
UNIT 24 SUMMING UP

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24.0 OBJECTIVES

In this last unit we shall sum up what we have tried to do on this course to develop your composition skills in English.

24.1 WRITING PARAGRAPHS

There were three units on the writing of paragraphs—Units 1, 2 & 13.

In Unit 1 we discussed the elements that went into the organization of a good paragraph—the topic sentence, the development of the topic, coherence, that is, connection between the sentences, and the use of transitional or linking devices.

In Unit 2 we discussed different techniques of developing paragraphs, such as illustration, description, cause and effect, definition, and composition and contrast.

In Unit 13 we discussed the organization of a paragraph in terms of chronological sequence, space relationship, and class relationship.

We hope you will now be able to organize your paragraphs properly, whether they contain an exposition, an argument, a narrative, or a description.

24.2 COMPOSITION

In Unit 3 we offered you some suggestions about the writing of compositions. For example:

- You should choose a topic about which you know a great deal.
- You should be aware of the reader's level of understanding, his interests and needs.
- When you choose a topic, you must know your sources of information.
- You must limit your topic in such a way that your composition reads smoothly.
- After you have limited your topic, you should start collecting and ordering your data.
- The writing of an outline is the most important part of the pre-writing stage.
- The beginning of the composition should be made interesting and arresting by

- plunging straight into the theme.
- The body of the composition develops the main ideas through illustration, description, definition, elaboration, etc.
- The ending should not be too sudden.
- The first draft should be revised and mistakes of grammar, diction and style corrected.

24.2.1 Expository Composition

We began our discussion on different types of composition by taking up expository compositions in Unit 4, and tried to illustrate some of the techniques used to develop the exposition of a subject.

24.2.2 Argumentative Composition

In Unit 7 we discussed the important features of argumentative compositions and the tactics used to support an argument. We also showed how an argumentative composition should be organized.

In Unit 8 we discussed the inductive and deductive methods of writing arguments, the fallacies in reasoning and some non-rational ways of writing.

24.2.3 Narrative Composition

In Unit 14 we discussed the various steps in the writing of a narrative composition, and in Unit 15 we presented some sample passages to illustrate (i) narratives in the form of dialogues, and (ii) different stylistic features.

24.2.4 Descriptive Composition

We took up descriptive compositions in Units 19-21.

In Unit 19 you learnt

- i) how to describe a person: his outward appearance, clothes, etc.,
- ii) how to give details about yourself in an application form or at an interview,
- iii) how to describe a person's habits and daily activities, and
- iv) how to describe a person's nature in general.

In Unit 20 you learnt

- i) to write and speak about a place by giving details like location, size, shape, colour, etc.,
- ii) to describe the atmosphere of a place by giving details of sounds, smells and activities, and
- iii) to describe an object of daily use by giving details like those for a place, as well as the texture, design and use of the object.

In Unit 21 we gave you some practice in describing

- i) the general conditions at a place,
- ii) the process of making things, like items of food,
- iii) the operation of common machines and apparatus, and
- iv) the process of applying for a passport or a post.

24.3 NOTE-TAKING

There were three units on note-taking—Units 5, 9 & 22.

In Unit 5 we suggested that you should read with a clear purpose in mind, so that you could separate the essential information in a text from what was repetitive or irrelevant. We also told you about the techniques of note-taking in terms of

- i) shortening devices such as abbreviations and symbols, and
- ii) the organization of notes in terms of headings and subordinate points.

In Unit 9 we discussed the organization of notes in the form of tables, charts and

diagrams. We also suggested that different kinds of material lent themselves to different techniques of note-taking.

In Unit 22 we discussed some of the special techniques required in taking notes while listening to a lecture. These included

- i) preparing yourself before the lecture,
- ii) being aware of the different parts of the lecture, and
- iii) differentiating between the main points and digressions, repetitions, etc.

We also provided some practice in reconstructing your notes.

24.4 WRITING REPORTS

24.4.1 Reporting Events

We started our discussion on the writing of reports by taking up the reporting of events in Unit 6. We showed you there how a report should be planned. An outline has to be prepared first. The three main parts of the report are the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. The language has to be clear, concrete, and precise; and jargon and roundabout ways of expression are to be avoided. If it is a report on an accident, you have to give the precise time and place of the accident, and information about any people killed or injured, the damage caused to property, and the cause of the accident.

24.4.2 Reporting Meetings and Speeches

In Unit 10 we suggested that a report on a meeting should give precise information about the organization holding the meeting and the venue, time, and agenda of the meeting. You have to report not only the final decisions but also the arguments made by the various speakers. The items of business can be taken up in the order of their importance. Some of the statements of the important participants can be quoted, and statistics, tables, and charts can be included where necessary.

When you report a speech, you have to give precise information about the speaker and the occasion for the speech. While you listen to the speech, you should take down notes carefully. After the speech has been made, you have to organize your notes. You should select the most significant point of the speech and arrange other points in the order of their importance. Direct quotations and your own paraphrase of the speeches will probably come alternately. You can use a tape-recorder, but you shouldn't depend on it entirely.

24.4.3 Reporting Interviews

In Unit 16 we discussed the procedure for conducting an interview and reporting it. First of all, you have to find out the biographical facts about the person you wish to interview and prepare a list of questions to ask. You must create a pleasant atmosphere at the beginning of the interview and ask your difficult questions when the mood is relaxed. Before you wind up, you must check your notes and clarify any doubts.

When you write the report, put the important points in the leading paragraph. You can use direct quotations. You can also add biographical details and explanatory passages.

24.4.4 Reporting Surveys

In Unit 17 we discussed survey reports. These may be written for various reasons; for example,

- i) to find out the opinions of consumers about a particular product;
- ii) to check the range of prices;
- iii) to study the feasibility of establishing a new branch.

You have to know the scope of your survey and the types of informants you will

have. Then you have to decide what methods you will choose for the collection of data—personal observations, interviews, questionnaires, consulting official records, or visits to libraries.

A long survey report usually has

- i) the front matter : a title page, a preface, a table of contents, a summary, and a list of illustrations.
- ii) the body : an introduction, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.
- iii) the back matter : a bibliography, a list of references, appendices, and a glossary.

A short survey report begins with a statement of the information the writer has tried to collect and goes on to present the findings, the conclusions, and the recommendations.

24.4.5 Reporting Experiments

In Unit 23 we indicated the steps in conducting an experiment:

- i) planning the experiment;
- ii) arranging the apparatus;
- iii) observing what happens during the experiment;
- iv) recording the observations; and
- v) writing the report.

The report should include

- i) the aim of the experiment,
- ii) details of the apparatus and other materials used,
- iii) the procedure adopted,
- iv) the observations made,
- v) the conclusions arrived at,
- vi) drawings, diagrams, and graphs related to the experiment and the findings.

24.5 WRITING SUMMARIES

There were three units on the writing of summaries—Units 11, 12 & 18.

In Unit 11 we gave you practice in

- i) separating the essential ideas in a passage from the non-essential ones, and
- ii) observing how the ideas in a passage were linked to each other.

In Unit 12 we showed you how summaries of the passages read by us could be written by

- i) looking for the important ideas in each passage and the relationship between them, and
- ii) adopting a proper arrangement for the main points in the summary and linking the various sentences in it with the use of connectives.

In Unit 18 we gave you practice in writing summaries—in the form of an outline, and in normal continuous prose. The writing of summaries is a very important activity, and besides being useful in practical life, it provides very good training for the mind. The separation of the important ideas from the less important ones and the ability to condense the information given to you help in the development of mental faculties.

24.6 LET US SUM UP

We hope you have found this course both useful and interesting. You should now be able to write English more effectively and undertake the various tasks requiring the use of composition skills in English.

We end the course with our best wishes for your success in the various academic and other activities where proficiency in written English is an asset.