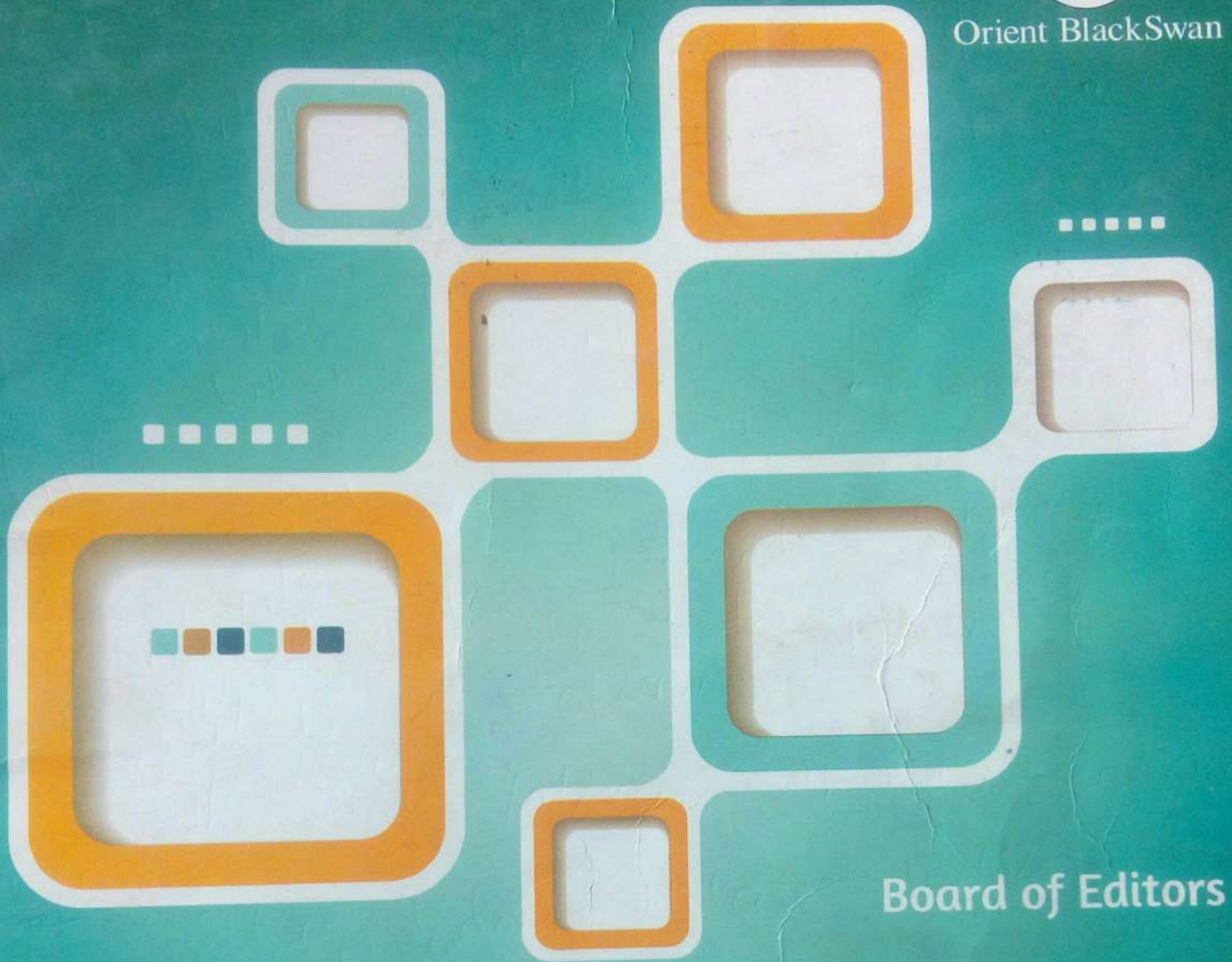




Orient BlackSwan



Board of Editors

Creative Writing

POETRY

Poetry is an art form that makes use of the musical qualities present in language to create pleasing literary compositions. Poetry has a long history in cultures around the world. There are many kinds of poetry and poets use numerous poetic devices in order to create poems. In this chapter, we will look at one such poetic device—rhyme. We will also read about a form of poetry called 'free verse' which does not use conventional poetic devices such as rhyme and metre.

Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounding words. An example of rhyme is provided below, in the opening lines from Robert Browning's famous poem 'My Last Duchess'.

That's my last Duchess painted on the **wall**,
Looking as if she were alive. I **call**

That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's **hands**
Worked busily a day, and there she **stands**.

The word 'wall' rhymes with 'call', just as 'hands' rhymes with 'stands'. Note that the words that rhyme are located at the very end of each line, producing a pattern and musical quality in the writing. In poetry, this is an example of **end rhyme**. Rhyme can also occur within a line, where it is known as **internal rhyme**. Take a look at the first stanza of Edgar Allen Poe's poem 'The Raven'.
like the poem

Once upon a midnight **dreary**, while I pondered weak and **weary**,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly **napping**, suddenly there came a **tapping**,
As of some one gently **rapping, rapping** at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, '**tapping** at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more.'

The highlighted words are examples of internal rhyme. (The above lines also make use of end rhyme. Can you spot the instances?)

Functions of rhyme

In poetry, rhyme serves two primary functions.

- ✧ to provide a sense of structure
- ✧ to transform the piece of writing into something that is pleasing to hear

Structure may be established through end rhyme or internal rhyme, as the reader detects the pattern within the piece and begins to anticipate the next set of rhyming words. This makes the reading process an active one that engages the reader. Rhyme may also provide symmetry within the poem's verses, conveying a sense of internal harmony and balance while enhancing the overall reading experience. Rhyme provides motion and rhythm to a poem, allowing the poem to develop a natural flow that it would otherwise have lacked.

(Rhyme is also a powerful memorisation tool. Early poets and bards used rhyme to make their works easy to remember.)

As mentioned before, the repetition of sounds may produce a lyrical quality in the writing. Rhyme may be used to emphasise the poet's primary points. The famous playwright Shakespeare often used two lines that rhymed to indicate the end of a scene.

Rhyme scheme

The rhyme scheme of a poem is the pattern by which the end rhymes have been arranged. Rhyme scheme is indicated/marked by letters of the alphabet. The way in which a rhyme scheme is shown is by using letters to mark each line that rhymes. For example if line 1 ends with 'tall' and line 2 ends with 'shawl' the rhyme scheme for both these lines will be marked with the same letter of the alphabet. Look at the example given below.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,	A
Looking as if she were alive. I call	A
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands	B
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.	B

Listed below are a few examples of common formal rhyme schemes.

- ✧ *Ballade*: Typically consists of three eight-line stanzas of ABABBCBC followed by a four-line concluding stanza of BCBC.
- ✧ *Couplet*: A pair of lines that rhyme (i.e., AA). Rhyming couplets usually occur as AABBCDD.
- ✧ *Limerick*: A short, humorous poem that consists of five lines with the rhyme scheme of AABBA.
- ✧ *Sonnet*: A fourteen-line poem. It usually follows one of these two rhyme schemes:
 - Petrarchan sonnet: ABBA ABBA CDE CDE or ABBA ABBA CDC DCD
 - Shakespearean sonnet: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

✧ *Triplet*: Three lines of poetry which follow the same rhyme (i.e., AAA), often repeating like the rhyming couplets.

Observe the rhyme scheme used below in the sonnet 'Bright Star' by John Keats.

Bright Star

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art—	A
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night	B
And watching, with eternal lids apart,	A
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,	B
The moving waters at their priestlike task	C
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,	D
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask	C
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—	D
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,	E
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,	F
To feel for ever its soft swell and fall,	E
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,	F
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,	G
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.	G

Sonnet

Below is an example of a Petrarchan sonnet by William Wordsworth.

The World Is Too Much with Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,	A
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;	B
Little we see in Nature that is ours;	B
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!	A
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,	A
The winds that will be howling at all hours,	B
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,	B
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;	A
It moves us not. —Great God! I'd rather be	C
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;	D
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,	C
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;	D
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;	C
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.	D

And finally, observe the rhyme scheme used in the first stanza of the following poem by Keats.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,	A
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,	B
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express	A
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:	B
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape	C
Of deities or mortals, or of both,	D
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?	E
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?	D
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?	C
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?	E

Keats is known for experimenting with rhyme scheme, and the above is an example where he blends formal rhyme schemes to form his own unique pattern. The use of the ABAB in the first four lines of the stanza represents a clear example of structure found in classical literature, while the remaining six lines appear to embrace a more contemporary (at the time) style.

Assonance, consonance and alliteration

The pattern of rhythm that sounds create can be used effectively in prose as well. **Assonance** is the *repetition of vowel sounds* within phrases or sentences. It is used to create internal rhyme. Below is an example of assonance in Edgar Allan Poe's 'Annabel Lee'.

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side

Read the line out aloud and you will notice the repetition of the 'i' sound. This is assonance; it gives the line rhythm and pace, and also enhances its musical quality.

Consonance is the *repetition of consonant sounds* occurring between words that follow one another. Take a look at some basic examples of consonance given below.

helter-skelter

pitter patter

struts / frets

blade / blood

Alliteration is a form of consonance or assonance which involves the *repetition of the opening/first sounds* of words. Tongue twisters often employ alliterations.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

She sells seashells by the seashore.

The following tongue twisters make use of assonance (italicised), consonance (underlined), as well as alliteration (marked in bold).

Betty **B**otter **b**ought a **b**it of **b**itter **b**utter.

(How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?)

Assonance, consonance and alliteration serve to provide rhythm and pace to lines, contributing to melody. Melody is the arrangement of sounds and notes to form a distinctive and pleasing-to-hear pattern.

Types of rhyme

It is hard to classify rhymes, as they may be distinguished by a number of different systems of classification, including defined by the nature of similarity, defined by the relation to stress pattern, and defined by the location of the rhyme. The most common types of rhyme are mentioned below.

- ❖ **Perfect (full) rhyme:** a rhyme where the later part of the words or phrases are identical. Note, for a rhyme to be a perfect rhyme, the vowel sounds and the letters that follow the vowel sounds must be identical, but the letters *before* the vowel sounds *must be different*. 'Tie' and 'lie', 'green' and 'preen', 'height' and 'light' are all examples of perfect rhymes.
- ❖ **Imperfect (half, or slant) rhyme:** a rhyme which involves assonance or consonance. The vowel sounds or the consonant sounds may match, but the letters that precede or follow the identical sounds do not match. 'Hand' and 'hang' are examples of imperfect rhyme, as the letters following the vowel sounds are different. 'Band' and 'bind' are imperfect rhymes, as the vowel sounds vary while the consonant sounds remain the same.
- ❖ **Identical rhyme:** a rhyme that, at its most basic level, involves using the same word twice. Emily Dickinson used this type of rhyme in her poem 'Because I Could Not Stop for Death'.

We paused before a House that seemed

A Swelling of the Ground—

The Roof was scarcely visible—

The Cornice—in the Ground—

- ❖ **Internal/End rhymes:** this type of rhyme has already been discussed, with the words that rhyme located within a set of lines (internal rhyme), or at the ends of lines (end rhyme).
- ❖ **Eye rhyme:** also called a visual or sight rhyme, is when two words are spelled similarly but do not sound the same. 'Though' and 'Tough' are an example of an eye rhyme.

Free Verse

basic rhythmic structure of a verse

In order to understand free verse, you must first understand what metre is. Metre is a system that measures poetry by focusing on the sounds and syllables of each word in each line in order to detect a pattern. Sixteen established patterns exist (iambic pentameter is an example of one that was often used by Shakespeare in his plays and sonnets), with their own set of rules and restrictions that the lines and syllables must obey. The metre of a poem influences the 'sound' of a poem and also has an impact on the poem's pace. It may often emphasise the poet's overall point.

Keeping that definition in mind, **free verse** is an open form of poetry which is free from the rules and restrictions of metre patterns.

Form

Free verse relies on the content of the poem, its punctuation and choice of words, to determine its form and shape. The only rule that seems to apply to free verse is that the poet must resist the temptation to adopt a regular metre. With that in mind, the poet is free to use assonance, consonance, alliteration or any other forms of rhyme to build a sense of rhythm within the poem.

Such freedom does not mean that free verse is poetry free of structure. Free verse done well will have rhythm. Walt Whitman, the famous American poet who is considered to be the 'father of free verse', used repetition and commas to affect the pace and cadence of his poems. **Cadence**, in poetry, refers to the pace and rhythm of the sounds in a poem. In order to understand what this means, read the following lines (from Walt Whitman's 'A Child Said, "What is the Grass"') out aloud.

A child said, What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;

How could I answer the child? ... I do not know what it is any more than he.

Using commas, question marks, semi-colons and ellipses, the poet has manipulated the pace and rhythm of the lines, forcing the reader to pause at key moments, affecting the rise and fall of the natural flow of speech. Below is Whitman's poem '1861'. Read the poem aloud and see if you can identify the tools Whitman has used to give his free verse structure and cadence.

1861

Arm'd year! year of the struggle!

No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you, terrible year!

Not you as some pale poetling, seated at a desk, lisping cadenzas
piano;

But as a strong man, erect, clothed in blue clothes, advancing,
carrying a rifle on your shoulder,

With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands—with a knife in
the belt at your side,
As I heard you shouting loud—your sonorous voice ringing across the
continent;
Your masculine voice, O year, as rising amid the great cities,
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you, as one of the workmen, the
dwellers in Manhattan;
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois and
Indiana,
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait, and descending the
Alleghanies;
Or down from the great lakes, or in Pennsylvania, or on deck along
the Ohio river;
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers, or at
Chattanooga on the mountain top,
Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs, clothed in blue, bearing
weapons, robust year;
Heard your determin'd voice, launch'd forth again and again;
Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-lipp'd cannon,
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.

The poet uses repetition of both words and ideas in order to give his poem unity. Punctuation and line breaks control the flow of the poem and draw attention to certain words and phrases. Whitman also makes use of assonance, consonance, alliteration and some kinds of rhyme to make his lines lyrical.

Now read aloud Emily Dickinson's poem given below.

Come slowly, Eden

Come slowly, Eden
Lips unused to thee.
Bashful, sip thy jasmines,
As the fainting bee,
Reaching late his flower,
Round her chamber hums,
Counts his nectars—alights,
And is lost in balms!

The poet has made use of imperfect (half or slant) rhymes and end rhymes in such a way that the poem has its own quirky and unique sound. Note how the 's' and 't' sounds in the second sentence give the line a fast pace and rhythm. And, unlike Whitman's poems, Dickinson makes conventional use of her commas and full stops, more often placing them at the end of each line so as to not interrupt the poem's flow.

Imagery, similes and metaphors

Imagery, similes and metaphors are important elements of poetry, and this is no less true in free verse. **Imagery**, as the word suggests, refers to images created by descriptive writing. Poetry makes use of imagery to enhance the reading experience and to have the reader be able to 'see' what the poet is trying to communicate.

A **simile** is a figure of speech that describes something by comparing it with something else. It is usually formed by the words 'like' or 'as'. D.H. Lawrence's free verse poem 'Baby Tortoise' includes a simile where the poet compares the baby tortoise's mouth to an iron door.

To open your tiny beak-mouth, that looks as if it would never open,
Like some iron door;

A **metaphor** makes a direct comparison between two completely different things. In D.H. Lawrence's free verse poem 'Bats', Lawrence uses both similes and metaphors to make his imagery more vivid.

Black piper on an infinitesimal pipe.

Little lumps that fly in air and have voices indefinite, wildly vindictive;

Wings *like* bits of umbrella.

Bats!

The poet metaphorically compares bats to 'black piper[s]' and 'little lumps' that fly in the air. But he also uses a simile to compare their wings to 'bits of umbrella'. Employing such literary devices makes the imagery more vivid and clear for the reader to see and appreciate.

Views on free verse

Whitman strongly believed in the power of free verse. He saw it as an artistic awakening that called for artists to break free of social conventions and live life without restraint. However, there were many others who disagreed with his point of view. Robert Frost believed writing free verse was like 'playing tennis without a net', implying there was no challenge and that anyone could do it without displaying a degree of literary skill. T.S. Eliot, one of the foremost poets of the twentieth century, wrote 'No verse is free for the man who wants to do a good job.'

JOKES

A joke is something that is said or written with the intention of causing amusement or provoking laughter. They are usually meant to entertain, but are also used to educate, satirise or mock people.

There are many different kinds of jokes. A very common variety is one based on stereotypes (that is, a commonly held idea about something or someone). 'Blonde jokes', for example, are based on the stereotype that people with blonde hair are beautiful but not very intelligent. In a typical blonde joke, the 'blonde' will say or do something silly as a result of his or her supposed lack of common sense.

A blonde asked someone what time it was. When told it was 4:45, he seemed puzzled.

'That's very strange,' he said, 'I have been asking that question all day, and each time I get a different answer.'

One must always be careful when making jokes based on stereotypes, as it might hurt people's sentiments. Keep your audience/readers in mind when telling a joke.

Jokes utilise many different techniques. One such technique is the use of a question-answer format.

Q: What do you call it when a blonde dyes his hair brunette?

A: Artificial intelligence.

A joke usually consists of two distinct parts: the set-up and the punch line. The set-up provides the situation, the subject, or a set of facts. It creates some kind of expectation in the audience. The opening lines of both the examples above constitute the **set-up** of the respective jokes.

The final phrase or sentence of a joke, which provides the humour in the joke, is called the **punch line**. It shatters the audience's expectations created by the set-up. The last lines of both the examples above are the punch lines of the respective jokes.

A punch line often relies on irony, sarcasm, puns and word play, or the reversal of expectations. Look at the joke given below.

Q: Why did the chicken cross the road?

A: To get to the other side.

The unusual question makes the listener/reader expect an unusual/interesting answer; however, the joke works by reversing one's expectations and providing a simple, matter-of-fact answer.

Writing jokes

There are no rules to follow when writing jokes. However, you could keep the following in mind when trying your hand at it.

- ❖ A joke is, in a manner of speaking, a story—a very short story told with the intention of making people laugh. Laughter is often triggered by situations that provoke surprise, embarrassment or recognition. Keep this in mind when composing your joke.
- ❖ Think of a subject for the joke. It could be something general (such as love, common situations in the workplace, etc.) or something specific (such as a current event, a celebrity in the news, or something that happened to you last Wednesday afternoon). Choose something that your audience will know about, or which you can explain very clearly in just a few sentences.
- ❖ You can find subjects for jokes all around you. Observe people and their behaviour; read the newspaper; watch television; reflect on your own actions. When choosing a topic for your joke, there is no need to look for something that is very obviously funny. If your audience can predict what is coming, they will not be surprised—and may thus not end up laughing. There can be a lot of humour in everyday subjects, even in serious subjects. The joke relies on your ability to reveal some comic insight or to put an absurd or entertaining twist to the familiar.
- ❖ One of the easiest ways to surprise people is to create a familiar situation that leads your audience/readers to assume one thing—and then suddenly change the ending to surprise them. Thus, you end up reversing expectations.

A grandmother was telling her grandchildren about how she married their grandfather.

'I was young and in love. Unfortunately, when war broke out, he had to leave for the battlefield. But he would write long letters to me every other day for as long as the war lasted. It was during this time that I discovered how wonderful your grandfather was.'

'That's lovely, granny! Did you marry granddad when he returned from the war?'

'Oh, I didn't marry the letter-writer... Your granddad was the postman!'

Look at how a situation is set up, creating a certain expectation of a predictable ending, but is suddenly given a twist, resulting in surprise—and in laughter.

- ❖ There are many techniques you could employ when composing a joke. Make use of common assumptions. Exaggerate or understate things. Use puns and play with words.

My car is so expensive that the radiator requires mineral water. (exaggeration)

One ghost asks another: 'Do you believe in humans?' (reversal of a common situation/assumption)

My father published a book on preserving the rainforest and what we can do as a human race to help protect it. It is over 3000 pages long. (irony)

Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.
(pun)

An angry customer calls the waiter in a restaurant. 'Waiter,' he says, 'There's a fly in my soup!' 'Don't worry sir,' the waiter replies, 'There's no extra charge.'
(absurd statements)

- ✧ Try not to be offensive, especially if you think that someone in the audience may not like it.
- ✧ Keep it brief. Include only those things in the set-up that are absolutely necessary to make the punch line work. Make sure that the last word/phrase/line is the punch line—do not add anything after that. Adding unnecessary detail will slow down the joke and make it ineffective.
- ✧ Read your joke out to someone and to see if they like it.

Exercises

A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.

- a. What is a joke?
- b. Why must one be careful when telling a joke?

B. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

- a. What are the two parts of a joke and what are their functions? Give an example.

C. Answer the following questions in 200 words or less.

- a. Try and write an original joke involving yourself (for example, about a habit that you have or something that may have happened to you).
- b. Compose a joke on an everyday life situation.

ARTICLES

An **article** is a piece of writing that could be a news story, a report, a critique, etc., found in newspapers, magazines or published on the Internet. Since chapter 7 focuses on news reports, this chapter will focus on general interest articles (articles that are of interest to the public) that may feature in **magazines** or **online journals**.

The primary function of an article is to inform the reader about a particular topic, presenting both sides of the issue along with research and facts that allow the reader to comprehend the topic. Newspaper articles are meant to be objective in nature. Magazine articles and those articles published on the Internet, including blog posts, can include personal opinions.

An article could be written on any subject. In addition to articles written by in-house writers, newspapers and magazines (including online ones) often ask other writers (who don't write for the publication on a regular basis) to contribute articles. Such writers are often termed 'freelance' writers and are usually experts on the subject that they are writing on. **Freelance writing** forms an important part of many publications since publishers cannot possibly hire an expert from every field on a permanent basis.

Newspapers, magazines and websites also publish 'think pieces' on social, political or economic issues. A **think piece** is thought-provoking article that discusses a topic in great depth, providing background information and an analysis of events, as well as the article writer's personal opinion on the subject.

Elements of an article

A good article includes the following components.

- ✧ **Title:** This is a very important aspect of an article as it is supposed to act as a hook, drawing the reader in. Titles should be attention-grabbing and eye-catching, while also being informative.
- ✧ **Introduction:** This section should brief the reader on what the focus of the article is, setting up a problem or touching upon an issue that will be discussed in an in-depth manner.
- ✧ **Body:** The body of an article consists of facts and figures (as a result of research conducted by the author) that allow the reader to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. As mentioned earlier, newspaper articles need to maintain a degree of objectivity and so must only present facts and not inject the article with any personal bias. Magazine articles may be more personal or subjective in nature,

especially if the author is writing about an experience or offering their opinions on something.

- ❖ **Conclusion/Resolution:** This section is used to complete and close the article. It may take the form of a line that succinctly sums up the author's thoughts about the subject or it may be a fact presented that is related to the story, offered by a reporter as a hint of what the future may hold.
- ❖ **Picture (optional):** Articles at times are accompanied by pictures related to the topic being discussed or reported on.

Sample article

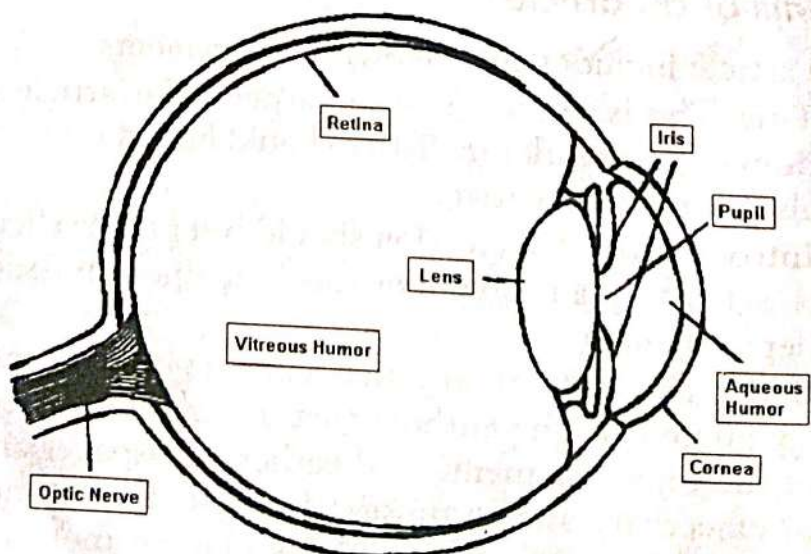
Below is a sample medical article that explains dry eyes. Note how the article is structured. The writer takes care to introduce the topic and carefully explain those terms that might confuse the reader. It even includes a labelled diagram of an eye. The writer then focuses on what the problem is, what its symptoms are, and what causes it. The article ends with treatment and preventative measures.

SAMPLE 1

Understanding Dry Eyes

Eyes are vital organs which are protected by eyelids. Eyelids serve two important functions. The first is to protect the eyes using a fast-action reflex that covers the eyes. The second is to ensure the eyes remain moist. However, it is not eyelids but the *nasolacrimal duct* (or tear duct) that secretes tears that clean and lubricate the eyes. The production of tears is known as *lacrimation* (or *lachrymation*). If a person is unable to produce a sufficient amount of tears, they suffer from dry eyes.

Dry eyes is a condition that tends to afflict older people as a result of not enough oil being produced by the lacrimal glands. Typically, tears form three layers over an eye. A layer of mucus covers the cornea of the eye. Above that is a layer of water and nutrients. An outer layer of oil traps the water and nutrients and prevents the water from



evaporating. Therefore, without the layer of oil, a person is likely to suffer from dry eyes.

If left untreated, dry eyes can cause a fair number of problems including itching, irritation, burning, discomfort and redness of the eyes and blurred vision. Hot, dry or windy weather, age, menopause, thyroid conditions or vitamin A deficiency are all leading causes of dry eyes. In addition, dry eyes is a common side-effect of many medications.

The treatment of dry eyes can only be planned after determining the root of the problem. In instances where the person is suffering from dry eyes as a result of age, artificial tears or an ointment may be used. However, if the situation is more serious, surgical options include plugging the passage between the nose and eyes. This passage drains tears and plugging it would ensure the eyes have a steady supply of tears. Drinking water regularly and periodically, exercising the eyes by blinking deliberately and resting the eyes from computer or television screens assist the eyes and safeguard us from dry eyes.

Objectivity

An article may be objective or subjective. If it is **objective**, then the writer has not offered his/her opinion on the matter discussed. Most informative articles and news reports are objective. However, if it is **subjective**, then the writer has expressed their personal thoughts and feelings on the matter.

Opinion pieces and general interest articles may be subjective. For example, an article on human cloning may be objective, exploring the pros and cons of such work; or it may be subjective, with the pros and cons explored, but the author concluding the article by stating whether she/he is for or against the process.

In an article where you are exploring two sides to an argument, take care that you are not overwhelmingly subjective, as this might risk alienating readers, who might believe you are **biased** (favouring one side over another) and incapable of writing a balanced article.

Preparatory work

Before you begin writing an article, you must have a thorough understanding of the subject you intend to write on. This means you need to do your **research**. This could include eye-witness reports, facts, figures and statistics pertaining to the topic you are writing on, on-scene photographs and interviews, etc. You need to collect and review all this data so that when you write an article, you present a comprehensive write-up on the topic.

The research and any material you include in the article must be double-checked and verified before the article is published. Therefore, make sure your sources are reliable.

Once you complete your research, it is a good idea to draft an **outline** of your article. Determine how long you want it to be and what information you would like to include. And remember to keep it simple. If you do not, you risk losing the reader's attention.

Sample article

Given below is the outline for an article after research on the subject matter (the sinking of the ship *Titanic*) was completed.

After studying the outline, take a look at the sample magazine article on the next page, which was created using the outline. Note how the writer's research has led to the article including facts and eye-witness reports that make the article all the more authentic.

SAMPLE 2

- *Titanic*
 - 2,300 passengers
 - 14 April 1912
- 11:40 p.m.
 - Iceberg tore a 300-foot hole in hull
 - Captain (unsinkable)
- 12:05 p.m.
 - Lifeboats
 - SOS signal
 - Six ships
- 02:00 a.m.
 - Abandon ship
 - Emily Richards (include interview)
- Dawn (no reported time?)
 - Rescue boats
 - Include figures on survivors

The Ship That Couldn't Sink

The *Titanic*, with 2,300 passengers aboard, was on its first voyage from Southampton to New York. It was 11.40 p.m. on 14 April 1912 and the sea was calm. Suddenly the look-out man saw an enormous iceberg. 'Iceberg ahead!' he shouted.

The ship turned, but not soon enough. The iceberg tore a 300-foot hole in the hull and water began to pour in. At first the captain's concerns were for those who may have been injured from the collision. He was confident the ship was still in good condition as the engineers had claimed when they built the ship that it was 'unsinkable'. Then the ship began to lean. At 12.05 p.m. the captain gave the order 'Uncover the lifeboats!'

The wireless operator sent out an SOS signal. Six ships began to race towards the *Titanic*. Unfortunately, the two ships closest to the *Titanic* never did receive its SOS message. *Save our souls*

At 2 a.m. the captain gave the order 'Abandon ship!' In one of the lifeboats was a young woman, Emily Richards, and her baby. She said later: 'It was the most frightening sight I have ever seen. The sea was full of bodies. The water was so icy that nobody could survive for more than a few minutes.'

A few minutes later the *Titanic* began to slip beneath the surface. One by one the last passengers jumped into the sea. Then the stern rose up in the air and *Titanic* sank quickly out of sight. *most people didn't*

At dawn the next morning a rescue boat picked up 705 survivors from the lifeboats. Most of them were first and second class passengers. All their children survived. Of the children who traveled third class, only a third survived.

Editing

Before submitting or publishing your article, you must **edit and revise** it.

After writing the article, wait a few days before revisiting the piece. First try to read it objectively and keep an eye out for typographical errors, grammatical errors and factual errors. Reading aloud often helps pinpoint such mistakes.

Once that is done, you should make sure the article is arranged in a logical manner so that it flows from point to point and does not leave the reader puzzling over what you have written. You must remember to ask yourself, 'Can someone new to the material follow and understand what the article is saying? Rewrite the material where necessary. As mentioned before, remember to keep it simple.'

4. THINK PIECES

Situations are not only exciting and important but are also hard to explain. They continue in the public eye day after day and the reading public looks for a summary to sum up and understand all the various things that have been happening. This requires good thinking and writing in order not to lose the feelings in words and facts. The stories that are written about these situations are generally called Think Pieces. Think Pieces stir a reader to think and understand. They put the events in proper perspective for him. They sum up a series of events and happenings and enable him to see a pattern or observe a thing which is going to happen.

Think Pieces are short essays of at least 300 words. There is no upper limit on length. But the essay should not be long and filled with empty verbiage. Every word counts. It must have a distinct point of view and it must present this point of view clearly and consistently. It allows to experiment with modes of writing as well as with ways of addressing problems. Whatever form the think pieces take, it will be judged first and foremost by its success at elucidating the class' subject matter.

Think Pieces should fit all the pieces of a complete puzzle into place and direct all examples, facts, and reports towards conveying the meaning of an overall pattern. Think Pieces are written in feature story format, introduction with a

news clip, development in which the details point towards specific conclusion and an ending that sums up possibly with one final remark or anecdote. Some think pieces carry an unknown reader beyond just understanding and enable him to acquire a feeling for what is going on, which is the success for writing.

TP
A Think Piece is assessed based on the following factors namely, quality, depth, complexity of the argument, the use of evidence to support the idea, the clarity and elegance of the prose. Apart from these factors it is judged based on the

intellectually stimulating aspect. A synthetic essay must be written not an analytic one. Analysis is the process of breaking something down into its basic parts. Synthesis, by contrast, is a process of combining separate elements to create a new complex entity. An analytic essay explains a subject matter in its own terms; it draws out and clarifies the main points of problem in ways that are intrinsically related to that problem. A synthetic essay, by contrast, elucidates a problem using terms that have no necessary relation to the original terms of the problem. It draws connections between otherwise separate bodies of knowledge. A superior paper goes beyond the evident facts about a subject to create something new, to show intellectual connections that are not evident in the subject matter itself.

Style
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DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Descriptive writing is a form of creative writing. Its purpose is to describe a person, place, object, experience, emotion or situation in such a way that a picture is formed in the reader's mind. When writing a descriptive passage, your goal is to evoke a strong sense of familiarity and appreciation in the reader by painting an image that is vivid and moving. This is done by using imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses.

Learning to write descriptively will improve your writing by making it more interesting and engaging to read. It might also help you clarify your understanding of a subject, and will encourage you to expand your vocabulary by using new or different words.

This section will show you how to make your creative writing interesting and effective such that your reader is able to clearly form an impression of the thing that you are describing.

General guidelines

- ❖ The first thing to keep in mind is to be original. Try not to be influenced by what you may have read or heard about the subject you are writing on; instead express as exactly as possible what *you* sense, think or feel.
- ❖ Try to involve all five senses when describing something. What do you see (sights, colours, lights)? What can you hear (sounds, noises, voices, music)? What can you smell (pleasant and unpleasant odours or aromas)? What do you taste (sweet, bitter, salty, sour, spicy)? How does something feel to the touch (temperature, textures)? Add as many such details as necessary to convey a full picture to the reader.
- ❖ In addition to such sensory details, talk about your thoughts and emotions. Convey your mood to the reader. How does the person/place/object/experience you are describing make you feel? Does it evoke happiness, sadness, pity, fear, anger, excitement, indifference? Describing your emotions may help you connect with your reader who may have felt the same in similar situations.
- ❖ Concentrate on what happens not only *to* you but also *around* you. Note carefully what is happening in the scene you are describing. Talk about 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', 'how' and 'why'.
- ❖ Use adjectives and adverbs to enliven your writing and make it more vivid. Look at the two sentences below and compare them for the effect they create.

The lion rose to its feet and let out a roar.

The lion rose to its feet **majestically** and let out a **loud** roar.

In the second sentence, the adverb 'majestically' and the adjective 'loud' give you a clearer impression of what is being described. Further, instead of saying

The lion let out a *loud* roar.

you could say

The lion let out an **ear-splitting** roar.

The adjective 'ear-splitting' conveys greater intensity than 'roar'.

- ✦ Use powerful, suggestive words to create clear images in your reader's mind. Compare the two sentences given below.

She drank the tea.

She **sipped** the tea.

The second sentence contains the same information as the first but gives you a clearer picture of what took place. Try to use verbs that add meaning to your sentence. Verbs that simply denote something, without suggesting anything additional, may result in a bland and uninteresting sentence. Therefore, use suggestive words and phrases that convey more than just what they represent. Look at another example.

The old woman walked up the hill.

The old woman **plodded** up the hill.

In the second sentence, the old woman walks up the hill, just as in the first sentence; however, the word 'plod' conveys the idea of someone walking slowly because it is difficult and suggests the strain involved in walking. The skilful use of words and phrases helps make your writing more specific in meaning and adds to its aesthetic value.

- ✦ Be specific when you write. Describe exactly what you observe so that the reader can see what you see. For example, look at the sentence below.

The tree was swaying in the wind.

Instead of 'tree', say what kind of tree.

The **coconut** tree was swaying in the wind.

Now bring the sentence to life by adding adverbs and adjectives.

The **slender** coconut tree was swaying **wildly** in the **powerful** wind.

You could, if you wish, add something extra to the scene by choosing a more appropriate adjective.

The slender coconut tree was swaying wildly in the **tempestuous** wind.

Use a thesaurus to find new and specific words. For example, instead of the word 'house', a thesaurus may suggest more specific ideas such as 'home', 'cabin', 'mansion', 'cottage', etc.

- ✧ Try not to use general, nondescript adjectives. Look at the following sentence.

The music was *nice*.

The adjective 'nice' does not convey much; depending on your personal preference, it could mean either of the two sentences below—which create opposite impressions.

The music was **energetic** and **upbeat**.

The music was **quiet** and **soothing**.

Therefore, avoid non-specific or general adjectives and passive verbs; instead use specific adjectives and strong action verbs to give life to the picture you are painting in the reader's mind.

- ✧ Use precise language. Choose words carefully, depending on how relevant they are to what you are describing. For example, do not write

He was a *cheap* man.

when what you really intend to say is

He was a **miserly** man.

because 'cheap' has many meanings other than 'stingy'. The right choice of word forms a firmer image in the mind of the reader and can offer nuanced meanings that serve one's purpose better. To describe a tidal wave, the word 'gigantic' would be a better choice than merely 'big'.

- ✧ Another technique is the use of unusual and expressive combinations of words. So instead of the conventional 'heavy rain' or 'pouring rain', you can use the phrases 'blinding rain' or 'pounding rain' to convey how heavy the rain was.
- ✧ You could also use figurative language such as similes and metaphors to help create a striking image in the reader's mind. For example, a warrior's strength and ferocity can be conveyed through the following association:

He fought like a lion. (simile)

He was a lion in battle. (metaphor)

You can read more on similes and metaphors in the chapter on poetry.

- ✧ Good descriptive writing is organised. Organisation of information is essential in order to communicate clearly. An incoherent mix of emotions and sensory details is difficult to understand. Your thoughts and descriptions must be presented in a logical manner so that the reader is able to take in all that you wish to convey. We will discuss how to organise your writing a little later.
- ✧ Vary your sentences: make sure that they do not look and sound exactly the same. Don't begin every sentence with 'then' or 'so' or 'and'. Use transition words such as 'firstly', 'lastly', 'after', 'next' and 'finally' to make sentences more interesting. Compare the following sets of sentences.

I played for a while.

Then I did my homework.

Then I ate dinner.

Then I went to bed.

I played for a while **before** doing my homework.

Afterwards, I ate dinner.

Finally, I went to bed.

- ✧ Finally, revise what you have written. Re-read your first draft. Did you include enough detail? Were you specific in your descriptions? Do you think you could make it better in any way? Ask a friend or teacher for their opinion.

How to organise your writing

There are many ways to organise one's writing. You could arrange sentences in chronological order (ie, according to time: useful when describing events); spatial order (ie, according to location: useful in describing a scene); logical order (useful when talking about a cause-and-effect relationship); or simply in order of importance.

For example, when describing a person, you might begin with a physical description, followed by how that person thinks, feels and acts. When describing a house, you might start with its location and size, and then talk about how the house looks from the outside before you move into the house and begin describing each room one by one. Remember to organise your sentences into paragraphs in which each paragraph contains one central idea.

Learn to be more observant

Good descriptive writing depends heavily on observing and recollecting vivid moments. Look at all that is happening around you. Notice the colours, shapes, sizes, textures and smells of the objects around you. Pay attention to sounds. Also note the people involved and their behaviour and reactions. In addition to all that is happening outside you, pay attention to what is happening inside you, ie, to your own reactions, thoughts and feelings regarding a situation. There are details worth observing in the most routine of events. Record such details, and the attendant emotions and reactions, in your memory and recall them when sitting down to write on the experience. Keep a notebook and a pen/pencil with you at all times: you could use these to jot down notes on what you observe. Use these notes in your writing in order to make your description of an experience seem more authentic.

Sample descriptive passage

Look at the following samples of descriptive writing and see how the writer has applied the above-mentioned principles of good writing to make the passages effective.

SAMPLE 1

My father's old, green Ambassador lies covered in dust. The car looks weathered, with rust slowly spreading through the entire body like a cancer consuming its victim. Its tires rest flat on the ground. The hubcaps are gone, along with all the mirrors and extras on the car. The interior is a dirty brown, with holes covering almost every square inch of the seat covers. I last took it out twelve years ago. As it chugged slowly down the street, its engine grunting and wheezing due to

the effort it made, its wheels wobbling all the way, I realised that it was time to buy a new car. The Ambassador retired from service, and now spends its days in the garage in my backyard now. My children have asked me to dispose it off; but I cannot bring myself to do it. It reminds me of my childhood: it recalls fond memories of the long joyrides that my father would take me on. No, I will not get rid of it—I will have it cleaned and repaired again. The idea seems to rejuvenate me, and fills me with an energy and enthusiasm that I haven't felt in a while.

Shall we now examine Sample 1 to see the various features of good descriptive writing?

- ❖ Look at the way the passage has been organised. The writer first describes the car (its exterior, then its interior), and then talks about his feelings regarding the car, closing with the promise of something about to happen.
- ❖ The car is described very well such that you can picture it in your mind: 'old', 'green', 'weathered', 'tires . . . flat', 'hubcaps . . . gone, along with all the mirrors and extras', 'interior . . . dirty brown', 'holes covering . . . the seat'.
- ❖ Adjectives are used to intensify the picture: the interiors are not simply 'brown' but '*dirty* brown', which emphasises the sense of dullness. The writer's attitude towards the past is captured by the adjective 'fond' ('fond memories').
- ❖ Similarly adverbs add to the effect of the apt choice of verbs ('chugged *slowly*' indicates painful exertion).
- ❖ The passage also evokes other kinds of images, such as images of movement ('chugged slowly', 'wheels wobbling') and sound images ('engine grunting and wheezing').
- ❖ The writer makes use of a striking simile in the line 'rust slowly spreading through the entire body like a cancer consuming its victim'; this gives the sense of slow decay.
- ❖ The simile also indirectly compares the old car to an old person, an idea reinforced by phrases such as 'grunting and wheezing due to the effort it made' and 'retired from service'.
- ❖ The passage also evokes certain feelings and emotions, such as those of fatigue, abandonment, the recollected joys of a past time, and finally of a new sense of purpose.

Let us look at one more sample passage before we try some exercises. Read the following description of a person carefully. Note how the passage moves from a physical description to a description of the person's inner qualities. What visual images does the passage create? Does the writer employ any other sense other than that of sight? Notice how adjectives are used to create specificity, and how the writer's own attitude towards the subject is shown.

SAMPLE 2

Mrs Hema Raghavan used to teach us geography at school. She had soft features and kind eyes. Though she was a woman of slim build, Mrs Raghavan was remarkably strong and energetic. She wore her hair in a small bun and dressed neatly in starched cotton saris that smelt faintly of sandalwood. She loved her subject and her students, which made our geography class hugely interesting and enjoyable. Mrs Raghavan was a person of the highest integrity and courage. She was never afraid of standing out against anything unjust or wrong. However, I think Mrs Raghavan's nicest qualities, which attracted people to her, were her terrific sense of humour and her spontaneous affection.

Exercises**A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.**

- a. What is the purpose of descriptive writing?
- b. Why is it important to organise one's writing?
- c. Why is it important to choose the most apt word when writing a paragraph?

B. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

- a. What advice must you keep in mind regarding sensory details?
- b. How do adjectives and adverbs help your written passage? Give an example.
- c. What are the different ways of arranging the sentences in a passage?

C. Answer the following questions in about 200 words or more.

- a. Write a short passage describing your house. Describe the outside of the house, the rooms inside, and the garden, if any. Remember to mention sizes, colours and any other details that might help the reader get a better picture of your house. Be careful not to stray off the topic.
- b. Write a brief descriptive passage on any one of the following topics:
 1. A treasured possession
 2. Your pet
 3. A large tree
 4. A birthday party

Additional activity**A. Answer the following question in about 500 words each.**

- a. Describe a walk through (a) an open field during a storm OR (b) a wooded area on a moonlit night. Remember to employ the senses in your description. Use adjectives to enrich your writing. You could also mention your thoughts and feelings during such a walk.

NARRATIVE WRITING

Narration is the act of describing incidents or a course of events. It forms an important and interesting part of our everyday communication, both oral and written. We are always telling stories of real or imagined people, reporting events or incidents or giving an account of our actions and those of others. Narration is a skill that all of us need to use in both personal and work situations, and we can be effective narrators if we understand its features and the process involved.

Narrative writing is a form of writing used to tell a story, real or imagined. Examples of narrative writing are an episode from history, a legend or a short story or novel. Narration is also the primary mode used to report events and incidents that happened, such as a political rally or a chance meeting with a famous actor. A narrative that is an account of imagined characters and events is called **fiction**. Novels and short stories are, thus, fictional narratives. The goal of a piece of narrative writing may be to entertain its readers or to teach them something.

General guidelines

Here are a few points that you should bear in mind when attempting any form of narrative writing.

- ❖ Avoid lengthy descriptions and long introductory passages at the beginning of your narrative, unless they are essential to the story in some way. The reader may lose interest if she or he is made to wait too long for the actual action of the story to begin.
- ❖ Keep track of the tense in which you write. A narrative consists of a sequence of actions and events, usually in the order in which they happened, and the writer uses the past tense to report this. However, sometimes the narrative is written in the present tense, especially when it involves the narration of a routine, or a habitual activity, or when it is presented as though the event or story is unfolding before the eyes of the narrator. It is important to be consistent in the use of the tenses, particularly within the same paragraph.
- ❖ Though a very short narrative could consist of just one paragraph, most narrative pieces are longer and have many paragraphs (or even chapters) strung together. Thus, just as in a paragraph all the sentences relating to the central theme are arranged logically and linked by means of connectives (such as 'firstly', 'meanwhile', 'accordingly', 'therefore') the paragraphs in a short story, biography

or novel, which are groups of related events or themes, follow a logical order and are connected as parts of a larger piece of writing.

- ❖ If the narrative includes dialogues, the words spoken by each person, enclosed in quotation marks, is treated as a separate paragraph. See, for example, Sample 4, which is an extract from a novel.
- ❖ Remember all that you have learnt in the previous chapter on descriptive writing and apply these principles in narrative writing as well: involve all five senses; note 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', 'how' and 'why'; be specific and use concrete images instead of vague, abstract words; use adjectives, adverbs and suggestive verbs to make your writing vivid; and use a variety of sentence types and vocabulary to avoid monotony.
- ❖ 'Show, don't tell' is a technique used in narrative writing. Allow your reader to experience what is happening through action and dialogue, instead of stating it outright. When you 'tell', the reader is forced to accept your judgement on something; when you 'show', the reader is allowed room to use her/his imagination and is invited to interpret what is happening. For example, instead of simply saying

It was a nice day.

you could show what you mean by using concrete images—

The sun was shining and a slight breeze blew across my face.

This technique will also make your writing seem more vivid. Instead of simply stating

The food was unappetising.

you can help your readers reach the same conclusion by writing

Slices of stale bread floated limply in a bowl of watery soup.

Let us look at two more examples. In each case, the second sentence uses the technique of 'show, don't tell', thus involving the reader more closely and giving a sense of immediacy and/or vividity to the narration.

My father was angry.

'Sooraj!' my father roared, 'How dare you do such a thing!'

Padma reacted shyly.

Padma blushed and looked away.

- ❖ Make sure that there is a point to your story. Why write at all if there is no point to what you are saying? If you intend to convey some information through your narration, ensure that all the facts are present. If you wish to thrill your readers or make them laugh, check what you have written to see if the events described achieve that purpose.
- ❖ Revise what you have written. Trim all that is inessential to the point you wish to make. For example, do not describe things just for the sake of adding descriptions—every phrase or sentence you write should contribute to the narration in some meaningful way.

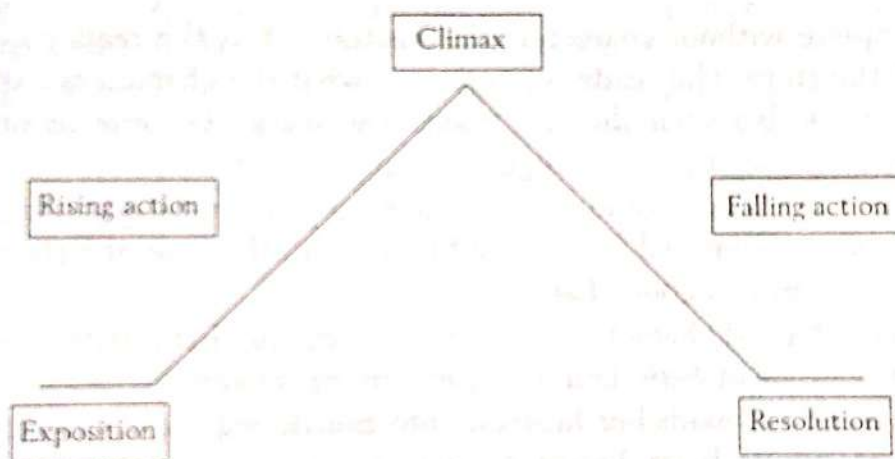
Features of fictional narratives

Now we shall take a closer look at four essential components of fictional narratives such as short stories and novels. These are plot, setting, characters and point of view.

Plot

The *plot* of a story is the sequence of events that take place in the story. Every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. There are no fixed rules that prescribe what a plot should be like. The writer could choose to present the events and incidents in their chronological order, starting with what happened first and taking the reader through all that happened after it up to the ending; or, to capture the reader's interest, the writer could start with the conclusion or the middle and then go back to how the story began, sometimes as a flashback.

The sequence of events in most plots is usually in the order of their occurrence in time. The diagram below indicates a commonly used format.



1. A story normally begins with *exposition*, where the author describes the world of the story and introduces the reader to characters. At the end of the exposition section, some event occurs that triggers rising action.
2. *Rising action* is a set of events that builds up to the climax of the story (the peak of the above diagram). Rising action could be compared to the act of climbing a mountain (but not reaching the top).
3. The *climax* is what the story has been building up to. It is the most exciting part of the story. It may also be called the 'turning point', as it reveals something unexpected.
4. As a result of the climax or the turning point, consequences have to be dealt with. The *falling action* thus deals with the after-effects of the climax.
5. *Resolution*, as the name suggests, focuses on the resolution of the story and on tying up loose ends of the plot.

Setting

The *setting* of a story is the location where the story is taking place. Most stories tend to have multiple settings. Setting is considered to be a fundamental component of narratives as it helps establish the 'where' and the 'when' of the story.

The setting of a story must be both believable and realistic, even if it is a fictitious setting. If the reader does not believe such a setting can exist, or is unable to visualise the setting, then the reader is likely to lose interest in the story.

Conventionally, a change in setting implies a change in scene, which means the story has moved on to a new section.

Writers usually describe the setting at the beginning of the narration, for example:

It was a bitterly cold winter night in Delhi. At eight o'clock, the streets were almost deserted, with just a few shadowy figures hurrying, heads bent and wrapped in thick woollen mufflers and coats, to the warmth of their homes.

Characters

No story is complete without characters. Characters act as the reader's eyes and ears in the world of the story. The reader experiences what the characters experience. The emotional connection between the two makes the reader become involved with the story and interested in seeing what happens to the characters.

Creating a character is no simple feat. A character must not be one-dimensional or a stereotype: they must seem real and believable, even in the case of fictional narratives. Here are a few features of a good character.

- ✧ *Motivations*: A good character must have something that justifies her/his actions. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth changes from docile and nurturing wife into someone who goads her husband into murdering the king because she loves and supports her husband. Emotions such as love, anger, jealousy or fear are often used as character motivation.
- ✧ *Conflict*: Every character must face some sort of conflict, whether it is internal or external. Internal conflict may include jealousy versus friendship, where a character envies his friend's luck, but does not want to express this envy because he values their friendship. External conflict could be something as simple as a fight between two people. A story without conflict would be flat and lifeless.
- ✧ *Development*: A good character should show change, even if it is the slightest amount. Ideally, this change is brought about as a result of events taking place during the rising action or the climax of the story.

Point of view

Another important element of narrative writing is *point of view*. The point of view of a story is the story's perspective. Is the story being told through the eyes of a character or from the eyes of an unseen narrator? The same sequence of events may sometimes be narrated differently depending on the character whose point of view it is told from.

Point of view may be of different types.

1. *First person*: using the pronouns 'I' or 'we' to tell the story (for example, 'I saw the man chase after the robber'). Here, the narrator is a character within the story.
2. *Second person*: using the pronoun 'you' to tell the story (for example, 'You saw the man chase after the robber'). The narrator refers to a character as 'you'. This is a rarely used point of view.
3. *Third person*: using the pronouns 'he', 'she', 'they', etc. to tell the story (for example, 'She saw the man chase after the robber'). This is considered to be the most flexible of the different points of view. Each and every character is referred to by their name or by 'he', 'she', etc. There are various kinds of third person points of view.
 - ◇ *Third person subjective*: For example, 'She saw the man chase after the robber and felt sure the man would catch up with the robber and give him a thorough beating'. The point of view remains in third person, with the interior thoughts of the character conveyed as well.
 - ◇ *Third person objective*: For example, 'She saw the man chase after the robber'. The thoughts of the character are not conveyed.
 - ◇ *Third person omniscient*: For example, 'She saw the man chase after the robber; little did she know that the robber was in fact her father'. The narrator is unconnected to the story but reveals information about the story and the characters that the characters themselves do not know.

Sandeep Nagarkar

Samples

A few examples of different kinds of narratives are given below. Read them and note their features. Sample 1 is written from a first person point of view. The next one is written in the third person objective, while the third and fourth samples are written in the third person subjective mode.

SAMPLE 1

I am usually up at five in the morning on week days. I spend the first hour studying or completing class assignments. Then, after a bath and breakfast, I take the 7.30 College Special from the corner of our street. We have classes from 8.30 am to 3 pm with a lunch break of forty minutes, when I eat in the college canteen with friends. After classes, it is time for the library, where we work until 4 pm. Later after a wash and a quick snack at home, it is time to go to the music class, just ten minutes away. Back home, I study for about two hours, until 9 pm. Dinner is the nicest part of the day, spent with my parents and sister. Finally, after watching television for a while, it is time to go to bed around 10.30.

SAMPLE 2

Yesterday Professor Bose got up at 7 o'clock. He was late! Hurriedly, he got out of bed and ran into the bathroom. As he switched on the geyser, the lights went out, so he settled for a cold wash. After a quick breakfast, during which he burnt his tongue drinking very hot coffee, Professor Bose got dressed. Because he was in such a great hurry, he forgot to tie his shoe-laces, and as he was hurrying out of the front door, he tripped and fell. He quickly picked himself up and ran to the bus stop only to see the back of the bus disappearing in the distance. Grumbling, he waved to a taxi and got in.

'Arts College!' he roared to the taxi driver, 'and in double quick time. I have a class in ten minutes from now.' The driver drove fast, and Professor Bose arrived at the college just in time for his lecture. But there were no students, there was no noise, nothing. It was a Sunday!

SAMPLE 3

Karuna had an exciting adventure some days ago. She was on her way back home from the college when her scooter broke down in the deserted ridge area. Seeing that there was no way she could get the vehicle to start, Karuna decided to walk through the woods to the main road, from where she could take an autorickshaw or a bus home. She had walked that way many times with friends and did not really feel nervous. So she was terrified when she found two men appear suddenly from behind a clump of trees, holding thick sticks in their hands. 'Hand over your wallet', the taller of the men said in a gruff voice. Fortunately, at that moment, a snake slithered out of a bush near one of the men, and finding that their attention was diverted, Karuna raced through the trees, screaming, 'Help! Help!' The thugs went after her and were barely two metres away when she caught sight of the road and some late evening walkers. She quickly scampered up to safety and was dropped home by a cheerful woman and her husband.

REPORTS

A report is a piece of writing that, as the name suggests, presents a 'report', or information on an event, situation or process. A report must be written in clear, simple language and in a direct style. When writing a report be clear about the following things:

- ✧ what the report is about
- ✧ who it is meant for
- ✧ what it will be used for

Reports are of three main kinds:

1. newspaper reports and general reports
2. reports of scientific experiments and processes that were carried out
3. official reports that are prepared on the instructions of someone in authority.

Newspaper reports and general reports

Newspaper reports cover current events and everyday incidents in the country and abroad that would be of interest to its readers. They deal with a variety of subjects such as education, entertainment, commerce and industry, politics, sports, science and stories of human interest. Reports for newspapers consist of a direct presentation of facts relating to some situation or event. They are generally impersonal and objective in style. ~~What this means is that the writer of a~~ newspaper report simply presents facts, without expressing his or her own reactions to the incidents.

Some typical features of newspaper reports are listed below. You would find it useful to refer to these when writing a report either as an examination task or for publication in a newspaper.

- ✧ The verb in the headings of newspaper reports is either in simple present tense or in past participle form.

President **leaves** (simple present) for SAARC meet

Tughlaqabad Fort **given** (past participle) a facelift

Book by Y. K. Reddy **to be released** (past participle)

- ✧ Factual descriptions and narrations in newspaper reports use a mixture of verbs in the active and passive voice. This choice is made on the basis of whether the performer of the action is important and needs to be focused on, whether the

performer of the action is understood, is not really relevant, is not known or whose identity needs to be kept a secret.

The prime minister **met** (active voice) the members of the visiting UN committee last evening. The meeting **was arranged** (passive voice) in the Parliament House Annex. It **is believed** (passive voice) that immediate plans to fight terrorism **were discussed** (passive voice) at the meeting.

- ✧ Newspaper reports also often include the opinions and statements by important persons, experts or those in authority. These may be either in reported speech or in the exact words of the speaker, in direct speech enclosed in inverted commas. Some newspaper reports use both direct and indirect speech to express people's comments and views.

The head of the cardiology unit at M. R. L. Hospital confirmed reports that the patient is in a critical condition. (indirect speech) Dr Prabhat Kumar said, 'The patient has been put on a ventilator following a massive cardiac arrest. His kidneys, liver and lungs too are not functioning satisfactorily.' (direct speech)

- ✧ A fourth feature of newspaper reports is the use of the expressions 'unconfirmed/confirmed reports' and 'reliable sources' as in the following extracts from newspaper reports. Such expressions are used either in the absence of an authentic source of information or when there is a need to keep the identity of the official or source confidential.

There have been **confirmed reports** of heavy showers in many parts of North India.

According to **reliable sources**, actor Sumalata will announce her retirement from films shortly.

Sometimes you are asked to write a factual report (not necessarily meant to be published in a newspaper) describing an event or situation for the college magazine or as part of a class assignment. Your report, in which you will describe an event, such as a cultural programme or trip, is expected to give its most important details. Although these reports are written with the same purpose as newspaper reports—to convey information about an event—general reports are not as formal in style as those written for the newspaper.

Note that reports meant for a newspaper or those written for a college magazine or as a class assignment usually consist of more than one paragraph. They begin with an introductory paragraph containing basic information about the venue, date and time of the reported event. The next two or three paragraphs are used to describe the event in more detail. The final paragraph sums up or concludes the report.

Sample reports

Take a look at the following model reports. The first is a newspaper report on an earthquake; the next one is a report on a school trip to Pondicherry; the third is a report on the activities of a college debating club; and the final one is a report on an inter-college dance competition.

SAMPLE 1*Earthquake in Bilaspur*

The small sleepy town of Bilaspur was destroyed completely when an earthquake, measuring 5 on the Richter scale, struck without warning at 2.15 a.m. on 2 June 2006. The damage caused by the earthquake was immense. Two hundred people were killed and more than twice the number were reported to have been badly injured. Most of the buildings in the town collapsed and the railway lines connecting Bilaspur to the outside world were wrecked. There was total power breakdown with the transmission lines being snapped.

The army was called out to assist the local administration in its relief operations. Several NGOs and other voluntary organisations came forward to provide medical assistance, food, water and shelter. An amount of Rs 4 crore is being released from the chief minister's fund, and this would be used to pay a compensation of 1 lakh each to the affected families.

SAMPLE 2*Excursion to Pondicherry*

During the summer vacation this year, we went in a large group to Pondicherry, a charming, well-planned town that was once a French colony. We booked into a quiet, old-fashioned hotel very close to the Beach Road facing the Bay of Bengal. The road is also part of the city's French Quarter and is a good place to stroll leisurely and enjoy a scenic view of the sea. On the other side of the town is the traditional Tamil quarter with its narrow streets and traditional houses with elaborately carved doorways.

We visited the Pondicherry Museum, filled with interesting exhibits. Two other attractions are the 19th century Church of Our Lady of the Angels and Raj Nivas, which used to be the official residence of an the French governor of Pondicherry. On the last day of our stay in the city, we visited the Aurobindo Ashram with its memorials to the great spiritual leader Sri Aurobindo Ghose and his disciple, the Mother. We spent every moment we could on the warm, golden beaches or shopping in the quaint, tiny stores or enjoying French food in the little cafes that can be found everywhere. When we left Pondicherry, it was with happy memories of its friendly people, its warm sand and water, its delicately flavoured cuisine and sweet smells and sounds.

SAMPLE 3*The college debating club*

The Arts College has a very active debating club. The club is as old as the college itself and follows the tradition of having the Head of the English Department as its president. A student from the final year is chosen every year to be the secretary of the club.

The debating club organises many debating events. First, there are the inter-class debates held once a month where students are allowed to suggest topics for the debate and the final topic is selected by a draw of lots. The winners of the inter-class debates are given training to improve their debating skills and sent out to other colleges for competitions. The debating club also holds an annual debating event in which other educational institutions are invited to participate. The event is considered to be prestigious and so attracts a large number of participants, making it necessary to spread the competitions over three days. Finally, the college is a member of the All-India Debating Society and sends its debaters to represent the college in the major competitions organised by the society.

The annual debate for this year is being held next month at the Gandhi Memorial Hall. The topic for the debate will be announced two days before the competition. Student members and teachers associated with the club are busy finalising arrangements for the big event in which over sixty debaters from different colleges in the state are expected to take part.

SAMPLE 4*Nrityanjali 2013*

The inter-college dance competition, Nrityanjali, was held in the university convocation hall at 6 p.m. on 18 April 2013. The competition, in which twenty colleges participated, was judged by a panel comprising noted dancers Bharati Shivaji, Chitra Visweswaran and Raja Reddy. The chief guest for the evening was R.V. Arunkumar, Minister of State for Education, who spoke briefly on keeping alive the cultural traditions of the nation.

The items presented in the solo section included bharatanatyam, odissi, mohini attam and kuchipudi styles. Among the group dances presented by students of six colleges were bhangra, karagattam and bamboo dance. The variety and colours of the costumes, the graceful movements of the dancers, the sparkle of jewellery and the tinkling of anklets had a mesmerising effect on the audience.

manale

The music, vocal and instrumental, accompanying the dances was of a high standard and added to the beauty of the performances.

The first prize in the solo section was awarded to Hemlata of the Avvai Bharati College for her odissi performance. The second and third prizes went to Akshay and Shubha of Periyar Institute and SGRK Women's College for their bharatanatyam and mohini attam performances respectively. The bhangra group dance presented by students of Anjum College was judged the best in its category because of the vigour, fluid grace and rhythm with which it was performed.

The function concluded with a short ceremony in which the chief guest gave away the prizes. The secretary of the organising committee presented bouquets and mementos to the chief guest and to the members of the committee. Finally, a vote of thanks was proposed by the president of the Periyar University Students' Union, Arul Selvi.

Reports of experiments and processes

Writing reports of experiments and processes involves a different style from that used in newspaper reports and general, descriptive reports. Since reports of scientific experiments and cooking processes, for example, need to focus on the procedure rather than on the performer of the experiment, the verb appears in passive voice all through the report. Thus, in the following pairs of sentences, the second sentence would be more appropriate than the first one for recording a laboratory experiment or a cookery demonstration.

- | | |
|--|---|
| The student <i>took</i> 5 ml of hydrochloric acid in a glass tube. | × |
| 5 ml of hydrochloric acid was taken in a glass tube. | ✓ |
| The chef <i>marinated</i> the fish slices in a paste of onions, ginger and garlic. | × |
| The fish slices were marinated in a paste of onions, ginger and garlic. | ✓ |

Reports of scientific experiments usually arrange their information under the following headings:

Aim	Apparatus	Principle
Procedure	Observations	Conclusions

Sample reports

Given below are short sample reports of a completed scientific experiment and of the steps followed in making a dish.

SAMPLE 1

A can with a duct for excess liquid to overflow was taken. The can was filled with water to the level of the duct. An irregular object was put into the can and the displaced water collected in a collecting can. The volume of the water that overflowed was measured. This was found to be equal to the volume of the irregular object that was put into the water.

SAMPLE 2

A tablespoon of cooking oil was heated in a pressure cooker. Cardamoms, cloves and finely sliced onions, and a teaspoonful of ginger-garlic paste were added to the hot oil and sautéed until golden brown. A cup of washed and drained rice together with chopped vegetables was put into the pressure cooker and stirred for a few minutes. Two cups of water were poured into the mixture of rice and vegetables and half a teaspoon of salt was added. The lid of the pressure cooker was closed tight, and when steam began to escape, a weight was placed on the vent. The gas stove was turned off after one whistle, and the pressure cooker was allowed to cool before being opened.

Official reports

Official, or business/technical, reports are formal reports written in response to instructions received from someone in authority. They are also referred to as 'survey reports' because they are investigative in nature and are written after studying or surveying, for example, a subject area, a situation or the working of an industry. It is essential for these reports to present facts clearly and concisely because they will be used to take decisions.

You can follow the guidelines below to write official reports.

1. The first step in writing an official report involves the collection of data through investigations, inquiry, meetings, surveys, etc.
2. The second step is to arrange the information in the following format, which is commonly used for the purpose.
 - ❖ **From:** name and designation of the person writing the report
 - ❖ **Date**
 - ❖ **To:** name and designation of the person to whom the report is sent

- ◇ **Title of the report:** subject of the report
 - ◇ **Terms of reference:** who authorised the report/why it is being made, what the reporter has been asked to survey, etc.
 - ◇ **Abstract or summary:** included when the report is very long, so that busy senior colleagues may get the essence of the report quickly, without having to go through the main body of the report
 - ◇ **Body of the report:** containing the findings of the investigation
 - ◇ **Conclusion:** containing the reporter's interpretation of the facts, and his / her comments and recommendations
 - ◇ **Signature:** of the person writing the report
3. The style and tone used in such reports is usually formal.
4. An official report must be accompanied by a formal covering letter thanking the person, persons or the organisation concerned for assigning you the task of making the report and stating your availability for further discussions and clarifications.

Sample report

Look at the sample given below for an illustration of the format that has been suggested for official reports.

SAMPLE 1

From:

Venkat Balaraman

District Education Inspector

Salem

Date: 15 May 2009

To:

Dr Susheela Sripathi

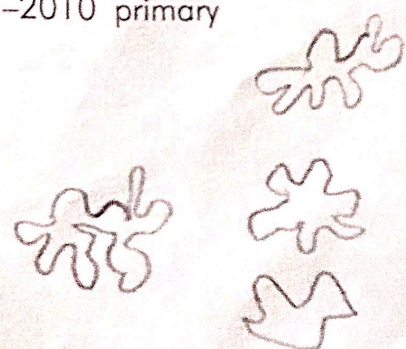
Chief Education Officer

District Centre, Department of Education

Salem

Title: Primary education programme

Terms of reference: As instructed by the Minister of State for Education, a survey was conducted to assess the implementation of the government's 2007-2010 primary education programme in four villages in the district.



Findings: The writer visited the four villages of Periyeripatti, Thindamangalam, Reddipatti and Pachanampatti to observe and assess the programme. The findings of the study are as follows.

- i. According to records maintained in the local panchayat offices, the number of students who enrolled in 2008–2009 increased from 23 to 50 in Periyeripatti, 14 to 47 in Thindamangalam, 22 to 70 in Reddipatti and 30 to 95 in Pachanampatti.
- ii. While a dropout of 7% was reported in Thindamangalam, the other villages were able to retain their initial strength for the entire course of the academic session.
- iii. It was confirmed that the mid-day meal scheme was being satisfactorily implemented in all the four villages.
- iv. Except for three cases in Periyeripatti, primary schools in the villages had all the students vaccinated for typhoid and cholera.
- v. It was verified that the free distribution of books and stationery was done in all four villages as per the records.

Conclusion and recommendations: The government's programme for improving primary education in the state seems to have succeeded in Salem district. It is recommended that permission be granted for the recruitment of more trained teachers and for the sanction of funds for the renovation of school buildings in the villages where this study was conducted.

Venkat B

(Venkat Balaraman)

Exercises

- A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.
 - a. What are the points which one must keep in mind while writing a report?
 - b. Name the different kinds of reports that one may be asked to write.
 - c. What is the style of a newspaper report?
 - d. What is a ~~survey~~ report?
 - e. What should be mentioned in the covering letter that accompanies a business report?
- B. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.
 - a. What must one keep in mind when writing a report on an experiment?
 - b. What are the different steps in writing a ~~business~~ report?
 - c. In what way would a report on a cookery demonstration be different from a report on a college excursion?
- C. Answer the following questions in about 200 words or more.
 - a. Write brief newspaper reports of two paragraphs each on the following topics:
 1. A railway accident
 2. An international football/cricket match
 3. A new shopping mall

BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

Reviews describe, discuss and evaluate something. You can review a book or an article, a music or dance performance, a film, the food served in a restaurant, a gadget, or a new model of a car or a motorcycle. A review allows you to judge the thing being discussed and express your opinion on it. This may help someone who wishes to buy or use a product or a service. Writing a review challenges and develops your critical and analytical abilities, and might help both you and your reader to better understand the object of the review.

Here are some general principles to keep in mind for any kind of review, be it that of a comic book, a mobile phone or a tourist resort!

- ❖ Do not merely describe an object, an event or a place: comment on it, tell your reader what you think of it.
- ❖ Give evidence, or reasons, for saying why you find an object or a work excellent, exciting, interesting, average, unsatisfactory or disappointing. Structure your review like a piece of argumentative writing—with an introductory paragraph for stating your opinion, paragraphs with supporting arguments, and a concluding paragraph. Support your opinion with facts and details about the text, event or object you are writing about.
- ❖ Be fair and objective in your description and in the expression of your opinion. Give your honest opinion, but take care that your remarks are not rude or unkind and likely to hurt people's feelings.

In this section, we will learn how to review a book or a film. Remember that a review is neither a summary nor a retelling of the content or story of the book or film—it is your *reaction* to the book/film, your appraisal or assessment of it. Since reviews are personal reactions and reflect the opinions of the reviewer, there is no one fixed way of writing a review. A review can be short or long, formal or informal in style, depending on the purpose of the review and the audience for whom it is written. The guidelines detailed below are, therefore, simply suggestions; they are not formulae that must be followed strictly. Practise writing reviews, as it might help you learn how to organise your thoughts about something and express them in a clear and logical manner.

Reviewing a book

A book review describes, analyses and judges the quality of a book. It does so by focusing on the book's content, purpose and significance. Analyse the book's strengths and weaknesses and give your personal opinion on how well the author has succeeded in her/his purpose, while presenting evidence to support your evaluation.

There are many kinds of book reviews, and they differ in what the person writing them says, as well as in their tone and style. You can learn how to write reviews by reading those that appear in newspapers and magazines. To help you start, here are some common features of reviews and some points for you to remember when writing them. Not all of these may be relevant to the review that you write because every book requires a different approach: make use of those suggestions that suit your purpose.

General guidelines

- ✧ Read the book or article you have to review carefully and thoroughly, preferably twice.
- ✧ Make notes on its content, style and your opinions about it. Write down lines, phrases or words that you would like to quote as evidence for the statements you make. You may not be an expert in the field or the form of work you are asked to review, but making careful observations will help you give the reader reasons for your opinion about it.
- ✧ Think about the person you are writing the review for. Is it a college assignment or for publication in a newspaper or journal? Are you writing the review for readers who want to know if the work will make a good read or if it will be useful as a textbook or relevant to their research in a particular area?
- ✧ You could begin your review by giving the title of the book or article and the name of its author. Some reviews, usually those that are written for newspapers and journals, also mention the publisher, place of publication, publication date, edition, pages, price and ISBN (the International Standard Book Number, assigned to every book published and which you find at the bottom of the outside back cover as well as on the reverse of the title page of the book).
- ✧ You could give details about the author that are in some way related to the work (e.g. nationality, historical period, interests, education, influences or personal life). Are there connections between the author's philosophy or life experience and the book you are reviewing?
- ✧ You could also talk about the situation that led to the book being written (the need for a textbook on a subject, to express feelings or describe experiences about something, or to pay tribute).

- ✧ What kind of a book is it? Is it fiction or non-fiction? Is it a collection of short stories, or a novel, or a cookery book, or a book meant for academic reference? What genre does it belong to (e.g. family drama, romantic comedy, political satire)?
- ✧ Give a very brief summary of the book's subject and scope.
- ✧ Tell your reader a little about the themes and the main ideas in the book, and the author's stand on them.
- ✧ Praise or criticise different aspects of the work (e.g. 'the theme of the poem is not new, but the poet's use of imagery is appealing'). You could also say, for instance, what you liked about the content or what you thought was different about it and whether you felt it was interesting, useful, imaginative, logical, well-researched, etc.
- ✧ If you think your readers want to know about the work itself, focus on the book and its author. On the contrary, if you think they might want to know your opinion on it, then you could emphasise your position.
- ✧ Many experienced reviewers discuss a work in a particular context. For example, a novel on the life of an immigrant family in America written in English by an Indian author could, for example, be reviewed in the framework of either postmodern literature or Indian English writing.
- ✧ You could compare the book with other books by the same author or with other books in the same genre (however, try not make the comparison seem more important than what you are reviewing).
- ✧ Say something about the author's writing style. Is the language simple or wordy, clear or complicated, formal or informal? Is the tone humorous or serious? Are the style and tone appropriate to the subject and suitable for the intended readers?
- ✧ You could choose to go into further detail about the author's style. Is the flow of the writing pleasing, harmonious or jarring? Does the author use stylistic devices such as symbolism, motifs, and metaphor? If there is dialogue, how effective and natural does the dialogue seem?
- ✧ Remember that you are expected to say what you actually think of the book. So if you think a book is ordinary, say so in a manner that will not offend. Similarly, if you think a book is excellent, say this clearly.
- ✧ All that you say will have to be supported by reasons for your doing so. For example, if you write that a textbook is too difficult for students at the undergraduate level, you could explain, for example, that it contains concepts that are taught in postgraduate courses.
- ✧ Sum up the book's strengths and weaknesses and conclude with an evaluation or by saying whether you would recommend the book to your reader.
- ✧ Be fair and balanced in writing your review. Being completely negative could make readers doubt your judgement.

- ✧ Write a first draft based on the notes you made. Read this to see if your review is unclear or incomplete in some way. Revise it and write the second draft. Check the second draft for correctness of language, spelling and punctuation and then write the final fair draft of your review.

Fiction

In addition to the general guidelines above, here are some additional points that one can discuss when writing a review for a short story, novel or book of poems.

- ✧ Ensure that you do not give away the story (especially the ending).
- ✧ Is the story a familiar one, or something original?
- ✧ You could say something about the characters in the work. Are they flat or three-dimensional? Do any of the characters develop during the course of the story? Do they engage your interest and sympathy?
- ✧ Comment on the plot. Have the various elements of plot (such as introduction, suspense, climax, conclusion) been handled well? Is the plot simple or complicated? Are there many sub-plots? Do these sub-plots integrate well with the main plot, or are they unnecessary distractions?
- ✧ Is the setting important in any way? Does it affect the story or the characters? How effectively has the atmosphere of the setting been evoked?
- ✧ Does the story unfold at a fast pace, or does it take a long time to build up to the climax?
- ✧ Has the author placed more emphasis on one element of the story (plot, character, setting, style, etc.) than the others?
- ✧ When reviewing poetry, discuss how effectively its central concerns/themes have been expressed. Was the verse powerful? Did it move you? You could also talk about the poetic devices used (such as rhyme, rhythm, figures of speech, imagery).

Non-fiction

When reviewing a work of non-fiction (such as a biography, a book on history or science, or a textbook), you might want to go into further detail.

- ✧ Tell the reader what the aim of the book is. You might find the author's purpose in writing the book mentioned in the preface, the introduction or the first chapter. Or you could attempt to understand it by asking yourself questions such as (a) why did the author write on this subject instead of some other subject? (b) what genre does this book fit into? (c) who is the intended audience?
- ✧ Give a critical evaluation, or your reactions to the content of the book. You could begin with the title and say, for example, if you think it tells the reader clearly what the book is about or say whether the author has explained the intention and scope of the book well in the preface, or comment on the table of contents and

say whether the content could have been organised in a better way. You could either comment on the work from the first chapter to the last one, in the order in which they appear in the book, or you could analyse it and give your opinions separately with regard to different aspects, such as its theme, its organisation or the writer's style.

- ❖ Does the author cover the subject well and in a balanced manner? Does the writer use a descriptive, historical or analytical approach to deal with the subject? Say whether concepts and arguments are clearly defined and whether the main ideas have been developed well. If the book is written to establish the author's opinion(s) on a topic, see whether this is reflected throughout the work.
- ❖ Say what the writer's point of view on something is and whether you agree or disagree with the author (e.g. you think she is right in her views on primary school education in the country).
- ❖ Does the author use convincing arguments to prove her/his position? Are the author's conclusions logical?
- ❖ Where there are facts and figures, say whether these are accurate and taken from reliable sources.
- ❖ Explore issues the book raises. Relate the book to your experiences or to the world we live in. Do you find anything in the work that conflicts with your experiences or what you have read in other books?
- ❖ Point out aspects that you think the author should have covered, but has not.
- ❖ Is the ending a good sum up and conclusion of the work?
- ❖ If there are footnotes, illustrations, maps, figures or an index, do these help the reader understand the book better? If there is a bibliography, is it comprehensive and are all the details about the works listed complete and accurate?
- ❖ If you think it is relevant, comment on the book's format, layout, binding, typography, etc. Is the paper of poor quality? Is the typeface legible? Does the text seem too cramped on the page? Is the collector's hardbound edition worth the price?
- ❖ Did you find the book enjoyable and satisfying to read? Has the book helped you understand the subject? Was it useful to you? Why or why not? Also say in your review whether you think the intended readers will like the work or find it useful.

Sample book reviews

Now read the three short reviews below. The first is the review of a textbook, the second of a novel, and the third of a non-fiction book. These are only meant to suggest the style and structure of reviews and to serve as models for you to imitate as a beginner.

SAMPLE 1

English in Use, published by SBO Publishers, Mumbai, and written by Professor Rajesh Anand, is a textbook of general English for first year undergraduate courses. Accompanied by an audio CD and prepared according to the UGC guidelines, the book offers a course in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The twelve texts for reading include literary pieces—prose and poetry—as well as extracts and adaptations of writings on current themes that are likely to interest students today. The exercises that follow the texts test reading comprehension. The writing section contains guidelines for writing twelve kinds of texts ranging from paragraphs to letters and book reviews. The listening section offers training in listening for different purposes—for general theme to specific pieces of information. The speaking section gives samples and practice in performing the most common language functions in everyday situations. All the sections have explanations supported by examples and followed by exercises that give practice and also test whether the student has gained proficiency in the area concerned. The CD, which can be played on an MP3 player as well as a computer, has high-quality recordings for the listening and speaking sections.

The explanations are written in a simple, easy to follow style, and the examples use familiar names, themes and situations. The brief, bulleted points of explanation, the clear samples and the exercises help make the textbook very student-friendly. If improvements have to be suggested for *English in Use*, they are that the book could have included short sections on grammar and vocabulary to make the coursebook more complete and that a larger font could have been used for better readability. Priced at Rs 90, this 184-page textbook is better planned, written and produced than most other books available for the general English paper in BA/BSc/BCom courses and it is, thus, highly recommended.

SAMPLE 2

Twenty-six-year-old Roma is in a dilemma. The handsome and sophisticated Karan has just proposed marriage to her—but so has Danny, her best friend and childhood confidant! In the midst of her confusion, she discovers her late grandmother Maya's secret diary, which tells the tale of a similar choice that Maya faced many years ago. A *Cup of Arabica*, Yamini Kandiyar's follow-up to her immensely successful debut novel *Purple Noon*, is a light breezy romance that weaves together the parallel love stories of Roma and Maya.

Set in a coffee plantation in the Nilgiris, the novel focuses primarily on its two protagonists. The character of Roma, especially, has been drawn with much affection, her wit highlighted and her foibles gently teased. The story of the lovable Maya is more touching and serves as the emotional core of the novel. The other characters, unfortunately, are rather one-dimensional in contrast and seemingly function only to move the action forward.

Although the author successfully manages to build suspense and throw in more than a couple of twists, the plot is not too complicated and the narrative flows smoothly from one episode to the next without slowing down. Kandiyar's writing style is more suited to humour and it is the comic moments that stand out when compared to the dramatic ones.

Though the ending might seem predictable to a few readers, fans of the romance genre will not be disappointed. *A Cup of Arabica* may not have the passionate intensity of *Purple Noon*, but it is quite an enjoyable read for a lazy afternoon or for a relaxing evening after work.

SAMPLE 3

Cancer is one of the deadliest diseases known to humankind, feared for its unrelenting nature and for its ability to penetrate the body's defences to strike at any organ. In *The Emperor of All Maladies*, oncologist and cancer researcher Siddhartha Mukherjee attempts to write a 'biography' of this dreaded disease, from its earliest mention in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics to its present-day reputation as a known killer of more than seven million people a year. Along the way, he pays homage to the dedicated and obsessive scientists who studied the disease and the centuries of effort that have led us to our present understanding of its prevention and treatment.

It is a fascinating tale, and Mukherjee tells it with panache, flavouring his narration with literary quotations and analogies. His descriptions of medical procedures are vivid and his stories of those fighting cancer—both doctors as well as patients—are well written. Mukherjee has a gift for translating complex medical concepts into simple language. However, he does occasionally revert to dense jargon when talking about cancer genetics. In spite of this, the book remains eminently readable and moves smoothly forward like an engrossing yarn.

The book reveals Mukherjee's concern and affection for his patients. The story of Carla Long, a 36-year-old leukaemia patient, becomes one of the central motifs of the book. The book reflects the despair, the courage and the hope

of those struggling with this illness. The other quality that shines through is his intense fascination with the behaviour of cancer, the way it spreads from cell to cell and the way it continues to defy our best scientific efforts to control it.

On occasion, the author takes narrative detours (such as a passage on the emergence of AIDS and its influence on patient activism) that distract from the primary story. He also fails to give due prominence to bone-marrow transplants, one of the most successful cancer treatments of this century. Despite such rare lapses, *The Emperor of All Maladies* is well worth one's time for its encompassing view of the science, philanthropy and politics that have defined the modern war on cancer. For a first book, this encyclopaedic work is an ambitious effort; but it can justly take its place as one of the most important books ever written on the history of scientific progress.

The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer by Siddhartha Mukherjee. HarperCollins India, 2010. ISBN 9780007428052.

Reviewing a film

Film reviews are perhaps more widely read than book reviews. Every week, newspapers, magazines, radio and television channels, and websites review films released that week. The opinions of reviewers can have an impact on whether people decide to see a film. Poor reviews can sometimes result in financial loss for film producers. Some reviewers even become well known for their film criticism and many viewers base their decision to watch, rent or buy a film on the opinions of a critic they trust. In addition ~~to helping~~ readers determine whether they want to watch a particular film, you can also write reviews simply to express your views and emotions regarding the film.

A summary description of the film usually forms the main part of any film review. A review should give just enough details about the movie to help the reader make an informed decision—without giving away the entire plot or, especially, any surprises.

Keep in mind that different people have different tastes: don't give a film a bad review simply because it doesn't suit your taste. You do not have to convince the reader that you are right in your opinions regarding a film; the usefulness of a review lies in how well the reviewer can predict whether the reader will enjoy the movie.

It might help to read a lot of movie reviews. You will find them in print media, as well as on the Internet on websites such as Rotten Tomatoes, Metacritic, MRQE and Review Gang. When going through these, think about what makes some of them better or more helpful than others. The points given below will serve as useful guidelines when writing a film review.

General guidelines

- ❖ To begin with, watch the film in question more than once, if possible. It is usually the little details that separate a good film from an average one. You might miss key elements if you watch a film just once; a second viewing helps you absorb a lot more detail. (Never write about a film without having watched it first: it is unfair to both the filmmakers and your readers.)
- ❖ Take notes on the movie and gather basic facts about it (such as the full title, year of release, running length, the genre, the names of the director and the lead actors, and so on) as you watch it. Use these facts when writing your review. Read professional reviews to learn how to weave such facts into your review.
- ❖ Give a brief summary of the story. You could identify the main characters, describe the setting, and give a sense of the central conflict of the movie. This is to give your readers an idea of what they will be in for.
- ❖ Remember: never, ever, reveal plot elements such as a crucial turn of events, the climax or the ending. A lot of the enjoyment of a piece of fiction depends on the revelation of such details during the course of the narration. Giving away too much information will ruin the movie for your readers. This holds true even for older films; do not presume that everyone knows the plot just because a film was released many years ago.
- ❖ You might wish to incorporate some of the following points in your review:
 - ◆ Talk about how the director chose to portray the events and characters in the story. Were there too many elements in the plot? Was, in your opinion, something essential left out? Such decisions are taken by the director, who oversees the making of a film. You could also compare this film to other films directed by the same person.
 - ◆ Give your opinion on the script of the film, as well as on aspects such as characterisation and dialogue. What genre does the film belong to? Was the story inventive or unpredictable and boring? Did the actions and motivations of the characters seem credible? Did the lines spoken by the characters seem realistic and believable?
 - ◆ Evaluate the cinematography and the editing. Cinematography refers to the techniques used to film the movie, which results in the overall look and feel (bright, dark, gloomy, cheery, gritty, surreal) of the film. Editing refers to the process of assembling the filmed action into a narrative. (Did the story flow smoothly or did the move from one frame or scene to another seem choppy?)
 - ◆ Take note of design elements. Did the costume and set design choices fit the style of the movie? Did these contribute to the overall tone and look of the film? Did the special effects look realistic?
 - ◆ What about the musical score and the soundtrack of the film? Did the score go well with the scenes? Was the music in the soundtrack well chosen?

- ✧ You could, if you wish, discuss the intended message of the film (if it had any), and how well the director has managed to convey it. Does the film deal with any current event or a social/political/economic/environmental issue? How does the film's content relate to the world we live in?
- ✧ Do you think the audience will be able to relate to the film, its characters or its message?
- ✧ Present your opinions regarding various aspects of the film. Avoid making generalised statements such as 'it was a wonderful film' or 'the acting was very bad'—be specific. For example, instead of simply saying 'The music used was a strange choice for the movie', elaborate on what you mean by saying 'The hip hop background music was a jarring contrast to the seventeenth century setting'.
- ✧ When presenting your opinions, support them with valid reasons. If you are pleased or disappointed or offended, or if you criticise something, explain your reactions, even if you think it is obvious. This will allow your reader to determine whether they agree with your opinion.
- ✧ Ensure that your writing is clear and easy to understand. Do not use too much technical jargon, unless you are absolutely sure that your readers will understand. Remember that the idea is to make yourself comprehensible, not show off.
- ✧ Once you have finished the first draft, edit your review: check all facts; change the paragraph structure; add or delete sentences as necessary; and check spelling, grammar and punctuation. A clean, well-written review seems more impressive and credible than one which is full of mistakes.

Sample film review

You could begin writing film reviews by modelling yours on the sample film review given below.

SAMPLE 1

The feature film *Camp Fire*, produced and directed by Shireesh Verma and released a week ago, is an autobiographical account of a forest ranger who spent all his life in the Manas tiger reserve in Assam. The story is a flashback in the words of Binoy Das, the forest ranger, told to his young granddaughter who has travelled thousands of kilometres to find him and take him with her to Canada. Binoy has had an interesting but difficult life, having known poverty and loneliness, but also having had the opportunity to get a good education, travel widely, learn to understand and love animals, and spend a few short, perfectly happy years with his wonderful wife and baby son.

The film introduces new actors Vasant Apte as Binoy Das, Nilanjana Dutta as the granddaughter, Vinita Nair as the local medicine woman and Karim Hussain as the cheerful doctor. Vasant Apte does a brilliant depiction of the character he plays while Nilanjana Das is impressive in her role and shows great promise. Vinita Nair and Karim Hussain also excel by bringing the characters they play to life, though Karim does sometimes tend to become selfconscious.

The plot of *Camp Fire* unfolds at a steady but slow pace and keeps the audience in suspense until the last few minutes. The film has good music, but the dance choreography is disappointing, considering that it has been done by Salil Sengupta, who is well-known in the industry for his exceptional talent. The film has some brilliant photography and offers breathtaking shots of the Manas forest region. The costumes, designed by Hannah Rose, are colourful and attractive, though some of them do not match the setting and the characters who wear them. *Camp Fire* is, on the whole, a film that is well made and interesting, and one that will not disappoint filmgoers looking for some clean family entertainment.

Exercises

- A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.
- What is a review and what is its purpose?
 - Why is it important to provide balanced points of view when writing a review?
 - Why must one never reveal the climax or the ending of any work of fiction?
- B. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.
- What general guidelines must you keep in mind when writing a book review?
 - What guidelines must one keep in mind when writing a film review?
 - What guidelines must you keep in mind when stating your opinion in a review?
- C. Answer the following questions in about 200 words or more.
- Write a short review of any film you saw recently.
You can organise your review in the following manner:
 - ✧ details
 - ✧ brief summary
 - ✧ your opinions, positive and negative, each with evidence, reasons, etc.
 - ✧ comparison with something similar, if possible/necessary
 - ✧ conclusion and recommendation

DIALOGUE WRITING

The word 'dialogue' means a conversation or a discussion between two persons. With regard to fiction specifically, **dialogue** refers to the lines spoken by characters in drama or in a story.

Dialogue is a very important component of all fictional writing, be it **novels, plays or short stories**. It is one of the most important elements in scriptwriting and other forms of writing for **film, television and radio**.

Importance of good dialogue

Why is dialogue so important? When it is done well, dialogue is more than mere conversation. Good dialogue

- ✧ imparts necessary information
- ✧ moves the story forward by creating conflict, increasing tension, or demanding a reaction
- ✧ reveals character
- ✧ shows the relationship between characters
- ✧ creates conflict
- ✧ conveys both text (the literal meaning of what is happening or what is being said) and subtext (the real/hidden meaning of what is happening or being said)
- ✧ helps the writer 'show, rather than tell' (you learnt about this in the previous chapter; when characters act and speak, they seem more real to us than when a writer simply talks about them)

How to write dialogue

Realistic dialogue is one of the most powerful tools at a writer's disposal. However, writing good dialogue does not come easily to everyone and takes practice. Poorly written dialogue can turn off your reader or your audience (the people watching the play/film/television programme or listening on the radio). Keep in mind the following tips to help you improve your ability to write good dialogue.

- ✧ Listen to how people talk and pay attention to the expressions that people use.
- ✧ When you start paying attention, you will realise that people do not sound alike when they speak. A city dweller might speak differently from a villager. A child

speaks differently from an adult. People talk differently based on age, gender, social and educational backgrounds, and the geographical area they belong to. Therefore, don't make all your characters sound the same.

- ❖ Try and make characters distinct in small ways by giving them particular phrases, mannerisms and speech patterns.
- ❖ Be careful not to overdo certain things such as the use of dialect, accents, slang and profanity. You risk distracting or alienating your reader.
- ❖ Dialogue reveals a character's personality traits and emotional state. When one is calm, one talks in a different manner from when one is angry.
- ❖ Do not let one person speak for too long: in real life, we do not usually give long speeches during regular conversations, except on special occasions (a speech, sermon, lecture, etc). If your characters have long blocks of speech, break them up by having other characters butt, ask for clarification, etc., or by the use of non-verbal responses from the listeners (nodding, sighing, frowning, etc).
- ❖ Dialogue should be realistic—but you do not need to add everything that happens in a real conversation. There is no need to start every conversation with a 'Hello'. Cut out inessential lines that do not contribute to your story.
- ❖ Dialogue is meant to provide information and can be used for exposition (see chapter 2), but beware of providing too much information at once. You should not make it too obvious to the readers that they are being fed important facts; nor is it necessary to provide all the facts at once. Let the story unfold naturally. Avoid making your characters tell one another things that they logically should already know simply because you need to convey information to the readers: make sure that the set-up for any conversation is appropriate.
- ❖ Use dialogue to move the story forward. You can do this by making your characters react to each other's dialogue either verbally or physically. Have people argue with people, or say surprising or contrary things.
- ❖ Having said that, remember that characters do not have to answer each other directly all the time. Sometimes, what is not said is more powerful than what is said.
- ❖ Punctuate dialogue correctly: it will help your readers understand and follow the dialogue better.
- ❖ Finally, read dialogue aloud: it is meant to be heard, after all. This will help you notice the flow and movement of your character's words and thus improve the lines you have given them.

Sample dialogue

Look at the following dialogue and note the following:

- ❖ Does it help you visualize the scene better?
- ❖ Does it create tension or conflict?

- ❖ Does it reveal character in any way?
- ❖ What information is conveyed about the story?

SAMPLE 1

'Sooraj!' his mother yelled, 'Where have you been?'

He ignored the question and plonked himself on the sofa.

'What's for lunch?' he asked, putting his feet up on the centre-table.

'Why weren't you answering your phone?' his mother continued, following him into the living room. 'What is the use of giving you a phone if you don't pick up when I call? Where do you disappear every day after school?'

Sooraj rolled his eyes and sighed. 'Chill. What's the big deal?'

'I even called your father at the office. Do you know how worried he—'

'He's not my father!' snarled Sooraj, as he sprang up to face her. He clenched his fists and glared at her.

She took a step back, unprepared for this sudden outburst. 'Sooraj!... don't say that... how could you say that?' she whimpered. He met her shocked expression with a defiant glower, till at last she turned her face away. 'Why do you do this to me?' There was no anger in her voice, only pain.

Sooraj could see tears in her eyes. His look softened. 'Ma, I...' But before he could say anything more, the doorbell rang.

Enact the above dialogue in class to see how effective it is in telling a story.

Exercises

- A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.
 - a. What is dialogue?
- B. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.
 - a. Why is it important to write good dialogue?
- C. Answer the following questions in 200 words or more.
 - a. Write a short scene of dialogue that creates tension between two characters.
 - b. Write a scene of dialogue that reveals a plot twist or reveals something surprising that a character did not know.

13. FREELANCE WRITING *gm*

gm A Journalist who is not a regular employee of any newspaper, magazine, or journal is called a free lance journalist. He enjoys freedom, independence. He can send his article to any newspaper or magazine. Acceptance of article depends on the reputation of journalist and standard of his writing. Infact, the name and personality of a freelance journalist counts a lot in the acceptance of his article. If he is a famous person, his article will be sought after by many newspapers and journalist. On the other hand if he is an unknown person he will have to face a lot of difficulties in publishing his article.

A freelancer, of course, has the freedom to write for any number of newspapers, magazines and on any subject. He should be careful that he does not send the carbon copy of his article to the newspapers or to the magazines officers because they would presume that he has already sent the original copy somewhere else. Similarly he should not send the copy which is crumbled, as it will give an indication that it has been traveling from one magazine office to another. Nobody wants to accept a thing which has been already rejected by others. Undoubtedly for an unknown freelancer it is very difficult to earn his lively hood from journalism. Those who move to freelance writing after serving in some famous newspaper or magazine are in a much better position because while in service they come to know thoroughly about the working of a newspaper and can also develop contact with a newspaper media.

* acceptable
* simple, creative & impressively clear
57

They may not have much difficulty in publishing their articles. This is a fact that a freelance journalist has to struggle very hard in the beginning to establish himself in their highly competitive profession. A freelance journalist cannot afford the time and effort to write an article without prior demand because if by chance that article is not accepted it will be sheer waste of labour and time. He has to write such articles as are readily accepted by the editors so that he does not have to starve. For this purpose, he must know the requirements of each newspaper and magazine so that he can write articles and feature which are acceptable to them.

* Its readability should be high.

A freelancer must try to have good contacts with the editors of newspapers and magazines as well as those who have the authority to accept his articles. He must also write continuously so as to keep himself in public eye all the time. A freelance writer should never depend only on one magazine or newspaper or periodical because he may face a lot of financial hardships when that single source no longer needs him.

A freelancer should keep the latest address and telephone numbers of the important newspaper and magazine. He should try to have regular contacts with the concerned people of those magazines. He must have a systematic time table of working. Being a freelancer does not mean that he should waste his time in an irresponsible manner. On the other hand he must utilize every minute of his time to the best of his abilities as his time is highly valuable.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising is the business of drawing public attention to a product/service to try and convince potential customers into buying or using the product/service. It is done to boost sales. The attention drawn must be positive; hence advertisements tend to favourably stress the key points of the product/service.

Types of advertising and advertising media

Nowadays, it is tough to go a single day without encountering advertising in all its forms. Virtually any medium can be used, which means we are likely to come across ads everywhere we go. The section below explores the most common forms of advertising.

Billboards

Billboards are large outdoor signboards on which advertisers can put up creative images of their product for the public to see. They are a common form of advertising, typically located in high traffic areas. Below is a photograph of a billboard.

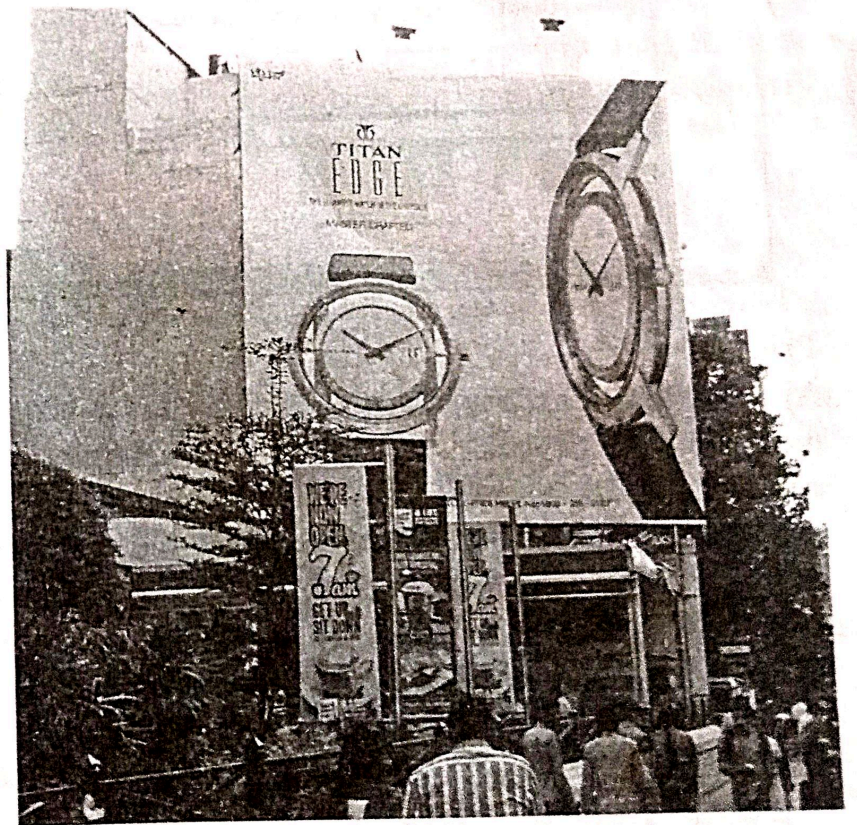
As you can see, the billboard attempts to be as eye-catching as possible, and is located in a traffic-heavy location where passersby can easily see the ad.

Online

This is a form of advertising that relies on the Internet as a platform for promoting products/services.

Banner ads (ads located or 'embedded' within a web page) and

pop-up ads (new web-browser windows that open or 'pop-up' in front of a previously accessed web page) are the two most common forms of online advertising.



Below is an example of a banner ad.

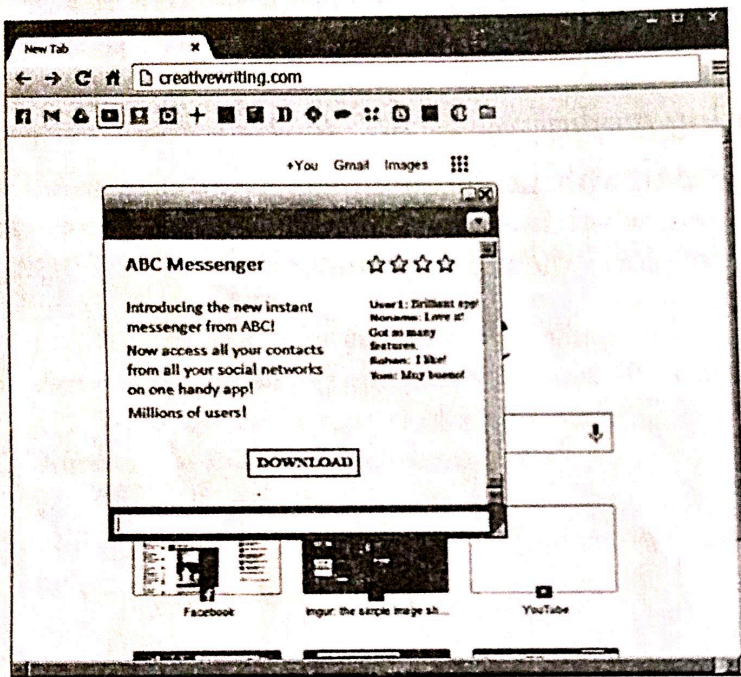
Graphic Design Agency gda.com

Thousands of wallpapers, pictures, designs and illustrations, all available at the same place.
Prices as low as Rs. 50 per print!

Sign up now and get a discount of 50% on your first purchase!
Hurry, limited time offer!

Such ads are located on the side or top of a web page and tend to be brief and simple.

Here is a screenshot of a pop-up ad.



Print

Also called 'Press advertising', this describes any advert that comes in the form of printed material. Therefore ads in newspapers, magazines, journals, etc., all come under print advertising. Such advertising has the potential to reach a broad audience as the ads may appear in national or local newspapers—like the *Deccan Herald* or *The Indian Express*—or may appear in popular magazines which target a large readership base.

When you get a chance, compare the style of advertisements in newspapers against the style of advertisements in magazines. Are there noticeable differences?

Radio

Many advertising agencies purchase **airtime** (the length of a radio show or message) from radio networks or stations so that those channels or networks or stations will broadcast their ads. Radio ads are audio ads, which means that people only *hear* about the product/service. These ads tend to be brief, lasting a minute or so, and match the content

broadcast. So it is not uncommon to find music stations including ads for concerts or live shows, or for news channels to include adverts on local events or offers.

There are two types of radio ads.

1. *Live reads*: during a radio show, a DJ (a Disc Jockey is a person who plays recorded music for listeners) will read out an advertisement or **endorse** (to publicly support a company or product/service) something.
2. *Produced spots*: The advertisement agency records their ad and submits it to the radio station for playback.

Television

This form is considered to be the most effective form of **mass-market advertising** (advertising a product that is designed to appeal to many different people) as one commercial can reach millions of viewers. Here, just as in radio advertising, advertisers purchase airtime from TV networks and channels, so that they can insert television commercials that could be as short as a few seconds, or as long as a few minutes. The cost of such advertising can be incredibly high, especially during **peak hours**, when people are most likely to be at home and watching television.

Celebrity endorsements

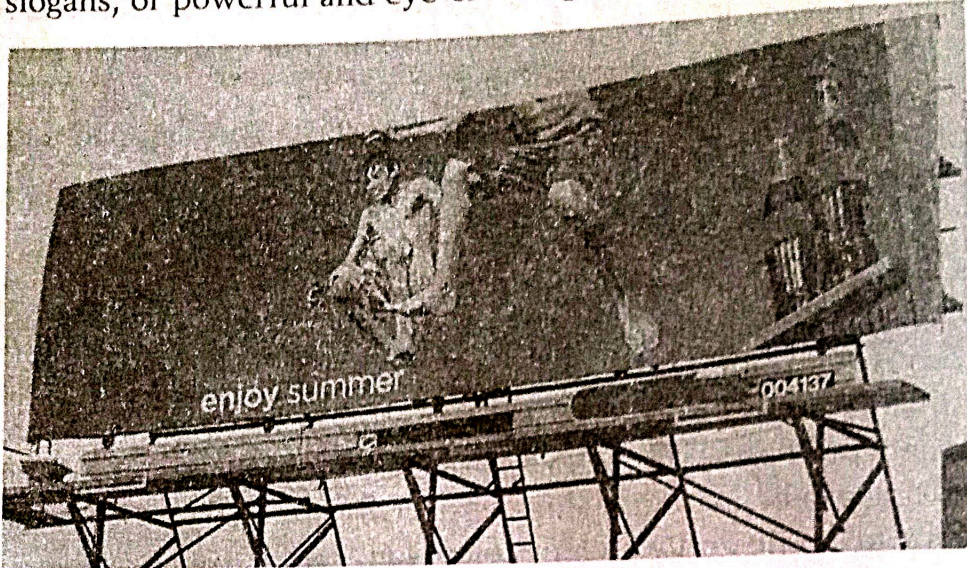
In advertising, across all mediums, celebrities or known public figures (from sports figures to politicians to musicians) may endorse or publicly show their support for a product/service. Using such figures helps bolster the company's image, making it more recognisable to the public through their heroes and celebrities. An example of a celebrity endorsement is Virat Kohli's presence in Adidas advertisements.

Techniques of effective advertising

Though advertisements come in many different forms, good ones all share the following points.

- ❖ **Attention grabbing**: Using catchy music, stirring images, bold text, etc. to catch the reader or viewer or listener's attention. Without the target audience's attention, an advertisement fails. Using 'positive' images, such as babies or friendly pets or nostalgic images, fills the audience with positive thoughts and leaves them looking for more; it makes them willing to watch, listen to or read the entire ad.
- ❖ **Key features**: Ads focus on those features or characteristics of the product that the customer can benefit from. For example, an ad for a laptop should highlight the distinguishing points that set the laptop apart from the competitors—perhaps its screen resolution or memory or processor speed is the best in the market.
- ❖ **Layout/structure**: Apart from radio ads, advertising is a visual form of communication. Therefore, there is a need for information to be arranged in a clear layout, with some structure, so that viewers can quickly process the advert and understand immediately what is being sold.

- ◆ **Billboards:** Since target viewers are commuters in a rush to get to their next destination, billboards need to convey information clearly and in a striking manner. This may be done through innovative catchphrases, slogans, or powerful and eye-catching images.



- ◆ Note how the above ad has a catchphrase and an image that tells a story (of boys jumping into water bodies to stay cool during summer) and connects the story with the product (the drink is just as refreshing as diving into cold water). There is no unnecessary text and a blue background is used to emphasise summer. This also makes the red colour of the drink's logo more distinct.
- ◆ **Online:** In this area, online advertisements are similar to print ads, only more succinct. Often online ads include active links that the web user can click on to access the web page where the product/service is being sold.
- ◆ **Print:** In print ads, concepts such as colour, white space (the amount of space in an advert that is left unmarked and clear), font and font size, and images and logos all play an important role. If an advertisement is text-heavy (including only uninterrupted lines of text), or visually unappealing with too many colours contrasting with one another, then viewers are likely to ignore the ad. Once again take a look at advertisements in newspapers and magazines and see how they effectively use these concepts to promote their product/service.
- ◆ **Radio:** Though radio advertisements do not have a visual component, they still follow a logical structure and progression. Often, the advertisement will use the following format:
 - introduce problem → introduce solution (in the form of product/service) → provide key features of product/service
 - reinforce need for product/service

- ◆ *Television:* In television ads, music, narration and video must all flawlessly coordinate with one another. Information should be conveyed in a neat and clear manner that is also interesting, so that the viewer does not feel compelled to change the channel. It has become common for many advertisements to tell a story with an emotional hook to it. This story, which has the product playing a key role in a positive way, leads to the viewer personally connecting with the advertisement. One such example of this is Google's most recent advertisement, which promoted Google products (including laptops, phones and software) by telling the story of how two men were separated by Partition but reunited decades later as a result of their children communicating and coordinating with one another using Google products.
- ◇ *Offer/urgency:* Many ads often use the phrase, 'Hurry! Limited offer only!' This is done to spur customers into buying the product as quickly as possible, as it is available on discount (or may include a bonus package) for a short period of time. It is an action motivator. Many ads use urgency to imply that if the customer does not act soon, they lose out on a once-in-a-lifetime deal.

Ethical concerns

Ethics is the study of what is morally right or wrong. It is an important element of advertising, as advertisers are granted the creative license to exaggerate the merits of their product/service in the hope of selling it. Such an 'exaggeration', or form of 'false advertising', can be seen as a lie by consumers.

Advertisers are often encouraged to use an ad to 'tell the truth—but not always the whole truth'. The ad should try to make a good impression and so should highlight only the positives and not the negatives of the product/service. The cost of such an approach is that the viewers never hear the complete story. For example, in the 1960s the tobacco industry targeted youths, claiming cigarette smoking was fashionable, 'manly' and having no serious health risks.

Ethics comes into play when advertisers 'distort' the truth they are projecting, and this was clearly the case with the tobacco industry. Scientific and medical studies would go on to prove the detrimental effects of cigarette smoking on one's health. Following the negative backlash, protests and media issues, the tobacco industry was forced to reconsider their approach to advertising their product.

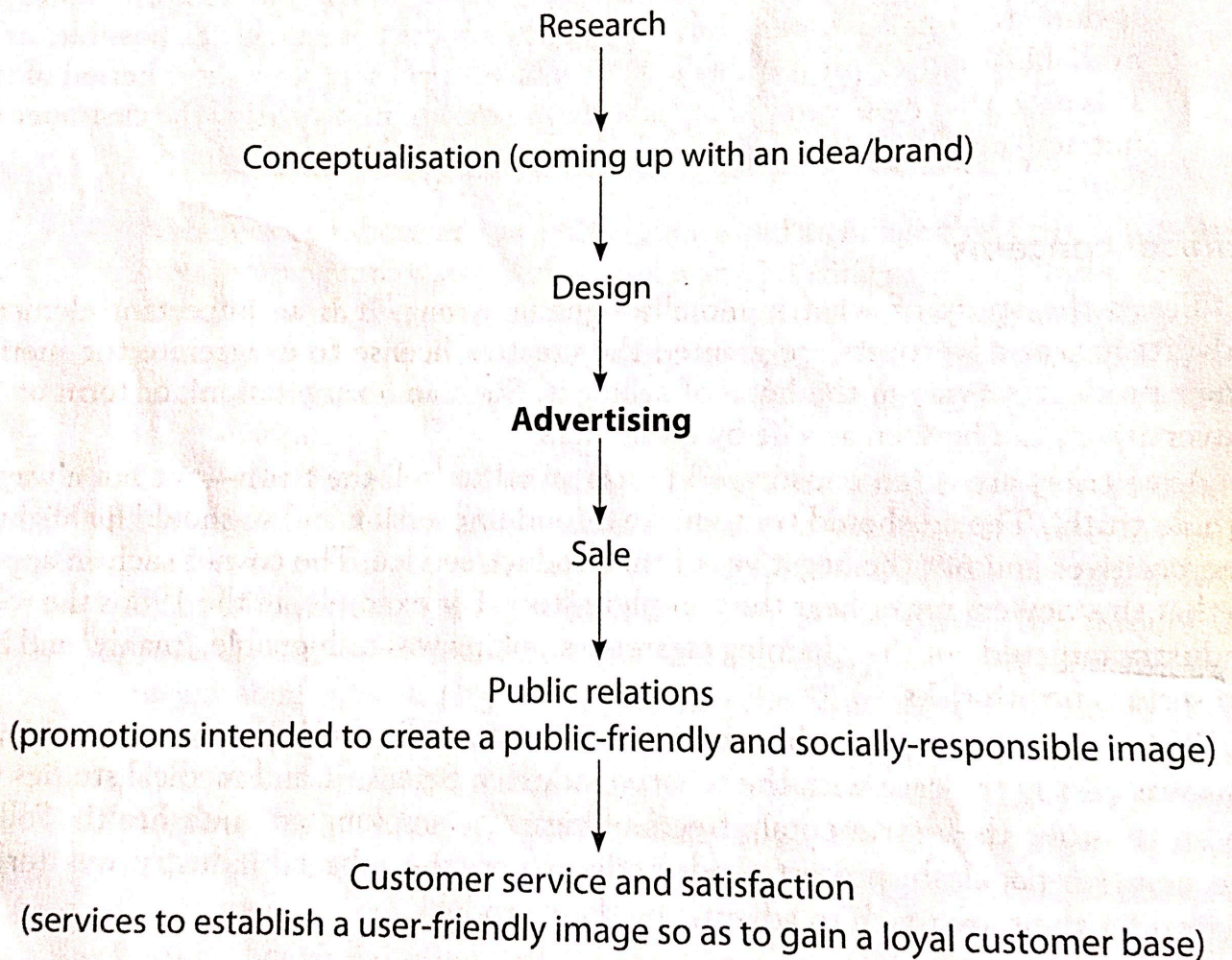
Standards

There exists a code of ethics in India with regards to advertising. However there have been many cases where ethically incorrect ads have been publically displayed. The **Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)** is a voluntary investigative body set up to screen content that is included within ads in India. It sees to it that any ads that exaggerate the truth in an intentionally deceptive manner are taken down. For example,

in 2013, the ASCI took down an advertisement where a weight-loss program promised customers that they would be able to shed 5 kilograms of weight after one session. Customers took them up on this promise, only to be disappointed with their results, which were far less than anticipated. The advertisers had falsely advertised the brand's features.

Marketing

What is the difference between advertising and marketing? As mentioned earlier, advertising is a process by which a company draws favourable public attention to its product/service in an attempt to boost sales. **Marketing**, however, is a larger process that uses advertising as a tool to establish a brand name.



As you can see from the above image, advertising is but one component of marketing.

Branding

Branding is the result of marketing. It is when a company's logo, slogan or visual identity are so well-recognised that they are immediately associated with that company. For example, the phrase 'Just Do It' is associated with the company Nike, just as the logo of an apple with a part bitten out of it is immediately associated with Apple Inc.'s products.

Exercises

- A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.
- List five different types of advertising.
 - Explain the difference between banner ads and pop-up ads.
 - What are the two types of radio ads?
 - What is the ASCI and what does it do?
 - What format do radio advertisements typically follow?
- B. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.
- What is branding?
 - How is ethics connected to advertising?
 - What is the difference between advertising and marketing?
- C. Answer the following questions in about 200 words each.
- Explain the difference between billboard advertising and print advertising.
 - Compare television advertising with radio advertising.
 - Write a short paragraph that functions as a print ad for any two of the following: (a) a toothpaste, (b) a ball-point pen, (c) a health drink, (d) a cycle.

Additional activity

- A. Answer the following questions in about 500 words or less.
- Examine the role of layout/structure in advertising.
 - Write a short ad meant for broadcast on radio. The ad should promote any one of the following: (a) membership at a particular gym, (b) a foreign language course, (c) a holiday resort. Remember to mention key benefits and offers (along with an action motivator).

WEB CONTENT

Web content is information that is made available to the public via the Internet. This information may be found on user web pages, websites, online forums, etc. An example of a website that hosts a tremendous amount of web content is Wikipedia.com, which acts as a free online encyclopaedia. Writing and preparing content for the web is very different from writing articles, advertisement, books, essays, etc., as information is conveyed in a different way on the Internet.

Planning

Before you begin to actually write your content, you must make a plan. Normally, when writing an article or essay, it is a good idea to break up the text into an introduction, body, and conclusion, with a central idea connecting and holding the text together. This applies here as well, with the purpose of your website being to connect all the individual bits of information together. The plan, or as it might later develop into, the **sitemap**, should list the headers and sub-headers of all the information you would like your website to include. These headers and sub-headers will eventually become **links** which users can click on to access information when the webpage goes live. To go live, here, means to become operational.

The sitemap will thus act as a rough template or outline for you to follow when you begin writing, and it could become a navigation aid for users when the webpage goes live. All major websites, from Apple India to Ebay India to Wikipedia, include a sitemap.

List of Pa
of a web

Look at the sample plan below.

SAMPLE 1

- Home
 - About Us
 - Webpage objectives
 - The team
 - Our Services
 - Designing webpages
 - Managing your content
 - Design
 - Optimising your webpages
 - Registration
 - Portfolio
 - Previous clients
 - Sample work
 - Articles
 - Tips & Tricks
 - Less is more
 - Having a plan
 - Backups!
 - Our Network
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
 - Contact Us

Note how the information is arranged in a logical and clear way, beginning with 'about us'. The 'About us' is a vital aspect of every webpage, as it states the webpage's purpose and intent. Every heading and sub-heading falls under it as they are all connected to the purpose of the webpage.

Below is a screenshot of Universities Press's 'About us' page.

SAMPLE 2

Universities Press

Search Title, Author, ISBN

Home | About Us | Publish with Us | Downloads | Distributors | Our Network | Contact Us

About Us

Universities Press focuses on the publication of books in Science, Engineering, Medicine and Management.

In addition to independent publishing, we collaborate with reputed organisations such as:

- Indian Academy of Sciences
- Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research
- Indian National Science Academy
- Indian Space Research Organisation
- Ramanujan Mathematical Society
- Indian Association for Research in Computing Sciences
- American Mathematical Society
- Indian Institute of Metals
- Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research

Several of our books are co-published for the international market by CRC Press and Springer Verlag. In addition to original publishing, we publish books selectively under license from reputed overseas publishers. Some of our overseas associates include:

- Princeton University Press
- MIT Press
- CRC Press
- Harvard University Press
- The Institute of Materials
- Silicon Press
- American Mathematical Society
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Our books are distributed exclusively by **Orient Blackswan Private Limited**.

Home | About Us | Publish with Us | Downloads | Distributors | Our Network | Contact Us | EASA

It is important you begin with your 'About us' section or a section that states the purpose of your webpage, so that (a) when you generate content, there is a flow and connectivity to your material and (b) if the plan becomes a sitemap, readers will be able to navigate your site with ease.

Look at the sample screenshot below, which features a section of Apple's sitemap.

SAMPLE 3

Apple.com Site Map

Apple Info

<p>News and Events Hot News RSS Feeds Apple Events User Groups</p>	<p>About Apple Contact Us Support and Service Product Feedback Website Feedback Public Relations Investors Working at Apple Environment Recycling Working with Apple Procurement Supplier Responsibility Legal Information Choose your country or region</p>	<p>Where to Buy Where can I buy Apple products? Apple Online Store Apple Store for Business Apple Store for Education Apple Online Store Country Selector Apple Retail Find a Reseller Apple Financial Services Apple Refurbs</p>
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Mac

<p>Macs Mac Pro Mac mini MacBook Air MacBook Pro iMac Compare Mac Models</p> <p>Accessories Magic Mouse Magic Trackpad Keyboard</p>	<p>Servers Servers Overview OS X Server</p> <p>OS X OS X Mavericks What's New What is OS X? OS X Apps How to Upgrade Tech Specs</p>	<p>Developer Apple Developer Connection WWDC Reference Library Contact ADC Mac Developer Program iPhone Developer Program</p> <p>Markets Creative Pro Business</p>
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As you can see, this is a far more complex and detailed sitemap than the rough outline drawn up earlier. This is because the Apple site contains a vast amount of information on various gadgets, software and applications, customer help, etc. However, despite its complexity, headers and sub-headers are clearly visible and logically ordered so that users can easily locate what they are looking for.

Creating an outline and rough sitemap will allow you to see how much information your website will include.

Target audience

Knowing who will primarily be visiting the website is very important. What the site looks like and what it contains, what language you will use, and what extra information you might need to provide: all these will depend on who the website is for. For example, if you are generating content for biotechnologists, you are likely to use engineering jargon, equations, and diagrams. However, if you are creating material for children who are learning basic mathematics, your tone will be less scientific and more user-friendly, perhaps accompanied by pictures connected to the content. Look at the two screenshots below and pay careful attention to how information is arranged and made available to the user.

SAMPLE 4

The screenshot shows a website interface for 'marks'. At the top, there are navigation links: 'marks', 'Topmarks Search', 'Whiteboard Resources', 'Learning Games', and 'Partners Resources'. Below this is a header with age groups: '3-5 Years', '5-7 Years', '7-11 Years', and '11-14 Years'. A sub-header reads 'Play these fun Maths Games for 7-11 year olds'. On the left, there are buttons for 'Maths' and 'English', and a 'Worksheets' section with a list of subjects: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English, and SST. The main content area is titled 'Choose a Category:' and lists various math topics: Ordering and Sequencing Numbers, Mental Maths, Addition and Subtraction, Place Value, Multiplication and Division, Fractions and Decimals, Money, Shape, Position and Movement, Measures, Data Handling, and Problem Solving. Below this, there is a section for 'Ordering and Sequencing Numbers Games' with a description: 'These fun learning games for kids involve a wide variety of ordering and sequencing numbers activities. They provide opportunities both to recognise a number sequence and complete sequences of numbers.' An image of a caterpillar with numbered segments (3, 6, 18, 10, 15, 12, 11, 9, 16) is shown. To the right of the image is the title 'Caterpillar Ordering' and a description: 'A wonderful game for ordering numbers and for number sequences.'

SAMPLE 5

Project for Alzheimer's
at the Alzheimer's Disease
York City. BIO's President & CEO Jim
highlighted the

ENVIRONMENTAL & INDUSTRIAL
BIO Hosts Rep. Scott Peters at 2013 Pac
Rim Summit
In a recent press release, BIO announced that Rep.
Scott Peters (D, of the 52nd Congressional District
of California) will deliver
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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Bee Care Team is Buzzing!
Too many people don't know
agriculture and food production
know about the important role it
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DANIEL SEATON | 11/12/2013 [Tweet < 0](#) [Recommend < 10](#)

Third Annual BIO Convention in China Begins in Beijing

More than 600 executives from biotech and pharmaceutical companies, along with investment firms from North America, Europe and Asia, are expected this week at BIO's third annual BIO Convention in China, which kicked off today in Beijing. With over 650 partnering meetings scheduled, the event illustrates just how important China's biotechnology and life science industry has become, and why building lasting relationships with companies, universities, scientists and government leaders here benefits biotech innovation across the globe.

Three keynote speakers provided insights on the business opportunities surrounding the biotech sector in China, including Gary F. Locke, Ambassador of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China; Bian Zhenya, Assistant Minister, China Food and Drug Administration; and Zhao Yajun, Director General, China Center for Pharmaceutical Exchange.

This year, China's pharmaceutical market reached \$70 billion, making it the number two market in the world. It is expected to grow to \$100 billion by 2015, and become the number one market by 2020. While today biologics and biosimilars account for about 10 percent of China's overall

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Jim's Corner

ENVIRONMENTAL & INDUSTRIAL
Biofuels & Climate Change

EVENTS

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Farmer Gene

HEALTH

PUBLIC POLICY
Patently Biotech

FEATURED AUTHORS

The first webpage is for children, with information clearly arranged and colour coded. Illustrations are used to hold the attention of the user, and there are no large blocks of text. The second website, in contrast, uses images sparingly. Information is available in the form of headlines and sub-sections, with the main data arranged in large paragraphs that use technical jargon.

Such extreme examples showcase the need to

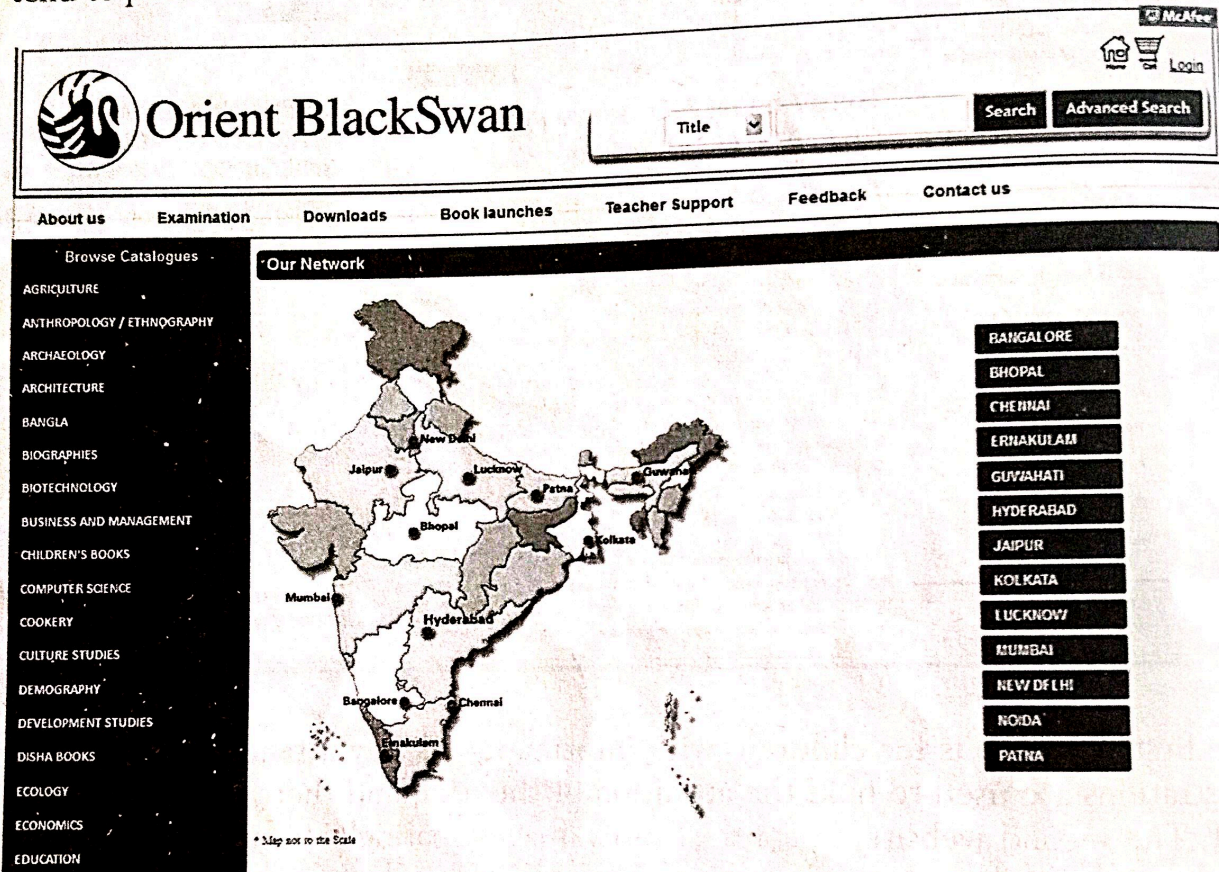
- ❖ determine who your target audience is
- ❖ how best to convey your information to them

Content

When generating content for the web, it is important to keep in mind the following points.

- ❖ *Less is more:* Be succinct and to the point. The Internet is a virtual hub that reflects the current pace of society. This means that everyone wants information at their fingertips. Make sure you clearly and concisely provide the information your target audience is looking for.

- ✦ **Visual hierarchy:** When creating web content, remember to think about headers, sub-headers, lists and links. Visual hierarchy means the order in which the eye is able to understand information in front of it. If the information is in the form of a large paragraph, then the user takes time to go through the text to find the main points. If the information is in the form of a list or bullet points or illustrations, the user picks up the points quicker. Focus on the structure of your content so that it is easy on the eyes and accessible to the reader. Large paragraphs of text tend to put off online readers.



Note in the above screenshot of Orient BlackSwan’s Network page you can clearly see the headings at the top (under the company logo). Below these is a list of Orient BlackSwan’s catalogues (extreme left pane). Beside the map of India is a set of sub-headings (extreme right pane) that, when clicked, open to a new page with more detailed information.

- ✦ **Consistency:** Consistently format content with clear headings and sub-headings. This makes the content both easier to read and to create. Keep it simple.

In order to write good web content, you must remember the fact that web users are more likely to scan than read content, and so are looking to find information as quickly and efficiently as possible.