



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

**YEAR ONE  
SEMESTER TWO**

**ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES II  
LNC – EAP – 122**

**August 2025**

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## MODULE OVERVIEW

Most students still 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 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: Sentence Writing Skills**

In this Unit, you will be introduced to sentence writing skills that include developing sentences, understanding subject-verb agreement, parallelism, modification, run-on sentences and sentence variety.

### **Unit 2: Achieving Worthwhile Content**

In this Unit, you will learn some elements that you will need in order to produce an effective content. Some of these elements that will be covered in this Unit include: credibility, informative value, completeness, sensible organization and readable style.

### **Unit 3: Composing Argument**

In this Unit, you will be exposed to how you can structure an argument, how you can analyse the audience. You will also learn some couple of fallacies in reasoning and types of reasoning

### **Unit 4: Introduction to Academic Report Writing**

In this Unit, you will understand what a report is, important considerations in report writing, different types of reports. You will also practice how to draft different reports.

### **Unit 5: Oral Presentation of Reports and Arguments**

In this last Unit, you will learn how reports and arguments can be presented orally. You will determine the structure of an oral report or argument, consider the audience, mind the language, and choose presentation style.



# 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 II
<b>MODULE CODE</b>	LNC – EAP – 122
<b>YEAR</b>	1
<b>SEMESTER</b>	2
<b>CREDIT</b>	10
<b>PRESENTED TO</b>	Senate
<b>PRESENTED BY</b>	The School of Business and Economic Sciences
<b>LECTURE HOURS/WK</b>	2
<b>TUTORIAL HOURS/WK</b>	2
<b>PRE-REQUISITES</b>	LNC – EAP – 111
<b>CO-REQUISITES</b>	None

## MODULE DESCRIPTOR

The module exposes students or learners to effective study practices and competent academic writing and presentation skills necessary for success in college. It will also prepare students for the academic challenges they are likely to face in college.

## MODULE AIM

To develop in students cognitive academic language proficiency and interpersonal skills necessary for communication.



## INTENDED OUTCOMES

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

- a) Write effective sentences
- b) Compose effective arguments
- c) Write reports
- d) Present reports and arguments orally
- e) Analyse work of fiction

## INDICATIVE CONTENT

### 1. Sentence Writing Skills

- Sentence development; Subject-verb agreement; Parallelism; Modification; Checking run-on sentences

### 2. Achieving Worthwhile Content

- Credibility; Informative value; Completeness; Sensible organization; Readable style

### 3. Composing Arguments

- a. Audience analysis
- b. Structuring an argument
- c. Ethical considerations
- d. Fallacies in reasoning

### 4. Reasoning : The basis of arguments Types of Reasoning

- a. Logic
- b. Emotion
- c. Ethics
- d. Appeal to authority

### 5. Introduction To Academic Report Writing

- a. Understanding the report.
- b. Important considerations in report writing.
- c. Types of reports : discipline specific
- d. Drafting different reports.

### 6. Wide Reading : Non-Fiction.

- a. Texts on emerging issues e.g. HIV/AIDS, gender, environmental issues, COVID-19.



b. Biographies, magazines, newspapers

## **7. Oral Presentation Of Reports & Arguments**

a. Oral presentation of reports

b. Oral presentation of arguments

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS**

Lectures, tutorials, oral presentations, group discussions, debates, assignments, peer evaluations.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The assessment of this module will be as follows:










- 40% continuous assessment
- 60% end of module examination

Continuous assessment will comprise essays, short tests and mid-semester examination. This criteria is in accordance with the program document approved by the University Senate.



## VISUAL ICONS

In this module, you will come across different icons (symbols) that will help you locate information, and the following are their meanings:

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: SENTENCE WRITING SKILLS



## Introduction

Welcome to unit 1. In this unit you are going to learn how to write good sentences. Most university students face challenges when it comes to academic writing. Writing skills are specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form. Writing is like any other skill in that it can be developed with practice and appropriate training. Writing skills include all the knowledge and abilities related to expressing ideas through the written word. Good writing skills are essential for effective communication.



## Learning outcomes

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

- a) apply sentence development skills.
- b) apply subject-verb agreement skills.
- c) identify and correct faulty parallelism in sentences
- d) identify and correct faulty modification
- e) check and correct run-on sentences.
- f) apply sentence variety skills.



## Key terms

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

- Modification
- Parallelism
- Run-ons





## Lesson 1: Sentence development

In the first semester, you learnt some writing skills that are essential to effective communication. You were also taught some stages in writing process that include planning, researching, drafting or writing, editing and proofreading. With that background, this module in this lesson, you will add some skills on how you can develop your sentences in any academic writing.

### 1.1. Definition of a sentence

A sentence is a collection of words usually containing a subject and a verb, assembled in such an order that they present a complete thought or idea. All words in sentences fall into the eight traditional categories known as the parts of speech, based on how they function. Here is an example a sentence, *They are studying Communication Studies 2.*

The following statements are true about sentences in English:

1. A sentence contains a **subject** that is only given once.
  - *Chimwemwe obtained his degree.*
2. A sentence contains a **verb or a verb phrase**.
  - *He obtained his degree.*
3. A sentence follows **Subject + Verb + Object** word order.
  - *He (subject) obtained (verb) his degree (object).*
4. A sentence must have a complete idea that stands alone. This is also called an independent clause.
  - *'He obtained his degree'; as opposed to 'Because of New Year's day'.*
5. A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark.
  - *Takondwa went home.*

### 1.2. Parts of a sentence

Every complete sentence contains two parts: **a subject and a predicate**.

#### 1. Subject

A subject of a sentence is who or what performs the action denoted by the verb. It can be a noun or pronoun or even an entire phrase or clause that is partnered with an **action verb**. For example, *John went home yesterday.* The action of this sentence is expressed by the verb – **went**, the noun **John** is doing the action of going home. Therefore, John is the subject of the sentence. Sometimes a verb expresses the state of **being** or **existence** instead of action. For example, *Good*



*friends are loyal to people.* The verb **are** in this sentence does not express an action, instead it expresses a **being** or **existence** of the noun 'friends' which is the subject. Sometimes we use sentences in which a subject is not actually **stated**, but **is**, nevertheless, **understood** in the meaning. For example, *Call the plumber, please.* What is the subject of the above sentence? **You** is the doer of the action call, therefore, you is the subject of the sentence.

## 2. Predicate

A predicate is a verb that expresses the subject's action or state of being. It tells what the subject does or is. In other words, a predicate is a verb or part of a clause that includes the verb, which links up with the subject. The predicate can also include a modifier, an object or a compliment. For example, *My mom enjoys cooking and feeding us our favorite foods.* A predicate's core is the **verb** - the action that is being done by the subject. The remaining parts of the predicate are everything that is not included in the sentence's subject, such as prepositional phrase, adjectives, adverbs etc.

There are three types of subjects and other three types of predicates, study them on your own. You may as well use the following links:

<https://www.careerpower.in/subject-axnd-predicate.html> and

<https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/english/english-grammar/predicate/>

## 1.3. Functions of a sentence

There are four sentence functions in English:

- i. **Declarative sentences** state an idea or a fact. They end with a period. For example: *Chimwemwe obtained his degree.*
- ii. **Exclamatory sentences** show strong emotions. They end with an exclamation mark. For example: *What a mess this house is!*
- iii. **Interrogative sentences** ask a question. As you would expect, they end with a question mark. For instance: *Where do you think you are going?*
- iv. **Imperative sentences** give orders, directions or a polite request, and so end with a period or an exclamation mark. For instance: *Sit down and listen!*

## 1.4. Types of sentences

There are only four grammatical sentence types based on the clauses it contains:

### 1. Simple sentences

A simple sentence contains one main clause with no subordinate clauses. It may



be short and truly “simple” (as in uncomplicated), or it may have several phrases that lengthen it. For example, *Thoko and his friends want a better job.*

## 2. Compound sentences

A compound sentence merely adds *one or more* main clauses to a simple sentence. They can be short or long, but they do not contain a subordinate clause.. This creates a sentence with *two (or more)* sets of subjects and verbs (*main clauses*) that are usually divided with a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*) and a comma – or a semicolon if the conjunction is omitted. A compound sentence is used when you want to give equal weight to two closely related ideas (coordination), for example, *John really needs to go to work, but he is too sick to drive.*

## 3. Complex sentences

Complex sentences are not necessarily any more “complex” (as in complicated) than simple or compound sentences, but they do contain another kind of clause – the subordinate, or dependent clause (adverb, adjective, or noun). This means that a complex sentence has one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses and often phrases. A complex sentence is used when you want to emphasize one idea over another in a sentence (subordination), for example: *Mr. Banda brings his daughter to class with him when her school is closed.*

## 4. Compound-complex sentences

The compound-complex sentence simply combines the two preceding sentence types, the compound and the complex. This sentence type, then, must have *two or more* main clauses with *one or more* subordinate clauses. For example, *Chisomo cried when her puppy got sick, but he soon got better.*



### Activity 1a

Identify subjects and predicates in the following sentences:

- a. She was upset for a long time over the breakup.
- b. We are going to the movies later.
- c. His terror of spiders kept him out of the dark basement.

Identify the functions of the following sentences:

- a. She won the bet again!
- b. What is your father’s name?
- c. I think going to school is a great idea.





## Lesson 2: Phrases and clauses

In this lesson, the focus is on phrases and clauses. When constructing sentences, writers use different building blocks of clauses and phrases to construct varied sentences. Phrases and clauses are groups of words that act as a unit and perform a single function within a sentence.

### 2.1. Phrase

A phrase is a group of related words that does not express a complete thought and does not have a subject and predicate pair. Therefore, a phrase can never stand on its own as a complete sentence. Using different kinds of phrases enables a writer or a speaker to create informative and descriptive sentences that vary in structure. There are different types of sentence phrases, and these are:

#### 1. Noun phrase

A phrase that acts as a noun in a sentence is called a noun phrase. It consists of a noun and related words (usually determiners and modifiers) which modify the noun. In other words, it can be said that a noun phrase can function as a subject, an object or a complement in a sentence.

- *My brother's friend had come to visit my family.* (Used as a subject)
- *The students were asked to find the buried treasure.* (Used as an object)
- *I can make him a better person* (Used as a complement of the object 'him')

#### 2. Prepositional phrases

A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition (*in, on, with, during, at, for, behind, until, etc.*), its object, and any word that modifies the object. Most of the times, a prepositional phrase modifies a noun (or words working as a noun) or pronoun. They function in a sentence as adjectives (telling *who, which one, what kind, or how many*) or adverbs (telling *when, where, why, how, or to what extent or degree*).

- *Please buy the bag with dots.* (tells which one) – Adjective
- *She visited during lunch hour.* (tells when) – Adverb

#### 3. Infinitive phrases

Infinitive phrases, along with gerund and participial phrases, are called **verbals**, meaning that they are a verb form with a sense of action, but they are incomplete verbs. Infinitives can never be the main verb in a sentence, and they are usually marked by the word “**to + verb**”. An infinitive phrase is just a part of a sentence, working like a noun, adjective, or adverb.



i. **Noun:** it answers the question “what?” So, the infinitive phrase will be the subject (which does action) or an object (which receives action). For example:

- *To succeed at his profession is Simone’s primary focus.* (Subject)
- *Mary doesn’t want to study for the test.* (Object)

When noun infinitive phrases follow verbs like **hear, let, see, help, make, and watch**, the *to* is dropped:

- *We all saw him **(to) help** the elderly woman out of her car.*

Also, the **to** may be dropped from infinitives in a pair or series after the first one:

- *Sobongire learned early in life to be polite to strangers, (to) care for her friends, and (to) love her family.*

ii. **Adjective:** it describes a noun or a pronoun. So, that means it will describe a subject or an object. For example:

- *Peter needs a magazine to read on the train.* (tells which magazine)
- *I wish I had a friend to study with me.* (tells which friend)

iii. **Adverb:** it modifies the verb in a sentence. Adverbs answer questions like where, when, why, how, and for what reason/purpose, so, as an adverb, the infinitive will answer the same questions. For example:

- *Hannah joined the group to become lead singer.* (tells why she joined)
- *He sat down to take the EAP exam.* (tells why he sat down)

#### 4. Participial phrases

A participle phrase is a group of words containing a participle, modifier, and pronoun or noun phrases. Participial phrases have a sense of action but are incomplete verbs (they function as adjectives) You need a comma after a Participle Phrase if it comes at the beginning of a sentence and the following phrase is a complete sentence. If the Participle Phrase is in the middle or at the end of a sentence, you do not need a comma. They begin with either a present or a past participle.

- Present participial phrase:** has the same **-ing** ending for both regular and irregular verbs. For example, *Removing her coat, Tiwonge rushed to the river.*
- Past participial phrase:** regular verbs take a **-d** or an **-ed** ending, while an irregular verb often ends in **-n** or **-t**. for example, *Confused by the EAP assignment, I emailed my lecturer.*



## 5. Gerund phrase

A gerund phrase is created when a gerund – a verb that takes an **-ing** form and functions as a noun – has a modifier, object or both. Gerund phrases begin with a gerund and are followed by other words (such as prepositional phrases). See the example, *Tamala likes singing songs in the shower*. The gerund is **singing**, the object is **songs**, and the modifier is **in the shower**

While the gerund **-ing** looks like a participle, the gerund works as a *noun* rather than an adjective. One way to tell the difference between participles and gerunds is that gerunds can be mentally replaced with the pronoun **it** or **this**.

## 6. Absolute phrase

The absolute phrase resembles a participial phrase in that it uses a present or past participle, but it differs in one important respect: a noun or pronoun always precedes the participle. Absolute phrases describe the rest of the sentence they are attached to, rather than modifying a single word; therefore, they can be in various positions within a sentence. See the two examples; *His body shaking, he looked at the dead body for its identification.* and *John felt safe for the night, his shelter in the trees hidden from view.*

## 7. Appositive phrase

An appositive phrase is a group of words consisting of an appositive and its modifiers. It does not function as an adjective or an adverb, but it does add useful information to a sentence. Appositive phrases rename or explain a noun or pronoun. Like a single word appositive, appositive phrases appear beside the noun or pronoun they are renaming. For example, *Grace Chinga, perhaps the best gospel singer of all time in Malawi, began performing at the age of 15.*

## 2.2. Clause

A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a predicate. A clause may form part of a sentence or it may be a complete sentence in itself. Without clauses we could write only partial sentences like “On our way to the bank...,” leaving readers in suspense, wanting to know what happened next. However, when we add a clause like “we saw a Toyota Fortuner,” we satisfy the reader’s curiosity, completing the thought. Clauses are of two types, main (Independent clause) and subordinate (Dependent clause). The main clause contains a subject, a verb, and a complete thought, so it can function as a stand-alone sentence. For example,



*I know the man who stole Mrs. Mbewe's car.*

A subordinate clause has a subject and a verb but lacks a complete thought and so cannot stand alone. Like a phrase, it depends on and must be attached to a main clause to form a sentence. For example, *I know the man who stole Mrs. Mbewe's car.*

There are several kinds of subordinate clauses and the following are the common ones: Noun clauses, Adjective clauses, Adverb clauses. Study them on your own.



### Activity 1b

- a. Identify main and subordinate clauses in the following sentences:
  - i. What Allen said about his wife shocked his sister.
  - ii. When Gabrielle arrived, her friends shouted, "Happy birthday!"
  - iii. The researchers published studies that back up this assertion.
  - iv. Mr Chibwe, who wanted to be an astronaut as a child, is now a bank president.
  - v. Because Lauren had a cold, she went to bed early.
- b. Identify and name the different types of phrases used in the following sentences:
  - i. Her father coming home after a long time, she decided to organize a welcome party for him.
  - ii. To reach Kamuzu Stadium by game time, Salome drove faster than he should have.
  - iii. My childhood friend, Janet, loved dancing.
  - iv. The victim was rushed to the hospital with great speed.
  - v. They did the assignment sitting in the library.





## Lesson 3: Paragraph development

This lesson will guide you step by step to understand how to write effective paragraphs. By the end this lesson, you will be able identify different parts of a paragraph and write an effective paragraph.

### 3.1. What is a paragraph?

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. A paragraph usually occurs with other parts in a longer piece of writing – an essay, article, or letter. The structure of a paragraph consists of three kinds of sentences: the main sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph. The second comprise major supporting sentences, which expand, illustrate, explain, support, or strengthen the main idea with secondary points and major supporting details. The last are the sentences which further exemplify and support the main idea with minor points and minor supporting details. These are called minor supporting sentences. Therefore, let us focus on single a paragraph.

### 3.2. The topic sentence

A topic sentence is the most important sentence in a 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 not always). A topic sentence essentially tells what the rest of the paragraph is about. All subsequent sentences have to give more information about it, prove it by offering facts about it, or describe it. For example, if the topic sentence is about Malawi as a beautiful country, then all subsequent sentences need to expound on that subject.

### 3.3. 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. For example: *Zomba is the most expensive city in Malawi for a number of reasons*. The **Topic** is Zomba while the **Controlling idea** is Most expensive city for a number of reasons. Look at the other example; *To be an effective Statistician requires certain qualities*. Here the **Topic** is Statistician and the **Controlling idea** is 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.

### 3.4. 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. The main points should be important, distinct and relevant.

- i. **Important:** when the topic is “Study Skills” for example, have important main points such as Summarizing, Time management, Buying notebooks (not important) and/or Taking notes.
- ii. **Distinct:** each of the main points should be different from all others. None of the points should duplicate any of the points. For example, if the topic is “Advantages of Exercise, your main points may be Keep health, Loss weight, Stay in good shape, Get more energy (this is the same as the first one – not distinct).
- iii. **Relevant:** are your main points relevant to the given topic? For example, the topic “Benefits of Gardening”, what may be your main points? Look at the following; Fresh air, Variety of colours (not relevant), Physical exercise, Intimacy with nature

### 3.5. 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 some three common ways to organize your main points:

#### 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. look at this example; *You may be 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.

## **3.6. Principles of paragraph writing**

It is essential that you develop the ability to write effective paragraphs as all essays in science courses are expected to have a series of related paragraphs. Writing an effective paragraph involves adopting a careful writing plan that ensures proper length, unity, coherence and logical development of ideas.

- a. Paragraph length:** paragraphs of different lengths may be used as per the needs of the writing assignment. Therefore, paragraph lengths need to be adjusted according to the readers, the subject matter, and to the demands of variety and emphasis.
- b. Paragraph unity:** unity is the principle of oneness. Unity in communication means that the components, as well as the whole, deal with one main idea, thought or thesis. Any writing which does not have unity distracts the reader and ceases to be purposeful. Therefore, any effective and purposeful composition should have one controlling idea or theme.
- c. Coherence:** in cohesive paragraphs, ideas are linked, and one idea logically leads to the next. As one word in a sentence leads to another, one sentence in a paragraph leads to another. In order to achieve coherence in a paragraph, you need to use appropriate cohesive devices which you learned in the first semester such as covert linkers and overt transitional expressions.





## Lesson 4: Subject-verb agreement

When you use a verb, you have to say who or what is doing the action. This who or what is the subject of the verb. The subject and the verb match each other. You say that the subject and the verb agree when they match each other. This lesson therefore, exposes you to know how to use a singular verb if the subject is a singular noun, and use plural verb if the subject is a plural noun.

### 4.1. Definition of subject-verb agreement

Subject-Verb Agreement means that subjects and verbs should agree with one another in person and number. Sentences may be written in first (I, we), second (you), or third (he, she, it, they) person. Verbs often change form, depending on whether the subject is first, second, or third person. When constructing a sentence, be sure your verb form agrees with the correct form of person. The following are the conditions for verb-subject agreement:

1. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular too.
2. If the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural.

### 4.2. Rules of subject-verb agreement

Some of the rules of subject-verb agreement include:

**a. Two or more subjects joined by “and” are considered plural and require a verb form without an “s.”**

- *Jan, John, and Bob walk to the store.*
- *Both the **lecturer** and the **students** enjoy playing football.*

Some singular subjects may appear to be compound, as in this example:

- *The **coach** and **counselor Kinnah Phiri** devoted his life to his team.*

**b. If a subject is modified by the words “each” or “every” that subject is singular and will take a verb form that ends in “s.”**

- *Each **boy** and **girl** walks to the store.*

**c. If plural subjects are joined by “or,” “nor,” or “but,” the verb must only agree with the subject that is closest to it.**

- *Either a **plasma** or an **LCD TV** is a good choice.*
- *Not **Bob** but his **brothers** walk to the store*

**d. Indefinite pronouns (which do not specify a specific person or thing, sometimes cause agreement errors.) are usually singular and take a verb form that ends in “s.”**



Some of the Indefinite pronouns include; Anybody, No one, each, anyone, anything, everybody, nobody, one, somebody, someone, something, either, neither, nothing. For example;

- *Should we go to the Black Missionaries or Gwamba show? **Either** suits me.*
- ***Nobody** was expecting the bride and the groom to dance.*
- ***Everyone** walks to the store.*

e. **The subject of a verb is never in a prepositional or verbal phrase. Therefore, you must isolate the phrase and find the proper subject.**

- *The mother **duck** with all of her little ducklings walks to the store.*
- *The mother **duck** including all her ducklings walks to the store.*

Some **indefinite pronouns** and nouns will be singular or plural depending on the object of the prepositional phrase. These words are always about number or amount such as: *all, half, some, none, most, part*, etc. for example;

- ***Some** of the students are gone.*
- ***Some** of the cake is gone.*
- *The mother **duck** and **all** of her ducklings walk to the store.*

f. **When a collective noun, such as family, group, committee, or class, is the subject, the verb will end in “s.”**

- *My **family** with all my cousins always walks to the store.*
- *Our **team** feels that the coach is wrong.*

However, if the members of the group are acting individually, it often sounds more natural to revise the sentence to reflect this.

- ***Most of the players** on the team feel that the coach is wrong, but some think he’s right no matter what.*

g. **False “Plural” Nouns**

A few nouns, such as economics, mumps, measles, or news end in “s” but are considered singular. You can tell these “s” words are singular because if you take the “s” away, you do not have a noun.

- ***Physics** explains how much of the world works.*
- ***Chambo species** is one of the endangered fish species in Malawi.*

h. **When the subject is a unit of measurement of time, distance, money, weight, etc. The unit is considered singular, and the verb ends in “s.”**

- ***Ten pounds** of chocolate is too much to eat at once.*
- ***Thirteen feet** of kite string tangles very easily.*



- i. In a question or in a sentence that begins with there or here, the verb will often come before the subject.
  - *Where is my sweater?*
  - *There are my sweaters.*
- j. When using who, that or which, you must look to the noun these relative pronouns are referring to in order to determine whether the subject is singular and will have a verb ending in “s” or is plural and have a verb without an “s.”
  - *The girls who eat cake are happy.*
  - *Lions that bother people are generally relocated or killed.*

**k. Use of Verbals (Incomplete Verbs)**

Certain words which look like verbs but are not, and while they have a sense of action or being, they are not complete verbs; therefore, they can never be the main verb in a sentence. And these are participles and gerunds.

**Table 1.1: Participles functioning as adjectives**

<b>Present and Past Participles</b>	1. A <b>trumpeting</b> elephant <u>is defending</u> his territory. 2. The <b>exhausted</b> marines <u>were retreating</u> slowly 3. <b>Dejected</b> , Arthur <u>was shredding</u> carefully <b>preserved</b> love letters and <b>faded</b> pictures of his high school sweetheart.
<b>Gerunds</b>	1. <b>Running</b> to the store and <b>flying</b> through the air <u>are</u> my favorite sports. (as subject) 2. In the summer Chisomo’s favorite sport <u>is surfing</u> . (as complement) 3. Many people <u>are</u> afraid of <b>flying</b> . (as object)



**Activity 1c**

Identify subjects and verbs in the following sentences:

- a. The boys are going home.
- b. The Malawi football National team is leaving for Tanzania.
- c. She rides her bicycle every weekend.
- d. They are playing netball.





## Lesson 5: Parallelism

Words in a pair or a series should have parallel structure. By the end of this lesson, you will balance the items in a pair or a series so that they have the same kind of structure, and you will make the sentence clearer and easier to read. Notice how the parallel sentences that follow read more smoothly than the nonparallel ones.

### 5.1. Definition of parallelism

When writing a sentence, the structure of items in the sentence should be grammatically consistent. All items in a series should be in parallel form using the same pattern of words including nouns, verbs, phrases, clauses, etc. Parallelism is a figure of speech in which two or more elements of sentences have the same grammatical structure. Parallelism can also be defined as a form of coordination that repeats similar grammatical units or structures for clarity and emphasis. It is the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a sentence. Consider the following examples;

- *Paul likes dancing, swimming, and running.*
- *Paul likes to dance, swimming, and run.*

In the first sentence all of the activities Paul enjoys are consistently presented as gerunds (parallelism). In the second sentence, the activities Paul enjoys are presented in inconsistent forms, (not parallel). This results in a decreased flow, an awkward sentence, and an increased amount of work for the reader.

### 5.2. Situations of parallelism

Parallelism can be applied in the following situations; series, list, pairs, essay headings and tables of contents, entences that Explain Chronological Events, etc.

#### 1. Making series parallel.

Items in a series should be similar grammatical units – nouns following nouns, verbs following verbs, phrases following phrases, and so forth. When ideas are presented in a series, the same parts of speech should be used to ensure parallel structure. This applies whether the series consists of single words, phrases or clauses.

**a. Words:** should be matched with single words of the same type (nouns, verbs)

**Incorrect:** *The lecturer asked the students to speak in tutorials clearly,* (adverb) *in a loud voice* (adverbial phrase) *and not to be rude.* (Infinitive)

**Correct:** *The lecturer asked the students to speak in tutorials clearly, loudly and*



*politely* (All words in the list are now adverbs).

**Correct:** *Will you remind me to buy cupcakes, ice cream, potato chips, and soda for the party?* (nouns)

**b. Phrases:** should be matched with word groups of the same pattern (noun phrases beginning with verb + -ing, prepositional phrases etc.).

**Incorrect:** *Success at university depends on attending classes,* (noun phrase -ing) *reviewing your notes* (noun phrase -ing) *and to keep up with your readings* (infinitive verb = to + verb)

**Correct:** *Success at university depends on attending classes, reviewing your notes and keeping up with your readings.* (all words in the list are now noun phrases beginning with -ng words)

**c. Clauses:** should be matched with clauses of the same pattern (noun clauses, adverbial clauses, adjectival clauses).

**Incorrect:** *The lecturer expected that the students would present the seminar, be using PowerPoint presentations and they would answer questions from the audience.* (two phrases followed by a sentence)

**Correct:** *The lecturer expected that the students would present the seminar, use a PowerPoint presentation and answer questions from the audience.* (all the elements of the list are now phrases beginning with a verb)

## 2. Making list parallel

Related to items in a series are lists and outlines. All lists and outlines should be in parallel form, using single words or phrases (of the same grammatical type) or full sentences. People often jot quick lists that are not parallel. Which items in the following list seem out of synch with the others?

- Gas up the car.
- Dog food.
- Go to Whole Foods for groceries.
- Pick up Lauren from school.
- Gym shoes for Lauren.
- Return Ginny's jacket to Martha (thank them both).

If you look closely, you will discover that list items bullet 2 and 5 are not sentences hence making the list not to be parallel. These items do not have verbs. To make the list parallel, you have to add verbs to these items to make them complete sentences. For example; Buy dog food and Wash gym shoes for Lauren.



### 3. Making pairs parallel

Rather than listing points in a series, we balance two items, usually with a coordinating and correlative conjunctions. Single words, phrases, and clauses can all be paired. Coordinating conjunction are words that link together parts of sentences. Ideas that are joined with these conjunctions need to be parallel in structure. Consider examples below;

**Type 1. Like** ideas joined by “and”, “but”, “or”, “nor”, ‘for’, “so”, “yet”.

- *Ben spends his free time **jogging and biking**.* (paired gerunds)
- *Sal **raised his glass and took a sip**.* (paired verbs)

**Type 2. Comparisons** joined by “than” or “as”.

- ***Learning at university is more difficult than studying at high school.***
- ***Writing assignments is as important as sitting for exams.***

Correlative conjunctions are pairs of words that work together to connect two parts of a sentence that hold an equal value, or correlate with one another. These paired conjunctions always appear in the same order. Ideas joined by pairs of conjunctions “both...and”, “either...or”, “neither...nor”, “not only...but also”, “whether...or”, “just as...so”. Consider the following example;

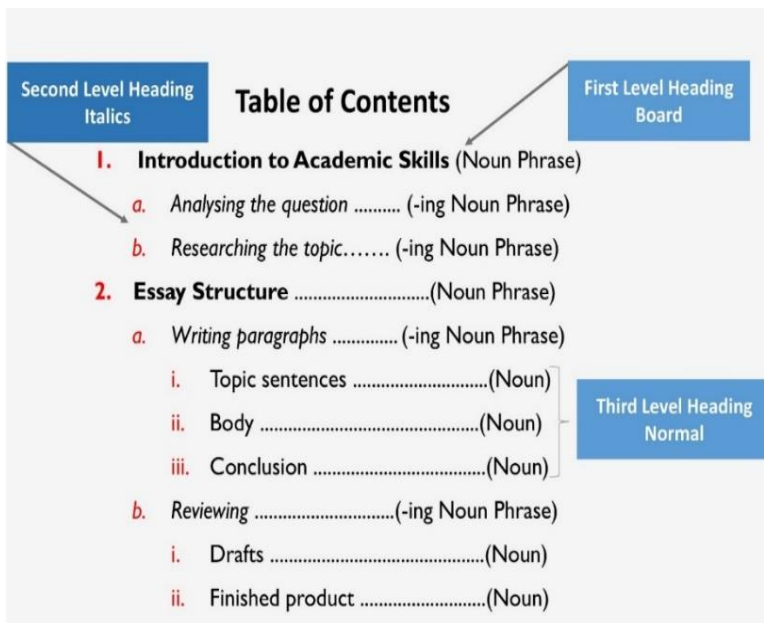
- ***Both the lecturers and the students protested about the changes in assessment policy.***
- ***The assignment tasks need to be either submitted electronically or posted to the university assessment center.***

### 4. Essay headings and tables of contents.

Assignment headings and tables of contents are easier to read if the headings at the same level have the same grammatical form.

- First level headings:** should use the same structure as other first level headings.
- Second level headings:** should use the same structure as other second level headings.
- Third level headings:** should use the same structure as other third level headings, and so on. For example;





**Figure 1.1. Level headings**

**5. Sentences that explain chronological events.**

Sentences must use verb tenses that are consistent and reflect the chronological order of events, for example;

**Faulty:** *Kevin stopped asking for directions and starts using a map.*

**Parallel:** *Kevin stopped asking for directions and started using a map.*

Because this sentence describes an event that happened in the past, both verbs need to be in the past tense.



**Activity 1d**

1. Figure out what parts of the sentences are being compared in following sentences:
  - a. She likes running, singing and reading.
  - b. The computer’s ability to multi-task, defend against viruses and overall usability all improved when I updated the operating software.
  - c. The Head of Department interviewed two subject lecturers, marked four assignments and edited two dissertations.
2. Make the following sentences parallel:
  - a. Initial trials showed that exposure to the chemical caused memory problems, intermittent dizziness, and deters sleep.
  - b. Mary’s main duties were answering phone calls, filling records, and to conduct visitor surveys.
  - c. The report stated that the student often talked in class, that he bullied other students, and rarely finished his homework.
  - d. The company is looking for a candidate who is friendly, organized, meticulous and is going to arrive to work on time.





## Lesson 6: Modification

In this lesson, you will study how some words may be modified to change the word to add emphasis or detail. You will learn positions and forms of modifiers and modifier errors.

### 6.1. Definition of modification

The working definition of the word “Modify” is to change or alter something. A modifier changes, clarifies, qualifies, or limits a particular word in a sentence in order to add emphasis, explanation, or detail. They tend to be descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs). Consider the following example:

- *He won the race.*

Now consider the same sentence with an adjective phrase modifiers added:

- *He won the race with a black horse.*

Here, the phrase "with a black horse" gives us extra information about the verb, "won." The modifiers engage the reader and hold their attention. Note that when a modifier is used incorrectly, the meaning of the sentence can become blurred.

Modifiers may modify a headword, usually noun, sentences as well as other grammatical categories like adjectives, prepositions, adverbs, etc. Consider the following sentences;

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Particularly, <u>I don't have to go</u>.</i></li> <li>• <i>Annoyingly, <u>nobody thinks of letting the players decide</u>.</i></li> </ul> | } | <b>(Modified sentences)</b>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>He frightened the pretty <u>girl</u> on the corner.</i></li> <li>• <i>The <u>man</u> who is there is my uncle.</i></li> </ul>             | } | <b>(Noun head modified)</b>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>She has a really <u>beautiful</u> face.</i></li> </ul>  |   | <b>(Adverb modifying an adjective)</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>They are smoking very <u>heavily</u>.</i></li> </ul>  |   | <b>(Adverb modifying an adverb)</b>    |

### 6.2. Positions of modifiers

The modifiers occupy varied positions, some according to their function, and others according to their meaning and they restrict the nouns according to types, size, and shape, etc.

#### 1. Pre-sentences modifiers.

Pre-sentence modifier takes a form of an adverb, participle, to-infinitive, before the sentence it modifies (Stageberg, 1981). Consider the following examples:

- *To stay away, one should be aware of the fire. (To - infinitive)*



- *Usually, he stops to have a breath. (Adverb)*

## 2. Pre-head Modifiers.

Modifiers take the position directly before the head they modify. For examples:

- *This book is so very much interesting.*
- *The shouting boy hides himself there.*

Adjectives can go before the noun they modify. The most common position of an adjective is between the determiner and the noun head. For examples:

- *All these attractive horses.*
- *Several charming students passed the exams.*

## 3. Post-head Modifiers

The headword is also modified, but it is modified by postposition. The modifiers postpose after the word they modify, for example, a prepositional phrase, and adverbs postpose after the word they modify. Consider the following examples:

- *The girl in the corner. (A prepositional phrase modifies the noun)*
- *The dog hastily learned (An adverb modifies the noun)*

## 6.3. Forms of modification

Modifiers take different forms, and their heads also take different forms.

### 1. Forms of modifying nouns.

This sub-section deals with verbs modify nouns, adjectives modify nouns, nouns modify nouns, adverbs modify a noun phrase, and prepositional phrases modify nouns:

i. **Verbs modify nouns:** when the verbs take the position of modifying place, the verb always takes either present or past participle.

- *A raging fire is in the fireplace.*
- *The dismissed employee.*

Similarly, any words or word group take the position of an adjective, an adverb, or an adverbial clause: *The shouting boy will play tennis.*

ii. **Adjectives modify nouns:** noun head can be modified by an adjective. An adjective is either attributive or predicative.

An attributive adjective's position is between a determiner and the noun head. This position is called attributive because it analyzes the noun head. For example: *All these amazing cats.* And predicative adjective is an adjective characterizing the nominal position of the subject: *Jack is handsome.* It is used also to modify an



object complement, and it is called object complement, for example, *The convention named Mr. Chikhosi Vice President to keep him happy.*

- iii. **Nouns modify nouns:** a noun sequence (noun ± noun ) contains many noun semantic relation, but the most important one is the noun which modifies the noun head. Consider these examples: *A family car.* and *The music room.*
- iv. **Adverbs modify a noun phrase:** there are a few intensifiers that pre-modify a noun phrase. The modifiers or intensifiers come before determiners either. For example: *It was rather a mess.* and *What a big fool he is.*
- v. **Prepositional phrases modify nouns:** prepositional phrase may modify noun only as post modification, and sometimes gives information about space or time which is related to the noun. For example: *The day after tomorrow* (time) and *The house on the corner* (space)

## 2. Forms of modifying adverbs.

Modifiers with an adverb as, a head, the modifiers are like; quite, pretty, rather, awfully, too, etc. They give a degree of assertion to the head. For example: *We are awfully short of help right now.* and *Go right ahead with mimeographing.* Adverbs are also modified by nouns for example; *Three of them came in at least a day early.*

## 3. Forms of modifying verbs.

An adverb often modifies action and provides information, typically, about action that it modifies. There are many kinds of adverbs that modify verbs. Consider the table below:

**Table 1.2: Adverbs modifying actions**

<b>Time</b>	Speak <u>now</u>
<b>Place</b>	Stop <u>here</u> , please.
<b>Manner</b>	He speaks <u>slowly</u> .
<b>Degree</b>	The bottle is <u>nearly</u> empty.
<b>Frequency</b>	She is <u>always</u> honest.
<b>Duration</b>	She comes <u>frequently</u> .

## 4. Forms of modifying adjectives

Adverbs modify adjectives and they are called intensifiers. When an adverb modifies an adjective as ahead, they usually precede the adjective immediately, except enough which follows the head. Consider the following examples:

- *She is awfully terrible.*
- *I've pretty well finished now.*



## 6.4. Modifier errors

### 1. Misplaced modifiers

Misplaced modifiers are words that, because of awkward placement, do not describe the words the writer intended them to describe. They often confuse the meaning of a sentence. Consider the following examples:

- *Most participants selected a lunch from the menu that was high in sugar.*
- *She arrived home and fell onto the sofa covered in sweat.*

From the above examples, it can be noted that the modifiers do not describe the intended words. In example 1, the modifier “that was high in sugar” is not describing the intended word “a lunch”. In example 2, the modifier “covered in sweat” is not describing the intended word “she”. To avoid them, place words as close as possible to what they describe. Below are the corrected sentences.

- *Most participants selected a lunch that was high in sugar from the menu.*
- *Covered in sweat, she arrived home and fell onto the sofa.*

### 2. Dangling modifiers

There are two reasons for dangling modifiers. The first is due to modifying word or phrase being placed too far from the word or group of words it is meant to modify. The second happens when the sentence does not include a logical subject to modify. In both situations, dangling modifiers make the meaning of a sentence unclear hence confusing the reader. Consider the following examples:

- *Jimmy was upset with John when he returned his damaged car with an air of nonchalance.*
- *Walking into the room, the smell was overpowering.*

In the first example, who had an air of nonchalance? From the sentence, it appears the car did. However, cars do not have emotions. “with an air of nonchalance” dangles because it is too far away from the subject “John” the writer intends to modify. The second example makes it sound like the smell walked into the room. In this case, there is no subject for the participial phrase, “walking into the room” to modify hence it dangles. These examples make clear two ways of correcting a dangling modifier. Decide on a logical subject and do one of the following:

#### i. Place the subject within the opening word group:

**Faulty modifier:** *Having almost no money, my survival depended on my parents.*

**Corrected modifier:** *Since I had almost no money, I depended on my parents for survival.*



ii. **Place the subject right after the opening word group:**

**Faulty modifier:** *Walking into the room, the smell was overpowering.*

**Corrected modifier:** *Walking into the room, they encountered an overpowering smell.*

**3. Squinting modifiers**

Squinting modifiers are like misplaced modifiers, except the modifier is placed between words so there is confusion as to which word the modifier refers. Words like *almost, nearly, only, both, and well* can easily squint or modify two or more words in a sentence. Be careful to specify which word is being modified. For example;

- *The family nearly lost everything in the tornado.*
- *The family lost nearly everything in the tornado.*

In the first example, the placement of “nearly” makes it an adverb, modifying “lost.” This sentence suggests that the family almost suffered lost, but did not. In the second example, “nearly” is an adjective modifying “everything.” This sentence suggests that the family lost a great deal – almost everything. Note that in scholastic writing, one common modifier error occurs when the author of a story is used as an adjective, leaving the pronoun without an antecedent. *In Thom’s “They Carried,” he writes about warfare.* The writer intends “he” to refer back to Thom, but because the author was used as an adjective describing “They Carried,” it is difficult to tell to whom the pronoun refers. The correct one is; *In “They Carried,” Thom writes about warfare.*



**Activity 1e**

Correct misplaced and dangling modifiers in the following sentences:

- a . Having arrived late for practice, a written excuse was needed.
- b . The grocery clerk won the Mega Millions lottery working at the supermarket.
- c . The social worker met with the terminally ill patient’s family who works for the hospital.
- d . We had a hamburger after the movie, which was too greasy for my taste.
- e . Playing a guitar in the bedroom, the cat was seen under the bed.





## Lesson 7: Checking run-on sentences

Have you ever heard about “run-ons”? well, a run-on is two complete thoughts that are run together with no adequate sign given to mark the break between them. As a result of the run-on, the reader is confused, unsure of where one thought ends and the next one begins. Two types of run-ons are fused sentences and comma splices.

**Fused sentences** are run-ons that have no punctuation at all to mark the break between two or more thoughts. They are fused or joined together as if they were only one thought. Consider the following examples:

- *Rita decided to stop smoking she didn't want to die of lung cancer.*
- *The exam was postponed the class was canceled as well.*

In **comma splices**, a comma is used to connect or “splice” together the two complete thoughts. However, a comma alone is *not enough* to connect two complete thoughts. Some connection stronger than a comma alone is needed. Consider the following examples:

- *Rita decided to stop smoking, she didn't want to die of lung cancer.*
- *The exam was postponed, the class was canceled as well.*

Comma splices are the most common kind of run-on. Students sense that some kind of connection is needed between thoughts, so they put a comma at the dividing point. But the comma alone is not sufficient. A stronger, clearer mark is needed between the two thoughts.

### 7.1. Fixing run-Ons and comma splices

#### 1. Fixing run-ons and comma splices with end punctuation

The easiest fix for fused sentences and comma splice errors is dividing the sentences with a period or other end punctuation. To decide where to place the period, identify the subjects and verbs in each part of the sentence. Use this method especially if the thoughts are not closely related or if another method would make the sentence too long. Consider the following examples;

**Fused sentence:** *Praise is the fastest runner in the BIS 1 class she wins all of the races.*

**Correct:** *Praise is the fastest runner in the BIS 1 class. She wins all of the races.*

**Comma splice:** *Timothy loves music, it makes him feel joyful.*

**Correct:** *Timothy loves music. It makes him feel joyful.*



## 2. Fixing run-ons and comma splices with a comma and coordinating conjunctions.

Dividing sentences with end punctuation creates choppy feel and monotonous pattern of sentences, instead, use a coordinating conjunction (i.e. and, so, nor, but/yet, or, for, etc.) preceded by a comma. For example:

**Fused sentence:** *My mother did not like the movie I could not stop watching it*

**Correct:** *My mother did not like the movie, but I could not stop watching it.*

**Comma splice:** *The music was loud, my neighbour complained.*

**Correct:** *The music was loud, so my neighbour complained.*

## 3. Fixing run-ons and comma splices with semicolons.

If the main ideas you want to separate are closely related, a semicolon (sometimes called a strong comma) is a good alternative to run-ons and comma splices. The thought in the second clause should complete, complement, or add very relevant information to the thought in the first. The semicolon signals more of a pause than a comma alone but not quite the full pause of a period. Occasional use of semicolons can add variety to sentences. For example:

**Comma splice:** *Madalitso was watching Monday Night Football, she was doing her homework.*

**Correct:** *Madalitso was watching Monday Night Football; she was doing her homework as well.*

**Fused sentence:** *I voted for the Mr. Simfukwe five years ago I would not vote for him today.*

**Correct:** *I voted for the Mr. Simfukwe five years ago; I would not vote for him today.*

A semicolon is sometimes used with a transitional word and a comma to join two complete thoughts. The transitional words include; however, on the other hand, nevertheless, instead, moreover, in addition, also, furthermore, therefore, etc.:

**Comma splice:** *Thokozani drank his hot tea too quickly, he burned the roof of his mouth.*

**Correct:** *Thokozani drank his hot tea too quickly; as a result, he burned the roof of his mouth.*

## 4. Fixing run-ons and comma splices with subordination.

Subordination is a way of showing that one thought in a sentence is not as important as another thought. Subordination occurs by using phrases and clauses.



### a. Subordinating with phrases

Phrases are word groups that may contain a verb form or a subject, but not both. Consider the following examples with some phrases:

**Run-on:** *We are looking forward to summer break school is hard work.*

**Comma splice:** *We are looking forward to summer break, school is hard work.*

#### Phrase Fix

- *In the months before summer, we work hard in school and so look forward to the break.* (Prepositional Phrases)
- *We are looking forward to summer break, a time without hard schoolwork.* (Appositive Phrase)
- *Working hard all year, we are looking forward to summer break.* (Participial Phrase)
- *Students and faculty working hard all year, we are looking forward to summer break.* (Absolute Phrase)
- *Working hard in school makes us look forward to summer break.* (Gerund Phrase)
- *To look forward to summer break is natural because school is hard work.* (Infinitive Phrase)

As you write, choose the phrases that sound best within the context of your sentences.

### b. Subordinating with clauses

A subordinate clause has both a subject and a verb, but it does *not* contain a complete thought. These incomplete clauses must be attached to a main clause to finish their meaning. Below are the three types of subordinate clauses:

**Run-on:** *We are looking forward to summer break school is hard work.*

**Comma splice:** *We are looking forward to summer break, school is hard work.*

#### Clause Fixes

- *We are looking forward to summer break because school is hard work.* (Adverb Clause)
- *We are looking forward to summer break, which will give us some relief from the hard work of school.* (Adjective Clause)
- *So much hard schoolwork means that we are looking forward to summer break.* (Noun Clause)





### Activity 1f

Correct run-ons in the following sentences using period and a capital letter, comma, a joining word, semicolon and subordination:

- a . My professor read my paper she said it was excellent.
- b . My cat meowed angrily, I knew she wanted food.
- c . The flowers are beautiful they brighten the room.
- d . My favorite band is in town they are performing now.
- e . I love classical music, it makes me feel joyful.
- f . Joseph likes to cook, he makes chicken every day.



## Unit summary

In this Unit you have studied the following main points:

- A sentence is a collection of words usually contains a subject and a verb, assembled in such an order that they present a complete thought or idea.
- There are different types of sentences.
- Subject-verb agreement, Parallelism, modification, run-ons

In the next unit you will learn about **Achieving Worthwhile Content**.



## Further reading

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## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 1a

**Identify subjects and predicates in the following sentences:**

1. She was upset for a long time over the breakup.
2. We are going to the movies later.
3. His terror of spiders kept him out of the dark basement.

**Identify the functions of the following sentences:**

1. She won the bet again! - **Exclamatory sentences.**
2. What is your father's name? - **Interrogative sentences**
3. I think going to school is a great idea.- **Declarative sentences**

### Answer to Activity 1b

**1. Identify main and subordinate clauses in the following sentences:**

- a. What Allen said about his wife shocked his sister. (Noun Clause)
- b. When Gabrielle arrived, her friends shouted, "Happy birthday!" (Adverb Clause)



- c. The researchers published studies that back up this assertion. (Adjective Clause)
- d. Mr Chibwe, who wanted to be an astronaut as a child, is now a bank president. (Adjective Clause)
- e. Because Lauren had a cold, she went to bed early. (Adverb Clause)

**2. Identify and name the different types of phrases used in the following sentences:**

- a. Her father coming home after a long time, she decided to organize a welcome party for him. (Absolute Phrase)
- b. To reach Kamuzu Stadium by game time, Salome drove faster than he should have. (Infinitive Phrase)
- c. My childhood friend, Janet, loved dancing. (Appositive Phrase)
- d. The victim was rushed to the hospital with great speed. (Prepositional Phrase)
- e. They did the assignment sitting in the library. (Participial Phrase)

**Answer to Activity 1c**

**Identify subjects and verbs in the following sentences:**

- 1. **The boys** (subject) are going (verb) home.
- 2. **The Malawi football National team** (subject) is leaving (verb) for Ghana.
- 3. **She** (subject) rides (verb) her bicycle every weekend.
- 4. **They** (subject) are playing (verb) netball.

**Answer to Activity 1d**

**1. Figure out what parts of the sentences are being compared in following sentences:**

- a. She likes running, singing and reading. (Gerunds)
- b. The computer's ability to multi-task, defend against viruses and overall usability all improved when I updated the operating software. (Verbs)
- c. The Head of Department interviewed two subject lecturers, marked four assignments and edited two dissertations. (Verbs)

**2. Make the following sentences parallel:**

- a. Initial trials showed that exposure to the chemical caused memory problems, intermittent dizziness, and insomnia.
- b. Mary's main duties were answering phone calls, filling records, and conducting visitor surveys.
- c. The report stated that the student often talked in class, that he bullied other students, and that he rarely finished his homework.
- d. The company is looking for a candidate who is friendly, organized, meticulous and punctual.

**Answer to Activity 1e**

**Correct misplaced and dangling modifiers in the following sentences:**

- 1. Having arrived late for practice, the team coach needed a written excuse.
- 2. The grocery clerk, working at the supermarket, won the Mega Millions lottery
- 3. The social worker who works for the hospital met with the terminally ill patient's family.
- 4. After the movie, we had a hamburger, which was too greasy for my taste.
- 5. While I was playing a guitar in the bedroom, the cat was seen under the bed.



### Answer to Activity 1f

**Correct run-ons in the following sentences using period and a capital letter, comma, a joining word, semicolon and subordination:**

1. My professor read my paper. She said it was excellent.
2. My cat meowed angrily, and I knew she wanted food.
3. The flowers are beautiful. They brighten the room.
4. My favorite band is in town. They are performing now.
5. I love classical music because it makes me feel joyful.
6. Joseph likes to cook, and he makes chicken every day.





## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour

Instructions:

- There are **two** questions on his Test.
- Answer **both** questions.

### Question One

Correct the following misplaced and danglind modifiers: **(10 marks)**

- The waiter presented a steak to the guest that was medium rare.
- Neil Armstrong made history as the first man to step on the moon in 1969.
- Most participants selected a lunch from the menu that was high in sugar.
- Fumbling in her purse, the keys could not be found.
- While driving to work, a car accident was witnessed on the highway.

### Question Two

Correct the verb-subject agreement errors below: **(10 marks)**

- The arrival of new fall fashions have excited all the back-to-school shoppers.
- Potatoes, pasta, or rice go well with grilled chicken.
- Student committee disagree about what to cut from the school budget.
- Within a year, 1 Billion Kwacha were spent on building the ODL building.
- A set of 12 are all you need for the dinner party.



## UNIT 2: ACHIEVING WORTHWHILE CONTENT



### Introduction

Any written article or passage comprises of paragraphs which contain ideas. As such, a good passage must meet qualities or features such as credibility, informative value, and sensible organization and among others, for it to have a complete thought. In this lesson you are going to learn how to write paragraphs, passages and essays that are worthwhile.



### Learning outcomes

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

- a) explain how credibility is achieved in a piece of writing.
- b) weigh the value of information you read.
- c) explain how completeness is achieved in a piece of writing.
- d) explain how sensible organization is achieved in a piece of writing.
- e) explain how readable style is achieved in a piece of writing.



### Key terms

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

- Credibility
- Completeness





## Lesson 1: Worthwhile content

Worthwhile content can be your opinion on something someone else has published, an old topic presented from a fresh angle, comparing information from other sources, etc. Worthwhile content is written and presented in a particular voice and style, which stays consistent across the content to make it easy for your audience to detect what is original and what is not. This lesson gives some ways that you would follow to achieve worthwhile content such as credibility, sensible organization, informative value, completeness and readability.

### 1.1. Credibility

Credibility is the level of trustworthiness and authority that a reader perceives a writer has on a subject. It is one of the features of a good passage. It is the quality of being trusted and believed. Credibility is particularly important in writing, without credibility a writer's ideas are easily dismissed by the reader(s).

#### How can credibility can be achieved in a passage

Credibility in a passage can be achieved by critically thinking about sources. The writer has to include sources, which are experts in the field of knowledge the writer is writing about. The writer has to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarizing can also affect the writer's credibility. In addition to that, the writer has to write for the audience. The writer has to consider the audience's needs. When the audience's needs are being met, the audience will view the writer as a credible source.



#### Activity 2a

Describe 2 ways in which credibility has been achieved in the paragraph below.

*Corruption is defined quite diversely in the literature. Yet that of Transparency International and the World Bank are the most widely accepted corruption definitions. According to Transparency International, corruption is “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (www.transparency.org, 2015) while the World Bank defines it as “the abuse of public power for private gain” (World Bank, 2000:137). In a broader definition, corruption; most prevalently conducted as bribery, covers practices such as embezzlement, rent-seeking, extortion, racketeering, lobbying, vote trading, favoritism and political favoritism (Tanzi, 1998: 8; Aktan, 2001: 51-66; Lambsdorff, 2006: 16). Especially as of 1960's; causes and consequences of corruption, as a phenomenon which impacts all societies and is characterized as an extremely complex social behavior, began to be examined by studies at academic level. On the other hand, political and economic consequences of corruption scandals that burst at numerous regions around the world in recent years; such as the collapse of governments, loss of*



*confidence towards politicians and politics and emergence of economic instability caused an increase at the interest of economists and policy-makers on the reasons and effects of corruption.*

## 1.2. Informative value

This refers to the usefulness of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value ([www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)). Informative value also refers to the quality of words in a passage, and how they have been presented in order to educate others on a certain topic.

### How is informative value achieved in a passage

A passage that has informative value must be simple, short and concise. The passage has to be consistent, complete and tailored to the needs of the audience. The aim is not narrating a story or persuading but to convey factual information, including observations and personal or other experiences. In other words, the audience is expected to change after receiving the information. A passage that has informative value has to help the audience in decision making.

## 1.3. Completeness

This refers to having all the necessary details/ words in a passage. It is also a feature of a good passage. When a sentence is complete, it simply means a sentence which will not need any alternative for the reader to understand because it gives meaning on its own.

### How can completeness be achieved in a passage

A complete passage should have the 5Ws & H (Where? What? When? Why? Who? & How?). A complete passage should also have relevant facts and figures. Apart from that, completeness can also be achieved through conciseness. The passage should be complete but should not contain a lot of unnecessary information; the writer should avoid repetition of words.



### Activity 2b

Explain how completeness has been achieved in the paragraph below:

*The most popular source for music downloads is the iTunes store. This online retailer offers millions of songs and albums, complete with album art and sometimes bonus tracks. It also sells videos, such as episodes of popular programs, so that you can see last night's **The Daily Show or Gossip Girl** right after downloading a "Clap Your Hands Say Yeah" song. iTunes software used to be for*



*Mac people only, but now PC users can get access, too. All that is required to start buying music is iTunes software, which is now dual platform. When you visit the iTunes store, you'll be able to search by artist, album, or type of music. Once you've found what you're looking for, you can listen to a sample for free. Usually, you can buy a single MP3 for \$1 or an album for about \$10. iTunes does limit the number of times you can transfer music files to other mediums (such as MP3 players and CDs), so you can't make limitless copies or mixes for your friends. But ultimately, buying music online is a great deal; you'll save on money, time, and space.*





## Lesson 2: Worthwhile content

Remember that we are still talking about how to achieve worthwhile content, and this lesson is a continuation of the last lesson.

### 2.1. Sensible organization

Sensible organization has to do with arrangement of ideas, incidents, evidence or details in a perceptible order in a paragraph or essay. It is when things are laid in some sort of order and helps the reader to work with the passage easily.

#### How to achieve sensible organization in a passage

The patterns of element arrangement can be used alone or in combination, for example, illustrations, narrations, descriptions, cause and effect, compare and contrast and problem and solution, just to mention a few. The order of major points and paragraphs should reveal a clear line of thought and emphasize what is most important. The conclusion, on the other hand, should give the reader a real sense of ending.



#### Activity 2c

Explain how the writer of the passage below achieved sensible organization:

##### ***Staying Fit***

*As in other aerobic team sports, people can get several benefits from playing soccer. First, there is the health benefit. While playing soccer, athletes use many parts of their bodies: head, chest, thighs, and feet, parts that they don't always use in everyday life. Soccer builds muscle mass, especially in the lower body. Also, since the games last 90 minutes, with players in almost constant motion, participants become aerobically fit.*

*Next, soccer helps to improve a person's attitude on life. Practice and game days help with discipline and focus. Athletes must learn plays and be able to perform them well. They must listen closely to their coach and blend their moves with teammates' to complete a play. When playing against another team, athletes must be able to think quickly and adjust to the skill level and moves of the opposing team.*

*In addition, after the game, win or lose, if they have played hard and well, the players feel an enormous sense of achievement and excitement, and they become more self-confident. However, the most important benefit from soccer is social, meeting people and forming lasting friendships. Soccer is a team sport, so teammates run plays together. They share the same emotions: happiness when winning, disappointment when losing. Players often keep in touch with each other off the field, too, so that the team becomes like an extended family. Playing soccer makes friendships strong.*



## 2.2. Readable style

This is a way of expressing words in a paragraph that can be easily read and understood. Each paragraph should be written in the sense that it should be easily understood the first time it is read by the reader.

### How to achieve a good readable style

Points in the passage should be conveyed in the fewest words possible. This means that the writer has to use simple short sentences and avoid lengthy sentences and unnecessary words. Each sentence should also be put together with enough variety. Readable style also entails that each word should do its job. This means that the writer has to use everyday language that is familiar and make sure that the meaning of the words used are precise, concrete and specific. The writer also has to make sure that the tone used is appropriate for the situation and audience.



#### Activity 2d

Using the passage “Staying Fit” in lesson 4 above, briefly discuss how readability has been achieved.



## Unit summary

You have studied in this Unit about achieving worthy while content as some of the skills you need to have in order to analyse a passage. We have discussed how we can achieve worthwhile content through Credibility, Informative value, completeness, Sensible organization and Readable style.



## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 2a

**Describe 2 ways in which credibility has been achieved in the paragraph below.**

1. The paragraph is credible in a sense that it has references. The very definitions of corruption are by different sources (www.transparency.org, 2015 & World Bank, 2000).
2. There is emphasis on important points. There is emphasis on forms of corruption and the diversity of its impact on different geographical regions i.e. economic and political consequences.

### Answer to Activity 2b

**Explain how completeness has been achieved in the paragraph below:**

1. Important points are well developed and supported in the passage. For example, the topic sentence “The most popular source for music downloads is the iTunes store.” has been supported by a sentence; “This online retailer offers millions



of songs and albums, complete with album art and sometimes bonus tracks” and other sentences.

2. There is also detailed information about iTunes. The paragraph has, among other things, indicated that one can also buy videos on iTunes and has also indicated the prices of buying songs/ albums on iTunes.

### Answer to Activity 2c

**Using the passage “Staying Fit” in lesson 4 above, briefly discuss how readability has been achieved.**

1. Each paragraph is starting with a topic sentence that summarizes content to come and it also has supporting sentences. In addition to that, the sentences are in a logical order and the paragraphs are not very long.
2. In addition to that, the writer has used everyday language that is familiar.





## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour

**Instructions:**

- There is **one** question in this Test.
- Read the passage carefully and answer the question that follows.

### **CORRUPTION**

Corruption refers to a form of criminal activity or dishonesty. It refers to an evil act by an individual or a group. Most noteworthy, this act compromises the rights and privileges of others. Furthermore, Corruption primarily includes activities like bribery or embezzlement. However, Corruption can take place in many ways. Most probably, people in positions of authority are susceptible to Corruption. Corruption certainly reflects greedy and selfish behavior.

First of all, Bribery is the most common method of corruption. Bribery involves the improper use of favors and gifts in exchange for personal gain. Furthermore, the types of favors are diverse. Above all, the favors include money, gifts, company shares, sexual favors, employment, entertainment and political benefits. Also, personal gain can be giving preferential treatment and overlooking crime.

Embezzlement refers to the act of withholding assets for the purpose of theft. Furthermore it takes place by one or more individuals who were entrusted with these assets. Above all, embezzlement is a type of financial fraud.

The graft is a global form of corruption. Most noteworthy, it refers to the illegal use of a politician's authority for personal gain. Furthermore, a popular way for the graft is misdirecting public funds for the benefit of politicians.

Extortion is another major method of corruption. It means to obtain property, money or service illegally. Above all, this obtainment takes place by coercing individuals or organizations. Hence, extortion is quite similar to blackmail.

Favoritism and nepotism is quite an old form of corruption still in usage. This refers to a person favoring one's own relatives and friends to jobs. This is certainly a very unfair practice. This is because many deserving candidates fail to get jobs.

Abuse of discretion is another method of corruption. Here, a person misuses one's power and authority. An example can be a judge unjustly dismissing a crime case.

Finally, influence peddling is the last method here. This refers to illegally using



one's influence with the government or other authorized individuals. Furthermore, it takes place in order to obtain preferential treatment of favor.

**Critically analyze the passage above in terms of:**

- a. Credibility
- b. Sensible organization
- c. Informative value
- d. Completeness
- e. Readable style



## UNIT 3: COMPOSING ARGUMENTS



### Introduction

As college students, you need to be able to write convincing argumentative essays on various topics, including emerging issues that Malawi and the world are currently facing. To be able to do this, you have to know how to write good arguments, analyze arguments, and identify and correct fallacious arguments. In this lesson, you are going to learn how to write a good argument.



### Learning outcomes

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

- a) identify the structure of arguments.
- b) explain the difference between Deductive and Inductive arguments.
- c) critically analyze arguments.
- d) apply audience analysis skills in arguments.
- e) apply ethical consideration skills in arguments.
- f) identify and correct fallacies in arguments.



### Key terms

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

- Deductive
- Inductive
- Premise





## Lesson 1: Structuring an argument

What is an argument? Try to define the term on your own. In this lesson, we will concentrate on how you can structure the argument. In everyday speech, this term is often used to mean a quarrel between two people. In academic usage, the word argument comes from the Latin “*arguere*” to mean “to prove”. Therefore, an argument is a chain of reasons which a person uses to support a conclusion, a reason for or against an idea, theory, thesis, etc. in other words, it is a discussion, either written or spoken, that takes a position about an issue and then presents reasons and evidence to convince an audience that its position is true.

To move people effectively, we need to build an argument - a convincing case for our position. Arguments require reasons/ conclusions (the main points made about an issue) and evidence to support those reasons. They also require a strong sense for an opposing viewpoint. The importance of learning how to identify, analyze and evaluate arguments becomes clear when we reflect on the multitude of emerging/ controversial issues, topics, and discussions taking place in our society today.

### 1.1. Basic structure of an argument

In a simple way, an argument needs at least one premise and one conclusion. If it does not, its not an argument. Otherwise, below are some elements or components of the structure of an argument; thesis or claim, evidence or support, reasoning or warrant, counter claim or counterargument or rebuttal and lastly, conclusion

#### a. Claim (Thesis)

The claim is the central proposition or main point of the argument. It is the statement that the author is trying to prove or support. A strong claim is specific, concise, and debatable, as it forms the foundation upon which the entire argument is built. Claims are general debatable propositions that support the Thesis. The writer asks the audience to accept the claim(s), its supporting evidence, and corresponding reasoning to show the truthfulness of the thesis. See an example:

- *Abortion should be legalized because it prevents the labor of single parenting of women.*

#### b. Evidence/ Support

Evidence is the facts that shows your claims to be true. Evidence must be factual. It must be true because if the evidence is true, it supports the truthfulness of the claim. Evidence can take the form of many things:



- Facts/statistics: commonly accepted truths in words and numbers.
- Authorities: the opinions and ideas of experts in a field.
- Examples: specific illustrations.
- Anecdotes: brief stories. Etc.

An example below shows authority based evidence:

- *Since most women are usually abandoned by their impregnators and some become pregnant out of a scenario of rape, the onus of raising a child as a single parent rests automatically on their shoulders (Mooney, 2013).*

### c. Reasoning / Warrant

Reasoning is the explanation of the logic connecting all the parts of the argument. Even when we think the logic should simply be understood, we need to explain our reasoning. This is where we make connections and explain how the evidence, claim and thesis are related. Warranting is explaining the logic that connects our ideas. It is the most important part of argumentative writing.

- *Therefore, legalizing abortion will bring an alternative from the suffering and hardships to the mother instead of giving birth to the child and suffering alone with the responsibility.*

In the example above, the writer has provided a connection between the claim (Abortion should be legalized because it prevents the labor of single parenting of women.) and the evidence provided by Mooney (2013) that in situations such as rape and abandonment by their impregnators, aborting is a good option.

### d. Counter Claim(s)

At some point, we should acknowledge the opposition and their claims in our paper. We do this by carefully presenting the opposing claims and then launching a counterclaim (refutation) attacking the truthfulness of the opposition's claim. A counterclaim is a statement countering the other side's claim to advance your side. Evidence should then be used to show the counterclaim is true. For example;

- *Women who have undergone abortion suffer from many emotional side effects. Among these are depression, long term grief reaction, anger, sexual dysfunctions, guilt, suicidal ideas and difficulty keeping close relationships (Banerjee & Anderseen, 2012). In a research by post abortion researcher Reardon (2002) it was found that 80% of women who had abortions later attempted suicide, and over half of these women did so more than once.*



*However, a study of teenagers who aborted in 1985–1986 showed that they were no more likely to have psychological problems two years later than who had gone on to give birth. In fact, they experienced less negative psychological change than the others (Zabin, Hirsch & Emerson, 1989).*

The paragraph above is a counterargument. The writer is for legalization of Abortion. After supporting his side, he is now providing counter arguments and one of the counter claims is that “*Women who have undergone abortion suffer from many emotional side effects.*” Note that the writer provides authority based evidence to support this counter claim. However, the writer has done more than just providing counter claim. The writer has also refuted the counter claim. The word “However” in the paragraph is the indication of the refutation. The writer has weakened the counter claim by proving with evidence that not every female who has aborted suffer from emotional effects.

#### **e. Conclusion**

The conclusion is the last chance for the author to leave a lasting impression on the audience. By restating the claim, summarizing key points, and reinforcing the strength of the argument, the author reminds the audience of the main takeaways. A well-crafted conclusion can leave the audience feeling satisfied and convinced, leading them to accept the claim or consider the proposed course of action.

## **1.2. Types of arguments**

Most everyone who thinks about how to solve problems in a formal way has run across the concepts of deductive and inductive reasoning. Both deduction and induction help us navigate real-world problems, such as who committed a crime, the most likely cause of an accident, or how many planets might contain life in the Milky Way galaxy. While they’re both practical tools for practical problems, they approach problem-solving in opposite ways. There are two major kinds of reasoning; Deductive and Inductive.

### **1. Deductive arguments**

Deductive argument works from the more general to the more specific. Sometimes this is informally called a “top-down” approach. We might begin with thinking up a theory about our topic of interest. We then narrow that down into more specific hypotheses that we can test. We narrow down even further when we collect observation to address the hypotheses. For example;



- *All reptiles ever examined are cold-blooded. Dinosaurs resemble reptiles in many ways. So dinosaurs were cold blooded.*

## Evaluation of deductive arguments

Deductive arguments are evaluated based on validity and soundness.

### a. Validity

Validity denotes logical strength. Validity is about the strength of the inference, or reasoning, between the premises and the conclusion. A deductive argument is Valid if its conclusion follows necessarily from its premises. Validity is concerned only with the logical structure of the argument. It has nothing to do with the truth of the premises or the conclusion.

To determine if an argument is valid or invalid Firstly, assume that the premises are true, even if they are not; pretend that they are true. Then ask yourself whether the conclusion would need to be true, assuming/pretending that the premises are true. Consider the example below:

**Premise 1:** *All unicorns eat pixie dust.* (False)

**Premise 2:** *James is a unicorn.* (False)

**Conclusion:** *Therefore, James eats pixie dust* (False) (**Valid**)

### b. Soundness

Soundness denotes both the truth of its premises and its logical strength. In other words, a deductive argument is sound when it is valid, and when all its premises are true. Consider the following example:

**Premise 1:** *All men are mortal* (True).

**Premise 2:** *James is a man* (True).

**Conclusion:** *Therefore, James is mortal* (True) (**Sound**)

This argument is sound because it is valid (the premises support the conclusion by necessity) and all of the premises are actually true! We all know that all men are susceptible to death and the fact that James is a man means that he will die one day.

## 2. Inductive arguments.

Inductive arguments works the other way, moving from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories. Informally, we sometimes call this a “bottom up” approach (please note that it’s “bottom up” and *not* “bottoms up”. In inductive reasoning, we begin with specific observations and measures, begin to detect



patterns and regularities, formulate some tentative hypotheses that we can explore, and finally end up developing some general conclusions or theories. For example;

- *Based on a survey of 2200 randomly selected likely voters, 56.2% indicate that they will vote for Lazarus Chakwera in the upcoming election. Therefore, approximately 56% of the votes in the upcoming election will be for Lazarus Chakwera.*

## Evaluation of Inductive arguments

Inductive arguments are evaluated based on strength and cogency.

### a. Inductive strength

Inductive strength denotes logical strength. The strength of an inductive argument is a measure of how well the premises support the conclusion. This is subjective (a personal judgment). “Strong” and “weak” are the terms used to describe the possibilities for the logical strength of inductive arguments. To determine if an argument is strong or weak, firstly, assume the premises are true, even if they are not; pretend for now that they are true. Then ask yourself whether it is likely/probable that the conclusion would be true, assuming/ pretending that those premises are true. Consider the example below:

**Premise 1:** *Most actors are robots.*

**Premise 2:** *Tom is an actor.*

**Conclusion:** *Therefore, Tom is a robot.*

This argument is inductively strong because **if** all its premises were true, then it would be highly likely or probable that its conclusion would also be true. The first premise “**Most** actors are robots.” Indicates that there is a large percentage of actors are robots. If Tom is a robot then there is a high chance/ it is highly likely that Tom is also a robot hence the argument is inductively strong.

### b. Cogency

Cogency denotes the truth of its premises and its logical strength. An inductive argument is cogent when it is inductively strong and when it has all true premises. Consider the example below;

**Premise 1:** *Europa has an atmosphere containing oxygen.* (True)

**Premise 2:** *Oxygen is required for life.* (True)

**Conclusion:** *Thus, there may be life on Europa.* (True)



This argument is cogent because it is inductively strong (if the premises were true, then the conclusion would probably be true) and the premises are actually true.



### Activity 3a

Evaluate the following arguments in terms of validity, soundness, strength and cogency:

1. Some professors wear glasses. Mr. Mgawi wears glasses. Therefore, Mr. Mgawi is a professor.
2. Roses are red and beautiful. Einstein was a genius. Therefore, if roses are red and beautiful, Einstein was a genius.
3. All lecturers are over 7 feet tall. Mr. Kondowe is a lecturer. Therefore, Mr. Kondowe is over 7 feet tall.
4. When a lighted match is slowly dunked into water, the flame is snuffed out. But gasoline is a liquid, just like water. Therefore, when a lighted match is slowly dunked into gasoline, the flame will be snuffed out.
5. No one who can afford health insurance is unemployed. All politicians can afford health insurance. Therefore, no politician is unemployed.

### 1.3. Analyzing arguments

As we analyze a spoken or written argument, we must “break it down” to identify components of an argument before we can determine whether or not it is strong or weak, effective or not. Consider the paragraph below:

- *Mangochi is a very safe place to live. Take a quick stroll around town, and you will likely run into friendly and helpful people. A study showed a 60% decreased in robberies and burglaries in recent years. No violent crimes were reported last year.*

In order to analyze the passage, ask yourself the following questions; what’s the point here? Does the author provide sufficient evidence? Does the author provide good and relevant evidence to the conclusion? These questions will help you to know the strength, cogency, soundness and validity of the argument presented.

For example, looking at the second premise (*A study showed a 60% decreased in robberies and burglaries in recent years*), one of the question we have to ask ourselves is “60% of how many cases?” if it 60% of 1000 cases the Mangochi still has 400 robberies and burglaries hence it is not a safe place. The first premise (*Take a quick stroll around town, and you will likely run into friendly and helpful people.*) does not fully support the claim that Mangochi is a safe place because friendly and helpful people has nothing to do with safety.





## Lesson 2: Emerging issues

Most of the argumentative essays you are going to write in your first year will be on emerging issues affecting Malawi and the world at large. Emerging issues are national and global issues that demand an informed approach from governments, global organizations, communities and individuals. These issues are a major consideration in economic sustainability. They have the potential to have a positive or negative impact and in some cases a dramatic impact on the future.

Examples of emerging issues include; Air pollution and climate change, gender-based violence, COVID-19, HIV/AIDS, depletion of stratospheric ozone, vaccine hesitancy, Legalization of abortion, and Capital punishment.

### 2.1. Audience analysis

While you can generally assume your reader is your teacher or a well-informed peer, you may be asked to write an argumentative paper for a specific audience. For example, if you are trying to convince an expert as opposed to someone with only casual knowledge of your topic, the types of evidence and even the terms you use will differ. If writing for a hostile audience (people who you expect will disagree with you), you have to work harder to anticipate counter arguments and focus on establishing common ground between your diverging positions. Audience analysis involves among others considering the following elements:

- a. **Age:** where possible know the age, age range or average of the recipients. This is important since different ages have different needs and expectations.
- b. **Gender:** find out if the audience is male, female or mixed. This assists the writer determine the relevance of their message, examples etc.
- c. **Level of knowledge, education, experiences:** writer needs to know what the audience already know and what they need to know from the writer. The writer may then build on what the audience already knows.
- d. **Recipients' motivation:** depending on age, gender and level of knowledge, the writer needs to think about what can easily motivate the audience into following, learning or acting according to writer's goals. Writer may use statistics, facts, examples etc.
- e. **Social status:** the writer needs to understand the cultural, economic, political and religious stand of the audience. Without establishing this stand the writer may use illustrations or example which are offensive to the audience.



## 2.2. Ethical considerations

While the term 'ethics' is used in a wide variety of senses, its meaning consistently relates to an 'ethos' (the act of persuading the audience by using the character/credibility of the speaker) or 'way of life. An ethical consideration is an accumulation of values and principles that address questions of what is good or bad in human affairs.

We are often tempted to emphasize anything that advances our case and to ignore anything that impedes it. But a message is unethical if it exploits fallacies or prevents readers from making their best decisions. The following are five proposed ethical considerations in writing or in argumentation; honesty, accuracy and fairness.

### a. Honesty

Honesty deals with making a clear distinction between certainty and probability. The writer has to make sure that the information sources are valid, reliable and relatively unbiased. The writer has to believe what they are saying, instead of advancing a hidden agenda. Honesty also entails that the writer would still advocate this position if he or she was held publicly accountable for it. The writer has to inform people of all the consequences or risks of what he or advocating. In addition to that, the writer should give feedback or criticism, if it is warranted.

Honesty demands accurate representations of information – making up statistics, taking information out of context, or misquoting sources, plagiarism (even when it happens unintentionally) are all dishonest acts, and hence unethical and still demonstrate a lapse in ethical judgment. Honesty also may require you to be candid and direct rather than passive aggressive or beating around the bush. Implying rather than stating claims may be an unethical act when used to manipulate others.

### b. Accuracy

Accuracy deals with exploring all sides of the issue and all possible alternatives. It also requires provision of enough information and interpretation for readers to understand the facts as the writer knows them. Accuracy may also require avoiding exaggeration, understatement, sugarcoating, or any distortion or omission that leaves readers at a disadvantage. This means that making up statistics, taking information out of context, or misquoting sources, plagiarism (even when it



happens unintentionally) are all dishonest acts, and hence unethical and still demonstrate a lapse in ethical judgment. Accuracy also entails stating the case clearly instead of hiding behind fallacies and generalities.

### **c. Fairness**

Fairness deals with being reasonably sure that the writer's document or writing will harm no innocent persons or damage their reputation. The writer has to make sure that he or she is respecting all legitimate rights to privacy and confidentiality and that he or she is distributing copies of his or her writings to every person who has the right to know about it. Lastly, the writer has to credit all contributors and sources of ideas and information.



#### **Activity 3b**

- a. List any five emerging issues affecting Malawi and the world today.
- b. Using three points, briefly discuss the importance of audience analysis in academic writing.
- c. Briefly explain three reasons why it is important for a college student to consider ethics when writing argumentative essays?





## Lesson 3: Fallacies

Fallacies are common errors in reasoning that will undermine the logic of your argument. Fallacies can be either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points, and are often identified because they lack evidence that supports their claim (conclusion). We are going to study fallacies for two reasons: The first is to help you avoid them in your own thinking and identify them when they are used against you in debate. The second reason is that understanding why these patterns of argument are fallacious will help us understand the nature of good reasoning.

### 3.1. Types of fallacies

There are several types of fallacies and they are discussed below.

#### 1. Ad Hominem/Personal attack/against the man

An ad hominem argument rejects or dismisses another person's statement by attacking the person rather than the statement itself. There are many different forms of this fallacy, but all of them involve some attempt to avoid dealing with a statement logically, and in each case the method is to attempt to discredit the speaker by citing some negative trait. For example;

- *“You shouldn't vote for Mrs. Chisala because her husband's brother is in jail.”*

#### 2. Appeal to majority/bandwagon/appeal to common belief or appeal to the masses

The fallacy of **appeal to majority** is committed whenever someone takes a proposition to be true merely because large numbers of people believe it or that a claim is false because a lot of people do not believe it. Whether or not an idea is true is rarely a matter of how many people believe it. Consider the example below:

- *Nowadays everyone (except you) has a smartphone and knows how to use it. So, you too should have a smartphone and know how to use it.*

#### 3. Appeal to emotion

This fallacy is the attempt to persuade someone of a conclusion by an appeal to emotion instead of evidence. A person who commits this fallacy is hoping that his listeners will adopt a belief on the basis of a feeling he has instilled in them: outrage, hostility, fear, pity, guilt, or whatever. It may take the form of rhetorical language that is heavily laden with emotive connotations, as in propaganda and other sorts of inflammable political speech. The fallacy may also take the form of visual images



that have a strong emotional impact. Consider the example below:

- *Power lines cause cancer. I met a little boy with cancer who lived just 20 miles from a power line who looked into my eyes and said, in his weak voice, “Please do whatever you can so that other kids won’t have to go through what I am going through.” I urge you to vote for this bill to tear down all power lines and replace them with monkeys on treadmills.*

#### **4. Appeal to authority (Argumentum ad Verecundiam)**

An authority is someone whose word carries special weight, someone who can speak with authority because of expertise in some area of knowledge such as law, science, or medicine. It is appropriate to rely on the testimony of authorities if the conditions of credibility are satisfied. If they are not satisfied, the appeal to authority is fallacious. The fallacy in this type of reasoning occurs when we confuse the truth of the proposition with the person stating it. Instead of considering the strength of the argument and any evidence associated with it, we focus solely on the individual.

- *A commercial claims that a specific brand of cereal is the best way to start the day because athlete Gabadinho Mhango says that it is what he eats every day for breakfast.*

#### **5. Hasty generalization/ Oversimplification fallacy**

It refers to an argument in which a conclusion is made on the basis of scanty evidence. You cannot make a claim and say that something is true if you have only an example or two as evidence. For example;

- *Some teenagers in our community recently vandalized the park downtown. Teenagers are so irresponsible and destructive.*

#### **6. Stereotype fallacy**

Stereotype refers to a fixed idea or image that many people have of particular person or thing. It is a particular kind of hasty generalisation and it refers to a fixed idea about characteristics of a particular group of people. In this fallacy, people ascribe individual characteristics to an entire group – thus, what one does or says as an individual is deemed as a representation of the entire group without considering individual differences or uniqueness of human beings.

- *Henry a Lomwe Man who worked for a certain company embezzled K200 000 and disappeared. Now everybody in that company goes about saying that Lomwe’s can’t be trusted.*



## 7. Slippery slope argument.

In a slippery slope argument, a course of action is rejected because, with little or no evidence, one insists that it will lead to a chain reaction resulting in an undesirable end or ends. The slippery slope involves an acceptance of a succession of events without direct evidence that this course of events will happen. For example;

- *Today late for ten minutes, tomorrow late for an hour, and then someday you will simply cease to show up.*

## 8. Begging the question (Circular argument)

The fallacy of begging the question occurs when an argument's premises assume the truth of the conclusion, instead of supporting it. In other words, you assume without proof the stand/position, or a significant part of the stand, that is in question. Begging the question is also called arguing in a circle.

- *Society has an obligation to support the needy, because people who cannot provide for themselves have a right to the resources of the community.*

## 9. Red herring/Diversion

This fallacy consists in diverting attention from the real issue by focusing instead on an issue having only a surface relevance to the first. In other words, irrelevant information is presented alongside relevant information, distracting attention from that relevant information. This may be done intentionally or unintentionally. For example;

- *The mayor has proposed building a new sports stadium. How can he consider allocating millions of dollars to this scheme when so many professional athletes are being paid such high salaries?*

## 10. Guilt by association:

This fallacy occurs when someone connects an opponent to a demonised group of people or to a bad person in order to discredit his or her argument. The idea is that the person is guilty by simply being similar to this “bad” group and, therefore, should not be listened to about anything. Consider the following example;

- *We cannot have the educational reform that Mr Smith calls for because Dr. Corrupt has also mentioned this kind of educational reform.*

## 11. Straw man fallacy

Occurs when someone takes another person's argument or point, distorts it or



exaggerates it in some kind of extreme way, and then attacks the extreme distortion, as if that is really the claim the first person is making. It is committed when a person misrepresents the argument or theory of another person and then, on the basis of misrepresentation, purports to refute the real argument or theory. Consider the example;

**Person 1:**

*I think pollution from humans contributes to climate change.*

**Person 2:**

*So, you think humans are directly responsible for extreme weather, like hurricanes, and have caused the droughts in the southwestern U.S.? If that's the case, maybe we just need to go to the southwest and perform a "rain dance."*

## 12. False analogy fallacy

An analogy is a comparison done to show similarity in some respects. And a false analogy is a comparison in which two *dissimilar* things are shown to have something in common. This is fallacy because the speaker or writer compares things that are apparently different therefore he or she is not reasonable in doing so. Let us consider an example:

- *Being a parent is like having a full-time job. The responsibilities are enormous and doing a good job requires a tremendous amount of time, energy and expense. Therefore parents should be paid by the government for caring for their children.*



### Activity 3c

Find out what the following types of fallacies are on your own:

- Appeal to tradition/genetic fallacy
- Circular reasoning/tautology
- Misleading language/misleading evidence/ equivocation/ slanted statistics
- Ambiguity
- Faulty extension/reduction to absurd
- Two wrongs make right
- Metaphorical fallacy
- Cause and effect fallacy





## Lesson 4: Appeals to persuasion/argumentation

The goal of argumentative writing is to persuade your audience that your ideas are valid, or more valid than someone else's. The Greek philosopher Aristotle divided the means of persuasion, appeals, into three categories – Logos (Logical), Ethos (ethical) and Pathos (Emotional).

### 4.1. Logical appeal (Logos)

Logical appeal also known as “logical” “evidential” “rational” appeal is the strategic use of logic, claims, and evidence to convince an audience of a certain point. Sometimes we come to believe something simply because someone gave us what we considered to be a “good reason.” Here is where we consider evidence and reasoning as parts of the persuasive process. Logical appeals are formed by defining the evidence and then explaining how the evidence must logically prove that a certain conclusion must be true.

### 4.2. Ethical appeal (Ethos)

Ethical appeal which is also called credibility appeal. means to convince an audience of the **author's credibility** or **character**. An author would use ethos to show to his audience that he is a credible source and is worth listening to. Ethos is the Greek word for “character.” it is an appeal to “**Ethics**”. Ethos can be developed by choosing language that is appropriate for the audience and topic (also means choosing proper level of vocabulary), making yourself sound fair or unbiased, using reliable sources, introducing your expertise or pedigree, and by using correct grammar and syntax.

Think of ethics as the force of character of the speaker as it is represented in oration or writing. If you misrepresent the evidence or one of your sources, your reader will question your ethics. In any situation where you must rely on your reader's good will and common sense, you will lose your reader's open-minded stance toward your argument when you use unethical methods to support your argument.

This can happen intentionally, by misrepresenting evidence and experts and by seeking to hurt individuals or groups. You may also undermine your argument by unintentional misunderstanding of the evidence and the implications of your position. This can happen when you do not research the evidence responsibly, preferring instead to express your own and others' unfounded opinions.



### 4.3. Emotional appeal (Pathos)

Pathos or the emotional appeal, means to persuade an audience by appealing to their emotions. Authors use pathos to invoke sympathy from an audience; to make the audience feel what the author wants them to feel. A common use of pathos would be to draw pity from an audience. Another use of pathos would be to inspire anger from an audience; perhaps in order to prompt action.

Since humans are in many ways emotional creatures, pathos can be a very powerful strategy in argument. For this same reason, however, emotional appeal is sometimes often misused to intentionally mislead readers or to hide an argument that is weak in logical appeal. Pathos can be developed by using meaningful language, emotional tone, emotion evoking examples / visuals (think of advertisements, with their powerful imagery, colors, fonts, and symbols), stories of emotional events, and implied meanings.

Using emotions as a support for argument can be tricky. Attempting to play on your readers' emotions can smack of manipulation and is often mistrusted. To use emotional appeal successfully, you need to apply discretion and restraint. You need to choose examples that represent and illustrate your ideas **fairly** and then present your arguments as objectively as possible. The writer must carefully draw the connections between the ideas and illustrations, choosing diction in such a way that readers do not question motives as manipulative and sensational. Strong evidence accumulated by careful research often addresses this potential problem well.



#### Activity 3d

Using relevant examples, differentiate the logical, emotional and ethical appeals to persuasion.



### Unit summary

In this Unit you have learnt about how to identify, analyze and evaluate arguments on emerging or controversial issues in our society today. We discussed as the following:

- An argument is made up of premises and a conclusion.
- There are different types of fallacies.
- Different aspects of the audience to analyse in academic writing.

In the next unit you will learn about introduction to academic report writing.





## Further reading

Beqiri, G. (2018, April 11). *Ethos, pathos, logos: 3 pillars of public speaking and persuasion*. VirtualSpeech. <https://virtualspeech.com/blog/ethos-pathos-logos-public-speaking-persuasion>

Highbrow. (2020). *Validity, soundness, and cogency*. Highbrow. <https://gohighbrow.com/validity-soundness-and-cogency/>



## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 3a

**Evaluate the following arguments in terms of validity, soundness, strength and cogency:**

1. Invalid;
2. Valid, Unsound.
3. Valid, Unsound; the first premise is false.
4. Inductive Argument, Weak, Uncogent.
5. Valid, Sound.

### Answer to Activity 3b

**List any five emerging issues affecting Malawi and the whole today.**

1. Covid-19
2. Ocean degradation
3. Mental health
4. Overpopulation
5. Waste disposal

**Using three points, briefly discuss the importance of audience analysis in academic writing.**

1. Audience analysis helps the writer to discover information that he or she can use in his or her writing. If, for example, the audience is knowledgeable about the topic, then there is no need for the writer to include many details. However, if the audience is not knowledgeable about the topic then the writer has to include a lot of information such as examples and visual aids in his or her so that the audience should have a better understanding of the topic.

Audience analysis helps the writer to know the language to use. If, for example, the audience is comprised of experts in the field in which the writer is writing then the writer may use technical jargons because experts will easily understand. When the audience is not made of experts then the best way to communicate to them is to use simple language. In addition to that, audience analysis also helps the tone of the written document. When writing to company executives, the writer has to use formal diction while when writing to colleagues, the writer can use an informal diction.



3. It helps the presenter to determine whether to use visual aids or not. Some readers are motivated by visual aids while some readers are not. Through audience analysis, the writer can easily know what motivates his or her audience. If, for example, the audience is motivated with visual aids such as graphs then the writer has to incorporate graphs in his or her writing so as to motivate the audience to read the writing.

**Briefly explain three reasons why it is important for a college student to consider ethics when writing argumentative essays?**

1. Accuracy will help the student to consider both sides of the issue he or she is writing about. This means that the writer will write points of the side he or she is supporting and the counter argument points. Accuracy will also help the reader to provide enough information and interpretation for his or her readers to understand the facts as the writer knows them.
2. Ethical considerations will help the writer to be honest in his or her essay. This entails that the writer will use sources that are valid, reliable and relatively unbiased to back up his points and even the counter arguments. Honesty also will help the writer to make sure that he or she would still advocate this position if he or she was held publicly accountable for it. This means that if the writer has written that he is supporting legalization of abortion in Malawi, then he or she will still support that position no matter what.
3. Ethical consideration will also help the writer to be fair in his or her essay. This means that the writer will make sure his or her document or writing will not harm innocent persons or damage their reputation. Fairness will also help the writer has to credit all contributors and sources of ideas and information. In addition to that, fairness will also help the writer to consider the counter arguments of his side. For, example, if the writer is supporting that capital punishment is good, he or she also to consider the side that it is also bad.

**Answer to Activity 3c**

**This activity is a reading assignment.**

**Answer to Activity 3d**

**Using relevant examples, differentiate the logical, emotional and ethical appeals to persuasion.**

1. An appeal to logic is a way of convincing or persuading an audience by reason or rationality. This involves the use of logic, claims and evidence to persuade an audience of a certain point. For example, “Buy my old car because yours is broken and mine is the only one on sale.”
2. An appeal to emotion is a way of convincing an audience of an argument by creating emotional response. These emotions include; happiness, sadness, fear and anger. This appeal targets the audience’s emotions to create some kind of connection with the persuader and uses the manipulation of the audience’s emotions rather than valid logic to win an argument. This appeal uses emotions as the basis of an argument’s position without factual evidence that logically supports the major ideas endorsed by the persuader.

In emotional appeal, persuasive language is used to develop the foundation of an appeal to emotion based arguments instead of facts. An example could be: "Buy my old car or this cute little kitten, afflicted with a rare degenerative disease, will expire in agony, for my car is the last asset I have in the world, and I am selling it to pay for kitty's medical treatment."

3. An appeal to ethics is a way of persuading someone of the character or credibility of the persuader. This appeal is used to establish the persuader as fair, open-minded, honest and knowledgeable about the





## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes.

**Instructions:**

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

### Question One

Analyze the following arguments in terms of validity, soundness, strength and cogency: **(10 marks)**

- No book in English begins numbering its pages on a left-hand page. This is a book in English, therefore it will begin its numbering on a right-hand page.
- Most of the EAP assignments in the course have been very easy so far. The lecturer announced that the next EAP assignment will be extremely difficult. Therefore, the next assignment will be very easy as well.
- All crows are black. John is black. Therefore, John is a crow.
- All northerners are intelligent. Waliko is from the north. So, Waliko is intelligent.
- Most birds can fly. Tweety is a bird. Therefore, Tweety can probably fly.

### Question Two

Write examples of the following informal and informal fallacies: **(12 marks)**

- Affirming the consequent.
- Hasty Generalization.
- False Dilemma.
- Denying the antecedent.
- Slippery slope.
- Appeal to emotions.

### Question Three

Using relevant examples, briefly explain how the following persuasion appeals can be applied in written communication: **(8 marks)**

- Logical appeal.
- Ethical appeal.
- Emotional appeal.
- Appeal to Authority.



## UNIT 4: INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC REPORT WRITING



### Introduction

As students and employees you will need to write good reports that will effectively communicate to fellow students, colleagues and even supervisors. Reports are written to present facts about a situation, project, or process and will define and analyze the issue at hand. Unlike an essay, which sets out to defend a writer's view about a topic and does not have to feature headings, a report discusses a topic in a structured, easy-to-follow format. Having report writing skills will enable you to be able to relay observations to a specific audience in a clear and concise style. In this Unit you will learn about academic report writing.



### Learning outcomes

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

- a) define a report.
- b) state the purpose of writing reports.
- c) discuss the importance of a report.
- d) state the different kinds of reports.
- e) apply the PASS principle in report writing.
- f) describe the structure of a short formal report.
- g) differentiate a field report from a progress report.



### Key terms

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

- Informational Report
- Analytical Report





## Lesson 1: Understanding the report

A report is a structured form of written communication, in which information or findings are presented, and a set of conclusions drawn. In this lesson, you will learn why importance and purpose of reports.

### 1.1. Why are reports important?

- a. Reports are indispensable in business. As an organization grows, the exchange and flow of information becomes more vital. Employees report their activities vertically to supervisors. At the same time, the various divisions of a business communicate horizontally with each other through reports.
- b. Management decisions in many organizations are based on information submitted in the form of reports.
- c. Routine reports keep managers informed about completed tasks, projects, and work in progress. Reports help to analyze problems, gather and study the facts, and then assess the alternatives.
- d. Reports help in understanding and studying systematically the challenges organizations encounter in business before they can outline the steps toward solving them.

The reports may be short, long, informal (Memo or Letter format) or formal, descriptive, narrative or evaluative.

### 1.2. Purpose of writing a report

The purpose of reports will vary; the purpose could be one or more of the following:

- To inform the readers.
- To provide a basis for discussion and debate.
- To sell or persuade the readers.

Reports can be categorized in different ways, such as length, tone (formal or informal), purpose and their format etc. However, the focus here will be on purpose. The following are the three broad categories based on the general purpose of the report:

#### 1. Informational reports

Reports that present data without analysis or recommendations are primarily informational. For such reports, writers collect and organize facts, but they do not analyze the facts for readers. A trip report describing an employee's visit to a trade



show, for example, presents information. These reports present information in a manner that readers can do their own analyses, interpretations and recommendations. The reports convey facts by indicating what is or what was and what will be.

### **Kinds of informational reports.**

- i. **Progress and project reports:** task and time related documents that describe tasks.
- ii. **Situation reports:** related to events or conditions such as what has happened in a particular situation- workplace or equipment.
- iii. **Site visits report:** describe visits, trips, observations or actions taken at a location other than the writer's work station- Field trip.
- iv. **Process descriptions and instructional reports:** describe how something is done-processes.

### **2. Analytical reports**

These are reports that provide data or findings, analyses, and conclusions are analytical. Analytical reports build on information, going beyond the mere giving of data. They try to find causes of a problem and show consequences. The report review to determine what caused something, analyze and evaluate data. Analytical reports usually deal with why something is so. Analytical reports may intend to persuade readers to act or change their beliefs. For example, if you were writing a yardstick report that compares several potential manufacturing locations for a new automobile plant, you might conclude by recommending one site after discussing several criteria.

### **Kinds of analytical reports**

- i. **Evaluation reports:** Present data and the writer's judgment of that information. These reports are fairly long.
- ii. **Feasibility reports:** Assess the practicability of a proposed project or change. Assist in deciding the course of action to take-proposal.
- iii. **Laboratory and test reports:** This is a presentation of research results or testing and should include: purpose, methods, results, conclusion & recommendations.

### **3. Persuasive reports**

The purpose of these reports is to influence decisions in determining a course of



action. They are concerned with the action oriented question- “what next?”. The report must contain data and must give interpretation of the data. Most often, the title and the body of the report must contain specific words intended to persuade.

### **Kinds of persuasive reports**

- i. **Proposals:** They propose a change, a solution, an action. This is a strong statement that show what should be done, how, when and why? It could be solicited or unsolicited.
- ii. **Responses to Requests for Proposals (RFPs):** Indicate what an entity can do to meet a stated need and specify how it can do so. Bids are submitted for that purpose.

### **1.3. Important considerations in report writing**

One of important considerations in report writing is the **PASS** principle, **P**urpose, **A**udience, **S**tyl, **S**tructure.

#### **a. Purpose**

The first element to consider is to know the purpose. Ask yourself two important questions: (a) Why am I sending this message? and (b) What do I hope to achieve? Knowing the purpose involves understanding the aims, reasons or objectives to be accomplished as a result of communicating. When the objectives of communication 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. The communication objectives can be evaluate with the **SMART** acronym.

#### **i. Simple**

Simple objectives make is simple for the presenter to communicate and easy for the audience to understand. The failure to simplify objectives leads to complex messages which lead to information overload.

#### **ii. Measurable**

Objectives need to have a way of assessing how the objectives have been achieved. For example, a measure of the success of a report aimed at informing people can be the level of knowledge that the people will get after reading the report. An objective or purpose which is not measurable is therefore as good as laboring in vain.



### **iii. Attainable**

This is a check as to whether the objectives are possible and can be achieved. Objectives can be achievable for some people and not for others. Its imperative to come up with objectives that can be achieved given the resources that are available.

### **iv. Realistic**

Objectives should be those that are based on actual and genuine need of the audience. Objectives that are realistic aim at providing solutions to actual problems. There should be practical means of achieving the objectives. Do not be theoretical but be practical.

### **v. Time Bound**

When setting objectives, consider time to be taken to accomplish those objectives. This also includes time given to the author to accomplish the objectives. Time limits also assist us to evaluate how we have spent time in relation to the tasks before use. It is therefore the consciousness of time that enables us to determine if there is progress in what we are doing.

#### **b. Audience**

While you can generally assume your reader is your teacher or a well-informed peer, you may be asked to write a memo or report for a specific audience. For example, if you are trying to convince an expert as opposed to someone with only casual knowledge of your topic, the types of evidence and even the terms you use will differ.

If writing for a hostile audience (people who you expect will disagree with you), you have to work harder to anticipate counter arguments 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 among others considering the following elements:

- i. **Age:** where possible know the age, age range or average of the recipients. This is important since different ages have different needs and expectations.
- ii. **Gender:** find out if the audience is male, female or mixed. This assists the writer determine the relevance of their message, examples etc.
- iii. **Level of knowledge, education, experiences:** writer needs to know what the audience already know and what they need to know from the writer. The



writer may then build on what the audience already knows.

- iv. **Recipients' motivation:** depending on age, gender and level of knowledge, the writer needs to think about what can easily motivate the audience into following, learning or acting according to writer's goals. Writer may use statistics, facts, examples etc.
- v. **Social status:** the writer needs to understand the cultural, economic, political and religious stand of the audience. Without establishing this stand the writer may use illustrations or example which are offensive to the audience.

### c. Style

There are two considerations to be made in relation to style: style of presentation and choice of diction.

#### i. Style of presentation

After audience analysis, the author has to choose a style of presenting the information. A letter, a memo, a press release, a report, a newspaper etc. are some of the styles. Factors to consider when choosing the style include;

- **Cost of the channel:** Some channels are more expensive than others. It is therefore wise to use channels that can deliver the message at a reasonable cost.
- **The urgency of the message:** Some messages are urgent than others and have to be sent via a quick channel.
- **The nature of the message:** Some messages are private and confidential, for example, medical reports. Sending such messages would require channels that are private.
- **The distance between the sender and the receiver:** Some channels are limited by distance, for instance, face to face oral conversations. It's imperative to consider distance between the sender and receiver before choosing a channel of communication.
- **The viability of the channel:** Some channels are subjects to abuse and distortion. For instance, an oral message sent through several people is likely to be distorted along the way. A poster pasted on a notice board may be distorted or be torn by some people. It is advisable to use channels that are likely to deliver the message in its original form.
- **Need to keep records:** Some information may need to be kept for future reference or may need to be kept as a legal document.



## ii. Choice of diction

This involves choosing the vocabulary to be used. For instance, after choosing a letter as your style, one has to determine the type of language and impression he wants to make. Writings that are described as formal, strong, serious, friendly etc. depend on the writers' choice of words and expressions.

### d. Structure

It involves correct manners of presentation. There are two levels of structure:

#### i. Layout

It refers to the general presentation or outlook of the message. A reader will know that the message is in form of a report because of its layout: introduction, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

#### ii. Content

It refers to the material that forms the text of the message. Layout can be linked to the vehicle while content the people in the vehicle. Structure in respect to content refers to the presentation of the Introduction, Body and Conclusion. The introduction aims at making the topic familiar to the recipient by, among other things, reminding audience what they already know or need to know before reading the body. The body encompasses the methodology and findings and presents all material that prompted the sender to communicate. This includes all details the receiver might need to understand the topic. The conclusion, among other things, restates the objective of the communication and summarizes the main ideas discussed in the body.

## 1.4. Short formal report structure

Short formal reports require more careful presentation than the informal reports. Because they will be distributed outside the originating institution, their writers must consider the impression the reports will convey of the entire company. The presentation aspect must convey the originating company's 'image', suit the purpose of the report, and fit the subject it describes. Formal reports are made up of several standard parts, not all of which appear in every report. Each writer uses the parts that best suit the particular subject and the intended method of presentation.

There are 5 major parts and several subsidiary parts of short formal reports and these are: cover/jacket, title page, Summary, table of contents, Introduction, Methodology, Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendation, reference, Appendix.



### **a. Title**

The title should clearly convey to the reader the nature of the report. It needs to be informative and descriptive so that someone just reading the title will understand the main issue of your report. You don't need to include excessive detail in your title but avoid being vague and too general.

### **b. Introduction**

The introduction begins the major narrative of the report by preparing readers for the discussion that follows. It orients them to the purpose and scope of the report. Written in paragraph format and contain the following information:

- The nature of report - **the statement of the problem** (the specific problem that was investigated).
- The reasons for writing the report and indicate whether the report is solicited or not.
- The name and position of the recipient.
- The name and position of the author.
- Date of submission.
- If appropriate, details of confidentiality.

Use the introduction to provide the reader with any background information which the reader will need before you can launch into the body of your paper. You may have to provide background such as theory or history of the subject.

### **c. Methods**

This section briefly introduces the methods that were used in investigating the issue being presented in the report (secondary and primary information sources). The report may use interviews, questionnaires, observations, literature review. You need to state clearly how you carried out your investigation. You also need to explain why you chose this particular method (questionnaires, focus group, experimental procedure etc), include techniques and any equipment you used. If there were participants in your research, who were they? How many? How were they selected? Write this section concisely but thoroughly – go through what you did step by step, including everything that is relevant.

### **d. Findings**

The findings which is the longest part of a report, presents all the evidence (facts, arguments, details, data, and results of tests) that readers need to understand the subject. This is where the accumulated data from interviews, documents,



observation is presented. The writer must organize the data logically to avoid confusing readers, but to hold their interest. This section should be presented in a factual and objective manner without personal opinions or interpretations. Present all findings whether positive or negative.

#### e. Conclusion

Summarizes the answers to the objectives of the report. This is where you draw all the threads together, the points arising from the findings section, and further discussing the most interesting or unexpected findings and trying to account for these. There should be no new data introduced in this section.

#### f. Recommendations

In this section, the author of the report gives free advice to the reader, following the results of the investigation carried out. The recommendations are based on the outcome of the investigation. The recommendation may be given to change the existing situation, if it is undesirable, or improve it. The recommendation may also include the way forward. They should be realistic and specific; clearly stating what should be done, by whom and in what timescales.

### 1.5. Report numbering system

Most reports have a progressive numbering system. The most common system is the decimal notation system.

- The **main sections** are given single Arabic numbers - 1, 2, 3 and so on.
- **Sub-sections** are given a decimal number - 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and so on.
- **Sub-sections** can be further divided into - 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and so on.



#### Activity 4a

Collect some reports from any organization, from college library or download from the internet. With your groups members identify effective report structure and style.





## Lesson 2: Types of reports

In this lesson, we will focus on types of reports. There are different types of report, however, you are going to learn about field and progress reports.

### 2.1. Field reports

It is a written document from data collected outside of the office or field and intends to describe an observed person, place or event. The purpose of a field report in the social sciences is to describe the observation of people, places, and/or events and to analyze that observation data in order to identify and categorize common themes in relation to the research problem underpinning the study (Uwe,2018). The content represents the researcher's interpretation of meaning found in data that has been gathered during one or more observational events.

### 2.2. Progress reports

One writes a progress report to inform a supervisor, associate, or client about progress he or she has made on a project over a specific period of time. Periodic progress reports are common on projects that go on for several weeks, months or more. Whoever is paying for this project wants to know whether tasks are being completed on schedule and on budget. If the project is not on schedule or on budget, they want to know why and what additional costs and time will be needed. Some of the questions progress reports answer for the audience include:

- How much of the work is complete?
- What part of the work is currently in progress?
- What work remains to be done?
- When and how will the remaining work be completed?
- What changes, problems or unexpected issues, if any, have arisen?
- How is the project going in general?

#### Purpose of a progress report

The main function of a progress report is persuasive: to reassure clients and supervisors that you are making progress, that the project is going smoothly, and that it will be completed by the expected date – or to give reasons why any of those might not be the case. Other purposes of a progress report include the following:

- Provide a brief look at preliminary findings or in-progress work on the project.
- Give your clients or supervisors a chance to evaluate your work on the



project and to suggest or request changes.

- Give you a chance to discuss problems in the project and thus to forewarn the recipients.
- Force you to establish a work schedule, so that you will complete the project on time.

## Structure of a short formal progress report

### a. Introduction

Review the details of your project's purpose, scope, and activities. The introduction may also contain the date the project began; date the project is scheduled to be completed, people or organization working on the project, people or organization for whom the project is being done, overview of the contents of the progress report.

### b. Project status

This section (which could have sub-sections) should give the reader a clear idea of the current status of your project. It should review the work completed, work in progress, and work remaining to be done on the project, organized into sub-sections by time, task, or topic. These sections might include:

- Direct reference to milestones or deliverables established in previous documents related to the project.
- Timeline for when remaining work will be completed.
- Any problems encountered or issues that have arisen that might affect completion, direction, requirements, or scope.

### c. Conclusion

The final section provides an overall assessment of the current state of the project and its expected completion, usually reassuring the reader that all is going well and on schedule. It can also alert recipients to unexpected changes in direction or scope, or problems in the project that may require intervention.

### d. References section if required.



#### Activity 4b

Imagine you are the chief programmer at one of the big business consulting firms in Lilongwe. The Managing Director of your firm saw the need to have an accounting software to overcome mismanagement of funds within the firm and gave the task of developing the software to you. It has been a month since he gave you the task. Write a progress report to him notifying the progress of the project.





## Lesson 3: Drafting different reports

The draft is a very important stage in developing a good report. It is the stage at which the ideas are formed in detail, the writing is clarified and diagrams and such are added in, yet the work isn't finalized. This is the time when others read the report, add their input, suggestions and critique; they may find errors, make amendments and reroute the content in certain ways. As such, the draft report needs to be good enough to be "almost" ready but done with a view to making various amendments after it's clear what is in need of improving.

### 3.1. Steps in drafting reports

#### 1. Plan the report out

This can be helped by producing a table of contents from the outset, even though the exactness of this may change as the report is written. It serves as a great guideline to follow as you add the "flesh to the bones". Consider when the introduction, conclusion and executive summary (if writing one) are best left until last. These parts are often improved by relating back to the input already within the body of the report, even though you will often feel inclined to write skeleton summaries for each.

#### 2. Do the background research

This can consist of reading books, articles, websites, journals and such, as well as doing interviews, visiting field sites, observing processes, and the like. Gather all the needed information, turning it into diagrams, photos, pictorial representations, etc., if needed.

#### 3. Determine the format required

At the outset, work out what sort of numbering system is to be used. This will often be determined by your workplace or educational institution. If there is a preferred formatting, do not deviate from this without permission or good reason. Many places use the formatting style either to conform to an expected approach or to represent the standard for each publication for that organization.

#### 4. Begin writing

Using the research, your own knowledge and experience and the required purpose of the report, write the contents. If you are to collaborate on the contents, be sure to do so in a way that gives each person inputting plenty of time to prepare their written sections, pieces or chapters. If you're new to report writing, check in with



your supervisor, teacher or other mentor regularly, to be sure that you're headed in the right direction.

### **5. Pull the report together**

Once you've written the main body, the conclusion and introduction are likely the next steps. Follow this with the executive summary, if relevant. Then comes the nitty gritty - the bibliography, the references, the table of contents, the header pages, and such.

### **6. Add a watermark**

This is useful because it clearly states that the report is in draft form only. Mark each page with "Draft".

### **7. Edit the report**

Check for grammar, spelling, sense, consistency, logical flow, accurate summation of issues, placement of images/diagrams/charts, etc. and general pulling together of the report. Make adjustments as needed. Treat this seriously; just because it's a draft, it does not mean it should be sloppy. The better the shape that the draft is in, the less likely that major changes will be made to it, making your life a lot easier.

### **8. Send the draft report to the relevant persons**

As part of this, make the note clear as to what is expected of each receiver, such as review, editing, accuracy checks, additional input, and so forth. Directing the reviewer to the exact requirements of them saves them time and hones their expertise to what is really needed.

### **9. Receive the comments, amendments, suggestions, additional input, etc.**

Sit down and go through all of these things to work out what is needed to pull the report together in its final format. This can take a while, depending on what type of work, study project, or such that you're doing, so try to allot it a decent amount of time, to avoid the last minute rush changes.

### **10. Finalize the report**

At this point, it's no longer a draft, so remove the watermark. Send it to the printers or print it in-house, make PDFs/eBooks or other digital formats and it's ready for the board, marker, client or public.



#### **Activity 4c**

What are some of the steps that need to be taken into account when drafting a report.





## Unit summary

In this Unit you have studied the following;

- A report written for different purposes.
- There are different kinds of reports.
- The PASS principle can be applied in report writing.
- The structure of a short formal report has different sections.

In the next unit you will learn about oral presentation of reports and arguments.



## Further reading

Chikoti, V. (2018). *Business communications*. Claim Mabuku.

Lust, S. (2018). *Technical writing essentials: Introduction to professional communications in the technical fields*. Pressbooks.

Ritchie, J. & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. SAGE Publications.





## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 4a

Collect some reports from any organization, from college library or download from the internet. With your groups members identify effective report structure and style.

The report should be written using simple and well understood language. Its paragraphs should not be very long. The report should also have a **Title** and include the following sections:

- a. Introduction.
- b. Methodology.
- c. Findings.
- d. Conclusions
- e. Recommendations

### Answer to Activity 4b

Imagine you are the chief programmer at one of the big business consulting firms in Lilongwe. The Managing

mismanagement of funds within the firm and gave the task of developing the software to you. It has been a month since he gave you the task. Write a progress report to him notifying the progress of the project.

### **A REPORT ON THE DEVELOPING OF NATIONAL BANK OF MALAWI ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE**

Prepared by

James Chirambo

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October 29, 2021

To

Mrs. Madalitso Majamanda

[mmajamanda@natbank.mw](mailto:mmajamanda@natbank.mw)

#### **1. Executive Summary**

This report is prepared to outline the status of the National Bank of Malawi's accounting application software project, set to be launched on September 01, 2021. Most major activities under the first phase of the execution phase have been completed. These activities include project discussion, hiring software developers, choosing a project manager, and writing and maintaining source code. However, for the first month of the project, the company encountered challenges in finalizing the design aesthetic that the client wanted to have for the software and inadequate communication between the management and the development team.

#### **2. Introduction**

##### **2.1. The Project**

National Bank of Malawi is currently in the process of creating an accounting software that will help its employees to record transactions, generate reports, manage customer and vendor contacts, create purchase orders, track stock levels, bill customers, and



Choosing Project Manager.	The project team selected their leader who will be the link between the development team and NB management.	Day 11	Completed
Writing & maintaining source code.	Designed the software framework and incorporated all design preferences of the client.	Day 28	Completed

**a. Coding**

By the end of this week, we plan to start coding. This entails writing the program code in the suitable language and developing error-free executable programs efficiently.

**b. Testing**

By the end of two weeks, we plan to test the software. This will be done while the developers will still be coding. This testing will be done various levels of coding such as program testing and in-house testing.

**c. Integration**

By the end of four weeks, we plan to integrate the software with other programs. Software developers will integrate the accounting software with other banking program such as customer databases.

**3. Problems/Projections**

During the project execution, the problems we have encountered so far are:

- There is lack of adequate communication between the management and the development team.
- Custom-coding to get the design features right is time-consuming.
- Some of the client expectations are unrealistic

**Answer to Activity 4c**

**What are some of the steps that need to be taken into account when drafting a report.**

The first step is to plan the report. This can be helped by producing a table of contents from the outset, even though the exactness of this may change as the report is written.

It serves as a great guideline to follow as you add the "flesh to the bones". Consider when the introduction, conclusion and executive summary (if writing one) are best left until last. These parts are often improved by relating back to the input already within the body of the report, even though you will often feel inclined to write skeleton summaries for each.

Another step is to do the background research. This can consist of reading books, articles, websites, journals and such, as well as doing interviews, visiting field sites, observing processes, and the like. Gather all the needed information, turning it into diagrams, photos, pictorial representations, etc., if needed.

Then one has to determine the format required. At the outset, work out what sort of numbering system is to be used. This will often be determined by your workplace or educational institution. If there is a preferred formatting, do not deviate from



expected approach or to represent the standard for each publication for that organization.

After that, the one should begin writing. Using the research, one's knowledge and experience and the required purpose of the report, write the contents. If you are to collaborate on the contents, be sure to do so in a way that gives each person inputting plenty of time to prepare their written sections, pieces or chapters. If you're new to report writing, check in with your supervisor, teacher or other mentor regularly, to be sure that you're headed in the right direction.

Another step is to pull the report together. Once you've





## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 15 min.

Your BIS 1 class in conjunction with the Ministry of Internal Affairs has organized a trip for students to Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Dowa. The aim of this trip is to try to understand the challenges refugees at Dzaleka face on a day to day basis as it has been observed that many refugees at Dzaleka face numerous challenges. After the trip, as the class representative, write a report to the Minister of Internal Affairs and suggest solutions to the challenges. **(25 Marks)**



## UNIT 5: ORAL PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND ARGUMENTS



### Introduction

Oral presentations, also known as public speaking or simply presentations, consist of an individual or group verbally addressing an audience on a particular topic. The aim of this is to educate, inform, entertain, or present an argument. Oral presentations are seen in classrooms, workplaces, and even at social events. At college, students make oral presentations on proposals, reports, and arguments. An oral presentation at college assesses the presenter's ability to communicate relevant information effectively in an interesting and engaging manner. This unit therefore equips you with oral presentation skills for different occasions such as reports and arguments.



### Learning outcomes

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

- a) describe oral presentations.
- b) explain the oral report presentation process.
- c) describe ways of handling questions during oral report presentations.
- d) apply oral presentation skills in reports and arguments.



### Key terms

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

- Visual Aids
- Impromptu





## Lesson 1: Oral report presentation

An oral presentation is a formal, research-based presentation of your work. Presentations happen in a range of different places. For instance, if you work at a company that assigns people to teams to collaborate on projects, your project team might give an oral presentation of your progress on a particular project. In academic settings, students also write reports and then make oral report presentations of the findings, conclusions and make recommendations.

Learning how to construct and deliver an effective oral presentation is a useful skill not only at college but at workplace as well. Employers look for experience in preparing written documents, but they also look for some experience in oral presentations as well.

### 1.1. Oral report presentation process

According to Bovee and Thill (2018), the oral report presentation process has the following stages: Planning the presentation, Crafting the presentation content and Delivering the presentation. This process can be applied in any form of oral communication.

#### 1. Planning the presentation.

If the thought of giving an oral report presentation makes you nervous, keep three points in mind. First, everybody gets nervous when speaking in front of groups. Second, being nervous is actually a good thing; it means you care about the topic, your audience, and your career success. Third, with practice, you can convert the nervousness into positive energy that helps you give more compelling presentations. You can take control of the situation by planning for the oral presentation. Planning presentations is much like planning any other business message: one has to analyze the situation, gather information, select the right medium, and organize the information.

##### i. Analyzing the situation

Analyzing the situation involves the following:

- **Know the purpose:** Make sure that you understand clearly the purpose of the report you are presenting. The most common purpose of an oral report is to inform an audience.
- **Know your audience:** The more you know about your audience the better. It will allow you to prepare a more appropriate and focused oral report. For



example, if your audience already has a good knowledge of the topic you may elect to leave out information they are already familiar with.

- **Circumstances:** Also consider the circumstances in which you will be making your presentation. Will you speak to five people in a conference room where you can control everything from light to sound to temperature? Or will you be presenting the report to 100 listeners and little control over the environment? Will everyone be in the same room, or will some or all of your audience participate from remote locations via the Internet? What equipment will you have at your disposal?

## ii. **Gathering information.**

Collect and read as much information as possible about the subject. If the presenter already has a written report document, then he or she has to read and understand information in the report. This is so because the process of gathering information provides opportunities to step beyond the limitations of your own experience and enrich your own understanding of your topic. Information gathering also entails determining audience needs and obtaining the information necessary to satisfy those needs. If, for example, your audience is interested in facts, figures and statistics, then make sure your presentation has facts, figures and statistics.

## iii. **Selecting the media and channels.**

For some presentations, you'll be expected to use whatever media and channels your audience, your boss, or the circumstances require. For example, you might be required to use a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation software in a face to face presentation or an online meeting software such as Zoom or Google Meet.

## iv. **Organizing a presentation.**

Organizing an oral report presentation includes the following;

**Defining the main idea (Purpose):** A successful presentation starts with a clear picture of the main idea you want to share with your audience. Start by composing a one-sentence summary that links your subject and purpose to your audience's frame of reference. An example of an oral report presentation main idea could be:

- *Convince the board of directors that we should build a new plant in Limbe to eliminate manufacturing bottlenecks and improve production quality.*

**Limiting the scope (select and prioritize):** Limiting your scope is important in oral presentations, for two reasons. First, for most presentations, you must work within strict time limits. Second, the longer you speak, the more difficult it is to hold



the audience's attention and the more difficult it is for your listeners to retain your key points. Limiting the scope is about selecting and prioritizing what will be part of the oral report presentation. The presenter does not have to present everything that is the written report document. Limitations can force you to focus on the most essential message points that are important to your audience.

**Preparing an outline:** A presentation outline helps you organize your message, and it serves as the foundation for delivering your presentation. Prepare your outline in several stages. Some of the stages include:

- Organize your major points and sub-points in logical order, expressing each major point as a single, complete sentence.
- State your purpose and main idea and then use these to guide the rest of your planning.
- Identify major points in the body first and then outline the introduction and close.

## 2. Crafting presentation content.

Crafting presentation content involves the following;

**Adapting to the audience:** Your audience will influence the style of your presentation. If you're speaking to a small group, particularly people you already know, you can use a casual style that encourages audience participation. Use simple visuals and invite your audience to interject comments. Deliver your remarks in a conversational tone, using notes to jog your memory if necessary. If you are addressing a large audience or if the event is important, establish a more formal atmosphere.

When you deliver a presentation to people from other cultures, you may need to adapt the content of your presentation. It is also important to take into account any cultural preferences for appearance, mannerisms, and other customs.

**Developing the presentation:** Ensure your information is well organized. The most successful oral reports have an introduction, a body and a conclusion:





## Lesson 2: Delivering a presentation

How do you present? In this lesson, you will learn different way that can help you have an effective preseantion. Delivering a presentation involves choosing the right style, considering language, practicing, answering questions properly, overcoming anxiety, etc.

### 2.1. Choosing your presentation method/ style

Depending on the circumstance of your presentation, you can choose from a variety of delivery methods:

#### 1. Memorizing

The memorization method is a form of speech delivery that involves fully memorizing a presentation, from start to finish, before delivering it. In oral presentation, this method can be useful when the message needs to be exact and the speaker does not want to be confined by notes.

#### Advantages of memorizing

- It enables the presenter to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech.
- Being free of notes means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures.
- If your speech uses visual aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage.

#### Disadvantages of memorizing

- Sometimes the presenter might look unnatural.
- In the worst circumstances, the presenter might forget your lines.
- Memorizing might make the present to make the presentation in a rapid “machine-gun” style that fails to emphasize the most important points.

#### 2. Reading (Manuscript)

This 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.

#### Advantages of reading from a manuscript

- Original words are repeated and this can be important in some circumstances. For example, reading a statement about your organization’s vision and mission to the audience may require that the original words be exact.



- Errors relating to content are minimized.

### Disadvantages of reading from a manuscript

- It is typically an uninteresting way to present since the presentation is generally dull.
- Reading from the manuscript also keeps the presenter's eyes glued to the script which precludes eye contact with the audience.

### 3. Speaking from an outline or notes

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.

#### Advantages of using an outline or notes

- It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible since you know the speech well enough that you do not need to read it.
- In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and nonverbally.
- It also allows flexibility; you are working from the strong foundation of an outline, but if you need to delete, add, or rephrase something at the last minute or to adapt to your audience, you can do so.

#### Disadvantages of using an outline or notes

- It requires a great deal of preparation for both the verbal and the nonverbal components of the speech.
- Adequate preparation cannot be achieved the day before you're scheduled to speak.

### 4. Impromptu speaking

It 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 Takondwa, and I'm an intern at Action Aid Malawi."



### Advantage of impromptu speaking

- It is spontaneous and responsive in an animated group context.

### Disadvantage of Impromptu Speaking

- The speaker is given little or no time to contemplate the central theme of his or her message. As a result, the message may be disorganized and difficult for listeners to follow.

## 2.2. Practicing your delivery

Practicing your presentation is essential because it boosts your confidence, gives you a more professional demeanor, and lets you verify the operation of your visuals and equipment. A test audience can tell you whether your delivery is effective or not. A day or two before you're ready to step on stage for an important talk, make sure you and your presentation are ready.



#### Activity 5a

Using relevant examples, distinguish memorizing from reading from manuscript presentations styles.

## 2.3. Language used

Clear language is powerful language. Clarity is the first concern of a presenter when it comes to choosing how to phrase the ideas of his or her presentation. If you are not clear, specific, precise, detailed, and sensory with your language, you will not have to worry about being emotional or persuasive, because you will not be understood. The presenter should use simple and easy to understand language. He or she should also avoid jargons, however this will depend on your audience. If you are presenting to experts then using jargons is alright. Be sure to use some variety as well; repeating the same words and phrases puts people to sleep.

## 2.4. Overcoming anxiety

As a presenter you have to recognize that nervousness is an indication that you care about your audience, your topic, and the occasion. The following techniques will help you to overcome anxiety during oral report presentation:

- Put yourself into a positive frame of mind before you start. Remind yourself of how well you know the material and how much you enjoy sharing useful or inspirational information. If appropriate, smile as you take the stage.
- Stop worrying about being perfect. Successful speakers focus on making an authentic connection with their listeners, rather than on trying to deliver a note



perfect presentation.

- Know your subject. The more familiar you are with your material, the less panic you will feel.
- Practice, practice, practice. The more you rehearse, the more confident you will be.
- Visualize success. Visualize mental images of yourself in front of the audience feeling confident, prepared, and able to handle any situation that might arise. Remember that your audience wants you to succeed, too.

## 2.5. Handling questions responsively

The following tips will help you handle questions responsively;

- When people ask questions, pay attention to nonverbal signals to help determine what each person really means. Repeat the question to confirm your understanding and to ensure that the entire audience has heard it.
- If the question is vague or confusing, ask for clarification; then give a simple, direct answer.
- If you are asked a difficult or complex question, avoid the temptation to sidestep it. Offer to meet with the questioner afterward if the issue isn't relevant to the rest of the audience or if giving an adequate answer would take too long.
- If you do not know the answer, don't pretend you do. Instead, offer to get a complete answer as soon as possible or ask if someone else can offer information on the topic.



### Activity 5b

You have noted that one of your classmates experienced anxiety when he was asked questions during class argumentation presentations. Advise him on how he should effectively handle questions during the next oral presentations.





## Lesson 3: Oral presentation of arguments

Having argumentative essay writing skills is very important but not enough. Students also need skills to make oral presentations of what they have written in their argumentative essays. In this lesson you will learn how to make presentation of arguments.

### 3.1. The structure of the oral presentation of arguments

The following is a basic structure that should be successful for oral arguments:

#### 1. Introduction

Introduce your topic and why it matters to you. Provide basic information to your audience for them to have knowledge about the emerging issue before they listen to your argument to avoid confusion. If, for example, one wants to make an oral argumentation on legalization of abortion, he or she should make sure that the audience knows what abortion is and how different people view abortion / what different schools of thought say about the abortion. One should also highlight the **Thesis statement** on the topic he or she has chosen.

#### 2. Body

This part takes the large portion of the oral presentation:

- Provide reason one that supports your argument with evidence (Research required).
- Provide reason two that supports your argument with evidence (Research required).
- Provide reasons why some people will disagree with you (**counter arguments**) and then refute those reasons with evidence (Research required).

#### 3. Conclusion

End on a clear and strong note. Remind your audience why they should agree/ disagree with you. For example, if you supported the legalization of abortion in your oral presentation, restate the reasons why aborting should be legalized. Thank your audience for listening and ask if they have any questions.

#### 4. References

Make sure you cite information you get from various sources. You should use the same references you indicated in the written argumentative essay.



## 5. Style of presentation

Refer to the presentation styles discussed under “Choosing your presentation method/ style” of lesson 1 of this unit.

## 6. Language used

Refer to the discussion under “Language used.” of lesson 1 of this unit.

## 7. Reasoning

The presenter should not just provide his or her opinions to support his or her claims. For instance, it is illogical for one to say abortion should not be legalized because I hate it. One has to provide evidence why abortion should not be legalized. This is where references come in. the presenter should use sources to support his or her claims. The presenter also needs to present strong point in order to convince the audience. This can be done by using facts and figures, statistics etc.



### Activity 5c

Your EAP lecturer has assigned your group to write an argumentative essay on abolishment of Capital Punishment and make a presentation based on the essay. As the group leader, advise your group on how they should structure the oral presentation.



## Unit summary

In this Unit you have learnt about Oral presentation skills, focusing more on reports and arguments. The skill in oral presentation is as important. People of all professions may be required on various occasions to participate in a seminar, conference, panel discussion and/or meeting and to deliver an address to the audience present there. This unit therefore has equipped you with oral presentation skills for different occasions.



## Further reading

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## Answers to unit activities

### Answer to Activity 5a

**Using relevant examples, distinguish memorizing from reading from manuscript presentations styles.**

Memorization style of presentation is a form of speech delivery that involves fully memorizing a presentation, from start to finish, before delivering it. In oral presentation, this method can be useful when the message needs to be exact and the speaker does not want to be confined by notes.

One of the advantages of memorizing is that it enables the presenter to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. In addition to that, being free of notes means that one can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. One of the disadvantages of memorizing is that sometimes the presenter might look unnatural. In the worst circumstances, the presenter might forget his or her lines.

Reading from a manuscript refers to 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.

One of the advantages of reading from a manuscript is that original words are repeated and this can be important in some circumstances. For example, reading a statement about your organization's vision and mission to the audience may require that the original words be exact. Apart from that, this style minimizes errors relating to content. One of the disadvantages of reading from a manuscript is that it is typically an uninteresting way to present since the presentation is generally dull.

### Answer to Activity 5b

**You have noted that one of your classmates experienced anxiety when he was asked questions during class argumentation presentations. Advise him on how he should effectively handle questions during the next oral presentations.**

1. When people ask questions, the presenter should pay attention to nonverbal signals to help determine what each person really means. The presenter should also repeat the question to confirm his or her understanding and to ensure that the entire audience has heard it.
2. If the question is vague or confusing, the presenter should ask for clarification then give a simple, direct answer.
3. If the presenter is asked a difficult or complex question, he or she should avoid the temptation to sidestep it. Instead, he or she should offer to meet with the questioner afterward if the issue is not relevant to the rest of the audience or if giving an adequate answer would take too long.



4. If the presenter doesn't know the answer, they shouldn't pretend they do. Instead, they should offer to get a complete answer as soon as possible or ask if someone else can offer information on the topic.

#### Answer to Activity 5b

**Your EAP lecturer has assigned your group to write an argumentative essay on abolishment of Capital Punishment and make a presentation based on the essay. As the group leader, advise your group on how they should structure the oral presentation.**

In terms of structure, the presentation should have the introduction, body and conclusion. In the introduction, the presenter has to introduce the topic and provide a brief background of it. For example, if the presentation is on legalization of capital punishment in Malawi then the presenter has to define capital punishment and how it is used in Malawi. The presentation should also contain the Thesis statement that will provide the position of the presenter on the issue. An example of the Thesis statement could be: *Despite the fact that capital punishment is helping in the reduction of population and reducing criminal activities, it is also a violation of human rights*

The body of the presentation should provide points from both sides of the issue. These points should be backed up with ideas from experts in the field. One of the point supporting capital punishment could be that *it helps in reducing population*. The presenter should provide strong points to support the claims made in the presentation. The presenter should also provide counterarguments and then refute them in order to weaken them. An example of a counterargument could be that *capital punishment is the violation of one's right to life*.

In conclusion, the presenter should restate the main points of the presentation and restate his or her position on the emerging issue. This will help to persuade that audience to side with the presenter.





## End of unit test

**Time:** 1 hour 30 mins

**Instructions:**

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

**Question One**

One of your classmates has been assigned to make an oral report on the report he wrote on theft in the MUBAS library before the whole class. Advise him on how he should approach the following in his oral report:

- a. Determining the structure. **(5 marks)**
- b. Selecting and prioritizing. **(5 marks)**
- c. Audience consideration. **(5 marks)**
- d. Language used. **(5 marks)**

**Question Two**

Explain how the following apply to an oral presentation of an argument:

- a. Structure (5 marks)
- b. Reasoning (5 marks)
- c. Language used (5 marks)





## END OF MODULE TEST (100 MARKS)

**Time:** 2 hours

### Instructions

1. Answer all questions
2. Each question contains **25 marks**
3. Marks will be awarded for clear thought, logical presentation of ideas, organization, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

### Question One

It is often said that Voting is important. What is your position on this?

### Question Two

In the following dialogue, some statements are fallacious. Identify five fallacious statements from the text. For each statement, provide an explanation why each statement you have identified is fallacious.

1. **Joe:** It's seven o'clock. Have you gone to the polls to vote yet?
2. **Moe:** No, and I don't intend to. There's no point in voting. All politicians are crooks.
3. **Joe:** What makes you say that?
4. **Moe:** Isn't it obvious? Everyone knows it's true. Just read the newspapers. Politicians are always being indicted for some crime or other.
5. **Joe:** I was hoping you'd vote for Mary Davis who is running for re-election to Parliament. She's never been accused of dishonesty. We should support her.
6. **Moe:** She's probably better off without my support. In the last two elections I voted, and both times my candidates lost. I'm a jinx (curse).
7. **Joe:** Maybe this time will be different. You really should vote. Professor Ben, my political science instructor, says every eligible person should vote because it's a way people can make a difference.
8. **Moe:** Professor Ben? That stiff? What does he know about anything? Did you know that his third wife just left him? He must be impossible to live with. I wouldn't believe a word he says.
9. **Joe:** Look, I voted this morning, but if you want, I'll give you a lift to the polls.
10. **Moe:** I told you: I'm not going to bother. And don't try to lay a guilt trip on me about being a bad citizen. At least I'm not a criminal or a junkie.



11. **Joe:** I'm not trying to make you feel guilty. I just think more people should vote. Did you know that in the last election less than fifty percent of the voters in our district actually came out?
12. **Moe:** Well, if so many people didn't vote, why should I?
13. **Joe:** Some of us have to be responsible.
14. **Moe:** There you go again with the good citizen bit. Maybe all those people who didn't vote figured out how silly it is.
15. **Joe:** Why do you say it's silly?
16. **Moe:** Voting is just like playing the slot machines in a casino. You pull a lever and hope for the best.
17. **Joe:** I don't think it's quite the same. Look, won't you please come vote for Davis. I like her because she supports the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to end sex discrimination.
18. **Moe:** Well, I don't think I want the ERA passed. That would mean we'd have to have unisex bathrooms. I like my privacy.
19. **Joe:** No, I don't think it would mean unisex bathrooms.
20. **Moe:** Al James says it would.
21. **Joe:** Who's Al James?
22. **Moe:** He's a really smart guy in my class. He's made a fortune in real estate.
23. **Joe:** I really think you should consider the issues more seriously.
24. **Moe:** Look, I've told you before. I think voting is useless.
25. **Joe:** Why is it useless?
26. **Moe:** Because it just doesn't do any good. Look at it this way: Let's assume that both candidates are about the same. It isn't worth the trouble to vote for one over the other.
27. **Joe:** But I don't think that the candidates are the same on the issues. Consider the Kirkland Garage, which almost closed last year, Davis has been working hard to keep it open because it provides jobs in our district. Her opponent says it's wasteful. Say, Kirkland is where you work, isn't it?
28. **Moe:** Yes! For God's sake, why didn't you tell me this in the first place? Come on, grab your jacket and let's hurry to the polls so I can vote before they close!



### Question Three

The following sentences have errors. Rewrite them correctly

- a. It seemed to Wongani that her daughter had more than enough crayons, they were strewn across the bedroom floor and some of them were broken, and worse still, someone had used a stub of a red crayon to mark a sinister smiley face on the wall.
- b. Neither of the computers are working.
- c. Each of the cars in the streets are working.
- d. If I was there with you, I would surprise you.
- e. She was interested in sporting, tasks that require challenge, but above all she loves to dance and of course singing.
- f. Juli, along with her friends, are always welcome here.
- g. The girl that rode the bicycle carelessly wrote the letter.
- h. To be well cooked, you should stew the chicken for over an hour.
- i. Beating eggs rapidly produces an airy volume.
- j. The company offers special college training to help hourly employees move to into professional careers like engineering management, software development, service technicians and sales trainees.

### Question Four

Your department in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Culture has organized a trip for students to Majete Wildlife Reserve. The aim of this trip is to accord the students an opportunity to appreciate the facilities that Malawi has to offer to tourists as it has been observed that many locals lack interest in such activities.

As one of those students on the trip, write a report.



## GLOSSARY

- **Analytical report:** A document that presents and analyzes information to help solve a problem or make a decision.
- **Completeness:** The state of being whole, entire, or finished.
- **Credibility:** The quality of being trusted and believed in.
- **Deduction:** The process of reaching a conclusion by reasoning from general principles or premises to specific instances.
- **Impromptu:** Done without being planned, organized, or rehearsed.
- **Induction:** The process of reaching a general conclusion from specific examples or observations.
- **Informational report:** A document that presents information without analysis or recommendations, often organized around the answers to specific questions.
- **Modification:** A change or alteration made to something.
- **Parallelism:** The use of similar grammatical structures in phrases or sentences.
- **Premise:** A statement or idea that is accepted as true and is used as the basis of an argument or theory.
- **Run-ons:** A grammatical error that occurs when two or more independent clauses are joined without appropriate punctuation or conjunctions.
- **Visual aids:** Objects or devices, such as charts, graphs, or models, that help to make something easier to understand.



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## STUDENTS FEEDBACK

Kindly provide your feedback regarding this module. Tick the appropriate:

1. How do you rate the structure of this module?  
(a) Poor (b) Better (c) Neutral (d) Good (d) Excellent
2. How do you rate the content presented if this module?  
(a) Poor (b) Better (c) Neutral (d) Good (d) Excellent
3. How do you rate the presentation style adopted in this module?  
(a) Poor (b) Better (c) Neutral (d) Good (d) Excellent
4. How do you rate the assessment activities?  
(a) Poor (b) Better (c) Neutral (d) Good (d) Excellent
5. List down all areas which need to be improved in this module.

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6. Any additional comments.

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