
UNIT 13 WRITING PARAGRAPHS -3

Structure

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to make you aware of the organization of a paragraph in terms of chronological (time) sequence, spatial relationships and class relationships.

After you complete this unit, you should be able to

- write paragraphs which follow both the natural and the unexpected time sequence,
- write instructions which involve giving directions, preparing a recipe, or conducting an experiment,
- write descriptions involving simple processes,
- write descriptions involving space relationships, and
- classify items and write paragraphs based on class relationships.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

You have already worked through two units on the writing of paragraphs. The first unit dealt with the basic elements in the organization of paragraphs. The second dealt with some of the techniques of developing paragraphs. In this unit, we shall deal in some more detail with some of the principles observed in organizing paragraphs. These relate to chronological (time) sequencing, spatial relationships, and class relationships.

13.2 CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

By chronological sequence we mean that we arrange events in the order in which they occur in time, beginning with the first event, going on to the next event, and so on until we have come to the last event. This is the method that we normally use when we tell a simple story, describe a process, report incidents and events, or write a biographical sketch.

13.2.1 Biographical writing

Self-check Exercise 1

Given below is a biographical sketch of Ronald Ross, who discovered how malaria was transmitted. The sections are not in the right order. Arrange them in the correct

chronological sequence. Check your answer with that given by us at the end of the unit.

- i) He started to study malaria, and during a vacation in England in 1894, met Patrick Manson, thirteen years his senior and learned in tropical diseases.
- ii) In 1897, at the age of forty, Ross made one of the greatest of medical discoveries. He proved that malaria was transmitted by mosquitoes, showed how the transmission occurred, and identified the particular kind of mosquito that was responsible for it.
- iii) He was educated in England and returned to India in 1881 as an officer in the Indian Medical Service.
- iv) Ronald Ross was born at Almora, in the Himalayas, in 1857.
- v) Manson directed him to an effective study of the disease, and with his help and encouragement, Ross solved the mystery in three years.
- vi) Then, about 1890, his medical conscience was stirred by the appalling disease and misery with which he was surrounded in the course of his work as an army surgeon in India, and he began to feel that he ought to try to do something about it.

(From S.G. Crowther: *Six Great Doctors*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. London)

Glossary

(The stressed syllables have been marked in words of two or more syllables.)

'tropical : of the tropics, parts of the world between the Tropic of Cancer (23° North) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23° South)

trans'mitted : passed on

ap'palling : shocking

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If you think of the exercise you have just completed, you will probably realize that the cues used to organize the biographical details chronologically are the dates mentioned in the text. You will find that most biographies are organized sequentially in a clear time frame, according to the dates of important events.

Our daily lives are also generally organized in a similar fashion, where we see time moving in one direction — from the past to the present and from the present to the future. Yet, there are moments in our lives which are more important than others and which we tend to highlight. If we write about such events, we may break the natural chronological sequence.

In more complex pieces of writing, we can manipulate time if we wish. We can move the writing backwards and forwards through time, according to our purpose in writing. In general, writers use unexpected chronological sequences when they want to emphasize something other than the time sequence.

13.2.2 Narrative

The extract below shows an interesting play with time in the mind of the main character. Read it carefully and note how the text moves from one period of time to another.

Example 1

It was the same story everywhere. He returned home in the evening; his heart sank as he turned into his street behind the Market. His wife would invariably be standing at the door with the children behind her, looking down the street. What anxious, eager faces they had! So much of trembling, hesitating hope in their faces. They seemed always to hope that he would come back home with some magic fulfilment. As he remembered the futile way in which he searched for a job, and the finality with which people dismissed him, he wished that his wife and children had less trust in him. His wife looked at his face, understood, and turned in without uttering a word; the children took the cue and filed in silently. Rama Rao tried to improve matters with a forced heartiness. 'Well, well. How are we all today?' To which he received mumbling, feeble responses from his wife and children. It rent his heart to see them in this condition.

There at the Extension how this girl would sparkle with flowers and a bright dress; she had friendly neighbours, a women's club, and everything to keep her happy there. But now she hardly had the heart or the need to change in the evenings, for she spent all her time cooped up in the kitchen. And then the children. The house in the Extension had a compound and they romped about with a dozen other children : It was possible to have numerous friends in the fashionable nursery school. But here the children had no friends, and could play only in the backyard of the house. Their shirts were beginning to show tears and frays. Formerly they were given new clothes once in three months. Rama Rao lay in bed and spent sleepless nights over it.

(From R.K. Narayan : 'Out of Business' in *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories*, Indian Thought Publications, Mysore)

Glossary

(The pronunciation of some of the words has been indicated by the use of phonetic symbols.)

his 'heart 'sank : he was depressed

in 'variably / in'veəriəbl / : always

ful'filment : realization of hopes.

'futile / 'fju:tail / : of no use; without result

cue/kju:/ : hint

'filed 'in : went in one behind the other

'heartiness : cheerfulness

'mumbling : speaking indistinctly

'rent his 'heart : made him extremely sad

'cooped 'up : kept within a small area

'romped a 'bout : played about

Self-check Exercise 2

1 Why did Rama Rao's heart sink when he turned into his street?

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2 'What anxious, eager faces they had !' Why were their faces 'anxious' as well as 'eager'?

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3 In what way was their earlier life at the Extension different?

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[illegible]

'His wife looked at his face, ... see them in this condition.'

Analyse the movement of time in the rest of the passage in terms of the present life and the past life of Rama Rao and his family. Write your answer in the table below :

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Why do you think the writer has used such a complex time movement in this passage? If you think about it, you may realize that it is because he wants to highlight the happy and comfortable life that Rama Rao and his family lived in the past, in contrast to the unfortunate circumstances they have fallen into now.

When you yourself write a composition involving chronological sequencing, the specific time expressions given below may help you work out the time relationships. These time expressions (1) mark a specific time, or (2) show the relationship between periods of time.

1 Specific Time Indicators:

just then	at the beginning of May.....
in those days.....	at 6 o'clock.....
last Monday	six years ago
in 1954.....	

2 Time Sequences :

a) *Earlier Time* :

Until then, he lived/she had lived

By (then)

Before (then)

Up to that time

Prior to

Same time :

During this period, he fell ill

While working at

In the meantime

At that moment

It was then that he

Later time :

After this, he went

Subsequently

Afterwards

Then

After a while

Later on

Eventually

In the long run

Self-check Exercise 4

Write a paragraph of about 100 words on how you spend your time on a typical morning. Arrange your points in a chronological sequence from the time you get up to the time you leave for work. You may take the help of the time expressions given above.

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Self-check Exercise 5

Write another paragraph of about 150 words, developing the points given below. The first sentence is also given. We have not maintained the natural chronological order. Why?

My School Days

When I think of my school days, the year that stands out most vividly in my mind is when I was in Class 8. Miss D'Souza was the class teacher — instilled love of

[illegible]

Another type of writing which involves chronological sequencing is what is known as process analysis.

Like narration, a process is organized chronologically. But here, the natural time order is strictly followed, i.e. starting at the beginning of the process, and continuing step by step to the end.

- **You must thoroughly understand the process that you are describing, and if possible, try it out yourself. This will help you anticipate any difficulties that might arise.**
- **Inform your readers of the special tools or materials needed for the job. These could be mentioned right at the beginning, in a section labelled 'Tools Required' or 'Materials Required'. This is to enable the reader to have all his tools ready before making a beginning.**
- **Alert your readers to be careful with steps that require precise timing or measurement.**
- **Warn your readers of potentially dangerous steps or materials. For example, if there are some materials which are flammable, let your readers know before they reach that step.**
- **Give illustrations if you think your instructions will be better understood that way. Illustrations can simplify instructions by reducing the number of words necessary to explain something. You will be able to focus your attention on the steps making up the instructions, rather than on the description of the various parts of the apparatus or equipment.**
- **Use linking words which will make clear the sequence in which events or the stages in a process occur.**

The table below gives some common linking devices used when describing a process :

Beginning steps	Middle steps	Final steps
First(ly),	Second,	Finally,
Initially,	Third, etc.	In the end,
To start with,	Next, Then,	Lastly,
	After that,	
	When.....,	
	Subsequently,	
	At the same time.....	

Self-check Exercise 6

- 1 You don't like the tea made at your place of work. You know how to make good tea. Write out a recipe for making tea.

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- 2 Write a set of directions to a friend telling him the way from the railway station to your house. Use a simple sketch map if necessary.

Explaining a Process

When you prepare instructions, your purpose is to help your reader to complete a specific task by following the step-by-step procedure you have outlined. If you are asked to write an explanation of a process, on the other hand, your purpose will be quite different. You will be telling the reader how something works or how something is done, but not something which he must do himself. The process you explain may be an event that occurred in nature (the formation of the Solar System, for instance) or an activity that requires human effort (e.g., harvesting of rice).

As in the writing of instructions, you must thoroughly understand the process yourself before you explain it to your readers. Another common feature in the explanation of a process and instructions is that both kinds of writing are composed of steps arranged in a natural chronological order. The example below explains how black tea is made. Read it carefully and note how it is different from giving instructions.

Example 2

Black Tea

The basic steps in making black tea from the raw leaf are withering, rolling, fermenting, and firing (drying). First the leaves are transported from the plantation to the factory as rapidly as possible. The leaves are spread on racks to wither. This removes about one third of the moisture, and the leaves become soft and pliable. After this they are rolled to break the cells and release the juices, which are essential for the fermenting process. Then the leaves are spread out and kept under high humidity to promote fermentation, which develops the rich flavour of black tea. Then the leaves are dried (fired) until the moisture is removed.

(From *The New Book of Knowledge*, Vol. 18, Grolier Incorporated, New York).

Glossary

raw /rɔː/: in the natural state before being used in a manufacturing process

'withering : causing something to become dry

'rolling : moving something along by turning it over and over, or from side to side

fer'menting : causing something to undergo chemical changes through the action of organic bodies

rack : a framework with bars, pegs or shelves for holding things or hanging them on

'pliable : easily bent

You must have noticed in the example given above that the writer is using mainly the simple present tense in the passive voice (e.g., First the leaves are transported). When the present tense is used in this way, it is often called the **timeless present**, because its use does not mean that the process is happening at this moment, but that it happens in this way, repeatedly, on many occasions. In other words, no specific time reference is necessary.

However, if you write up the stages of a process as a report, then you will probably use the past tense (e.g., First the leaves were transported....). This is because you will be reporting each specific occurrence of the process, which took place at a specific (past) time.

13.3 SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

We have discussed the organization of paragraphs according to a chronological sequence. Paragraphs can also be organized according to space relationships.

Very often we have to write about the Location of a place, how a place is to be laid out (e.g., Proposals for landscape work) or how a set of objects are connected (e.g., description of laboratory equipment). For this we need to be aware of the spatial relationships involved. In a spatial sequence, you describe an object or a process according to the physical arrangements of its features.

There is no one right pattern for spatial development. Depending on the subject, you may describe its features from top to bottom, from side to side from inside to outside, and so on. What matters is that the way you present your subject in space should be suited to what you are trying to say about the subject. For example, if you are writing about a river being polluted by chemicals, it is better to proceed along the course of the river as it passes by various sources of pollution. A description of the river from a single point of view on the bank showing first what is near and then moving toward what is at a distance may not be useful at all. Such an arrangement would limit you to one view of the river. When you write about the distant view, the distance might prevent your giving any specific details of pollution.

Thus a paragraph developed through a proper spatial relationship presents the point of view of the writer and at the same time turns the reader's attention in a certain direction. Supposing you were to write a paragraph describing your university campus, you might organize the description in different ways :

- 1 You might use some important landmark, for example the library, and describe other places in relation to it. The order in which you discuss each place is not as important as its relationship to the landmark.
- 2 You might use an important landmark as the starting point, and move from it to the next place, on to another, and so on, perhaps ending at the original landmark.
- 3 Another type of development by space might give importance to the boundaries of an area. This would lead to a logical progression from one location to another.
- 4 Still another spatial development might stress the interrelationships between locations. Then, the order of description is not necessarily important.

Generally, when you write a paragraph showing spatial relationships, your description is likely to include the following features :

- dimension (height, width, length)
- direction (up, down, north, south)
- shape (rectangular, square)
- proportion (one-third, half)

Read the description below, which makes use of spatial relationships. Try to create in your mind a visual image of the area when you read about it.

Example 3

And everything was as Shama had said. On one side of the drive there was a cricket field; the pitch was red and broken : obviously the village team did not use matting. On the other side, beyond the saman tree, the lianas, the wild tannia, there was a swimming pool, empty, cracked, sandy, plants pushing up through the concrete, but it was easy to see it mended and filled with clear water; and beyond that, on an artificial mound, a cherry tree, its thick branches trimmed level at the bottom above a wrought-iron seat. And in the drive the gri-gri palms, with their white trunks, red berries and dark green leaves; though they were perhaps too old : they had grown so tall they could not be seen whole, and could even be missed.

(From V.S. Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Penguin)

Glossary

drive : A private road through a garden or park to a house

'matting : rough woven material used to cover the cricket pitch

li'ana / li'ana/ : a plant that climbs round trees; up the walls, etc. in tropical countries

'concrete /'konkri:t/ : building material made by mixing cement with sand, gravel, etc.

mound : a mass of piled up earth, like a small hill

'wrought-iron : iron beaten into shape

Self-check Exercise 7

Answer the following questions. These questions will help you to understand the passage and its organization.

- 1 In the discussion above, we listed four possible ways in which you can organize your paragraphs in terms of spatial arrangement. Into what category would the paragraph in Example 3 fit? Give reasons for your answer.

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- 2 Pick out the words/phrases which suggest 'direction' in the passage.

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- 3 a) What are the things mentioned in the paragraph which obviously strike you as needing repair?
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- b) Write down the phrase which suggests that the writer feels the place can be lived in after proper repairs.
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- 4 Read the paragraph again and try to draw a simple plan of the area described.

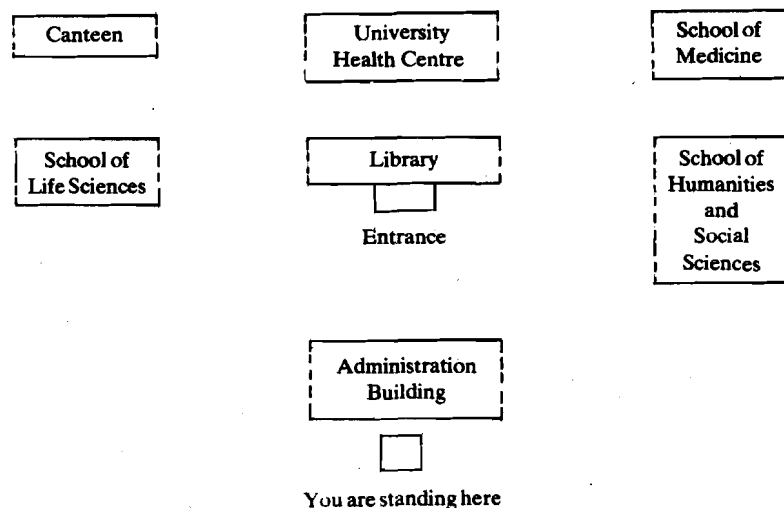
Visual Aids

Spatial description often include visual material, such as a plan, a map or a diagram. These aid our understanding of a text. Writers use visuals to achieve different goals. Sometimes the purpose is to duplicate the information given in a text, so that the reader can visualize the relations more clearly. The visual can also clarify the rather complicated spatial relations set out in a text. Visuals are also used to supplement texts, i.e. to add further information to the text or to emphasize certain aspects of the information given in a text.

Self-check Exercise 8

Given below is a rough map of a university campus. Imagine that you are standing in front of the Administration Building. Using the library as the focus, describe the layout of the campus in about 100 words.

A University Campus



The following expressions may help you in writing your description :

in front of	beside
behind	on/to the left/right
	between

13.4 CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

There are various ways in which people organize the world around them. We have already discussed two such ways : time and space. Another way they do this is by looking for relationships among objects or ideas and classifying them into groups according to their similarities and differences.

Self-check Exercise 9

Given below is a list of words. Classify them into groups. Give each group a heading. Can you explain why you grouped them as you did?

doctor	father	daughter
uncle	aunt	Mongoloid
Caucasian	negroid	son
nurse	engineer	dentist

Why do we need to classify things? Without classification systematic thought would be difficult. You must have noticed that in the list given above we are referring to human beings. Yet we need to classify the words into various categories. Similarly, biologists classify forms of life in order to describe them better. They classify living things into plants and animals. They classify animals into vertebrates (having a back-bone) and invertebrates. They classify vertebrates into mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Each class has its distinct characteristics, and so, if a biologist comes across some creature he hasn't met before, he has at least some way of describing it.

Of course classification depends on the purpose of writing. A biologist writing for fellow scientists would use very different categories for species of 'reptiles' than a schoolboy on a field trip. What are the factors involved in classification? The way we classify depends on what characteristics we think are important. For example, in biology, the presence of bones in the body is an important characteristic which differentiates animals, so we have the categories of vertebrates and non-vertebrates. Generally, in academic writing (unless new discoveries are made) classifications are

based on conventions (how others have done it), and on the purpose of writing. Of course categories will change with time. English literature, for example, has been traditionally divided according to historical periods : Medieval, Renaissance, seventeenth century, eighteenth century, Romantic, Modern. However, it is possible to have an English literature syllabus in prose based on categories of form : e.g., descriptive prose, narrative prose, expository prose, and introspective prose; or essay, short story, novel, one-act play, full length play, biography and autobiography. When you organize your writing according to class relationships, you must keep in mind the following points :

- Use only one principle of classification; e.g. Cars can be classified according to size, manufacturer, price, and country of origin. Choose the principle of classification suitable for your purpose.
- Be consistent. Once you've decided on a scheme of classification, stick to it throughout your composition. Mixing different ways of classification would cause a lot of confusion. For example, if you are classifying television programmes, do not put 'morning shows, afternoon shows, evening shows' with 'detective serials, UGC programmes and children's programmes'.
- Make the categories as complete as possible. All the individual units you are describing should fit into one of the classes you have adopted. In some cases you may be faced with the prospect of an endless number of classes. For example, if you are discussing religious beliefs and practices, you may end up with a long list of types. It may, then, be a good idea to restrict yourself to, say, 'Major Religions in India.'
- Do not hesitate to acknowledge an overlap of categories in some cases. Classifications are necessary, but they can also be arbitrary, especially in subjective writing. For example, you may classify people as introverts and extroverts, but it is a good idea to mention that introverts can sometimes be outgoing among close friends, and extroverts can be shy in unfamiliar situations.

Given below is a passage which is organized in terms of classification. Read it carefully and try to understand its arrangement.

Example 4

A government's main source of revenue is taxation. Taxes are contributions that the people of a country pay to their government to administer the country's affairs. There are two main types of taxes — direct and indirect. Direct taxes are those that individuals or firms pay directly to the government. These will include income tax (paid by the individual) and corporate tax (paid by companies). Indirect taxes are taxes paid on goods and services, such as sales tax, entertainment tax, etc.

Self-check Exercise 10

In the second unit on Note-taking (Block 2, Unit 9) we told you that passages of a classificatory nature could be analysed by means of a tree diagram. Try to organize the information in the paragraph above in terms of a tree diagram.

Exercise 11

You have come across several teachers in your life. They have all been quite different. Classify them into three categories and write about them in 150 words.

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13.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the organization of a paragraph in terms of chronological sequence, space relationship, and class relationship.

You should now be able to write paragraphs which involve natural and unexpected time sequences. These include biographical writing, narratives, instructions, and descriptions of processes. You should also be able to write paragraphs which involve space relations. These paragraphs may involve both visual and non-visual cues. Finally, you can now classify items and write texts based on class relationships.

13.6 KEY WORDS

bio'graphical : relating to the story of a person's life

'categories : classes

'character : a person portrayed in a novel, story, drama, etc.

,chronological : relating to the arrangement of events according to dates or times of occurrence

class : a group of persons or things having some characteristics in common

,classifi'cation : arrangement in classes

'landmark : an object that attracts notice in an area

'narrative : a story

'process : a series of operations

'sequence : the order in which one thing comes after another

'spatial : of space

13.7 SUGGESTED READING

13.8 ANSWERS TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

Exercise 1

(iv), (iii), (vi), (i), (v), (ii)

Exercise 2

1 because he knew that his wife and children would be expectantly waiting to hear that he had found a job — and he had been unsuccessful in finding one.

2 'anxious' — because they feared that they might have to hear the news that he had not been able to find a job.

'eager' — because they trusted him and hoped to hear that he *had* found a job.

3 At the Extension his wife was brightly dressed. She had a full social life, visiting neighbours and joining in the activities of the women's club. But in her present life, she didn't feel like changing in the evenings as she was always cooped up in the kitchen.

Rama Rao's children too had a better time at the Extension. Since the Extension had a compound, the children would play with the other children there. They also attended a fashionable nursery school. Now the children could only play in the backyard, and had no friends.

4 from the bottom of one's heart
to one's heart's content
take fresh heart
heart-burning
have one's heart in one's mouth

Exercise 3

Past

"There at the Extension
..... keep her happy there."

"The house in the Extension
..... nursery school."

"Formerly they were given
..... once in three months."

Present

"But now she hardly had
the heart kitchen."

"And then the children"

"But here the children
..... tears and frays."

"Rama Rao lay in bed and
spent sleepless nights
over it."

The last sentence refers to an event that often occurred in the past and is likely to happen again.

Exercise 4 : Specimen Answer

A Typical Morning

My day begins at 6.30 with the shrill sound of the alarm clock. I have a quick wash and read the newspaper over two cups of tea. From 7 to 7.30, I do yoga, which gives me peace and keeps me fit for the rest of the day. Now the leisurely part of the morning is over. After this, there is hectic activity, when I have my bath, prepare my breakfast, eat it, pack my bag, and do my bed. I'm out of the house by 9 o' clock.

Exercise 5 : Specimen Answer

My School Days

When I think of my school days, the year that stands out most vividly in my mind is when I was in class 8. Miss D'Souza was our English teacher. She was a motherly looking lady of uncertain age, but with a beautiful, expressive voice. She loved

Shakespeare, and made 'Julius Caesar', our text, come alive to us. About the years before that, I can hardly remember anything. I, therefore, imagine I must have had a fairly uneventful time. The senior years passed quickly. My satisfaction was that at the end of it all I got a good grade. Now, I am an English teacher, and I try my best to make Shakespeare come alive to my students.

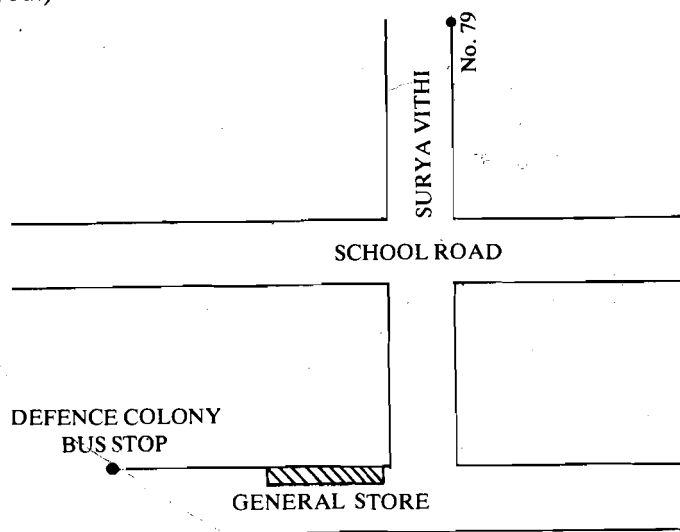
Exercise 6 : Specimen Answers

1 (The ingredients are well-known and need not be mentioned.)

To make a good pot of tea, use fresh water and bring it to a full boil. If possible, use a preheated pot for the tea. For each cup of water, put a teaspoonful of tea into the pot. Pour boiling water on the tea. Wait for 3 to 5 minutes. If you wait longer, the tea will have a slightly bitter taste. If you do not give enough time, the tea will be too weak.

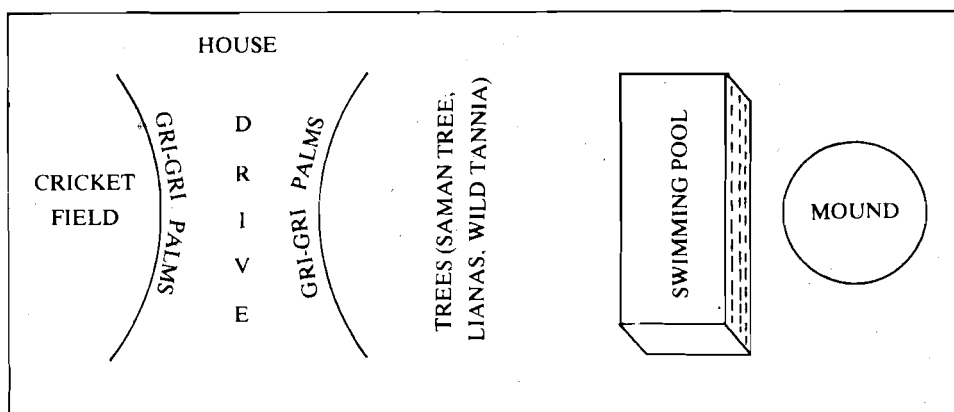
2 The way to my house

There's a bus terminus next to the railway station. Catch a 421 or 425 bus from there. Get off at the Defence Colony bus stop. The conductor will help you. From the bus stop walk past the General Store (Kwality Store), and take the first turning on the left. Walk along this road. Cross the first road you come to (School Road), and you'll come to Surya Vithi. No. 79 is the last house on the right. (The map given below may help you.)



Exercise 7

- 1 Category 1 . The drive is the important landmark and the other locations are described in relation to it.
- 2 On one side of the drive; On the other side.....; beyond the Saman tree; beyond that; above a wrought iron seat; in the drive.
- 3 a) The cricket pitch and the swimming pool.
b) "it was easy to see it mended and filled with clear water."
- 4 Here is a specimen map of the place.



Exercise 8 : Specimen Answer

The library is located at the centre of the University Campus. It is flanked by the School of Life Sciences on the left and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences on the right. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences is quite large. In front of the library is the Administration Building and behind it is the University Health Centre. To the left of the Health Centre is the Canteen and to the right is the School of Medicine.

Exercise 9

Races : Negroid, Caucasian, Mongoloid.

Relations : uncle, aunt, son, daughter, father.

Professions : doctor, dentist, nurse, engineer.

Exercise 10