Lecture Notes
Business Communication A

Prepared by

Olga Temple
English Communication Strand
School of Humanities & Social Sciences
University of Papua New Guinea

Andrew Kavana
English Communication Strand
School of Humanities & Social Sciences
University of Papua New Guinea

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Foreword

This is an attempt to provide the students of the University of Papua New Guinea with an up-to-date and concise text on the subject of Business Communication.

These lecture notes introduce the students to the theory of communication and to the special features and principles of business communication. . This knowledge is essential in improving the students' interpersonal communication skills and provides a platform for the follow-up Business Communication B course, which is more practically oriented.

The first part of BCA explains the concept and process of communication, providing an in-depth understanding of what is effective communication, common barriers to effective communication, and the specifics of communication in organizations.
The course further focuses on the characteristics and principles of business communication and the process of planning business communication. The various interpersonal communication skills required for effective communication are discussed at length (writing, reading, speaking, and listening), with special emphasis placed on *analytical thinking*, which is the underlying prerequisite for all the other communication skills.
This course also introduces the students to the major types and conventions of business communication and provides some practical experience in writing business letters, memos, short reports, etc.

These Lecture Notes are based on a number of sources, including

- The AAT Study Text (Language & Literature Dept., UPNG)
- Judith Dwyer The Business Communication Handbook 2nd Edition MBC NSW Australia, 1991
- L.A. Woolcott & W.R. Unwin Mastering Business Communication Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983
- N.B. Sigband Business Communication Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Outline Series, Books for Professionals, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1984
- The Internet

Olga Temple
University of Papua New Guinea
Port Moresby

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Lecture 1: Introduction to Business Communication

1. **The Purpose of the Course**
2. **Definition of Communication**
3. **Communication Theory**
    - **The Behavioral Theory**
    - **The Mathematical Theory**
4. **The Process of Communication**
5. **Feedback in Communication**
6. **Effective Communication**
7. **Barriers to Communication**

1. The Purpose of the Course. This course is designed to improve the students' communication skills through achieving a better understanding of:

- the role of communication in human society
- the nature of communication in human society
- the process of communication in human society
- the importance of feedback in communication
- barriers to effective communication
- specificity of communication in organizations
- forms, media, and channels of communication in organizations

The focus on the principles and conventions of business communication will also help us improve our basic interpersonal communication skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The all-important role of analytical thinking as the underlying factor in any form of effective communication will be highlighted.

2. Definition of Communication. *Communication* is a complex process often involving reading, writing, speaking and listening. It may be verbal and non-verbal (or a mixture of both), and it uses a variety of media (language, mass media, digital technology, etc.). Broadly speaking, communication is a transfer and reconstruction of information. More specifically, we may define ***communication as the transmission and reception of ideas, feelings and attitudes – verbal and non-verbal – that produce a response.***

3. Communication Theory. There are two major theories of communication: behavioral & mathematical.

- ***The Behavioral Theory*** covers both verbal and non-verbal communication. First set forth by Dr. Jurgen Ruesch, a psychiatrist, it postulates that *communication is based on social situations* in which individuals find themselves. Our participation in communication with others must conform to established behavioral patterns involving
    - ***social situations*** (culture, social class, time & place, etc.)
    - ***roles*** (sex, professional, religious, etc.)
    - ***status*** (authority, respect, social/class standing, i.e. in the caste system in India)
    - ***rules*** (protocol, ethics, or code of behavior)

- ***clues*** in non-verbal communication (gestures, touch, voice inflections, rate of delivery, etc.)

This theory identifies communication networks such as

- *intrapersonal*, i.e., communication with oneself,
- *interpersonal*, i.e., communication between individuals,
- *group interaction*, such as between clans, or organizations, and
- *cultural*, i.e., between distinct cultures, such as Islamic and Christian, or African, Anglo-Saxon and Spanish, etc. in America.

The Mathematical Theory is largely based on the work of Claude Shannon & Warren Weaver who were not social scientists but engineers working for Bell Telephone Labs in the United States. Their goal was to ensure the maximum efficiency of telephone cables and radio waves. They developed a model of communication, which was intended to assist in developing a mathematical theory of communication. Shannon and Weaver's work proved valuable for communication engineers in dealing with such issues as the capacity of various communication channels in 'bytes per second'. It contributed to computer science, and in making 'information' 'measurable' it gave birth to the mathematical study of 'information theory'.
Their original model consisted of five elements:

- An *information source,* which produces a message;
- A *transmitter,* which encodes the message into signals;
- A *channel,* to which signals are adapted for transmission;
- A *receiver,* which 'decodes' (reconstructs) the message from the signal;
- A *destination,* where the message arrives.

A sixth element, *noise*, is a dysfunctional factor: any interference with the message traveling along the channel (such as 'static' on the telephone or radio) which may lead to the signal received being different from that sent.

The strengths of Shannon and Weaver's model are its

- Simplicity
- Generality, and
- Quantifiability.

Such advantages made this model attractive to several academic disciplines. It also drew serious academic attention to human communication and 'information theory', leading to further theory and research.
Weaknesses of the transmission model of communication: The transmission model tends to over-simplify and misrepresent the nature of human communication, reducing it to a process of "transmitting information." It fails to recognize that human communication is about *meaning* rather than *information*.
The transmission model fixes and separates the roles of 'sender' and 'receiver', whereas human communication often involves *simultaneous* 'sending' and 'receiving' (not only talking, but also 'body language' and so on). In Shannon and Weaver's model the source is seen as the active decision-maker who determines the meaning of the message; the

destination is the passive target. It is a linear, one-way model, ascribing a *secondary* role to the 'receiver', who is seen as absorbing information. There was no provision in the original model for *feedback* (reaction from the receiver). Feedback enables speakers to adjust their performance to the needs and responses of their audience. A 'feedback loop' was added by later theorists, but the model remains linear.

For the purposes of this course, however, we shall make use of the modified version of the transmission model of communication, highlighting some important behavioral aspects and implications of human communication.

4. The Process of Communication. Communication begins with ***an impulse*** (or motivation) to pass on *a* ***message*** made up of bits of information. In the process of ***encoding***, units of information are selected and organized for transmission. ***Input*** is the sum of experiences that build up in the human brain or computer. ***Output*** is the ***encoded message*** transmitted by the ***information source*** (an individual person or group of people).
The interpretation of the message is referred to as ***decoding***. ***Feedback*** is the response, or message that the recipient ***(decoder)*** returns to the sender ***(encoder).***

Graphic presentation of this model of the process of communication:

Impulse – input/encoding/output – relaying through potential distortion on both sides – decoding – feedback

Example: When Peter calls Jenny on the phone and says, "Would you like to stop at the Big Rooster's today?" he is drawing on his pleasant past experiences with Big Rooster's roast chicken and potato chips. He has *encoded* a *message* and transmitted it to Jenny, using the English language as the *medium* and the telephone lines as *channel* of communication.
Jenny, in turn, has received the message, *decoded* (= translated) it, and on the basis of her *information source (= input = sum total of experiences)*, gives Peter *feedback* (response) by saying, "I dislike the Big Rooster thoroughly. How about the Chinese instead?"

5. Feedback in Communication. Feedback in the communication process is the response that gives us some indication of <u>how effectively</u> we communicate. It is the gauge of efficiency in communication.
Example:
If a thirsty man asks for water in a culturally appropriate way, using proper means and channels of communication, he will get the desired feedback (water to quench his thirst). Thus, the purpose of his communication will have been achieved.

6. Effective Communication. We communicate with other people around us from the day we are born until death. Most of our communication, however, will be ineffective if we do not understand the processes involved and acquire special communication skills in order to enhance our effectiveness.
What is *effective communication*? Human communication is effective, if:

- the input (a sum of information or experiences built up in the encoder's mind) is translated into an encoded message in such a way that the output (encoded message sent) most accurately represents the input (1:1 output-input ratio),
- the encoded message is easily decoded, or translated by the decoder, and
- an adequate (= desired, predictable, calculated) feedback (response to the encoded message) is sent back and duly received.

Prerequisites for effective communication:

1. **Knowledge of**
    - subject matter
    - decoder(s)
    - environment
    - human psychology

2. **Communication Skills.** *Skill* means "practiced ability, expertness." If you are good at something – whatever this activity may be - because you approach it intelligently, have mastered and habitually employ the techniques, then you have a skill, i.e. driving, swimming, or typing *Communication skills* means intelligent and practiced ways of sending and receiving messages – talking and writing, listening and reading. This involves an understanding of how the process works, and sensitivity to variable factors, as well as mastery of the techniques.

    - **Language skills**: *oral* (i.e., clear pronunciation, suitable vocabulary, correct grammar/syntax, fluency, expressive delivery), *written* (correct spelling, suitable vocabulary, correct grammar/syntax, good writing or typing, suitable style, etc.), and *visual/non-verbal* (understanding of/control over "body language")
    - **Analytical thinking**: ability to extract and prioritize information; ability to choose the appropriate medium & channel of communication; ability to analyze the reactions of the decoder(s), etc.
3. **Personality** traits, such as charm, self-confidence, relaxed, easy-going and friendly manner, sensitivity, perceptiveness, emotional stability, objectiveness and patience, open-mindedness and flexibility.
4. **Motivation**, practical benefit, personal interest, etc.
5. **Necessary infrastructure**, such as telephone, fax, public address system, microphone, computer networks, the Internet, e-mail, visual aids, electricity supply, etc.
6. **Physical/mental health and fitness**, i.e., communication with a deaf, dumb, or delirious man will be impeded, just as it will be if the encoder / decoder is exhausted physically or drunk/drugged.

Thus, good interpersonal communication skills and conducive attitudes (willingness to communicate) are the basic requirements for effective communication.

7. Barriers to Communication: on one or both sides (encoder's and decoder's):

- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of interest or attention
- Lack in communication skills (language use, analytical thinking)
- Lack of charm, self-confidence, sensitivity, perceptiveness, objectiveness and patience; tense, uneasy personality, inflexibility
- Bias, prejudice, or preconceived ideas
- Distractions
- Competition for attention
- Differences in perception
- Attitudes
- Lack of motivation
- Physical/mental handicaps
- Stress

All of the above barriers to communication may be classed into two broad categories:

- **Distortion** resulting from inadequate use of language (incorrect grammar, syntax, overuse of technical/obscure words, ambiguity, etc.) and other communication skills (analytical approach to/understanding of decoders and the context/ environment within which communication is taking place, choice of appropriate medium and channel of communication).
- **Noise, or interference:**
  - **Physical noise** – actual noise that may drown the communication
  - **"Technical noise"** – a failure in the channel of communication (breakdown of technology/equipment, etc.)
  - **"Social noise"** – personality differences due to upbringing; difference in perceptions/mentality due to diverse cultural, religious, educational, etc. backgrounds, bias due to age, sex, social class, status, etc.
  - **"Psychological noise"** – excessive/uncontrolled emotions (anger, fear, etc.), prejudice, stress, nervous tension, etc.

Summary:

1. Human communication is a very complex dynamic process of human interaction subject to a multitude of environmental, cultural, etc., factors, as well as potential distortion.
2. For the purposes of this course we shall make use of the modified version of the 'information transmission' theory, bearing in mind, however, the implications of the behavioral theory.
3. Transmission model of communication: impulse – input/encoding/output – relaying through potential distortion on both sides – decoding – feedback.
4. The concept of *effective communication* in this context signifies a most accurate transmission of *meaning* in the process of human interaction from the encoder to the decoder that receives an adequate response (feedback).

Lecture 2: Communication in Organizations.

1. **Concept & Types of Organizations with Reference to the Behavioral Theory**
2. **Communication in Business Organizations**
3. **Functions of Communication in a Business Organization**
4. **Increased Volume and Complexity of Communication in Organizations**
5. **Organizational Structure & Lines of Communication**
6. **Communication in a 'Network' Organization: New Realities**
7. **Channels of Communication & Networking; Types of Networks**
8. **Communication Media in Business Communication**
9. **Principles of Business Communication**

1. Concept & Types of Organizations with Reference to the Behavioral Theory

People function in society as individuals and in organized groups, such as family, clan, school, community, professional associations, trade unions, etc.

Organization, according to one of the meanings given in the Oxford Dictionary, is *an organized body of people; an organized system.*

Just like an **organism** (a living being, an individual animal or plant), it is an individual entity functioning as a unit. Examples: Telikom, Microsoft, Netscape, The National, Pepsi, Coca-Cola, the Government, the military, the air force, the navy, etc.
Just like an **organ** (a distinct part of an animal or plant body, adapted for a particular function, i.e., *digestive organs*) in the larger body of human society, every organization carries out a specific function – be it educational, business, government or religious. To make our analogy more vivid, individuals are like single cells in the body of human society, whereas organizations are like organs with their specific functions.

The Behavioral Theory identifies **four levels of communication** in the human society, or four main types of communication networks:

- *Intrapersonal*
- *Interpersonal*
- *Group interaction* and
- *Cultural.*

Communication in organizations may occur on all four levels.

2. Communication in Business Organizations

Business organizations are established to achieve a specific purpose, such as the production of some goods or services. Effective communication is vital for the coordinated functioning of any organization.
There are the two main contexts in which organizational communication may be viewed: ***internal*** and ***external*** communication.

Internal communication involves all communication networks within the organization, i.e. between the various levels of the hierarchy, departments, branches, or individuals.

The main internal communication channels include:

- *Written* – memos, reports, forms, notice boards, house magazines, manuals
- *Oral* – interviews, consultations, formal and informal meetings, grapevine.
- *Telecommunications* – telephones, intercoms, private lines, fax, computers, email, etc.

External organizational communication entails all communication by the organization with the general public, or other public or business organizations. External communication purposes vary from public relations and image-building to governmental, educational, environmental, etc.
The channels of external communication include the mass media, advertising, letters, company reports, open days, local/community participation, sponsorship, trade fairs and exhibitions, conferences, etc.

Internal communication in all organizations has ***formal*** and ***informal*** channels of communication.

Levels of Business Communication**:** There are four levels of communication in organizations:

1. *intrapersonal* (communication with yourself)
2. *interpersonal* (communication to a superior or subordinate)
3. *one to many* (making a speech)
4. *many to one* (a committee making a presentation to company president, etc.)

3. Functions of Communication in a Business Organization

The major functions of communication in a business organization include communication for

- **Information** - passing information between people working in the same organization and between the organization and others
- **Control** - communication (written, oral, or even nonverbal) is also used as part of management control for the planning of operations, evaluating performance, directing and motivating staff.
- **Motivation -** The difficulty is for the managers to find a balance between control and motivation and efficiency. Too much control may reduce initiative and actually lead to a lower productivity with less response to what the customer wants and more emphasis on what the workers think the management wants

4. Increased Volume and Complexity of Communication in Organizations

We know how complex the process of communication is between two parties (See Lecture 1). The complexity of internal communication systems and information flow increases with the growth of the administrative and clerical functions and the size of organizations. In a small organization with perhaps only 6 or 7 staff, all in one room, communication is simple and straightforward, with people talking face to face to one another. There is no need to send innumerable memos* or use the telephone.

*However, there will still be a need for some internal written communication (information which will be used more than once must be kept in written form, such as reports, financial information, order and purchase records, stock control forms, etc.).

As soon as the organization expands, so does the communication system. More written communication is needed, more *specialized* information is needed, even the same information will need to be communicated in different ways to different groups.

Advances in *telecommunications technology* have significantly expanded our options for communicating, but they have not solved the communication problem at work. It has always been difficult to get the right information to the right people at the right time – and it still is. In fact, one can make a persuasive case that the rate of change and the rapid growth of information are making this age-old challenge more difficult than ever.
In view of the large volume and increased complexity of communication within organizations, the need arises to effectively select, control, and direct the flow of vital information.
This is achieved with the help of formal organizational structure.

5. Organizational Structure & Lines of Communication

Business organizations consist of people who work together to achieve common goals (at least in theory! :). Organizations are the system by which individuals cooperate, so that there can be specialization of functions and skills for greater efficiency. This specialization of functions forms the basis of organizational structure. All organizations, as we know, have formal and informal structure.

The formal structure is deliberately developed to regulate and direct the flow of information and to control other aspects of organizational hierarchy and set-up. In order to select, restrict, direct, and control the flow of communication within the formal organization structure, the traditional organizations employ the *sequential model of communication* that emphasizes *up and down hierarchal communication*. Most frequently we designate communication to superiors as ***upward/vertical*** communication, messages to subordinates as ***downward/vertical*** communication, and communication to those on our level as ***lateral/horizontal*** communication. ***Diagonal*** communication occurs when there is communication between lower and higher levels of hierarchy, but both in different lines of authority (for example, between senior members of academic staff and junior Bursary officers, etc.). Most traditional organizations also have a <u>policy of communication</u> (protocol) dictating the etiquette (formal standards/rules of correct and polite behavior within the organization) designed to ensure effective communication within the organization.

Informal structures/networks, based on personal relationships, will not appear on any organization chart, but can have as much or more impact on the functioning of the organization as the formal communication system.

For example, here are some of the **positive aspects of the informal network**:

- <u>It may speed up the communication process</u>: when an employee in one department needs help to complete a task or solve a problem, members of the informal network in other sections can use their authority or power to assist. This avoids the delay of ‘going through the right channels.’
- <u>It may create a conducive working atmosphere, again leading to higher productivity:</u> If the needs and goals of formal management coincide with those of the informal organization, in other words,

if staff are well motivated, then the atmosphere of trust between the management and employees will lead to higher productivity.

- It helps to diffuse tensions: Job satisfaction is also related to social environment. The informal network allows employees to 'let off steam' with other colleagues, thus diffusing potentially destructive conflicts.
- It provides feedback to the management: If management are sensitive to the 'grapevine,' they can obtain information on how employees feel about the organization, the management, and the work.

Some of the possible **negative effects of the informal organization**:

- It may cause conflict within the formal structure: when the goals of the informal organization differ from those of the formal structure, conflict occurs. If the formal channels of communication are ineffective, rumor and gossip ('grapevine') spread like wild fire and may disrupt the work process. Individual perceptions distort information. Rumor is the unsupported or untrue part of the informal communication and is therefore of great disadvantage to the organization.
- The informal organization will tend to resist change: organizational restructuring (downsizing, etc.) that are perceived to threaten the existing structure, will be opposed effectively by a well-formed informal organization.

Every organization has a constantly changing informal communication network that involves the link between individuals and groups *outside the formal lines of authority and communication.* To deal with it effectively, management should recognize its existence and try to influence its direction. It will do so by being aware of the rumors, replacing rumors with fact, and creating conditions that support the goals of both groups.

Classification of Organizational Structures: Despite the wide diversity of organizational structures, we can classify them according to the following criteria:

- The extent of complexity
- The level of formalization
- The degree of centralization.

The greater the number of individual job functions/titles in an organization, the more complex the structure. The more sections, departments, or divisions in the organization, the more complex a company becomes because there are more levels between the least powerful and senior management.

Complexity: Organizational structures may be *tall* or *flat*, depending on the number of levels of management.
Tall structures are typical of large public sector corporations; they are also still found in some large companies. Tall structures are put in place when the management wants to centralize all decision-making and retain control over the whole of the organization.
Flat structures exist in those organizations which have very few levels of management, so that there may be only one or two levels in the hierarchy.
The number of levels, that is, whether the organization is tall or flat, directly affects communication within an organization. The effectiveness of communication will depend on how well managed the organization is, and on the extent of horizontal links.

Formalization: The more an organization determines the job specifications of its employees, the more formalized it is. Low formalization in a job means that the employee has a high degree of independence and discretion in the job. In other words, it means a high degree of control over work. Conversely, high formalization means little control or independence, therefore little power.

Centralization: The communication effectiveness of an organization will also depend on the extent of the centralization of decision-making in the company. Organizations with tall structures tend to be highly centralized: all major decisions there require the approval of top management. This means that middle management is unable to make important decisions and must therefore use memos, short reports, and submissions to request a decision.

Thus, there is an undeniable link between the organizational and communication structure of any concern. This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the link between an organization's structure and its overall efficiency; however, structure does have a major effect on the communication that takes place. Traditional organizations, operating in a more or less stable environment, tend to be more structured and make greater use of organizational charts, protocol, policies, and job descriptions. Modern organizations, operating in a very dynamic environment, may have no organizational charts, job descriptions, or standing plans; they are highly flexible. The structured organization is called ***mechanistic*,** and the flexible structure, ***organic*.**

Mechanistic structures:

- are static, rigid, vertically oriented, pyramid shaped
- use rules, policies, procedures
- decision-making is limited to top management
- authority is based on position
- have elaborate control system and
- rigid communication channels.

Mechanistic structures are best used when

- goals are well known and long lasting
- there is a stable, reasonably simple environment
- technology is simple and well understood
- work force appreciates routine, structure, and low levels of ambiguity.

Organic structures:

- are fluid, dynamic, ever changing
- horizontally oriented
- flat
- decision-making takes place at all levels
- changing authority patterns
- authority based on expertise
- collaboration
- informal routes of communication based on current needs.

They are best used when

- tasks are uncertain
- environment is complex and ever changing
- technology is complex and constantly changing
- workforce is creative and innovative.

7. Communication in a "Network" Organization: Facing New Realities. Leadership (management) has generally been considered the province of the CEO (Central Executive Officers), or at best, a few people at the top of the organizational hierarchy. "Command and control" leadership/management carried many organizations to very high levels of financial performance during periods when competition was not so great and things did not change very fast - but its time has passed. It is becoming clear that no small group at the top can provide the leadership needed for an entire organization of any size in the information age. The demands on the total organization are too great for a few people at the top to call all the shots.
Today, better-informed customers, rapid change, and fierce competition from global competitors demand empowered employees exercising leadership at every level of the organization. This is not possible without a radical restructuring of the traditional sequential model of organizational communication. As mentioned earlier, there have been three pervasive patterns that will no longer work in knowledge-based organizations:

1. the primary flow of information was vertical – within departmental walls that were often impermeable,
2. information was hoarded and used as a source of power over others, and
3. people at the top often withheld crucial strategic information from those lower in the organization in the belief they couldn't handle it.

The restrictive and regulatory function of the traditional sequential model of communication is no longer effective in ensuring the timely delivery of the right kind of information to the right people at all levels of the modern organization. Because vertical communication is bound by hierarchy and function, communication is constrained, lacking integration across function. The sequential model restricts innovation and prevents organizations from making effective use of information resources. A new, concurrent communication model is evolving – it is goal oriented and emphasizes an interactive process that supports simultaneous and spontaneous communication. Since communication is a critical element in organizational design, a new type of 'network' organization is evolving, with formal and informal interactive communication structures at all units and levels. As the environment becomes more dynamic, the general trend is for organizations to move from the mechanistic structure to organic structure in order to remain competitive.

7. Channels of Communication and Networking. Types of Networks. When we communicate with those above us, below us, or around us, we are establishing communication *networks.* These may be *formal* channels or *informal* channels.

Within the organization, there are usually four types of networks:

- ***Wheel***: a wheel network exists when there is a supervisor with a number of subordinates reporting directly without consultation or links with each other.

- ***Chain***: in a chain communication network information is passed sequentially to the next employee above or below in the line of authority.
- ***Circle***: the circle is a three level hierarchy with the lowest level of employees communicating with each other and directly with the person on the next level. That level then reports directly to the higher level. Communication also occurs downwards between the levels.
- ***Star***, or the ***all channel network***, is more an ideal than a reality: every member of the organization is able to communicate directly as an equal with every other member. Some committees are examples of all channel (star) networks.

The most structured is the wheel; the least structured is the star, where opportunities for feedback are greatest and morale is usually the highest.

8. Communication Media in Business Communication

Both formal and informal channels of communication may employ four major media of communication:

- face-to-face communication (formal meetings, interviews, informal contact, the grapevine),
- oral communication (the telephone, the intercom or public address system),
- written communication (letters, memos, reports, forms, notice boards, bulletins, newsletters, organizational manuals, etc.),
- visual communication (charts, films, slides, photos, etc.).

9.Principles of Business Communication

There are eleven principles of business communication:

1. **Conciseness.** Most business people are very busy (time is money!). The wordy letter is usually put aside, for its very wordiness makes comprehension difficult.
2. **Completeness.** Your communication must contain all necessary information. Having to request information that should have been included will probably antagonize the recipient of the communication.
3. **Courtesy.**
4. **Correctness**. Everyone has a tendency to focus on errors. To many people, errors in spelling, price quotations, sentence structure, and the like are a reflection of organizational inefficiency.
5. **Clarity.** All ambiguity should be avoided.
6. **Logical Organization**. It is one of the keys to all effective communication.
7. **Attractiveness.** All business communication should ‘look good’. Appearance is also important in face-to-face communication.
8. **Natural tone.** The tone of business communication should be friendly, natural, and sincere. Hackneyed, archaic, and obsolete words, phrases and expressions should be avoided.

9. **Tact.** Controversial expressions that might antagonize or embarrass the ‘receiver’ should be avoided. At times it is necessary to convey unpleasant ideas, but the choice of words used to accomplish that objective should permit the ‘receiver’ to save face and accept the idea.
10. **Positive tone**. A positive tone almost invariably evokes a positive reaction. In almost every situation, it is more desirable to make a positive statement. On rare occasions you may wish to convey a negative idea or problem. However, you should almost always follow immediately with an offer of a positive solution.
11. **‘Receiver’ orientation.** An effective communicator must be sensitive to the reactions and anticipated responses of the ‘receiver(s)’.

We shall take a closer look at these principles in the next few lectures on the use of the language in business communication.

Assignments

1. Examine a company of your choice and answer the following:
    a. Is this a tall structure or flat structure organization?
    b. Briefly describe the extent of complexity in this organization
    c. Describe two horizontal communication channels in this organization.
2. Construct a diagram of one of the four communication networks discussed. Name the organization that you think uses this structure. Highlight in the diagram the leader in the network. Which of the four types of communication networks would you prefer to use as a leader? Why?
3. Examine the company or public sector organization you work in or one you can get information about and describe its formal structure, with the aid of an organizational chart, if possible.
   Give examples of vertical, lateral, and diagonal communication used in this organization/business.
   Outline the major communication problems that can arise because of this organization’s structure.
4. What is the difference between a tall and a flat organization?
5. Why is it important for an organization to match goals and expectations with its employees’ goals and needs?
6. Identify 3 examples of formal communication channels and three informal channels

Lecture 3: Using the Language

1. **A Historical Overview**
2. **The Wrong Words**
    a. **Jargon**
    b. **Emotive language**
3. **Too Many Words**
4. **The Fog Index**
5. **The Right Words**
6. **Style & Tone**
7. **Sentence Structure**
8. **Paragraph Structure**
9. **Assignments**
10. **Reference Section: Basics of Syntax & Sentence Analysis**

1. A Historical Overview

English has many more words than most other languages: for example, the *Concise Cambridge Dictionary* has 300 pages for Italian-English, but 500 pages for English-Italian. Why?
The wealth of vocabulary is the legacy of its history. The basis of the language is Anglo-Saxon, a relatively obscure Germanic dialect brought to England in the 5th century. The Norman Conquest in 1066 (the best-known date in English history) brought about the defining influence of Norman French: over the next 200 years Anglo-Saxon (the language of the peasants) absorbed a huge number of French words and became English. Thus, it gained a large number of words from the mainstream Romance languages descended from Latin.
By *high medieval times** English had become the common tongue of nobleman and peasant alike, but the languages of learning were still largely Greek and Latin. That is why English absorbed large numbers of often technical and scientific terms from these languages.

***Middle Ages**: period in European history between the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century and the Renaissance in the 15th. Among the period's distinctive features were the unity of W Europe with the Roman Catholic Church, the feudal organization of political, social, and economic relations, and the use of art for largely religious purposes. It can be divided into 3 sub-periods:
The ***early Middle Ages*** (5th-11th centuries), when Europe was settled by pagan Germanic tribes who adopted the vestiges of Roman institutions and traditions, were converted to Christianity by the Church (which had preserved Latin culture after the fall of Rome), and who then founded feudal kingdoms;
The ***high Middle Ages*** (12th-13th centuries, which saw the consolidation of feudal states, the expansion of European influence during the Crusades, the flowering of scholasticism and monasteries, and the growth of population and trade;
The ***later Middle Ages*** (14th-15th centuries), when Europe was devastated by Black Death and incessant warfare, feudalism was transformed under the influence of incipient nation-states and new modes of social and economic organization, and the first voyages of discovery were made.
(Reference from The Wordsworth Encyclopedia, Helicon Publishing Ltd, 1995)

The spread of the British Empire gave English an influx of words from many languages. Some, like *char* (*dated Brit. infml.* for 'tea'), brought back from India by soldiers, remained colloquial, while others, like *bungalow* or *khaki* went directly or indirectly into standard usage.

However, the greatest modern influence has been American. Especially in the last 70 years, there has been a lease-lend of words which has helped maintain the vigour and versatility of the language. To it we owe hundreds of such useful expressions as *boom, slump, bulldoze, paperback, grapevine, commuter, breakeven*, etc.

English is the most widely used language in the world: 60% of the world's radio programmes and 70% of the letters written every day are in English. It is the international language of air traffic and of the United Nations.
A vigorous language is constantly changing. New words come into use, new meanings evolve (i.e. *escalate*, in the Vietnam war). Some words become archaic and disappear – perhaps to reappear! *Obscene*, for example, was dismissed as somewhat archaic by the Oxford English Dictionary in 1933, but was restored to general use recently.
The structure of the language changes, too, and there is no good reason for clinging to rules of grammar which no longer reflect current usage. *The function of the structure* of *language is to support the meaning, not to restrict expression.*
The English language, like society, manners and fashion, has become more informal since the Second World War, and many words and constructions which would once have been unacceptable in standard English are now established. For example, *different to*, and *different than*, as well as *different from*, are now acceptable forms. The distinction between *due to* and *owing to* has disappeared, and the rules about *will* and *shall* are fast disappearing.
'*Correct English' is, in short, whatever is widely acceptable in current usage. But 'Good English' is something else again.* Despite the large vocabulary (the average vocabulary of a person in Britain is 13,000 words), we still often have difficulty in expressing ourselves clearly. We use the wrong words – those that do not express what we mean, those which are not understood by our recipient, or which antagonize him. Sometimes we merely use so many words that the meaning is lost in them: we can't see the wood for the trees. To be aware of the many ways in which language can be misused is the first step towards using the language more effectively.

2. The Wrong Words

Jargon cannot be better defined than in the words of H.W. Fowler:

> *Jargon is talk that is considered both ugly-sounding and hard to understand; applied especially to the sectional vocabulary of a science, art, class, sect, trade or profession, full of technical terms…the use of long words, circumlocution and other clumsiness.*

There are two kinds of language identified here. First, the *special terminology* that develops within any group: lawyers, social workers, computer staff, medics, pilots, and so on. The use of these technical vocabularies can be both irritating and incomprehensible to outsiders, but within the group they act as a kind of spoken shorthand, a concise and precise way of expressing a concept (i.e., *siblings, software, hardware, etc.)*

In a world of increasing specialization and technology, these technical vocabularies are not only defensible, they are necessary. Mathematicians, lawyers, systems analysts and accountants need the precision and brevity of their own 'languages.'

What is indefensible, however, is to use your special vocabulary on outsiders who are not familiar with your jargon. Not only will you fail to communicate, you will bore or antagonize your 'receivers.'

The second variety of jargon, defined by Fowler as *the use of long words, circumlocution and other clumsiness*, is a sure way of losing, or at least obscuring meaning in a fog of words. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with using long words (*circumlocution* is certainly one, but shorter than '*longwinded and roundabout ways of saying things*'!). However, too many long words do make it difficult to understand what we are reading or hearing (see the description of the Fog Index below).

The letter of which the following is an extract won a booby prize of two pounds of tripe from the Plain English Awards Committee:

> *We would advise that our policy does exclude as contingency consequent upon a condition which is receiving or awaiting treatment at the date of issue of the policy*.

The same letter ended ironically:

> *We hope this clarifies the situation.*

The following excerpt from a real letter illustrates clumsiness of expression:

> *In response to your card regarding the above order and the non-delivery of one box of 352 Typing Paper, we are writing to inform you that this has currently met an out of stock situation and that delivery cannot be met until the end of February*.

Cliches are those expressions which, due to their original popularity, have been overused, and have lost their force and vigor as a consequence. Harold Macmillan's expression, *a wind of change*, which originally referred to a new direction in African politics, but is now applied to any minor event, is an example. Other clichés, often with a less respectable history, may commit the offence of circumlocution too: *at this moment in time* and *in this day and age* for *now* are particularly irritating.

Slang, like clichés, changes with fashion. How many slang words for money can you recall? *Readies, lolly, dough, bread, cabbage.* <u>Good English is what is appropriate to the circumstances</u>, and slang has its place in familiar chat. It is out of place in most business communication: it is obvious that too informal a choice of language in, say, a company report would not inspire confidence.

Pompous people seek to add weight (at the expense of losing the point) by using long words, and too many words, for example:

> *Passengers are requested not to communicate with the driver while the vehicle is in motion.*

Pompous writers habitually use such expressions as *in connection with* when *about* might be more appropriate. They *ameliorate, acquaint, terminate* and *assist* when they could *improve, tell, end,* and *help*!
Churchill used the simplest, most direct, language in his plea for brevity:

> *To do our work we all have to read a mass of papers. Nearly all of them are far too long. This wastes time, while energy has to be spent in looking for essential points.*

Negative expressions often cause an emotive response from the recipients, and need to be used with care, i.e.:

> *I am afraid he is not available.*

This is a rejecting statement whose rejection is emphasized by the word 'afraid.' It is better to say *'I am sorry, he's not available,'* which at least implies a polite degree of sympathy.
Disappointment is a particularly negative word and a sentence beginning with 'I am sorry to disappoint you…' may be more upsetting to the receiver than if the word had been omitted.
Unfortunately is another depressing expression: '*Unfortunately we were not able to get in touch'* makes a negative statement even more negative.
It is often preferable to avoid negatives altogether. *'We cannot deliver in three weeks'* is totally negative and may lose you a customer. Put another way, *'Can you give us five weeks for delivery?'*, it invites the receiver's cooperation.

Ambiguity is a particularly offensive fault in business writing, when content is often factual. *Smith told Jones he had been promoted* is an example of ambiguity caused by a careless use of pronouns. Other kinds of ambiguity may have a second meaning which is contradictory, i.e.:

> *Nothing acts faster than…*(a well-known headache pill) ☺

Emotive Language

It is very difficult to convey information, ideas, and especially opinions, without 'coloring' them with some personal feeling or emotion. We usually betray our own opinions or attitudes by our choice of words. It is not wrong to do this, but it may evoke an unfavorable reaction in other people and thus affect their acceptance or rejection of our communication. Consider the following statement, which highlights a typical lack of objectivity by the average human:

I am determined, you are obstinate, he is pig-headed.

Politicians are natural users of emotive language; it is in their speeches that we so often find fact and reason clouded or lost in rhetoric. For example, the use of biblical imagery, *the journey through the wilderness, the pilgrimage* to their vision of *the New Jerusalem,* can lend an aura of sanctity, rightness, or inevitability to their policies and ideals.

3. Too Many Words

Even if we have disciplined ourselves not to use technical jargon to the uninitiated, have avoided dishonestly using emotive language (rather than reason) to persuade, have used long words with discretion, avoided slang and cliché, there are still many pitfalls in the use of language.
Of these, in business and commerce, one of the worst offences (because it wastes time) is to use more words than necessary to convey our meaning, as, for example:

Broadly speaking, this may have the ultimate effect of doubling in numbers the total of orders dispatched outwards in a single day.

This sentence has many superfluous words. *'Broadly speaking'* is surely implied in the rest of the sentence. How else can one double but in numbers? *'Outwards'* is implied in the word *'dispatched'*. **Tautology** is the technical (JARGON!) word for expressions like these, when the meaning is repeated, i.e.:

This unique ornamental vase, the only one of its kind…

A more economical version of the sentence above would read:

This may have the effect of doubling the number of orders dispatched in a single day.

While the word *single* is implied in the expression *in a day*, it has been retained because it adds *force* to the sentence.

A major cause of 'too many words' or verbosity is the over-use of modifiers, i.e. adjectives and adverbs:

The complete implementation of this overall programme will inevitably necessitate extensive demands on the available resources of the appropriate committees and other bodies concerned.

The difficulty – not to say tedium – inflicted on the readers of such writing is self-evident. The surest way to bore people is to write, or say, too much. Such absurdities as *the true facts* only cast doubt on the truth of the facts presented.
Another communication which won a 'tripe' award was from a British Rail employee who took 158 words to explain why a particular train had no buffet service. And a third 'tripe' award went to a local government official who devoted 104 words to asking a local resident to trim his hedge.

4. The Fog Index

All misuse of language obscures the meaning of the communication (message). Several methods have been devised to measure the readability of written language; the Fog Index is one such. Readability is affected by:

- The average length of the sentences, in words
- The percentage of simple words
- The percentage of verbs expressing forceful action
- The proportion of familiar words
- The proportion of abstract words
- The proportion of personal references
- The proportion of long words.

The Fog Index is based on the count of the number of words of 3 or more syllables in a hundred-word sample of the passage being checked, as well as of the average sentence length.
To determine the reading difficulty of a passage you will need to:

- Select samples of 100 words each
- Calculate the average number of words in the sentences of your sample by counting the number of complete sentences and dividing that into the number of words
- Count the number of words of three or more syllables, excluding words with a capital letter, compounds such as bookkeeper and words ending in *–es* or *–ed*
- Add the average number of words per sentence and the number of words of three syllables or more, and multiply by 0.4.

This gives the Fog Index, which is graded as follows:

Index	Reading Level
Less than 10	easy reading
11-12	the top 20% of 12-year-olds
13	the top 20% of 16-year-olds
14-16	first-year university student
17	university graduate.

This index can usefully be used in checking company communications, for example, to ensure that they are comprehensible to the workers. A British Leyland memorandum to workers, which concerned an ultimatum about productivity, reportedly had an index of 17: hardly likely to be effective in securing the workers' cooperation. Indeed, it is claimed that the only management-to-worker communication which fell below an index of 13 was a memo wishing all employees a Happy New Year! ☺ British Leyland has in the past notoriously suffered from poor industrial relations. Could ineffective communication have been one of the causes?
Some recent American research found that:

Only 4 % of readers will understand a sentence of 27 words
But 75 % of readers will understand a sentence of 17 words
And 95 % of readers will understand a sentence of 8 words.

5. The Right Words

We have already defined the use of good English in business as the use of language appropriate to the circumstances.
That is the target – how can one achieve it?
First, the reader should be considered. Readability must be balanced so that the reader can easily understand the message without any feeling of being talked down to. Our existing relationship with the reader is another defining factor. To a stranger there must always be more formality than to a colleague or friend. To someone much lower or higher in the hierarchy than ourselves there must be more formality than with our equals.

<u>Use simple words</u> whenever appropriate. Generally prefer to *begin* something, not *commence;* don't *transmit* (except in the technical sense) but *send;* agree to *use*, not to *utilize.*

<u>Use shorter expressions</u>. Don't write a letter *with regard to, with reference to, in connection with, or in respect of,* but *about* your subject.

<u>Prune modifiers</u>, i.e. adjectives and adverbs, from your writing. Don't let it become inflated by unnecessary words.

<u>Use active verbs</u>, not passive ones, for example:

> Not *A meeting will be held by the Board next week.*
> But *The Board will meet next week.*

<u>Generally use personal pronouns</u> rather than the impersonal form, for example:

> Not *The task would be capable of determination when the appropriate tools be made available to those concerned,*
> But *Give us the tools and we will finish the job.*

Try to be positive, not negative. For example:

The project failed (Not *The project was not successful*).
The company has abandoned the plan (Not *The company will not now proceed with the plan).*

Finally, Be flexible and keep an open mind. 'Rules' about language are meant to be guidelines, not straightjackets. The long word may express our meaning more precisely than a short one. Modifiers are invaluable in expressing shades of meaning, for example:

I was concerned.
I was very concerned.
I was most concerned.

The passive impersonal form may be useful: *It has been decided that…* may be less damaging to a relationship than *I have decided* (it may also be used to avoid responsibility, or 'pass the buck.')

Our choice of words should be governed by considering not "What do I want to say?" but "What result do I want to get?"

6. Style & Tone

Style is a combination of choice of words, characteristics and structure of language, and there are so many possible variations that we each develop a method of writing which can be as distinctive as fingerprints.
Style is not a mannerism that you can take on at will, like mimicking an accent or gesture. In the words of Eric Partridge, the author of a popular grammar textbook 'Usage or Abusage,' "…it is that which one *is* when one writes; so far from being compelled to seek it, one cannot avoid it."
Obviously we can, and do, adapt our style to the circumstances, the subject and the receiver. But something of ourselves will show through – our style will communicate to the receiver something about ourselves as persons. A pompous person is likely to reflect pomposity, a good-humored one – affability, and a meticulous, precise person will dot his *i*s and cross his *t*s in even his most informal note. The following examples convey very different personalities:

Have you got any jobs vacant at your place?
I would respectfully submit myself for the appointment of clerical assistant advertised in the 'National.'
I was interested to read your advertisement in the 'Post Courier' for a clerical assistant.
I am in receipt of details about a vacancy for a clerical assistant in your company.

Tone is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as ‘a particular quality, pitch, modulation or inflexion of the voice expressing … affirmation, interrogation, hesitation, decision and some feeling and emotion.’ Usually it will in effect underline or emphasize the meaning of the words used. In written language the tone conveys the feelings of the communication.
The tone of a communication will reflect what is being said, but it can also add a great deal of meaning. A reprimand might be cool, cold, angry, heated, impersonal or detached in tone. A congratulation is likely to be warm and enthusiastic, but could also be cool and formal. In much business writing a factual, neutral tone is appropriate, but remember that sincerity is an essential of tone, however formal the context.

`7. Sentence Structure

In Elizabethan 16th century England sentences were about 45 words long. In Victorian England (19th century) they were about 30 words long. Modern sentences average 20 words or less. Shorter sentences are more dynamic and vigorous, but if all our sentences were short, our speech would become boring, and thus less effective.

A typical sentence is a statement composed of ***subject*** (what we speak about) and ***predicate*** (what we say about the subject).

The ***subject*** of the sentence is the thing we talk about with all its modifiers, e.g.:

> ***The definition of experience*** *is knowledge acquired too late.*

The ***predicate*** is made up of the verb (expressing action performed or received by its subject), together with all the words that go with that verb:

> *The definition of experience* ***is knowledge acquired too late***.

We have distinguish types of sentence structure:

- ***Simple:*** one subject, one predicate (See Appendix I): *All great truths begin as blasphemies.*

- ***Compound:*** two or more simple sentences joined by a conjunction: *You can twist perceptions*, but *reality won’t budge.*

- ***Complex:*** one main clause plus subordinate modifying clauses: *Everything you can imagine is real.*

- ***Compound-complex:*** at least two main clauses and one or more subordinate clauses: *I have kleptomania, but when it gets bad, I take something for it.* Or: *Saina has the key that opens this cabinet, but she is not here today.*

Varying our sentence structure makes our communication more effective, it helps keep the interest of the receivers.
But however long or short the sentence, it should preferably express only one main idea – several ideas jammed into one sentence make 'decoding' and comprehension far more difficult, e.g.:

> *Saying that, while he accepted medical evidence that asbestosis was associated with the cause of death of a Washington chemical worker, John Henry Thompson, aged 40, of 51 Pattenson Town, the Coroner, Mr. Williams, indicated at the inquest at Chester-le-Street last night that the final decision whether the disease caused or contributed to death would rest with the Pneumoconiosis Medical Panel.*

A useful way of determining optimal sentence length is to try speaking your sentence aloud. If you can't manage it comfortably with one breath, then it needs 'pruning.'

8. Paragraph Structure

As with sentences, so with paragraphs; the most important quality is unity. A paragraph should have only one theme. This subject may be stated or implied in the opening sentence and then expanded, qualified or illustrated in succeeding ones. Sometimes the so-called *topic sentence* comes at the end of the paragraph, to sum up what has gone before. Too many ideas thrown together in a paragraph confuse the reader. We need to remember that sentence and paragraph structure contribute equally with the choice of words to the clarity of what we write.

Summary:

1. **In order to communicate effectively, you must know:**
    1. **Your subject (*what* you want to say)**
    2. **Your purpose (*why* you want to say it, what result do you want to get?)**
    3. **Your receiver(s)/audience.**

2. **Effective business communication must be:**

    i. **Clear**
    ii. **Concise**
    iii. **Coherent**

9. Assignments

- Read the following passage and work out its Fog Index. Then rewrite it in much simpler language and calculate the Fog Index of what you have written.

Language is the primary instrument of communication and the extent to which this volume is concerned with language is with that of our native tongue. The observation has been presented in the previous sections that the ineffectual utilization of English can be a hindrance or even a prevention of the process of communication, but that the observation of the regulations regarding the usage of English will be of assistance in the conveyance of information. There will be sectional interests who may present the argument that the rigidity of the regulations of language is a deterrent to improved communication.

(98 words)

- What do you understand by the term ‘readability’? How would you assess the readability of a lengthy printed document intended for unskilled workers?
- What is the importance of concise writing in business communications?
- Define precisely the meaning of the word ‘cliché’ and give 5 examples of clichés with which you are familiar.
- Redundancies often creep into written communication. What types of redundancies are the most common?
- The following notice on a staff notice board caused great offence. Why?

> Employees are herewith instructed that any requests pertaining to vacation dates must be submitted to the Divisional Personnel Manager, copies to the employee’s immediate superior and to the Managing Director. No employee will be given permission to take holidays at any time not already scheduled on the holiday rota unless a month’s notice is given and the immediate superior allows it. This ruling is effective immediately and applies to all holidays from Monday of next week. Any employee with holidays booked for the coming month must renegotiate them.

Rewrite it and compare your version with that given in the Answers Section p. ….

10. Reference Section: Basics of Syntax & Sentence Analysis

Language skills, as we know, are vital for effective communication. One may know the meaning of all the words in a language, but still be unable to communicate effectively, if one does not know how to put these words together in a sentence.
Syntax, or the arrangement of words in the sentence, is determined primarily by word *functions,* otherwise called *Parts of Speech.*

Here are a few basic concepts that we need in order to understand the mechanics of sentence structure. We shall call them our ‘tools’ for sentence analysis:

Concept # 1: Parts of Speech. The most important concept in our approach to sentence analysis is that of 'Parts of Speech.' These are *functions* of words, phrases, or whole clauses within the larger context of the sentence:

	Function
Nouns	- name things (What? Who?)
Pronouns	- stand instead of nouns (What? Who? etc.)
Adjectives	- describe (modify) nouns (Which?)
Verbs	- name actions or states of being
Adverbs	- modify verbs (How? Where? When? Why? etc.)
Conjunctions	- join similar grammatical items (words, phrases, clauses, etc.)
Prepositions	- show 'positions' of things in space and time
Interjections	- expressions of feelings and attitudes interjected, or 'thrown into' the midst of a clause (they are our 'raisins in the cake' ☺).

All the hundreds of thousands of words in a language fall into these eight (8) groups, *depending on* ***how they function*** *in the sentence*. Thus,

<u>Part of Speech</u> **is** ***<u>the grammatical function of a word/group of words.</u>***

Some English words may have only one function (for example, *and* as a conjunction). Others may have several functions (for example, *fancy*, which is a noun in the phrase *'flights of <u>fancy</u>'*, a verb in *'<u>Fancy</u> that!'* and an adjective in *'a <u>fancy</u> hat'*).

<u>Other examples:</u>
A characteristic <u>feature</u> (<u>noun</u>)
To <u>feature</u> in a film, etc. (<u>verb</u>)
A <u>feature</u> film (<u>adjective</u>)

Ann came in <u>early</u> (adverb)
She is an <u>early</u> bird! (<u>adjective)</u>

In the so-called 'developing' countries the divide between the <u>rich</u> and the <u>poor</u> is ever increasing. (<u>nouns</u>)
The <u>poor</u> people get poorer, whereas the <u>rich</u> elite gets richer. (<u>adjectives</u>)

<u>Figure</u> of speech (noun)
It is difficult to <u>figure</u> out his meaning. (verb)
<u>Figure</u> skating (adjective)

These are examples of single words fulfilling different functions. However, whole *groups of words* often work together as one unit, fulfilling one function. They then form *phrases* or *clauses*. What are they? We already know that both are groups of words. But before considering the difference between them, we need to understand the concept of *clause* and consider the basic sentence structure.

Concept # 2: Clauses and their Basic Structure Pattern (S/FiniteV/C). Clauses are groups of words that have a **Subject** (what we speak about) and a **Finite Verb** (what we say about the Subject). The Finite Verb conforms to its Subject in number and person: this **Subject-Verb Agreement** is essential to sentence grammaticality. Both Subject and its Verb may have modifiers.
Basic Sentence Pattern: (S/V/C). Most declarative English sentences follow the S/V/C pattern: the Subject + its modifiers (what we speak about) fill the first slot / the Finite Verb and its modifiers fill the second slot / and Compliment (optional) takes the third slot (S/V/C). Compliment may be made up of:

- Zero Compliment
- Predicate Adjective (PA)
- Predicate Noun (PN)
- Direct/Indirect Object (DO/IO)

Together /V/C make up the Predicate, or what we say about the Subject. The 'heart' of the predicate is the finite verb, which may be separated from its Subject by modifiers (other words, phrases, or even clauses). It is important that the Subject-Verb Agreement is maintained despite the intervening words: without the Subject-Verb Agreement the sentence becomes ungrammatical (as in 'Mary am a clever girl').

Examples:

S / V / C (PN)
Ignorance / is / the mother of devotion. (Robert Burton)

S / V / C (PA+or+PA)
Nothing / is / good or bad/.
Conj / S_2 / V_2 / C (DO)
But / thinking / makes / it.
(Shakespeare)

Concept # 3: the Difference between Phrases and Subordinate Clauses. Both are groups of words that function as one part of speech (a noun, an adjective, or an adverb). In order to understand and diagram sentence structure correctly, we must be able to *recognize* clauses and differentiate them from *phrases,* which are not shown in our schematic clause diagrams.
Since both subordinate clauses and phrases may function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs within the larger framework of the sentence, then what is the difference between them? The difference between them is *structural*: clauses contain at least one *finite* verb, whereas phrases do not:

Adj. Phrase: 'It is a mark of an educated mind *to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it*.' (Aristotle) [N.B.: the prepositional phrase 'without accepting it' functions as an adverb modifying the verb 'to entertain' within the framework of the larger adjective phrase which modifies the noun 'mark.' Neither of these phrases contains a finite verb.]

Adj. Clause: 'A man *who has committed a mistake and doesn't see it,* is committing another mistake. (Confucius, 'Success and Failure') [Here the Adj. Clause contains two finite verbs, ‘has committed’ and ‘doesn’t see,’ joined together by the conjunction ‘and’; this clause modifies the noun ‘man’ in the main clause.]

Concept # 4: The Two Essential Aspects of Both Phrases and Subordinate Clauses: Their Form and Function..

In our analysis of the more complex units of speech (phrases and clauses) we must consider their two different aspects that make them what they are:

- *function*, or relation to other words within a larger framework (noun, adjective, or adverb; naming or modifying), and

- *form*, or structural pattern. Phrases may be or may not be introduced by prepositions, but they never contain a finite verb. Clauses, on the other hand, may or may not be introduced by relative pronouns or subordinating conjunctions, but they always have their ‘autonomous’ nexal pattern (S/ finite V/ C).

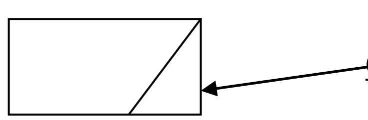
Both phrases and subordinate clauses may function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. The presence/absence of a *finite* verb within a particular group of words that functions as one part of speech determines whether it is a phrase or a clause.

***Prepositional Phrases:** Simply put, a prepositional phrase is a preposition plus a group of words without a finite verb in it that answers the question ‘what?’ after it. The list of words that can function as prepositions:

About, Above, Across, After, Against, Along, Among, Around, As, At, Before, Behind, Beneath, Beside, Between, Beyond, By, Despite, During, Except, For, From, In, Inside, Into, Like, Near, Of, Off, On, Onto, Outside, Over, Since, Through, To (not the particle ‘to’ indicating the infinitive form of the verb!), Toward, Under, Until, Up, Upon, With, Within, Without, Aside from, As to, Because of, Instead of, Out of, Regardless of, But (when it means ‘except’), Past (when it means ‘by’)

In sentence analysis, it is helpful to eliminate prepositional phrases in order to see the main S/Finite V/C patterns more clearly. If the group of words following a preposition does contain a nexal pattern (S/Finite V/C), then the preposition introduces a subordinate clause, which must be reflected in the nexal diagram, for example:

//They/ traveled / in *what appeared to be thick fog.*



C [IO] – Noun Clause

Concept # 5: the Difference between Main and Subordinate Clauses:

Subordinate clauses may function in three ways within the larger sentence framework:

- *Noun clauses* name something/somebody in the main clause, i.e., 'The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible.' (Einstein)

- *Adjective clauses* modify (describe) nouns in the main clause, for example: *The person* who knows how to laugh at himself will never cease to be amused.

- *Adverb clauses* modify verbs in the main clause, i.e., 'We *don't see* things as they are. We *see* things as *we* are.' (Anais Nin)

Main clauses, however, do not have such function:

- 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.' (Confucius)

Concept # 6: the Finite Verb. The finite verb is a verb that has a Subject which defines its form (*number* and *person*). Subject-Verb Agreement is what makes a sentence.

Concept # 7: the Infinitive Verb. This is the base form of the verb (as listed in dictionaries). Infinitive verbs have no subjects, or 'doers' – they simply signify actions or states of being, and thus function as nouns, giving names to these actions or states of being. They are usually preceded by the particle 'to' when used in sentences, except after modal verbs (can, must, may, might, could, should, would, etc.). Example (infinitives are in italics):

A diplomat is someone who can *tell* you *to go* to hell and make you happy *to be* on your way.

Concept # 8: Compounding. Compounding means joining of two or more *similar* items by compound conjunctions 'and,' 'or,' 'but,' 'either … or,' and 'neither … nor.' These conjunctions are often used to join **equal grammatical constructions** – subject and subject, object and object, adjective and adjective, verb and verb, etc. Whatever grammatical construction appears before one of these words should also appear after it.

Concept # 9: Ellipsis. Ellipsis is simply the omission of understood words in a sentence (reduction). For example,

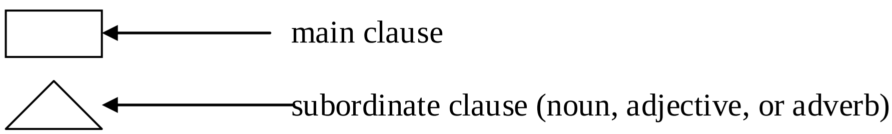
[You] Help! [me]

[You] Put your thinking cap on [your head]!

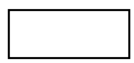
Practical Examples of Sentence Analysis: Diagramming of Clauses

Three Steps of Analysis: First eliminate prepositional phrases, then identify the S/finite V/C patterns, and finally determine how these S/V/C patterns relate to each other.

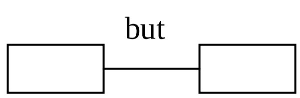
Symbols:



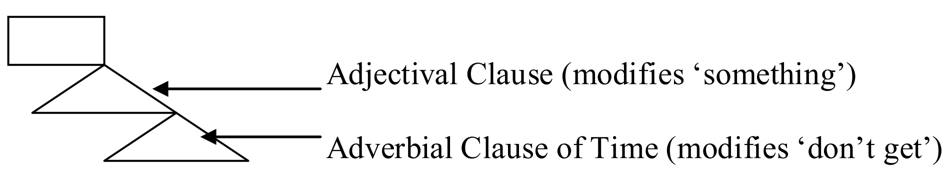
1. //All great truths / begin as blasphemies//.



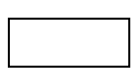
2. //You / can twist / perceptions//, but // reality / won’t budge//.



3. //Experience / is / something // you / don’t get / until just after /you / need / it//.



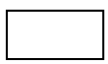
4. //Absence of proof / is not / proof of absence//.



5. //I / think //, //therefore / I / am//. (Rene Descartes)

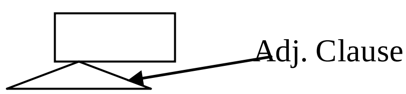
6. //The definition of experience / is / knowledge acquired too late//.

7. //Drawing on my fine command of language, / I / said / nothing//.*

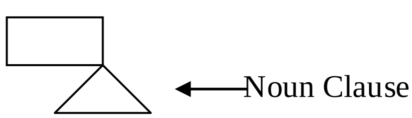


* Here the adverbial phrase precedes the Subject.

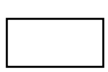
8. //Everything // you / can / imagine // is / real // (Picasso).



9. //True knowledge / exists in knowing / that /you / know / nothing// (Socrates).

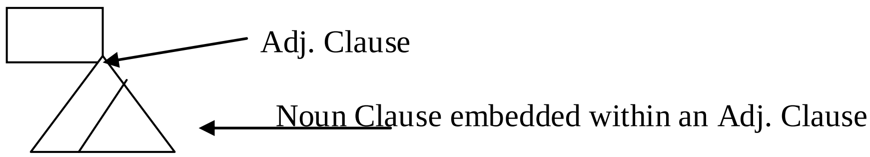


10. //The important thing / is / not to stop questioning // (Einstein).



11. // Knowledge and belief / are / two separate tracks // that / run parallel to each other and never meet, except in the child// (Godfried Bomans: Buitelingen II).

12. //Brain / is / an apparatus // with which /we / think / we / think// (Ambrose Bierce).



Lecture 4:
I. Research Methods; Obtaining Information

1. Business Information
2. Effective Information Search: Primary and Secondary Data
3. Receiving Information
4. Analysing, Selecting and Preparing Information
5. Taking Notes
6. Making Notes
7. Summary and Precis

1. **Business Information** The Oxford Dictionary definition of *"information"* reads: "facts told, heard or discovered about sb/sth; knowledge: *give/provide/pass on/receive/ obtain/collect information on/about sb/sth.*"
   Data **becomes** ***information*** **after it has been received and analysed/processed by the recipient.** Data processing may involve classifying, selecting, sorting, analyzing, etc.

   Business information is any information, which relates to business organizations and their activities. This includes information about business in general, as well as information generated by and about individual organizations.
   Business information should be:
   - Clear
   - Concise
   - Complete
   - Relevant:
     - to the subject matter
     - to the recipient
   - verifiable
   - timely
   - cost-effective
   - appropriately communicated

   Information is the living blood of any organization, making possible the coordination and regulation of organizational activities both *internally* (coordination and records of activities, bookkeeping, information on staff, etc.) and *externally* (keeping records of transactions with suppliers, customers and contractors, reports to investors, outside agencies like the State Revenue Department, local government agencies, etc.).

2. **Effective Information Search: Primary and Secondary Data** All business information, written or oral, should be based on facts. There are two kinds of facts: primary data and secondary data.
   Primary data are those that you or your staff collect without someone else's interpretation of that information. Items of this nature include raw data, memoirs, questionnaire returns, artifacts, diaries, interviews, and the like.

Secondary data are those that others have previously reported in journals, books, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, public opinion polls, etc.

For one **to be effective** in one's **search for relevant information**, one **must:**

- identify the **problem,** or **what** the information should be about, i.e., identify the subject matter and the purpose of looking for it.
- Develop a **strategy** for the search; this will dictate the type of information that needs to be collected (primary, or secondary, or both).

In order to find secondary information, one must be familiar with the methods, or ways of storing it.

Organisations Providing Information include varied sources (mass media: newspapers, TV, Information Bureax, News Agencies, reference books, libraries, etc.).
Using the Library: There are several systems of classifying material store in any library:

- **The author index** is arranged alphabetically by authors' surnames (and the initials, if the surname is the same).
- **The subject index**, also arranged alphabetically by subject and its subdivisions.
- **The classified index** contains cards in numerical order (the disadvantage of this is, one must know the number!)

3. Receiving Information

Looking and listening: Sight and hearing are two of the sensory methods by which we 'take in' information. Remember that *looking* at something does not necessarily mean *seeing* it, as well as *listening* does not always mean *hearing*. We have *information* only if our brain has *processed the data supplying it.*

The basic conditions required for data processing are:

- Purpose, or motivation
- Concentration
- Patience

Reading is one of the most important skills one must have in order to be able to receive data and process information. Analytical approach in processing data available is most important. You will read more efficiently if you 'go for the essentials' at each stage of the task, i.e., if you *prioritize* issues.
Reading routine:

- Identify your *objectives*
- *Scan* to get the rough idea of the *content* of the material
- Separate the *essential* from the *irrelevant* – prioritize

4. **Analysing, or Selecting and Preparing Information** In order to select required information, one must be able to analyse and prioritize all available data. This, in turn, requires certain skills in
    - Scanning, or 'getting the drift' of the data received
    - Identifying the 'essence'
    - Recording the essential points for later processing and analysis

5. **Taking Notes.** There are a few useful practices that should be adopted for effective note-taking:

    - Choose a suitable storage method
    - Leave plenty of space for further comments
    - Start with your source and subject
    - Look for key words and phrases
    - Revise your notes as soon as possible after taking them
    - Know why, on what and for whom you are taking notes – before you start.

6. **Making Notes:** This involves the analysis and recording of the most important points made. One should develop one's own 'system of shorthand' for key words, e.g., b/4 = before, $\Rightarrow$ for therefore, $\angle$ for less than, etc. The use of standard symbols and abbreviations should also be made.
    Structure your notes.

7. **Summary and Precis** The objective of summary is to reflect the original source in a much shortened form.
    It must be clear, complete, and precise. In summary:
    - Include all the essential points
    - Include only the essential points
    - Include only the author's ideas
    - Preserve the logical sequence of ideas

II. The Planning Process in Communication; Writing with Force and Clarity

1. **The Planning Process in Communication**
2. **Scope, Limitations, and Depth**
3. **Drawing up the Tentative Outline**
4. **Outlining Methods**
5. **Orders of Development**
6. **Types of Outlines**
7. **Writing the First Draft**
8. **Choosing the Words**
9. **Choosing the Sentences**
10. **Choosing the Paragraphs**

11. Qualities of Writing Style
12. Editing Suggestions
13. Readability Formulas
14. Ten Suggestions for Clear Writing
15. The Final Paper

In this lecture we shall discuss the process of writing. The objective is to develop your abilities so that you consistently write with clarity, conciseness, and coherence. We shall review the time-saving value of planning and outlining prior to writing the first draft, and consider different types of outlines.

We shall also examine the discipline of writing, the skills involved there, the tasks of editing, and a method for determining easy readability or comprehension of material. Finally, we shall review the factors involved in writing the final draft.

1. The Planning Process in Communication

Planning and organizing are the keys to success in most activities, from constructing a building, taking a 2000-mile trip, or performing a surgical procedure, to writing a report, letter, or proposal. Few daily activities are carried through without a plan; unfortunately, though, many people attempt to write without planning.

In communication, the planning process consists of clearly defining the problems to be solved, recognizing the purpose of the communication, and identifying the audience to which the communication is directed. Interestingly enough, many people begin their research, or even their writing, without knowing precisely the problem they are concerned with.

Example: Sales are declining in the Campbell Corporation and the president of the firm requests a report. Before one can prepare a report on declining sales, it is vital to determine the precise problem or cause of the problem. The decline could be due to higher sales prices, ineffective advertising, poor sales representatives, increased competition, or any one of a number of other causes. If the report writer offers a solution based on an incorrect cause, certainly little would be achieved in the way of solving the problem. The first step is to determine accurately the precise problem: sales prices? Advertising? Sales personnel? Competition? Or what?
The report writer's second step is to determine the purpose of the report. The purpose could be to *inform* the reader, *persuade* the reader, offer a *comparison* between two or more situations to the reader, or *explain* a process or technique to the reader. For example, if the writer simply wants to inform a potential buyer of technical details of a product or service, he would be unwise to attempt to persuade the buyer to take a specific action.
The report writer's third step is to determine who will be reading the report. Certainly, the complexity of presentation, the choice of graphs, the depth of analysis, and the details covered vary according to whether the reader of the report is a stockholder or a member of the audit committee.

2. **Scope, Limitations, and Depth**

The planning process also includes an analysis by the writer of how deeply he or she wishes to examine the topic. At the same time, the writer must define the limitations of the topic in order to avoid going too far afield and including irrelevant material. If the writer has carefully recognized the purpose of the piece of writing and who the reader is, then defining the depth and limitations of the topic is not difficult.

3. **Drawing up the Tentative Outline**

Once the writer knows the precise problem, the limits of the problem, and who the reader is, the writer should draw up a tentative plan or outline.

The outline serves as a guide for research, thinking, and organizing. It permits the writer to

- Check the logic of the plan
- Evaluate the relative proportion of each section
- Check the completeness of the coverage
- Determine if the order of development is correct
- Save time (it requires less time to change an outline than a finished presentation)

4. **Outlining Methods**

An outline may use a *number-letter system:*

1.
    A.
    B.
        1.
        2.
            a.
            b.
2.

or a *decimal system:*

1.
    1.1
    1.2
        1.21
        1.22
            1.221
            1.222

or simply *informal indentation:*

Advertising Media Used
    Newspapers
    Magazines
        Monthlies
        Weeklies
    Radio
        A.M. stations
        F.M. stations
    TV
        Public Broadcasting Channels
        Commercial Channels

Example: Number-Letter Outline

1. Sea Travel as a Vacation

A. Travel by passenger freighter
B. Travel by cruise ship
1. The advantages and cost of using a national cruise line
2. The advantages and cost of using a foreign cruise line

a. The Australian lines available
b. Other lines available
2. Auto Motoring as a Vacation

5. Orders of Development

A consistent order of development should be used in the outline, and orders usually should not be mixed. Orders of development include

- Inductive
- Deductive
- Chronological
- Geographical
- Analysis and synthesis
- Spatial
- Directional
- Simple to complex

6. Types of Outlines

There are three major types of outlines:

- Topic outline
- Sentence outline
- Paragraph outline

The easiest and most frequently used type is the topic outline. The topic outline may be drawn up quickly and easily, with little time needed to formulate complete sentences and paragraphs. Points listed in a topic outline may be moved from one section to another easily.

Example: Topic Outline (decimal system)

1.Incentive systems to increase productivity
1.1 Merchandise awards
1.2 Money awards
1.21 On the basis of sales
1.22 On the basis of production
1.221 Cost savings secured
1.222 Increased units over base
2.Equipment changes to increase productivity

7. Writing the First Draft

Once the writer has carefully thought through the topic, defined the problem and purpose of the communication, identified the reader, and drawn up a tentative outline, he/she is ready to write the first draft.

Turning out that first draft should be carried through in a satisfactory writing environment. For most of us that means a clear desk, plenty of paper, and no distractions. Others might add soft background music. Whatever your cup of tea, the environment should be arranged as expertly as possible to set the right climate for you.

8. Choosing the Words

Although the choice of words is absolutely vital to evoke the precise image in the reader's mind, the writer should be primarily concerned with getting ideas and concepts on paper as quickly and as completely as possible when writing the first draft. At a later time the exact word can be found, the alliterative phrase can be developed, or the simile or metaphor injected.

9. Choosing the Sentences

Even in the first draft, the writer should become accustomed to using complex sentences so that the writing has variety and rhythm. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with simple and compound sentences. However, using too many of either gives writing an air of repetition, or dullness, or boredom.
The complex sentence may be short or long, fast or slow, soft or loud. In a word, it has *variety,* and variety is one of the factors that make writing interesting.

10. Choosing the Paragraphs

Paragraphs may be

- Expository (providing explanation)
- Informational
- Transitional (making a bridge)
- Emphatic, or
- Persuasive.

11. Qualities of Writing Style

Unity is the quality of "oneness" that a piece of writing possesses. All ideas are related to a central idea; irrelevant material is discarded.
Coherence is the logical interconnection of ideas so they flow smoothly and easily together.
Courtesy and *consideration* of the reader's needs, viewpoints, and desires are important in writing style.
Emphasis is the writing skill that brings key ideas or concepts into sharp focus. It may be secured by proportion, placement, repetition, attention-catching words, or use of type styles (bold, italics, etc.).
Imagination is the writing quality that permits the reader to see, feel, smell, or hear the incident, conversation, or activity that the writer "draws" with words.

12. Editing Suggestions

Once the material has been written, it should be reviewed and edited. Edit for

- Coherence
- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Emphasis
- Readability
- Format

13. Readability Formulas

There are several formulas for judging readability of material. The “Fog Index” already discussed in Lecture 3: Using the Language, is the most popular. In this system, the lower the readability index, the easier is the comprehension. A level of 8 is easy to comprehend; a level of 16 is quite difficult; over 20 is very difficult.

14. **Ten Suggestions for Clear Writing** (these were made by Robert Gunning, the author of the Fog Index):
    - Keep sentences short, on the average
    - Prefer the simple to the complex
    - Prefer the familiar word
    - Avoid unnecessary words
    - Put action in your verbs
    - Write as you talk
    - Use terms your reader can picture
    - Tie in with your reader’s experience
    - Make full use of variety
    - Write to express, not to impress

15. The Final Paper

The final paper should be checked to determine if all the following items are excellent:

- Topic headings to help the reader comprehend the material
- White space to improve appearance and readability
- Appendix, charts, and supplements (make sure that all data contained in these elements are necessary and that all irrelevant data have been eliminated)
- Preface to set the stage properly
- Bindings to present the paper attractively.

Study Questions

Can you explain ….?

- The items to be aware of when planning a written communication
- The value of a tentative outline
- Outlining methods
- Outline types
- The qualities of writing style
- What to edit for in a piece of written communication
- Gunning’s ten suggestions for clear writing
- What to check in the final paper

Summary:

1. In planning written communication, be sure to define the problem accurately, recognize the purpose of communication, and identify the specific audience to whom the message is directed. In other words, identify:
    - The subject, or *what* you want to say
    - The purpose, or *why* you want to say it, and
    - The audience, or *to whom* you want to say it.
2. Planning also means limiting the scope of discussion. Once the parameters of the topic are established, the writer should determine in what depth to examine the topic.
3. The writer should draw up a tentative outline in order to check the logic of the design, evaluate the relative proportion of each section, check the completeness of coverage, review the order of development, and, overall, save time if changes are needed.
4. Outlining methods include: number-letter system, decimal system, and simple informal indentation.
5. Types of outlining include
    a. Topic outline
    b. Sentence outline
    c. Paragraph outline
6. The topic may be developed through any one of the following orders:
    a. Inductive
    b. Deductive
    c. Chronological
    d. Geographical
    e. Analysis & synthesis
    f. Spatial
    g. Directional
    h. Simple to complex
7. The first draft should be written quickly, using the tentative guideline for a guide.
8. Words, sentences and paragraphs should be selected carefully.
9. For best results, the writer should be aware of the following qualities of writing style:
    a. Unity
    b. Coherence
    c. Courtesy
    d. Emphasis
    e. Imagination
10. After writing the first draft, the writer should edit it for
    a. Coherence
    b. Clarity
    c. Emphasis
    d. Readability

11. A readability formula is designed to measure the level of difficulty of reader comprehension of a written piece. Robert Gunning is the author of a well-known readability formula, the Fog Index.
12. Gunning has ten suggestions for achieving conciseness and clarity in writing. His major points are:
    a. Keep sentences short, on the average.
    b. Avoid unnecessary words
    c. Write to express, not to impress.

Lecture 5:
Communication through Writing:
Business Letters, Memos & Notices

We have already discussed the major principles of business communication in general and of business writing style in particular. We have also considered the crucial stages in planning written communication. Now we are going to consider how these basic principles and strategies apply in writing different kinds of business letters, memos, and notices.

1. **The Advantages of the Business Letter**
2. **The Business Letter Today**
3. **Letter Format**
4. **Letter Form**
5. **Principles of Business Communication**
6. **Different Types of Letter**
    - *Job Application Letter*
    - *Collection Letter*
    - *Complaint or Grievance*
    - *Favorable Adjustments of Claims*
    - *The Unfavorable Response, or the Psychology of Refusal*
7. **Memoranda and Notices**

1. The Advantages of the Business Letter: All organizations today communicate with dozens of different publics: customers, suppliers, vendors, government agencies, community groups, manufacturers, schools, and so on. In most cases, that communication takes the form of telephone calls or letters. Although the use of letters is expensive (some estimates peg the cost of a letter at over $7.00 today), letters do have at least two important advantages over many other communication media:

- *A letter establishes a record of the interaction*
- *A letter is personal*

It is true that electronic mail and computers now permit us to communicate in many new and different ways. However, the consistent and effective use of the letter as a business instrument has been proved millions of times in the last 2000 years. We are accustomed to it, and its use in the foreseeable future is certainly assured.

1. **The Business Letter Today**

<u>To the reader, the business letter is a reflection of the company.</u>
The letter is a liaison, the representative, and the courier of the organization, its products, its services, and its people. To the buyer, vendor, prospective customer, or government representative, that letter *is* the company.

- The letter that is concise, clear, friendly, courteous, and complete gives the reader an image of a firm that is efficient and concerned.
- Conversely, the letter that is carelessly typed, incorrect in its details, and sloppy in its makeup may reflect an image of an organization that is one with which the reader should not do business.
- Consequently, written communication must be prepared with care.

3. Letter Format

A. *<u>There is no one correct letter format.</u>*

- Almost every organization has developed its own design and format for its letters. Some use a block form, others use an indented style; some include the typist's and author's initials; others do not.
- However, whichever format an organization uses should be used consistently.

B. *<u>The typical business letter is made up of six parts:</u>*

- The ***heading*** is made up of the *letterhead* and the *date*. The former is usually carefully designed to project an effective nonverbal image of the organization. The date should be spelled out. Using only numerals may be misleading, i.e. 06.09.00 or 04/05/00.
- The ***inside address*** should carry titles of individuals. Street and city designations should ordinarily not be abbreviated. Recently, it has become acceptable to use the standard abbreviations for states in the United States and some nations, such as the U.S., the U.K., the U.A.E., or P.N.G.
- The ***salutation*** in formal correspondence should be followed by a colon. Whenever possible, the person's name should be used rather than the impersonal "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam."
- The ***body*** of the letter should be centered on the page. Paragraphs should be relatively short.
- The ***complimentary close*** is typically "Sincerely," "Sincerely yours," "Truly yours," or "Yours truly." Gaining in popularity are signatures that are somewhat more informal: "Warm regards," "Best wishes," and "Cordially yours."
- The ***signature*** is often made up of the organization's name on the first line, the signature, the typed name used in the signature, and the person's title.

N.B. An ***attention line, subject line,*** or ***letter reference number*** usually appears in the area of the *inside address* and *salutation*. ***Enclosure*** and ***initial designations*** appear below the *signature*.

4. Letter Form: *<u>There are three popular forms for business letters</u>*:

- Full block form
- Modified block form

- Modified block form with indented paragraphs

5. Principles of Business Communication:

- ***Conciseness.*** Most business people are very busy. The wordy letter not only is put aside because of the time factor, but its very wordiness makes comprehension difficult. Therefore, whenever you write a business letter, cut every possible sentence and word. Say only what needs to be said. However, don't make your letter so concise that it sounds curt or abrupt. Retain the friendly tone.
- ***Completeness.*** Check your letter to be sure it contains all the necessary information. For the reader to have to request information that should have been included is costly to both parties (and not just in monetary terms). Use a system for organizing to ensure completeness (see sections on *Drawing up the Tentative Outline* and *Outlining Methods*).
- ***Courtesy.*** Be sure to include a "Please," "We appreciate," or "Thank you very much" in your letter. A few words of courtesy do not violate the principle of conciseness; rather, they add to the communication.
- ***Correctness.*** Everyone has a tendency to focus on errors. To most people, errors are a reflection of a firm's inefficiency. Edit carefully for errors in spelling, sentence structure, price quotations, and the like.
- ***Clarity.*** Here again, careful editing will eliminate possible ambiguities. If there is any possibility that a statement may be misconstrued, take it out or rewrite.
- ***Logical organization.*** Logical organization is one of the keys to all effective writing. In a message as brief as most letters are, logical organization is vital. The effective letter writer must organize the points to be covered and their logical order in an outline noted on the letter he or she is replying to. Others make up the outline on a piece of scratch paper. Any system of organization that works for you will do. Whatever the method used, the important factor is making up the outline, carefully reviewing it, and using it as a guide for writing the letter.
- ***Attractiveness.*** The letter, like a package for a product, should "look good." Paragraphs should be brief and well balanced. White spaces should be generous: wide margins and adequate space between sections should be the rule. The entire letter should be centered on the page, and topic headings should be used if they facilitate comprehension.
- ***Natural tone.*** The tone of the letter should be friendly, natural, and sincere. Hackneyed, archaic, and obsolete phrases, words, and expressions should be avoided. Such expressions help build an image of a stodgy,, old-fashioned organization that may be "behind the times." Here are some examples of expressions to avoid:
    1. *as in the above*
    2. *advise*
    3. *as per*
    4. *as indicated*
    5. *attached hereto*
    6. *attached please find*
    7. *beg to state*

8. *beg to remain*
9. *contents noted*
10. *enclosed please find*
11. *hand you herewith*
12. *hereby acknowledge*
13. *hoping to hear*
14. *permit me to say*
15. *pursuant to*
16. *wish to state*
17. *take this opportunity*

- ***Tact.*** Avoid words or phrases that might antagonize or embarrass the reader. The careful choice of words is essential if one is to get the decoder's cooperation. At times it is necessary to convey unpleasant ideas, but the words chosen by the writer to accomplish that objective should permit the reader to save face and accept the idea.

6. Different Types of Letter:

- ***Job Application:*** Your resume (or C.V.) should be accompanied by a cover letter. In many respects, the cover letter to the resume is a sales letter and you are the product.
  Objectives of the cover letter**:**
  - Context: refer to your source of information about the vacancy.
  - Gain the reader's attention by indicating your major qualifications and how the firm would benefit from your skills and abilities
  - Describe your background and qualifications and refer to more complete data in your resume
  - Provide proof of your competence by referring to relevant awards, employment, degrees, and the reference list provided in your resume
  - Ask that an interview be scheduled a.s.a.p.; make the request positive and indicate that you wish to elaborate on how the firm will benefit by hiring you.

    N.B. Other factors to consider: submit typewritten letters that are neat and error-free. Be specific. Tailor your cover letters to the specific jobs you are applying for.
- ***Collection Letter:*** Occasional accounts become delinquent, and although the firm wants to collect its money, it also wants to maintain good relationships. Most companies follow the same steps to collect delinquent accounts: a collection series, beginning with a reminder message and then becoming progressively more insistent as the letters in the series continue.

Reminder: Often a short note with a brief statement on the invoice such as "Did you forget?" is sent soon after a delinquent account is recognized. If the customer has not responded to the reminder, a *personal letter* (or a series of letters) is in order. That letter must be courteous and must specify *the exact amount due, the due date,* and *the consequences of nonpayment.* In addition, always convey the message that settling the bill is to the customer's advantage.

- ***Complaint or Grievance (Claim Letters):*** Because today's production and marketing systems involve so many different processes and people, claim letters regarding lost or mishandled merchandise, bills, etc., have become a constant part of doing business.
  The objective of a claim letter is to receive a definite answer. The writer hopes that the reply to the claim will be favorable. However, if that is not possible, the writer may be satisfied with a compromise or a rejection. What the writer does *not* want is a letter that reaches no decision – this usually results in further correspondence, which wastes time and money.
  A claim letter should include 5 features:
  - An opening statement that refers very specifically to the transaction
  - A specific statement of the loss
  - A specific statement of the adjustment desired
  - A statement to motivate favorable action
  - A close

- ***Favorable Adjustments to Claims:*** Because of the increasing complexity of doing business, companies expect claims. They are aware that a certain percentage of claims will be entered in the natural course of doing business. Thus policies are established for making adjustments under various conditions.
  Most firms recognize that making an adjustment graciously and openly is an opportunity for building good will. As a matter of fact, an adjustment made grudgingly often will do more damage than a refusal made courteously and intelligently.
  Buyer at fault: At times a buyer will submit a claim that he/she may think is justified but actually is not. Firms will often grant such claims purely for the purpose of maintaining good will. However, it is important that the buyer be told (tactfully of course) that he/she is at fault. Normally that is done before the grant is made. The organizational pattern for the kind of letter used in this situation is:
    1. reference to the specific transaction
    2. a tactful explanation of how the buyer is at fault
    3. claim granted (graciously)
    4. a sales appeal, if applicable

5. a friendly close

<u>Seller at fault:</u> Obviously, this is a difficult situation to handle. Buyers are usually not very sympathetic when they have filed a claim because of the *seller's* error. Nevertheless, the seller must grant the claim and attempt to retain the customer's good will and continued business. The organizational pattern for the letter used in this situation is:

1. an opening that refers to the situation and almost simultaneously makes the grant
2. an explanation of how the error occurred, if such an explanation serves a reasonable purpose
3. a statement designed to rebuild the customer's confidence in the seller
4. a sales appeal, if appropriate
5. a friendly close

- ***The Unfavorable Response, or the Psychology of Refusal:*** When we say no to what others think is a reasonable request, the potential for causing problems (as well as losing sales and good will) is great. However, the need is still there. Provided one organizes carefully, the task of saying no becomes quite easy. The organizational plan is a simple one based on the assumption that everyone is reasonable and intelligent. If there is a legitimate reason for the refusal, people expect to be told what it is. Thus refusal letters should be organized in this manner:
    1. a statement recognizing the situation
    2. an explanation of why the refusal is necessary
    3. the refusal, implied or stated
    4. a constructive suggestion
    5. a sales appeal, if appropriate
    6. a close

  If the explanation is offered *before* the refusal, it is usually unnecessary to include comments such as "therefore we must refuse," "it is not possible," "we regret," and similar negative expressions. The explanation indicates the reason for refusal and the refusal itself can be implied. One need only add "therefore you can appreciate," "we know you will understand," and so on. At times, however, it may be wise to add after the explanation a statement such as "therefore we must refuse…."

7. Memoranda and Notices.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, office workers routinely use the memorandum, or **memo**. The memo acts as a record that can be filed and referred to later, if necessary. When identical information must be transmitted to several individuals, the memo is an essential tool. In addition, a memo can be used to confirm assignments, fix responsibility, and document decisions or minutes of meetings.

Memo Format: The memo provides the busy executive with information quickly and concisely. For easy use, memos have taken on an almost universal form:

1. Memos are usually written on full-page or half-page paper.
2. At the top, memos have a four-item heading:
   To:
   From:
   Date:
   Subject:
3. The *subject line* tells the reader exactly what the memo is about, eliminating the need for an introductory paragraph. This line should be clear and specific.
4. The information in the memo should be clear and concise. Tables and headings should be used whenever possible so the reader will note important information immediately.

Memos are a record. Memos should be planned as carefully as a lengthy research project. Although memos are usually brief, they make up a significant part of records in company files.

Another medium used to communicate with large numbers of people within an organization is the **notice**. The channel of communication is then the *notice board* on which it is posted, the *journal* or *newsletter* in which it is displayed, etc. Notices serve the purpose of bringing a matter to people's attention. They are used for

- Effective impact in the presentation of a message (visually and intellectually)
- Longer-term display of the message, as a continual reminder and record
- Instruction, education, reminding or persuasion.

The *format* of a notice is extremely flexible. Their *design* should be easily seen, quickly grasped and attractive. Notices should

- Stimulate immediate interest
- Be easy to read and comprehend
- Encourage the appropriate reaction on the part of the reader
- Stick in his/her mind

Summary:

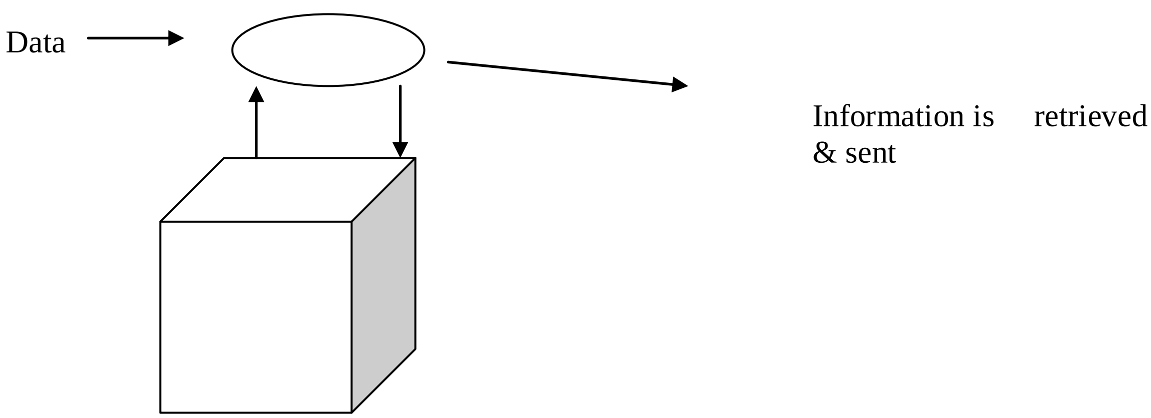
- People derive an image (impression) of an organization as a result of evaluating the quality (or lack thereof) of a business letter.
- The business letter is quite costly
- The business letter is usually divided into
  - The heading (includes the letterhead and date)
  - The inside address
  - The salutation
  - The body of the letter
  - The complementary close
  - The signature. Added to these are miscellaneous items such as the *subject* And *reference lines, attention line, author's and typist's initials*, and *enclosure* and *carbon copy notations.*

- The forms most usually used for business letters nowadays are
    - Full block form
    - Modified block form
    - Modified block form with indented paragraphs.
- The principles of business communication include
    1. Conciseness,
    2. Completeness,
    3. Courtesy,
    4. Correctness,
    5. Clarity,
    6. Logical organization,
    7. Attractiveness,
    8. Natural tone.

Lecture 6: Information Storage & Retrieval. Report Writing and Form Design

1. **Information Storage and Retrieval**
2. **Reports for Decision Making: Types of Reports**
3. **General Points of Style**
4. **Report Formats: the Short Form**
5. **Report Formats: the Long Form**

1. **Information Storage and Retrieval:** In all areas of our lives, our decisions are influenced by the facts available to us. We remember that *data* is gathered and processed in order to provide *information*. Data processing involves:
   - *Duplication:* copies are made for those who need the information ('public' information, such as newspapers, adverts, etc., and business information – reports, sales documents, etc.)
   - *Transmission:* information is sent to people who need it, in formats appropriate to their needs, and is properly received/acknowledged by them (feedback is part of the process of communication!)
   - *Storage:* not all information is needed straight away, or it might be needed again later, so it has to be filed away for various lengths of time (from days to years). The same item of information may be stored in different files, once by each person or group who might need it.
   - *Retrieval:* information on file is obtained for use and further data processing by 'retrieving,' or getting it out of file.



Aspects of information storage and retrieval include

- Report writing
- Form design
- Classification and indexing methods
- Filing procedures
- Retention periods (length of time files are kept)

Today we are going to focus on reports as sources of information for decision making. As we know, people in business need to obtain and utilize information quickly. Report is a general term for 'telling,' or 'reporting' of information, which may be presented in a variety of formats.

2. **Reports for Decision Making: Types of Reports.** Report formats differ depending on their purpose and nature. Reports may be:
    - *Formal, or informal*
    - *Routine* (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual, etc.), or *occasional*
    - *Professional,* or *for a wider audience*

Uses of Reports. Reports are meant to be *useful* by providing information for decision making They may be used

- to assist management in decision making based on clearly written, concise information which may consist of:

    - Information, retrieved from files or other sources
    - Narrative or description, i.e. of one-off events or procedures (accident, installation of new equipment, etc.)
    - Analysis
    - Evaluation and recommendation

- as a permanent record and source of reference
- to convey information to other interested parties

The *use*, or *purpose* of the report *must be clear* to both the person requesting the report and to the report writer. Routine reports have their purpose and use specified in procedure manuals. Occasional reports often require *'terms of reference'* explaining the purpose of the report and any restrictions on its scope.

3. **General Points of Style:** The general principles of business communication, such as *conciseness, completeness, courtesy, correctness, clarity, logical organization* and *attractiveness* all apply in report writing.

Readability (clarity) may be facilitated by various display techniques, such as headings, references, font types, spacing, etc.
Since reports provide objective information regarding facts or processes, passive constructions (emphasis on the process, not the doer of the action) are typical in report writing.

4. **Report Formats: the Short Form.** Short reports may be *formal* or *informal*. *Formal* reports are strictly schematic, with a wide use of impersonal constructions. *Informal* reports are less rigid in structure and slightly more personal in style.

The short formal report is usually split into logical sections, each referenced and headed appropriately:
Title (usually centered)

I. Terms of Reference
II. Procedure (or Method)
III. Findings

1. Section heading (if required)
2. Section heading
   (a) sub heading
      (i)sub point

IV. Conclusions
V. Recommendations (if asked for)

SHORT FORMAL REPORT

Title: At the top of every report (or on a title page for lengthy ones) should be the *title* (i.e., subject) of the report, *who* has prepared it, *for whom* it is intended, *the date* of completion, and *the status* of the report (i.e. ‘Confidential’ or ‘Urgent’).

I. TERMS OF REFERENCE
The purpose and scope of the report. This section may sometimes be called ‘Introduction’ and may include the details set above under ‘Title’; the title then would give only the subject of the report.

II. PROCEDURE or METHOD
This outlines the steps taken in the investigation, collection of data, etc. For example, telephone calls or visits made, documents consulted, computations or analyses made, etc., should be briefly described, and the names of other people involved mentioned.

III. FINDINGS
Information itself is set out, with appropriate headings and subheadings, if the report covers more than one topic. Organization: as with a letter or memorandum, the content should be complete, concise, and clearly structured in any relevant logical order of development.

IV. CONCLUSIONS
This section allows for a summary of main findings (if the report is complex and lengthy). For a simpler report it may include *action taken* or *decisions reached* or the overall ‘message’ of the report.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS
(if stipulated by the terms of reference)

<u>The Sort Informal Report</u> is used for less complex information, so the structure of the short informal report is also less complex, without any elaborate referencing and layout. There are usually three main sections, each of which may be headed in a way appropriate to the context in which report is written.

TITLE
1.Background/Introduction/Situation

2.Findings/Analysis of Situation
3.Action/Solution/Conclusion

SHORT INFORMAL REPORT

TITLE: Again, the subject title, 'to', 'from', 'date', and 'reference' (if necessary) should be provided, perhaps in the memo format.

1.*Background* or *Introduction* or *Situation*: this sets the *context* of the report, i.e. its purpose and any other relevant details. This section may also contain the equivalent of 'terms of reference' and 'procedure' ('method').

2.*Findings,* or *Analysis of the Situation*: the detailed information gathered is set out in well structured paragraphs. Subheadings may be unnecessary in the short informal report.

3.*Action* or *Solution* or *Conclusion*: the main findings should be summarized and conclusions drawn, together with a note of the outcome of events, or action required, or recommendations with regard to solutions sought.

<u>The Memorandum Report</u>: In informal reporting situations within an organization, the 'short informal report' may well be presented in A4 memo format, which incorporates title headings and allows flexibility of content layout. Example of memo report:

To: Mac McNally
Executive Vice President

From: Tom Swanson
Director of Sales

Date: May 2, 2000

Subject: Periodic Sales Report for April 2000

SALES VOLUME

District	Consumer	Manufacturing	Government
I	K 400,000	K 800,000	K 1,700,000
II	500,000	900,000	2,900,000
III	600,000	800,000	4.800,000*

* Includes billing for first quarter

COST OF SALES TRAINING

District I	K 42,000 (includes cost of video equipment)
District II	K 21,000
District III	K 32,000

Recommendations

1.Split District III into two districts, effective July, 2000.
2. Appoint Manager of Sales. All district supervisors to report to this manager.
3. Appoint Sales Training Director for all Districts.
4.Increase Sales Training budget by 20 percent.
5.Add one secretarial position to the Director of Sales office.

The Form Reports: Some routine (particularly periodic) reports have standard content requirements, and can therefore be preprinted with appropriate format and headings, and filled in when the need arises. Often companies develop forms to facilitate the periodic reporting of information such as sales, inventory, number of transactions, and so forth.

General principles of form design: The purpose served by a form is to ensure an effective transfer of necessary information.
A good form is one which is designed so that information can be easily:

- Transmitted
- Interpreted
- Filed (size, etc.)
- Retrieved

Form design should focus on:

- Content
- Layout
- Make-up
- Printing
- Paper

5. Report Formats: the Long Form

In most organizations, decisions are based on information gathered from a variety of sources. This information is usually presented to the decision maker in the form of a long report that contains carefully substantiated data, conclusions, and recommendations.

Types of Long Reports: There are several different types of long reports. Each type is designed for a different goal. Therefore, when you write a long report, it is important to identify your goal early in the planning stage. The different types of long reports are as follows:

- *Informative long report:* This type of report presents information needed to make a decision.
- *Analytical long report:* This type of report provides in-depth data about a particular situation. For example, a company might wish to analyze the feasibility of marketing a new high intensity bulb, or of purchasing a new piece of equipment from another firm. Such a report would analyze the financial,, personnel, risk, and other factors involved.

- *Comparative long report:* A comparative report compares two or more alternatives. Advantages and disadvantages of each alternative are outlined.
- *Argumentative long report:* this type of report strongly recommends a specific course of action and provides documentation to support it.
- *Persuasive long report:* A more subtle approach is used in the persuasive report than in the argumentative report. Here data and information are provided to encourage the reader to take favorable action.

Quite often, a single report combines one or more of the types listed above; for example, a report may not only inform but also persuade.

<u>The Format of the Long Report</u>: All of the types of reports listed above follow the same format. The elements of this format are as follows:

- *Letter of transmittal:* the letter of transmittal introduces the report. It cites the authorization, purpose, limitations, and sources of information for the study. In some cases,, the research findings also may be referred to briefly in this letter, and there may also be acknowledgement of assistance received.
- *Title page:* the title page of the report contains the report title, the name(s) of author(s), the date of the report, and the name(s) of the individual or organization to whom the report is directed. All individuals listed should have their titles and affiliations noted.
- *Letters of authorization and acceptance:* letters that authorized the report and approved the study may be included if appropriate.
- *Table of contents:* this lists the section titles and page numbers for easy reference.
- *Summary:* A long report usually has a summary placed before the main body of the report. This allows the busy reader to quickly review the problem, objectives, and solutions so that he or she can make informed decisions.
- *Body:* the body of most long reports is divided into four sections:
    - *Introduction:* this section provides background information. If it is preceded by a summary section and a letter of transmittal, this section may be shortened. The topics covered could be a brief history of the problem, a review of the literature search, methods used in analyzing the problem, and references to data and forms presented in later sections.
    - *Discussion:* This section should be the largest part of the report. Findings, interpretations, and implications are presented here. Whenever possible, topic headings should be used. Tables and figures aid the reader in interpretation.
    - *Conclusions and recommendations:* Using the objective data presented in the discussion section, the writer should present carefully substantiated conclusions and thoroughly justified recommendations. Because the reader often is an executive who wishes to grasp the 'big picture' quickly, conclusions and recommendations appear immediately after the introduction.
    - *Addendum:* this section includes all supplemental information: appendixes, examples of measurement instruments used, calculations and statistics, supporting data and/or visuals, and the bibliography.

Summary

Short Reports:

1. Short reports facilitate decision making in business.
2. The information presented in a short report should be clear and concise.
3. Periodic reports are submitted on a routine basis. They may be completed daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually.
4. Headings facilitate the reading of periodic reports.
5. Forms for easy fill-in are sometimes used for periodic reports.
6. More and more periodic reports are computer-generated.
7. The formal short report format: Title, Terms of Reference, Procedure, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations (if required).
8. The informal short report format: Title, Background, Findings, Conclusion.
9. Memos are the universal method of documenting important information quickly and concisely.
10. The format for memos begins with a standard four-part heading: ‘To:’, ‘From:’, ‘Subject:’, ‘Date:’.
11. The subject line of a memo usually replaces the introductory paragraph.
12. Memos are used to confirm assignments, record minutes, document information for file purposes, fix responsibility, transmit information, and record items for completion (action items).

Long Reports:

1. Long reports are written to inform, analyze, compare, argue, or persuade.

2. Identification of the goal of a long report determines which type of report is most appropriate.

3. The main elements of a long report are the letter of transmittal, title page, letters of authorization and acceptance, table of contents, summary, and body.

4. The body of a long report usually includes an introduction, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, and addenda.

5.The summary of the long report is often placed before the body to provide the reader with an immediate overview.

Lecture 7: Oral, Non-Verbal and Visual Communication.

1. **The Advantages of Oral Communication**
2. **The Disadvantages of Oral Communication**
3. **Skills in Oral Communication**
4. **Effective Speaking: The Short Presentation**
5. **Effective Speaking: The Long Presentation**
6. **Listening**
7. **Using Visual Aids to Communicate**

1. The Advantages of Oral Communication:

- Swift and direct feedback
- Interactive nature of medium
- Great flexibility in the range of available persuasive/motivating tactics.

2. The Disadvantages of Oral Communication:

- Potential interference ('technical noise')
- Memory is unreliable, and perceptions differ. In the absence of written records, oral communication may lead to misunderstanding
- Less time is available for planning, hence increased possibility of making wrong decisions
- Clash of personalities may form a barrier to effective communication
- The greater the number of people involved in the communication process, the more the potential magnification of these disadvantages.

3. Skills in Oral Communication:

- ***Speaking:***
  - Articulation
  - Structuring the message
  - Style and Tone
  - Delivery
  - Tact [sensitivity to recipient(s)]

- ***Listening:***
  - Concentration
  - Interpretation of metacommunication and paralanguage
  - Offering feedback

* *Metacommunication* (*meta* = beyond) is a form of 'supercommunication,' a sum total of all signals communicated (verbal and non-verbal)
** *Paralanguage* (*para* = beside, beyond) is spoken language used to convey a meaning greater or other than its surface meaning.

4. Effective Speaking: The Short Presentation. During your business career you will be required to make a variety of oral presentations. These may be as short as three minutes, such as for introducing a speaker, or as long as one hour, such as for making a technical presentation. The size of the audience may vary from one individual to hundreds, and the purpose may vary from informative to comparative to persuasive. *Planning Your Short Presentation:* Like written communications, speeches must be well planned. Analyze your audience and note how much time is allotted to you to speak.

Planning your talk in relationship with your allotted time and audience level is very important. However, the critical factor in planning is the organization of the presentation itself. Just as with a written report, the communicator must carefully determine the major topics and minor areas, then integrate them in a logical order for the greatest impact on the audience.

The presentation itself may be divided into 3 parts, as follows:

1. <u>Introduction:</u> Usually it is wise to introduce your speech by stating your purpose, problem, and goal. This gives your audience an idea of what you will be speaking about and how it relates to them.
2. <u>Body:</u> The bulk of your time should be spent on developing your main ideas and arguments to support your central theme. The logic of the presentation is increased by using a consistent order of development (deductive, inductive, chronological, etc.). It is possible to use more than one order of development in a presentation provided a logical sense is maintained.
3. <u>Conclusion</u>: The conclusion usually summarizes the main ideas and urges the audience to adopt a specific course of action.

<u>Principles of Effective Public Speaking:</u>

- *Knowledge*: you should be completely familiar with your topic. This has two advantages: first, you will be more confident as you address your audience; second, you will be able to anticipate and answer questions addressed to you.
- *Organization*: If you organize your presentation logically, you will be able to stay on track, move rapidly through your key ideas, and thereby maintain the attention and interest of your audience.
- *Advance Preparation*: improves effectiveness. Preparation of ideas, supporting facts, visual aids, attention-catching statements, etc. contributes to your confidence and helps you speak with force and clarity.
- *Honesty*: when speaking, be yourself – no more, no less. If you can't answer a question, say so quickly and directly and move on. Do not try to fool your audience.
- *Vocabulary and Articulation*: After analyzing your audience, select a vocabulary level appropriate for your listeners. Define those terms that may be unfamiliar to them. Pronounce your words clearly. Eliminate "cuz," "dontcha," "comin'," and so forth.
- *Rate of Delivery*: The rate of your delivery is critical in maintaining and holding the interest of your audience. Audiences bore easily while listening to a slow, monotonous speech. On the other hand, extremely

rapid speech tends to lose an audience. For maximum effectiveness, vary the rate of your delivery at appropriate times to hold the audience interest.

- *Volume and Inflection*: Vary the volume of your voice for emphasis when necessary. Be sure you can be heard distinctly in every corner of the room. On the other hand, be careful the volume is not so high as to be disturbing. Use inflection to emphasize key points, ideas, and concepts.

  Rate of delivery, volume and inflection should vary with the content of a presentation and the impact a speaker wants to make on the audience.
- *Gestures*: Always maintain eye contact with your audience. Avoid looking out the window, at an open door, or at the floor. If you are sitting, sit up straight. If you are standing, stand relaxed yet straight. Use gestures and eye movements to communicate your ideas. A smile is well received when it is made in keeping with the proper statement.

5. Effective Speaking: the Long Presentation. Sometimes you will be asked to present a rather lengthy speech to inform members of an audience of new policies, procedures, or products; to exchange technical material; to present research findings; or to analyze budget considerations. The long presentation differs from the short one in several ways:

- The length of the long presentation may vary from 10 to 60 minutes
- Visuals are used more frequently in the long presentation
- The concepts and ideas in the long presentation are usually more complex.
- Audience involvement and participation are more common in the long presentation

Like other presentations, long speeches contain an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

- *Introduction*: The introduction is critical since its purpose is to gain the attention of the listeners. This may be accomplished by establishing rapport with your audience. If you are an ‘outsider,’ they need to be reassured of your competence and honesty. Your introduction should include a statement of the topic for discussion and how it is relevant to the audience. If you plan to use new or technical terms, be sure you define them in the introduction.
- *Body*: Organize the body of your long speech as you would a long written report. Make sure you have researched your topic thoroughly. Organize your ideas in a logical sequence and provide supporting data.
- *Conclusion*: The data presented should lead naturally to the specific points in the conclusion. These points may be listed and emphasized. Then you well-substantiated recommendations may follow. The way you deliver your conclusion may determine the effectiveness of your speech. Plan the conclusion carefully, using visual aids if appropriate to increase audience retention of key points.

6. Listening: Besides reading, writing, and speaking, a fourth area of communication, listening, has now been recognized as an essential management tool. Listening has become so important that some companies have begun holding seminars for employees on the subject.

Why Listen? Studies have shown that managers spend approximately 60 – 70% of their time communicating. Of that amount of time, approximately 55 – 65% is spent listening. Effective listening has five advantages:

- It may result in better relationships at home and at work
- It helps us to better understand those with whom we communicate
- It provides important information
- It stimulates new ideas
- It motivates others to improve their listening skills

These advantages, all secured as a result of effective listening, help us to become effective managers.

Levels of Listening:

- Attentive listening for important information
- Empathetic listening to appreciate others' attitudes, feelings and emotions
- Casual listening to music and informal discussion for pleasure

Why We Don't Listen: There are many reasons why many of us don't listen effectively.

- *Rate of comprehension*. We can comprehend much faster than we can speak. Most of us speak about 125 to 150 words per minute, while we comprehend about 600 to 800 words per minute. If we don't concentrate, that extra time could be spent thinking about unrelated issues, and the key ideas in a presentation or conversation could be lost.
- ***Competition***. External distractions also compete for our attention: 'physical noise' (ringing telephone, conversation nearby, etc.)
- ***Time***. Sometimes we just don't have time to listen because other items seem more important. Remember that not all conversations take place at your convenience, and if you can't make the time to listen, someone else will. (However, some people may want to monopolize all of your time with conversation: tactfully stop this kind of behaviour so you don't spend critical time listening to somebody who should not be heard!)
- ***Lack of Training***. In school we learned how to speak, read, and write; yet few of us learned how to listen. Now, both schools and companies are realizing this deficiency in education and are offering courses in the area.
- ***Negative Responses***. Often people fail to listen to a speaker because they respond negatively to external factors such as speaker's clothes, hairstyle, accent or smell. A good listener, however, will not let negative responses get in the way of concentrating on what is being said.
- ***Emotions***. Emotions often get in the way of effective listening, particularly during confrontations.
- ***Bias, or Prejudice***.

Listening for Facts:

- <u>Resist distractions</u>: concentrate on key ideas being presented. Try taking notes; it may help you to listen.

- Remember key words: Listen carefully for key ideas. Remember key words associated with them. Remembering five key words will help you remember five major topics presented.
- Review key concepts. Since your comprehension rate is faster than your speaking rate, use the extra time to review the key words and key concepts.
- Set aside your own bias. Even if you disagree with what the speaker is saying, continue paying attention. The speaker may place new light on the issue or may introduce a new concept.
- Work hard to listen. Extend yourself mentally and physically to become a better listener.

Listening for Feelings: Empathetic listening is perhaps the most difficult of all listening skills. Learn to listen and respond to others' feelings in what they are saying.

- ***Listen from the speaker's point of view:*** Very often people have great difficulty articulating what they feel deeply. Try to understand and 'hear' those feelings.
- ***Watch the nonverbal communication:*** facial expressions, hand movements, and body posture of the speaker. Pay attention at the *paralanguage* – the quality and tone of speech and the delivery rate. The verbal communication may say one thing, but the nonverbal communication may say another. Be sensitive to what the speaker's nonverbal messages convey.
- ***Listen to what isn't said:*** this is often the 'real' message. For example, when a person tells you that he worked overtime for three straight days to finish the job, is he really saying, 'compliment me'? Respond to these obscure comments when appropriate.
- ***Listen at the right time and place:*** some discussions may have to be delayed. Graciously tell the speaker you are genuinely interested and make alternate arrangements to continue the discussion.
- ***Listen objectively:*** recognize your own biases. Although it is difficult to change your attitudes, try to put them aside during the conversation. Try to reevaluate your ideas in the light of the new information.

7. Using Visual Aids to Communicate. Whether your presentation is long or short, written or oral, visual aids usually enhance it. When business data seem complex, visuals can make the interpretation of these facts much easier. Graphs, charts, and tables clarify the data being presented as well as illustrate relationships amongst them. Graphics should be included to clarify, supplement, or complement the information being presented.
Factors to Consider in Choosing Visuals: The type of visual you select should be appropriate for your audience, your communication purpose, and the type of data you are presenting.
Audience: Before selecting and designing your visual, analyze your audience carefully.
Purpose and data analysis: Always be sure your data clarifies the concept or answers the question you are trying to explain.

Graphs & Charts: Graphs and charts are often used to express relationships among data as well as trends in sales, losses, inventory levels, and so forth over a period of time.

- ***Line or curve charts***: These are a series of points connected by a straight or curved line to reflect a change over a period of time. When different colored inks or different line configurations such as a broken line, a dotted line, or a solid line are used, readers can easily note relationships and trends among data.
- ***Bar charts***: Bar charts (either vertical or horizontal) show the relationship by using bars of different lengths to reflect quantitative differences in the data. Sometimes the actual numerical data is included on or near the bars. (Variations of the bar chart – component bar chart).
- ***Pie charts:*** A pie chart is drawn in the shape of a circle. The entire area of the circle is considered to represent 100% of a given total. A pie chart that is broken into segments without any indication of percentages has questionable reliability and should be viewed with caution.
- ***Tables:*** Tables help to convey messages by making data easier to interpret. Tables also permit the reader to easily contrast and compare information, retain it, and quickly note similarities and differences. If a table is labeled and explained separately from the text, it is considered independent of the text. If all explanatory information is in the text, the table is considered dependent on the text.
- ***Miscellaneous Visual Aids:***
    - *Pictograms or pictographs:* these charts use symbols to help the reader visualize the product/service
    - *Map charts:* use symbols to represent quantities
    - *Photographs:* are useful to show plant sites, actual products, etc.
    - *Exploded drawings and cutaways:* these provide an in-depth view of a product or a piece of equipment
    - *Flowcharts:* as the systems approach becomes more popular, work activities and relationships may be illustrated by means of flowcharts
    - *Organizational charts:* these show the relationships among personnel within an organization
- ***Visuals for Oral Presentation****:*
    - *Chalkboard or whiteboard* – both are easily erasable.
    - *Flip charts* are large sheets of newsprint supported on an easel. Flip charts are used easily when it is impossible or undesirable to turn out the room lights.
    - *Transparencies* are sheets of acetate that are projected onto a screen by means of an overhead projector. They have similar advantages to flip charts (that is, if the room lights need not be dimmed).
    - *Slides* may be used in large auditoriums to highlight main ideas. Unfortunately, room lights must be dimmed for proper viewing.

- ***The Key to Using Graphics:*** ask yourself if they will truly supplement, explain, complement, or emphasize the information you are presenting. If the answer is yes, use them.

Lecture 8: Persuasion

1. **Persuasion and Influence**
2. **What is Argument?**
3. **Constructing a Logical Argument: Persuasive Logic**
4. **Message Characteristics: Persuasive Style**
5. **Identifying False Arguments**
6. **Engaging in a Constructive Discussion**

1. **Persuasion and Influence.** Teamwork, cooperation is vital for the success of any organization. How can these be achieved? Management, skilled in the art of persuasion, will be able to influence company employees, shape their attitudes, motivate their cooperative activities, and thus ensure the highest levels of efficiency. In this section we shall focus on the nature and power of persuasion and discuss the "anatomy" of argument.
   It is important to define our terminology first, as common words have special meanings in social sciences. The street value of terms like 'persuasion,' 'influence,' and attitude' may not apply here.

   Influence is our umbrella term. Any time a source deliberately attempts to change a receiver's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, influence has occurred.

   Persuasion is under the umbrella as a special case of influence. When a source deliberately uses communication to try and change a receiver's attitude, then persuasion has occurred.

   Both influence and persuasion concern deliberate change, but diverge because persuasion requires communication (verbal and nonverbal messages) and persuasion seeks attitude change. By contrast influence can proceed without communication and may achieve behavior (external) change without gaining attitude (internal) change.

   Now what is 'attitude'? *Attitude* is a person's evaluation of an object of thought. A person holds up an evaluative (good to bad) yardstick and judges objects against that scale. Women's Lib: Good or Bad? Smoking: Good or Bad? Repetitive examples: Good or Bad?

   Persuasion, not influence, seeks to change attitudes because *attitudes drive behavior.*

   <u>Recap</u>:
   - Influence deliberately seeks any change
   - Persuasion deliberately seeks attitude change through communication
   - Attitudes are evaluations
   - Persuasion seeks attitude change because attitudes drive our behavior

So we've got three new concepts: Influence. Persuasion. Attitude. We've got definition. We've got comparison and contrast. We are ready to move on.
How can we achieve attitude, and therefore behavior change? By putting up a convincing argument. We shall next consider the nature and 'anatomy' of argument, the agent of persuasion.

2. **What is Argument?** Once again, let's put aside the commonplace meaning of the word 'argument' ('disagreement,' or 'quarrel'). In school we learned that
   - *Argument is a specific position on an issue with supporting points* (i.e., main claim plus supporting evidence)
   - *Issue* is an essential prerequisite for any logical argument – that is why identifying an issue (= problem evoking strong disagreement among people) is basic to a successful construction of argument
   - Essential <u>*Parts of Argumentative Essays*</u> are:
      i. *Main Idea (Thesis) Statement*
      ii. *Reasons,* supported by
      iii. *Evidence, or facts and examples*
      iv. *Constructive suggestion(s)*

   In *logic*, the branch of philosophy that studies valid reasoning and argument, argument is defined as a series of logical steps – using reasons or evidence – supporting of a conclusion:

   > Argument is a set of statements (premises), one or more of which purportedly constitute support or reason(s) for the truth of one of the others (the conclusion).

- **Statement:** a meaningful declarative sentence that is either true or false.
- **Premise:** a statement in an argument that provides evidence or support for a conclusion. In other words, a *premise* is a statement from which a logical deduction, or *inference*, may be drawn.
- **Conclusion:** a statement in an argument which the premises support or imply. In other words, *conclusion* is a statement that can be drawn (deduced) from the premises.

Thus, an argument is composed of 2 kinds of statements:
- *The conclusion* (main claim) is that statement which follows from the other statements, and
- *The reasons* (evidence) are those statements which are intended to support the conclusion.

If we compare an argument to a structure such as a house, the conclusion will be its roof, supported by the pillars of reasons (premises):

Arguments appear in many forms and in many contexts: from advertisements to conversations, from newspaper and magazine articles to speeches. An initial step toward sharpening one's reasoning skills is to develop one's ability to analyze arguments by identifying the main conclusion and the existing logical relationship between the conclusion and its premises.

3. **Constructing a Logical Argument: Persuasive Logic.** A logical argument aiming to 'prove' a point to another person's satisfaction will contain a number of premises and a conclusion.

X is true. [premise]	*Y* is true. [premise]	Therefore, *Z* is also true. [conclusion]
All men are mortal.	Socrates is a man.	Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Arguments can be represented in one of two ways: deductively or inductively.

- **Deductive Argument:** an argument that purportedly guarantees the truth of the conclusion, if the premises are true. In other words, a deductive argument *is intended* to be constructed in such a way that if all the premises are true, then it is impossible for the conclusion to be false.
- **Inductive Argument:** an argument that purportedly makes the truth of the conclusion ***highly likely or probable***, if the premises are true. In other words, an inductive argument *is intended* to be constructed in such a way that if all the premises are true, then the conclusion is highly ***likely to be true*** as well.

You will have to make sure that:

- Your premises or assumptions are valid; and
- Your conclusion actually follows or can be deduced from them.

For example, the following thought processes may *sound* plausible, but are false:

'Nobody can do two things at once [premise], so you will have to give up one of your activities [conclusion]' – this premise is invalid, for its truth depends on the nature of activities involved, as well as on one's individual capabilities.

'You listen to music while you work [premise] and you have been getting bad results [premise]: obviously your results are poor because you listen to music! [conclusion]' (Not necessarily: there may be a whole lot of other reasons for bad results:
'x* and** also ***y' does not mean ***'x caused by y'***)

'Jane likes John. John is a salesman. Jane must like salesmen [conclusion]. (No – all this means is that she likes *one* salesman called John, for reasons that may have nothing to do with his being a salesman. This is a common error in communication: assumption that personal reactions are necessarily caused by partiality, bias or prejudice – 'because I am a woman,' 'because I am foreign,' etc.)

‘It must be okay [conclusion] because, after all, 6 million people can’t be wrong [premise].’ (Yes they can…)

Apart from the logic of how you have derived your conclusions, there are other factors affecting the effectiveness of your argument (= eliciting positive response to persuasion).

4. Message Characteristics: Persuasive Style. In this section we will consider a variety of ways in which we can use *message characteristics* to influence others. Here is a sampler of some useful message strategies for effective persuasion:

- **Revealing Persuasive Intent.** When receivers believe that a source is trying to change them, they frequently respond defensively. Sources who “forewarn” of their intent to persuade often put themselves at a major disadvantage precisely because of the maxim, “Forewarned is forearmed.”

  As a general rule, persuasion is more effective when the forewarning is minimized.

- **Organization.** Well-organized messages tend to be more persuasive than disorganized messages. The value of message organization is obvious. If your message is incoherent and confusing, then receivers will have difficulty merely understanding. The source may have good arguments, but the receivers will not comprehend them. (For example, most teachers have had the experience of presenting information to students in a way that was less than well organized. We know what happens: the students get confused. They get worried and anxious because they do not understand. This leads to frustration and creates more barriers to communication).

- **Message Sidedness.** There are two sides on every issue. One sided messages discuss only one perspective. Two sided messages present information on both sides. Now, one and two sided messages still advocate only one position. The one sided message ardently defends a position and makes no mention of competing views. The two sided message also defends a position, but it also “considers” the other side.

  Generally speaking, a two sided message is more persuasive than a one sided message. To be most effective, a two sided message must do two things:

    - Defend one side;
    - Attack the other side.

  When two sided messages merely mention that there are competing perspectives and there is no attack on the competition, two sided messages are no more effective than one sided messages. The question is, why are two sided messages better?

  <u>First</u>, two sided messages may simply appear to be more fair and balanced. Thus, for receivers who are not thinking very carefully, two sided messages make sources more credible.

  <u>Second</u>, for receivers who are thinking carefully, the combination of defense and attack makes them think even more systematically about the issue and to start

questioning the validity of the "other" side. Thus, two sided messages can provide a double-barreled strategy where the source gets more support because receivers like one side and dislike the other.

- **Repetition and Redundancy.** If Maggi runs the same ad for maggi noodles 100 times, that's repetition. If Maggi runs 10 different maggi noodles ads 10 times each, that's redundancy. What impact does repetition have, and does redundancy moderate its effect?
  Interestingly, repetition has two different outcomes. First, a little repetition leads to a lot of persuasion. Second, a lot of repetition leads to a lot of frustration. There is a balance point with the lever of repetition. Using repetition up to that point is effective, but once you've got past the balance point, you get diminishing returns.

  In the first outcome a little repetition works for an obvious reason: Comprehension. As you repeat a message, over and over, more and more receivers understand the message. For example, advertisers know that if a hundred people are exposed to a TV commercial, most of them won't even remember it. But if you show that same commercial over many different times, more and more people in the audience will finally begin to 'see' it for the first time. And even if a particular receiver recognized that new ad the very first time, repeated viewings are still effective. They permit the receiver to learn more about the ad and consider it more carefully.

  But, if this repetition is overused, the second outcome occurs. You've heard the expression, 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' That is exactly what happens with messages that are repeated too much. The ad comes on the TV and you go, "Oh, no, not that again!" Instead of thinking about this wonderful ad, you start getting angry or frustrated or bored with it. That is not good persuasion.

  Now, *redundancy* (saying the same thing in a different way) can permit repetition to work effectively for a while. Redundant messages essentially fool the receivers into thinking that they are seeing something new. However, even with redundant messages, you will still reach that balance point eventually. The moral of this is: do not overuse repetition in an effort to emphasize a point.

- **Rhetorical Questions.** Rhetorical questions are persuasive, aren't they?

  Let's make sure we know the terminology. A *rhetorical question* is an utterance that is really a statement, but looks like a question. Rhetoricals are polite ways of making claims without appearing to take a stand:
    - People who study longer get better grades, don't they?
    - Advanced persuasion courses build character, don't they?
    - He's made his point, hasn't he?

  The research with rhetoricals reveals one very strong conclusion: Using rhetoricals can change how people think. If the receivers are not thinking very carefully about the persuasive appeal, a rhetorical question jerks their attention and makes them think. The reason for this is due to our social training. When somebody asks us a question, it is required that we respond to it. To respond correctly requires that we understand the question.

A rhetorical question is not a real question, it only looks and sounds like one. If you are really paying attention, when you hear a rhetorical question, you know that the source is not really asking you to do anything. But, if you are *not* paying close and careful attention, when you hear that rhetorical question, it grabs you because you think that the source has just asked you to do something and you must respond to be polite. Now, you start listening and really thinking about the rest of the persuasive message.

So, rhetoricals can be persuasive because they can make receivers think more carefully. There is also some evidence that rhetorical questions can be persuasive cues. That is, when receivers hear a source using rhetorical questions, they think the source and the message are more believable and correct.

The timing of the rhetorical appears to determine its effect. If a source uses rhetoricals very early in the presentation, then the rhetoricals will make the receivers pay more attention. If a source uses rhetoricals at the end of a presentation (when it is too late to pay attention), receivers will use that device as a persuasion cue.

- **Examples versus Statistics.** Examples tend to be more powerful and persuasive than statistics. There are several reasons for this.
    - First, examples are easy to comprehend and require less effort.
    - Second, people tend to think more about them. With statistics, about all that people do is learn them. They exist as statements that are either true or false. Examples, by contrast, make people think a bit more. They react more fully as they recollect their own similar personal experiences.

- **Evidence.** Both examples and statistical data are part of a broader category called evidence. ***Evidence* is any factual statement, object or opinion not created by the source, and used by that source as support.** Evidence, then, is something that somebody else created, that a source uses as a means of persuasion. Needless to say, all good evidence must be verifiable.

Evidence works. Sources who use good evidence persuade their receivers much better than sources who do not use evidence or who use poor evidence. And the use of good evidence also leads to stronger perception of that source's credibility.

Now, of course, examples will not always be preferred to statistics. If the audience is highly sophisticated and very well informed, statistics would be considerably more effective.

We have looked at seven message variables. They are intent, organization, sidedness, repetition and redundancy, rhetorical questions, examples versus statistics, and evidence. Skillful and appropriate use of each will produce greater influence. Whenever you are trying to influence anyone you can use any or all of these message variables to improve your effectiveness. To recap:

- **Intent:** Forewarned is forearmed. Therefore, simply present the persuasive message without warning.
- **Organization:** Structure produces comprehension. Chaos produces confusion. Therefore, make the message clear and organized.
- **Message sidedness:** There are two sides to every issue. Messages which defend one side and attack the other are more effective. Therefore, support your position, but make sure you point out the weaknesses in other views.
- **Repetition and redundancy:** The frequency with which a message is given enhances influence to a balance point. Past that point repetition will annoy and frustrate receivers. Redundancy will delay reaching the balance point, but will not prevent it. Repetition works to improve comprehension. Therefore, expect to repeat your messages several times to make sure everyone gets the word and understands the word.
- **Rhetorical Questions:** Statements hidden as questions work well when given in advance of the main message. Rhetoricals serve to enhance attention and message processing. Therefore, use rhetoricals to get or regain the attention of your receivers.
- **Examples versus Statistics:** Examples are easier to comprehend and generate greater thoughtfulness than statistics. Therefore prove your points with examples your receivers find compelling.
- **Evidence:** Something created by others that you use to support your point is evidence. Evidence may be the most powerful message variable there is. It produces a simple equation: More good evidence, more influence. Therefore, always include the best evidence for your receivers.

5. **Identifying False Arguments.** False arguments twist or ignore logic. If you can identify false or weak reasoning, you will effectively defend your argument and influence (persuade) your receivers. Common diversionary tactics include:
    - The personal argument
    - The emotive argument
    - The illogical argument
    - The dishonest argument.

Personal arguments aim to persuade the audience of the validity of an idea or attitude by *discrediting or attacking the source* of an opposing idea or attitude. A case may be undermined by the claim that the person putting it forward is:

- *'guilty of that very thing'.* This introduces a totally irrelevant subject (the personal record of the source) and ignores the contention at hand, be it true or false: "Why should we listen to *his* proposal for flexi-time, when we all know *he* doesn't come in until eleven anyway?"

- *an unreliable source of information on the matter:* "Well, he would say that, wouldn't he, being a foreigner." (This has nothing to do with the truth or falsehood of what has been said.)
- *otherwise discreditable.* Many debaters resort to attacking the opponent, if they cannot refute his argument on its own demerits: "You want to implement a 5 year plan? You can't even stay married to the same person for a year at a time!"
- *bound to be discreditable for holding that very view.* It is possible to attack an opponent before anything has been uttered: "Only a complete idiot would suggest that we change the present system." [any takers?]

The Emotive Argument: 'Emotional' or 'emotive' arguments can take many forms. It is possible to influence persuasive outcomes by deliberately using prejudiced terms which elicit a more favorable or hostile response than the bare facts would indicate. Advertisers, lawyers, politicians, journalists and speakers at mass meetings are generally good at this: "Whom are we to admire? A lone, conscientious man who speaks out the truth, or a group of power-hungry and blinkered tyrants?" [Not much choice, huh?]
Partiality, self-interest, bias and prejudice should not influence our judgment in matters of fact. Language can be calculated to appeal to the emotional leanings or needs of the audience, distracting attention from the evidence and logic of the argument.

The Illogical Argument: Illogical arguments contain gaps in the logical progression from the premise to the conclusion. Often

- *a false conclusion is derived from reasonable premises* by:
    - Assuming that two events which occur together or one after another must be related as cause and effect: "Jane came to the office the day the file disappeared. She must have stolen it."
    - Confusing general statements with specific cases: "The teaching at that college is excellent. He teaches there. He must be great." Or: "He used to be a car salesman, and we know they're crooks. He can't be trusted."
- *A conclusion is derived from false premises:* "If it were any good, they would have installed it ages ago. They haven't, so it isn't any good."
- *An unestablished conclusion is used to prove itself:* "We ought to raise salaries because it is right that we pay more." (i.e., because we ought to raise salaries!) Or: "I am asking you to do this because I trust you." "How do I know you trust me?" "Because I am asking you to do this."

The Dishonest Argument uses diversionary tactics by introducing irrelevant elements, such as:

- *Proving a totally irrelevant conclusion:* "Of course you need a word processor – typewriters are totally inefficient." [Do we need a word processor?]
- *Introducing a 'red herring':* The scent of a red herring is used by a hunt-master to draw his hounds off the trail they are following and onto a new one of his choice. A speaker can do exactly the same in an argument to divert the receivers from the main point, and prevent the logical conclusion (which may be against him) from being reached: "I say, that's *my* wallet you are holding! Yes, and a very nice

wallet it is, too. Do you know how much crocodile skin costs nowadays?" The red herring may also take the form of an anecdote, joke or other irrelevant humour.

- *Logic traps or ambiguities:*
  - Presenting only two alternatives, when there are in fact others. This traps the receiver in a false dilemma, limiting his options: "If you are not with me, you are against me."
  - Slipping *in unjustified assumptions* into a question requiring a yes/no answer: "Do you love your family enough to keep them safe with this security system?" (If 'yes', then buy it. If 'no'- shame on you!). Or: "Have you stopped fiddling the account?" (If 'yes': you used to. If 'no': you still do it!)
  - Equivocating, making your words conceal their meaning, so that logic cannot grasp anything solid: "You can rest assured that your letter will receive the attention it fully deserves."

These, then, are some of the methods which might have a short-term persuasive effect. They should, however, be kept out of a constructive discussion as much as possible. Receivers come to realize eventually that they have been tricked or pressured, and in business context particularly you depend on the good will, trust, and cooperation of the people you attempt to influence.

6. **Engaging in a Constructive Discussion.** Discussion carries none of the competitive essence of debate or dispute. It involves the cooperation of all participants. Constructive discussion allows for effective communication, participation and interaction. Discussions often fall short of these expectations because of:
   - Time wasted on irrelevant issues
   - Lack of cooperation between individuals
   - Poor leadership or guidance

The approximate order, or sequence of procedures in a constructive discussion:

- Definition of the objectives of the discussion
- Information supplied on the issue in hand
- Arguments and counter-arguments advanced
- Conclusions sought and formulated
- Conclusion assessed and recorded for decision and action.

Sensitive, but firm leadership and general cooperation are essential for any constructive discussion and effective group communication.

Lecture 9: Cooperation.

1. **Cooperation and Group Characteristics**
2. **Roles and Relationships within Groups**
3. **Working in Groups**
4. **Supervision and Leadership: Styles and Functions**
5. **Conflict Management**
6. **Motivation**
7. **Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures**

1. **Cooperation and Group Characteristics.** Teamwork, cooperation is the heart and soul of an organization. All the aspects of effective communication (verbal and nonverbal) that we have looked at in the past weeks are crucial in creating and maintaining the team spirit within an organization. Now it is time for us to consider the personal inter-relationships and attitudes in an organization, which form the *context* for communication.

   What is a group? Is it just a random gathering of individuals? Would you call passengers in a PMV, or shoppers at Andersons a group? Neither would you call all the people queuing at the Telikom a group. However, when you go to the Botanical Garden over a weekend, you are likely to see many groups of people picnicking there. So what makes a group special?

   A group has certain attributes that a random collection of people does not possess. These **group characteristics** include:
   - **A sense of identity.** Whether the group is formal or informal, its members have a *sense of belonging* to it. There are generally acknowledged boundaries to the group which define who is 'in' and who is 'out,' who is 'us' and who is 'them.' The PNG society is very conscious of the 'one-tok' system, which represents ethnic groups. People generally need to feel that they 'belong' and are accepted by others. Organizations try to establish a sense of corporate identity among their employees and create an appealing company image for the general public through advertising and public relations. This sense of group identity finds expression in
   - **Conformity,** or acceptance of the 'norms' of behavior and attitude that bind the group together. Think of the traditions and norms of behavior in your 'one-tok' group, for example. Or the Bank of South Pacific – most of their employees wear a green uniform that identifies them and creates a sense of identity and solidarity.
   - **Purpose and Leadership.** Most groups have an expressed purpose, or set of objectives, and most will spontaneously or formally choose individuals or sub-groups to lead them. Leadership helps coordinate and direct group members and their activities.

Most groups and organizations like to project the image of coherence and integrity. However, often they will in fact be composed of many sub-groups with attributes and characteristics of their own. This is a natural phenomenon, dictated by human nature (personal likes or dislikes), shared experiences, and similar circumstances (i.e., common rank, clubs, unions, etc.)

2. **Roles and Relationships.** When you join a group or an organization, you take on a role. In social sciences,
   'role' means **'the appropriate pattern of behavior in a certain social context.'**

   These patterns of behavior are things we have to learn to be accepted. We spend our entire lives adapting to new circumstances and often multiple roles we find ourselves in (child, parent, student, teacher, professional, superior, subordinate, etc.).
   All groups have a set of role expectations, i.e. behavior patterns generally considered appropriate in a particular context. These may vary widely (compare school rules in PNG with those in Afghanistan, or the United States!).

   Roles are bound up with relationships. You play a role in a context which includes other people. You cannot be a son or a daughter without parents: you are a student in relation to a teacher, etc.
   Our roles at work are complementary to those of others. The larger the organization in which you work, the more complicated the pattern of roles becomes. However, there are 4 main role situations:
   - You work *for* other people (subordinate role)
   - You work *with* other people (equal, or peer role)
   - Other people work *for you* (authority role)
   - You *represent* the organization to outsiders

This 'overlapping' of roles is a potential source of conflict, as it often leads to a clash of interests. Each individual may at the same time be engaged in a number of different relationships, each with its own demands and responsibilities.
All these varying (and sometimes conflicting) roles affect the process of communication, its manner, tone and content. People tend to :
- Expect others to communicate with them in a manner appropriate to a perceived relationship between them ('Of course he didn't say anything: he's the boss')
- Expect others to share the same perception of the relationship ('He spoke right back to me: what cheek!')
- Be more formal and less open with superiors
- Be restrained with subordinates also, to preserve a position of formal authority
- Be more open and familiar with peers or equals

3. **Working in Groups** involves 2 types of activity:

   - Collective tasks for the achievement of group objectives
   - Group maintenance, i.e. providing support and encouragement, maintaining harmony within the group.

Being a team member, one must:

- Know the rules of the game
- Cooperate with others in all activities and communication

Ideally, the benefits of teamwork are many, among them:

- Each individual gets the support of the group
- Shared skills, information and ideas enhance individual potential

Unfortunately, the need to conform to the 'house rules' may sometimes restrict individual personality and flair, and rigid leadership and procedures may strangle initiative and creativity in individuals.

4. Supervision and Leadership: Styles and Functions. Authority, or right to lead, may come from various sources. It may be:

- Rational/legal, i.e. depending on established rules obeyed by everyone;
- Traditional
- Charismatic

There are different 'styles' of leadership:

- Authoritarian, intolerant of any contradiction
- Democratic, encouraging staff participation in decision-making
- 'laissez-faire,' leaving staff to their own devices

Another way of analyzing leadership styles identifies 4 categories:

- the 'tells' kind: decisions are made by the manager and then announced to the subordinates to be carried out without question;
- the 'sells' kind: the manager persuades subordinates to accept decisions;
- the 'consults' kind: managerial decisions are taken after consultation with staff;
- the 'joins' kind: the manager delegates to the group the right to make decisions. He defines the problem and its terms of reference, but the actual decision will normally reflect majority opinion.

You see how *leadership style* is practically *communication style* between the leader and the group. The most effective style of leadership in a particular situation will depend on the circumstances and the personalities involved: it should be adapted to the requirements of the subordinates.

The functions of the manager, or leader of a working group include:

- organization of work: giving instructions and explanations
- supervision of the work of others
- consultation with the group members
- provision of information and assistance to group members
- representing the group in dealings with 'outsiders'

A few golden rules for the communicating manager:

- be informed: Knowledge is Power
- be fair: keep an open mind
- be clear: ambiguity causes confusion
- be encouraging. Even negative information (e.g. a reprimand) can be given in a positive way.

5. **Conflict Management.** Differences of opinion occur in any group. They may be expressed in different ways:
    - By argument: this is the constructive exchange of ideas with the positive intention of reaching an agreement
    - By competition: this may be constructive or destructive
        i. Constructive competition enhances motivation and results
        ii. Destructive competition occurs when results are achieved at the expense of another ('zero-sum' competition)

    - By conflict. Symptoms: poor communication, interpersonal differences, inflexible attitudes toward change and low morale and frustration.

Conflicts may be caused by disputes about the boundaries of authority or differences in the objectives of different groups or individuals.
The *tactics* of conflict:

- Withholding information
- Distorting information
- Imposition of rules or restrictions by one group on another in order to bolster up its own importance
- Favoritism
- 'Witch-hunting'

Effective conflict management may be achieved through effective communication by:

- encouraging fuller employee participation in decision-making
- providing (preferably informal) negotiation and arbitration for settling disputes
- using persuasion to establish cooperation, trust and good will between individuals.

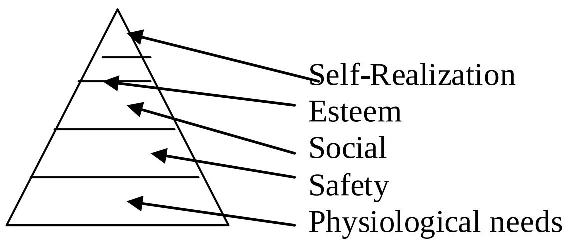
6. **Motivation.** Efficiency depends on motivation. Motivation can be positive (promise of benefits and rewards – 'the carrot') and negative (use of intimidation – 'the stick').

    Abraham Maslow's theory concerning the needs and satisfactions of human beings stated that
    - Man is a wanting being: his needs must be satisfied; once satisfied, they are replaced by further needs;
    - Man's needs are arranged in a progressive series of levels – a hierarchy of importance
    - A man's job may help satisfy those needs.

The hierarchy of needs may be as follows:

- The basic physiological needs (air, food, drink, rest, etc.)
- Safety or security needs (safety from physical danger, economic security, discrimination, a desire for order)
- Social needs (friendship, affection, and acceptance: informal groups become very significant aspects of organization behavior)
- Esteem needs, including self-esteem and the esteem of others (status, recognition, respect and appreciation, the desire to excel)
- The need for self-realisation (realization of one's full potential).

Maslow suggested that the need for self-realisation was relevant only for those whose other needs have already been satisfied, although these levels do often overlap to some extent.



Maslow's pyramid of human needs

Since work provides a livelihood and takes up such a large part of a person's life, it obviously plays an important role in personal satisfaction.

N.B. The same need may cause different behavior patterns in different individuals (conformity/rebellion).

Frederick Herzberg had a slightly different perspective on *job satisfaction and motivation* – he emphasized the 'wanting' nature of man and believed that even if all man's needs were satisfied, man would soon start taking them for granted and become dissatisfied again! Herzberg called this 'hygiene factors.' Hygiene keeps you safe from disease – but it cannot by itself give you 'good health.' Similarly, pay and other benefits are necessary to *prevent* employees from being dissatisfied, but do not tend to offer long-term positive motivation. He suggested a set of other 'motivators':

- Status
- Advancement
- Gaining recognition
- Being given responsibility
- Challenging work
- Achievement
- Growth in the job

Pay and participation as motivators. Is *pay* only a 'hygiene' factor? It directly affects man's livelihood, and the satisfaction of most of the other needs is usually in direct proportion to his income. It is generally agreed that there is a clear, short-term and direct

link between extra effort, results and higher pay (salesmen paid on a commission basis – a clear example of this principle in practice).
Participation contributes a lot to job satisfaction. It gives people a sense of identity, responsibility and belonging.

<u>Contingency approach to motivation</u> looks at motivation *in context*, depending on the interplay of a multitude of factors over time.

7. **Discipline and Grievance Procedures.** Maintaining discipline is an integral part of leadership. Once employees know what is expected of them and feel that the rules and requirements are reasonable, *self*-disciplined behavior becomes a part of 'group norm' ("attitudes drive behavior"- remember?).

   <u>Disciplinary action</u> may however sometimes be necessary. This will usually involve an *interview* with the 'offender' and the supervisor should be properly prepared for it:
    - Investigate first
    - Discipline in private.

ACAS guidelines for disciplinary action suggests *progressive* disciplinary action in the following sequence:

- An informal talk
- Formal oral warning
- Written or official warning
- Suspension or dismissal, if necessary.

<u>Discipline and relationships.</u> Four basic rules will help the supervisor reduce resentment in disciplinary actions:

- Immediacy
- Advance warning
- Consistency
- Impersonality.

<u>Grievance procedure</u> typically provides the following steps:

- The employee should take the grievance first to his/her immediate boss
- If the immediate boss cannot solve the matter, the case should be referred to the next level
- Cases referred to a higher manager should also be reported to the personnel department for assistance/advice of a personnel manager in resolving the issue.

The advantages of these formal grievance procedures are:

- They are a means of solving the problem without disrupting the work process
- They are seen to give a fair treatment to all employees
- They allow for a 'cooling-off' period
- They protect the employee from possible hostility from his boss
- They give an employee a chance to speak for himself and be heard.

Lecture 10: Conducting Meetings: Documentation for Meetings

Personal communication, whether one-to-group (as in a meeting or conference) or one-to-one (as in an interview), is a useful medium for information exchange at all organizational levels.
When the participants at a meeting leave the room thinking that the meeting was a waste of time or that nothing was accomplished, both time and money have been lost. But meetings can be effective and productive. The key is to have a system that ensures success.

A. Establish a Corporate Policy Regarding Meetings and Conferences.

A company-wide policy regarding meetings and conferences helps eliminate unnecessary meetings and provides procedures for running meetings effectively. The corporate policy on meetings should address the following areas:

1. Meetings should be called only when a decision needs to be made. Routine meetings (i.e., weekly) should be cancelled if agenda items have not been identified. Meetings that are 'informational' usually can be handled by memos.
2. Invite only those individuals who can make a positive contribution to the decision-making or the problem-solving activity.
3. Agendas should be distributed before each meeting so that those attending can prepare for the meeting. If there is insufficient time to distribute an agenda, list the agenda items on a flip chart or a blackboard at the beginning of the meeting.
4. Begin an end meetings promptly at the scheduled times.
5. After each meeting, distribute a set of minutes to the participants within 24 hours of the session. Be sure to list the action items, the person(s) responsible for their accomplishment, and the dates for completion.

B. Prepare for the Meeting or Conference.

As with all effective communication activities, meetings and conferences should be planned carefully. Several areas should be addressed:

1. *Determine the need.* Discuss the need for the meeting with key individuals. Do not call the meeting if the need has not been defined clearly.

2. *Define the topic or problem to be discussed*. Carefully analyse the problem. Once the *specific* problem and related items have been defined by key personnel, note them as agenda items. This will keep participants focused on key topics and make it easier to reach decisions.

3. *Determine the type of meeting to be held.* Determine what type of meeting would most suit your needs. Although it is possible to include all of the following at one meeting, it is not recommended.

- *Problem-solving.* This is the most common type of meeting. Individuals are asked to help solve a problem by contributing their expertise, whether it is in engineering, accounting, marketing, production, or other areas.
- *Informational.* This type of meetings brings individuals together so they may all be provided with the same information at the same time – for example, when a new employee benefit is made available or when a new procedure is implemented. Individuals are often encouraged to ask questions for clarification.
- *Brainstorming.* This type of meeting provides an opportunity for the organization to hear new and different solutions to a problem. Participants express as many ideas as possible about a topic or a problem.
- *Training.* At this type of meeting, specific ideas, skills, procedures, or concepts are explained, demonstrated, and/or practiced.

4. *Select participants.* Invite only those individuals who can make a positive contribution to the meeting. Avoid inviting individuals because of their position, or to prevent 'hurting someone's feelings,' or for the purposes of so-called protocol.

5. *Identify a meeting leader.* Although the term *leader* is not really accurate, an individual should be selected to act as stimulator, moderator, catalyst, or arbitrator at the meeting. This person may be a member of the group or the group's 'boss.' For groups that meet routinely, it may be preferable to give each member an opportunity to lead a meeting by rotating that position. Rotating the position of leader helps ensure that no one in the group feels threatened or neglected. A good meeting leader should be someone who has the ability to think analytically, express ideas clearly, and be poised, tactful, patient and self-restrained. He or she should also be objective, impersonal, and good humored.

6. *Designate subtopics.* Determine the discussion areas that will help solve the problem, the complexity of each item, and how much time will be necessary for discussion. Avoid listing more topics than can be covered adequately in the allotted time.

7. *Distribute an announcement or agenda.* The advantages of distributing an announcement or agenda are: participants and leader can prepare for the meeting; the leader can plan a strategy; the discussion will more probably 'stay on track.' The following points should be listed on the agenda:

- Date, time, and location of the session
- Topics and subtopics to be discussed

- Names of participants
- Documents to be retrieved before the meeting, if applicable

8. *Prepare physical facilities.*

- Room arrangements. Secure a room with appropriate seating arrangements
- provide necessary audiovisual equipment
- Handouts: prepare an adequate number of handouts for participants
- Refreshments (optional)
- Miscellaneous material: Make arrangements for providing stationery, ashtrays, name tags, and so forth, if appropriate.

C. During the meeting the leader determines the climate of the meeting. It should be open and friendly, and should encourage an open discussion of problems and possible solutions.

Introductory elements:

- Membership (optional)
- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising

The business of the meeting:

Agenda items should be discussed in a way that each participant has an opportunity and enough time to contribute.

A respected member of the group or a secretary should take the minutes during the meeting.

If more information is needed to solve a problem, the group should decide on a specific course of action. One individual or a group of several participants may volunteer to collect the necessary data. This should then be listed as an action item.

Conclusion of the meeting: Before ending the meeting, the leader should make sure that all the agenda items have been adequately covered and decisions have been made where necessary. The conference leader should take the last few minutes to summarize the meeting activities.

Closing formalities:

- A.O.B.
- Date of the next meeting (if applicable)

D. After the meeting: Within 24 hours, meeting minutes should be distributed to those who were present as well as to those who were unable to attend. Advantages of prompt distribution of minutes:

- Those who were present receive the same summary information. Any errors may be reported immediately.

- The decisions reached are distributed to all concerned. This avoids someone saying at a later date that he or she was not aware of a specific decision.
- Action items and individuals responsible for accomplishing them are identified. Everyone is aware of the responsibilities and deadlines listed.
- The minutes may be filed for future reference.

The formats of minutes vary. General hints:

- Start with details of the time and place of the meeting
- Follow the sequence of the agenda items
- Finish with 'Signed: (name & designation of leader and date).

Minutes may take three forms:

- Resolution minutes
- Narrative minutes (the use of reported speech important here!)
- Action minutes.

Summary:

1. When meetings are ineffective, both time and money are lost.
2. A company-wide policy regarding meetings helps eliminate unnecessary meetings and provides procedures for running meetings effectively.
3. Every meeting should be carefully planned.
4. The most frequently held meetings are problem-solving, informational, brainstorming, and training meetings.
5. The meeting agenda should be distributed so participants may prepare for the meeting.
6. Notes should be taken during the meeting.
7. After the meeting, minutes should be distributed promptly (within 24 hrs)