

# ENG 224

## ADVANCED ENGLISH COMPOSITION II

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**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**COURSE  
GUIDE****ENG 224  
ADVANCED ENGLISH COMPOSITION II**

Course Developer/Writer	Moji Olateju (Ph.D) Department of English Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Programme Leader	Christine I. Ofulue Ph.D National Open University of Nigeria
Course Coordinator	Mr. Theodore Iyere National Open University of Nigeria

**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Office  
No. 5 Dar es Salaam Street  
Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse II, Abuja  
Nigeria

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

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## **Introduction**

ENG 224 is a one-semester course of two credit units. It is designed for English language students and others in other related departments involved with studies on communication. The course has fourteen units which cover almost all the different kinds of compositions, i.e. minutes of meetings, reports, memoranda, letters, invitations, etc. and the technical details involved.

You are expected to go through this course guide carefully to know what the course is all about, the course materials you need, the tutor-marked assignments and some other needed information. Please attend your tutorial classes for practical discussion of some of the various compositions. By the time you are through with the course, if you were crowd-shy before, you would be confident enough to face the crowd. You should also be able to present specialised writings in the form of reports, speeches, letters, minutes of meetings, memoranda, etc. Going through this course will equip you specially for this purpose. Let me encourage and assure you that this course is a very interesting one. Welcome on board.

## **Course Aim**

This course is designed to expose you to the different kinds of compositions. Its goal is to:

- a) enable you to have a broad understanding of the various types of compositions in English.
- b) introduce you to the technical details involved in the different compositions.
- c) encourage you (through tutor-marked assignments) to write some of these compositions.
- d) equip you with specialised skills for different kinds of compositions.
- e) make you an effective communicator who will be able to contribute to national development in all areas of human endeavour.

## **Course Objectives**

The objectives of a course are the things you are expected to be able to do at the end of the course. These objectives will guide you when going through the study and they will also help you in self-assessment and where you need to improve on your learning and study habits. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. identify the different kinds of advanced compositions that you have been taught in the course.
2. discuss the stylistic varieties in the different forms of compositions depending on the context.
3. describe the technical details involved in the different kinds of compositions.
4. attempt the practice exercises that will enable you to demonstrate your acquired skills on composition writing.

### **Working through this Course**

In this course, you have fourteen study units to go through. In each of the study units, you are expected to study the contents very well before attempting the questions. You should pay attention to the objectives of each study unit so that you can be properly guided through the unit. You should be prepared to do a lot of thinking and writing in this course because it is designed to make you do so. The assessment will be through tutor-marked assignments which you are expected to do and turn in at the appropriate time. You are also expected to write a final examination at the end of the course. The time for the examination will be communicated to you.

### **Course Materials**

The major components of the course are:

1. The course guide
2. The study units
3. The textbooks
4. The assignment files
5. The presentation schedule.

### **Study Units**

There are three modules which are divided into fourteen units in this course. Each study unit is a week's work and this is heralded by the objectives which you are expected to study before going through the unit. In each study unit, you also have the reading materials and the self-assessment exercises. The tutor-marked assignments, the study units, the tutorials, all put together, will help you to achieve the stated objectives for this course.

The Modules and study units are as follows:

#### **Module 1**

- |        |                                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Some Basic Principles of Good Writing |
| Unit 2 | Minutes of Meetings I                 |
| Unit 3 | Minutes of Meetings II                |

- Unit 4 Letter Writing I (Formal Letters)
- Unit 5 Letter Writing II (Informal Letters)

### **Module 2**

- Unit 1 Public Announcements
- Unit 2 Memoranda
- Unit 3 Report Writing I
- Unit 4 Report Writing II

### **Module 3**

- Unit 1 Speech Making I
- Unit 2 Speech Making II
- Unit 3 Long Essays I
- Unit 4 Long Essays II
- Unit 5 Invitations

## **Textbooks and References**

Each unit has a list of recommended textbooks and materials. Go through them for necessary assistance while going through the unit and before attempting the exercises.

## **Assessment**

You will be assessed in two ways in this course – the tutor-marked assignments and a written examination. You are expected to do the assignments and submit them to your tutorial facilitator for formal assessment in accordance with the stated deadlines in the presentation schedule and the Assignment file. Your tutor-marked assignments will account for 40% of the total course mark.

## **Tutor-Marked Assignment**

ENG 224 is a course that involves a lot of writing, so there are tutor-marked assignments at the end of every unit which you are expected to do. You are expected to have practised writing the different kinds of compositions and if possible, rehearse some of them in class before your tutorial facilitator. You will be assessed on the different kinds of compositions but only four of them will be selected for continuous assessment. Send the completed assignments (when due) together with the tutor-marked assignment form to your tutorial facilitator. Make sure you send in your assignment before the stated deadline.

## **Final Examination and Grading**

The final examination for ENG 224 will be a two and a half hour paper during which you are expected to answer three questions. Each question carries twenty marks, giving you a total of sixty marks for the examination. The forty marks for the course work and the sixty marks for the examination give a total of one hundred marks (i.e 40+60=100). The pattern of the questions will not be too different from those you have responded to in the tutor-marked exercises. Revise the different kinds of compositions properly before the examination date.

### Course Marking Scheme

The table below shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignments	Four Assignments; best three marks count as 30% of course work.
Final Examination	70%
Total	100%

### Course Overview

Unit	Title of Work	Week's Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
	Course Guide	1	
	<b>Module 1</b>		
1	Some Basic Principles of Good Writing	1	Assignment 1
2	Minutes of Meetings I	2	Assignment 2
3	Minutes of Meetings II	3	Assignment 3
4	Letter Writing I	4	Assignment 4
5	Letter Writing II	5	Assignment 5
	<b>Module 2</b>		
1	Public Announcements	6	Assignment 6
2	Memoranda	7	Assignment 7
3	Report Writing I	8	Assignment 8
4	Report Writing II	9	Assignment 9
	<b>Module 3</b>		
1	Speech Making I	10	Assignment 10
2	Speech Making II	11	Assignment 11
3	Long Essays I	12	Assignment 12
4	Long Essays II	13	Assignment 13
5	Invitations	14	Assignment 14
	Revision	15	
	Examination	16	



	Total	17	
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## **How to Get the Best from this Course**

The study units in this course have been written in such a way that you can easily go through them without the lecturer being physically around and this is what happens in Distance Learning. Each study unit is for one week. The study units will introduce you to the topic for that week; give you the objectives for the unit and what you are expected to be able to do at the end of the unit. Follow this religiously and do the exercises that follow.

In addition to the above, unlike other courses where you just read and jot notes, ENG 224 is basically a writing course. You are expected to do a lot of writing. For you to be equipped adequately to be able to write and present specialised writings in the different compositions, you need a lot of practice which you should try to do.

## **Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials**

There are 12 tutorial hours for this course. The dates, times and location of these tutorials will be communicated to you as well as the name and phone number of your tutorial facilitator. You will also be notified of your tutorial group.

As you relate with your tutorial facilitator, he/she will mark and correct your assignments and also keep a close watch on your performance in the tutor-marked assignments and attendance at tutorials. Feel free to contact your tutorial facilitator by phone or e-mail if you have any problem with the contents of any of the study units.

## **Summary**

ENG 224 is designed to introduce you to the different types of advanced compositions in English and improve your proficiency in composing and presenting them. On completion, you should be well equipped with all the necessary skills needed to compose any type of specialised writing in English.

I wish you the best as you go through this course.

**MAIN  
COURSE**

Course Code	ENG 224
Course Title	Advanced English Composition II
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**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Office  
No. 5 Dar es Salaam Street  
Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse II, Abuja  
Nigeria

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)

URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

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## MODULE 1

Unit 1	Some Basic Principles of Good Writing
Unit 2	Minutes of Meetings I
Unit 3	Minutes of Meetings II
Unit 4	Letter Writing (Formal Letters) I
Unit 5	Letter Writing (Formal Letters) II

## UNIT 1 SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GOOD WRITING

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4.0	Conclusion
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to some basic principles of good writing in English. This unit is more of a revision of most of the things you have learnt before. You will benefit a lot from this course if you try as much as possible to take note of the little things that make for good writing. In this course as a whole, your ENG 101 module 2 will be a very useful and good companion. In language learning in general, a lot of repetition

is necessary for good mastery of the relevant concepts and ideas. So, do not be surprised if you come across some things you have learnt before.

Writing is societal. The stylistic varieties demonstrated in writing are contextual and depend on the communities, relationships or groups involved. For example, giving an eye-witness' account of a situation, giving a speech before an audience, making a report of a case, writing an application letter for a job, taking down minutes of a meeting, all demand some level of competence which you have to demonstrate for you to be able to function as expected on specific occasions in the society. Your writing must conform to the conventions of form and style although; at times you may need to expand that to be able to accommodate some varieties of writing. A society is a complex institution with all kinds of practices and assumptions about behaviours. Writing in the society, for the society or about the society has a lot of social demands. To meet these demands, your use of language is very important. This unit is designed to remind you of some of the basic language principles of good writing which will help you in the various kinds of compositions that you have to write for this course and later in life.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the essentials of good writing
- construct good paragraphs
- identify what linkers and conjunctions are in English
- use grammatical connective devices appropriately in your write-up.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

In this unit, you will learn about paragraphing and some grammatical connective devices which will help you in advanced composition writing.

### 3.1 The Paragraph

Some of the things which a reader needs to know about a paragraph are the **aesthetic**, **stylistic** and **functional** aspects of it. A paragraph is aesthetic in terms of its appearance on the page and what it conveys is recorded in your mind as you read. The stylistics of a paragraph is seen in the internal patterns in terms of the sentence-by-sentence connections, management of ideas, sentence length and types, and how it is punctuated and arranged. The paragraph displays its functional value in

terms of the content and how the writer uses it to present his/her ideas on any issue.

There is no hard and fast rule about the length of a paragraph. You are at liberty to determine the length and content of any paragraph you create while writing. You might have written a page and you feel it is too long for you or your reader to hold your thoughts together. At that point, you can look for a minor boundary where the separation of ideas can be easily done. You must however make sure that there is, at least, a major point that can hold the other minor points in the paragraph together.

This can be said to be the edited type of paragraph development because you have already written a page or two before you start looking for convenient boundaries to separate the text into paragraphs. Forming a paragraph in this way can be said to be a retrospective approach to paragraph formation.

The other way to form a paragraph is a concurrent one. That is, developing it as you think and write, having at the back of your mind the number of main points you want to develop along with the number of paragraphs that goes along with it. You arrange and group your points logically with appropriate connective devices. Some of these devices will be discussed in this unit as well.

The concurrent system of paragraph development is a monitored one because you are deliberately watching the length, the development of ideas and how a paragraph is linked with another.

In the tutor-marked assignments, since you are writing on your own and you are likely to be using a computer to write most of the time, you can use either of the two types, but in the examination, the concurrent one is better because of time constraint. The concurrent one is more natural in that you are conscious of the fact that you have to write with a monitored mind in the presentation of a logical and psychologically sound argument or presentation.

### **3.1.1 How to Monitor the Growth of a Paragraph**

In monitoring the growth of a paragraph, you need what is called compositional competence. First and foremost, your mind must be in what you are writing. There are also some rhetorical patterns that are instinctive and some of these have been acquired either through intensive reading or extensive reading. Some of these patterns which are linking expressions are also formally taught in classes at different levels of the educational ladder.

In writing, you need appropriate linking expressions to guide whoever is reading the write-up later. By using appropriate linking expressions, you will be able to engage in useful sentence connection and management of gaps between sentences through appropriate use of some structural devices.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

How do you monitor the growth of a paragraph?

### 3.1.2 Some Grammatical Connective Devices

Connective devices can be referred to as syntactic or structural devices made up of structural items such as auxiliaries, prepositions, pronouns, determiners, demonstratives, articles etc. Functionally, the connections can be in the form of substitution, conjunction, ellipsis etc. Some of these are discussed below.

#### 3.1.2.1 Substitution

Substitution is a device for abbreviating and avoiding repetitions. Pro-forms such as; *same, so, too, any, each, neither, same, none, then*, and pronoun references such as *he, him, she, her, hers, my, mine, we, ours, their, them* can be used for substitution. Pro-forms and pronouns can be used within a sentence and across sentences and various parts of the sentence such as subject, object, verb, complement, adverbial, predicate, and whole sentences. Below are examples:

- a) *Sule and Ismail* pushed the car. *They* washed their clothes afterwards.  
(Subject of the first sentence is substituted)
- b) Bola broke *the plate*. *Its* broken pieces are still on the floor.  
(Object of the first sentence is substituted)
- c) Jane *destroyed* the wall pictures and *did same* to the window blinds.  
(Verb of the first sentence is substituted)
- d) The boy behaved *irrationally*. *Such behaviour* is unacceptable.  
(Adverbial is substituted)
- e) Moji *drives a car*. I think Tinu *does so* too.  
(Whole predicate is substituted)

#### 3.1.2.2 Conjunctions

Conjunctions see to the connection of sentences into meaningful units. They conjoin words or phrases or clauses within the larger pattern of the sentence. There are two types of conjunctions – coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions are known as



coordinators while subordinating conjunctions are known as subordinators. While writing, you will need all these connective devices and that is why it is important that you go through this section and master their use.

### 3.1.2.2.1 Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are of three major types – *and*, *but* and *or*. They link items of strictly parallel grammatical status: The two items could be two nouns, two noun phrases or a noun and a noun phrase. Below are examples:

*And* – signals a relationship of equal grammatical units.

- e.g. - *Aduke and Foluke* gave presents to Bose.  
 (Aduke and Foluke are both nouns)  
 - Razak washed his clothes *and* Karim did same to his.  
 (Both sentences on either side of *and* are of equal status in terms of the subject and predicator)

*But* – signals a relationship of contrast or difference between linguistic items. It is used to join contrastive clauses.

- e.g. - Tinu passed all her exams *but* her parents were not pleased with her grades.  
 - The manager received a lot of encomiums from his staff members *but* got rebuked at the top management level.  
 - We built our hope on him *but* he disappointed us.

*Or* – signals a relationship of choice between two items. It can be used to join two items ranging from words to clauses.

- e.g. - Either Kola *or* Yesufu is expected to be at the meeting.  
 - You can come to my house *or* meet me at the junction.

Some other markers of coordination may be correlatives such as *both*, *either---or*, *neither ---nor*. These are referred to as correlatives because they function in pairs. For example:

1. *Both* Kola *and* Ajayi came.
2. We would prefer *either* Peter *or* Chima.
3. *Neither* Jane *nor* Bade came.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What do coordinating conjunctions do?

### 3.1.2.2.2 Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions e.g. *because, therefore, although, yet, while, since, where, when, that, who, before, after, which, whom*, etc. furnish us with reasons, conditions, provisions, concessions or attach some indication of time to what we write.

Subordinators are used in the formation of non-simple sentences such as complex and compound-complex sentences. Examples are:

1. *When* I arrived, I met the little old man.
2. *Before* I say anything at all, I'll like to introduce the chairman.
3. *After* completing his first degree at the University of Ibadan, he left for the United States of America.
4. The man *who* came in after you wrote *The Gods are not to Blame*.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Mention some subordinating conjunctions.

### 3.1.2.3 Ellipsis

This is the omission of linguistic items that have been realised elsewhere in the sentence. Ellipsis is used to avoid monotony or unnecessary repetition.

#### 3.1.2.3.1 Types of Ellipsis

#### 3.1.2.3.2 Anaphoric Referent

With anaphoric referent, the omitted item is referring backward to an earlier referent. Below are examples: The empty spaces indicate where the linguistic items have been omitted.

1. The baby cries a lot at night but (...) sleeps well during the day.  
(the baby is omitted)
2. She can dance but I don't think she should. (...) (dance is omitted)
3. I'm happy if you are. (...) (happy is omitted)
4. Kate is singing soprano because Joy won't. (...) (sing soprano).

#### 3.1.2.3.3 Cataphoric Referent

With cataphoric referent, the omitted item refers forwards. Below are examples:

1. While (...) working for the professor, he became a good typist.
2. Although (...) told to stop, he kept on running.
3. Not knowing what else (...) to do, Ade resigned from the meeting.

The omitted items could be nouns or pronouns like the ones in the second half of the sentences.

#### 3.1.2.3.4 Ellipsis of Subject

1. He sang and (...) danced at the party.
2. Bola couldn't come but (...) sent her secretary.
3. He walked along the corridor, (...) saw the coins on the floor, (...) picked them up and (...) went his way.

The empty spaces indicate where the ellipted subjects should have been inserted.

#### 3.1.2.3.5 Ellipsis of Subject and Auxiliary

1. Kola has worked and (...) (...) put everything in place.  
(Kola and *has* are omitted)
2. The chairman has written and (...) (...) presented the bill to the house. (The *chairman* and *has* are omitted)
3. He has done the work and (...) (...) cleaned up the mess. (*He* and *has* are omitted.)

#### 3.1.2.3.6 Ellipsis of Predicate

The predicate refers to the group of items in a simple sentence or clause after the removal of the subject. Below are examples:

1. Adeodu *is playing baseball* for his school and Peter (...) for his club. (*is playing baseball* is omitted)
2. Sade *will cook the meals* this morning and Bola (...) tomorrow. (*will cook the meals* is omitted)
3. Let's *meet the chairman* today and (...) tomorrow.

Other types of ellipsis are those of

- a. whole predication (group of items remaining when the auxiliary or operator has been taken away from the predicate)
- b. predicator
- c. subject and predicator
- d. adverbials
- e. direct object and subject complement

Details of these can be got in Asiyanbola (2005). See details of references in the reference section at the end of the unit.

### **3.2 Punctuation Marks**

This is an aspect that you have been exposed to since you were in the primary school. Nevertheless, you still need to go through the section to remind yourself of a few things you might have forgotten about them.

Punctuation marks such as the Full Stop, Comma, Hyphen, Colon, Semi Colon, dashes, etc. are important for good writing. The purpose of punctuation is to help you present your ideas clearly and effectively. Punctuation marks must be used only when necessary. Please read up this section in Babalola (2005). See details by checking the reference materials at the end of this unit.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have been able to go through some of the basic principles of good writing in this unit. This will be a good reference point for you any time you need to do some formal or informal writing.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

You have learnt from this unit that:

- i.the concept of a paragraph is aesthetic, stylistic and functional.
- ii.the internal structure of a paragraph is seen in terms of the sentence-by-sentence connections, management of ideas, sentence length and types, how it is punctuated, and arranged.
- iii.there is no hard and fast rule about the length of a paragraph.
- iv.forming a paragraph could be in two ways – retrospective approach and concurrent approach.
- v.compositional competence is important in monitoring the growth of a paragraph.
- vi.conjunctions conjoin words or phrases or clauses within the larger pattern of the sentence.
- vii.coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) link items of parallel grammatical status.
- viii.subordinators are used in the formation of non-simple sentences.
- ix.substitution is a writing device where an item is replaced by another within or across sentences to avoid undesirable repetition.
- x.punctuation marks and capital letters are also important ingredients for good writing.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

With adequate examples, explain what you understand by ellipsis and identify some parts of a sentence that can be omitted.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## **UNIT 2      MINUTES OF MEETING I**

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- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Preparing to take Minutes
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Readings

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

This study unit is an all-important topic to all and sundry because of its usefulness. You may be called upon to take minutes when you least expect. That is why you need to study this unit and get prepared for such a responsibility in future. Some people take up positions in organisations and parastatals or private institutions where they are appointed as secretaries of committees or where they are expected to stand in for the secretary. Some people are at sea as to what to do while some others do a shoddy job to the effect that the essentials of the meeting are not well taken.

As prospective graduates, you may be asked to write minutes of meetings in future and you should be equipped to perform this function. In fact, when you tell people that you are a graduate, they assume you know how to do such things as writing minutes of meetings. That is one of the reasons, why you need to go through the next two study units on writing minutes of meetings and be well equipped to face any future challenge you may have as regards writing the minutes of meetings.

Minutes of a meeting are the accurate summary of records of what is said and decided at the meeting, especially of a society or committee. Minutes can also be said to be a way of recording discussions, comments and decisions in a very clear, understandable and concise form. Minutes are written or should be written in plain language.

In some places, minutes are usually entered into a minute book- usually a big book that could take many records of minutes. In some government offices, summaries of minutes of meetings are printed out and circulated to members.

You also need to know that minutes of meetings can be tendered as evidence before panels investigating some delicate issues at times. In fact, if the executive members of an association want to open an account with a bank, the bank usually asks for the minutes of the meeting where that decision was made and the individuals involved. Relevant details such as the attendance, the date, the decision to open an account, which bank to use and who the signatories should be will be requested for. Please go through the next two units and you will be glad you did.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- identify the essential features of minutes of meetings
- understand the stylistic and essential features of different types of notice of meetings
- write minutes of meetings using or exploring conventions of style and form of specific minutes of meetings.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Preparing to take Minutes**

In preparing to take minutes of meetings, it is important to take note of the following.

Before a meeting can hold, participants need to be informed about the meeting, otherwise the attendance will be affected. Apart from this, people usually want to know what the agenda is all about and why there has to be a meeting. Therefore, what is referred to as notice of meeting has to be sent round. If it is an institution, the notice of meeting can be put in people's pigeon holes so that they can be informed. In a situation where people are connected to internet services, the notice of meeting and the agenda can be sent by e-mail to participants. In this era of mobile telephony, notices of meetings can also be sent through the short message services or telephone calls.

The meeting for members of an association (e.g. students' or other social groups) could have their notice of meetings pasted on notice boards in students' halls of residence, on departmental notice boards, society's hall or the place of meeting. As such, the people concerned will be notified of the meeting and all the relevant details involved. Below are examples of notice of meetings:

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Mention some ways by which you could disseminate the notice of a meeting.

**TYPE A**

**NOTICE OF MEETING  
IFE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL OLD STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
(IFE BRANCH)**

**PLEASE ATTEND A MEETING OF THE ABOVE-NAMED  
ASSOCIATION**

**DATE: 29TH JANUARY, 2008**

**TIME: 4 PM**

**VENUE: FAJUYI CAFETERIA**

**AGENDA: 1. ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS  
2. AOB**

**PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL**

**SECRETARY**

**TYPE B**

**OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE IFE- NIGERIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Ag. Head  
Department of English

**To:** All Academic Staff  
Department of English

**Date:** 29/10/07

---

**NOTICE OF DEPARTMENTAL MEETING**

There will be a Departmental meeting on Thursday, November 1, 2007

Time: 10.00am

Venue: Departmental Library



**TYPE C****OBAFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY, ILE IFE- NIGERIA  
INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Ag. Head  
Department of English

**To:** Faculty Secretary  
Faculty of Arts

**Date:** 21/09/02

---

**NASELS HOLDS ALUMNI RE-UNION**

The English Students Association (NASELS) holds the 1<sup>st</sup> Alumni Re-Union of the Department tomorrow- Saturday, 22 September, 2002 at Ogunbanjo Community Centre, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Please honour them with your presence.

Thanks.

Head of Department

**Type A**

This is usually for participants who can be reached easily in public places-especially among students. If a secretary is unable to distribute notice of meeting to members of the association, type A notice of meeting could be used to inform members of the meeting.

**Type B**

This type is used in institutions where people have different offices and attend to their primary assignments at different times. Notice of meetings need to be sent days earlier than the actual date so that people can be well prepared for the meeting.

In secondary or high schools, the principal or vice principal may just inform the staff members of the need for a meeting verbally or where resources are available, the notice of meeting could be written and pasted on the staff notice board in the staff room.

**Type C**

This is a kind of notification done on behalf of a group especially where the group wants some official backing for the meeting so that the meeting can be well attended and issues thrashed out.

**Type D (e- mail messages)**

Type D is the type done electronically by e-mail. This is quick and fast but in a situation where there is power failure and people can not access their mails, some people may use this as an excuse for not attending.

**Type E (text messages/phone calls)**

Text messages/telephone calls can be used to inform people of meetings- especially emergency meetings. There could be a problem where people's handsets are switched off or gone off as a result of power failure or network problem. What is important however is to use every available means of reaching the participants for a meeting for effective deliberations.

**Type F (Notice of an inaugural meeting of an Association or group)**

This type of notice will have the title, the date, venue and tentative agenda. At times, if it is a pasted notice and since nobody has been elected, the convener's name may or may not be there. If it is a circulated notice, the convener's name has to be there.

Below are some of the things you need to do while getting ready to take the minutes of a meeting

1. Get an outline prepared based on the agenda ahead of time and leave a lot of empty lines after each topic so that you can have spaces to write. Once you have the topics written down, you can quickly jump to any topic that is raised and begin to write down the important points immediately.
2. Prepare a list of expected attendees and mark their names as they enter. Or you pass round a list of their names where you can just ask them to sign against their names. In some cases however, you may not know the attendees, so you just pass round a sheet of paper for people to write down their names and sign. As a secretary or someone taking the notes, you should also take note of those who went out during the meeting and at what time. This is important because a dubious person can sign in at a meeting

and leave the meeting to go and commit a crime and still claim that he was at a meeting when the crime was committed.

3. You must not attempt to record or document everything that is said at a meeting. Just listen to the discussion very well and summarise by putting down the essential points. If you think you may miss some valuable discussions, you can take a tape/cassette recorder along to record the contributions at the meeting.
4. You can use any convenient method of recording that is comfortable for you. You can use a note pad, a big notebook, some sheets of paper out of which you will later transfer the essentials of the meeting. You can also use a laptop computer, a tape recorder, a steno pad or shorthand. Recording can be a good back-up for the notes you have already taken. It is important to note however that having to transcribe from already recorded material takes a lot of your time if you use this method.
5. If you have been asked to take notes as a staff member in an organisation, you are an active participant. You may want to contribute to the discussion and also take note at the same time. You should be able to balance these roles, otherwise you will lose some essential information or contribution by some of the speakers. Your participation here is different from when you are the secretary of an organisation taking minutes at a management meeting. You are not expected to contribute except when you want to ask for clarification of a participant's contribution. Otherwise, you are expected to just listen and do a proper documentation of what is said at the meeting.
6. Occasionally, a meeting can get very hot and participants abuse or insult one another. As a secretary or someone taking the notes, you should not put down verbatim what is said. You must use your discretion to document issues by using the appropriate language for such situations. You can say:
  - a. there was a heated argument between-----
  - b. some of the participants disagreed on this point---
  - c. the chairperson intervened before the situation got out of hand---

Except in a situation where a person specifically asked you to quote him on a particular issue, you may not mention anybody's name.

7. You need to request that people introduce themselves before they make contributions so that your records can be accurate.

8. Do not forget to write the names of people who were given specific assignments to perform.
9. Type out the minutes as soon as possible. In this way, you will remember most of the discussions.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What are some of the things to take into consideration while preparing to take minutes?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From what you have gone through in this study unit, you will notice that for you to take down minutes of meetings and write them out requires adequate preparation. In study unit 3, you will be taken through the actual organisation of minutes of meetings so that you can be well equipped to do the exercise of writing out minutes of meetings any time.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this study unit, you have learnt the following:

- i. Minutes of meetings are the accurate summary or records of what is said and decided at a meeting, especially of a society or committee.
- ii. Before a meeting can hold, a notice of the meeting ought to be circulated. This can be done verbally at times.
- iii. Notice of meetings can be circulated in different ways:
  - a. pasted on notice boards
  - b. distributed to participants
  - c. sent by e-mail/telephone calls
  - d. sent as text messages, etc.
- iv. Notice of an inaugural meeting of an association may not be signed by anybody because there are no elected officers at that point in time.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Write short notes on six things you have to do while preparing to write the minutes of an association's meeting.
2. Prepare a notice of meeting for an association where you have just been elected as the secretary.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Arema, B. (2001.) (Ed.) *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books.

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## **UNIT 3      MINUTES OF MEETING II**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Title
  - 3.2 Attendance/Membership
    - 3.2.1 Membership
      - 3.2.1.1 Present
      - 3.2.1.2 Absent (with permission)
      - 3.2.1.3 Absent (without permission)
      - 3.2.1.4 In Attendance
  - 3.3 Preamble
  - 3.4 Adoption of Minutes of the Previous Meeting
  - 3.5 Matters Arising
  - 3.6 New Items for Consideration
  - 3.7 AOB (Any Other Business)
  - 3.8 Adjournment
  - 3.9 Endorsement
  - 3.10 Sample Minutes of Meeting
    - 3.10.1 Attendance
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    - 3.10.3 Adoption of Previous Minutes
    - 3.10.4 Matters Arising
      - 3.10.4.1 Publicity
      - 3.10.4.2 Cultural Activities
      - 3.10.4.3 Children's Programme
      - 3.10.4.4 Lectures
    - 3.10.5 New Items for Consideration
      - 3.10.5.1 Topics for the Seminar Session and Keynote Speaker
      - 3.10.5.2 Visit to the Vice-Chancellor
      - 3.10.5.3 Date for the Next Meeting
    - 3.10.6 Adjournment
    - 3.10.7 Endorsement
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, you will learn about the actual writing of minutes of meetings and you will be given an example. Minutes are expected to be

written in good and carefully chosen expressions in English. If they are hand written in the minute book, they should be written in clear handwriting that other people apart from the writer can read. It happens at times that the secretary or the person who took the meetings is unavoidably absent and someone else is chosen to stand in for the secretary by first reading the minutes. In such a situation, the person reading should have no problem reading the minutes in the absence of the writer. Minutes have their own organisational structure and this should be followed so that there can be adequate documentation of the report.

In the next section, you will be introduced to the general organisation of minutes.

Organising your minutes of meeting very well helps in the understanding and search for particular bits of information from the minutes. There are some things that should be in the minutes of meetings and these are the things that will be discussed in this section. They are:

1. Title
2. Attendance/Membership
3. Preliminary discussion
4. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting
5. Matters arising
6. Items for consideration
7. Adjournment
8. Endorsement by the chairperson

All these will be discussed under Main Content.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this study unit, you should be able to

- identify the organisational structure of minutes
- describe how minutes of meetings are arranged
- write out a sample minutes of an imaginary meeting.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

A good format to follow in the writing of minutes is as indicated in the introduction and below. Just as mentioned in Module 1 Unit 2, a notice of meeting has to be passed round to the members before the meeting. This notice has to indicate the title, name of the club, society or institution, date, venue, time, convener, agenda etc. It is also important

to note that whoever is developing the section on matters arising, should number it e.g. Minute 1,2,3,4 etc depending on how the items were recorded.

### **3.1 Title**

At a glance, there should be a clear indication of the group holding the meeting, at what place, and time and for what purpose. Below is an example.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES – (ASUU) AGBA OSELU UNIVERSITY BRANCH, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2007 AT AUDITORIUM 1, HUMANITIES BLOCK 1, AGBA OSELU UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE.**

### **3.2 Attendance/Membership**

This section is a highlight of the names of all those who were present at the meeting. It also indicates those who were absent (with or without permission). If there are new members/observers etc, this will be indicated here as well. Below is an example:

#### **3.2.1 Membership**

##### **3.2.1.1 Present**

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Mr. J.A. Adigun   | <b>Chairman</b>  |
| 2. Mr. O.O. Ogungbe  |                  |
| 3. Mr. J.S. Otunbo   |                  |
| 4. Mr. J.B. Jumbo    |                  |
| 5. Mr. O.B. Jegede   |                  |
| 6. Mr. A.A. Fabusuyi |                  |
| 7. Mr. O.O. Adejojo  | <b>Secretary</b> |

##### **3.2.1.2 Absent (with Permission)**

1. Mrs. J.A. Oni

##### **3.2.1.3 Absent (without Permission)**

1. Engineer O.O. Alebiosu
2. Chief O.O. Ogunleye
3. Mr. O.O. Adelaja



### **3.2.1.4 In Attendance**

1. Mrs. J.O. Bolarinwa (Town planner)
2. Mrs. O.O. Ojo (Business woman)

It could also be a list of all the members, indicating absentees with abs, abswa or \*, \*\*, \*\*\* in the margin. Abswa means absent with apology.

### **3.3 Preamble**

This is not a compulsory part or feature of minutes of meetings. It can be included in the minutes if the chairperson makes some preliminary remarks by welcoming members, introducing a new member or visitor, giving apologies for lateness or apologies sent in by members, etc. Remarks on a member's new status, addition to a family or news of bereavement could also be included in this section. The preamble usually takes place before the meeting proper.

### **3.4 Adoption of Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

There are two ways of distributing the minutes of a previous meeting. The first one is by getting it ready and sending it to members before the day of the next meeting so that members will enable to go through and have their comments ready for the meeting. In this way, time will not be wasted reading through the minutes. The chairperson calls for any observation on the minutes. If there are none, he then calls for the adoption of the minutes.

The other way which is common in most organisations, societies, or high school staff meetings is the method of reading the minutes of the last meeting while members are seated. The members are advised to listen attentively while the secretary or any other designated person reads the minutes.

While going through the minutes or having gone through the minutes, observations such as the following can be taken and addressed:

- a. omission of a member's name
- b. misspelt names
- c. misrepresentation by the secretary, etc.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Discuss three important sub-headings that have to be in the minutes of meetings.

### 3.5 Matters Arising

In this section, the chairperson does a follow-up on the assignments given to members or report on actions taken on some issues that had been previously discussed. This section emphasises the need for members to work on the implementation of decisions taken at meetings so that the society or organisation can move forward. For example, the following can be part of what is discussed at a meeting:

Chairperson: Mr Adagunodo was asked to see to the purchase of a new piece of land for the building of a new business office complex for the society. Can you please give us a report on that?

Mr Adagunodo: Thank you Mr Chairperson. I visited the surveyor and he promised to release the land on the condition that we pay the amount for the land once.

Chairperson: Do we all agree to do that?

Members: Yes.

In taking the minutes of such a meeting, the secretary can write that the members agreed to pay for the proposed piece of land upfront.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What is the importance of the section on matters arising?

### 3.6 New Items for Consideration

In this section, the chairperson takes the members through the new items listed for discussion and consideration at the meeting (that is, the list of items to attend to). These may include, for example:

- a) members' participation at their old students' founder's day celebration (for an association)
- b) application for sabbatical leave for some members of a department (institution)
- c) discussion of the new year budget (Ministry or parastatal)
- d) promotion cases (institution, etc.)

### 3.7 AOB (Any Other Business)

At times members have some observations, contributions or requests which have not been listed as part of the agenda for the day. Such comments or contributions can be discussed and recorded in this section.

### 3.8 Adjournment

This is a move to bring the meeting to a close. After all items on the agenda might have been discussed, the chairperson can then call for an adjournment of the meeting. This should be moved by a member and supported by at least another member. For example, the secretary could write:

The adjournment of the meeting was moved by Mr. A.O. Ajayi and supported by Mr. A.K. Akamo. The meeting came to a close at exactly 6.45pm.

### 3.9 Endorsement

Spaces must be created at the end of the minutes for the secretary and chairperson to put their signatures and date. Below is an example:

Signature/Date  
Secretary

Signature/Date  
Chairperson

### 3.10 Sample Minutes of Meeting

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE NIGERIA NATIONAL BOOKFAIR, WESTERN ZONE, HELD AT AGBA OSELU UNIVERSITY PRESS, ODE-IRELE ON JANUARY 19, 2007**

#### 3.10.1 Attendance

Mr. Ade Fatomilola	Chairman
Dr. G.A. Adeowo	
Mrs. O.M. Olaoba	
Mr. T.A. Agbakuru	Secretary
Dr. M.A. Adetayo	
Mrs. B.J. Adejo	
Mr. O.M. Bintu	
Alhaji O.T. Balewa	

### **3.10.2 Preamble**

The meeting started at 12.15p.m with a prayer by Mrs Olaoba. The Chairperson reported that Mrs Dada and Dr Adetayo sent in apologies for their absence. He also reported that Mr Olorunwa would join us at the Vice Chancellor's office at 2.00 p.m.

### **3.10.3 Adoption of Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on July 20, 2007 were read through by members. The motion for the adoption was moved by Mrs Olaoba and it was seconded by Mr Bintu.

### **3.10.4 Matters Arising**

#### **3.10.4.1 Publicity**

Mr Jide Omisola was being expected to give details of his plans. Members reiterated the earlier decisions on publicity to go out early enough, get more posters pasted and handbills well distributed aside the usual newspapers, TV and radio advertisement.

#### **3.10.4.2 Cultural Activities**

Dr Kola Adeowo apologised for not being able to attend the last meeting. He brought and submitted his plans as well as the financial implication of the programme he drew up. It was being planned that Irele Outreach Performers would perform at the opening ceremony while a full length play would be fixed for one of the nights during the Book Fair. The total cost was put at about N95, 000.

#### **3.10.4.3 Children's Programme**

Mrs Olaobaju said that she was still working on the activities for the children's programme. She promised to package it up and submit soonest.

#### **3.10.4.4 Lectures**

Prof. Eniayekan and others would be contacted on the lectures as planned. It was also reported that Mrs Odunsi already saw the Principal Personal Secretary (PPS) to the Odia State Governor, and that there was every hope that the government would be adequately represented at the Book Fair. The Ministry of Education had also been contacted.

### **3.10.5 New Items for Consideration**

The following items were listed for consideration

#### **3.10.5.1 Topics for the Seminar Session and Keynote Speaker**

Members discussed the need to inform the keynote speaker and other discussants concerning the following topics:

- a) The Role of Children in Functional Education.
- b) Children and Functional Education.
- c) The Role of Government in Functional Education.

#### **3.10.5.2 Visit to the Vice Chancellor**

The visit to the Vice Chancellor scheduled for 2.00pm was discussed and finalised. Members agreed to visit the Vice Chancellor at the appointed time to discuss the possibility of getting some financial support for the programme.

#### **3.10.5.3 Date for the Next Meeting**

The date for the next meeting was tentatively fixed for January 21<sup>st</sup> 2007

### **3.10.6 Adjournment**

In the absence of any other thing to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1.40 p.m. to give members enough time to prepare for the visit to the Vice Chancellor.

### **3.10.7 Endorsement**

.....  
**Secretary**

.....  
**Chairperson**

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have tried to take you through the writing and the organisation of minutes of meetings in this unit. We have also presented an example of minutes of an imaginary meeting which is expected to guide you while trying to write yours.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

- i. minutes are expected to be written in good and carefully chosen expressions in English
- ii. anybody reading the minutes of a meeting should have no problem reading it in the absence of the writer.
- iii. organising your minutes very well helps in the understanding and search for particular bits of information from the minutes.
- iv. minutes of meetings have a format which can be adjusted occasionally for convenience
- v. a notice of meeting has to be sent out before the actual meeting.
- vi. endorsement of minutes of meetings by the secretary and the chairperson after it has been adopted is important.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

You can practise writing the two questions in this tutor-marked assignment but submit only one to your tutorial master.

1. Using examples of your own, illustrate how minutes of meetings should be organised.
2. Is it true that minutes of meetings are verbatim reports of meetings?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Adebisi, F.O. (2001) in (Ed.) Aremo, B. *Advanced English Composition*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books pp. 99-115.

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## **UNIT 4      LETTER WRITING I (Formal Letters)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Writer's Address and Date
  - 3.2 The Addressee's Address and Date
  - 3.3 The Salutation and Subject Heading
  - 3.4 The Opening Paragraph
  - 3.5 The Body of the Letter
  - 3.6 A Final Paragraph
  - 3.7 Closing
  - 3.8 Letters on the Internet
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit introduces you to the essential details of formal letters in English. All forms of writing are important because they can easily be kept and documented. As a result of the importance of letters, even the unlettered employ the services of people who can write to help them write to their loved ones, children and relatives in far away places or when they need to apply to establishments as supporting staff etc. At one point in time or the other in life, you may need to write formal letters or help someone do so. Do you know that many applications for jobs, appointments and requests end up in the trash can because of the inability of the applicant to fulfil the writing requirements and standard? Some unknowingly write formal letters the way they speak while some are simply very rude in their use of language while writing. As you go through this study unit under the following subheadings, you will be taken through some of the things you need to know.

This study unit will remind you of some of the things you need to know and some of the things you have probably forgotten, taken for granted or counted as unimportant. You will soon graduate and you will discover that you need some of these skills when applying for jobs, when you become a chief executive in an establishment or when you start or own a business and when you need to write to clients, other business associates or the government.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the essential features of formal letters
- write formal letters based on the characteristic features of formal letters that you have learnt.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Formal letters are meant to serve some official purposes and these are needed almost all the time. Formal letters also have features which unlike informal letters, must be adhered to strictly.

### 3.1 The Writer's Address and Date

As we have in informal letters, the address and the date are compulsory and these usually appear at the top right hand corner but recently as mentioned in informal letters, some people have shifted the address and date emphasis to the left. Thus, you have people using the traditional method of writing the address and date on the right while some use the latest one which starts all on the left. The all-left style is, however, not yet popular with many people.

### 3.2 The Addressee's Address and Date

This section is not required in informal letters and it has always been on the left hand margin about two lines below the date. Usually, the official designation of the person being addressed is used. But occasionally the name is included. For example,

*B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.  
18/2/08*

*The Managing Director,  
Opec Engineering Company,  
Oregon.  
Eruobodo State.*

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



***B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State  
18/2/08***

***The Managing Director,  
Opec Engineering Company,  
Oregun.  
Eruobodo State.***

-----  
-----

The addressees' name and address could be written thus if the letter is written personally to him.

\* Please note that the addressees' address could also be written at the top right hand corner.

***B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State  
18/2/08***

***Mr. James Erhabor,  
The Managing Director,  
Opec Engineering Company,  
Oregun.  
Eruobodo State.***

-----  
-----

### **3.3 The Salutation and Subject Heading**

The normal salutation for people in their official capacity is *Dear Sir*, if the person is known to be a man, and *Dear Madam*, if the person is known to be a woman. The salutation is always written close to the left hand side of the margin about two lines below the last line of the addressees' address.

***B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.  
18/2/08***

***Mr. James Erhabor,  
The Managing Director,  
Opec Engineering Company,  
Oregon.  
Eruobodo State.***

***Dear Sir,***

***APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF A CLERICAL ASSISTANT***

-----  
-----

The subject heading usually comes between the salutation and the opening of the letter. If you receive a reply to your letter with an official heading as the one above, the heading, preceded by Re- is used in the reply. For example,

*Re- Application for the post of a clerical Assistant*

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Imagine that you have to write to the manager of a company who wants to sell some used cars that you are interested in, how will you write your own address and the manager's? You can also include the salutation and subject heading.

**3.4 The Opening Paragraph**

The opening paragraph states the reason for the letter. Below are some ways by which you could start the letter.

- a) I wish to apply for the post of ----advertised recently in the *The Nation*.
- b) It gives me great pleasure---- to inform you that---
- c) I am writing this letter in response to your advertisement for the sale of----
- d) With reference to your letter dated-----
- e) This is to thank you for your response to my request on-----
- f) I regret to inform you that----

- g) You may remember telephoning me on the issue of the accommodation of your office staff last -----etc.

You should try to avoid some outdated usages such as

- a) I beg to apply---  
(You do not have to beg. You may just simply apply)  
b) I acknowledge the receipt of---

Remember to quote any reference number that is used to write to you in your response to such a letter. For example,

- a) With reference to your letter dated----  
b) I wish to refer to your letter dated---in which you referred to ---  
c) With reference to your letter, R/101/ATO of 16/10/2001 ---

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Write the opening paragraph to a letter of application for the post of the Deputy Manager of a textile industry.

### **3.5 The Body of the Letter**

The body of the letter must be divided into paragraphs just like informal letters. Any subject matter that is not of relevance to the topic should not be included. Make yourself clear and go straight to the point. Points should be made as briefly as possible. Most official letters are written to fit on one page. Chief executives and business people do not have too much time to start going over pages and pages of writing. They are very busy people so the shorter your letter the better for maximum attention to be given to it. There is really no time for lengthy letters.

Make sure you use very simple language. Do not think you can impress your reader by writing very complicated sentences and expressions. The simpler you make your language, the better.

### **3.6 A Final Paragraph**

A final paragraph is important to convey your expectation. You can make statements such as:

- a) Looking forward to hearing from you  
b) I would be grateful to have an answer as soon as possible  
c) Thank you for your attention  
d) Awaiting your favourable response  
e) I look forward to---

### 3.7 Closing

The complimentary closing of *Yours Faithfully* is common in formal letters. This is followed by the signature and the full name of the writer which is written close to the right hand or to the left in some cases. You must create enough space for the signature between the closing and the full name of the writer. In the past, ladies were enjoined to put *Mrs*, *Ms* (used by a woman when she does not want to disclose her marital status) or *Miss* in bracket after their full name. But recently, some of the advocates for gender equality noted that such was not necessary since men do not put *Mr* in bracket after their own names.

The official title should be put under the full name when letters are written in one's official capacity. Below is the sample of a short official letter with all the features.

\* Please note that the address of the addressee, the closing, the signature and the full name could also be written on the right hand side of the portions they occupy.

*Opec Engineering Company,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.  
18/2/08*

*M.A. Obajo  
The Managing Director,  
Ajab Engineering Company,  
Oregun.  
Eruobodo State.*

*Dear Sir/Madam*

#### **RE – REMOVAL NOTICE**

*Thank you for your letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 in which I was informed of the company's intention to take over the ownership of the premises at No 15 Oko Oba Street, Ode Irele.*

*I wish to state that prior to the notice, I had informed the landlord of my intention to buy the property but I did not know that the landlord was not willing to release the property to my company.*

*Now that the property has been officially allocated to you, I will try and arrange for my company to relocate to another place within the next two weeks. I am sorry for the inconveniences this may cause you.  
Thank you very much indeed.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

**[Signature]**

*Mr James Erahbor*  
Managing Director,  
Opec Engineering Company.

### **3.8 Letters on the Internet**

Correspondences on the internet are called e-mails. No matter how long or short they are, they do not have the structure of letters that have been discussed in this study unit. They look like memos. They already have a set web page which cannot be changed. Even though recently, interviews for some jobs are conducted via telephone in some cases, hard copies of written applications will still continue to be relevant in our society.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this study unit, we have been able to outline the essential features of formal letter writing. We have also been able to present examples of the different sections.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

- i. formal letters are meant to serve some official purposes.
- ii. formal letters have a structure which should be adhered to strictly.
- iii. the address and the date are compulsory and these usually appear at the top right hand corner, even though these days they appear on the top left hand corner.
- iv. the opening paragraph states the reason for the letter.
- v. the body of the main letter must be divided into paragraphs just like informal letters.
- vi. the simpler you make your language, the better.
- vii. the complimentary closing of *Yours Faithfully* is common in formal letters.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Write a letter to your Head of Department informing him/her of complaints by other students in the Department against some of the lecturers who have been accused of absenteeism, lateness to classes, failure to prepare and give lecture notes to students etc,

and the need to do something urgently to avert an impending riot or protest by students.

2. Write a formal letter to the police giving an account of a crime you witnessed.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Arema, B. (2001). *Letters*, in (Ed.) Arema, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 14- 45.

## **UNIT 5 LETTER WRITING II (Informal Letters)**

## CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Writer's Address
  - 3.2 The Date
  - 3.3 The Salutation
  - 3.4 The Body of the Letter
  - 3.5 Ending the Letter
  - 3.6 Sample Question on Informal Letters and how you are Expected to Respond to it
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Writing letters in this electronic age is no less important than what it used to be in the past. We still need to write letters to friends, relatives, colleagues, etc. It is still important to write well constructed letters for communicating our personal, official, consumer and political interests. There are two types of letters – formal and informal letters. In study unit 4, you learnt about formal letters. In this study unit we shall learn about informal letters.

It is interesting to note that as easy as informal letters seem to be, many people do not know how to write interesting and heart-warming letters. Some have even written letters that have eventually denied them their needed pocket money, housekeeping allowances or the needed peace around them just because of inappropriate language use and structure of the letters they have written. A young man even said some years ago that he felt like jumping into the river when he received a letter from his so-called lover. Letter writing is a skill. You can make or mar yourself or someone else if care is not taken while writing.

We know you have been writing letters before, but going through this study unit will remind you of some of the things you already know or need to know. We shall start this study unit by going through the subheadings below.

Letters can be used to make a case, express a point of view, express feelings, register an opinion or present a need. Writing in general demands the use of specialised skills for different kinds of writing. Communicating using letters also demands precision and appropriate

use of language. Letters also have a structure and as a writer, you should follow the structure so as to get the desired result.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the essential features of informal letters
- write informal letters of your own using appropriate language and structure.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Informal letters are letters to friends and relatives. Below are the features of informal letters.

### 3.1 The Writer's Address

The writer must have an address and this could appear at the top right hand corner. Recently however, some people have started using the top left hand corner for the writer's address which makes all writings start on the left. This is however not so popular yet. The name of the country need not appear if the letter is not going outside the country. It is also not necessary to write the name of the writer on top of the address as some people used to do. Below is an example.

**1**

Department of English,  
Oba Awon University,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State

**2**

Department of English,  
Oba Awon University,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.

Both styles (straight and slanting types) are acceptable but number 1 is the one most frequently used. If you are writing manually make sure you write clearly so that you can be well understood in terms of the address you have written. Many people have not received replies to letters they have written because their writings were not clear and the person responding copied the wrong address.

### 3.2 The Date

The date is important in any document including letters and it could be written in several ways. Do not forget to include the date whenever you have to write a letter to someone or for examination purposes. Below are examples.

30<sup>th</sup> June, 2008



June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
27 Jan., 2005  
March 30, 1999  
30/7/2008  
30:7:06

### 3.3 The Salutation

In writing letters to friends, relatives and loved ones, the salutation (or opening) is usually Dear--- or My Dear ---- followed by the first name of the friend or by some other familiar name. Some people write only the first name of the addressee. The salutation should be written close to the left hand margin and you should make sure it is a line or two below the date.

Some other variants for salutation are what we have in love letters such as:

Honey,  
Sweetheart,  
Dear,  
Treasure,  
Darling,  
Sweetie, etc.

Letters to older relatives, friends or colleagues can have the following salutations which are common practice by the Nigerian user of the English language:

Dear Daddy/Dad,  
Dear Mummy/Mum,  
Dear Mama Kemi,  
Dear Auntie Toowo,  
Dear Uncle,

Dear --- followed by the person's title (i.e. professional or social) are salutations used for people that we know but are not necessarily our friends.

Dear Chief,  
Dear Alhaji,  
Dear Sir,  
Dear Ma,  
Dear Doctor,  
Dear Professor/ Prof,  
Dear Pastor,

*Dear Mrs, Dear Mr, Dear Ms, Dear Miss*, (without a name) is not used as salutation.

The layout therefore looks like this:

***B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.  
18/2/08***

***Dear Uncle Ade,***

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

How important are the writer's address, the date and salutation in an informal letter?

### **3.4 The Body of the Letter**

After the salutation, you can start the letter with a form of greeting which you know the addressee will be happy with. For example,

- a) How are you over there?
- b) This is Moji saying hello to you. How are you and the children?

You must be warm in your approach. Nobody wants to be threatened, insulted in a letter or addressed rudely or be made to have a feeling of insecurity. Such a letter will not get the needed response. Even if you have bad news to break, you must do it cleverly in such a way that it will not be too much of a shock for the addressee.

The body of the letter should be written in paragraphs. Each main point should be written and the supporting sentences developed along with the paragraph. Letters should be written in simple everyday language. There should be no complications that can make the letter difficult to understand. Whenever people read from their loved ones, they want to enjoy reading the letter. They want to hear details of good things happening at home or around the writer. If peradventure the addressee finds it difficult understanding the letter, then, something is definitely wrong either with the mode of communication or with the language in general.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What are some of the things to consider while writing the body of an informal letter?

### 3.5 Ending the Letter

After completing the body of the letter, you need to bring your letter to a close by being warm at the end. You can end the letter by asking about some familiar names or people that you have not asked about at the beginning of the letter, the progress of a member of the family, the health condition of a friend, etc. This will make the reader happy that someone cares because everyone wants to feel loved and cared for. (See the example below)

*B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State  
18/2/08*

*Dear Uncle Ade,*

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

*Yours truly,  
Dele*

The common type of ending or final salutation in informal letters is;

Yours sincerely,  
followed by the name of the writer. For example,

Yours sincerely,  
Ayo.

As mentioned earlier, some people prefer the all left style where all writings start on the left. Invariably too, in such letters, the final salutation is written on the left as seen below:

*B 44 Surulere Quarters,  
Aba Iyagani,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.  
18/2/08*

*Dear Uncle Ade,*

-----

-----

-----

-----

*Yours truly,*  
*Biola.*

### 3.6 Sample Question on Informal Letters and how you are Expected to Respond to it

#### Question

Write a letter to your brother on how the relationship between you and your best friend got soured.

This is a personal letter to a brother telling him how the relationship between you and a close friend got soured. In writing this letter, you have to show what led to the deterioration of the relationship. You probably want to write because you are not happy that a relationship which was a close one stopped like that or that you felt relieved because of what the continuation of such a relationship can cause. That is why you want to write your brother telling him about it.

You must give a series of events that culminated in the break-up. You should also express your disappointment or relief. This is an informal letter meant to explain some form of action and reaction to a particular issue. The language of informal letters usually demonstrates some form of repetition, contracted forms, rhetorical questions, mixture of long and short sentences, slang, expressions in the local dialect or language, code switching, etc. Some of these should be made use of in this type of letter. Below are some examples:

- a) I *never, never* expected to see my own close friend----
- b) when I accosted him, he said, “you *don’t* understand and you *won’t ever, ever* understand.”
- c) Brother Kunle, *can you imagine someone doing that?*
- d) *What of Tayo alias ‘Orube’?*
- e) Greetings to little ‘Eba o waste’.
- f) Bye for now.
- g) Send some of the left-over chicken for Christmas.
- h) Olorun a wa pelu wa o (God will be with us all)!
- i) ol’ boy ki lo nsele over there?(Old boy, what is happening over there?)

In informal letters, a lot of emotions can be demonstrated and feelings expressed. The writer of this kind of letter expects a response sympathising with him on the broken relationship and giving suggestions on how it can be restored. The reader on the other hand can congratulate him depending on what the cause of the broken relationship was.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this study unit, we have been able to discuss the formal features of an informal letter, what to consider while writing an informal letter by giving a sample question and hints on how to answer it.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

- i.informal letters are letters to friends, relatives, etc.
- ii.they are more relaxed than formal letters.
- iii.salutations can be of different kinds depending on who is being written to.
- iv.you can start the letter with a form of greetings.
- v.the body of the letter should be written in paragraphs.
- vi.the language is not formal, there can be repetitions of words, contracted, forms, mixture of long and short sentences, slang, code switching, expressions in the local dialect, etc.
- vii.the closing should be warm ad friendly.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Answer one of the following questions.

1. Write a letter to your married sister who has just given birth to her fourth baby, congratulating her on her safe delivery and giving at least three reasons why she should not have any more children.
2. Write a letter to your aunt inviting her to the Speech Day celebrations in your school.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Arema, B. (2001). *Letters*, in (Ed.) Arema, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 14-45.

## **MODULE 2**

Unit 1	Public Service Announcements
Unit 2	Memoranda
Unit 3	Report Writing I
Unit 4	Report Writing II

### **UNIT 1 PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Goals of Public Service Announcements (PSA)
3.2	The Message
3.3	The Language
3.4	Music
3.5	Length
3.6	Printed Announcements
3.6.1	Newspaper Announcements
3.6.2	Wall Posters
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A public service announcement can be said to be information about a past or on-coming event passed on to members of a particular community or group of people. It can be said to be a free commercial made available for a non-profit organisation. Public service announcements are usually transmitted through radio, television, posters or handbills. The electronic form may be for just a minute or two or even seconds. Radio stations are expected to donate a certain amount of airtime to serve the public and the community. Public announcements such as health and safety tips on immunisation for children, fire outbreak alerts, use of seatbelts, reasonable speed limit on major highways, etc. are usually transmitted through radio and television announcements and some other means which may be seen to be appropriate for any particular community.

Public announcements always indicate who, what, where, when and why. If it is an event that is long gone by, you can make a video

recording of the event and get it aired. You can also give the radio station a recording of the announcement of the event to be aired either before or on the actual date.

Different media outlets differ in operation. Some have specific number of days or weeks that the notice for public service announcement could be submitted before it can be aired. Except if it is a situation that possesses serious health hazard or risk. Each station has a PSD – Public Service Director or the equivalent – to whom all requests are sent. You should contact the PSD if you have any PSA – Public Service Announcement – to be aired so that you can be adequately informed about their specifications concerning Public Service Announcements.

Don't just send your PSA to a media house without asking for their specifications for such announcements and programmes. This will save you the embarrassment of not getting the programme aired when you so desire.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- mention the goals of PSA
- describe the language of PSA
- identify some of the essential components of PSA
- prepare PSA on your own.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Goals of Public Service Announcements**

PSAs are aimed at getting someone to take an action, usually a positive one. The target is the audience and it is designed to get them to act in a particular way. For example, to stop cigarette smoking, to stop drinking contaminated water, to use treated mosquito nets always, to tell people to pay up their electricity/utility bills. In short, the action could be to give information, to warn people, to incite people, to order people to stop a habit, to advertise some goods and services (commercial) etc.

For you to create a PSA, you have to identify a reason why you are doing it. You need to ask yourself what you intend to achieve and what kind of response you want from the public. At times, you identify a need that should be addressed or a danger that should be avoided. This need should be of common benefit and addressing it through PSA should yield results. You must include the dangers that neglecting such PSA can pose to the general public. In countries where response to such

public announcements is slow, you may need to include the fact that law enforcers would be on the look out for offenders.

Occasionally, it is appealing to the general populace and not the presence of law enforcers that can be used to accomplish the goal. For example, if people are littering a particular place with refuse, law enforcers can be called in to make them desist from continuing the bad habit. But where people have refused to use the family planning method available at the health clinics, which has resulted in people having too many children, it is several appeals and health education that would probably help citizens to see the need to plan their families aright.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

What is Public Service Announcement and who is it meant for?

#### **3.2 The Message**

The message must be important and relevant enough to broadcast or else it will be a waste of time. Another important factor is that the message must concern majority of the people. Otherwise, the people concerned could be contacted by telephone, e-mail, fax, etc. Except the message is urgent and there may not be enough time to get through to all concerned, you may not have it aired.

In preparing PSA, you must emphasise its relevance and importance to the target audience. In short, your PSA must:

1. address the audience in the language they understand most or that is commonly spoken in that area,
2. directly address and attract the attention of the target audience who are the most affected by the situation,
3. be clear and straight forward,
4. be relevant to their day-to-day living,
5. emotionally strong enough to move them to action or create favourable response in them.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What are the goals of PSA?

#### **3.3 The Language**

Most commercial adverts on the television and the radio use very colourful expressions such as:

a.our highly qualified staff



- b.our efficient and friendly staff
- c.affordable prices
- d.esteemed customers
- e.highly valued customers.

In writing PSA, you do not need highly colourful words. Use plain and simple language. People respond based on emotional reasons. Make a list of the positive and negative effects of people's actions and responses. These will move them to action. For example, if you include the fact that a particular community still go about half naked publicly as a result of illiteracy and lack of essential clothing materials, you are likely to receive better response if you have phrases such as:

- a.Your generous donation of used clothes and materials will stop someone from having pneumonia and cough today in----community.
- b.You can be a part of the people the world is waiting for to help the people of -----overcome guinea worm in their area.
- c.Donate generously for the anti-TB project for Adeojo community.
- d.Many families will go hungry tonight except you bring your widow's mite to help the people of---
- e.This little girl you see on the screen can overcome this problem and go back to school if only you can give some money to support her much needed heart surgery.
- f. The little girl you see on the screen is a victim of kerosene explosion.
- g.Your little donation is what she needs now for her plastic surgery.

Occasionally in Nigeria, the guardian/parent of the unfortunate person is allowed to speak on TV and further appeal to the public for help. You need to work on people's emotions to be able to get the needed reaction to the situation from them. A PSA can ask people to donate food, money, time or other essential materials.

You can have adverts such as:

Can you create time and place in your home one hour a week for a disabled child?

(The picture of a disabled child, with eyes screened, on a wheelchair may be included.)

Use simple tense forms. Most PSAs are constructed using simple present/future tenses. For written announcements, the graphology that is, the different types of letters used in writing the announcement. is very important. In writing your PSA, you can deliberately capitalise or make some letters bold for emphasis and the attention of the reader. Graphological devices can attract the attention of the reader and if they are wall posters they should be bold enough from afar and the letterings clear. The message should also be catchy enough to make readers move

near the poster to read it at a closer range and if it is a radio announcement, it should be interesting enough to make listeners desire to hear it again.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

What are some of the things you need to take into consideration while preparing a PSA?

#### **3.4 Music**

Most commercials and some PSAs have music accompanying them. You can use music if it will enhance the impact of the message. At times the music makes the PSA more interesting. Do not use sound effect just for the sake of it. Use it only if it will increase the impact of what is said.

#### **3.5 Length**

The length of a PSA is determined by the broadcast station that will air it. Usually it is between 30-60 seconds. It is important for it to be brief so that people do not get bored and so that it can meet the station's requirement for PSA.

#### **3.6 Printed Announcements**

There are different kinds of PSAs. Printed announcement is one of them. Osisanwo (2001:72) notes some form of printed announcements which are basically commercial. (See details in Osisanwo 2001). The following are some forms of printed announcements.

##### **3.6.1 Newspaper Announcements**

Newspaper announcements can be in magazines and journals, public notice, announcements, special message, information to the public. Adverts in newspapers and magazines are mostly commercial adverts about products and article for sale to the public. This could include the notice given about existing vacancies in some establishments, etc.

##### **3.6.2 Wall Posters**

This has to do with paper on walls in strategic places within an institution or area. Most of the people who paste these posters however contravene the rule on 'No posters on walls' or 'Post no bill' in some countries. Handbills, circulars and press releases are also some form of printed announcements.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

We have been able to discuss the structure of public service announcements and types. We have also been able to discuss examples of some sections of PSA.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

- i.PSA can be said to be information about a past or on-coming event passed on to members of a particular community or group.
- ii.PSAs are aimed at getting someone to take an action – usually a positive one.
- iii. the target of PSA is the audience and it is designed to make them do something.
- iv.to create a PSA you have to identify a reason for doing it.
- v.there are different kinds of PSA - spoken and written.
- vi.the language must attract the attention of your target audience.
- vii.in writing a PSA, you should use plain and simple language.
- viii.you need to appeal to the emotion of your target audience.
- ix.the message must be important and relevant enough to broadcast.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. As the president of your department's student's association, write a PSA to be displayed on your Departmental notice boards concerning students who have refused to do their online registration for courses and others who have not been coming for tutorials.
2. Discuss how a writer can make his/her PSA interesting

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Aremo, B. (2001) (Ed.). *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books.

Osisanwo, W. (2001). *Public Announcements* in (Ed.) Aremo, B. Ibid pp 61 – 72.

[kent@kab.net](mailto:kent@kab.net)

## UNIT 2 MEMORANDA

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- 1.0 Introduction
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study unit will introduce you to the art of writing memoranda or memos (singular - memorandum) which is another skill you need as a university student who hopes to be of service to the nation or community in future. It is particularly useful and a part of daily life of those in the civil service. So in case you graduate and find yourself in the civil service, this study unit will be a good companion and reminder for some of the skills you need at that time. On the other hand, if you start your own business and you happen to be the executive director of your establishment, having an already designed memo pad will be a good thing to have beside you as you constantly need to communicate with others within your establishment.

A memorandum is a short, written document which addresses specific people or groups for the purpose of giving information or generating an action for specific reasons. You will learn more about writing memos in the sections that follow.

A memorandum (memo) is a very precise write-up or document because most decision-makers have limited time for writing or going through

materials. They always want a gist of what you are trying to say so that they can give their comments in very few words as possible. Usually, long memos do not get read easily and if and when they do, it may be difficult going through all the sections in detail. The executive may just scan through to pick a few essential points. In this study unit, you will learn a few things about writing memos so that if in future you find yourself in a position where you have to write or read one, you will know what to do or expect.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- describe a memorandum
- outline the procedure for writing a memorandum
- attempt writing a simple memorandum following the structure you have been taught.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Before you write your memo, you need to know the receiver of the memo, the essential points they need to know and how to best present it so that it can attract their attention.

### **3.1 Who**

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons memos are written is to generate action in the receiver. The information you are transmitting is expected to make a point, give a timely reminder for something or some action, note an agreement or make the receiver take some action. If the receiver is a decision-maker, to be able to get the expected response, you must give the precise information needed.

Decision-makers also write memos to executors of projects or ideas, etc. Some of these memos are however instructive and the receiver is expected to act promptly for specific reasons and report back probably through another memo. For example, the chairman, committee of deans in a university can write a memo to all heads of departments informing them of the need to get final year students' results ready for senate approval on or before a particular date. The writer knows the receiver is in a position to take action and that the work would be done for the organisation to move forward.

### **3.2 The Content**

When preparing a memo, you must determine how much information your reader needs and you should have or be able to make a good guess how much the reader already knows. For your reader to make good judgment, he/she assumes you are giving him/her the correct and valid information that is needful at that moment. The reader also needs to be presented with all necessary facts- both positive and negative, depending on the issue at hand. If you are making a request, you must make realistic ones and give suggestions that are practicable.

### 3.3 How to Present the Information

You must be clear in your presentation. Make your information or presentation precise. For you to master this art of precision, you need a lot of practice. You can start with your day-to-day interaction with people by making sure you make your contributions clear and to the point always. You can also practice by putting whatever you want to write down in simple, short sentences which you can later reduce to point form. Look at the examples below.

*Final year students' results should be made ready by the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2007 for processing to Business Committee of Senate because final year students are going for NYSC Orientation Programme on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2007.*

The above can be re-written in a short form:

1. *NYSC orientation programme starts on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2007*
2. *Please make final year students' results ready for processing to Business Committee of Senate on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2007.*

### 3.4 Language

Your use of appropriate language is important while writing memos. Even though it is a precise write-up, it should be written in well constructed language. You must check your memo for bad or wrong spellings, tense or grammatical errors in general. Your writing must be simple, well focused and easy to read.

#### 3.4.1 Simplicity

This is the hallmark of good writing. You should use simple sentence patterns. Complex sentence structure and organisation may bring confusion. You must write in a very clear manner. Read the sentence below and also read the modifications that have been done to it.

*Whether you believe it or not, and there are pieces of evidence to prove that it is likely to be true that some of the students were responsible for beating up the Agric Master who without doubt was on his way to the principal's house in town.*

The writer above is trying to use the conversational style. This kind of language makes things complicated. It can be made simpler and easier to read. Read the sentences below.

- a) *There are pieces of evidence to show that some students were responsible for beating up the Agric master.*
- b) *The Agric Master was on his way to the principal's house in town*

### 3.4.1 Clarity

This involves choosing the right words and avoiding any kind of technicality except when necessary. You should think about different ways of saying the same thing. You can use the dictionary or the thesaurus which will help you find alternatives or synonyms of words. Civil servants tend to prefer the use of complex phrases that seem to have some form of bureaucratic meaning. This can still be made simple for the benefit of those who are not used to such language.

### 3.5 Structure of Memorandum

There are two types of memoranda.

- a) informal memorandum; and
- b) formal memorandum.

Informal memorandum is one that is circulated internally. These are written to individuals during the course of duty by people within the same establishment or organisation. Memos have a format. They are not as elaborate as formal letters. There is usually no formal address like term(s) such as *Dear Sir* or *Dear Madam*.

Formal memorandum is usually written specially for particular persons or committees for the purpose of providing the recipients with information on certain issues. Memorandum of this type is always longer than the informal type. In formal memoranda have a structure – title, introduction, body, conclusion and recommendations. It can be presented in a letter format.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What are some of the things you need to take into consideration while preparing a memorandum?

### **3.5.1 Title**

This states the subject matter and should be stated in a clear way.

### **3.5.2 The Introduction**

This section informs the reader what the write-up is all about.

### **3.5.3 The Main Body**

In this section, the main points are expanded and discussed under appropriate headings and subheadings.

### **3.5.4 Conclusion**

This is a summary of the points and arguments that have been presented.

### **3.5.5 Recommendations**

In this section, the logical conclusions arising out of the discussion are presented and listed. When writing the recommendations, use the same kind of grammatical structure to express each of them. This will make your presentation better and clearer.

## **3.6 Revision of the Write-up**

Before you send your memo or present it to whoever should have it, you must revise it. Try to go over the content again and be sure your points are well presented and that there are no contradictions. You should also make sure that it is devoid of grammatical errors.

## **3.7 Electronic Mail Memos**

Today, people use the electronic mail (e-mail) on the internet to send memos and communicate. E-mail correspondence seems to be a more rushed correspondence which presupposes that it needs even greater brevity and clarity. In places where internet services are well developed and connected, establishments use e-mail communication instead of the traditional memos. Please note the following about e-mail communication.

### **3.7.1 It is Official**



E-mail messages are legal documents. Whatever you write through e-mail can be tendered as evidence in a law court.

### 3.7.2 Spell-check your Mail

Most users of the e-mail programmes do not check for spelling and grammar. Always check your spellings and grammar before you send your e-mail. E-mail needs to be proofread. It is good to go the extra mile of first going through thoroughly to check for wrong spellings of people's names and phone numbers before sending it to multiple users.

### 3.7.3 Formatting Tools

You should be clear and concise with your writing of e-mails. Your writing must be as clear as any written document you produce. Use bullets, bold text, etc to highlight your writing so that readers can easily find what they are looking for. Use appropriate line spacing, breaks between paragraphs and lines. This makes your mail more visually accessible and easy to read.

#### Samples of informal memorandum

##### Sample A

**OBA AWON UNIVERSITY, ODE – IRELE, NIGERIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Ag. Head  
Department of English

**To:** All Academic Staff  
Department of English

**Date:** 29/10/07

---

#### Departmental Examiners' Meeting- A Reminder

This is to remind you of our meeting coming up tomorrow, Tuesday, 11th October 2007.

Time: 10.00am  
Venue: Departmental Library  
Agenda: Graduating Students' result  
AOB

Please bring along your copy of our new programme.

Thank you,

Dr W.O Adigun  
**Sample B**

**OBA AWON UNIVERSITY, ODE-IRELE, NIGERIA  
INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

**From:** The Secretary  
Oba School of English

**To:** See distribution below

**Date:** 21/09/07

---

Department of English/Unifecs Programme  
**Notice of Meeting**

There will be a meeting of all members involved in this programme.  
Please attend punctually

Thanks.

Mr A.T Akande

Secretary

CC:

Mrs A.A. Akamo

Dr S.O. Olateru

Dr A.A. Winson

**Sample of Format of a Formal Memorandum**

*No 36, Ajebandele  
Ode-Irele,  
Eruobodo State.  
20/02/08*

*The Chairman,  
Furniture Allocation/ Repair Committee,  
Oba Awon University.*

*Dear Sir/Ma*

***REQUEST FOR A WORKSPACE FOR THE REPAIR OF BROKEN  
DOWN FURNITURE AT THE CENTRAL CAFETERIA***

*On behalf of the Managing Director of Reo Engineering Company, I  
wish to request for the release of the space between the Central  
Cafeteria and the students' hostels as workspace for the repair of  
broken down furniture.*

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What do you understand by simplicity and clarity in memo writing?

**A. Location and Quantity**

*The broken down furniture are located in all the students' hostels and they are about 1000 in number.*

**B. Condition of Furniture**

*The broken down furniture are in a very bad state. The students can no longer use them.*

**C. Quotation**

*Repairing the furniture will cost a total amount of N500, 000.*

**D. Conclusion**

*We look forward to receiving a favourable reply from you.*

**E. Recommendation**

We hereby wish that:

- 1. the said space be released to us as workspace for a token fee.*
- 2. we be allowed to operate and do repair work after office hours.*
- 3. students be allowed to bring some other pieces of furniture to us for repair.*

*Yours Faithfully,*

*Prince A. Salawu*

*Secretary*

*Reo Engineering Company*

*For and on behalf of the Managing Director of Reo Engineering Company*

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this study unit, we have discussed memoranda, outlined the procedure for writing them. We have also discussed their structure and given some samples of memos

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

1. a memorandum is a short, written document which addresses specific people or groups for the purpose of giving information or generating an action for specific reasons.
2. memos have a structure.
3. the reader, the content and the language are very important.
4. simplicity is important while writing memos.
5. you must present your information simply and clearly.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Answer only one of the questions.

1. What are some of the things you need to take into consideration while writing e-mail memos?
2. As the manager of Aluminium Extrusion Company, write a memo to the sales manager on the need to contact some other companies as regards the sales and distribution of your finished products.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Okanlawon, B. (2001). Memoranda in (Ed.) Aremo, B. *Advanced English Compositions, Lagos, Nigeria*: Scribo Educational Books. pp 46-60.

<http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/management/courses/mgmt242/cases/m emotips>

## **UNIT 3      REPORT WRITING I**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Components of an Effective Report
    - 3.1.1 Transmittal Document
    - 3.1.2 Title Page
    - 3.1.3 Foreword
    - 3.1.4 Acknowledgements
    - 3.1.5 Table of Contents
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    - 3.1.7 Abstract or Summary
    - 3.1.8 Procedure for Collecting Data
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  - 3.2 Types of Reports
    - 3.2.1 Periodic Report
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  - 3.3 Terms of Reference
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Curtin University of Technology (in its write-up on report writing) sees a report as a structured written presentation directed to interested readers in response to some specific purpose, aim or request. Reports give information on an assignment or research that has been completed. This is an exercise we all engage in daily at home, in our places of work and other places whether verbally or in written form. Students could be asked to give a report on an experiment done. A government official may be asked to inspect a sight and give a report of the assessment of the situation.

There are several kinds of reports. You have technical, business, engineering, accounting, financial information, technology and police reports. The assignments for which reports are required are set in form of a task, a problem or a case study. An individual may be asked to

research a problem, visit a particular site or go through some documents and then write a report on the observations or notes the person has taken based on what has been researched into and analysed.

There must be a problem to analyse and a report of that analysis which is expected to give beneficial information to those concerned. In short, a report may give account of something or offer a solution to a problem or answer a question. Reports are different from ordinary essays. A report has some specific features that have to be studied, researched into and reported. In this study unit, you will be taken through the essential structure of reports. When you go through the structure of essay writing, you will notice that there are differences between essay writing and report writing.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- describe a report
- identify the specific purpose of reports
- identify and describe the component parts of report writing.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Components of an Effective Report**

There are so many things to look for in a report. Some of them are discussed in this section.

An effective report is appropriate to its purpose and audience. This, in effect, means that the writer should identify the reason for the report, the purpose and the audience. A report should also be accurate, clear and well organised with appropriate sub-headings. At a glance, a reader should be able to identify the section he wants to examine or go through in the report. Reports also have a structure and standardised format which should be followed as much as possible.

Curtin University of Technology notes some essential features of a good report. Some of them are discussed below.

#### **3.1.1 Transmittal Document**

A transmittal document personalises the document for a particular reader drawing attention to the part that really concerns that reader. A transmittal document is not part of the document but accompanies the report. It can be in the form of a letter, memo or minute.

### **3.1.2 Title Page**

There must be a title page which spells out what the report is about – that is, the subject matter. The title page features the organisation, author's name and position, authority for report, place of origin, the date of receiving the report and the date of submission of the report.

### **3.1.3 Foreword**

It is important that someone who knows the genesis of the enquiry that led to the report put in a word at the beginning so that readers can have an idea of what the problem was that warranted the writing of the report.

### **3.1.4 Acknowledgements**

In this section, there is an acknowledgement of all who contributed to the success of the work. In addition, this section is also used to acknowledge the contributions of earlier authors, if there are, whose works have influenced the writer's contribution to the report. Others such as the typist(s) and those who helped in collecting data and information for the work can also be acknowledged in this section.

### **3.1.5 Table of Contents**

This shows the section titles and major headings with the page locations (i.e i, ii, iii, 1, 2, 3, etc.)

### **3.1.6 Table of Charts**

This section indicates the locations of charts, diagrams, graphs as they appear in the report.

### **3.1.7 Abstract or Summary**

This is a very brief summary of the report. After writing the body of the report, you need to write the abstract. The abstract is a brief summary of the essential elements of the report. The abstract covers the main points. In paper writing, most editors request between 150-200 words for an abstract. In report writing, an abstract of about 10-15% of the entire length of the report should be written. The abstract should be compact and to the point.

### **3.1.8 Procedure for Collecting Data**

This section spells out the procedure for collecting the data used for the report. Report data can be collected through interviews, questionnaires, tests, experiments, recorded data, telephone calls that can be confirmed through face to face interaction, e-mails, etc. The procedure for analysis should also be spelt out in this section. This should state the total amount of data collected, the sample used and rationale for the sample preferred.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

What are reports and what are the component parts of report writing?

### **3.1.9 Discussion and Findings**

In this section, the discussion and the findings are discussed.

### **3.1.10 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Conclusions are usually drawn at the end of reports from the findings and the investigations done. Recommendations are the line of action to be taken based on the conclusions drawn from the findings.

### **3.1.11 Appendix**

There are some information that cannot be incorporated in the body of the report but which are circumstantial evidences. These include materials like photographs, letters, statistical details which may be difficult to include in the body of the work. All these will be in the appendix at the end of the report.

#### **3.1.1.2 Bibliography**

This is a list of the books, journals, or reference materials consulted while writing the report.

## **3.2 Types of Reports**

Lekan Dairo (2001:178) notes that there are all kinds of reports and that reports are required by initiators (companies, government establishments, etc.) to guide them in making some important decisions or policy statements.



### **3.2.1 Periodic Report**

Periodic reports are written at some specified intervals – e.g. weekly, termly, quarterly, annually, etc. In hospitals, nurses write reports on patients in the wards but such reports may not have all the necessary details as described above. There is a daily report on the medical condition of the patients under their care.

### **3.2.2 Progress Report**

These are periodic or progress reports written at regular intervals. They are normally written on the progress of a particular project for the duration of the period it is supposed to last. This kind of report provides up-to-date account of the work in progress.

### **3.2.3 Investigative Report**

This is based on authorised investigation. The body asking for such reports normally prepare some terms of reference or guidelines for the writers of the reports. Such terms of reference could include: causes, prevention, possible outcomes of some issues plaguing a society or a community. Below is an example of terms of reference (3.3).

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Mention different types of reports that you have learnt in this study unit and some others that you have probably heard of and describe what they are used for.

## **3.3 Terms of Reference**

The panel was given the following terms of reference:

- a) To look into the causes of the fire outbreak at Aluta Market, Oba Akinwale Memorial University, Are-Agbo on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2008.
- b) To make appropriate recommendations that will forestall future occurrences of fire outbreak in the market.
- c) To submit its report on or before the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this study unit, you have been introduced to report writing, the different kinds of reports and the essential features of reports.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this study unit, you have learnt the following:

- i.that reports give information on an assignment or research that has been completed.
- ii.there are different kinds of reports.
- iii.a report should be accurate and well organised.
- iv.reports have a standardised format which most writers follow.
- v.a transmittal document personalises the document for a particular reader.
- vi.the title page features the organisation, author's name and position, authority for report, place of origin, the date of receiving the report and the date of submission of the report.
- vii.the abstract is a brief summary of the essential points.
- viii.that the bibliography contains the list of all publications and works consulted.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What is a report and what do you understand by the following terms – title page, transmittal document, abstract, terms of reference, periodic report, and investigative report?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Arema, B. (2001) (Ed). *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books.

Curtin University of Technology Start Up 2008.

Dairo, L. (2001). Reports in (Ed.) Arema, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. Pp. 178-198.

## **UNIT 4      REPORT WRITING II**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Procedure for Report Writing
    - 3.1.1 Planning Process
    - 3.1.2 Writing Process
      - 3.1.2.1 Introduction
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      - 3.1.2.5 Abstract
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    - 3.1.3 Revision
    - 3.1.4 Sample Report
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous study unit, you were introduced to report writing. You learnt that report writing is technical and that there are specific ways of writing reports. You also learnt that specific details should be included in the writing of reports. Just in case you did not have time to go through the previous unit before opening up this one, let us just do a recap on what we learnt in the previous unit. We learnt that:

1. reports give information on an assignment or research that has been completed.
2. there are different kinds of reports and that a report should be accurate and well organised.
3. reports have a standardised format which most writers follow
4. a transmittal document personalises the document for a particular reader
5. the title page features the organisation, author's name and position, authority for report, place of origin, the date of receiving the report and the date of submission of the report.
6. the abstract is a brief summary of the essential points
7. the bibliography contains the list of all publications and works consulted.

With this at the back of our minds we can now go ahead to find out what we need to know about report writing in this study unit.

In the last study unit on report writing, you were taken through the essential details of report writing. In this study unit, you will learn about the practical procedure for report writing. For you to prepare for report writing you need to take some practical steps. There have been people who have written reports in the past and the reports rejected because they did not take some practical steps which they could have taken before writing the report. In report writing, there must be a planning and a writing process.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- outline the procedure for report writing
- provide some samples of report writing structure
- attempt writing a simple report following the structure you have been taught.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

This section presents the necessary general background information needed in the preparation of a report.

### **3.1 Procedure for Report Writing**

A write-up on the procedure for report writing by Curtis University of Technology notes that planning, writing and formatting are good steps to follow while preparing a report. Some of these will be discussed below.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Mention five important things you know about report writing.

##### **3.1.1 Planning Process**

In planning to write a report, you need to take note of four things- the purpose, audience, terms of reference, and fact finding. You need to go through relevant notes on the issue at hand and make sure you understand what you have been asked to do. This is important because lack of understanding of the situation can lead to a misinterpretation of the purpose of the report. Your audience is also important while planning. You need to know their level of understanding and what they should know. This is one of the reasons why you need to write in simple

language so that you can be well understood and not quoted out of context.

The terms of reference which has been earlier mentioned is also important. This will help you to determine the amount of details required, what you need to include and what you need to overlook. Fact finding is another thing you need to take seriously while preparing a report. You need to gather relevant and factual information if you want to write a credible and an acceptable report.

Make sure you make enough credible contacts so that your information source can be reliable.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

The planning process in report writing is very important. What are some of the things you should take into consideration?

### **3.1.2 Writing Process**

After the planning stage is the writing stage which starts with an introduction.

#### **3.1.2.1 Introduction**

Readers always want to know why they are reading what they are reading and this is why an introduction is important. In writing a report, you need to introduce the subject matter by writing the background information which will make the reading of the report relevant and important to the reader. Readers want to be informed about the aim, objectives, premises, scope, limitations, and any other useful information that will give good insight to the reader.

#### **3.1.2.2 Discussion**

The discussion comes after all investigations and researches on work must have been done. This must be written in clear and plain language so that it can be well understood by all those who have to go through the report. The discussion is also the body of the work which contains all headings and sub-headings. You have to describe, analyse and give your suggestions based on the pros and cons of the matter.

You have to discuss the procedure used, evaluate the steps taken, and show the correlation between observable patterns. In addition, you have to justify the methodology and do a critical analysis of the findings, argue back and forth and show a very good understanding of the content.

### **3.1.2.3 Conclusion**

The conclusions in a report are usually drawn from the evidence, findings and discussion of available material. This section should include the key points, main arguments, findings and comments.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

What are some of the things that should be included in the introductory part of a report?

### **3.1.2.4 Recommendation**

This section is a summary of the suggestions and possible actions to be taken. You should give your recommendations based on available evidences. You should be imaginative, rational and forward looking. Do not present a dead end. Suggest a way forward.

### **3.1.2.5 Abstract**

After writing the body of the report, you need to write the abstract. The abstract is a brief summary of the essential elements of the report and it covers the main points. In academic paper writing, editors normally request for an abstract of about 150-200 words. In report writing, an abstract of about 10-15% of the entire article should be written to summarise the main points.

### **3.1.2.6 Bibliography**

This section focuses all documents and materials used and referred to in the work.

### **3.1.2.7 Transmittal Document**

Before you dispatch the report to readers, you must write a transmittal document. Just as mentioned in the previous study unit on report writing, a transmittal document is not part of the report but accompanies the report in form of a letter or memo and it personalises the report for a specific reader highlighting the parts the areas of possible interest to the reader.

### **3.1.3 Revision**

This is a very important stage. It is a stage when you go through the report to find out if there are omissions, grammatical errors or any unnecessary additions that need to be corrected. Do not send out a report

without going through for spelling or other errors which might have occurred during the preparation of the report.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4**

At what stage should you start your discussion and what should you include?

#### **3.1.4 Sample Report**

*Agba-Awon*

*University,*

*Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.  
20 Nov. 2007*

*The Vice Chancellor,  
Oba-Awon University,  
Ode-Irele.  
Eruobodo State.*

*Dear Sir,*

#### **REPORT ON STUDENTS CRISIS ON OBA AWON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, ODE-IRELE, ERUOBODO STATE, NIGERIA**

##### **1. Abstract**

*On the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007, a five-man panel was instituted to investigate the causes of students' unrest on the campus between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and make recommendations on how to forestall future occurrences of students' unrest on the campus. The investigation revealed that the main cause of the unrest was the inability of the University authority to provide some essential services such as clean water and electricity supply for the students' hostels. The disturbances resulted in two members of staff of the University getting wounded by the students and this led to their being hospitalised. It is recommended that the University authority should without delay employ the services of commercial tanker drivers for the supply of water on an hourly basis to students' halls of residence and empower the University power house with enough funds to operate the available generators for the supply of electricity in the absence of power supply from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria. The University should also make a release that, in future, students should make their complaints known to the University instead of managing the situation by themselves.*

## **2. *Members of the Panel***

- a) *Professor A.A Adeolu*     *Dean of Students Affairs - Chairman*
- b) *Dr. Ade Adegoke*        *Head, Department of Human Relations*
- c) *Dr. M.A. Olateju*         *Head, Department of English*
- d) *Dr. E. Egbonwon*        *Lecturer, Department of Communication Arts*
- e) *Mrs. O.O. Ogunwo*       *Head, Maintenance Department - Secretary*

## **3. *Terms of Reference***

*The five man panel was given the following terms of reference:*

- a) *to find out the cause(s) of the students unrest at Oba-Awon University, Ode-Irele between 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and the havoc wrought while it lasted.*
- b) *to recommend solutions to the problem of lack of good water supply and electricity to the students; hostels.*
- c) *to submit its report within two weeks from the date of its first sitting*

## **4. *Methodology***

- a) *The panel interacted with the following persons:*
  - i) *Students in different students' hostels*
  - ii) *Students wounded during the crisis*
  - iii) *Members of staff hospitalised at the University health centre*
  - iv) *The public relations officers of the University*
  - vi) *The head, maintenance department*
- b) *The panel visited the power house, the University water dam and the students' hostels.*
- c) *The panel also visited the wounded students and members of staff at the State Hospital.*

## **5. *Findings***

*The following were the findings of the panel:*

- a) *The cause of the students' unrest was lack of water and electricity supply to the students' hostels.*



- b) *Three days before the crisis, students had been going to fetch water from the only borehole in the students' hostel in one of the halls*
- c) *The pumping machine of the borehole broke down and students could no longer get water to bathe and wash.*
- d) *The quality of the little water coming from the taps in the halls was not good enough. The colour was brown which shows that it had not been purified.*
- e) *The electricity supply was epileptic and dull. The students could not read or cook with it.*
- f) *Some of the students also went to the power house in annoyance to protest against poor power supply. In the process, two members of staff of the power house were rough-handled by the students which led to their being hospitalised at the State Hospital.*
- g) *Five of the students were wounded and some windows of Hall 4 got broken while the students were struggling for water in their hostel.*
- h) *The five wounded students were given first aid treatment at the University Health Centre.*

## **6. Conclusions**

- a) *Water supply to students' hostels is not adequate.*
- b) *Electricity supply to students' halls is also not good enough.*
- c) *Many of the water pipes carrying water to students' hostels are already damaged and rusty.*
- d) *Many of the security/search lights in students' hostels and those on the paths leading to the hostels are no longer functioning.*

## **7. Recommendations**

*The members of the panel therefore recommend the following:*

- a) *The damaged water pipes leading to the students' hostels should be replaced immediately.*
- b) *Work on the generators at the University water dam should commence immediately so that students' hostels can be supplied with clean water.*
- c) *Materials for the purification of water for use should be purchased immediately.*
- d) *The power house should be empowered financially for better generation and supply of electricity.*

*Thank you for the opportunity given us to serve.*

*Yours Faithfully,*

*Ogunwo Olujimi*

*Secretary,*

*Panel on the January 2007 Students' crisis at Oba-Awon University,  
Ode Irele, Eruobodo State.*

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5**

Why must you revise your report before sending it out to readers?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have been able to deal with the practical aspects of writing a report by looking at the planning, writing and revision stages.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

- i. in planning to write a report, you need to take note of four things – the purpose, audience, terms of reference, and fact finding.
- ii. in writing a report, you need to introduce the subject matter by writing the background information.
- iii. the discussion comes after all the investigations and researches on the work must have been done.
- iv. the abstract is a brief summary of the essential elements of the report and it covers the main points.
- v. you do not send out a report without going through for spelling or other errors which might have occurred during the preparation of the report.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Attempt any one of the questions.

1. You were an eye-witness to the robbery that occurred at your branch in a bank. As a staff member, write a report of the incidence to the head office under suitable headings, inventing names and details as necessary.
2. There is a reported case of mismanagement of funds in an establishment. You are one of the auditors of the company and you have been asked to investigate the case and give a report. Write a report to be submitted to the director of the establishment.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Dairo, L. (2001). *Reports* in (Ed) Aremo, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 178-198

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## MODULE 3

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## UNIT 1 SPEECH MAKING I

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

There are all kinds of events happening around us that demand speech making. There can be great speeches for occasions such as speech and prize-giving day, wedding, birthday, retirement, graduation. etc. All these speeches differ in their content and not necessarily the structure. Have you ever been asked to deliver a speech before? Do you remember that feeling? That it is an excellent way of standing out from the crowd and making some comments about people or some issues of life? Or have you made a presentation on behalf of someone dear to you or have

you had to publicly defend someone before? If your answer is yes then you are on the right path to getting ready for great speeches in future. If your answer is no, then this study unit is what you need to have that initial kick off. The sub headings below will take you through what it takes to get prepared for yet another skill that we need to get the best out of life and out of whatever profession we find ourselves in future.

A speech is a talk to an audience or a group of people gathered in a particular place for a particular reason. It is sometimes referred to as an address if the occasion is a ceremonial one. Olowe (2001) notes that it is referred to as an oration if it is very moving and makes people to probably want to take some actions. It can also be referred to as a lecture if it is intended to teach and if delivered in a church service as a sermon. Below are some of the objectives of the study.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- describe the different types of speeches
- give information on how to choose the topic for speeches
- describe how to gather information for making speeches
- write on the structure of speech.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Types of Speeches**

There are different types of speeches. They are:

- a) Manuscript speeches
- b) Memorised speeches
- c) Extemporaneous speeches
- d) Impromptu speeches

#### **3.1.1 Manuscript Speeches**

Olowe (2001) notes that manuscript speeches are well planned and prepared for a particular occasion. They are well written and usually read aloud from a script. Members of the audience could be given copies so that they can read along with the speaker. Some of these speeches are long and could be boring if the writer does not make it lively enough. These are the kind of speeches we have delivered on behalf of presidents or chief executives at times. The presenter presents on behalf of someone and is probably not in a position to answer any queries on the speech, peradventure there is any.

### **3.1.2 Memorised Speeches**

These are speeches that are also well planned and well written but the contents have been memorised by the speaker. The manuscripts are kept away from the audience. This could also be very long. The danger in memorised speeches is that the speaker may forget part of it and just make it up in between.

### **3.1.3 Extemporaneous Speeches**

In this type of speech, the main ingredients are well known to the speaker. The main points are well thought out and the speaker then supplies the words and sentences as he speaks. This makes the presentation conversational in style and they can be quite long.

### **3.1.4 Impromptu Speeches**

These are speeches that were not previously planned. They are usually given by those who are asked to stand in for people when the expected guest fails to show up. These kinds of people just present what is befitting without any form of preparation.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

1. Mention the types of speeches that have been discussed so far and the differences between them.
2. Try to remember some speeches you have listened to recently and write down their titles. Which of them would you consider fits in to any of the types above?

## **3.2 Speech Structure**

Speech making or writing is another specialised form of writing that has a structure. In particular, manuscript speeches have a formal or standard structure because they are planned. Below is the usual structure of planned speeches.

### **3.2.1 The Title**

A speech must bear a title and this must be specific just like the title of minutes of meetings. E.g.

- a) ‘An Address by the Olubuse-Oba Okunade Sijuade to the newly elected Ode-Irele Local Government Chairmen at Ode-Irele town hall on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2007’

- b) 'An Address by the president of the Student Union to the congregation during the inauguration of the Board of Trustees at the Student Union building, Oba-Awon University, Ode-Irele on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2005'
- c) 'Back to land: A lecture delivered by the Minister of Agriculture – Alhaji Kola Bokupalemo on World Agricultural Day at Auditorium 1, Oba-Awon University, Ode-Irele, on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008'

From the titles of addresses above, you will notice the following:

### **3.2.1.1 The Speaker**

The writer or author of the address must be indicated. Even if the person that did the actual writing was delegated to do so and another person had to present it as well, it is assumed that the person whose name is written on the address is the author of the address.

### **3.2.1.2 The Audience**

The speech must be directed at an audience.

### **3.2.1.3 The Venue**

The venue is where the speech was actually delivered.

### **3.2.1.4 The Date**

The particular day of the week, the month and the year have to be specified for record purposes.

### **3.2.1.5 The Topic**

In some cases, the title may indicate the topic of the lecture or speech as we have in (c) above. Please note that the titles do not end with a full stop.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Write out an appropriate salutation for:

- a) a conference of obas, high chiefs and prominent personalities gathered at the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected local government chairmen.
- b) a gathering of a social club to which you belong.

### 3.2.2 The Salutation

Speech making is interactive and you have to face an audience or a group of people. It is, therefore, mandatory that you salute them. You therefore have to start your speech with some form of greetings before you speak to them. Apart from this, there may be some dignitaries there who should be recognised. As a result of this, you have to mention these people by names at times or by their title or both. After you have done this, you then address the others as ‘Ladies and Gentlemen’. The people who have to be specially recognised are persons like obas, high chiefs, obis, emirs, chairmen, and guests of honour. People who hold official positions in a social club, etc. may also be given special recognition. The salutations may be like this:

Your Royal Highness, The Owa of Ode-Irele, Oba Ayinde Isola;  
High Chief Adesoka Gbolade,  
High Chief Desola Ogunade,  
The Chairman, Irele Central Local Government;  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please note that commas are used to separate subsections but if one of them already has a comma, then a semicolon is used. You will also notice that a comma is used at the end of the salutation because the speaker is still speaking.

If however the audience is large and there would be too many people to give recognition to, after the first speaker has tried to recognise the people present, all other speakers may then say “all protocols observed”. The president in a broadcast to the nation may also say – ‘Fellow citizens’, ‘Great citizens of Nigeria’ etc. Some public officers have special ways of referring to them. For example, the head of a government is referred to as *Your Excellency*; a Bishop – *My Lord Spiritual*, a Judge – *My Lord Temporal* while kings are referred to as *Your Royal Highness*

### 3.2.3 The Introduction

A very good introduction is important in speech making. Your introduction can either make or mar your speech. A good introduction can achieve the following:

#### 3.2.3.1 Getting the Attention of the Audience

For you to be able to deliver your speech the way you want, you should try to have the attention of your audience. You can best do this by first



saying things that would make the audience feel good and appreciated so that they can be receptive to what you have to say. For example:

*It gives me great pleasure to stand before the victorious youths of this generation.*

*It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this Award-giving ceremony.*

*Let me first and foremost welcome you to the state of the Living Spring with very progressive and forward looking people.*

*Today, we are witnessing another great and historic occasion in which some of our well deserving people of this state are being given honorary awards.*

*This is a great occasion indeed and you will agree with me that great people attend great occasions.*

In some of the examples above you will notice that reference is made to the audience, occasion, the relationship between the audience and the topic. The speaker can also start with a joke or a rhetorical question which will attract the attention of the audience and make them attentive to what you have to say. In particular, if the topic is of interest to human relationships and survival, starting with probing questions may hold the attention of the audience.

Immediately you are able to secure the attention of your audience, present the topic to them and briefly how you intend to go about it and, if possible, you can assure them of the fact that you will not waste their time.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Write the introduction of a speech you have been asked to deliver on the occasion of the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday ceremony of your very close friend.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this study unit, we have been able to go through the topic on speech making and some of the essential features of speech making. We were able to go as far as getting the attention of the audience under the introductory section. The next unit will feature the body of the speech and some other tips on speech writing and delivery.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this section you have learnt that:

- i.a speech is a talk given to an audience,
- ii.there are speeches for different occasions,
- iii.there are different types of speeches,
- iv.impromptu speeches are given without prior planning,
- v.extemporaneous speeches are well thought out but the speakers use the main points and flesh it up on the spur of the moment,
- vi.manuscript speeches are well prepared and often read out,
- vii.memorised speeches are well planned and written but the scripts are not used during delivery,
- viii.speech writing is a specialised skill and it has a structure,
- ix.the title is important in speech writing,
- x.the introduction has to be very good so that you can have the attention of your audience.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Answer only one of the questions in this section.

1. Look through one of the national dailies and select an editorial. Re-write that editorial as a manuscript speech.
2. The students in your university have been complaining about some of the activities of public transport drivers in your institution and these include arbitrary change in bus fares, not taking students to their destinations, using ragged and dirty buses, etc. As the students' union president, write the title and the introduction of a speech to be delivered at the annual convention of the Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Olowe, D. (2001). *Speeches* in (Ed.) Aremo, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 73-98.

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## **UNIT 2      SPEECH MAKING II**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In Module 3 unit 1, you were introduced to speech making, the types of speeches and the structure of prepared speech up to the introduction. From the beginning of this course you would have noticed in all the modules that ENG 224 is a very practical course (and that it is) designed to make you function effectively within and outside school or wherever you may find yourself in the future. This unit takes you into the practical aspects of speech making by taking you through a few steps to take while writing speeches. Giving a presentation can be a very great way of kicking off or building your business. There are secrets of writing a powerful and persuasive speech which you need to know and this study unit will lead you into that. Just go through with the sub-headings listed below.

Writing speeches for birthdays, graduation or other kinds of occasions is more than just putting the biro on paper. It needs preparation. Some of the things you need to do will be discussed in this unit but before we do that, we need to complete our work on the structure of planned speeches. In Module 3 unit 1, that is, the module preceding this one, we stated that the first thing to consider in the structure of a speech is the title, then the

salutation and we ended the unit with the introduction. In this unit, we shall continue from where we stopped in Unit 1 by talking about the body of planned speeches and the conclusion. After this, we shall give you a few hints on the preparation of speeches and present a sample written speech by some students in a higher institution.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss the structure of a prepared speech
- discuss what to take into consideration while preparing to write a speech
- prepare speeches of different types for different occasions.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Just as mentioned earlier, we shall continue from where we stopped in Module 3 unit1 but before we do that, we shall do a brief recap of what we said concerning the title, the salutation and the introduction.

The title is a compulsory part of the speech and it must indicate the speaker, the audience, the venue and the date. The title may also indicate the subject or topic of speech especially if it is a lecture. The salutation is important because speech making is a face-to-face interaction and the speaker must extend some form of greetings to the listeners. The introduction is very important in that a good introduction helps in capturing the interest of the audience. In your introduction, you can make reference to the audience, occasion, the relationship between the audience and the topic and you can also sensitise your audience by asking rhetorical or probing questions. You can also tell a joke or give an anecdote. All these strategies will put the audience in a relaxed mood.

### **3.1 The Body of the Speech**

This is the main or actual text. Since it is a planned speech, you are expected to itemise and prioritise the main points and discuss them logically, explicitly and comprehensibly. The language should not be too difficult for the audience and that is why you need to know your audience before you prepare your speech. For example, if you have to address a group of senior secondary school students, your use of language will be different from when you have the students from a higher institution as your audience.

### 3.2 The Conclusion

The conclusion is a very important part of the speech just like the introduction. The speaker finishes off what he started in the introduction. A good conclusion should be able to:

- a) give the listener an indication that the speaker is about to stop. The speaker should not just stop abruptly without giving hints that he is about to stop.
- b) give a short summary of what has been said in the body of the speech.
- c) make reference to the audience's cooperation throughout the period of the speech delivery.

The conclusion is also important because it is one of the last things the audience will be able to remember. They may also remember well hammered points. The speaker should end his speech by using adverbials such as, *Finally, Before I take my seat, In summary* or expressions such as, *Let me leave you with these words ----*

By the time you start using these type of adverbials, the audience would know that you are about to end your speech. You must end on a very strong note that the audience would remember for a long time to come. You may even end by including an appropriate quotation from a very important national or world figure. You should also be careful not to introduce a new point in your conclusion. Finally on conclusion, you should make sure you end with a valedictory statement such as:

*I thank you for listening--  
I thank you for your patience*

### 3.3 Special Tips on Speech Writing

We have gone through speech structure which is a very important part of speech writing. We now want to go through what it takes to prepare a speech and the things you need to take into consideration while preparing a speech.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What are some of the things you need to take into consideration while writing the body of the speech?

### **3.3.1 Planning**

When you are given the assignment of giving a speech, you need to plan what you want to write by taking note of the following:

#### **3.3.1.1 The Audience**

It is important that you present a speech that influences the listener. Whatever you are presenting must meet the needs of the listener. A speaker can be very eloquent but the listeners may not find anything of interest to them while listening to the speech. Such a speech has not achieved its purpose. There are different kinds of audience. Olowe (2001) notes the following types of audience: uninvited audience, audience by compulsion, interested audience and audience composition.

##### **3.3.1.1.1 Uninvited**

These are people who have not been invited but who have come there because they probably heard that something is happening there and so have come to see and listen. The speaker must take note of these people who can disturb the speaker while delivering his speech. Reference to their personal lives and a few jokes can do the magic of enlisting the interest of these types of people.

##### **3.3.1.1.2 Audience by Compulsion**

These are people who have been mandated to be at the occasion where the programme is holding. These set of people are therefore not interested in the speaker or the speech. They want to see the end quickly and go to their houses. The speaker may not worry about them because they must of necessity be of good behaviour or else they would be disciplined by their respective bosses. Nevertheless, as a good speech writer you should try to enlist their interest

##### **3.3.1.1.3 Interested Audience**

These are people who are favourably disposed to the speaker and his speech. They may be people from the same club, professional group or political party. They are not likely to complain about anything because they are there to give their solidarity and support. They may not be under any compulsion to listen.

##### **3.3.1.1.4 Audience Composition**

This has to do with the size, sex, age, educational status and beliefs of the audience. The larger the audience, the wider the range of interests to

be taken into consideration. The smaller the audience the easier it is to be personal and intimate.

The sex is also an important factor to consider. Where you have an exclusively female audience, it will not be good enough to use only male examples and vice versa. Where the audience is mixed, the examples should reflect both sexes. The speaker should show awareness of the issue of gender equality and the feminist movement by using neutral words which will not reflect preference for any sex. E.g. *air attendant* instead of *air hostess*, *their books* instead of *his book* (*this is the use of singular 'they'*).

Age is an equally important fact to take into consideration while delivering a speech. Age disparity is important in the sense that what is of interest to the old may not be of interest to the young. The speaker has to take note of this. The youth will likely prefer a speech that is forward looking or one that promises a better future while the old may prefer one that is reflective.

Educational status is one other factor to consider while preparing a speech. It is important that you make yourself understood by using very simple grammatical constructions.

People's beliefs and values should be respected. As a speech writer, you must not deliberately hurt people's sensibility by making unwholesome references to their beliefs and ideologies, group membership, religious affiliation or back ground.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What are some of the things you need to take into consideration about the audience while planning the writing of a speech?

### **3.3.1.2 The Occasion**

You must take the occasion into consideration and make sure you do not go outside the topic. You must avoid having too much content. You can bore the audience with too much content if the speech is too long. You must also make sure that you do not turn a lively occasion to a dull one through the tone of your speech.

### **3.3.2 The Writing of the Speech**

The actual writing of the speech has to do with having a strong opening, a purposeful body and a memorable conclusion as has been discussed under section 3.1 and 3.2 above.

### 3.3.3 The Delivery

For the delivery of the speech, decide whether you want to use notes or rely on your memory. Maintain regular eye contact so that you can carry the audience along. You will also be able to know whether you need to give more illustrations or not. As a speaker, you should also be able to sense the mood of the audience and respond appropriately.

### 3.4 Sample Speech

**‘DRUG ABUSE AND ITS EFFECTS ON NIGERIAN YOUTHS**  
*An Aquinas’ Club ’86 Annual Lecture Delivered by Sir Rowland Adegboye*  
*at the Banquet Hall, Olympic Hotel, Ibadan on Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1996’*

*The Chairman, Chief S.A Ariyibi, the Otunba of Ife;*  
*Special Guest of Honour, the MILAD of Oyo State,*  
*Colonel Ahmed Usman;*  
*Guest of Honour, Kabiyesi, Oba Adeyemi Adegboye, the Alapatira of Apatira;*  
*The President, Aquinas’ Club ’86;*  
*Presidents and Representatives of invited Social Clubs;*  
*Distinguished Guests,*  
*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*I feel highly honoured to have been chosen as one of the speakers at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this great club. It is a well known fact that the Aquinas’ Club ’86 is made up of achievers: successful business tycoons and professionals of enviable track records. The great club is also known for the humanitarian and philanthropic services it has been rendering to the community in particular and the nation as a whole. The topic of this year’s lecture is also a pointer to the fact that the blood of humanity runs in the veins of this great club’s members. It is against this backdrop that I feel proud to be associated with Aquinas’ club ’86. You will all agree with me that the damage which drug abuse is doing on Nigerian citizens is great. Seven out of every ten Nigerians are guilty of drug abuse one way or another, but the youths are most affected. Researchers have proved that out of every five youths, three are neck deep in Drug Abuse. If it is not cigarettes, Indian hemp or alcohol then it would be some hard stuffs like cocaine or heroine.*

*The reasons given by these youths for taking to drugs are not tenable. Some, if asked, would still tell you that they feel “high” or that “unless you’re seen taking some stuff you’re not yet there”. (God knows where!). Some may even tell you that they are always moody if they are their normal selves but will work better and be happier the moment they are “on”. I nearly collapsed the night I met a group of five ladies with each carrying a bottle of beer topping it with a cigarette to match. Yes! Such is the extent of the decadence. I shook my head thinking “Armageddon has come!”*

*The effect of Drug Abuse is limitless. It constitutes a health hazard to the human race. Cigarettes and Indian hemp cause lung and kidney cancer. They make the youths useless to the nation and even to themselves. After a prolonged use they run the risk of becoming thieves and highway robbers, because the moment they become addicted, they will stop at nothing to get the stuff if they are short of money. The list of atrocities and crimes they can commit is endless, and if we are to attempt to list them we may not leave this hall today.*

*The question now is: Do we need to hasten our own death all in the name of socialising? Or do we fold our arms while the future of this nation is being*



*destroyed? My answer to these two questions is No. I implore each and every one gathered here today to take up the campaign against drug abuse. Moderation in everything should be our watchword. If we do this truthfully we will be saving many souls from premature and untimely death. The government should also be up and doing through the Ministry of Health in the campaign against drug abuse. The nation's youth will be grateful for a useful future while the old ones will go to their graves with the joy of leaving the world a better place.*

*Thank you very much indeed for the attention. Good evening.*

*(Adegboyega, 1997)*

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this study unit, we have been able to present useful hints on speech planning, writing and delivery. We have also tried to present a sample speech.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this study unit, you have learnt that:

- i. writing speeches for birthdays, graduation or other kinds of occasions is more than just putting the biro on paper.
- ii. the body of the speech is the main text.
- iii. the language should not be too difficult for the audience.
- iv. you need to know your audience before you prepare your speech.
- v. in your introduction, you can make reference to the audience.
- vi. the conclusion is a very important part of the speech just like the introduction. The speaker finishes off what he started in the introduction.
- vii. whatever you are presenting must meet the needs of the listener.
- viii. the larger the audience, the wider the range of interests to be taken into consideration.
- ix. you must take the occasion into consideration and make sure you do not go outside the topic.
- x. maintain regular eye contact so that you can carry the audience along.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Your old time friend has just graduated with a first class honours in Pharmacy from a very notable university in this country. You have been invited to give a speech at the graduation party. Write out your speech.
2. The students in your university are planning a demonstration against the stand of the university authority on some issues. As an ex-president of the students' union of your university, write a speech to be delivered at the students' congress to pacify the students.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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Olowe, D. (2001). *Speeches* in (Ed.) Aremo, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 73-98.

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## **UNIT 3      LONG ESSAYS I**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We have been working on different types of writings. Here is another one that is both specialised and technical. You need to learn the skills and practise them. This study unit will try to introduce you to this specialised type of writing but you will need to go through the references so that you can learn more because we may not be able to go through everything in this study unit.

A long essay is a piece of academic work in which students are asked to write on a specific topic. Long essays are usually required for first degrees. Aremo (1997) also refers to long essays as special reports on pieces of academic research. Long essays are usually submitted by students in tertiary institutions such as universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics for the award of various degrees. Some other pieces of academic work done by students in tertiary institutions are theses and dissertations. Theses are done by post graduate students for the award of a master's degree while dissertations are done for the award of a doctoral degree.

As a student you need to get prepared and get equipped for this exercise which you will eventually have to face towards the end of your course and at postgraduate level, if you decide to go for postgraduate studies.

Writing a long essay or dissertation is not a child's play. You need both mental and physical preparation. Some of what you need to do before you get started and what you need to do after you have started will be discussed in this study unit and the next one.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- describe a long essay, theses and dissertation
- itemise the essential features of a long essay
- describe a proposal.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

When you get to your final year in your institution or you are on your postgraduate studies, you need to write a long essay, a thesis or a dissertation. You must however write it under supervision. This means that you need a supervisor.

### **3.1 Supervision**

Different institutions have different means of choosing supervisors for their students. Some institutions appoint supervisors for their students while some allow students to choose whoever they feel they can work with, depending on the area of study. Some institutions even insist that the names of supervisors be put against the names of intending candidates before the postgraduate school can ratify the admission. This is to prevent a situation where the department may not have enough hands for supervision of PG students thereby making the students to spend more than the required time on the programme.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Differentiate between long essays, theses and dissertations.

### **3.2 Getting a Research Topic**

You need a research topic for a long essay, thesis or dissertation and the topic has to be approved by an appointed supervisor. You can get a research topic through any of the following ways:

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Discuss two ways by which you can get a research topic.

### **3.2.1 The Supervisor**

A supervisor can be of immense help in getting a research topic. If you interact with your supervisor, he/she can give suggestions on a topic. The supervisor can suggest directly or give materials that you can read which will inspire you or prompt a topic in you. Immediately a topic occurs to you, you must share the idea with your supervisor who will look through and tell you whether it is researchable or not. Do not hide anything from your supervisor.

Another reason why you need to show your supervisor your topic is that, a topic may be researchable but has been done by someone else in that same institution or another one which the supervisor knows about. In that case, the supervisor will be in a better position to advise you on the topic. The supervisor may say that even though someone has done something on the topic, you can still approach the topic from another angle. In that case, you will not be doing exactly the same thing as the other person.

### **3.2.2 Library**

A candidate can visit the library and go through many books, articles and works done in an area of interest. A student can even go through theses that have been submitted in previous years so that he/she can have an idea of the kind of work that has been done in various areas of discipline. This can be an eye-opener for a research topic. At whatever stage you have the break through concerning a research topic, make sure you discuss it with your supervisor so that you can both agree on the methodology of doing the work. We are spending so much time on how to get a research topic because this has been problematic for most students recently. At times some of them spend over one year thinking and looking for a research topic at the end of which they put the blame of their inability to finish on time on the supervisor or the institution.

It is even advisable for undergraduates to try and identify their areas of interest while going through the different lectures before they get to their final year so that it will not be difficult for them to find a topic when the time is ripe for long essay writing. PG students are also advised to do the same by trying to identify their areas of interest as they go through the different courses during the first and second semesters when they are on their coursework.

For most undergraduates, there are two approaches to long essays depending on the amount of time they have. The first approach is that they do a library research work. This means that the topic they have chosen can be written up by using materials from the library. It means they are not involved in any field work. The other one is one that involves field work. Which means that the data they are using will be the product of researches carried out on their immediate community or through their interactions with people. With this kind of research, you still need the library while writing up your findings and literature review.

### 3.3 Examples of Research Topics

The research topic you choose should not involve too much otherwise you will not be able to finish at record time or you can end up doing a shoddy job. That is what usually happens to those who bite more than they can chew. So, you should try as much as possible not to choose a topic that is too wide or too broad. For example, the topic below will be too wide to cover within a short time.

*'Errors in General Olusegun Obasanjo's speeches'*

The topic above looks short and simple but it is not, in the sense that it is too wide.

1. The speeches of Obasanjo are many, so you can not possibly go through all the speeches.
2. Errors are of different kinds, so you can not work on all the errors.

You can select a particular speech because they are always long. You have to select which of the errors you want to work on. Is it grammatical, semantic, lexical or what? When you are trying to do this you are delimiting the topic

You can, therefore, delimit the topic above to read:

*A Pragmatic Interpretation of President Olusegun Obasanjo's Inaugural Speech to the National Political Reform Conference.*

With the above topic, you have the particular speech you want to analyse and you also have the particular area of English language you want to examine. This is a manageable topic.

Below are examples of some other delimited topics.

1. *The linguistic features of letters exchanged between President Olusegun Obasanjo and Professor Wole Soyinka*

The number of letters involved here would definitely not be many. So going through them would not be difficult.

2. *Conversation analysis of language use in the Osun State House of Assembly*

This topic can still be delimited to include the particular sessions the writer wants to use and for which period of time. Is it for a whole year, for three months or for which number of years? Parliamentarians always have a lot to say, so going through all their proceedings would definitely be a hard task for a research topic.

3. *Discourse features in selected sermons in Nigerian Churches*

This topic still needs further delimitation in that there are many preachers in Nigeria and the writer has not included the name(s) of the preachers whose sermons he wants to work on. The topic would read better thus:

*Discourse features in selected sermons of Pastor E.A. Adeboye in Nigerian Churches*

His sermons in non-Nigerian churches may have some other peculiar discourse features.

A topic such as:

4. *The Grammatical Problems of Secondary School Learners of English in Eruobodo State*

is definitely too wide in scope for a long essay, theses or even a dissertation. This is because, if the state is a large state that has many secondary schools, going through the secondary schools will be too much a task for a single research work. Apart from this, grammatical problems are many. It may not be possible going through all of them for a group of schools, not to mention a whole state. The topics can be delimited thus:

*Common Tense Errors in the Written English of Secondary School Students in Ode- Irele.*

*Grammatical Errors in the Written English of Secondary School Students in Ode-Irele.*

These topics can still be delimited further otherwise you will have too much data to cope with. This is because the secondary schools in Ode-Irele may still be too many for you to deal with. Not only that, classes one to six may be too many in all the schools. You may have to choose one of the classes in some of the schools. The topics above can be re-written as:

*Grammatical Errors in the Written English of Selected Secondary School Students in Ode-Irele.*

*Grammatical Errors in the Written English of J.S.S three Students in Ode Irele.*

*Grammatical Errors in the Written English of Selected J.S.S three Students in Ode Irele.*

You can now think of a selection model to use in choosing the schools you want to use. It could be any of the following:

Private/public schools

Town/village/suburb schools

Schools according to performance in public examinations

Schools according to gender i.e. boys only, girls only

You can use some other selection criteria depending on the environment the data is found.

We have taken so much time to dwell on the issue of topic selection and delimitation because it is very crucial. If your topic is not well chosen or delimited you may have problems with data collection, duration of the time for completion of the thesis, analysis of the data etc. In addition to the above, your research topic must have something it wants to contribute to knowledge or existing contributions of earlier scholars in that area of study. You do not choose a topic because you want to. You must think about how the research will benefit humanity on the long run.

### **3.4 Writing a Proposal**

A proposal is a plan of how you intend to carry out the research and the writing of the long essay, theses or dissertation. This plan has to be approved by the supervisor before you start the work. This is very important because occasionally, students' plan or proposal may not work out the way they think if it is too elaborate or if the topic has not been delimited. There must be a set time-table for the commencement, progress and completion of the work.

Below are some of the essential features of a proposal.



Title page  
 Table of contents  
 Abstract  
 Introduction  
 Methodology  
 Timetable for completion  
 Trial table of contents of proposed long essay  
 Bibliography

### 3.4.1 Title Page

This is where the title of the proposed long essay, the student's full name, the purpose, and the date the student is submitting the proposal are all written. Below is an example:

*ADVERBIAL TENSE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WRITTEN ENGLISH  
 OF SELECTED OBA AWON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS*

*BY*

*MOJIRADE ADESOLA FABUSUYI*

*A Proposal for a Long Essay to be submitted in Partial  
 Fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
 Bachelor of Arts in English Language*

*Oba-Awon University  
 2008*

### 3.4.2 Table of Contents

This section highlights the heading and page numbers of the different sections and subsections. Below is an example of Table of Contents.

#### Table of Contents

Abstract-----	1
i. Introduction-----	2
1. Background to the Study-----	4
2. Objectives of the Study-----	5
3. Research Questions-----	6
4. Scope of the Study-----	7

5.	Theoretical Framework-----	8
6.	Expected contribution to knowledge-----	11
ii.	Methodology-----	14
iii.	Time table for completion-----	16
iv.	Trial table of contents of the long essay-----	17
v.	Bibliography-----	17

### 3.4.3 Abstract

This is a short summary of the whole work in just a few words; usually not longer than a page. Although it is normally written last, it comes immediately after the *Table of Contents* in the arrangement of the long essay. An example is given below:

#### *Abstract*

*This study attempts to examine the written work of some University undergraduates at Oba-Awon University, Ode-Irele. The objective of the study is to identify the kinds of adverbials that the undergraduates use in relation to the tenses and, in the light of the findings, to make recommendations for improvement in the quality of English language instructions given to undergraduates.*

*The data will be got from the answered scripts of 140 undergraduates in their final year and analysed using David Crystal's 2007 categorisation of adverbial groups in English.*

*The relative frequency of occurrence will be determined based on the total number of occurrence of each group of adverbials on the total number of adverbials used by the students. Recommendations can then be made based on the findings.*

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

What are some of the things you have to take into consideration concerning a research topic?

### 3.4.4 Introduction

The introduction gives information on the background to the study, the objectives, some research questions, the scope of the study, the theoretical framework and the expected contribution to knowledge.

#### 3.4.4.1 Background to the Study

It is important to discuss what prompted the study or why you think it is important at this point in time to embark on such a study. For example,

on our topic above, you can discuss how the use of English by some university graduates have been defective and you feel that tackling the problem while in the university would be a good idea. If you know of some efforts that have been made over the years on improvement along such lines you can mention them.

#### **3.4.4.2 Aim/Objectives**

These are the primary goals of the study. The aim is usually one- that is, the specific problem you want to tackle while the objectives are the steps to be taken to achieve the aim. For example,

##### **Objectives:**

- a) to identify the various types of adverbials used by the undergraduates,
- b) to categorise these adverbials/tenses into structural/semantic groups,
- c) to offer suggestions in the light of the findings for improvement in the quality of university students of English.

#### **3.4.4.3 Research Questions**

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1. What kinds of adverbials do the undergraduates use most in their written English?
- 2. Are the students aware of the adverbials they do not use or is it that they do not know how to use them?
- 3. How often do students use the adverbials with the tenses that have been identified?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this study unit, we have tried to introduce you to the writing of long essays, thesis and dissertations. We have also dwelt at length on topic selection and delimitation because of its importance in the whole process of writing. We started proposal writing and stopped with the research questions. Please proceed to the next unit for completion of the discussion on proposal writing and some hints on the actual writing of the long essay.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this study unit you have learnt that:

- i. a long essay is usually written by undergraduates in their final year.
- ii. a thesis is usually written by master's degree students.
- iii. a dissertation is written by PhD students.
- iv. the topic has to be delimited for easy management of data.
- v. you need a supervisor who will assist you.
- vi. you can get a research topic by going through relevant literature.
- vii. you can also interact with your supervisor, members of the academic staff or some other students for suggestions on a research topic.
- viii. your topic must make sense.
- ix. you must make sure it has not been researched on before.
- x. you must write a proposal and draw up a timetable for completion of the work.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Think about an area of study in English and think about what you can write on it. Discuss the possibility of working on it with your tutorial instructor and then write out the topic. While writing the topic, consider the fact that it has to make sense and it has to have what it will contribute to knowledge.
2. Go through the topic below and write down your comments on the topic.

*The phonological problems of learners in the Adult Education Classes in Ondo State.*

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Arema, B. (2001). *Long Essays* in (Ed.) Arema, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 116-177

## **UNIT 4      LONG ESSAYS II**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Scope of the Study
  - 3.2 Theoretical Framework
  - 3.3 Methodology
    - 3.3.1 Data Collection
    - 3.3.2 Selection from the Total Population
  - 3.4 Research Instruments
  - 3.5 Timetable for Completion
  - 3.6 Table of Contents of Proposed Long Essay
  - 3.7 Bibliography
  - 3.8 Style of Writing
    - 3.8.1 Style Sheets
    - 3.8.2 Footnotes
  - 3.9 Appendix
  - 3.10 Writing the Long Essay
    - 3.10.1 Literature Review
    - 3.10.2 Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions
  - 3.11 Sample of Table of Contents of the Long Essay
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous study unit, you were introduced to the writing of long essays which is an important part of the educational requirements of university students or students in tertiary institutions. In that unit, we mentioned the fact that:

- a) long essays are written by undergraduates in their final year.
- b) theses and dissertations are written by postgraduate students.
- c) you must discuss your research topic with your supervisor.
- d) you can read relevant materials on your proposed topic.
- e) you must delimit your topic for easy management, etc.
- f) you need to write a proposal that has to be approved by your supervisor at the beginning of the project.

You can go through Module 3 unit 3 again for more details on topic selection and delimitation. Towards the end of the unit, we started the

discussion on proposal writing which we are going to continue with fully in this unit. Please go through this unit under the following sub-headings for the essential features of the remaining part of proposal writing, and some points to note while writing the long essay.

The proposal is very important because it gives you something like a map to follow while preparing for the writing of your long essay. If you follow your proposal strictly, you will discover that you will finish in record time and you will not blame anybody for non-completion of your work. Remember that the long essay is one of the prerequisites for graduation. So take it seriously and do your best to present a good essay.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- itemise the essential features of a long essay
- describe the different sections of a proposal
- attempt writing some sections of a proposal of a well thought out topic
- attempt writing sections of a long essay.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

Just as mentioned earlier, a proposal is a plan of how you intend to carry out the research and the writing of the long essay, thesis or dissertation. This plan has to be approved by the supervisor before you start the work. The discussion on proposal started in the previous unit and you should try to go over that section in this unit before you continue. In Module 3 unit 3, we went as far as the research questions. This unit starts with the scope of the study as you can see below.

### **3.1 Scope of the Study**

You must let the reader know the scope of the study. That is, what you will be able to do and what you may not be able to do. For example, you can have something like:

*The scope of this study has been restricted to final year students of the Department of English because of the need for in-depth study and analysis of the data----*

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

You must make adequate reference to the linguistic concept related to the topic. In the example we are using in this section, the tenses and adverbials are important. You must read up relevant and current

literature on both concepts and use them as the basis for your discussion on the topic. In the introduction, there should be a section on tenses and another on adverbials. With adequate review of literature of these linguistic concepts, your work will have a theoretical base or framework. You should try to review the work of the scholar that you feel is most appropriate for the work you are doing currently.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Explain what you understand by background to the study, scope and research questions.

### **3.3 Methodology**

This is the section that deals with data collection and analysis.

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection**

The data for any form of research must be adequate. It must be both quantitative (enough) and qualitative (must adequately represent the population you have chosen). Your data must represent the different groups and sections of any representative data. For example, our topic demands that we collect samples of the written work of English language students at all levels but this may be an arduous task taking into consideration the time limit. We therefore have to limit ourselves to final year students alone.

#### **3.3.2 Selection from the Total Population**

It is not possible to use all final year students and that is why we limited ourselves to English language students alone.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What are some of the things you should take into consideration under methodology?

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

In this section, you have to mention what you used to get your data. You might have conducted a written test or a series of tests for your subjects or you used a questionnaire, interview, cassette recorder, etc. from which you transcribed the data before analysis. All these have to be explained.

### **3.5 Timetable for Completion**

The time table you provide must be a realistic one and you should try to adhere strictly to it so that the work can be completed in record time. A sample of a timetable is given below:

1 and 2 months	Reading around the topic
3 month	Literature review
4 month	Chapter one etc.

### 3.6 Table of Contents of Proposed Long Essay

The sections and subheadings of the long essay are almost the same as that of the proposal. The sections that will be added to the main long essay later are the acknowledgements, discussion of findings, conclusions, recommendations and appendices.

### 3.7 Bibliography

In this section, you have to list all the works you have referred to or the ones you went through while writing the proposal. It is important that you refer to the source of your information each time you use materials by other people or else you will be accused of plagiarism which is a very serious offence. This section is also in the final long essay. If it is only the works or books you used in the write up, then you should title the section *references*. E.g.

**Badejoko, A. (1982) *The English Language in Nigeria*, *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association*, 6(1) pp1-23.**

**Chomsky, N. (1957) *Syntactic Structures*, The Hague: Mouton**

**\_\_\_\_\_ (1966) *Topics in the Theory of Generative Grammar*, The Hague: Mouton.**

These are examples of how you can make your entries in the bibliography or references. You will notice that the title of books is written in italics. Names of authors are written in alphabetical order and if an author has many publications, you enter them with the earliest ones first and you may just omit the name of the author and just write the dates and the other entries for the author. Whoever sees it will know that the same author has all the publications. Please note the punctuation marks. You should find out how your institution wants you to make your bibliographic entries because some institutions have specific ways by which they want it done and specific style sheets that they want students to use. Some journals too have their preferences. If in future you write an article you want published, make sure you read their



‘*instruction to authors*’ so that you can make adequate bibliographic entries.

### 3.8 Style of Writing

The language of a long essay is formal. As a result, you do not include any form of colloquial language or jestings or jokes. You must also not get used to using the pronoun ‘I’ too often. It tends to present you as a proud person who claims to have done all the work alone without the help of anybody. You can use ‘we’, ‘our’ etc. Try to spell out every word and where you have to use abbreviation, make sure you have explained it much earlier. Do not write complicated sentences. Make yourself clear by writing simple and correct sentences. Do not assume that the reader knows or should know, try to explain every step and make sure you bring your discussion to a logical conclusion. If you have to quote and it is a long one, you must indent. For example

‘-----’

#### 3.8.1 Style Sheets

In the Arts, there are two common style sheets that are normally used. The language section uses the APA (American Psychological Association) style sheet while the literature section uses the MLA (Modern Language Association) style sheet.

The APA sample is what has been used in all the references in this work because it is language. Below are just two examples of APA entries for an article in a book and an article in a journal.

##### *Article in a book*

Areomo, B. (2001) *Long Essays* in (Ed.) Areomo, B. *Advanced English Compositions, Lagos, Nigeria*: Scribo Educational Books. pp. 116-177.

##### *Journal Article*

Olateju, M.A. (2007). *Reading Kiosks: Literacy Empowerment for the Girl-child. Language, Culture and Curriculum*. Clevedon England: Multilingual Matters. Short Run Press Vol. 20(2): 155-163.

The MLA style sheet is normally used by those in the literature section. There are some peculiar features of this writing system which is quite different from the APA. Below are some examples.

*Article in a book*

Olateju, M.A 'Journal Keeping' (eds) Onukaogu, C.E; Arua A.E & Jegede O.B *Teaching Reading in Nigeria: A Guide Book to Theory and Practice*. Newark D.E USA: International Reading Association, 2003, 212-220.

*Journal Article*

Olateju, Moji. & Yusuf Yisa. 'Backchannel Communication in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*' *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 15:4 (2006): 520-535.

Olateju, Moji. 'Reading Kiosks: Literacy Empowerment for the Girl-child' *Language, Culture and Curriculum* Vol. 20:2 (2007) Clevedon England: Multilingual Matters. Short Run Press, 155-163.

You will notice in the examples given above that the date comes towards the end in MLA while it is fronted in APA. We may not be able to give details of the two writing systems mentioned in this unit because of time and space. But you can go through the samples and see the differences. You can also check the APA/MLA style sheets on the internet and the references at the end of this unit for details of these writing procedures so that you can get used to them.

**3.8.2 Footnotes**

This used to be fashionable in the past. You may use footnotes to refer to sources of quotation, provide additional information or explain some uncommon language use. They are usually written at the bottom of the page on which the word or expression referred to appears. If there are many expressions like that, you must number them in the body of the work and down the page where you explain them. If you refer to the same work but on another page, you should write *ibid.*, followed by the page number. E.g.

---

Olateju, Moji. *Analysing Discourse in the ESL Classroom*, Ile-Ife, OAU Press, pp. 23-27 *Ibid*, p.26

**3.9 Appendix**

In this section, you can attach or write out some of the materials you used which you would like readers to go through if they want.

### **3.10 Writing the Long Essay**

The actual writing of the long essay is not too different from the proposal. One of the significant differences of your writing is that, in the proposal, you use the future tense while in the real essay, you express yourself in the past tense because you have conducted the research and you are reporting what you have done. Another significant difference is that, the section on the chapters are now well arranged to reflect in-depth details of what has been done and the findings.

Chapter one which is the introduction has all the listed sections which have already been highlighted in the proposal. Chapter two is the literature review and we shall dwell a little on this because it has not been fully discussed.

#### **3.10.1 Literature Review**

This chapter discusses the references consulted while choosing the topic, getting the theoretical framework for the write up, tracing the arguments that have ensued on the topic up till the present moment and the justification for choosing the topic. This section can also be highlighted in the proposal to give your work a focus for the theoretical framework. Your literature review must be current. For example, you can not be writing in 2008 and your latest reference will be 1995. This is too far away. Scholars are always working and you can be sure that there would be someone somewhere who has done something recently on what you are writing on. You only need to search and you will find that out. You should not also assume that nobody has done something or anything on what you are writing on. Visit the internet, consult books in the library, ask your lecturers or tutorial masters for materials, go to other libraries of other universities, consult encyclopaedias, etc. and your literature review will be rich in quality. However, do not allow your review to now degenerate to a list of research reports. But the chapter should present what scholars have done before which you need to improve on or borrow ideas from. You should explain how your work is related to earlier works and how, to some extent, it is different from the previous works. This review should be reported in the past- i.e:

**Olateju (2007) worked on----- . The findings revealed that ----- and she concluded that-----**

#### **3.10.2 Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions**

This section usually begins with the summary which states briefly the background to the research, the objectives and the procedures for data collection and analysis. The conclusions of the findings come next, followed by the recommendations based on the findings. There could be suggestions on what later researchers could work on in future, having highlighted the focus of your own research.

### 3.11 Sample of Table of Contents of the Long Essay

Title Page-----	
Acknowledgements-----	
Table of Contents-----	
List of Abbreviations and Symbols-----	
Abstract-----	
Chapter 1 Introduction -----	
1.1 Background to the Study-----	
1.2 Objectives of the Study-----	
1.3 Research Questions-----	
1.4 Scope of the Study-----	
1.5 Theoretical Framework-----	
Chapter 2 Review of Literature-----	
2.1 Introduction-----	
2.2 The English Language in Nigeria-----	
Chapter 3 Data Collection and Analysis-----	
3.1 Introduction-----	
3.2 Data Collection-----	
3.3 Data Analysis-----	
Chapter 4 Discussion of Findings-----	
4.1 Introduction-----	
Chapter 5 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations-----	
5.1 Introduction-----	
5.2 Summary-----	
5.3 Conclusions-----	
5.4 Recommendations-----	
Bibliography-----	
Appendix-----	

Your own table of contents could be longer than this. It depends on the contents. This is just a sample.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit we have been able to discuss the remaining format of proposal writing which started in Module 3 unit 3. We have also been able to conclude our discussion on the writing of long essays. You

should however go through the references at the end of units 3& 4 for more details on this topic.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt that:

- i. a proposal that should be approved by your supervisor is important.
- ii. an abstract is a short summary of the long essay.
- iii. a timetable for completion is important for a long essay.
- iv. the timetable is a guide for the final writing.
- v. you must make adequate bibliographic references.
- vi. data collection must be adequate.
- vii. your methodology must be well spelt out.
- viii. you must include all references in the bibliography.
- ix. your literature review must be comprehensive and up to date.
- x. there are APA and MLA style sheets for the Arts.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Answer one of the questions below.

1. What are the major differences between the proposal of a long essay and the actual essay?
2. What are the essential components of a long essay? Your ingenuity as a writer will be rewarded.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Areomo, B. (2001). "Long Essays" in (Ed.) Areomo, B. *Advanced English Compositions*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books. pp 116-177.

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/modules/writess.html>

## **UNIT 5      INVITATIONS AND THANK-YOU NOTES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Important Points to Note while Preparing Invitations
    - 3.1.1 The Host Guests
    - 3.1.2 The Event
    - 3.1.3 The Venue
    - 3.1.4 The Date
    - 3.1.5 Time
    - 3.1.6 Contacts
    - 3.1.7 RSVPs
    - 3.1.8 Salutation
    - 3.1.9 Dress Code
  - 3.2 Thank You Notes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We live in a society and as such we communicate for mutual interaction and existence. Scollon and Scollon (2003:538) note that we become who we are through discourse and social interaction. There are all kinds of communication – Inter-cultural communication and cross-cultural communication. In the past, communication used to be done through face-to-face contact, town criers and sent messengers. But as development of modern technology improved, several means of communication came into being. People can now contact each other through facilities such as surface mail, e-mails, speed post, fax messages, telephone calls and text messages. Communicating in this way could be for different purposes which include sharing of ideas, information, requests, invitations of different kinds, apologies, messages of different kinds, etc. With modernisation, these different means of communication and reasons for communicating get increased and improved. In this study unit, our focus is on invitations. You will learn about the structure of invitations and you will also be shown some samples of invitations and thank-you notes.

The new international Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of English language sees the word invitation as meaning the following:

1. The act of inviting: courteous solicitation to come to some place or to do some act, especially requesting of another's company; a standing invitation to dinner.
2. The means of inviting; the words by which one is invited; a written invitation.
3. The act of alluring, incitement, attraction.
4. In the Anglican Church, the hortatory introduction preceding the confession in the communion office; the invitatory; 'o come let us....'

The exposition by the dictionary shows that invitation takes different forms. It could be done orally, in which case a person just solicits your presence or the presence of another person through you to a place for company or to perform some act. Invitation could also be done through alluring, incitement (to urge to a particular action, instigate, stir up etc.) or attraction (process of pleasing with the intention to draw closer. Specialised invitation could be through songs and chants.

People could be invited to participate in sporting activities locally or internationally, dinners, birthdays, engagements such as weddings, luncheon, graduation ceremonies, etc. Invitations could be for ceremonies of different kinds-seminars, public lectures, conferences, inaugural lectures, house warming, naming ceremonies, etc.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- mention different types of invitations
- describe how invitations should be written
- identify some of the dos and don'ts of invitations.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Important Points to Note while Preparing Invitations**

There are all kinds of events that demand our attention and which require invitations. Some invitations are honoured while some are not. A few of the things that may be responsible for an invitation not receiving attention will be discussed in this section.

### **3.1.1 The Host/Guests**

It is important to note that the personality of the person sending out invitations matters at times. Some people feel reluctant honouring invitations of people who are not in the same social class with them. This could be due to the fact that whatever is expended there cannot be compensated or given back in cash or kind. It could also be that they would not find people of their status there. Guests who think this way sometimes send their gifts to the celebrant or refuse to make themselves available. This also happens at seminars or public lectures at times. Once the person presenting is not familiar to some people in one way or the other, they may not attend. This however is not a good attitude to invitations and should be discouraged.

### **3.1.2 The Event**

You need to know that people will attend your event if it sounds interesting and exciting. The event is important so you should give an outline of the activities you have planned, the speakers, performers and personalities who will be there. These are some of the things that people look for on the invitation card or message. There are personalities that people respect and who they will willingly come and listen to if their presence is highlighted in the invitation. The personalities may be people they have been longing to see. Going for the event will be an opportunity to see such a personality.

If the event is a lecture, the title is also important as people generally respond to what is of interest to them. You should, therefore, make the title of your lecture catchy and interesting, something they will desire to be a part of. It is also important to let invitees know whether there will be night parties after the reception. This information is important because some people prefer night parties to day time probably because of lack of time or because it is an avenue to display their wealth and love for the celebrant by giving money publicly to the celebrant while dancing. Please note that this type of practice is not common among people.

### **3.1.3 The Venue**

The venue of the occasion has to be indicated. You should not assume that everybody knows the venue. Transport details should be included and if it is an event that would take days to finish, hotel reservations and their prices and locations should be spelt out in the invitation. Where necessary, facilities such as bus route, train station, bus stop, motor park etc. should also be included. It is also important that you secure a good venue otherwise, the length of time that people will spend at your event



may be affected if the venue is not a convenient and conducive one for such an occasion. For example, if the venue is too cold, hot, dusty or not clean enough, people may not stay long. Some people even complain of a venue being too open or not having free parking space. Information on all the available conveniences should be given. If possible, provide the direction to the venue with a map.

### **3.1.4 The Date**

The date of an event is important. You should try to fix a date that will be convenient for many people. For example, if you fix a ceremonial event at the beginning of a working week the attendance may be low. In the tropics, people organising events try to fix it during the dry season when the rains would not be a disturbing factor. Celebrants also try to fix their ceremonial events at a period of the month when they feel that invitees would be able to make their financial contribution to the event if they so desire.

### **3.1.5 Time**

This should normally include starting and finishing times. If it is an academic meeting, set times should be given to speakers or participants at conferences, etc. This is very important everywhere especially in countries where venues are paid for hourly.

### **3.1.6 Contacts**

Invitations should include contact addresses so that people can get in touch with the host/hostess or convener, if necessary. If the event is not at a popular place or usual place of meeting, there is need to include your mobile phone numbers and, if possible, phone up a few people whose mobile numbers you know so that they can be adequately informed.

### **3.1.7 RSVPs**

**RSVP** is an acronym for a French expression which means ‘Repondez s’il vous plait’ which means ‘Please respond’. People whose names and phone numbers are written under this section are expected to be contacted before the D-Day if there is any information to be passed across to the convener of the programme or event. This section is important and necessary for easy contacts of particular people concerning seating arrangements, time of arrival, hotel reservations, etc.

If you also know their phone numbers and they have not contacted you before the D-Day, you can phone them to confirm their attendance and presence at the occasion. This is particularly important for prominent people in the community so that adequate preparations can be made for their accommodation and seating arrangements.

### **3.1.8 Salutation**

This is particularly important because if people are not properly addressed they may use this as an excuse for not attending the event. You must be sure of people's titles and the correct spellings of their names. One will not be happy receiving an invitation with one's name wrongly spelt. It shows you do not really know them. If you are not sure of their names, phone them and ask so that you can write the correct name on the invitation.

### **3.1.9 Dress Code**

You need to inform your invitees of the dress code for the occasion. It can be embarrassing for a guest to get to an occasion only to discover that he/she is the only different person in terms of dressing at the occasion. You may need to specify the colour of the traditional dress, suit, and tie or whether the dressing should be casual or corporate. In some African countries, occasionally, the celebrant passes a notice round interested guests of the need to buy a uniform headgear/cap (traditional attire) for a particular occasion. This could be used in the distribution of special gifts to all those who bought the specified colour of headgear/cap or traditional attire.

## **3.2 Thank-You Notes**

Thank-you notes could be sent after the event to all those who responded to your invitation. They should be written in short appreciative words and sentences that show that you value them and their presence at the event. In some African countries, thank-you notes are written at the back of invitations for social occasions such as burial and wedding ceremonies. This is an economical way of getting round some extra expenses on the occasion.

**Below are samples of a ceremonial invitation card and a thank-you note**

**The Families of**  
**CHIEF AND DR. MRS. A.O.P ADELAJA**  
**&**  
**LATE CHIEF AND MRS. E.A AJAYI**

cordially invite

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to the solemnization of Holy Matrimony of their children

*Omobola Adeola*  
**&**  
*Omokehinde Charles*

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2008

At

**Emmanuel Chapel of Life**

20, Odiolowo Street, Surulere, Lagos

Time: 11:a.m. prompt

Reception follows immediately at

Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos

**Colour Code:**

Bride: Pink      Groom: Grey

**RSVP**

Aanu (08060100138)      Feranmi (08052501529)

## ***APPRECIATION***

*First and foremost,  
our gratitude goes to  
Almighty God who turns every  
evil prophesy, vision and curse  
to blessing.*

*We also express our sincere gratitude  
to every one who contributed to the  
success of this marriage. We cherish  
your love, presence, moral and  
financial support.*

*May God grant you all journey  
mercies to your destinations.*

*Till Christ comes,  
we say remain blessed.*

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit we have tried to discuss invitations, their features and thank-you notes.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this study unit you have learnt that:

- i. there are all kinds of events that demand our attention and which requires invitations.
- ii. the event is important and so, you should inform participants of the outline of the activities you have.
- iii. the venue of the event has to be indicated. Give the direction with a map of the area.
- iv. contact addresses are important.
- v. you should also make sure that the salutation on the invitation is well done.
- vi. thank-you notes are usually written after the event but some cultures include it at the back of invitations for ceremonial occasions.
- vii. invitations should include contact addresses.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

You can answer any one of the questions below.

1. What are the essential features of invitations?
2. Prepare an invitation for the wedding ceremony of your elder sister due to Wed., on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2008.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Arema, B. (2001) (Ed.). *Advanced English Composition*, Lagos, Nigeria: Scribo Educational Books.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S.W. (2003). *Discourse and Intercultural Communication* in (Eds.) Schiffrin; Tannen D. and Hamilton, H.E. Malden USA: Blackwell pp 538-547.