MCM301

HIGHLIGHTED NOTES FOR FINALS BY BRICK (ANSAR)

Lesson 23

Visual Aids

Why Visual Aids?

Audiences expect you to use visual aids in your oral presentations. Visual aids can improve the quality and impact of your oral presentation by:

- creating the attention of your listeners,
- illustrating points that are difficult to explain in words alone,
- enhancing understanding of the topic,
- centering the attention of the listeners,
- adding variety,
- helping your speech have lasting impact,
- emphasizing your information & ideas, and
- helping your listeners remember your talk.

With the right tools and ideas, you can be a high-impact presenter ready for an increasingly competitive world. Modern technology is providing exciting improvements to the most traditional types of presentation media offering new ways for you to excel at meetings, conferences, conventions, and training sessions.

Yet many of the traditional presentation techniques may still be the best ones. As a presenter with meeting objectives, you may choose to project full-color images that incorporate text, animation, and video. Or possibly your objective may best be met through the advantages of professionally imaged flip charts placed right next to your conference room table.

As contrasting as these two styles are, one is not necessarily better than the other. In order to make educated and informed presentation decisions the following rules will guide you to determine which medium will serve you best, based on your personality, style, the environment, your budget, your material, the audience, and your goals.

To find the right media for your presentation you need to first determine:

- The size of your audience.
- Whether or not there will be audience participation.
- The room size, arrangement, lighting, acoustics, climate and safety of your presentation environment.
- The presentation budget.
- Equipment and supply limitations.
- Time constraints.

Today's speakers can select from a variety of visual aids to enhance oral presentations. Among the most popular types of visual aids are: computer based presentation, video, 35-millimeter slides, overhead transparencies, flip charts, whiteboards, and handouts.

1. Computer based Presentation

The availability of affordable software and new technology has made computer based presentations the visual aid of choice in most business situations. What used to take weeks of preparation and an outside production house can now be created by you at your desktop. Computer-based presentations can be real-time or prepared in advance. Real-time presenting is useful when the audience needs to see immediate results or the software in action--like financial brainstorming sessions or software training. Prepared presentations can be simple text slides or--with the integration of text, graphics, animation, video, and sound--sophisticated multimedia productions.

In the past, these sophisticated presentations could only be viewed directly from the monitor or projected in a room equipped with a data/video projector and technical support. With the development of portable data/video projectors these presentations can now be transported and projected almost anywhere.

Computer-based presentations bring a level of professionalism that challenges you to be as dynamic as the presentation. With this in mind, it is very important to balance animation, video, transitions and special effects with what you're trying to communicate. Your goal should be a smooth natural delivery of information where the electronics and special effects are not apparent to your audience. Because multimedia software programs provide so many options, it is very easy to overdo them. Beware of creating more interest in the software than the material you're presenting.

Benefits

- Dynamic, full-color multimedia presentations are available to the average presenter
- Data can be presented in real time
- Supply costs are non-existent
- Last minute changes are possible
- Special effects add interest
- Production costs are low
- Transmission to remote locations is possible

Limitations:

- Projection equipment is expensive
- Computer and graphic skills are required
- Presentation depends more upon equipment than the presenter
- A darkened room is required

Helpful Hints:

- Before your presentation check equipment for proper location and function.
- Use only a high-intensity overhead projector
- Use a remote control device to advance your visuals
- If you do not have a remote, have an assistant advance the visuals
- Back up your computer media and take an extra copy with you
- Unless you take your own computer, use the view or runtime version on your computer software program so you do not have to load your software to the computer
- Use a laser pointer to focus the audience's attention
- If possible, vary the presentation with another activity so that you can turn the lights on.

2. Video

When you need to show real-life motion in your presentation, video is the most effective medium. Video clips are used with computer graphics to create multimedia presentations. These presentations incorporate text, graphics, animation, and motion video.

Portable video projectors have made video practical for everyday meetings as well as group presentations. These cost-effective, plug-and-play projectors allow you to project high-quality video images from VCRs, cameras, laser disc players, and CD players.

You can also use video as a delivery system for larger audiences through the use of desktop conferencing, distance learning, video conferencing, and closed-circuit television systems.

Technological developments have made recording, capturing, sending, viewing, editing, and printing video images easier, more practical, and cost effective.

Viewing videos is a passive activity and can allow your audience to lose concentration and focus. If possible, use short video segments (five to ten minutes) during your presentation.

Benefits

- Presentations are professional.
- Full-color motion with sound is possible.
- Duplicating presentation is simple.
- Presentations may be more entertaining.
- Presentation does not require presenter.
- Small cassettes are easy to store.
- Presenting to large remote audience is possible.

Limitations:

- Professional production is required.
- Production is expensive and time consuming.
- Little presenter involvement--can be impersonal.
- Discourages audience participation.

Helpful Hints

- Before your presentation, become familiar with and test all equipment.
- Make sure the room can be properly darkened.
- Be sure that you have enough monitors in place for adequate viewing.
- Keep video presentations short (ten minutes is considered the limit for attention and concentration).
- To increase participation, ask your audience to look for a specific idea or activity in the video before viewing it. Then refer to it by asking questions after viewing.

3. 35mm Slides

The content of 35mm slides provides a crisp, colorful, easy to read format for presenting information. 35mm slides are the most universally accepted way to show full-color, three-dimensional still pictures. They are also used extensively to show graphics or pictures. Slides can be used with large or small audiences and, because the projectors are small and portable, they can be taken almost anywhere. Remote operation allows you to move around the room and still control the duration and sequence of each slide.

One of the main advantages of slide projection is that slides can be easily duplicated and sent to multiple locations with assurance that everyone receives an identical message. If it is also important that the verbal element be consistent, include a pre-recorded tape that has been synchronized with your slides.

Because slide presentations require a darkened room and little or no audience participation, presenters who wish to sell, instruct, or teach should limit slide use. Consider incorporating other presentation formats that encourage audience participation instead. Watching slides in a darkened room for an extended period of time causes drowsiness. Even well narrated slide presentations should be limited to ten or fifteen-minute segments. Encourage audience involvement with the use of a rear projection system in a lit room.

Benefits

- Images are the highest quality.
- Presentations can be easily duplicated.
- Projectors are reliable, portable and easy to use.
- Remote control enables the presenter to move around the room.

Limitations:

- Darkened room is required (or uses rear projection system in lit room).
- Discourages audience participation.
- Presenter is more impersonal.
- More preparation time is necessary.
- Note-taking is difficult.
- Previewing and editing is difficult.

Helpful Hints:

- Arrange and place your slides in the slide tray and check to see that they are in the proper order and right side-up before arriving at the presentation.
- Once the slides are positioned in the slide tray, use a marker to draw a line around the top of the entire ring of slides. If your tray spills, you'll quickly distinguish top from bottom on each slide.
- Be sure the lights are properly adjusted.
- Try to keep enough light so that you can maintain some eye contact with the audience.
- Use a laser pointer to focus the audience on a specific point.
- Number the slides in case they do spill.
- Make sure the slides are in focus before you start.
- If you want to discuss a topic without any visuals, use a black slide.
- Face the audience at all times.
- If possible, vary the presentation with another activity so that you can turn the lights on.

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

Lesson 24

Visual Aids

4. Overhead Transparencies

Overhead projection is the most versatile and popular presentation medium used by businesses today. Because of its effectiveness and wide acceptance, its popularity is continuing to grow. The projectors are brighter, quieter, and more portable, and high-quality transparencies can now be printed in full color directly from your computer.

Overhead projection gives you control over every aspect of your presentation. By allowing you to face your audience in a fully lighted room, you are able to maintain the eye contact necessary for effective two-way communication. (Never face the "projected" image on the screen. Many presenters face the screen and end up talking to the screen). Facing the audience, you can detect audience confusion and easily clarify by highlighting, underlining, or circling important points with a project-able marker. If you need to explain further place a sheet of un-imaged film or write-on film on the stage of the overhead and use it as an "electric blackboard." By using a technique called revelation, information on your visual can be revealed point-by-point, preventing the audience from reading ahead or jumping to conclusions. If you want undivided attention, simply turn the projector off and all eyes are on you.

Overhead projection provides an informal, but structured atmosphere where an audience expects to learn and is naturally invited to participate. It supports the presenter, enhances the communication process, and shortens meetings.

Benefits

- Presenter has complete control over the presentation.
- Presenter faces the audience in a fully lit room.
- Visuals can easily be rearranged or omitted to fit the needs of the presenter or audience.
- Material can be highlighted or revealed point-by-point.
- Material can be created or added during a presentation using a projectable marker.
- Transparencies are easy and inexpensive to produce.
- An overhead projector is comfortable and simple to use.

Limitations:

- Can be used for groups of up to 100 people.
- Presenter must rely on equipment.
- Older projectors tend to be dim and noisy.
- Presenter is forced to remain near the projector in order to change transparencies.
- Audiences that don't understand the benefits of overhead projection may perceive it as outdated.

Helpful Hints:

- Test to see if the visual is in focus and if the projector is the right distance from the screen before you begin.
- Place the overhead to your RIGHT if you are right handed and to your LEFT of you are left handed-This will make it easier for you to face your audience and write if you need to. In either case, you want to stand in the center of the speaking area.
- Place your overhead projector on a table low enough so it does not block you or the screen. Have a small table next to the overhead so you can stack your overheads before and after you use them.
- To create a smooth transition and keep the audience from staring at a glaring white screen, turn the projector off before placing the next transparency.
- Be sure you have a spare lamp. Nothing is more unsettling than to have your overhead projector bulb goes out during your presentation. Bring spare bulbs and a glove to change the bulb. The old bulb will be HOT! Make sure you know how to change the bulb.

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

- Don't look at or point to the screen, look at the transparency or maintain eye contact with your audience.
- Use a pencil, pointer, or color highlighting system when pointing to a transparency on the stage of the projector.
- To reveal one line at a time, put a sheet of paper under your transparency and slide it toward you as you discuss each item.
- If you want the attention focused on you and a point you're emphasizing, turn the overhead projector off and move inward the group.
- Make sure what's projected is short and simple.
- Tape the power chord to the floor-to protects you or someone else from tripping.
- Mount transparencies in a frame for easy handling.
- Write your name on mounting frames and number them.

5. Flipcharts

While everyone seems to be interested in creating high-tech computer generated presentations, the flip chart still continues to be the most effective presentation media of all. One should not assume that investing a lot of money in high tech visual aids & equipment will "make" your presentation. The best visuals have been and still are the simplest. Whether hand-written or professionally imaged, the flip chart remains one of the most popular means of presenting meeting room information. An easel is comfortable, reliable, non-threatening (to you and your audience), and usually readily available.

Flipcharts are ideal for recording audience input, reinforcing important points, or gathering information obtained during brainstorming sessions. It is an ideal presentation medium for executive offices, small conference rooms, onsite locations, and courtrooms--any location where projection equipment is unavailable or doesn't suit the environment.

Benefits:

- Clip charts do not need electricity - You don't need to worry if the bulb will burn out or worry about additional presentation equipment.
- Flip charts are economical - They do not require you to use any special films or printers to produce them.
- Flipcharts can be used in fully-lit rooms, allowing the presenter to be the focus of the presentation
- Handwritten flipcharts are ideal for brainstorming sessions and encourage participation when used to record audience input
- The easel is reliable, predictable, comfortable and readily available
- Flipcharts can be used in a variety of environments that aren't suitable for projection equipment--outdoors, small rooms and on-site locations
- Flip charts allow spontaneity - Any last minute changes can be easily made.

Limitations:

- Can be used for group of up to 35 people only.
- Presenter must have high energy.
- Handwritten flipcharts require good penmanship and still may be difficult to read.
- Handwritten flipcharts lack professionalism and credibility.
- Preparation of handwritten flipcharts is labor intensive and therefore costly to produce.

Helpful Hints:

- Make sure the flip charts you use will fit the flip chart stand you will be using. Some have different spaced holes at the top.
- When preparing your charts, it is best to first design your charts on paper first before drawing them on the actual flip chart pad.
- Lightly write your text in pencil first before using the actual flip chart markers. This will allow you to make any adjustments with text spacing and any figures you will be drawing. Do NOT use

all block letters (UPPER CASE). Using upper and lower case letters makes it easier to read. Use the 7 x 7 rule. Have no more than 7 words on each line and no more than 7 lines to a sheet. Using a 6 x 6 rule is even better.

- Use flip chart markers and not regular magic markers. Flip chart markers will not "bleed" through the paper.
- Avoid using the colors yellow, pink, or orange. These are extremely difficult for the audience to see. Avoid using too many colors.
- You can write "lightly in pencil" any notes next to key points you need. The audience won't be able to see them. You may also write what is on the next sheet. Knowing this will allow you to properly introduce your next sheet.

6. Whiteboard

The chalkboard is probably the oldest, most familiar visual aid. It has evolved over the years from the standard black or green hard chalk variety to whiteboard that requires the use of liquid markers. Information can now be written quietly, in brighter colors, and erased completely with considerably less effort. Whiteboards are inexpensive, easy to use, and best suited for small groups where brainstorming sessions or spontaneous illustrations are necessary.

Using a whiteboard as your primary visual aid is considered inadequate for most business situations. Handwriting is time consuming and sometimes illegible. Also, because you have to turn your back to write, you run the risk of losing control of your audience.

Benefit

- Whiteboards are ideal for recording spontaneous information.

Limitations:

- Can be used for groups of up to 30 people only.
- Handwritten material may be difficult to read.
- Audience attention may be lost while presenter turns his/her back to write.
- A whiteboard used as a primary presentation medium conveys lack of preparation.
- Whiteboards are difficult to transport and may not fit all meeting rooms.

Helpful Hints:

- Write large enough so that everyone can see.
- Use when brainstorming or group planning is needed.
- Plan an activity for the group to prevent boredom.

7. Handouts

Handouts are written supplements that you can pass out to your audience to provide additional details or a summary of your presentation. They can also be supporting data worksheets, outlines, or even questionnaires that will give you the feedback you need to do a better job the next time.

Handouts should only be used as a supplement to--not a substitute for--presentation visuals. Handouts that are not to be used during a presentation should be passed out after the meeting. If not, they may distract the audience when they should be concentrating on your message. If the handout is a summary, let the audience know in advance to avoid preoccupation with note taking. Also be careful of passing out too much information. It will most likely confuse or end up in the wastebasket.

Handouts are a reflection of your presentation and should be well designed. Many presentation software programs provide a format for handouts.

Benefits

- Handouts eliminate the need for note taking.

- Provide an accurate record of the information being presented.
- The dissemination of additional information is possible.
- Information is available for absent or late presentation attendee.
- Handouts can be used with all types of presentation media.

Limitations:

- Because people can look ahead, the presenter may lose control.
- Handouts passed out in advance tend to cause attendees to prejudge the presenter. and/or the presentation.
- The noise from page turning is distracting.
- Poorly designed handouts reflect negatively on your presentation.

Helpful Hints:

- Prepare sufficient handouts for the group plus extras.
- Determine the best time to distribute the handouts and place them in a convenient location or pass them out.
- Distribute material before the presentation if you want the audience to follow along as you speak.
- Distribute material during the presentation if you have a reason for not wanting the audience to see it until you are ready to talk about it.
- Distribute material after the presentation if you want people to listen to you rather than read the material.
- If people are going to receive a handout that summarizes your presentation, let them know in advance so they won't need to take extensive notes.

Summary

The following are some general guidelines to consider when choosing and creating visual aids:

Visuals should add to the presentation, not distract from it.

Make sure that your speech has enough substance to equal your visuals so that the audience focuses on your messages. If your audience only remembers your visual aids, then your speech has not been effective.

Visual aids can only add to a good speech, they cannot rescue a poorly developed speech.

Do not put all your time and effort into your visuals at the risk of ignoring developing and practicing your speech.

Your visual aids must be clearly visible and understandable by the entire audience.

A great visual aid is useless if the audience can't see it. Make sure that every member of the audience can see, read, and understand each visual. Always use at least 18-point type for all text.

Use simple fonts

Lettering styles (fonts) that are overly ornamental may look cool, but are very difficult to read. For example, compare the following sentences:

The second sentence is much easier to read, and your audience can comprehend it instantly. The extra time it takes to read and understand the first sentence is time that your audience is not listening to you.

Avoid distributing objects to the audience while you are speaking.

A common temptation is to have the audience pass around items while you are speaking, or to distribute handouts at the beginning of your speech. Unfortunately this distracts the audience and significantly reduces the effectiveness of your speech.

Distribute handouts at the end of your speech, and don't use visuals that the audience can't see from their seats. Use overhead transparencies for photographs or small objects.

Practice with you visuals well ahead of time so that you can smoothly integrate them into your performance.

Nothing can ruin your credibility faster than fumbling around with your visual aids. Always practice with your visuals so you can use them with confidence.

Be prepared for disaster!

Overhead projector bulbs burn out unexpectedly, posters sometimes fall down, and videotapes sometimes jam in the machine. Always prepare an alternate plan for your presentation so that you do not have to depend on your visual aids to carry your speech.

Speak to your audience, not your visual aids.

Keep your eye contact on the audience, and avoid the temptation to constantly look at or read from your visuals.

Keep video and audio presentations short and to the point.

Do not make the audience wait for the important part -- start with the tape cued up to the right spot and make sure the tape is of the highest quality possible.

Try to have only one piece of information on a poster or overhead transparency.

Do not overload your visuals with too much information because they become messy and difficult to understand.

Statistical information is easier for your audience to understand when presented visually through charts and graphs.

Statistics will have a much greater impact if your audience can see the relationship between the numbers, instead of having to imagine how numbers relate.

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

Lesson 25

Group Communication

Definition of a Group Meeting

A meeting is a gathering of two or more people where purposive discourse occurs. Of course these purposes will vary.

A communication between two people is primarily an interchange – dyadic communication. A group is larger: at least 3 people and perhaps as many as 15 or more. Additionally, a group often meets face to face with a common purpose in mind. Such a group may also be informal (un-planned, free-flowing discourse) or formal (clear, planned purpose).

Informal Group

Casual or informal group meetings are common. Here you casually chat over tea, meet after work, or get together for purely social reasons. You and your friends meet to socialize, to interact – often spontaneously, without plan. Your business day is filled with such informal group meetings. Ironically, out of the need for frequent casual meetings may develop the need for more formal and directed meetings.

Formal Group

Often called task-oriented groups, formal groups often search for answers to problems, look for a course of action, make recommendations to a higher authority. This means that you and others may meet to change a policy, make decisions on how a specific problem should be solved, and decide on the beginning steps to implement a solution.

Formation of Groups

Groups go through four formative stages in becoming a group.

Forming: Here the group tries to get started. It is the orientation phase for group members.

Storming: Members begin to stake out their positions; they begin to have conflicts and arguments.

Norming: Progress begins here. Members work to solve conflicts and recognize acceptable kinds of conduct.

Performing: Here the group begins to achieve its goals.

Once you are part of a group seeking to solve a problem, one other thing occurs: The group begins to follow certain phases in solving the problem.

Orientation: Here discussion is free flowing; people orally wander about, each trying to focus on asking questions. Here too, questions are numerous: Members try to inform, ask further questions. Here members' convictions are tentative and somewhat ambiguous.

Conflict: After the preliminary sparring is over, members begin to offer opinions, evidence in support of their positions. At this phase initial conflicts occur. There may even be resistance to the agreed upon task.

Emergence: Open exchanges continue; members begin to search for ways of truly solving the problem. Compromises occur, and there is a decrease in conflict and sincere movement toward decreasing differences in opinion.

Solutions: A positive attitude exists at this phase. Options have been discussed, and criteria for measuring those options have been viewed. Now is the time to complete the task and agree upon a solution.

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

Purpose of Group Meetings

Meetings have two core purposes: to present information and to help solve problems. Obviously both purposes occur in all meetings. Three kinds of meetings help achieve these objectives.

- Informational meetings
- Suggested solution meetings
- Problem-solving meetings

Informational meetings: In these meetings the members learn, ask questions, and seek to understand. No problems are solved; no recommendations for change occurs. Participants come to the meeting with one pivotal purpose: to be informed, to understand the information.

Suggested solution meetings: Visualize this situation. A manager desires to receive input from her staff on an issue; he desires to review preliminary recommendations before solving the issue. The complete scenario may run something like this:

1. A supervisor senses a problem and desires a meeting to review options on addressing the problem. The goal: purely exploratory.
2. A memo or e-mail message is sent to all staffers asking for possible opposition on removing the problem.
3. Suggestions are tabulated and distributed to all respondents.
4. A meeting is called to discuss all possible options.

The manager and the review committee review all recommendations. Comments on the options occur at the meeting. Often no decision is made. The meeting is exploratory and informational. Then a final recommendation is prepared either for higher approval or group consensus.

Problem-solving meetings: Problem, solution, benefit, action. These four steps trace the most common process in solving problems typical of the business world. Often (1) the major problem is presented early in the meeting, (2) participants suggest solutions, discussing and evaluating them, and (3) participants arrive at a decision for further action.

Group Decision-Making

Standard agenda

Involves a careful, systematic approach to a problem. Groups make their decisions make use of a six-step guide called the standard agenda.

Problem identification: What is the problem? What is wrong with the current situation?
Problem analysis: View the current situation as a balance between restraining forces and helping forces. What are the forces in play in your group's situation?
Criteria selection: What are the goals of the final decision?
Solution generation: Generate as many solutions as possible. Avoid groupthink by listing many solutions.
Solution evaluation & selection: Measure each solution against the criteria from step three.
Final decision - There are many ways that a group can make a final decision, decide on a solution, or come to agreement. Some of the most popular ways of making the decision include:

- **Consensus**: The group members all agree on the final decision through discussion and debate.
- **Compromise**: Through discussion and readjustment of the final plan, group members come to agreement by giving up some of their demands.
- **Majority Vote**: The decision is based on the opinion of the majority of its members.
- **Decision by Leader**: The group gives the final decision to its leader.
- **Arbitration**: An external body or person makes a decision for the group

Solution implementation: Enact the chosen solution.

Alternate option

Brainstorming - Another option for decision-making is brainstorming. When brainstorming, group members are encouraged to generate as many ideas about a particular topic as they can. For instance, group members may use brainstorming to generate as many solutions as they can in step four of the standard agenda. Group members should be encouraged to say anything that comes to mind when brainstorming. Every idea is written down and judgments about ideas are saved until later, when the group returns to all of the ideas and selects those that are most useful.

Tips for Structured Brainstorming

"The best way to get good ideas is to have lots of ideas."

Brainstorming is a blending of group problem solving and discussion. It operates on the premise that the more ideas that are generated, the greater the possibility of finding a workable solution to a given problem. There are three phases to brainstorming: (1) generation of ideas, (2) analysis, and (3) action planning.

Brainstorming is useful for:

- Generating many ideas is a short time
- Encouraging creative, spontaneous thinking
- Helping people temporarily suspend judgment
- Expanding or piggy-backing on ideas

Final decision - There are many ways that a group can make a final decision, decide on a solution, or come to agreement. Some of the most popular ways of making the decision include:

- **Consensus**: The group members all agree on the final decision through discussion and debate.
- **Compromise**: Through discussion and readjustment of the final plan, group members come to agreement by giving up some of their demands.
- **Majority Vote**: The decision is based on the opinion of the majority of its members.
- **Decision by Leader**: The group gives the final decision to its leader.
- **Arbitration**: An external body or person makes a decision for the group

Styles of Group Leadership

Authoritarian

• Activity plans are made by the leader, with some uncertainty on the part of members about what the next step may be.
• All policy decisions are made by the leader.
• Unless productivity is high, member frustration may increase, resulting from high standards set by the leader.
• Members discontent may develop when leaders seek dominance for its own sake.
• Considerable status difference exists between leader and members.
• Aggressive status-seeking activities develop among members who have need of status.
• Members listen carefully to leader's instructions; they may pay little attention to what others say, unless productivity is at stake.
• There is a fundamental belief on the part of the leader that constant direction is necessary for goal achievement.
• Limited responsibility is placed on all members; members are chosen for specific tasks.
• Status comes from praise from the leader, which is usually personal & subjective.

Democratic

• Policy decisions are made by the group, encouraged and assisted by the leader.
• Activity plans made by the group, technical advice being provided by the leader when needed.

- Members satisfactions are gained in making own decisions.
- Members grow in self-confidence & self-acceptance.
- Leader and members function as peers.
- Emphasis on status decreases, and emphasis on respect for others increases.
- Listening improves, with the result of greater acceptance of the ideas of others.
- Little stress is placed on discipline, unless imposed by the group. The leader's relation to the members is friendly, helping, and tolerant.
- There is a fundamental belief on the part of the leader that the members can attain their own ends by using their own resources.
- Responsibilities are placed on all members
- Status in the group is earned by the contribution made to the achievement of the group's goals; praise from the leader is objective and factually based.

Laissez-faire

- Members of the group are given help in activity plans by the leader only when it is requested.
- The group has complete freedom to make policy decisions without any help or guidance from the leader.
- Members do not know what is expected pf them and develop disunity and dissatisfaction.
- Members have little sense of accomplishment.
- Few contacts exist between leader and members. Little friendship for the leader develops.
- Status-mindedness develops, resulting in competitive hostility.
- Members focus primarily on their own concerns. Listening to others' comments is infrequent.
- There is no concern for goal achievement.
- There is no concern for discipline. Members develop self-assertiveness without regard for others.
- Lack of development of feelings of unity, self-confidence or friendliness.

Planning the Meeting

As with formulating an informative or persuasive speech, take some time to:

- Define the purpose;
- Decide who to participate;
- Arrange for meeting date, time, & place;
- Create an agenda;
- Announce the meeting;
- Check on physical arrangements;

Procedures during the Meeting

- Begin with an opening statement
- Engage participants in discussion
- *Understand the roles of the participants*

Small group success depends on three types of functions being performed:

- Group task roles,
- Group building & maintenance roles, and
- Individual (Personal) roles.

-

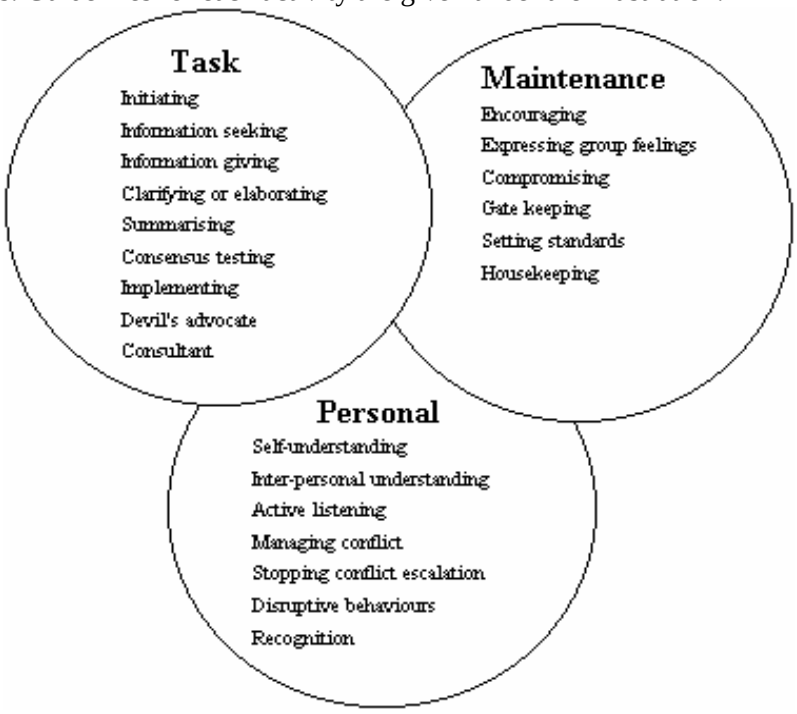
Group task roles help to keep the group focused and directed towards achieving its goals.

Group building & maintenance roles help group members to stay involved, and ensure that everyone is able to contribute to their maximum potential.

Individual roles address the personal needs of group members to ensure that the group functions in the best possible way - these activities include the ways in which conflicts and disruptive behaviors are handled.

These functions are complementary, which means they must all be performed if a group is to work well. Responsible for seeing that these functions are performed rests, on the whole, with the group leader, but each group member also has a responsibility to support the leader, to improve their personal group-work skills, and to help the group achieve the best results possible.

The illustration below lists activities of all the three types of functions performed in the group work. Group leaders and members need to be familiar with all these activities, and to apply them whenever appropriate during group meetings. Guidelines for each activity are given under the illustration.



Listed below are guidelines for carrying out these activities.

Group task roles

Initiating - This is any action taken to get the group members started on working together towards their purpose. The initiating action may be:
- to suggest a procedure for advancing the group's task to the next step such as to flowchart a process, brainstorm a problem, or to evaluate data gathering and measurement options, or
- to re-cap progress to date and to call for suggestions on the best task to undertake next.

Information, or opinion, seeking - This is the act of asking for facts, relevant information, suggestions or ideas about a group concern. This can be done through normal group interaction or if fresh ideas are required, a full brainstorming session or other ideas generation technique can be used.
Information, or opinion, giving - This is offering information up to the group in the form of facts, beliefs, opinions or ideas.
This is a leadership function that most people tackle with enthusiasm, but take care not to overdo it or you will stifle contributions from other members of the group. They will take the attitude that you value your own opinion more than theirs and will be reluctant to offer up their contributions.

This action is best taken when group discussion is a little stuck and needs some fresh points of view to react to.

Clarifying or elaborating - Interpreting ideas, clearing up confusions, identifying alternatives, and raising related issues, are all ways of clarifying and elaborating on things the group is discussing.
Summarizing - This is the act of pulling together related ideas, restating suggestions after they have been fully discussed, or offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject.
Consensus seeking - This is the act of testing whether the group is nearing a conclusion or decision. It is aimed at assessing the extent to which the group is in agreement.
Implementing - This involves putting the decisions of the group into action and requires:
-assigning responsibility
- delegating authority
- accepting personal commitments

Devil's advocate - This is an essential act of leadership and is performed when there is a suspicion that the group has reached agreement or consensus on an issue too quickly and easily. It is a way of

elaborating on an issue to make sure that the best assessment of its implications is made.
Consultants - Design or research groups have some special leadership needs because they often include artists, researchers or other 'specialists', who are often unwilling to submit themselves, their art, or their ideas to the 'limitations' of group process.

To get the benefit of their work some special concessions can be made by placing them in a consultant role to the group in which they offer up their ideas but do not participate as full group members.

Group Building & Maintenance Roles

Encouraging

Encouragement simply means being responsive to others, giving them an opportunity for recognition, and consciously helping them to feel that they are welcome and valuable members of the group.

Expressing group feelings

This refers to picking up or sensing the mood of the group at appropriate times and disclosing your feelings or reactions to the other group members.

Compromising

Compromise is often regarded as an undesirable thing, which prevents the best ideas from being adopted, and even demeans the person who offers the compromise. The reason for this bad reputation is that people often seek a compromise at the wrong time. They often refuse to modify their stand on many minor issues but back down on important ones because they are intimidated by their far-reaching impact.

Gate keeping

This is the function of keeping communication channels open within the group at all times. This means two things,

- restraining those who tend to talk at all times and at length, and
- drawing out those who tend to stay quiet and withdrawn, who find it difficult to enter a discussion or who are easily talked over by others.

Setting standards

This is the function of imposing and insisting on standards for the actions of the group. This function is essential for keeping the group focused on its task and it is a function, which is often difficult to perform without risking short-term resentment and hostility.

Housekeeping

This function is about making sure that everyone is kept aware of the group's decisions, progress, and 'to do' list. It is easily fulfilled by keeping minutes, distributing them, and discussing them.
Individual Roles

Self understanding

Your capacity to see your own behavior, actions, and reactions in the group in an objective way, will make a big difference to how well you communicate with other group members, and how well you are able to identify and manage potentially destructive conflict.

Better self-understanding leads to better communication by reducing the contradictions between your words and your body language.

Inter-personal understanding

This is the ability to understand the other person's point of view and leads not only to much greater tolerance (which in turn reduces unproductive, or emotionally based, conflict), but also encourages many more ideas to be submitted to the group. This is because group members will feel better understood and less likely to have their ideas ignored or ridiculed.

Active listening

Our natural disposition in a competitive world is to constantly seek attention, to fight to have our ideas heard, to attempt constantly to command the consideration of others or to put our side of the argument. But communication is a two-way thing and if a discussion is to be productive, each person's position must be understood clearly along the way.

Unfortunately, since most of our efforts in discussion go into being heard, rather than listening to the others' points of view, progress is often slow. This natural tendency needs to be countered by active

listening.

Managing conflict

Conflict is the double-edged sword of group functioning.

The absence of conflict means that the group is not reaching its full potential to identify problems and explore possible solutions. It may mean that the group is not sufficiently motivated, or challenged, to generate the 'creative tension' that forges the best solutions.

An excess of conflict, on the other hand, can be destructive to the group and undermine its ability to carry out any action at all.

This means that conflict must be managed. The leader must pursue an agenda which is challenging enough to draw out each person's differing views, but which prevents argumentation from blocking progress and decision making.

Stopping conflict escalation

The problem with our traditional view of conflict is that we see it as a situation, which is only resolved by having a winner and a loser. In this view, conflict is resolved only when one person prevails over the other, so it is a situation, which is ripe for escalation. Escalation means that the heat in the argument rises, the number of points in dispute increase, personal abuse increasingly creeps into the discussion, and in the extreme, escalation leads to violence.

For group-work to be effective, this traditional view of conflict must be undermined and replaced with one, which sees conflict as an essential factor in finding the best solution to a problem.

Disruptive behaviors

There are many types of disruptive behavior which group members can engage in and which need to be dealt with to stop them from hindering the group's progress.

The problem, however, is that the person concerned is often unaware that their behavior is disruptive. In fact the group leader is just as likely to be the culprit as another group member. Taking this into account, anyone in the group may initiate action to stop it:

Recognition

People work best when they feel that they belong, that their participation is worthwhile, and that their contributions are valuable.

What is often overlooked is the need to constantly reinforce this feeling in group members by giving recognition when and where it is due. By recognizing and acknowledging all actions which help the group to function well and achieve its aims, you will be consolidating and improving the capabilities of the group.

Participant roles in a group meeting

Organizer – Some persons do not like clutter – even in meetings. Some are natural organizers. They dislike disorganizations. Meetings often move without direction, from either the inability of the leader to give direction or because members wander off the path. When you are an organizer, you give procedural suggestions; you steer back to main, central issues.

"I feel we're wandering from the topic. I suggest we return to the main subject, which in my estimation is, what criteria should we consider for any foreign expansion?

Clarifier – A clarifier attempts to make clear unclear expressions.

"It's useful that we begin with a consistent definition of the term *strategic*; let's see if we can set a common understanding of the timeframe."

Questioner- Many questions need clarification. You wish to fill your knowledge gap for yourself and others. Be careful: Know the difference between a vital or an inconsequential question. But when in doubt ask your question: others may have had the same question but were afraid to ask.

Factual contributor – Any time you add substantive (factual, accepted opinions) information to a discussion, you are making a worthwhile contribution. Watch your tone. Presenting factual information in an arrogant or overbearing manner will create negative reactions. Be positive.

"You make an interesting point; I like it. May I add some data from a study appearing in the fall issue of the *Journal of Business Communication*?"

Energizer- Gloom is a part of meeting; so is frustration. An energizer keeps the discussion moving by stimulating members to reach their goal.
"Hang in there, we're almost there. If we can make it another half hour, I'm sure we'll reach some kind of consensus."
Idea creator- The creator risks ideas that may be new, different, even unusual. If you are an idea creator, you are willing to test an idea in the open forum of the meeting.
"Wait a second, there may be third option…"
Critical tester- Every meeting needs a person willing to challenge, tactfully, the validity and reasonableness of contributions.
"Are the facts – and the language clear?"
"Are the sources of information recent; can one see the source and verify the evidence given?"
Conciliator- Deadlocks are not uncommon in meetings. Both sides refuse to budge; violent disagreements do occur. You as a conciliator attempt to find a middle ground, seek to find a compromise.
Helper of others- A final role you can play to invite other participants to join in.
"I'd like to hear what Sohail has to say on the topic." (Invitation to participate)

Lesson 26

Elements of Effective Written Communication

Because written communication plays such a significant role in our economy and in the daily routines of the vast majority of organizations, an understanding of the essentials of written communication is critical. You must know *what* you want to say and *how* to say it. In addition, you must design your messages to portray exact meaning as well as create a favorable impression. Well-worded messages not only bring you and your reader closer together, but also make you appear more friendly, helpful, and interested.

In order to choose the right words and sentences for your letters, you need to be familiar with the elements of effective written communication.

The elements are:
1. Courtesy
2. Correctness
3. Conciseness
4. Clarity
5. Concreteness
6. Completeness

1. Courtesy

Review of actual business correspondence reveals that special attention should be devoted to assuring the courtesy of business communication. Effective writers visualize the reader before starting to write. You will want to consider your reader's desires, problems, circumstances, emotions, and probable reaction to your request. This step will enable you to develop your communication from the reader's point of view.

You-Attitude

Writing with a you-attitude shows sincere concern for the reader. Emphasizing the reader's (you) viewpoint rather than the writer's (I) viewpoint demonstrates sincerity. Merely replacing a few I's, we's, our's and my's with you's and your's throughout a letter, however, will not guarantee the presence of the you-attitude. To establish a you-attitude, you must create a positive state of mind through your suggestions and decisions.

A you-attitude is more than simple courtesy or politeness. It hinges on demonstrating a clear understanding of the reader's problem or question. If a reader feels that you are genuinely concerned about his/her problem or question, the overall impact of the message will be greatly enhanced.

Incorporating a you-attitude into your message will help give them *reader benefit,* which shows the reader how he/she will benefit by complying with your request or announcement. Readers are more likely to comply if the benefits appear to be worth their time, effort, or cost. Even though the benefits of compliance may not be readily apparent to the reader, your message can be made much more effective by including reader-benefit material.

Understanding some basic truths about human nature helps us humanize our business messages. These truths are:

- ***People are self-centered***
- ***People are defensive***

- ***People are not perfect***
- ***People expect courtesy***
- ***People do the best they can***

People are self-centered

Being self-centered does not mean egoistic and conceited. It means that people want to know what good they will get out of doing business with us. When a business executive receives mail, s/he asks two questions: what's this and why me. Effective writers tell their readers how they will benefit from doing whatever they are asked to do.
Readers are more likely to comply with your request if the benefit appears to be theirs.

The first of the following two sentences got very little response when it was used in a collection letter; however, when the sentence was revised to include reader-benefit material, the letter was much more successful.

Change**:**	**Please send your cheque for the amount you owe.**
To:	**By sending your cheque for Rs. 5,000, you will be able to maintain your good credit reputation.**

Merely inserting the second-person pronoun *you* into a sentence does not necessarily assure a you-attitude or reader benefit. The first version of the text example lacks reader benefit, although it does contain the word *you*. The revised version, by mentioning "shopping convenience," contains reader benefit.

Change:	You will be glad to know that we are now open until 9:00 PM seven days a week.
To:	For your shopping convenience, we are now open until 9:00 PM seven days a week.

People are defensive

Put another way, it's human nature to be suspicious of promises and to resist (at least initially) even the most well-meaning criticism. Constructive criticism can be seen as a personal attack. Since it's normal for people to take what we say at face value, we need to be careful with the things we say and we say them.

People are not perfect

Error is a part of life, but no one likes having mistakes pointed out. Effective writers focus on solving the problem not pointing out mistakes.

Example
You go to a store, shop and return leaving an unsigned cheque behind. You receive a call. "You forgot to sign the cheque. Would you please come and sign it today before we close the store." How would you like it? The message amounts to saying, it was your mistake. You did not sign it.

This situation could be better handled by

Incorporating You-Attitude

”We noticed that your signatures were missing. Could you please come in sometimes today to sign?”

People expect courtesy

This is very obvious, isn’t it? Think about the kind of service you want, when we go into a store. We want the sales person to pay attention to us, to make us feel that our business is important. When we call or e-mail someone, we want that person to reply promptly. It’s human nature to expect courtesy, so effective people are courteous to others.

People do the best they can

Effective writers assume their readers are acting honestly, fairly, and intelligently. You have to trust people – even if you are cheated sometimes. You have to forgive the ugly things that people say or do because one day you are going to need to be forgiven too.

Guidelines for Courteous Writing

1. Exclude irritating expressions

Many words and phrases that are used effectively in oral and interpersonal communication are perceived as inappropriate in written communication.

For example: “We find it difficult to understand.”
“Your lack of communication …”
“As we have explained to you many times..”
“Why can’t you understand our position?”

Such words and phrases anger, irritate, or belittle the reader.

We react negatively to words and phrases which imply that we are lying or are dishonest. Yet, that is the implication you are likely to receive from phrases such as ”You claim that ……..,” “ You state that ……,” “According to your letter…..” Writer can also belittle readers and make them feel stupid by stating: “as we have explained to you many times….” Why can’t you understand our position?” Readers are likely to find following opening sentences irritating: “I regret you are having problems with the S-20 lawn-mower you recently purchased from us.” (After all, you are probably more interested in learning how the writer is going to help you with your lawn-mower dilemma than in the fact that he/she acknowledges your problem).

As a writer, you need to be aware of these trouble spots and should avoid using words or phrases that might evoke a negative reaction.

2. Include meaningful apologies

Business correspondence often calls for sincere apologies or a willingness to grant the action that was requested.

When you receive a discourteous letter that incorrectly accuses you, the wisest approach is to reply in a courteous manner. By using this approach, you may win a life-time customer. Another effective way to enhance goodwill is to apologize for a mistake or error even before the customer discovers it. For less serious mistakes or errors, a printed form may be suitable; but when the mistakes or errors are serious, a personalized letter is the only appropriate communication medium.

3. Include courteous wording

Omitting discourteous wording does not necessarily guarantee courteous messages. Although some messages are void of discourteous word, they can be overly harsh or blunt. Notice how the blunt, harsh wording of the material in the example below can be revised to be more pleasant.

Blunt, harsh wording:
"You did not read my recent letter."

Courteous writing:
"Please refer to my June 10 letter."

Similarly notice a difference between the begrudging tone in the first paragraph and the courteous tone in the second paragraph of the following illustration.

Change:	To change the closing date of your charge account will create a great deal of extra paperwork for us. However as you requested, we will comply with your desire to have the closing date of your account changed from the 15th of each month to the 1st of the month.
To:	The closing date for your account has been changed from the 15th to the first of each month, as you asked, I can fully appreciate the reason for your wanting to have this change made.

4. Respond in a timely manner

Although one person's priority may be another person's timewaster, prompt attention to customer questions and needs is imperative. When we do not receive an answer to a letter within a reasonable time, we believe that our concerns are not important to the person to whom we wrote. Delaying a response can be severely damaging to the write-reader relationship.

When the action requested by a customer cannot be competed in a reasonable time, he/she should be notified of the delay, sending a short note like the following will distinguish you as a courteous person.

We will examine your camera to determine the shutter–response problem and have it back to you within three weeks. If repairs are needed, I will call you on Friday Dec. 11, for approval to make the repairs.

Or, when the person to whom a business letter is addressed is out of town for an extended period, the following is a suitable response.

Mr. X is out of the office until next Friday, I am sure he will be able to provide you with all of the information you requested when he returns.

Many companies have found that prompt answer to question result in satisfied customers and help generate additional business. Courteous writing is more than words and sincerity. It is a total effort to demonstrate sincerity through positive writing and prompt attention to customer questions and inquiries.

5. Positive wording

In written communication, the use of positive wording is essential for building goodwill. The elimination of words that have negative connotations will provide a pleasing and comfortable link with the reader. Examples of positive and negative wording are:

Negative wording:	You do not qualify for the free gift because you did not respond within ten days.
Positive wording:	You probably did not notice that your order was mailed after our special gift order had expired.
Negative wording:	We are very sorry that we cannot send you our Communication Skills booklet by December 5.
Positive wording:	The publication department has assured me that you will have the Communication Skills booklet by January 20.

Positive writing also requires a conscious effort to exclude words that readers normally consider to be negative. You cannot use such words as ”sorry” or unfortunately” without conveying to the reader that the situation is going to end with somewhat less than desired results.

5. Bias-free language

Most of us think of ourselves as being sensitive, unbiased, ethical, and fair. But being fair and objective isn't enough; to establish a good relationship with your audience, you must also appear to be fair. Bias-free language avoids unethical, embarrassing blunders in language related to gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability.

a. Gender bias

Avoid sexist language by using the same label for every one (don't call a woman "chairperson" & then call a man "chairman"). Reword sentences to use *they* or to use no pronoun at all. The preferred title for women in business is *Ms.*, unless the individual asks to be addressed as *Miss* or *Mrs.* or has some other title, such as *Dr.*

Change: Please share this report with your supervisor. He will find it interesting.
To: Please share this report with your supervisor, who will find it interesting.

You can also eliminate sexist language by using plurals as the following example illustrates.

Change: The attitude of an employee is important if he expects to be promoted.
To: The attitudes of employees are important if they expect to be promoted.

Good communicators make every effort to change biased language such as:

Replacing

Businessman	**with**	**Businessperson**
Chairman	**with**	**Chairperson**
Man-made	**with**	**Artificial**
Spokesman	**with**	**Spokesperson**
Mankind	**with**	**Humankind**

b. Racial and ethnic bias

The central principle is to avoid language suggesting that members of a racial or an ethnic group have stereotypical characteristics. The best solution is to avoid identifying people by race or ethnic origin unless such a label is relevant.

Examples:

"His black assistant speaks more clearly than he does" (Racial-bias**)**
"His assistant speaks more clearly than he does". (Reader-friendly**)**
"Mr. X is an unusually tall Asian" (Racial-bias**)**
"Mr. X is tall" (Reader-friendly**)**

c. Age bias

As with gender, race, and ethnic background, mention the age of a person only when it is relevant. When referring to older people, avoid age avoid adjectives like frail, old etc.

Example:

"Mr. X, aged 55, has just joined our Technical Department" (Age-bias**)**
"Mr. X has just joined our Technical Department". (Reader-friendly**)**

d. Disability bias

No painless label exists for people with a physical, mental, sensory, or emotional impairment. Avoid mentioning a disability unless it is pertinent. However if you must refer to someone's disability, avoid terms as "handicapped", "crippled", or "retarded". Put the person first and the disability second.

Example:

"Crippled workers face many barriers on the job". (Disability-bias)
"Workers with physical disabilities face many barriers on the job" (Reader-friendly).

Lesson 27

Elements of Effective Written Communication

2. Correctness

At the core of correctness is proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
However, a message may be perfect grammatically and mechanically but still insult or lose a customer.
The term correctness, as applied to business messages also means the following three characteristics:

- Use the right level of language
- Check accuracy of words, information, and data.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check spelling.

Use the right level of language

Writing at a level appropriate for your reader is crucial. The words you use and the way you use to form sentences affect comprehension and also convey an unwritten message. If you write in a stiff, formal way, you will give the impression of being formal, whether or not you intend to be. On the other hand, if you write as casually as you speak in conversation with your friends, you may create an impression of informality. Formal English, like formal dress and formal manners, is appropriate for formal reports, research papers, and address delivered on serious occasions.

Informal English is the language of business correspondence written for a general readership. The conventions of informal English are less rigid than those of formal English. Sentences may be long or short, and they tend to sound more conversational than formal English. For example,

Formal
"**Please inform me of the manner in which you intend to liquidate this balance".**

Informal
"Pl. let me know when you plan to pay the outstanding balance of your account".

The vocabulary of informal writing is less difficult. Compare the following lists, noting the differences between the formal and informal usage.

Formal	Informal
ascertain	**find out**
endeavor	**try**
procure	**get**
utilize	**use**

Check accuracy of words, information and data

Effective business communication requires the use of accurate words, information, and data. The goodwill that perhaps required years to develop can be destroyed with even a minor error. One error in a letter, a figure, or a digit can make a big difference. To ensure the accuracy of your facts, you should recheck before signing a document.

Use correct grammar and punctuation
Many people in business organizations incorrectly apply principles of grammar and punctuation. The proper use of these two language fundamentals is crucial. Even if the content of the document is

appropriate and contains the essential qualities of written communication, the presence of incorrect grammar and punctuation will have a negative impact on the message.

Check spelling

Administrative assistants provide a valuable service to supervisors, managers, and executives by ensuring the correct spelling of words. While the first draft of a written message is the responsibility of the typist, the final product is the responsibility of the person signing the document. Don't depend upon the spell-check, if you have the slightest doubt of a spelling, consult a dictionary.

3. Conciseness

Effective writing is concise - each word, sentence, and paragraph counts. Conciseness should not be interpreted to mean brevity, which will result in an incomplete message. To illustrate, a 150-word letter that could be written in 100 words without a loss in meaning is not concise. A two-page letter cannot be shortened without a loss in meaning is concise.

Concise communication does the following:

a. Eliminate wordy expressions

Using unneeded words increases the length of sentences and forces readers to carry excess words in their minds. In the following two paragraphs, the writer was not careful in selecting words. Notice the conciseness of the revised paragraph.

Change**:**	We would like to ask you to return the form enclosed herein at your earliest possible convenience. In accordance with your request, we have a consensus of opinion that the washing machine that you purchased when you were in our store is at this time still under warranty.
To:	The warranty on your machine is still in effect. As soon as you return the enclosed form, we will send our repair technician to your home.

Here are some of the wordy and concise writing.

Wordy	Concise
In accordance with your request	**as you requested**
Consensus of opinion	**we agree**
Held a meeting	**met**
At this time	**now**
A long period of time	**a long time**

b. Include only relevant material

The effective, concise message should omit not only unnecessary wordy expressions but also irrelevant statements. To be sure you include only relevant facts, observe the following suggestions:

i. stick to the purpose of the message.
ii. Delete irrelevant words and rambling sentence.

iii. Omit information obvious to the receiver; do not repeat at length what that person has already told you. If you feel it is important to remind the audience of known information, subordinate the familiar information.

iv. Avoid long introductions, unnecessary explanations, excessive adjectives and propositions, pompous words.

v. Get to the important point tactfully and concisely.

Example**:**

Wordy**: We hereby wish to let you know that our company is pleased with the confidence you have reposed in us.**
Concise**: We appreciate your confidence**

c. Avoid unnecessary repetition

Sometimes repetition is necessary for emphasis. But when the same thing is said two or three times without reason, the message becomes wordy and boring. Here are three ways to eliminate unnecessary repetition:

i. Use a shorter name after you have mentioned the long one once. Instead of "Business Communication Center", use "Communication Center"

ii. Use initials rather than repeat long name. Instead of using Virtual University again and again, use VU.

iii. Cut out needless repetition of phrases and sentences.

Wordy: Continue to utilize the old form until such time as the new form is available.
Concise: Start using the new form on Feb. 1

4. Clarity

Getting the meaning from your head into the head of your reader – *accurately* – is the purpose of *clarity*. Of course, you know this is not simple. We all carry our own unique ideas, experiences, and interpretations with words.

Clarity can be achieved by:
i. Choosing precise, concrete & familiar words
ii. Constructing effective sentences & paragraphs

1. Choosing precise, concrete and familiar words

Clarity is achieved in part through a balance between precise language and familiar language. When you use precise or concrete language you select exactly the right words to convey your meaning. When you use familiar language, you select a word that is familiar to the audience, and appropriate for the situation. Familiar words, as between two good friends, for example, are often conversational, and occasionally may be part of a speech or written communication.

When you have a choice between a long word and a short one, use the short, familiar word your reader or listener will quickly understand.
Examples: Note that the long words and their short replacements are in italics.
Long word
1. *During the preceding year*, the company was able to *accelerate* the productive operations.
2. The president *acceded* to the proposition to nullify the *contractual relationship*
Short word
1. *Last year* the company was able to *speed up* operations
2. The president *agreed* to break the *contract*.

Concrete words

The dividing line between abstract and concrete words is hard to define. Abstract words are vague.

Abstract	Concrete
sizeable loss	4% loss
near future	on Friday

Choose familiar words

The foremost suggestion for word selection is to use familiar words. These are the everyday words – the words with sharp and clear meanings in the mind.

Notice how the following statement with unfamiliar words is expressed clearly in the revision using familiar words.

Unfamiliar: After our perusal of pertinent data the conclusion is that a lucrative market exists for the subject property.
Familiar: The data we studied show that your property is profitable and in high demand.

When you have a choice between a long word and a short word, use the short, familiar word that your reader will quickly understand.

Unfamiliar word	Familiar word
ascertain	find out, learn
peruse	study, learn
subsequent	after
remuneration	pay

2. Constructing effective sentences & paragraphs

At the core of the clarity is the sentence. Important characteristics to consider are length, unity, coherence, and emphasis.

Length

Generally, short sentences are preferred. The suggested average sentence length should be about 17 to 20 words. Because variety in sentence length adds interest to writing, adopt a range of from 3 to 30 or more words. But when a sentence exceeds 40 words, try to rewrite it into more than one sentence. Also, if all sentences are short (under 10 words), the result is overly simple.

This memorandum is being distributed with the blueprints that show the final version of the new offices at our new Lahore headquarter and are to be used later for discussion at the next board meeting, which is to be held on Sept, 14. (Long sentence)

This memo is being distributed with the blueprints. The blueprints show the final version of the Lahore. Headquarter offices. Later they will be used at the Sept. 14 board meeting. (Improved sentence)

Unity

In a sentence – whether simple, compound, or complex – unity means that you have one main idea, and any other ideas in the sentence must be closely related to it.

Example: “We have safe deposit lockers, and we have the maximum employees in Pakistan.”

Coherence

To help improve the clarity of your writing, your sentences and paragraphs need to be coherent. Coherence is achieved by making sure the relationships between parts of sentences and paragraphs are clear to the reader and by placing the modifiers in the correct location in each sentence.

Example

The car is in the garage that he wrecked. (means that he wrecked the garage that housed a car) The car he wrecked is in the garage. (means that he wrecked a car and it is in the garage).

Emphasis

The technique of emphasis is used when you want certain words, phrases, clauses, or sentences to stand out. Some of the emphasis techniques that you can employ are position, repetition, quantity, and mechanics.

Emphasis stands out in two positions: the beginning and the ending. The beginning is generally the preferred location, unless you are presenting negative information. When using the repetition technique, you simply repeat the words you want to emphasize. In addition, you can emphasize an idea by increasing the number of words devoted to its discussion. Emphasis can also be achieved by presenting a key idea in a short paragraph and then using the paragraphs that follow to present additional information. Finally, several mechanical means of emphasizing ideas are available, including underlining, putting information in all capitals, and using a different color ink.

Writers must decide what needs emphasis, and then choose sentence structure. In the example below, the first of the two sentences illustrates how overuse of the repetition technique can have a negative impact.

Example

Change:	Candidates should be motivated and have interest in public speaking, and have prerequisites and others.
To:	Candidates should have prerequisites and be motivated for public speaking.

Lesson 28

Elements of Effective Written Communication

5. Concreteness

Communicating concretely means being specific, definite, and vivid rather than vague and general. Concrete writing makes specific references to persons, places, objects, & actions while abstract mans making general references to these items.

To make your writing concrete you should:
a. Include as much specific information as possible.
b. Use active rather than passive verbs.
c. Use vivid, image-building words.

Include as much specific information as possible

Unfortunately, what is concrete to us may not be concrete to our readers. An effective way to overcome this dilemma is to provide as much specific information as possible rather than general information. For example, knowing how "fast" "fast" is in the following sentence is impossible without presenting additional information.

Change:	She is a fast typist.
To:	She types @ of 80 words/min.

Another example of a general statement and a more concrete revised version follows.

Change:	He got a good score in his MBA Program.
To:	His GPA in 2000 was 3.9 on a four point scale.

General words are often interpreted differently by the reader from what you intended. The following is a partial list of particularly troublesome words.

large	**good**
small	around
old	convenient
young	little
majority	large

It's permissible – even desirable - to use general expressions, only when:

i. It's not possible to be specific: "You may not have the precise figures & facts.

ii. You wish to be diplomatic (considerate): "You have missed three invitations to my office" – is harsh, rude; you may be tactful by saying, "I have sent you several reminders to see me in my office."

iii. Exact figures are unimportant, as in "more than half the committee was present".

Use active rather than passive verbs

Active verbs help make your sentences more:
1. Specific: "The Dean decided" is more explicit than "A decision has been made".
2. Personal: "You will note" is both personal and specific. "It will be noted" is impersonal.

3. Concise: The passive requires more words and thus slows both writing and reading. Compare "Figure shows" with "It's shown by figures"
4. Emphatic: Passive words dull action. Compare "The students held a contest" with "A contest was held by the students".

You may prefer the passive voice, instead of the active, only in such situations:
1. When you want to avoid personal, blunt accusations or comments. "The October cheque was not included" is more tactful than "You failed to include the October cheque". "Attendance at the meeting is required" is less harsh than " You must attend".
2. When you want to stress the object of the action. In "Your saving account is insured up to 1,00,000", you have intentionally stressed "your account" not the firm that does the insuring. Also "You are invited" is better than "We invite you."
3. When the doer isn't important in the sentence. In "Three announcements were made before the meeting started" the emphasis is on the announcements not on who gave them or who made the announcement.

Use vivid, image-building words Among the devices you can use to make your messages forceful, vivid, and specific are sensory appeals, comparisons, concrete nouns, and well-chosen adjectives and adverbs.

Examples:

Change:	This report is weak.
To:	The following flaws weaken the quality of this report: - the numerous grammatical errors - the inaccurate information that is presented, and - the absence of feasible recommendations."
Change:	This is a long letter.
To	This letter is three times as long as you said it would be.

6. Completeness

Incomplete messages quickly increase the organization's cost. Any time a message is prepared that requires the preparation of another message, the cost of communicating doubles. Incomplete messages are costly in other ways as well because they can result in:

1. Loss of goodwill.
2. Loss of valued customers.
3. Loss of sales.
4. Waste of time trying to make sense out of an incomplete message.
5. Cost of returning merchandise because of an incomplete order.

The best way to determine if you have provided enough information is to subject your writing to questions like Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? – 5Ws & H. If you have provided clear answers to these questions, your response is likely to be complete. If you cannot answer these questions, you probably should consider adding additional information.

As you strive for completeness, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Provide all necessary information.
- Answer all questions asked.
- Give something extra, when desirable.

Provide all necessary information

When you initiate a message, check to make sure you have provided all the information the reader needs for thorough, accurate understanding. One way to help make your message complete is to answer the five W questions – *who, what, when, where, why* – and any other essentials such as *how.*

Examples:
While placing an order (request), make clear:
what – you want
when – you need it
where- to send it
how – payment will be made
suppose you are reserving a banquette hall or rooms, specify:
accommodation required (what for)
location - (where)
sponsoring agency - (who)
date & time - (when)
event – (why)
details – (how to pay ..)

Answer all questions asked

Whenever you reply to an inquiry, try to answer all questions – stated and implied. A colleague or prospective customer's reaction to an incomplete reply is likely to be unfavorable. The customer may think the respondent is careless or purposely trying to conceal information. In general, "Omissions cast suspicions." Whether you are answering an inquiry about your product or recommending a former employee for a new job. If you have no information on a particular question, say so clearly. If you have unfavorable information in answer to certain questions, handle your reply with both tact and honesty.

Give something extra; when desirable

sometimes you must do more than answer the customers' specific questions. For example, suppose you receive the following inquiry from an out-of-the-town visitor:

> I will be visiting your country next week. Since we have not met for a long time, I would like to know where we could meet.

If you answer only this one question - "when could we meet" - your letter would be incomplete. Realizing that your reader is a newcomer, you should include in your reply a welcome plus such needed details as direction for reaching the meeting place, day, date, and time of meeting.

Lesson 29

Preparing for Effective Business Writing

Effective business writers prepare for writing. In fact, much of their writing success can be attributed to the quality of their preparation. Occasionally, preparing to write may be as time consuming as the actual writing.

Preparing to write is a multifaceted activity that includes the planning and organizing stages, which are followed by the drafting or dictating stage. Most inexperienced writers also find it necessary to edit their first draft – and in some case several drafts – before they are satisfied with their message.

Several steps are found within each of the stages. The following outline identifies these steps.

1. Planning Stage

- Determine your purpose
- Consider your reader
- Choose your idea
- Determine the appropriate content

2. Organizing Stage

- Outline the topics you plan to include
- Determine the order of the topics

3. Drafting Stage

- Develop appropriate beginning paragraph
- Compose the body
- Develop appropriate ending paragraph

4. Editing Stage

5. Proofreading stage

1. Planning Stage

The more time you devote to planning your message, the more effective it will be because planning will help you determine what material to include given the nature of the situation and the reader. During the planning stage you determine your purpose, consider your reader, and determine the appropriate content for your message.

Determine your purpose

The first step you undertake in planning a written message is to determine your purpose. Is the message to be sent to the reader as a response to a message you received from him/her? Does the message have to be persuasive? Is the nature of the situation positive or negative? your message mainly informational, such as announcing your firm's new location? The purpose of your message determines the content as well as the order in which you present the material.

Consider your reader

Effective writing is readily understood by your reader. Unless you are familiar with your reader and have considered his/her background, you may have difficulty focusing on his/her needs. The approach & content you use in writing for one reader may not be appropriate for another reader.

The purpose of your message will determine how much you need to know about your reader. The amount of necessary background knowledge will vary from situation to situation. For example, when you are composing a reply to an invitation to speak at a convention, you will need to know less about your reader than when you are composing a sales letter designed to promote the computer supplies distributed by your company. In the first example, you will want to write in a concise, courteous, and straight-forward manner. In the second case, you will want to know the type of computer supplies the reader buys, in what quantity, for what popular brands of equipment, and so forth. Knowing this information will enable you to "pitch" your message to the reader.

To give full consideration to your reader, you will want to have several answers to the following questions.

1. How much technical background does your reader have?
2. Are you preparing material for one reader or for multiple readers?
3. Is your reader from within the organization or outside the organization?
4. What is your reader's occupation & income level?
5. What is your reader's age?
6. What important habits of your reader should be considered?
7. What is the educational level of your reader?
8. What is your reader's geographical location?
9. Is your message likely to be read as part of your reader's routine?
10. What do you expect your reader to do with the information contained in your message?

Choose your ideas

With your purpose and receiver in mind, the next step is to choose the ideas for your message. If you are answering a letter, underline the main points to discuss and jot your ideas in the margin. If you are writing an unsolicited or a complex message, begin by listing ideas as they come to you – brainstorming – and then choosing the best ideas for your receiver.

Determine the appropriate content

Determining the content for a letter in which you are responding to a request is easier than when you are initiating the communication relationship. When responding to a request, you simply answer the questions asked in the originating letter, adding any additional information that you feel would be helpful to your reader. But when the letter you are preparing is the first of a series, you have no prior correspondence to guide your decision about what material to include.

To determine appropriate content, you might find answering the following questions helpful.

1. What information is relevant for this situation, given the purpose of the message and the reader's needs?
2. What information should be included to make the message complete?
3. If I were the recipient of this message, what information would I find helpful?
4. What material needs to be included to make the message conform with the content customarily found in the type of message I am preparing.

Once you have determined the broad topics to be included in the message, the planning stage is completed. The next stage, organizing the material, now begins.

Lesson 30

Preparing for Effective Business Writing

2. Organizing Stage

Outline the topics

Once the broad areas to be included in your message have been identified, your next step is to outline the. This step involves identifying the various subtopics to be discussed within each of the broad topics.

Assume you are composing a letter to send to a client whose credit account has had a past due balance for four months. One of the broad topics you decide to discus is the need for the client to pay the amount of the past-due balance. The following partial outline summarizes the information that could be included in the discussion of this broad area.

A. Need to have account paid in full by Dec…

1. The customer can protect his/her credit reputation by paying now.

2. Receipt of payment now will help you avoid having to borrow short-term money, which will benefit the customer in the long run because you will not have to increase your prices.

3. The customer can avoid paying additional finance or interest charges on his/her account.

Careful outlining is helpful for several reasons: One, it improves the clarity of your message; Second, it saves writing time later (changes in outline are easy than in writing material); and Third, it enables to emphasize properly the various topics in the message (placing the most important at the beginning is more emphatic than in the middle).

Several methods can be used in developing topics:

1. Direct method

2. Indirect method

The direct method involves presenting a general statement first, followed by specific supporting statements. This method is generally preferred when presenting positive or good-news information because the reader is immediately given the information of greater interest. The supporting information, which is of lesser interest, can be presented next.

An example of the direct method is shown in the outline below:

A. Mention that replacement copier is on its way
B. Discuss the examination of the copier revealed two defects

1. Weak transistor

2. Short circuit in one of the components

C. Mention that quality control tests do not find all defects
D. Discuss warranty on new copier
E. Express “satisfaction guaranteed” in courteous closing

Example of Direct-Method Letter

Dear Mr. ..

A copier was sent to you this morning to replace the copier you sent to us for repair.

An examination of your copier revealed a weak transistor and a short circuit in one of the electronic components. Because your copier was still under warranty, we prefer to replace the copier with a new one.

Our electronic equipment is subjected to right quality control tests during several stages of its manufacture. These tests find nearly 99% of the defective components - which is the best performance record in the industry. The reliability of our products is accepted by many of our customers.

The 120-day warranty on your replacement copier will take effect upon its receipt. Please complete and return the warranty card enclosed with the copier.

You are sure to have good performance by your copier. Remember, your satisfaction is guaranteed.

The indirect method, which is more appropriate for negative-news messages, presents the specific information first, followed by the conclusion.

A. Use a neutral opening that compliments the reader for having good credit references.
B. Discuss the reasons that the credit account cannot be approved for Rs. 1, 00,000. 1. Company requires minimum monthly income of Rs. 50,000 for this credit limit. 2. Is advantageous to applicant by helping him avoid assuming a potentially greater financial burden than can be effectively handled on this income level.
C. Mention that the credit account can be opened for Rs. 75,000 but not for the Rs. 1,00,000 that was requested.
D. Suggest that the reader, if he desires, can have account reviewed after one year to determine if credit limit can be increased.

Example of Indirect-Method Letter:

Dear Mr. …

Each of the individuals you listed as credit references on your charge account application spoke favorably about your bill-paying habits. You can be proud of this record.

A minimum monthly income of Rs. 50,000 is required to open an account for the Rs. 100,000 max. that you requested. Your present monthly income is Rs. 30,000. We find this limit actually benefits many of our customers because it helps them avoid assuming a greater financial burden than they might be able to handle on income of less than 50,000.

Your income level qualifies you for a charge account with a credit limit of Rs. 75,000. If you would like for us to open an account with this credit limit, please sign & return the enclosed card, which we need as authorization to open an account for you.

If you wish, we will review your account after one year to determine if the maximum limit can be increased to 100,000. All you need to do is request the review.

Our charge account can enhance the convenience of your shopping in our store.

Determine the appropriate order of the topics

Once you have prepared your outline, the next step involves reviewing the topics to make sure they are discussed in an appropriate order.

When you are determining the order of the topics, you should review your outline, keeping the following questions in mind.

1. Are the ideas of equal importance presented in a parallel manner?

2. Is the sequence of the topics appropriate for the development method I am using (direct, indirect)?

3. Is the sequence of the topics likely to add clarity to my message?

4. Are related topics properly sequenced?

5. Are the topics presented in the sequence recommended for the type of the message I am preparing?

To illustrate how changing the order of topics in an outline can improve message clarity, note the difference in the two outlines below.

Topical method of outlining

1. Health Insurance

   a. Individual insurance

   b. Group insurance

   c. Federal insurance / industrial insurance

   d. Dependent coverage

2. Life Insurance
   a. Option I
   b. Option II
3. Long-Term Disability
4. Dental Insurance
   a. Employee group insurance
   b. Dependent coverage
5. Retirement

Revised topical outline

1. Types of Employee Benefit Plans & Coverage
   A. Health Insurance
      a. Individual insurance
      b. Group insurance
      c. Federal insurance / industrial insurance
   B. Dental Insurance
      a. Employee group insurance
   C. Life Insurance
      a. Option I
      b. Option II
   D. Long-Term Disability
   E. Retirement
2. Dependent Coverage
   A. Health insurance
   B. Dental insurance

Lesson 31

Preparing for Effective Business Writing

3. Drafting Stage

Once you have completed the planning and organizing stages, you are ready to draft the message. The beginning and ending paragraphs of your messages are critical to their effectiveness. Because they usually occupy positions of emphasis, they are likely to be carefully scrutinized by the reader.

Developing opening paragraphs

The following suggestions help improve the effectiveness of the opening paragraph:

1. Make sure the beginning is appropriate for the reader.

2. Make sure the beginning is appropriate for the situation. Normally, in good-news letters, begin with the good news; in neutral or direct-request letters, begin with the main idea or request; in disappointing-news letters, buffer the beginning with neutral or information which the reader will agree; and in persuasive messages, begin with information that will catch the reader's attention.

3. Avoid the inclusion of negative information or discourteous wording by emphasizing what can be done rather than what cannot be done.

4. Use a you-viewpoint (rather than an I-viewpoint) in the opening.

5. Use a fast-start beginning rather than a slow beginning in which you provide information that is obvious to the reader.

6. Keep the beginning paragraph fairly short.

5. Make sure the beginning paragraph possesses unity and coherence.

In a direct-request letter, the opening sentence can represent the request. In the first of the following two paragraphs the reader will not know why he/she received a letter after reading the opening. In the revised paragraph, notice how much more quickly the reader will learn the purpose of the letter.

Change:	I am a student at XYZ business school and am currently enrolled in MBA program. One of the projects in the class is to make an in-depth financial analysis of some of the leading companies in Pakistan. I have selected your company for this project. (The main idea which was to request an annual report for the related company - is not presented in the beginning paragraph.)
To:	Would you please send me an annual report for use in making a financial analysis of your company? Making a thorough analysis of the financial condition of your company is one of the requirements for the MBA program I am enrolled in at XYZ Business School.

To begin a disappointed-news letter with negative information complicates a negative situation even more, as the first of the following two paragraphs illustrates.

Change:	We are sorry to inform you that we are unable to open a charge account at XYZ store. Unfortunately, you have too many liabilities in relation to your assets to qualify for a charge account. (A beginning like this will surely irritate the reader.)
To:	You will be pleased to learn that the credit references you listed on your credit application commented favorably on your bill-paying record. Several were also impressed with your promptness that has enabled you on numerous occasions to avoid interest charges. (Using a beginning such as this in a disappointing-news letter will help put the reader in a more positive frame of mind before reading the disappointing news.)

We are not always inclined to read unsolicited mail unless something in it attracts our attention. In persuasive messages, attention-getting beginnings are especially desirable. Notice how the first of the following two paragraphs, which does nothing out of ordinary, fails to capture the reader's attention, while the revised paragraph creates a greater amount of initial interest.

Change:	We are soliciting volunteers to donate an hour or two of their time each month to work at the information desk in the National Museum. We hope you will consider volunteering. (A beginning like this in a persuasive message will do little to entice the reader to comply with your request
To:	What could be more exciting than helping direct visitors at the National Museum to the location of the work of their favorite artist? You can share the excitement of our visitors by volunteering to work at the information desk in National Museum an hour or two each month.

Ending paragraph

In the ending you have opportunity to do two things: (i) Concentrate on the action you desire the reader to take; (ii) Show courtesy towards the reader.

Suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the ending paragraph of your messages are:

1. State the desired action clearly & completely.

2. State who is to perform the desired action if the action is to be performed by someone other than the reader.

3. State how the action is to be performed.

4. State when the action is to be performed, if appropriate.

5. Make the action easy to be performed.

6. Include reader-benefit material, if appropriate.

7. Show appreciation to the reader, if appropriate. Remember, until the reader does something for you, thanking him/her is inappropriate.

8. Avoid the inclusion of negative information in the ending.

9. Offer to be of assistance, if appropriate.

10. Keep the ending paragraph as short as circumstances will allow.

Notice how the first of the following two paragraphs fails to specify clearly and completely the action desired by the reader. The revised version removes any doubts the reader may have about the desired action.

Change:	Please let us hear from you.
To:	Just as soon as you sign and return the enclosed authorization card to us, we will be able to make the requested modifications to your insurance plan. (This paragraph is effective because it tells when, who, what, how, and why, as well as contains reader-benefit material.)

In the first of the following two paragraphs, the writer failed to mention in the closing who is to take the desired action. The revised version clearly points out who is to do what.

Change:	Upon receipt of the enclosed form, we will be able to add Mrs. Murad's name to your saving account.
To:	Please have Mrs. Murad sign the line marked with a red "X" on the signature card. As soon as we receive the card, she will be entitled to use this saving account. (This paragraph identifies who, what, where, why, and when, in addition to containing reader-benefit material.)

Notice how the first of the following two paragraphs violates several of the suggestions for writing effective ending paragraphs. The violations are removed in the revised version.

Change:	Let me know when you would like to come for an interview.
To:	Please call at 586…. early next week to let me know a convenient time for you to come for an interview. (This paragraph identifies what, where, when, and why.)

The negative information found in the first of the following two paragraphs has been removed from the second version.

Change:	We regret that we do not have the information you requested.
To:	Best wishes for the successful completion of your project. Your effort to obtain actual material for inclusion in your project is commendable. (The refusal, which was stated earlier in the letter, shouldn't be repeated in the closing paragraph.)

Body composition

Develop the main idea with the scope of your message (its length and detail) in mind.

Discuss main points and supporting evidence within the framework of the scope

Adjust your message to fit the time and space available.

4. Editing Stage

Evaluate for compliance with principles of effective communication. The editing process will be simplified if you evaluate your work, keeping in mind the following questions.

1. Is the information in your message correct?
2. Is the information relevant to your audience?

3. Have you provided enough information to satisfy your reader's needs?
4. Have you covered all your points in the most logical order?
5. Do the most important ideas receive the most space, and are they placed in the most prominent position?
6. Would the message be more convincing if it were arranged in another sequence?
7. Do you repeat yourself?
8. Are details scattered that need to be grouped together?
9. Have you answered all the questions asked by the reader?
10. Have you provided additional info which your reader will appreciate having?

As you proofread you should check for:

1. Accuracy of dates, figures, amounts, numbers, and so forth
2. Misspelled words
3. Typographic errors
4. Omissions and additions of material
5. Proper sequencing of material
6. Correct format

Lesson 32

Parts of Business Letter

- Heading - letterhead
- Date
- Inside address
- Salutation
- Attention line
- Subject
- Body
- Complimentary close
- Signature area
- Reference initials
- Enclosure
- Copies line
- Postscripts

Parts of letter

- Essential parts
- Non-essential parts

Essential parts

- Letterhead
- Date
- Inside address
- Salutation
- Body
- Complimentary close
- Signature

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

Specimen Business Letter

Letter Head **Company Letterhead**
With address/telephone/fax

Date	August 5, 2001
	Mr. / Ms. First name Last name
	Title or Department
Inside Address	Company Name
	2000 Street, Suite 100
	City, State Zip
Salutation	Dear Mr. / Ms. Last Name:
	I am writing to request information about
	Accommodations in the Seattle area. Our company is
Body	sending six senior managers to Seattle to attend an
	executive training program at the University for two months
	in the fall.
	I understand that there are several different housing options
Body	available for international visitors: university residence halls, home stays,
	hotels, and apartments. Which would you recommend?
	I would appreciate any information you could send
Body	me.
Complementary	Sincerely,
Close	First name last name
Signature	First name Last name
	Position

Non-essential parts

- Addressee notation
- Attention line/ Reference
- Subject line
- Reference initials
- Enclosure
- Copy notation/Carbon copy (CC)
- Mailing notation
- *Post script*

Heading -letterhead

A heading shows where the letter comes from, and if it is letterhead stationary, it is usually at the top center of the letter. If you are not using letterhead stationary, your return address, but not your name, is typed directly above the date about 2 inches from the top.

A heading includes, most if not all of the following information:
- Name of the firm and its full postal address
- Name of department
- Telephone, fax, telex number and E-mail.
-Optional: directors name, logo, trade mark, firm's starting date

Date
The date is typewritten two to six lines below the last line of the letterhead. The date indicates when the letter was written. If your letter is completed over a number of days, use the date it was finished. The date is placed at the left margin or so it ends with the right margin.

Date sequence preferred is:

- December 5, 2005 – month, day, year; or in figures like 12/5/05 (American style). In Europe & Asia – 5/12/05.

Inside address

The inside address is the recipient's address. Always best to write to a specific individual. Write at the left-hand margin. Includes name & address of the individual, group or organization. If the addressee has no professional title like "Dr." "Prof." use courtesy titles i.e. Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms.

Example:

Mr. A. R. Qureshi,

General Manager, XYZ Corporation,

P. O. Box 1234

Lahore.

Salutation and complimentary close

The salutation (or opening greeting) is typed on the 2nd line below the inside address, two lines above the body, & even with the left margin. Salutation is conventionally paired with an appropriate complimentary close (the 'signing off'), to end the letter in a similar tone and formality.

Greeting	*Close*	*Context*
Dear Sir/Madam/Sirs (Name not used)	Yours faithfully,	Formal Situations Recipient not personally known Recipient senior in years, position
Dear Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss Qureshi, Dear Colleague Dear Customer	Yours sincerely,	Friendly (or would-be-friendly, e.g for selling or conciliatory letters). Established relationships. Implied relationships.
Dear Jaffer/ Jamila My dear Jaffer/ Jamila etc.	Yours, Yours sincerely, Kind regards. Best wishes. Affectionately,	Close, informal relationships. More personal.

Main body

The main body of the letter is divided logically into the paragraphs. Paragraphs are conventionally separated by two line spaces for clarity; whether or not the first line of each is indented from the left hand margin.

Complimentary close

The closing begins at the same horizontal point as your date and one line after the last body paragraph. Most popular closes are: Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Very truly yours, yours very truly. When the letter is informal, additional closes are often used, like Warm regards, Best regards & Best wishes. From UK and Asia closing is; faithfully yours.

Leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature.

Signature area

You can include in the signature area several identifications: name of your company, your signature, your typewritten name, and your business tile.

Sincerely,
Mohammad Nazim

Head, Communication Dept.

Addressee notation

Addressee notation is written to make the readership of the letter restricted. It is written two lines above inside address. It is written in capital letters.

Ways:

CONFIDENTIAL

PERSONAL

PLEASE FORWARD

Attention line/ reference

An attention line is useful in the following contexts:

When the writer doesn't know an individual's name but wants the message to go to a particular title (sales manager) or department (personnel). When the writer knows only the person's surname (Mr. Butt) and therefore does not want to use that name in the salutation. When the writer expects that the addressee travels often and wants the letter to be attended promptly by whoever takes care of the addressee's business. It is written two lines below the inside address.

Example:

For the attention of: Mr. Butt

Subject line

Subject gives a few words indication of the main subject of the letter. It directs the reader's thoughts to the matter in hand. Though Subject line is not an essential part of a letter but it is commonly used in business letters where higher management is your recipient, as they usually don't have time to read complete letters. However, subject line is essential if you writing in simplified format. The subject line also indicates where to file the letter for future reference.

Example:

Subject: Contract No. 12280-051

Subject: Order No. 0012254

The Subject line is usually written one line below the salutation. The subject line can be left aligned, centered or indented as the paragraphs in the body text. Some times the subject line is written above the salutation or at the very top of the page.

Ways to Write subject line:

Giving the heading "Subject":

Subject: Summer 2005 Sales Meeting

Distinguishing it from other parts of the letter:

Some writers omit the word subject and upper case to write the subject line, or in a different way so that it is easily distinguishable, i.e. different font type, italics, etc.

Example:

SUMMER 2005 SALES MEETING

Some writers like under lining the subject line or the last line of the subject line if it is long.

Examples:

- Subject: Summer 2005 Sales Meeting
- Subject: Summer 2005 Sales Meeting
- SUBJECT: SUMMER 2005 SALES MEETING
- SUMMER 2005 SALES MEETING

Reference initials

As it is very common that one person dictates or writes the letter and the other person types it, therefore reference initials are used to show who helped prepare the letter. Reference initials always appear at the left margin and are typed one or two lines below the last line of the signatures. If the writer's name is in the signature block then only the typist's initials appear in the reference initials.

Your initials as the composer of the message along with those of your typist usually appear at the left margin on the same line with the last line of the signature area. The first is writer's initials and the second is the typist's initials.

Example:

- mn/ mqs
- mn: mqs
- MN: MAS

Sometimes the writer and the signer of a letter are different people. At least the file copy of a letter should bear both their initials and as well as the typist's.

Example:

- **mn/ dq/ mqs (signer, writer, typist)**

Enclosure

Putting something other than the letter in the same envelope, such as a cheque, resume, price list, leaflet or any other document for reference is called enclosing something with the letter. Indicate this simply by typing Enclosures one, two or three lines below the complementary close and signature. Enclosure is written left aligned with the margin. One may list the name of each document you are including in the envelope.

Mailing notation

Mailing notation words such as Special Delivery, Certified, or Registered Mail, when applicable, may be typed a double space below the date line and at least a double space before the inside address.

Postscript

To emphasize a point already in your letter or to include a brief personal message unrelated to the letter, a postscript, typed or handwritten may be added ("P.S.," "PS," or "PS:") below everything else typed on the page.

Example:

Enc. (or Encs, for more than one item)
Enclosures 2 (two documents are enclosed)
Enclosed: 1) CV
2) Attested Copy of NIC
3) Attested Final Transcript

Copy notation

When you want persons other than the addressee to receive a copy of your letter, the names of these persons should be typed just below the reference initials or the enclosure notation, whichever is last. Type "cc" before the copy notation names if you are sending them a carbon copy. On occasions you might want to keep the sending of copies or a copy to one or few persons secret from the person who receives the original letter. In that case place the notation "bc," "bcc," or "bpc" for blind copy, blind carbon copy and blind photo copy. Place this on the copies and not on the original in the same place where copy notation appears.

Example:

cc: Muhammad Aslam

c: Muhammad Aslam

pc: Muhammad Aslam

Copy to Muhammd Aslam

A second after thought would be designated as P.P.S, meaning post postscript.

Additional rules

Second page Heading:

If the letter is long and an additional page is required, a second page heading is used.

The name of the receiving person or organization, page number, and date are included in the second page heading, however reference number can also be included.

Two lines are left empty after the second page heading and then the body is written.

Second page Heading:

Examples:

Mr. XYZ

May 10, 2005

Page 2

or

Mr. XYZ, May 10, 2005, Page 2

Lesson 33

Direct-Request Letters

Writing routine letters

Whenever you ask for something – information, action, products, adjustments, and references – you are making a request. To be as clear as possible, you as a writer need to imagine all the ways a request might be understood and then carefully choose your words to avoid pitfalls.

Strategy for routine requests

Like all routine messages, routine requests may be thought of as having three parts: an opening, a body, and a close. Using the direct approach, you place your main idea (a clear statement of the request) in the opening. You use the middle to give details and justify your request. Then you close by requesting specific action and concluding cordially.

State your request up front

Begin routine requests by placing your request first – up front is where it stands out and gets the most attention. Of course, getting right to the point should not be interpreted as a license to be abrupt or tactless:

- **Pay attention to tone.** Even though you expect a favorable response, the tone of your initial request is important. Instead of demanding action ("Send me your catalogue no 33A"), soften your request with words like "please" and "I would appreciate."
- **Assume your audience will comply.** An impatient demand for rapid service isn't necessary. Generally make the assumption that your audience will comply with your request once the reason for it is clearly understood.
- **Avoid beginning with personal introductions.** Don't be tempted to begin your request with a personal introduction such as "I am the senior corporate writer in the corporate relations department of XYZ, and I am looking for information that …."
- **Punctuate questions and polite requests differently.** A polite request in question form requires no question mark: "Would you please help us determine whether Mr. Aslam is a suitable applicant for this position." A direct question within your message does require a question mark: "Did Mr. Aslam demonstrate an ability to work smoothly with clients?"
- **Be specific.** State precisely what you want. For example, if you require the latest census figures from a government agency, be sure to say whether you want a page or two of summary figures or a detailed report running several thousand pages.

Explain and justify your request

Explain the middle section of your message to explain your initial request. Make the explanation a smooth and logical outgrowth of your opening remarks.

Whether you're writing a formal letter or a simple e-mail, you can use the middle section of your routine request to list a series of questions.

When using a series of questions, just keep a few basics in mind:

- **Ask the important questions first.** If cost is your main concern, you might begin with a question such as "What is the cost for shipping the merchandize by air versus truck?" Then you may want to ask more specific but related questions about, say, the cost of shipping partial orders.
- **Ask only relevant questions.** So that your request can be handled quickly, ask only questions central to your main request. If your questions require simple yes-or-no answers, you might provide readers with a form or with boxes to check. If you need more elaborate answers, pose open-ended questions. "How fast can you ship the merchandize?" is more likely to elicit the information you want than "Can you ship the merchandize?"
- **Deal with only one topic per question.** If you have an unusual or complex request, list the

request and provide supporting details in a separate, short paragraph. You may even use paragraph headings to make your reader's job easier.

Request specific action in a courteous close

Close your message with three important elements:

1. A specific request,
2. Information about how you can be reached, and
3. An expression of appreciation or goodwill.

Use the closing to request a specific action and to ask readers respond by a specific and appropriate time ("Please send the figures by Sept 10 so that I can return first quarter results to you before the Oct 10 Conference"). Help your reader respond easily by including your phone number, office hours, and other contact information.

Conclude your message by sincerely expressing your goodwill and appreciation. However, don't thank the reader "in advance" for cooperating.

1. Direct-inquiry letters

Two types of direct-inquiry letters discussed here are:

A. Requesting information about products or services

B. Requesting information about people

A. Requesting information about products or services

Organizations that receive letters of inquiry about their products or services find their responses to these letters can be an effective sales technique.

Your goal in preparing direct-inquiry letters is to make responding as easy as possible for the recipient? For the reasons identified above, you need not be particularly concerned about motivating the recipient to respond. Rather, your main concern is to present your inquiry with as much clarity as possible so the recipient will be able to respond completely and accurately without having to prepare additional correspondence.

You are generally advised to begin a direct-inquiry letter with the request rather than with explanatory material. Placing the request after the explanatory material results in a slow-start opening, as the following example illustrates.

Change:	I am thinking of purchasing a new printer for my ABC personal computer. This printer would primarily be used when I am using the computer as a word processor. I use the Electronic Word Processing Software package. Will all of the F-1080 printer functions be operational when using my computer system and word processing system?
To:	Will all of the F-1080 printer functions be operational when using the Electronic Word Processing software on an ABC personal computer system?

Notice how much faster the revised version gets to the main purpose of the letter. The first version lacks conciseness and tells the reader something he/she can easily infer: The printer will be used primarily when the system is being used as a word processor.

The first of the following two paragraphs also has a slow-start beginning. You will notice that the second version is much faster because it avoids telling the reader something he/she can easily infer.

Change:	My wife, son, and I are planning to travel to Ayubia this summer. While in this area we want to do several things, including horse riding, hiking, and bird watching. Could you please send me information about the hiking trails as well as information about the places best suited for the other activities?

To:	Could you please send me information about the following facilities in the vicinity of Ayubia: trails for half-day hiking trips, horse riding and bird watching activities?

Occasionally when you are requesting information about a product or service, you may have several questions to ask. The most important question is usually asked first, and the less important questions follow. If you are asking a number of questions, you may want to consider putting the questions in an enumerated list.

Could you please send me information about a photocopier that has the following features:
1. A heavy-duty photocopier, which could print 10,000 copies/min.
2. An in-built program to sort out and staple each document.
3. Remote control functions.
4. Dual purpose functions of a computer printer and a photocopier.
5. Quick and easy repair and replacement.

After the request is presented in the opening of the letter, explanatory material is then included. This includes the reason for the request or information that the recipient will find useful in preparing the response.

The following paragraph illustrates an effective explanation section of a direct-inquiry letter.

We intend using this facility for conferences which are held almost every two-months. On the average the total number of participants vary between 800---1000.

The last section of the direct-inquiry letter is the closing, which should be action-oriented.

Change:	I will appreciate your sending me the requested information.
To:	A quick response to my request will enable us to decide soon as to which photocopier best meets our needs. If there are any additional features than those mentioned above, which you think might be helpful, please feet free to suggest.

The suggested plan for a direct-inquiry letter includes the following elements:

1. An opening that contains the primary request and secondary requests;
2. An explanation that includes the reasons for the requests or provides additional helpful background information;
3. A closing that suggests the action you wish the recipient to take; and that expresses appreciation for assistance.

B. Requesting information about a person

Inquiries about people involve two considerations: First is the need to respect the rights – legal and moral. Second is the need to structure the questions around the job involved. Therefore:

1.Respect human rights, both legal and moral.
2.Ask only for info related to the job.
3.Stress fact, write for business use and when authorized and treat confidentially.
4.Structure the questions around the job.

When these requirements are considered, plan and organize the inquiry by:
Beginning directly, with a general question seeking information, or a specific question that sets up the entire message.
Explaining the situation.
Covering the additional questions systematically. Make certain they cover the work involved and protect the subject's rights.

Ending with adapted goodwill talk.

Now applying these instructions to Mr. Aslam's application for the position of Office Manager, assume that analysis of the application and the job tells you that you should ask four questions:

1.Is Mr. Aslam capable of handling the responsibilities involved?
2.Does he know the work?
3.How hard a worker he is?
4.Is he morally responsible?

Now how would you arrange the questions and the necessary explanation in a message? Here is a specimen.

Mr. Aslam has applied to us for employment and has given your name as a reference. He indicated that he worked under your supervision during the period 2001-2004.

(*An opening that fails to contain the request for information.*)

We would be most appreciative if you would give us your evaluation of Mr. Aslam. We are especially interested in his ability to handle responsibility, knowledge of office procedures, work habits, and morals.

(*A section that contains a delayed request for imprecisely identified information.*)

Thanking you in advance for your courtesy. I remain.

(*A closing that lacks action orientation.*)

The above example illustrates an ineffective letter that requests information about a person. The message shows a not-so good effort. The opening is indirect. The explanation in the opening is important, but does it deserve the emphasis that the beginning position gives it? Although the question part gives the appearance of conciseness, it is actually scant. It includes no explanation. It does not even mention for what kind of position Mr. Aslam is being considered. The items of info wanted do not stand out. In fact, they are not even worded as questions but are run together in a single declaration sentence. Though courteous, the closing words are old style (thanking in advance).

Lesson 34

Direct-Request Letters

B. Requesting information about a person

Following example illustrates an effective revision of the previous letter:

Will you help me evaluate Mr. Aslam for the position of Office Manager? In authorizing this inquiry, Mr. Aslam indicated that he worked for you from 2001-2004. Your candid answers to the following questions will help me determine whether Mr. Aslam is the right person for this job. (*An opening that contains background information and the primary request*)

1. What is your evaluation of Mr. Aslam's leadership ability, including interpersonal skills? Our office has a staff of 20.
2. How well can Mr. Aslam manage a rapidly expanding office system? Ours is a growing company. The person who manages our office not only will need to have good computer skills but also need to know how to adapt them to changing conditions.
3. What is your evaluation of Mr. Aslam's stamina and drive? The position he seeks often involves working in a fast-paced environment under time pressures.
4. What is your evaluation of Mr. Aslam's moral reliability? Our office manager is responsible for much of our company equipment as well as some company funds.

(*A section that identifies the desired information.*)

Other than the common duties performed by an Office Manager, we are particularly looking for a person who could travel within the country and liaise with our other branch offices and prepare a variety of reports for our senior executives and shareholders.

(*A section that contains a discussion of the duties to be performed by the jobholder.*)

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. We plan to fill this position by October 1, 2005; therefore we will appreciate if you please send us your reply within the next two weeks.

(*An action-oriented closing that mentions the confidential handling of information.*)

This example gives evidence of good analysis of the job and the applicant. The message begins with an opening question that also includes helpful explanation. Then the message presents the specific questions. Worded separately and in a question form, each stands out and is easy to answer. Worded in with each question is explanation that will help the reader understand the work for which Mr. Aslam is being considered. The close is courteous.

Note, throughout the message, the concern for the rights of the people involved. The inquiry is authorized, is for business purposes only, and will be treated confidentially.

The suggested plan for a letter in which information about a job applicant is requested includes the following elements:

1. An opening that mentions the name of the person who has given the reader's name as a reference;
2. A list of questions that you would like to have answered.
3. A brief discussion of the common duties of the job for which the applicant has applied.
4. A courteous, action-oriented closing.

2. Indirect-inquiry letters

The indirect-inquiry letter is used to request general information rather than answers to specific questions.

If you have one or more specific questions, you will want to use the direct-inquiry letter. But if you simply desire general information, an indirect-inquiry letter will suffice.

Except for the request, the other sections of both types of letters are quite similar.

The opening of an indirect-inquiry letter can be less specific than the opening of a direct-inquiry letter. You are cautioned to avoid preparing such a general opening for an indirect-inquiry letter that the recipient will have difficulty responding.

The first paragraph illustrates the opening that is too general to be of much help to the recipient. The revised version is more specific – and therefore will be more helpful to the individual who has to prepare the response.

Change:	Do you have packets available for individuals visiting Ayubia? If so, please send me one.
To:	Would you please send me information about points of interest and scheduled events for families visiting Ayubia?

The explanatory sections of direct- and indirect-inquiry letters may not vary much from one another. The following paragraph illustrates an appropriate section for an indirect-inquiry letter. You will notice that the writer decided to include several pertinent details.

My wife and two sons (ages 14 and 12) plan to accompany me to Ayubia for a meeting that I am attending Sept 10-14. While I am attending the daytime meeting, they want to do as much sightseeing as possible. Because they will not have access to a car, they will have to depend on public transportation to get around.

3. Claim letters

The manner in which an organization deals with the claims it receives will affect its reputation.

When you have a legitimate complaint about a product or service, you should make it known to the manufacturer or supplier.

Claims against service connected with purchases are far more common than against the products themselves. The following list summarizes the bases for claims about service:

1. Merchandize not received.
2. Part of the merchandize not received.
3. Wrong merchandize received.
4. Damaged merchandize received.
5. Merchandize received too late.
6. Merchandize sent to wrong address.
7. Error made in prices of merchandize.
8. Statement received for bill already made.
9. Employee incompetence or rudeness.

Qualities of effective claim letters

Before you begin the process of preparing a claim letter, you will want to be familiar with the following qualities of effective claim letter:

1.An effective claim letter does not threaten.
2.An effective claim letter presents all the facts pertinent to the situation.
3.The writer of an effective claim letter does not take his/her anger out on the recipient.
4.An effective claim letter, by containing you-attitude material, will help the recipient realize the advantage of making an adjustment.

5. An effective claim letter makes a definite request, such as one of the following:
a. Replacement of the product or service.
b. Partial or full refund on the purchase price of the product or service.
c. Replacement shipment, which contains the merchandize that was ordered.
d. Repair of the defective product.
e. Cancellation of an order or a portion of the order.
f. Correction of an error in billing, such as overcharging for merchandize, tax, and shipping.
g. Clarification of a procedure

Structure of effective claim letters

The opening paragraph in a claim letter should mention the nature of the claim.

The X-photocopier we purchased from you on Aug. 22 is being returned with a request that it be replaced with a new one.

Explanatory material be presented as precisely and directly in an impersonal and courteous manner.

On several occasions during the last month it was inoperable at critical occasions. Because we bought it primarily to make copies on very short notice, our international visitors were severely inconvenienced when they could not provide copies of their presentations to the participants. On such occasions we had to get the outside service or

do without it.

The inclusion of you-attitude material is suggested:

The concern your company has for its customers convinces me that you will want us to own a X-photocopier worthy of its excellent reputation.

Effective action-oriented closing.

I will appreciate your replacing the X-photocopier soon so we can provide a fast and efficient photocopying service to our conference participants.

4. Order letters

Normally, order blanks or purchase orders are used when ordering merchandise by mail. However, when neither order blanks nor purchase orders are available, you can prepare an order letter.

When placing an order, you need not excite your reader; just state your needs clearly and directly. Most orders refer to a product that the reader knows about, so these messages are usually processed without objection.

Order letters are comprised of three distinct content components:

1. Pertinent information about the items being ordered;
2. Directions for shipping the merchandize, including desired receipt date (if appropriate) and the desired shipping location (if different from your address); and the
3. Method of payment.

The order letter below presents an effective writing:

Please send by urgent delivery (TCS/FedEx etc.) the following items:

Quantity	Cat. No.	Description	Size	Price	Unit Total
1	697-44	Trouser L	890	890.00	
2 pairs	713-88	Gloves	L	90	180.00
					1,070.00

Please charge these items to my Visa Card (account number 111-333-6666) that has an expiry date of December 30, 2005.

Because the above items are to be given as a gift, your delivery by Sept. 20 will be appreciated.

Lesson 35

Direct-Request Letters

5. Letters of invitation

Letters of invitation include speaking invitations as well as informal and formal social invitations.

Speaking invitation

When writing a letter inviting someone to make a presentation, the inclusion of vital information about the event will help prevent inconvenience or misunderstanding.

Important details to include in the letter of invitation are:

1. Name of the group before which the presentation will be made;
2. A few characteristics about the group to help the speaker tailor his/her remarks to the audience;
1. The desired length of the presentation;
4. The topic of the presentation;
3. The date, time, and the location;
4. Any transportation and/or lodging arrangements;
7. Amount of honorarium, if one is being given.

An effective example of speaking-invitation letter is as follows:

As Secretary General of the All- Pak Students Conference, I cordially invite you to speak on conflict management at one of the morning sessions on Jan. 15, 2006. The Conference will be held at the X-hotel in Lahore. (*An opening that contains the invitation and that presents important details about the event*)

I had the honor of listening to your speech on the above subject delivered at the Punjab University last year, which was well received by the students. I believe it would be appropriate if the students are reminded once again of the importance of conflict management that is the root cause of many ills in our society. (*A section that contains you-attitude material)*

The participants of the above Conference will comprise of graduate and postgraduate students coming from all over Pakistan, faculty members from all academic institutions, a few high government. officials and invitees from private corporations. (*A section that contains a discussion of the characteristics of the audience*)

If you are able to make a presentation at our Conference, please select whichever of the following sessions times best suits your availability on the morning of January 15; 9:30-10:15, 10:30-11:15, or 11:30-12:15. (*A section that invites the reader to select the time of the presentation*)

As a token of our appreciation for your participation, we will give you an honorarium of Rs. 5,000. We would also like you to be our guest at the lunch, which begins at 12:30 on the 15th.
(*A discussion of the reimbursement to be offered*)

Because the Organizing Committee wants to finalize the program soon, could you please let me know your decision by October 25? (*An action-oriented closing*)

Social-invitation letters

Most social invitation letters are considered informal. When more formality is needed, a formal invitation, either printed or handwritten should be considered.

Printed formal invitation is illustrated below:

Mr. M. Nazim
requests the pleasure of your company
at a dinner
in the honor of
Dr. A.U. Rehman
on Friday, the twenty-first of December
at seven o'clock
in the Blue Room
SB-Hotel, Lahore

R.S.V.P.
5867… Black Tie

Effective social-invitation letter is illustrated below:

Please join us at a luncheon on Dec. 21 to celebrate Mr. Rehman's tenth year as the Rector of the University. This important event, which begins at 12:30, will be held at the Blue Restaurant on Hali Road in Lahore.
(*A fast-start that presents the invitation and that contains important information about the event to which the reader is being invited*)

In addition to the University's staff, a few of the senior academicians are also being invited. If you wish, you will have an opportunity to join others in making a public tribute to recognize Mr. Rehman's significant accomplishments during his attachment with the University. (*A section that presents a discussion of the important information*)

Please let me know by Dec. 10 if you will be able to attend the celebration and if you wish to deliver a tribute. (*An action-oriented closing*)

6. Reservation letters

Provide all information, like: type of room needed (single, double, suite); number of persons to occupy the room; arrival and departure date and time, and a request for confirmation.

For putting this information, follow the plan like:
1.A fast-start opening which identifies the type of room desired and the days needed;
2.A section which mentions arrival and departure times;
3.A courteous, action-oriented closing, which mentions your desire for a confirmation.

The example below illustrates an effective reservation letter. Notice that all of the important elements are included.

I will appreciate if you please reserve two double beds for the nights of Sept 20 and Sept 21. The reservations are for my wife and two sons (age 6 and 4)
We will be arriving in Islamabad by PK-346 on Sept 20 and departing early on the 22nd.
Please send me the confirmation of our reservation within a week so that we could finalize our visit.

7. Letters requesting favors

When a favor is requested, the writer has a special reason for expressing his/her ideas tactfully and courteously as well as persuasively.

The individual requesting for a favor should first ask two questions
1.Have I sufficient reason for making this request?
2.Am I asking a favor of a person reasonably expected to be willing to grant the favor?

The letter should have a positive tone, be courteous, and show appreciation for the recipient's granting of the favor. The recipient should not be thanked in advance.

Change:	The students in the data processing class I teach at the Virtual University are always interested in seeing state-of-the-art computer installations. The article in last week's Business News about your installation was very interesting to my class. Would you be able to provide my students with a tour of your new computer installation?
To:	Would you be able to give a tour of your new computer installation to a group of 15 eager-to-learn students in my data processing class at the Virtual University? We became aware of your state-of-the-art installation through the article in last week's Business News.

Once the nature of the favor has been stated, additional information about the favor should be provided. The information will help the recipient become more aware of your desire to have the favor granted. This material should be followed by an explanation of why the favor is important to you and others. The following paragraph illustrates an effective request.

All of the students in this class are seniors in the data processing program at VU. Nearly half of them have work experience in data processing. These students would be especially appreciative of having an opportunity to see a state-of-the-art installation. Seeing such an installation will contribute significantly to their understanding of the vital nature of the data processing function in an insurance company.

The closing of a letter requesting a favor should be action-oriented and express appreciation for the possibility that the recipient may be able to grant the favor, While the first of the following two paragraphs expresses appreciation, it is not action oriented.

Change:	Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.
To:	I will call you next week to learn of your decision about the possibility of a tour. My students would be greatly appreciative of an opportunity like this to enrich their educational backgrounds.

The letter below is not likely to motivate its recipient to grant favor.

A friend of mine recently told me about the excellent presentation you made to a class of his several years ago. Would you be willing to make a similar presentation in my class?
(*An opening that presents the request but that is quite deficient in the information that is provided*)

Having speakers come into high school classes is an excellent way to bridge the gap between the real and educational world. We often find that speakers are able to share their rich experiences, one cannot find in the books. (*A section that presents additional information*)

Please let me know at your convenience if you might be available to speak to my accounting class.
(*A section that lacks action-oriented material*)

An effective version of an effective favor-request letter is as follows:

Are you available within the next two months to make a presentation on the topic of accounting careers before my accounting class? Because the class meets from 1:00 to 1:50, a presentation lasting thirty minutes with a twenty-minute question-answer period would be ideal. (*A fast-start opening that presents vital information about the request*)

Mr. Kausar recently told me about the excellent presentation you made on accounting careers before one of his classes several months ago. He indicated that several of his students chose an accounting career after having heard your presentation. Several of my students are consideration an accounting career --- and your presentation would be helpful as they make their decisions. (*A section that provides additional information about the request*)

Your helping enrich the educational experiences of my students would be greatly appreciated. I will call you on Dec. 10 for your decision. (*A courteous action-oriented closing)*

Lesson 36

Good-News Letters

Types of good-news letters:

Many situations in the business world require the preparation of good-news letters. When well written, these letters help organizations improve their relationships with their customers and clients.

The types of good-news letters are:

1. Letters replying to inquiries, extending credits,
2. Letters granting adjustments
3. Letters acknowledging orders
4. Letters granting favors
5. Letters of congratulation
6. Letters accepting invitations

What characteristics do good-news letters possess?

Good-news letters can be identified by the following characteristics:

1. Begin with the good news or main idea
2. Use a fast-start opening
3. Provide explanatory details or information of primary and secondary importance.
4. Incorporate a you-viewpoint
5. Incorporate an appropriate closing

Examples of a fast-start opening:

I am pleased to inform you that after deliberating the matter carefully, our human resource committee has recommended you for appointment as a staff accountant.

Congratulations. You have been selected to join our firm as a staff accountant beginning Sept.10.

Example of providing explanatory details or information of primary and secondary importance:

Your educational background and internship have impressed us, and we believe you would be a valuable addition to our Company. As discussed during your interview, your salary will be Rs. 20,000, plus benefits. In this regard, you will meet our HR manager, Mr. Moin, at 9:00 AM on Monday Sept 10. He will assist you with all the necessary paperwork. He will also arrange various orientations to help you know about us and the Company.

Letters that provide information about products or services

Letter responding to an inquiry about a product or service should have a fast-start opening

Change:	Thank you for your recent letter in which you inquired about our new desktop computer.
To:	Yes, the memory of the H-D 3000 in our new desk-top computer line can be expanded to 512K by inserting two H-D 3987 boards. A service contract that u also inquired about is available for an annual charge of Rs. 1000.

Inclusion of answers to questions and/or presentation of details or information of secondary importance.

Change:	The installation of the memory boards is an easy process. Any of our trained service technicians can install these boards in a few minutes.
To:	The factory-trained service technicians who work for the H-D computer dealer in your area, B-world Co., are able to install these memory boards in approx. 30 minutes. The cost of each board is Rs. 3000. We estimate that the memory of the H-D computer can be upgraded to 512 K for less than Rs.4000.

The inclusion of sales-promotion, or reader-benefit material:

During the six months that the H-D 3000 has been on the market, it has received excellent reviews in several computer magazines. After you read the four reviews that I am enclosing with this letter, I think you will agree that the well-designed keyboard, the high resolution of the screen, and the upgradeable nature of its memory make the H-D 3000 a superior product. Add to these features our exclusive three-year warranty and you can easily understand why the H-D 3000 is receiving such positive reviews.

The closing appropriate for a letter responding to an inquiry about a product or service be friendly and courteous.

Change:	Thank you for your interest in the H-D 3000.
To:	We appreciate having the opportunity to answer your questions. Should you have any other questions, please write me. Or if you would like to see a demonstration of the H-D 3000, please visit our dealer in your area, the B-world Company.

Letters responding to an inquiry about a person

Two situations necessitate the preparation of such letters responding to an inquiry about a person. These situations occur when you are asked to provide information about

1. A person whom you serve as a reference (such as former or current employee) and
2. A job applicant's work performance (also for a person's credit worthiness).

Notice the difference between the slow-start of the first of the following two paragraphs and the fast-start of the revised opening.

Change:	Your letter in which you inquired about the suitability of Mr. Aslam for an Office Manager position arrived recently. Mr. Aslam worked here from 2001-2004. His last position was Office Supervisor.
To:	Mr. Aslam, about whom you recently inquired, was highly regarded when he worked for us from 2001-2004. I am glad to recommend him to you as an Officer Manager, a position he is well suited for.

The following paragraph illustrates an effective response to an inquiry about a person's work performance.

The following are answers to your questions:
1.Yes, Mr. Aslam is a self-starter. Rarely did I have to give him instructions for carrying out his job duties.
2.Yes, Mr. Aslam's work is meticulously done. I recall only one instance in which he had to redo the work because of the manner in which the first report was prepared.
3.Yes, Mr. Aslam is a dedicated worker. On several occasions, he cheerfully worked after hours and on weekends when I asked him to.
4.Yes, Mr. Aslam works well with others. He is pleasant to be around, has empathy for others, and is very helpful.
Other information you may find helpful in evaluating Mr. Aslam's suitability for employment includes the following:
1.Of all the supervisors I have had, Mr. Aslam is the most eager to learn and to develop professionally.
2.The level of Mr. Aslam's management skills, his understanding of business operations, and his personality will enable him to handle in a very competent way the position he has applied for.
3.Mr. Aslam is able to defuse effectively, both in person and on the phone, many situations that have the potential of becoming problematic.

Your response will be helpful to the reader if you can provide evaluative statements about the person's performance. Specific information in your response will be more helpful to the reader than general information.
If you have negative information to present, you should make sure that it is pertinent to the situation. Unless these negative aspects are likely to affect the person's ability to perform his/her job well, you may want to consider omitting this information.

The ending should include a statement summarizing your overall opinion.

"Mr. Aslam, whom I found to be an excellent supervisor, is being referred to you with my top recommendation. If he is given the opportunity to work for you, I am sure you will readily concur with my evaluation of his work performance.

Letters responding to indirect inquiries

A number of the characteristics found in letters responding to direct inquiries are also found in letters responding to indirect inquiries. These characteristics are a fast-start opening, the presentation of material of primary importance first, followed by the presentation of material of secondary importance, and a friendly, courteous closing.

Also, when you are preparing a letter in response to an indirect inquiry, the inclusion of reader-benefit material is more appropriate. To illustrate, the following reader-benefit material is appropriate for inclusion in a letter responding to an inquiry about things to see and do in Ayubia.

> You will find Sept. to be a perfect month to visit Ayubia. The mild days and comparatively cold nights will add to your family's sightseeing pleasure.
>
> Among the attractions found especially interesting by families who have children the ages of yours are the chair lifts, the play-land, and the zoo. For the more culturally minded families, the museum and the roadside restaurants are especially interesting. The deep-forest trails are another interesting attraction. The locations of these attractions, which are easily accessible by the bus or taxi, are identified on the enclosed map.
> We are sure you will be eager to return for another visit once you spend a few days in Ayubia.

The suggested plan for a letter responding to an indirect inquiry contains the following elements:

1. A fast-start opening that mentions your compliance with the initial inquiry / request – but that avoids presenting obvious information
2. A section that includes additional information that might be helpful to the reader, including sales-promotion, or reader-benefit material
3. A friendly, courteous closing that expresses your willingness to provide future assistance.

Letters granting adjustments

Because the situation stems from an unhappy experience, you have two special needs.

1. Need to overcome negative impressions
2. Need to regain lost confidence

One is the need to overcome the negative impressions the experience leading to the adjustment has formed in the reader's mind. The other is the need to regain any confidence in your company, or its services the reader may have lost from the experience.

The example below illustrates an ineffective letter:

Subject: Your broken chandelier

We have received your July 1 claim reporting that our shipment of the crystal glass chandelier reached you with 20 broken units. We regret the inconvenience caused to you and can understand your unhappiness. (*A slow-start opening that presents obvious information*)
Following our standard practice, we investigated the situation thoroughly. Apparently the fault is the result of an inexperienced temporary employee's negligence. We have taken corrective measures to assure that future shipments will be placed more carefully.
(*A delayed presentation of the good news*)

I am pleased to report that we are sending replacements today. They should reach you before Dec. 12.

Again, we regret all the trouble caused to you. (*A redundant apology that ends on a negative note*)

An improved version of the same letter is presented below:

Subject: Your July 1 report on invoice 1234

Twenty carefully packed pieces of Chandelier should reach you before Dec. 12. Our driver left our warehouse today with instructions to special deliver them to you on Friday.
(*An opening that presents the good news first*)

Because your satisfaction with our service and products is important to us, we have thoroughly checked our shipping procedures. It appears that the shipment to you was packed by a temporary employee who was filling in for a hospitalized packer. Even though we now have our experienced packer back at work, we have instituted a control procedure designed to assure safe arrival of all future shipments.
(*A section that explains the cause of the problem; a negative discussion handled in a positive way)*

As you know, our Crystal Chandeliers have become one of the hottest products, their unique designs remain a collection item of prized customers like you.
(*A courteous closing*)

Keeping in mind the two special needs, we come up with this specific plan for the message granting an adjustment:

1. Begin directly – with the good news
2. Incidentally identify the correspondence that you are answering
3. Avoid negatives that recall the problem
4. Regain lost confidence through explanation or corrective action
5. End with a friendly, positive comment

Letters that grant favors

Writing a letter to grant a favor should be one of the easiest letters to write.

Suggested plan for a letter that grants a favor:

1. A cordial, courteous opening that mentions the granting of favor
2. A discussion of restriction or limitations that pertain to the granting of the favor
3. A discussion, if appropriate, of any action the reader is to take in accepting the favor
4. A cordial, courteous closing that is action oriented when appropriate

The opening paragraph of a letter that grants a favor should be cheerful and cordial. The following illustrates an effective beginning for such a letter:

Yes, I look forward to showing your students our beautiful new facility. A tour of our building will enable them to see the latest interior office design.

When a favor is granted with a limitation or a restriction, that information should be included in the letter. For example consider the following as an appropriate discussion of a limitation.

So that we can complete the tour before the employees leave at 4:30, it should begin no later than 3:00. Should you prefer to begin the tour earlier in the afternoon that will be possible as my schedule is open all afternoon on Sept 10.

The granting of a favor with a limitation or a restriction often necessitates some action on the part of the reader. The following paragraph effectively outlines the requested action.

Will you please call me at 586…. when you decide on the time and would like the tour to begin. We can finalize any other details at that time.

The closing of the letter that grants a favor should be cordial and courteous, as well as action oriented, if appropriate.

I look forward to hearing from you - and also to showing your students our new facility.

Letters of congratulation

An excellent – although often overlooked – way to recognize the achievement or accomplishment of an acquaintance is to send a letter of congratulations.

Some of the occasions or events for which congratulatory letters are prepared are: job promotion, an election to an office, an achievement in a special interest, and the receipt of an award, a retirement, and so forth.

One of the indispensable qualities of letters of congratulation is sincerity. Trite stilted phrases indicate a lack of sincerity and destroy the goodwill that congratulatory letters should create.

The suggested plan for a congratulatory letter includes the following elements:
1. An opening that congratulates the reader for his/her accomplishment or achievement
2. A section that expresses your understanding of the importance of the accomplishment or achievement
3. A courteous closing that extends best wishes for continued success

An example of a well-written congratulatory letter is shown below:

Congratulations on your being recognized as the Business Leader of the Year. You are certainly a deserving recipient of this award.

(*An opening that congratulates the reader on the accomplishment*)

The countless hours you have spent trying to improve the business climate of XYZ Company finally "paid off" when it was recently recognized as one of the country's most desirable business organization. You can be proud of the fact that you gave your time and effort for the good of the organization - and not for any personal gain.

(*A section that presents a discussion of your impression of the importance of the reader's accomplishment*)

You have my best wishes for the continued success and happiness that you certainly deserve.

(*A courteous closing that extends best wishes*)

Letters accepting invitations

A letter in which a special-business invitation or an invitation to an event is accepted should convey appreciation and enthusiasm and should be sent as soon as possible after receiving the invitation.

In acceptance of an invitation to an event, the acceptance should be conveyed in the opening. Also incorporated into the acceptance are the important details about the event: date, time, and place. These details are wisely included:

a. to verify the accuracy of these details in case an error has been made, and
b. to provide a record in case the invitation becomes misplaced.

The suggested plan for a letter of acceptance for a social-business invitation includes the following elements:

1. An opening in which the invitation is cordially and enthusiastically accepted
2. A review of the important details about the event
3. A courteous closing that expresses appreciation for the invitation

The example below illustrates a well-written letter in which a Social-business invitation is accepted:

I enthusiastically accept your invitation to the retirement dinner of Mr. Munir. This event will be a fine tribute to Mr. Munir whose accomplishments as Executive Director of the XYZ Company are extensive.
(*An opening that mentions the enthusiastic acceptance of the invitation*)

Because the retirement dinner is to be a surprise to Mr. Munir, we will say nothing to him about it before the evening. (*A section that reviews the important details of the event*)

I appreciate your inviting us to this important event. We look forward to seeing you at the P-Continental at 6 p.m. on Dec. 20. (*A closing that expresses appreciation and that reviews other important details*)

The example below illustrates a well-written letter that expresses appreciation for the invitation.

I sincerely thank you for inviting me to Mr. Munir's retirement dinner. I was especially pleased to be able to join others in paying tribute to a hard-working, dedicated employee of the XYZ Company.
(*An opening that expresses cordial thanks for the event*)

I was quite impressed with Mr. Munir's impromptu after-dinner remarks. The graciousness with which he delivered those remarks was impressive. As always, he gave others all the credit for his success.
(*A section that contains a discussion of the event's highlights*)

I appreciate your giving the opportunity to help honor Mr. Munir.
(*A cordial closing*)

Letters acknowledging orders

The reasons for acknowledging an order are to inform the customer that his / her order has been received and that it has been shipped (or will be shipped), to express appreciation to the customer for his / her order, and to build goodwill.

A letter that acknowledges an order should begin with a fast-start opening which provides the best news first. The reader will be more interested in learning about the status of his / her order than receiving a "thank you." Although including a note of thanks in the opening is appropriate, information about the status of the order should be presented first. The following example illustrates the difference between the slow-start and fast-start openings.

Change:	Thank you for your recent order for three pairs of shirts.
To:	The three pairs of shirts you recently ordered from us were sent to you this morning by UPS, and they should arrive in two days. Your order and the cheque for Rs. 3,000 are appreciated.

The inclusion of resale and/or sales-promotion material is also appropriated in letters that acknowledge orders.
The following paragraph illustrates the use of sales-promotion material.

You will be interested to learn that all of our summer stock goes on sale next week. Prices on this stock will be reduced between 30 and 50%, enabling you to purchase at greatly reduced prices. A summer-sale catalog, along with an order blank, is enclosed with your shipment. Orders, most of which are filled within 24 hours of their receipt, can be charged as we honor all major credit cards.

The closing of an order-acknowledgement letter should be forward-looking. The first of the following two closing paragraphs is weak, while the revised version is much more effective.

Change: We appreciate your business.
To: We appreciate having you as a new customer. You can always count on fast, courteous service when ordering from the Fancy Store.

Lesson 37

Disappointing-News Letters

A variety of situations arise in the business world that require the preparation of letters in which disappointing-news is conveyed. Your goal in writing these letters is to state the refusal in an inoffensive way to avoid alienating your reader.

Developing strategies for disappointing-news letters

When delivering disappointing-news, you have five goals:
1. To convey the disappointing-news,
2. To ensure its acceptance,
3. To maintain reader's goodwill,
4. To maintain organization's good image, and
5. To reduce/eliminate need for future correspondence

Accompanying so many goals in a single message is not easy. But you can make your bad-news messages effective by:
1. Adopting an audience-centered tone
2. Organize your message to meet your reader's needs and expectations by using direct or indirect approach.

Creating an audience-centered tone

It's not what you say but how you say it. Your tone contributes to your message's effectiveness by helping your readers:
- Accept that your disappointing-news represents a firm decision.
- Understand that, under the circumstances, your decision was fair and reasonable.
- Remain well disposed toward your business.
- Preserve their pride.

When establishing tone, strive for **firmness, fairness, goodwill and respect**

Disappointing-news involves emotions. You must acknowledge these emotions – empathic response. But you can't let those emotions interfere with your message.

Adopt audience-centered tone by paying attention to three things:

1. **Using the "you"-attitude**

Using the "you" attitude is crucial to every message you write, but it's especially important in disappointing-news messages. For example, point out how your decision might actually further your audience's goals. Convey concern by looking for the best in your audience. And assume that your audience is interested in being fair, even when they are at fault.

2. Choose Positive words

You can ease disappointment by using positive words rather than negative, counterproductive ones.

Avoid a negative tone	**Use a positive tone**
I can't understand what you mean	Pl. clarify your request
The damage won't be fixed for a week.	The item will be repaired next week
The breakage was not our fault.	The merchandize was broken during shipping.

The enclosed statement is wrong. Please recheck the enclosed statement.

3. **Use respectful language**

When you use language that conveys respect and avoids an accusing tone, you protect your audience's pride. For instance, when refusing a claim, try using third-person, impersonal, passive language to explain your audience's mistakes in an inoffensive way. This approach downplays the doer of the action because the doer is not satisfied

Say, "The appliance won't work after being immersed in water" instead of "You shouldn't have immersed the appliance in water".

When the audience is at fault, the "you" attitude is better observed by avoiding the word "you".

Organizing your message

Using the direct approach

The key to choose the best approach for disappointing-news messages is to analyze audience members first. Try to put yourself in their shoes. What is their likely reaction to the news? How important is the message? How well do you know them? Some people like to know the disappointing-news right away. Similarly, some situations are more appropriate for directness than others. If you know that your audience is likely to prefer the disappointing-news first, or if the situation is minor and the news will cause your audience little pain or disappointment, use the direct approach.

Use the direct approach when your negative answer or information will have little personal impact. The direct approach is also appropriate when you want to present an image of firmness and strength.

Harshness in the direct approach

The example below states the disappointing-news right away. This blunt treatment puts the reader in a bad frame of mind. The result is that the reader is less likely to accept the explanation that follows.

Sub: Your request for donation

We regret to inform you that we cannot grant your request for a donation to the association's scholarship fund.

So many requests for contributions are made of us that we have found it necessary to budget a definite amount each year for this purpose. Our budgeted funds this year have been exhausted, so we simply cannot consider additional requests. However, we will be able to consider yr request next year.

We deeply regret our inability to help you now and trust that you understand our position.

Using the indirect approach

Beginning a disappointing–news message with a blunt "no" could well prevent people who prefer an explanation first from reading or listening to your reasons. Presenting the reasons first increases your chances of gaining audience acceptance by gradually preparing readers for the negative news to come.

The indirect approach follows a four-part sequence:

1. Open with a buffer
2. Continue with a logical, neutral explanation of the reasons for the disappointing-news
3. Follow with a clear but diplomatic statement of the disappointing-news (emphasizing any good news and de-emphasizing the bad), and
4. Close with a positive, forward-looking statement that is helpful and friendly.

Tact and courtesy in an indirect refusal

The example below skillfully handles the negative message. Its opening words are on subject and neutral. They set up the explanation that follows. The clear and logical explanation ties in with the opening. Using no negative words, the explanation leads smoothly to the refusal.

Sub: Your scholarship fund request

Your efforts to build the scholarship fund for the Association's needy children are most commendable. We wish you good success in your efforts to further this worthy cause.

We are always willing to assist worthy causes whenever we can. That is why every January we budget for the year the maximum amount we are able to contribute to such causes. Then we distribute that amount among the various deserving groups. Since our budgeted contributions for this year have already been made, we are placing your organization on our list for consideration next year.

We wish you the best of luck in your efforts to help educate the deserving children of the Association's members.

Begin with a Buffer

The first step in using the indirect approach is to make a neutral, no controversial statement that is closely related to the point of the message; this statement is called a buffer.

A good buffer expresses your appreciation for being thought of, assures the reader of your attention to the request, compliments the reader, or indicates your understanding of the reader's needs.

Use a buffer that is:

-Neutral
-Relevant
-Not misleading
-Assertive
-Succinct

Here are some things to avoid when writing a buffer:

Avoid saying no. An audience encountering the blunt refusal right at the beginning usually reacts negatively to the rest of the message, no matter how reasonable and well phrased it is.

Avoid using a know-it-all tone. When you use phrases such as "you should be aware that, "readers expect your lecture to lead to a negative response, so they resist the rest of your message.

Avoid wordy and irrelevant phrases and sentences. Sentences such as " We have received your letter," "This letter is in reply to your request," and "We are writing in response to your request" are irrelevant. Make better use of the space by referring directly to the subject of the letter.

Avoid apologizing. Unless warranted by extreme circumstances, an apology only weakens the explanation of your unfavorable news that follows.

Avoid writing a buffer that is too long. Be brief. Identify something that both you and your audience are interested in and agree on before proceeding in a businesslike way.

Types of Buffer

Buffer	Strategy	Example
-Agreement	Find a point on which you and the reader share similar views.	We both know how hard it is to make a profit in this industry.
-Appreciation	Express sincere thanks for something.	Your cheque for Rs. 5.000 arrived receiving yesterday. Thank you.
-Cooperation	Convey your willingness to help in any way you realistically can.	Employee services is here to smooth the way for all of you who work to

		achieve company's goals.
-Fairness	Assure the reader that you have closely examined and carefully considered the problem, or appropriate action thatdetect any pattern of use that might has already been taken.	For the past week, we have carefully monitored those using the photocopy machine to see whether we can mention an explain its frequent breakdowns.
-Praise	Find an attribute or an achievement to compliment.	Your resume shows an admirable breadth of experience which should serve you well as you progress in your career.
-Understanding	Demonstrate that you understand the reader's goals and needs.	So that you can more easily find the printer with the features you need, we are enclosing a brochure that describes all the XYZ printers currently available.
-Good news	Start with the part of your message that is favorable.	A replacement knob for your range is on its way, shipped Sept. 2005

Lesson 38

Disappointing-News Letters

Follow with reasons

Well-written reasons are:

1.**Detailed:** provide enough detail to make the reason for the refusal logically acceptable.
2.**Tactful:** implies that the applicant is better off avoiding a program in which he or she would probably fail, given the background of potential co-workers.
3.**Individualized:** explains the company's policy as logical rather than rigid.
4.**Unapologetic:** offers no apology for the decision.
5.**Positive:** avoids negative personal expressions like "You do not meet our requirements".

Suppose you refuse the application of a management trainee. A tactfully worded letter might give these reasons for the decision not to hire.

> Because these management trainee positions are quite challenging, our human relations department has researched the qualifications needed to succeed in them. The findings show that the two most important qualifications are a bachelor's degree in business administration and two year's supervisory experience.

The paragraph does a good job of stating the reasons for the refusal:
- It provides enough detail to make the reason for the refusal logically acceptable.
- It implies that the applicant is better off avoiding a program in which he or she would probably fail, given the background of potential co-workers.
- It explains the company's policy as logical rather than rigid.
- It offers no apology for the decision.
- It avoids negative personal expressions ("You do not meet our requirements").

State the refusal

Three techniques are useful for saying no as clearly and as kindly as possible:

Firstly, **de-emphasize the disappointing-news:**

-Minimize the space or time devoted to the disappointing-news.
- Subordinate disappointing-news in a complex or compound sentence ("My department is already short of manpower, so I will need all my staff for at least the next two months"). This construction pushes the disappointing-news into the middle of the sentence, the point of least emphasis.

-Embed disappointing-news in the middle of a paragraph or use parenthetical expressions ("Our profits, which are down, are only part of the picture").

Second, **use a conditional (if or when) statement** to imply that the audience could have received, or might someday receive, a favorable answer: ("When you have more managerial experience, you are welcome to reapply"). Such a statement could motivate applicants to improve their qualifications.

Third, **tell the audience what you did, can do, or will do, rather than what you did not do, cannot do, or will not do**: Say, "We sell exclusively through retailers, and the one nearest you that carries our merchandise is …." rather than "We are unable to serve you, so please call your nearest dealer." By implying the disappointing-news, you may not need to actually state it ("The five positions currently open have been filled with people whose qualifications match those uncovered in our research."). By focusing on the positive and implying the disappointing-news, you soften the blow.

Instead of this	**Use this**
- We must deny you application.	The position has been filled.
- We must reject your proposal.	We have accepted the proposal from AA Builders.
-We can't afford to continue the program	The program will conclude on May 1
-We must turn down your extension request.	Please send your payment by Sept. 14.

Close with a goodwill

After giving your audience the disappointing-news, your job is to end your message on an upbeat note. Follow these guidelines:

- Keep it positive – Don't refer to, or apologize for the disappointing-news, and refrain from expressing any doubt that your reasons will be accepted (avoid statements such as: "Again, may I say that I regret that we must refuse". "I sincerely hope that you understand why we must make this decision". "I trust our decision in satisfactory").
- Limit future correspondence – Encourage additional communication only if you are willing to discuss your decision further (avoid wording such as: "If you have further questions, please write").
- Be optimistic about the future – Don't anticipate problems (avoid statements such as: "Should you have further problems, please let us know").
- Be sincere – Steer clear of clichés that are insincere in view of the disappointing-news (avoid saying: "If we can be of any help, please contact us").
- Be confident – Don't show any doubt about keeping the person as a customer (avoid phrases such as: "We hope you will continue to do business with us").

Refusing request for information

When people ask you for information and you can't honor the request, you may answer with either the direct approach or the indirect approach. Say that you've asked a company to participate in your research project concerning sales promotion. However, that company has a policy against disseminating any information about projected sales figures. The following letter conveys the negative message without sounding offensive:

We at XYZ Co. appreciate and benefit from the research of companies such as yours. Your study sounds interesting. (*Buffer is supportive and appreciative*)

Our board requires strict confidentiality of all sales information until quarterly reports are mailed to stockholders. We release press reports at the same time the quarterly reports go out, and we'll be sure to include you in all our future mailings.

(*Body fully explains reason for decision without falling back on a blanket reference to company policy*)

Although we cannot release projected figures, we are more than willing to share information that is part of the public record. I have enclosed several of our past earnings reports for your inspection. We look forward to seeing the results of your study. Please let us know if there is any additional way we can help.
(*Close is friendly, positive, and helpful*)

Lesson 39

Disappointing-News Letters

Refusing request for a favor

When you must say no to a requested favor, your use of the direct or indirect approach depends on your relationship with the reader. For example, the principal of a local college asks your company to host graduation on your corporate grounds, but your sales meetings will be taking place at the same time. If you do not know the principal, you will use the indirect approach. If you are friends you'll probably use the direct approach. See the example below:

Because we appreciate XY College and the many opportunities you have provided to deserving students over the years, we at Infotech have supported the college in many ways. Thank you for considering our grounds for your graduate ceremony.
(*Buffers disappointing-news by demonstrating respect and recapping request*)

Our company-wide sales meetings will be held during the month of December. We will host over 200 sales representatives and their families, and activities will take place at corporate campus. Therefore, we will be unable to devote an adequate support staff for your graduation. (*States reason for the disappointing-news explicitly and in* detail).

Have you called Mr. Sohail at the Community Club? I can't think of a prettier site for graduation. I know Sohail personally. I can fill you in on the details if you would like to talk to me first. (*Suggests an alternative showing that the writer cares about the college and has given the matter some thought*).

Even though our annual meeting will most likely prevent us from hosting graduation, we remain firm in our commitment to your institution & to yr students. We will continue to
be a corporate partner to XY college and will support your efforts as you move forward.
(*Close by renewing the corporation's future support*).

Refusing a refund

An out-of-town customer bought an expensive dress and mailed it back three weeks later, asking for a refund. The customer explained that the dress was not a good fit and that she really did not like it anymore. But perspiration stains on the dress proved that she had worn it. This letter skillfully presents the refusal.

We understand your concern about the exclusive Nina Boutique's dress you returned on February 15. As always, we are willing to do so as much as we reasonably can to make things right. (*Sets up explanation*)

What we can do in each instance is determined by the facts of the case. With returned clothing, we generally give refunds. Of course, to meet our obligations to our customers for quality merchandize, all returned clothing must be unquestionably new. As you know, our customers expect, only the best from us, and we insist that they get it. Thus, because the perspiration stains on your dress would prevent its resale, we must consider the sale final. We are returning the dress to you. With it you will find a special alteration voucher
that assures you of getting the best possible fit free of charge.

(G*ood restraint – no accusations, no anger*)

So, whenever it is convenient, please come by and let us alter this beautiful Nina Boutique's creation to your requirements. We look forward to serving you.
(*Friendly goodwill close*)

Refusing a claim

Almost every customer who makes a claim is emotionally involved; therefore, the indirect method is usually the best approach for a refusal.

When refusing a claim, avoid language that might have a negative impact on the reader. Instead, demonstrate that you understand and have considered the complaint. The, even if the claim is unreasonable, rationally explain why you are refusing request. Remember, don't apologize and don't rely on company policy. End the letter on a respectful and action-oriented note.

An effective letter refusing a claim is mentioned below:

Thank you for your letter about the battery release switch on your XY digital camera. We believe, as you do, that electronic equipment should be built to last. That's why we stand behind our products with a 90-day warranty. (*Buffers the disappointing-news by emphasizing a point that reader and writer both agree on*)

Even though your XY camera is a year old and therefore out of warranty, we can still help. Please pack your camera carefully and send it to our store in Lahore. Include your complete name, address, phone number and a brief description of the malfunction, along with a cheque for Rs. 500. After examining the unit, we will give you a written estimate of the needed parts and labor. Then just let us know whether you want us to make the repairs – either by phone or by filling out the prepaid card we'll send you with the estimate. (*States disappointing-news indirectly, tactfully leaving the repair decision to the customer*)

If you choose to repair the unit, the Rs. 500 will be applied toward your bill, the balance of which is payable by cheque or credit card. If you decide not to repair the unit, the Rs. 500 will pay for the technician's time examining the unit. XY also has service center available in your area. If you would prefer to take the unit to one of them, please see the enclosed list.

(*Helps soothe the reader with a positive alternative action*)

Thanks again for inquiring about our service. I have enclosed a catalogue of our latest cameras and accessories. In Dec. XY is offering a "Special Sale" at which time you can buy a newer model. Come and visit us soon.

(*Closes by blending sales promotion with an acknowledgement of customer's interests*)

Declining an invitation

From time to time, invitations must be declined. The reasons necessitating regrets are varied, ranging from a potential conflict of interest to a lack of time. Regardless of the reason for the refusal, the letter of decline must be tactful and courteous.

The letter declining an invitation below is much more likely to produce a better relationship between the writer and the reader.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at the upcoming convention of the Management Association. I've always found it pleasant to visit Lahore in Spring.

Our firm recently began offering public seminars in various cities throughout the country. I am scheduled to offer a 3-day seminar in Karachi during the same 3-days of your convention. Otherwise, I would be happy to speak at your convention.

One of my colleagues who also has expertise in management sciences is available during the time you asked me to speak. His presentation skills are excellent, and I am certain that he could contribute significantly to the success of your convention.

If you are interested in contacting my colleague about the possibility of his speaking at your convention, please send me a note or call me at ……

Best wishes for a successful convention.

Rejecting job applications

It's difficult to tactfully tell job applicants that you won't be offering them employment. But don't let the difficulty stop you from communication the disappointing-news.

Follow 3-guidelines:

- Open with the direct approach. If you buffer, you appear manipulative, because you otherwise phone.

- Clearly state why the applicant was not selected. Make your rejection less personal by stating that you hired someone more experienced, whose qualifications match the position requirements more closely.

- Close by suggesting alternatives. Mention other openings within the company. Application will be considered for future openings.

We have filled the tax accountant position. Selecting just one candidate from 30 qualified applicants was quite difficult. We hired a candidate with more than 10 years' experience in the field. (*Opens with the direct approach by not postponing the disappointing-news that the applicant expects*)

Your resume and credentials show you to be a deserving candidate. Your academic record and previous accounting experience certainly indicate your willingness to work hard. Those of us who had the opportunity to talk with you believe that your ability to communicate will certainly help you achieve an excellent position in a recognized accounting firm. (*Follows the disappointing-news with further encouragement, offering specific praise to help the candidate with her self-confidence intact*)

In the mean time, we would like to keep your info on file for six months, in case another position opens up in the near future. (*Closes positively by asking to keep information on file*)

Do's & Don'ts to follow in preparing disappointing-news messages

Suggestions of a Do-Nature

Suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of disappointing-news messages are presented below. Each suggestion is followed by one or more sentences that illustrate its use.

1. **Use a neutral or buffered opening that produces agreement rather than disagreement**.

When you purchase a Green Products lawn mower, you have every right to expect that it will be of the quality commonly associated with the Green Products.

The items you recently ordered from us have been selling very well.

2. **Discuss the facts and analyze the situation in sufficient detail, which will help convince the reader of your honesty and sincerity**.

We consider a number of factors when reviewing applications for credit. Included are such factors as length of time at one residence, length of time of current employment, income, assets, bill-paying record, and amount of current financial obligations.

3. **Consider using an implicit refusal rather than an explicit refusal**.

The warranty that came with your Mix-Rice electric mixer is in effect for the first year of ownership, beginning with the date of purchase. Our records show your mixer was purchased more than two years ago.

4. **Capitalize on what you can do for the reader rather than what you cannot do**.

We are offering you a 2% discount on all cash purchases for the next six months. During the second year of ownership of your XY Computer, our warranty covers the cost of labor when making repairs if you purchase the parts from us. We are currently offering a 5% discount on the list price of all XY parts.

5. **Use sales-promotion material whenever appropriate**.

You will be glad to know that we just received authorization to distribute the Pak sportswear line. To help introduce this new line to our customers, we are offering a 3% introductory discount on all Pak merchandize ordered on or before Dec. I.

6. **Offer suggestions to prevent a recurrence of the problem situation**.

To keep your Green-Products lawn mower operating at peak performance in the future, we suggest that you use only Green-Products oil-gas mixture.

7. **Make a counteroffer or counter-proposal, if appropriate**.

We believe it will be in your immediate best interest for us to set your credit limit at Rs. 75, 000 rather than the 1,00,000 you requested.

8. **Make reader action easy, if appropriate**.

If you would like us to substitute “Fancy Shirtings” in the same quantity and size for the out-of-stock “Brand-Shirtings” that you ordered, please call me on 586…… The Brand-shirtings can be shipped as soon as we hear from you.

Suggestions of a Don’t-Nature

1. **Avoid the use of negative words or phrases**.

We regret that we cannot exchange your recently purchased S-radio for SR-radio, as you requested.

2. **Avoid the use of an accusatory tone**.

Your new power cutter malfunctioned because you failed to assemble it properly.

3. **Avoid placing the statement of refusal in a position of emphasis**.

For the reasons outlined in the above paragraph, we are sure you will understand why we cannot honor your request for a full refund on the formal dress you recently purchased from us.

4. **Avoid using company policy as the reason for justifying the refusal**.

Our company has a policy that prohibits the use of our facilities for anything other than official company business.

5. **Avoid making suppositions that are not likely to occur**.

Now that you have heard our side of the story, we are certain that you will agree with our decision.

6. **Avoid apologizing for the action you are taking**.

We are sorry that we cannot grant your request.

7. **Avoid a slow-start opening**.

We have received your letter of Jan.

8. **Avoid a meaningless closing**.

Thanks for getting in touch with us.

9. **Avoid suggesting that problems may arise again in the future**.

Should you feel, after we repair and return your VCR, that it is not giving you the quality of service that you have the right to expect, please contact.

10. **Avoid phony or insincere empathy**.

We know just how upset you were when the heating coil in your coffee maker burned out in the middle of your dinner party.

Lesson 40

Writing Persuasive Message

1. **Planning Persuasive Messages**
   a. Analyze your purpose
   b. Analyze your audience
      i. gauging audience needs
      ii. considering cultural differences
   c. Establish your credibility
   d. Strive for high ethical standards
2. **Developing Persuasive Messages**
   a. Get your reader's attention
      Begin the message with an attention-getting statement that is:
      - personalized
      - you-oriented
      - straightforward
      - relevant

   b. Build your reader's interest
      - elaborate on the main theme
      - relate benefits specifically to the attention-getter

   c. Increase your reader's desire
      - make audience members want to change by explaining how the change will benefit them
      - back up your claims with relevant evidence

   d. Motivate your reader to take action
      - suggest a specific step the audience can take
      - stress the positive results of the action
      - make the desired action clear and easy

   e. Balance emotional and logical appeals
      - use emotional appeals to help the audience accept your message
      - use logical appeals when presenting facts and evidence for complex ideas or recommendations
      - avoid faulty logic

   f. Reinforce your position
      - use semantics to build credibility and enhance the emotional content of your message
      - use a variety of critical thinking and effective writing tools to strengthen your case

   g. Deal with resistance
      - anticipate and answer possible objections
      - try "what if?" scenarios
      - let others help you find solutions to problems that you uncover
      - present pros and cons of all options
      - avoid common mistakes

Planning Persuasive Message

Unlike routine positive messages, persuasive messages aim to influence audiences who are inclined to resist. Therefore, persuasive messages are generally longer, are usually more detailed, and often depend heavily on strategic planning.

Persuasive messages require that you pay particular attention to several planning tasks. E.g. because your purpose is to persuade, making sure of your purpose is perhaps the most important planning task. When

analyzing your audience for a persuasive message, you may want to delve more deeply than you would for other messages. Your credibility
takes on extra importance in a persuasive message. So whenever you are trying to persuade someone, you must make sure your ethics are above reproach.

Analyze your purpose

Writing an external persuasive message is one of the most difficult tasks you could undertake. For one thing, your purpose is to persuade people to do something different or to try something new. But people are busy, so they are reluctant to act, especially if it takes time and offers no guarantee of any reward in return. Given the complexity and sensitivity of persuasive messages, you must be absolutely sure that your purpose is clear, necessary, and appropriate for written media.

Analyze your audience

Process of audience analysis is much more involved for persuasive messages. To write an effective persuasive argument, you need to search for common ground, points of agreement on which to build. That means you must shape your argument so that others believe your proposal will satisfy their concerns and bring them rewards.

Gauging audience needs. Consider these important questions: Who is my audience? What are their needs? What do I want to do? How might they resist? Are there alternative positions I need to examine? What does the decision maker consider the most important issue? How might the organization's culture influence my strategy?

To assess individual needs, you can refer to specific information such as demographics (the age, gender, occupation, income etc.) and psychographics (personality, attitude, lifestyle, and other psychological characteristics of an individual). Both types of information are influenced by culture. When analyzing your audience take into account their cultural expectations and practices so that you don't undermine your persuasive message by using an inappropriate appeal by organizing your message in a way that seems unfamiliar or uncomfortable to your audience.

Considering cultural differences. Your understanding and respect for cultural differences will help you satisfy the needs of your audience and will help your audience respect you. That's because persuasion is different in different cultures. In France, using an aggressive, hard sell techniques is no way to win respect. In Germany, people tend to focus on technical details, verify any figures you use for support, and make sure they are exact. In Sweden, people focus on theoretical questions and strategic implications. In the US people are concerned with more practical matters.

As with individuals, an organization's culture or subculture heavily influences the effectiveness of messages.

Establish your credibility

To persuade a skeptical or hostile audience, you must convince people that you know what you are talking about and that you are not trying to mislead them. Your credibility is your capability of being believed because you are reliable and worthy of confidence.

Some of the ways to gain credibility are:
Support your message with facts. Testimonials, documents, guarantees, statistics, and research results all provide seemingly objective evidence for what you have to say, which adds to your credibility. The more specific and relevant your proof, the better.
Name your sources. Telling your audience where your information comes from and who agrees with you always improves your credibility, especially if your sources are already respected by your audience.

Be an expert. *Your knowledge of your message's subject area (or even of some other area) helps you give your audience the quality information necessary to make a decision.*

Establish common ground. Those beliefs, attitudes, and background experiences that you have in common with members of your audience will help them identify with you.

Be enthusiastic. Your excitement about your subject can infect your audience.
Be objective. Your ability to understand and acknowledge all sides of an issue helps you present fair and logical argument in your persuasive message.
Be sincere. Your concern, genuineness, good faith, and truthfulness help you focus on your audience's needs.
Be trustworthy. Your honesty and dependability help you earn your audience's respect.

Have good intentions. *Your willingness to keep your audience's best interests at heart helps you create persuasive messages that are ethical.*

Your credibility will also be enhanced if you maintain high ethical standards.

Strive for high ethical standards

Persuasion is wrongly associated with coaxing, urging, and sometimes even tricking people into accepting an idea, buying a product, or taking an unwanted or unneeded action. However, the best businesspeople make persuasion positive. They influence audience members by providing information and aiding understanding, which allows audiences the freedom to choose. Ethical businesspeople inform audiences of the benefits of an idea, an organization, a product, a donation, or an action so that these audiences can recognize just how well the idea, organization, product, donation, or action will satisfy a need they truly have.

To maintain the highest standards of business ethics, make every attempt to persuade without manipulating. Choose words that won't be misinterpreted, and be sure you don't distort the truth.

Developing Persuasive Messages

Your success as a businessperson is closely tied to your ability to convince others to accept or act on your recommendations. Minimally, you want them to pay close attention to your ideas and value your contributions.

Some formal strategies you can use to strengthen your persuasive skills.

Strategies for Persuasive Messages

Effective persuasion involves four distinct and essential strategies:
1.Framing your arguments
2.Balancing emotional and logical appeals
3.Reinforcing your position
4.Dealing with resistance

1. Framing your arguments

To effectively persuade your audience, you need to frame your argument in the most effective way. Most persuasive messages follow an organizational plan that goes beyond the indirect approach used for negative messages. The opening does more than serve as a buffer; it grabs your audience's attention. The explanation section does more than present reasons, and it is expanded to two sections. The first incites audience's interest, and the second changes your audience's attitude. Finally, your close does more than end on a positive note with a statement of what action is needed; it emphasizes reader benefits and motivates readers to take specific action.

Organizing persuasive messages plan involves four phases:

a. Attention

Begin the message with an attention-getting statement that is:

- personalized
- you-oriented
- straightforward
- relevant

Make your audience want to hear about your problem or idea. Write a brief engaging opening sentence, with no extravagant claims or irrelevant points. And be sure to find some common ground on which to build your case.

b. Interest

In the interest section

- continue the opening theme in great detail
- relate benefits specifically to the attention-getter

Explain the relevance of your message to your audience. Continuing the theme you started with, point a more detailed picture with words. Get your audience thinking.

c. Desire

In the interest section

- provide evidence to prove your claim
- draw attention to any enclosures

Make audience members want to change by explaining how the change will benefit them. Reduce resistance by thinking up and answering in advance any questions the audience might have. If your idea is complex, explain how you would implement it. Back up your claims in order to increase audience willingness to take the action that you suggest in the next section. Just remember to make sure that all evidence in directly relevant to your point.

d. Action

End by

- suggesting a specific step the audience can take
- restating how the audience will benefit by acting as you wish
- making action clear and easy

Suggest the action you want readers to take. Make it more than a statement such as "Please institute this program soon" or "send me a refund". This is the opportunity to remind readers of the benefits of taking action. The secret of a successful action phase is making the action easy.

2. Balancing emotional and logical appeals

How do you actually convince an audience that your position is the right one, that your plan will work or that your company will do the most with reader's donation? One way is to appeal to the audience's minds and hearts. Together, these two elements have a good chance of persuading your audience to act.

Finding the right balance between the two types of appeals depends on four factors:
i. The actions you wish to motivate
ii. Your reader's expectations,
iii. The degree of resistance you must overcome,
iv. How far you feel empowered to go in selling your point of view

When you are persuading someone to accept a complex idea, take a serious step, or make a large and important decision, lean toward logic and make your emotional appeal subtle. However, when you are persuading someone to purchase a product, join a cause, or make a donation, you will rely a bit more heavily on emotion.

Emotional Appeals: An emotional appeal calls on human feelings, basing the argument on audience needs or sympathies; however, such an appeal must be subtle. For example, you can make use of the emotion surrounding certain words. The word *freedom* evokes strong feelings, as do words such as

success, prestige, credit record, savings, free, value, and *comfort*. Such words put your audience in a certain frame of mind and help them accept your message. However, emotional appeals aren't necessarily effective by themselves. Emotion works with logic in a unique way. People need to find rational support for an attitude they're already embraced emotionally.

Logical Appeals: A logical appeal calls on human reason. In any argument you might use to persuade an audience, you make a claim and then support your claim with reasons or evidence. When appealing to your audience's logic, you might use three types of reasoning:

- **Analogy** With analogy, you reason from specific evidence to specific evidence. For instance, to persuade employees to attend a planning session, you might use a town meeting analogy, comparing your company to a small community and your employees to valued members of that community.
- **Induction** With induction, you reason from specific evidence to general conclusion. To convince potential customers that your product is best, you might report the results of test marketing in which individuals preferred your product over others. After all, if some individuals prefer it, so will others.
- **Deduction** With deduction, you might reason from a generalization to a specific conclusion. To persuade your boss to hire additional employees, you might point to industry-wide projections and explain that industry activity (and thus your company's business) will be increasing rapidly over the next three months, so you'll need more employees to handle increased business.

Lesson 41

Writing Persuasive Message

No matter what reasoning method you use, any argument or statement can easily appear to be true when it's actually false. Whenever you appeal to your audience's reason do everything you can to strengthen your argument by finding common ground (basing your major argument on points that your audience already accepts) and by stating your points clearly. Finally, keep your arguments relevant, well grounded, and systematic. To avoid faulty logic, practice the following guidelines:

- **Avoid hasty generalizations:** Make sure you have plenty of evidence before drawing conclusions.
- **Avoid begging the question:** Make sure you can support your claim without simply restating it in different words.
- **Avoid attacking your opponent.** Be careful to address the real question. Attack the argument your opponent is making, not your opponent's character.
- **Avoid oversimplifying a complex issue.** Make sure you present all the factors rather than relying on an "either/on" statement that makes it look as if only two choices are possible.
- **Avoid assuming a false cause.** Use cause-and-effect reasoning correctly; do not assume that one event caused another just because it happened first.
- **Avoid faulty analogies.** Be sure that the two objects or situations being compared are similar enough for the analogy to hold. Even if A resembles B in one respect, it may not hold true in other important respects.
- **Avoid illogical support.** Make sure the connection between your claims and your support is truly logical and not based on a leap of faith, a missing premise, or irrelevant evidence.

3. Reinforcing your position

Once you have framed your arguments and chosen your appeal, you can concentrate on strengthening your message with some important persuasive tools. Effective persuaders know that the facts alone may not be enough to persuade your audience. So they supplement numerical data with examples, stories, metaphors, and analogies to make their position come alive. They use language to paint a vivid picture of the persuader's point of view.

Semantics. Say that you are trying to build your credibility. How do you let your audience know that you are enthusiastic and trustworthy? Simply making an outright claim that you have these traits is sure to raise suspicion. However, you can use semantics (the meaning of words and others symbols) to do much of the job for you. The words you choose to state your message say much more than their dictionary definition.

Instead of this	**Say this**
1. I think we should attempt to get approval on this before it's too late.	Let's get immediate approval on this.
2. This plan could work if we really push it.	With our support, this plan will work.
3. I have been thinking lately that may be someone could …	After careful thought over the past two months, I have decided that …

Another way semantics can affect persuasive messages is in the variety of meanings that people attribute to certain words. Abstract words are subject to interpretation because they refer to things that people cannot experience with their senses. So you can use abstractions to enhance the emotional content of a

persuasive message. For example, you may have better luck collecting an overdue bill by mentioning honesty and fair play than by repeating the sum owed and the date it was due.

Other Tools

Using semantics skillfully is not your only persuasive tools. Here are some additional techniques you can use to strengthen your persuasive messages:

- **Be moderate.** Asking your audience to make major changes in attitudes or beliefs will most likely evoke a negative response. However, asking audience members to take one step toward that change may be a more reasonable goal.
- **Focus on your goal.** Your message will be clearest if you shift your focus away from changing minds and emphasize the action you want your audience to take.
- **Use simple language.** In most persuasive situations, your audience will be cautious, watching for fantastic claims, insupportable descriptions, and emotional manipulation. So speak plainly and simply.
- **Anticipate opposition.** Think of every possible objection in advance. In your message, you might raise and answer some of these counterarguments.
- **Provide sufficient support.** It is up to you to prove that the change you seek is necessary.
- **Be specific.** Back up your claims with evidence, and when necessary cite actual facts and figures. Let your audience know that you have done your homework.
- **Create a win-win situation.** Make it possible for both you and your audience to gain something. Audience members will find it easier to deal with change if they stand to benefit.
- **Time your message appropriately.** The time to sell roofs is right after the tornado. Timing is crucial in persuasive messages.
- **Speak metaphorically.** Metaphors create powerful pictures. One metaphor can convey a lifetime of experience or a head full of logic
- **Use anecdotes and stories to make your points.** Anecdotes tie it all together – the logic and the emotions. Don't tell your audience what kinds of problems they can have if their system clashes. Tell them what happened to Mr. X when his hard drive crashed in the middle of his annual sales presentation.

All these tools will help your persuasive message be accepted, but none of them will actually overcome your audience's resistance. Whether based on emotion or logic, your argument must be strong enough to persuade people to act.

4. Dealing with resistance

The best way to deal with audience resistance is to eliminate it. If you expect a hostile audience, one biased against your plan from the beginning, present al sides – cover all options, explaining the pros and cons of each. You will gain additional credibility if you present these options before presenting the decision.

To uncover audience objections, try some "what if?" scenarios. Poke holes in your own theories and ideas before your audience does. Then find solutions to the problems you have uncovered. Recognize that people support what they help create and ask your audience for their thoughts on the subject before you put your arguments together. Let your audience recommend some solutions. With enough thought and effort, you may even be able to turn problems into opportunities; for example, you may show how your proposal will be more economical in the long run, even though it may cost more now. Just be sure to be thorough, open and objective about all the facts and alternatives.

When putting together persuasive arguments, avoid common mistakes such as:

Using an up-front hard sell. Setting out a strong position at the start of a persuasive message gives potential opponents something to grab onto – and fight against.

Resisting compromise. Persuasion is a process of give and take. As one expert points out, a persuader rarely changes another person's behavior or viewpoint without altering his or her own in the process.

Relying solely on great arguments. In persuading people arguments matter, but they are only one part of the equation. Your ability to create a mutually beneficial framework for your position, to connect with your audience on the right emotional level, and to communicate through vivid language are all just as important; they bring your argument to life.

Assuming persuasion is a one-shot effort. Persuasion is a process, not a one-time event. More often than not, persuasion involves listening to people, testing a position, developing a new position that reflects new input, more testing, more compromise, and so on.

Lesson 42

Writing Persuasive Message

The Sales Letters

The suggested plan for a sales letter includes the following elements:

1. *An opening that attracts the reader's attention.*
2. *A section that captures the reader's interest in the product or service you are selling;*
3. *A section designed to establish desire and conviction on the part of the reader;*
4. *A courteous, action-oriented closing.*

The letter below shows how the writer incorporates the suggested plan.

You are one of the several hundred carefully selected customers who have been approved for a special credit opportunity. **(An effective opening that creates interest)**

Only a small percentage of Pakistanis are financially responsible enough to meet the stringent selection criteria for a credit card – and you are one of the few with exceptional credit worthiness. **(A section that uses an effective interest-building approach)**

Your credit authorization certificate is enclosed. Simply take the certificate to your local authorized Electronic dealer, and you can take your new Electronics dealer, and you can take your new Electronics equipment home with you the same day. A charge account agreement form is also enclosed. **(A section that stimulates action)**

As an Electronics charge customer, you will not only be able to charge your purchases, but also will get advance notices of our sales. During two sales each year, our charge account customers are able to take advantage of our sale prices the day before the sale is announced to the public.

(A section that outlines the advantages of being a charge customer, which also helps create interest)

Your Electronics charge account, which has a credit limit of Rs. 100, 000, will arrive at your home just a few days after you sign and return the enclosed agreement form. Because this offer expires on December 31, act today to open your account. You will be glad you did.

(A closing that outlines the action to be taken)

Another persuasive letter selling a product:

Did you know that one out of four residents in your area becomes a victim of theft? How would you feel if you returned to your home and discovered that your hard-earned stereo, computer, or microwave had been stolen? Remember, locked doors won't stop a determined thief. ***(*Starts with a provocative question - raises reader's awareness*)***

My home was burglarized too. That's why I have developed a simple to install security system which works like an auto alarm and can be installed on the main gate without the help of any other person. The small activator hooks to your key chain. Just press the "lock" key. A "beep" tells you your home is secure, and a blinking red light warns the intruder to stay away. ***(*Explains how the product works – information that creates interest*)***

If a thief tries to breach in, a loud alarm sounds. Your possessions will be safe. And, even more important, you can activate the system from your bedside, so you are safe while you sleep.

(Uses both a logical appeal, protecting possessions, and an emotional appeal, personal safety)

You would expect this peace of mind to cost a fortune – something most people don't have. But we are offering Security Alarm System for only Rs. 5000. Here's what you will receive by return mail.

- ***The patented alarm unit***
- ***Two battery-operated programmable remote units***
- ***A one-year warranty on all parts***
- ***Complete and east-to-follow installation instructions.***

Order additional alarm boxes to install on your window or bathroom door for only Rs. 3000. Act now. Fill out the response card and mail it along with your choice of payment method in the enclosed envelope. Don't give thieves and criminals a chance. Protect yourself and your belongings. Send in your card today

(*Urges quick action*)

Collection Letters

Collection letters are also considered persuasive because the inclusion of motivationally oriented material is designed to get the reader to comply with your request. Because the reader may not be readily able nor willing to comply with your request, you have to take extra measures to assure compliance.

Use of one or more appeals in writing effective letters is discussed below:

Appeal to fair play

The fair-play appeal essentially says to the customer: "We have been fair with you by providing the quality of product and services that you have the right to receive, and now you need to be fair with us by paying your account in full."

The following example illustrates the use of fair-play appeal in a collection letter.

The special instructions in your order indicated that the glassware was needed by Dec. 10, so we sent the order to you by air express – at your expense.

We believe that we have been fair with you, and we are certain that you intend to be equally fair with us. Will you, therefore, please send us your cheque for the amount due?

Appeal to good credit reputation

The appeal to a good credit reputation is most effective for the first letter in a collection series. An effective appeal to a customer to maintain a good credit reputation is illustrated below.

- *We remember very well the favorable comments made by several of yours credit references when you applied for credit. Because of this good credit reputation, we do not want you to lose it. Is the past-due status of your account an oversight?*
- *So that we will be able to recommend you some day as a credit customer, please protect your credit reputation by sending us your cheque for Rs. 20,000.*

Appeal to pride

Another appeal commonly used in collection letters is to pride, which involves asking the reader to act in ways that he/she can be proud of – in this vase, paying the past-due account.

During the six years that you have had a charge account with us, we have been very proud of the way in which you have met your financial obligations. We are sure that you, too, take a great pride in keeping your account balance paid up.

We are confident that you will want to pay the balance of your past-due account very soon, which will enable you to continue to take pride in your good credit reputation.

Appeal to fear legal action

When all other appeals have failed to entice the customer to pay, the company may include a statement of intended action in the final collection letter.

We believe that we have given you ample time to pay your account or at least to explain to us why you have chosen not to pay. Now we are forced to take more drastic action.

Unless we have your full payment by Dec. 10, we will turn your account over to our collection department.

To avoid the inconvenience of a poor credit reputation, will you please pay your account in full by Dec. 10? Doing so will enable you to protect your credit reputation.

Memoranda and Short Reports

What is a Memo?

A memorandum, also called as a memo, is a message written to use within the organization. Traditionally letters are used for external communication; ordinarily the memo is intended solely for communicating with others within the organization.

General Format

The format is fairly standard. If printed memo forms are not available, the following headings can be typed on a sheet of paper:

To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

Basic Purpose

Memos are prepared for:

- **Requesting information**

- **Giving instructions**
- **Serving as covers for all messages, and**
- **Making announcements**

Advantages of a Memo

Memo:

- ***Solves problems (by transmitting information)***
  - By informing reader about solutions e.g.,
    - Policy Changes
    - Price Increases
  - By persuading reader to take actions e.g.,
    - Attend a Meeting
    - Change Current Production Procedure
- ***Provides a written record***
- ***Can reach many persons simultaneously***

A Memo requesting information

The following suggestions will be helpful in writing a memo requesting information:

1. State the key idea, the request.
2. Present the details.
3. Remind the reader of the request and provide additional specific information.

To: ***Faculty, Business Education Department***
From: ***M. Ahmad, Chairman, Business Education Department.***
Date: ***Sept. 10, 2005***
Subject: ***Film Catalog for Faculty Use***

In order to reduce the time it takes to screen and select appropriate files, we are putting together a catalogue of those films which have been used effectively in Business Education classes
Please submit to this office the following information, using a separate sheet of paper for each film:

1. ***Film title and appropriate length***
2. ***One paragraph description of the main points made in the film***
3. ***One paragraph description of how the film relates to the courses in which it was used.***

Please provide this information by January 1. Shortly thereafter you will receive your copy of the completed catalogue. Through the cooperation of all faculty members in this project, all of us will benefit."

A Memo giving instructions

A sample memo is presented below:

To: ***Faculty, Virtual University***
From: ***Rafiq Ahmad, Assistant Circulation Manager, College Library***
Date: ***March 15***
Subject: ***New Procedure for reserving books***

A new procedure for putting books on reserve will begin at the start of the summer session. Remember to follow these guidelines:

1. Submit a list of books on the attached form to the Reserve Department at least four weeks before the start of the session in which the books will be assigned.
2.Do not include more than 10 books on a form.
3. Include the following in each entry on a list:

- **Call number**
- **Book title**
- **Author's name**
- **Course number and name**
- **Faculty's name and office Tel. No.**

By following these procedures you will be contributing to library efficiency.

A transmittal Memo

A transmittal memo is used to introduce the reader to a longer, accompanying message. Besides the introduction it describes the main points of the message.

The main body of a memo written on a research done:

To: ***M. Arshad, Personnel Director***

From: ***Abdul Ghafoor, Logistical Support Coordinator***

Date: ***August 1, 20--***

Subject: ***Research report on Turnover among workers***

I have done some research on the high rate of turnover among the workers.

My report is divided into four parts, and each part is preceded by a brief abstract of its contents.

Part I clarifies the problem and its effects on operation;

Part II presents a compilation of the supervisor's perceptions of the problem;

Par III presents a compilation of the workers' perceptions of the problem;

Part IV presents conclusions bases on the findings of the survey.

An announcement Memo

Memos may be used to announce such matters as personnel transfers, meetings, or policy changes.

To: ***All Management and supervisory Personnel***

From: ***Ch. Rasool, Manager of Industrial relations***

Date: ***June 10, 20--***

Subject: ***Paid holidays for Full-time employees***

ABC Co. will observe the dates listed below as official holidays during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005. These holidays will apply to all regular employees. Part-time employees and probationary workers are not considered regular and, therefore, are not entitled to receive holiday pay.

- Independence day, August 14

- Defense day, Sept. 6

……..

……..,

Please see that all personnel under your jurisdiction are made aware of this official holiday schedule.

Memorandum Reports

- ***Progress reports***
- ***Periodic reports***
- ***Justification reports***
- ***Letter reports***

Progress reports

The content of a progress report is determined by the familiarity of the report reader with the project.

The suggested plan for a progress report includes the following elements:

- ***Introduction***
- ***Summary of progress already reported***
- ***Detailed summary of progress since last reporting***
- ***Nature of exceptional progress***
- ***Summary of work yet to be completed***

Progress report

To: ***Ghulam Murtaza, Vice-President***

From; ***A. Dastagir, Assistant Vice-President***

Date: ***July 17, 2005***

Subject: ***Status report on the development of a Training Program***

The following outlines the status of the development of the training program I have been working on for several months.

Introduction

The purpose of this research project is to determine the need for a training program in XY Corporation. The project, which is being undertaken by Sohail and me, is to be completed by Jan. 1, 2006.

Summary of progress already completed

The progress that has been reported up to this point includes the following:

1.Determination of objectives of the project.

2.Definition of parameters of the project.

3.Development of an appropriate research instrument (questionnaires and interviews)

Detailed summary of progress

Since the last progress report was prepared, the following have been completed:

1.Obtained approval of the questionnaire and interview record.

2.Pilot tested the questionnaire and interview record.

3.Determined method for selecting the respondents.

4.Selected the respondents.

Nature of exceptional Progress

The project is six days behind schedule because of a strike at Prime Printing, the company we have contracted with to print the questionnaires. The strike ended Oct. 15, and we expect printed questionnaires this week.

Summary of work yet to be completed

The following work remains to be done: distribution of questionnaires, completion of interviews, analysis of data, and preparation of the final report.

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

Periodic Reports

To: ***M. Aslam, Executive Vice-President***

From: ***M. Munir, Manager, Credit Department***

Date: ***August 10, 20--***

Subject: ***Expenditure for the Credit Dept. for Sept., 2005***

The expenditures you asked me to calculate for the Credit Dept. for Sept., 2005 follow:

	Beginning Balance	Ending Balance	Expense
Salaries	***Rs.50,000***	***20,000***	***30,000***
Supplies	***9,000***	***7,000***	***2,000***
Telephone	***500***	***200***	***300***
Printing	***500***	***300***	***200***

Justification Report

Sometime you have to write a memorandum report in order to justify something a change in procedure, an increase in budget, or perhaps reasons for resisting any new policy. For whatever reason – and there are many – it is written, the justification report is a common type of memorandum report.

The justification report follows a direct or deductive plan, which means that the recommendations and conclusions are presented before the facts and findings. This plan is used because the most important section of justification reports typically is the recommendation.

The suggested plan for a justification report includes five elements, as shown in the example:

Interoffice Memo

To: ***M. Sohail, Office Manager***

From: ***M, Arshad, Office Service Supervisor***

Date: ***July 15, 20--***

Subject: Need for automatic Collator

The following information outlines the need for the purchase of an automatic collator:

Statement of purpose and recommendation:

Because of the increasing employee time consumed by manually collating documents, the possibility of purchasing an automatic collator should be investigated.

Outcome of recommendation:

By using an automatic collator, a considerable amount of employee time could be saved. The result would be higher employee productivity and greater efficiency because employees could utilize their time to perform more worthwhile work.

Suggested plan for implementing recommendation

An examination of the automatic collators manufactured by several different companies is recommended. Because of the different features found on the various devices, some collators would be more suitable than others.

Discussion of recommendation &/or advantages & disadvantages:

The use of an automatic collator would result in the following advantages:

a) employees would not have to perform the rather menial task of collating;

b) employee time could be better utilized by performing other tasks;

c) employee morale would improve if employees do not have to collate manually; and

d) greater accuracy of collated documents could be expected.

The only disadvantage seen in purchasing an automatic collator is the purchase cost, which is estimated to be approximately Rs. 10,000.

Conclusion:

Among the conclusions are the following:

An automatic collator can be justified on the basis of the number of sheets that have been collated.

Letter reports

- ***Basic difference is their destination***
- ***Are useful for presenting limited amount of information (1 to 4 pages & use a regular letter format)***

Letter reports

November 12, 2005

Mr. XYZ

General Manager

Hali Rd.

Lahore.

Dear Mr. XYZ

Here is the report you requested on June 15 concerning the nature of the physical improvements made at the branch office.

Physical improvements to General Office Area

The general office area has been completely renovated. New tile has been installed. In the general office area, and the carpet in the managers' and supervisors' offices is new. A new fluorescent lighting system has been installed, which adds greatly to the overall appearance of the office area. Heating and cooling ducts are integrated into the lighting fixtures. New furniture was purchased for some employees and work areas. Because the new furniture is streamlined and the old furniture has traditional styling, the two styles are not coordinated.

Suggestions for additional improvement

As a response to your request for suggestions to improve the branch office facilities, the following recommendations are being made:

1. ***Purchase more of the new streamlined furniture.***

2. ***Renovate the restroom facilities.***

I think we are making substantial progress toward improving the appearance of the facilities here at the branch office. If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely (or faithfully),

Lesson 43

Writing Résumés

What is a Résumé?

A résumé is a one or two page summary of your skills, accomplishments, experiences, and education designed to capture a prospective employer's interest. The purpose of a r*ésumé* is to create interest and secure an interview. ***It is the primary tool of your job search and may take several drafts to prepare effectively.***

Fallacies and facts about Résumé

Fallacy	*Fact*
The purpose of a résumé is to list all your skills & abilities.	***The purpose of a résumé is to kindle employer interest & generate an interview.***
A good résumé will get you the	***All a résumé can do is get you in job you want. the door.***
Your résumé will be read carefully and thoroughly by an interested employer.	***Your résumé probably has less than 45 seconds to make an impression.***
The more good information you present about yourself in your résumé, the better.	***Too much info on a résumé may actually kill the reader's appetite to know more.***
If you want a really good résumé, have it prepared by a résumé service.	***Prepare your own résumé – unless the position is especially high-level or specialized. Even then, you should check carefully before using a service.***

Adapt your résumé to your audience

Because your résumé will have little time to make an impression, be sure to adopt a "you" attitude and think about your résumé from the employer's perspective. Ask yourself:

1. What key qualifications will this employer be looking for?
2. Which of these qualifications are your greatest strengths?
3. What quality would set you apart from other candidates in the eyes of a potential employer?
4. What are three or four of your greatest accomplishments, and what resulted from these accomplishments?

Writing your résumé

To write a successful résumé you need to convey seven qualities that employers seek. You want to show that you:

1. think in terms of results,
2. know how to get things done,
3. are well rounded,
4. show signs of progress,
5. have personal standards of excellence,
6. are flexible and willing to try new things, and
7. possess strong communication skills.

As you organize and compose your résumé, think about how you can convey those seven qualities.

What do you have to offer?

Get started by jotting down 10 achievements you are proud of, such as taking a prize-winning photo, tutoring a child, or editing your college magazine. Think carefully about what specific skills these achievements demanded. For example, leadership skills, speaking ability, and artistic talent may have helped you coordinate a winning presentation. As you analyze your achievements, you will begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of them might be valuable to potential employers?

Next look at your educational preparation, work experience, and extracurricular activities. What do your knowledge and experience qualify you to do? What have you learned from volunteer work or class projects that could benefit you on the job? Have you held any offices, won any awards or scholarships, mastered a second language?

Take stock of your personal characteristics. Are you aggressive, a born leader? Or would you rather follow? Are you outgoing, articulate, great with people? Or do you prefer working alone? Make a list of what you believe are your four or five more important qualities. Ask a relative or friend to rate your traits as well.

What do you want to do?

What you can do is one thing. What you want to do is another. Discover the things that will bring satisfaction and happiness on the job.

1. *How would you like to work?* ***Consider how much independence you want on the job, how much variety you like, and whether you prefer to work with machines, ideas, people, figures, or some combination thereof. Do you like physical work, mental work, or a mix? Constant change or a predictable role?***
2. *What specific compensation do you expect?* ***What do you hope to earn in your first year? What kind of pay increase do you expect each year? What's your ultimate earnings goal? Would you be comfortable getting paid on commission, or do you prefer a steady paycheck? Are you willing to settle for less money in order to do something you really love?***
3. *Can you establish some personal career goals?* ***Consider where you'd like to start, where you'd like to go from there, and the ultimate position you'd like to attain. How soon after joining the company would you like to receive your first promotion? Your next one? What additional training or preparation will you need to achieve them?***
4. *What size company would you prefer?* ***Do you like the idea of working for a small, entrepreneurial operation? Or would you prefer a large corporation?***
5. *What type of operation is appealing to you?* ***Would you prefer to work a profit-making company or a non-profit organization? Are you attracted to service business or manufacturing operations? Do you want regular, predictable hours, or do you thrive on flexible, varied hours? Would you enjoy a seasonally varied job such as education (which may give you summer off) or retailing (with its selling cycles)?***

6. *What locations would you like**? Would you like to work in a city, a suburb, a small town, an industrial area, or an uptown setting? Do you like working indoors or outdoors?***
7. *What facilities do you envision**? Is it important to you to work in an attractive place, or will simple, functional quarters suffice? Do you need a quiet office to work effectively, or can you concentrate in a noisy, open setting? Is access to public transportation or freeways important?***
8. *What sort of corporate culture are you comfortable with**? Would you be happy in a formal hierarchy with clear reporting relationships? Or do you prefer less structure? Are you looking for a paternalistic firm or one that fosters individualism? Do you like a competitive environment? One that rewards teamwork? What qualities do you want in a boss?***

The well written résumé may include a persuasively arranged summary of:

- ***Name & address***
- ***Career objective or summary of qualifications***
- ***Education and training***
- ***Work experience, skills, and accomplishments***
- ***Activities and achievements***
- ***Personal Data (memberships, honor and awards, hobbies and interests.)***
- ***References***

Each of these is discussed below:

Name & address

This constitutes the heading of the résumé. It includes the applicant's name, address, telephone number(s), e-mail address.

RÉSUMÉ

Mohammad Nazim

1..-J, Model Town, Lahore-54700

(92 42) 58676..

0300-4518…

nazim49@…mail.com

Career objective or summary of qualifications

This section must be prepared with as much clarity of thought and specificity as possible. Remember, your goal is to generate interest immediately. If you decide to state your objective, make it effective by being as specific as possible about what you want.

Objective

Employment in the career services field.

A challenging position of responsibility as a personnel director, personnel specialist, or organization development specialist in private industry anywhere in Pakistan.

Summary of qualifications

Ten years of experience in commission selling with track record of generating new customer leads through creative advertising and community leadership positions.

Education and training

List the latest educational or training level first and work chronologically backward from there. Account for any significant gaps between major educational training events.

Include your degree or diploma, major field, institution, and date of attainment for each level.

Education

1993 to 1995 ***Master of Business Administration with emphasis on International Business, University of the Punjab.***

1990 to 1993 ***Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting, University of the Punjab.***

Work experience, skills, and accomplishments

Tailor your description to highlight the relationship between your previous responsibilities and your target field. When describing your work experience, list your jobs in chronological orders, with the current or last one first. However the reverse chronological order is preferred. Include any part-time, summer, or intern positions, even if unrelated to your current career objective.

Several formats exist for presenting your work experience information. You may list it (a) by date, (b) by job title, (c) by functional skills attained.

Work experience

Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2005 ***Modern Furnitures, Lahore.***

(by date) ***Worked part time during school year as a book-keeper and full time during the summer.***

Performed computerized bookkeeping operation.

Receptionist & Snack Bar Cashier ***(by job title)*** ***S & P Restaurant, Lahore. Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2005. Worked part time as front-desk receptionist & as cashier in the snack bar. Took messages, answered questions, gave directions. Etc.***

Have developed effective Management skills ***(by functional skills attained)*** ***As production manager (Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2005) and later as vice-president (Oct 2005 to present) of A. J. Corporation, Lahore. I have had many varied management experiences.***

Activities and achievements

Your résumé should also describe any volunteer activities that demonstrate your abilities. List projects that require leadership, organization, teamwork, and cooperation. Emphasize career-related activities such as "member of the Student Marketing Association." List skills you learned in these activities, and explain how these skills are related to the job you are applying for.

Note any awards you have received. Quantify your achievements. If your activities have been extensive, you may want to group them into divisions such as "College Activities," "Community Service," Professional associations," "Seminars and Workshops," and "Speaking Activities."

Personal data

Provide additional information about yourself, if not mentioned earlier

References

When listing the names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of references, obtain their permission prior to submitting the resume. Choose those people who represent the range of various facets of your career and professional talents and experiences.

The chronological résumé

The work-experience section dominates and is placed in the most prominent slot, immediately after the name and address and the objective. You develop this section by listing your jobs sequentially in reverse order, beginning with the most recent position position and working backward toward earlier jobs.

This approach has three key advantages:

1. ***Employees are familiar with it and can easily find information.***
2. It highlights growth and career progression, and
3. It highlights employment continuity and stability

The chronological résumé

RÉSUMÉ

Mohammad Aslam
254-K, Garden Town, Lahore
(92 42) 586....
0300-45.....
maslam@...mail.com

Objective

Accounting management position requiring a knowledge of international finance

Experience

March 2001 to Present	*Financial Analyst, I. A. Imports* ***- Prepare accounting reports for wholesale importer ($10 million annual sales)*** ***- Audit financial transactions with supplies in 12 foreign countries.*** ***- Created a computer model to adjust accounts for fluctuations in currency exchange rates*** ***- Negotiated joint-venture agreements with major supplies in UK.***
Oct. 1998 to March 2001	*Staff Accountant, M. S. Chemicals* ***- Handled budgeting, billing, & credit processing functions for the Lahore Branch.*** ***- Audited travel/entertainment expenses*** ***- Assisted in launching an online computer system to automate all accounting functions***
Education	
1996 to 1998	***Master of Business Administration with emphasis on International Business, University of the Punjab.***
1993 to 1996	***Bachelor of Business (administration, Accounting)*** ***University of the Punjab.***

Lesson 44

Writing Résumés

The functional résumé

A functional resume emphasizes a list of skills and accomplishments, identifying employers and academic experience in subordinate sections.

This approach has three advantages:

1. ***Without having to read through job descriptions, employers can see what you can do for them,***
2. ***You can emphasize earlier job experience, and***
3. ***You can de-emphasize any lack of career progress or lengthy unemployment.***

Objective

To work as director of marketing.

Relevant Skills

- *Training and Development*

  2 years of experience as the training and development manager for A & R Co.

- *Organization Development*

  2 years of experience as an organization development planner for D. B. Consultants

- *Managing*

  Trained part-time employees of B. Services in cash register operation and customer services.

Work Experience

Manager, Training and Development, ***A & R Co., March 1, 2003 to April 15. 2005***

Organization Development Planner, ***D. B. Consultants, Jan. 30, 2001 to Feb. 28, 2003***

Education

Master of Business Administration (3.8 GPA/4.0 scale). V. University, Aug. 2000

These suggestions aid in completing application forms:

2. ***Keep your résumé up to date, and carry a copy of it with you.***
3. ***Read the instructions on the form carefully before beginning to complete it.***
4. ***If the instructions specify printing or handwriting responses, do as required.***
5. ***Complete every blank on the form – even if you have to insert entries like "None," "Not applicable."***
6. ***Complete the form correctly and neatly. Carry a small dictionary with you to spell words correctly.***
7. ***For open-end questions, organize your thoughts carefully and write a draft of the answer on a piece of paper before transferring to the form.***
8. ***Answer questions honestly, but in a manner that will emphasize strengths, not weaknesses.***
9. ***As suggested for the résumé, consider carefully whether to include or omit answers to questions that you may not legally have to answer.***

© Copyright Virtual University of Pakistan

10. If the form includes a question about what salary you expect to receive, write an actual figure or range of figures if you have made such a decision, or write something like this:

- **The typical salary paid for the position to someone of my ability**
- **To be discussed during interview**
- **Negotiable**
- **Open for discussion.**

11. Upon completion, review the entries for completeness and accuracy.

Interviewing

Getting Ready

1.Review your resume.
2.Try to find out information about the interviewer.
3.Formulate answers to questions you are likely to be asked.
4.Become familiar with nonverbal cues that can enhance your interview performance.

Thinking ahead about questions

Planning ahead for the questions will help handle them more confidently and intelligently:

- Tell us something about yourself.
- What are your greater strengths?
- What are your greater weaknesses?
- Why is your GPA not higher?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- If we hire you, what changes would you make?
- What didn't you like about previous jobs you have had?
- Where do you want to be five years from now?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Is money important to you?

Making a good impression during the interview

1.Appropriate dress is important for a good first impression.
2.Be on time.
3.Be confident and courteous.
4.Keep eye contact with the interviewer.
5.Provide thoughtful, direct, & honest answers.
6.Avoid asking questions about salary

What do interviewers evaluate?

1.How mentally alert and responsive is the applicant?
2.Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions?
3.Does the applicant demonstrate a degree of intellectual depth when communicating or is his/her ability shallow and lacking in depth?
4.What is the applicant's capacity for problem solving?
5.How well does the applicant respond to stress and pressure?
6.Can the applicant succeed in the position for which he/she is being interviewed?
7.Can the applicant be trusted?
8.Is the applicant professionally and socially mature?

The most Critical Success Factors employers are looking for:

- Positive attitude toward work
- Proficiency in field of study
- Communication skills (written & oral)
- Interpersonal skills

- Confidence
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Flexibility
- Self-motivation
- Leadership
- Teamwork

- Leadership

People with high EQ

Research shows that employees with certain personality traits tend to be more successful at their job. As a result, many employers today seek candidates with a high "emotional intelligence," or EQ (emotional quotient). People with a high EQ generally possess these desirable attributes: self-awareness, good impulse control, persistence, confidence, self-motivation, and empathy, as well as the abilities to persuade, articulate a mission, interpret the mood of a group, and communicate with people in terms they understand.

People with high EQ:

- Think clearly and stay focused on the task at hand while under pressure.
- Admit to their mistakes.
- Meet commitments and keep promises.
- Hold themselves accountable for meeting their goals.
- Seek new ideas from a variety of sources.
- Handle multiple demands and changing priorities.
- Make sacrifices to meet an important organizational goal.
- Cut through red tape and bend outdated rules when necessary.
- Seek fresh perspectives, even if that means trying something totally new.
- Operate from an expectation of success rather than a fear of failure.
- Try to learn how to improve their performance.
- Set challenging goals and take calculated risks to reach them.

Lesson 45

Overview

Having had a good thorough study of Oral and Written Communication techniques, which spread over 44-lectures, the students should finally be in a position to understand the importance of effective communication in their personal and professional life. Starting from the first lecture, which delved on knowing about "self concept" and "self image", and ending on the note of having a "self-assessment" made before drawing your future roadmap (or writing your resume for the job search), the students are advised to start focusing on some of the lessons they could learn from this course. Although these could be numerous, depending on how you look at, a few that could be mentioned in an overview are:

1. Becoming a smart thinker;
2. Being an active listener; and
3. Becoming an effective speaker.

Making a great change in your life would depend on how smartly you employ all the tools and techniques you learnt for good planning and organization in communication. Do not forget we all are born with the ability to think, listen, and speak, but what will make a difference in our lives is how skilled we are to be effective. Therefore, few things you could start doing from today is:

1. Think smartly

Finding your identity, being aware of one's capabilities and limitations, defining one's goals and objectives, sorting out one's priorities, and organizing oneself to produce results require giving a serious thought by asking yourself questions like:
Who you are?
Where am I?
Where do I stand professionally?
What are my strengths?
What are my major problem areas? And so on.

Remember, if you have no concept of your identity, then you have nothing on which to build your plans for the future. A lack of identity often results in a lack of direction. You must know your strengths and weaknesses; otherwise the process of defining your goals and working toward them would be flawed. So, start thinking now. Thinking seriously and smartly.

2. Listen actively

Of the various ways we interact with people, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, nearly 42% of our waking time is spent in listening. A good communicator needs to be a good listener; otherwise barriers occur and affectivity suffers.

It is important, therefore, that of all the levels of listening discussed so far (Active, Passive, Partial, and Preferential listener), one should develop skills to become an Active Listener. Understanding the listening process is of paramount importance which is: Receiving; Filtering; Understanding; Remembering; Evaluating; and Responding. Don't forget that the most crucial phase in the listening cycle is the "remembering". We tend to remember only half after listening, and that too *not what was said, but what we think was said*. Memory for speech is not reproductive, it's reconstructive. Acknowledging these facts, start developing attentive listening skills, i.e.

- Keep an open mind. Listen non-judgmentally. Recognize your own biases. Welcome new viewpoints rather than resisting them.
- Be motivated to listen
- Be alert to nonverbal cues
- Listen with a goal in mind
- React to the message, not to the person.
- Listen for supportive ideas without personal prejudice or bias.

- Don't get angry
- Remember it's impossible to listen and speak at the same time.
- Try to get into the other person's inner frame of reference.
- Listen for speaker's main ideas and concentrate on their meaning. Take advantage of your brainpower.
- Do not jump to conclusions. Listen for facts before forming your opinion.
- Ask questions. Show your interest and attention. Keep them pertinent to the speaker's frame, not yours.
- Listen with the heart as well as with the head.

3. Speak effectively

How to be an effective speaker, a good negotiator, and an impressive communicator? Answer to all these questions lie in the various aspects of a good speech. And a good speech is how skillful the speaker is. Of the various techniques we discussed in our lectures salient components of an effective speech are the:

-Speaker
-Message
-Audience
-Channel
-Feedback
-Setting

The speaker

One of the major components of any speech or presentation is the speaker himself or herself. Many presenters, while using visual aids, forget that they are the presentation and not the visual aids. They tend to put too much effort into the visual aids and forget that those are just aids to the speaker.

There are three factors that contribute to a speaker's affectivity:

a. Speaker's motivation
b. Speaker's credibility
c. Speaker's delivery or the speaker's style

a. **Speaker's motivation**: It can be approached in terms of two considerations:
Whether direct personal reward (monetary compensation) or indirect rewards (feeling good about helping others) are involved.

Whether immediate rewards (cash) or delayed rewards (getting a college degree after four years of college) play a part.

In essence, one or both of these factors may motivate a speaker. Before speaking you should consider what your motivations are.

b. **Speaker's credibility**: A speaker's ideas are accepted as believable only to the degree that the speaker is perceived to be credible. The speaker's credibility depends on his/her trustworthiness, competence, and good will. The speaker who is well organized will usually be considered competent. The speaker who is attractive and dynamic will be seen as more credible than one who is not.

c. **Speaker's delivery**: The delivery, the way the message is presented, should compliment the speech's objective. A well-written speech delivered poorly can quickly lose effectiveness.

The message

The message refers to everything a speaker does or says, both verbally and non-verbally. The verbal component may be analyzed in terms of three basic elements:

a. Content
b. Style
c. Structure

Let's look at each of these elements.

a. **Content** - is what you say about your topic. The content is the MEAT of your speech or presentation. Research your topic thoroughly. Decide on how much to say about each subject.

b. **Style** - The manner in which your present the content of your speech is your style. Styles can vary from very formal to the very informal. The style should be determined by what is appropriate to the speaker, the audience, as well as the occasion and setting.

c. **Structure** - The structure of a message is its organization. There are many organizational variations, but in each case, the structure should include:

i. An Introduction
ii. A Body
iii. A Conclusion

The introduction should include:
- an opening grabber such as a quote or shocking statistic.
- an agenda
- the purpose or main message of your presentation.

The body should include:
- your main points or ideas.
- points which support your main message.

The conclusion should include:
- a summary of your main points.
- a closing grabber.
- time for questions & answers, if appropriate.

When speeches and presentations are poorly organized, the impact of the message is reduced and the audience is less likely to accept the speaker or the speaker's ideas.

The audience

As a speaker you should analyze your listeners and then decide how to present your ideas. This analysis might include considerations related to: age, sex, marital status, race, geographic location, group membership, education, career etc.

A well-prepared speech that is ill suited to the audience can have the same effect as a poorly prepared speech delivered to the correct audience. Both speeches will fail terribly.
Proper audience analysis will assure that you give the right speech to the right audience.

The channel

When we communicate with our audiences, we use many channels of communication. This includes non-verbal, pictorial and aural channels. It is very important that you use as many channels as you can to communicate with your audience. The more channels of communication you can use at the same time, the better. A brief list of examples for the three channels we mostly use are:

A. Nonverbal
   1. gestures
   2. facial expressions
   3. body movement
   4. posture

B. Pictorial
   1. diagrams
   2. charts
   3. graphs

4. pictures
5. objects

C. Aural

1. tone of your voice
2. variations in pitch and volume
3. other vocal variety

The feedback

By "feedback" the speaker receives information about how his or her message has been received by the listeners and, in turn, responds to those cues. The feedback process is not complete until the speaker has responded to the listener. This process includes the listener's reactions to the speaker's response and so forth.

The setting

The place in which you deliver your presentation may be one that enhances or interferes with the effectiveness of your presentation. Determine ahead of time what the facilities are like before you speak. This way you can properly plan your delivery or make adjustments, if necessary.

4. Write purposefully

Good writing style is important to good communication. Communication happens only when you write something that somebody else reads and understands. For this, you must use words and concepts that mean the same thing to you and to your reader.

In other words, you must adapt your writing to your reader. Here again, good writing proceeds from clear thinking (or smart thinking?) – thinking that gives importance to the reader, not to you.

To write purposefully, don't start writing briskly with the hope that your thoughts will somehow clarify themselves by the working of the magic of words. It won't happen. There is no such magic. You have to spend a good amount of time practicing: planning and organizing, before you start writing purposefully. Refer back to the exercise of going through the following four steps:

i. Determining your purpose
ii Considering your reader
iii. Choosing your idea
iv Determining your content

Much of your writing success could be attributed to the quality of preparation, which could consume as much as 60% of the total time devoted to the actual writing.

5. Live happily

Communication performs many important functions related to our day-to-day needs. Our success in satisfying our personal needs rests with our skills in interpreting and responding to the communication behavior of other people. In order to gain this skill we must be willing to understand human and interpersonal communication. We must also be willing to understand the underlying causes of human behavior which mostly result from the misconceptions that undermine our communication endeavors only because we think that:

- We need more communication,
- Communication eliminates problems, and
- Meanings are in words.

It is important, therefore, to remind yourself of the gainful application of the communication skills and maximize the awards to you and the people in your life.

To sum up, the study and practice pf communication should be a lifetime process, and it must ensure a happy and a healthy living throughout.

THE END