
UNIT 3 WRITING A COMPOSITION

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

Composition requires organized thinking and writing, and both these activities have been discussed in this unit. By the end of this unit you should have

- the ability to select a topic for a composition, keeping in mind the interests of your reader and your own knowledge of the subject; and
- the skills to plan your composition in two stages : the pre-writing and the writing activities.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Composition is the act of putting together parts, according to a plan, to form a whole. That is to say, every composition requires organization. Every composition has a shape or design — it begins somewhere, and in an orderly manner, moves in some direction. A poem, a piece of music, a sculpture, or a painting, is such a composition. The composition we are talking about is that of a piece of writing.

At school you have already written essays, which are one form of composition. You must know that it is the writer's control and direction of his material which gives unity and clear expression to his writing.

A composition grows naturally from the first paragraph you have written. You have studied paragraph writing in Units 1 and 2. You will find that, on some topics, you

may wish to say more than you are able to put into one paragraph. You probably wish to write about a topic in greater detail, give more examples, or tell a story. So one paragraph is just not enough.

You have already learnt how to plan and write a paragraph. The guidelines for writing paragraphs will be useful in writing a composition also; but here you have a larger unit of writing, with a number of paragraphs. Therefore it is a more comprehensive activity needing more complex skills.

In this unit we shall draw your attention to some of the major organizational problems of a composition and also suggest ways in which to tackle them. We shall present a model composition at the very beginning of the unit and refer to it throughout.

3.2 A MODEL COMPOSITION FOR STUDY

Read the following passage. We shall refer to it to illustrate some of the major points we shall be making in this unit.

Growing up to be a Monkey

Nothing could be more important to the development of an infant Indian langur than its relationship with its mother. During its early weeks, it depends almost completely upon it — although from time to time she will allow the other females to hold and fondle it. Secure in this maternal haven, the infant gradually comes to widen its horizons. Though its first week is spent sleeping and nursing, by its second it is already stumbling about and being restrained by a yank of the tail or leg. At four weeks, tripping over itself, it ventures forth and discovers the world — or at least that part of it within a safe three or four feet (0.9 to 1.2 m.) of its mother.

As its excursions into the world grow bolder, the maturing infant Indian langur begins to encounter age-mates. At first, with its attention span still short, its coordination still imperfect, it retreats from such social contact, scampering “home” for a swig of milk before settling down to play by itself. But by its third month it need no longer rely entirely on its mother. It now learns how to eat solid foods by sampling those the mother consumes. In a demonstration of its increasing freedom, it spends more and more time away from her side in the company of other young monkeys. This loosening of ties corresponds to a change in the color of the infant’s coat, from brown to light gray. At five months it ranges 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 m.) from its mother for 20 minutes or so at a time, climbing tree trunks and branches and playing. But despite its new-found independence, the infant still is under its mother’s care, still under her watchful eye.

Growing up involves long hours of play, in groups of two, three or more. The young monkeys jump, wrestle, chase each other and pull each other’s tails. As they become older, they grow more mischievous, teasing the adult females, jumping on them, bumping up against them, and grabbing their hair or swinging from their dangling tails. By the time Indian langurs reach their 10th month, they are spending upward of four hours a day hard at play and often travel together, rather than with their mothers, when the troop moves from one area to another. Unlike the females, the young males now begin to have contact with the older males — but almost always in the same highly stereotyped manner. Screeching, they first touch the adults, then tensely they mount them, and finally run around and embrace them.

About this time, when life would seem to be at its very best, something untoward happens — the infants begin to be rejected by their mothers as part of the two-to-five-month weaning process. No longer able to run to their mothers at every scare, no longer protected by them when threatened by adults, the weaned infants — or juveniles, as they are called — must learn to solve their own conflicts themselves. And in doing so, they become full-fledged members of the troop — and eventually grown-up monkeys.

(from Eimerl, S. and De Vors, I. (eds). ‘the Monkey’s Success in the Trees’ in *The Primates*, Time-life Books)

se'cure : safe

'haven : a place of calm and safety

ho'rizon : the limit of one's view

'tripping : losing one's balance

'stereotyped : fixed in one form or type

3.3 TYPES OF COMPOSITION

Before we move further into the course, we shall tell you briefly about the four types of composition we are going to discuss. Different types of composition will need different approaches and different types of treatment.

Example

Topic 1. 'Do you think that the housewife leads a more pleasant life than a career woman?'

Topic 2. 'My most embarrassing moment'.

You cannot possibly write about them in the same way. The first topic suggests a discussion. The second is very personal.

Compositions also differ from each other because different people would write on the same topic for different readers and for different reasons.

Example

Topic : 'Growing up to be a Monkey'.

One writer could tell the story of his pet monkey. Another writer (with a sense of humour), could give the same title to a factual essay about an infant monkey's growth to adulthood.

The four main types of composition are : **expository, argumentative, narrative, and descriptive.** The writing of each requires a slightly different type of logical sequencing and a different vocabulary.

When you choose a topic for a composition, it is important for you to decide which of the four types of composition you wish to write. But no composition has to be entirely of one kind. You will find that a composition will be organised according to the type it belongs to, but it will also use techniques from other types of composition as well.

3.3.1 Expository Composition

Very simply, expository composition means writing (i) to explain something and make it clear; for example, an exposition of one's political beliefs; (ii) to present one's views on a topic in order to inform and persuade the reader. The approach is direct. The writer states his theme and gives his views on it in the first few lines.

Example

'Nothing could be more important to the development of the infant Indian langur than its relationship with its mother.'

3.3.2 Argumentative Composition

In an argumentative composition, one has to give reasons to support or disprove something. The skills of logic and rhetoric are used to develop the argument.

Example

Here is a quote that can be argued about endlessly.

'East is east and west is west;
And never the twain shall meet'

twain : two

3.3.3 Narrative Composition

In a narrative composition one writes an account of an actual or imagined happening, event or incident. A short story is within the scope of such writing. Chronology (that is, the order in which the events take place), description, and the writer's point of view are important in such writing.

3.3.4 Descriptive Composition

In a descriptive composition the writer wishes to present a picture of an object, scene, person or situation, through the use of words. He affects the reader by appealing to his senses and imagination.

Example

'The cave was tolerably convenient. They skirted the puddle of water, and then climbed up over some unattractive stones, the sun crashing on their backs... The small black hole gaped where their varied forms and colours had momentarily functioned.'

3.4 WHAT YOU MUST DO BEFORE WRITING YOUR COMPOSITION

As we have said earlier, a composition is an organized piece of writing. We shall now show you ways in which to organize your material. To begin with, you must know who you are writing for. Keep in mind the interests of your reader and his level of ability. Here are some questions you can ask yourself :

- For whom am I writing, and why?
- How can my writing appeal to him?
- How much does he already know about the subject I am writing on?

Further, you must have enough information on your topic to write a number of paragraphs. You must know enough to define, elaborate and illustrate your theme.

3.4.1 Decide on your Topic

How do you choose a topic? You must know who your reader is (a child, an educated adult, a specialist in the field you are going to write about, or the man in the street). You must also know your subject well. Given below are some suggestions for collecting topics :

- i) Reading newspapers and magazines and watching television programmes will keep you informed of daily happenings, conflicts, problems, etc. All these will provide topics for compositions.
- ii) Talking to friends and colleagues can raise interesting questions and make you aware of different viewpoints.
- iii) Let your mind move freely over your activities and pastimes — hobbies, sports, art, dramatics, etc.
- iv) For topics with which you have to deal more seriously, you should visit libraries, archives and museums, or even contact people who work in the field you wish to write about.

There is no limit to the search for materials or topics, but here are some suggestions for choosing the topic :

- i) Choose a subject you feel strongly about. You will enjoy writing about it, and it will be convincing to your reader.
- ii) Choose a subject about which you know quite a lot.
- iii) If you are bored by a subject, avoid it, because your composition will only bore your reader.

3.4.2 Limit your Topic

When a student chooses a topic for composition, it is sometimes found that the title is too general, covering a broad area of experience. Such a composition cannot be easily managed. It will have too many general statements, and they cannot all be supported by examples and illustrations. Therefore the next thing to do is to limit your topic — to reduce the scope of the composition. Now your composition has a well-defined goal and it will be easy for you to strike out or omit all unnecessary matter.

You may wish to write about 'Gypsies', 'Pets', 'Monkeys', 'Kindness to Animals', or 'Drought Conditions in India'. These topics cover very broad areas of experience and knowledge. You will have to select certain aspects of the topic for your composition. Unless you do so,

- i) the resulting piece of writing will not be a well-organized composition but a collection of paragraphs on very different aspects of the same subject;
- ii) you will not be able to discuss the main idea of the topic in detail.

Once the topic is limited, it should be stated very clearly in the opening paragraph. Following this, the main idea can be developed in the body of the composition.

Example

Supposing you have decided to write a composition on 'Animals'. This is a broad topic as it does not make clear what aspect of animal life you plan to cover. You might narrow it down to 'Wild Life', or 'Domestic Animals'. This is still too large an area for one composition. You can narrow it still further — 'Farm Animals'. But then your composition may be only a list of farm animals and already well-known facts about them.

Why not look at the theme from another angle and write about a particular animal : 'My Pet Dog, Moti', or 'My Neighbour's Noisy Dog'? Then you can really write a 'juicy' composition, in some detail, with anecdotes, examples and illustrations. And if you have any experience of village life, you can write a personal and entertaining composition 'How Moti, our Bull, Saved my Life'.

3.4.3 Gather and Order your Data

In trying to limit your topic you will find that you are really introducing new words, getting rid of unwanted items, and rearranging words in the statement of your topic to bring it closer to your meaning. In doing this, you come close to the next activity in planning your composition — exploring your sources of information to gather facts and arranging them according to some order.

Regarding the sources of information, some suggestions have already been given to you in Section 3.4.1. Besides all the sources available to a keen student, we should like you to be aware that your own thinking and self-exploration can be one of the richest resources available to any human being.

Order and arrange your facts. Once your mind, and the paper on which you are jotting down what comes to your mind, are flooded with facts, ideas, opinions, feelings, and illustrations you will realize that to compose any writing from this material, you will have to arrange it in some order. This is necessary because

- not all the ideas you have jotted down will be directly related to your theme; some will have to be discarded;
- you may also find that much of what you have jotted down is not worth writing about;
- much of the information jotted down is commonly known and will only make the composition dull;
- there may be repetition of ideas;
- you may discover that you do not have enough details to write a worthwhile composition. (It is details and facts that make a composition interesting.)

The items of information must be arranged in groups according to how like or unlike they are to each other, all similar items being grouped together. We shall offer a set of directions to follow in grouping ideas and facts. But first you must have ideas before you can group them.

- i) To encourage your thinking, underline all important words in your topic : e.g., 'Lizards are Friendly Creatures'. Often students just miss out a significant word in the topic they have chosen. In such cases the composition is usually out of focus.
- ii) Having analysed the topic, jot down random thoughts as they occur to you.
- iii) All ideas, suggestions or facts that have something in common should be placed in one group.
- iv) The natural flow of information from one group to another can be arranged according to some logical order. We shall list here some of the more important logical orders which underlie writing.
 - a) spatial sequence
 - b) chronological sequence
 - c) logical sequence (cause and effect)
 - d) matter arranged in decreasing order of importance
 - e) matter arranged in increasing order of importance

By now you will have a fairly good idea about your topic — how you wish to begin and where you would like your composition to end. You might even have a topic sentence written out, but do not start writing yet. You have yet to make your outline.

Example : Grouping Ideas

Refer to the model composition 'Growing up to be a Monkey' given in Section 3.2.

The ideas in this passage can be grouped as follows :

Group 1 Mother-infant relationship

- i) dependence for food and shelter
- ii) learning — the first steps into the world
- iii) fear of strangers

Group 2 Changes that accompany growth

- i) bodily changes
- ii) exploring the world
- iii) play

Group 3 Becoming an adult

- i) peer relationship
- ii) moving away from the mother
- iii) rehearsing for adulthood — aggressive behaviour

You will notice that there is a natural flow of ideas from one group to another; they are linked by a time sequence to the basic process of growing up. Within this overall chronological pattern there is the sequence of cause and effect. The changes that take place in the growing monkey are described and explained.

Grouping helps you to see the relationship between ideas. However, it is not necessary to cover all the items of a group in one paragraph, or to write a paragraph on each item.

3.4.4 Construct your Outline

Now you are at the final step of the pre-writing stage — constructing an outline.

An outline is like a road map which helps you to stay on the right path to reach your destination without any waste of time and effort.

- If you have prepared a good outline you will not have to revise your composition too often.
- You will not wander away from the topic.
- It will save you from repeating yourself.
- The more complicated the composition is, the greater the need for an outline.

A Sample Outline

Introduction

Man is responsible for progressive destruction of environment; he must change his attitudes and work harder to save his environment.

Body

- 1 Man responsible for environmental damage — politically, industrially and individually.
 - a) Government does not plan use of resources; this causes waste and pollution.
 - b) Privately owned industry causes waste and pollution as it aims at large profits with small investments.
 - c) Through need, carelessness and laziness, individuals cause damage to the environment.
- 2 Government, industry and individuals are now beginning to realize that they should prevent further damage.
 - a) In collaboration with international agencies, through enactment of laws, government is trying to save the environment.
 - b) Industrialists must accept the responsibility for recycling waste, and using safety measures to prevent pollution.
 - c) Individuals and groups are working in research laboratories to discover the causes of pollution and the means to save the environment.
- 3 What is being done is not enough.
 - a) Government must enforce its policies and laws strictly.
 - b) Industrialists must widen their goals to include social and national interests in building up pollution-free industrial environments.
 - c) Media should educate the public about concern for the environment.

Conclusion

Man must no longer look upon himself as the master of his environment. He is as dependent on the environment for survival as it is on him.

Exercise 1

After going through the sample given above, construct an outline of the model composition : 'Growing up to be a Monkey' given in Section 3.2.

[illegible]

3.5 FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING YOUR COMPOSITION

Successful writing requires careful preparation and logical organization. In a composition the unit of organization is the paragraph. Therefore certain features of paragraphs as parts of a composition need to be noted.

- A paragraph provides help to the reader in comprehending the subject of the composition by providing a break on the page.
- Every paragraph introduces a new idea.
- A paragraph should be just long enough to discuss the idea of the topic sentence fully. A new paragraph should begin whenever there is a major change in the subject.
- For balanced writing all paragraphs should be of more or less equal length. Paragraphs which are too long can confuse a reader by piling up ideas which would be better written in separate paragraphs. A short paragraph will not develop an idea fully and therefore the link between ideas in a composition may not be clear.
- For smooth reading, good *transitions* between paragraphs are important.

To understand how a composition is written we shall study its major components : the beginning, the body, and the conclusion. However, before we come to the actual composition itself, let's give you a few guidelines for choosing a proper title for your composition.

- The title should be clear enough, short, and to the point, so that the reader is sure of the subject of the composition.
- It should arouse interest and make a person want to read the composition.

3.5.1 The Beginning

The beginning of the composition is also referred to as the introduction, the introductory paragraph, or the opening paragraph. A beginning or an introduction is not necessarily limited to one paragraph. It can be just one sentence or a number of paragraphs, depending on the topic and the length of the composition. Also, all compositions may not need to be introduced. We shall now talk about the functions of an opening paragraph.

The opening paragraph should state the subject or the main idea of the composition. This can be done in a number of ways, depending on the purpose of the composition. Does it seek to explain, argue, narrate, or describe? For instance, if the composition requires exposition, the topic should be stated immediately and exactly. This is a business-like approach, and you should come straight to the point. This approach is required in reports of meetings, scholarly and scientific writings, etc.

Example

'Nothing could be more important to the development of an infant Indian langur than its relationship with its mother.' In this opening sentence, even without the title, you can make a correct guess about the subject of the composition, and how it is going to develop.

Not only must the main idea be made clear, but the topic should also be indicated in the opening paragraph.

The beginning also gives an idea of how the rest of the composition will be organized.

Example

'Science has obviously multiplied the power of the war-makers; the weapons of today can kill more people more secretly and more unpleasantly than those of the past.'

- Most importantly, the opening should **arouse the interest and curiosity of the reader**. Here are some hints on how to do this.

- Treat the reader as an intelligent and well-read person. **Go straight to the point of the topic** you are writing about instead of beginning with broad general statements, and then saying exactly what you mean. You can take it for granted that the reader already has a certain background of general knowledge.

Example

'Many people are involved in the building and setting up of a new club : architects, bankers, bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, and so on.'

- Begin your composition with a short, factual sentence. The reader then begins to think about it and wants to read more.

Example

'Some teenagers live in a world of their own.'

- Amuse the reader by a funny remark, an anecdote, or a simile, metaphor, analogy, or quotation. A simile is an expression making a comparison between two things, for example *as white as snow*. A metaphor is a phrase which describes one thing by stating another thing with which it can be compared; for example, *the roses in her cheeks*.

Example

'America has a thousand lights and weathers and we walk the streets, we walk the streets forever, we walk the streets of life alone!' (metaphor)

'My mother was always throwing out new ideas; some of them were rather wild; others were so simple and sensible that they very nearly amounted to genius; but the application of them was sometimes rather autocratic.' (witty)

3.5.2 The Body

Your opening paragraph has stated the topic, limited it, and in so doing, has aroused the interest and curiosity of the reader. Now you have to tackle the body of the composition. Here your concern should be to **develop** the topic and to concentrate on the use of language to express your thoughts accurately. Only then will the reader be able to follow the flow of thought in your composition.

You have already learnt in Unit 2 how to develop your topic through illustration, description, definition, etc. At the pre-writing stage you have been shown how to group your ideas and draw up your outline. What you further need to know is how to use language to make your ideas clear. We shall talk about two ways in which language can be used to give clarity and unity to your composition.

We shall refer to the first such use as **signposts** to guide the reader through the composition. These are words and phrases which enable the reader to follow the writer's thinking.

How do you recognize a signpost?

- Topic sentences of paragraphs become signposts through a composition.
- Other signposts are words or phrases which tell the reader about the sequence or design of the composition — what you have done, are doing, will do next or later, will not do at all. The expressions *firstly, in the first place, secondly, in the second place*, for example, act as signposts.
- Paragraphing and indentation of quotations are also signposts to the reader.

Example

Look at the first paragraph of the model composition in Section 3.2. The first phrase : 'Nothing is more important....' is a signpost. It indicates the feeling of the writer about his subject. He is going to give importance to the mother-child relationship in the growth of the infant langur. The phrase 'During its early weeks' in the second sentence, and the word 'gradually' in the third sentence, are both signposts to the reader telling him how the infant grows.

Besides signposts, **interparagraph transitions** are important in helping the writer to link the flow of ideas in a composition. Interparagraph transitions are words or phrases which tie the beginning of a new paragraph to the one that goes before it.

Every new paragraph indicates some change in thought from the one before it. So every new beginning must be linked with the ideas expressed in the earlier paragraph. Here are some linking devices.

- **Repetition.** At the beginning of a paragraph pick up a keyword or phrase occurring at the end of the preceding paragraph.

Example

'...But the element which is constant and common in all of them is *change*.

Change is the master key.'

'...The bringing *to an end of the life* of say, a spastic child, by the deliberate refusal of the fullest medical care, seems morally indefensible.'

Even if the idea of *bringing someone's life to an end* is based on compassion...'

- **Question and answer transition.** The question comes at the end of one paragraph and the answer is the first sentence of the next one.

Example

'...Why cannot we be honest and say whatever comes into our heads?

The answer is that we are not good enough.'

- The opening sentence summarizes, in a subordinate phrase or clause, the idea of the previous paragraph; the main clause which follows states the topic of the new paragraph. *If* and *while* clauses are generally used in such cases.

Example

'If we were to measure freedom by standards of nutrition, education and self-government, we might rank the United States and certain nations of Western Europe very high.'

- Pronouns such as *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, can be used to refer to a key noun of the last sentence of the previous paragraph. These words can also be used as determiners modifying a word or a phrase.

Example

'...it provides for inner joy of the loftiest kind. *This* does not come naturally.'

'*These* handicaps are...'

'*Such* political traditions were...'

- Words and phrases showing logical relationships can be used to link paragraphs. Some of these expressions are:

therefore, however, but, consequently, thus, and so, even so, on the other hand, for instance.

Example

'...The sight of the dog, the faithful sentry of the previous night, being finished off in that brutal manner was somehow more horrifying than many things he had seen in this war.

But as a soldier, he could see the reason why the dog had been killed.'

3.5.3 The Ending

You have developed your topic fully through the body of your composition. You have said all you wanted to say, and you feel now that the composition should end. But you cannot just stop writing. You must plan your concluding paragraph.

First and last impressions, in any composition, are important. These are the parts a reader tends to remember, and it is in these paragraphs that you should put all that you wish the reader to remember — impressions, ideas, suggestions, opinions, judgements and predictions.

Whereas the beginning of a composition introduces and excites, the ending should tie up, round off, or summarize the main ideas.

- The substance of the concluding paragraph should **recall for the reader** all the main points of the composition. The theme introduced in the opening paragraph should be repeated to convince the reader that you have proved your point.

Example

The opening sentence of a composition on insects is as follows : 'Present-day insects have spread to every habitable area on the face of the globe'.

This theme is developed through three successive paragraphs. It ends by summarizing the discussion and stressing the theme of the composition.

'Wherever there is sufficient moisture, warmth, and food to support life, there the insects are well-established. Both in the number of species and in the number of individuals, the insects exceed any other visible form of life on the earth.'

- In a descriptive or a narrative composition the end comes naturally at the end of the description or the narrative. This is how an article on the travelling theatre of Maharashtra begins :

Example

'They are always on the move but they are not nomads.... They are the Tamashawalas, the traditional performers who bring a few moments of undiluted happiness....'

And this is how it ends, suggesting new beginnings.

'Performance over, they return to their worn-out tents and shoddy existence. With the next sunrise they are once again on the move, dishing out dreams in the form of entertainment.'

Here are some other ways in which compositions can end, depending on the purpose of the writer and in what way he wishes to influence his reader.

- An ending can suggest a remedy or a course of action.

Example

'Today it is felt that possibly 50 per cent of hydrocephalic patients, if treated early, can be salvaged for normal mental and neuro-muscular development. Long-term follow-up of results and research is essential.'

- An ending can offer a value judgement. Thus the conclusion to an article on eating-houses in Bombay offers the writer's judgement on Bombay restaurants.

'It used to be said that if you wanted to eat well in Europe you went out; if you wanted to eat well in India you stayed at home. The latter, fortunately, is no longer true.'

- The writer can think ahead on the basis of the discussion in the composition he has written.

Example

'Finally, the much awaited announcement on the new drug policy is still awaited; and *this may turn out to be better* for the industry than expected earlier.'

Do not use such words and phrases in your concluding paragraphs : *in short, to sum up, in conclusion, and now I will conclude with, now I end by saying*. They reduce the force of the idea presented in the sentence that follows.

Do not introduce a new topic in your ending paragraph. An ending should strengthen the ideas presented in the composition.

Self-check Exercise 2

Given below are extracts from different passages marked (1), (2) and (3). Each of them has sections, one of which is an ending. Choose the correct one.

- 1 a) Words are the tools of writers, the tools they use to give form and shape to the medium in which they work— ideas.
b) Without the proper word the idea is never expressed. In the beginning is the word.
- 2 a) Even in her deep anguish the ragwoman's tear-stained face beamed. The goat was dead; a white heap still lying on the mud floor.

- b) From neighbouring stalls in the Tuesday *haat* of the village she purchased by a barter of rags the two objects that were to make the motif of her life for months to come: three ripe pumpkin seeds... and a month-old goat youngling.
-

- 3 a) The Study Centres of Indira Gandhi National Open University will form part of the detailed programme of the University...
- b) The face-to-face contact in the shape of tutorials at the University Study Centres will be different from what takes place in conventional colleges.
- c) In other words, Study Centres and Regional Centres will act as the means through which the university will take education to the doorsteps of the student.
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3.6 REVISION

After you have written the first draft of your composition you must revise it.

- Read aloud what you have written. Sometimes you can 'hear' what is wrong with a sentence. Make the necessary changes and read it again. It will sound better.
- Read as if someone else is reading your composition. Does it sound interesting? Will it be clear to your reader?
- If you can get a friend to listen to your composition and comment on it, or if you let him read it to you, your composition is bound to improve.
- If a phrase or sentence is vague, and the meaning is not clear, change it.
- You may find that some words have been used too often, or some ideas have been repeated. Strike them out.
- Sometimes you find that the really important sentence comes at the end of a paragraph so that the controlling idea of that paragraph becomes clear to the reader only after he has reached the end. Remove it from that place and place it in its proper position, somewhere at the beginning.
- If the meaning of a word is not clear in the context, replace it with one which makes the text clearer and therefore more interesting.
- Be careful that you do not annoy your reader by posing as one who is superior to him.
- Check every error of grammar, usage, spelling and punctuation.

The composition should be neatly written in a readable handwriting.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

- You should choose a topic about which you know a great deal.
- You should know who your reader is; that is, you should be aware of his level of understanding, his interests and his needs.
- When choosing a topic you must know your sources of information.
- To do justice to your topic you must limit it in such a way as to make sure your composition will read smoothly, and will cover the theme fully.
- It is only after limiting the topic that you start collecting and ordering your data. The grouping of ideas should follow a logical sequence.
- The outline is the most important part of the pre-writing stage.
- The beginning of a composition tells the reader about the subject matter. The

writer should make the opening interesting and arresting by plunging straight into the theme while giving some background information on it as well.

- The body of the composition develops the main ideas. Some of the techniques of development are illustration, description, definition and elaboration. Different types of composition require different techniques.
- The ending or conclusion of a composition should not come suddenly. There are several ways in which you can give a satisfactory ending to your composition.
- Revise your first draft to check for errors.

3.8 KEY WORDS

argu'mentative : giving reasons to support or disprove something

compo'sition : the act of putting together parts to form something

con'clusion : the end

'data : facts

de'scriptive : that gives a picture in words

draft : the first rough written form

ex'pository : explaining something and making it clear

'factor : something that acts with others to bring about a result

'model : having all the necessary good qualities

'narrative : telling a story

'organized : formed into a whole

'outline : the main ideas

re'vision : reading through a piece of writing carefully to make improvements and correct mistakes

3.9 SUGGESTED READING

S. Eimerl and I. Devors (eds), *The Primates*, Time-Life Books.

3.10 ANSWERS TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

Exercise 2

- 1 b) This last sentence summarizes the idea stated in 1 (a) about the importance of words to a writer.
- 2 a) Here the ending of the narrative is obvious. The goat dies.
- 3 c) 'In other words...' is a phrase which introduces a repetition of the ideas in the earlier sections.