

# UNIT 36 A TELEVISION SCRIPT

## Structure

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## 36.0 OBJECTIVES

After a careful study of this unit, you will be able to

- 'see' the images behind the words you say;
- prepare a 'storyboard' of your script for television;
- plan to take advantage of the redundancies of television; and
- take steps to prevent the loss of your message in noise.

## 36.1 THE TWIN MEDIUM AND ITS TWO-TRACK SCRIPT

When you write for television, you divide the page into two columns. You write your 'text' in the right hand column. Your 'text' is what you or your actors are going to say. But it is not what you write first. That is in the left hand column, since English reads from left to right. But if we put everything we are going to say on the right, what is there to put on the left?

People sit in front of a television screen, first thing to *see* something. Only then do they want to hear anything. Now you know what goes into the left-hand column of your page. That is what you are going to put on the screen. If you are going to put your head there, write 'my head' on the left-hand side. But you should write it in, not so starkly as 'my head', but in the TV script style. And that is, 'CU: PRESENTER'. Now, when do you put your head on a TV screen?

Suppose you are advertising a brand of toothpaste. Then the viewer should see your sparkling white teeth as you beam your smile at him and say, 'Hallo' Now here's what that looks like on a page of a script.

Video	Audio
CU: PRESENTER: BEAMING CAP: [TOOTHPASTE PACKET]	Pres: Hello! Voice over: Use 'smiles' Then smile like sunshine.

CU and CAP are instructions to the camera crew. CU is 'close-up', and CAP (caption) is anything from an object to a strip of paper with writing. CU here tells, the camera crew that they should show the presenter's 'face alone' on the screen. 'Voice Over' (V.O.) means the speaker is unseen.

The speaker's voice is heard 'over' whatever is seen on the screen at the time. The whole thing you read in those two little columns with music before, during, and after the pictures and the words, can be a script for a one-minute ad. (advertisement). But

etc. in the left-hand column, and words to speak and sounds to make, etc., in the right-hand column. Such a page is called a 'storyboard', and you have just seen how a small strip of it is made. Before you start writing for television, you will have to learn at least some of the symbols, signals and conventions of the storyboard.

But why should we worry about storyboards? Playwrights don't make storyboards when they write stage plays. True, they don't, but stage plays don't use cameras. And the audience can look at the whole stage and the *whole* of the actors! Television viewers have only a small screen to look at. The biggest one is not bigger than 21 inches across. That was why the radio producer told the advertiser that television can stretch the imagination to 21 inches (!) while radio stretches it sky-high. On the small screen we can't show human bodies etc. whole all the time. No one will see the details they need to see. That is a drawback. Then the camera is an *advantage*. In the theatre or a lecture hall, we are never sure everybody is looking where they ought to be looking. On television, the camera can do the looking on their behalf and show on the screen exactly what everybody ought to be looking at, no more, no less. So we have to tell the cameras what the viewer ought to be looking at each moment of the programme. The way we tell the camera, that is the *storyboard*. The writer need not tell the camera what it is exactly. The producer will do that if the writer makes his intentions clear enough by means of the storyboard.

When we make use of the storyboard, however, we have to bear in mind certain points about the nature of television as a medium. Our storyboard should take advantage of the medium's strengths and avoid its risks as far as possible.

Television can send out information along three dimensions and two channels. The three dimensions are length, breadth, and time; and the two channels are light and sound. It is now technically possible to put the missing dimension of depth in, so is it feasible to enlarge the size of the receiver screen to cover a whole wall of a sitting-room. But, for all practical purposes, 'TV' is still a small screen no more than 21 inches diagonally, and it is flat. So it cannot bring us actual depth, nor can it show us people life-size. Still, the information it can bring us is much more than we need to reduce our 'uncertainty'. That is to say, it is a *redundant* medium. Let us see exactly what that means.

You may remember J.M. Tranaman's book on communication and comprehension. For his research Tranaman tested people's comprehension of information put out through all the three media, of print, sound, and vision. His results showed that no medium was a superior or specially preferable channel for transmitting information as a means of enhancing comprehension. The medium of transmission was not crucial to comprehension. That is to say, whether something was read in print, heard on a taperecorder, or seen in a picture on a screen, people understood it just as well, and as quickly. *This* information, however, surprises most people, but there is no reason why it should. Whether you say the word, 'mango' or write it on the wall, or you *show* an actual mango to the audience, they will understand it is a mango, if they understand English and have seen a mango before.

That means that just one channel of transmission is enough to reduce uncertainty, and the other channels are redundant if they all bring in information at the same time. That is exactly what television can do. It can say a word, flash it across the screen in print, and show a picture with it at the same time. Therefore TV is a *medium of maximum redundancy*. This is a great advantage. It is a triple assurance against the loss of our message in case of noise. If someone fails to hear the word or can't read it, there is then the picture to help that viewer.

That is what make people so relaxed in front of a television screen. They will put up with a great deal of disturbance without protesting. You can't take such liberties with them and escape their displeasure when they are reading a book or listening to the radio. Television does not overtax anyone's sense organ or means of understanding. It distributes pressure in all available directions. Your storyboard should help television do this.

On the other hand, if information from two channels or in two codes compete with each other instead of complementing them, one of them will be treated as the message, and the rest, as noise. For instance, when a film is in a foreign language, dialogues are superimposed in captions on the pictures. Quite often, however, some

pictures, which they don't want to miss. So they ignore the captions as far as possible. If the dialogue is 'dubbed' in the viewers' language, on the other hand, the information in the audio channel is complementary to that on the screen, and viewers can now view with much reduced tension.

TV can put out at the same time, spoken words, other sounds, written words, and pictures. These together can often be much more than the brain can deal with at once. Your storyboard should help viewers arrange information in 'chunks' instantly as signals arrive on the screen. Or you had better give your viewer the information in ready-made patterns. If you are not careful in doing this, much of your information is likely to 'go waste'. Television programmes take no end of trouble to produce, not to mention all the expenditure they demand. So the last thing that anyone involved would care to hear is that they are 'going waste'.

We said above that information items should complement, rather than compete with, each other. To put out items in complementary relations efficiently, we should be aware of two ways of coding information. These are the *analogue* and the *digital* systems of coding. A picture is an analogue of the original. The picture *looks like* the thing or the person pictured. An analogue means a likeness. On the other hand, a word for a thing does not look like it, if it is an English word or a word in any widely spoken Indian language. The word, 'grape', for instance, does not look like grapes. This is a 'digital' way of making a sign for grapes. It is digital because it has no connection with the original. You cannot look at the word grapes and somehow arrive at the fruit. Someone has to teach you the meaning of the word. Digital means, 'like fingers', discontinuous, independent, not connected to each other. And that is the main problem with digital coding. The signals are not connected with what they stand for as signs. So you have to *teach them*.

But we have no time to teach our viewers what we mean by our signs. They are waiting for our *messages*. And the way to make sure they get our messages, is to find a code that they know without any teaching. Such a code is the analogue code, that is to say, a code of pictures. As soon as anyone sees a picture of a cat, he or she will recognize it as a picture of a cat if they have seen cats before. They will not recognize the word 'cat', unless they have learnt English. A cat is a common word, so most viewers may recognize it. But if your programme is about armadillos, it's no use writing the word 'armadillo' beautifully on the screen. You have to get a picture of the animal. Then the viewer will know what kind of an animal it is, because he or she has seen animals. This is the biggest advantage of television over radio. Radio can only use words for things, unless the thing makes a sound. But TV can bring in the thing itself, in pictures. On your storyboard, for instance, you may often find there is no space for all the words you need to describe something in the left-hand column. Then you can show what you want to put there in pictures or diagrams. Quite often, scriptwriters fill the left-hand side of the storyboard with pictures and diagrams, if they are good at drawing. But 'stick drawings' will do. The pictures are usually in rectangular frames of a ratio of 4:3 because a television screen has a length to height ratio of 4:3. This ratio is known as the *aspect ratio*. More about coding later on. Now check your progress.

### Check Your Progress 1.

1) Why do you divide your page into two columns for TV script writing?

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.....

2) Why do we put the 'audio' on the right-hand side?

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- 7) Medium Long Shot (MLS) or 'Knee' Shot': The picture shows the person from the knee upward.
- 8) Medium Shot (MS) or MID Shot or Waist Shot: The picture shows the subject (the person) from waist upwards.
- 9) Medium Close Shot (MCS), or Medium Close-Up (MCU): Only the head and shoulders of the subject are seen in the picture. And also the chest. So this is also called the CHEST Shot or Bust Shot.
- 10) Close Shot (CS) or Close Up (CU): The subject's head alone is seen, from neck upward.
- 11) Big Close Shot (BCS) or Big Close Up (BCU): Only the subject's face is seen, from chin to forehead.
- 12) Over-the-Shoulder Shot (OSS): The subject is seen as someone else sees him or her. So the camera looks at the subject over the shoulder of the other person.

Now with all these divisions of the human figure in mind, you should look at a number of TV programmes from the programme maker's angle and see *when* you need each type of 'Shot'.

Now how many kinds of programmes are there in which you can use all these 'shots'? There are television talks or 'addresses', which are usually given by high state dignitaries (such as the President) and so on. Then there are illustrated talks or 'demonstration-lectures'. These are given in 'intellectual contexts'. There may be a series of 'memorial lectures' given every year. Or there may be members of the public who wish to be informed and enlightened on certain topics. Or there may be some television 'lectures' given on behalf of the University Grants Commission or the Open University. But television talks are difficult to prepare. The speaker cannot read as he can over the radio. He either has to learn his speech off by heart from the beginning to the end, or appear on the screen for some parts of it and speak the rest 'Voice Over', while pictures, diagrams and so on appear the screen while he is speaking unseen. Then, you see, he can *read*. You are going to read three such illustrated talks in sections 36.3, 36.4 and 36.5. After reading each talk, you will decide:

- 1) When the speaker is going to appear on the screen,
- 2) What words and pictures should be seen on the screen when the speaker is not appearing on it.

Then you fill the left-hand side of the page with information to the producer on what you have decided.

Remember that writings and diagrams etc. are called 'Captions (CAP)' on the left-hand side of your storyboard.

The task of making up a storyboard should not be difficult for anyone. When we speak, or just before we start speaking, we see something, either in the world outside or in the world in our mind. Then we find words for what we see and say those words. The words we say are on the right-hand side of the page. We usually never fill the left-hand side of the page because there is no reason for doing so. Only artists, such as painters go on drawing pictures instead of speaking about them. Now television gives us too a reason for getting the pictures drawn. We need not draw them; the cameramen and the graphic artist will do the work for us. We only have to tell them what we need.

There is *one* problem, though. We usually speak *after* we have seen things. So, when we speak, we don't tell the story in the order in which it happened. We mix up the events and leave some out. This is all right. But we should remember to put our story in some sort of order. We almost always speak after the event, in the past tense. We seldom speak about something that is going on, except in a general way, unless we are giving a running commentary on a sporting event or something like that. A television script writer has to learn to speak like a running commentary as a matter of habit, silently if not aloud. Then he or she will find a storyboard the easiest thing in the world to make. We call this Unit 'Going Back to Images'. If we can go back to the images that we have in our head, before we begin speaking, we can easily put those images on our storyboard.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What is the purpose of a Very Long Shot?

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2) What is the difference between a Big Close Up and a Bust Shot?

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**36.3 STUDY A STORYBOARD**

Here is a specimen 'storyboard'. Read the text and study the video slots (numbered).

**A Point about Speaking**  
(An 'illustrated' talk)

Video

Audio

(Music)

1) MS: PRESENTER

We have by now spent a considerable time on *writing* radio talks. But talks are for speaking. Suppose you yourself are going to *speak* the words you have written. How would you go about preparing for *that* job? And the job of speaking on television?

If you would like to speak well, you should take a course in speaking. Or, if you would rather train yourself, we can make just one point here to help you start yourself on your training. This is a point that most students of English in India don't pay much attention to because the teaching is dominated by writing. But it is what makes the *crucial* difference between what sounds like 'good English' and what sounds like 'not so good English' as people judge it when they hear someone speak. And there is no radio or television speaker who would not like his listeners to say his talk sounded like 'good English'.

The point has been made in a programme on Speaking English. Here's an extract from the beginning of the programme.

(MUSIC)

Dissolve  
to Extract

(MUSIC)

AN EXTRACT FROM A PROGRAMME

2)

MS:SPEAKER Speaker:

... Lots of us think we should all cultivate a good pronunciation. Practically every other day I hear someone laugh at someone else's pronunciation. But many of these people who criticize others do not themselves speak English with anything like a good style of pronunciation. They mispronounce the very word, pronunciation. They say, 'pronounsation' So, let's get this word right, to start with. The verb is, 'pronounce'.

3)

CAP/

PRONOUNCE + ATION

- 4) CAP: 'pronounce'  
 VOICE OVER: *pronounce.*  
 MS: SPEAKER: But when we pronounce the noun we get from the verb,  
 Speaker: 'pronounce', we should say,  
 'pronunciation'.
- 5) CAP  
 'pronunciation'  
 VOICE OVER: pronunciation.  
 MS: SPEAKER: So from now on, let us pronounce at least the word  
 Speaker: 'pronunciation' in the right way of  
 pronunciation, like enunciation, renunciation,  
 denunciation, and so on.
- 6) CAP  
 enunciation  
 denunciation  
 renunciation
- 7) MS SPEAKER  
 Now that we have got that out of the way, let's get back to  
 our point. As I was saying, a number of people think we  
 all ought to speak English with a good pronunciation. But  
 if you ask them what makes English pronunciation 'good',  
 you will not get any answer that will work. What are the  
*features* of good English pronunciation? Will our  
 pronunciation be good if we imitate Englishmen or  
 Americans like parrots? I'm afraid, it won't. Here's what  
 an Englishman (or an American, I don't remember  
 which), said about it.
- 8) VOICE OVER: (with a foreign accent): When a foreigner  
 CUT: ANIMATED speaks good English with a foreign accent, we  
 CARTOON OR respect him. But when he speaks exactly as we do,  
 COMIC ART we suspect him.  
 CAP: 'respect'  
 CUT: 'suspect'
- 9) CAP  
 MS SPEAKER  
 Speaker: Because he might be a spy, you see! so, unless  
 you'd like to get a job as a spy, you mustn't try to speak  
 English exactly as an Englishman or an American speaks  
 it. Therefore the question for us is this. What will make  
 our English pronunciation 'good' with our own Indian  
 accent? And the answer?
- 10) CAP: 2nd Voice: Word accent, and, sentence rhythm.  
 'word accent' Speaker: Word accent, and sentence rhythm."  
 'sentence rhythm'  
 Cap  
 MS: Speaker  
 DISSOLVE TO (MUSIC) END OF EXTRACT  
 PRESENTER
- 12) MS: PRESENTER: So, one thing appears to be strangely true. A style of  
 spoken English has a good chance of sounding 'good' to  
 the ears of anyone who has learned to speak it so long as it  
 keeps the natural patterns of word accent and the rhythm  
 of the language. Foreign flavours in the pronunciation of  
 sounds may not strike the hearer as 'not good' so long as  
 the words are recognizable for what they are meant to be.
- 13) CAP: 'foreign flavour' CUT 'Accent' is used in two different senses in the talk you've  
 breath force stress just heard. In 'foreign accent' the word is used in its  
 popular
- 14) CAP  
 FOREIGN ACCENT
- 15) CAP style, meaning, 'having foreign speech characteristics'.  
 Having foreign  
 speech charac-  
 teristics.
- 16) WORD ACCENT  
 17) STRESS, In 'word accent', however, 'accent has its technical  
 breathforce. sense of 'stress' or breath force used while uttering  
 the sound or syllable.

Having read that script, check your progress

### Check Your Progress 3

Answer each question in not more than three sentences each.

1) What purpose does the storyboard of that script serve, in your view?

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

2) Why are only Medium Shots (MS) of the Presenter and the Speaker suggested on this storyboard?

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

3) What can we do for 'video' No. 8, if neither animated cartoons nor comic actors are available for the production?

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.....  
.....

Now that you have studied a storyboard, you can try to fill one in.

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## 36.4 FILL IN A STORYBOARD

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Read the text and fill the video slots (numbered) to make up a storyboard.

### HOW DOES SPEECH RHYTHM WORK?

Video            Audio  
1)

Now, with the points made in that extract in mind let us give some thought to your 'radio voice' or TV 'voice-over' reading your script, which is what we are preparing you for.

Reading the media is altogether unlike ordinary reading, unlike even ordinary reading aloud. We have seen how we read silently. We do not pay attention to all the words. Even when we read aloud to others, we often pass hurriedly over several words. But the microphone will turn such a reading into a disaster. The reader has to render every word carefully. Even hurry and carelessness have to be carefully acted out. And as the reader reads, the listener has to hear every significant word with attention, to get the full meaning of the phrases. If it is radio, he has nothing to look at. And his ear will tire unless the rhythm of the speech brings in some excitement, and then follows the excitement with some relaxing experience. That is the curious thing that rhythm does. It does excite as well as relax, by turns! We shall now take a quick look at the way it brings about these two seemingly opposite effects.

You may have learned in Foundation Course in English-1  
..... on its word



those aspects of it that help us in writing and reading for the radio. Do you remember the word that describes how word accent makes English speech rhythm? It is

- 2) 'isochronism'. It means 'equal-timedness'. 'Iso'
- 3) stands for 'equal', 'chronic', for 'timed', and '-ism' for '-ness'. The word helps us to remember the main characteristic of English speech rhythm, which is that, in an uninterrupted flow of speech, 'the accented syllables tend to recur at regular intervals of time.'
- 4) In other words, English speech has an 'accent-timed' or a 'stress timed' rhythm. In case that is not clear, let us spell it out.
- 5) When we speak, we put some *breath force*, or *stress*, on the words which are important for the meaning of our sentence. Breath-force comes in momentary 'out-bursts'. So we can't put it on an entire word. We can put it only on one syllable at a time. English does not allow us to put this force on just any syllable. If a word has only one syllable, stress falls on it, ... if the word is important in the sentence. If the word has two syllables or more,
- 6) the dictionary shows us which syllable takes the
- 7) stress. e. g. in/de'light/, 'light' is stressed. And
- 8) if there are four such stressed syllables in a sentence, they will come at three equal lengths of
- 9) time. This is a *tendency* in English speech. The speaker is not making any deliberate effort to get any equal timing.
- 10) In this characteristic, English is *unlike* any of the widely spoken Indian languages. There appears to be no rule in these Indian languages saying that any particular kind of syllable should come at regular intervals in ordinary speech.
- 11) In English verse, each line has a fixed number of accented syllables and unaccented syllables, and both these kinds of syllables recur in regular patterns.
- 12) But in English *speech*, on the other hand, the accented syllables *alone* tend to come at regular intervals. There is no such regularity in the way the unaccented syllables come.

For radio and TV writers, it will be useful to study speech rhythm side by side *with* verse rhythm.

Let us now look at two lines of verse from Shakespeare, and some sentences from ordinary speech. Each sentence will first appear in ordinary spelling. Then it will be seen with accented syllables in block capitals.

- 13) Golden lads and girls all must  
Like chimney sweepers come to dust
- 14) GOLDen LADS and GIRLS all MUST  
like CHIMney SWEEPers COME to DUST
- 15) 1) Who'll help you clean the place?  
WHO'LL HELP you CLEAN the PLACE!
- 16) 2) The men never arrive at nine.  
The MEN NEVER arRIVE at NINE
- 17) 3) Who'll defend you if they accuse you of desertion?  
WHO'LL de FEND you if they accuse you of desertion?

18) You can see how, in the verse, there are four accented syllables in each line. In line 1 there is only one unaccented syllable after each accented one except the last one in the line. If we ignore the word 'like' at the beginning of Line 2, each line of verse goes with the rhythm 'tumti tumti tumti tum'.

Now, in each of the three spoken sentences also, there happen to be four accented syllables;

19) for instance, in Sentence 3 they are WHO'LL-FEND, -CUSE, and -SER. These syllables just happen to be four in number. No one has told the speaker to put four accented syllables in his sentence. And after each accented syllable there are several unaccented syllables; we can't tell how many they are unless we count them. When we do count them we find that in Sentence 3 there are one, four, three, and one. In Sentence 2, there are nil, two, one and nil. In Sentence 1 there are nil, one, one, and nil. But whatever their number, the point is this: the intervals between the accented syllables will be almost equal if not exactly so in native English speech, or in the speech of those who speak English 'very well', as hearers generally judge them.

**Check Your Progress 4**

What is on the screen when the verse and the sentences are read out to demonstrate how speech rhythm goes?

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Now that you have studied the storyboard in one section of a programme and filled in the assigned slots of the storyboard in the other, you should be ready to try your hand at making up a storyboard all on your own. In the next section, you will find just the text of the last part of this programme on speech rhythm. Read the text and make up the storyboard all by yourself.

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**36.5 MAKE UP A STORYBOARD**

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Read the text, divide it into video slots, and then fill the video column.

**How does Rhythm Help the Listener?**

**Video**

In this rhythm, as we said earlier, the accents are regular, but the number of unaccented syllables between two accented ones is not fixed. The number is not predictable. This is an uncertainty. This uncertainty creates an expectancy in the hearer's mind. 'What is the uncertain number within the certain interval?—he wonders. Then, when the interval is over and the unaccented syllables are 'known' (in a way of speaking), the hearer derives pleasure from the reduction of uncertainty.

The opposite of Information is Redundancy. As Information is the reduction of uncertainty, Redundancy is the confirmation of probability, as we said earlier. For instance we know that accented syllables are 'isochronic' or 'isochronous' in English speech rhythm. So when we hear two accented syllables at an interval of, say two seconds, we can predict that the third such syllable will probably arrive in another two seconds. If it does, our predicted probability is confirmed. This confirmation too is

But we do not want our radio listener to go to sleep. And sleep is an 'occupational hazard' for television viewers as well. Hence we give them the 'awakening excitement' of the uncertainty of Information, side by side with the relaxation of Redundancy.

That, in brief, is one way how a spoken prose writer can exploit the possibilities of English speech rhythm to catch and keep the attention of his or her audience, and keep them pleased with the effect of the *sounds* they hear.

There is another way in which sounds switch forth and back between uncertainty and Redundancy to create a pleasing effect. It is rhyme. Rhyming words begin with different sounds and end in the same sound (or set of sounds) as in

- 1) 'What I say may not be new. But it is true.'
- 2) Instead of the power to leap, they got the power to creep!

The rhyming sound in two rhyming words is a vowel as in (1), or a vowel-and-consonant, as in (2). Here are some more examples. (3) This is not news to us,—nor does it *amuse* us."

- 4) Then they fought for the right to work,  
now they fight for the right to shirk.
- 5) The prophets of *gloom* and *doom*.

When words begin with the same sound, we have another kind of Redundancy, known as alliteration, as in the line.

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper.* Radio writers use all these devices of Redundancy and more, as do poets, in stringing words together in phrases that call back wandering attention. For example, (1) '*the democracy of the dead*', (2) '*Workers of the World*', (3) *murder and mayhem*, (4) *War on want*, (5) *peace, prosperity and progress*. But we should remember not to overdo anything. Too much of Redundancy is tiresome.

**Check Your Progress 5**

Answer these questions in not more than three sentences each.

- 1) What captions (written words, sentences, etc. for display) have you suggested for the video for the programme given in section 36.5?  
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- 2) For which portions of the 'talk' would you suggest that the presenter appear on the screen?  
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.....
- 3) Have you suggested any activity for the presenter, such as getting up to move to the 'blackboard' or wherever the rhymes are supposed to be on display?  
.....  
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**36.6 LET US SUM UP**

This unit is about how to go back to the images behind the words we use. We usually

should stop before the words come to our tongue, and try to *draw* the images, either in pictures or in symbols or 'shorthand' notations used in the production studio.

- 2) When we write for television we usually divide the page into two columns, the left-hand side for video and the right-hand side for the audio channel. This itself shows that in TV the picture comes first.
- 3) Therefore on a page of television script, we tell the story on a storyboard in pictures. The storyboard tells the camera what to look at. We are not free to look at the 'stage' in television. The camera does the looking for us, and we see what the camera looks at. So we must tell it what to look at. The writer, however, need only make his intention clear. The producer will interpret it in detail for him in the studio.
- 4) Television is a three-dimensional twin medium, its dimensions being length, breadth (height) and time. It has not yet got depth. Its two channels are light and sound. Therefore television is the medium of maximum Redundancy and maximum noise. And the noise is often made by an overload of information, or, mutually competitive, rather than complementary, information. Our storyboard must take advantage of the Redundancy to offer viewers chances to relax, and try to prevent possible outbreak of noise.
- 5) The twin channels of television give it a great advantage. It can put out information in analogue and digital signals (codes) at the same time. A picture is an analogue, that is to say, a likeness, of its original. Information in pictures can be 'read' (understood) without learning to read.
- 6) The storyboard is usually prepared in certain conventional signs and symbols. The TV script writer should be familiar with those signs, at least the most common ones, so that he can communicate with the production crew and the producer 'in their own language'.

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## 36.7 KEY WORDS

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**The Storyboard:** A storyboard shows the producer how the writer sees his TV programme moving forward from its beginning to its end, as well as what he hears from the beginning to the end of the programme. The pictures he suggests are given (suggested in signs, abbreviations and so on) on the left-hand side of the page. All the speeches and other sounds that go with the pictures are given or suggested on the right-hand side of the page. The writers' storyboard, however, is by no means the real shape of the final picture. That is the producer's responsibility. The writer's storyboard says what picture *he* wants to see. But the producer makes the picture as the viewers want to see it. And programmes are after all for the viewers. The producer may change the writer's storyboard almost out of recognition, and finally come out with a far better programme than the writer expected to see!

**Analogue and digital codes:** An analogue code uses signals which are likenesses of what they stand for. A picture of a cat looks like a cat. If that picture is used in a code, anyone will at once know what it stands for, that is to say, what it *means*. We could tell whole stories in pictures. Charlie Chaplin's silent comedies are stories told in moving pictures. A hundred people in a room speaking a hundred different languages will understand them and laugh. Now, suppose Charlie Chaplin spoke in those pictures. At once the number of people who could understand would come down to those who spoke English. Speech is a digital code of communication, while pictures make an analogue code. In an analogue code, the signals are determined by the meanings. In a digital code, on the other hand, the signals are invented by the senders. So no one knows their meanings unless the senders tell them what they mean by them. No one can learn English or any other spoken language without the help of those who already speak them. This is because words, the signals of these digital codes, have no connection with their meanings. The word 'cat' does not look like or sound like a cat. We have no clue to its meaning until an English-speaking person tells us what it means. Words are digital, that is to say, finger-like, independent, disconnected, separate, from what they stand for.

Digital codes were invented because analogues were clumsy to use. Imagine having to draw a cat each time instead of just writing the word 'cat'. Digital codes are many

understood'. So, when a sender and a receiver have no common digital code they have learned, they have to use an analogue code, such as drawing pictures and making signs with their hands. Television can use analogues far more efficiently than people can in their daily lives. And analogues have far greater emotional impact than digital codes. A beautiful picture surely will be more welcome than the word 'beauty'. Therefore TV producers and writers can gain from an awareness of the possibilities of the two ways of coding.

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## 36.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS AND BROADCASTS

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Winton, Brian. *The Image of the Media*. Davis-Pointer, London, 1973.

Bartlett, Sir B. *Writing for Television*. George Allen and Unwin, London (1955).

WESTON, *Writing Television and Radio Programmes*, Holt, New York, 1967.

TV Programmes 'Illustrated talks' of the kind used in this unit are usually telecast in the UGC INSAT slot transmitted on working days in the afternoons.

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## ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Television is a twin medium, which has to put out pictures as well as words, sounds and music. Therefore a TV Programme has to suggest pictures as well as to write out the spoken words for the programme. Hence the division of the page into two columns.
- 2) Television viewers are primarily interested in seeing its pictures. Therefore the pictures come first among the TV producer's priorities. Words are only secondary, and so they appear in the right-hand column.
- 3) In the analogue code, the signs are likenesses of what they stand for, as a round disc alone can stand for the sun. Digital signs, on the other hand, can be anything. For instance, 'A' can be an ant, a man, or a mountain. Therefore digital signs have to be taught to the receiver before he can decode a message in them. A message in an analogue code, on the other hand, can be decoded without the help of any 'teaching'. If signs resemble their meanings even remotely, a receiver can somehow decode a message in the code. But if the code is made of signs totally unconnected to their meanings, it becomes enormously difficult to decode the message without a key, i.e., without first learning the code itself. So an analogue code can be used when we communicate with a receiver who may not have learned the signs of the digital code we are in the habit of using; that is to say, it is better to make signs for what we need when we are in a place where the people don't speak our language!

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The purpose of a Very Long Shot (VLS) is to show the subject, such as a person, against the sweep of a background, which may be significant for a 'story'.
- 2) A Bust shot is a Medium Close Shot, which shows the subject's head and shoulders, with the chest included. Between this and the Big Close Up, there is the Close Up or Close Shot which shows the subject's head from neck upward. A Big Close Up does not show even the head fully. It shows only the face, from chin to forehead. It concentrates on the expression on the face.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) The storyboard of this script does no more than tell the producer what the writer's intentions are, in general terms. The producer must then interpret these intentions, use his own imagination and judgement as well, and make a programme that is more...

- 2) The presenter and the speaker are expected only to talk in the programme. Their walking or the expressions on their faces are not of any great special significance at any time. So only medium shots are suggested, but the producer can find other shots significant and introduce them. So can you.
- 3) If neither cartoons nor comic actors are available, the words of the foreign speaker can be 'captioned' on the screen, and the foreigner's words, heard 'voice over'. This is one way of dealing with the situation. It is, however, not very 'exciting'.

#### **Check Your Progress 4**

The verse and the sentences will be displayed on the screen while the presenter demonstrates how their rhythm goes. Therefore, verse and the sentences should appear in both columns, 'video' for the camera crew to record on the screen, and 'audio' for the presenter to say, while demonstrating.

#### **Check Your Progress 5**

- 1) The sentences and phrases with rhyming endings, and the alliterative lines and phrases have to be displayed as 'captions' on the screen.
- 2) The presenter can appear three times on the screen in this part of the programme.
  - i) in the beginning,
  - ii) after the first lot of captions, and
  - iii) then for the final portion of the talk.
- 3) Since this part of the programme is 'all running talk', it may be a good idea for the presenter to get up to demonstrate the rhymes and to point to whatever needs to be specially noticed on the display board.