



**BACHELOR OF COMMERCE IN ENERGY AND  
RESOURCE ECONOMICS**

**YEAR ONE**

**SEMESTER ONE**

**ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES I**

**LNC – EAP – 111**

**August 2025**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>COPYRIGHT</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>MODULE OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>COURSE OUTLINE</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>INTENDED OUTCOMES</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>UNIT 1: WRITING SKILLS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	1
Learning outcomes .....	1
Key terms.....	1
Lesson 1: The writing process .....	2
Lesson 2: Essay writing .....	7
Lesson 3: Paragraph development .....	12
Lesson 4: Documentation in academic writing .....	16
Unit summary.....	18
Further reading .....	18
Answers to unit activities.....	20
End of unit test .....	21
<b>UNIT 2: STUDY SKILLS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Introduction .....	22
Learning outcomes .....	22
Key terms .....	22
Lesson 1: Time management .....	23
Lesson 2: Examination skills .....	28
Unit summary .....	30
Further reading .....	30
Answers to unit activities.....	31
End of unit test.....	32
<b>UNIT 3: LISTENING SKILLS</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Introduction .....	33
Learning outcomes .....	33
Key terms.....	33
Lesson 1: Hearing and listening.....	34
Lesson 2: Note-taking .....	41



Unit summary .....	46
Further reading .....	46
Answers to unit activities.....	47
End of unit test.....	48
<b>UNIT 4: READING SKILLS .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Introduction.....	50
Learning outcomes .....	50
Key terms .....	50
Lesson 1: Reading process .....	51
Lesson 2: Reading techniques/strategies .....	55
Lesson 3: Reading and note making .....	59
Unit summary.....	64
Further reading .....	64
Answers to unit activities.....	65
End of unit test .....	65
<b>UNIT 5: ORAL PRESENTATIONS .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Introduction.....	69
Learning outcomes .....	69
Key terms .....	69
Lesson 1: Defining oral presentations.....	71
Lesson 2: Methods or Styles of oral presentations .....	77
Unit summary.....	80
Further reading .....	80
Answers to unit activities.....	80
End of unit test .....	82
<b>MODULE TEST (100 MARKS).....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>STUDENTS FEEDBACK .....</b>	<b>89</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Examples of topic sentences .....	12
Table 1.2: Important, distinct and relevant of main points .....	13
Table 1.3: Essay outline .....	15
Table 2.1: ABC method .....	25
Table 4.1: Difference between reading and critical reading.....	63



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Gantt Chart.....	26
Figure 3.1: Cornell method of Note-Taking.....	43
Figure 3.2: The Outline method .....	44
Figure 3.3: Sentence method .....	44
Figure 3.4: Mind Mapping.....	45
Figure 3.5: Tabular method .....	45



## MODULE OVERVIEW

Most learners face challenges during their studies. These challenges may include the following: managing time, taking notes, reading, writing, speaking, listening, understanding examination questions, acknowledging references, etc. This module provides you with the opportunity to assist you to develop strategies and skills in time management, note taking, reading, listening, studying, and preparing for examinations among others to help you succeed in college-level studies.

This module aims to develop student success strategies, improve written and oral communication skills, and enhance presentation skills. For you to achieve this, the module is organized into units as follows:

### **Unit 1: Writing Skills**

The Unit focuses on the academic essay including editing and proofreading skills. You will, therefore, plan the academic essay writing process; conduct research on a given topic; write a well-referenced academic essay; and edit written works.

### **Unit 2: Study Skills**

In this Unit, you will among other experiences be introduced to basic skills that are essential for you to study careful. You will be able to explain time management; apply time management strategies; and demonstrate examination skills.

### **Unit 3: Listening Skills**

This Unit focuses on listening and note-taking skill. You will explain the differences between hearing and listening; outline the listening process; describe different types of listening and explain notetaking and its different styles.

### **Unit 4: Reading Skills**

This Unit not only equips you with effective reading skills but also skills in writing book reports. You will therefore briefly explain purposes for reading; explain different types of reading; read different types of texts effectively; make notes from a variety of texts; and write book reports.

### **Unit 5: Oral Presentations**



This Unit equips you with oral presentation skills for different occasions. You will describe oral presentations; explain four main types of oral presentations; explain ways of preparing for oral presentations; present oral book reports; and apply oral presentation skills in discussions and debates.



# COURSE OUTLINE



<b>SCHOOL</b>	School of Business and Economic Sciences
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Law and Economics
<b>PROGRAMME</b>	Bachelor of Commerce in Energy and Resource Economics
<b>MODULE TITLE</b>	English for Academic Purposes I
<b>MODULE CODE</b>	LNC – EAP – 111
<b>YEAR</b>	1
<b>SEMESTER</b>	1
<b>CREDIT</b>	10
<b>PRESENTED TO</b>	Senate
<b>PRESENTED BY</b>	The School of Business and Economic Science
<b>LECTURE HOURS/WK</b>	2
<b>TUTORIAL HOURS/WK</b>	2
<b>PRE-REQUISITES</b>	None
<b>CO-REQUISITES</b>	None

## MODULE DESCRIPTOR

This module will assist learners to develop note-taking techniques, reading strategies, listening skills, and study strategies to be successful in college-level studies. Strategies to improve essay and report writing and opportunities to develop and deliver presentations will also be covered in this module.

## MODULE AIM

This module aims to develop student success strategies, improve written and oral communication skills, and enhance presentation skills.



## INTENDED OUTCOMES

By the end of this module learners should be able to:

- a) demonstrate effective time management skills
- b) take notes from lectures
- c) make fair notes from written texts
- d) write well researched and documented essays
- e) evaluate a variety of texts
- f) conduct oral presentations

## INDICATIVE CONTENT

### 1. Writing Skills

- a. Academic Writing Process
- b. Essay Writing
- c. Writing Using Sources

### 2. Study Skills

- a. Time Management
- b. Examination Skills

### 3. Listening Skills

- a. Hearing and Listening
- b. Note Taking

### 4. Reading Skills

- a. Reading Overview
- b. Types of Reading
- c. Reading Techniques
- d. Reading and Note Taking
- e. Critical Reading

### 5. Oral Presentation Skills

- a. Oral Presentation Overview
- b. Styles of Oral Presentation
- c. Important Guidelines for Oral Presentations

## ASSESSMENT

- Continuous assessment - 50%
- End of semester examination - 50%

X












## TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Lecturing, Oral Presentations, Group Discussions, Self-study, Debates, and Peer Evaluations.



## VISUAL ICONS

Icon	What the icon entails
	<b>Introduction:</b> This is an advanced organizer that tells what you will learn from a unit of study.
	<b>Outcomes:</b> These define the type of knowledge, skills, and attitudes you should be able to display after going through the lessons in the unit.
	<b>Key terms:</b> These are words or phrases which will help you understand lessons in the unit.
	<b>Lessons:</b> This is content you must read and understand to achieve the stated unit objectives.
	<b>Activity:</b> This tells you the tasks you should perform to facilitate your learning from the unit.
	<b>Answers to unit activities:</b> This gives you the suggested answers to the unit activities. Ensure that you begin by performing the activities on your own before comparing your answers with the suggested answers.
	<b>Further readings:</b> This shows you a suggested list of resources you will need to study for your deeper understanding of lessons in the unit.
	<b>Summary:</b> Reminds you of what you have learned in a unit.
	<b>Unit Test:</b> Examines your understanding of lessons in the unit.



# UNIT 1: WRITING SKILLS



## Introduction

Starting university can be compared to starting a whole new chapter of life. Whenever you leave your home for college, a new journey with many challenges is bound to begin. A good number of students are not usually prepared for the possible challenges that university life has to offer, hence causing them to get overwhelmed. Some of the challenges these students face relate to writing skills. Welcome to the first Unit of this module where you will study writing skills while focusing on the academic essay and some principles of writing.



## Learning outcomes

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

- a) understand different writing skills
- b) plan the academic essay writing process
- c) conduct research on a given topic
- d) write well-referenced academic essays and reports



## Key terms

Ensure that you understand the key terms or phrases used in this unit as listed below.

- Proofreading
- PASS



## Lesson 1: The writing process

This Unit takes you to the writing process after understanding different types of writing styles. Every writer follows his or her writing process. Being conscious of your writing process is especially helpful when you find yourself struggling with a particularly tricky piece. Despite this overview of the general writing process, writing an academic essay particularly follows an established pattern that goes through different stages.

### 1.1. Stages in writing process

#### Stage 1: Planning/Prewriting

Planning involves determining the stages the writing process will go through including the time to be taken on each activity until the essay is submitted. In college, you can expect to be assigned topics for writing or define topics for yourself. All you need to do is to narrow your topic down to a manageable level so that research and an essay can be written on that topic. For instance; one student would be interested in a topic on **Education** or **Human rights**. These topic are broad topics and they do not tell the reader specifically what the student will be writing on.

#### Why is prewriting important

The following are some of the reasons why pre-writing is important:

- It helps writers develop clear reasoning
- It increases efficiency by helping the writer map or brainstorm about their writing before beginning the first draft
- It helps a writer organize their thoughts
- It helps a writer process the order of those thoughts so they can organize them effectively for their audience
- It can facilitate a better understanding of the audience and rhetorical situation

#### Stage 2: Research

Research is the act of collecting information from different sources to understand a topic better. The following are some of the ways that can be used to gather information:

- **Brainstorming:** Sitting in a group and discussing ideas on a topic helps in understanding a topic better. A list of questions and ideas generated through this method can help in providing alternative ways of looking at a problem.

- **Keeping a journal:** This is a record of ideas, notes, data, or information on a particular subject. Such information becomes an important resource when writing an essay assignment.
- **Literature review:** Reading available literature on the topic helps in getting new information. This includes reading books, journals, newspapers, etc.
- **Interviews:** Information can also be solicited from identified specialists and authorities in the field of the topic.
- **Asking the question (5Ws and H):** In answering the questions, you can define, compare, contrast, or investigate cause and effect. The assumption is that by thinking about parts, you will have more to write about than if you focus on the topic.

### **Stage 3: Drafting and writing**

During the drafting stage, list the main ideas. Under each one of them put the main points to be used to support each main idea. Attach references where there is a need to strengthen your argument. You can keep revising this outline until you are satisfied with the flow of ideas. Once drafting the outline is completed, write an introduction where you define the key terms, provide a clear explanation of the topic and state the main aim of the essay. After the introduction, write a paragraph on each of the ideas listed in the outline. At the end provide a proper conclusion.

### **Stage 4: Editing**

You have finished writing your essay. It is time to fine-tune your essay line by line. Check for repetition, clarity, grammar, spelling, and punctuation, appropriate style formatting, capitalisation, etc. Editing is an extremely detailed process and you need to be focussed. Nobody wants to read a work that is full of mistakes, and your lecturer will be put off and grade your essay lowly if it is not properly edited.

### **Stage 5: Proofreading**

Proofreading is not just looking for errors but learning to avoid making the same mistakes in the future. Handbooks and dictionaries are important resources to be kept close as you proofread. During this stage, check that the work has adhered to the principles of effective communication. It is the final stage of the writing process when the paper is evaluated for mechanical correctness. Proofread only after you have finished all of your other revisions and editing.

## **1.2. Principles of effective writing**



The business world is highly competitive, and you need to be an effective communicator to stay afloat. Your writing skills reflect your professionalism and determine your success in the corporate world. Here are the top common principles to help you become a competent business writer; PASS principle, 7Cs.

### 1. P.A.S.S. Principle

No matter the context, being well-prepared before writing is essential to ensure that the message is clear, concise, and easy to comprehend. The P.A.S.S. principle is based on the idea that the content of a written communication should be tailored to the specific purpose, audience, situation, and style of communication.

- a. **Purpose:** What is the purpose, the objective of your writing? Ask yourself why you are sending the message, and what do you hope to achieve?" Knowing the purpose involves understanding the aims, reasons or objectives to be accomplished as a result of communicating. When the objectives are vague, it is difficult to know whether your communication was effective or not. With clear objectives, it is easier to evaluate yourself as regards with objectives have been achieved or not, depending on the feedback that you get.
- b. **Audience:** Who am I writing to? What are they interested in? What are their expectations? What language do they speak? If you are writing for a hostile audience (people who you expect will disagree with you), you have to work harder to anticipate counterarguments and focus on establishing common ground between your diverging positions. In short, tailoring your report to its audience will help make it more persuasive. Audience analysis involves considering the age, gender, recipients' motivation, social status, level of knowledge, education, etc.
- c. **Style:** What document am I writing? Is it an essay, a memo, a report, a business letter, an email, a short message, etc.? How is the chosen document written? The purpose and the audience will further determine the style of communication to use. Depending on the purpose and audience, the writer must choose the appropriate language, tone and format that is best suited for the message.
- d. **Structure:** How should my message be arranged from the beginning to the end of the message? There are two levels of structure:
  - Layout: the general presentation or outlook of the message.



- **Content:** the material that forms the text of the message. Structure is in respect to the Introduction, Body and Conclusion.

## 2. 7Cs Principle

The PASS principle helps much when planning and drafting the message. After the message is written, the 7Cs principle helps to check how the message has been written. This principle covers seven principles that need to be considered:

- i. **Completeness:** The message must be complete and geared to the receiver's perception of the world. The message must be based on facts and a complex message needs additional information and/or explanation. A good subdivision of subjects will clarify the message because of which there will be a complete overview of what is said.
- ii. **Concreteness:** Concrete writing is also about a clear message. This is often supported by factual material such as research data and figures. The words used as well as the sentence structure can be interpreted uni-vocally. Nothing is left to the imagination.
- iii. **Courtesy:** In addition to considering the feelings and points of view of the target group, it is also important to approach the audience in a friendly and courteous manner. Use of terms that show respect for the receiver contributes towards effective communication, e.g. how you address someone.
- iv. **Correctness:** In any writing, grammatical errors must be avoided, and stylistic lapses or wrong use of verbs are not sufficient in verbal communication. Correct use of language increases trustworthiness and the receiver will feel that they are taken seriously.
- v. **Clarity:** Clear or plain language is characterized by explicitness, short sentences, and concrete words. By avoiding parentheses and keeping to the point, the receiver will get a clear picture of the content of the message. Briefly worded information emphasizes the essence of the message.
- vi. **Consideration:** Communicating with the target group (Consideration). To communicate well, it is important to relate to the target group and be involved. By taking the audience into account, the message can be geared toward them. Factors that play a role in this are for example professional knowledge, level of education, age, and interests.
- vii. **Conciseness:** A message is clear when the storyline is consistent and when this does not contain any inconsistencies. When facts are mentioned, it is

important that there is consistent, supporting information. Systematically implementing a certain statement or notation also contributes to clear business communication. Varied statements will confuse the receiver.



### Activity 1a

Education is a broad subject. Narrow it down to a manageable topic on which you can write a three-page essay.

- a. From the narrowed topic in (a) above, formulate a thesis statement for your essay.
- b. Formulate 3 topic sentences to develop your thesis.
- c. Critically evaluate any 3 sources of information you would use to write your essay on the narrowed topic.
- d. Draft an introduction to your essay.





## Lesson 2: Essay writing

In lessons 1, you were introduced to different stages in academic writing process, and different principles of writing. This lesson takes you into the actual writing process, specifically, essay writing. An academic essay is a focused piece of writing that develops an idea or argument using evidence, analysis, and interpretation. It is a multi-paragraph composition that has a clear focus and a defined purpose. Formal essays inform or persuade readers to understand an issue or accept a point of view. Informal essays share a writer's personal feelings, thoughts, or express an opinion. Whether written to inform, entertain, motivate, or express an opinion, essays must have a clear goal, address a specific subject, and logically organize supporting details.

### 2.1. Types of essays

There are many types of essays you might write as a student. The content and the length of an essay depend on your level, subject of study, and course requirements.

#### 1. Narrative essays

A narrative essay tells a story. It is a hybrid type of essay that falls somewhere in-between academic writing and fiction. It uses many of the most common storytelling elements such as plot, character, setting, conflict, emotion, and a core message you are trying to get across. It is most used in fiction and creative writing, but it can also be used in non-fiction to help make true stories more compelling to your reader. For instance, you might use narrative writing in novels and short stories, memoirs, creative essays, feature stories, speeches, etc. This is not a must, but in most cases, narrative essays call for first-person narration, meaning you must use first-person pronouns ("I," "my," "me," "we," and so on). Some of the standard topics for a narrative essay include:

- *Tell about the place from your childhood that mattered to you a lot.*
- *Describe the biggest challenge you've ever faced and how you've overcome it.*
- *Write about the most valuable gift you've ever received. Describe when and how that happened.*

#### 2. Descriptive essays

Descriptive essay involves capturing every detail of the place, person, or scene you



are writing about. Think of descriptive writing as painting a picture with your words so that the reader truly envisions the subject in their mind's eye. It can occasionally be seen used in more formal writing to help explain an idea more deeply or get the reader to emotionally connect with the story you are telling. Some examples of where you might use descriptive writing include poems or song lyrics, fiction, copywriting, such as when describing a product or travel destination, and narrative nonfiction, such as memoirs. A few examples of common topics for descriptive essays include:

- *Describe the most spectacular museum you've ever been to.*
- *Talk about your favorite clothing item. Describe it in detail and tell how you got it.*
- *In your opinion, what does the most beautiful piece of jewelry in the world look like?*

### **3. Persuasive essays**

The goal of this type is to share your opinion in a thoughtful way or, even better, to convince the reader of a viewpoint or idea. Persuasive essay is often found in non-fiction and is rarely used in fiction. It is particularly worth mastering if you do any kind of business writing, even just drafting emails to your colleagues since clearly convincing people of your ideas or point of view can be so valuable at work. You will see persuasive writing used in essays, speeches or presentations, sales writing, letters of recommendation, etc.

### **4. Expository essays**

Expository writing exists to explain a subject or inform about a particular topic area, concept, event, or phenomenon to introduce it to the audience. The goal is simply to teach the reader something. Expository writing should aim to answer any questions a reader might have about a subject: think about the 5W and How questions. Learning how to write in this style is valuable if you ever need to teach through writing, even if that is just training your colleague on a particular process. You will see expository writing in How-to or “explainer” articles, Help center articles, FAQ pages, Textbooks, Technical or business writing, etc.

The only challenge of an expository essay is to make it opinion-free. Even if you have a strong position on what you are writing about, the reader should not be able to gauge it from your essay. A few examples of topics for expository essays:

- *What are the main reasons for procrastination?*

- *What are the most competitive degrees in American colleges?*
- *Describe what happened during the battle of Gettysburg.*

## 5. Argumentative essays

This type does not only give information but also presents an argument with the supporting and opposing ideas of an argumentative issue. An argumentative essay presents an extended, evidence-based argument; therefore, it should still sound academic and credible. It requires a strong thesis statement - a clearly defined stance on your topic. It tests your ability to research and present your own position on a topic. Your primary objective is to convince your audience to agree with your facts, share your values, accept your argument and conclusion, and adopt your way of thinking or point of view. Here are a couple of topic examples for argumentative essays:

- *Should schools ban unvaccinated children from attending classes? Why or why not?*
- *Should NATO close the sky over Ukraine in light of Russia's invasion?*
- *Would it make sense for governments to tax airlines more to make flights more expensive and decrease the environmental harm they cause?*

## 6. Compare and contrast essays

As the name suggests, a compare and contrast essay is supposed to discuss two or more objects (ideas, events, people, phenomena) and compare them to one another. These essays are not too difficult to write. But they do have some distinct genre conventions that students must keep in mind. For example, there are several typical structures that all compare, and contrast essays follow. Here are some sample topics for a compare and contrast essay:

- *Discuss the comparative benefits of ebooks versus traditional books.*
- *Compare the advantages and problems of pharmacological versus non-pharmacological treatments of mental disorders.*
- *What are the comparative upsides and downsides of attending college in one's home country versus abroad?*

## 2.2. Structuring an essay

It is the general outlook of the message such as letters, memo, etc. (layout), and the materials that form the text of the message (content). Structure in respect of content refers to the presentation of, *Introduction, Body and Conclusion*



## a. Writing the Introduction

The introduction sets the tone for your essay. It aims at attracting/grabbing reader's attention, interest and it informs them of what to expect.

- i. **Hook your reader:** the first sentence (hook) of the introduction should pique your reader's interest and curiosity. It might be an intriguing question, a surprising fact, or a bold statement emphasizing the relevance of the topic. For example, writing an essay about the development of Braille.

*The invention of Braille was a major turning point in*

- ii. **Provide background on your topic:** it is important to give context that will help your reader understand your argument. This might involve providing background information, giving an overview of important academic work or debates on the topic, and explaining difficult terms.
- iii. **Present the thesis statement:** The controlling idea that will be developed in an essay. The thesis statement provides focus and signals your position on the topic. It tells the reader how you will interpret the significance of the subject matter under discussion. It is a guide that gives readers a preview of what to expect from the rest of your essay.

*As the first writing system designed for blind people's needs, Braille was a groundbreaking new accessibility tool. It not only provided practical benefits, but also helped change the cultural status of blindness.*

- iv. **Map the structure:** End the introduction by briefly describing what will be covered in each part of the essay. It guides the reader through your structure and gives a preview of how your argument will develop. For example:

*The invention of Braille marked a major turning point in the history of disability. The writing system of raised dots used by blind and visually impaired people was developed by Louis Braille in nineteenth-century France. In a society that did not value disabled people in general, blindness was particularly stigmatized, and lack of access to reading and writing was a significant barrier to social participation. The idea of tactile reading was not entirely new, but existing methods based on sighted systems were difficult to learn and use. As the first writing system designed for blind people's needs, Braille was a groundbreaking new accessibility tool. It not only provided practical benefits, but also helped change the cultural status of blindness. This essay begins by discussing the situation of blind people in nineteenth-century Europe. It then describes the invention of Braille and the gradual process of its acceptance within blind education. Subsequently, it explores the wide-ranging effects of this invention on blind people's social and cultural lives.*



## b. Writing the main body

The body of your essay is where you make arguments supporting your thesis, provide evidence, and develop your ideas. Its purpose is to present, interpret, and analyze the information and sources you have gathered to support your argument. These points are developed in paragraphs and each supporting paragraph should begin with a topic sentence.

*Lack of access to reading and writing put blind people at a serious disadvantage in nineteenth-century society. Text was one of the primary methods through which people engaged with culture, communicated with others, and accessed information; without a well-developed reading system that did not rely on sight, blind people were excluded from social participation (Weygand, 2009). While disabled people in general suffered from discrimination, blindness was widely viewed as the worst disability, and it was commonly believed that blind people were incapable of pursuing a profession or improving themselves through culture (Weygand, 2009). This demonstrates the importance of reading and writing to social status at the time: without access to text, it was considered impossible to fully participate in society. Blind people were excluded from the sighted world, but also entirely dependent on sighted people for information and education.*

## c. Writing the conclusion

The conclusion is the final paragraph of an essay. A strong essay conclusion returns to your thesis, ties together your main points and shows why your argument matters. To make your essay's conclusion as strong as possible, avoid including new arguments or evidence; undermining your arguments (e.g. "This is just one approach of many"); using concluding phrases like "To sum up..." or "In conclusion..." For example:

*Braille paved the way for dramatic cultural changes in the way blind people were treated and the opportunities available to them. Louis Braille's innovation was to reimagine existing reading systems from a blind perspective, and the success of this invention required sighted teachers to adapt to their students' reality instead of the other way around. In this sense, Braille helped drive broader social changes in the status of blindness. New accessibility tools provide practical advantages to those who need them, but they can also change the perspectives and attitudes of those who do not.*



### Activity 1b

In groups of five members, choose any topic and write a descriptive essay.



## Lesson 3: Paragraph development

Before we start developing a paragraph, we need to know what a paragraph is. A paragraph is a group of related sentences that develop one main idea. Although there is no definite length of a paragraph, it is often from five to twelve sentences long. The structure of a paragraph consists of three kinds of sentences: the main sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph; major supporting sentences, which expand, illustrate, explain, support, or strengthen the main idea with secondary points and major supporting details; and the minor supporting sentences which further exemplify and support the main idea with minor points and minor supporting details. Therefore, before studying a longer essay, we will look at single paragraphs.

### 3.1. The topic sentences

A topic sentence is a key sentence that provides a focus for a supporting paragraph. Sometimes referred to as focus sentence, the topic sentence helps organize the paragraph by summarizing the information in the paragraph, in formal writing, the topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph (although it does not always have to be). It may be found at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the paragraph.

A topic sentence essentially tells what the rest of the paragraph is about. All subsequent sentences should give more information about it, prove it by offering facts about it, or describe it. For examples if the topic sentence is about Malawi as a beautiful country, then all subsequent sentences need to expound on that subject.

#### Topic sentences and controlling ideas

Every topic sentence should have a topic and a controlling idea. The controlling idea shows the direction the paragraph will take. The controlling idea limits the subject – it tells what the author intends to say about the subject or controls the topic to the aspect that you want. The table below provides two examples of topic sentences.

**Table 1.1: Examples of topic sentences**

Topic Sentence	Topic	Controlling Idea
Zomba is the most expensive city in Malawi for a number of reasons.	Zomba	most expensive city for a number of reasons.



To be an effective, Statistician requires certain qualities.	Statistician	requires certain qualities
--	--------------	----------------------------

As you can see, the topic sentence provides a focus for the reader; it tells the reader what the paragraph is about. The controlling idea helps the audience understand what is being said.

### Writing the topic sentence

Writing a good topic sentence is an important step toward effective paragraph since the topic sentence will determine the direction and the scope of the body. The topic sentence should be limited. It should be carefully worded to express a limited main idea. As a rule, the more limited the topic sentence, the better the paragraph.

### 3.2. Identifying the supporting sentences

Once you have decided on your topic and your main controlling idea you need to choose two, three, or four supporting points for the topic. The topic is what the paragraph or essay is about; the supporting points are the most important details you have to say about your topic. You will have generated the supporting points in your pre-writing activities. The main points should be important, distinct and relevant, as shown in the table below.

**Table 1.2: Important, distinct and relevant of main points**

	Topic	Main Points
<b>Important</b>	Study skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarizing</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Buying notebooks (not important)</li> <li>• Taking notes</li> </ul>
<b>Distinct</b> Each of the main points should be different from all others. None of the points should duplicate any of the points.	Advantages of exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep health</li> <li>• Loss weight</li> <li>• Stay in good shape</li> <li>• Get more energy (this is the same as the first one -not distinct)</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant</b> All the main points should relate to the subject and	Benefits of gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh air</li> <li>• Variety of colours (not relevant)</li> <li>• Physical exercise</li> </ul>



help develop the reader's knowledge about the subject.		• Intimacy with nature
--	--	------------------------

### 3.3. Ordering ideas

After you have determined the main points of your essay, you will need to choose a way to organize your ideas. The way that your ideas are organized can help your readers understand your material. Here are four ways to organize your main points: Logical, Chronological and Spatial

#### a. Logical order

Ideas must be explained in a certain order – one point must be explained before another point (see writing a process) The points must be explained in correct sequence, otherwise readers may be confused. For example:

*Insert your ATM card into the machine. Then punch personal identification number. Next, push the button for “withdraw”. After you have entered the amount of cash you want, push the button for the account that you want to use. Then collect the cash and take your card and receipt.*

#### b. Chronological order:

With this order ideas are presented in order of time, from first to last. The details in a paragraph of this kind tend to answer such questions as ‘what happens first, what happens next, etc. for example:

*You may be asked to explain how you spend your day. With such questions, you use directional words such as first, after, next, once, finally, and so on.*

#### c. Random order

Ideas can be presented in any order without affecting the reader's understanding. This type of organization is very rare and can only be used when all the main points are of equal value and, are not linked together logically or chronologically.

### 3.4. Creating an outline

Once you have grouped your ideas, you should begin an outline for your essay. Outlining can help you organize and develop your material. An outline is a formal organized list of the ideas, explanations, details, examples, and other supporting points in an essay.

#### Outline for an illustrative essay

This is an outline for an Illustrative Essay. Use this example outline as a guideline when writing an illustrative essay outline.

**Table 1.3: Essay outline**

<b>1. The Title</b>
<b>2. Introduction</b> Thesis Statement Point #1 Point #2 Point #3
<b>3. The Body</b> Point #1 Supporting detail Example Point #2 Supporting detail Example
<b>4. Conclusion</b> Summary of main points Restatement of thesis statement





## Lesson 4: Documentation in academic writing

Welcome to the next lesson that equips you with citing and referencing skills. Every time you use material derived from specific sources, whether quoted passages or summaries or paraphrases of fact or idea, you are ethically obliged to let your reader know who deserves the credit. This also involves telling the reader precisely where the material came from so that they could locate them. When you are writing as a student or a professional (e.g. in essays or reports), you will frequently be expected to **refer** to the work of other writers or experts in your subject area (**sources**), and formally acknowledge them by including their identifying details.

### 4.1. Referencing and citation

Referencing is documenting, acknowledging, or giving credit to sources of the information or views on which you are expressing your own opinion in your essay. Citation is quotation from a book or passage in support of an argument. It is a way you tell your readers that certain material in your work came from another source. All citations are included in the list of references.

#### Why referencing

- To evaluate the work of others in order to negotiate your position with regard to the present body of knowledge and establish your stance
- To support/back up/ or develop your own findings, ideas, or point being made
- To relate your findings/ideas to those of others, thereby giving authority to yours
- To criticize the findings or ideas of others in light of your own
- To enable readers to follow up what you have written and more fully understand the cited author's work.

### 4.2. Evaluating information from sources

Not all materials require referencing. When you are writing about issues of *common knowledge* you are not supposed to cite the source. It has to be noted that internet is just a system of networks and a communications tool, not a source. The quality of information available on the internet can vary significantly. It is essential to analyze any source for content, validity, and appropriateness especially web resources because they lack editors or publishers who filter out misinformation. There are different materials that require referencing:

- **Direct quotations:** whenever you use someone's words, even if it is just a phrase, put quotation marks around it and acknowledge the source.

- **Judgements or opinions of others:** whenever you present another person's opinion, even if you present it in your own words (in a phrase or summary) you must cite the source of the opinion.
- **Statistics, charts, tables, diagrams and graphs** must all be acknowledged if they do not originate from your own field research. Even if the chart or graph is your own it is the information whose source you need to acknowledge.

After finding different materials that are required for referencing, you are required to present them in your text. This is where you integrate the information you have got from different sources with your ideas into your write-up. Whatever method you employ, always remember that weaving other people's words, facts or ideas into your writing can be very challenging. Be prominent in your work and avoid filling your work with other people's voices.

### 4.3. Referencing style

There are several styles of referencing some of which are American Psychology Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Harvard System of Referencing, Modern Languages Association (MLA) etc. This module focuses on APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition. You need to study the other styles on your own.

#### The American Psychological Association (APA) Style of documentation

The APA style is commonly known as The APA style for parenthetical citation because it presents sources in parentheses. In late 2019, the APA published a revised style guide, the 7<sup>th</sup> edition. This edition contains a few minor changes to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the manual. You are therefore, required to study both 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> editions and note the changes. Dig more about how to cite your sources using APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition. You may use also click on this link: <https://www.scribbr.com/apa-style/apa-seventh-edition-changes/>

### 4.4. Understanding plagiarism

“To plagiarize” means “to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own. This simply means that you have used someone else's work (exact words, ideas, images, and so on) in your writing without giving proper credit. Any time you use someone's work without giving him or her credit, you are plagiarizing. This may include copying word-for-word, changing certain words, or using another person's ideas without properly citing him or her.



Plagiarism is considered unethical in school and in the professional world: if you do not give the original author credit, you are telling the reader that you came up with the idea on your own. Most professors will outline their policy regarding plagiarism in their syllabi. These policies range from receiving an “F” on the plagiarized assignment to failing the course and being reported to the university.



### Activity 1c

Present the information below in a Reference format following APA style (7<sup>th</sup> edition):

- This was published in 1991 in Oxford and is a book by Professor John Sinclair. The title of the book is: *Corpus, concordance and collocation* and the publisher was Oxford University press.
- This small book is called: *learning purpose and language use*. It was written by Henry George Widdowson and published in 1983. Like all his books it was published in Oxford by Oxford University Press.
- This newspaper article was written by Jane Martinson in New York. The title of the article is: *Microsoft faces defining moment*, and it was in the Guardian on page 10 on Saturday November 6th, 1999.
- This book, like many dictionaries, does not say who wrote it. The title is: *Collins COBUILD English language dictionary* and it was published in 1987 by HarperCollins in London.



## Unit summary

In this Unit, we focused on how to write academic essay and reports. We considered the following:

- Principles of writing
- Five stages of the writing process
- APA style of referencing.

In the next unit you will learn about **Study Skills**.

## Further reading



Brandon, L. E., & Brandon, K. (2007). *Sentences, paragraphs, and beyond: With integrated readings* (5th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Cho-Baker, S., Bridgeman, B., Ling, G., Flor, M., & Belur, V. (2025). *Academic Writing Skills in College Admissions Essays: Exploring Their Implications for Admissions Decisions and First-Semester Grade Point Average*. Educational

Researcher. Advance online publication.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X251324189>

Strongman, L. (2013). *Academic Writing*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.





## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 1a

**Education is a broad subject. Narrow it down to a manageable topic on which you can write a three-page essay.**

The Impact of ICT on Tertiary Education in Malawi

- a. Developments in ICT are negatively affecting tertiary education in Malawi.
- b. **i)** ICT and the internet provide readily available answers to student's assignments  
**ii)** ICT and the internet have reduced the need for students to physical contact their lecturers.  
**iii)** Students learn bad behaviors from what they watch online.
- c. **i)** Books are one source to provide information on the topic. These books can be found from libraries. The challenge is that these books may have information that may not directly be the Malawian situation.  
**ii)** The internet is another source. This would help to easily identify anything on the topic relating to Malawi or the region.  
**iii)** interviews with professionals like lecturers or school administrators is another source. These are people who directly work with the students and have knowledge and information on the topic.
- d. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) covers all gadgets and software used for communication and information management. These technologies are used in tertiary education and by students for many purposes. This essay argues that developments in ICT are negatively affecting tertiary education in Malawi.

### Answer to Activity 1b

**In groups of five members, choose any topic and write a descriptive essay.**

Students are expected to be in a group of five, choose the topic and develop a descriptive essay.

### Answer to Activity 1c

#### **Referencing:**

*Collins COBUILD English language dictionary.* (1987). Harper Collins.

Martinson, J. (1999, November 6). Microsoft faces defining moment: *The Guardian*, (p. 10).

Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance and collocation.* Oxford University press.

Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use.* Oxford University Press.

### Answer to Activity 1d

#### **Report Writing.**

Each student should write a well-structured report.



## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 15 min.

**Instructions:**

- There are **three** questions in this Test.
- Answer **all** questions.

**Question One**

Explain the difference between editing and proofreading. **(10 marks)**

**Question Two**

Mention any **five** differences between the APA and other styles of citation. **(15 marks)**

**Question Three**

Discuss the 7Cs principle of communication. **(25 marks)**



## UNIT 2: STUDY SKILLS



### Introduction

Studying is one of the possible challenges that students also face at the university. At the University, most of the time, you work on your own. This offers opportunities for using the bulk of your time in ways that suit your personal preferences, for example, some prefer working in the morning, some at night, so there's need for proper planning against time available. There are factors that affect the length of time you can concentrate, such as: how interested you are in the subject, how experienced you are in the given subject. For you to be braced for the new aspects of life that you will find in university, it is of importance for you to know the most common problems and be able to overcome them. In this unit therefore, you will be introduced to basic skills essential for you to study effectively.



### Learning outcomes

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

- a) explain time management
- b) apply time management strategies
- c) demonstrate examination skills



### Key terms

Ensure that you understand the key terms or phrases used in this unit as listed below.

- Time management
- Planning
- Evaluation
- Instructions
- Examination skills



## Lesson 1: Time management

In this lesson, you will understand what time management is, and why it is important to manage time. You will also learn different principles of time management.

### 1.1. An overview of time management

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. Pickford and Brown (2006) define time management as the skill, which above all others, can make the difference between graduating and dropout. It refers to planning through apportioning your time well for various activities. Planning is the ability to know how an activity will be accomplished including resources to be used, challenges to be encountered and how the challenges will be resolved. Consider the following situations as examples:

- *A doctor who is operating on a patient. The operation was supposed to last 2 hours and it has now taken 8 hours. How will the relations of the patient feel?*
- *A lecturer who was supposed to attend a 7:30am class on a Monday. The lecturer wakes up at 8:15am on that Monday and must use public transport to the lecture room. How will students in the class feel?*
- *A politician planned to open a referral hospital as part of the campaign promises. The contractor who is constructing the hospital fails to finish the project in time due to other factors and people refuse to vote for the politician because of an unfulfilled promise. How will the politician feel?*

These situations show that time management affect different people in many ways. Failure to manage time causes inconveniences not only to one person but to other people too.

### 1.2. Principles of time management

Below are some core principles or strategies of time management:

#### a. Planning

Planning is always important, no matter what you do. Take a few minutes in the morning to plan your activities for the day. For a hectic schedule, minimize distractions as much as possible. You can also use various personal planning tools to plan and organize your schedule such as calendars, wall charts, notebooks, etc.

#### b. Organize and prioritizing

There are two kinds of problems: **important** and **urgent**. The most fundamental premise of effective time management is differentiating what is important and what

is urgent. Note that the most important tasks are not the most urgent tasks and vice-versa. The problem is most of us let urgent tasks dominate our lives. Experts suggest that though both urgent and important tasks can be done together, one must first focus on important ones regardless of their urgency. Focusing on what you want to accomplish, will give you full control over your time. The easiest way to prioritize your tasks is to:

- i. **Prepare a semester calendar:** record your college assignments with due dates, college scheduled exams and your known out-of-school activities
- ii. **Prepare a weekly schedule:** before a school week, record your daily classes, enter things to be done with due dates e.g. projects, surveys, lab reports, assignments, etc.; enter review of your class notes/lessons; add “out-of-school” activities you will be involved in.

#### c. **Avoid procrastination**

Sometimes students put off what can be done today for tomorrow – this is what is called procrastination and has to be avoided. It just provides momentary satisfaction but unfortunately the long-term effect is stress and pressure. Most last-minute efforts result in lower-quality work than that achieved through planned, methodical completion. There are various ways to avoid procrastination:

- i. **Having the motivation:** when dealing with tasks, have internal motivation (intrinsic): what is your goal at the college. You should also have external motivation (extrinsic): It could be pleasing somebody, behaviour modification in terms of rewards, or as peer pressure and or punishment.
- ii. **Having goals:** if you are not sure of what your goals are, you will have little reason for beginning and completing a project (study). Set objectives or goals as you study and then allocate time to complete them on schedule. Goals must measure observable, concrete fact rather than abstract ideas.
- iii. **Getting started:** sometimes it is hard to get started on a project because it is large or complex. If this is the case, cut it down to size, brainstorm with others or ask your lecturer for suggestions.

#### d. **Avoid distractions**

You sit at the desk with determination in mind to complete a task no matter what. As you turn on your laptop, you notice a friend’s message on Facebook or text on your phone and forget about that important task. Well, distractions happen and it is hard to avoid them. Identify internal distractions and external distractions that will affect



concentration when you study and pinpoint their cause.

**e. Learn to say “NO”**

Know that it is perfectly OK to say “no” to tasks you feel overwhelmed by. Unless something truly important comes to you, practice saying ‘no’ to the tasks that you feel pressured with. Instead, save your energy and concentration for the activities that are important for you, and you enjoy doing. Being a “yes” person can lead to you getting too much on your plate and becoming overwhelmed with work hence stress.

**f. Make realistic schedules**

Everyone knows that timetables work, but not everyone makes them, because it is discouraging when you find there are too difficult to keep to. The key is to be realistic and leave a bit of room for flexibility. Plan your schedule before the week starts. Stay positive and when you feel stressed, take a 10-minute break to do things that you enjoy.

### 1.3. Techniques used to manage time

Many techniques which people use to manage time and some of these are:

**a. To-do list**

This technique involves listing down all activities to be done on a particular day. In other cases, it may include allocating time for the activities to be done. This technique helps in ensuring that all work that was planned to be done has been done during that period. A To-Do can also be presented in form of a program, timetable, or checklist.

**b. Pareto analysis (80-20 Rule)**

This technique was named after Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian Politician, who observed that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the people. By application, 80% of the land challenges Italy faced were caused and would be resolved by focusing on the 20% of the people that owned it. In terms of time management, approximately 20 percent of your hard work produces 80 percent results.

**c. ABC method**

Developed by Alan Lakein. It categorizes all human activities into: “A”, “B” and “C.”

**Table 2.1: ABC method**

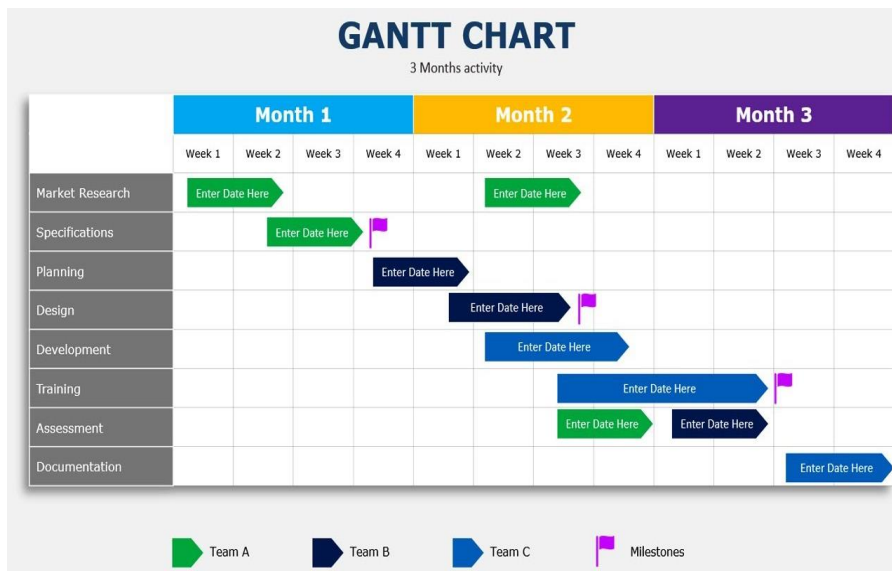
Category	Priority	Nature of task
----------	----------	----------------



<b>A</b>	<b>Status</b>	"Must Do" High priority,	Very important, critical items, with close deadlines or high level of importance to them
<b>B</b>	<b>Status</b>	"Should Do" Medium priority	Quite important over time, not as critical as "A" items, but still important to spend time doing.
<b>C</b>	<b>Status</b>	"Nice to Do" Low priority at this time	Low consequences if left undone at this moment.

#### d. Gantt Chart

Developed by Henry Gantt and usually used in project management. All activities in a project are listed down and allocated specific time periods when they would be carried out. This chart helps to follow that all activities are carried out and finished as planned. Below is an example of a Gantt chart:



**Figure 2.1: Gantt Chart**

### 1.4. Importance of time management

The following are some of the reasons why time management is important:

#### **It improves your performance.**

When you learn to block time out of your day for all your important tasks, you will have a better idea of everything you need to accomplish and how long each task should take.

#### **Boost your confidence.**

When you manage your time properly and successfully meet your deadlines, you will feel a sense of accomplishment and confidence in your abilities. Consistently



finishing your daily to-do list is a huge motivator that can drive people to further improve their time management skills and take on new work opportunities.

### **It reduces stress**

It is easy to become anxious when you have a full list of tasks to accomplish both for work and in your personal life. Good time management can help you prioritize your to-do list and set aside the time needed for your most important tasks.

### **It opens up new possibilities**

One of the hidden dangers of poor time management is that it kills your chances of broadening your horizons and trying out new things. If you go through life rushing from one task to the next, you never have the chance to explore other opportunities.

### **It enhances your decision-making ability**

Time management has a powerful effect on the quality of your decisions and, in turn, affects almost every aspect of your life, from your career progression to your relationships, friendships and social life. Through effective time management, you can avoid making the poor decisions that you make when you are feeling stressed, tired or pressured.



#### **Activity 2a**

- a. Using the definition of Time management, list at least five examples of situations that a student would need to manage time.
- b. Explain any three reasons why it is important for a student to manage time.





## Lesson 2: Examination skills

In the previous lesson, you learnt about different principles and methods of study that will enable you achieve certain goals. This lesson takes you a step further to one of the goals you would like to achieve after studying, and that is to pass examinations. Not so?

### 2.1. What are examinations?

Examinations are the proof of learning that can be used to demonstrate one's skill level. This is an ability or capacity by a student to effectively carry out a prepared assessment. Examinations may test the student's knowledge, skills, aptitudes or even physical fitness. When the student has examination skills, they increase their chances of succeeding in the examination. When answering examination questions, do you really answer the questions? Failure in examinations can be attributed to exam nerves or as a result of the negative effects of stress. It is important that you take control and organise your time and employ strategies to ensure better performance in examinations.

### 2.2. Examination Tips

There are several ways of preparing for an examination:

#### a. Preparing for the examination

**Revise:** draw up a realistic revision timetable that should include some social time to allow you to relax. You need to organise your notes by module or topic and decide what topics to revise. It is also important to use past exam papers to guide your revision. Be positive about your learning; ask tutors for help or to clarify information if necessary.

**Have a good memory:** recall of information is essential for successful performance in examinations. Better recall can be achieved by time management of study periods and regular over learning.

**Study Habits:** give yourself enough time to study, find a quiet place to work to avoid being distracted during revision periods; practice on old exams. Check how past examinations were being set to have an idea of what you can expect; explain your answers to others; organize study groups with friends.

**Timed Examinations:** make certain you know where all of your exams are being held in advance of the start time. This will help you organise pens, pencils, rulers etc. the night before. Plan the day of your exams and know what to carry along.



## b. Writing

**In the exams:** before you turn over the exam paper, write down key dates, definitions, quotes names or other information you feel you may forget. Read the instructions on the question paper carefully. They will tell you if there is a compulsory question and how many questions you must answer.

**Remember:** write in short clear sentences. If you forget a word, spelling or chunk of information, leave a gap and come back to try to fill in the detail later. Make your writing legible.

## 2.3. Understanding examination questions

Examination questions have three important parts that candidates need to understand: **Action Verbs** (Define, Explain, Compare and contrast, Discuss, Examine, Evaluate), **Magnitude (Extent) of the Answer** (three benefits of, advantages and disadvantages of..., qualities of... etc. If the magnitude of the answer is not clear enough, the marks given provide a clue of how much the examiner is expecting. The last part is **The Topic Area** (time management, examination skills, etc.).

### Types of examination questions

- i. **Simple factual questions:** These are questions that do not require much explanation. They ask for specific answers. They may ask for specific number of items to be given in the answer. For example, *define time management*. (2 marks)
- ii. **Composition questions:** These are questions that give the candidate enough room to explain their answers using several connected sentences. For examples, using an illustration, explain the Gantt Chart. (8 marks)
- iii. **Essay questions:** These are questions that are answered in a detailed way. The answer has a Title, Introduction, Body, Conclusion (and References). In an examination situation, references are not a requirement while references become a must in a take-home assignment. For examples, discuss any four strategies of managing time. (25 marks)

### Commonly used verbs in examination questions

The following are the common verbs used in examinations and their meanings:

- **Analyze:** Separate information into components and identify characteristics.
- **Assess:** Demonstrate the ability to form an opinion based on an analysis.

- **Compare** and contrast: Identify similarities and differences.
- **Describe**: Give an account, including all the relevant characteristics, qualities and events.
- **Differentiate**: Recognize or determine what makes something different.
- **Discuss**: Give an account that addresses a range of ideas and arguments.
- **Distinguish**: Notice and present differences between models/ theories/ concepts/ contexts/ solutions.
- **Evaluate**: Make a judgement considering different factors and using available knowledge/ experience/evidence.
- **Explain**: To give account of the purposes or reasons.
- **Identify**: Recognize, list, name or otherwise characterize.
- **Illustrate**: Make clear by using examples or provide diagrams.
- **Justify**: Present a reasoned case for actions or decisions made.
- **Outline**: Set out the main points/characteristics.
- **Recommend**: To put forward a solution or an idea.
- **State**: Reproduce known facts or information in a logical format.
- **Suggest**: Give possible alternatives, produce an idea, put forward, e.g. an idea or plan, for consideration.



### Activity 2b

Explain any two reasons why examination skills are important to students.



## Unit summary

In this Unit you have covered the following:

- the importance of time management and how it can be applied in different situations.
- Success in examinations require planning, practice and evaluation.

In the next unit you will learn about **Listening Skills**.

## Further reading



Brown, S., & Pickford, R. (2006). *Assessing skills and practice*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203969809>

Langan, J. (2013). *Reading and study skills* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Beidel, D. C., Turner, S. M., & Taylor-Ferreira, J. C. (1999). Teaching study skills and test-taking strategies to elementary school students: The Testbusters program. *Behavior Modification*, 23(4), 630–646.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0145445599234007>

Pritchard, A. (2008). *Studying and learning at university: Vital skills for success in your degree*. SAGE Publications.



## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 2a

**a. Using the definition of time management above, list five examples of situations that a student would need to manage time.**

- Time to attend different classes
- Time to study notes and materials for different modules
- Time to do group discussions
- Deadlines for submitting assignments
- Time to engage in entertainment and sporting activities

**b. Explain any three reasons why it is important for a student to manage time.**

- Provides awareness on how to use your time
- Makes study easier
- Improves performance
- It allows students to complete more in less time

**c. Pick one of the ways of managing time and fill it with your own details.**

- One of the ways of managing time is Pareto analysis. Approximately 20% of your hard work produces 80% results.

**d. Why did you choose the method you have used?**

- I chose this method because it is easy to understand, it is practical, and its results can instantly be seen.

### Answers to Activity 2b

**Explain any two reasons why examination skills are important to students.**

- They help a student to know how to answer the question while addressing what the examiner expects.
- They help the student to manage time during the examination and boost his/her confidence of passing the examination.



## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 15 min.

**Instructions:**

- There are **five** questions in his Test.
- Answer **all** questions.

**Question One**

Define time management **(2 marks)**

**Question Two**

Explain any **four** reasons why time management is important. **(8 marks)**

**Question Three**

Illustrate any **three** strategies of time management. **(15 marks)**

**Question Four**

Discuss the importance of Examination skills to students. **(20 marks)**

**Question Five**

Explain any five barriers to time management. **(5 marks)**



## UNIT 3: LISTENING SKILLS



### Introduction

Have you ever had to ask someone to repeat something you could not understand? Obviously, the answer is “YES”. Whether it is because they are talking too fast or they have unfamiliar accent, or they are using slang words you do not recognize, it can be hard to really hear what people are saying. At this level, you study different modules, there is increased need for you to listen to different presentations, study literature and take notes. Listening and notetaking are some of the skills that you will learn in this Unit.



### Learning outcomes

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

- a) explain the differences between hearing and listening
- b) outline the listening process
- c) describe different types of listening
- d) explain notetaking and its different styles.



### Key terms

Ensure that you understand the key terms or phrases used in this unit as listed below:

- Hearing
- Listening
- Note taking





## Lesson 1: Hearing and listening

Many people use the words “hearing” and “listening” interchangeably; however, there are several important differences between the two. According to Workman (2021), hearing is the passive intake of sound while listening is the act of intentionally working to comprehend the sounds (e.g., background noise) you hear.

### a. Hearing

Hearing is the ability to detect produced sounds using auditory sensory organs (ears). It is a physiological response that involves our perception of sound. It does not require focused attention. For example, if you are watching television, you can still hear the sound of traffic outside, neighbor’s dog barking, people laughing etc.

### b. Listening

Listening is the ability to manipulate or interpret audio input (sounds) through sensory organs to make meanings. A process that involves making sense of the words and sounds you hear with full attention. In turn, you may develop an emotional response to what you hear.

### 1.1. Listening as an active process

Listening requires some effort and concentration. A good listener mentally processes what he or hears with concentration on sound heard in order to derive meaning from it and react to it. Active listening in contrast to passive listening requires you to “get inside” the speaker’s head. Active listening includes:

- **Identify the central idea:** listen for and identify the essential thought that runs through the passage.
- **Relate points to your experience**
- **Predict what will come next:** prediction helps to focus your attention by forecasting what will come next.
- **Look for similarities and differences:** your understanding of a subject is often aided if you can discover the similarities and differences in relation to what you already know.
- **Ask questions:** as you listen, ask yourself questions and if you cannot answer, ask the speaker.
- **Identify supporting *material*:** your next step is to look for the main heads that support the central idea, and the supporting points to build evidence for the main heads.





### Activity 3a

Give any two scenarios where one can hear but not listen.

## 1.2. Stages of listening process

People often believe that listening involves no work. Listening without interest often occurs in classroom; not all lecturers are stimulating; some subjects are less interesting than others. In these above situations, you have to make a real attempt to listen. The following are listening stages:

### a. Predicting

Based on your past experience with someone, you have to predict about how he or she is likely to respond to your conversation. For example, if you come to a place after an agreed time, expect to hear complaints from your colleague.

### b. Reception or Hearing

This is the first stage where the listener receives and registers sounds. In a single day, one is exposed to various messages. You have to hear many of these messages, but you do not listen to all of them. Receiving messages goes beyond mere hearing. When you listen, you filter out the irrelevant messages.

### c. Attending or Attention

After receiving the sounds, the next stage involves focusing your attention on a particular stimulus to understand what that stimulus means. Five techniques for consciously focusing attention include:

- Try to eliminate physical impediments to listening, such as turning down radio, understand your physical limitations such as hearing impairment.
- Get physically and mentally ready to listen.
- Make the shift from speaker to listener a complete one. For example, in class, it is easy to be a listener but in conversation is not.
- Hear a person out before you react.
- Adjust to listening goals of the situation.

### d. Perception or Judging

This is the act of interpreting and absorbing what you have heard in order to get meaning. It revolves around the ways in which we select, organize and interpret the information that reaches us through our senses. It entails understanding the message and judging the value of the sound that reaches the ears or what our eyes



see. Perception is the most significant phase because it is at this stage most of our problems in listening occur.

#### **e. Retention or Remembering**

This involves committing to memory what you have heard. Techniques to remembering include:

- i. Rehearsal:** Act of mentally repeating material immediately on receiving it. It ensures likelihood to remember information later.
- ii. Constructing Mnemonics:** A mnemonic device is any artificial technique used as a memory aid. For example, SOH-CAH-TOA
- iii. Note taking:** Note taking provides us with written records that we can go back to. One strategy, as students is by taking down effective notes that help you remember the important points as you listen.

#### **f. Evaluating or Assessing**

Evaluating and critical listening consist of critically analyzing the message we have understood to determine how truthful, authentic or believable we judge it to be i.e. persuasion to vote. Critical listening includes separating facts from inferences and evaluating the inferences that have been made.

#### **g. Responding or Feedback**

At this stage, the listener provides verbal and/or nonverbal reactions based on short-term or long-term memory. Following the remembering stage, a listener can respond to what they hear verbally. This involves asking a question, requesting additional information, redirecting or changing the focus of a conversation, cutting off a speaker, or repeating what a speaker has said back to her in order to verify that the received message matches the intended message. The response can also be non-verbally (gestures such as nodding, making eye contact, tapping a pen, fidgeting, etc.). These kinds of responses can be displayed purposefully or involuntarily.

### **1.3. Types of listening**

Different situations require different types of listening. In some cases, a type of listening may be determined by how much one already knows, the reason for listening, or the type of person presenting the information. The following are some of the types of listening:

#### **1. Discriminative listening**

Discriminative listening is the first listening type that you are born with. It is the most basic type of listening, whereby the difference between different sounds is identified. If you cannot hear differences, then you cannot make sense of the meaning that is expressed by such differences. Instead of relying on words, discriminative listening uses tone of voice, verbal cues, and other changes in sound. Babies understand the intention of a phrase before they can understand words. If someone speaks to them in a happy and amused tone of voice, they'll smile and laugh back. They can also tell who is talking because they recognize different voices.

## **2. Comprehension/Informative/Content Listening**

The next step beyond discriminating between different sound and sights is to make sense of them. To comprehend the meaning requires first having a lexicon of words at our fingertips and also all rules of grammar and syntax by which we can understand what others are saying. An example of comprehensive listening is when your favourite chef is making a recipe you have been dying to try. You hang on every step, trying hard not to miss one second of the demonstration.

## **3. Critical/Analytical listening**

Critical listening is also called 'evaluative', 'interpretive', or 'judgemental' listening. We can be said to be engaged in critical listening when the **goal** is to evaluate or scrutinise, evaluate and judge, forming opinion about what is being said. Judgment includes assessing strengths and weaknesses, agreement and approval. Be able to analyze the content so that you make informed decisions. Critical listening requires all the ingredients of listening for information.

## **4. Biased/Selective listening**

Biased listening happens when the person hears only what they want to hear, typically misinterpreting what the other person says based on the stereotypes and other biases that they have. This listening process can lead to a distortion of facts. That is because the person listening is not fully in tune with what the speaker wishes to communicate.

## **5. Sympathetic listening**

Sympathetic listening is driven by emotion. Instead of focusing on the message spoken through words, the listener focuses on the feelings and emotions of the speaker. By using sympathetic listening, you can provide the support the

speaker needs. You can understand how they are really feeling not what they say they are feeling. The speaker will feel heard and validated when you take the time to pay attention in this way.

## 6. Empathetic or Therapeutic listening

When we listen empathetically, we go beyond sympathy to seek a truer understanding of how others are feeling. This requires excellent discrimination and close attention to the nuances (hint, tone) of emotional signals. When we are being truly empathetic, we feel what they are feeling. To get others to expose these deep parts of themselves to us, we also need to demonstrate our empathy in our demeanor towards them, asking sensitively and in a way that encourages self-disclosure.

### Characteristics of a good listener

The following are the attributes of good listening skills:

- **Concentration:** Good listening is normally hard work. With a lot of sensory messages, we usually have in a moment there's need for a total concentration to the message which is important for our being here at the college.
- **Eye contact:** Good eye contact is essential for several reasons: eliminating some of the competing visual inputs, easily picking up non-verbal clues, giving feedback, 'yes, I'm listening'
- **Receptive body language:** Certain body postures and movements are culturally interpreted with specific meanings e.g. Crossing of arms and legs, nodding of the head vertically or horizontally, etc.
- **Questioning/Clarifying:** If you are unclear about the intent of the message, ask for more information after allowing sufficient time for explanations. Don't ask questions aiming to hurt, embarrass or show off.
- **Restating the message:** You are restating the message as part of the feedback can enhance the effectiveness of good communications.

### 1.4. Barriers to effective listening

These are factors that interfere with a message being transmitted from a sender to a receiver (distracters). They are called noise and are grouped into four categories:

#### a. Physical Noise (generated from outside the listener)

This is the distraction from the physical location.

- i. **Actual noise:** this is the noise other than the speaker's, e.g. listeners talking, outside noise, etc. and these make you lose concentration (Use your own discretion to eliminate this barrier)
- ii. **Context:** this is about the environment (setting & time) of communication. Problems arise when the context doesn't allow you to do what is needed for effective listening. Uncomfortable seat, faint sound from the speaker, etc. Can decrease your attention.
- iii. **Channel:** message is carried in different channels and if the listener cannot see the speaker or hear adequately, effective listening cannot take place.

One way to cope is to increase your interest in the subject that you ignore whatever is bothering you. Or move to a different seat, move closer to the speaker etc.

#### b. **Psychological (generated from within (mentally))**

This is anything that interferes with our mental attention.

- i. **Receiver:** this is when a listener is not prepared for the message, so they let internal thoughts distract them. Distraction of this kind could be physical discomforts, daydreaming about something, hunger or being worried about something. Self-talk can be used to force yourself back to attention. 'Stop! Pay attention now!'
- ii. **Impatience:** this is the tendency to evaluate / judge immediately about what the speaker is saying. As you become busy judging the speaker, the mind automatically becomes not attentive. Avoid looking down upon the speaker. All these block minds for effective listening

#### c. **Technical (generated from the message itself)**

This is when the problem is coming from the message itself.

- **Source:** a problem can come from the sender of the message. If he uses a term or construction that is unusual or unknown to the listener, a barrier is created. (Ask for clarity or nod for dissatisfaction)
- **Information overloaded:** this is when listeners put too much sensory input to the message; How many things do we attend to at one time? (the best thing you can do to improve your memory is to pay attention to the things you want to remember)
- **Inability to find main idea:** sometimes finding the central idea (important information) is hard to do, especially when you are listening. Every lecture

(lesson) has a plan, a structure which indicates the purpose of the talk; use the same *text structure* from written texts to find the main ideas of lectures.

**d. Social-Cultural (generated from the attitudes, beliefs and values in the society)**

This is a barrier caused by perceptual bias & selectivity. One becomes prejudiced (having preformed opinion) towards the speaker, through values, beliefs and attitudes (social principles). The speaker is viewed as someone who talks badly (considered dull) cannot be listened to.

- i. **Egocentrism:** Self perceptions and personal biases also leads to noise.
- ii. **Ethnocentrism:** Another aspect of social noise where just like egocentrism, we limit ourselves to the interests of our ethnic or cultural group
- iii. **Dogmatism (opinions we hold without questioning):** This is yet another barrier (personal bias). Listening requires that we understand and question our own opinions. Without knowing our own positions, we cannot compare and understand them with other speaker's opinions.



**Activity 3b**

1. Explain any two benefits of listening to each of the following:
  - a. a student
  - b. an employee
2. In groups of 5 people, describe one scenario where you can use empathetic listening.





## Lesson 2: Note-taking

The previous lesson set a good foundation for notetaking, one of the reasons we effectively listen. Listening for notetaking is an activity that will help you improve listening comprehension. Notes are always easier to take if you are familiar with the topic of the lecture; therefore, before the lecture, interact with the text to get the background knowledge through previewing or reading the entire text (given in advance). Leave spaces for amendments during your final study of material.

### 2.1. What is note-taking

Note-taking is the practice of recording information captured from another source. By taking notes, the writer records the essence of the information, freeing their mind from having to recall everything. To make notes, the writer develops ideas written during the note-taking stage. Note-taking expands on notes taken and notes are written in a detailed way that makes sense and ideas can be presented in short form or symbols.

### 2.2. Tips for successful note-taking during lectures

#### 1. Be prepared for the lecture

If the lecture is a continuation from a previous lecture, glance through your notes on the previous lecture to refresh your memory. This will give you a good background which can foster understanding in the coming lecture. You need to devise some questions about the coming lecture if you know the topic: What do I already know about the topic? What do I expect to learn? How will the topic relate to other topics already discussed?

#### 2. During the lecture itself

When attending a lecture, conduct yourself in a manner that particularly promotes grasping of concepts. The following are desirable to enhance comprehension: Sit in the front or centre of the classroom: if you sit in the back of the room or near a door or window, your concentration can be distracted by many things. Try not to write out the lecturer: Sometimes, the lecturer may say something that you strongly disagree with, and you may want to stop listening; do not do this. Try to concentrate on what the presenter is saying rather than reacting to it.

#### 3. The actual process of note-taking

- i. **Listen for cues that indicate important ideas:** these cues are also

known as semantic markers or signalling devices. They perform different functions and some of them are:

- *To show emphasis e.g.:* I would like to emphasise; Listen carefully to this; it is important to note that; it is worth noting that; I repeat; etc.
- *To show listing e.g.:* firstly; in the first place; to begin with; Secondly; in the second place; Thirdly, Lastly, etc.
- *To show illustration e.g.:* let me give you some examples; for instance, for example, let's take; to illustrate this point, etc.
- *To show contrast e.g.:* but; nevertheless; on the other hand; and yet.
- *To sum up e.g.:* What I have been saying is this; if I can just sum up; in a nutshell; to sum up; to wrap up, etc.
- *To rephrase e.g.:* In other words; let me put it this way; to put it in another way; that is to say ...
- *To show digression:* During a lecture, when digression occurs, it means that a presenter has side-tracked and is not saying anything noteworthy.

You are not supposed to note down digressions because they are just included in a lecture to add some spice thus making it interesting. Every time these phrases are uttered, you must know that an important point worth taking down is about to be raised.

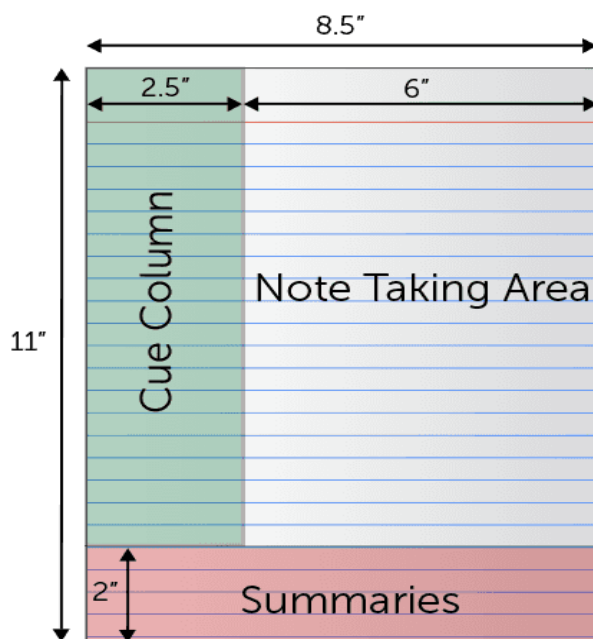
- ii. **Watch non-verbal clues during lectures:** here, the focus is shifted from use of language to transmit ideas, instead, other features like facial expressions and voice emphasis are considered. You therefore need to recognise voice emphasis in sentences. Particularly check for emphasised words or phrases; similarly, watch out for facial expressions that are used to denote a strong point. You must also closely watch gestures being made in a presentation.
- iii. **The use of abbreviations in Note-Taking:** when taking down notes, you need to develop some strategies to enable you cope with the speed at which the speaker is presenting the information. One of the most effective strategies is use of abbreviations. You are encouraged to use standard symbols and abbreviations.

### 2.3. Styles/Formats of note-taking



## 1. Cornell Method

The Cornell Method for note-taking was created at Cornell University in the 1950's, and has been useful for many students in making their notes more organized. When taking notes using this method, you divide your paper into two columns: the narrower left column (called the "cue" column) contains keywords, important terminology, or major concepts, and the wider right column (called the "outline" column) contains notes or descriptions associated with those terms. At the bottom of the page, you should also include a summary section, in which you restate the main ideas of the lesson in your own words. The Cornell method is ideal for all types of lectures or even meetings.



**Figure 3.1: Cornell method of note-taking**

## 2. Outline method

This method uses numbers, letters, or even Roman numerals to identify and classify information based on levels of importance. The most important pieces of information are categorized as headings, and then supporting or less significant information is listed beneath that particular heading in order of importance or relationship. This method can be used in a variety of situations but works best if the lecture or class follows a relatively clear structure.



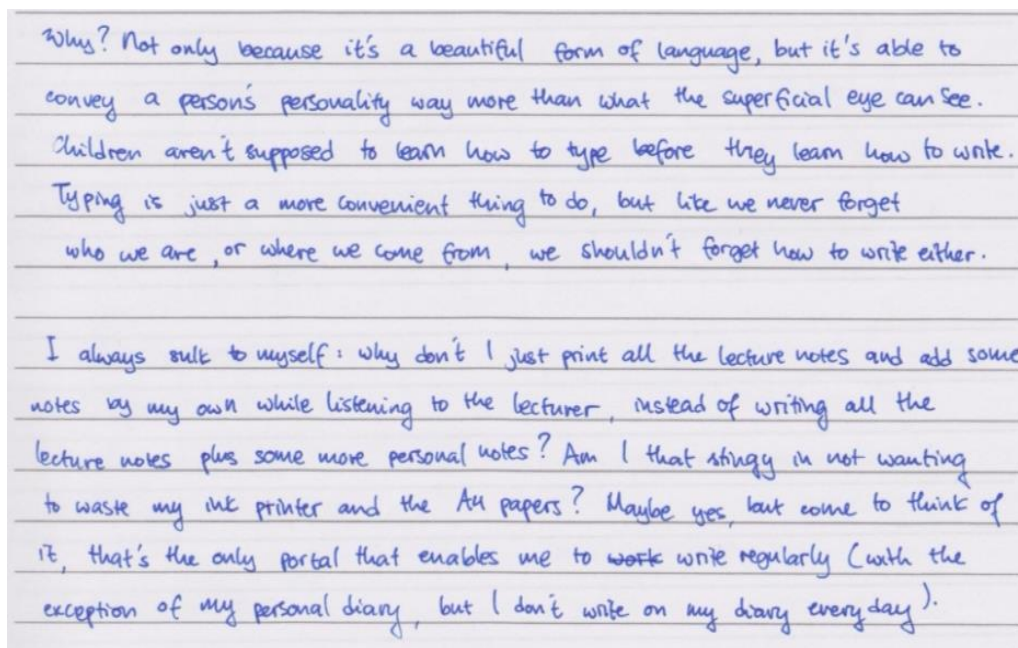
## Contents [hide]

- 1 Outline organization
- 2 Types of outlines
  - 2.1 Outline styles
    - 2.1.1 Sentence outline
    - 2.1.2 Topic outline
    - 2.1.3 A sample topic outline application: An outline of human knowledge
  - 2.2 Outlines with prefixes
    - 2.2.1 Bare outlines
    - 2.2.2 Alphanumeric outline
    - 2.2.3 Decimal outline
    - 2.2.4 Integrated Outline

**Figure 3.2: The Outline method**

### 3. Sentence method.

This method emphasizes writing down complete sentences during a lecture, so that you are retaining the specific terminology or wording used by your professor. If the information is very specific or specialized, writing down individual sentences can be helpful - although we recommend pairing this method with another, more visual, form of note-taking to provide balance. This method works best if your aim is to jot down thoughts as quickly as possible. It is ideal for taking quotation-like information that must not be changed.



**Figure 3.3: Sentence method**

#### 4. Mind-mapping method

Visually representing information by using bubbles, lines, boxes, visual markers etc. to represent relationships, sequence, and importance. This method works best if you have plenty of space and information can be grouped around each main idea.



Figure 3.4: Mind mapping

#### 5. Tabular method

All notes that are related to each other are grouped together in a table. A dedicated table is assigned for each section of notes which cuts down the time needed for reading and reviewing. This method works best if you have information that can be split into different sections that are still related in a sense.

The Charting Method  
(Title)

Monday March 12, 2012  
page 1 of 1

How?	Advantages	Disadvantages	When to use it?
Set up your paper in columns and table headings	Helps pull out the relevant information.	Can be a hard system to learn to use.	If you'll be tested on facts and relationships.
The headings could be categories covered in the lecture.	Reduces the amount of writing required.	You will need to know what content is being covered at the beginning of the lecture.	If content is heavy and presented quickly — such as a history course with dates, people, events, etc.
Insert information (words, phrases, main ideas, etc) into the appropriate column.	Provides easy review for memorizing facts and studying comparisons and relationships.		If you want to make an overview of the whole course on one big paper.

Figure 3.5: Tabular method

## 2.4. Improving your note-taking skills

Effective note taking is one of the keys to succeeding in school. Students should devote a considerable amount of time reviewing information discussed during classroom lectures. It is very difficult to remember specific details—even major concepts—from classroom lectures without good notes. These note taking strategies will help you to take better notes:

1. Make clear and accurate notes
2. Come to class prepared
3. Compare your notes
4. Minimize distractions
5. Organize your notes
6. Use abbreviations and symbols
7. Review your notes
8. Write down questions
9. Avoid Digital Notes
10. Overlook the Power Points
11. Note Taking Methods
12. Write clearly



### Activity 3c

- a. Using an illustration, explain the Cornell Method of note taking.
- b. Listen to any presentation or lecture of this course and use sentence method to make your notes. Share and discuss with your classmates.



## Unit summary

In this Unit, you have learnt about listening and notetaking as some of the skills you need to have in order to study effectively. Below is a summary of the key learning points of this Unit:

- Hearing and listening are different
- Listening is a process that goes through stages.
- Listening is of different types.
- There are different methods of notetaking

In the next unit you will learn about **Reading Skills**.



## Further reading

Langan, J. (2013). *Reading and study skills* (10th ed.) [Textbook]. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

McDonald, K. (2012, August 23). *Different reading techniques and when to use them*. HowtoLearn.com. Retrieved from

<https://www.howtolearn.com/2012/08/different-reading-techniques-and-when-to-use-them/>



## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 3a

**Any two scenarios where one can hear but not listen are:**

- When you are focusing on one thing and yet there are other people doing other things at the same place.
- When someone is speaking a language that you do not understand.

### Answer to Activity 3b

**1. Any two benefits of listening to each of the following:**

- a. A student:
  - It will be easy for the student to learn from lecturers and colleagues
  - The student answers questions correctly since they are well understood
- b. An employee:
  - It results in efficiency since instructions are followed and there is no room for error
  - A culture of listening brings about tolerance and unity which creates a conducive work environment.

**2. Students in group should identify one scenario where empathetic listening can be applied.**

### Answer to Activity 3c

**a. Using an illustration, explain the Cornell Method of note taking.**

This is a method of notetaking that divides the page into three sections. The key points are written on the left column while the column is for the notes and explanations. Summaries of contents on the page are written in the third section below the page. The main benefit is that the notes are easily organized and revision for students becomes very easy.

**b. Students should listen to any presentation or lecture of the same course and make their own notes using sentence method.**



## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 30 min.

### Instructions:

- There are **three** questions on his Test
- Answer **all** questions.

### Question One

Distinguish hearing from listening.

**(10 marks)**

### Question Two

Give any **four** reasons why listening is an important skill for a student. **(20 marks)**

### Question Three

Read the speech that former president of the United States, Barack Obama, gave on August 24th, during 2008 presidential election campaign in the United States. Summarize key issues in the speech using Cornell method of taking notes. **(20 marks)**

*Hello Everybody. This Labor Day weekend, we don't just celebrate the end of summer. We also honor the hardworking men and women who have made this country what it is. And, the American labor movement that has fought tirelessly to improve their wages, benefits, and working conditions. America was built by its laborers, but today our workers are struggling just to get by, in an economy that no longer works for them. That's why we can't afford four more years of the failed George Bush economic policies. Policies that Senator McCain has proudly embraced and promises to continue.*

*It's time we had a President who will stand up for working men and women, by building an economy that rewards not just wealth, but work, and the workers who created it. It's time you had a partner in the White House, who knows that the struggles facing working families can't be solved by spending billions of dollars on more tax breaks for big corporations and wealthy CEOs. And, that hardworking families need immediate relief.*

*That's why, as President, I'll end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas and give them to companies that create good-paying jobs, here at home. And, while Senator McCain is proposing \$4 billion in new tax breaks for oil companies that are making record profits, I'll put \$1000 tax cut into the pockets of 95% of workers and*

*their families.*

*It's time you had a President who honors organized labor, who's walked on picket lines, who doesn't choke on the word "union," who lets our unions do what they do best and organize our workers, and who will finally make the "Employee Free Choice Act" the law of the land. That is the choice in this election. We can choose to remain on the path that has abandoned workers and gotten our economy in so much trouble. Or we can re-claim the idea that in America, opportunity is open to anyone who is willing to work for it.*

*I've spent my entire career fighting for working men and women. And so has my running mate, Joe Biden – a man whose heart and values are rooted firmly in the middle class. With him by my side, I am confident that we can take this country in a new direction, and restore that fair shot at your dreams that is the core of what Joe Biden and I stand for, and what America stands for, as a nation.*



## UNIT 4: READING SKILLS



### Introduction

When you are in college, you are exposed to reading different materials for different reasons. Having strong reading abilities can enable you to interpret and find meaning in all that you read, and when you continuously improve these skills, you can develop your ability to communicate effectively through writing. With proper skills in reading, you can gain much from reading and studying sessions and improve your performance. This unit equips you with effective reading skills.



### Learning outcomes

By the end of your study of this unit and the relevant reading, you should be able to:

- a) mention purposes for reading
- b) explain different types of reading
- c) read different types of texts effectively
- d) make notes from a variety of texts



### Key terms

Ensure that you understand the key terms or phrases used in this unit as listed below:

- Scanning
- Skimming
- SQ3R
- Note Making





## Lesson 1: Reading process

Readers typically make use of background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with text and other strategies to help them understand written text. Therefore, reading is a skill which enables us to get a message, recognizing the written words (written symbols), understanding the meaning, teach pronunciation, grasping information from texts. All these components can be categorized into three processes of reading.

### a. Word recognition

This refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one's spoken language. It is the ability to see a word and recognize its pronunciation and meaning without conscious thought. Automatically, the reader's brain recognizes a large number of word and accurately associates meaning with those words.

### b. Comprehension

This is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. The act of constructing meaning from the overall text. It is the ability to identify key information through skimming, as well as synthesizing the information with what the reader already knows, making connections to the text, questioning, and predicting.

### c. Fluency

The ability to read a text quickly and accurately, as though it were spoken, reading a passage like the spoken language, and includes the natural rhythm, intonation, pacing, etc. that would naturally accompany the text.

## 1.1. Types of reading

### 1. Extensive reading

Extensive reading is reading that is for pleasure and relaxation, it generally involves the element of enjoyment. This practice is very unlikely to be taken up by the student while preparing for any sort of exam.

### 2. Intensive and deep reading

Typically, this type of reading is used in the study of English in order to intensively parse the proposed short, teaching text. With this type of reading, grammatical constructions, unfamiliar words and phrases are intensively examined. This type would be beneficial for all the language students who need help in understanding various vocabulary.



## 1.2. Stages of reading process

There are different aspects of active reading and they can be broken down into six stages:

### **Stage 1: Pre-reading**

This is the stage where students prepare themselves to read by briefly looking over or skimming a text prior to actively reading it. They may decide or be told why they are going to read a piece of text. They may use their background knowledge to make predictions of what the text is going to be about. The concept map called a **KWL** chart can be used, where students put down what they know (**K**), what they want to know (**W**), and after they have read what they learned (**L**) from their reading.

### **Stage 2: Reading**

This is where you get down to the actual reading part. The text can be delivered to students in a variety of ways. Students can engage in individual reading or they can read aloud.

### **Stage 3: Comprehension**

To understand what the writer communicates involves a series of perceptions taking place in rapid succession. The reader has to re-create the author's intended meaning. To comprehend a text, one has to use one's knowledge of *syntax* (the way words are arranged to form sentences or phrases) and *semantics* (meaning of words and phrases) to extract meaning from a series of perceptions of words.

### **Stage 3: Responding/Reacting**

Responding is where a student reacts to what they have read, most often through discussion. This is reaction to text physically, emotionally, and intellectually. At other times you may read an article and accept, reject or criticize it.

### **Stage 4: Exploration**

This is where students explore their new information. They may re-read part or all of the text. They may read more texts to expand their knowledge of the new subject. Students may learn new vocabulary words that they came up against in the text. Exploration is a very broad stage that can take many paths.

### **Stage 5: Applying**

During the applying stage students take the new knowledge they have learned and



do more with it. Often, they will have projects that measure how much they have learned. They may read books related to the original text or participate.

### 1.3. Purposes of reading

#### a. Reading for communication

Some messages come in written form and reading becomes the only way to know what others think and for us to give a response.

#### b. Reading to search for simple information

In reading to search (also called scanning) we typically scan the text for a specific piece of information or a specific word.

#### c. Reading to skim quickly

This is a common part of many reading task and a useful skill. It involves, in essence, a combination of strategies for guessing where important information might be in the text, and then using basic reading comprehension skills on those segments of the text until a general idea is formed.

#### d. Reading to learn from texts

Reading to learn typically occurs in academic and professional contexts in which a person needs to learn a considerable amount of information from a text.

#### e. Reading to integrate information, write and critique texts.

Reading to integrate information requires additional decisions about the relative importance of complementary, mutually supporting or conflicting information and the likely restructuring of a rhetorical frame to accommodate information from multiple sources. These skills inevitably require critical evaluation of the information being read so that the reader can decide what information to integrate and how to integrate it for the reader's goal.

### 1.4. Sources of information

Being able to research and use materials which back up your study or offer different interpretations of your study area is an essential aspect of studying and learning. Primarily, you need to be aware of where to look for information, how to access it and how to use it. You must also be able to scrutinize your sources to check that they are relevant and of a suitable nature to be included within your work. The following list cannot hope to cover all sources of information, rather, it contains the main sources you are likely to find useful.

### **a. Library sources**

The word library comes from the Latin word “Librarium” which in turn from “Liber” meaning a book. Library is a place in which literary, musical, artistic, or reference materials (books, manuscripts, recordings, or films) are kept for use - not for sale.

### **b. Internet sources**

It is a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols. For example; Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. You can search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic etc. And Electronic journal (e-journal) is published in electronic format, usually on the Internet.

### **c. Sources from bibliographies**

Authors will have consulted other scholars and by checking their bibliography you will discover related publications which may well enhance your own research. Some authors will also provide a list of recommended reading and since they have already researched the subject area it may be worth taking note of their findings.

### **d. Sources from colleagues**

It is always worth discussing your study with friends, family and colleagues - you will often find that they have some interesting points of view and sometimes they may be able to help with sourcing of information. They may, for example, have studied the area at some time or know someone who has and be able to find or lend you relevant books or other resources.



#### **Activity 4a**

a. Discuss in your own words why reading is important?





## Lesson 2: Reading techniques/strategies

Welcome to this short lesson that provides you with different strategies of reading:

### 2.1. Predictions

Prediction means saying in advance that something will happen. The best way to begin reading a chapter is to make predictions about the content, about what each section contains - in this way, you can actively interact with the text.

#### Ways of making predictions

- Examining chapter objectives provided by the author(s) helps you get learning goals and determine if you have met them. After reading the chapter you should be able to meet the requirements specified in the objectives.
- Previewing the chapter summary or review questions helps you identify important information to be learned from reading the chapter.
- You can predict using titles (chapters of each section or subtitles).
- Go through table of contents at the beginning of the book.
- You can predict by changing boldface headings into questions. Such questions help you to predict what the chapter contains and their main ideas. And once you find main ideas you use other questioning words to locate details.

### 2.2. Skimming

Skimming is a reading technique used to get the main gist of a material. It is all about going through a chunk of text quickly and less about comprehension. Your familiarity with the topic and the difficulty of the material determine how quickly you can skim. Your focus should be on nouns and verbs or key words and phrases and transfer these to working memory. Ignore adjectives, adverbs, connectives (prepositions and conjunctions). The strategy of skimming also requires that you review typographical aids (e.g. boldface headings, italics) and graphics (e.g. charts, maps, graphs).

#### Steps in skimming

- i. **Read the title:** think about what information the chapter could contain. Consider what you already know about the topic. Some texts list objectives at the beginning of the chapter.



- ii. **Skim the introduction or first paragraph:** the initial sentence or paragraph usually states the main idea of each section or chapter.
- iii. **Read the boldfaced heading:** these identify the topic of each section.
- iv. **Read the first paragraph or sentence under each heading:** this gives you an overview of each section.
- v. **Look at accompanying graphs, charts, and pictures:** visuals emphasize main points and summarise details.
- vi. **Read the last paragraph or summary of the chapter:** this often restates the main ideas or contains conclusions.

### 2.3. Scanning

Scanning is similar to skimming in approach. It also involves going through a chunk of text quickly without any care for comprehension. The difference between skimming and scanning is on purpose. While skimming is done to get the main idea of the whole material, scanning is done to find specific information in the material such as date, figure or a name. It is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. In most cases, you know what you are looking for, so you are concentrating on finding a particular answer. It involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words or phrases.

### 2.4. SQ3R

SQ3R is one of the strategies used during intensive reading. It is a comprehension strategy that helps students think about the text they are reading while they are reading. Often categorized as a study strategy, SQ3R helps students "get it" the first time they read a text by teaching students how to read and think like an effective reader. This strategy includes the following five steps (Robinson, 1946):

- i. **Survey:** surveying involves getting a quick idea of the whole material. Students review the text to gain initial meaning from the headings, bolded text, and charts. Different ways to survey a reading material include: reading the summary and the introduction; looking at the chapters/ headings and subheadings; looking at the pictures or charts; looking up the study questions
- ii. **Question:** Students begin to generate questions about their reading from previewing it. This step is about preparing questions that you will find answers to in the material as you read. You can easily create questions from headings and subheadings. For example, if a heading in a chapter is "Drinking alcohol before a workout," you can ask yourself a question like "does drinking alcohol

before a workout have any adverse effect?”. Creating questions automatically gives you a purpose as you read and make you pay more attention to what you read.

- iii. **Read:** this step is more productive than reading the material straight-up. This is because you will already have an idea of the material and questions in mind that you seek answers to. As students read, they need to look for answers to the questions they formulated during their preview of the text. These questions, based on the structure of the text, help focus students' reading. To help you in this step, make notes as you read. Also, after reading a section, highlight the most important points.
- iv. **Recite:** This is where you answer the questions that you had created before starting to read. Reciting aids comprehension as you digest what you had read, make sense of it, and get answers to your questions. So, as students move through the text they should recite or rehearse the answers to their questions and make notes about their answer for later studying.
- v. **Review:** This is simply making mental notes of what you had read to see how much of it you remember. You should do the review immediately after reading and sometime after in order to answer lingering questions and recite the questions you previously answered. For maximum retention, do not wait for more than 24 hours after reading to do the review.

### Benefits

- It helps students activate their thinking and review their understanding throughout their reading.
- It also dissuades students from waiting and then cramming for tests since the five steps requires them to review information and create notes during their initial reading.
- It assists students in developing notes and study guides from their initial reading.

## 2.5. Inferencing

Inferencing is the act or process of forming an opinion based on what you already know. It is similar to deduction - the process of using information you have in order to understand a particular situation or to find the answer to a problem. When information is not directly stated, you make mental associations between external



and internal sources. Readers who make inferences use the clues in the text along with their own experiences to help them figure out what is not directly said.

## 2.6. Concentrative

Concentration is “exclusive attention to one object” and *to concentrate* is “to bring all efforts, faculties, etc., to bear on one thing or activity”. It involves reading the main area of interest word by word to catch the gist.

- i. **Interest and Activity:** do you have to “try to concentrate” when you watch the climax of an exciting movie, or when you're in the middle of a fascinating conversation? No; if you are truly interested in an activity, good concentration is natural and effortless.
- ii. **Ignoring Distractions:** the human mind responds to sensory input (sight, sound...) and constantly generates its own ideas. When these mental activities interfere with what you are trying to think about, it causes external distraction (due to sensory input) or internal distraction (due to your thinking), respectively.



### Activity 4b

Using an example, explain the difference between scanning and skimming.





## Lesson 3: Reading and note making

When engaged in some form of study or research, either informally or formally, you will probably need read and take in a lot of information. This lesson describes how you will take effective notes while reading. Taking notes is a way to be engaged with the printed word and can help you to retain more of the information, especially if you summarise and paraphrase it. Note making methods are just like the ones you learned in Unit 2 (Note Taking).

### 3.1. Note making in reading skills

Note making does not only happen when you are listening to or attending lectures but are also when reading. Your notes should contain source information (title, author, date etc.); headings to help you identify the key topics; key points, examples, names, new ideas; triggers to make your notes more memorable – such as mnemonics, colour or drawings.

#### How do you make your notes

- Skim through the material to get a good overview.
- Read material carefully.
- Pay attention to words and phrases, which signal main points and supporting details e.g., First, finally, for example, the causes of ...etc.
- Quote only key words and phrases from study text, use your own words wherever possible.
- Use abbreviations and symbols in your notes to save time.
- Use mostly nouns and verbs in your notes, omit articles i.e. **a**, **an**, and **the**.
- Revise your notes at regular intervals, e.g. Weekly, fortnightly, monthly etc. so that you commit them to memory.

### 3.2. Summary writing

Summarizing can be linked to note making as it is one of the methods of note making. A summary is a shorter description of a longer work, covering all the highlights but not many of the details, it is used for an overview so that people can get an idea of what the longer work entails without reading or watching it first. Summaries are usually short, from one to two sentences to paragraph, but if you are summarizing an enormous work, like all seven Harry Potter books, for instance, they can stretch out over pages.

## Steps in Summary writing

### Step 1: Read and understand the text

You should read the article more than once to make sure you have thoroughly understood it. It is often effective to read in three stages:

- i. Scan the article quickly to get a sense of its topic and overall shape.
- ii. Read the article carefully, highlighting important points and taking notes as you read.
- iii. Skim the article again to confirm you have understood the key points and reread any particularly important or difficult passages.

### Step 2: Break the text down into sections

To make the text more manageable and understand its sub-points, break it down into smaller sections. If the text is a scientific paper that follows a standard empirical structure, it is probably already organized into clearly marked sections, usually including an introduction, methods, results, and discussion. Other types of articles may not be explicitly divided into sections. But most articles and essays will be structured around a series of sub-points or themes.

**Tip:** To see at a glance what each part of the text focuses on, try writing a word or phrase in the margin next to each paragraph that describes the paragraph's content. If several paragraphs cover similar topics, you may group them together.

### Step 3: Identify the key points in each section

Go through each section and pick out its most important points. What does your reader need to know to understand the overall argument or conclusion of the article? Keep in mind that a summary does not involve paraphrasing every single paragraph of the article. Your goal is to extract the essential points, leaving out anything that can be considered background information or supplementary detail.

### Step 4: Write the summary

Now that you know the key points that the article aims to communicate, you need to put them in your own words. To avoid plagiarism and show you have understood the article, it is essential to properly paraphrase the author's ideas. Do not copy and paste parts of the article, not even just a sentence or two. The best way to do this is to put the article aside and write out your own understanding of the author's key points.

### Step 5: Revise, proofread and edit

Have you indented all paragraphs? Have you captured the main points of the article? Have you included the most important details? Is there sentence variety? Have you avoided writing short, choppy sentences? Are there transitional words and phrases to connect ideas? Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation. Is the verb tense consistent? Are all names spelled correctly and capitalized? etc. Cross out errors neatly with a single line and write the correction above.

### **Step 6: Read your summary one last time before you turn it in**

Finally, read through the article once more to ensure that you have accurately represented the author's work, you have not missed any essential information, the phrasing is not too like any sentences in the original. If you are summarizing many articles as part of your own work, it may be a good idea to use a plagiarism checker to double-check that your text is completely original and properly cited.

### **3.3. Critical reading**

Critical reading means that a reader applies certain processes, models, questions, and theories that result in enhanced clarity and comprehension. There is more involved, both in effort and understanding, in a critical reading than in a mere "skimming" of the text. It does not, necessarily, mean being critical of what you read, it means engaging in what you read by asking yourself questions such as, "what is the author trying to say?" or "what is the main argument being presented?" Critical reading involves presenting a reasoned argument that evaluates and analyses what you have read. Being critical, therefore - in an academic sense - means advancing your understanding, not dismissing, and therefore closing off learning. In academic circles, whilst you are a student, you will be expected to understand different viewpoints and make your own judgements based on what you have read. As a critical reader you should reflect on:

- **What the text says:** after critically reading a piece you should be able to take notes, paraphrasing - in your own words - the key points.
- **What the text describes:** you should be confident that you have understood the text sufficiently to be able to use your own examples and compare and contrast with other writing on the subject in hand.
- **Interpretation of the text:** this means that you should be able to fully analyse the text and state a meaning for the text as a whole.

#### **Components of critical reading**

Critical reading is intended to understand, respond, evaluate and synthesize.

### **a. Reading to understand**

Identify the author's purpose such as to inform or argue. Identify the author's intended audience, text to be written with readers in mind Understand the structure of the text – locate main points. Identify as quickly as possible what you do not understand. Reading to understand entails reading in three stages:

### **b. Reading to respond**

This is the second component of critical reading. The overall goal of reading to respond is to identify and explore your reactions to a text. The goals are as follows:

- Reflect on your experience and association with topic of text. Know what you feel about a text.
- Let the text challenge you
- Use the text to spark new, imaginative thinking.

Applying techniques for reading to respond: Use questions when you approach the text. The questions are:

- Which one or two sentences did I respond to most strongly in the text?
- What is the origin of my views on this topic?
- What new interests, questions or observations does this text spark in me?

### **c. Reading to evaluate**

The focus is on personal associations with the text. Setting goals for reading to evaluate. There are four goals:

- Distinguish between an author's use of facts and use of opinions
- Distinguish between an author's assumptions and your own.
- Judge the effectiveness of an explanation
- Judge the effectiveness of an argument

Applying techniques for reading to evaluate:

- Distinguish your assumptions from those of an author
- Distinguish facts from opinions
- Distinguish your definitions of terms from those of an author
- Question sources that explain and sources that argue

### **d. Reading to synthesize**

Once you have understood, responded to and evaluated a single source, you are in a position to link that source with others. Synthesis requires that you read and



understand all your source materials and that you respond to and evaluate each one. Goals for reading to synthesize are as follow:

- Read to understand, respond to, and evaluate multiple sources on a subject, problem or issue
- Understand your own views on the subject, problem or issue- be able to state these views in a sentence or two.
- Forge relationships among source materials, according to your purpose. In a synthesis, your views should predominate.
- Generally, try to create a conversation among sources- be sure that yours is the major voice in the conversation.

Applying techniques for reading to synthesize, especially when writing:

- Subdivide the topic into parts, and give each part a brief title
- Write cross-references for each part
- Summarize each author's information or ideas about each part
- Forge relationships among reading selections.

### 3.4. The Difference between reading and critical Reading

The table below shows the difference between the two.

**Table 4.1: Difference between reading and critical reading**

	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Critical Reading</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To get a basic grasp of the text	To form judgments about HOW a text works.
<b>Activity</b>	Absorbing/Understanding	Analyzing/Interpreting/Evaluating
<b>Focus</b>	What a text SAYS	What a text DOES and MEANS
<b>Questions</b>	What is the text saying? What information can I get out of it?	How does the text work? How is it argued? What are the choices made? The patterns that result? What kinds of reasoning and evidence are used? What are the underlying assumptions? What does the text mean?
<b>Directions</b>	WITH the text (talking for granted it is right)	AGAINST the text (questioning its assumptions and argument, interpreting meaning in context)



<b>Response</b>	Restatement, Summary	Description, Interpretation, Evaluation
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### Activity 4c

Explain why making notes when reading is important to a



## Unit summary

In this Unit you have learnt about reading skills and how you can gain much from your reading and studying sessions and improve your performance. The Unit has also equipped you with different components of critical reading.

In the next unit you will learn about **Oral Presentation Skills**.



## Further reading

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## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 4a

**1. Discuss in your own words why reading is important?**

Students are expected to explain their own reasons why reading is important.

**2. Explain the following three phases that are involved in reading**

- i. Pre-reading:** The process of briefly looking over or skimming a text prior to actively reading it. The stage where students prepare themselves to read.
- ii. During reading:** during this part of the process, readers engage a text as they closely read by actively thinking about what they are reading.
- iii. After-reading:** This is when readers reflect on what they have read, make connections between it and other ideas, and how they feel about what they have read.

### Answer to Activity 4b

**Using an example, explain the difference between scanning and skimming.**

Skimming is a reading technique used to get the main gist of a material while scanning is done to find specific information in the material such as date, figure or a name.

### Answer to Activity 4c

**Explain why making notes when reading is important to a student.**

- Writing notes helps you remember what you heard
- Taking notes helps you to concentrate and listen effectively
- It increases your understanding
- Notes create a resource for exam preparation
- Notes taken in class often contain information that cannot be found elsewhere.



**Time:** 2 hours 30 min.

**Instructions:**

- There are **three** questions in his Test
- Answer **all** questions

**Question One**

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

*The education level of the sample population is low with a quarter of the sample population having had no formal education whereas close to 57 % had some primary education. Furthermore, 28.3 % females had no education compared to*



only 23.1 % of the males. Likewise, more males had higher education (secondary and above) than females. A higher percentage of females have less monthly income as compared to their male counterparts indicating gender gap is prevalent in Malawi.

It has been noted that Malawi faces a pressing housing problem in its cities and towns, and in its rural communities. It has been stressed that unless decisive measures are taken the housing problem could assume alarming proportions in the years to come. The real cause of the housing problem is the growing poverty in the country, itself largely the result of an unfavourable macroeconomic environment and other factors such as low agricultural production, limited employment opportunities and low levels of education. The growth of unplanned settlements has been spurred primarily by the inability of housing authorities, and the wider housing market, to provide serviced plots in numbers large enough to cope with the fast-rising urban population.

The majority of the households in rural areas (almost 97 %) use paraffin or candle for lighting and virtually no electricity. In the urban areas, on the other hand, almost 36 percent of households use electricity for lighting. Still the majority in the sample in the urban areas (64 %) use paraffin candles. This result indicates the economic inaccessibility to electricity of the majority of households in the sample. This is as a result of both poverty which makes electricity beyond the reach of many people, as well as lack of alternative fuel sources. Due to deforestation, siltation is severe in the rivers which in turn adversely affect electricity generation.

It was observed that water supplies were not adequate in all the sampled areas. The main problems include: lack of potable water, threatened water sources and inadequate water delivery systems. It was also observed due to unplanned housing development; sanitation is adversely affected.

A simple indicator of a number of meals taken per day was used to determine the level of security. The major reason for going without food in rural areas is inadequate food reserves and for urban areas it is lack of money. In the rural areas, the major alternative when a household goes without adequate meals is exchanging ganyu (piece-work) labour for cash or in kind on other people's farms while in urban areas the households seeks help from friend and relatives. Good proportions (22.4 %) in urban areas are helpless in the sense that they have no alternative.

*The survey indicates that 58.7 % of the households have farm sizes of more than 1.5 hectares and based on the Malawi government's definition of food security, about 41.3 % can be classified as vulnerable. However, regression results indicate that the size of farm land is not a significant determinant of the number of meals taken by the households per day and hence of food security.*

*In terms of income, rural households are relatively poor compared to urban households. These are disparities in the different income brackets which reveal the uneven income distribution between urban and rural areas that may lead to rural decay and encourage urbanization.*

*Most respondents reported that income had fallen due to loss in purchasing power because of inflation, drought and poor business profits. A positive change in the levels of income was attributed to increase in salaries (mainly in urban areas) and higher producer prices (mainly rural areas) and increase in profits from businesses.*

*Free primary school education has certainly reduced the cost of education especially for rural households. Urban households, however, appear not to have significantly benefited because of other expenses such as school uniforms, educational materials, transport and general rise in the cost of living. Urban households which have been compelled to send their children to private schools due to declining quality of education in public schools have actually experienced a rise in educational expenditure.*

*The inadequacy of drugs and other materials was cited to be the major reason why the quantity of health services is seen to have deteriorated over the past five years. This problem affects rural household's more than urban households because the former finds it difficult to pay for health services or to buy drugs. Some of the problems that have been identified as contributing to the provision of health services include the provision of free health services to everyone and a skewed deployment of health.*

*The majority of the rural population derive their livelihood from agriculture while the majority of the urban population are either in paid employment or self-employed. It is increasingly difficult to get a job in the unskilled job category whether paid or self-employed. The predominant type of survival strategy is assistance obtained from friends and relatives in both the rural and urban areas. This supplemented by*

*friends and relatives in both the rural and urban areas. The survival mechanisms are not influenced by either sex or areas, or occupation or education.*

(Extracted from Allast Mwanza's edition, *Social Policy in an Agricultural Economy*)

- a. Give a suitable title to the passage. **(2 Marks)**
- b. Summarise the passage to show that you have understood it. **(18 Marks)**
- c. Write a paragraph indicating the skills that you have used in summarising the passage. **(5 Marks)**

### **Question Two**

Change the subject from 'a carpenter' to 'carpenters' in the passage below. **(10 marks)**

A carpenter uses many different tools in his work. When he is faced with a job that is particularly difficult, he has to use his patience as well as his skill. Without patience, a hammer, a saw, or a screwdriver will do a carpenter no good. He has to be able to understand the problem, and find the best way to solve it. Sometimes, the quickest solution is not the best one. His customer, or client, has to be pleased with his work, or he loses his chance to be hired for another job. There is a great pressure on the carpenter to succeed. By no means in his job an easy one.

### **Question Three**

Carefully read and restructure the following paragraph, addressing its errors, which include misspellings, poor punctuation, poor sentence construction, poor subject-verb agreement and other aspects of grammar, as well as poor paragraphing in terms of the positioning of the topic sentence and support sentences. **(15 marks)**

#### **Arousing interest to travel**

Even more influential is the personal descriptions of trips taken by family members, friends, neighbours, and Coworkers. There is most trust in personal contacts than there is in advertising or publicity. Little is required to arouse the interest of potential cliants to take a trip. Many things in our society motivates people to explore and experience a tourist destination, movies, television, books, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet does the tourism industry a great favour in arousing the interest of the travelling public at no expense to the tourism industry. For most people, travelling to a tourist destination has an intrinsic curiosity. Word-of-mouth publicity are the single most effective source of new customers for the tourism industry.

(Passage extracted from H. Kenner Kay's book, *Selling Tourism*)

## UNIT 5: ORAL PRESENTATIONS



### Introduction

Whatever your profession is, you may be asked on various occasions to participate in a seminar, conference, panel discussion and/or meeting and to deliver an address to the audience present there. If you are an effective speaker, you can take this opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, enhance your prestige, influence decisions, and occupy more important positions in your organizations. So, the acquisition of oral presentation skills is essential for success in any profession. This unit therefore equips you with oral presentation skills for different occasions.



### Learning outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- a) describe oral presentations
- b) explain ways of preparing for oral presentations
- c) explain four main types of oral presentations
- d) effectively communicate relevant information in an interesting and engaging manner.
- e) apply oral presentation skills in discussions and debates



### Key terms

Ensure that you understand the key terms or phrases used in this unit as listed below.

- Informative
- Persuasive
- Extemporaneous
- Manuscript
- Impromptu







## Lesson 1: Defining oral presentations

Let us start with explaining what oral communication is all about. Oral presentations, also known as oral communication or public speaking or simply presentations, is the process of verbally transmitting information and ideas from one individual or group to an audience in form of a speech on a particular topic. The aim of this is to educate, inform, entertain or present an argument. Oral presentations are seen within workplaces, classrooms and even at social events such as weddings. This lesson teaches you important steps that are involved in an oral presentation, different types of oral presentations including the styles or methods used in oral presentations.

### 1.1. Steps involved in oral presentation

Oral presentations typically involve three important steps: planning, practicing, and presenting.

#### a. Planning/ Preparation

Scholars estimate that approximately 50% of all mistakes in an oral presentation occur in the planning stage (or rather, lack of a planning stage). Oral presentations require a good deal of planning. Pick the method of preparing for the talk that best suits your comfort level with public speaking and with your topic. Below are guidelines to oral presentation of arguments.

- i. **Know the purpose:** much that the most common purpose of an oral presentation is to inform an audience, make sure that you clearly understand the purpose of the report you are presenting and be clear about your purpose in the communication.
- ii. **Selecting and prioritizing:** what information do you need to include in your report? That will determine the type of report you are writing. Before writing a report, select the relevant data or information that answer the objectives of your report. The priority of the information should come first, and second priority should come second, and so forth.
- iii. **Analyze the environment:** to become comfortable and confident, it is helpful to visit and become familiar with the room in which you will be presenting. Check out the size of the room, chair placement, temperature, and any distractions (e.g., fans). Check out the equipment available.
- iv. **Audience consideration:** focus your presentation on the audience. Your

presentation is not about how much you can say, but about how much your audience can understand. Tailor your message to the audience. Who are they? What are their interests, knowledge levels, and attitudes toward your topic? The more you know about your audience the better. It will allow you to prepare a more appropriate and focused oral report.

- v. **Determining the structure:** learn the basic outline for any oral presentation. Most consist of four parts: **introduction** – create an effective opening that will interest your audience: pose a question, give an amazing fact, or tell a short, interesting story. Reveal your topic to the audience and explain why it is important for them to learn about; **main body** – this includes an elaboration of the background of your topic, such as a theory or hypotheses for an experimental approach or procedure; **conclusion/closing** – this includes a summary statement of your conclusions or recommendations, or other material suited to your report type such as time.

### b. Practicing

Practicing your presentation is essential. It is at this stage of the process that you figure out word and phrase emphasis and the timing of your sections and overall presentation.

- Record your presentation and review it to know how you sound and appear to your audience.
- Consider using different colored highlighters to remind yourself when to pause, when to emphasize a particular point, etc.
- Practice in front of peers and elicit feedback. Ask your peers to comment on your delivery and content.
- Remember that the more you practice, the more comfortable you will become with the material.

### c. Presenting

It is your job to make your audience feel comfortable and engaged with both you and the material of the presentation. Consider the following:

- i. **Language used:** when preparing what to say in a presentation, we usually emphasize three principles in the use of language: Principle of simplicity, Principle of explicitness and Principle of repetition (and summary).
- ii. **Visual aids:** visual aids explain your points, act as supporting evidence,



and add visual interest. Highlight what you want the audience to focus on, and then make sure you fully explain the information you are highlighting. Make your visuals readable and visually pleasing. Try not to include too much text or too many images in your visual aid. Your spoken words and your visual aid should work together so the audience's attention is never divided between the two.

- iii. **Questions and answers:** In the question-and-answer period, interact with the audience by responding to their queries. Use the question-and-answer period as a means of collaborating with your audience: learn what you failed to communicate effectively; incorporate suggestions from the audience into the next stage of your work, where appropriate. Gauge the effectiveness of your presentation from the kinds of questions you are asked. If the questions seem trivial or repetitious, then you probably did not communicate well to that audience.

## 1.2. Types of oral presentations

There are different kinds of oral presentations and some of them are as follow.

### 1. Informative presentations

This type gives detailed information about a product, concept, or idea to a specific kind of audience. They are often analytical or require a rational analysis of the data presented. Keep an informative presentation brief and to the point. Stick to the facts and avoid complicated information. Choose proper organizational structure for an informative presentation such as time – when things should happen, place – where things should happen, cause and effect – how things should happen and logical order – simply listing the items in their order of importance. You can use this kind of presentation in different situations such reporting, briefing, research, etc.

#### Tips for giving informative presentations

- As there would be a lot of technical information and statistics, focus on the main points or agenda first and if you have more time, you can add them at the end.
- Keep your presentation simple and clear. Avoid complex sentence structures and graphics.
- Tell the outline of your presentation briefly in the introduction for a better flow.
- Make sure that your presentation does not stretch for too long. 10-15 minutes is what your audience can concentrate on.

- Restate your key phrase at the end and briefly summarize all the important points of your presentation.

## **2. Persuasive presentations**

Persuasion is the art of motivating or convincing someone to act or make a change in their actions or thoughts. A convincing persuasive presentation offers a solution to a controversy, dispute, or problem. To succeed with a persuasive presentation, you must present sufficient logic, evidence, and emotion to sway the audience to your viewpoint. You can use persuasive presentations in circumstances such as policy making, value judgement, etc.

### **Tips for giving a persuasive presentation**

- Start your presentation with a relevant quote or statistics about your topic to establish credibility.
- Tell personal anecdotes and examples wherever necessary to develop an emotional connection with your audience.
- Deliver your presentation with passion and genuine interest to motivate your audience to think.
- Answer the question “why” for better understanding and clarity in your presentation.
- State your viewpoint clearly and clarify doubts if your audience seems to have any.

## **3. Demonstrative presentations**

This involves demonstrating a process or the functioning of a product in a step-by-step fashion. Usually, the audience is an active part of such presentations and these can work in any context where you want the audience to learn a new skill. When giving instructions for example, take it slow! This involves giving guidelines or steps of a process or work.

### **Tips to give a demonstrative presentation**

- Introduce your product and its function to your audience before telling them how to go about with the steps.
- Explain the steps with diagrams or show them in real-time along with the audience
- Give equal time to every person in the audience for clearing doubts, if any
- Keep your introduction short. Not more than 5 minutes



- Discuss options or variations that the audience can try at the end of the presentation.

#### 4. Inspirational presentations

As the name suggests, this type of presentation involves inspiring others! The main aim of an inspirational presentation is to motivate or move your audience and is also known as a motivational presentation. Using techniques like storytelling, narrating personal anecdotes, or even humor work wonders as your audience develops an emotional connection to the message.

##### Tips for giving an inspirational presentation

- Start with a question that will leave the audience thinking. Pause for some time and then begin with your presentation.
- Develop a sense of connection by narrating personal incidents and experiences to grow empathy.
- Have some main points that you want to emphasize on
- Make use of humor! It instantly builds a connection with the listener.
- Non-verbal elements like paralanguage, body language, speech modulations, tone, etc., makes a huge difference.

#### 3. Business presentations

In the corporate world, presentations are the go-to solution to do anything: planning or strategizing, articulating company goals, screening candidates, status reports, and many more.

##### Types of business presentations

- i. **Sales presentation:** Make sure to practice before giving a sales presentation! Also known as sales pitches, sales presentations involve providing information about a product or a service to sell it. It has a pre-defined strategy of initiating and closing the sales deal. This can be done in person or nowadays, on the phone, or via e-communication.
- ii. **Training sessions:** Make training sessions interesting by interacting with the audience! Often employees have on-the-job training sessions that are aimed to increase the knowledge and skills of the employees. This kind can also involve the audience to participate, like in demonstrative presentations.
- iii. **Meetings:** Take everyone's opinion before concluding a point! Meetings can be called for different reasons and can be of different forms as well.



Conferences (both video and in-person), board meetings, informal team meetings, daily reporting, etc., are all various contexts of meeting in a business setting.

- iv. **E- presentations:** E- presentations existed before the COVID pandemic as well but were used seldom. But, with the ongoing pandemic, e-presentations or remote presentations have replaced all other types of presentations and will be with us for a while longer. However, on the brighter side, it is an eco-friendly alternative to normal face-to-face kind of a set-up, and it also saves transportation and other costs!
- v. **Seminars:** Give ample time of breaks in a seminar to make it less tiring! Seminars are widely used in the health sector, usually involving a panel of speakers on a topic. The audience is anywhere between 10 to 100. It ends with a question and answers session, and the audience gets to take handouts with them.
- vi. **One-on-one or 1:1:** Pay attention to your body language, especially in an interview! Interviews are usually one-on-one and involve presenting your achievements and capabilities to your prospective employer. Apart from interviews, 1:1 meetings are also used in sales and marketing to crack a business deal.



#### Activity 5a

In groups of 5, prepare an inspirational presentation.





## Lesson 2: Methods or Styles of oral presentations

In this lesson, we will dwell much on methods that you can use in any oral presentation. When there is need to make an oral presentation, the presenter may choose one of the following styles or types of oral presentations:

### 1. Extemporaneous speaking

Extemporaneous speaking is the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes. By using notes rather than a full manuscript, the extemporaneous speaker can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the speech as it progresses. The opportunity to assess is also an opportunity to restate more clearly any idea or concept that the audience seems to have trouble grasping.

For instance, suppose you are speaking about workplace safety and you use the term “sleep deprivation.” If you notice your audience’s eyes glazing over, this might not be a result of their own sleep deprivation, but rather an indication of their uncertainty about what you mean. If this happens, you can add a short explanation; for example, “sleep deprivation is sleep loss serious enough to threaten one’s cognition, hand-to-eye coordination, judgment, and emotional health.” You might also (or instead) provide a concrete example to illustrate the idea. Then you can resume your message, having clarified an important concept.

### 2. Speaking from a manuscript

Manuscript speaking is the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains his or her attention on the printed page except when using visual aids.

**NB:** It is worth noting that professional speakers, actors, news reporters, and politicians often read from an autocue device, such as a TelePrompter, especially when appearing on television, where eye contact with the camera is crucial. With practice, a speaker can achieve a conversational tone and give the impression of speaking extemporaneously while using an autocue device. However, success in this medium depends on two factors: (1) the speaker is already an accomplished public speaker who has learned to use a conversational tone while delivering a prepared script, and (2) the speech is written in a style that sounds conversational.

### 3. Speaking from memory

Memorized speaking is the rote recitation of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory. Actors, of course, recite from memory whenever they perform from a script in a stage play, television program, or movie scene. When it comes to speeches, memorization can be useful when the message needs to be exact, and the speaker does not want to be confined by notes.

### 4. Impromptu speaking

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. Impromptu speeches often occur when someone is asked to “say a few words” or give a toast on a special occasion. You have probably done impromptu speaking many times in informal, conversational settings. Self-introductions in group settings are examples of impromptu speaking: “Hi, my name is Steve, and I’m a volunteer with the Homes for the Brave program.” Another example of impromptu speaking occurs when you answer a question such as, “What did you think of the documentary?”

#### Step-by-step guide to effective impromptu speaking

Impromptu speeches are generally most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

- Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan the main point you want to make.
- Thank the person for inviting you to speak.
- Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
- Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
- Stop talking.

### 2.1. Important guidelines for oral presentations

To make a presentation effective, you may consider the following:

#### b. Preparation

Preparation is the key to giving an effective presentation and to controlling your nervousness. Know your topic well. You will be the expert on the topic in the classroom. Good preparation and the realization that you are the expert will boost your self-confidence. After your research, you will find that you know much more about your topic than you will have time to present.



### **c. Visual aids**

Visual aids (maps, photos, film clips, graphs, diagrams, and charts) can enhance a presentation. You should observe the following if using visual aids: Keep visual aids simple and uncluttered; Use color and contrast for emphasis but use them in moderation; Use a font large enough to be seen from the back of the room; Ensure that slides are readable from the back of a room; If using PowerPoint, strongly resist the temptation to use sound effects and dramatic slide transitions.

### **d. Handouts**

Handouts provide structure. They can provide supplemental material, references, a glossary of terms, and serve as a record of the presentation. The handout should be attractively laid out and inviting to read. Leave enough white space on the handout for the listener to take notes. A handout should be 1-2 pages long and consist of:

- Your name
- Title of course
- Date of presentation
- Title of your presentation
- Brief abstract (50-word summary of your presentation)
- A brief outline of your presentation including the major points
- A bibliography of references used to inform the presentation

### **e. Practice**

Practice giving your presentation to yourself. Speak out loud and time yourself. Practice using your visual aids. It is important that you adhere to your time limit. Your professor knows that you know more about your topic than you will have time to share. Your goal is to inform, not overwhelm. In this case, less can be more.

### **f. Dress for the occasion**

Your manner dressing can encourage or discourage communication with your audience. Make sure your dressing, grooming or make-up is suitable for the occasion.

### **g. Delivery**

To deliver your presentation you will have to overcome your nervousness and deal with room conditions. Good preparation should allay most of your nervousness; realizing that everyone feels nervous before a presentation should also help. Your



presentation will never go exactly as you think it will fortunately, they usually go better than you expect. However, if you are using any kind of technology (overhead projector or PowerPoint) be prepared for something to go wrong and have a backup plan.



### Activity 5b

- a. Distinguish extemporaneous from manuscript presentations using examples
- b. Watch or listen to any debate or discussion. It can be on TV, radio, or any place where people are having a serious discussion. List any four benefits that a person gets from either participating in or watching other people debate.



## Unit summary

In this Unit, the focus was on Oral presentation skills. It has therefore equipped you with oral presentation skills for different occasions. Below is a summary of the key learning points:

- There are different types of oral presentations.
- Effective oral presentations require good preparation.
- Participating in debates and discussions is beneficial especially to students.



## Further reading

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## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 5a

In groups of 5, students are supposed to prepare an inspirational presentation.

### Answer to Activity 5b

#### **a. Distinguish extemporaneous from manuscript presentations using examples.**

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. Impromptu speeches often occur when someone is asked to “say a few words” or give a toast on a special occasion. Self-introductions in group settings are examples of impromptu speaking: “Hi, my name is Steve, and I’m a volunteer with the Homes for the Brave program.” Another example of impromptu speaking occurs when you answer a question such as, “What did you think of the documentary?” On the other hand, Manuscript speaking is the word-for-word iteration of a written

message. In a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains his or her attention on the printed page except when using visual aids.

**b. Watch or listen to any debate or discussion on TV, radio, or any place where people are having a serious discussion. List any four benefits that a person gets from either participating in or watching other people debate**

- It helps one develop excellent oral communication skills.
- It helps in development of excellent critical thinking skills.
- It encourages one to develop research, organization and presentation skills.
- It helps one develop confidence and overcome fear during public speaking.





## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 15 min.

**Instructions:**

- There are **four** questions in his Test
- Answer **all** questions.

**Question One**

Explain the following types of oral presentations:

- i. Extemporaneous presentation **(10 marks)**
- ii. Memorized presentation. **(10 marks)**

**Question Two**

Explain any five reasons why preparations for oral presentations are important. **(10 marks)**

**Question Three**

Explain any five elements that you would focus on when evaluating a novel in an oral book report **(10 marks)**

**Question Four**

Distinguish a book review from a book report. **(10 marks)**





## MODULE TEST (100 MARKS)

**Time: 2 hours 30min.**

**Instructions:**

- There are **five** questions in this Test
- Answer Question **One** and choose any other **Three** questions.
- Read each question carefully before starting answering.

### Question One

**Read the paragraph below and answer the questions below:**

Jane is a first-year bachelor of journalism student that wants to succeed in not only her academics but her social life as well. She is trying to maintain her friendships while also making sure her grades are above average. Jane feels she is under a lot of pressure as she is struggling to balance the two. She fears that she might lose friends and get bad grades at the end of the semester.

- Explain how you would encourage Jane to adapt the 7 habits of effective people by Steven Covey into her everyday life in order for her to achieve success. **(14 marks)**
- Explain **three** advantages of managing time in the university. **(6marks)**
- Discuss any **two** principles of time management. **(5 marks)**

### Question Two

Explain the situation or the context where the following types of listening can be applied to.

- Critical listening **(5 marks)**
- Empathetic listening **(5 marks)**
- Comprehensive listening **(5 marks)**
- Informational listening **(5 marks)**
- Discriminative listening **(5 marks)**

### Question Three



Write paragraphs using the topic sentences provided below. Each question carries **5 marks**.

a. Example

University students are crucial in the good governance of African countries.

b. Narrative

There is truth in the claims that the youth are a marginalised group in Malawi.

c. Definition

Heroes are not people that have lived a blameless life.

d. Cause and effect

There is a reason that makes gender equality integral to development.

e. Comparison and contrast

The music that the current generation listens is different yet similar to the music of the old generation.

#### **Question Four**

With regards to the Corona Virus, the decisions you make about where you go, who you meet and how you meet them are decisions of life and death. Comment on this assertion. **(25 marks)**

#### **Question Five**

When attending lectures;

a. What are the key steps to attaining effective listening?

**(10 marks)**

b. Discuss possible factors that can hinder effective listening in class.

**(10 marks)**

c. Briefly explain a circumstance in which one would use therapeutic listening.

**(5 marks)**

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

## GLOSSARY

- **Extemporaneous** refers to something done, spoken, or performed without preparation. In an academic context, an extemporaneous speech or presentation is delivered without prior rehearsal or detailed notes.
- **Hearing** refers to the physiological process of perceiving sound through the ears. In an academic context, hearing may also refer to the passive reception of auditory information without necessarily actively processing or comprehending it.
- **Impromptu** refers to something that is done, spoken, or performed on the spur of the moment, without prior planning or preparation. In an academic context, an impromptu speech or presentation is delivered without advance notice or formal preparation.
- **Listening** refers to the active process of receiving, interpreting, and understanding auditory information. In an academic setting, effective listening involves focused attention, comprehension, and critical evaluation of spoken or recorded content.
- **Manuscript** is a handwritten or typed document, especially one that is prepared for publication. In academic writing, a manuscript typically refers to the draft of a scholarly article or research paper submitted for publication.
- **Note making** involves the process of summarizing, condensing, and organizing information from academic sources into concise and structured notes. It is an essential skill for capturing key points, ideas, and details during lectures, readings, or research.
- **Note taking** is the act of recording or transcribing information from academic sources, such as lectures, textbooks, or research materials. It involves capturing important details, concepts, and examples for later review and study.
- **P.A.S.S.:** the principle that is based on the idea that the content of a written communication should be tailored to the specific purpose, audience, situation, and style of communication.
- **Persuasive** refers to the ability to convince or influence others to adopt a certain viewpoint or take a particular course of action. In an academic setting, persuasive writing or speaking aims to sway the audience's opinion or behavior through logical reasoning and compelling arguments.



- **Proofreading** is the careful examination and correction of written material to identify and rectify errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and formatting. In an academic context, proofreading is essential for ensuring the accuracy and clarity of scholarly writing before submission or publication.
- **Scanning** is the rapid reading or examination of a text to locate specific information or gain a general impression of its content. In academic reading, scanning is often used to quickly identify relevant sections of a text or to preview its main ideas.
- **Skimming** is the rapid reading or superficial examination of a text to understand its main points or overall structure. In academic reading, skimming is used to quickly grasp the central ideas of a text without reading every word in detail.
- **SQ3R** is a reading comprehension method that stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. It is a systematic approach to studying academic texts, involving previewing the material, formulating questions, actively reading, summarizing key points, and reviewing the content to enhance understanding and retention.



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