

UNIT 3 CREATING SHORT WRITING

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to :

- identify the differences between facts and opinions;
- write factual information and opinion statements;
- use facts to enhance the clarity of your writing;
- identify steps in the process of writing;
- recognize tone;
- edit a piece of writing;
- write materials for community involvement using both facts and opinions; and
- write a pamphlet, flyer, or newsletter to illustrate the writing process.



3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Units 1 and 2, you were given the opportunity to practice some important grammar and punctuation skills. The practice, Self Assessment Activities in sentence and paragraph writing enabled you to structure multi-paragraph forms. In this unit, you will focus on creating short writing. For many organisations, getting the word out about an event or project can be difficult. Questions as to how to write a promotional piece or how to make it look good are often the first hurdle to overcome. This unit will demonstrate how to write interesting short pieces. You will be given the opportunity to apply your new skills in writing for community involvement.



3.2 WRITING FACTS AND OPINIONS

Before you embark on writing short pieces, it is important to distinguish between writing about facts and writing about opinions. Most writing in the workplace is factual. Journalists track down facts to write their stories for newspapers. Accountants will use

facts about the financial status of a company to write their quarterly reports. Caseworkers will gather facts about their clients before they begin to write out case histories. Factual writing is a skill to acquire to enhance your job **performance**.

The writing you do at work also involves giving an opinion. You might have to make a recommendation as to what resources your organisation needs, or you might have to offer an opinion on the best course of action based on the report you submit. **Whatever** the call for action, you could be asked to give your opinion based on the facts you have obtained.

Many writers have difficulty in separating fact from opinion. This is an important skill to learn since it can help you achieve your goal in writing. Opinions that are supported by factual evidence are more likely to get a response. And well-organised and **well**-supported writing helps your readers to understand your purpose.

Let's begin by separating out the facts from the opinions. Put a tick (✓) in the box beside the statements that are facts.

- 1. Computers are expensive.
- 2. Water freezes at 0° Celsius.
- 3. This letter is addressed incorrectly.
- 4. The address on this letter is incorrect.
- 5. It rained yesterday.
- 6. Silicon is the main ingredient in glass.
- 7. His office is downstairs.
- 8. Carrots are the healthiest vegetables.
- 9. Samosas are better than pakoras.
- 10. Steel bars add strength to concrete.
- 11. Shail won the office raffle.

How do you know which statements are facts? How do you know which statements are opinions?

You can evaluate your answers with the help of the following correct answers.

Facts = 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11

Opinions = 1, 3, 8, 9

3.2.1 Facts Vs. Opinions

A fact is a statement that can be proven to be true or false.

Examples:

That man is thirty years old. (You can check his birth certificate to verify this fact.)

Bombay is in India. (You can look at an official map.)

An opinion is a statement that is a view or judgement held by the **person(s)** who says or writes it.

Examples:

Vilas looks fifty years old. (You may think so, but others may think he looks older or younger.)

Delhi is the most exciting city in the world. (This is true for the person saying it, but perhaps for only that person.)

When should you use facts and opinions?

Use facts when presenting information for review. For example, if you are submitting a proposal, focus only on the facts when you write about the budget, resources, timelines, etc.

Use opinions when you are making recommendations or outlining an action plan. For example, at the end of a proposal you may recommend the use of an additional resource or an extra step in the process based on the facts you have supplied. You will gain credibility if you support your opinions with facts.



Self Assessment Activity 1: Identifying Facts

A Nice Cup of Tea

Read the following paragraph to identify the facts in this writing.

Tea is drunk the world over but new research says that tea can actually help prevent cavities and gum disease. A major cause of gum disease is plaque, a combination of more than 300 types of bacteria that form a compound that binds to your teeth. Once plaque builds up it can cause gum irritation and eventually gingivitis. The bacteria in plaque turn sugars into acids, which erode the tooth enamel, eventually leading to the development of cavities. Components of tea, called polyphenols, have been linked to retardation of the build-up of plaque and the reduction of its ability to stick to your teeth. Still, only regular brushing and cleaning by a dental hygienist really removes all the plaque from your teeth. That is one reason why cavities still affect 90 per cent of people in tea-drinking countries with poor dental hygiene.

1 What is the **topic** sentence in this paragraph.

.....
.....
.....

2 What type of paragraph development does the author use to support the topic sentence?

.....
.....
.....

3 Identify the sentences that are based on **facts**.

.....
.....
.....

4 How does the author conclude the paragraph? Was it effective? Why?

.....
.....
.....

5 Re-write the paragraph using only statements of opinion.

.....
.....
.....



Self Assessment Activity 2 : Identifying Opinions

Two New Ways to Kick That Killer Habit

Read the following paragraph to identify the opinions expressed.

Each new method to stop smoking seems to have its promoters and detractors. Some animal studies sponsored by a Florida drug company suggest that a newly patented nicotine vaccine can be effective in quitting the nicotine habit. So far no Federal Drug Administration approval for human trials has been filed. Meanwhile, other university researchers are using a liquid form as a possible replacement for nicotine and the patch. Researchers say their product may taste like a dirty ashtray to some. Adding juice may make it more palatable. A preliminary study found that this new product kept 20 per cent of people nicotine-free after six months in trial. According to the Centres for Disease Control, any new technique may lead more people to kick the nicotine habit.

1 What is the topic sentence in the above paragraph.

.....
.....
.....

2 List out those sentences that are based on opinion.

.....
.....
.....
.....

3 What method of paragraph development does the author use?

.....
.....
.....

4 Re-write the paragraph using only factual statements.

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.....
.....
.....

5 Identify and define any word that is unfamiliar to you

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It can be tricky, at times, to separate fact from opinion, as you can see from the example. In some cases, the message of the writing becomes unclear because the writer has not organised his or her thoughts and supported them with facts. And at other times the wrong information is given. In all cases, it is important to decide which method best suits your topic. If you are writing a report, offering your opinion based on a series of facts might be the most appropriate way of convincing the reader to accept your point of view. Think about how to establish yourself as a credible source. Ask yourself, "does fact or opinion suit my argument best?"



Self Assessment Activity 3: Writing for Clarity

Humbled

Read the following paragraph and complete the following Self- Assessment activity for a small group.

During a promotional visit to the city recently, Shail Oswal, a rather fresh singer, had a somewhat tough time. After he had finished addressing the press in C'handigarh Press Club on January 16, some of the "adventurous ones" among the scribes decided to test the singer's mettle. So they asked him to sing the title track of his latest album, which he was so fondly promoting. While most singers in the past have been eluding such situations on account that the normal mikes don't have amplifiers to do justice with the high-pitched songs, Shail decided to take on the challenge. To his embarrassment, the mike could not amplify his voice when its range increased and the sound that reached the audience was too shrill to be applauded. Humbled, the singer submitted gracefully: "That is actually how it goes!"

- 1 **Can** you recognise the facts and opinions in this writing? Circle the sentences that are facts and use parentheses to identify those that are opinions.

- 2 Underline the words or phrases that are vague or misleading in the above paragraph.

- 3 What claim does this piece make? How is it supported?

- 4 **How** is the last sentence confusing?

- 5 Re-write this paragraph, changing vague words to specific ones, supporting the main idea with facts, and correcting any sentence errors.

As a writer, you are *responsible* for providing a map for your reader. If your reader is confused or misled, your piece loses its impact. It is up to you to provide direction for your reader by *organising* your thoughts in a logical manner. Use your dictionary and thesaurus to write in simple language, and create an outline so your thoughts are well *organised* and logical. Clarity is essential. The next section gives you an opportunity to put your knowledge of clear writing into practice.



3.2.2 Writing Facts and Opinions

In Unit 2, you learned three methods of development for a paragraph. They are: example or detail, comparison and contrast, and process. You practiced writing each of these forms, which may have included the use of facts. When your writing requires you to include facts and opinions, you need to think about how you are going to organise your ideas and then present them in the most logical manner for your reader. The next Self Assessment Activity will help you achieve this goal.

You will need a separate piece of paper to complete this activity. And, if you have not already done so, review the section on methods of development for a paragraph in Unit 2.

There are four things you should do when you write a factual piece:

1. Make a claim (or pose a question).
2. Provide proof.
3. Draw a conclusion.
4. Make suggestions for the reader to take action or give your opinion.

Self Assessment Activity 4: Writing Facts and Opinions

Example:

Read through the example below. Separate out the facts and opinions. Is there any order to the facts presented?

Statement:

Computers are more efficient than typewriters.

Sample Paragraphs:

Now that computers have become the tool of choice for many companies, the use of typewriters has decreased. The reason for this is that computers are more efficient tools than typewriters. For example, the word processing function on a computer makes editing a document much easier. The full document is displayed on the screen and the user can make changes directly to the document without having to retype the text. A typewriter, on the other hand, can make some changes to individual letters, but substantial changes mean retyping the entire page.

The computer is fast. In a moment or two a user can easily delete sentences from a paragraph or insert new sentences into it. A person can move a sentence from one part of a paragraph to another and make corrections in spelling with a few strokes on the keyboard. The typewriter provides no quick mechanism to make these kinds of changes. Every time a change has to be made, a person needs to use an eraser or correction fluid or to type a new draft of the paragraph.

The computer also has useful options that make writing much more efficient. For example, there is a spell check option that can identify any word spelled incorrectly and offer the correct spelling. The computer can count the number of words in a paper and it can change the margins and spacing between lines. Unfortunately, the typewriter does not offer any of these options. The fact of the matter is that a computer uses modern technology while the typewriter makes the user feel stuck in the past. Computers are more efficient than typewriters. That's a good thing, isn't it?

Now you are ready to start the Self Assessment Activity.

Write down a statement about your job. For example, "computers save me time" or "street youth programmes are under-funded." Make sure that your statement is a claim that you can support with facts.

Write down all the facts that support your statement. Don't worry about the order. Just write whatever comes to mind.

Review the facts you wrote down and delete any that appear unsupportable. Choose the three most important facts and order them from weakest to strongest. This arrangement gives impact to your writing by placing the strongest fact last, as was demonstrated in the example above. You will want to create an outline at this point. For each fact, write a topic sentence and jot down a supporting example or detail. Complete your outline. Once you have reviewed your outline (preferably with someone else), write a concluding sentence. This sentence refers back to your original claim. Restating your claim using different words is a good way to write a concluding sentence.

Begin writing your piece. Remember, this will be a multi-paragraph piece of writing, so be sure to use transitional devices, proper paragraph form, and simple language. We suggest limiting your first attempt to 4–6 paragraphs.

Once you have completed the first draft, have someone look over your writing. You will learn more about revising your own writing later on in this unit; however, it's a good idea to have someone else check over your work. Use the Paragraph Checklist from Unit 2 to help guide you. Make any necessary changes. After you have had your work checked by someone, you are ready to produce the final draft.

Share your writing with others and ask them to identify the main idea behind your piece. Also ask them to distinguish between the facts and the opinions. Congratulations! You have just completed your first piece of factual writing. You will know you have achieved success if your readers have been able to identify the main idea in your writing. If there is some confusion on this point, go back and determine where you need to re-write your piece for clarity.

Now that you have written a sequence of paragraphs that support a main idea, you can practise by composing a piece of your own writing.



3.3 WRITING FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are involved in many community projects, such as fund-raisers. You will be able to use the business writing skills you are developing to write particular pieces to help your projects. In this section you will learn some basic writing and page design for producing community action pieces such as flyers.

There are some small differences between how you reach your audience using a pamphlet, flyer, or newsletter. Each of these types of information piece may appeal to a different audience and involve different layouts. A flyer may be the simplest – one sheet of paper with a notice or information. It is cheap and meant to be distributed by hand. A pamphlet may have several folds and generally provides information on a longer-term programme or organisation. A higher production quality is used in this type of piece and it requires a more sophisticated layout. A newsletter can be an informational update on the progress of a programme. It might include success stories and facts about the programme.

For each of the pieces you write, think first about the information that you will convey. Would someone reading it want to save it and reference it later? Does it have important information that may be used elsewhere, such as in a report, or is it temporary information, such as advertising for a special event?

Writing Pamphlets, Flyers, and Newsletters That People Will Read

Messages surround us. Bulletin boards, TV and newspaper advertising, and flyers all scream for our attention. Whatever the message, each piece of writing or advertising wants us to focus on it NOW. People are bombarded with information every day, and getting their attention is becoming increasingly difficult.

Many organisations have worthwhile events, services, and products that people need to know about; however, these events and services may go unnoticed due to poor writing. This section shows you how to create powerful and persuasive writing for community involvement.

3.4 THE PROCESS OF WRITING

What makes up a well-written, appealing piece of factual writing? It captures the reader's attention and makes him or her want to read further. The main idea is carried through and backed up by supporting materials. The sentences are clear, crisp, and grammatically correct. There are no typos. The tone is appropriate to the audience. And the reader knows exactly what to do after reading the piece.

If you achieve all of this you will have created a persuasive piece of writing that demands attention.

The writing process follows four steps:

- 1 Plan
- 2 Write
- 3 Design
- 4 Print



3.4.1 Step 1 Plan

"Planning and preparation prevent poor performance".

Planning is absolutely essential. Your writing will be more effective if you spend some time gathering information before you write. Begin by doing the following:

Define your purpose for writing

Some examples might be:

- I want to inform people about my services.
- I want to persuade people to attend a meeting.
- I want money to support a fund-raiser that we are sponsoring.

Identify your target audience(s)

The people who will read your writing have specific interests, needs, and characteristics. It is up to you to find out what they are. Different groups will require different messages, so take the time to research your audience.

Use these questions to determine the characteristics of your audience:

- What interests does my audience have?
- What are their attitudes, beliefs, and values?
- What is their geographic location? (People in different locations might have different interests and needs.)
- Demographics: How old are they? What race, religion, gender, occupation, education level, etc., are they?
- How well do they know you or your organisation? (It is easier to convince someone who knows you than someone who does not know you.)

A charity might target anyone to contribute his or her time or money. The message might be, "I want to inform prospective donors of the services my charity offers." This message is too broad. The writer needs to define what he or she wants from the reader. For example, "I want to inform the small business owners in my community about my charity and ask them to participate in hosting an upcoming event."

What is your format?

Decide what type of writing best suits your needs. Is a community flyer (a one-page piece of writing) appropriate? Or would a newsletter be better? Keep in mind who will be reading your writing and how you want to display the information.

Keep your format in line with your budget. A high-end glossy flyer will cost much more than one that is produced on your computer with standard paper. Using standard-sized paper will cut down costs and make it easier to fit into envelopes for distribution. "The simpler the better" is the rule.

Create an outline

As you gather information, create an outline as you did previously for writing paragraphs. Give each piece of information a number and list the supporting information beneath it. Do not worry about the sequence of your work; that will come later. Right now it is important to get everything down on paper so you can begin writing.

3.4.2 Step 2 Write

The five main points to consider when writing your content are tone, content, main idea, body, and contact information. Each plays a role in the presentation and reception of your information.

Tone

Writing your piece will be much easier if you have done a good job on your plan. Before you begin, you need to determine the tone of your piece. Tone is simply good manners on paper. The words you choose should be respectful of and appropriate for the reader. Never insult your reader. Avoid phrases such as "any idiot can see," "it is obvious that . . .," "You are so welcome," and "I beg to request. . .," which treat your readers as though they are ignorant or talk down to them.

The appropriateness of the tone varies with your audience. For instance, if you are writing a flyer to attract street youth to a free clinic, your tone might be casual and friendly. However, if you are trying to attract funding from local businesses, the tone will be sophisticated and reserved. All of this comes down to word choice.

Informal: Come on out and learn computer skills for free!

Emotional: Urban renewal must be stopped! Urban redevelopment is ruining this country.

Biased: Women can never make good mathematicians.

Formal: The Delhi Community Centre cordially invites you to attend the "Artist in the Community" annual auction.

Reasonable: Urban renewal is revitalising our cities, but it has caused some serious problems.

Unbiased: Although a fear of math is not purely a female phenomenon, studies indicate that women tend to drop out of math sooner than boys, and adult women experience an aversion to math and math-related activities.



Self Assessment Activity 5

Identify the problems in the sentences below and then re-write them using a more appropriate tone.

1 If you don't pay this telephone bill, your service will be disconnected.

.....
.....

2 I am confident you will be gratified to learn that we have decided to refund your money.

.....
.....

3 It is hereby requested that you remit your reports to the undersigned by November 1st.

.....
.....

4 It is obvious that double entry bookkeeping is more efficient.

.....
.....



Content

The design of your flyers, pamphlets, or bulletins will vary, but components of the written content will usually include the following:

- Main idea
- Body
- Introductory paragraph
- Supporting details
- Benefits of your service (if applicable)
- Contact information

The **main** idea is usually written as a headline. The headline is the attention grabber. This is the sentence that pulls your reader in so they want to keep reading. People stop reading if the **headline** does not capture their attention. Careful wording of the headline or main idea is important. Your goal is to make the reader want to know more and read more.

Examples: Soccer Star Gives Free Clinic

Delhi Community Centre Presents Movie Vadh

List four announcements or services that your organisation would like to tell the community about.

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.....

.....

Write a headline about one of the items listed above.

.....

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.....

.....

Write this headline in your outline as the first point. Next you will develop the rest of the content in the outline.



Body

Your first paragraph should address the issue you presented in the headline. Use sub-headings to organise your information so it is easier for the reader. Under each sub-heading, you need to add supporting material. If you presented "Soccer Star Gives Free Clinic" as a headline, the first paragraph should tell the reader who is giving the clinic and to whom. Your sub-headings might look like this:

Soccer star gives free clinic

Learn from a Pro	(Sub-heading 1)
Learn new techniques	(Supporting fact)
Learn the new international rules for soccer	(Supporting fact)
Free three-week clinic	(Sub-heading 2)
Outline times	(Supporting fact)
Eligibility	(Supporting fact)

You **have** probably noticed that the body of your writing looks like an outline. And it should! Listing the sub-headings and the corresponding supporting points will help you to organise and clarify your thoughts.

Take a moment now to list the sub-headings for the heading you wrote. Under each sub-heading write down the points you want to make.

Sub-heading 1: _____

Point a) _____

Point b) _____

Point c) _____

Sub-heading 2: _____

Point a) _____

Point b) _____

Point c) _____



Contact information

Remember this step! If you are asking your reader to take action—for example, make a phone call or check out a Web site—you must give the correct contact information. List all street addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail and Web site addresses (if applicable). Identify the names of persons to contact and how to do so if necessary. A logo can readily identify your organisation and add visual impact. This is where you can list any other events, services, or products that are associated with your group.

Now you are ready to write your piece. Keep your audience in mind as you write and think about the tone you want to use. Once you have written the body content, you are ready to think about the design.

Example:

Soccer Star Gives Free Clinic

Come and learn the latest soccer tricks from a pro. **Beckham**, the British soccer star, will be giving free clinics to kids aged 8-12 years old. Come and learn the latest on banana kicks, chest traps, and chip shots. And find out what is new in offside ruling.

A FREE 3-week clinic will take place at the Delhi Community Centre, from May 1st to 21st. Girls and boys from age 8 to 12 are eligible to attend.

Registration takes place from April 25th to 30th and only 50 spaces are available.

Pick up a registration form from the Delhi Community Centre, located at 10 Peele Rd., or phone the office at 432-2254 for more information.



3.4.3 Step 3 Design

Excellent writing is not enough when it comes to capturing the reader's attention. The world is full of visual stimulation and your goal is to produce something that is eye-catching as well as effectively written. You might shudder at this idea; many people feel that they do not know anything about design. Be brave! With a little knowledge and practise, you can produce interesting-looking prose that will draw in your reader.

Here are some of the basics of good design:

Identify the look you need. This ties in to your audience. If you are sending out a bulletin to the executive committee of the organisation, you will want to create a sophisticated look. If you are posting a notice about a social event, you can take a more casual approach. The message you are sending, the tone, and the look all must support one another.

Lay out the design. Desktop publishing software programs allow writers to design pieces of high quality. Whether or not you have access to such software is not important; the first step is always to sketch your ideas with pencil and paper. Start with your headline and sub-headings. How do you want the text to appear? Try several ideas. Search through examples of pamphlets and choose those elements that appeal to you. You are creating a rough sketch at this point, so don't worry about details.

Consider these factors:

Balance	Use unusual shapes, white space, and placement of colour to achieve balance on the page.
Spacing	Left hand quadrant (primary viewing area) is more heavily weighted than anything else.
Size	Large items are more noticeable and remembered longer.
Colour	Dark elements carry more weight. Colour attracts attention, but use it sparingly. Remember that colour also has certain cultural associations.
White Space	White space around an element draws the reader's attention to that element. Use white space: <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around the headline. • In margins — wide margins draw the reader's eyes to the centre of the page. • Between columns — the wider the columns, the wider the space between them.
Images	Visuals — photographs, illustrations, and drawings — will reinforce the information. If you are not handy with pen and ink, try looking through Clip Art files on the Internet or search for images in books of illustrations. Whatever you choose, remember that the image must be accurate and support your main idea. Self Assessment Activity restraint; use visuals selectively.
Boxes and Bullets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullets show relationships among points. • Boxes tell readers, "this is a primary point." • Both catch the eye and facilitate scanning.
Font	Some font types are better for print than others. Be careful. Limit your choice to two fonts — one for the headers and one for the body text. A good choice for headers is Helvetica or Arial. For the body text, use Times New Roman. Use bold, italics, or ALL CAPS sparingly. Overuse of these styles will decrease their effectiveness.

With your outline in hand and some creative ideas about design, you are ready to put together your pamphlet, bulletin, or flyer.



3.4.4 Step 4 Print

Before you go to print, check your ink supplies and determine what quality of paper you require. Remember to check whether or not the correct **type** of paper is available in sufficient quantities. If your writing is going to be presented to members of the board, be sure to use high-quality paper.

Flyers to be handed out in large quantities will probably be printed on an inexpensive, lower-quality paper.

Watch the time. Writing takes time and so does printing. Try not to rush. Quality work gets noticed and this will help you capture the reader's attention.

Here is a checklist to **help** you identify all the elements required in writing your piece:

Document Checklist

Plan

- What is the message?
- Who is your target audience?
- What is the **format**: flyer, bulletin, or **pamphlet**? And what are the limitations of each?
- Do you have an outline?

Write

- What is **the** tone?
- Is your headline interesting?
- Do you have appropriate sub-headings?
- Have you gathered the necessary supporting material?
- Have you completed the outline?

Design

- What is the look you want to convey?
- What type of layout is best?
- Do your images enhance the content?
- Have you used two fonts?
- Do you have adequate white space? Or is your writing dense and cluttered?

Print

- Are you using black and white or colour?
- Do you have sufficient paper and ink?
- Does your paper quality reflect your message?
- Have you made adequate time allowances for all the stages?



Self Assessment Activity 6 : Writing Your Own Flyer

Go back to the list of headlines you wrote in the previous section. Choose one and **write** a flyer. Complete an outline that involves the planning, writing, and design stages. Once you have finished your outline, create the flyer. You will need to write **the** necessary information under each sub-heading and sketch out all the visual elements. Keep your writing and design simple; use bullets, short sentences, and clean **design** elements. You don't necessarily need images; use boxes, lines, and shading to create visual appeal.

This is a challenging **task**, so please ask for help from your co-workers. Some of the **members** of your group may be gifted artists, while others are better with words.

Use each individual's strength to help you accomplish your task.

When you have completed this Self Assessment Activity, you are ready to move on **to** the next section on the principles and techniques of editing and proofreading.



3.5 EDITING AND PROOFREADING

After you have created an outline, accumulated all the information, and written out your copy, you are still in need of some editing (correcting errors in word choice, spelling, and punctuation) and proofreading (correcting errors in typing or writing that appear in the final draft). Many people skip this stage in the writing process, only to suffer the **consequences** later on. If you want to make a positive impression on your reader, you must complete these final tasks.

Most word-processing programmes come with a grammar and spelling checker, and it is **worthwhile** running your writing through these programmes at the editing stage. But user beware! Do not assume that the programme will pick up all your mistakes. Many errors can slip past the computer's checker; only you can find and correct them.

It's always a good idea to have someone you trust review your writing. Often this person will be able to pick up **things** that you have missed, or maybe he or she is a better speller than **you**. Having someone else edit your work tests your writing; can the reader identify the main point? If not, you need to edit your work.

Before you begin to edit your work, you need to take a break. If you are able, take a few days. Before you look at your work again. If you do not have the luxury of taking extra time, go grab a cup of tea or walk around the block. You need at least 15 minutes to take on **the** role of observer rather than writer.

Editing Checklist

Word Usage

- Have you used words accurately?
- Have you used plurals where necessary?
- Have you selected the right words for the tone?
- Have you used clear and simple language?
- Is there agreement between the subject and verb?
- Have you checked for active and passive voices?
- Are all the conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, so, and yet) punctuated correctly? (Hint: If there is an independent clause on either side of the conjunction, it does not need a comma.)

Spelling

- Are all words spelled correctly?
- Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?
- Have you used capital letters in other places where they are needed?
- Have you used apostrophes correctly?
- Are you consistent in your spelling (for example, Oxford English spelling)?

Punctuation

- Have you used commas appropriately?
- Have you used colons and semicolons where needed?
- Have you eliminated run-on sentences?
- Do all of your sentences contain an independent clause? If not, they are sentence fragments and need to be re-written.

Paragraphs

- Does each paragraph contain a topic sentence?
- Does each paragraph end with a concluding sentence?
- Does each paragraph contain supporting material for one idea?
- Are your paragraphs sequenced in a logical order for your reader?
- What method of paragraph development did you use? Were you consistent?
- Have you used parallel structures?

General strategies

- Read aloud. Reading aloud makes you concentrate on each individual word.
- Read with a cover over the page. Try moving a piece of paper over each line individually to emphasise each word.
- Find out what errors you typically make and learn how to fix them. Ask others with experience how to correct common errors and keep a list of these solutions.



Self Assessment Activity 7: Editing

Please edit and rewrite the article below. Use the checklist to help you complete this activity. Have someone read over your revised piece to check for errors. Remember to use an appropriate tone and word choice. Also, look for facts that are really opinions. Check the paragraph structure. You may want to start with an outline to organise the information before writing.

Childline Unites Childhood with Home

LUCKNOW: Dressed in a blue trousers and a shirt five-year old Talib gives a disarming smile to every stranger he comes across.

His eyes reflect the yearning in his heart, for a familiar face. Even before one can get talking to him, he tugs at your hand pleading, "baji mane ghar jana hai (sister I want to go home)".

Prod him about the details of his home and the only information he can furnish is, "Jhanda Chowk". Where is Jhanda Chowk? He does not know. How did he get to this place? He does not know.

Talib is just one of the many children whose case the 'Childline Lucknow' has taken up with the intent of uniting lost children with their parents.

While the Childline grapples with the case of Talib as also that of 8-year old Rahul's who is also currently housed at the Shishu Grah a large number of other cases, which have been referred to it have thrown up interesting facts.

In most of these cases they were also found to be glib talkers and convincing liars. The case of 9-year old Kiran best exemplifies this. Kiran was found at the Charbagh Railway Station a month back and subsequently given shelter by the Childline.

All throughout her stay under the helpline's care, during which she was also given extensive counselling, Kiran maintained that she had run away from her home as her stepmother ill-treated her.

When Kiran's father was eventually contacted at his home in Bhopal and informed that his daughter was in Lucknow, he rushed to the city.

"On seeing her father, Kiran broke down and admitted that she had been telling a lie about her mother and that she was in fact not her stepmother.

Kiran's case has not been a solitary case of the family being blamed by the child as the reason for running away. Most of these cases that are handled by the Childline, are found to have come from families belonging to the lower economic strata of society.

There have however been genuine cases, wherein children from Uttar Pradesh have been lured by miscreants and then taken to places even as far off as Chennai.

They have been finally restored to their parents through the networking of the Childline, which has centres in 33 cities. The Lucknow child helpline service, which began in February 2001, has till date handled 70-plus cases.

Aided by the NGOs 'Ankur Yuwa Chetna Shivir' and 'HUM' (Human Unity for Movement) it functions under the UP Council for Child Welfare which is directly controlled by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Its telephone service 1098 operates round-the-clock.

Proofreading

By the time you have finished editing, you will have gone over your writing so many times that you have practically memorised it. When you write the final copy, it will be difficult to recognise small mistakes since you are so close to the writing. Here are some tips to help you find those tiny errors:

- Read through your piece line-by-line, using a ruler to guide you.
- If you have been keeping a list of your common mistakes, scan the content looking specifically for these mistakes.
- Circle any spelling errors.
- Make a final check of all aspects of your writing.

Your "last **draft**" may need further revision after your proofreading review. If so, take the time to re-write the piece so the version you send off is clean and correct. Computers make editing and proofreading much easier, so if you have one on hand, use it. At long last, you are ready to print your piece of writing and send it off to prospective readers. If you've followed the steps of editing and proofreading carefully, you can be confident that your writing will convey the message that you want. One last word of advice:

DO NOT FORGET TO KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR FILES!



Review Self Assessment Activity: Editing Your Own Work

Now it is time for you to examine your work closely. Select one of the letters you wrote in Unit 2 and the flyer you created earlier. Apply the principles of editing and proofreading to your pieces of writing.

Did you notice that you made the same errors more than once? Be sure to make a list of these errors and how to correct them for future reference.

Once you have completed proofreading, have a friend or colleague read your writing as a final check. Ask this person to state the main idea behind your piece and **summarise** the points you made. If your writing was clear, simple, and direct then the reader should be able to identify these items easily. If not then you need to go back and re-write the piece.



3.6 LET US SUM UP

Give yourself a big pat on the back! You have acquired a great deal of information in the last three units. This unit built on your knowledge of **grammar** and **punctuation** so you could begin writing for specific purposes.

Once you mastered the ability to differentiate between fact and opinion, you were able to create promotional pieces based on **supporting** details. You had a chance to practise creating some simple design layouts, and in Unit 4 you will put this knowledge to good use.

What you have learned in this unit is just the **beginning**. Check the Internet for more ideas on creating flyers, bulletins, and pamphlets. And don't forget to look for good examples around you. Keep practising and remember to do learning.

Answers to Self Assessment Activity 1: Identifying Facts

- 1 Topic sentence = Tea is drunk the world over but new research says that tea can actually help prevent cavities and gum disease.
- 2 The author uses facts and examples to support the topic sentence.
- 3 All of the sentences in this article contain facts:

Tea is drunk the world over but new research says that tea can actually help prevent cavities and gum disease. A major cause of gum disease is plaque, a combination of more than 300 types of bacteria that form a compound that binds to your teeth. Once plaque builds up it can cause gum irritation and eventually gingivitis. The bacteria in plaque **turn** sugars into acids, which erode the tooth enamel, eventually leading to the development of cavities. Components of tea, called polyphenols, have been linked to retardation of the build-up of plaque and the reduction of its ability to stick to your teeth. Still, only regular brushing and cleaning by a dental hygienist really removes all the plaque **from** your teeth. That is one reason why cavities still affect 90 per cent of people in tea-drinking countries with poor dental hygiene.

- 4 The author concludes by **giving** another fact (90% of people still have poor dental hygiene). This is effective as it gives the reader more **information to be able to draw a conclusion** about the effects of tea on dental hygiene.
- 5 Tea is a great way to prevent cavities and gum disease. Plaque makes **gums and teeth** unhealthy and unpleasant looking. It will build up on your teeth and give you gum disease. Plaque and sugar will rot your teeth and give you cavities. **Drinking tea will surely help stop the build-up of plaque and keep your teeth clean. Still, it's best to have your teeth cleaned by a hygienist and checked by a dentist. And of course you have to brush regularly. That's the way to keep your teeth looking and feeling great!**

Answers to Self Assessment Activity 2: Identifying Opinions

- 1 Topic sentence = Each new method to stop smoking seems to have its promoters and detractors.
- 2 Two New Ways to Kick That Killer Habit
 - a) Each new method to stop smoking seems to have its promoters and detractors.
 - b) Researchers say their product may taste like a dirty ashtray to some. Adding juice may make it more palatable.
 - c) Any new technique may lead more people to kick the nicotine habit.
- 3 The author uses details, opinions, and facts to develop the paragraph.
- 4 Scientists and marketers make conflicting claims regarding the various methods of stopping smoking. Some animal studies sponsored by a Florida drug company suggest that a newly patented nicotine vaccine can be effective in quitting the nicotine habit. So far no Federal Drug **Administration** approval for human trials has been filed. Meanwhile, other university researchers are using a liquid form as a possible replacement for nicotine and the patch. Test subjects have complained about the taste of the product. A preliminary study found that this new product kept 20 per cent of people nicotine-free after six months in trial. Research has indicated that certain new techniques may help people stop smoking.

Answers to Self Assessment Activity 3: Writing for Clarity

1 Facts:

"...they asked him to sing the title track of his latest album..."

"While most singers in the past have been eluding such situations on account that the normal mikes do not have amplifiers to do justice with the high-pitched songs, Shail decided to take on the challenge."

Opinions:

"Shail Oswal, a rather fresh singer, had a somewhat tough time."

"...which he was so fondly promoting."

"...the sound that reached the audience was too shrill to be applauded."

- 2 During a promotional visit to the city recently, Shail Oswal, a rather fresh singer, had a somewhat tough time. After he had finished addressing the press in Chandigarh Press Club on January 16, some of the "adventurous ones" among the scribes decided to test the singer's mettle. So they asked him to sing the title track of his latest album, which he was so fondly promoting. While most singers in the past have been eluding such situations on account that the normal mikes do not have amplifiers to do justice with the high-pitched songs, Shail decided to take on the challenge.

To his embarrassment, the mike could not amplify his voice when its range increased and the sound that reached the audience was too shrill to be applauded. Humbled, the singer submitted gracefully: "That is actually how it goes!"

- 3 The article claims that Shail Oswal was humbled by his performance. This statement is supported by opinion.
- 4 The last sentence claims Oswal was humbled; however, he states, "That is actually how it goes!" This does not sound like someone who has been humbled.
- 5 During a promotional visit to the city recently, singer Shail Oswal addressed the press in Chandigarh Press Club on January 16. Some of the reporters decided to test the singer's mettle. So they asked him to sing the title track of his latest album, which he was promoting. Most singers in the past have eluded such situations because the normal mikes do not have amplifiers to do justice to the high-pitched songs, but Shail decided to take on the challenge.

Unfortunately, the mike could not amplify his voice when its range increased and the sound that reached the audience was too shrill to be applauded. The singer submitted: "That is actually how it goes!"

Answers to Self Assessment Activity 4

As the answers will vary from person to person, there is no "right" answer given here.

Answers to Self Assessment Activity 5

1. Problem: Curt, rude
Solution: Please pay your telephone bill to ensure uninterrupted service.
2. Problem: Patronising
Solution: Please **find** a refund enclosed.
3. Problem: Formal and wordy.
Solution: Please send your report by November 1st.
4. Problem: Insulting
Solution: Given the facts, double entry bookkeeping appears to be more efficient.

Please compare your flyer to the example in the unit and with others that have been produced.

Answers to Self Assessment Activity 7

The following is an example of one way this report could have been edited. There are many other "right" ways to written the article.

Childline: Uniting Children with Their Parents

LUCKNOW: Dressed in a yellow shirt and blue trousers, five-year old Talib gives a disarming smile to every stranger he meets. The yearning in his heart for a familiar face is reflected in his eyes and even before you speak to him he tugs at your hand and pleads, "baji inane ghar jana hai (sister, I want to go home)".

When Talib is asked where home is, he answers, "Jhanda Chowk" but is unable to provide any other details such as how long ago he left home or how he got to Lucknow. Talib, along with 8-year old Rahul who is also housed at Shishu Grah, are just two of marly lost children that "Childline Lucknow" is attempting to reunite with their parents.

Many of these children, however, have been exposed as glib talkers and convincing liars. One example is nine-year old Kiran who was found about a month ago at the Charbagh Railway Station and given shelter at Childline.

Kiran said she ran away from home because her stepmother mistreated her. She received extensive counselling while she was at the shelter, and eventually her father was located and contacted at his home in Bohpal. He subsequently rushed to Lucknow where he met with Kiran. When Kiran saw her father, she broke down and admitted she had been telling lies and the stepmother she was talking about was actually her mother.

Many of the children housed at Childline come from poor families and they run away from home for a variety of reasons, although they often cite their family as the main reason that they leave. Some children do not leave voluntarily, but are kidnapped and taken to cities far from their homes.

Childline, which functions under the UP Council for Child Welfare, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, is aided by the NGOs "Ankur Yuwa Chetna Shivir" and the "Human Unity for Movement" (HUM).

The Lucknow Child Helpline Service, which began in February 2001, has handled more than 70 cases to date. The helpline number is 1098 and operates on a 24-hour basis. Childline has a network of centres in 33 cities and have been successful in reuniting many children with their parents.

3.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. "There is a tremendous advantage to a person who has mastered the art of effective speed reading and writing". Elucidate.
2. Distinguish between writing about facts and writing about opinions ?
3. What are the four things you should do when you write a factual piece of paper ? Explain them with the help of practical examples.

4. What do you mean by writing? What makes up a well-written, appealing piece of factual writing? Explain the different steps of writing process.
5. What do you mean by proof reading? How it is different from Editing.
6. What factors would you consider before starts Editing and Proofreading?
7. Briefly comment on the following statements
 - a) Most writing in the workplace is factual.
An Opinion is a statement that is a view or judgement.
 - b) Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are involved in many community projects, such as fund-raisers.
 - d) The headlines is the attention grabber.
 - c) Excellent writing is not enough when it comes to capturing the readers' attention.
 - d) Most word-processing comes with a grammar and spelling checker.
 - f) Computer makes editing and proofreading much easier.

Note : These questions will help you to understand the unit better. Try to write answers for them, but do not submit your answers to the university for assessment. These are for your practice only.