

MODULE 4

COMMUNICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

1. COMPONENTS OF A FORMAL LETTER:

i. Letterhead/Logo of the company

The sender's address (return address) with the organization's name, full address, email, telephone and fax numbers.

ii. Inside address

This is the address you are sending the letter to (reader), which includes the reader's name and typically, their title also.

iii. Date/Dateline

This is the month, day, and year the sender is actually sending the letter. It is never abbreviated.

iv. Salutation

This is nothing but greeting the reader. The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word 'Dear'.

v. Subject line

This comes after the salutation/greeting. This is to sum up the purpose of writing the letter in one line. This helps the receiver focus on the subject of the letter in one glance.

vi. Main Body of the letter

a. Introduction: The sender introduces why they are sending the letter to the reader, and the sender is usually expressing their request in this paragraph. It is typically very short, maybe only a few sentences.

b. Body: In this paragraph, the sender is using specific examples and details to highlight their request or the information about why they are sending the specific letter. This paragraph will include several details, and it can potentially be very lengthy.

c. Conclusion: In this paragraph, the sender calls the reader to action. The sender specifically states what they want to be done from the reader. Also, the sender thanks the reader for taking the time to read the letter and for completing the request.

vii. Complimentary closing

At the end of your letter, we write a complimentary closing. The words “Yours Faithfully” or “Yours Sincerely” are printed on the left side of the letter.

viii. Signature Line

The sender includes their signature and a typed version of their name.

Tips on how to write a formal letter:

- i. Be concise
- ii. Be courteous and considerate
- iii. Don't blame the reader
- iv. Avoid being negative
- v. Be natural and precise
- vi. Be simple and specific
- vii. Avoid using clichés and jargon
- viii. Keep it direct
- ix. Don't use flowery language or too complicated an expression.
- x. Use proper format and presentation

Sample Formal Letter

	123 Elm Ave. Trees Ville, ON M1N 2P3 <i>[Letterhead/Logo of the company]</i> 6-10 spaces
November 23, 2018 <i>[Dateline]</i>	
	2-4 spaces
Mr. M. Leaf Chief of Syrup Production Old Sticky Pancake Company 456 Maple Lane Forest, ON 7W8 9Y0 <i>[Inside Address]</i>	
	2 spaces
Dear Mr. Leaf. <i>[Salutation]</i>	
	2 spaces
Subject: Placing an order for Pancake mix and Maple Syrup. <i>[Subject line]</i>	
	2 spaces

[Main body]

Let me begin by thanking you for your past contributions to our Little League baseball team. Your sponsorship aided in the purchase of ten full uniforms and several pieces of baseball equipment for last year's season. *[Main Body: Introduction]*

Next month, our company is planning an employee appreciation pancake breakfast honoring a few retired employees for their past years of service and present employees for their loyalty and dedication in spite of the current difficult economic conditions. We would like to place an order with your company for 25 pounds of pancake mix and five gallons of maple syrup. We hope you will be able to provide these products in the bulk quantities we require. *[Main Body: Body]*

As you are a committed corporate sponsor and longtime associate, we hope that you will be able to join us for breakfast on December 12, 2018. *[Main Body: Conclusion]*

2 spaces

Respectfully yours, *[Complimentary close]*

4spaces

Derek Jeter. *[Signature line]*

2 spaces

[Enclosure, if any]

Exercise 1: List out the difference between formal and informal letters

2. FORMATS AND TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS:

A. **Formats:** Letters can be formatted in several ways. Three of them are given below.

i. **Full Block Format:** In this format, the lines are left justified.

Logo of the company <i>[Letterhead]</i> 6-10 spaces
April 27, 2013 <i>[Dateline]</i>
2-4 spaces
Mr. Sampat Saxena <i>[Inside Address]</i> Associate Professor Humanities JNTU Hyderabad-500085.
2 spaces
Subject: List of Technical Books. <i>[Subject line]</i>
2 spaces
Dear Mr. Saxena, <i>[Salutation]</i>
2 spaces <i>[Main body below]</i>
We are thankful to you for your query regarding books on technical writing in English.
We have a large number of books on the subject you have queried about, both India and foreign editions. We would be quite happy to supply the books of your choice.
Please forward you e-mail address so that we may send the complete list to you without delay. We are attaching a hard copy of a shorter list with this letter for your perusal and kind consideration.
2 spaces
Sincerely yours, <i>[Complimentary close]</i>
4 spaces
Sheela Subramanyam <i>[Signature line]</i> Sales Manager
2 spaces
<i>[Enclosure, if any]</i>

- ii. **Semi-block format:** In this format, the dateline is either slightly right to centre or flush right. Address, salutation and end note are flush left. The first line of each paragraph is indented five spaces. The complimentary close and the signature space are aligned with the dateline.

Logo of the company

[Letterhead]

6-10 spaces

April 27, 2013 *[Dateline]*

2-4 spaces

Mr. Sampat Saxena *[Inside Address]*

Associate Professor

Humanities

JNTU

Hyderabad-500085.

2 spaces

Subject: List of Technical Books. *[Subject line]*

2 spaces

Dear Mr. Saxena, *[Salutation]*

2 spaces

[Main body below]

We are thankful to you for your query regarding books on technical writing in English.

We have a large number of books on the subject you have queried about, both India and foreign editions. We would be quite happy to supply the books of your choice.

Please forward you e-mail address so that we may send the complete list to you without delay. We are attaching a hard copy of a shorter list with this letter for your perusal and kind consideration.

2 spaces

[Complimentary close] Sincerely yours,

4 spaces

[Signature line] Sheela Subramanyam
Sales Manager

2 spaces

[Enclosure, if any]

- iii. **Full Block Justified:** In this format, everything is aligned flush left but the paragraphs are justified.

Logo of the company

[Letterhead]

6-10 spaces

April 27, 2013 *[Dateline]*

2-4 spaces

Mr. Sampat Saxena *[Inside Address]*

Associate Professor

Humanities

JNTU

Hyderabad-500085.

2 spaces

Subject: List of Technical Books. *[Subject line]*

2 spaces

Dear Mr. Saxena, *[Salutation]*

2 spaces

[Main body below]

We are thankful to you for your query regarding books on technical writing in English.

We have a large number of books on the subject you have queried about, both India and foreign editions. We would be quite happy to supply the books of your choice.

Please forward you e-mail address so that we may send the complete list to you without delay. We are attaching a hard copy of a shorter list with this letter for your perusal and kind consideration.

2 spaces

Sincerely yours, *[Complimentary close]*

4 spaces

Sheela Subramanyam *[Signature line]*

Sales Manager

2 spaces

[Enclosure, if any]

B. Types of Business Letters:

There are different types of business letters, which are as follows:

- i. Acknowledgement Letter**

This type of letter is written when you want to acknowledge someone for his/her help or support when you were in trouble or you required that person's monetary help or guidance for the completion of some task.
- ii. Letter of Recommendation**

This letter is written to recommend a person for a job position or admission in a higher degree or a specialized kind of study programme. The letter simply states the positive aspects of the applicant's personality, required skills and how he/she would be an asset to the organization.
- iii. Appreciation Letter**

We feel good when we are appreciated for our good work. Realising its importance, an appreciation letter is written to appreciate someone's work in the organization. This type of letter is written by a superior to his/her junior.
- iv. Acceptance Letter**

Although one will often accept a job offer in person, it is a good gesture and a wise practice to formalize it with a letter. Begin your acceptance letter by thanking whoever has sent you the job offer and then make it clear that you have decided to accept it.
- v. Apology Letter**

In the professional world, an apology letter is written for a failure in delivering the desired results. If the person has taken up a task and he/she fails to meet the target, then an apology is generally offered.
- vi. Complaint Letter**

A complaint letter is written to tell someone that an error has occurred and that needs to be corrected as soon as possible.
- vii. Adjustment Letter**

A letter that deals with a complaint and claim letter is termed as an adjustment letter.
- viii. Inquiry Letter**

A letter of inquiry is written to enquire about a product or service. at times, enquires are also written to find out the status of an order already placed.
- ix. Permission Letter**

They are widely used to send and receive messages of request, or to seek or grant permission for utilizing the resources, facilities or services. In the business world, you

may request the management to grant you the authority to do something or take decisions on authority's behalf.

x. Invitation Letter

A letter of invitation is sent by an individual or an organization to invite someone to attend an event. An invitation letter can be formal or personal.

xi. Rejection Letter

These letters are written for declining somebody's request. It could be declining a donation, turning down a request for some favour or facility or for denying a candidate a job offer.

xii. Order Letter

This letter can be used as a legal document to show the transaction between the customer and the vendor.

xiii. Application Letter

The letter of application is just like a sales letter in which you market your skills, abilities and knowledge. A cover letter is primarily a document of transmittal as it identifies that an item is being sent. It includes the information like the person to whom it is being sent and the reason for its being sent.

xiv. Sales Letters

Sales letters are the most interesting and unique in their approach and appeal. Sales letter are written to advertise and promote a product.

Exercise 2: My college fest JUNE-2019

(Divide the students into 8 groups. Each group is assigned a letter. Every member in a group will write a letter related to the assigned topic and also identify the type of letter.)

- Write a letter:
 1. To your college principal acknowledging their support for the college fest.
 2. To your fellow coordinators on their good & efficient work to make the fest a huge success.
 3. To the police inspector of your college locality seeking permission for night parties for 3 night & police protection for those respective nights.
 4. To all the students in your college, inviting them to the fest.
 5. To a local vendor ordering 1000 t-shirts & specify the details to be printed on the t-shirt.
 6. To the famous celebrity who is supposed to perform at the fest, enquiring about their payments and other particulars.
 7. Regarding the fest to the local social media pages, requesting them to help you with the sales of the tickets of all the events.
 8. Write a letter to industries, local media, city based firms and companies, requesting for sponsorship for the college fest.

3. MODEL LETTER OF APPLICATION (COVER LETTER) WITH RESUME:

Cover Letter: It is a one-page document that is sent along with your resume. It is a chance to tell a potential employer why you're the perfect person for the position and how your skills and expertise can add value to the company.

Do I need to send a cover letter?

- Even if an employer doesn't ask for a cover letter, it couldn't hurt to send one. In fact, it can help you get someone's attention in a different way, and it can be a great way to display your enthusiasm for the job and company.

Elements of a cover letter:

1. **Greeting:** Address your cover letter to the proper person.
2. **Opening:** Write a personable, inviting opening paragraph that notes how your skills are a perfect fit for the job and display your enthusiasm.
3. **Hook:** Highlight your past achievements as they relate to the job you're applying for.
4. **Skills:** Emphasize additional relevant skills, such as computer languages or certifications.
5. **Close:** Briefly recap your strengths as a candidate, and include your contact information.

Cover letter sample

Ms. Rhonda West
Customer Service Manager
Acme Inc.
123 Corporate Blvd.
Some town, CO 50802

Re: Customer Service Representative Opening

(Ref. ID: CS300-Denver)

Dear Ms. West.

I was excited to see your opening for a customer service rep, and I hope to be invited for an interview. My background includes serving as a customer service associate within both call-center and retail environments. Most recently, I worked on the customer service desk for Discount-Mart, where my responsibilities included handling customer merchandise returns, issuing refunds/store credits, flagging damaged merchandise for shipment back to vendors and providing back-up cashiering during busy periods.

Previously, I worked within two high-volume customer-support call centers for a major telecommunications carrier and a satellite television services provider. In these positions, I

demonstrated the ability to resolve a variety of issues and complaints (such as billing disputes, service interruptions or cut-offs, repair technician delays/no-shows and equipment malfunctions). I consistently met my call-volume goals, handling an average of 56 to 60 calls per day.

In addition to this experience, I gained considerable customer service skills during my part-time employment as a waitress and restaurant hostess while in high school.

I also bring to the table strong computer proficiencies in MS Word, MS Excel, and CRM database applications and a year of college (business major). Please see the accompanying resume for details of my experience and education.

I am confident that I can offer you the customer service, communication and problem-solving skills you are seeking. Feel free to call me at 555-555-5555 (home) or 555-555-5500 (cell) to arrange an interview. Thank you for your time—I look forward to learning more about this opportunity!

Sincerely,
Sue Ling

RESUME: A resume summarizes the most important information an employer needs to know when they consider a new hire. The job seeker's relevant qualifications, training, and work history are listed under easily understood resume headings such as "Summary of Qualifications," "Professional Experience," or "Education."

Preparing a good resume or curriculum vitae (CV) requires good imagination, creativity, ingenuity and consistent effort in keeping it updated comprehensive and effective.

A typical resume will include the following:

- 1. Contact information:** Job seeker's name, phone number and email.
- 2. Objective:** Relevant and impressive qualifications for the desired position, presented at the top of the page, directly under the contact information.
- 3. Education:** Here the latest/highest level of education should be mentioned first and then mention the rest of the levels in descending order.
- 4. Technical Skills:** Mention any technical skills that you have learnt over the years. (If possible, mention the certification). This can include programming languages, web technologies, operating systems, design tools, etc.
- 5. Project:** You can either mention the projects that you have completed or your current work. Also mention the details of the project.
- 6. Paper Presentation:** Provide brief details about the papers you have already presented (preferably, mention the ones that are already published).

7. **Workshops and Seminars attended:** List out all the workshops and seminars you have attended and give details about each of them. You can include either technical or co-curricular events.
8. **Awards and Achievements:** Make a list of all the awards you have received in a descending order. It can include the honours and labels you received over the years.
9. **Interests:** This part includes your hobbies and interests. Do not lie here either. If you do not have any specific hobby, just avoid mentioning it.
10. **Personal Details:** Mention your address, languages known to you and date of birth.

If appropriate for your field or job, you can also include topics under such headings as **Licenses, Professional Affiliations** and **Related Coursework**.

Need: Companies that require resumes will say so in their job postings, and those that don't will ask you to fill out an application. But it's also a good idea to have a typed resume to submit with the application form.

Purpose: The popular belief is that resumes land jobs. Not true. The resume's sole purpose is to land you an interview. If employers like what they see in your resume, they'll contact you to schedule an interview. During the interview, they'll evaluate how well your skills match the job requirements, and how well your personality fits with their team.

Types of Resume: There are many kinds of resume templates, these types offer you different ways to organize your details you want your employer to know.

- **Chronological:** With work history listed in reverse chronological order (a most recent position first, the oldest position last), this traditional type of resume focuses on titles and dates.
- **Functional:** This less-common format focuses on skills and accomplishments, rather than dates and titles. It divides your qualifications into functional categories, such as Administrative, Marketing, or Project Management.
- **Combination/Hybrid:** Featuring a mix of elements from both of the above resume types, this format is the most versatile for individual scenarios. Many feel this format gives hiring managers the best of both worlds
- **Hybrid/Combination:** This is the most common type of resume. Here, you list your skills and experience history first and work/employment history next.

Include in resume	Exclude in resume
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Details. • Career Objective or Summary. • Education. • Work Experience. • Additional Information. • References. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal details such as religion, age or family details. • Salary expectation or previous salaries you've received.

Sample Resume:

RAJESH B V
+91 9000 000 111
rajeshbv@xyz.com

OBJECTIVE:

Seeking an entry level position to utilize and enhance my skills and abilities in computer programming to develop innovative and inventive software solutions.

EDUCATION:

Qualification	Institution	University/Board	Year of passing	Percentage
Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science)	ABC College of Engineering, Bangalore	VTU	2018	70% (till 7 th Sem)
Class 12 th	XYZ PU College, Mysore	Karnataka PU Board	2014	91%
Class 10 th	New Cambridge High School, Bangalore	KSEEB	2012	93%

TECHNICAL SKILLS:

- Programming Languages : C, C++ and Basics of Java
- Packages : MS Office
- Database : Oracle and MySQL
- Operating System : Windows XP, Linux and UNIX
- Web Technologies : JSP, CSS
- Design Tools : MATLAB, PSpice, Auto CAD, MASM

PROJECT:

Title : **Distributed File Sharing System**
Company : Microsoft India Development Center, Bangalore
Description : Distributed File Sharing System aims at-----
features / functionalities -----uses.

PAPER PRESENTATION:

- Presented a paper on “**Application of Robotics**” at Techfest 2017 conducted by RV College of Engineering, Bangalore

WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS ATTENDED:

- Attended a workshop on “Android and its applications” conducted by Google India in the month of July 2016
- Attended a seminar on “Future of Robotics” conducted by Engineers Institute, Bangalore chapter in the month of June 2017

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Recipient of the Governor’s Award in 2014; conferred by His Excellency Shri H R Bhardwaj, the then Governor of Karnataka
- Represented Karnataka state in Athletics and Table Tennis events
- Winner of prizes in quiz competitions and other extra-curricular activities conducted by various institutions

INTERESTS:

- Reading
- An avid interest in cricket
- Quizzing

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Permanent Address : Door No.822,
14th Main, 3rd Block,
Rajajinagar,
Bangalore-560010

Languages known : English, Kannada and Hindi

Date of Birth : 16th June 1996

Exercise 3:

1. Write your resume. Include personal details, education, technical knowledge, projects and assignments, internships, awards and achievements and extracurricular activities.
2. Attach a cover letter with your resume.

4. EMAIL AND BLOG WRITING:

EMAIL WRITING:

In the information age, email has become the dominant form of communication. Being able to write a polished, professional email is now a critical skill both in college and the workplace. Below are some key distinctions between formal and informal writing, as well as some guidelines to follow when composing a formal email to a superior (professor, current or prospective employer, etc.) or someone who does not know you.

Reasons for popularity:

- Emails are fast, cheap, easy to operate.
- Emails capture the spirit of the age.
- Emails offer flexibility in tone and style.
- Emails have become legal and valid.

Guiding principles for composition:

- Avoid being abrupt
- Use subject lines effectively
- Start courteously
- Add a warm-up sentence
- Avoid all capital letters
- Use proper spellings
- Avoid acronyms
- Use emoticons and smileys sparingly
- Take care of punctuation marks
- Use salutations and complimentary close
- Identify yourself

Maintaining common etiquette:

- Reply immediately
- Avoid circulating emails to everyone
- Avoid attaching unnecessary files
- Answer all queries
- Avoid sexist language
- Be aware of email jargon
- Keep your mail box uncluttered
- Read and edit your mails

Email Format:

Just like there are formats to write a letter, report, resume etc., there is a format that has to be followed to write an email.

Structure of the mail:

a. Sender:

To,Cc,Bcc:

- To: Use this when you need any action (response) from the person.
- Cc: This is used when a person is just a part of the mail, as in when he/she has to be informed.
- Bcc: When the mail is to a selected audience, use this to add them.

b. Subject: In brief, mention the topic the email holds.

- c. **Salutation:** The salutation of a formal email is similar to the salutation of a letter. When writing to someone you do not know by name, you put “To Whom it May Concern.” When applying for a job, you would address the person by, “Dear Hiring Manager.” If you do know the recipient’s name, you put “Dear Mr/Ms. Smith.” For a formal salutation, you should not use the recipient’s first name or the informal greetings “Hello” or “Hey.”

Some common salutations:

- Dear Dr...
- Dear Mr/Mrs...
- Dear Ms...
- Dear Sir/Madam
- Dear Colleagues
- Dear Friends
- Dear Customer
- Dear Reader
- My Dear...

- d. **Body Paragraphs:** It is important to remember that an email needs to be concise. The first sentence, known as the opening sentence, can be a greeting if the situation allows it.

- I hope all is well with you.
- Thank you for your prompt response.

However, for most formal emails it is best to get straight to the point. Depending on the subject, you should have a maximum of four paragraphs and each paragraph should contain a single point. It is also important to provide questions in order to prompt a response. At the end of your last paragraph, you should provide a “thank you” or “call to action” depending on the subject of your email.

- Thank you for your assistance with...
- Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you.
- Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions.
- I would appreciate it if this could be taken care of promptly.

e. **Closing:**

Like the salutation, the closing of a formal email can be the same as the closing to a letter. However, unlike the salutation, there are more options for a closing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you • Best regards • Sincerely • Yours • Look forward to receiving a mail soon • Soliciting an early reply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With warm regards • With love • With best wishes • Thanks and regards • Feel free to call anytime • Your enquiries are always welcome
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The closing is then followed by your full name. It is also beneficial to add your job position (if applicable) and phone number under your name.

Effective Email Writing:

Make it easy for your reader to read, understand, and take action on your message.

Consider these while writing an email - Subject line, length, tone of voice, language choices and format.

Email Etiquette:

General format: Basics: Be sure to include the following

- Proper subject line
- Greetings
- Introduction (if necessary)
- Request
- Thank you/ closing remark
- Signature

Dos and Don'ts of an email:

<u>Dos</u>	<u>Don'ts</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use proper written, not spoken, language• Be thoughtful and respectful in what you write• Choose your words carefully• Use proper grammar and sentence structure• Spell check your email• Remember that direct language can sound harsher in email than in person• Read your email before sending it and rephrase it if necessary• Try to keep your line length at 80 character or less. If the message is likely to be forwarded keep it to 60 character or less• If you're writing the directions or want to emphasis important points, number your directions or bullet your main point• Write in a positive tone• When you are sending an attachment tell your respondent what the name of the file is and what program it is saved in and the version of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make demands• Expect or demand an immediate response• Avoid negative words that begins with "un, non and ex" or that end with "less"• Emails are normally not private. So do not be informal while writing the email• Humor can be hard to understand and relate to. Hence avoid it as it can also be taken to be offensive• Expect an prompt reply• Avoid using abbreviations and emoticons• Use capital or bold letters unless you want to highlight something important• Send a large attachment. Send a link instead• Assume the recipient knows what you are talking about. Hence don't send one-liners.• Overuse exclamation points• Email continuously about the same topic. Give it some time and wait for the reply.

Note: Emails are the most important part of your professional life. Always make sure that your emails are formal, whosoever it is being addressed to. Also, always send a positive reply and never be aggressive.

Exercise 4:

State whether the sentence would be classified as either formal or informal. If informal, change it to formal.

Example: Hi' all!

➤ Informal; To Whom it May Concern.

1. I am pleased to inform you that you have won our grand prize.
2. I hope all is well with your new career choice.
3. I shouldn't have gone and messed with it!!
4. I can't help you with that because it's too hard.
5. Hi Mr. Smith, how are you?

Exercise 5:

Find and correct the errors in the following emails:

a.

Hello Professor Smith,

I'm sorry to tell you but I'm sick and will not be able to come to class. See ya on Wednesday.

Jason

b.

Dear Sally Blue,

I read online that you're selling business cards. I was wondering how much if I only wanted 500? Is color and a logo extra? Can I see an example before all are shipped or will that cost extra? You seem to have a great business so I hope you can help.

Thanks,

Jess Higgins

c.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a graduate of Menlo College. I got a degree in business and would now like to use it. Your company looks interesting. Can I come in for an interview? I have a lot of experience from my schooling and extracurriculars. I think I can help the company a lot. Please respond to my email to let me know.

Thanks,

Max Oates

BLOG WRITING:

The word "blog" a contraction of "web log," is an informational web page that consists of discrete units called "post." It is a very popular platform for expressing some ideas, views and opinions. The blog post is often shorter and less formal than other types of writing.

Blogs can be personal, artistic, academic, or professional. It is a unique form of online publishing that creates opportunities for producing knowledge, sharing research, building social networks, developing professionally, or documenting personal growth.

Composing a post: You want your blog to invite readers in and keep them coming back for updates. Great blogs are vibrant and visually interesting, but they are thoughtful and purposeful. Every post matter's for generating and holding attention.

Consider the following principles when composing:

- **Make a point:** While posts do not require a formal thesis or claim, it is important to have an argument, opinion, or purpose in mind when you compose.
- **Be concise:** Use precise language and coherent syntax to make your posts easy to read.
- **Post often:** Blogs should be updated regularly to hold readers' interest. Actively generate new and interesting content on a daily or weekly schedule.
- **Consider inviting guest bloggers:** to appeal to diverse readers, broaden your blog's scope, or refresh your own perspective on the project.
- **Proofread:** Careless mistakes and errors can distract readers and make you appear less credible as a writer.
- **Create visual interest:** Consider which aspects of your content would pair well with visual elements such as photographs, figures, or videos. Break up large chunks of text with visual elements to make your blog more readable.

Using Multimedia: Audio and visual interest helps to grab a reader's attention. Blogs give writers the opportunity to use design, images, audio, and video to supplement their writing. Take advantage of these innovative ways to enhance your presentation.

Here are some guidelines to have in mind when you choose your blog's multimedia elements:

- **Use appropriate content:** size, and quality. Make sure your chosen images complement the layout of your text visually. Images should be easy to see without obstructing the text of a post. Choose the highest possible quality image while also making sure it is easy to load. You don't want your readers squinting at blurry pixels, but you don't want them to wait 10 seconds for something to load, either.
- **When linking to an online video:** consider using a screenshot from that video as your hyperlink. A screenshot can make a reader more likely to click on a link. It can provide a visual preview, as well as demonstrate the clip's relevance to your post.
- **Attribute your sources:** Like ideas, images and videos are someone else's intellectual property. Whenever possible, provide captions for the reader. Even a simple caption – (Image courtesy of msnbc.com) – will help readers identify the object's origins.
- **Using Hyperlinks:** Hyperlinks are an important part of blogging and can really increase your credibility. They create a sense of conversation, act like citations in more informal circumstances, and demonstrate that you are engaged with other people's work.

Tips to Maintain a Successful Blog:

- Make post titles eye-catching but also reasonably accurate.
- Consider using the tag function in each post. This will help guide readers through your content thematically instead of chronologically. Keep tags consistent, including punctuation. For example, "tshirt" and "t-shirt" would be regarded as two different tags because of the hyphen.

- If your hosting platform allows, link to similar blogs in order to increase your traffic.
- Unlike other writing contexts, you may find it difficult to identify your audience when you are composing blog posts. If your blog is public, you could have a large, diverse, and even global readership. Be aware that you are potentially addressing people with very different knowledge bases and cultural assumptions than yours.
- Handle comments with care. As the blog's creator, the way you handle dissenting or inflammatory voices sets the tone for your readers. Consider adjusting your platform's comment settings if you need to regulate the conversation. For instance, requiring minimum identification to post a comment can address the problem of inappropriate posts by increasing a writer's accountability.

Exercise 6:

Write a blog on any one of these topics:

- Share a recipe that you enjoy eating or making. Spice up your post with a photo of the end result.
- Create an A-Z of yourself or one of your interests (e.g. an A-Z of basketball or gardening).
- Describe what your perfect classroom would look like. Use your imagination; it could be indoors, outdoors, in a school, or somewhere else!
- If you had three wishes, what would they be?

www.vtuloop.com

5. READING COMPREHENSION:

Introduction

Reading comprehension is one of the most commonly assessed skills in many a reputed test meant to select people for further studies or professional positions.

Understanding the author's point of view

While approaching a passage, it is also important for us to identify its nature. Broadly speaking, the passages can be information based or point-of-view based. There are passages in which the author intends to inform the reader about some phenomenon. In such passages, the author does not really have a point of view to prove. In other types of passages, however, he/she may have an opinion or an argument to establish.

Understanding the author's opinion helps you answer various point-of-view based questions worded in different ways such as:

- i. The author's primary purpose in this passage is to...
- ii. With which of the following statements would the author of the passage be most likely to agree?
- iii. The author's argument would be most weakened by the discovery of which of the following?
- iv. Which of the following examples could best be substituted for the author's example of...
- v. The author's tone is best described as...
- vi. The author views his subject with...
- vii. The author's presentation is best characterized as...

Therefore, understanding the author's point of view really helps in understanding a given passage.

Identifying the central idea

All passages have a central or main idea which becomes very important for us to understand. It is so because out of the questions asked in a reading comprehension exercise, most of these relate to the central idea of the passage. Therefore, attempting a passage without knowing with whom or for what it is being fought.

- i. The passage is primarily concerned with...
- ii. Which of the following statements best expresses the main idea of the passage?
- iii. The author's primary purpose in this passage is to...
- iv. The author in the passage implies that...
- v. It can be inferred from the passage that...
- vi. With which of the following statements would the author of the passage be most likely to agree?
- vii. The author's argument would be most weakened by the discovery of which of the following?
- viii. Which of the following examples could best be substituted for the author's example of...?
- ix. Which of the following statements best summarizes the main idea of the passage?

Tips for identifying the central idea:

- Never read a passage in a laid-back manner.
- A passage-particularly a longer one-is often divided into several paragraphs.
- Carefully read the beginning of each paragraph.
- Also carefully follow the ending of each paragraph.
- Predicting and anticipating certain views.
- Paying careful attention to each of the linkers.
- Thinking about a suitable title for the passage.

Employing discourse analysis:

- Style:** Writers tend to structure their texts in a particular style or at times mix a couple of them together while writing. Some of the basic styles of writing are informative, descriptive, analytical, narrative and abstract.
- Tone:** Just as writing in a particular style helps an author structure his/her ideas appropriately, choosing to write in a particular tone helps him/her express his/her perspective or point of view.
- Symbols, imagery and figure of speech:** A literary passage abounds in figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, litotes, synecdoche, metonymy, onomatopoeia, and so on and so forth. Epigrammatic expressions, paradoxes, oxymoronic phrases, symbols and imagery are quite frequently employed by authors even while discussing common, everyday affairs.

Exercise 7:

Read each of the following passages carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1:

What distinguishes humans from animals? For some it is language, for others it is the altruistic willingness to help other members of the species. However, this kind of altruism seems to exist in the animal world as well.

Researchers working with Crisophe Boesch at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig observed that West African chimpanzees adopt orphaned young, even though they are not related to them. Several animals lavished care on a juvenile for several years. Surprisingly, half of these adoptive parents were male.

This behaviour is thought to be encouraged by the pressure of leopards, with whom the West African chimpanzees share their habitat. The constant threat from the big cats seems to have encouraged cohesion and solidarity within the group. Accordingly, the scientists observed more chimpanzee adoptions in West Africa's Tai National Park than in East Africa.

Wild chimpanzees appear to be more prepared to help than those living in captivity. In zoos, chimpanzees cooperate with other members of the group to only a very limited extent. 'Our observations show that altruism in wild chimpanzees is much more widespread than studies of chimpanzees in zoos would suggest', concludes Crisophe Boesch.

- i. Which of the following does the author want to establish by suggesting that animals are altruistic?
 - a) That humans are beginning to behave like animals.
 - b) That animals are beginning to behave like animals.
 - c) That animal too, like human, share empathy with fellow creatures.
 - d) That humans are not so empathetic to their fellow creatures as animals are.

- ii. While discovering the adoptive streak in animals, what surprises the author is that
 - a) Even chimpanzees adopt orphan juveniles of big cats.
 - b) Even male chimpanzees adopt juveniles of other species.
 - c) Even big cats adopt orphan juveniles of chimpanzees.
 - d) Even female chimpanzees adopt juveniles of other species.

- iii. About the recently discovered altruistic zeal in chimpanzees, all expect the following be inferred from the passage.
 - a) Chimpanzees living in the wild are more altruistic than those on cages.
 - b) Chimpanzees adopt orphans that are even unrelated to them.
 - c) Chimpanzees found in West African forests are more altruistic than those found anywhere else.
 - d) Chimpanzees found in the Tai National Park in West Africa are observed to be more altruistic than those found in East Africa.

- iv. Which of the following is not a reason for the altruistic behaviour observed in West African Chimpanzees?
 - a) The presence of a constant threat from leopards in their environment.
 - b) The presence of a natural altruistic willingness to help others.
 - c) The presence of a natural sense of competition in animals.
 - d) The presence of a natural environment that stimulates such a behaviour in them.

- v. In the expression ‘this behaviour is thought to be encouraged...’, the word ‘this refers to which of the following.’
 - a) That chimpanzees are not much distinguished from humans.
 - b) That chimpanzees exhibit a sense of altruism existing in them.
 - c) That chimpanzees do not behave as strictly according to their gender as humans do
 - d) That sexual limitations do not stop a male chimpanzee from being altruistic and adoptive in behaviour.

Passage 2:

Marie was born in 1867 in Warsaw, Poland, where her father was a Professor of Physics. At an early age, she displayed a brilliant mind and a blithe personality. Her great exuberance for learning prompted her to continue with her studies after high school. She became disgruntled, however, when she learned that the university in Warsaw was closed to women. Determined to

receive a higher education, she defiantly left Poland and in 1891 entered the Sorbonne, a French university, where she earned her master's degree and doctorate in physics.

Marie was fortunate to have studied at the Sorbonne with some of the greatest scientists of her day, one of whom was Pierre Curie. Marie and Pierre were married in 1895 and spent many productive years working together in the physics laboratory. A short time after they discovered radium, Pierre was killed by a horse-drawn wagon in 1906. Marie was stunned by this horrible misfortune and endured heartbreaking anguish. Despondently she recalled their close relationship and the joy that they had shared in scientific research. The fact that she had two young daughters to raise by herself greatly increased her distress.

Curie's feeling of desolation finally began to fade when she was asked to succeed her husband as a physics professor at the Sorbonne. She was the first woman to be given a professorship at the world-famous university. In 1911 she received the Nobel Prize in chemistry for isolating radium. Although Marie Curie eventually suffered a fatal illness from her long exposure to radium, she never became disillusioned about her work. Regardless of the consequences, she had dedicated herself to science and to revealing the mysteries of the physical world.

- i. Marie had a bright mind and a _____ personality.
(a) Strong (b) lighthearted (c) Humorous (d) Strange
- ii. When she learned that she could not attend the university in Warsaw, she felt _____.
(a) Hopeless (b) Annoyed (c) Depressed (d) Worried
- iii. Marie _____ by leaving Poland and travelling to France to enter the Sorbonne.
(a) Challenged authority (b) Showed intelligence
(c) Behaved (d) Was distressed
- iv. _____ she remembered their joy together.
(a) Dejectedly (b) Worried (c) Tearfully (d) Happily
- v. Her _____ began to fade when she returned to the Sorbonne to succeed her husband.
(a) Misfortune (b) Anger (c) Wretchedness (d) Disappointment
- vi. Even though she became fatally ill from working with radium, Marie Curie was never _____.
(a) Troubled (b) Worried (c) Disappointed (d) Sorrowful

Passage 3:

"I Have a Dream" is a public speech delivered by American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, in which he calls for an end to racism in the United States and called for civil and economic rights. Delivered to over 250,000 civil rights supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the speech was a defining moment of the civil rights movement.

Beginning with a reference to the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed millions of slaves in 1863, King observes that: "one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free". Toward the end of the speech, King departed from his prepared text for a partly improvised peroration on the theme "I have a dream", prompted by Mahalia Jackson's cry: "Tell them about the dream, Martin!" In this part of the speech, which most excited the listeners and has now become its most famous, King described his dreams of freedom and equality arising from a land of slavery and hatred. Jon Meacham writes that, "With a single phrase, Martin Luther King Jr. joined Jefferson and Lincoln in the ranks of men who've shaped modern America". The speech was ranked the top American speech of the 20th century in a 1999 poll of scholars of public address.

- i. What issues does Martin Luther King's speech address?
 - a) Continuation of racism
 - b) End to racism and civil and economic rights
 - c) Civil rights
 - d) Civil War

- ii. What pushes King to speak: "I have a dream"?
 - a) He reads out the Emancipation Proclamation
 - b) He is prompted by Mahalia Jackson
 - c) He is overwhelmed by the crowd
 - d) Lincoln had asked him to give the speech

- iii. From the last paragraph, give one word for "to leave"
 - a) Departed
 - b) Proclamation
 - c) Improvised
 - d) Address

- iv. What is the name of Martin Luther King's famed speech?
 - a) The Emancipation Proclamation
 - b) An Improvisation
 - c) A Peroration
 - d) I Have a Dream

- v. In front of whom does King speak?
 - a) The civil rights supporters
 - b) His friends
 - c) Lincoln
 - d) The Negroes