reading is necessary. Moreover, it may be the only way in which a student can keep contact with English after s/he has completed the course.

Furthermore, as extensive reading is, or should be, reading for pleasure on topics that interest the students, it increases their motivation and gives them a more positive attitude towards the target language. It may also provide the student an excellent opportunity to increase reading speed, particularly because this skill is rarely developed in the ordinary English classroom. As the students are reading for pleasure, they will be eager to know what happens next and will therefore try to read faster. Thus, the more students read extensively, the faster they learn to read.

Although extensive reading involves a lot of reading out of class, some class time has to be devoted to it both to maintain the students interest in it and to train them how to cope with longer texts. Students who have not acquired the reading habit are often put off by the long books usually prescribed for supplementary reading. They need guidance and encouragement through an organized programme.

The syllabus for **intensive reading** has to be spelt out in terms of reading skills and abilities, and not merely in terms of an anthology of prose passages and poems, as is usually done in schools and colleges. Some of the main reading skills required of the general second language student are given below. Even though all the reading abilities listed here are important and have to be cultivated for efficient reading, the emphasis will vary from one level to another and this emphasis will determine the selection and grading of abilities as well as the texts used for developing those abilities.

Another point to be remembered is this : not all texts will lend themselves to practising all the reading skills - some texts clearly lend themselves to certain skills rather than others, and the teacher must keep this in mind. Similarly, no single reading lesson has to cover all the skills. What is important is that, over a period of time, say a term or a year, the teacher must ensure that s/he provides the students with practice in those skills which seem appropriate to their needs, through a range of texts and activity types. The skills and abilities outlined here must therefore be treated only as a checklist that provides guidelines for classroom work and evaluation.

After completing a course in intensive reading, a student should be able to :

a) skim a passage to identify the topic, the central theme, and other general ideas and information to ensure that s/he reads only what is relevant.

b) scan to locate specific details or items of information.

c) grasp the meaning of words and phrases in context, and interpret, idiomatic, figurative and other non-literal uses of language.

d) understand the meaning of punctuation.

e) understand the rhetorical organization of a text and make use of his/her understanding in interpreting a complex message.

f) recognize and discriminate between facts, beliefs, judgements, opinions, hypotheses, and expressions of bias, probability, uncertainty, tentativeness, etc.

g) understand the relationship between sentences and clauses in a text by making use of the reference system, discourse markers, etc.

h) understand logical relationships between sentences and parts of a text such as cause and effect, general and specific, pros and cons, generalization and support, equivalence, etc.

i) make inferences and form generalizations based on a text and justify them with evidence from the text.

j) make use of non-text information (e.g. diagrams, graphs) to supplement textual information, thereby increasing his/her understanding of the text.

k) select information from a text and use it for a particular purpose (e.g., presenting it in note form, presenting arguments for or against a proposition, taking part in role-plays, discussions, etc.)

l) match his/her expectations based on his/her own knowledge, experience, and imagination with the writer's assumptions, etc., and recognise the similarities and differences between the two.

m) locate the source of misunderstanding in a text and handle it.

n) evaluate the ideas, arguments, etc. developed in a text, the author's point of view or tone, and style.

You will notice that this list of reading abilities is by no means complete or exhaustive – it does not include those reading skills which are required for more specific purposes, like speed reading and references skills. These have to be tackled separately. Nevertheless, the list should serve as a checklist of the objectives of a programme of instruction in intensive reading.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

7. What should be the overall aim of a reading programme ?

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8. Distinguish between 'intensive reading' and 'extensive reading'.

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9. Give at least two reasons why an extensive reading component is necessary in a reading programme.

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10. Among the various abilities and sub-skills of reading, which ones would you mainly focus on at the primary level ? At the secondary level ? List them separately.

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175

12.5 MATERIALS FOR READING DEVELOPMENT

If we agree that reading involves skills and abilities that we need to develop in our students, we must ask ourselves what kinds of texts will be suitable for our purpose.

What criteria should we adopt in selecting texts for intensive reading ?

Obviously, a reading text should be at the right level of linguistic difficulty for the students. Linguistic difficulty is a combination of structural and lexical (i.e. vocabulary) difficulty. A likely cause of structural difficulty beyond the elementary levels is the length and complexity of sentences, which can make the relationships among the various parts of a text difficult for the reader to sort out. At the lexical level, if we choose texts with a high proportion of new vocabulary items (words and idioms or compound phrases), it will defeat the aims of the reading programme except when we only want the students to get the gist of a text.

However, readability is not only a matter of grammatical complexity and lexical difficulty. It also depends on the interest of the reader in the text. A text that grips the reader will carry his/her along in spite of its linguistic difficulty. The opposite is also true; dull material, even if it is written in a simple language, will make readers plod along and will not help in developing their reading competence.

Outside the classroom, in our daily life, we mostly read things we are really interested in, for some reason or other. The same principle should be applied in our choice of reading materials for our students. That is, we should select topics that would appeal to them and have some relevance for them. Therefore, one of the criteria for text selection would be the students' interest, which we can find out through a survey of the students' reading tastes.

In addition to ensuring that the topics dealt with in the passages for intensive reading would appeal to the students, we should select texts that would introduce the students to new and relevant ideas and make them think about them, help them to understand the way people with different backgrounds, problems or attitudes feel or think, and make them want to read for themselves.

Another criterion for text selection would be **authenticity of language**. What do we mean by authentic language ? It is the language from which the features of real language have not been filtered out for language teaching purposes; that is, language written originally for communication in a non-teaching context. To learn to read properly, the student must, early on, learn to deal with all the features of written English in authentic real life communicative contexts.

One objection that is often raised against the use of authentic language in the classroom is that it would be far too difficult for students to cope with because it is unedited and not written specially for language teaching purposes, with proper selection and grading of structures and vocabulary; that is, there is no control exercised by the teacher over the language employed in such texts.

But authentic language need not necessarily be difficult for the students. We can easily find many pieces of authentic language use, such as signboards, road signs, leaflets, brochures, announcement notices, advertisements, newspaper and magazine/articles, and so on which are written in simple language – not simplified language. Even if some of these texts are complex in language use, easy tasks may be set on them so that the texts become accessible to even elementary level students.

Yet another criterion for text selection is variety of formats, registers, and organisational patterns. Outside the language classroom we may read newspapers, magazine articles, cartoon strips, letters, instructions, cookery books, tourist brochures and maps, pamphlets, menus, time-tables, detective stories, etc. The full range of text materials must be brought into the classroom for language work. We have to choose texts from many sources to give our students a wide range of materials in particular, texts of the kind the students will later read for themselves, for study or other specific purposes as well as for pleasure.

Furthermore, for intensive reading, we need to choose material that is not only interesting and appealing to students but worth spending time on, that is, it should be **exploitable**. Short texts are usually chosen for intensive study. A text that cannot be exploited to develop our students' competence as readers is of no use for teaching even if the students enjoy reading

it. When we choose a text, therefore, we need to be clear about the interpretive abilities it demands and the methods we will be able to use to help our students to develop those abilities. Students should also be able to interact with the texts on their own, without too much mediation by the teacher.

Extensive Reading

The aim of an extensive reading programme is to establish the habit of reading among our students. It is not difficult to create this habit if the books are well chosen. When we choose books for extensive reading, the criteria of readability (i.e., suiting the linguistic level of the reader) and suitability of content are even more important than when we choose a text for intensive reading, because we expect the student to read the books on his/her own.

Extensive reading materials should, therefore, be :

a)   **Easy** : The language must be easier than that found in the course book because the guidance of the teacher or the task is absent for the student. To develop fluent reading it is far more useful to read a lot of easy materials than a few difficult ones.

b)   **Short** : The length of the book must not be daunting. Elementary level students need short books that they can finish quickly without a sense of strain and without getting bored.

c)   **Appealing** : The book will be appealing if it is attractive in appearance, well-printed and with good coloured illustrations - more illustrations and bigger print for more elementary students. The books should not smell of the classroom; notes and questions are better omitted.

d)   **Varied** : There must be a wide choice of books to suit the varying needs and wants to the students in terms of content, language, and intellectual and emotional maturity.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

11.   What are the sources of 'linguistic difficulty' of a text ?

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12.   Why should the reading materials be 'interesting' to students ?

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13.   Explain the meaning of 'authentic language' in the context of language learning.

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14.   Distinguish between 'simple language' and 'simplified language'.

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177

15. What do you understand by the 'exploitability' of a reading text.

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16. Outline briefly the nature of extensive reading materials.

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12.6   CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Reading involves looking at sentences and words, recognising them, and understanding them. It is a process of making sense of written language. The main way in which students learn to read is by reading. So, the more guided practice students have in 'making sense' of written messages, the better they will be able to do it.

Teaching Basic Reading

At the very earliest stages of learning to read, children must learn to distinguish among visual symbols (for example, the d and the b) and acquire a 'sight word' vocabulary, a repertoire of words that they recognise and find meaningful on sight without a complicated analysis. This will help young children gain control over the written symbols of language so that they can understand texts later. Therefore, it will be useful to give children practice in recognising words.

A simple way of doing this is to write words or phrases on pieces of paper of cards. These cards may be called 'word cards'.

| a chair | a book | a table | a desk |

Hold up the first card. Point to it and say the words. Ask the class to repeat once or twice. Then do the same with the other cards. Hold up the cards again, this time in a different order. Do not say anything but pause for a while to give the whole class a chance to look at the words. Ask one of the children to say what they are.

This technique is called 'Look and Say', because children look at the words and then say what they are. But the important part of the activity is looking and understanding. Saying the words is not an essential part of reading; it is just a way of checking whether the children can recognise the words. Therefore, we need not ask children to keep repeating the word – the activity should focus on reading, not on speaking.

Teachers can create a classroom environment in which children are immersed in meaning-filled print. Children's desks may be labelled with their names, the door may be labelled DOOR, and windows, chairs and walls may also bear labelling cards. Number words may be hung from the ceiling next to the numbers themselves and colour words next to colour samples. As children and teacher talk together, they can refer to the labels. Children will locate words and lables that apply to what they are talking about. They use the words that fill the classroom as they narrate stories or write on their own.

Furthermore, think of the early experiences of children with print at home : the label on the soap they use or the shampoo bottle – the recipe for making noodles or the advertisements on TV; outside home : the neon signs in the street or the words like, PUSH, PULL, ENTER, EXIT, IN and OUT in shops or cinema houses, often accompanied by visual clues. These

178

are not constructed specifically for teaching reading, but they are part of the child's world. The child learns of their purpose as well as meaning without learning them formally in the classroom. The teacher should exploit these experiences too in the classroom in creative ways.

Word Cards can also be used to give practice in reading whole sentences. For this kind of activity you will need two sets of Word Cards as shown below :

SET 1	SET 2
Put your book	on the floor
Put your pen	in your bag
Put your hand	on your head

Hold up one card from SET 1 and one card from SET 2. Read the complete sentence pointing to the words. For example, "Look, it says, Put-your-book-on-the-floor''. Ask the class to do what it says. Show the other cards in the same way. Now hold the cards up again, in different combinations. This time, do not say anything, but give all the students a chance to read the cards silently and do what they say.

The aim of this activity is the same as that of 'Look and Say' - children have to look at words, this time in sentences, and understand what they mean. The use of words cards makes it easy to change different parts of the sentence and so make different combinations. Instead of holding the cards yourself, you can also ask two or three students to come to the front of the class and hold them so that you are free to point to the message on the word cards.

Besides these activities, there are many other ways of checking the children's understanding and giving them a reason to read. For example, you can ask them to match sentences with pictures, match halves of sentences together, or draw pictures from sentences. These are simple reading tasks. You can also teach the decoding skills using class readers or a big book. One way is to put flaps over some words or parts of words and ask children to guess what is beneath the flaps. The children naturally use the context to derive meaning from print. They predict and test their predictions by asking themselves if the words they have guessed make sense in context.

Another way is to prepare word and sentence cards to accompany the text of the book. Children match the cards with words and sentences in the text. You can also prepare a cut-up sentence version of the text – you can cut apart key story sentences to highlight chunks of meaning of the natural phrasing units (i.e., sense groups) people use in speaking. Children reconstruct the story based on their understanding of sight, sound and meaning.

Besides, reading sentences helps children to recognise words, because they can guess them from the context. So it is useful to give children practice in reading and understanding complete sentences even at the early stages. Giving students sentences to look at and understand, not merely words, will give them more useful practice in reading than asking them to repeat written sentences aloud over and over again or getting them to 'spell out' words.

When we read our own language, we do not need to distinguish every single letter; if we did, we would only be able to read very slowly. When we read fluently, we do not ever read word by word – our eyes move rapidly across whole sentences. However, when children begin to read an unfamiliar script, they may feel that they need to look at individual letters and try to 'match' the word with the way it sounds.

However, in English this is quite difficult because the relationship between sound and spelling is very complex. For example, **by, buy, light, lie,** and **island** all have the same sound but different spellings. Similarly the letter 'e' has a different sound in **father, yet, be** and **pale.** We cannot possibly teach all these relationships – even for the commonest words there are several rules – and we do not need to teach them. Children can gradually become aware of the relationships as they read. Nevertheless, children can profit from some attention to the ways speech sounds are represented on paper, and the teacher can help them by drawing attention to sound-spelling relationship from time to time.

Thus in the very early stages, teachers are concerned, necessarily, with developing the mechanical reading skills such as the recognition of letters and words in print. However, the teacher should move on as quickly as possible to practising the different types of reading activity and to developing the cognitive skills associated with those activities. The earlier the students begin this kind of work even at the elementary level, the more efficient readers they are likely to become soon. For this purpose, texts of different kinds can be used in the classroom.

(For details of Reading at the Elementary stage you may have a look at Course 4.)

Using a Text

The most important thing about using a text for developing reading skills is to decide what you expect the students to be able to do with the text. Do you want 'full' comprehension or do you want them just to have a general understanding ? Do you want them to retrieve some specific information for a purpose or do you want to give further practice of a specific language item ?

We read most efficiently when we either need to or want to read. In the real world, the need is created naturally by circumstances. In the more artifical situation of the classroom, however, the teacher has to create specific needs for specific purposes.

1. General Guidelines

a) One way of creating the need to read a text is to relate the reading to the performance of another task such as note-making or information transfer.

b) To help focus attention and to give students a purpose, give out questions (you may write them on the board) which students have to answer when they are exposed to the text. Remember to make sure that these questions serve the intended purpose.

c) You can create motivation by working on one section of a text before revealing the next. You can ask students what they think the writer is likely to say in the next section, what will happen next, etc.

d) Even if your comprehension questions are properly structured, it will be a dull activity for the students if you simply read through them from a lesson plan. You need to be sensitive and flexible enough to change direction - to skip a few questions if you find they are not necessary, or think of a few additional or supplementary questions with weaker learners.

e) Comprehension questions should be organised and serve a clearly thoughout purpose - they should not be asked at random. You should ask yourself : ''What do I want the students to understand ? What is this question really asking ?'' Generally, you should ask 'gist' question before you ask 'detail' questions, 'easy' before 'difficult', 'factual' before 'inferential or evaluative' and questions requiring short answers before those requiring long answers. But mix them up and vary the types.

f) Very often teacher ask questions after a text only to determine how far the students have understood it. It is worth focusing attention on improving the skill itself through questions which lead students towards the main ideas of the text by forcing them to go back to the text frequently and search for meaning. In this process, students are constantly pressed to substantiate their answers with evidence from the text.

g) It is good to vary the classroom activities and the types of questions asked according to : i) the aim of the lession, ii) the stage of lesson and the level or type of understanding you expect, and iii) the capability of your students at any given point. Sometimes, you may even try to make the students frame questions. Try to deal with different sections of a text in different ways.

h) Although you may occasionally read the text aloud or get a few students to do it, you must provide ample opportunities to the students for silent reading. Training in reading aloud may be given only after the students have sufficiently understood the text.

180

i) · As far as possible, students must be encouraged to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words and expressions from the context. This will help them acquire vocabulary in a meaningful way. At the primary level, visual clues such as pictures could be provided to help in this process. A glossary, if it is provided, should be selective and include only those words and expressions for which no help is available in the text for students to arrive at their meaning.

j) If you have to handle a long text in the class, try to deal with it in several short sections. Students generally shy away from a long text even if it is not difficult. By handling a text in sections, you can ensure a more thorough understanding. This is because, when the first section has been understood, it helps the students to interpret the second, and so on. In this way, interpretation of later sections builds on the understanding of the earlier sections. Besides, it is easier to hold the students' interest in a short section and work thoroughly than on a long text. You can also vary your approach with different sections, thus providing for variety in classroom activities.

k) A text can be used as a source of several follow-up activities. Consider whether it could provide the basis for a role-play, a discussion, a debate, or some useful written work. You can put questions of evaluation (of ideas, arguments, bias, character, significance of the title, etc.) and personal response (agree/disagree, like/dislike, etc.- why ?), and help the students to relate the content of the text to their own experience or knowledge. You also make them reconsider the hypotheses they had made about the text in the early stages.

2. **Introducing the Text** ·

Many teachers feel that they must introduce every text elaborately (often through a phrase in the vernacular language) before allowing the students to start work on it. While an introduction can certainly be helpful, it may not always be necessary. The purpose of the introduction is to get the students interested in reading the particular text and guiding them in the right direction.

An introduction will not serve the purpose and will be a waste of time if it.

a) is too long,

b) gives away too much of the content of the text,

c) is irrelevant, thereby confusing the students by raising misleading expectations about the text, or

d) is a monologue by the teacher without any student involvement.

A good introduction, therefore,

a) is usually short,

b) does not tell the students anything that they can find out for themselves by reading the text,

c) makes the students want to read the text,

d) helps the students to relate the text to their own interests, experiences, and aims, and

e) involves the students actively by means of questioning.

This can be done in two ways :

i) By giving a few questions for students to think about as they read and discussing the answers afterwards - these are called 'guiding questions' or 'signpost questions'.

ii) By organising an activity before students read a text, which arouses their interest in the topic and makes them want to read. Such activities are called 'pre-reading activities' or 'pre-reading tasks'.

Examples of pre-reading activities

i) You are going to read about an earthquake. What would you like to know about the earthquake ? Write down at least five questions, which you hope the text will answer.

ii) You are going to read about an earthquake. Try to imagine what the text will tell you about : buildings, people, boats, trains, hills around the city, etc.

iii) You are going to read a text about an earthquake. Here are some words and phrases from the text. Can you guess how they are used in the text ? Tremors, the Richter scale, massive shocks, huge wave, etc.

iv) You are going to read about an earthquake. Have you seen or read about an earthquake? Was there an earthquake in India in recent times ? What do you know about it ?

3. Suggested Activities

A few examples of activities or tasks are given below. You may think of many more creative ways of developing the various reading abilities in your students.

Skimming for gist

a) Stating the main idea of a selection or finding the sentence that gives the main idea.

b) Reading through a text and then selecting a suitable title from among three or four titles suggested, or from a list of sentences, one that expresses the main idea of the text.

c) Reading through a passage and then suggesting a suitable title for it.

d) Matching different text titles to a series of short texts within a given time limit.

e) Matching different topic phrases or sentences to a series of short paragraphs in a given passage.

Scanning for specific information

a) Scanning a passage and underlining or circling the required information in a given time limit.

b) Going through a set of pre-reading questions focusing on specific information and scanning the passage for such information.

Making predictions

These activities are not only useful in developing students' predictive abilities, but also in stimulating their interest in the reading text.

a) Making hypotheses or predictions about what the text is likely to deal with, based on the title alone or the tilte of the book from which the text is taken.

b) Discussing the topic of the text or lesson beforehand, based on previous knowledge and experience.

c) Indicating which of a series of questions listed by the teacher are likely to be answered in a given selection and then checking the responses after reading the selection.

d) Stating questions the student would expect to find answered in a given selection and the then checking to find the answers during or after reading the selection.

e) After reading a section of the text anticipating or predicting what is likely to happen next.

f) Making up possible endings for stories.

Reading for detail

a) Indicating which of a series of ideas listed are brought out in a given selection.

b) Indicating which of a series of details support the main idea of a selection.

c) Completing sentences with relevant details from the reading text.

d) Matching a series of details with a list of main ideas.

e) Showing through outlinking the relationship between details and the main points.

f) Indicating which details belong and which do not, in an outline that has been made

182

on a selection.

g)   Preparing charts, tables, graphs, etc. based on the material read.

h)   Deciding which details are important in terms of a stated purpose.

i)   Making a list of details that occur in a story as preparation for dramatising the story.

Understanding the organization of a text

a)   Putting the jumbled paragraphs of a reading text in the correct order - before they can sequence them correctly, students have to understand what is happening in the text. Variation : Giving each student a different paragraph and asking him/her to find out, through dicussion, what the others is his/her group have and sequence the paragraphs.)

b)   Deciding which of several summaries best summarises a selection.

c)   Discussing the function of particular paragraphs.

d)   Dividing a long text into two or three sections which reflect the organization of the text.

e)   Making notes on the text - filling in main topics and sub-topics of a selection in a framework suggested; placing sub-topics given in a mixed up order under a list of main topics specification making an outline of points in selection on one's own.

f)   ''Jigsaw texts'' : Giving individual students or groups of students slightly different texts concerning a single event so that they have to exchange information with each other before some final task can be completed.

Understanding the relationship between sentences, clauses and phrases

a)   Rearranging jumbled sentences or parts of scrambled sentences.

b)   Sorting out jumbled sentences from two stories and rearranging the sentences in each story the right sequence.

c)   Indicating which sentences in a series mean almost the same as the sentences specified.

d)   Listing the sentences in a selection that helps prove a given point.

e)   Interpreting the meaning of conjunctions or cohesive linkers pronouns, and prepositions they are used in a text.

f)   Supplying the logical connectors that are omitted from a passage.

g)   Establishing the relation in meaning among the parts of a sentence.

h)   Studying the relationships of sentences within a paragraph.

(The table and the tasks that follow have been adapted from Mike Beaumount, ''Reading in a foreign language at an elementary level'' in A. Matthews, M. Spratt and L. Dangerfield eds. **At The Chalkface**, London : Edward Arnold, 1985).

For the purposes of illustration, some activity types are suggested below, which imply a range of techniques for developing the reading skills at the elementary level.

Consider the tabular information given below :

Name	windows	rooms	trees	gate	door	roof
Arthi	1	2	1	green	red	red
Balu	1	1	1	green	green	red
Hussein	1	1	2	green	green	green
James	2	2	2	red	green	green
Minu	2	1	1	red	red	green
Sharad	2	1	2	red	red	red

Information transfer

From this, students can write six short paragraphs, each paragraph containing slightly different information.

Example: James's house has two windows and two rooms. It has a green door and a green roof. It has two trees in the garden and a red garden gate.

Students can be asked to write the other five paragraphs. They can even be asked to complete the sentences in a couple of paragraphs, like these :

a)   Sharad's house has............... windows and one.......... . It has a ....door and a.......roof. It has............... trees in the garden and a...........garden gate.

b)   .... house has one room and one window. It has a.............door and a red......... It has one...........in the garden and a.........garden gate.

The student can also be asked to colour the pictures of the six houses suitably, writing the name of the child in a box in each picture.

Skimming

Read the paragraphs and write one word.

There are................. children how many ?

Each paragraph is about a.................

Find two numbers. What are they ?   ....

Find two colours. What are they ?   ....

(By completing this task, the students show that they have a good idea of the content of the six paragraphs or the tabular information.)

Scanning

Write a child's name. Do it as quickly as possible.

His house has one window and a red roof ....

Her house has one tree and a green roof ....

etc.

Write a colour. Do it as quickly as possible.

Hussein's house has a.................garden gate.

Arthi's house has a.................door.

Matching

Match the picture given below with the children.

(The pictures of the six houses are drawn, but not in the order of the names given in the Table.)

Write the child's name under each picture and colour the pictures.

Making inferences

Write a child's name in each box.

His favourite colour is green.   ....

His favourite colour is red.   ....

Her house is very warm.   ....

His house is very airy.   ....

(The teacher should ask the students to justify their responses, using language similar to that of the text as well as their own previous knowledge and experiences about warmth or airiness.)

184

You may think of other ways of exploiting this material for reading.

For example, you may ask comprehension questions based on the tabular information, like, 'How many children have houses with two rooms ?'

But you must not forget that every reading task you set your students should have the clear aim of developing one or more of the specific sub-skills of reading like skimming, scanning, or inferencing.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

   b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

17.   Explain what is meant by the technique, 'Look and Say'.

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18.   What types of comprehension questions can be set on a reading text and how are they generally sequenced ?

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19.   What are the characteristics of a good introduction to a reading text ?

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20.   What are 'signpost questions' ?

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21.   What is the vlaue of 'pre-reading tasks' ?

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12.7   LET US SUM UP

Let us briefly restate the points made in this unit :

Reading is not a general ability but involves a complex set of skills and mental processes, which can be acquired through guided practice in an instructional programme. Efficient readers adapt their approach and speed of reading both to the nature of the material to be read and to their own purpose in reading it.

Reading comprehension occurs at four interrelated levels : literal, interpretive, critical, and creative. Teachers must train their students in reading at all these four levels. The overall reading skills comprises : skills involving flexible technique, skills of using non-text information in understanding a text, word-attack skills, and text-attack skills. The basic skills of reading are skimming for gist, scanning for specific information, inferencing and evaluating. The overall aim of a reading development programme is to enable students to read without help unfamiliar, authentic texts at an appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding.

Basically, two kinds of reading can be distinguished : intensive and extensive reading. They involve different classroom procedures as their purposes are basically different. Intensive reading involves examining a text closely and in detail, while extensive reading involves reading fluently in quantity, for enjoyment and without help. Material selected for developing intensive reading skills must be accessible to students linguistically and conceptually. It must be interesting, relevant, and varied, and should represent samples of authentic language use. In the very early stages, teachers are concerned with the mechanical reading skills of decoding letters and words in print, but even then it would be more useful to children if they are given sentences to look at and understand, not merely words. Teachers should exploit children's early experiences with print, at home and outside, for this purpose.

Materials chosen for extensive reading must be easy, short, appealing in content and presentation, and varied to suit the interests and ability levels of students. At soon as children have acquired these basic skills, the teacher should expose them to different types of reading activity to develop the mental abilities involved in those activities. Certain general guidelines are given for using reading texts in the classroom and a few activities or tasks are also suggested for exploiting the texts. Some of the activity types are illustrated as well.

12.8 KEY WORDS

Authentic language	:	Language used in real-life contexts, not edited or written specially for teaching purposes.
Creative reading	:	Generating new ideas, insights, applications, etc. from a text; imaginative reading.
Critical reading	:	Making judgements with regard to a text - about the ideas, implications, organization of information, author's style etc.
Extensive reading	:	Reading widely and fluently for enjoyment and without external help.
Flexibility	:	Being able to vary the speed of (in reading) reading according to the nature of the reading material and the reader's purpose in reading it.
Information transfer	:	Transferring some of the relevant information from a verbal text to a graphic format (e.g. table, graph, chart), and vice versa.
Intensive reading	:	Reading a text closely and in detail for a thorugh understanding.
Interpretive reading	:	Understanding the ideas and information not directly stated in a text; reading 'between the lines' and making inferences.
Literal reading	:	Understanding the information stated directly in a text.
Pre-reading tasks	:	Activities or tasks which students are required to attempt **before** they start reading a text.
Scanning	:	Darting over a text to search for a specific item of information desired, passing over irrelevant information.
Sight word vocabulary	:	Words that students can recognise and understand on sight without a complicated analysis.
Skimming	:	Glancing rapidly through a text to find out its general content, central idea(s), or gist.

12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Literal, interpretive, critical and creative.

2. Interpreting or inferencing time relationships, geographical relationships, cause and effect, generalizations based on details/facts given, attitudes, emotions and points of view. Select any two and give your own examples.

3. Making judgements about the accuracy of facts, validity of opinions or inferences, effectiveness of style and organisation, etc.

4. Dramatising or role-playing, rewriting from a different point of view, etc.

5. The nature of the text to be read and the reader's purpose in reading it.

6. **Skimming** : Glancing rapidly through a text to find out its general content, main ideas(s) or gist.

   Scanning : Searching for a specific item of information by glossing over irrelevant information.

7. To enable students to read without help unfamiliar, authentic texts at an appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding.

8. **Intensive reading** : Reading a text closely and in detail for a thorough understanding.

   Extensive reading : Reading fluently and in large quantity for enjoyment without external help.

9. It complements classroom learning by reinforcing the language learnt already; it motivates the students, and develops in them a positive attitude towards reading in general; it develops the habit of reading faster.

10. (Have you been able to sort them out neatly ? Why not ? Many of the skills which are developed in the early stages can be further refined at an advanced level in later stages.)

11. Length and complexity of sentence structure and new vocabulary items.

12. Because, in real life, we mostly read things we are interested in.

13. Language used in real life for communication in various contexts which has not been edited or simplified for language teaching purposes.

14. Simple language is language originally written in a way which is easily understood by the students; simplified language is authentic language which is modified and made simpler in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structures to suit the level of the students.

15. The extent to which a text lends itself to activities or tasks which would enable the development of reading skills in students.

16. They should be linguistically easy, short, appealing in presentation, and varied to suit the interests and maturity levels of students.

17. Children look at word cards and say the words.

18. 'Gist' questions (or global questions), 'detail' (or local) questions, factual questions, inferential questions, evaluative questions, question requiring short or long answers.

19. **Short**; not giving away too much of the content; **relevant**; **involving** the students; making them **want** to read the text.

20. Questions given to students to think about while they read a text; questions that lead the students towards the main ideas of the text.

187

21. They arouse the interest of students in the topic and make them want to read the text.

12.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Doff, A. (1998) : *Teach English : A Training Course for Teacher's,* The British Council & Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Matthews, A., M. Spratt and L. Dangerfield (eds.) (1985) : *At the Chalkface.* Edward Amold, London.

Nuttall, Christine (1987) : *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language,* Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1982; ELBS Edn., London.

UNIT 13 READING COMPREHENSION-I

Structure

13.1 INTRODUCTION

A simple definition of reading is that it is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written. The key word is 'understands' – merely reading aloud does not count as reading.

This definition does not mean that the learner needs to understand everything in a text. Understanding is not an 'all nothing' process, and therefore reading too is not an 'all or nothing process either'.

Again, although reading has been defined as a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written, the reader does not necessarily need to look at everything in a given piece of writing. The reader actively works on the text and is able to arrive at understanding it without looking at every letter and word.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to :
- relate the reasons for reading with the appropriate reading style;
- aware of the teaching objectives and principles underlying reading comprehension activities;
- describe the three phases of a reading lesson and identify the questions belonging to each phase.

13.3 REASONS FOR READING AND READING STYLES

People generally do not read unless they have a reason for reading, i.e., they have a need of some kind that can be satisfied through reading. Furthermore in case of an effective reader, his/her reason for reading will also influence his/her style of reading. The effective reader is one who is able to adapt his/her style to his/her purpose, and does not read everything slowly and intensively.

Learning language should not be an aim in itself — the ultimate aim is to be able to use language appropriately. It is therefore important to give learners practice in different reading styles. This is achieved not by telling learners to skim, read intensively, etc. but by setting tasks that encourage the use of these styles.

The following diagram summarises the relationship between reasons for reading and various styles of reading.

REASONS
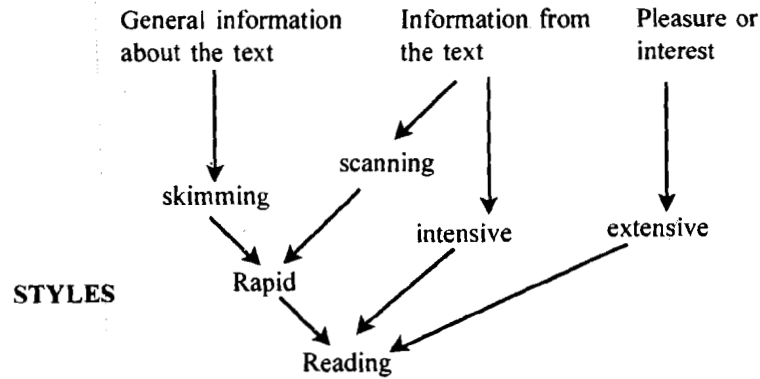
STYLES

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
         b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1 Consider the following types of texts and write for each of them the reason for reading it and the style of reading used. One has been done for you.

Text	Reason for Reading	Style of Reading Used
i) Railway time table	Looking for a particular piece of information	Scanning
ii) Instruction for using a machine		
iii) Newspaper article		
iv) An extract from a novel		
v) Telephone directory		
vi) A letter to the editor		
vii) A notice		
viii) A recipe		
ix) A poem		
x) Rules for playing a game		

13.4 READING COMPREHENSION AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

The important thing to remember is that the reading comprehension passage and the associated activities should promote skills in reading for understanding. The following are some important characteristics of 'understanding' and their implications for teaching reading comprehension.

1. All readers bring something with them to a text in terms of a general stock of knowledge. Knowledge of the world does not only cover knowledge of a particular topic, if may include knowledge of a particular topic, it may also include knowledge of a particular culture or a way of life.

Teaching implications : Before reading the reading passage itself, one can draw on the learners' previous knowledge of the subject matter, their experience of life in general. (This is the purpose of warm up/pre-reading activities).

2. One can understand something better if one puzzles out things for oneself. Advice and guidance are valuable. But true learning involves a large element of personal discovery, struggle and achievement. The outcome is that one is more confident and better equipped for further and more challenging tasks of understanding. The same is true of reading comprehension.

Teaching implications : Make students work out things for themselves. Don't spoon feed them by explaining the passage to them, but devise exercises so that they can work them out on their own.

3. Understanding something will be deeper and will last longer if one does something with the information one has just acquired e.g. one will understand a recipe better if one has actually cooked the dish concerned. This is equally true of reading.

Teaching implications : There should be exercises and activities to get the learners to use this new found knowledge and ideas.

4. In trying to understand, for example, directions on how to get to someone's house, you need to concentrate exclusively on what the directions are. Similarly, in reading, one needs to concentrate on reading for understanding and not get sidetracked into other aspects of the passage.

Teaching implications : While teaching reading comprehension, don't focus on teaching pronunciation or grammar.

5. Understanding anything is not an 'all or nothing' process. Similarly, reading for understanding is not an 'all or nothing process' either.

Teaching implications : Don't aim at 'total comprehension' of every single word, sentence and item of the content of a passage.

6. The ability to understand anything or anybody is made up of a variety of component sub-skills (e.g. anticipating what will come next, distinguishing main elements from the details, bringing together information from various sources). Reading, too, is composed of such sub-skills.

Teaching implications : Instead of aiming at 'total comprehension' of a particular reading passage, use that passage as a vehicle for teaching the reading skills that the learner needs for reading other passages.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2. Write in your own words the various factors that you need to keep in mind while constructing exercises for teaching reading comprehension.

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191

13.5 TEACHING OBJECTIVES FOR READING

At the end of a reading programme we should expect our learners to be able to achieve the following objectives at their own level, e.g. a learner at the end of class VI should be able to identify the main points and details of a passage suitable to his/her level and (s)/he should be able to do the same for a difficult passage at the end of class IX.

1. read silently at varying speed depending on the purpose of reading.

2. adopt different reading strategies for different types of text.

3. recognise the organisation of a text.

4. identify the main points of a text.

5. understand the relations between different parts of a text.

6. anticipate and predict what will come next in a text.

7. deduce the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items in a given context.

8. consult a dictionary to obtain the required information.

9. infer, analyse, interpret and evaluate the ideas in a text.

10. select and extract from a text information required for a specific purpose.

11. transcode i.e. transform information from verbal to diagrammatic form.

12. read extensively for pleasure.

In any given passage it is possible to fulfil a combination of objectives i.e. when you choose a reading passage you can set questions/exercises/activities which would fulfil a number of objectives stated in this list.

13.6 PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PRODUCING OR USING READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

According to Francoise Grellet (1981), there are a number of considerations to be borne in mind when producing or using reading comprehension exercises/activities.

1. One should start with global understanding (understanding the text as a whole) and move towards detailed understanding rather than working the other way round. Similarly, when constructing/using reading comprehension exercises on a given text it is always preferable to start with the overall meaning of the text, its function and aim, rather than working on vocabulary or more specific ideas.

   This is important and essential because :

   a) It is an efficient way of building the learner's confidence. If the activity is global enough, the learner will not feel completely lost. They will feel that at least they understand what the text is about and will later feel less diffident when tackling a new text.

   b) It will develop an awareness of the way texts are organised (e.g. stating the main aim and developing it or giving the chronological sequence of events). It is this awareness of the general structure of a passage that will allow the students to read more efficiently later on.

   c) Reading is a constant process of guessing and what one brings to the text is often what one finds in it. From the beginning the learners should be taught to use what they know, to understand unknown elements, whether these are ideas or simple words and phrases. This is best achieved through a global approach to the text.

2. It is important to use authentic texts whenever possible (at least when you are choosing an unseen passage for reading comprehension). Authenticity means that nothing of the

original text is changed and also its presentation and layout are retained e.g. a newspaper article should be presented as it first appeared in the paper.

Getting the learners accustomed to reading authentic texts from the very beginning as against a simplified or adapted text does not necessarily mean a much more difficult task on the learner's part. The difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activities and the exercises rather than on the text itself. Therefore, one should grade them and not the text.

3. Another important principle when devising comprehension exercises is that the activities should be flexible and varied. The exercises should be suited to the texts and to one's reasons for reading them. It is essential to take into account the author's point of view, intention and tone for a full understanding of the text.

4. Reading comprehension should not be separated from other skills. There a few cases in real life when we do not talk or write about what we read. It is therefore important to link the different skills through the reading activities.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. What are the various considerations we must take care of in order to make a learner an independent, efficient reader ?

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13.7 READING COMPREHENSION IN THE CLASSROOM

As you already know the first point to be noted when conducting a reading lesson in the classroom is that it is a silent activity. Therefore silent reading should be encouraged. The students should not read aloud. This would in fact tend to give the impression that all the texts are to be read at the same speed. Besides when we read, our eyes do not follow each word of the text one after the other — at least in the case of efficient readers. On the contrary, many words or expressions are simply skipped; we go back to check something or go forward to confirm something. Such tactics became impossible when reading aloud and this reading activity therefore tends to prevent the learners from developing efficient reading strategies.

Three phases of a reading lesson

Pre-reading Phase

This phase consists of a variety of tasks. These tasks arouse learners' interest in the topic, encourage them to predict and deal with difficult vocabulary.

In order to help prepare for pre-reading work, useful questions that you can ask yourself are:

a) What knowledge, ideas or opinions might the learners already have on the topic and how can this knowledge be drawn out and used ?

b) Why should anyone want to read this text and can the same or similar reasons be generated in the learners ?

The answers to these questions will give a clue to ways of introducing the text, motivating the learners and at the same time will incorporate language preparation. Visuals, drawing

193

up of lists or setting questions (mostly oral) may all play a part in pre-reading activities.

While-reading Phase

This phase draws on the text, rather than the learners' ideas previous to the reading activity. The aims of this phase are :

a) to help understand the writer's purpose.

b) to help understand the organisation of the text.

c) to clarify the text content.

The traditional 'Comprehension exercise' at the end of the text is a typical **while-reading** activity. There are usually plenty of these activities/exercises. What you need to do is to consider whether these exercises correspond to and fulfil the objectives of teaching reading.

The sort of questions that you can ask yourself as a guide to the while-reading activities are the following :

a) what is the function of this text ?

b) how is the text organised ? (narrative, descriptive, chronological, etc.)

c) what content is to be extracted from the text ?

d) what may the learner infer or deduce ?

e) what reading style is suitable ?

f) what language may be learned from the text ?

As a rule, **while-reading** work should begin with a general or global understanding of the text, and then move to the smaller units such as paragraphs, sentences and words. The reason for this is that the larger units provide a context for understanding the smaller units – a paragraph or a sentence may help the reader to understand a word.

Let us look at some examples while-reading questions here.

1. How are wildlife sanctuaries of today different from the private hunting preserves of kings and rulers ?

    (The purpose of this question is to check the students understandings of two contrasted situations — wildlife sanctuaries and private hunting preserves and this question can be answered when the learner has an overall understanding of both the situations.) The organisation of the test in compare and contrast style can be discussed with the students.

2. How did Helen Keller come to realise that she was different from others ?

    (The question demands comprehension of all the situations/incidents/happenings which Helen Keller faced before she realised that others were different than her.) The importance of sequence of events in a narrative style can be highlighted.

3. Why couldn't Costas' father accompany him to Mount Lycabettus ?

    (Demands local comprehension of the reasons that stopped Costas' father from accompanying him to Mount Lycabettus.)

Post-reading Phase

The exercises/activities in this section do not directly refer to the text, but grow out of it.

The aims of **post-reading** exercises are :

1. to consolidate and reflect upon what has been read; and

2. to relate the text to the learner's own knowledge, interests or views.

These exercises should contribute, in a coherent manner, to the writing, speaking and listening skills.

194

Let us look at some post-reading questions given below.

1. Your class has been allowed to meet and interview Ms. Rita Panicker, the Founder Director of Butterflies and Ms. Poonam Chandra, Co-ordinator at Bal Sahyog.

   In groups of five, frame ten questions that you would like to ask them about their organisation, the programmes they run, the source of funds and the success of their efforts.

   Compare your questions with other groups.

   (Demands understanding of the programmes and activities of both the organisations – Butterflies and Bal Sahyog. The lesson acts as a take-off point to frame these extrapolatory questions.)

2. Imagine that you are Squire Gordon – Black Beauty's master. Write a letter to your friend in the town narrating your miraculous escape on that stormy night.

   (Based on the events of the lesson and yet provides a chance to students for creative thinking and writing.)

3. How is dinner time similar or different in your house from what has been described in the poem ?

   (An attempt is made to relate the experience of the learners to what has been described in the poem. Reading then becomes more meaningful for the learners by giving them an opportunity to compare their own experience in a similar situation.)

You may get ideas for post-reading work by asking yourself the following questions :

a) Do the learners know of a similar situation to that presented in the text ?

b) Does the text present a situation that invites completion ?

c) Does the text present views that might need to be counter-balanced ?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes' then there is an opportunity for post-reading activities.

This three-phase approach is not to be carried out mechanically on every occasion. Sometimes you may wish to cut out the pre-reading stage and get the learners to work on the text directly. Sometimes post-reading work may not be required.

However, the advantage of this three-phase approach is two-fold :

a) it respects and makes use of the learner's knowledge of language and of the world and uses this as a basis for involvement, motivation and progress.

b) it leads to the integration of the skills in a coherent manner, so that the reading session is not isolated.

Check Your Progress

4. Here are some exercises/activities based on a lesson called 'The Never-Never Bird'. Which phase of a reading lesson is it meant for — pre, while or post reading ? Give reasons to justify your answer. You can do this without knowing the text.

   i) Why does the author call the never-never bird 'a spirit of the sky ?'

   ii) Why was it important for the never-never bird not to cry out even though she was so scared ?

   iii) Imagine you can fly like a bird. What does it feel like to soar above people's heads, to fly over houses and trees ? What will you do and where will you go? Write a story about the exciting flight you made.

   iv) Describe how the scientist carried out the experiment.

   v) Why do we need to experiment ?

   vi) Discuss in groups of four what you know about the Atlantic Ocean.

195

13.8 LET US SUM UP

You are aware, about the nature of the reading process and the characteristics of reading as a meaningful activity. In this unit, we have reiterated the aspects of reading and at the same time tried to help you understand the principles underlying producing and using reading comprehension exercises which will help you to conduct the reading activity in the classroom in a meaningful way.

13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. **Reason for Reading**   **Style of Reading Used**

    i) Looking carefully for instructions for operating a machine.   Intensive

    ii) **Reasons for vary**

    a) To seek information $\rightarrow$ Rapid reading followed by more intensive reading

    b) For interest $\rightarrow$ Extensive reading

    iii) Infer character traits, understand sequence, appreciate literary style   Intensive reading

    iv) Looking for a particular number   Scanning

    v) For interest   Scanning followed by intensive reading (if necessary)

    vi) For particular information   Scanning

    vii) For proper instructions   Intensive

    vii) a) Appreciate the peom   Intensive

        b) For pleasure/enjoyment   Extensive/Extensive

    ix) For total grasp of the rules to be followed.   Intensive

2. ● make optional use of learners own experience.
    ● allow learners to negotiate meaning (do not always tell the answers to the learners).
    ● the exercises to follow should be based on what has been learnt in the lesson.
    ● the different sub-skills of reading are to be focussed on instead of total comprehension of cach and every word.

3. Proceed from global to local comprehension (for an overall view of the text to local specific details); draw the students attention to the organisation of the text; use authentic texts instead of simplified or adapted text; allow the learners to work through a variety of activities.

4. i) While-reading activity – (must understand the author's reason's for calling the never-never bird the spirit of the sky).

    ii) While-reading activity – (the reasons must be inferred understood from the text).

    iii) Post-reading activity – (allows the student to express his own ideas).

    iv) While-reading activity.

    v) Pre-reading activity – (uses learners own experience and would (perhaps) help them understand the text better).

    vi) Pre-reading activity – (reason same as in question number 5).

13.10 SUGGESTED READING

Grellet, F. (1981); *Developing Reading Skills*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

UNIT 14 READING COMPREHENSION-II

Structure

14.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit attempts to give examples of various types of reading comprehension exercises. There are illustrations of different types of exercise types. The level of difficulty of the text is not important - the exercise types suggested can be adapted for different levels.

14.2 OBJECTIVES

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

● understand the various skills of reading comprehension;

● set questions and activities for different reading skills e.g. skimming and scanning;

● describe various functions of texts;

● identify various devices used for textual cohesion and describe their function;

● analyse a variety of text in terms of its organisation.

14.3 READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. Read the short passage in the box. Read the questions set on the passage and judge whether the questions test comprehension or not. Write 'yes' or 'no' on the dash against each question.

Why was Nitin tired ?	Use 'got back' in a sentence of your own	What does 'this one' refer to ?

Nitin shook his head tiredly as he walked down the steps of the hotel and got back into the car. "No. This one has no room either."

Check the pronunciation of hotel from a dictionary	What was Nitin looking for ?	Where is Nitin ?	Is there anyone else in the car ?

B. **Aim :** To train the students to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words. In the space provided write the word/phrases which help you deduce the meaning of the words in bold.

a) I saw her walk away. Her day had been **ruined**. She had made a fool of herself in public. She had impressed no one. In her own sad red eyes she was a failure.

    i) made a fool of herself

    ii) ....

    iii) ....

b) Monday morning found Tom Sawyer **miserable**. Monday mornings always found him so, because it began another week's slow suffering in school.

    i) ....

c) "Hey ! Where are you going ? Come back !" But the tinker was already **out of earshot**. He was on his way back to Mirzapur twice as fast as he left it, with his dog running behind him.

    i) ....

    ii) ....

    iii) ....

    iv) ....

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
    b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Make a short passage.

a) Frame 4-6 questions which test only Reading Comprehension.

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b) Frame 4-6 vocabulary exercises where the student has to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from other words in the text.

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198

14.4 SKIMMING AND SCANNING

You have already come across these terms. Both skimming and scanning are specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading.

Whe **skimming**, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organised, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer.

When **scanning**, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even read the whole passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information.

The activities suggested below to practise scanning also try to put the students in an authentic situation where they would naturally scan the text rather than read it. The students are therefore asked to solve a specific problem as quickly as possible - which is only possible by means of scanning.

Activity 1

Imagine that your uncle who has retired wishes to settle down in Delhi. He, along with his family, is expected to shift to Delhi in a month's time.

He's asked to scan the newspapers for a number of advertisements.

First of all he wishes to rent a comfortable house preferably with three bedrooms. Your aunt is a great lover of plants, so there should be enough space for her plants.

Your uncle worked in the accountant general's office. He is still very energetic so he'd like to take up some suitable job for some time.

Your aunt doesn't want a fulltime job, however, she wishes to take up some tuitions, during free morning hours.

His son Sanjay has a computer degree and is looking for a suitable job.

His daughter is a journalist, a free lancer. She is also looking for a suitable job.

Scan the following advertisements and locate the appropriate ones.

Indicate the advertisement against the person stated below :

1. Flat for your uncle's family ....

2. Job for his son ....

3. Job for his daughter ....

4. Part time job for your aunt ....

5. Job for your uncle..

WANTED AN EXPERIENCED LADY COMPUTER OPERATOR-CUM-GENERAL OFFICE ASSISTANT, PERSON MUST BE FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND ABLE TO INITIATE WORK TO COMPUTERISE THE COMPANIES ACCOUNTING SYSTEM. GOOD WORKING ENVIRONMENT. APPLY IN CONFIDENCE.

GHAZIABAD TOOL PVT. LTD.
FLAT NO. 110
ASHIRWAD COMPLEX
D-1 GREEN PARK
NEW DELHI-110 016   (AD 99246)

Wanted by a reputed Pvt. Company, an expert Computer Operator. Salary according to merit and perks. Apply with full particulars to A & A Periodical Subscription Agency Pvt. Ltd. 191, Deepali, Pitampura, Delhi-34, Phone 7278098.

199

(Home Tuitions) tutors/tutoresses/available all localities/classes/public/convent school/English conversations/European languages (Also wanted more tutors/tutoresses). Ring (P.T.B) Puri Tutors Bureau 693077/4624631.

First floor drawing dining three bedrooms, second floor three bedrooms attached bath rooms big balconies. Company/Embassy lease. Contact Telephone 6434856, 6460635 Office 6874689.

Industrial shed 50, 100 & 150 square metres with 20 H.P. 400 square metres plot with 20 H.P. Contact Bhatia 5553346, 5592227.

Kalkaji Alaknanda Aravalli Apartments 3 bedroom flat duplex type large terrace. Company lease/South Indian preferred. Contact 2201488.

Posh three bedroom three bathroom apartment available at N-15, Panchshila Park, Company lease preferred. Phone 6440758.

S-52 Greater Kailash-II, spacious room covered verandah kitchen bath courtyard, suits small family. Company lease preferred. Contact site or ring telephone 6440758.

Two bedroom drawing dining modern construction, single unit, Sukhdev Vihar, Mathura Road, 2 years company lease, foreigners only Contact 2213664.

West Punjabi Bagh 4 bedrooms duplex apartment fully furnished. Company lease only. Phone 7129635/644519 Nair.

St. Paul's tutor's Bureau provide excellent tutors/tutoresses for convent children. Call. F. Bob 3715114 Tutors/tutoresses also welcome.

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Activity 3

The following news item was printed in a newspaper about the longest letter in the world, which might be included in the Guiness Book of World Records. Fill in the form given below for the publishers to include this information in the book.

KOTTAYAM, Oct. 30 - A 27 year-old man from this city may figure in the Guiness Book as the author of the world's longest letter, reports UNI. The letter is 2.4 km long, contains 100 million words, weighs 100.5 kg and cost the author, Reagan Jones, a freight charge of Rs. 2,058 to reach it to its addressee - Pope John Paul II.

Advocating world peace, the letter, artistically written with tasteful colourshades on 2,985 sheets of thick J.K. card paper of width two feet four inches, was sent to the Pontiff on his birthday on May 18.

The unemployed Jones had worked on the gargantuan letter for four years at an average of ten hours a day.

200

In a recent communication to Jones, the Guiness Book of World Records deputy editor, Sheelagh Thomas, said the letter would be considered for inclusion in the book at Guiness's "annual, review cycle, next spring".

Title:		The Longest Letter in the World
a.	Name of the Writer:	
b.	Written to :	
c.	Purpose of Writing:	
d.	Weight:	
e.	Length:	
f.	No. of sheets used:	
g.	Language used:	
h.	No. of words used:	
i.	Visuals used:	
j	Days spent :	
k.	No. of hours spent:	
l.	Kind of ink used:	
m.	Kind of paper used:	
n.	Susbstance of the letter :	
o.	Date on which sent to the addressee :	

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
        b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2.   Prepare two skimming and two scanning exercises.

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14.5   DEVICES USED FOR TEXTUAL COHESION

We need to prepare the students in recognising the various devices used to create textual cohesion and the use of reference and link words.

201

Aim : To train the students to understand relations between parts of text through pronoun referents.

In the paragraph below, some of the pronouns have been numbered. On the lines below the paragraph, write the word or words that each numbered pronoun refers to. The first has been done for you.

The name of the largest river in the world is the Amazon. But how did this river get its[1] name ? A tale exists which[2] tell us that the name originated when an early Spanish explorer of South America was attacked by Indians who[3] wore grass skirts and head dresses. Since the Indians reminded him[4] of the Amazon in the Greek legends, he[5] named the area after them.

This river Amazon

1. its   ....

2. which   ....

3. who   ....

4. him   ....

5. he   ....

14.6 FUNCTIONS OF A TEXT

It is obvious that being aware of the function of a passage is important to comprehend it. So the students should be trained to find out whether the text aims at convincing the reader, giving information or asking for something.

Match the following passages with their function. There could be more than one passage for a function. Write the function against the passage.

Function	Passage No.
Warning	_____
Giving information	_____
Giving instructions	_____
Invitation	_____
Giving advice	_____
Entertaining	_____

202

Angry mob sets two Redline buses on fire

From Our Staff Reporter

1. New Delhi, March 18. An angry mob set on fire two Redline buses after a 40-year old man was crushed to death under the wheels of one in Janakpuri here late on Saturday night.

2. Don't allow children to play Holi on roofs and parapets, cautions a neurosurgeon at the Mool Chand Hospital.

3. In the past two days, the hospital has had a number of children brought with head injuries, all caused by falling from roof-tops while playing with water-balloons, Dr. Ravi Bhatia, the neurosurgeon, warns against these.

4. If a child falls from a height and is injured, make him or her lie on the side. The mouth should be cleared of food or blood so that the air passage can be maintained. Rush him/her to the nearest medical centre, with the head in a low position.

5. Adults are advised not to drive after consuming bhang or alcohol.

Curbs on Holi

By A Staff Reporter

6. New Delhi; March 14 : The city police have announced certain measures to preempt "riotous, indecent and disorderly behaviour" during Holi. They will come in force from tomorrow for a period of 10 days.

7. The police have warned that throwing of coloured water or rubber balloons and application of "gulal" on unwilling persons will invite prosecution. So will any indecent behaviour or language.

8. Pushing or obstruction of persons in any public place and "violent movements, menacing gestures or shouting" which disturb the public order are prohibited.

9. The police have also banned the sale of rubber balloons of two inches or less when not inflated.

10. **Gajjar Halwa**

    Ingredients

    1 kg red carrot
    1 litre milk

    200 gm sugar. Dry fruits for garnishing. Grate unitl soft. Mix in the sugar and boil the mixture till the milk dries up. Add ghee and stir for a few minutes. Finally add dry fruits.

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203

12. The Weather

Rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at one or two places in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya, Sub-Himalayan, West Bengal and Sikkim, plains of West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, West Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Maharashtra, Marathawada and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Weather will be mainly dry over the rest of the country.

Temperature

City	Max.	Min.
Abu	25	10
Ahmadabad	34	18
Bangalore	33	19
Bhopal	32	18
Bhubaneswar	35	22
Bombay	30	22

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4.   Collect five/six different types of texts and prepare a similar exercise.

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14.7 ORGANISATION OF THE TEXT

This refers to the method of presentation of information in any passage. These could be in the form of

● Main idea and supporting details

● Sequence

● Comparisons

● Logical Sequence

Let's look at some examples:

Aim : To train the students to make an outline of the given passage with main ideas and their supporting details.

Whales

When you are outlining an article, you will often want to include the details that are given about some of the sub-topics. As you read the article below, decide what its main topics, sub-topics, and details are. Then complete the outline by using the items listed at the bottom of the page.

Whales are the largest animals the world has ever known. They are found in every major ocean, and although they resemble huge fish, they are really mammals. One important way whales differ from fish is in their body temperature. They are warm blooded, so their

204

temperature remains constant despite the surrounding climate. Extra protection is provided by blubber, a thick layer of fat that keeps them warm even in the coldest water. Whales also differ from fish in their manner of breathing. Equipped with lungs instead of gills, they are forced to hold their breath while underwater. When a whale's supply of fresh air runs out, it must surface to breathe otherwise it would drown. Another difference that sets whales apart from fish is the way they treat their young. Babies are born alive and are nursed on their mother's milk until they are old enough to feed themselves.

For centuries man has hunted whales for a variety of profitable reasons. Although whale products are not as sought - after today, they are still used throughout the world. Whale oil goes into making margarine in many European countries, and it is often found in various kinds of explosives. Some laundry soaps still contain whale oil. The meat of a whale is not as widely valued as the oil, but many manufactures use it in canned dog and cat food. Whale meat is even eaten by human beings in such countries as Norway and Japan.

A. How do whales differ from fish.

   1. ....

   2. ....

B. Breathing

   1. ....

   2. ....

C. Sub-titles

   1. ....

   2. ....

Whale products

A. Sub-titles

   1. ....

   2. ....

   3. ....

B. Sub-titles

   1. ....

   2. ....

....

Margarine	Breathing	Explosives
Whale products	Warm-blooded	How whales differ from fish
Lungs instead of gills	Treatment of young	Whale meat
Protected by blubber	Whale oil	Must surface to breathe
Food for animals	Food for humans	Laundry soaps
Babies born alive	Body temperature	Young drink mother's milk

Aim : To train the students to write in a sequence. Here are the steps for a game called 'Pattern Puzzle'. The steps are in jumbled order. Unscramble them and list them in proper order.

a) There is a time limit, say five minutes.

b) Give each group a card with a letter pattern.

205

c) The letter pattern should be the same.

d) The group with most words is the winner.

e) No letter should be used more than once in any word.

f) The players each write down on paper all the words they can think of, containing some or all of these letters.

g) The middle letter e.g. E must appear in each word.

(T)   (I)

                    (E)

(S)   (N)

Aim : To train the students to understand comparisons/contrasts used in the text.

Read this passage and complete the table that follows :

Most people think spiders are insects; they are not. Insects belong to the class Insecta and most of them have wings. Insects have six legs and a three part body – the head, thorax and abdomen – with two legs attached to each part. The antennae or feelers project from the head. Spiders belong to the class Arachnida and most of them are web-spinners. Spiders have eight legs and a two part body — the combination of head and thorax to which the eight legs are attached, and abdomen which contains the silk glands.

Unlike insects, spiders are not equipped with antennae. Their intricate webs serve not only as fingers but also as eyes.

	Insecta	Arachnida
body		
legs		
other parts		

Aim : To train students to understand the logical relationship within a passage.

Read the following sentences and rearrange them so as to form a coherent paragraph.

a) We should not dismiss Malthus too quickly, however.

b) But certain directions of developments are clear and suggestive of our future problems.

c) There are few people today who agree with the Malthusian theory in its original form.

d) It is hard enough to understand those we already face.

e) A large number of the world population still lives in hunger, just above the starvation level.

f) No one can predict exactly what our main problems will be in the next generation or two.

g) The reason may be that he didn't know about the advances in technology and transportation which have increased food production and made it possible to use in one part of the world what has been produced in another.

h) There certainly will be a difficult balance between man and natural resources on which he depends.

i) Because of these historical facts, the English economist Robert Malthus declared in 1798 that population tends to grow more quickly than food supplies.

j) Despite the enormous increase of the world population since his day, his theory is no longer feared.

k) Time after time, the population of certain areas has developed so quickly that there was not enough food available, which brought starvation.

i) In the foreseeable future, world food production will be enough for the population.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
        b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Why do you think it is important for the students to understand how a text is organised ?

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14.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed various types of reading comprehension exercises which you may use or adapt in your classroom. We once again state that the level of difficulty of the text is not important, the exercise types can be adapted for different levels. Do try some of these activities - it will make reading comprehension a more interesting and enjoyable experience for your students.

14.9 KEY WORDS

Skimming	:	Reading the text quickly for main idea.
Scanning	:	Reading to locate specific information.
Textual cohension	:	The use of pronouns, conjunctions, or synonyms to establish relationship between sentences and paragraph.
Organisation of the text	:	The method of presentation of information in any passage.

14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Open ended

2. Open ended

3. Open ended

4. Open ended

5. Understanding is better if the organisation of the text is clear to the learner e.g. in an article with headings and sub-points, the students can arrange and try to follow the text in those terms. In a narrative or set of instructions the sequence/order in which things happened or are to be done is important. When the learner knows that these are instruction, he/she would look for the sequence in which to proceed. Similarly, when the students are handling a text written to compare and contrast two or more things, they would start arranging the points in their own minds or in an exercise as similarities and differences.

207

14.11   SUGGESTED READINGS

Alderson, C. & Urquhart, A.H. (ed.), (1984) : *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Longman, London.

Chall, J.S. (1983) : *Stages of Reading Development*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York.

208

UNIT 15   TEACHING VOCABULARY

Structure

15.1   INTRODUCTION

Few teachers will disagree that one of their basic goals of teaching a new language includes the growth of their pupils' vocabulary. They will also acknowledge that learning vocabulary is a rather more complex process than it might first appear. To know a word in a target language means the ability to :

- recognise it in its spoken and written forms,

- recall it whenever needed,

- pronounce it while speaking, in an acceptable manner,

- use it in the appropriate grammatical form,

- spell it correctly while writing and use it at the appropriate level of formality while speaking and writing.

As teachers, you must realise that the understanding of a word is **not** 'a once-and-for-all affair' and hence the emphasis on vocabulary development doesn't stop in the early years but continues throughout one's life.

15.2   OBJECTIVES

After you have read this unit, you will be able to :

- explain the importance of teaching/learning vocabulary in a second language;

- distinguish between active and passive vocabulary and content and structure words;

- justify the attempts for drawing basic vocabulary lists;

- enumerate some of the difficulties of the learners of English;

- use different methods of teaching vocabulary in your own classroom situations; and

- organize vocabulary games in your classroom.

15.3   DIFFERENT VOCABULARIES

Although there is a considerable agreement, there are still some differences in the way individuals interpret words. It is particularly important for teachers to appreciate the fact that the child's understanding of a word may not be the same as that of an adult. We acquire our understanding of word meaning gradually, building all the time upon our experience.

The core vocabulary of the first language is learned quite naturally at home. Neither the child nor his/her family have much to say about the words that must be learnt - these are given by the immediate environment and the culture. The child learns words for the persons with whom (s)/he lives, for the things (s)/he needs, for the actions (s)/he wants performed or stopped and (s)/he learns functions words that enable him/her to construct the sentences (s)/he utters. At school (s)/he learns to write the words (s)/he knows and expands the vocabulary more arbitrarily, following the school curriculum.

The vocabulary that a child acquires formally in school is quite different from that (s)/he acquires in the first language at home. Although the function words necessary to express sentences are usually the same as for the native speakers, the content words for actions, things, qualities – are different since the second language serves a different purpose from the first, e.g. the child does not usually need to address his/her family in the second language, (s)/he does not have to use it to fulfil basic needs and to communicate socially in it.

The vocabulary of a second language can thus be decided by the teacher, the textbook, or the school. But before we go on the discuss the selection of vocabulary for a second language we need to distinguish and differentiate between a few terms.

A distinction is often made between **structure** (function) words and **content** words as has been done in the earlier paragraph. The words bold in the following sentence are content words.

Mary went by **bus** to the **hospital.**

If someone tells you 'Mary', 'went', 'bus' or 'hospital' you will have some idea of what the person is talking about even though the speaker is not communicating in grammatical utterances. You are able to associate these words with real-life things, idea or emotions.In other words, all content words have referents and therefore have meaning (although it is difficult to indicate the referents of such abstract terms as **sympathy** or **mysticism**). All nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs formed from adjective (e.g. **beautifully**) are content words. The list of content words is open-ended; new nouns and verbs are often coined to name new things or processes and the same is true of adjectives and adverbs (words like **helipad** or **micro-wave** ovens are new words.)

Structure (function) words may be considered as part of the grammar of the language in that they are almost "empty" of meaning when considered in isolation. If we take words like **by, to, or the** from the above sentences they will have no meaning when taken separately, but in the sentence they have a grammatical function. Modal verbs (such as **may, can**), pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions and certain adverbs (e.g. **very, rather**) are known as **function** or structure words.

Another important distinction which is often made is between **passive (receptive)** and **active (productive)** vocabulary. Anyone who learns a new language is usually able to recognise many more words than (s)/he can produce. The words the learner can recognise but do not use are the items that make his/her **receptive** vocabulary. It is much more difficult to produce a word correctly as one has to pronounce or spell it in the right way, use it in the correct grammatical form, use it appropriately with the correct words, coming before and after it and so on. Any item which becomes part of a learner's active productive vocabulary must first of all be a part of his/her passive vocabulary and obviously a learner cannot use an item which (s)/he doesn't fully understand. In order to understand an item fully, a learner must read or hear it many times in realistic situations, and above all must understand its use. It is thus very important for you as a teacher to decide which words you want your students to **produce** correctly (i.e. use with the correct meaning, correct pronunciation and stress, spelling and in the appropriate context) and which words you want merely to be recognised and understood.

210

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;">

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
  b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Underline the content words and encircle the structure words in the following sentence.

    The Principal punished the boys of class XII when he found them beating a junior.

2. Explain how 'judge' is a different sort of word from 'to'.

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3. Your learners have come across the word compassion in their reading text today for the first time. Should you ask them to find out the meaning and write a sentence with that word? Why?

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15.4 SELECTION OF VOCABULARY ITEMS

Selection is the process of deciding which items to teach. Although **selection** is predetermined by the learning material which is used in the classroom, yet as a teacher you have to make a choice for the student's passive and active vocabulary.

The beginnings of vocabulary selection and control was made by Thorndike way back in 1921 when he counted the occurrence of words in $4\frac{1}{2}$ million words to establish the frequency of the commonest 5,000 words — the idea being that the more common words are useful and hence should be learnt before the rare ones.

A number of interesting and useful facts emerged from this and additional criteria of selection in addition to frequency were involved. It was observed that in frequency lists based on any material, structural words were extremely common and thus their importance in teaching English was well established. Another important fact was the emergence of about 1500-2000 words as a common core which enabled a learner to write or speak fluently and comfortably on non-specialised subjects.

Besides frequency some other criteria like availability, teachability and coverage were also considered while selecting an item. By **availability**, we mean that an item is particularly frequent in a particular situation. For example, the item **test-tube** is not generally frequent but is much used in science laboratories. We have already mentioned that content words like **'briefcase'** is much easier to teach than an abstract word like **'compassion'**. Thus the word **briefcase** is much easier to teach (more teachable) than **compassion**. Concrete words like 'door', 'window', 'flower', 'vase', can be shown or drawn but abstract words need a lot of explanations e.g., 'dishonesty', or virtue can only be taught to students through

211

examples of different situations. By **coverage** we mean the capacity of an item to take the place of another item. For example, 'immediately' can cover **at once, instantly, now, rightaway, without delay,** etc. Although the meaning may not be exactly the same as the other items, yet in most of the contexts it can be substituted without much loss of meaning.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2 On what criteria are vocabulary items selected for teaching a language ?

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15.5 DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING WORDS IN ENGLISH

In English lexical ambiguity can result from **homonymy** - when two words have identical sound and spelling associated with two unrelated meanings. Take, for example, the word **ground.** You know that the word **ground** can mean two separate things - i.e. **soil or land surface** as in 'How many acres of ground ?' It can also mean the past tense of **grind** as in '**The spices were ground**'. Homonymous relation like this can confuse many learners. Students are also faced with some problems when they come across words like flower/flour or tale/tail or vain/vane or one/won – words that sound the same (**homophone**) but the spellings are very different and so are the meanings. Another confusing situation arises when two or more words unrelated in meaning have indentical spellings but different pronunciation (**homograph**). Examples of these kinds of words are **lead** (the metal) and **lead** (a dog's leash); minute (60 seconds) and minute (very small).

Another kind of lexical ambiguity in caused by **polysemy.** This occurs when one word carries several different senses or related meaning e.g. **club** may mean a society of people who join together for a certain purpose; a heavy wooden stick; a specially shaped stick for striking a ball (as in golf) or a playing card.

Frozen idiomatic expressions can also be a hurdle in the way of a new learner. By frozen expressions we mean those idioms the meaning of which does not come from its different parts e.g. **to pull someone's leg** or **the apple of someone's eye** is not the sum total of the different words. Idioms have to be learnt as complete expressions and often cause particular problems.

Use of vocabulary at the wrong level of formality and the connotations of some words also pose practical problems for the learners. In learning a new language there is a tendency to use the more formal language in normal conversational situations or vice versa i.e. use a slang or colloquial expression inappropriately. Similarly the positive or negative connotations of some words might be found difficult by the learners. We all know how we applaud the **firmness, determination or resoluteness** of people we like whereas we deplore the **stubbornness, obstinacy and pigheadness** of those whom we don't like in exactly similar situations. Similarly the same person can be **fat** or **plump** to different persons. It takes a long time for the learners to catch such nuances of the language.

212

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Explain with examples the difference between homophones and homographs.

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6. How do homonymy and polysemy confuse students ?

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7. How many meanings can the following words have - table, tube, light, bank?

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8. Give examples of two idiomatic expressions which you think your students may find difficult to learn.

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15.6 VOCABULARY TEACHING AND EXPANSION — SOME SUGGESTIONS

In the past vocabulary was taught mostly be translation. It was also assumed that vocabulary teaching was nothing more than putting across the meaning either in the mother tongue or in the target language. But even a learner needs to be exposed to a new word a number of times in a variety of ways - like hearing the word in isolation and in a sentence, pronouncing the word, understanding the meaning and ultimately using it in a situation.

213

The meaning of a word can be grasped by the pupils when put across by several methods and techniques. Some are given below :

Definition : *Dusk* - The period of time when daylight fades and night sets in.

Enumeration : Dogs, cats, horses are all *domestic* animals.

Context : The class begins at 9.00 a.m. you should be here at 9.00 a.m. You should be punctual.

A very effective mehtod of teaching the meaning of new lexical items is to present them together with their referents either by **presenting the object**, the **drawing** or **photographs**, or by **demonstrating** or **miming** if possible. Sometimes giving a translation of a particular word (if available in mother tongue) can also be helpful. This technique is easily used while teaching context words.

The meaning of a word depends on the context or the real-life situation in which the word is used e.g. the word **foot** can be used with different meanings in different situations or contexts. Here are a few examples.

● I have hurt my **food**.

● I want a piece of wood - one **foot** broad and three feet long.

● I have enough money to **foot** the bill.

● A project is on **foot** to build a bridge over the railway crossing.

But as a teacher, it is important to exemplify the **same** meaning of a word in as many similar situations as possible. Students should also be encouraged to guess (deduce) the meaning of words from other words in a sentence or paragraph. For example students may not know the meaning of the word **scarecrow** but in the following conversation the meaning is well brought out.

● The other day Deepak and I were walking through the fields when Deepak jumped when he saw a scarecrow.

I laughed and said, "Are you a bird to be scared of a scarecrow ?"

"No." he said.

"Then why are you scared of a scarecrow ?"

'Oh, it looked like a real man, fully-dressed and with outstretched arms'.

"A scarecrow is like that, isn't it ?"

"Yes I know, still it made me jump".

(**Source** : *English Secondary Course Despatch 2*, National Open School.)

Every language has groups of lexical items which are very similar in meaning (**synonym**) but are never identical. For example **angry, annoyed, upset,** and **irritated** may be synonyms but each word differs slightly from the others. As a teacher, you have to pay attention to synonyms if you wish to encourage your students to choose appropriate words in different types of writing.

A new lexical item can often be effectively taught by contrasting it with another item which is opposite in meaning. However, the item 'antonym' is used to refer to pairs of meanings which are **gradable** e.g. hot/cold; tall/short. In other words gradables can be modified e.g. very short/short/ quite short/not very short/fairly tall/very tall or hot/quite hot/warm/fairly warm/ tepid or luke warm/not warm/quite cool/cool/quite cold/cold. On the other hand, nongradable opposites such as true/false; alive/dead; married/unmarried have no neutral ground between one term and the other.

A knowledge of the structure of words is one of the most effective ways of expanding vocabulary and helps in inferring word meaning. Teaching students to guess the meaning of words by explaining the prefix/suffix may be one strategy. We all know that prefixes can be categorised by their meaning e.g. prefixes indicate negation (**un-, nor-, in-, dis-, a-,**); indicate number (uni -, mono-,bi/di , tri-, multi/poly-) or distance (tele). Similarly suffixes

214

are related to a part of speech and are often used to change one part of speech into another. For example, the suffix - **ance** usually indicates that the word is a noun, whereas the suffix - **ant** usually indicates the word is an adjective.

Sometimes new words are formed by putting two or more words together. e.g. **armchair, headmaster** or **rainfall**. Sometimes words which have been joined together for a long time and are in the frequent use are written together **(headache)** whereas newer or less common compounds are hyphenated or printed as separate words. (e.g. tennis-player, crime reporter).

Dictionaries and Thesaurus can be used for a variety of purposes - to increase one's vocabulary, to track down a term that has been temporarily forgotten or just for fun.

A dictionary usually helps the learner with pronunciation, spelling, the context in which a word is found and used. Many dictionaries also describe idioms, special phrases, phrasal verbs and compound words - thus providing a lot of help. Some dictionaries also provide cross references – thereby allowing the user to look for synonyms and related words which might be useful. (e.g. carpet sweeper – a hand machine for sweeping carpets – compare **vacuum cleaner** – see picture at HOUSEHOLD.)

(Source : *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Longman.*)

A Thesaurus, on the other hand helps a learner with a near synonym and is specially helpful when one is groping for a word to use instead of using what has already been used. However, a Thesaurus should always be used alongwith a dictionary as the words given for an entry always differ in shades of meaning. For example, let us look at the following given for "walk" in the Collins the Thesaurus.

Walk : *advance, amble, hike, march, move, pace perambulate, promenade, saunter, step, stride, stroll, trek, trudge.*

Now consult a dictionary to find out how some of the words have different meanings.

Nevertheless, using a Therasurus definitely increases ones vocabulary.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

9. Mention the technique(s) would use to teach the following words in class VII.
beehive, envy, lazy, magnify.

10. Think and write as many words ajon can by adding prefixes and suffixes to the word USE.

11. Substitute the word **nice** in the following sentences.

a) It is a **nice** day. ....

b) My friend is very **nice**. ....

c) The soup is **nice**. I would like some more. ....

d) Monisha Koirala looked very **nice** in the film – 1942 A Love Story. ....

15.7 VOCABULARY GAMES

The basic aim of vocabulary games is to increase the students repertoire of words - perhaps by extending his/her vocabulary or perhaps by giving him/her practice in using what (s)/he already knows. Some examples of vocabulary games which can be easily arranged in classroom are given below :

215

Word chains : A word is written on the board. The next word has to begin with last letter of the preceding word.

Class — Soldier — Rucksack — Kangaroo, etc.

Associated Words : Words related to a particular situation are listed down.

garden — gardener — plants — seedlings — etc.

Semantic Mapping : This game is simple to implement and can be adapted to meet a variety of objectives. You can use the following procedure :

1. Choose a word or a topic.

2. Write the word on chalkboard/chartpaper.

3. Ask students what kind of information they would like to include.

4. Encourage students to think of and write as many related words as possible.

5. Write the words under appropriate heading.

6. Have a class discussion, using the map as a guide.

The following semantic map for **telephones** has been taken from Hayes (1991) : *Effective Strategies for Teaching-Reading.*

Parts	Things it does
Cord	Rings
Wires	Gives Busy Signal
Dial	Records Messages
Mouthpiece Telephones	Dials automatically
Receiver	Redials last number
Push Buttons	
Answering Machines	

Kids	Uses	Workers
Pay Phone	Talk to others	Telephone Operator
Cordless	Listen to others	Secretary
Car Phone	Get Phone numbers	Installer
Dial (Rotary)	Long distance calls	Repair man
Push Bottom		Pole man
Cellular		

The Simple and Compound Game : Choose a base word. Ask students to produce as many words as they can which contain the base word. e.g. if the word chosen is **self**, then the words **selfless, yourself, self made, self pity** and many more.

In "**Wordfinder**" the students are given a word and they have to make as many words as they can from the letters in it. How many words do you think you can yourself make from the word **grandmother** ? You can also allow your students to use their dictionaries to check possible answers.

Circle Games can be played in circles of 3 to 7 students. Student **A** says a letter. Player **B** thinks of a word beginning with A's letter and says its second letter. **C** tries to guess the

216

word and gives a third letter. The player/student who in saying a letter completes a word loses and drops out. If a player on his/her turn thinks that the combination offered so far, cannot make a word (s)/he may challenge the previous player. If there is no such word, that student has to drop out, otherwise the challenger is penalised.

A : d   A : c   (*word in mind)

B : o (*- dog)   B : h (- change)

C : l (- dole)   C : r (- christ)

D : l (- dollar)   D : o (- chromium)

E : That's a word   E : That's not possible :   What's your word ?

D : Loses a life   D : CHROMIUM

                                         E : Loses a life

These are a few exmples. There are many more games that you can choose from, depending on the level that you teach.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
        b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

12. Choose a topic/word. Describe how you'll organise a Semantic Map on the chosen word/topic with your students.

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13. Choose any vocabulary game of your choice. Explain to your students how it is played and how it would be scored.

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14. Are vocabulary games a waste of class-time ? Give reasons for your answer.

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217

15.8   LET US SUM UP

● Vocabulary teaching does not end in school classes; it continues well into our adult life.

● All of us have a much wider passive vocabulary and a person's active vocabulary increases constantly.

● Teaching of content and structure words is equally important.

● Words are selected for teaching on principles of frequency, availability, teachability and coverage.

● Homonymy, polysemy and connotations of words make learning of words in English difficult.

● Several strategies like demonstration, real objects, audio-visual aids, teaching of word structures, guessing the meaning of a new word from the context can be effectively used for teaching and expanding student's vocabulary.

● Dictionary and Thesaurus work can increase the students word power.

● Vocabulary games make learning/revising of known words enjoyable.

15.9   KEY WORDS

Core vocabulary	:	A range of about 800 words with which the learner can function.
Selection	:	Deciding on word lists to be taught to learners.
Teachability	:	How easily a word can be taught. (for e.g. the word camera can be taught easily than the word religion.)
Availability	:	The frequency of a word in a particular situation.
Coverage	:	The quality of a word to substitute other words and phrases.
Gradable opposites	:	Some words can be graded as if in a continuum e.g.

hot   warm   tepid   lukewarm   cold

Non-gradable opposites	:	The words are exact opposites - there is no word in between e.g. alive - dead (there is no word which can come between these two words).
Active-passive vocabulary	:	Active vocabulary refers to the words used, while passive vocabulary refers to words that are understood.
Content words-structure words	:	Contents words are words which refer to a thing, quality, state or action and which have meaning when words are used alone. Content words are mainly nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Structure words are words which have little meaning on their own, but which show grammatical relationships in and between sentences. Conjunctions, prepositions, articles are structure or function words.
Homographs	:	Words which are written in the same way but which are pronounced differently and which may have different meanings. Exmaples : **Lead** is a metal. Does this road **lead** to the city.
Homonyms	:	Words which are written in the same way and sound

218

alike but which have different meanings. Examples : **Lie** down. Don't **lie**, tell the truth.

Homophones	:	Words which sound alike but are written differently and often have different meanings. Example : **No and know.**
Polysemy	:	Refers to a single word with more than one meaning. Example : **Foot** of the stairs. I've hurt my **foot.**

15.10   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.   Content words - Principal, punished, boys, class XII, found, beating, junior.

   Structure words - the, when, he, them, a.

2.   **Judge** is a content word and has a meaning of its own even in isolation, whereas the word to which is a structure word would be important in indicating meaning in a particular sentence.

3.   One shouldn't ask students to make their own sentence with a word they have come across for the first time, because the incubation period in learning new words is quite long and is never mastered in the first time.

4.   On principles of frequency, availability, teachability and coverage.

5.   'Homo' means similar, 'phone' means sound and 'graph' means writing. So homophones are words with similar pronunciation/sound (like vale/veil; sun/son) but with different spelling and different meanings. Homographs are words with similar spellings but different pronunciation and meaning e.g. Tie a **bow. Bow** before a queen. **Wind** the watch. The **wind** is blowing hard.

6.   Homonyms include both homophones and homographs which are found difficult by new learners. Similarly, polysemy - the different meaning of the same words in different contexts can be very confusing for students. (e.g. the word 'head' or 'mouth' have different meanings in different contexts.)

7.   Open ended (in case of difficulty consult a dictionary).

8.   Open ended.

9.   · ● beehive   -   pictures can be shown, a beehive can be drawn on the board; a small portion of a hive can be brought to the class and shown; students can be taken to see a beehive if there is one in the nearby trees.

   ● envy   -   explanation is situation; synonyms.

   ● lazy   -   explanation in situation; synonyms, opposites.

   ● magnify   -   demonstrate with a magnifying glass; draw on the board; show pictures of the same object in 2 sizes.

10.   Open ended. Some exmaples are given below :

   use   -   useful, usefulness, usefully

      -   useless, uselessness

      -   usable

      -   used, unused, misused, disuse

      -   user, using

11.   Open ended : Some examples are given below :

   -   lovely, bright, sunny day

   -   pleasant, agreeable, good, amiable, friend

- : delicious, mouthwatering soup

- : charming, appealing, captivating, bewitching

12. Open ended.

13. Open ended.

14. No. It makes learning/revising of new words enjoyable. The last few minutes of a class can be used for small games which make language learning more meaningful.

15.11   SUGGESTED READINGS

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Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University

Block

4

Teaching , Writing and Grammar

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. R.N. Mehrotra
Former Head and Dean
Department of Education (CIE)
University of Delhi, Delhi

Prof. P.R. Nair
Former Dean
University of Mysore, Mysore

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Prof. M.B. Menon
IGNOU
New Delhi

Prof. L.C. Singh
Formerly Consultant
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. M.C. Sharma
Programme Coordinator, B.Ed,
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Sohanvir S. Chaudhary
Programme Coordinator-Practicals
(Till October, 1997)
IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE TEAM

Course Contribution
Prof. V. Saraswathi
University of Madras
Chennai

Ms. Gopa Biswas
National Open School
New Delhi

Prof. P.N. Ramani
Pondicherry University
Pondicherry

Content Editing
Prof. V.K. Sabharwal
University of Delhi, Delhi

Ms. Gopa Biswas
National Open School
New Delhi

Dr. Anju Sahgal Gupta
IGNOU
New Delhi

Language Editing
Ms. Poonam Bhushan
IGNOU, New Delhi

Dr. Anju Sahgal Gupta
IGNOU, New Delhi

Course Coordinator
Ms. Poonam Bhushan
IGNOU
New Delhi

This Programme has been developed in collaboration with the School of Humanities.

PRODUCTION

Pro V.S. Prasad
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COURSE ES-344 TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Block 1   Instructional Planning in Teaching of English

Block 2   Listening Comprehension and Speaking

Block 3   Reading Comprehension

Block 4   Teaching, Writing and Grammar

BLOCK 4 TEACHING WRITING AND GRAMMAR

Block Introduction

The Block entitled 'Teaching Writing and Grammar' begins with a discussion on the writing process emphasising on the process rather than the end-product. Here the importance of undergoing the process of writing - starting with an overall plan, thinking about what is to be said to whom, and how is crucial.

The second Unit in the Block discusses the different types of writing. The focus is more on non-traditional types of writing - diarise from-filling, information transfer etc. as well as traditional types like paragraphs, essays and letters.

Beginning with the view that language is a 'skill' rather than knowledge which means the more you speak the more fluent you become, Unit 18 focusses on the four linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing and attempts to define study skills.

The thrust the Unit 19 is to teach grammar covertly by i) making grammar learning enjoyable and ii) making grammar help learners to read and write better. Unit 18 which is on assessing writing ability emphasise on both the process of writing and the end-product (the written material) nad the role of the teacher in taking care of both these aspects. It looks at the approaches and the methods to assesd both these aspects of writing. It draws the teachers attention to the aspects that when the teacher is directing the learners attention to writing as a process her aim is to provide constructive feedback (as opposed to awarding marks/grades). On the other hand when she is assessing writing as an end-product she is more concerned with finding out how well the learners have mastered the wried skills of writing. On such occasions she has to award marks/grades to the students writing and tell them where they stand and what they have achieved.

The last Unit namely 'Testing Grammar and Usage' begins with a discussion on the shift of thrust in teaching and testing of grammar (which is presently on the teaching of language and communication) and links it with changes in 'how' to test grammatical competence.

In further discusses at length discrete and integrated tests for their appropriateness to situations and finds items like completion, location and correction of errors or transformation exercises common to both kinds of tasks.

UNIT 16 THE WRITING PROCESS

Structures

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus in language teaching, as you must be aware, has now shifted from 'product' to 'process'. What does this mean? How does 'process' differ from 'product'? What are the implications of this difference for classroom teaching? These are some of the questions we would have answered by the end of this unit.

When we look at writing as a 'product' we are mainly interested in learning outcomes — that is, we identify what the students have to produce, e.g. grammatical accuracy, mechanics of writing, proper format, good organization, etc.

Recent research on writing has provided us with an important insight: good writers go through certain processes which lead to successful pieces of written work. "They start off with an overall plan in their heads. They think about what they want to say and who they are writing for. They then draft out sections of the writing, and as they work on them, they are constantly reviewing, revising, and editing their work". (Hedge, 1988 p 9). It is considered useful to enable our learners to engage in this 'process' rather than worry about the 'product'. For, they should learn **how** to go about the process of writing, rather than **what** the end product should be. If the process is proper, the product will take care of itself.

16.2   OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you will be introduced to:

● the various facets of the **process** of writing;

● the organisation of writing;

● the categorisation of writing tasks according to purposes e.g. describing, narrating, reporting and arguing; and

● the need for linking writing tasks with the language skills.

16.3   THE WRITING PROCESS : SALIENT FEATURES

"Writing is a creative process because it is a process of reaching out for one's thoughts and discovering them. Writing, as such, is a process of meaning making" (Third Year Student, 1994, National University of Singapore).

The following diagram attempts to capture the major phases of the writing process :

	Writing Process	
Planning	Translating	Reviewing
:	:	:
	Monitoring	
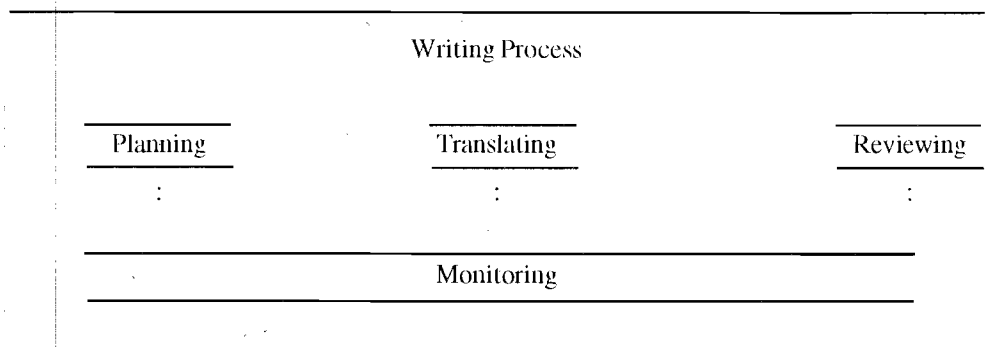
16.3.1   Planning

The planning stage is also known as the pre-writing stage. Before putting pen to paper, good writers try to answer two basic questions: **Why** am I writing this? **Who** is supposed to read this? In other words, they have a clear sense of **the purpose** and **the audience.** These two, together, constitute the **writing context.**

The plan, however, need not be strictly adhered to. As we keep writing, our plan keeps changing. Writing is in fact a messy process as represented by Frank Smith (1982) is his book *Writing and the Writer* (London : Heinemann).

Let us look at the practice of composition in the schools. Think of the usual topics we ask children to write on "Summer Holidays", "Hobbies", "My favourite Book", etc. Children are most reluctant to write on such topics which do not motivate them. Further they are not able to conceive of an audience and purpose for the writing task. As far as they are concerned, they are writing for the teacher, who is all knowing and whose only intention in looking at their work is to assess them and fill their pages with red marks. Instead, if our tasks simulate an interesting real-life context, children will be willing to write. For example

e.g. 1)   Imagine that your best friend has been missing since yesterday. Write a short but good description of him, to be telecast on "Persons Missing".

2)   You have recently seen a film which was most boring. Write a letter to your sister in Bombay, advising her not to see the film. Say why you didn't like the film.

In real life, writing normally arises out of a genuine need to communicate something to somebody but in the classroom that need has to be created in such a way that students do not have tohack their brains for something to write but can concentrate on the actual writing itself.

16.3.2   Translating

Translating here means, putting your thoughts into appropriate language — in other words, finding the right words and sentences for your thoughts. At this stage we make the first draft.

This forms a crucial and difficult stage for learners who do not have the required linguistic competence. Though they may have the ideas, they do not have the vocabulary. They tend to repeat the same words; they commit a number of grammatical mistakes also. It may, perhaps, be worthwhile trying group composition initially as it would enable peer learning.

16.3.3 Reviewing/Editing

This may be regarded as the post-writing stage, though, in reality there is a great deal of overlap between this and the previous stage. Many good writers keep reviewing their work as they write. Between the first draft and editing there is much re-thinking and re-organization. The writer adopts a reader's perspective here and assesses whether the reader would be able to follow his/her ideas. Many poor students do not edit their writing as they assume that what is clear to them must be clear to others! Others are lazy or do not know how to review their own work.

16.3.4 Monitoring

As the diagram shows (sec. 16.3), the process of monitoring is in operation right through the three stages of composition. As we plan, we monitor our ideas; while drafting, we monitor the mechanics, including punctuation, vocabulary and grammar. Editing and reviewing are also forms of monitoring.

We shall now look at three different tasks in writing which help to develop the skills of planning, writing and reviewing respectively.

Task 1 : Planning : Making Mind Maps

The task given is a description of a festival — Diwali. Students jot down ideas in a notebook. Then the teacher elicits their ideas and puts them down as a mind map on the blackboard.

Origin	Monsoon rains Oct.- Nov.
Religious Festival	Season - Cool
Significance today	
	New clothes
DIWALI	crackers, fireworks
Visit friends	
Personal feelings	Sweets

(Adapted from Hedge, T., 1988, p 30).

They then write a composition based on the mind map.

Task 2 : Writing : Writing a Newscast

Supply the students with a number of cuttings from today's newspaper (about 10) — they may be newspaper headlines, news in brief or newspaper articles. The students are first asked to listen to a recorded newscast. Then using the cuttings, they are asked to prepare a newscast to last for 5 minutes. They may work in groups.

Task 3 : Reviewing : Reformulating

On the first day the students write the first draft and hand it over to the teacher. The teacher edits/reviews one of the pieces of composition. (S)he then makes photocopies of the 'original' and reformulated versions and distributes them to all the students the next day. The class compares them, looks for changes and discusses the reasons for them. Finally they go through their draft essays and revise them to produce a final draft.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of unit.

1. Collect a least three definitions of 'Writing'. What is the common feature among these? Choose what appeals to you, add your own ideas and arrive at your own definition of writing.

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ACTIVITY

1. Observe the composition classes of your colleagues. What are the different stages you find ? Do they differ from the stages described in this unit ?

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2. Design one task each for the planning, writing and reviewing stages.

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16.4   TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

Teachers who seek to systematically develop the writing skills of their students do not make written work a random affair slotted into the occasional slack period or a homework. Instead, they choose a variety of written tasks that would be meaningful and motivating for the class and then teach the skills that are required for those varieties.

Anita Pincas enumerates (in Teaching English Writing, 1982, Macmillans.) the nine areas in which a writer needs some competence besides the ability to write correctly and choose appropriate words. These are :

1.   Communication between people ⎫
2.   Suiting a specific subject   ⎬   Communication
3.   Presenting ideas   ⎭

4.   Constructing Sentences   ⎫
5.   Using Paragraphs   ⎬   Composition
6.   Using Linking Devices (cohesion) ⎭

7.   Writing in four major styles
     (narrative, descriptive, expository, argumentative) ⎫
                                                           ⎬   Style
8.   Achieving the desired degree of formality
9.   Creating the necessary emotive tone   ⎭

Because each piece of writing has a different purpose. Students need to practice the writing skills for a variety of purposes, e.g., business letters, frequently make requests, offer to help or apologise while the aim of advertising is largely to persuade. Similarly, although most writing consists of a mixture of two or more of the four major styles, it is better to teach them separately. Some of these organisational patterns and styles of writing are discussed in the following sections.

16.5 THE ORGANISATION

Generally, the essay consists of three types of paragraphs : introductory, supporting and concluding.

16.5.1 Introduction

The opening paragraph introduces us to the subject matter or topic and the author's attitude to the subject matter. The purpose of the introductory paragraph is to attract the reader's attention and motivate him/her to read on. The introductory paragraph could be a definition, a question, a proverb, an anecdote, an example, a universal truth, etc. Look at the following introductions.

1. **Definition**

   One of the finest definitions for education comes from Swami Vivekananda : "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man". And religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man".

2. **Question**

   Why don't learners learn what teachers teach? This is a question that worries every committed teacher. Who is to be blamed — the teacher? Or the student? Or both?

3. **Proverb**

   A rolling stone gathers no moss. A man who has no fixed goal, but keeps shifting from one thing to another, never achieves anything significant in life.

4. **Anecdote**

   Last week I was coming out of a lift when a young man said to the lift operator, "Seventh Floor". The lift operator said "Sorry, this won't go". The young man was furious. "What do you mean?" he roared. The liftman answered calmly, "You must say "Please" if you want me to take you up!"

16.5.2 Supporting Paragraph (The Body)

The supporting paragraphs, as the name suggests, 'support' the main theme in various ways. The major types of organisation of the body of an essay could be **chronological, spatial** or **classificatory**. In chronological ordering, events are narrated in a sequence. This is the most suitable order for stories, biographies and narrative. 'Spatial' is used to refer to things relating to size, area or position, rather than time. For instance, if one is writing on the Taj Mahal, s/he would use the 'spatial' supporting paragraph which would describe the location, the size, the dimensions, etc. of the Taj. In 'classificatory' organisation, categories of items, events, etc. are presented. For example, while describing the history of the English language, we present a classification of the various languages that have descended from the Indo-European parent language.

16.5.3 Concluding Paragraph

The concluding paragraph attempts to summarise the essay and provide an impressive conclusion. Like the introduction, the conclusion could also be of various types. It may simply restate the contents of the introductory paragraph. It may state limitations and constraints. It may use a proverb, an anecdote or a rhetorical question.

229

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

2. Look at Introductions/Conclusions of essays. Identify two ways of beginning/ending an essay not discussed above.

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3. Write an attractive introduction and conclusion for an essay on one of the following topics :

a) The India of My Dreams

b) The Computer Age

c) Democracy

d) Secularism

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16.6 DIFFERENT METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE BODY

16.6.1 Description

Look at the following contexts :

a) You have won a return ticket to Srinagar in the AIR INDIA QUIZ Contest. You have been asked to write a description of Srinagar to be published in the AIR INDIA inflight magazine.

b) You have gone on an educational tour of the South Indian temples as a part of your History Project. On your return, you are asked to present a detailed description of the temples.

c) One of your friends has applied for a job and asks you to give him/her a testimonial.

In the above contexts, you are asked to describe a place or person. In order to write a good description, we must follow certain guidelines. Try to observe carefully what you're going to describe. Then collect as many details as possible. The more detailed your description, the better it would be. Then decide on your 'focus'. This will help you to exclude irrelevant details. An important rule for descriptions is "show your readers don't just tell them". In other words, give life and human interest to your descriptions. In fact, the boundaries of description and narration are fluid. A description can tell a story, and a story can include descriptions.

16.6.2 Narration

We use narrative writing when we need to talk about something that has happened within a definite time span. Narrative writing relates an event, usually in simple chronological order. In other words, it tells a story. Haeker & Renshaw (1989:175) present the following grounds rules for narrative writing:

1. Put readers on the scene immediately

2. Select details for a specific effect

3. Keep the story moving.

The use of dialogues and the avoidance of irrelevant details adds to the tempo of the narrative.

We could devise different types of tasks on narration : e.g

a) Narrating events in order: We can present a jumbled up story and ask learners to put it in the right order.

b) Narrating a story from different points of view—that is, as told by different characters.

c) Using flashback techniques, etc.

16.6.3 Reporting

A report usually presents information in a logical, orderly and precise manner. The following are some occasions when you have to write a report.

a) There has been a burglary in your house. You report this to the insurance company to claim compensation.

b) As an NCC Junior Officer you have to present to your Senior Officer a detailed report on the proceedings on the NCC day.

c) Your little sister has a heart problem. You are seeking the advice of a famous American Cardiologist. Enclose a report on her condition and the treatment she has been receiving so far.

What are the characteristics of a good report?

a) Completeness

   The purpose of a report is to inform your reader about things s/he doesn't know. Hence make sure you include all necessary details. At the same time, make sure you avoid unnecessary details.

b) Accuracy

   The report should not include any false information.

c) Clarity

   The report should be clear enough for readers to understand, and take action if necessary. Simple language contributes to clarity. Jargon should be avoided.

16.6.4 Arguing

Consider the following contexts :

a) There is a proposal to demolish an ancient 200 year old building in your city. Write a note of protest.

b) The Government proposes to increase the price of milk by Rs. 2/- per litre. Write a letter of protest to the Commissioner, Dairy Development Project.

   In each of the above you have to argue your case, as your reader needs to be convinced of your point of view.

   An argument will be effective if you follow these guidelines :

   i) Decide on the precise issues to address

   ii) Select evidence to support your arguments

   iii) Anticipate the arguments of the other side

   iv) Avoid fallacies, sweeping statements, emotional language, aruing in a circle, etc.

231

ACTIVITY

4. Write why the following description is not very effective:

    My favourite city is Madras. I was born and brought up there. I have many friends there. It is wonderful city. I feel happy whenever I return to Madras after a long trip. Madras is the capital of Tamil Nadu. It lies on the shores of the Marina beach.

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5. Think of at least 5 interesting topics on which you could ask your students to write a narrative, e.g. a car race; a tennis match (last 5 minutes); a cyclonic storm.

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6. Prepare a lesson plan for teaching your students a develop the skill of argument in writing. Your plan may relate to one of the following topics : Capital punishment; Computerisation; Adult Franchise.

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7. Prepare a model report on any one of the following topics. Remember the salient features of a good report. (e.g. completeness, clarity and accuracy.)

    Repairing a bicycle; Arranging flowers; Preparing a cup of coffee.

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232

16.7 TECHNIQUES IN STRUCTURING PARAGRAPHS

Every paragraph has a main idea, which is usually stated in a topic sentence. This idea needs to be supported and developed in the rest of the paragraph. The structuring of the Paragraph may be of different types, depending upon the writer's purpose. In this section, we shall look at some of the major techniques for structuring paragraphs.

16.7.1 Examples

In order to convince the reader of the truth of the topic sentence, a writer may provide a number of examples.

E.g. the history of India's freedom struggle is filled with great people who were brave and sacrificed their lives for the sake of their country. Look at Jhansi Ki Rani who died fighting for India. The South produced the famous Veerapandiya Kattabomman, who refused to bow down to the British. More recently, we have had Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and countless others.

16.7.2 Cause and Effect

Here the topic sentence may state the result, while the rest of the paragraph may list the cause or vice-versa.

E.g. Television is beginning to be regarded as the worst evil of modern life. Children become addicted to the TV and do poorly in their studies. Housewives get so lost in TV programmes that they are not even aware of burglars entering the house and stealing. Psychologists say that the TV turns people into idiots. Doctors feel that constant TV watching affects the eyes.

16.7.3 Definition

Very often we have to define concepts in a paragraph. E.g. What is Democracy? It is the government of people, by the people and for the people. In other words, people rule themselves; they elect their own representatives and finally they work for each other's welfare. This is radically different from monarchy, where one person rules all the people, as s/he pleases.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

        b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4. Think of linking words usually found in paragraphs of different types.

    e.g. cause/effect

    so, thus, therefore, consequently.

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5. Have you come across any other types of paragraph structuring?

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233

16.8 USING COHESIVE DEVICES IN WRITING

A writer has to make the relationships between sentences and paragraphs clear to the reader. This is usually done with the help of "Cohesive devices" or connecting words, or linking words or links.

The six ways to establish links are : reference, conjunction, substitution, lexical relationships, ellipsis and patterning. In this section we shall look at them very briefly.

16.8.1 Reference

Some words do not have any meaning of their own, but take their meaning from some other item they refer to.

1. **Rita** is planning to put up an exhibition. **She** has painted nearly forty landscapes.

2. I want **to leave very early tomorrow. This** is my plan.

16.8.2 Conjunction

Conjunctions like **and, yet, so, then, but, furthermore, inspite of, as a result** etc. connect sentences.

16.8.3 Substitution

A substitute word is used to avoid repetition.

1. It has baked a **chocolate cake** for the picnic. I too have baked **some.** (some more chocolate cakes).

2. Mridula believes **in being honest,** Anita does so too.

16.8.4 Lexical Relationships

Use of synonyms or general words also unify a piece of writing because of similarity in meanings. e.g.

a) You have to bring your own **tools.** You will need **a hammer, some nails and a saw.**

b) I saw **a boy** climbing the tree. The **lad** was not more than eight years old.

16.8.5 Ellipsis

Ellipsis means the ommission of words and phrases without any loss of meaning. e.g. **It didn't rain** last week. It **might** today. (night rain).

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

6. The Dhaba Doli Deer Park in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan spreads over an area of 400 km. Twenty six villages, mostly inhabited by the vishnois, come within **this** protected area. The vishnois are well known for their unselfish and sincere protection of trees and wildlife. **They** strongly believe that 'a man may die but a deer should not'. Hence they would rather risk their own lives to protect a deer than let one be killed by merciless poachess or hunters. **This** is one of the reasons why one can see needs of black buck in and around the villages, fields and highways of Bikaner and Jodhpur.

Explain what the bold words refer to.

a) This — ....

b) They — ....

c) This — ....

16.9 LET US SUM UP

- While teaching writing, it is better to focus on the 'process' rather than the product.

- The major phases of the writing process are : Planning, Translating, Reviewing and Monitoring.

- In the planning stage, the writing context, viz. audience and purpose, are envisaged.

- In the translating stage, ideas are 'translated' into appropriate language.

- The reviewing stage involves editing and reformulating.

- Monitoring is operative in the three stages of writing.

- Students need to practice different writing skills in a variety of tasks.

- A piece of writing usually has introductory, supportive and concluding paragraphs.

- The four major types of development of the body of a piece of writing are : describing, narrating, reporting and arguing.

- The major techniques in structuring paragraphs are : exemplification; comparison and contrast; cause and effect; definition.

- The six ways to establish links are — reference, conjunction, substitution, lexical relationships, ellipsis and patterning.

16.10 KEY WORDS

Monitoring : The process of checking and assessing as we are engaged in planning, translating and reviewing.

Process : 'How' we write.

Product : 'What' is the outcome of the writing activity.

Planning : The first stage of writing, when we collect our thoughts and think of an audience and purpose for writing.

Reviewing : The last stage of writing where we edit, reformulate and refine what is written.

Translating : The stage when we 'translate' our abstract thoughts into concrete words.

16.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Three definitions of writing could be:

   i) Writing is a process of problem-solving, a way of processing information.

   ii) Writing is a transcription of the process of composing ideas. It is not a product of thought but its actualization and dramatisation.

   iii) Writing is a thinking process.

2. Two ways of ending/beginning an essay could be with statistics, joke.

3. Open-ended.

4. Open-ended.

5. Open-ended.

6. a) This — The Dhaba Doli Deer Park.

   b) They — The Vishonis.

   c) This — The risking of lives by the vishnois for the protection of deer.

235

16.12   SUGGESTED READINGS

Radhakrishnan Pillai, Rajeevan K. & Bhaskaran Nair T., (1990) : *Written English for You*, Emerald, Madras.

Saraswathi V., (1979) : *Organised Writing*, Orient Longman, Madras.

Haekar D. & Renshaw R., (1989) : *Writing with a Voice*, Scott, Coresman and Company, Illinois.

Hedge T., (1988) : *Writing*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, ELBS.

Raines, Ann (1983) : *Techniques in Teaching Writing*, Oxford University, New York.

Pincas, Anita (1982) : *Teaching English Writing*, Macmillan, London.

UNIT 17   DIFFERENT TYPES OF WRITING

Structure

17.1   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we considered the process of writing in general. Now we shall look at specific types of writing, which we are required to teach at school. Research in writing is quite advanced today; interesting materials on teaching composition are being published almost every other day. With proper guidance, you could use them in your classes. They are sure to make the classes lively and useful.

In the days when I was a school kid, composition classes were dreary. All that we were asked to write were essays, precis and paraphrase of poems. Of course we failed to find them useful in our day-to-day life. What we learnt in the classroom had little relevance to the world outside. Further our teachers believed in the dictum, "the more you write, the better you will write". There was little guidance; infact no one took composition seriously. Teachers would laugh at the idea of "teaching" composition. After all, how could one teach writing? One had to learn to write on ones own. But today the scenario has changed drastically. ELT experts today believe that writing **can** be taught and that writing **should** be taught.

In this unit, we shall look at non-traditional types of writing — diaries, form-filling, information transfer, etc. as well as traditional types like paragraphs, essays and letters. We shall first discuss the salient features, if any, of these types of writing and then present a few samples of new types of tasks. You could try these tasks in your classes. Later you could design similar tasks on your own. You could also use/adapt tasks from the reference material noted at the end of this unit. But before we do that we would like to discuss how you can help your students to write accurately and effectively.

17.2   OBJECTIVES

With the help of this unit, you will be able to :

●   become familiar with the different types of writing that would be useful for learners;

●   be able to distinguish the salient features of each of these types of writing;

●   be able to design your own tasks to teach these types of writing.

17.3 TEACHING WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM

The two most important problems which students face when asked to write something are **what** to write and **how** to present one's thoughts. In other words, the **ideas** that can be used in a piece of writing and the problems of **organising** such ideas logically and coherently, using appropriate linking devices. There are also the problems of choosing the most appropriate style and achieving the desired degree of formality. As teachers, we can overcome these problems with a two-pronged strategy. First, we can use **controlled** and **guided** writing tasks before proceeding to **free** writing. Second we can use **collaborative** writing techniques in the classroom. Both these techniques are discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

In a controlled writing task-both the content and the expression are provided. A student is therefore neither at a loss for ideas or for the words, he/she needs to use. The chances of making too many errors are thus minimised and the student gets to practise certain composition skills systematically and gradually. For example, your students might have read a text or writen a paragraph on a festival (using say the mind map as given in Unit 16 of this Block). Now ask your students to use the same writing plan to write on any other festival like Rakhi/ Christmas/Id. Instruct your students not only to use the same organisational pattern but also the same sentence structures as far as they can.

Other examples of controlled writing will be filling in blanks of a small passage (e.g. a letter or paragraph) where only one answer is possible.

From totally controlled writing, your students can go to **guided** writing where you may provide a series of hints through questions - which each student would respond to separately e.g. Write a description of a party you recently attended. The following questions will help you :

1. Who invited you to the party? When?

2. What was the occasion? Who did you go with?

3. Who all did you meet?

4. What did you do later? What did you eat? What was the meal like?

5. What happened later.

Another example of a guided writing task can be to give the beginning and ending of a story. Ask your students to write the middle.

Now let us look at this example of a writing task which focusses on interpreting data and arriving at generalisations. You have a controlled task if you restrict yourself to Column C and you have a guided task if you include Column D also.

A	B	C	D
How students relax over the weekend		Students prefer watching T.V. and other readymade entertainment forms to making an effort and taxing their brains.	Topic Sentence: Different people use different ways of relaxing. While readymade .... whereas...........On the one hand,
Reading	6%		
Visiting friends	10%		....,
Hobby	2%	Only 2% indulge in .... like gardening, stamp collection etc.	on the other hand
T.V.	52%		....
Theatre, Cinema Concerts	4%		
Outdoor games	4%		
Video games	12%		

(Adapted from Pincas, A., 1982; Page no. 19.)

In free writing students are presented with a topic and are then free to write as they please. No one denies that the ability to write freely and independently is the goal of writing lessons. But unfortunately this produces many errors (different errors in every composition) which are frustrating to both the teacher and the student. In the communicative approach, however, the teacher should be more interested in finding out if the student has achieved a reasonable communicative competence and therefore concentrate only on those errors that hinder communication in a set writing task.

Writing in the classroom is no longer considered an individual activity to be attempted alone from the beginning to the end. Particularly in the middle and secondary levels, teachers can and should allow students to put their ideas together and work together in pairs, small group or a team . In fact, the idea that many students can pool in the content, expressions, editing skills and self correction strategies to produce a final piece of writing is becoming acceptable. In many of the learning materials produced for middle and secondary classes, such techniques of collaborative writing has been used. One example is given below:

1.   Discuss in groups of four the following topic - 'It is cruel to keep animals in a zoo'.

2.   Write down the points that you have got under two columns - **For** and **Against**.

3.   Write an article for your class magazine using the points you have discussed.

4.   Try and correct your own article before you read it out before the class.

Hence with a little time–planning and management, teachers can use collaborative writing techniques for collection of ideas, organising ideas, development of first draft, editing of first draft and revising and finalising the draft. Such group activities would definitely help students to write effectively and accurately.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1.   Why do students need controlled and guided writing tasks before they attempt any free writing?

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2.   Why are collaborative writing techniques becoming acceptable in classroom situations?

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17.4   DIFFERENT TYPES OF WRITING

17.4.1   Filling in Forms

On several occasions we need to fill in forms for different purposes e.g. application forms, forms for reservation on trains, money-order forms, cheques, etc. Many people feel intimidated by forms and always require someone else's help to fill them in. Most often our forms are rejected if they are not filled in properly. This can be regarded as one of the most basic writing skills — where vocabulary is involved and accuracy is important.

You may wonder if children at school need this skill. Yes, they do. And if we train them right from standard I, they will acquire a lot of confidence. We shall now look at some very simple tasks requiring this skill.

Task 1 : Here's a label you want to fix on your history notebook. Fill it in.

Name :

Class :

School :

Subject :

Now look at the label of a girl in R.K. Primary School :

Name : Supriya Sridhar

Class : III-B

School : R.K. Primary School

Subject : History

Supriya is a small girl. Her father's name is Sridhar. She studies in Class III-B in R.K. Primary School. History is one of her subjects.

Now, look at the label on your neighbour's notebook, and write four sentences about him.

Task 2 : Rakesh Sinha is 12 years old. He was born on 10th May 1983. His father Ramesh Sinha is a doctor. They live at No.10, Meghraj Sethi Marg, Bombay. Rakesh studies in Adarsh Vidyashram. He plays cricket and chess. His hobbies include painting and stamp collection. Rakesh wants to join the local children's club. Could you help him to fill in the application form below?

The Andheri Children's Club

1. Name   :
2. Age   :
3. Date of Birth   :
4. Father's Name   :
5. Father's Occupation   :
6. Address   :
7. Name of School   :
8. Sports   :
9. Hobbies   :

Task 3 : John Smith received the following telegram on his birthday. Write three sentences about it.

To
JOHN SMITH,
7, Kasturba Marg,
New Delhi 110 028

Message : HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Sender : Ahmed Khan
20, Jawaharlal Nehru Road,
Madras 600 017.

17.4.2 Information Transfer

What do we mean by "information transfer"? To put it simply, it means, transferring information from one form to another e.g. writing a paragraph based on a graph; or drawing a table based on given data. In almost every walk of life we have to use this skill. While the change of non-verbal communication like tables and charts, into verbal communication (i.e. a paragraph or a report) develops composition skills, the reverse process enables learners to develop their comprehension skills. This is an important study skill which would be useful to children in their study of subjects like Mathematics, Science, History, etc. In fact, form-filling is also a type of information transfer.

240

Task 1 : Read the following description of Deepika's school.

I study in Gandhi Vidyalaya. In front of my school there is a big park. The corporation playground is behind my school. To the left of my school is the famous super-market 'Kotagiri's. St. Joseph's Church is to the right of my school.

Now here is a sketch of the school :

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                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Play Ground  │
                    └──────────────┘
                           ▲
                           │
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│ St. Joseph's │    │    Gandhi    │    │   Kotagiri   │
│    Church    │    │   Vidyalaya  │    │ Super Market │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
                           │
                           ▼
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │     Park     │
                    └──────────────┘
```
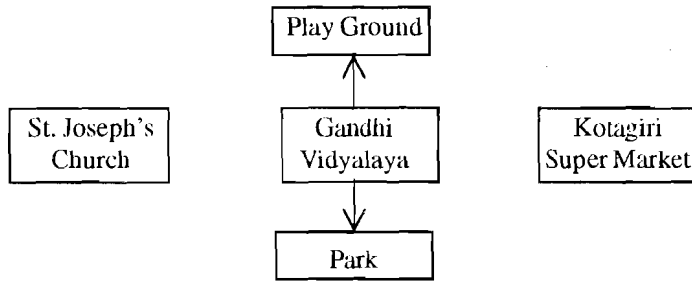
Now, look at the plan around Shreesh Chandhury's house and write a paragraph on it.

```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Lake Puzhal  │
                    └──────────────┘

┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐
│   Hospital   │    │    House     │    │ Vegetable market │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────────┘

                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Central Railway  │
                    │     Station      │
                    └──────────────────┘
```
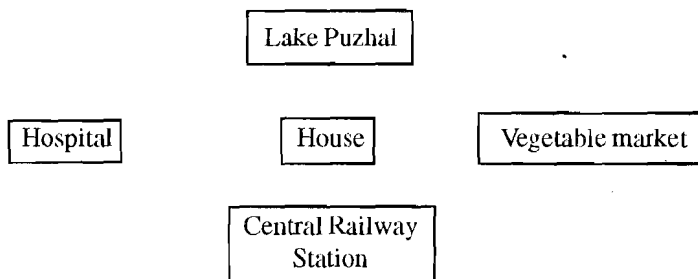
Task 2 : Look at the boxes below and describe how to make a cup of coffee :

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┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│ Boil one cup │   │   Add    │   │   Add    │   │  Add sugar   │
│    water     │   │  coffee  │   │  milk    │   │   to taste   │
└──────────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────────┘
```

Task 3 : Study the following menu card from "Hotel Dwaraka".

Idli	-	3.00 Rupees
Rava Dosa	-	6.00 Rupees
Masala Dosa	-	7.00 Rupees
Poori Potato	-	5.00 Rupees
Pongal	-	4.00 Rupees
Samosa	-	2.50 Rupees
Vadai	-	4.00 Rupees
Coffee	-	3.50 Rupees
Tea	-	2.00 Rupees

Rajiv Menon orders the following :

One plate Idli	:	Rs.3.00
One plate Vadai	:	Rs.4.00
One cup of Tea	:	Rs.2.00

His friends Kishore and Rahim want different items; none of them wants to spend more than Rs.10/- for breakfast. Can you write out their orders for them?

241

21

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. Make a list of different forms (at least ten) which children may have to fill-up in the course of their school life.

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4. Refer to the science/history/maths book of your pupils. Choose any table/graph/ diagrams from them and prepare a transfer exercise based on it.

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17.4.3 Composition

Pictures have always been popular with good teachers of English. Andrew Wright (1989) lists a number of roles for pictures in language learning :

1. Pictures motivate the student. They make him want to pay attention and to take part.

2. Pictures bring the real world into the classroom and provide a context for language learning.

3. Different responses are possible to pictures; they can be described in an objective way, or interpreted, or responded to subjectively.

4. Pictures can stimulate and provide information which could be referred to in conversation, discussion and story telling.

Pictures are easy to prepare, and easy to organise. They are interesting and provide scope for meaningful and authentic use of language.

Pictures can be used with students at all levels - from beginners to advanced learners, from children to adults. Once the teacher has a collection of pictures, and has identified the ways they can be used, she requires little time for preparation. That is, once she has a bank/file of pictures, she can draw on them as and when she need to. Further in a developing country like ours where sophisticated high-technology, educational aids are not practical, pictures offer an economical but interesting resource. We shall now look at some tasks where pictures are used for developing writing skills.

Task 1 :   This task is suitable for beginners/small children. We can present a set of jumbled up pictures which tell a story. Then we can also write down a sentence matching each pictures. Now the pupils could be asked to match the pictures and sentences and rewrite the story in the correct order.

e.g. a)   The thief drove away in a car

b)   He lay down on a stretcher

c)   A thief stole of Rs.10,000/- from a bank

d)   The hospital ward boy took him to the operation theatre

e)   The policeman chased the thief

f)   He looked for him at the hospital but couldn't find him

g)   He escaped through the back gate of the hospital

| Pic 1 | | Pic 5 | | Pic 3 | | Pic 2 | | Pic 6 | | Pic 4 |

Task 2 : This task can be used at different levels. Here we need pictures where things are wrong :

a)   e.g. A man is wearing a shoe on one leg and a chappal on the other.

b)   A lady is carrying a shoulder bag, which has no straps.

c)   There is a clock, which has no hour hand.

d)   There is a notice which is upside down, etc.

The children have to look at the picture carefully and identify the mistakes.

Task 3 : Children today (why, even adults!) love reading comics. We could take a comic story and remove the words and ask the students to narrate the story on their own. If you want the task to be simpler, you could retain the words and ask the children to rewrite the story in the form of a narrative.

Task 4 : An interesting photograph from a magazine or newspaper could be given to the students and they could be asked to construct a story around it. Later, they could compare their story with the original report.

17.4.4   Diaries

A diary is personal record. Hence the way in which we write a diary differs from the way we write English normally. We don't need to write English normally. We don't need to write complete sentences. Nor do we have to worry about continuity. Thoughts and feelings are often expressed in a disconnected manner, as they flash through the mind. We can use abbreviation of our own. The language of a diary is close to the language of a telegram.

Task 1 : The following is a page from the diary of Sheila.

Woke up at 7 - Mom not at home - Granny says she has gone to hospital. I'm worried. Dad comes home at 8 — leaves me at school. I want to go to hospital - dad says 'no'- evening dad picks me up at school - all smiles - gives me 2 Five Stars -- we go straight to hospital - and how nice to see mom - wow. There's my baby brother. So soft and cuddly - just like a doll. I'm going to call him JoJo. He'll call me 'akka' - Today happiest day of my life.

Rewrite this diary entry in the form of a continuous paragraph.

Task 2 : Write a diary entry for the day when your results were published and you learnt that you were promoted to the next class.

Task 3 : Your Headmaster maintains a diary for his engagements every day. What would he write on the Annual Day celebrations of your school ?

You may begin as follows :

3.00 p.m. Tea for guests

3.30 p.m.

4.00 p.m.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of unit.

5.   What are the advantages of using pictures in the English class ?

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6.   How do diary entries differ from telegrams ?

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7.   Choose any picture and think of a way of using it to teach composition.

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8.   Ask your students to keep a diary to enter their reactions to the English classes. Collect them at the end of the week. What do they tell you about yourself as a teacher ?

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17.4.5   Dialogues

Dialogues belong to spoken English. But often they are included as part of the composition syllabi because it is quite difficult to test spoken English. Dialogues could be very simple or matter of fact as in day-to-day conversations. They could also be highly artistic and imaginative as in literary texts — especially novels. At the primary and secondary levels we could concentrate on simple dialogues.

What makes a dialogue natural - that is, very similar to the way we speak every day ?

a)   Dialogue need not always be in a full sentence

b)   It is enough if simple vocabulary is used

c)   A number of abbreviations are used e.g. can't, don't, etc.

d)   Colloquial expressions are allowed e.g. tummy, oops, wow! dad, etc.

Task 1 :   The following is an incomplete conversation between a mother and her son. Fill in the blanks and complete the dialogue :

Son : Mom, our class is going on an excursion to Shimla.

Mother :

Son : In May, during the summer holidays.

Mother :

Son : For ten days. Two teachers are coming with us.

Mother :

Son : Not much - only Rs. 500 per head. Mom, can I go ?

Mother :

Son : Thank you mom. You are a pet, aren't you?

Task 2 : The following is a part of a telephone conversation between Ahmed and Sharif. Reconstruct the whole conversation.

Ahmed:

Sharif:

Ahmed: And you know, the Maths teacher was also on leave today.

Sharif: So you had two free periods? That means I didn't miss much after all!

Ahmed: Oh, we had a 'fab' time! How I wish you had come to school today. You and your silly 'flu'.

Sharif:

Ahmed:

Task 3 : Imagine, that on your way to school, a stranger asks you the way to the Railway Station. Write the dialogue between you and the stranger.

Task 4 : Group Composition

A picture is displayed so that the whole class can see it. Each group studies it and then creates a five minute drama which finishes with the picture. Then they act out the drama in front of the whole class. The other groups watch the drama and because the same picture is referred to, their interest is retained.

17.4.6   Letters

All of us write letters for various reasons. Letters enable us to communicate with people who are away from us. Some of the purposes for which we write letters are: to inform, to invite, to enquire, to complain, to congratualate, to express sympathy, etc. Every letter has a writer, a reader and a situation. There are two types of letters: a) **formal letters** are written for business purposes usually among strangers; b) **informal letters** include all correspondence between friends, members of a family, relatives, etc.

The important parts of the letter are:

The writer's address, date, the receiver's address, salutation, body of the letter; subscription, signature and the writer's full name below the signature.

The important parts of an informal letter are:

The writer's address, date, salutation, body of the letter, subscription and signature.

Now we shall look at some interesting task types on letter writing:

Task 1 : Letter to a pen friend on a picture post card.

Date	
Dear Jane,	
My name is Rani, Will you be my pen friend? I am ten years old. I study in class V. I have a brother. My dad is an engineer and my mum is a teacher.	
I love swimming and cycling.	M/s. Jane Gilpin 7, Mayfield Road Edinburgh, Great Britain
Please write to me about yourself.	
Your affectionately, Rani	

This is Rani's first letter to her pen friend Jane. Now write a similar letter to your pen friend.

Task 2 : Jumbled up letter

Read this letter from Asha to her mother. Asha is describing her life in the hostel. But the paragraphs are jumbled up. Put them in the right order.

At night we have chapatis for dinner and a glass of milk too. We study upto 10 p.m. Then the lights have to be switched off. You know how difficult it is for me.

How many late night movies I used to watch at home?

In the hostel four of us share a room. Each has a cot, a table, a desk and an almirah. My roommates are Sharmila (from Calcutta), Sapna (from Delhi), and Nandita (from Kerala). I am learning some Bengali and Malayalam too. We sit and chat for a long time in the nights. We always do everything together.

Dear Mom, hope things are fine with you . You had asked me about the hostel. I'm now going to bore you to death with my description!

Can you believe mom, that your dear daughter wakes up at 5 O'- clock in the morning? Yes, hostel has changed me a lot. No bed coffee till six, but a mad rush for the bathroom. If we don't reach the dining hall by eight no breakfast either! Don't think your daughter is suffering. I must tell you about my friends.

Task 3 : Suresh wrote the following letter to his Headmaster. But his Headmaster was very angry when he read it. Why? Can you help Suresh to correct it?

My dear headmaster,

Hope you are fine . I am not feeling very fine. I have fever. Sorry I can't come to school today. Please excuse me. Can I take leave for today.

Yours affectionately,

Suresh

Task 4 : A letter from Space.

This is a letter from a girl in Mars to her friend Rajesh on earth.

5, Center Street
Red Colony
Mars

Dear Rajesh,

Thanks for your letter and photographs. It was lovely to see them. You look so different.

You wanted to know about me. My full name is Beepantaina. I have red hair and a green face. Do you know I won the first prize in the beauty contest at my school?

How do you manage with two hands? We all have four arms and four eyes - we can look at all the four directions at the same time. We eat a lot of fruits and flowers. We drink only milk.

We speak Martiana. Our songs are beautiful. On New Year's Day we sing and dance throughout the day. We also exchange gifts.

Please write again soon and tell me more about yourself.

With Love,

BEEPANTAINA

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

9. Think of at least 5 contexts which are for common for communication in school e.g. A teacher discussing a child's progress.

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246

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10.   Identify at least 5 occasions when a pupil has to write letter e.g. a letter asking for leave.

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11.   Design one task each on:

a)   teaching dialogue

b)   teaching letter writing

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17.4.7   Paragraphs/Essays

Paragraphs form a part of any continuous piece of writing in essays, reports, letters, etc. So it is necessary to teach our pupils to write good paragraphs. What are the characteristics of a well-written paragraph?

a)   It has unity — Each paragraph deals with a specific idea. Generally most paragraphs have a topic sentence; i.e. the sentence which contains the key idea of the paragraph.

b)   A paragraph is well organised — It has a definite plan. There are various types of paragraph organisation e.g. exemplification of an idea, narration, i.e. a time-sequenced organisation of events; comparison - contrast, etc.

c)   A paragraph has coherence — Each sentence logically follows from the previous sentence, and anticipates the next sentence.

When we teach the children paragraph/essay writing, we should impress upon them these ideas of unity, coherence and proper organisations of ideas.

Task 1 :   At the elementary stage we can provide a model paragraph and ask the children to closely imitate it.

Kiran has lost his pencil box and he puts up the following notice:

My pencil box is red in colour. It has the picture of Mickey Mouse on it. There are two pencils in it. One pencil is black and the other is blue. There is also a pink eraser in it. There is a Superman sticker inside the box. I also kept a two-rupee coin in it.

Now write a paragraph about your school bag in the same way.

247

Task 2 : In the passage below, two paragraphs are jumbled up. Can you separate them?

Once there lived a cruel wolf in a town. One day a king saw an old man planting small mango plants. He asked him, "When will you get any fruit from these plants?" Saint Francis visited the town and wanted to see the wolf. The king laughed and said "You'll die before the trees bear fruit". People told him that he would be killed. But the saint would not listen. The old man smiled and said "Yes, but others will eat the fruit. Now, I am eating the fruit from the trees which my grandfather planted". He went into the forest. When the wolf ran towards him, he said "Come here Brother Wolf". The king was ashamed. The cruel wolf closed its mouth and sat down at his feet.

Task 3 : Use the following hints to write a paragraph.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi — born 1869 Porbander — Father Karamchand Gandhi — Mother Putli Bai — went to England to study law - worked as lawyer in South Africa — Came to India — joined the freedom movement — believed in Ahimsa and Satyagraha — won freedom for India in 1947 — always spoke the truth — tried a simple life — fought for Hindu-Muslim unity — killed by Godse in 1947 — remembered as Mahatma, Father of the Nation.

Task 4 : Choose any interesting picture from a magazine. Ask the students to write a paragraph describing the picture.

17.4.8   Reports

A report describes an event or an experience. Reports are of several kinds: newspaper reports, scientific reports or business reports. The following are the salient features of a report.

1.   A report is brief and complete.

2.   It is usually written in the third person.

3.   It includes only relevant details - there are no digressions. It is accurate.

4.   It avoids emotional overtones. It is clear.

5.   The ideas are logically arranged.

Task 1 : Imagine that you are the editor of the school newsletter 'School Times'. You have to report the Independence Day celebrations. Use the following hints and write a report.

15 August 1995 - 7.00 a.m. - all students in white, assembled under the flag post – Chief Guest, the Police Commissioner arrived at 7.30 a.m. - Flag-hoisted - Everyone sings flag song - guard of honour presented to Chief Guest by N.C.C. students meeting at the hall - " Duties of youngsters to Mother India" – Vote of thanks proposed by the school Principle - Tea for all pupils.

Task 2 : Nitin telephoned Ben but Ben was not at home. His sister Rita picked up the phone. The following conversation took place between Nitin and Rita.

Rita   : Hello, this is 8265279.

Nitin   : Hello Rita, this is Nitin. Could I speak to Ben?

Rita   : Sorry, he's gone out. Can I take a message for him?

Nitin   : Yes, please. You see, we were planning to do combined study at your place tonight, but my mother is down with fever and I have to take her to the doctor. Could you tell Ben that I can't come tonight? Say I'm extremely sorry.

Rita   : O.K. I'll explain it to him.

Nitin   : Thank you, Bye.

Now Rita wrote down a message for Ben, reporting her conversation with Nitin. It began as follows: "Your friend Nitin rang up to say............"

Task 3 : The students' union met to discuss the farewell party for seniors. The following items were discussed at the meeting.

1. Data and Venue
2. Budget
3. Items on the menu
4. Gifts for seniors
5. Speeches
6. Entertainment

Using this outline plan, write a report of the meeting, to be presented to the Principal.

ACTIVITY

1. Consult any one of the books in the reference section at the end of the unit (or any other textbook on teaching writing) and select a task each on paragraph writing, essay writing and report writing.

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   ....
   ....
   ....

2. Ask each of your pupils to think of any one topic on which they would like to write a paragraph/essay. Collect them and make a list of the most interesting ten. Write why they appealed to you.

   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

3. Collect from newspapers at least 5 reports which you could use in your class.

   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

17.5 LET US SUM UP

● Writing **can** be taught; writing **should** be taught. For this teachers should use controlled and guided compositions in the primary/middle school and secondary classes.

● We should teach our pupils what is relevant to their life.

● Collaborative writing techniques helps students to write well.

● We should teach traditional types of writing, e.g. paragraphs, essays, letters, reports, etc.

● We should also teach non-traditional types e.g. dairies, form-filling, information transfer, etc.

● Form- filling is a basic writing skill which demands accuracy and develops confidence in children.

● The skill of information-transfer helps children to study subjects other than English too.

● Pictures offer an interesting stimulus to develop various types of writing skills.

● Writing diaries helps children to express their emotions freely without worrying too much about grammatical accuracy.

249

- Dialogues offer an indirect means of training in spoken language.

- Letters, formal and informal, are useful for various purpose in life. Each has a specific format.

- Paragraphs and essays constitute the backbone of all good writing. A good paragraph should have unity, coherence and good organisation.

- The three major types of reports are: newspaper reports, scientific reports and business reports.

17.6   KEY WORDS

Information transfer : a task which requires pupils to change non-verbal communication into verbal communication and vice-versa.

Picture composition : using pictures as stimuli to develop writing skills.

Topic sentence : the sentence containing the key idea of a paragraph.

17.7   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Students need assistance in writing in both content and expression in the beginning stages. They also need help with organisation and clustering of idea. Both controlled and guided writing tasks help students with these skills. Students need not waste time racking their brains for something to write but can concentrate on the actual writing itself.

2. It is being accepted that writing is a process and a series of activities ultimately results in the finished product. Pooling ideas for content as well as presentation thus minimises the most important problem faced by the students — lack of content and how to put across whatever content they have. Also peer cooperation reduces, to some extent, the problem of innumerable error.

3. Application form; bus pass form; library membership form; details in hand book; medical inspection form; etc.

4. No specific answer.

5. The advantage of using pictures: motivating, participating, life-oriented, scope for objective/subjective responses, informative.

6.

Diaries	Telegrams
Personal	Impersonal
Brief or long	As brief as possible
Personal abbreviations allowed	No personal abbreviations
Meant for one's own self	Meant for others
May or may not be clear to others	Should be very clear.

7. No specific answer.

8. No specific answer.

9. a) Students and teacher planning a school event.

   b) Teacher asking for explanation of misconduct.

   c) Student seeking permission (for several things).

   d) A parent complaining.

   e) A teacher commending children.

10. a) Letter requesting permission to do something.

    b) Letter apologising for misconduct.

    c) Letter of inquiry.

d) Letter inviting someone to school.

e) Thank you letters.

11. No specific answer.

17.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bhaskaran, M.P. (ed.) (1989): *Onwards English : Language Practice 1-5*, Orient Longman, Madras.

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UNIT 18 TEACHING STUDY SKILLS

Structure

18.1 INTRODUCTION

Today language is viewed as a 'skill' rather than as 'knowledge'. What does this mean? If you want to acquire knowledge about any subject, you read books or listen to lectures. For example, if you want to know about the Moghul rule in India, you read history books, or you listen to talks/lectures on this topic. Thus you acquire more knowledge. On the other hand, if you want to learn singing, you don't read books on singing, you practise singing until you attain competence. The same is true of dancing, painting, cycling or swimming. These are known as 'skills'. Skills are acquired through practice. Language is also regarded as a skill by experts. The more you speak, the more fluent you become. The more you read, the faster you can read. There are, as you know, four linguistic skills : listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills have to be mastered by any user of the language. If you want to **study** anything through a language, you have to master what are known as study skills. In the next section we shall make an attempt to define study skills and also look at the various types of study skills.

18.2 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

● define study skills;

● list the various types of study skills;

● explain why study skills are important to learners; and

● design tasks to develop study skills.

18.3 WHAT ARE STUDY SKILLS ?

In very simple terms, 'study skills' may be defined as skills which help learners to study more efficiently. When we teach study skills to our learners, we achieve two purposes :
(a) **Directly** — We help the student to increase his/her knowledge of the subject matter, and
(b) **Indirectly** — We improve his/her ability to learn other subjects independently and at will. In other words, we enable him/her to **'learn to learn'**.

We must be careful to distinguish linguistic skills from study skills. Linguistic skills help learners to 'communicate'; study skills, on the other hand, enable the learners to 'study'; and

the process of study involves four operations : **perception, comprehension, retention and retrieval.** In other words the student should first perceive what is relevant to his/her needs, and select only those areas which are important. (S)he cannot study everything available in every book (s)he can lay hands on. Once (s)he has decided on areas significant to him/her, (s)he has to read and understand - or comprehend - the material that (s)he has selected, for no learning can take place without comprehension. What is not understood is not learnt. Comprehension thus consitutes an important stage in the process of learning. However, mere comprehension does not guarantee mastery of the subject; for human memory is so transient, that, what is understood, may easily be forgotten, hence the learner has to make special efforts to **retain** what (s)he has learnt. Different students adopt different means towards retention. Very weak students blindly memorize the whole lesson; brighter learners, however, try to remember the basic principles in the form of short notes, which could be paraphrased later. The last stage in the learning process involves the **retrieval** of what has been learnt. When required, for example, in the examination hall, the learner should be able to **retrieve** all that (s)he has learnt throughout the year. We shall look at each of these sub-skills of study in greater detail.

In the literature on study skills, we refer to three major types of study skills corresponding to the four operations in the process of study. They are :

a) Gathering skills (Perception, Comprehension)

b) Storing skills (Retention)

c) Retrieval skills (Retrieval)

18.3.1 Gathering Skills

These are also known as **reference** skills and enable a learner to gather information as quickly as possible. This requires two sub-skills: **locating** and **comprehending** information.

How do we go about locating the information we need? We should first of all, know the **sources** available, e.g. books, journals, etc.; once the learner has identified the sources, (s)he should make effective use of them.

A major source of information, which all educated people keep consulting often, is the **dictionary**. We mainly look for meanings of words in the dictionary. Most students don't even know how to use a dictionary. Nor are they aware of the fund of information available in a dictionary, e.g. pronunciation, grammar, etymology, derivations, etc. In a later section of this unit we shall present several tasks which enable a learner to exploit the potential of the dictionary for language learning.

What are the other sources of information available to a student? Imagine that there is a student of chemistry who has been asked to write an assignment on a specific topic.

His/her textbook alone will not be sufficient nor can (s)he afford to copy verbatim from the same. (S)he has to go to the library. Here (s)he should know how to make use of library catalogues. In the era of computerisation today, (s)he should know how to get the information from the computer. Once (s)he has located the relevant books from the library catalogue, (s)he can start referring to them. As it is impossible to read every word of every book on the area, (s)he, needs to be selective. Here (s)he could get some guidance from the **contents page** or the **index** at the back of the book. After locating the relevant pages, (s)he should quickly **skim** through them and perhaps **scan** only those sections which are useful for his/her assignment. Most students today do not want to go through these laborious processes, with the result, the xeroxed materials pile up but nothing gets assimilated. The gathering skills may be summed up as follows :

a) Locating information - through reference to dictionaries, library catalogues, Tables of Content, Index, etc.

b) Comprehending information - through mastering the sub-skills of reading, like skimming, scanning, etc.

18.3.2 Storage Skills

As the name suggests, storage skills involve the ability to **store information for ready retrieval and use.** You may ask : What is so difficult 'storing' information? Once we have read and understood some information, is it not automatically stored in the memory? I would say, 'partly yes' and 'partly no'. What does this mean? We do remember what we read/listen

to; but not everything. So, most of us hasten to copy down important facts. If we are not properly trained, we would waste a lot of time in copying; further, just before the examination, when the students revise all the lessons, it would be just impossible for them to read through hundreds of pages. They should have the notes in a brief and precise form, ready for quick reference. In fact, each student adopts his/her own way of storing information. However, (s)he will benefit greatly from a training in storing skills.

Storing skills are of two major categories :

a) **Note-taking** - which involves listening to lectures and taking down **notes** - i.e. the main and subordinate points. This is a skill every student needs to master. In fact, since students have not mastered this skill adequately, we teachers are forced to resort to dictating notes after we have finished lecturing on a topic.

b) **Note-making** is very similar to note-taking, except for the fact that note-making involves reading books and making notes, whereas note-taking involves listening to a lecture and taking down notes. Note-making is a more leisurely activity.

Both the skills above, may be divided into the following sub-skills.

i) Comprehension of the text/lecture

ii) Identification of the main points

iii) Distinguishing main factors from subordinate ones

iv) Deciding on the order of priority among the various points

v) Indentifying the organisation of points

vi) Organising the points into a visual display

Note-making and note-taking are meant only for the student's private use, hence (s)he is free to use any abbreviation, symbol, etc., although it would be a good idea to tell the students about certain reduction devices.

18.3.3 Retrieval Skills

While writing an examination, or participating in a conference or seminar, students need to **summarise** their ideas in a coherent form, so that their readers can understand them. Or sometimes they have to prepare a research abstract based on their reading.

The student will of course base their summary or abstract on the notes they had prepared earlier. The length of a summary may vary depending on the purpose for which it is intended. Generally the precis in the examination papers is required to be one-third of the original; but all summaries need not be so.

Summarising is not an exercise to be learnt for use in the classroom alone; it has relevance for life. We can summarise articles, chapters and even books for future reference. If you are a secretary, your boss may ask you to present the gist of a document. A newspaper reporter's job is to summarise speeches and reports. Scientists and researchers read abstracts of important books/papers to keep themselves uptodate and save time as well. A good summary requires several skills on the part of the learner: reading, comprehension, analysis, judgement, clarity, brevity, etc.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1.   What are 'skills'? How do they differ from 'knowledge'?

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2.   What are the major study skills?

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3. Distinguish between note-making and note-taking.

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4. How does a summary benefit its reader?

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5. What skills do you need in order to write a good summary?

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18.4 WHY DO STUDENTS NEED TRAINING IN STUDY SKILLS ?

Students have two types of goals: the short-term goal is to pass the examination. The long-term goal, on the other hand, is to prepare for life; in other words, the second goal extends beyond examinations. In order to achieve both these goals they have to know how to study. Hence the importance of study skills.

It is a sad reflection on our education system that our learners do not know the study skills even in relation to their mother tongue. They do not know how to locate information or make notes even when they refer to books in the vernacular. Very often, the English teacher tells them what study skills are, as well as, how to develop them. By training them in study skills, the teacher indirectly helps them to study their other subjects also more efficiently.

Many teachers argue that there is no need to focus on study skills or give special training in this area. Conscious teaching of study skills is not necessary. They say : "Most of us learnt our study skills unconsciously. No one taught us how to make notes. We learnt it on our own; similarly our learners will also 'pick up' these skills. There is no need to 'waste' precious class time on such trivialities".

There are two basic flaws in this argument. Firstly, we know from experience that most students do not learn study skills on their own. Even when they join the undergraduate course, they do not know how to make notes or how to write a summary. They lift words at random and string them together and call it a precis. The concept of note-making is totally strange to them.

Secondly, even learners who can learn these skills on their own, might take a long time doing so. In the absence of guidance, they have to adopt the 'trial and error' method to develop these skills. If, on the other hand, they are given some training, they will learn these quickly; this, in turn, will accelerate their pace of learning the other subjects as well. Instead of regarding the time spent on developing study skills as a waste of time, it is necessary to regard it as a wise investment.

Study skills are needed at all levels. Even children at the primary level need them. For example, identifying the moral of a story is a study skill. Locating answers to questions is another study skill. As students go to higher classes the nature of study skills becomes more complex.

255

Learning to learn, as we pointed out earlier, is more important, than learning **per se.**

Why should study skills form a part of the English curriculum?

Even those who strongly advocate the introduction of study skills as an integral part of school education, suggest that the teachers of various subjects should undertake the responsibility of developing study skills in their learners. Two major reasons are offered in support of this view :

a) Study skills help learners to study their subjects better.

b) The English teacher is not a master of all the subjects and hence may find it difficult to deal with subjects like Physics, Economics, etc.

While we admit the validity of both these reasons, we would still argue for the inclusion of study skills in the English curriculum for the following reasons. The attitude towards the nature of the English to be taught in schools and colleges has undergone a sea change in recent years. Teaching of English literature, though it has its value, is no more regarded as the primary aim of General English courses. English is now regarded as a **service language** or a tool, which enables learners to acquire mastery in other subjects. Hence there is an urgent need to relate the teaching of English to the teaching of other subjects.

Of course the English teacher cannot master all the subjects; and (s)he need not. It is enough if (s)he is able to steer the middle course between literature and other subjects as far as the content goes. The English teacher is not expected to teach the subjects; but only the strategies to study them. This becomes feasible at the secondary school level, where most English teachers also handle subjects like Science, History, etc.

ACTIVITY

1. How would you convince the Secondary School Board of Studies to include study skills in the English curriculum?

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2. Select any six students two each from bright, average and weak categories, and conduct an experiment to identify their relative mastery over study skills in L1 and English.

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3. Interview colleagues who teach subjects other than English and find out

   a) if they train their students in study skills;

   b) and if so, how they go about it.

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18.5 HOW CAN STUDY SKILLS BE DEVELOPED IN LEARNERS ?

In this section we propose to present simple tasks/experiences which may be used to develop the various study skills in our learners.

18.5.1 Gathering Skills

a) **Using a Dictionary**

Task 1

Arrange the words in each list below in the correct alphabetical order :

A	B	C
question	separate	prayer
person	sanction	primary
ancient	sublime	proficient
doubtful	stately	practice
handsome	space	prudent
troublesome	smooth	presentation

Task 2

If you want to refer to the dictionary for the meaning of the following phrases, under which word will you look them up?

(e.g.) to pull on, **pull**

1.	at the end of	6.	on account of
2.	put of place	7.	to sail through
3.	break out	8.	burn the midnight oil
4.	turn down	9.	look down upon
5.	in spite of	10.	make both ends meet

Task 3

Look up the following words in your dictionary and find the four different kinds of information about each word.

(**Note** : All these words have more than one meaning).

i) Parts of speech (Noun, Verb, Adjective, etc.)

ii) Inflected forms (Tenses of verbs, plurals of nouns, degree of comparison, etc.)

iii) Pronunciation

iv) Meaning

e.g. book - Noun, Plural - books ; Pronunciation -/buk/

a) bear

b) bank

c) lead

d) fire

Many different types of exercises are possible on the use of the dictionary. You could design many more such tasks on your own, relating to what you are teaching your learners at the moment.

257

b) **Using the Library**

Task 1

The following is a part of the Index taken from a book. What information do you get from the book ?

i) 1. Abbreviations - 76

2. Colloquial expressions - 25-27, 48, 92 .

3. Idiomatic usage - 43- 46, 57, 85

4. Pronunciation - 15-20,37,90

5. Reported speech - 35-38,52,79

6. Word order - 53-57, 68, 87, 98

ii) Where would you find information related to the following? stress; short forms; slang.

iii) You want to find out what is wrong with the following sentences. Where could you possibly find the information?

1. The Minister gave to each of his friends on his birthday an expensive gift.

2. He asked me where are you wrong.

3. I read in the newspapers that he has kicked the bucket.

18.5.2 Storing Skills

a) **Note-Making**

Task 1

Read the following passage, then fill in the notes below :

Upto the end of the eighteenth century, small-pox was a particularly dreaded disease, not only because it was often fatal but also because those who recovered were permanently disfigured. A very large proportion of the population bore the marks of small-pox on their faces.

In the seventeenth century, people in Turkey began to inject themselves deliberately with mild forms of small-pox with the hope of making themselves immune to severe attacks. Sometimes they developed a light infection as a reaction; sometimes they suffered the very disfigurement or death they had sought to avoid. It was a risky business, but people were willing to risk the horror in order to escape from it.

Certain countryfolk in England believed that a case of cow-pox, a disease that attacked cows and sometimes people, would make a person immune to both cow-pox and small-pox. An English doctor, Edward Jenner, decided that there might be some truth in this 'folk' superstition. Milkmaids, he noticed, were particularly prone not to be pockmarked by small-pox.

Very cautiously Dr. Jenner began to test this notion. In 1796, he decided to make the supreme test.

Now fill in the blanks in the notes below :

1. Small-pox — a dreaded disease till the end of the 18th century.

    Reasons :

    a) ....

    b) ....

2. Attempts to conquer small-pox – Turkey- 17th century - Risky method - Injecting mild forms of small-pox.

    Results :

    a) ....

    b) ....

258

3. Stem ? ?

a) ....

b) ....

Task 2

Read the following passage on 'Insects', then fill in the notes in the outline given below.

Insects are small creatures having six legs, no backbone and a body divided into three parts. They are the most plentiful of all living creatures. From man's point of view, insects can be divided into two main kinds : those insects which are useful to man and those which are merely interesting or beautiful.

Bees and silkworms are examples of useful insects. Bees collect honey and produce wax from flowers which we can use. Silkworms supply us with fine, strong silk. These insects provide man food and clothing.

Locusts and mosquitoes, on the other hand, are harmful to man. Locusts will eat all growing plants and every year trees and crops are destroyed by these hungry creatures. Mosquitoes, on the other hand, are harmful to man. Mosquitoes pass the dangerous disease of malaria from person to person, and every year millions of people become ill and even die because of the activities of mosquitoes, which are a great danger to health.

There are some insects which are not directly useful or harmful to man, but are interesting and beautiful. Examples of such insects are colourful butterflies, pretty little ladybirds and fluttering moths.

1. ....

    a) 6 legs

    b)

    c)

2. ....

    a) useful - example - (i) bee (honey)

    b) .... (i)

                                                 (ii)

    c) .... (i)

                                                 (ii)

                                                 (iii)

Task 3

Notes may also be made diagrammatically. Read the passage below :

A student can acquire information in several ways. His teachers give lectures, conduct tutorials and issue handouts. He can read library books, listen to the radio or watch the TV and thus learn from other experts. He can get information from fellow students through seminars or informal conversation. He can also learn from himself by thinking about his subject when he is alone.

Now fill in the diagram below :

From Teachers

Lectures

Tutorials

Handouts

Acquiring Information
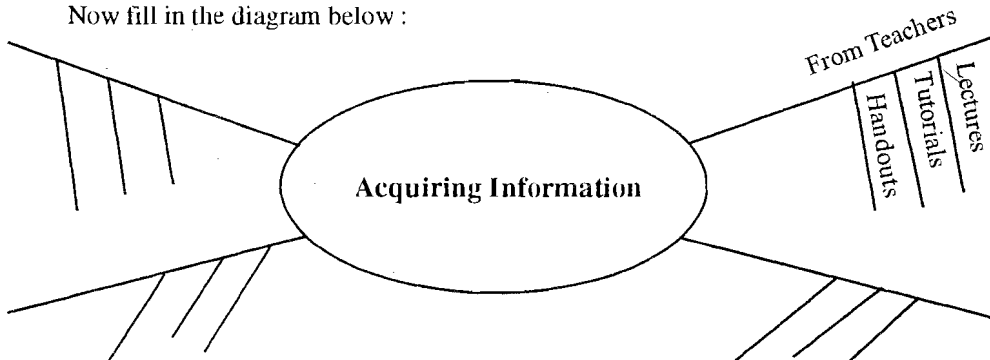
(Adapted from Michael J. Wallace (1980) : *Study Skills in English,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

b) Diagramming/Information Transfer

The diagrammatic presentation of notes as seen in the task above, is also known as diagramming. Diagrams are of various types : trees, pie charts, histograms, graphs, tables, etc. Such visual display can be grasped quickly and also facilitates retention. In most disciplines, writers resort to such diagrammatic or visual presentation. e.g., labelling of the digestive system or genealogy of a king, etc.

'Information Transfer' means the restatement of verbal information in non-verbal form or vice-versa.

Task 1

Read the following paragraph and complete the table given below :

The Rajans and the Davids are very good friends. They have a monthly in come of Rs. 7,000 and Rs. 5,000 respectively. The Rajans buy milk for Rs. 700/- whereas the Davids spend only Rs. 500 on milk. The Rajans, being vegetarians spend Rs. 200 more on vegetables than the Davids, who spend Rs. 200 on vegetables and Rs. 150 on meat. The provision bill for the Davids comes to Rs. 700 per month whereas the Rajans spend Rs. 200 more on the same. Since Mr. and Mrs. David are both working, they have little time to prepare snacks at home. Hence they buy bakery for Rs. 200 every month. The Rajans spend only Rs. 100 for the bakery. They both buy fruits for Rs. 200 every month.

Items	The Rajans (Rs. 7000)	The Davids (Rs. 5000)
1. Milk	Rs. 700	Rs. 500
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Task 2

The following pie chart represents the budget of the family of Mr. Iqbal. Study it carefully and rewrite it in the form of a paragraph.
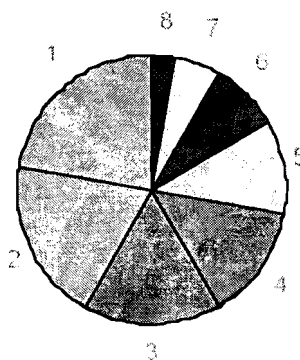
Pie Chart

1.	Food	40%	5.	Transport	8%
2.	Education	14%	6.	Recreation	8%
3.	Clothes	14%	7.	Savings	5%
4.	Electricity	8%	8.	Rent	3%

260

Given below is the floor plan of a deluxe room in Hotel Bombay International. Write a paragraph describing the room.

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┌──────────┬─WINDOW─┬──────────────────────────────┬──────────┐
│ Bed      │        │                              │ Writing  │
│ Table    │        │                              │ Table  Chair
├──────────┤        │                              ├──────────┤
│   BED    │        │                              │          │
│          │        │        BED ROOM              │ Dressing │
│          │        │                              │ Table    │
├──────────┤        │                              ├──────────┤
│   BED    │        │                              │ Suitcase │
│          │        │                              │ Rack     │
├──────────┤        │                              │          │
│ Bed      │        │                              │          │
│ Table    │        │                              │          │
├──────┬GEYSER─┬─WASH BASIN─┬────┬─────────────────┴──────────┤
│      │       │            │    │  ┌──────┬──────┐           │
│      │       │            │    │  │ SOFA │ SOFA │           │
│      │       │         DOOR    │  └──────┴──────┘           │
│      │                   │     │              ┌──────┐      │
│ ┌──────┐                 │     │              │      │      │
│ │TOILET│  BATH ROOM      │     │              │ SOFA │      │
│ └──────┘                 │     │              │      │      │
│                          │     │              └──────┘      │
│                          │     │      ENTRANCE              │
└──────────────────────────┴─────┴──────DOOR─────────────────┘
```
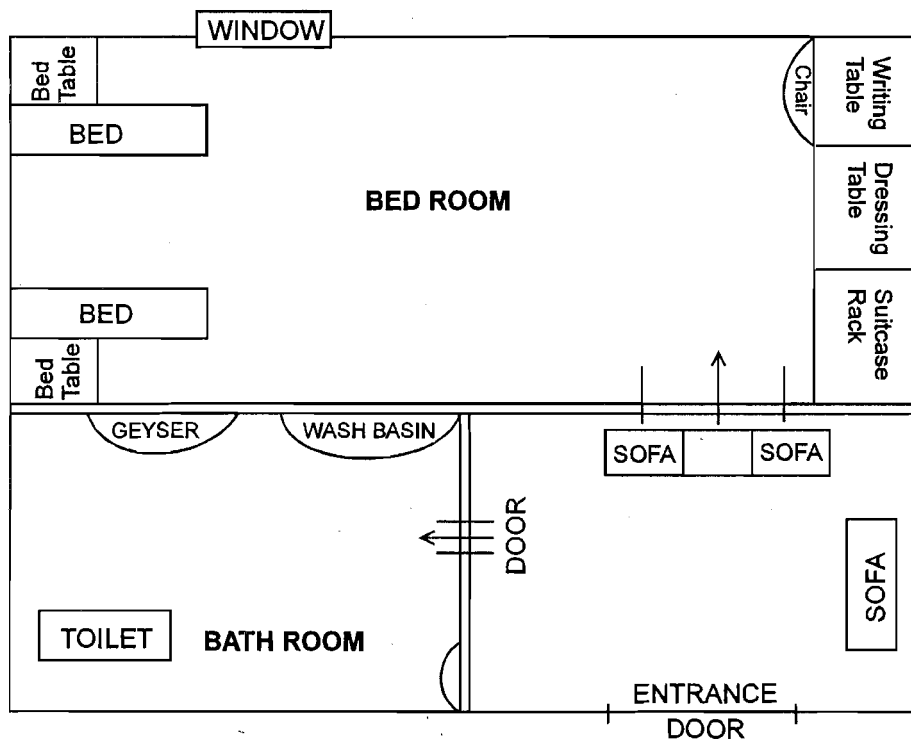
18.5.3   Retrieval Skills

Summarising is the major retrieval skill. Once a student has mastered the skill of note-making, summarizing becomes easy. In addition to identifying the main and subordinate points in a text, and their manner of organisation, summarising requires a learner to write a coherent, logical piece of discourse in the form of a continuous paragraph. The length of the summary may vary according to the purpose for which it is written. Generally a summary needs to be comprehensive but precise. It should include the major relevant points but should not add any extra points not included in the text.

There is a more detailed discussion of summarising in the units on **Writing.**

Task 1

Refer to Task 1 on note-making in 16.4.2. Based on the notes you have prepared, write a summary of the passage not exceeding 100 words.

Task 2

Based on Task 3 on note-making in 16.4.2, write a brief abstract in about 50 words to be included in the guidebook for students.

Task 3

Read the Editorial of today's newspaper and summarise it in about 100 words, to be put upon the school News Bulletin board today.

ACTIVITY

4.   Prepare a task on each of the study skills discussed in this section, viz. Reference skills, Note-making, Diagramming and Summarising. Try to relate each of them to a subject that your students study e.g. Science, History, etc.

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5. Look through the tasks in the above section again carefully. Could you identify some basic principles of designing tasks to develop study skills in your learners?

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18.6   LET US SUM UP

● Language is skill, not knowledge.

● Skills are acquired through practice.

● Study skills are different from the four linguistic skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Study skills enable learners to study more efficiently.

● The process of study involves four operations : perception, comprehension, retention and retrieval.

● There are three study skills corresponding to the four operations, namely, Gathering skills, Storage skills and Retrieval skills.

● Gathering skills help learners to locate and comprehend sources of information, e.g. use of a dictionary, skimming, scanning, etc.

● Storage skills enable learners to store information for ready retrieval and use, e.g. Note-making, Note-taking, Diagramming.

● Retrieval skills help learners to retrieve information when they need it, e.g. summarising.

● Students need training in study skills.

● The English teacher is the best person to develop study skills in learners.

● Study skills may be developed through tasks which require a problem-solving approach.

18.7   KEY WORDS

Gathering skills	:	skills useful for gathering information.
Information transfer	:	transfer information from verbal to non-verbal medium or vice-versa.
Linguistic skills	:	the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW).
Learner training	:	enabling learners to learn on their own.
Note-taking	:	listening to a lecture and taking down important points.
Note-making	:	referring to a written text and taking down important points.
Retrieval skills	:	skills used for retrieving the information that has been stored.
Study skills	:	skills which enable a learner to study more efficiently.
Storing skills	:	skills useful for storing the information.
Summarising	:	identifying the gist of a text.

262

18.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. 'Skill' is a special ability to do something, gained through practice. Knowledge refers to the information one has gained through learning.

2. The major study skills are of three categories : gathering skills, storing skills and retrieval skills.

3. Note-taking is related to oral communication and note-making to writing.

4. A summary saves time for the reader.

5. Skills required for writing summary :

   Comprehension : ability to identify major and minor points; ability to recognize the hierarchy of ideas in a text; ability to write a coherent piece of discourse.

UNIT 19   TEACHING GRAMMAR: NEW TYPE ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

Structure

19.0   INTRODUCTION

Most of us do not have very pleasant memories of grammar classes during our school days. Except for the few gifted grammar 'whiz kids' who revelled in grammar, the average students generally used to dread, if not hate grammar. Perhaps this is due to the traditional approach to teaching grammar. The general pattern was to present the rules of grammar first, followed by a number of exercises which were mechanical and monotonous. Further, even if the students were able to do all the exercises correctly, there was no guarantee that they would be able to read and write English well solely based on their mastery of grammar.

In other words we can say that the emphasis was on teaching of **formal** grammar. Formal grammar refers to theoritical grammar in which all the grammatical rules are taught irrespective of the fact whether they are of wider application or not. Emphasis is laid on learning definitions and in acquiring terminology.

Recently there has been a lot of rethinking on teaching of grammar and the stress is more on **functional** grammar. It is the study of that portion of grammar which helps the learner to speak and write correct English. Although certain grammar areas like tenses, numbers etc. are taught, the emphasis is on helping the learner to acquire the language incidentally by imitation or consciously by observation and deduction. Specially in the early stages, no attempt is made to teach the learners rules or definitions of grammar.

While no one denies the importance of teaching grammar while trying to teach the language, the fact remains that language is better learnt through its use than through learning rules of grammar.

Hence in the primary or elementary stages, the students may be asked to do an information gap activity or read a text where new grammar is introduced and practised, but the students' attention is drawn to the activity and not to the grammar. Grammar teaching is thus **covert** and nor **overt**. Changes have been introduced with specific reference to two major issues:

a)   making grammar learning enjoyable.

b)   making grammar help learners to read and write better.

In this unit we will study how Grammar Games (GGs) and Grammar Practice Activities (GPAs) can helps students in learning a language. Let us then understand what the terms Grammar Games (GGs) and Grammar Practice Activities (GPAs) mean.

Grammar Games (GGs)

Grammar games are similar to play-way methods of teaching. Practice in important areas of

grammar is provided through games. So while students think they are just playing a game, in fact they are unconsciously getting practice in a particular grammatical structure.

Grammar Practice Activities (GPAs)

Grammar Practice Activities, as the term implies, provide practice in grammar. The practice is made interesting and not mechanical like traditional exercises. Further these activities provide opportunities for learners to use language for communication. As Earl Stevick cautions us, "Though a student may repeat over and over the forms of the language, in doing so he may not be using the language".

The GGs and GPAs help learners to engage in active language use - while learners are producing structure which they should practise, they are at the same time actively involved in communication. They listen, speak, understand and interpret. This improves their communicative competence.

19.2 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall learn the following:

● what are grammar games (GGs) and grammar practice activities (GPAs)?

● the usefulness of GGs and GPAs in the ESL classroom;

● some GGs and GPAs and how to organise them.

19.3 ADVANTAGES OF GRAMMAR GAMES

1. Games help to motivate learners and sustain their interest.

   As we pointed out earlier, grammar is serious study and requires hard work. Grammar exercises, though useful, may become mechanical and prevent learners from becoming actively involved. But the spirit of competition generated by a game can make them participate enthusiastically. In fact they master language structures, without being aware of the fact they are doing so. As modern language experts say, language is best learnt when the focus is not on language, but on meaning.

2. Games helps the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful.

   While playing the game it is necessary for learners to listen to and understand what others say and also speak. In other words, games provide meaningful practice in real life contexts. By making the language convey information and opinion, games provide the key feature of 'drill' with the opportunity to understand the working of language as living communication. The 'quality' of the practice provided by these games is much richer than the amount or 'quantity' of practice provided by traditional grammar exercises.

3. Games provide practice in all the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

4. Games are useful in all the stages of teaching/learning sequence - that is presentation, practice , re-combination and free use of language. They can also be designed to suit various levels: primary, secondary or tertiary.

5. Games also have a diagnostic role: while the students play the games, the teacher could quietly observe the students' performance and identify their strengths and weaknesses. This feedback can prove very valuable to teachers for further planning of their teaching.

6. Games provide situations of genuine information gap/opinion gap. What is information gap? We speak or write because we want to pass on information or convey an opinion which the listener might be interested in. If the listener is familiar with the information or is of the same opinion, there is no gap and (s)he will probably switch off. The information may seem terribly obvious. In many language classes, there is no information gap at all and opinions are rarely asked for. When the teacher asks the student, for instance, "Where is the book?" the student knows that the teacher knows the answer ! The teacher is more interested in the **form** than the **content** of what the learner says. In grammar games, on the other hand, there is always a genuine information/opinion gap. This makes the game more interesting and life-like.

1. How do grammar games differ from traditional grammar exercises?

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2. What are the advantages of using grammar games?

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3. Choose any grammar exercise from a grammar textbook written before 1960. Do you find in these exercises, any of the advantages of grammar games listed in section 19.3 ? Do you find any other intrinsic merits in them?

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19.4 GRAMMAR GAMES

In this section we shall present to you a few grammar games.

Game 1: What am I doing?

Level: Secondary

Grammar: Present Continuous Tense.

Procedure: Write a number of statements which describe different interesting actions, on different slips of paper. For example:

1. You are trying to keep awake in a boring class.

2. You are eating noodles with a fork.

3. You are trying to get change from your pocket in a crowded bus.

4. You are trying to thread a needle while travelling in an autorickshaw.

5. You are trying to switch off an alarm clock, lying in bed in the dark.

Now ask students to volunteer each time to pick up a slip and act out the command. Ask the class to guess what action is being performed. In their attempts to guess they would come out with a number of sentences in the present continuous tense. Repeat this with another volunteer. This will give your learners a great deal of practice in the use of the present continuous tense. Compare this with a traditional exercise.

266

Change the verbs in the following sentences into the present continuous tense:

1. Ram climbs the mountain.

2. I walk to school.

3. You write on the blackboard.

Game: Noughts and Crosses

Level: Secondary

Grammar: Conjuctions

Procedure: Most of your students should be familiar with the game of noughts and crosses and the same rules apply, except that there are words instead of noughts and crosses. Draw the following on the blackboard.

and	either...or	as
though	but	neither...nor
if	since	because

Divide the class into two groups. The first group should choose one of the words and construct a sentence with it, for example;

I like bananas but hate apples.

Now the second group should choose another word and make a sentence. They should be careful in the selection of words so that they win the game and not allow the other group to win. That is, they should select words across a row, down a column, or diagonally. This game can be adapted to apply to any grammatical area, e.g., parts of speech, prepositions, conditionals.

(Adapted from Rinvolucri M.)

Game 3: Tomatoes are red.

Level: Secondary

Grammar: Use of simple present tense for habitual actions.

Procedure: Divide the students into groups of five. Ask each group to think of as many sentences as possible describing universal truths. Give a few sample sentences e.g.

The sun rises in the east.

Honey is sweet.

Tomatoes are red.

Give a time limit of 10 minutes. The group that comes out with the maximum number of grammatically correct sentences will be declared the winner. You could make the game more challenging by asking the learners,

a) to write sentences relating to one particular context,

b) to use a different verb each time.

Game 4 : The burglary

Level: Secondary

Grammar: Passive Voice.

Procedure: Tell the children that a burglary had taken place in Mr. Gupta's house when he was on a holiday. When Gupta came back he was shocked to find the following:

The windows were broken.

The safe had been opened.

Now ask the learners to write ten more sentences about the burglary. This would provide a natural context for the use of the passive voice. You could make the task more interesting if you would give them a picture of the room after the burglary.

ACTIVITY

1. Given below are two exercises. Compare them with the grammar games presented above and discuss the relative merits of each:

   Exercise (i): Fill in the blanks with the appropriate conjunctions:

   1. Ram studied hard........he failed.

   2. ....I am angry, I will not punish you.

   3. He was late ....he missed the bus.

   4. ....you don't come by 9, we will leave the place.

   5. ....you sow, so you reap.

   Exercise (ii): Change the following sentences into Passive Voice.

   1. Rama killed Ravana.

   2. John ate the apples.

   3. Susan rang the bell.

   4. I drank the coffee.

   5. He taught me English.

19.5 GRAMMAR PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

a) **Level:** Secondary

Grammar: Present Perfect (Passive).

Draw two pictures of a classroom. In the first one put a number of things in a state of disorder, e.g. Children all over the place, furniture messy, blackboard dirty, papers strewn all over, etc. In the second picture present a tidy, well organized classroom. Now ask the students to identify the changes that have taken place.

(e.g.) The blackboard has been cleaned.

The children have returned to their places.

The floor has been swept., etc.

This provides a natural context for the use of the Present Perfect and the Passive form of the same.

b) **Level:** Secondary

Grammar: Gerunds as object.

Procedure: Think of your last birthday. Tell us all that you remember about it.

(e.g.) I remember
$\begin{cases} \text{getting up very early.} \\ \text{wearing a new dress.} \\ \text{distributing sweets to my friends.} \end{cases}$

This will encourage students to use gerunds as objects in a continuous discourse in a natural context.

c) **Level:** Secondary

Grammar: Articles and Prepositions.

Procedure: Think of a number of telegraphic messages. Ask the students to expand them into complete statements. This will require them to insert articles and prepositions wherever necessary.

e.g. Exams postponed. Cancel ticket.

The examinations have been postponed. Hence the ticket you have booked for my return may be cancelled.

e.g. Arriving Madras Second G.T. Meet Station.

I am arriving in Madras on the second of this month by the G.T. Express. Please meet me at the station.

In fact the exercise could be adapted for other areas of grammar as well, e.g. Conjuctions.

d) **Level:** Secondary

Grammar: Future Simple/Reported Speech.

Procedure: Divide the students into groups. Ask them to choose one of the group members to be the fortune-teller. He should sit apart while the other members of the group go to him one by one with questions like, "What will be my career?", "When will I get married?", "Will I become famous ?" etc. They should note down his/her answers and come back to report them to the whole group.

e.g. He said that I would become a Professor of English.

He said that I would get married at the age of twenty-eight, etc.

ACTIVITY

2. Try out any one of the games/activities presented above. Carefully observe the reactions of the students. Then write down how their reactions differ from their response to traditional exercises.

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3. Choose any area of grammar and prepare a game/activity to teach it. You could use popular advertisements shown over TV.

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19.6 GUIDELINES FOR USING GRAMMAR GAMES/ GRAMMAR PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

a) To begin with, when learners are not familiar with the new approach, games could be used to supplement the main course. Later, as teachers and learners acquire greater familiarity, games may be used as substitute for parts of the course.

b) We must remember to choose a game appropriate to the level of the learner. The instructions should be clear. We may also use the mother tongue to explain the rules of the games, if necessary.

c) At the beginning all learners may not participate enthusiastically. Some may feel shy and inhibited. Do not compel them to participate. A time will come when they are willing to participate.

d) The teacher should be alert and note when learners begin to get tired of a game. At this stage, she should stop and change over to another activity. Otherwise there is the danger that learners may develop grammar game fatigue.

e) In the course of playing a game, learners are sure to make mistakes. However the teacher should not stop the game in order to correct the mistakes. (S)he should quietly note down the mistakes without interrupting the game, and take them up for discussion later.

f) Grammar games could be used in three ways:

i) before presenting a structure — to diagnose learner's knowledge,

ii) after presenting a structure — as feedback to find out how much learning has taken place,

iii) as revision.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4. Each one of the above guidelines is based on an important principle of language teaching. Try to infer these principles. Example,

a) Introduction of any change should be gradual; otherwise it may fail due to learner/teacher residence.

b) ....

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c) ....

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d) ....

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19.7 TYPES OF GRAMMAR GAMES

Rinvolucri (1984) divides games into four types:

a) **Competitive Games:** This include traditional games like "noughts and crosses", "snakes and ladder", "double or quits", etc., which have been adapted to highlight a specific grammar point. Here students are asked to think consciously about grammar. These games pose a cognitive challenge.

b) **Collaborative Games:** In accordance with the humanistic approach, these games require warm cooperation among students rather than competition. The teacher generally remains in the background and plays the role of a facilitator.

c) **Awareness Activities:** Here the students engage in activities which require them to think and feel about human relationships e.g. their childhood, friends, etc. Indirectly they practise grammar. The students' focus is on **what** they are saying, not on the form they are using. On the other hand, the teacher's job is to control the structures.

d) **Grammar though Drama:** During these activities, students are active, they practise grammar through movement; when students are shouting or disinterested these games are ideal. Or when you have a set of lively youngsters with a lot of energy to expend, this is the best way of channelising it.

Given below is a sample for each type:

a) **Competitive Games**

Game: Find Who

Level: Secondary

Grammar: Simple Past - Active/Passive

Give each student the following sheet, which they have to complete by locating the appropriate person from among themselves. Find a person, who, when aged between 3 and 10.

a)   rode a bike

b)   bit his father

c)   broke his leg

d)   had chickenpox

e)   fought with other children

f)   slept in the afternoons

g)   was spanked for stealing sweets

h)   was often made to stand in the corner

i)   was forced to drink milk.

Now the students must go around and find various people to whom these things happened. They should then write the name of the person on their sheet. Make sure that for each item they enter a different name. The winner is the person who gets the most names soonest.

(Adopted from Rinvolucri)

b) **Collaborative Games**

Game: Sentence Collage

Level: Any

Grammar: World Order

Take a long sentence for example, Look dad, if you let me have my dress made the way I want, I'll have it done by your tailor.

Put each word on a separate slip of paper. Divide the class into groups of seven. Give each group a complete set of words. Ask them to form a sentence into which all the sentences fit grammatically and intelligibly. They may come out with different sentence, which is fine.

(Adopted from Rinvolucri)

c) **Awareness Activities**

Game: True Names and False Professions

Level: Primary

Grammar: Sentences with linking verb; vocabulary (professions)

Organise the students into groups of fifteen. First give your real name and a false profession, beginning with the first letter of your name, e.g. I am Peter the painter.

Now ask the student next to you to repeat your name and profession and then add his own.

(e.g.) He is Peter the Painter. I am Tina the Tailor, etc. The last person will have quite a few names and professions to remember!

(Frank & Rinvolucri)

271

d) **Grammar through Drama**

Game: One idea at a time

Level: Primary/Secondary

Grammar: Adjectives

Ask a learner to volunteer. (S)he should think of an adjective and mime it. Others should try to guess what (s)he is miming. An example is provided.

Learner 1	:	Are you tired?
Mimer	:	(Shakes head)
Learner 2	:	Are you lazy?
Mimer	:	(Shakes head)
Learner 3	:	Are you bored?
Mimer	:	(Nods head)

(Wright et. al.)

ACTIVITY

4. Think of any popular game you have enjoyed playing. Can you adapt it to teach any specific area of grammar?

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19.8   TEACHING GRAMMAR RULES

At some point, specially in higher classes, i.e. secondary or senior secondary, you may have to teach grammar rules and provide detailed explanations to enable learners to avoid pitfalls of incorrect expression and to secure reasonable accuracy. How would you go about organising such grammar lessons?

In a traditional grammar classroom (refer to the first paragraph in the introduction) a teacher announced the grammar item that would be taught, gave the definition, the rules related to the particular item and then usually followed it up with an exercise where the item taught was practised. The learners on their part were expected to learn the rules and definitions by heart and apply them wherever necessary. Such **deductive** methods usually weakened the initiative of the learner and gave him/her no opportunity to think about the rules or the situations in which it was to be applied.

Language experts now suggest that a grammar class should be organised in a slightly different manner. They are of the opinion that the teacher should encourage students to formulate certain rules by working through a lot of examples. As the learners have a sense of achievement in reaching their own conclusions (through principle of discovery), they remember the rules for a longer time. The different stage of such a grammar class can be summarised as follows:

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1. Working with Examples ───→  2. Formulating Rules ─┐
                                                      │
4. Reinforcement of Rules ←───  3. Practice Exercises ←┘
 └→ 5. Enabling Exercises
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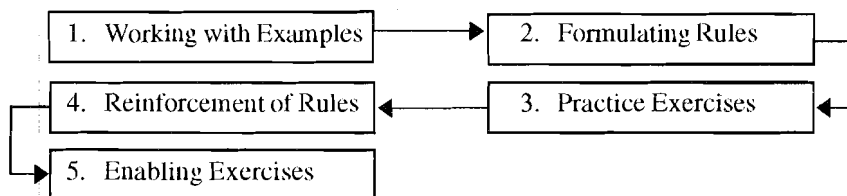
However, the problem of this kind of an approach is the time required and the thoughtfully planned correlation between the text and grammar item presented.

A teacher, despite his/her best intentions, may be compelled to teach directly a set of grammar rules. For example, students often use the double past tense. In such cases the teacher can save a lot of time by pointing out that the tense marker is used only **once** in sentences like.

"He **did book** his tickets for the concert a week back" or "I took a lot of pains over this embroidery, I **didn't finish** it in a hurry and **not**". (He **did booked** his tickets ...etc. or I **didn't finished** it in a hurry.)

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Think of a grammar area where your students make a lot of mistakes. How will you help your students to correct such mistakes. Mention at least two ways.

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19.9 LET US SUM UP

- Grammar should be enjoyable and help learners to improve their skills in reading and writing.

- Grammar games provide practice in grammar in an interesting way.

- Grammar Practice Activities provide practice in grammar in an enjoyable manner.

- The advantages of grammar games are providing opportunities for meaningful use of language; practice in the four language skills; usefulness at all levels of learning; diagnostic; offer genuine information gap.

- In order to make grammar games effective, we need to follow certain guidelines: gradual introduction; appropriacy to learner's level; no compulsion; variety; incidental correction.

- There are four major types of grammar games : competitive games; collaborative games; awareness activities; grammar through drama.

- In higher classes, a teacher may have to teach grammar to help students monitor their own progress and specially to edit their own written work.

- Students remember the rules of grammar if they themselves **discover** it by working through a lot of examples.

19.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. | **Traditional Exercises** | **Grammar Games** |
|---|---|
| Serious | Both serious and enjoyable |
| Mechanical practice | Meaningful practice |
| Learners conscious of learning grammar | Learners not conscious of learning grammar |
| Contrived | Related to real life |
| Individual work | Collaborative work |
| No information gap | Genuine information gap |

2. Advantages of grammar games. (Refer 19.3).

3. Open-ended. No one correct answer possible.

4. b) learner-centred;

    c) don't force learners if they are not ready;

    d) need for variety;

    e) incidental correction.

5. Open-ended

19.11   SUGGESTED READINGS

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Makey, Sardra L. (1985): *Teaching Grammar*, Pergamon Institute of English, Oxford.

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Ur, Penny (1988): *Grammar Practice Activities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

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Channel 1 - 10 (1990): Orient Longman Ltd., Madras.

UNIT 20 IMPROVING AND ASSESSING WRITING ABILITY

Structure

20.1 INTRODUCTION

You have already read in Units 16 and 17 that writing can refer to both the process of writing and the written products. You also know that as a teacher you have to take care of both these aspects. When you direct your learner's attention to writing as a process, your aim is to provide constructive feedback (as opposed to awarding marks or grades) - to provide maximum support for redrafting, rethinking, rewriting parts of the texts and editing. On the other hand, when you are assessing writing as a product, you are more concerned with finding out how well the learners have mastered 'the many and varied skills of writing', viz.

– language use	:	the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences.
– mechanical skills	:	the ability to write a neat hand, use correct punctuation and spelling.
– treatment of context	:	the ability to think and develop thoughts.
– stylistic skills	:	the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs for focus and effect.
– judgement skills	:	the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

On such occasions, you have to award marks or grades to your students' writing and tell them where they stand, what they have achieved and what still has to be taken care of.

In this unit we will look at approaches and methods to assess both these aspects of writing. But before we proceed further, we must bear in mind a few things.

a) "There is no simple transition from spoken to written language". Students have to move from casual (colloquial) speech to formal acceptable language, from spontaneous to planned language use, from known audience to unknown reader. In India, this transition becomes more difficult because of students translating some experiences literally from their mother tongue. Not only is a tolerance of errors essential, but also of Indianisms and certain adolescent slang expressions.

b) Students do not learn particular features of written language once and for all at a particular stage. Like all skills, the ability to write well develops slowly and gradually. Therefore, writing tasks should be repeated with varying degrees of complexity and difficulty at all stages.

275

c) Students show different ability on tasks of different kinds. Therefore only a relatively broad range of tasks demanding use of different varieties of language can provide reliable assessment.

d) As teachers, we need to use a combination of informal (continuous evaluation) and formal (unit test/term end) assessment to measure learner ability.

20.2   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

● involve students in assessing their own writing;

● assess systematically students' written work;

● writing tasks for assessment; and

● devise and use a marking scheme for marking written composition.

20.3   STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN ASSESSMENT

Research studies by Brian Johnston (1987) suggest that when English teachers avoid grades or marks and involve students in assessing their own work, then the students are more motivated to improve their writing than are students who continuously receive grades or marks. He recommends that teachers should "encourage student involvement in arriving at assessments by : teaching students self assessment and peer group assessment skills, teaching students to specify the aspects of their work that they want responses to; and teaching students to negotiate assessments".

Tricia Hedge (1988) advocates students' involvement in the designing of a grading scheme on the grounds that this raises " student awareness of what makes a good piece of writing" and "prevents misunderstanding about the role of grading in writing classrooms". Let us work at some of the ways of promoting student involvement and motivation in improving their writing skills.

Self Assessment : At the secondary level, when students develop greater understanding of the writing process, it is a good idea to give them time to read through and revise their own writing, to give advice about what they should look for in their own writing and show them examples of revised scripts. (They can see how some other students mark a script for revision). The ability to identify problems in their own writing is inculcated through this process and with your (i.e the teacher's) help a good deal of effective revision can be done.

Pair Work Editing : Students can work in pairs, correcting and helping with each other's work. They can talk about their ideas for their writing with each other and once the first draft in written, exchange it with the partner to mark the work and write comments. In case of doubt or clarification of some points, they can seek your help.

As pair work editing takes place immediately after the writing, it makes it useful and meaningful to the writer, Also students learn to recognise errors in their own writing by suggesting corrections in their partner's work. Also it makes them think about clarity and acceptability in writing.

Negotiating Assessment : With your students (consent) prioritise the criteria for assessment. You can either write them on the blackboard or use photocopies of the following:

276

Marking Compositions

What do you thing is most important in a composition? Put these things in order
of importance (1-10).

correct grammar	☐
length	☐
originality of ideas	☐
spelling	☐
punctuation	☐
neat handwriting	☐
a good range of vocabulary	☐
complex and well structured sentences	☐
good organisation with introduction	☐
body and conclusion keeping to the title	☐

What would you prefer ?

● marks out of 10

● a letter grade

(Adapted from: Tricia Hedge (1988): *Resource Book for Teachers: Writing.*)

Have a class discussion to prioritise these criteria and having arrived at some kind of
consensus, use the criteria for self or peer assessment. All these activities for involving
students in the assessment of their own work will be most effective when the criteria for
assessment are understood and accepted both by the students and teachers.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of unit.

1. Which aspects of writing would you give more importance to:

● at the primary level?

● at the secondary level?

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2. Why should not all writing tasks be given marks or grades?

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3. What problems do you foresee (in your classroom) in involving students in
assessment? How can you solve them?

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277

4. In which of the four stages of writing (viz. planning, translating, reviewing and editing) can you involve students in assessing their own work?

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20.4 DEVISING A MARKING CODE

There is no doubt that students' confidence in the exploration of ideas and manner of their presentation is best nurtured in a "helpful, non-threatening atmosphere, where experiments in language are not only acceptable but encouraged". Nevertheless, there has to be some routine correction of technical errors and these surface features can be taken care of by devising a code of correction. Students should not get a copy marked with red ink with no inkling of what is amiss and therefore with no opportunity for self correction. Also a middling or poor grade at the end of composition without detailed comments for further improvement has a negative impact on students.

Many teachers use some symbols which tell the students where or what the error is so that they can correct them when they get their copies. Some common symbols which are used for the purpose are as follows:

Sp	=	wrong spelling
T	=	wrong tense
P	=	wrong punctuation
( )	=	rearrange ideas, reword and rewrite this part
IR/NR	=	irrelevant/not required
W.w	=	wrong word
		etc.

You can add more items depending on your requirement. Also just a 'T' in the margin may not help some students. You may perhaps write the correct tense in some cases.

Detailed comments at the end of the work, though time consuming, are specially beneficial to those motivated students who like to monitor their own development.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

5. Look at the following sample of student writing. Use a code of marking to correct the paragraph and write detailed comments at the end.

Education for All (taken from an answer script of a Govt. Girls School student)

India is a developing country. The 75% people of India are poor. In them most of thepeople illiterate and they had to suffer in calculating money, they are cheated by shopkeepers etc. It is the duty of the Govt. to literate the people. Many private social workers should also help the Govt. in this work. Nowadays, the Literacy mission has been started its aim is to literate more and more people of India. The advertisements are given in Delhi Doordarshan, Radio etc. In school there should be a rule that each student teach one person. An extra gracing marks could also to them if needed. If the people of India could be fully literated, then the country would progress and could become a developed country.

278

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20.5 SETTING WRITING TASKS FOR ASSESSMENT

We have mentioned at the beginning of this unit that we must set a number of writing tasks (and not just one composition) for purposes of assessment. Can you write two reasons why this is important?

a) ....
   ....

b) ....
   ....

If you have written that students need to be familiar with different methods of developing ideas (depending on the text type) and that different task types demand different language use, you are right. (While a personal letter can be written in informal language, a report has to be very precise and formal, while a picture composition demands a chronological development of a narrative, arguing for a cause implies the use of persuasive language with lots of evidence to support the line of thought/argument.) If we rely too heavily on one writing task, we may not assess a student properly because students perform differently on different tasks. Hence, the combination of marks on different tasks is a better guide to student competence and proficiency. J.B. Heaton and others suggest that we should not provide any internal choice to the students in a particular task (in the unit test or term tests). Not only does this provide a common basis for evaluation, but it also prevents the candidate from wasting time on choosing an item. On the other hand, when writing tasks are set for (internal) continuous evaluation purposes, a choice of topics will cater to the interests of each student. (Please note that we do just the opposite - any question paper from schools will show you that there is a lot of internal choice in paragraph or letter writing but the homework set is the same for everybody in a class. Well, we do have to unlearn to learn).

Let us look at some writing tasks which are usually set to evaluate the writing ability of students.

1. • Write a paragraph of about 100 words on

    i)   Lavish Living

    ii) Patriotism.   (10 marks)

    • Write a letter to the Editor of The Indian Express about the menace of loudspeakers at night. Sign yourself as Hem.   (8 marks)

In recent years, those Boards of Education (like West Bengal or CBSE) which have adopted the Communicative Approach to language teaching are introducing a different type of test to evaluate writing ability. Let us look at some examples:

1. Ashok Mathur of Class VIII A has just passed his annual examination. Two of his books are in fairly good condition and he wants to sell them at reduced rates. He puts up a notice on the school notice board giving all the necessary details. Write this notice in the space below, using not more than 30 words. Try to make the notice catch people's attention. You may use the space on the side of this page for rough work.

                                                                              (5 marks)

2. You have met the following handicapped persons. You want to put up the information on your school notice board. Do it in two simple paragraphs in about 120 words.

S.No.	Name	Parents	Handicap	Employment	Award won so far
1.	Parimal Roy	Father: Biren Roy, Army Officer Mother: Uma Roy, Teacher	Unable to walk (both legs affected by polio)	Manager in a chemical factory	State Award for Employees 1988
2.	Bina Mandal	Father: Teacher Mother: Teacher	Blind and slight deformity in leg	Music teacher in a music academy	State Award, Handicapped, 1989

3. Your friend Suman Mehta is a boarder of Eden School Hostel, Calcutta-96. Write in about 100 words a letter to Suman advising him to give up the habit of smoking which he has recently picked up from some of his senior friends. You may stress the bad effects of smoking using the following points.

i) affects the mouth, nose, and other respiratory organs

ii) develops cancer risks: mainly lung cancer

iii) causes growth of tumour and heart diseases

iv) increases blood pressure

v) causes pre-mature death.

(12 marks)

4. Use the following flow-chart to write a paragraph describing how **hand-made paper** is made ready for market.
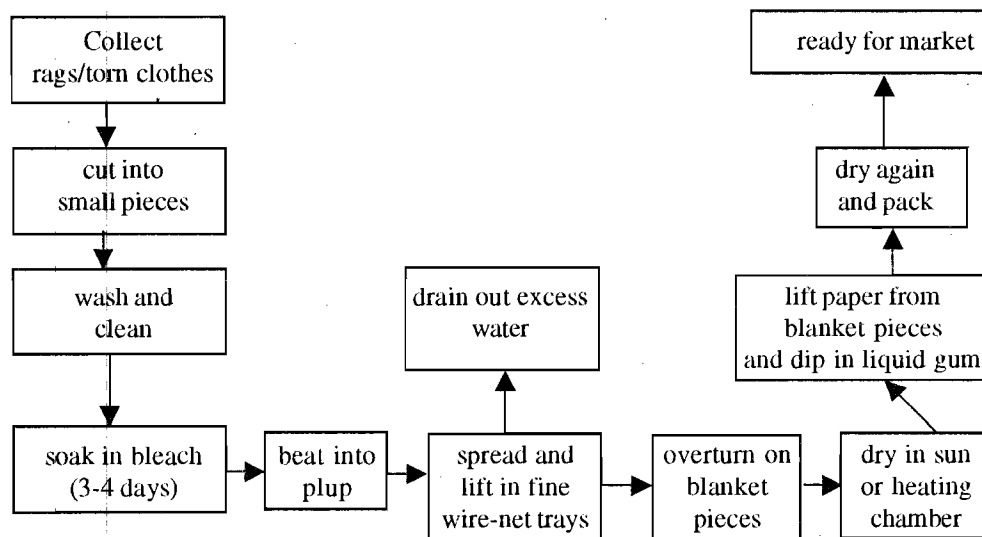
What changes do you find in these tasks? A meaningful specific situation ensures that the students have something to say and a purpose for saying it. They also have an audience in mind when they write. The input or information which the students have to incorporate in their writing is much more. So they don't waste much time chewing the pen trying to figure out what they should write. As the task is more controlled, the teacher can evaluate all the students on the same parameters.

(14 marks)

280

Check Your Progress

Note : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

6. Use this advertisement to set a task on letter writing. Provide a specific situation and clear instructions.

HIMACHAL TOURISM'S

SPECIAL PACKAGE

PAY FOR	STAY FOR
2 DAYS	3 DAYS

Here's an exciting gift coming your way from Himachal Tourism. Just pay for a two-day stay at any of our 42 hotels and have the third day **ABSOLUTELY FREE!** Two children upto the age of 9 can also lodge with their parents **FREE**

This offer valid upto 31st March 96 only

For *reservation contact:*
HIMACHAL TOURISM
Chanderlok Building,
36, Janpath,
New Delhi-110001
Tel.: (011)3325320, 3324764
Fax:(011) 3731072
**MANALI RESORTS
HOSPITALITY SERVICES**
UG-49, Som Dutt Chambers-II
Bhikaji Cama Place
New Delhi-110066
Tel.: 672474, 6116762
Fax: 011-6119073

SKIING COURSES ALSO ON

HIMACHAL TOURISM

NOBODY CAN GIVE YOU HIMACHAL BETTER THAN US

7. Read these writing tasks given below:

a) A newspaper in Mahapur wants to publish an article about the increasing awareness of health and diet. The table below shows some of the changes in Mahapur between 1970 and 1990. Using this information together with your own ideas from the unit on 'Health and Medicine' write the article in the space provided below.

(10 marks)

Health in Mahapur	1970	1990
• Number of Yoga + Health clubs	2	10
• People using non-refined oil	45%	10%
• No. of magazines on health care	3	10
• TV/Radio programmes on health	10%	6%
• Death rate	15%	11.7%

8. During his holiday, Rohit has visited Yoku and Belagudi. Below you can see pictures of these two places. Choose one picture of these two places. Choose one place and write a post card from Rohit to his friend Gita Ramaswamy describing what he saw and what he liked about the place. Write the post card in the space provided on the side. You may use the space at the side of this page for rough work.

(10 marks)

281

i)   What is being tested in each of these tasks ?

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ii) Which sentence tells you that writing as a process is also been taken care of in this task ?

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iii) What changes do you find in these tasks from traditional letter writing and paragraph writing items ?

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20.6   GRADING THE COMPOSITION

Composition may be marked according to one of the two methods : the **impressionistic** method or the **analytic** method.

The **impressionistic** or **holistic** scoring involves the awarding of a single score to a piece of writing on the basis of an overall impression. In open ended tasks (where no hints are provided for the learner to fall back on like essays, paragraphs or letters) it is quite possible for a composition to appeal to certain examiner but not to another. On the other hand, the same composition can be marked by three or four examiners and then the marks can be combined or averaged. Such **multiple-marking** procedure reduces subjectivity. But few teachers have the opportunity to get three or four colleagues to help them with multiple marking and so impressionistic marking usually becomes the subjective impression of the teacher.

The **analytic** method, on the other hand, depends on a marking scheme where the total marks are spread over separate aspects of the task like grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, form, etc. An example is given below:

	5	4	3	2	1
Grammar			X		
Vocabulary				X	
Mechanics		X			
Fluency				X	
Relevance		X			

Total = 14

Source : J.B. Heaton. (1988): *Writing English Language Tests.*

If this kind of a scheme is attached to the end of a composition, then the students are able to see how their particular grade has been obtained.

Flexibility regarding divisions needs to be maintained in the analytical method. In lower classes, grammar and mechanics are usually given more importance; hence fluency can be omitted. In higher classes, originality of ideas and organisation of thought become more important than mechanics of writing. Again, it is not necessary to give equal weightage to these different aspects. The teacher can decide on the weightage to be given to different aspects. The students score is the sum of the weighted scores.

In the writing assessment scale prepared by the CBSE English Language Teaching Project Team the total marks of 10 are divided as follows: Content 4; Fluency 3; Accuracy 3. These marks are then shown as a scale where how the marks are to be awarded further specified as shown below.

Writing Assessment Scale

Content/4

0   The answer bears almost no relation to the task set.

1   The answer bears limited relevance to task set. There are many gaps in the treatment of the topic and/or pointless repetitions.

2   Much of the answer is in line with the task set, but there is some repetition, redundancy and/or omission.

3   The answer is largely relevant and adequate, with little repetition redundancy or omission.

4   The answer is fully relevant and adequate to the task set.

Fluency/3

0   Ideas are fragmentary, not organised in a coherent manner, and the theme is not clear.

1   Although the general theme is clear, ideas are not logically presented and the style may be inappropriate.

2   The general theme is clear. Main ideas are adequately presented in a fairly appropriate style, but supporting details are not always coherent.

3   The general theme, main ideas and supporting details are all well organised and presented in a style appropriate to the situation.

Accuracy/3

0   Inadequate vocabulary even for the basic part of the writing task, most grammatical patterns inaccurate, frequent punctuations spelling errors.

1   Frequent grammatical and/or vocabulary inaccuracies, poor use of punctuation and spelling.

2   Use of vocabulary is adequate, though perhaps sometimes limited. There are still some minor grammatical, punctuation and/or spelling errors.

3   Uses appropriate vocabulary with hardly any grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors.

Layout

Where layout is to be assessed, up to one mark may be deducted as follows :

−1   The work is inappropriately or inaccurately laid out.

−1/2 The layout is generally appropriate, but with a few minor errors.

−0   The layout is appropriate and accurate.

Both the impressionistic and the analytic methods have their own advantages and disadvantages as we can see from the table below. Depending on particular circumstances the teacher can decide whether to use the impressionistic or the analytic method.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Holistic	• Scoring very fast	• Subjective • Less reliable
Analytic	• Students can see how a particular grade is obtained	• Time consuming • The overall effect of a piece of writing is not considered.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

9. Read the following sample of student writing to the task set.

Q : You are correspondent of "The Hindustan Times". Write a brief report for your paper on 'The Children's Day' celebrations in Chhatrasal Stadium.

(10 marks)

Student Response

Delhi : 14 Nov. : HT Corr : Yesterday, the day of Childrens the 14th Nov. was celebrated with great pomp and show at Chhatrasal Stadium at 2 p.m. It was celebrated by Govt. Girls Senior Secondary School of Bemani. The Chief Guest was Madan Lal Khurana. The childrens looked like flowers in their dresses of different colours. The Fancy Dress competition was held. The prizes were distributed to the winners. A Dance Programme was organised by XI class. The small children of II class showed the ribbon drill. After this sweets were distributed among the children. At 5 p.m. the occasion ended. The children went to their homes with their parents. The school staff came to see of the Chief Guest.

(Both question and answers taken from the question and answer script of a Govt. Girls School, Delhi.)

a) Make your own marking scheme for the analytic marking of the writing task.

b) Score the composition (by the analytic method) following your marking scheme.

10. Read the paragraph on Education for All:

a) Mark it using the impressionistic method.

b) What difference in attitude is there while correcting for feedback and marking for assessment?

20.7 LET US SUM UP

• As teachers you have to play several roles as guide, facilitator, and vigilant scorer.

• Not all writing work should be awarded grades or marks.

• Students feel motivated and involved if they understand the basis on which marks are awarded.

• Students should be involved in the assessment procedure in informal situations/daily classroom situations.

• A code of correction coupled with detailed comments can help motivated learners.

• A range of tasks demanding different registers, language use, methods of development should be used to assess students.

• No internal choice in items should be given while students are being assessed.

284

- Specific situations, writing contexts and clear instructions should be given with each and every writing task.

- Impressionistic and Analytic methods of marking have their own advantages and disadvantages.

- Analytic marking, though time consuming, is more reliable.

20.8   KEY WORDS

Analytical marking	:	a method in which a marking scheme is used. The marks are divided in value points/aspects to be covered.
Code of marking	:	symbols (understood by students) used to correct written work.
Holistic marking	:	(also called impresssionistic marking) a method of marking where a single score is awarded on basis of overall reading/assessment of the written work.
Multiple marking	:	the same script is marked by three or four examiners by the impressionistic method for greater reliability.
Pair editing	:	students work in pairs to correct/edit each other's work.
Self assessment	:	a student uses a set of assessment criteria to mark her own work.

20.9   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Primary level — mechanics of writing (neat handwriting, punctuation).

    Secondary level — originality of ideas, coherence and cohesion, range of vocabulary and syntactic structures, range, fluency and accuracy.

2. Students play it safe and try to anticipate what the teacher wants; students who constantly get poor grades are demotivated and devalue these grades.

3. Inter-personal and group dynamics have to be taken into account and pairs and groups need to be changed frequently - students would rate their friends high and not so good friends low - weak students may not be able to identify their own/others problems and errors.

    Teachers should move about in the class when the class is engaged in such activities and give her advice, suggestions wherever necessary; students should maintain a file where all writing tasks are kept - teachers can occasionally go through them.

4. Translating - self assessment; pair editing. Reviewing/rewriting.

5. Open-ended.

6. Open-ended.

7. Open-ended.

8. i)   table : to compare and contrast ideas and arrive at conclusions. Picture : description of a location/place of interest. And personal experiences and reactions.

    ii) last sentence - where planning, organisation of ideas and rough draft is being taken care of.

    iii) more information included in task so the students only have to transcode information from a table and write it in a paragraph form.

9. a)   Marking scheme showing weightage to relevance of ideas, fluency, accuracy and complexity of sentence structures.

    b)   Open-ended.

285

10. a) Open-ended.

   b) In both cases you ignore local errors, e.g. tense/article and concentrate on global errors which involve overall strucrture of a sentence or break down in communication. But, while correcting you use the correcting code to provide opportunities for self correction, self improvement. But marking is not for diagnosing but assessing the level of achievement.

20.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Brindley, Susan (ed.) (1994): *Teaching English*, Routledge, London.

Hedge, Tricia (1988): *Writing*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Johnston, Brian (1987): *Assessing English*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

Hugues, Arthur (1990): *Testing for Language Teachers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

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UNIT 21 TESTING GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Structure

21.1   INTRODUCTION

At present the main thrust in language teaching is on the teaching of language as communication; to enable the learners to engage more effectively in natural "communication activities". To do so the learner must produce grammatically acceptable sentences appropriate for the occasion in the target language.

Although this is in total contrast to the earlier approach of learning grammatical patterns of the target language (with or without social contexts), yet the crucial role of the grammatical system in the successful communication of ideas and intentions cannot be denied. "The shift in emphasis in language teaching programmes has neither eliminated nor even reduced the need for teachers to assess their students' grasp of structural items of the target language. The requirement to assess grammatical competence is as necessary today as it ever was."(**Pauline H. Rea** : *An Alternative Approach to Testing Grammatical Competence*). It has been long accepted that the student's ability to recognise or produce correct forms is more important than his/her knowledge of grammatical terminology.

In this lesson we will discuss in detail both the **discrete** and **integrated** item types you can use to assess your learners' grammatical competence.

21.2   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

● explain the shift of thrust in teaching and testing of grammar;

● distinguish between discrete and integrated tests of grammar;

● explain the usefulness of different types of question to test discrete points of grammar;

● discuss the different types of integrated items for testing grammar.

21.3   DISCRETE AND INTEGRATED ITEMS

For many years, different aspects of English grammar like determiners (any, some), modals (may, can, ought to) or tenses (present continuous or past perfect) were assessed through single sentences.

For example :

Fill in the blanks as directed.

a) Use appropriate words :

    i) This year it has rained harder _____ ever before.

    ii) You cannot leave _____ you have finished your work.

b) Use appropriate forms of the verbs given in brackets.

    i) The concert _____ when we reached. (just, begin)

    ii) Mother _____ up the house before the guests arrived. (tidy).

Such isolated single sentences provided no context to test the students' ability to recognise or produce correct grammatical forms. Moreover, the items did not test the students' ability to use language to express meanings, attitude, emotions, etc. But such discrete items focus on the learner's attention on a particular aspect of grammar and make it possible for the learner to score marks (even in stressful conditions) in examinations.

Integrated items, on the other hand, provide a situation/context in which different grammatical aspects are tested at one go. Look at the following example :

Complete the passage below by writing one suitable word in each space.

Sohna : Jagdish Prasad is a boy of thirteen and serves food, tea, etc. to customers in a roadside hotel. His father, _____ tills a few bighas of land in his village in Bihar, is a small farmer. Poverty and drought forced him _____ his elder brother, who works in a factory, to seek means of livelihood here near Delhi.

Jagdish Prasad's day begins _____ 5 a.m. in the morning and he does not go to bed _____ it is 11 p.m. at night.

Thus the context clues enable the learner to derive the global meaning and supply the omitted items accordingly.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

        b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Is teaching and testing of grammar important in the Communicative Approach to teaching English? Give reasons for your answer.

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2. How does a discrete item get its name?

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3. What is the most important differences between discrete and integrated items which test the grammatical competence of learners.

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288

21.4 MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS

Predominant among the item types which test discrete grammar points are:

- multiple choice items
- completion items
- word order items
- transformation items
- matching items
- error identification items

We will discuss these item types in the next few sections and in this section we will begin with multiple choice items.

Multiple Choice Items are constructed in two parts :

- the stem
- three or four distractors and the key

The stem can be an **incomplete statement** and the correct option completes the meaning, e.g.

Choose the correct word with a tick (√) to complete the sentence.

a) After I _____ the letter, I realised it was unstamped.

    A.   was mailing

    B.   had mailed

    C.   had been mailing

    D.   mailed

b) I _____ come to Delhi in February, but I am not very certain about it.

    A.   must

    B.   will

    C.   can

    D.   may

The stem may be a **complete statement** based on which the student may have to ask a question. For example

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Choose the right question with a tick (√) to which the word(s) is/are in bold, the answer.

Bulbul and Meenakshi of Class XI D are planning and organising the Teacher's Day programme of this year.

A.   What are Bulbul and Meenakshi planning ?

B.   In which class do Bulbul and Meenakshi study ?

C.   Who are planning the Teacher's Day programme this year ?

D.   Where are Bulbul and Meenakshi going this year ?

The stem may be a **complete sentence** for which the correct answer has to chosen. E.g.

"If it rains, the picnic will be cancelled".

This sentence means :

A.   If it rains the picnic will not be cancelled.

B.   If it does not rain the picnic will be cancelled.

C.   Unless it rains the picnic will not be cancelled.

D.   The picnic is cancelled because it is raining.

289

While framing multiple choice items we should be careful **not** to use a wrong grammatical form as a distractor e.g.

Choose the correct word with a tick (√) to complete this sentence.

I _____ that you would bring some sandwiches.

A. think

B. thinks

C. thinked (this distractor is unacceptable)

D. thought

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

4. What is wrong with the following multiple choice items ?

Choose the correct word with a tick (√) to complete the meaning.

a) I will wait for you _____ the Rajghat bus stop.

A. near

B. at

C. beside

D. behind

b) Are you going to Calcutta next week ?

A. I may.

B. I will.

C. I ought to.

D. I needn't.

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5. How can you improve item no. 4 ?

....

6. Frame your multiple choice items to test your learners' knowledge of grammar.

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7. What difficulties, if any, did you have while framing these items ?

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21.5 COMPLETION TASKS AND WORD ORDER ITEMS

Completion items are a useful means of testing students' ability to produce acceptable and appropriate forms of language. The omitted words have to be filled by the learner.

For example :

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1. Fill in the blanks with **a/an** or **the** where necessary.

   a)   Paris is _____ capital of France.

   b)   _____ Mr. Nayar wanted to meet you.

2. Fill in the blanks with a personal pronoun. The person and number for each pronoun are given in the brackets.

   Raghav and _____ (first person, singular) decided to clean the house.

   Raghav insisted that _____ (third person, singular, masculine) would dust all the furniture. _____ (first person, plural) tossed a coin to decide.

In the lower classes, however, fill in the blank items can be made less difficult by providing a set of words at the end or some choice in the sentence itself. For example:

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1. Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word.

   a)   There is a bridge _____ the river. (**on, up, across**)

   b)   An old man is sitting _____ the tree. (under, over)

2. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words given in the word box.

   a)   Manish _____ do this sum. It is difficult.

   b)   Rahul _____ know my address. Do you ?

   c)   Find the answer yourself. I _____ tell you.

   | **doesn't, can't, isn't, won't** |

Completion items, without given options, have the advantage of measuring production rather than recognition, testing the ability to use the most appropriate word in the given blanks e.g.

Fill in the blanks with appropriate **articles** and **prepositions** to complete the following text.

The lion safari _____ Nandan Kanan is _____ largest one _____ the country and covers an area _____ nearly 20 hectares.

J.B. Heaton (1988) in *Writing English Language Tests* provides an interesting example where an isolated sentence can be interpreted in a different manner and hence filled in with another set of correct prepositions.

As soon as possible the next day I sent my story _____ the editor _____ the magazine _____ which my best work usually appeared.

Heaton argues that it is quite possible to write a story **about** an editor and send the story about the editor **to** a magazine. As teachers, you must either be so careful that there can be no two answers or you have to give credit for all acceptable answers although you may not have thought of these while writing the item.

In **word order items** a learner is required to arrange items or parts of sentence in a meaningful and acceptable order.

291

For example :

1. Make a meaningful sentence by putting the words in proper order.

   a) any questions/The elephant's child/asked

   b) The crocodile/the elephant's child/for dinner/wanted to eat.

2. Make questions from these mixed words and phrases. Don't forget the capital letters and the questions marks.

   a. mrs. nag/principal/is/of the school.

   b. at the party/was/last week/she.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

Fill in the blank with a suitable determiner.

8. I want _____ sugar in my tea.

9. How can you improve this item?

10. You must be familiar with substitution tables like the one given below.

She He	goes	to school every
We You	go	morning.

How is making sentences from this kind of a table different from a word order item?

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21.6 TRANSFORMATION ITEMS

Transformation items are extremely useful in testing learner competence in producing correct sentences. You are familiar with the following kind of transformation items.

1. a) Rewrite the following in **Indirect Speech.**

   i) "Keep quiet, boys. Do not make any noise" said the teacher.

   ii) I said to the teacher, "Please explain this question to me".

   b) Telephone wires have been cut.

   (Change the voice.)

   c) There was hardly a young prince who did not desire to win her for his wife.
   (Rewrite after removing negatives.)

   d) Shall I ever forget those happy days ?

   (Rewrite as assertive sentence)

2. He dismissed his old ministers and advisers. This was a foolish act.
   (Combine these sentences into one beginning with. "It was foolish ....")

An important point which you should keep in mind while framing such transformation items concerns the marks to be allotted to the item. Let us look at this example :

> Rewrite this sentence in reported speech.
>
> He asked me, "Will you come to the club tomorrow ?"

What marks would you allot to this item ? Write it in this blank space _____ .

If you have written three then you are correct. If not, then you are wrong. Let us see why.

How many changes including those of punctuation do you expect your learners to make ? Atleast six?

> He asked me **if I** would come to the club **the next** day.
>
> (Removal of comma, inverted commas and question mark (replaced by fullstop).
>
> Introduction of if/whether, change in pronoun, change of adverb).

If for every change that you expect your learner to make you allot 1/2 (half) mark, you must have three marks for the six changes. Otherwise you'll find it very difficult to award marks to partially correct answers.

Check Your Progress

Notes :   a)   Write your answers in the space given below.

b)   Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

11.   Frame four transformation items testing your learner's ability to change narration, voice, sentence types and degrees of comparison.

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12.   a)   How many changes have to be made in the following item ?

The truck is being unloaded.

(Change into Active Voice.)

....

....

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....

b)   What marks should you allot to this item ?

....

....

c)   What will your problem be if you allot one mark (1 mark) to this item ?

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21.7   ERROR IDENTIFICATION ITEMS

In an **error identification item** a learner is required to identify and sometimes rectify the error. Such items can be written in either of the two ways.

293

Simple Identification

Which of the underlined words is wrong in the given sentences ?

a) I know a little Hindi, I can understand when my friends speak.

b) I am worried that you'll be angry to me.

In which part of the following sentences does the error lie ?

a) Mrs. Raghavan/enjoys/looking the children/playing in the park.

b) Sun/is shining/brightly today,/isn't it ?

Identification and Correction

1. Some parts of this mini-dialogue is incorrect. Identify it and write the correct form in the blank provided.

   A : Ouch !

   B : **What've you done** ?   _____

   A : **I have been hurting** my foot.   _____

2. Correct the errors in the following sentences.

   a) I have not had some breakfast this morning.

   b) Bring me any water to drink.

Error identification items can only be effectively used when the learners have acquired some competence in the language. However, you can focus your students' attention on the common errors in the area which is being dealt with the classroom at that particular time, e.g.

The following sentences have **two** errors each. Rewrite the sentences after correcting the errors.

a) A student who broke an window should stand up now.

b) Earth revolves round sun.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

13. Do you think that a student's writing or speech can be the most helpful source for error identification items ? Support your answer with examples.

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14. Frame four error identification items.

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21.8 INTEGRATED GRAMMAR TASKS

An important change has been brought in (especially in the testing of grammar) by the Boards which have introduced the Communicative Syllabus. Integrated grammar tasks, with a lot of emphasis on meaningful situations and global comprehension of the text used are being used. Four different task types are being used these days.

1. **Location and Insertion of Omitted Words**

    In the following paragraph, one word has been omitted in each line. Mark the place where you think a word has been omitted, using '/'. Write the word you think has been omitted in the space provided. The first correction has been done as an example.

    There/no doubt about it - fish is very good for you   **is**

    Not only it contain protein and vitamins, as   _____

    well as minerals such as calcium and iron, but it

    can also low in fat and calories. In   _____

    white fish fat content can be as little as   _____

    10% or 20%, and average serving provides   _____

    at least one third of the daily recommended amount   _____

    Niacin, which is vital for healthy skin.   _____

2. **Error Identification and Correction**

    The following passage is intended as a part of a **tourist** brochure, but it has not been edited. There is one error in each line. Underline each error and write your correction in the space provided. The first correction has been done as an example.

    Nishat Bagh, Kashmir

    Nishat Bagh, 11 Km. to the east of Srinagar is

    situate on the banks of the Dal Lake   situated

    with Zabarvan with the back. Water   _____

    is supplies to it by the Harvan Stream. It   _____

    commands a magnificent view of the lake

    but the snowcapped Pirpanjal mountain range.   _____

3. **Completion Items**

    Fill in each blank with one word that fits in the context. Read through the text once before you start filling in the blanks. (Remember that all the words will be grammatical/structural words). The first one has been done for you.

    <p align="center">Strange Silence at Zoo Lake.</p>

    The sprawling lake at the Alipore Zoo is no longer a favourite haunt for thousand of migratory birds _____ used to spend the winter months here. _____ a couple of years ago the tumultous cries _____ whistles of the "winter guests" from Siberia and _____ foothills of the Himalayas _____ be heard. But this year there is silence _____ the lake.

4. **Controlled Composition**

    Below you can see a cartoon. Complete the following paragraph reporting what happened in the cartoon.

    Vikas asked Vinay ....

    and Vinay replied...

    At this, Vikas regretted ....

    ....

    Hearing this, Vinay ....

    ....

    (If you look at it more carefully this is just another way of changing narration. An interesting but simple cartoon has been used to test the learners' knowledge of transformation instead of isolated sentences which do not have any relation with each other).
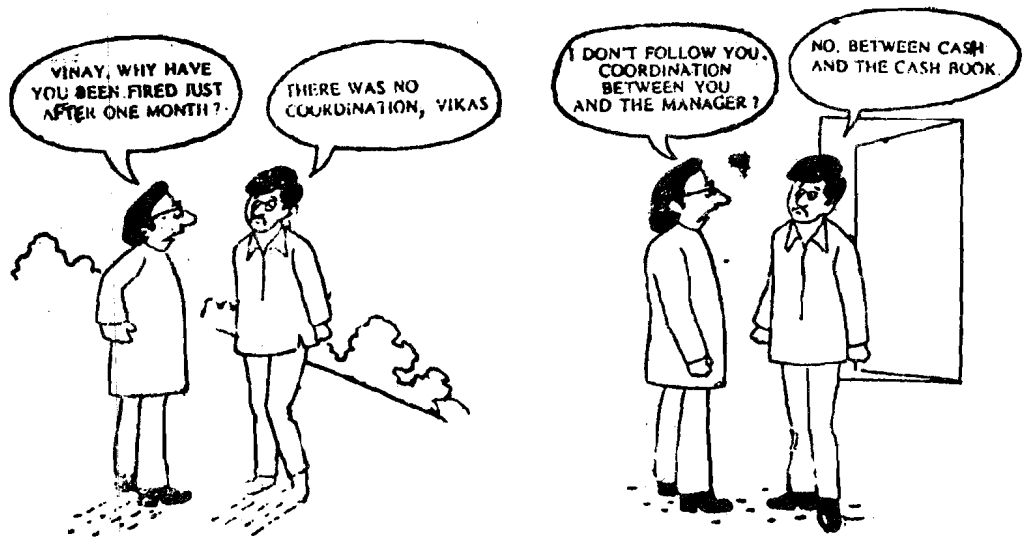
5. **Cloze Tests**

Another example of integrative approach in grammar testing is the use of **cloze tests** - which measure the learner's ability to negotiate meaning from the context despite gaps or interruptions.

In this kind of tests a passage is selected in which every seventh or ninth word is deleted and students have to fill in each gap using an appropriate word.

An example is given below :

Complete the passage by filling in the gaps.

Sometimes people sit up in bed and shout. Some people talk in their sleep, repeating phrases _____ during the day, or something else. They rarely _____ what they have said the next morning. Occassionally _____ may walk while they are asleep. Such sleep-walkers _____clumsily, bumping into furniture. Their eyes may be _____ and they matter to _____ . Unless they wake up they rarely remember anything the _____ day.

Apart from dreaming, the most common sleeping activity is _____ . Snores usually disturb other people, but not the _____ , although some people snore so loudly that they _____ themselves up too. The only way to stop _____ snoring is to wake them up.

In a cloze test each **acceptable** answer is awarded marks as it is not necessary that the learner would get the **exact** word which has been deleted. In the words of J.B. Heaton (1991), "If a reasonable equivalent is provided it should be acceptable".

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

15. What, from the students' point of view, are the advantages and disadvantages of the integrated grammar tasks ?

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296

21.9 LET US SUM UP

- The communicative approach to language teaching has not minimised the need and importance of grammar teaching and testing.

- The change in emphasis from learning of forms to language as communication has brought about changes in 'how' to test grammatical competence.

- Discrete items test single grammar points through isolated sentences.

- Integrated grammar tasks do not test one particular grammar point at one time. The tasks are always a number of sentences on a meaningful situation.

- Several items like completion, location and correction of errors or transformation exercises are common to both kinds of tasks.

21.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Yes. In the Communicative Approach accuracy and appropriacy have received more attention than ever before. Both are impossible to achieve without grammatical competence.

2. It tests discrete (single) grammar points through discrete (isolated) sentences.

3. Discrete point tests focus on one single area of grammar while integrated tasks do not focus on a single grammatical point. Such integrated tasks are more meaning-oriented and usually use small paragraphs, letters or other text types to test students.

4. All distractors are correct and acceptable.

5. By providing a picture in the first case and a context/situation in the second e.g.

   A : Where is the interview for this job ?

   B : At Calcutta

   A : Are you then going to Calcutta ?

   B : _____ etc.

6. Open-ended.

7. Open ended. (time consuming, finding plausible distractors would be common.)

8. Many determiners are acceptable (e.g. some/more/a little/less).

9. Specify determiners like fill in the blanks with **some** or **any.**

10. In word arrangement items one has to think of the structure and the meaning, but in a substitution table the structure is given. Only rarely does one have to make a choice for grammatical accuracy.

11. Open-ended.

12. a) A student must rewrite the sentence with four changes. (1) Supply an agent, (They, the coolies) subject verb agreement (plural verb - are) present continuous form (unloading) and change in subject object position - (the truck) at the end of the sentence.

    b) At least 2. (1/2 × 4 = 2)

    c) The students will be either penalised for minor mistakes or marked too liberally.

13. Yes. You can pick up any examples related to tense, preposition or subject verb agreement.

14. Open ended (most common — double past tense - did wanted to go; pronouns - My father lost her car keys; or present continuous tense - I'am having two sisters).

15. Students whose competence level is high find the integrated tasks easier - but the average and the below average students do not always understand the nature of tasks. Also it is easier to take students to sustained writing tasks from such controlled compositions. In discrete test items, the students do the grammar exercises mechanically and do not transfer their knowledge to written work.

297

21.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

Heaton, J.B. (1982): *Language Testing,* Modern English Publications Ltd.,Great Britain

Heaton, J.B. (1991): *Writing English Language Tests,* Longman, Hongkong

Interact in English, Teacher's Book, (1993): CBSE, Delhi.

298

Notes