

Block

**2****WRITING TECHNIQUES**

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## BLOCK 2 INTRODUCTION

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Journalism is being described as literature in a hurry. Yet, writing news is an essential skill for any news professionals. The golden rule for any writing is to keep it simple to enable readers' involvement in the content, as this is highly necessary for journalistic writing. Simple writing goes well with the online platform, as most Internet users are young. One of the significant trends in digital journalism is that users prefer to glance through the contents. Many online users may not be interested in scrolling through a lengthy news report; instead, journalists can convert it into multiple web pages or multiple news stories.

The digital platform encompasses various media elements - text, picture, graphics, audio and video. More importantly, many news contents are presented through a combination of any of these media elements. In this course, you will learn the skills required to be a multimedia journalist. To begin with, in Block 2, you will learn three crucial elements - basic writing techniques, writing for radio and television.

**Unit 5: Basics of Writing** deals with writing for media, which involves identifying your topic, gathering information, knowing your audience, and explaining how to manage the writer's Block. The Unit outlines various forms of writing such as expository, narrative, descriptive and argumentative discourses. Towards the end, it takes you through writing and refining drafts, editing, and proofreading, thus providing a holistic view.

**Unit 6: Writing Effectively** stresses that economy of words, simplicity and clarity are the hallmarks of good writing. That paragraph is a complete composition in itself that should have unity, coherence and transitions. The Unit outlines various tools such as metaphors, visualisation, humour, the concretisation of abstract ideas for increasing readability.

**Unit 7: Writing for Radio** introduces students to the basic concept of the language used for radio programmes as distinct from the language used for print media. The Unit points out that while writing a script for a radio programme, it is essential to consciously adopt the elements of spoken language and avoid the style of written/ printed communication. Different aspects of scriptwriting for radio programmes are described. The theme is further developed by analysing the characteristics of language suitable for different radio formats separately. The importance of identifying the listeners for a particular programme is also underlined. It explains the importance of a good beginning and natural flow in a script.

**Unit 8:** Writing for television focuses on writing for television news. Television is an audio-visual medium, and it tells the story with the help of visuals and sound. The nature of the medium influences writing, so television requires a different type of writing. This unit talks about how to write effective scripts for television news programmes.

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## UNIT 5    BASICS OF WRITING

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### Structure

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### 5.0    INTRODUCTION

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As a journalist, one of the important tasks you will have to perform is writing. In fact, for many of you, it is a task you must perform spontaneously, effectively and with accuracy. Writing, unlike speaking, is a complex process, and competent writing, even for native speakers, is difficult to acquire. Few people can write spontaneously, and fewer people are comfortable writing in formal contexts, keeping closely to word limits and formats – an essential requirement in journalistic writing.

In this unit, we shall discuss in detail the writing process. We will discuss the methods of writing, which involve identifying the topic, gathering information on it, the purpose of writing, and the writer's block. When we begin writing, it is important to start with a thesis statement, followed by an essay map, adequate paragraphing and effective introductions and conclusions. We also must be aware of the various discourse types involved

in organising your writing: expository, descriptive, narrative or argumentative. Finally, we shall delineate the process of writing the drafts, reviewing, editing and proofreading.

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## 5.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After reading through this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the methods of writing;
- organise your writing; and
- explain the basics of the writing process.

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## 5.2 METHODS OF WRITING

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You must realise that writing is not a gift but is a skill that anyone can pick up by focusing not only on what you have to say and how to say it but also by concentrating on those methods that are most likely to help you write successfully. Now let's see what a few experienced writers have to say about what leads to good writing:

- Experienced writers spend 50-80 per cent of their time planning before they attempt the first draft.
- They spend a considerable amount of their time thinking about their readers. They explore and thoroughly understand their subject.
- They consider their first draft to be their discovery draft.
- They thoroughly revise their draft. Sometimes, completely rethinking and restructuring their first draft.

Of course, not all writers follow the same method, and a particular writer may use different methods at different times. But the methods suggested here are generally tried and tested. In short, the steps you can follow are:

- 1) planning
- 2) considering your reader
- 3) thoroughly investigating your subject/topic organising
- 4) writing a full draft revising and refining it.

It is not necessary to go through these stages in the sequence in which they are listed. When you write, many things happen at the same time. As you plan, you may find that you are thinking of facts and ideas that you may want to include in your draft. As you organise, you may find that you are once again exploring your topic. The steps that we have suggested are guidelines, not rigid rules. You may feel free to adapt them to suit your situation.

Writing is commonly seen as a three-way process, **pre-writing**, **writing** and **rewriting**. This division might be an over-simplification, but it is a useful one to understand and practice. When we write, it is a good idea to think about three key elements:

1. Purpose
2. Subject matter
3. Reader/ audience You need to ask yourself:
  1. why am I writing this piece?
  2. whom am I writing for?
  3. where do I source the material for it?

### 5.2.1 Identifying Your Subject

Many of the topics you write about in the course of your job will be assigned to you probably by your editor. Some editors will give you a detailed brief; others will give you a broad topic and leave you to fend for yourself.

Most topics are like interesting landscapes that could tempt you to move in many directions all at once, and this is precisely what you need to avoid. You must learn to focus on that part that caters to the brief of your editor, your readers' interest and the context of the situation. This will prevent you from researching in all directions and wasting time and effort.

It is also important to know why you are writing about a particular subject. Does the situation demand it, or is it something your editor asked you to do or something you have a deep desire to write on?

Knowing why you are writing will help you formulate a goal, do your research and organise your material. For example, suppose you want to write about **English as a global language** for an Indian audience, you need to be sure what aspect you are trying to concentrate on. Are you going to concentrate on the business benefits of knowing English, or will you focus on how Indians can work towards making their English more acceptable internationally? You need to identify and state your purpose clearly, because only then:

- will your audience understand what you are writing about and why it is important to you and them;
- you can identify and gather the most relevant information to your readers and your goal; otherwise, you are likely to collect any available information.

For example, when you look at the above topic, if you are looking at the business benefits of knowing English, you are likely to give figures that substantiate the amount of English used for trade. You could give the example of China, which is rapidly trying to learn English. On the other hand, if you turn to features that could enable Indian English to be acceptable and intelligible globally, you would dwell on the phonological, morphological and syntactic features which differentiate Indian English from international English. You could talk about ways of bringing Indian English closer to accepted standards.

### 5.2.2 Gathering Information

You must make sure that before you write, you have all your matter in one

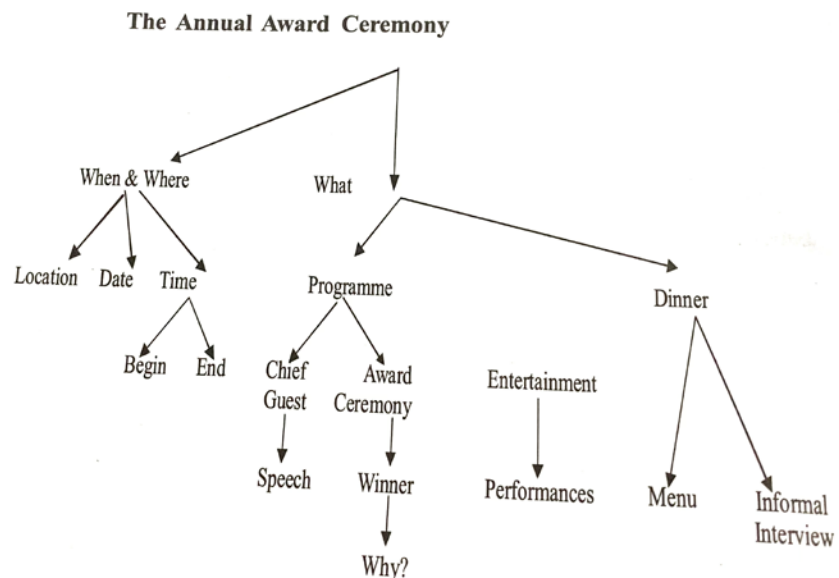
place. While researching, read quickly through your material and use highlighters to indicate the material that you think you can use in your writing. You could use one colour highlighter for ideas, another for evidence and another for arguments. (Hamp-lyons and Heasley, 2006).

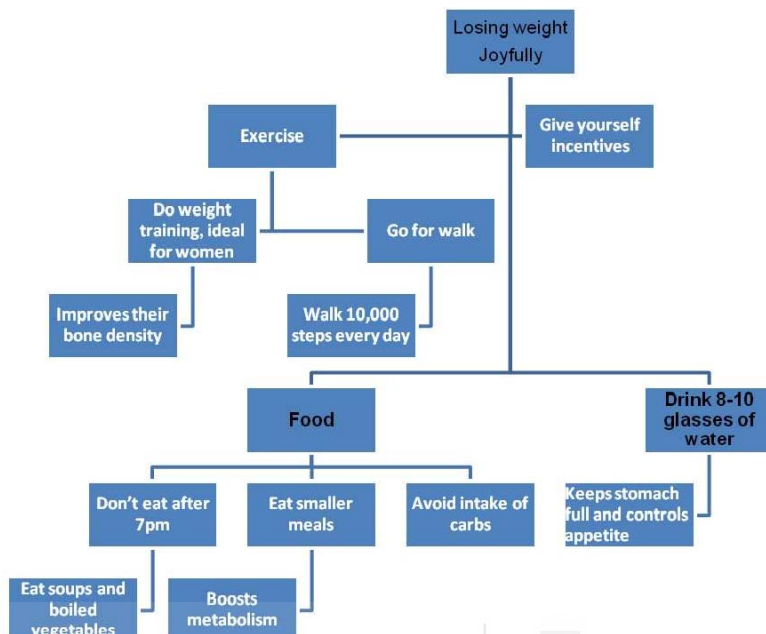
You could also **make notes** as you go along. Keeping notes will enable you to be specific and keep track of and manipulate what you have read. It is good to concentrate on purely gathering information; wait until later to decide whether the information is valuable and important.

**Brainstorming** is also another well-known and productive method of generating ideas, facts and opinions very quickly. Again, not all the ideas will be of equal quality or usefulness, but you can evaluate that later. Of course, brainstorming need not always be with others; it can also be an activity you perform by yourself.

Working by yourself is a little different from brainstorming in a group. You will need to motivate yourself to generate the same energy that usually accompanies a group activity. You can do this best by reviewing your materials and notes before you begin brainstorming. This session can be termed a **planning session**, so it is important to keep track of ideas and information that you generate by yourself by making a list or speaking into a tape recorder. There is no need to write and speak in complete and connected sentences. Your goal is to generate as many ideas as you can through rapid thinking and free association - you can evaluate the ideas later.

Another technique that you can use to help you recall ideas, information, and arguments is building an **issue tree** or a **mind map**. Brainstorming and note-taking is a verbal technique that requires you to record your ideas in words. Issue trees and mind maps, however, are primarily visual. As you think of ideas and information, you construct the visual display that arranges your information in a hierarchical structure. In this way, you can see each idea's relative importance and its relationship to other ideas.





### 5.2.3 purpose

You must be very clear about what your text will be used for; for example, are you expected to write a report, a feature or a persuasive piece.

Having a clearly stated purpose is like having a destination when you take a trip. Once you have decided on a destination, you can make the arrangements to reach it. So without a goal, your writing project will be a meandering collection of miscellaneous facts with no focus or point. An explicit purpose statement will help you:

- identify the steps that you must take to reach your goal;
- concentrate your search for information/ ideas on what is related to your purpose.

### 5.2.4 Knowing your Reader

Once you know your subject/topic, the next most important question to ask yourself is who the reader is. The answer to this question will affect how and what you write. For example, if you are writing for experts and specialists, you could perhaps use some technical jargon and pitch your language and subject matter to a higher level.

You also need to think about what the reader already knows and what s/he needs to know. You do not want to tell the reader what s/he already know, although you may refer to shared information from time to time. If you are giving completely new information, this information must be stated and explained with great clarity. It is a good idea to know the attitude of the readers as well. Are they likely to be provoked by the topic? If so, it is better to use more tactful language. In brief, you could ask yourself these questions about the reader:

- Is the reader an expert or a general reader?

- What does the reader already know about the topic?
- What background information might they need to know to understand the current situation?
- What does s/he need to know?
- What action do you want them to take?
- What is their attitude? Are they biased, or do they have positive associations with your subject?

### 5.2.5 Managing the Writer's Block

As mentioned earlier, there could be days when we face what is known as **writer's block**, when we find it difficult to generate ideas or find anything to say. Freewriting is a technique that one could use on such a day. This is a technique where you write even when you have nothing to say. The object of freewriting is to help you recall and write about whatever is in your mind on the subject without editing, evaluating, or rejecting it. Freewriting works this way: begin by setting a time limit and start writing. Keep writing, no matter what happens - keep your pen moving across the page. There is no need to edit, cross out or stop to think of a word or a sentence. Keep the words flowing and keep your mind and imagination moving. Some useful things would begin to happen once the words begin to flow. Solution and new ideas that are lurking in your subconscious will surprisingly appear. Whatever you do, don't stop writing until your time is up. You will be surprised to see that this exercise might produce highly relevant and useful ideas and information. Moreover, since you are less preoccupied with writing correctly, you have become more fluent with words.

#### Activity-1

Make an issue tree or a mind map on any one of the following topics:

- Why does stress hurt?
- English as a global language

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## 5.3 BEGINNING TO WRITE

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It is important to begin writing with more information than you think you will need. The greater your choice, the more likely it is that you will select the ideas, facts and arguments that will help you accomplish your purpose. If you begin with only five or seven facts or examples to support your main idea, you are likely to use all of them regardless of their quality. But if you gather, say, ten to fifteen facts or examples, you have a choice that will effectively help you accomplish your job. As a result, there will be fewer gaps in your presentation, and your reader is less likely to raise questions and objections. However, at the same time, do not invest too much time in your research as you have deadlines to meet.



### 5.3.1 Writing the Thesis Statement

Let us assume that at this point, you have identified the topic you wish to write about. You may now find it useful to formulate a **thesis statement**. What is a thesis statement? And how does it help to have a thesis statement? *A thesis statement declares the main point or controlling idea of your writing task.* It is frequently located at the beginning of your writing. Your thesis statement may begin as a very simple sentence.

For example, *Our University requires an On-campus Printing Centre since the major part of our teaching strategies is through print material.*

Such a “working” thesis states an opinion about the subject (the need for a Centre) and suggests what the report shall do (give arguments for building such a Centre).

Allow such a statement to work for you as you move from the pre-writing stage through various drafts and revisions. A “*working thesis statement*” can be your most valuable organisational tool. Once you have thought about your main point and purpose, you can draft your article to accomplish your goal. Everything in your writing should support your thesis statement.

It is important to know the difference between the *working thesis statement* in your rough drafts and your *final thesis*. As you begin drafting, you discover that you want to write about another aspect. For example, you may think that your University may more urgently require an On-campus Recycling Centre because so much paper is used and you feel it should not be wasted. Changing direction is not uncommon because remember writing is an act of discovery. A working thesis statement in your early draft is to help you focus and organise your writing; don't think that it is carved in stone and cannot be changed. Let us remember some guidelines for writing a good thesis statement.

- A good thesis statement states the writer's clearly defined opinion on a particular topic;
- It generally asserts one main idea;
- It is stated in specific terms.

#### Essay Map

Many thesis statements will benefit from the addition of an essay map, a brief statement in the introductory paragraph introducing the main points to be discussed in the essay. In addition to suggesting the main points of writing, the essay map provides two other benefits: it will provide a set of guidelines for organising your writing and help you from wandering into areas only vaguely related to your thesis statement. In other words, your thesis statement and essay map are a skeleton outline for the sequence of paragraphs in your writing.

**Note** that this essay map is different from the mind map; the crucial difference is that the essay map describes the main point of each paragraph in a more concrete fashion. On the other hand, a mind map is a jotting down of ideas as they come to your mind.

### 5.3.2 Writing a Paragraph

Mastering the art of writing a paragraph is essential to success in any form of writing, whether it is a letter, a report, or a newspaper article since all longer pieces contain a series of related paragraphs. In these longer pieces of writing, paragraphs generally introduce new ideas to develop the central theme.

What is a Paragraph? A paragraph is a piece of writing which is unified by a **central, controlling** idea or theme. This idea or theme is called the **topic** of the paragraph. It is sometimes expressed in the paragraph by one sentence, which is usually called the **topic sentence**. This topic sentence may be a statement, a generalisation, or a problem. This sentence is most frequently found at the **beginning** of the paragraph but can sometimes come at the **end** or even in the **middle** of the paragraph. There may not often be a topic sentence at all, but it may be implied within the paragraph.

Beginning a paragraph with a topic sentence helps both the writer and the reader. It is a useful device, especially in the early stages of your journalistic career. As a writer, you will have less difficulty constructing a unified paragraph because you will relate every sentence to the topic sentence and the central idea it expresses. And your reader will know immediately what the paragraph is about because the opening sentence states the central idea.

To develop the central theme, you have to expand the idea contained in the topic sentence. This can be done by adding more information, explanation, examples, illustrations, etc., to the idea expressed in the topic sentence.

#### Example:

Two main circumstances govern the relationship of living things in the sea: the unbelievably lavish fruitfulness of marine life forms and the utter ruthlessness with which the larger creatures eat the smaller ones. Somebody has calculated, for instance, that if all the eggs laid by codfish were hatched and grew to maturity, the Atlantic would be packed solid with codfish within six years. But nature does not let this happen. Only a tiny fraction of all codfish eggs ever become full-sized cod, and wastage among other fish is as great. One sea creature in about 10 million escapes the usual violent death inside another sea creature.

Analysis of the paragraph:

1. **Topic statement:** ‘Two main circumstances govern the relationship of living things in the sea.’
2. **Elaboration of the topic sentence:** the fruitfulness of marine life and the ruthlessness with which the larger creatures eat the smaller ones.
3. **Illustration:** The example of the codfish.
4. **Summing up:** only one sea creature in about ten million survives.

An effective paragraph requires more than a **topic sentence** and supporting

details; it must also be coherent. In a coherent paragraph, the writer takes the reader logically and smoothly from one idea to another. The reader must also clearly recognise that one sentence logically leads to the next.

Another technique that brings about coherence in a paragraph is the use of **transitional devices** between sentences. These are words/phrases that help a writer move smoothly from one sentence to the next and show the logical relationship between sentences. Transitional devices are like signposts in a paragraph. They enable us to follow the writer's line of thought by showing how one sentence relates to another.

The following list includes words and phrases that function as transitional devices:

- To express result: therefore, as a result, consequently, thus, hence to give examples:
- To for example, for instance, specifically, as an illustration, To express comparison: similarly, likewise
- express contrast: but, yet, still, however, nevertheless, on the other hand
- To express addition: moreover, furthermore, also, too, besides, in addition
- To indicate time: now, later, meanwhile, since then, after that, before that time
- To express sequence: first, second, third, then, next, finally

The order in which you present your paragraph is another decision that you have to make. In some pieces of writing, the subject matter itself will decide its order. Other pieces of writing may not suggest such a natural order, in which case you have to decide which order will most effectively hold your readers' attention. Often, writers withhold their strongest point until they reach the end of their writing. As you already know, each paragraph usually signals a major point in your discussion. These paragraphs should not appear as isolated blocks of thought but rather as part of a unified, step-by-step progression. To bring about continuity, you must link each paragraph to the one before it with transitional devices. Sometimes, instead of using transitional words or repetition of keywords, you can use what is known as an *idea hook*. The last idea of the earlier paragraph may lead you smoothly into your next paragraph.

### 5.3.3 Introductions and Conclusions

The first few sentences of your writing are particularly important because they help catch the readers' attention and make them want to keep on reading. Here are some suggestions for successful introductions. You could begin with:

- An arresting statistic or shocking statement; A question;
- A quotation;
- A relevant story, joke or anecdote; An analogy or comparison;
- A contrast;

- A personal experience;
- Statement of a problem or a popular misconception.

A good piece of writing must have a satisfactory conclusion that gives a reader a sense of completion on the subject. The concluding paragraph must emphasise the validity and importance of your thinking. Here are some suggestions that might lead to some ideas for your conclusions:

- A restatement of the thesis statement;
- An evaluation of the importance of the subject;
- Statement of the broader implications of your piece of writing; A call to action;
- A warning based on the thesis statement; A quotation from an authority;
- An anecdote;
- A rhetorical question that makes the readers think about the writer's main points.

**Check Your Progress: 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. How do you start the writing process? Explain briefly.

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2. What is a Thesis Statement?

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**5.4 ORGANISING YOUR WRITING**

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One of the important skills that a journalist requires is a quick way of organising their material. From a writer's point of view, organising involves searching for a sequence pattern that is appropriate to your information, goals, readers' needs, and editor's brief. Your readers expect you to create a pattern that will make what you say easy to read, understand, remember and be useful.

Once you have determined the relationship among the concepts and data you

have gathered, you still have to decide how to present these to your readers. There are four basic discourse strategies that you could use or adapt to your needs. Remember, while we are discussing them as separate types of discourse, you are likely to use more than one type in a single piece of writing.

## Forms of Discourse

Generally, exposition, narration, description and argumentation are considered to be the basic forms of discourse. When a writer is concerned with setting forth facts, then the form is known as *exposition*, when s/he presents them in terms of temporal action, the form is *narration*, and in terms of space, it is a *description*. When s/he intends to resolve a conflict of facts, then it is known as *argumentation*. These forms do not exist as pure forms; they are intermixed, and one can only talk about a dominant form. Let us look at the dominant forms separately.

### 5.4.1 Expository Discourse

Expository writing is probably the most common form of writing. Expository writing has the overall purpose of explaining. Central to expository writing is grouping, classification and definition. While grouping involves selection, classification involves breaking down a broad topic into parts. In contrast to these, definition sets limits or boundaries or points out the characteristics that distinguish the thing under discussion from others. Definitions are one of the purest forms of exposition because their purpose is to explain. They answer the basic question “What is it?” or “What does it mean?”

### 5.4.2 Narrative Discourse

Narration depends chiefly on temporal order, i.e., upon actions in chronological order at the level of time. The chronological order involves the sequencing of events or actions from beginning to end. A skilled narrator can arrange the details in such a way so that a reader’s interest rises to a climax at some point in the narration. The narration, in turn, can range from storytelling, as in novels and short stories, to anecdotes used for illustration, explanation or support.

Sometimes, for special effects, etc., an author may begin his narration from the end and then, through a process of *flashback*, may return to the beginning and then give the full events till the end. The author may also begin in the middle of a chronological sequence, narrate events leading up to the point of narration, and then complete the narration of events. The way of beginning in the middle of a sequence of events is called *medias res*. You can generally find both the above kinds of presentation of events in novels and films.

#### Where to look for ideas:

You can only write about what you have experienced, observed, imagined, and thought about. Although we discuss the experiences and thoughts of others, they do not become our own. Borrowed ideas like borrowed clothes do not fit, and writing is not so much a matter of ideas or phrases as of how we present them. The most interesting story or narration is what you have

experienced and thought about in your fashion. A narrative, to be interesting, must be original. The sources for your narratives are:

**Your memories:** What places or persons do you recall clearly? What days do you remember vividly? What was the happiest day you recall? What was the most painful time you remember?

**Your friends and favourite places:** Who is the most peaceful person you know? Who is the most amusing person you know? Which is the place you would like to go back to?

**Events and Participants:** What events in your life did you find most moving? What was the greatest satisfaction or disappointment that you experienced? What people in your life did you consider powerful, good or beautiful? Do you still admire them? What events would you like to wipe out from your memory? What events would you like to remember and relive?

**Imagination and wishes:** if you had your choice, which country would you like to live in? What persons would you like to meet? What country would you choose as your own?

You can devise your plan by asking the following four basic questions:

- What is special or typical about my narrative?
- Why am I telling the story?
- What kind of readers am I writing for?
- How will my reader best understand my plan and purpose?
- You may find you have three more questions: How long does my narrative have to be?
- Do I know enough about what I am writing? Where can I get more information about it?

In writing narrations, one of the skills to be cultivated is style. The question that arises is how you can improve your narrative style. You can consider the following stylistic features:

- a. Simplicity
- b. Direct conversational style
- c. Individuality
- d. Concreteness

### 5.4.3 Descriptive Discourse

The description also involves narration, but of a different kind. It is a kind of picture-making, indicating what someone, something, someplace, etc., looks like. All descriptions involve spatial dimensions.

Any description would involve one of the two possibilities: either the description would proceed from a particular to the general or from the general to the particular. For example, a description of a painting could begin with a central focus on a particular detail and then proceed to other things

that relate to it, thereby giving a general picture. Or one could also describe the picture in general terms and then focus on particular items within it. However, what is common to any kind of description is the spatial arrangement, i.e., how things appear and how they are arranged. It is analogous to the long shot, with diminishing distance leading to close-ups from various angles, and vice-versa, by a film camera. Note that a description can be of people, places and processes.

#### 5.4.4 Argumentative Discourse

In argumentative discourse, the writer argues a case or expresses an opinion by looking at a problem from both sides. Any structure representing argumentation must take into account the pro-and-con nature of the argument. Argumentation can be done in three different ways. First, one can give one's arguments by taking an affirmative position. Second, one can give further evidence to counter-balance the arguments of an opponent. And, third, one can point out the fallacies in one's opponents' arguments to discredit them. Strong argumentation, therefore, demands perceptive reasoning and careful perusal of evidence to present one's arguments or to belittle the opponent's arguments. However, this kind of writing becomes interesting when the writer has something to say. Your opinion still not be worth expressing until you have thought about the subject.

The nature of reasoning shapes the structure of an argument. The reasoning here simply means moving from the basic propositions, through evidence, to a conclusion. There are two main directions of reasoning: *induction and deduction*. It should be noted that each of these approaches is usually used in combination with the strategies of narrating and explaining.

##### a) Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning is a way of enabling us to make general statements from particular examples and evidence. It is, therefore, both a way of discovering and explaining. For example, if a teacher says, "No one in my English class has failed", – the generalisation can be accepted to be true since it is based on the observation of all possible examples. Even the generalisations based on a high degree of probability are true; thus, doctors prescribe medicines based on high probability, etc.

When you use this pattern, you are taking your readers step by step through a carefully designed sequence of facts or ideas or a reasoning process so that you can bring them to a conclusion that you have already reached.

##### b) Deductive Reasoning

Using a deductive pattern, you can begin with the general concept and then proceed to subconcepts or other specific details. This pattern is especially useful when you want to announce your conclusions or recommendations quickly. Then you can go on to provide necessary and detailed explanations. Doing this calls immediate attention to your most immediate point of concept, followed by illustration or proof.

You will rarely use one of these organising patterns to the exclusion of others. You may combine them in your piece of writing.

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## 5.5 THE WRITING PROCESS

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So far, we have been discussing some of the ways to organise our ideas. But sitting down to write the first draft is much more formal and intimidating than the writing you did while planning. Drafts require that you write in complete sentences and paragraphs and pay some attention to the format and the organisation you want the finished product to have. At this stage, you will be coping with questions of length, format, word choice, coherence, sentence structure, cohesion, paragraphing and format. The best way to tackle this is to understand how this process works.

### *Writing the First Draft*

Your first draft is an experiment, a test, to find out what you have to say. It is an attempt to build a rough framework of content, meaning, and form, which you will improve later. It is provisional writing. It encourages you to write quickly in an attempt to delineate the general meaning, content, and organisation of your draft. When you finish, you will not have spent so much time and effort that you will be unwilling to change or discard part or all of what you have written.

### *Revising the First Draft*

Revising begins with carefully reviewing your first draft to determine if you have done what you set out to do. As a review, you will check how close you have achieved your original intention and where and how far you have fallen short of it. You are therefore concerned with:

- what you left out?
- What have you included that you do not need?
- Whether you can make this draft achieve your goals?

Remember that revision is a thinking process that occurs throughout the writing process. It means looking at your writing with a 'fresh eye', i.e. looking at your writing in ways that will make you make more effective choices. As you write, new ideas emerge, prompting you to revise what you have planned or have just written. Sometimes, new ideas will encourage you to begin an entirely new draft with a different focus or approach. Remember that revision occurs throughout the writing process.

### *Refining*

Once you have settled on the major concepts you wish to include in your first draft, and how you would organise them, you can shift your attention to the next level. Look at your examples, illustrations and evidence. Do these support the main ideas? Do the sub-sections follow up with each other logically? Do your examples exemplify and explain? This is a good time to look for gaps in your writing. Is there anything missing? Now is the time to add explanations and details without having to rewrite the whole draft.



Editing is a careful reading of the draft to ensure that everything is the way you want to be and there is no mistake to embarrass you. Editing will be easier if you know how to go about it and what to look for. Let's concentrate on what you should look for.

- i) **Looking at Paragraphs:** This is the time we ask the following questions:
- is the paragraphing logical and visually appropriate?
  - Is there a topic sentence which states the main idea of the paragraph?
  - Are the sentences related to each other?

By this time, you have probably stopped adding new material. You are now trying to make your writing concise and clear sentence by sentence.

- ii) **Sentences:** You need to read your text sentence by sentence. Are the sentences related to each other? Are the tenses correct? Is the pronoun referencing correct? Are there any dangling modifiers?

- iii) **Vocabulary:** It is a good idea to focus at this stage on the words that you used. Do the words mean what you want them to mean? Will your readers understand what you wish to state? Does your vocabulary have a vast range? For example, do you use words precisely and is there variation in your word choice. Example:

**Precise words:** gaze, glance, stare, glare, and peep

**Variation:** car.... Maruti Zen.....Vehicle.... As well as ..... also.... what is more....

- iv) **Format:** The headings should be consistent throughout the draft. That is, all main headings should have the same typography, spacing and placing. All sub-heading should also be alike.
- v) **Indentation** should be consistent throughout the draft.
- vi) **Visual Aids:** Take a close look at all the visual aids, including graphs, charts, tables and drawings. See that they are at appropriate places in the text. Be sure each visual aid has a title that explains what it is.

### **Proofreading**

Proofreading is more than re-reading. It is a careful word by word or line by line review of your first draft to ensure that everything is as it should be. We give you some tips and techniques to make your proofreading sessions more effective.

- i) **Concentration:** When you proofread, you need to concentrate. This means getting rid of distractions and potential interruptions.
- ii) Don't rely entirely on spelling or grammar checkers on the computer. These programmes work with a limited number of rules, so they cannot identify every error.
- iii) Read slowly and read every word.

- iv) Check the punctuation
- v) Pay attention to capitalisation, missing or extra commas, colons and semi-colons used incorrectly.
- vi) Numbers: If you are using numbers, check them. We often make a mistake by omitting or adding a zero.
- vii) Finally, get somebody else to proofread it once because, after a few readings, we become blind to our errors.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. How is Narrative Discourse different from Descriptive Discourse?

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2. Explain in brief the steps of the writing process.

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**5.6 LET US SUM UP**

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In this unit, we have introduced you to the techniques of good writing. This will stand you in good stead no matter what particular media aspect you get employment in since writing is an essential part of a journalist’s job. We have discussed in some detail the writing methods, overcoming the writer’s block, writing a thesis statement, elaborating on it and writing effective introductions and conclusions. We have also introduced you to the various discourse types: expository, descriptive, narrative and argumentative. Finally, we have taken you through writing drafts, refining them, editing and proofreading them. We hope you find the unit useful and interesting.

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**5.7 FURTHER READINGS**

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- 1. Jean Wyrick (1990), *Steps to Writing Well with Additional Readings* (6<sup>th</sup> edition), Thomson Wadsworth, Boston, USA.
- 2. Liz Hamp-Lyons and Ben Heasley (2006), *Study Writing*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press.

3. Richard P. Batteger (1985), *Business Writing, Process and Forms*; Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California.

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## 5.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. Before beginning the writing process, it is important to identify the topic and gather as much useful information on the subject as possible. It is sometimes a good idea to make a mind map or issue map of the topic. Knowing your audience and having a clear purpose is also important.
2. A thesis statement identifies the main point or controlling idea of your writing. It is the first thing a writer should pen down after identifying the topic.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. A Narrative Discourse involves the sequencing of events in chronological order. On the other hand, a Descriptive Discourse is more like picture making, wherein a writer describes a person, place or process.
2. The writing process involves the following steps:
  - a) Writing the first draft
  - b) Editing the first draft
  - c) Refining
  - d) Editing
  - e) Proofreading

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## UNIT 6 WRITING EFFECTIVELY

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### Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Learning Outcomes
- 6.2 Qualities of Good Writing
  - 6.2.1 Economy of Words
  - 6.2.2 Simplicity
  - 6.2.3 Clarity
  - 6.2.4 Rhetorical Stance
- 6.3 The Paragraph
  - 6.3.1 Functions of a Paragraph
  - 6.3.2 Characteristics of a Good Paragraph
  - 6.3.3 The Structure of a Paragraph
  - 6.3.4 The Process of Writing a Paragraph
- 6.4 What is Style?
  - 6.4.1 Different Kinds of Style
  - 6.4.2 Passive and Active Structures
  - 6.4.3 Sentence Forms: Use of Periodic Sentence
  - 6.4.4 Attributes of Good Style
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Further Readings
- 6.7 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

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Journalism is the craft of conveying news, information, descriptive material, opinions, comments and trends to the general public through various vehicles of mass media like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, the Internet and most recently, even cell phones. Writers, reporters, columnists, editors and photographers act as the chief purveyors of information and opinion in contemporary mass society. Lippman interpreted the journalist's role as a mediator or translator, in a way, a middleman between the public and the policymakers. He believed that the common person was not able to deconstruct all the information available or understand issues because they were complex. The journalist was thus the intermediary who listened, recorded, distilled and then passed on the filtered information for public consumption. So in a way, 'news is what the consensus of journalists determines it to be.' This implied that the public was receiving only the information that the journalists handed down to them.

On the other hand, Dewey believed that the public was intelligent and discerning and capable of understanding the issues, political or otherwise, and that decisions should be made in a public forum after discussion and debate. He gave importance to the public and felt that journalists should do more than simply passing information. They should engage citizens with the experts and the elites, and they should propose and generate content through conversation, dialogue and debate. The shared knowledge of many is superior to a single individual's knowledge. Modern journalists view their role as collaborative and keep the readers focused while writing their stories.

Journalists need to assess the needs of their audience and deliver what they want, on the one hand, and meet the requirements of the organisation in which they work, adhering to the principles they subscribe to, on the other. This means that journalists have to suspend their personal opinions to deliver what the readers want, ensuring the popularity of the newspaper. They need to bear in mind the interests and the level of understanding of their readers and relate the news to their personal experiences and contemporary events and issues. They need to remain faithful to the facts and present them with simplicity and clarity while making the story sound exciting and interesting to read at the same time.

In the previous unit, we have discussed the basics of writing. In this unit, we shall explain the qualities of good writing, the structure and function of a paragraph, and different writing styles.

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## 6.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the qualities of good writing;
- write effective paragraphs; and
- use appropriate style for writing.

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## 6.2 QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING

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A writer projects the sincere and indefinable qualities of personality into his or her writing. Any kind of sincere writing has the writer's 'voice', which is his/her opinion. But it ought to be a voice that has been modulated to the needs of the audience. The appropriate voice should be direct, clear and unstrained.

It is best to avoid rhetoric and high flown words, which might give a false ring, making the writing appear insincere. It is also essential to write with consistency; the hallmarks of good writing are economy of words, simplicity, clarity and rhetorical stance.

### 6.2.1 Economy of Words

It is worthwhile to look at the quotation from William Strunk & E. B. White's 'The Elements of Style: "A sentence should contain no unnecessary

words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer makes all sentences short or that he avoids all details but that every word tells.”

In short, economical writing is ‘efficient and aesthetically satisfying’ because it makes the minimum demand on the reader and promotes pleasure at the same time. This is achieved “by producing a sense of form and right proportion, a sense of words that fit the ideas that they embody.”

### 6.2.2 Simplicity

Simplicity does not mean that complex sentences should be avoided. Simplicity means that there should be no attempt to embellish the writing with rhetoric, as said earlier. **Cervantes** has said, “All affectation is bad.” Hence a natural, unpretentious style is the best. However, this is easier said than done since the ability to say profound things simply comes with years of writing and polishing.

### 6.2.3 Clarity

Clarity is a basic requirement for all writing. Even complex ideas can be presented lucidly. Let us consider the basic purpose of writing- to clarify and inform. If that is the aim, then a writer should not create hurdles in the shape of convoluted sentences, jargon and rhetoric, making understanding difficult. This can happen if the writer has clarity of thought, understands his/her idea, and wishes to convey it to others.

In brief, the writing should be clear, orderly, readable and in a language understandable to the audience. Hence, it is important to consider the audience to decide how much knowledge and language the writer can ‘assume’. Expository writing should be readable, informative and engaging. It could even be poetic!

### 6.2.4 Rhetorical Stance

Any kind of writing should be human. This means that it should not only address the mind but also appeal to the senses and the heart. It should not be cut and dried or too dispassionate. Here the writer’s knowledge of his /her audience would help him or her decide the rhetorical stance. The readers can be hypothetical or real; the writer would be addressing them, assuming an appropriate voice and a suitable and appropriate relationship to his/her material.

These are a few basic things that will help to decide the rhetorical stance.

- Who is the writer?
- Who his/her readers are?
- Why is he/she addressing them, and on what occasion?
- What is his/her relationship to the subject matter?
- How does he/she want the readers to relate to the subject matter?

## Check Your Progress: 1

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Explain the qualities of good writing.

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2. What are the two basic factors that determine the style of a written piece?

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3. What determines the understanding or perception of a written piece?

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### 6.3 THE PARAGRAPH

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As discussed in the previous unit, a paragraph is one of the central components of all kinds of writing. Effective writing will depend upon the way the topic has been divided into paragraphs and how well they cohere with each other. This section of the unit will consider various aspects of the paragraph. “A paragraph is a collection of sentences that helps you fulfil your thesis (theme promise). Itself a small “theme”, a paragraph should be written and specific: and it should not wander or make irrelevant remarks.” (McCuen and Winkler, 1980). Another definition of a paragraph is that it is “a group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit” (Lunsford and Connors). It is not the number of sentences that constitute a paragraph but the unity and coherence of ideas among these sentences.

A paragraph may summarise the topic as in the introduction or the conclusion or elucidation of the main point. In other words, a paragraph can introduce a thesis statement, explain specific details, persuade or argue present points for or against an issue. In journalistic writing, one may have one-sentence paragraphs, too, but they are not so common. A strong paragraph has one controlling idea and other sentences unified around it. A paragraph is a

microcosm of the article and has the main idea and explains or describes details. Just as there is a transition of ideas from one paragraph to another, there is a transition from one sentence to another within a paragraph.

### 6.3.1 Functions of a Paragraph

According to Richard M. Weaver (1910-1963), a paragraph is like a visual aid that signals the beginning of new thought. ‘The paragraph has the useful role of **organising our thoughts** into groups of intermediate size.’

In earlier times, the turn in the thought was marked by a symbol in the margin. Today we indicate this by segregating paragraphs and by using indentation. The meaning of the word paragraph is “something written besides”, referring to the symbol written in the margin in medieval times. It signals to the readers that a new set of thoughts is beginning. The readers, then, turn their attention to something new. Paragraphs are indicators of transition of thought and are miniature compositions in themselves having a unity of their own. They have a major point and facilitate progression while reading. A good paragraph has unity, coherence and emphasis.

There are pieces of writing which are single-paragraph compositions too. These are self-contained and carry a logical progression of thought, and sentence discourse markers mark the transition of thought. As a component of a larger composition, a paragraph is not a device to mark mechanical intervals in writing to change the reader.

### 6.3.2 Characteristics of a Good Paragraph

First and foremost, a paragraph has unity, coherence and completeness.

**Unity:** Unity is developed when one general idea governs the entire paragraph. This general idea is a topic sentence, usually found at the beginning of a paragraph. It may occur in the middle or at the end of the paragraph as well. When it occurs in the beginning, it signposts the new thought in the paragraph and allows the reader to be mentally prepared for it. It is considered effective when it occurs at the end of the paragraph. It appears as the logical conclusion of all that was said in the paragraph, or one can say sums up the content of the paragraph. A topic sentence may be implied rather than stated. All details in the paragraph support the topic sentence.

Consider this paragraph for its unity. It has a topic sentence. Every detail that follows supports this sentence. Nothing is irrelevant, and the last sentence seems to sum up the paragraph's points and reiterates the topic sentence.

**Coherence:** Coherence means that one sentence follows another in a clear, logical sequence in a paragraph. Coherence allows the reader to move from one idea to the next, see the connections between ideas and the topic sentence.

The devices used to obtain coherence are parallel grammatical structures and signals like ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘third’, ‘next’, ‘further’ etc. These are discourse markers, and they indicate not only the turn in the thought but also the



hierarchy of the ideas. Normally, one would find the idea least important occurring towards the end of the paragraph.

**Completeness:** A paragraph is complete when enough is said to support a topic sentence to make it convincing. This can be obtained by providing details, supporting ideas, illustrations and examples or using direct quotations.

### 6.3.3 The Structure of a Paragraph

A paragraph comprises a controlling idea or topic sentence and information that explains, describes, argues in favour, expands or illustrates it. On the larger scale, the paragraph does the same function concerning the controlling idea of the larger composition.

The components of a paragraph are the controlling idea or topic sentence, explanation of the controlling idea, examples used in the explanation, explanation of the example, completion of the paragraph's idea and transition into the next paragraph.

#### Controlling Idea or Topic Sentence

It is the expression of the main idea, topic or the focus of the paragraph in a long sentence or a collection of sentences. The controlling idea directs the development of the paragraph. As mentioned above, it may occur in the beginning, middle or the end of the paragraph. It may appear in the beginning and the end of the paragraph, as well. It helps the reader to identify the point and notice how the ideas are organised in the composition.

#### Explanation of the controlling idea

The subsequent sentences in the paragraph explain the writer's thoughts on the main topic or idea. They present the rationale for how the reader should interpret the information presented. The explanation may cite examples to substantiate the claims made in the controlling idea.

#### Example and its explanation

An example represents the relationship established in the idea and the explanation portions of the paragraph. It provides support or evidence of the idea and the explanation that has just been offered. Sometimes, the example needs to be explained, especially to clarify why one chose to use particular examples to substantiate the major claim or focus in the paragraph. This establishes the relevance of the example to the topic sentence by explaining the relationship of the example with the topic sentence.

#### Transition

Occurring at the end of the paragraph, the transition reviews the relevance of the information discussed in the paragraph and sums it up in brief to mark the completion of the idea of the paragraph. This prepares the reader for the next paragraph. Loose ends are tied up, and the reader is reminded of the relevance of the idea to the controlling idea of the composition. The transitional sentence establishes the relationship between ideas and creates a

logical progression. Transitions can be marked by a single word, a phrase or a sentence in a paragraph and by a whole paragraph in a longer composition.

To sum up, it can be said that paragraph writing is an organic process that makes intricate links between various ideas which are connected to form one larger idea that runs through the entire paragraph or the composition.

### ***Purpose statements***

Like a thesis statement, papers have purpose statements that announce the paper's purpose, scope, and direction. It tells the reader what to expect in a paper and what the specific focus will be. Some examples of statements of purpose are given below.

“This paper examines. . .,”

“The aim of this paper is to. . .,” “The purpose of this essay is to . . .”

A purpose statement usually appears toward the end of the introduction. The purpose statement may be expressed in several sentences or even an entire paragraph.

## **6.3.4 The Process of Writing a Paragraph**

Paragraphs can be descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive, based on cause and effect, a definition, comparison and contrast between two things, classification or a sequence. So first, decide on what kind of paragraph you wish to write.

### ***Decide the topic and purpose of writing.***

This would depend upon your topic. Think of the topic on which you wish to write. You must be convinced about what you are going to write. This will ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of your paragraph. Writing a paragraph is like writing a good essay. A paragraph that attracts a reader to read through to the end has an introduction, supporting evidence and a conclusion. For this, it is important to take into account the potential reader and his/her interests. It has a logical transition of thought, its sentences cohere, and an organisation of ideas presented with a focus point.

### ***Decide on Controlling Idea***

The thesis is the ‘seed’ or the ‘nucleus’, and the development of the paragraph is an organic process. The subsequent sentences of the paragraph would have a recurrent relationship with the thesis or the controlling idea as branches growing out of the stem of a plant.

Hence, the first step is to decide on the topic sentence or the controlling idea. For this, narrow your topic enough to support it well in one paragraph. If your topic runs into more than one paragraph, then it would become an essay.

The controlling idea should be clear with no ambiguities. It may be an unconventional statement, but the intent should be clear. You can decide where to place your controlling idea: as an announcement in the beginning, as a revelation of intent in the middle of the paragraph or as the logical

conclusion of all the ideas mentioned in the paragraph at the end. The controlling idea would be a generalised statement.

### ***Body of the paragraph***

The information that you will use will be in the context of the controlling idea. The subsequent sentences will be related to the controlling idea in one way or the other. The information you use might comprise reasons, interpretations, examples, names, references, numbers and senses that support your controlling idea. In this portion, you sell your idea, i.e. bring the reader to your point of view.

### ***Use graphic organisers or mind maps.***

Before launching on the actual writing, it is advisable to jot down the ideas and work on a framework regarding the organisation of ideas, whether they would follow the main point and details, compare and contrast, sequence, problem and solution pattern. Place the ideas in a graphic format like a webchat, a flow chart, a table, an inverted tree diagram or a Venn diagram as discussed in the previous unit. This mind map will give a clear idea of how the topic will develop and if anything has been left out.

Begin to write. Get to the point as quickly as you can. Use formal language, avoid contractions. Do not use first or second-person pronouns. Ensure that all tenses match. The sentences should not be very complicated but should be varied in structure. Try to write emphatic sentences. They should relate to the controlling idea and move logically. Use connectors, linkers and discourse markers so that the reader can logically understand the connection between your controlling idea, the point or opinion. Your transitional sentences should prepare the reader for the next idea.

Use examples or concrete evidence to support your ideas. Avoid fragmentary paragraphs which jump from idea to idea in a jerky unconvincing fashion. They also indicate a weak writer's stance. Avoid irrelevancies in your paragraphs.

### ***Concluding Sentence***

The concluding sentence sums up or reiterates the main idea and reinforces the point or opinion. It reminds the reader of the relevance of the information. You should be satisfied that you have fulfilled the reader's expectations established by the controlling idea. In the end, remember, your paragraph is a mirror of you. You would have shared something of your personality into your paragraph!

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## **6.4 WHAT IS STYLE?**

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Style is the way something is said, done, expressed or performed. In a way, the figures of speech used to embellish any kind of discourse come under style. Style reveals the writer's personality and 'voice' because the structures, the diction and the figures of speech a writer chooses depend on his or her personality, attitude towards the topic or the audience and ideology. The style

also depends upon the purpose of writing and the audience. The purpose impacts the major rhetorical mode of any piece of writing and is the most important deciding factor. Hence a written composition can be narrative, academic or scholarly, descriptive, argumentative or literary, depending upon the purpose.

The audience, too, determines the writer's diction or vocabulary, the structure of the sentences (complex or simple) and the extent of the figures of thought or speech, such as metaphors or oxymorons.

Initially, these factors govern the writer's style, but slowly a personal style evolves, which makes the writer distinguishable from others. This may be called the signature style of a writer. As F.L. Lucas (1894-1967) said, "...not one of us can put pen to paper, or even open his mouth, without giving something of himself away to shrewd observers.." He further goes on to say, "Words can be more powerful, and more treacherous, than we sometimes suspect; communication more difficult than we may think."

In communication, many things come into play. One is the writer's perception of self, which may be different from his/ her real self, the reader's perception of the writer and similarly the reader's real self and perception of self. All these influence the process of 'meaning-making, and we know that the interpretations of a piece of writing may be many and divergent. Therefore, a writer must try to gain mastery over the language and learn how to express feelings or ideas.

#### **6.4.1 Different Kinds of Style**

There are different kinds of styles in which a topic can be presented. A journalist would need to vary his or her style according to the audience and the purpose.

##### **Concise Style**

In concise style, the writer expresses thoughts or provides information in the fewest possible words employing only such terms as are most expressive. Ideas are not repeated, and figures of speech are employed sparingly. The sentences are compact with no vague or redundant expression. A writer, however, needs to see that in doing so, clarity is not lost, and the transitions are not abrupt. A journalist may use this style to report the news.

##### **Plain Style**

The plain style rejects embellishments of any kind. The prose is simple, direct, and easily understandable. Three things govern this style: purity, propriety and precision. The writer aims to inform or narrate, which he/she may do with force or vivacity but will not make any special effort to capture the reader's attention. Reporting events or news on non-controversial issues would follow this style.

##### **Elegant or Graceful Style**

This style contains figurative language in the right measure. The words used

are the most appropriate, and the units of the sentence are arranged with such care that they enhance the beauty of each other. The prose appears spontaneous in which metaphors, allusions and thoughts are woven carefully. In a way, 'it pleases the fancy and the ear while it informs the understanding; and conveys the ideas, clothed with all the beauty of expression, but not overcharged with any of its misplaced finery.' It has charm, a perfect harmony of thought and diction, ease and refinement.

### **Forcible and Vehement Styles**

A piece written in the forcible style is plain, distinct and impressive, which reveals a writer who is firmly convinced of the truth of the idea he/she is expressing. This author is deeply interested in the subject and is convinced of the importance of conveying the idea to others. The writer employs vigorous arguments that are sound and convincing, related and adapted to the subject, topic or theme and reveal a disciplined mind.

#### **Example:**

The arguments are vigorous, and the writer has made his stand very clear. He is convinced that force is not the best option to subjugate the races America was trying to control. The style's distinct, impressive and the prose dignified. But it makes its point because the arguments are convincing.

Such writing would find its place in the editorial column where the editor or seasoned journalists, or senior experts in a field present their views on issues that are debatable.

When the forcible style is tempered with a highly excited state of feeling, we get what can be called.

#### **Vehement style.**

Writing can be classified into some other kinds of style like the florid style, the vehement style and the dignified style. The major ones have been discussed in this section.

### **6.4.2 Passive and Active Structures**

The use of passive voice is prevalent in expository or argumentative writing to emphasise the receiver of action and lessen the remarks that the writer does not want to emphasise. A truth or an opinion can, thus, be presented in a less acerbic form by putting the idea in a passive construction.

When the person who does a thing is obvious or does not matter, then the passive structure is used to emphasise the act or action and its effects, which are more important.

'The common man has been made the scapegoat' takes away the direct attack made by a statement like this: 'They have made the common man suffer for this!'

Passive structures are more impersonal. However, passive structures should not be used consistently throughout the written piece, making the writing

weak and unconvincing. Where things need to be said directly, they must be said so.

### 6.4.3 Sentence Forms: Use of Periodic Sentence

In contrast, the periodic sentence places the main point in the middle or the end instead of the beginning. Here the main point is modified by the preceding subordinate clauses.

Other techniques could be using exaggeration to attract attention, referring to the reader's imagined personal experiences, using questions to get the reader's attention, using idioms and at times using informal expressions like short forms of verbs.

### 6.4.4 Attributes of Good Style

Some persons indeed have a talent for writing well and do so effortlessly and naturally. Nevertheless, those who may not be so blessed can train themselves to write effectively. In his article 'What is style?' F.L. Lucas has listed a few things you may consider to make your writing graceful and worth reading.

Avoid the use of too many pronouns. 'Far better repeat a noun, a name, than puzzle the reader, even for a moment with ambiguous pronouns. For with too many 'he' or she', the reader gets confused about who is being referred to.

The next point he mentions is the rhyming clusters or jingles. There is a repetition of the syllable 'port' in the following sentence: 'The enemy is *reported* to have seized this *important port* and, and reinforcements are hurrying up in *support*.'

Lucas also warns against using too many relative clauses, which he compares to a string of sausages or Chinese boxes, one inside another. He would prefer shorter sentences with a lesser number of explanatory or informative clauses attached to them. It would be better to break and begin a new sentence if many ideas related to a point. The use of jargon should be avoided or kept to a minimum if the writing is for the general public.

The two cornerstones of style, according to him, respect for truth and respect for the readers. This will ensure **honesty and courtesy** in writing. It is better, to be honest, and present one's true self rather than carrying on a pretence, which does not last long and as we said earlier, writing reveals the author and readers are intelligent and discerning.

The next important point is **courtesy and respect for the reader**. Many things follow naturally from this courtesy, and the first is clarity. It is not nice on the part of the writer to puzzle or confuse the reader. It is essential to ensure that the reader can understand without any effort or struggle. Certain famous writers have tried their writing on their servants and modified them accordingly to ensure clarity and comprehension.

The other principle that a writer needs to adhere to is **brevity**. If one can say a thing in a few words, one must not ramble before coming to the point. It is

not nice to waste the reader's time. Short and effective expressions are more valuable than waxing eloquent.

When French Marshals turned their backs on him at a reception, Wellington said, 'I have seen their backs before.' This is a very profound statement and speaks volumes. Any attempt to lengthen the sentence would diffuse it or make it ineffective. It is often seen that wordiness or redundancy affects the clarity of the sentence. Hence these are best avoided.

Clarity is not the same as using many words to make a thing clearer. The statement may become confusing or bewildering for the reader who tries to search for the idea from amongst the numerous words in which it is clothed.

Clarity and brevity are the basic requisites. But they need to be accompanied with **variety, good humour, good sense, vitality and imagination**. Variety can be attained by varying the sentence length and structure to avoid 'monotony of language, rhythm and mood'. So good writers amplify their vocabulary and diversify their tone. This means that serious writing can be solemn at places, which can be relieved by a humorous expression, thus relieving the boredom and strengthening the point.

**Vitality and imagination** can be obtained through the use of metaphor and simile or by drawing analogies. Some common symbols and icons are understandable, and metaphors and similes can help provide a concrete idea that can be visualised and understood. The idea can be clear and the expression simple, yet the writer can convey a lot through the help of these simple tools.

**In his book 'On Writing, Stephen King** has expressed how adjectives can make the writing dull and bland. Instead, if the situation is presented through metaphor or visualisation, the writing becomes vivid and vigorous.

The sentence "The mountain that lay behind the hill loomed large over the town, obscuring it with its shadow every sunrise," creates a mental picture which the use of the adjective 'huge' or 'immense' might not have been able to do. It is also argued that 'much of the meaning can be conveyed not through words but with effective and clever punctuation'.

The requisites of a good style would include the following:

- 1) Effective syntax where the main point is identifiable
- 2) Nominalisation means avoiding too many pronouns
- 3) Using discourse markers to indicate the relationship between sentences and ideas.
- 4) Varying between loose and periodic sentences according to the need  
Using metaphor or simile, visualisation to concretise abstract concepts  
Avoiding repetition.
- 5) Using the active voice unless otherwise required  
Using good-natured humour, whenever possible
- 6) Using effective diction and avoiding the use of a word  
Avoiding cliches

- 7) Being convinced of the topic or idea Being clean and honest with the reader Having respect for the reader
- 8) Avoiding wordiness and redundancy

The elegant style is the most impressive, having the right diction, suitable metaphors and appropriate figures of speech.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1. What are the attributes of a well-written paragraph?

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- 2. When would a journalist use passive voice in writing?

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- 3. What are the important requisites of a good writing style?

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**6.5 LET US SUM UP**

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Journalistic writing has certain features and differs from literary writing, for it includes different genres. Yet, we may say that the rules that govern any good writing govern journalistic writing too.

In this unit, it was explained that the paragraph is at the heart of all writing, and it has to be well organised and should have a topic sentence or a controlling idea with other points that offer details or illustrations. It is a complete composition in itself, and it should have unity, coherence and transitions. Any kind of longer composition should have a thesis statement which can occur anywhere in the first paragraph. It would have unity and coherence in the paragraphs.



The written product is governed by the purpose, the audience, and the place where the writing will appear. All writing should have economy, simplicity and clarity as to their hallmarks. In addition, the writer can use certain tools to increase its readability by using visualisation, good humour, the concretisation of abstract ideas through metaphor and simile and using punctuation cleverly to provide the intended meaning concisely.

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## 6.6 FURTHER READINGS

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1. Dash, A. (2008). *Journalistic writing*. New Delhi: Sonali Publications
2. Gurdon, M. (2007). *Write on!*. London: New Holland
3. Hicks, W., Adams, S., Gilbert, H., & Holmes, T. (2010). *Writing for Journalists*. London: Routledge

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## 6.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. A well-written story should be simple, clear and use the least possible words to convey the point properly.
2. The two most important factors that determine the style of a story are the language used in the presentation of matter and the thought behind writing the story.
3. A clearly understood written piece would have moderate matter presented in an elegant style.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. Attributes of a well-written paragraph are:
  - Unity – one general idea covered in the paragraph
  - Coherence – sentences follow a clear, logical sequence
  - Completeness – enough is said about the idea to make it convincing.
2. A journalist uses the passive voice in argumentative writing to emphasise the receiver of action and to lessen the remarks that the writer does not want to emphasise.
3. Clarity and brevity, variety, good humour, good sense, vitality and imagination, are the basic requisites of a good writing style.

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## UNIT 7 WRITING FOR RADIO

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### Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Learning Outcomes
- 7.2 Radio Writing – Challenges of the Medium
- 7.3 Basic Elements of Radio
- 7.4 Difference between Language of Print and Radio
- 7.5 Radio Writing for Different Radio Formats
- 7.6 Radio Writing – Broad Categories of Programmes
  - 7.6.1 Information Based Programmes
  - 7.6.2 Awareness Based Programmes
  - 7.6.3 Entertainment Based Programmes
- 7.7 Identifying the Listeners
- 7.8 Research for a Script
  - 7.8.1 Example of a Documentary
- 7.9 Attractive Beginning
  - 7.9.1 Examples of Attractive Beginning
  - 7.9.2 Maintaining the Flow of Script
  - 7.9.3 Precautions for Final Draft
- 7.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.11 Further Readings
- 7.12 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

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You have already understood the medium of radio and its basic characteristics. You have also acquainted yourself with the constraints and strengths of this medium. Radio writing simply means writing in the language of radio, so now we shall try to understand what is meant by the language of radio.

Radio writing is different from any other kind of writing. It is also true that radio writing is more difficult and challenging than other kinds of writing. This is so because radio is an aural medium. Further, even if we know the fundamentals of the appropriate language for radio, the creative challenges for writing still persist. The language for a children's programme cannot be the same as that of a youth programme. The language for a rural programme will be entirely different from the language of any literary programme. Another issue is the absolute necessity to remain within the time duration allotted for the programme.

Moreover, you have to deliver a powerful message or convince the audience about a product through spoken words only. The writing also varies according to the format. The craft of writing a talk will be entirely different from writing a radio play. Keeping all these things in mind, we shall try to learn some basic characteristics of radio writing in this Unit.

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## 7.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- differentiate between the languages of print and radio;
- recall the main elements that constitute the language of radio;
- identify different forms of radio programmes;
- distinguish between different formats of radio programmes; and
- describe different stages of radio writing.

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## 7.2 RADIO WRITING – CHALLENGES OF THE MEDIUM

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Although you have understood the basic nature of radio as a medium, it is necessary to know certain essential facts before we venture into radio writing.

If you watch a movie in a cinema hall, you purchase a ticket and keep sitting in the darkness, not doing anything else except watching the movie. Similarly, while reading a book, it is essential to devote your whole attention to the reading process. But, just imagine how many of us listen to the radio while doing nothing else. Most of the radio listeners are engaged in some other simultaneous activities as well.

While listening to the radio, someone may be driving a car, and a homemaker may be cooking in the kitchen, a student may be solving a mathematics problem, a farmer may be tilling his land, a shopkeeper may be attending to his customers so on. Therefore, the radio writer has to shoulder a double responsibility. Firstly, from the very beginning of the programme, by the sheer magic of his/her words, he/ she has to attract the listeners towards the programme, and, after that, keep them engaged in it till the end. Further, the content of a radio programme has to be understood by the listeners then and there, in real-time, during the process of listening to itself. While reading a book or a magazine, the meaning of a difficult word can be looked up in a dictionary, and to clarify a point of doubt, one can go back to the earlier passage. But, this is not possible while listening to the radio. Hence in radio writing, there is no scope for difficult words, long sentences, unknown references etc. A radio script has to be in a language we use to speak or talk to each other. That is why the language of radio script is called 'Spoken Word'. It should be friendly and informal. Another challenge for a radio writer is the wide diversity of listeners – from scholarly intellectuals to illiterates - so a radio writer has to find a balance in his writing to appeal to a wide spectrum of society.

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## 7.3 BASIC ELEMENTS OF RADIO

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Every Radio programme is, in fact, a message to the listeners. If this message is communicated to and understood by the listeners and appreciated, then radio writing can be considered effective and fruitful. A message through radio or any other medium has certain codes from the sender, and one who receives the message decodes them. Let us understand this by some simple examples.

When we talk to each other, then the codes which work to deliver the message are:

- Spoken words
- Facial expressions
- Body gestures such as hand movements

The person to whom we are talking decodes i.e. understands these. For instance, just by staring sternly, a father can convey his anger or disapproval to his child. A professor can stop a student from coming late to the class just by a movement of his hand.

In the print medium, i.e. books, magazines, newspapers etc., written words, pictures, tables, graphs etc., work as 'codes' to take the message to the readers. Now, let us try to understand the codes which work for a radio message, i.e. the basic elements which create the 'language of radio'. As you have learnt in Unit 1, there are four basic elements which constitute radio programmes, i.e. whenever we listen to any programme of any radio station from any part of the world, and we shall hear only these four:

- Spoken words
- Sound effects
- Music
- Pause or Silence

Words are the most important part of any radio programme. These words are different from printed words because they reach a listener through a 'human voice' and thus are 'spoken words. Words of radio form a double code. Their meaning is embellished by the beauty of language and, second, the voice in which these are rendered. Thus, the quality of voice and the delivery of words can make the language of radio more effective, depending on the style of presentation. In brief, we may say that:

- Words used in a radio programme are spoken words.
- These give a feel of human presence.
- These also reflect some aspects of the speaker's personality.
- These may tell us about the 'broadcast stations' or even the country where the broadcast is coming.

Because radio is a blind medium with no visuals, appropriate sound effects

enrich the visuals created by spoken words in listeners' minds. Radio plays, and documentaries take immense help from suitable sound effects. Music also helps in developing the language of radio. For example, a musical piece of just 30 seconds, played as a 'signature tune', identifies the broadcast institution and the individual programme. Similarly, the effect of an opening or dropping curtain in a theatre is achieved by 'fade in' and 'fade out' of music in a radio drama. The background music in a radio drama helps make a scene lively.

Radio is a sound medium, but the absence of any sound is also an important part of the language of radio. The most interesting contradiction is that no radio programme can be imagined without natural and even deliberate pauses or silences. Pause is an integral part of the grammar of radio. A pause in radio replaces the use of a comma or full stop in print.

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## 7.4 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGE OF PRINT AND RADIO

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Having understood the basics of radio language as a spoken language, we can now very well understand the difference between the languages of print and radio. Sometimes experts invited for broadcast don't understand the radio requirements and bring a script designed more for the print media, i.e. using the characteristics of 'written word' and not 'spoken word'. Let us try to understand the subtle difference through some examples.

If we read an article in a newspaper, we may find – 'we should take the precautions mentioned below. Likewise, we may say 'the above facts are important in an article. However, there is no 'below' or 'above' in spoken language; using similar phrases in a radio talk will sound ridiculous. Again, instead of mentioning dates on radio, the use of 'yesterday', 'the day before yesterday' or 'last week' or 'last month' etc. may be better suited as spoken language.

In radio, we try to paint a picture through spoken words as radio is a blind medium. Hence, if we say that the height of Bhakra Dam is 740 feet, it may not conjure a picture. But, if we say that Bhakra Dam is as high as three Qutub Minars put one above the other, it will make a visual impact in a listener's mind. We may also say that the height of Qutub Minar is the same as 125 people standing on one above the other. It again creates a visual.

Similarly, in print, we may say that the capitals of Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia are Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, respectively. Still, on the radio, it will be appropriate to say that Tokyo is the capital of Japan, Kuala Lumpur is Malaysia's capital, and Jakarta is Indonesia's capital, thus avoiding using the word 'respectively'. We avoid using complex and complicated sentences in radio language. Simple words and short sentences are the requirements of radio communication.

Likewise, while talking about history, instead of saying '1520 AD', it might be better to say approximately 500 years ago. Long figures such as 'Rupees 15 lakhs 53 thousands 9 hundred 74' may be better said as 'about 15 and a

half lakhs' or 'more than 15 lakhs'.

To summarise what we learned in this part of the Unit, we can say that radio listeners may be engaged in other activities while listening to the radio; therefore, we should keep our words simple and friendly as in our normal conversation. Long and complicated sentences need to be avoided. Short sentences and simple words are essential requirements of radio language.

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## 7.5 RADIO WRITING FOR DIFFERENT RADIO FORMATS

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Just as poetry, short stories, novels, drama, essays, travelogues etc. are different formats of literature, similarly, there are many formats of radio programmes, and these formats are created by combinations of the four elements of radio, i.e. spoken word, sound effect, music and pause. Pause is a compulsory element for all the formats. If we take only spoken words (no sound effect, no music), we get the following formats:

- 1) Radio Talk
- 2) Dialogue
- 3) Interview
- 4) Discussion
- 5) News Bulletin

If we combine spoken words with sound effects, we have the following formats:

1. Quiz
2. Radio Report
3. Live Commentary

If we combine spoken words, sound effects and music, then we have:

1. Radio Feature/Documentary
2. Radio Drama
3. Radio Spots (Advertisements/commercials)
4. Radio Serial
5. Docudrama
6. Newsreel

Every Radio format has its attraction and requirements. We choose a format as per available airtime, subject or theme, target audience, etc. Thus, while a radio advertisement may be of just 30 seconds duration, a radio play maybe 15 minutes to 1 hour long, and a talk may usually be of 4 to 9 minutes. We have to understand a particular radio format before writing a script for it.

It has to be understood here that certain formats of radio programmes have to be unscripted by their very nature. For instance, running commentary of a sports

or non-sports event cannot be pre-scripted as it is essentially a live description of what is happening on the spur of the moment. However, proper preparation and having detailed background material are indispensable for running commentaries also. Similarly, interviews and discussions are also extempore formats but systemically preparing talking points is essential so that invaluable radio time is put to optimum use.

### **Activity – 1**

Listen to different scripted radio formats like talks, plays, documentaries, etc. and then compare them with non-scripted formats like interviews or commentary.

## **7.6 RADIO WRITING – BROAD CATEGORIES OF PROGRAMMES**

After understanding the language of radio, we should also be aware of the various fields for which radio writing can be done. We have a vast range of subjects for people of all age groups having varied interests. Broadcasting touches many areas of our life, and so the scope for radio writing becomes almost unlimited. It is, however, worth mentioning that, unlike AIR stations, private FM channels should not be taken as the representative model of a radio station. The main purpose of private radio channels is to earn commercial revenue through mostly entertainment-oriented programmes. They use not more than 3 to 4 programme formats out of more than 25 programme formats available to programme producers. Let us know what kinds of programmes are broadcast from a radio station dedicated to public service broadcasting. That would make you familiar with the whole scenario of broadcasting. But, first, we should know the three major functions or objectives of broadcasting, which result in three broad categories of programmes.

### **7.6.1 Information Based Programmes**

From the very beginning, the first and foremost purpose has been to provide information to the listeners. Many informative programmes are broadcast every day from a majority of radio stations. News bulletins and programmes on current affairs are prime examples of this role played by radio. Although now there are hundreds of television channels and social media platforms from where one gets all sorts of information, the role of radio as the primary information disseminator to a wide spectrum of society continues to be relevant.

### **7.6.2 Awareness Based Programmes**

To educate is the second most important function of the radio. This is particularly true of broadcasting in India. Radio serves people by informing them about the latest happenings and imparting education to them in a non-formal manner. Radio stations broadcast educational programmes for the listeners to supplement their knowledge.

There are millions of visually challenged people who cannot avail the benefits of print and visual media. Radio provides great service to these people by giving information and education, thus enabling them to lead a productive and dignified life. Radio has also done a great service by educating the farmers about the improved techniques and opportunities for better marketing of their produce. It also helps the students' community by imparting them education of high quality.

### 7.6.3 Entertainment Based Programmes

Entertainment is the third most important activity of broadcasting. While there are multiple means of entertainment available for affluent people in larger cities, many people still get a lot of their entertainment from radio programmes. A special service named 'Vividh Bharati' with a mix of film music and other light-hearted programmes was created in 1957 by All India Radio to cater to the entertainment needs of millions of people all over the country. Now, FM channels of AIR, namely FM Rainbow and FM Gold, also serve the infotainment needs of the people. Private FM Channels focus on entertainment, whereas AIR FM channels also devote airtime for information and education.

#### Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space provided below for your Answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. How is Radio writing different from other media?

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

2. What are the three broad categories of radio programmes?

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

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## 7.7 IDENTIFYING THE LISTENERS

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After learning about the broad categories of programmes, radio writers should also know about the programmes for special audiences.

Whenever we plan a programme and write a script for it, we have to keep that programme's listeners in mind. Certain programmes are for all the listeners, but many are targeted at special groups of audiences. When writing for a



particular audience group, we also need to identify various sub-groups and their particular requirements. For example, radio stations have programmes for women, but all women may not have identical interests. A homemaker may have some requirements, but a working woman may have different requirements. Similarly, the needs of unemployed youth would be different from those of a young person holding a good job.

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## 7.8 RESEARCH FOR A SCRIPT

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Any radio script can be effective based on its content, which depends on the research about the subject. Let us take an example. Suppose a talk on the historic Red Fort in Delhi mentions that the road opposite Red Fort going to Chandni Chowk used to be a ‘Canal’ during the Mughal period. In that case, it will certainly attract the attention of the listener. Listeners may like this information, which might be hitherto unknown to them that the road that is now brimming with heavy traffic is where people used to enjoy boating in the moonlight. To find out unknown, rare facts on a given subject, we should consult books on the subject, go through magazines for relevant articles, consult subject matter specialists, visit a particular place or tourist spot or historical building concerning the subject and so on. Formats like documentaries require deep and detailed research. But, even for writing a radio talk of 5 minutes, the importance of research can’t be ignored. If we write for radio without proper knowledge of facts, it will only be a ‘play of words, which would be unethical and almost mean cheating the listeners.

### 7.8.1 Example of a Documentary

Let us take a practical example to understand the need for in-depth research for a format like a radio documentary. Suppose you have to write a script for a documentary on ‘Suicides in India’. You will have to find out the average annual number of suicides in the country along with the data and information on various aspects such as the tendency for suicide in different age groups, reasons for suicide, government efforts to prevent suicides, the role of NGOs, society, family members, friends, etc. Information about the trends in other countries and preventive efforts made is also relevant.

For a documentary on ‘Suicides in India’ broadcast by All India Radio, the writer researched by consulting psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, writers, social workers and government officials on various known and unknown aspects of suicide. He also consulted books, research papers, magazines and the internet. The writer also talked to those who had tried to commit suicide but survived. Legal experts and family members of those who committed suicide were also consulted. Several lesser-known facts emerged from the research like:

India is among the countries of the world where a large number of suicides take place. In India, every 6 minutes, someone commits suicide and 100 people attempt suicide every hour. The tendency to commit suicide is not confined to cities only; it has reached smaller cities, towns, and villages.

Many children commit suicide due to increased pressure and expectations

from family and schools. Many older adults are also committing suicide due to depression and loneliness.

Suicides indicate mental illness, but mental health has not been given due attention in our country. People hesitate to go to a psychiatrist or counsellor due to the perceived stigma of being called insane.

About 95% of the people contemplating suicide can be saved if timely help can be offered to them and that 'vulnerable' moment can be avoided. The attempt to commit suicide is a 'cry for help'.

Now, you must have understood the importance of the research for a particular subject.

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## **7.9 ATTRACTIVE BEGINNING**

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After you have done proper research on a subject and get down to write a script for radio, the most important aspect is an attractive beginning. You must have observed that newspapers often give very catchy, interesting and attention-seeking headlines to their news stories. For instance, there was a headline "Pak PM throws a no ball", making dramatic use of the fact that the Pakistani Prime Minister has been a well-known cricket bowler.

The attractive beginning is important for all the mass media. Still, in a radio programme, it is crucial as this medium has no visual dimension like television or cinema. Hence, the opening few lines of a radio programme often decide the fate of the entire programme. In the case of television, someone may keep watching the programme because of a favourite actor or actress or a beautiful visual, but the same is not true for the radio. A very formal beginning of the radio programme has very little chance of being attractive. Whatever be the subject, the beginning should be such that it connects immediately with the listener, creates curiosity, touches emotions and forces the listener to pay attention and start listening to the programme.

### **7.9.1 Examples of Attractive Beginning**

Suppose you have to write the script for a radio talk on environmental pollution. A traditional formal beginning for this could be:

"Pollution is a serious problem in India. There are mainly three kinds of pollution – air pollution, water pollution and sound pollution....."

Such a beginning may not attract many listeners because of its formal tone. However, if you start the script in the following manner:

"Taj Mahal is the symbol of eternal love and one of the Seven Wonders of the World. But, are you aware that this gleaming white monument may become black one day? No, it is not just a horrible imagination; the increasing environmental pollution can make this a reality one day, if we don't wake up now and start protecting our environment"...

Such a beginning is much more likely to catch the attention of the listeners because the Taj Mahal touches a chord with every Indian, as it is a symbol of

glory and one of India's prominent identities.

Similarly, if you have to write a talk or documentary on the Bheel tribe, a formal beginning might be like this:

“In India there are many tribes. Bheels are one such prominent tribe. They live mainly in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.....” Again such a formal opening may not appeal to many listeners. But to make the programme connect better with listeners, we have a number of other informal opening options.

1. We may begin with the story of ‘Eklavya’ who gave his ‘thumb’ to his ‘Guru’ (teacher) as ‘Gurudakshina’ or fee.
2. Story of ‘Shabri’ in Ramayan offered fruits to Lord Ram after tasting them to check whether they were sweet enough.
3. Story of great warrior Maharana Pratap, who was given shelter by ‘Bheels’ in the forests when he was fighting the army of Akbar.

### 7.9.2 Maintaining the Flow of Script

An attractive beginning catches the audience's attention and makes them listen to our programme, but that is not all. We have to ensure that our listener continues to listen to the whole programme with maximum possible attention. If, after a good beginning, the writer cannot maintain the flow and the progression of the script does not arouse any curiosity, then the programme will not achieve its objective. Hence, a radio writer must ensure that along with informal and friendly language, relevant and interesting facts on the subject continue to be presented attractively so that the listener remains engrossed in the broadcast.

The talker may be a very renowned and knowledgeable person. Still, while broadcasting, he/she should use interactive phrases such as ‘let us see why it happens’ and ‘you must be wondering why it is so just to establish a friendly rapport with the listener and make them a partner in discussing the subject.

#### Basic rules of a Radio script:

- **Use simple words:** Easier, simple and common words should be used. We need to remember how we talk, not how we write. Radio is a medium whose least common denominator audience are the laymen; using simple words is important. A list of a few radio appropriate words in English is provided below. I am sure you can find such equivalents in your mother tongue too:

Written	Spoken
Adequate	Enough
Anticipate	Expert
Commence	Begin, start
Conclude	End
Manufacture	Make

Purchase	Buy
Underprivileged	Poor

- b) **Use short sentences:** Sentences should avoid conjunctions as much as possible. The sentences should ideally be of a length appropriate for talking. Remember, unlike print, we cannot go back to the sentence and re-hear it.
- c) **One idea per sentence:** One sentence should carry one idea. Never clutter one sentence with too many ideas.
- d) **Avoid sound clashes:** Read your copy aloud for awkward sounds. Be sparing in the use of ‘s’ ‘th’ and ‘ing’ sounds. Avoid words like ‘thrust’, ‘wrists’ and ‘frisked’, all of which are difficult to pronounce.
- e) **Use present tense:** This is especially relevant for news bulletins, particularly the headlines. For conveying the immediacy and to drive home the urgency of news, the use of present tense is a cardinal rule. For example:
  - The Monsoon Session has commenced (commences)
  - We have responsibility for quality..... (are responsible)
  - The Prime Minister has inaugurated the project (inaugurates)
- f) **Use active voice:** Scripts should be written in active voice, for example: -
  - A new governor was appointed by the President (President appointed)
  - Ten shops were destroyed by a fire ... (A fire destroyed)
  - A meeting will be held by the teachers.... (Teachers will hold a)
- g) Avoid stock phrases, superfluous words and clichés. Below is a tentative list of each word that we tend to use every day while writing in English (which is not exhaustive):

**Stock Phrases:**

“Lead from the front” – Where else?

“Follow in x’s foot steps”- just follow “Ground rules”- just rules

**Superfluous words:**

Set a *new* record

*Died* in a *fatal* accident *Holiday period*

*Future* plans

It is a *true* fact in a *week* priority history

**7.9.3 Precautions for Final Draft**

Once you have written and evaluated your script for a radio programme and found it suitable for broadcast, keep the following precautions in mind while preparing a final draft:

- The script should be typed or written only on one side of a sheet so that no noise is recorded while turning the pages.

1. It is better to finish a paragraph on the same page. If that is not possible, at least the sentence should be completed. Carrying an incomplete sentence onto the next page should be avoided because it will create a break in the flow of reading at the time of recording. A new page should always begin with a new sentence.
2. Nothing should be written which is against the code of conduct of the concerned broadcast organisation.
3. The decency of language should always be maintained.
4. Nothing should be written that can hurt any community's sentiments or ridicule any disabled person, even if it is a programme of humour or satire.

### Check Your Progress: 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the basic rules of writing a radio script?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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## 7.10 LET US SUM UP

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Radio writing is different from writing for a magazine or a newspaper. While listening to a programme, a listener can't go back and forth; therefore, a radio broadcast has to be followed and understood by the listeners simultaneously in real-time. Short sentences and simple language are essential for a radio script. For effective radio writing, the writer has to be mindful of the programme's duration and format and be aware of the target listener for whom the programme script is being written. The beginning of the programme should be very attractive. The flow of language and content should be maintained until the end of the programme to sustain the listeners' interest. Intelligent research about the subject is very important to make the programme rich in content.

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## 7.11 FURTHER READINGS

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1. Grove, C., & Wyatt, S. (2013). *So you want to write a radio drama*. London: Nick Hern Books.
2. Horstmann, R. (1997). *Writing for radio*. London: A & C Black.
3. MacLoughlin, S. (2001). *Writing for radio*. Oxford: How to Books.

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## 7.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. Radio is an audio medium, and hence a radio script has to be written for the ear. It should be written in a conversant manner while using simple words and short sentences. Unlike the print, a listener cannot go back to re-hear an unclear portion. Also, there are no supporting visuals on the radio like that on television. So, care needs to be taken to make a script easily comprehensible.
2. The formats of radio programmes are as follows:
  - Programmes that inform – These provide information and news to the listeners.
  - Programmes that educate – This help educate. Several different educational programmes are broadcast for different segments of people – students, farmers, etc.
  - Programmes that entertain – This has increasingly become one of the key radio functions. No one wants to hear anything boring and thus the increasing need for entertaining programmes.

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. While writing a Radio script, you should:
  - Use simple words and short sentences.
  - Unlike print, a listener cannot go back and re-hear what's been said. So it is important to use words and sentences that will be easily understood in one go.
  - Present one idea per sentence so as not to confuse the audience.
  - Use active voice and present tense, as these make for simpler language that is easily understood.

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## UNIT 8 WRITING FOR TELEVISION

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### Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Learning Outcomes
- 8.2 Television News Stories
  - 8.2.1 Chronology of Television News Content Creation
  - 8.2.2 Stages of Television News
- 8.3 Writing for Television News
  - 8.3.1 Basic Principles
  - 8.3.2 Fundamental Rules
  - 8.3.3 How to Write an Anchor-Package
- 8.3 Writing News Feature and Documentary
- 8.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.5 Further Readings
- 8.6 Key Words
- 8.7 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

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### 8.0 INTRODUCTION

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Television (TV) has become an integral part of our lives these days as most of us depend on it for our daily dose of entertainment, news and information. Besides that often TV programmes in general, and TV news, in particular tend to influence our views thus indicating its possible impact on the society at large. Hence, the responsibility of TV news programme makers increases manifold. TV news writing is a critical part of those programmes and in this Unit, we shall try to understand various aspects of it. TV news programmes generally include news bulletins, news features, documentaries based on news, interviews, panel discussions and so on. So, writing for TV generally means writing scripts for news bulletins, features and documentaries as other formats such as interviews and panel discussions are not required to be scripted.

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### 8.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After reading through this Unit, you will be able to:

- describe the various stages of television news;
- discuss the basic principles of television news writing;
- describe the fundamental rules for writing a good television news script; and
- understand the writing for different formats of television news.

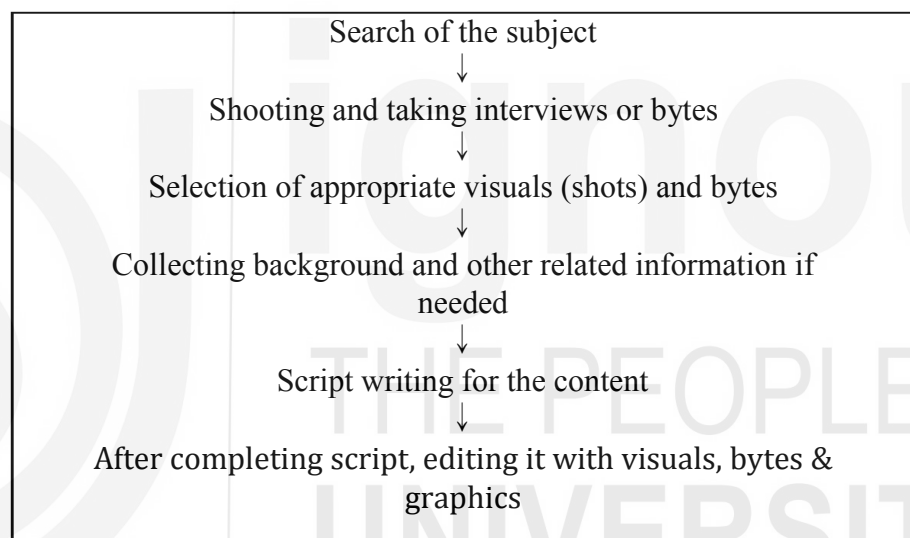
## 8.2 TELEVISION NEWS STORIES

Television channels broadcast news and current affairs related content in different programme formats. In this Unit, we shall focus mainly on the news stories.

Before going directly to the writing part, it is necessary to discuss the basic steps of production of a television news story. We shall also discuss the journey of a TV news story from its birth as *breaking news* to its matured stage of *anchor-package*. All these discussions will finally help us to improve our writing capabilities.

### 8.2.1 Chronology of Television News Content Creation

Television news content creation has a standard chronology. For writing an effective TV news script, you should understand it. The following chart shows this chronology:

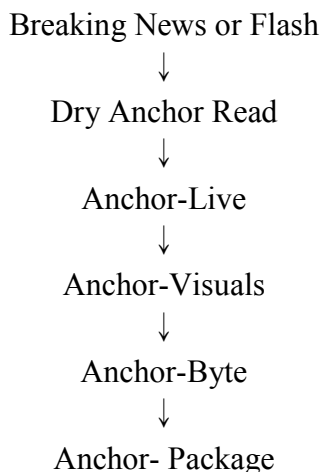


This is the normal chronology which is followed to create news contents but in some cases the order may be changed. For example, in hardcore news segments, you get the raw information and may be asked to telecast the news as early as possible and therefore, you cannot plan your story according to the standard chronology.

### 8.2.2 Stages of Television News

There are various stages of a TV news and you should be aware of all of them. Writing is involved in almost all these stages at different levels. Many news pieces may not pass all the stages but unless you know all of them, you would not be able to decide which stage is fit for which news piece. Following are the stages of a TV news:





Obviously for each stage, the process of writing will be different. For becoming a good TV journalist, it is necessary for you to know about all of them. We are going to give you a brief information about these stages of a television news.

**Breaking News or Flash:** When you receive an information from your source which has news value for your audience, you decide to present it as soon as possible. At this stage, the news will be of one or two lines. The purpose of the breaking news is to make your viewers aware of the latest happenings immediately. If you get some more information of the happening, you can break the news into small lines to present it.

**Dry Anchor Read:** Dry anchor read means that the anchor or news presenter reads the news only without any visuals. This normally happens in the case of breaking news situation. It can also be presented with graphics plates where the information is written on the screen.

**Anchor-Live:** If the news is in developing stage, the news bulletin producer may decide to take the live or telephonic interview of the reporter after anchor read. If visuals are available, they can be used along with 'live' or 'phone link' of the reporter.

**Anchor-Visuals:** When the news related visuals come into the newsroom, the anchor reads the news and the appropriate visuals are played over that. Here the purpose is to present the news in a concise manner.

**Anchor-Byte:** If there are some bytes relevant to the news item, it is also often attached with the anchor read. The bytes may be of the persons involved in the event or reaction of prominent personalities on that event.

**Anchor-Package:** The culmination of all the above stages is the package. In this, there are voice overs, appropriate visuals, relevant bytes and PTC. The package is supposed to present a full picture of the event.

So far as writing the news scripts of the above stages is concerned, the basic underlying principles remain the same. You must have read about the inverted pyramid style of news writing. Always remember to follow that. It is very important to understand the newsworthiness of the raw information before starting the writing. All news stories should have answers of the 5Ws & 1H. Each of these questions may have several parts which depend on the nature of the news. But you should not try to answer all these questions in the anchor read only. This will depend on

the time which you are getting for that news. If you are making an anchor-package, you will have the liberty to answer all the 5Ws & 1H.

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## 8.3 WRITING FOR TELEVISION NEWS

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Writing depends on two major things: first, type of medium and second, nature of the content. Here, our medium is television and content is news. Television is an audio-visual medium which requires a certain type of writing suitable to the nature of this medium. In this section, we shall discuss the different principles and rules of television news writing.

### 8.3.1 Basic Principles

Writing for TV news is different from literary writing. In the case of literature, the writer has the liberty to use words to beautify the subject and concept, but in news you should make your selection of words as simple as possible. In the case of literature, the writer has the liberty to express his/her feelings and narrate the story accordingly, but in journalistic writing one has to be objective. It is believed that the target audience of TV news is the general people so a news writer, especially TV news writer, must not use the complex and difficult words.

If you see the nature of television as a medium, it is dynamic. The story is flowing continuously. Unlike print, for a TV news viewer, it is quite difficult to stop or go back to the previous content to understand that. The process of understanding should match the speed of content flow. So, simple language is must. A simple principle is that no one should be in the need of a dictionary while consuming the TV news. Always remember the golden rule of news writing i.e. K.I.S.S. - Keep It Short and Simple. And you can keep your news writing short and simple by using the words used in daily conversation amongst us.

Always remember that the primary objective of news writing is to communicate the desired information in simple words so that it can be understood easily. At the same time, it should also be remembered that the news piece should answer the 5W & 1H (Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?) in the order of their importance. It is not necessary to explain all the aspects of the news equally, but it is a normal practice to emphasise the 'What' aspect first and foremost. After that, according to the nature of the information, you can decide which other aspects (Who or Where or How, etc.) are needed to be explained.

### Check Your Progress: 1

**Note:** Use the space provided below for your answers.

Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is the golden rule of news writing?

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2. In the news writing which aspect gets the most prominence?

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### 8.3.2 Fundamental Rules

There are a few fundamental rules of writing which have been laid down to assist in creating effective content for TV news. We shall discuss them one by one:

**Write for the eyes and ears of the viewers:** Yes, you got it right. A TV news viewer must be hooked in the beginning of the story and therefore the script should be emphatic enough to garner his/her attention to the TV screen. You should read your script out loud after completing it. Because there are many words which sound alike but have different meanings and these may create confusion for the viewers. Once your script reaches your own ears, you can decide about the changes required in it and improve. For example, words such as ‘Quiet’ and ‘Quite’ or ‘See’ and ‘Sea’ can create confusion, if not properly supported by visuals. Therefore, it is better to avoid such words. Use short and punchy sentences and refrain from long and complicated sentences.

**Write as much as possible in active voice:** In a good TV news script, passive voice has no place as the passive voice writing jumbles up the normal sequence of subject, verb and object. Due to this, the viewer’s brain has to work more than the normal to understand what is being said in the news. A basic thumb rule is to avoid the use of “by” in a sentence.

Example: The district magistrate has ordered to impose curfew in certain areas of the city. (Active voice)

In certain areas of the city, the curfew has been imposed by the order of the district magistrate. (Passive voice)

Naturally, the sentence said in the active voice uses less words as well as communicates the message easily. So, you should remember this rule that your news script should be ‘Active’.

**Use present tense as much as possible:** TV news should sound like “now.” Even the evening news bulletin needs to sound fresh because no one is interested to know about the old and stale news. The natural tendency is to write the news in past tense which should be avoided.

For example: “The Court declared XYZ firm bankrupt in a decision pronounced in the afternoon today. The court also suspended the payments of the jewellery firm according to the bankruptcy law.”

But you can write the above sentences in the following manner as well:

“The court declares XYZ firm bankrupt. Today afternoon, the court suspended the payments and declared the jewellery firm bankrupt according to the law of the land.”

In this example, you just start the news in present tense for the hook, then shifts

to past tense. It is always good to put the sentence in present tense to give it extra punch but remember not to force the present tense into every sentence you write.

**Stories should be people-centric:** It is a smart idea to weave the stories around people as viewers tend to connect with such stories. If viewers sense that your stories do not directly affect them, they would not show much interest. For example, if any big infrastructure project gets the government approval, do not present it with simple facts and figures. It should be presented as a news item which is going to impact the lives of the people where the project will be based.

You can start your story with sentences like “Now you can cover the distance between Delhi and Agra in less than four hours. The State government has given its nod for a new expressway between these two cities.”

By merely presenting the information in people-friendly way, you can evoke the viewers’ interest in your story multiple times. Therefore, it is advised to all the news scriptwriters to study press releases and raw information carefully before writing the story.

**P to G Style:** There are mainly two styles of the news script which are followed all over the world. The first one is P to G i.e. particular to general. In this style, the script starts with a case study of any person who represents the larger community which is affected by the event being discussed. Normally the first voice over (VO) of the script talks about the case study and in further VO, the script tells us the details of the story. The purpose here is to make a connect with the viewers. As we have mentioned above that stories should be people-centric, this P to G style endorses this theory. Remember that wherever human emotions are involved in the news script, it has a greater chance to leave an impact on the viewers.

**P-P-F Style:** The second style of news script writing is P-P-F, i.e. Present-Past-Future. It implies that the initial VO of the story should talk about the main news (present), the middle VO should talk about the background of the news (past) and at the end the VO talks about possible impact of the news (future). This style of writing is considered to present the story with all the aspects of the news and hence, it is very popular. An example of such script is given in this Unit in later section.

**Use action verbs in your story:** In news writing, you cannot do much to the subject or object of your sentences, but you can use action verbs to make the story more interesting. These words give urgency to the story and thus create more interest among the viewers.

For example, use of “is, are, was, were, etc.” weakens the impact of the story. “Residents started shouting” sounds much better and impactful than “Residents are shouting.”

**Be careful with facts and figures:** We all know that mathematical numbers are hard to understand for many and especially when these are stuffed in a news story. So always think twice before using too many numbers in your script. Try to make your point clear with rounded or approximate numbers.

Consider this sentence, “The company’s profit was Rs.11,470,543, which fell to Rs.5,695,765 a year later.”

Now read this, “The company’s profit was about eleven and-a-half million rupees, which fell to about half of that the next year.”

Which one gives you the better understanding? The second one. Yes, in the second sentence, the viewer gets the point which you want to make and he or she need not to go through many digits. Similarly, if you present numbers as something simple and meaningful information for viewers, the news piece will have better connect. You can understand it with following example:

Sentence- 1: “The car company has raised rates up to 3 percent.” Sentence – 2: “The car prices will be hiked up to thirty thousand.”

In the second sentence, numbers have been presented as simple and more meaningful information and thus it has added capacity to connect with the viewers.

**Try to draw viewers’ attention towards screen:** Your words should be catchy enough to get the attention of the passive viewers to the television screen. Sometimes, you can restrain yourself from giving too much details and just leave the viewers with a little suspense.

Consider this sentence, “The Khans of Bollywood - Shah Rukh and Salman met and hugged each other.”

Now read this, “What happens when King Khan and Bhai of Bollywood meet, let us watch.”

In the second sentence, you are forcing the viewers to watch the television screen as you are not telling them what the two celebrities did. The mention of these two celebrities is enough to grab the viewers’ attention. You can use this style in a soft news.

**Present your story as something special:** Do not forget that this is the era of competition and TV news channels are no exception. They have to compete with many other news channels which may show the same story which you are going to present. So, what will make your story more interesting? The ability to present your story as something different and superior. These days you must have heard the use of words “exclusive”, “never before”, “first time on television”. It is to show your promptness and dedication towards the viewers. But apart from this, you can structure your sentence in such a way that it shows your dedication and promptness.

*Example: -*

“When the education minister said there was no money for mid-day meals in the schools, we decided to dig for answers.” A sentence like this shows that you are serious about finding the truth.

“We are the only channel with exclusive visuals of the accident that took place at the highway.” By using such writing, you can build the perception of a prompt and fighter news channel amongst your viewers.

**Take the story forward:** “The End” caption works for the movies, not for the TV news stories. Remember that the end of your news script should encourage the audience to come back to your channel. They should have the interest to know what will happen next.

*Example: -*

Consider this sentence, “The union cabinet will take a call on the ‘one rank, one pension’ scheme in its next meeting.”

Now read this, “We will update you about the outcome of the next meeting of union cabinet on the ‘one rank, one pension’ scheme.”

While the first sentence leaves the viewers in suspense, the second generates curiosity as well as reinforces that your reporter will follow the story further. It is always good to promise to your viewers that you will return with updated information. It helps to build a sense of loyalty amongst TV news viewers.

### Check Your Progress: 2

**Note:** Use the space provided below for your answers.

Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. When it is said that your news script should be ‘active’, what does it mean?

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2. How can you make your script people-centric?

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3. What care should one take while using figures in a news script?

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4. Why is it advisable to write a script which takes the story forward?

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### 8.3.3 How to Write an Anchor-Package

The Anchor-package has two parts. The first part is the anchor-link or intro of the news. Here you inform your viewers about the main news and give the basic information. You should not infuse too much information in the intro because it

may confuse the viewer. You should just include one or two key points in the sentence. Normally, the intro consists of two or three sentences. The second part is the body of the package. Here, the visuals and bytes are used and the complete story is presented for the viewers. There are some VOs (voice over) over which visuals are laid and bytes are inserted between two VOs to move the story forward. You should start with the best of the visuals you have, and your story should flow naturally. It is ideal to write TV news script according to visuals. An example of the script of anchor-package is given below:

*(ANCHOR LINK)*

*The number of Indians getting EB-5 visas has jumped almost four-fold in the last 2 years. EB-5 visas promise foreigners a faster route to Permanent Residency in the United States of America. According to statistics issued by the US Department of State, at least 585 EB-5 visas were issued to Indians during the 12-month period ending September 2018. India is just behind China and Vietnam in getting the green card through this route.*

*PACKAGE*

*VO 1- United States of America or USA has been always a preferred living destination for rich Indians. That is why it is not surprising that in the last couple of years, the tendency to get the US citizenship by making investment there has surged. (GFX IN) According to the data released by US Department of State, 585 EB-5 visas were issued to the Indian citizens during the 12-month period ending September 2018. This number was mere 174 in the 12-month period ending September 2017. When compared with the same period ending September 2016, the number of 2018 is almost times, as in 2016 the US Government has issued only 149 EB-5 visas to Indians. (GFX OUT) But what is the reason behind the renewed interest of rich Indians in getting US green card?*

*Byte- Rohit Pawar, MD, Bridge Overseas, Mumbai*

*(By September 2019, the applications for getting EB-5 visas can be increased to 1000. For the last 3 years, this number has seen only an upward growth and this trend is expected to grow further. The real estate community of the country has shown more interest in this as they want to take its benefit for securing the future of their children.)*

*VO 2- EB-5 visa promises a green card, if the applicant invests a minimum one-time stipulated amount of 5 lakh US dollars in certain specified areas. At the same time, the investment amount should be enough to provide full-time employment to at least 10 persons there. This rule allows the person making investment to have green cards for two people. Wealthy Indians consider EB-5 visas a good and easy route to secure their future.*

*Byte- Mohit Pate, EB-5 Visa Applicant, Mumbai*

*(We can do business in USA as we are doing in India. But there we can get good higher education for our children as well as social security for us. We can spend our life comfortably there.)*

*VO 3- In USA, a total of 10,000 EB-5 visas can be issued to foreigners every year, but no country is allowed more than 7 percent of it. It means that no country will be issued more than 700 EB-5 visas per year. The time taken to get the Permanent Residential status approval is normally 18 to 24 months. The number of Indian applicants currently rank behind China and Vietnam only. And it seems that the rich Indians are ready to wait for this period, or perhaps longer, for becoming green card holders. In Mumbai, XYZ (imaginary name of the reporter) reporting for ABC (imaginary name of the news channel).*

In the above script, you can see that the scriptwriter has presented a trend amongst rich Indians to settle in America. This is written in explanatory nature. From the anchor links, it becomes clear that the content of the story will revolve around the increasing numbers of rich Indians who want to get green card. In the first VO, the numbers are given, and the instructions are also provided to insert and remove graphics (GFX) plate in the package. It helps the video editor to understand from where graphics plate will be inserted and where will it end. Similarly, the transcriptions of byte are also written in the script, so that the VO artist as well as the video editor of the package have full understanding of the story.

In the last VO, the reporter has signed off by mentioning his name. The idea is to register his presence at the place from where he has filed the report. It gives the viewers a feel that the information provided are genuine, original and first hand. Earlier, PTCs (piece to camera) were used to do the same thing but nowadays very few PTCs are being seen in news packages. If you know how to write anchor-package, you can write any script required for different stages of the news.

### **8.3.4 Writing News Feature and Documentary**

Apart from script of a package, TV news writing also includes news features and documentaries. These are longer formats of news content and different in their approaches. You can consider them as the next levels of script writing (for the news content). We are going to discuss these formats briefly here.

**News Feature:** Writing for news feature is different from hard news scripts. Normally the feature writer has the liberty to show his/her writing skills and creativity. It is built around a news point and it contains those elements which can attract the viewers. As feature writing is more a show of skill, it does not follow any set pattern. Each feature writer can develop his/her own style. Moreover, the style may differ from subject to subject. But there are some points which should be kept in mind while writing the news feature scripts.

**Exploring the angles of the story:** Before writing, it is imperative to find out all the possible angles of the story. But at the same time, you can not include all the angles of the issue in a single story because it will become too long. So you will require to choose a couple of angles which you find more appropriate than others and around which you would like to narrate the story.

**Proper research about the story:** You must research properly about the subject which is the basis of your script. Research may include talking to the



people having expertise in the subject, sourcing as much information about it as possible and trying to find any previous feature story on the same subject by any other news organisation. This will help you to structure your script.

**Writing script according to the mood of the story:** You should remember that being a feature story, it has not to be written necessarily in the inverted pyramid style. Here you are telling a story to the viewer and your goal is to give them a real feel of the subject. You must stick to the theme and mood of the story in your writing. There is no need to describe those things which are not relevant to the story. You can add colour, drama and punch in the story but these should fit in your theme.

**Documentary:** Documentary is also a longer format. New York Film Academy defines documentary as something which is fascinating and which captures the brilliance of humanity when executed thoroughly. A documentary is a result of very hard work and it demands a lot of time, energy and resource to be mobilised. A good documentary is written skilfully, catches people's attention and touches their feelings and communicates efficiently. A documentary is much more and much different than a news report but just like the news, your documentary should be able to connect with the viewers. New York Film Academy says, "Documentaries are real, with real people and dealing with real issues that are powerful and hit us at our core. Let your writing reflect those deep, moving messages and capture your audience emotionally." Therefore, before writing documentary script, you should have a clear and precise idea of your subject. You must have the understanding of how the story will be delivered. In fact, before writing a documentary script, you must complete your research, collect the required data and shoot the interviews, etc. Once you have all the materials, you can filter the required ones and start writing the script of the documentary. You must remember that writing is an art and you need to practice regularly in order to improve your artistry. Also, every artist has his/her unique style and creativity, similarly, every news writer has his/her own style of expression. You should study the writing styles of others but try not to copy anyone but to develop your own style.

### Activity 1

Write a TV news script in the P-P-F format with the following raw information and discuss the script with your counsellor and classmates during counselling sessions.

*The Prime Minister's signature Ujjwala Scheme came in for rich praise in a new WHO pollution report. The report nevertheless estimated that 9 out of 10 people around the world breathe air containing high levels of pollutants. An estimated 7 million people every year die of diseases caused by ambient (outdoor) and household air pollution. "While the latest data show ambient air pollution levels are still dangerously high in most parts of the world, they also show some positive progress. Countries are taking measures to tackle and reduce air pollution from particulate matter. For example, in just two years, India's Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana Scheme has provided some 37 million women living below the poverty line with free LPG connections to support them to switch to clean household energy use," the report said.*

*Launched by the PM on May 1, 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) aims to safeguard the health of women and children. The BPL families are given LPG connections with a support of Rs 1600 per connection in the next three years.*

*The report estimated that ambient air pollution alone caused some 4.2 million deaths in 2016, while household air pollution from cooking with polluting fuels caused an estimated 3.8 million deaths. A total of 7 million people die every year from exposure to fine particles in polluted air that penetrate deep into the lungs and cardiovascular system, causing diseases including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and respiratory infections, including pneumonia, the report said. Particles less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter (PM2.5) are referred to as “fine” particles and pose the greatest health risks. Because of their small size, fine particles can lodge deeply into the lungs. Commenting on the findings of the Report, WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: “Air pollution threatens us all, but the poorest and most marginalized people bear the brunt of the burden. It is unacceptable that over 3 billion people – most of them women and children – are still breathing deadly smoke every day from using polluting stoves and fuels in their homes. If we do not take urgent action on air pollution, we will never come close to achieving sustainable development.”*

*The report shows that more than 90% of air pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, mainly in Asia and Africa, followed by low- and middle-income countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Europe and the Americas. “Many of the world’s megacities exceed WHO’s guideline levels for air quality by more than 5 times, representing a major risk to people’s health. We are seeing an acceleration of political interest in this global public health challenge. The increase in cities recording air pollution data reflects a commitment to air quality assessment and monitoring. Most of this increase has occurred in high-income countries, but we hope to see a similar scale-up of monitoring efforts worldwide,” says Dr Maria Neira, Director of the Department of Public Health, Social and Environmental.*

*Determinants of Health at WHO. The highest ambient air pollution levels are in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and in South-East Asia, with annual mean levels often exceeding more than 5 times WHO limits, followed by low and middle-income cities in Africa and the Western Pacific.*

*(Indian Express Report on 2nd May, 2018)*

**Check Your Progress: 3**

**Note:** 1) Use the space provided below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

- 1. What is the difference between writing for hard news and a news feature in television?

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## 8.4 LET US SUM UP

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As television is one of the most popular and powerful media of mass communication, you need to be doubly sure before telecasting any news item. Every news item must follow the basic principle of answering 5Ws & 1H. Remember the KISS (Keep It Short and Simple) formula for script writing for TV news.

And, because of its audio-visual nature, in TV news writing, you need to focus not only on words but on visuals as well. It must be kept in mind that the words and visuals match as well as complement each other while presenting on screen. People-centric news scripts generate more interest amongst viewers. The aim of the script writer is to present the news in such a way that people feel connected and benefitted by that. Also, the story should move forward so that the viewers can develop a sense of loyalty towards the broadcaster. TV news writing also includes feature as well as documentary writing. The approach of writing these scripts may be different but the basics of script writing remain the same.

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## 8.5 FURTHER READINGS

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Barnas, F. (2018). *Broadcast news writing, reporting, and producing*. New York: Routledge.

Block, M. (2011). *Writing broadcast news: Shorter, sharper, stronger: A professional handbook*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

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## 8.6 KEY WORDS

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- Byte** : A short and relevant part of interview (on camera) of a person related to the news story. ‘Byte’ and ‘Bite’ are used interchangeably.
- Voice Over** : An audio which describes and explains the visuals.
- Anchor Link** : The content spoken by the news anchor.
- GFX** : GFX stands for graphics.

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## 8.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress: 1

1. The golden rule of news writing is K.I.S.S. It stands for Keep it short and simple. It means that while writing news, the scriptwriter should use easy to understand words which are part of our daily conversations. The sentences should be short so that the target audience can understand them easily.
2. It is expected from any news item that it will answer the 5Ws & 1H i.e. (Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?). But the most important aspect is ‘What’ and in most cases, the news answers the ‘What’ aspect first. It is because the viewers will be interested to know what happened

before going into the details of any event.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

1. The news script should be written in active voice sentences as much as possible. The sentences written in passive voice are longer and give unnecessary twist to the structure of the sentence which is not suitable for television.

To make the news script people-centric, it is necessary that the same should be presented with facts or information which are going to impact the lives of people. Mere presentation of press releases or raw information in a dry manner will not be attractive for viewers. Viewers will be interested to know whether the aired news has anything to do with their daily lives.

2. It is always advisable to refrain oneself from using too many mathematical figures in news scripts as they may take more time to be understood. So, if there is a need to use figures in a script, it should be made as simple as possible. Scriptwriter should try to connect those figures with some daily life activities so that the viewers can relate to them and their interest is retained.
3. If a script takes the story forward, it shows that the channel is following the story and will update the viewers as and when the further information are made available. It helps to build a loyal viewer base for the channel.

**Check Your Progress: 3**

1. In hard news script, the writer cannot take any liberty to beautify the script, but in a news feature the writer has the option to present the script in an attractive way. Feature writing does not necessarily follow the pattern set for the hard news. A feature is normally made on soft news or when the hard news needs to be presented along with different perspectives.