
UNIT 24 NOTES

Structure

- 24.0 Objectives
- 24.1 Introduction
- 24.2 Difference between Letters and Notes
- 24.3 The Language of Notes
 - 24.3.1 Ellipsis
 - 24.3.2 Imperatives
 - 24.3.3 Exclamations
 - 24.3.4 Contractions
 - 24.3.5 Punctuation Marks and Use of Capital Letters
- 24.4 Different Types of Notes
 - 24.4.1 Giving Instructions
 - 24.4.2 Making Arrangements
 - 24.4.3 Giving Explanations and Apologizing
 - 24.4.4 Making Requests
- 24.5 Let Us Sum Up
- Answers

24.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is :

- to acquaint you with a common form of informal communication—short notes and some of the characteristic features of the language used in notes ;
- to give you samples of different types of notes and practice in writing them.

After you complete this unit, you should be able to write notes of different types, and to different people.

24.1 INTRODUCTION

There are occasions when we don't need to give messages to people by writing letters to them—a short note will suffice, and perhaps be more appropriate. Short notes, like memos, are generally not sent by post, but are left in a prominent place for the person to read, or they are sometimes delivered by hand.

We normally write notes to people with whom we are in regular contact—and these may be members of our family, close friends, colleagues, or room-mates. We also have to take down telephone messages for people, and may be leave notes for them.

There is often a greater degree of informality in the language of notes than even in personal letters.

For example, we need not even write complete sentences in notes. There is no strict layout for notes either.

In this unit, we shall discuss the difference between notes and letters ; the language used in notes ; and the different types of notes that people normally write.

24.2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LETTERS AND NOTES

A letter, even a personal letter, follows a certain format (see Block 1, Unit 4). For instance, the sender's address and the date are written on the top right hand side of the page. Below that, towards the left, there is the salutation or greeting, and at the end, you have the complimentary close.

Notes follow no such format. The time and date are sometimes written, but only if they are necessary. Unlike letters, where you have to follow a certain method in writing dates, in notes you may write them as you wish.

In the examples below, notice how the time and date are written in notes :

Example 1

A note written by a colleague to another.

Wed. 5.30 PM
Vibha called from communications Ring her up between 10 and 11 URGENT
Rita

Example 2

A note from a friend to a couple who were not at home.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON
Subhash & Anju, Where were you!!? Thought I'd surprise you . . . got surprised myself! Will call you some time soon.
Rama

Example 3

A note from a husband to his wife. Both of them work, and the wife leaves for work before him. Notice that there is no date or time mentioned.

Kusum, M.D. just telephoned . . . may come home late . . . don't wait dinner.	Anil
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Some people prefer to write the time and date below their name.

Example 4

Daddy, I've spoken to the maintenance folk. They'll come by 11. Also, please remember to cook the dal . . . 2 cups of dal + 4½ cups of water + salt + haladi + mirch.	P 9 A.M.
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The salutation and ending in a note do not follow any format. As you must have noticed in the notes given above, in nearly all the cases only the name is given at the top. A letter would probably have,

Dear/My dear

In a note, you may sometimes not even write the name of the person for whom the note is intended. For instance, if you are leaving a note for your room-mate :

7 P.M.
<p>IMPORTANT... 'phone your sister... she's rung up 6 times today... sounds UPSET... but won't leave message.</p>
Sudesh

To a friend you may write :

Hi, (name)
Hello,

However, when we leave a note for a superior, we normally use the more formal style.

Example 6

<p>Dear Dr. Ahmed,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thanks for lending me this book. I've jotted down a few points that I'd like to discuss with you. Could you give me a ring when you get back?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Parvin Sinclair 11 a.m. 9.4.89.</p>

Again, the end of the note follows no format. In most cases just the name or even the initial letter of the name will suffice. Occasionally, one sees notes ending with,

Love,
.....
(name)

24.3 THE LANGUAGE OF NOTES

In Block 1, Unit 4 we discussed some of the specific stylistic features of informal writing, especially those that obtained in informal letters. In informal letters, we often use expressions that characterise conversation. In short notes that one leaves for people to read, we come even closer to spoken language. Let's look at those features of language which particularly relate to notes.

24.3.1 Ellipsis

You must have noticed in the notes given above that many of the sentences are apparently incomplete, with certain 'grammatical' items missing. Yet the sense is clear to the reader. This device, as you already know, is called ellipsis. Examples :

- i) '... Thought I'd surprise you... got surprised myself! Will call you sometime soon.' (Example 2)
- ii) '... just telephoned... may come home late... don't wait dinner'. (Example 3)
- iii) '... sounds UPSET... but won't leave message'. (Example 5)
- iv) Will be late today. Please give Celestine Rs. 10/- for Milk...

Check Your Progress 1

Read the examples of ellipsis given above again, and write the messages in full sentences.

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24.3.2 Imperatives

Imperatives are more a part of spoken than written English. They are generally used when the relationship is intimate.

Example 7

From a working mother to a school-going daughter.

Radhu-please have your lunch. *Don't buzz off to Swati's before 4.30.*
I'll listen your tables of 15 and 16 when I return. *EAT THE
CUSTARD ONLY AFTER LUNCH.*

Mamma

Check Your Progress 2

Pick out the imperative expressions in the following notes.

i)

Daddy,

I have spoken to the maintenance folk. They will come by 11.
Also, please remember to cook, the dal . . . 2 cups of dal + 4½ cups of
water + salt + haldi + mirch.

P
9 A.M.

ii) Ramesh,

DON'T FORGET

Pick up the cake from Maxims by 2 O' Clock. Pay Rs. 150.

Sunita

24.3.3 Exclamations

Exclamations are very common in notes. Besides expressing emotions and feelings, they also tend to emphasize the importance of a message.

Examples

i) Where were you ?!! Thought I'd surprise you . . . got surprised myself!
(EXAMPLE 2)

ii) **Example 8**

From wife to husband

Vijay,
Remember, have to go to dinner at 8.
Don't be late !

N

From one colleague to another

Ahmed,
 Parvin rang. Please ring her NOW !! Sounds very imp. She's waiting
 for your call.

Salil (10.30 a.m.)

24.3.4 Contractions

The use of contractions is a very common feature in informal writing.

Check Your Progress 3

Pick out the contracted forms from the 6 examples of notes given in Section 24.2.

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24.3.5 Punctuation Marks and Use of Capital Letters

In informal notes, we may take several liberties in our writing. For example, dashes may be used instead of full stops and commas. More than one exclamation mark may be used to emphasize the point. Sometimes capital letters may be used even in the middle of a sentence to express urgency. Let's look at some examples,

Notice the use of dashes and capital letters in the example below.

Example 10

IMPORTANT . . . Ring up your mother . . . sounds upset . . . rang 3 times
 before 7 p.m.

J
 7.30. p.m.

Notice the use of exclamation marks in Example 2 :

Where were you ? !! Thought I'd surprise you . . . got surprised myself !

Check Your Progress 4

Make the following notes more interesting by adding punctuation marks, dashes, capital letters, etc. You may leave out certain words if you wish.

i) Hi Sangeeta
 Useless creature. I spend all my energy getting to you and find that you're
 gadding about yourself. Haven't met you for ages and want to see you soon. Give
 me a ring and land up at my place any evening. See you.

Rashmi

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ii) Renu,

Vibha called. Please ring her now. Sounds very important. She's waiting for you to ring her before going out.

ASG (9.30 Tuesday)

24.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF NOTES

Notes can be written on practically any subject under the sun. But there are certain communicative functions for which notes are frequently required. These include

- giving instructions,
- making arrangements,
- making requests, and
- apologizing.

Of course, there can be an overlap between the various functions. You may also have to leave a note when you take down a telephone message.

We shall give you examples of, and practice in writing some of these different types of notes.

24.4.1 Giving Instructions

When you write instructions of any sort, you must combine accuracy of detail with brevity. We give you examples of notes in which instructions are given to different people.

Example 11

From a colleague who is going on leave, to another who is absent that day.

Manik,

I'm off tomorrow. Certain things need to be cleared yet. Pl. handle them for me.

- 1) Art work for Block 1 with Wasima. She'll bring it on 6th June. Pl. send it to PPD *immediately after checking*.
- 2) Units 6 & 7 in Hindi have to be got back from the translator.
- 3) Block 3 has to be typed again. Pl. get that done . . . I'll come back & check it.

Thanks a lot.
See you on the 15th.

Parvin
1.6.89.

Example 12

From a sister to a brother.

Dear Rajiv,

I'll be coming home late tonight because I've got a late evening booking at the studio.

Just make sure Dad gets his hot milk at night, and cover all the left-over food and put it in the fridge. There's a new bottle of Horlicks in the store if you are looking for it.

See you,

Vibha.

Check Your Progress 5

Your sister is staying with you for a few days. She's asleep when you leave the house. Leave a note telling her some of things that she must do around the house.

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24.4.2 Making Arrangements

Read the notes given below :

Example 13

A note from wife to husband

Vijay, I tried calling you at the office, but you were not there. I'm going to Sunaina's for tea. Please pick me up from there at about 7 p.m. See you.

Neera

Example 14

From one friend to another

Saturday 7 p.m.

Dear Kusum,

'Salaam Bombay' on at Chanakaya... 11.30 show. Let's meet Sunday at 10.30 for a quick coffee. Pizza at Nirula's afterwards. Phone if arrangement not convenient.

Sunil

Diaries, Notes, Tables and Figures Check Your Progress 3

Example 2 I'd surprise you

Example 3 don't wait dinner

Example 4 I've spoken to the maintenance folk.
They'll come by 11.

Example 5 She's rung up 6 times today *won't* leave message

Example 6 I've jotted down a few points about it that I'd like to discuss with you.

Check Your Progress 4

i) Sat. 10 a.m.
Hi, Sangeeta!
Useless creature !! I spend all my energy getting to you... find you're gadding about yourself! Haven't met you for ages and want to see you SOON. Give me a ring and land up at my place any evening.
Rashmi

ii) Renu,
Vibha called. Please ring her *NOW*. Sounds *very* IMPORTANT. She's waiting for you to ring her before going out.
ASG (9.30 Tuesday)

Check Your Progress 5

Sheila—didn't want to wake you.
Good Morning! Pl. do the following:
— boil the potatoes
— water the plants
— don't forget to feed Sheru at 10.
— don't tolerate Radha's nonsense!
Will be back by lunch. Take care.

Check Your Progress 6

i) Wed. 9 p.m.
Kapil, Haven't seen you for a while. How about meeting at Aka Saka at 1 p.m.? Leave a note only if you *can't* make it.
Hope to see you then
Suresh

ii) Sat. 2 p.m.
Uma,
Sorry—can't join you for lunch—have to go out—will explain when I get back. One message—your friend Salma called—in Delhi for a few days. Would like to meet you for lunch at Kwality's... 1 p.m. tomorrow. If you can't make it phone her at 6467379.
Pran.

Check Your Progress 7

Hi, Ajay... Sleepy Head!!
You are on your own again. Have a hearty lunch... and tell Celestina to give you whatever you want during the day. I won't be back till after tea. DON'T make other plans... we're going to Daitchi for dinner.
S
8.30 a.m.

Check Your Progress 8

Dear Sengupta,

I understand that you're on duty tomorrow night. Would it be possible for you to do my duty next Friday, if I take up your duty tomorrow night? My mother is coming to visit us next Friday. I'll be very grateful if this arrangement is acceptable to you.

R. S. Pillai