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# UNIT 6 FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH STYLE

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## 6.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- understand functional English style;
- explain the concept of functional style;
- set guidelines for the discussion of writing;
- provide adequate information for the preparation of a composition;
- view functional English style in terms of diction, syntax and expressive devices; and
- define terms to enable the non-specialist to understand them.

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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Language is an essential and a powerful medium of communication. It is but natural that scholars have tried to study its structure and function. In its most general sense, the term structure applies to the main abstract characteristics of language. Language has a structure in the sense that it is a network of interrelated units, the meaning of the parts being specifiable only to the whole. On the other hand, the term function refers to the role language plays in the context of society and the individual. Language functions to communicate ideas, express attitudes and identify certain socio-linguistic situations such as formal, informal or colloquial.

Language style becomes functional when in addition to denotative meaning it gives additional information about geographical, ethnic and social background of the language user. A widely recognized feature of linguistic identity is the regional variety of language. Thus, from the use of English one can recognise Americans, Britishers, Indians, etc. Languages as well as dialects convey geographical information about their speakers. A language is but a dialect that has become socially prestigious. Following Trudgill (1983) a correlation between dialect, social class and regional variation can be represented (Figure 1):

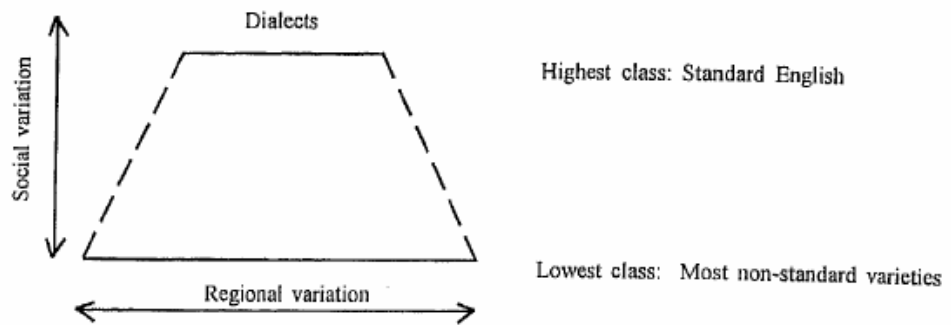


Figure 1 : Social Class and Regional Variation

Figure 1 intends to locate a speaker socially as well as geographically. At the top are people of the highest social class who speak the standard dialect with very little regional variation. Further down the class scale, we encounter more regional accent and dialect variation. At the lowest level we encounter the widest range of dialects and language varieties.

Many features of functional language correlate directly with the characteristics of the context, or situation, in which a communicative event takes place. Classifications vary but most approaches recognize the central role played by the following:

- 1) **Setting** : Language is shaped by time and place in which the communication act takes place, e.g. informal language is the talk amongst friends, and formal language in a lecture talk, etc.
- 2) **Participants** : Language is also shaped by the relationship existing between participants. Informal language would mark the discourse between friends, while formal structures would be used between, say, a student and his examiner, etc.
- 3) **Activity** : Language is also shaped by the kind of activity in which a participant is engaged in, e.g. intimate while talking to a close friend, and formal while developing an argument in a public debate, etc.

Roman Jakobson (1960) has highlighted six functions of language corresponding to the six factors in a communication situation. The focus on the *addresser* constitutes the *emotive* function; the focus on the *addressee*, *context*, *contact*, *code* and *message* constitutes the *cognitive*, *referential*, *phatic*, *metalingual* and *poetic functions* respectively. The emotive function is expressive of a speaker's attitudes or feelings; the cognitive function influences the feelings or attitudes of the addressee; the referential function provides the external situation in which the message occurs; the metalingual function occurs when one talks about the code itself, the poetic function serves to maintain a rapport between the speakers; and the poetic function can be visualised in the novel expressions which are unique and singular. Each dominant function of language brings about different language structures.

Since the aim of this lesson is to highlight functional English style in its written form, it would, therefore, be quite fitting to point out features which are central to the written style as opposed to the oral or spoken style.

Writing and speech are seen as alternative systems of linguistic expression. Most obviously, they contrast in physical form i.e., speech uses 'phonic' substance in the form of air-pressure movements, while writing uses 'graphic' substance, typically in the form of marks on a surface. But of far greater interest are the differences in the structure and function of the two styles.

The differences of structure and usages between spoken and written language are inevitable because they are the products of different kinds of communication situations. Speech is time-bound, dynamic and transient - part of an interaction between the speakers. Writing, on the other hand, is space-bound, static and



permanent - the result of a situation in which generally the producer of the message is distant from the recipient - and, often, may not even know the recipient. The points of contrast between the two styles can be highlighted

as below:

- (i) The permanence of writing allows repeated reading and close analysis. It promotes careful organisation and more compact and intricately organised structures. Units of discourse, such as sentences and paragraphs, are clearly identified through graphic layout and punctuations. In contrast, the spontaneity and rapidity of speech minimizes the chance of complex preplanning and hence promotes looser constructions, repetition, rephrasing and filler phrases (such as *you know, you see, well, etc.*) and the use of information and pause to divide utterances into manageable units.
- (ii) The participants in written interaction cannot usually see each other, hence they do not rely on the context for clarity of meanings as they would when speaking. Thus contexts are inbuilt in the writing, and ambiguity and vagueness are minimised by reducing the use of deictic expressions such as *this one, here, there, etc.*
- (iii) Written language displays many unique features such as punctuation, capitalisation, spatial organisation, and even colour and graphic effects. While question marks can be expressed by a rising intonation, exclamation marks or underlinings by increased loudness etc, most graphic features, even in the form of graphs etc, do not have an equivalent in the spoken style.
- (iv) Many grammatical and lexical forms frequently occur in written style such as relativisation and technical terms, etc. On the other hand certain slang and obscene expressions, though generally found in speech, are not normally found in written language.
- (v) Written language tends to be more formal than spoken language and is more likely to provide the standard variety. Because of its quality of permanence it has a special status for all treaties, contracts, agreements and scholarly treatises.

Having viewed the differences between written and spoken style, in the remaining part we shall focus on the functional English style of written compositions. We shall be dividing the discussion under four broad headings, namely:

- 1) Writing Process
- 2) Writing Paragraphs
- 3) Forms of Discourse
- 4) Rhetoric of Language

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## 6.2 WRITING PROCESS

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Writing is an important means of communication. It is in fact a complex form of behaviour which involves the mind, senses, feelings and the hands of the writer. In writing one must have something to say, a point to begin and a point to end, words to express thoughts and feelings, a tone to indicate nuances beyond words and certain punctuations to module the sentences and make the meanings clear. Showing improvement in writing, subsequently, is a matter of gaining self-confidence and of becoming more conscious of the ways to vary expression and to control language.

The writing process involves the following steps: Selection of Topic,

- Limiting the Topic,
- Thesis Statement,
- Developing the Form of the Thesis.

### 6.2.1 Selection of Topic

A composition must be on a topic. If a topic is not given it has to be selected. The selection would depend upon your interest, knowledge and experience. At first you could select a broad topic in tune with your liking and knowledge of the subject. The broad topic may be a selection out of a still larger list, which could consist of topics listed below:

Sports	Music
Libraries	Parents
Driving	Consumer goods



Advertising    Politics  
Engines        Marriage, etc.

You may, for instance, choose to write on the broad topic 'Politics'.

### 6.2.2 Limiting of Topic

Limiting a topic involves a process of selection and exclusion. The first step is to determine the aspects of a general topic that one selects. Next, you have to decide about what you want to say about the topic. You must divide your broad topic into aspects, then select one and limit it to fit your information, your attitude, and the space available to you.

After your choice of the broad subject i.e., 'Politics', you must determine what particular area of politics interests you and what you think about it. Since you cannot cover the whole field there is a need to delimit the topic. This could involve a consideration of the following, type of aspects of politics:

- Domestic politics
- International politics
- Two - party system
- Women in politics
- Voter's responsibility
- Political compromise

Depending on your knowledge and experience, suppose you select 'political compromise' You may, then, like to delimit it still further by considering some more sub-aspects is political compromise like :

- International politics
- State politics
- City politics
- Campus politics

May be campus politics interests you more and you may select it as a topic. This topic could be further delimited by making a list of possible approaches to this aspect, probably as given below:

- Political compromise between student representatives and college administration,
- Political compromise between campus candidates,
- Students' inability to use political compromise,
- Destructive force of campus political compromise,
- Positive force of campus political compromise, etc.

May be, you select 'Political compromise between student representatives and college administration' as your topic depending upon your interest and knowledge of the subject

### 6.2.3 Thesis Statement

Having selected the topic you can now write a thesis statement - a statement containing the controlling idea or the focus of your paper/composition. After having studied the conflicting views expressed by others, you probably would have an opinion which could be in the form of a thesis statement:

Various student groups at the college have been unable to use political compromise to make any significant changes in the college's administrative policies because student spokesmen are often unreasonable in their demands, too impatient in negotiating their terms, and too emotional in presenting views. (Flanigan 1974:10)

The emerging view is that though you sympathise with the aims of the student representatives, you do not see any success in their methods. Thus, you have something to write about. The unifying element within the thesis statement is the focus of the area of support, and, say, you have found out three major areas of support:

**Unifying Element**

Various student groups at the college have been unable to use political compromise to make any significant changes in the college's administrative policies ....

**Areas of Support**

... because student spokesmen are often

- I. unreasonable in their demands, ....
- II. too impatient in negotiating their terms ....
- III. too emotional in presenting their views.

**6.2.4 Developing the Form of the Thesis**

Having decided what you plan to support and having determined the kind of support, you can consider the organisation of the essay.

It could be as follows:

**Title**

- |                                        |   |                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Content of introductory paragraph   | : | Something to interest the reader.                                                                                                           |
|                                        | - | Special information that provides necessary background, and indicates the question or the problem.                                          |
|                                        | - | Thesis statement.                                                                                                                           |
| 2. First major area of support         | - | First paragraph of development.                                                                                                             |
| 3. Second major area of support        | - | Second paragraph of development.                                                                                                            |
| 4. Third major area of support         | - | Third paragraph of development                                                                                                              |
| 5. Content of the concluding paragraph | - | Generally, an effective summing up of the major areas that support the essay and related focus producing a note of conviction and finality. |

This skeletal form could then be filled as below, forming thus the outline of the composition:

1. Title : Political compromises in the college
2. Introduction : *Thesis* : Various student groups .... presenting their views (see Section 6.2.3 for *Thesis Statement*)
3. Area I : I Student spokesmen are often unreasonable in their demands. They demand
  - A) elimination of any prohibition on the nature of student programmes,
  - B) elimination of cost as a factor in selecting programmes, and
  - C) removal of administrator from the programme selection committee.
4. Area II : II Student spokesmen are often too impatient in negotiating their terms. They want
  - A) tabling of items without any further consideration and discussion, and
  - B) no delay in the enactment of the concessions.
5. Area III : III Student spokesmen are often too emotional in presenting their views.
  - A) They become indignant when asked to supply details regarding past incidents and recent proposals.
  - B) They interrupt and refuse to hear others
  - C) They bring up irrelevant matters.
6. Conclusion : Generally the thesis is restated in other words.

The above text becomes the outline of the composition which can be elaborated with facts. Each point can be further developed. This Unit makes you aware of the processes involved in compositions, but the detailed writing of the composition is left to you.

**Self Check Exercise**

- 1) What are the steps involved in the writing process?
- 2) Write down the form of the composition of the selected topic.

**Note:**

- i) Write your answers in the space given below.
- ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

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**6.3 WRITING PARAGRAPHS**

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Now that you are aware of the overall writing process from restrictions of broad topic to outlining the composition - we can now look at the largest unit of a composition, i.e., the paragraph.

Paragraph is a way to divide continuous discourse into units of convenient segments to make it meaningful and readable. A paragraph cannot be defined as a grammatical unit like a sentence, because it can vary in size, shape and functions. Emphasis, therefore, has to be on what paragraph does rather than what it is.

Paragraphing practices vary greatly. They may be visual devices, as newspapers use them; they may be logical divisions, each division expanding on one point in some depth; and they may also be rhetorical units, as individual writers may use them for special effects. However, in all these uses the paragraph represents a relatively short unit of varying length that divides the discourse for purposes of readability and better understanding.

Generally, there are four kinds of paragraphs: introductory, developmental, transitional and concluding. Let us briefly look at each of these.

**6.3.1 Introductory**

A well-written introductory paragraph helps arrest reader's attention. It also helps in establishing the tone and the subject and its limitations. It also states briefly the precise thesis. In this paragraph there is no place for dull and hackneyed statements, etc.



The introductory paragraphs can use devices to varying degree, devices which could be, among others, say, statistical, rhetorical, illustrative, etc. See the examples below:

- 1) *Statistical* : According to the C.B.I., abduction is one of the least reported crimes. The bureau estimates that five times more crime occurs than is reported. In 1991 about ten thousand cases were reported .....
- 2) *Rhetorical* : What chance do you have of escaping the criminal element in our society?
- 3) *Illustrative* : A few weeks ago, two men were walking along the street of a large city singing exuberantly. A man, holding his ears and having an anguished expression on his face, asked them to stop. One of them handed him a ten dollar bill. Somewhat surprised, he thanked him and asked them to go on singing. As a matter of fact he followed them no longer holding his ears! This incident suggests the soothing power of money.

### 6.3.2 Developmental Paragraphs

The developmental paragraphs are the most important ones in a composition. They provide the support for your thesis. The paragraphs of development must support the stated or implied thesis statement, and the material within it must support one controlling idea. A well written developmental paragraph has the following characteristics:

- 1) It has a stated or implied *topic sentence* suggesting the controlling idea of the paragraph
- 2) It has *unity*, a single dominant idea.
- 3) It has *coherence*, the paragraph's sentences are connected in such a way that the supporting material flows smoothly and logically, contributing to the unity of the paragraph.
- 4) It has *logical organisation* and adequate development of the supporting material to give an understanding of the controlling idea.
- 5) It often has a *concluding statement*, repeating the controlling idea of the paragraph, and adding emphasis and finality to it.

It can be seen from figure 2 that the paragraph and the composition have a similar basic structure.

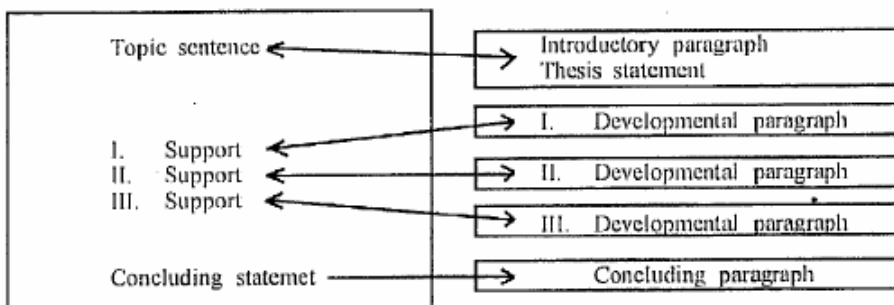


Figure 2 : Similarity in Basic Structure of Paragraph and Composition

#### a) Writing Topic Sentences

The topic sentence depends on the already written thesis for the controlling idea of the developmental paragraph. The topic sentence has the following characteristics:

- 1) It supports the thesis
- 2) It has only one controlling idea embedded in the sentence
- 3) It gives the central idea of the paragraph
- 4) Usually it occurs in the beginning of the paragraph with the support following:

Let us return to the composition. 'Political compromises in the college'. In its Development paragraph I the controlling sentence could be:



“Student spokesmen are often unreasonable in their demands”. The statement draws itself from the thesis statement and will also have supportive arguments as shown earlier in Section 6.2.4.

**b) Unity in the Paragraph**

It means unity of thought and no digression from the topic. This would be possible only if you develop one dominant idea about the topic. Let us look at a probable Development paragraph 1 of the composition ‘Political compromises in the college’: Student spokesmen are often unreasonable in their demands. They make demands which are difficult to be met by any responsible administration. Let us look at three of their demands. First, they demand the elimination of any prohibition on the nature of student programmes. *If* there is no prohibition then programmes of the kind can also take place without any check. Second, they demand the elimination of cost as a factor in selecting programmes. If this demand is conceded then there will be budgetary problems and the student programmes will become lopsided. And, third, they demand that the administrators remove themselves from the programme selection committee. Surely this would lead to anarchy and marginalisation of the administration. All the above demands go on to show that what students want is complete control of the college's finances, and of its social, moral and academic atmosphere. These are unreasonable demands and are virtually impossible to be conceded. (Flanigan 1974 : 17).

The above paragraph reveals the development of a single idea, that is, concerning the unreasonableness of the demand of the student's representatives, and this line of development, without any digressions, provides the paragraph its unity.

**c) Coherence in the Paragraph**

A paragraph reads smoothly if it is coherent. There should be a clear relation between sentences. This involves the idea of connectedness across sentences. Coherence is the way sentences in a paragraph, or even the way paragraphs in an entire composition, get linked together. The linguistic elements that perform the function of linkage are said to be the means or feature of coherence. The generally recognisable features of coherence are transitional words and phrases, anaphoric relations, and rhetorical strategies consisting of elements such as repetition, parallel structure, question and answer, contrast, etc.

**d) Transitional Words and Phrases**

These are the devices of coherence which indicate relationships by direct linkage and by signaling the direction in which the thought is moving. In the paragraph below the connecting links have been underlined:

I believe that the disestablishment of the school has become inevitable and that this end of an illusion should fill us with hope. *But* I also believe that the end of the "age of schooling" could usher in the epoch of the global schoolhouse that would be distinguishable only in name from a global warehouse or global prison in which education, correction and adjustment become synonymous. *i therefore* believe that the breakdown of the school forces us to look beyond its imminent demise and to face fundamental alternatives in education. *Either* we can work for fearsome and potent new educational devices that teach about a world which progressively becomes more and forbidding for man, *or* we can set the conditions for a new era in which technology would be used to make society more simple and transparent, so that all men can once again know the facts and use the tools that shape their lives. *In short*, we can disestablish schools or we can have deschool culture. (Ivan Illich: ‘The Alternative to Schooling’)

It can be seen that the above passage relies heavily for its coherence on transitional words like *and*, *or*, *but*, *either*, and a transitional phrase *in short*. In other paragraphs phrases and words such as *to illustrate*, *for example*, *that is*, *namely*, *thus*, etc. function to introduce illustrations. Contrasts or alternatives are signalled by expressions such as *by contrast*, *on the contrary*, *on the other hand*, *conversely*, *however*, *but*, *nevertheless*, *or*, *nor*, *instead*, *still*, etc. Additions in the discussions are made by the features like *in addition*, *in the second place*, *second*, *next*, *furthermore*, *further*, *similarly*, *moreover*, *too*, *also*, *again*, *finally*, *and*, etc. Result or conclusion can be signalled by forms such as *a result*, *in conclusion*, *in their words*, *to sum up*, *for this reason*, *consequently*, *therefore*, *thus*, *so*, *hence*,





etc. Such features help to connect sentences and even paragraphs, together.

**e) Anaphoric Relations**

Anaphora is a term used in grammatical description of a linguistic unit referring back to some previously expressed unit or meaning. Generally, pronouns are used to refer to already existing antecedents in the discourse. Look at the brief paragraph below with the anaphoric words underlined:

(1) Armstrong made only a small step from where *he* was standing, on part of the outside of *his* moon-landing vehicle, on to the actual surface of the moon, (2) But *it* was a 'giant leap' for mankind, (3) *He* was the first representative of mankind to set foot on the moon, (4) *His* feet had last trodden ground back on *his*' own planet, the earth, 2,33,000 miles away, (5) A giant leap indeed. (D. Y. Morgan: 'Man Reaches the Moon').

Hence, the pronoun forms *it*, *he* and *his* in sentences 2,3, and 4 function. to link the sentences together. While the *it* refers back to Armstrong's 'small step' in sentence 1, *he* and *his* refer back to the proper noun Armstrong. This is a major way of enmeshing sentences into each other.

**f) Rhetorical Devices**

Sentences get linked into a paragraph, and paragraphs may also get linked to one another, by the use of rhetorical devices such as repetition, paralld structure, question and answer, etc. Consider the paragraph below with sentence numbers given in brackets:

(1) But nevertheless the uneasiness remained and became more and more evident in our books, our painting, our music and even the new directions of our medical sciences.

(2) Who were we in this strange new world ? (3) What part did we play in it ?

(4) Someone had written a new equation somewhere, pushed the doors of ignorance back a little, entered the darkened room of knowledge by one more step. (5) Someone else had formed a way to make use of that new knowledge and put it to work.

(6) Our lives had changed but without *our* changing them or without our intending them to change. (7) Improvements had appeared and we had accepted them. (8) We had bought Mr. Ford's machines by the hundreds of thousands. (9) We had ordered radios by the millions and then installed TVs. (10) And now we took to the air, fly from city to city, from continent to continent, from climate to climate, following summer up and down the earth like birds. (11) We were now men in a new world ... but a world we had not made --had not, at least, intended to make.

(Archibald Mac Leish: "The Great American Frustration ")

The above paragraph reveals some rhetorical strategies that bind the sentences together. Repetition and parallel structures can be seen almost throughout the paragraph. Sentences (2) and (3) reveal repetition of question forms which function to link the two sentences together for emphasis. Sentences (4) and (5) have parallel beginnings which serve to link the two sentences together. Sentences (8), (9) (10) and (11) have a common subject and a somewhat 'parallel structure which functions to enmesh the four sentences. Repetitions also occur within the sentences, and similar kinds of repetition across sentences also build sentences together, e.g., sentences (7) and (8) have similar kind of repetition for emphasis inbuilt in the respective sentences.

Thus, rhetorical devices also function to link sentences together in a paragraph.

**g) Logical Organisation and Adequate Development of Supporting Material**

The paragraph may have a topic sentence, unity and coherence but it also needs logical organisation. This means that support material should be carefully arranged. In the Developmental paragraph I (Section 6.3.2) the controlling sentence is that the student spokesmen are often unreasonable in their demands. The supporting material is provided one after the other, all intending to prove the point that the demands are unreasonable.

The adequate development of the paragraph is a product of the linkage of the supporting material. The three supporting materials of the topic statement are each followed by the recognition of the negative effect of the demands. Hence, the demands are made to look unreasonable. The full circularity of idea with the supporting material makes the development of the paragraph quite adequate.



**h) Concluding Statement**

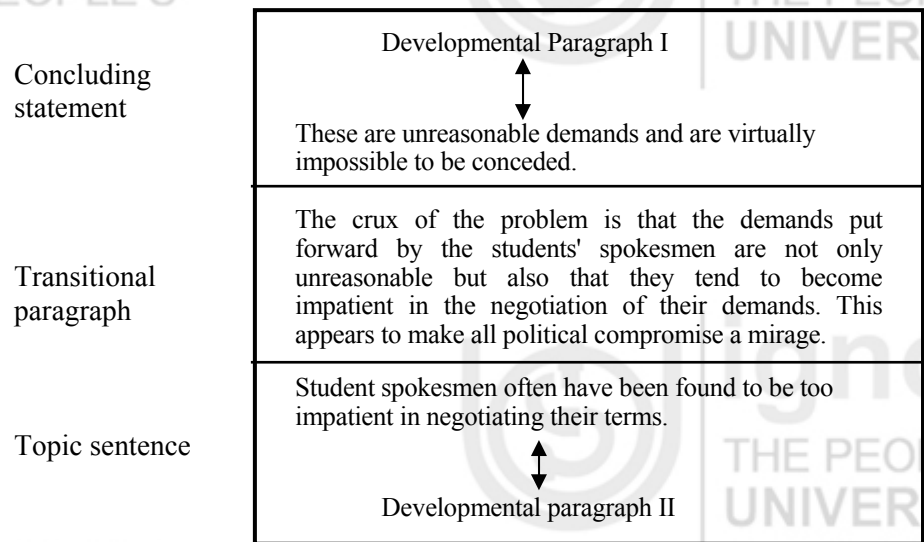
The concluding statement of a paragraph functions not only to repeat the topic statement but also to emphasize it. For example, consider the last sentences of Developmental paragraph I (Section 6.3.2)

"These are unreasonable demands and are virtually impossible to be conceded".

This sentence not only repeats the topic statement (discussed earlier) about the unreasonableness of the demands made by the students' spokesmen but also emphasizes it by adding that virtually the demands cannot be met.

**6.3.3 Transitional Paragraphs**

Transitional paragraphs can be formed between two Developmental Paragraphs. This involves the topic sentence of one paragraph which at the same time refers to the concluding statement of the previous paragraph, thereby reiterating the first paragraph's main idea giving the gist of the second paragraph. Let us construct a probable transitional paragraph between the concluding statement of Developmental paragraph I (Section 6.3.2) and the topic sentence of Developmental paragraph II (Section 6.3.4).



The transitional paragraph functions as a smooth connective between two developmental paragraphs.

**6.3.4 Concluding Paragraph**

The concluding paragraph to a composition has essentially the same function as a concluding statement to a paragraph. Whereas the concluding statement to a paragraph repeats the controlling idea of the paragraph and adds emphasis and finality, the concluding paragraph emphatically sums up the major ideas of the thesis that support the compositions, restates the focus and provides a note of conviction and finality.

Just as the introductory paragraph is important in making a first impression, the concluding paragraph is important in making a lasting impression. Let us look at a probable concluding paragraph for the composition 'Political compromise in the college':

'The headlines of the papers tell the whole story:  
 "STUDENTS DEMAND ADMINISTRATORS NEGOTIATE NOW";  
 "DEAN SAYS STUDENTS DEMANDS OUTRAGEOUS";  
 "STUDENTS OCCUPY DEAN'S OFFICE";  
 "STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATION DEADLOCKED". And on it goes,  
 "STUDENTS REFUSE TO COMPROMISE", and this is the picture of the political compromise in the college.'



The concluding paragraph is a kind of emphatic restatement of the main idea of the thesis. It also attempts at making a memorable impression by trying to represent the same idea by quoting the headlines of the newspapers.

Finally, in concluding paragraphs you should avoid statements such as "As you can see from the above ...", or "Having proved my point ...", etc. Such statements are worn out and are irritating to the reader. You have to be courteous to your reader's intelligence. Further, avoid introducing a new idea in the concluding paragraph of the composition.

### Self Check Exercise

- 3) Define a paragraph and name its kinds.
- 4) What are the characteristics of a well written developmental paragraph.

#### Note:

- i) Write your answers in the space given below.
- ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

## 6.4 FORMS OF DISCOURSE

Generally exposition, narration, description and argumentation are considered to be the basic forms of discourse. Each of these represents a shifting concern on the part of a writer. When a writer is concerned with setting forth facts then the form is known as *exposition*, when he presents them in terms of temporal action then the form is *narration*, and in terms of space it is *description*, and when he intends to resolve the conflict of facts then it is known as *argumentation*. These forms do not exist as pure forms; they, in fact, are intermixed and one can only talk about a dominant form. Let us look at the dominant forms separately.

### 6.4.1 Expository Discourse

Expository writings are probably the most common form of writing. It can be seen in the description of competing theories, in economic interpretations, in critical aspects of literary texts, in the operation of scientific procedures, etc. Expository writing has the overall purpose of explaining, although one may explain by setting down facts, or by telling about an incident, or by describing how something works, or still by reasoning.



Central to expository writing are grouping, classification and definition. While grouping is a pattern of order based on selection, classification involves breaking down of a broad topic into parts. In contrast to these, definition sets limits or boundaries, or points out the characteristics that distinguish the thing under discussion from others.

Grouping and classification can be observed in the paragraph below:

Lenin with whom I had long conversation in Moscow in 1920, was, superficially, very unlike Gladstone, and yet, allowing for the difference of time and place. To begin with the differences : Lenin was cruel, which Gladstone was not; Lenin had no respect for tradition, whereas Gladstone had a great deal; Lenin considered all means legitimate for securing the victory of his party, whereas for Gladstone politics was a game with certain rules that must be observed. All these differences, to my mind, are to the advantage of Gladstone, and accordingly Gladstone on the whole had beneficent effects, while Lenin's effects were disastrous. In spite of all these dissimilarities, however, the points of resemblance were quite as profound. Lenin supposed himself to be an atheist, but in this he was mistaken. He thought that the world was governed by the dialectic, whose instrument he was; just as much as Gladstone, he conceived of himself as the human agent of a superhuman Power. His ruthlessness and unscrupulousness were only as to means, not as to ends; he would not have been writing to purchase personal power at the expense of apostasy. Both men derived their personal force from this unshakable conviction of their own rectitude. Both men in support of their respective faiths, ventured into realms in which, from ignorance, they could only cover themselves with ridicule - Gladstone in Biblical criticism, Lenin in Philosophy.

( Bertrand Russell: *"Eminent Men I Have Known"* )

In the above paragraph you can see opposing and similar ideas grouped separately to represent qualities of Lenin and Gladstone. The groupings, it is also clear, are classified into qualities of Lenin and Gladstone.

Definitions are one of the purest forms of exposition because their purpose is to explain. They answer the basic question "What is it?" or "What does it mean?" A definition can be used to explain a word in a sentence, but usually it is used to interrupt the development of thought in order to define something for the reader. For example, see the passage below:

Psychiatrists are not alone, of course, in their failure to comprehend the nature and the importance of the adversary process. A word of explanation about what I mean when I use the term is in order here. The adversary process is the central feature of the system of legal institutions and procedures set up by our society to resolve controversies that arise between contending interests, values and ideologies. The adversary - to use the word in its old dictionary meaning - is supplied not by the process but by the parties to the conflict; the adversary process is merely the decisional mechanism for resolving their conflict.

(David L. Bazelon : *"Psychiatrists and the Adversary Process"*).

The third sentence in the above passage is in the form of a definition which interrupts the normal flow of thought to classify the expression 'adversary process'.

#### 6.4.2 Narrative Discourse

Narration depends chiefly on temporal order, i.e., upon actions in a chronological order at the level of time. The chronological order involves a sequencing of events or actions from beginning to end. A skilled narrator is able to arrange the details in such a way so that a reader's interest rises to a climax at some point in the narration. The narration, in turn, can range from story telling, as in novels and short stories, to anecdotes used for illustration, explanation or support. Look at the narrative elements in the passage below:

On May 21, late in the afternoon, a 1-year old schoolboy, the son of a Chicago millionaire real-estate man, stopped on his way home to watch a ball game. A car drove up and carried him away. The following day a special delivery letter assured the parents that the boy was safe and asked for a \$ 10,000 ransom, to be collected in work bills and put in a cigar box. The father duly obliged and drove off to the specified meeting place. Quite incredibly, he forgot the instructions about where he was to go, and he drove back home. It would have been too late anyway. That morning a labourer found the naked corpse of the boy near a railroad right-of-way. Nearby was a pair of shell-rimmed spectacles. They were the crucial clue that led to the arrest, and subsequent conviction, of two young men, both the sons of millionaires, both brilliant and already, at 19, both postgraduate students at the University of Chicago. In September the two men, Nathan Leopold, Jr., and Richard Loeb, were sentenced to life imprisonment.

(Alistair Cooke : "*Nineteen Twenty Four*").

The above passage clearly shows a progression of events sequentially and chronologically. Such is narration.

Sometimes, for special effects, etc. an author may begin his narration from the end and then through a process of *flashback* may return to the beginning and then give the full events till the end. The author may also begin in the middle of a chronological sequence, narrate events leading up to the point of narration and then proceed to complete the narration of events. The way of beginning in the middle of a sequence of events is called *in medias res*. Both the above kinds of presentation of events can generally be found in novels and films.

### 6.4.3 Descriptive Discourse

Description also involves narration, but of a different kind. It is a kind of picture-making, indicating what someone, something, or some place, etc. looks like. All descriptions involve spatial dimensions.

Any description would involve one of the two possibilities: either the description would proceed from a particular to the general, or, from the general to the particular. For example, a description of a painting could either begin with a central focus on a particular detail and then proceed to other things that relate to it giving us thereby a general picture, or, one could describe the picture in general terms and then focus on particular items within it. However, what is common to any kind of description is the spatial arrangement, i.e., the way things appear and the way they are arranged. It is analogous to the long shot, with diminishing distance leading to close-ups from various angles, and vice-versa, by a film camera. Carefully study the passage below:

Punctually at midday he opened his bag and spread out his professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, a notebook, and a bundle of palmyra writing. His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermilion, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his clients took to be a prophetic look and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced by their position - placed as they were between the painted forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks; even a half-wit's eyes would sparkle in such a settling. To crown the effect he wound a saffron coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are. attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways: a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night. A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way: medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap cloth, who created enough din all day to awake the whole town.

(R.K. Narayan : "*An Astrologer's Day*").



Here the narration begins with a close description of an astrologer and then goes on to describe the hustle and bustle of the place in general terms.

#### 6.4.4 Argumentative Discourse

Argumentation implies dispute resulting from opposing positions. Any structure representing argumentation must take into account the pro-and-con nature of the argument. Argumentation can be done in three different ways. First, one can give one's own arguments by taking an affirmative position. Second, one can give further evidence to counter-balance the arguments of an opponent. And, third, one can point out the fallacies in one's opponents' arguments in order to discredit them. Strong argumentation, therefore, demands perceptive reasoning and careful perusal of evidence in order to present one's own arguments or in order to belittle the opponents' arguments.

The structure of an argument is shaped by the nature of reasoning. Reasoning, here, simply means moving from the basic propositions, through evidence, to a conclusion. There are two main directions of reasoning: *induction and deduction*.

It should be noted that each of these approaches is usually used in combination with the strategies of narrating and explaining.

##### a) Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning is a way of enabling us to make general statements from particular examples and evidence. It is therefore both a way of discovering and explaining. For example, if a teacher says "No one in my M.Lib previous class has failed" - the generalisation can be accepted to be true since it is based on the observation of all possible examples. Even the generalisations based on a high degree of probability are true; thus doctors prescribe medicines on the basis of high probability, etc.

Further, the structure of inductive reasoning can be perceived in one of the following ways: either the arguments are stated first followed by the conclusion, or, the conclusions are stated first followed by the arguments. Both are accepted modes of inductive reasoning. Consider an example cited in Gere. (1985 : 186):

##### *Traffic*

Six cars ahead of you are trying to turn left. Just before you get to the intersection, the light changes, and you have to wait for another whole cycle of lights. Downtown traffic congestion at any intersection with Bellevue's Northeast Eighth street, one of the busiest arterials in the state, is not unusual. It will likely worsen as the expansion of Bellevue Square attracts additional shoppers. Other smaller shopping areas are separated by one or more blocks from each other and from Bellevue Square. Most persons elect to drive their cars this distance, and the city studies show that one in four cars in downtown traffic is being moved from one parking lot to another.

The above passage reveals the process of induction. The author begins by looking at the actual traffic congestion, and then he moves on to consider the causes of congestion, which are stated to be the expanding commercial areas and the dependence of people on automobiles for transportation. The progression from effect, i.e., traffic congestion, to its cause reveals inductive reasoning.

##### b) Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning is a way of enabling us to draw inferences from one general statement. It also applies generalisations drawn from one instance to another related instance. Deduction, therefore, has predictive value if one statement is used to imply another related statement. Deductive reasoning is commonly perceived as a movement from the general to the particular, and it can also be viewed as a movement from one general statement to another general statement. The important thing, however, is that one of the generalisations must be prior to the conclusion and the two should be logically connected by certain terms. For example, if a film director, in your opinion, always produces excellent films, you can conclude that a new film advertised must also be good. You can reason from your generalisation about the director to the specific instance of the new film. The thinking process can be shown in the following way:

Satyajit Ray always directs excellent films.  
 Satyajit Ray has directed this film.  
 Therefore, this film must be excellent.

In all such cases the truth of the conclusion hinges on the truth of the general premise, and, the key to reasoning deductively is to determine the truth of your general premise. The following example cited by Gere (1985 : 187-88) illustrates deduction :

### *Apathy*

In the recent ASUW election only 3,480 of the 36,000 students voted. This apathetic attitude disturbs the, and I consider it a threat to our campus as well as to the democratic freedom in this country. The most popular excuse for not voting is, "Well, my vote won't count anyway." People cling to this excuse because they feel that the most heavily endorsed people will automatically win. As a result of this apathy a few campus groups dominate the elections. In last Thursday's election, groups from the interfraternity council/Panhellenic, the northeast dormitories, and the south campus centre made their preferences known, and in most cases their candidates won. However, several of the endorsed winners had a very small margin of victory. Brian Macintosh, winner of BOC position 4, was only twelve votes ahead of the person in second place. If a few more people had voted, some of the other candidates could have been elected.

The above passage argues against apathy in campus elections. The low turnout is related to the idea that 'my vote won't count', which is further related to the idea that endorsed candidates win. The above three statements are related to one another in order to lead to the final deduction of general apathy towards elections among the people of the campus.

#### **Self Check Exercise**

- 5) What do you mean by
- (i) Expository discourse
  - (ii) Narrative discourse
  - (iii) Descriptive discourse
  - (iv) Argumentative discourse

#### **Note:**

- i) Write your answers in the space given below.
- ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

## **6.5 RHETORIC OF LANGUAGE**

English, like any other language, is a language in action. To know this functional language fully it is necessary to have a look at the language at different levels of its structural and functional organisation. To make the point more clear it may be stated that for studying functional English style in written discourse it is necessary to know





the language at the levels of sentence structure, word structure, expressive devices, and style. While a study of the sentence structure and word structure will give us an insight into the formal properties of the English language, the study of expressive devices and aspects of style will provide us an insight into the texture of the language.

### 6.5.1 Sentence Structure

The sentence is a formal unit that divides discourse into finite and separable parts. In speech it is signalled by a final juncture or pause, and in writing by beginning the words in a capital letter (if it is English) and ending them with a fullstop (punctuation mark). Meaning-wise, a sentence is an arrangement of words that makes a complete sense, and is acceptable to the speakers of the language. Grammatically, a sentence is a unit with a subject and a predicate that contains a finite verb as shown below:

#### Subject

Children  
The children  
The children of this block

#### Predicate

Play  
play in the garden  
are playing a match in the school ground today.

The subject refers to a person, place or thing about which something is said in the sentence. It may consist of one or more words. The predicate says something about the subject. It may consist of just a verb or a verb and some other elements. The normal word-order in English is subject + predicate. And since there can be no sentence without a verb, the smallest English sentence must have the structure subject + verb.

In grammar, sentences have generally been classified as simple, compound and complex, and while studying these forms you have to understand the principles of co-ordination and sub ordination. In addition, it is also necessary to recognise the notions of sentence length, cumulative sentences, periodic sentences, fragments, questions, passives, and balance and parallelism.

#### a) Simple Sentence

A simple sentence contains only one predicate. That means it can have only one finite verb. See the sentences below with the verb underlined:

They danced with joy.  
The team played well.  
Will you write it down?

#### b) Compound Sentence

When two or more sentences are joined together by a connecting word (conjunction) like *and*, *but*, *or*, etc. we get a compound sentence. See the compound sentences below with the conjunctions underlined:

George went for a walk but Sam stayed at home.  
They reached the station and took a train for Bombay.  
You must return the book or you must pay its price.

In the above sentences the conjunctions *but*, *and*, *or* join two sentences respectively, each consisting of a subject and a predicate.

#### c) Complex Sentence

A complex sentence combines one main clause and at least one sub ordinate or dependent clause. Consider the sentences below:

- (1) He saw that the table was good
- (2) They applauded enthusiastically when he sang a new song.
- (3) There is nothing that this book can tell me which I do not already know.

All the above sentences consist of a main clause and a subordinate clause (sentence 3 has two subordinate clauses). The main clauses in sentences 1-3 respectively are *He saw*, *They applauded enthusiastically*, and *There is nothing*. Their respective subordinate clauses are *That this book can tell plus which I do not already know*. In all these cases you will notice that the main clause and the subordinate clause are joined together by connecting words like *that*, *when* and *which*, etc.





#### d) Co-ordination

You have already seen that co-ordination links sentences and other shorter units with conjunctions. Co-ordinating conjunctions, in fact, join words, phrases, clauses and complete sentences. The four main connectives express different relationships between the parts: *and* is the conjunction that joins in the sense of 'adding to'; *but* excludes or contrasts; *or* and *nor* provide alternatives. Some other words like *for*, *so* and *yet* are also used as co-ordinating conjunctions.

In writing, co-ordination tends to produce a loose prose style. Consider the passage below:

Out in the club the Epics, with four electric instruments going are playing "doing the dog", and Misty is doing the Dog, and Janet is doing the Mashed Potatoes, and Jerry Miller is doing the Monkey, with a few baroque emendations, but Marlene reflects a moment, as if upon her busy round of work with the churches, the benefit balls, the women groups and the youth.

(Tom Wolfe : "*The Peppermint Lounge Revisited*")

Co-ordination in the above passage presents a string of thoughts together.

#### e) Sub ordination

Subordination predominates in writing because of the element of forethought attached to it. The subordinating conjunctions not only introduce dependent clauses but also define the relationship between the clause and the remaining sentence. Several categories suggest this range:

*Cause* : because, in, that, since

E.g. We will postpone the decision since we no longer have a quorum.

*Condition* : if, although, unless, whereas

E.g. Unless you keep the flame low, you run the risk of burning yourself.

*Manner*as, as though , as if

E.g. The soldiers, as if they knew the enemy was approaching, hid behind the bushes.

*Result* in order that, so that

E.g. I deliberately sent the tickets so that you may not miss the film.

*Time* after, before, since, until, then, when, while

E.g. Since his graduation he has been living in Delhi.

Another special category of subordinating words are the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, etc. The subordination in totality produces an element of complexity. In fact, subordination has also been viewed as an important feature that enables the writer to give emphasis to the complexity of thought, as in the example below:

Linguists are no different from any other people who spend more than nineteen hours a day pondering the complexities of grammar and its relationship to practically everything else in order to prove that language is so inordinately complicated that it is impossible in principle for people to talk. (R.W. Langacker: *Language and Its Structure*).

In the above example there is a main clause ("Linguists are no different from any other people"), a subordinating relative clause ("who spend ... else"), a subordinating adverbial clause ("in order to provide ...."), and two subordinating noun clauses ("that language is .... complicated" – and - "that it is ... to talk").

#### f) Sentence Length

Sentence length is an important feature of writing style. While long sentences can represent a ponderous style, short ones can represent a Racy one. Sentence lengths generate their own rhythmic movements. These rhythmic movements become significant when brought into contrast. For example, the contrast between long and short sentences is an effective way of making a point. Consider the passage:

The first and most evident of the conflicts is that between choosing, on the one hand, to publish whatever most easily interests the largest number of readers most quickly-that is to say, yellow journalism--and, on the other



hand, to provide, even at a commercial loss, an adequate supply of what the public will in the longer run need to know. This is responsible journalism.

(Walter Lippmann : " *On the Importance of Being Free*").

In the passage, the strength of the last short sentence following the longer one result from a rhythmic contrast. While the long sentence is ponderous, the shorter one is climactic and forceful one which makes the point.

### g) Cumulative Sentences

A cumulative sentence is so grammatically constructed that its main thought is first state and then added to by other phrases and clauses. It is a loosely structured sentence often with parallel phrasing. Consider the passage below:

We would sit round the long shiny table, made of some very pale-coloured, hard wood, with sim goading, threatening, exhorting, sometimes joking, very occasionally praising, but always prodding, prodding away at one's mind to keep it up to the right pitch of concentration, as one might keep a sleepy person awake by sticking pins into him.

(George Orwell : " *Such, Such were the Joys ....*").

In the above, the addition of various expressions to the main thoughts "we were sitting round a table ...." and "... sim goading ..." make the whole sentence a cumulative one. It produces an effect of informality because the additions tend to suggest the kind of thoughts that develop when we speak.

### h) Periodic Sentences

A periodic sentence is grammatically constructed so that the main thought is suspended until the end of the sentence. Here one has to wait until the end for the meaning to emerge. Such sentences are generally short. See the example below:

It comes as a great shock to discover that the country which is your birth place and to which you owe your life and identity has not, in its whole system of reality, evolved any place for you.

(James Baldwin: " *The American Dream and the American Negro*')

In the above example the subordinate clauses are so placed that the sentence is not synthetically complete till the end. Such sentences represent a kind of forward movement of thought.

### i) Fragments

A fragment is a word or group of words short of a complete grammatical sentence. It is, however, punctuated like a sentence. Many a time fragments can be used effectively as transition devices. For example, see the expressions

To move them to a second argument.

And now for the implications.

A final point.

All the above can be used as transition sentences. Fragments can also be used to create emphasis as in the passage below:

The people were liberal, but that does not imply that they were permissive, disorderly or immoral. Quite the contrary.

The last sentence, here, is a fragment which functions to emphasize that the people were a positive lot.

### j) Questions

The questions, or interrogative forms are commonly used for seeking information. These sentences, generally, begin either with a WH + word (such as *who, where, why, when, what*, etc.), as in the sentences

Who gave you the book?  
 Where are you going?  
 What happened at the meeting?, etc.

or these sentences begin with an auxiliary, as in sentences

Is he coming?  
 Are they studying?  
 Has he read the book?, etc.

In writing compositions the question form called the *rhetorical question* is significant. The rhetorical question is one to which no direct reply is expected. It is a device that makes us feel as if the issue is being weighed. Sometimes even an answer to such a question is not necessary, for it may function to focus on a problem. For example, while writing about Dylan Thomas, the poet, Richard Whittington-Egan stops at one point to ask

Was it really, then, all make believe? or was he a fringe alcoholic, stalwartly refusing to admit the fact even to himself?

(Richard Whittington-Egan: "*The Toss poet*").

These questions are not answered in the essay directly, for the author is only focusing on a problem.

The rhetorical question can also function as an argumentative device, if its answer appears to be self-evident. For example consider.

Who can argue on the side of poverty, or against justice, or against the idea of a Great Society?

(Norman Mailer : *Lyndon Johnson*).

The questions that Mailer raises need not to be answered. The negative form of the sentences are clearly the answer. The question forms here are used to put forward arguments against the administration of Johnson.

### k) **Passives**

In a passive sentence the subject and object are reversed by a change in the verb form. Consider the sentences below:

Active : The Chief guest will distribute the prizes.

Passive : The prizes will be distributed by the Chief guest.

In written compositions the transposition of the subject, or the doer of an action, and the object, or the receiver of an action, functions for stylistic effect. The difference in the sentences given above is basically one of emphasis, while in the active sentence the subject of the sentence is in focus, in the passive construction, on the other hand, it is the object that is under focus. It has been noticed that in newspaper reporting it is the object of the crime which is under focus when the agent is unknown:

The State Bank of India branch was robbed by an unidentified group of young men at 11:00 this morning.

In addition to emphasis, the passive constructions are often used in scientific and technical writings. Here the passives provide an impersonal tone, for the facts are of primary importance. For example, see the passage below:

Around 800 BC., a mineral was discovered in the town of Magnesia which had wondrous properties. This mineral was called MAGNETITE after the place of its origin. It attracted pieces of iron towards itself. Even stranger, a thin strip of this mineral always aligned itself in the same direction, if left to rotate freely.



For this property it was given the name, the LEADING STONE OR LODESTONE. Such materials were later found to be composed of oxides of iron ( $Fe_3O_4$ ) and are now called magnets.

(*Science: A Textbook for Class VIII*. NCERT Delhi).

Here, the first two and the last two sentences are in the passive. While the initial two sentences function to give a historical detail, the last two function to show its naming and its chemical composition.

### 1) **Balance and Parallelism**

The terms balance and parallelism generally occur together because while 'balance' implies the principle of recurring pattern, parallelism refers to the similarity of structure. These two help generate a rhythm in composition. The expression given below reveals a rhythmic structure along with symmetry of form i.e., repetition of subject-verb pattern,

I came, I saw, I conquered.

Exact balance and parallelism heighten the effect. They also function to heighten memorability and effectiveness as in the example below:

The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves.

(William Hazlitt: "*Political Essays*")

Balance and parallelism, essentially, add to the rhetorical quality of expressions.

### 6.5.2 **Word Structure**

Language essentially consists of words. The total stock of words of the English language, or of any language, is called lexicon. The total number of words in a language are never final. Along with the extension of the domains of human experience the words of a language also keep increasing. The new words and the new uses of old words are ways of showing the vitality and creativeness of its language users.

Word formation processes across languages show a great deal of regularity. Let us look at some of the basic processes by which new terms have been created in the English language. The new terms add to the communicative resources of the language.

#### a) **Coinage**

One of the least common processes of word formation in English is *Coinage*, i.e., the invention of totally new words. Words like *aspirin*, *nylon*, *kleenex*, and *xerox*, etc. were originally invented trade names which gradually became words of everyday language. Even poets like Shakespeare and Milton have given the language new words like *assassination* and *pandemonium*, etc.

#### b) **Borrowing**

One of the most common sources of new words in English is the process of borrowing, i.e., taking words from other languages. Throughout its history, English has borrowed a large number of words from other languages, some of which are mentioned below:

<b>Words</b>	<b>Borrowed from</b>
alcohol, coffee	Arabic
boomerang, kangaroo	Australian tribal languages
boss, buoy	Dutch
bourgeois; resume	French
wicket, wanderlust	German
academy, catastrophe	Greek
raja, thug,	Hindi
piano, confetti	Italian
lilac, turban	Persian
tundra, vampire	Russian



**c) Compounding**

Many words in English are formed by joining two separate words which produce a single form with a distinct meaning. This combining process is called compounding. Thus, in English there are words like *bookcase*, *fingerprint*, *sunburn*, *wallpaper*, *textbook*, *wastebasket*, *doorknob*, *henpeck*, and *handbook*, etc.

**d) Blending**

Sometimes in English two separate forms combine to form a single new word in such a way that the beginning of one word and the end of another word are joined together. This process is called blending. These forms are also called portmanteau words. Some of the long-established forms are *flare* (a combination of *flame* and *glare*), *glimmer* (*gleam* and *shimmer*), and *smash* (*smack* and *dash*). More recent forms are *motel* (*motor* and *hotel*), and *brunch* (*breakfast* and *lunch*). Presently, under the English Channel a tunnel is being constructed between England and France, and this is now being called *Chunnel*.

**e) Clipping**

The element of reduction which can be seen in blending is even more noticeable in the process called Clipping. This occurs when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form in speech. The term '*advertisement*' is still in use but occurs much less frequently than the clipped form *ad*. Some other common examples are *gas* (*gasoline*), *fan* (*fanatic*), *Prof* (*Professor*), *lab* (*laboratory*), *flu* (*influenza*), *gym* (*gymnastic*) and *exam* (*examination*), etc.

**f) Backformation**

A very special kind of a reduction process is known as backformation. Here, typically a word of one type (usually a noun) is reduced to form another word of a different type (usually a verb). A good example of backformation is the process by which first the word *television* came into use and later the verb *televise* was created from it. Other examples of words created by this process are: *edit* (from *editor*), *donate* (from *donation*), *opt* (from *option*), *educate* (from *education*), and *enthuse* (from *enthusiasm*), and more recently *prioritise* (from *priority*).

**g) Conversion**

Whenever there is a change in the function of a word, for example, when a noun comes to be used as a verb (without any reduction), the process is known as conversion. A number of nouns, such as *paper*, *butter*, *bottle*, *vacation*, have come via the process of conversion, to be used as verbs, as can be seen in the sentences below:

He is *papering* the drawing room walls.

Have you *buttered* the toast?

We *bottled* the jam yesterday.

They are *vacationing* in Switzerland.

This process is quite productive in English. The conversions can involve verbs becoming nouns, with verbs like *guess*, *must* and *spy* becoming nouns as in *a guess*, *a must*, and *a spy*. Even adjectives, such as *dirty*, *empty*, *total*, *crazy* and *nasty*, can become verbs *to dirty*, *to empty*, *to total*, or the nouns *a crazy* and *a nasty*, etc.

**h) Acronyms**

When a new word is formed from the initial letters of a set of other words then the word formed is called an acronym. All acronym formations follow the rules of syllable formation of the language. In English the acronyms often consist of capital letters, as in NATO (for North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) or UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation). At times the capitals have been lost to become everyday words such as *laser* ('light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation'), *radar* ('radio detecting and ranging'), and *scuba* ('self contained underwater breathing apparatus'), etc.

**i) Derivation**

The most common word-formation process in English is derivation. This process is accomplished by means of a large number of small bits called affixes. Whenever, the affixes are added to the beginning of a word (e.g., *un-*, *mis-*, *pre-*, etc.) these are called prefixes. The other affix forms which are added to the end of words (e.g., *-id*, *-ish* etc.) are called suffixes. Some examples are given below:



Prefix	Meaning	Example
bi-	two	bicycle
con-	with	concurrent
dis-	opposite of	distrust
in-	not	inapt
re-	again, back	reclaim
un-	not	unbeaten

Suffixes have a special place in the English language. They permit the change of a word from one grammatical class to another. Thus, the word *emotion* can be changed to adjective *emotional*, a verb *emotionalize*, adverb *emotionally* and nouns *emotionalist* and *emotionality* by adding the suffixes -al, -ize, -ly, -ist, and -ity, respectively. Some of the important suffixes that mark nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are given below:

Suffixes marking nouns ist, -ity,	:	-acy, -age, -ance, -dom, -hood, -ism, - -ment, -ness, -tion, etc.
Suffixes marking verbs	:	-ate, -en, -fy, -ise
Suffixes marking adjectives -ar, -ble,	:	-able, -al, -ful, -ic, -ine, -ish, -less, -y, etc.
Suffixes marking adverbs:	:	-ally, -fold, -ly, -wise, etc.

#### j) **Multiple Processes**

Many a time it is possible to trace the operation of more than one process at work in the creation of a particular word. For example, the word *snowballed*, in the sentence *problems in writing the book have snowballed*, is a result of compounding the words *snow* and *ball* giving us the word *snowball*, which has further undergone 'conversion' to be used as a verb. Multiple processes can be seen to be at work in numerous ways.

#### 6.5.3 Expressive Devices

A writer needs to know how words function in a language to create meaning. There is no problem with words that have specific meanings or referents. For example, the word *fire* in its basic sense refers to our perception of burning and flame. Whether the word refers to the flame of a match, the burning of a log, or to the conflagration in a building, the core meaning of the word remains the same. This basic meaning of a word is commonly referred to as *denotation*.

#### a) **Synonyms**

There are words which are said to share a common denotation. Example, the words *opponent*, *antagonist*, and *adversary* have a similarity of meaning in certain contexts, though not in all contexts. For in a match of hockey two rival players can be termed opponents, but in a classroom they can be antagonists, while in a courtroom they can only be adversaries. However, all dictionaries and thesauri list synonyms. These are helpful guides in writing so long as you remind yourself that words also have subtle differences of meaning.

Further, words are also capable of operating in different contexts by *extension* without any loss of meaning. For example, the word *head* is a biological term, a part of the body of a living thing. However, its use can be extended to new contexts giving us expressions like "the head of a pin", "the head of a boil", "the head of a department", "a river's head", "the head word of a phrase", or "bringing matters to a head". In general terms, each of the above expressions has a carry-over meaning of 'something at the top', but the specific context in each case determines a more specific meaning-which does not allow us to mistake one for the other.

Meaning, therefore, depends on preciseness with which words are used, their arrangement, and in the total context in which we find them. In larger contexts words begin to acquire still more extended meanings.

Many effective writers change the denotative meanings of words by giving them additional, private, associations of meanings. The additional

associations of meanings that words have are referred to as *connotations*. Connotations are an essential fact of language, and they can neither be prevented nor ignored by a writer.

The connotations of some words are well known. For example, names of certain insects like fly, butterfly, mosquito, centipede, etc. can evoke additional associations of meaning. The fly may evoke the associations of peskiness, butterfly of beauty, mosquito of irritation and a centipede of, say, amusement. Many connotations are also similar, e.g., the associations of *fire* could refer to aspects of human temperament such as 'ordour', 'enthusiasm', or 'inspiration'.

In writings connoted meanings add to the depth of meaning as well as lend an air of freshness to the expressions. Some of the important ways in which words become connotative are by using figurative devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, oxymoron, synecdoche, metonymy, irony, hyperbole and pun.

### b) **Metaphor**

Metaphor is one of the major sources of expressiveness in language.

Examples:

- (1) Time is money
- (2) The darkness swallowed them
- (3) The audience sat glued to their seats.

These are often used expressions and they are all metaphoric. While sentence 1 is suggestive of the value and preciousness of time, sentence 2 is suggestive of the expanse of darkness, and sentence 3 is expressive of the audience's great interest in whatever they are watching.

It can be seen from the above that metaphor is a process of comparison where one thing is described as being another, implying in the process a 'carrying over' of all the semantic associations. It is essentially analogic where we speak of 'X as if it were, Y'. Let us look at another example:

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow  
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field ...

(Shakespeare: "*Sonnet II*").

In this metaphor time (forty years) is spoken of in terms of an invading army and aging is seen as besieging, 'deep trenches' are wrinkles and 'beauty's field' is the battle-field. The metaphor intends to express the idea that time is like an army for it weakens its opponent before full conquest, and, ageing is like besieging for the patient has no control over the external agency. In the metaphor the tension between the perception of similarities between time and army, ageing and besieging, and the youthful skin and battle-field give the metaphor a "double - vision".

Thus, all metaphors act by giving us two perspectives simultaneously. The richness of the metaphor resides in bringing the two frames of reference to bear upon one another.

### c) **Simile**

Simile, like metaphor, involves the stating of one thing as another. In similes, unlike in the metaphors, comparisons are explicit for they contain words such as 'like' or 'as'. A common example would be :

The boy is behaving like a monkey.

In this simile the acts of the boy which may be like the antics of a monkey are under focus.

A more expressive simile is as below:

Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out at Knightsbridge station, like a worm with a fiery head winding through darkness, obstinately and laboriously.

(J. Joyce: *Dubliner*).





This simile compares the train and its movement at night with that of an animate object the worm, with its useful movement. The simile is expressive of presenting the train in animate terms.

**d) Personification**

Personification is a figure of speech like the metaphor in which an inanimate object, an animate non-human, or an abstract quality or idea is given human attributes. It is particularly associated with poetry, e. g., see the lines by Gray:

Here rests the head upon the lap of Earth  
A youth to Fortune and Fame unknown  
Fair. Science frowned not on his humble birth,  
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

(Thomas; Gray : "*Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*").

Here, Earth, Fortune, Fame, Science and Melancholy are given human attributes.

Personification occurs in ordinary speech too. For example, we have the expressions

Time flies

Necessity is the mother of invention. The hands of a clock ...

The leg of the table

The mouth of a river ..., etc.

In each of the above human attributes are given to non-human and inanimate entities. Consider another example of expressive writing:

And all the little roofs of the village bow low, pitiful, beseeching, resigned ...

(D.H. Lawrence: *End of another Home Holiday*).

The roofs have been given human characteristics so much so that their physical condition is shown to arouse pity.

**e) Oxymoron**

It is a figure of rhetoric which juxtaposes apparently contradictory expressions for witty or striking effects. Milton in his *Paradise Lost* often uses oxymoron. Consider the forms: 'darkness visible', 'precious bane', 'splendid vassalage', and 'living death'. The expression 'darkness visible' suggests a vague, impalpable gloom which half conceals and half reveals objects and is sensed as a force of evil. It was a common belief that the flames of Hell emitted no light. 'Precious bane' literally means 'sweet poison', i.e., something which is enjoyable yet harmful, 'splendid vassalage' refers to hard liberty and easy yoke, that to obey is easier. Finally, 'living death' expresses a kind of life in death.

Oxymoron appears to be condensed paradox.

**f) Paradox**

A paradox is a statement which is apparently self-contradictory, a kind of expanded oxymoron. For example:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter:

(Keats: "*Ode to a Grecian Urn*").

Here, "heard, melodies" and "those unheard" are almost opposite to each other. This is what makes the statement a paradox. Further, the apparent contradiction has to be resolved by the reader. The above paradox can be resolved if *unheard* can be taken to mean something *desired* to be heard. The paradox would then mean: While heard melodies are sweet those desired to be heard are sweeter –

In the same way one can see various other examples as well, as given below:





War is peace, Freedom is slavery, and Ignorance is knowledge.

(G. Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty Four* 1984).

### g) **Metonymy**

Metonymy as a writing device involves the substitution of the name of a thing by the name of an attribute of it or of something closely associated with it, e.g., the words crown and Shakespeare often stand for 'monarchy' and the works of Shakespeare respectively. Metonymy is also very common in ordinary language, e. g, people often use phrases like the press, the stage, the White House for the newspapers, the theatre, and U.S. Presidency respectively. Each case of metonymy reveals a semantic shift from a noun to an object associated with the name.

In literary texts one of the ways for effective communication is the creation of new metonymy. Consider the lines below from a poem:

All perform their tragic play,  
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,  
That's Ophelia, That Cordelia.

(W.B. Yeats: "*Lapis Lazuli*").

Here, the names Hamlet, Lear, Ophelia, Cordelia are from two of Shakespeare's tragic plays, viz. *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. These names in the poem function to represent the prototypes of everyman, that every person is in some sense a tragic figure.

### h) **Synechdoche**

Synechdoche is a figure of speech in which a part is used to describe the whole of something or vice versa. As in metonymy, here too, the linguistic deviation involves the substitution of one item for another. Thus, *strings* would mean 'stringed instruments' (part for whole), or *India* means a sports team (whole for part) in a sentence like *India has won the World Cup*. In ordinary language synechdoche is often found in proverbs, e.g., the use of the word *hands* and *heads* in the expressions. *Many hands make bight work* and *Two heads are better than one*, etc. Here, the words 'hands' and 'heads' are parts which in fact refer to abilities of *person*.

In creative writing a new synechdoche also enriches meaning. For example when Christopher Marlowe in his play *Dr Faustus* wrote:

Was this the face that launched  
thousand ships ....

The word *face* raises associations, in the context of the play, of the beauty of Helen of Troy, which led ultimately to the war between the Trojans and the Greeks.

### i) **Irony**

As a figure of speech irony consists of saying one thing while meaning its opposite in a particular context. For example, if one says *What a lovely weather!*, when the weather is bad, the statement is not to be taken literally, rather it means the opposite that the weather is very bad. In ordinary speech irony is often used, say, when you tell a person - Aren't you clever! - when obviously he isn't clever.

In writings irony also highlights the discrepancy or incongruity between what appears to be the case and what actually is the case. For example, consider the lines:

My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye mighty and despair

(P. B. Shelley : "*Ozymandias*").

The above example is in the form of an inscription below the statue of Ozymandias. From the lines it appears as if Ozyandias wants everyone to look at him and his action, and be so impressed, that they should give up the hope of equalling him. The literal statement reveals a very proud man who wants to dwarf the achievements of others. The context of the poem tells us



that the statue now is lying in ruins in the desert sands. In the context the inscription now represents pride amongst the ruins, and it appears to be expressing the opposite of its literal meaning.

**j) Hyperbole**

Hyperbole, as a figure of speech, emphasizes something through exaggeration or over statement. It, however, should not be mistaken for telling lies because there is no intent] to deceive the listener. For example, if one says *thousands are feared to have perish z' in the cyclone* there surely can be a discrepancy in the numbers dead, however, the set of loss of life is aptly communicated by the hyperbole.

In creative writings hyperboles are used to express intense feelings many a time. Consider the example below:

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers could not,  
With all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum

(Shakespeare: *Hamlet*)

In this example the exaggeration lies in Hamlet claiming his love to be greater than the of forty thousand brothers'. In fact, Hamlet wants to convey, through the hyperbole, that his love for Ophelia is infinite, that it cannot be compared to anyone else's, not eve to a brother's.

**k) Pun**

Pun is a form of word-play exploiting ambiguity of word meaning. In other words i involves the use of polysemous words to suggest two or more meanings, or the use o homonyms i.e., different words which sound the same but which have different meanings The whole point of a pun is the user's intent to produce a humorous or witty effect from the juxtaposition of meanings. Thus, puns commonly occur in jokes, e.g.:

Q : How do you get down from elephants?  
A : You don't, you get it from ducks.

The pun, here, is on the word *down* which functions as a preposition in the question, and is referred to as a noun by replacing it with a pronoun *it* (meaning 'soft feathers').

One often finds puns in drama texts. Here is an example from Shakespeare's play *Othello*:

Cassio : Dost thou hear my honest friend?  
Clown : No, I hear not your honest friend, I hear you.

In this dialogue the Clown is deliberately punning on the word *hear*. While Cassio uses the expression "my honest friend" in opposition to "thou", the Clown deliberately makes it the object of the verb "hear".

**6.5.4 Aspects of Functional English Style**

It is often said that style is "proper words in proper places". The definition implies that context determines what is suitable. It is the context that forces a writer to use language systematically. A society reveals various kinds of language forms, and a context will force us to make choices of a particular kind. For example, style has generally been identified in terms of the levels of formality in society -- choice of a level would force us to choose words and expressions appropriate to that level. Consider the following examples with crucial words underlined:

The gentlemen *hastened* from the room.  
The boy *hurried* home from the market.  
"Take the loot and *scram*", shouted the robber to his henchmen.

The above three sentences reveal words expressing *haste* according to the varying levels of formality. While *hastened* reveals a formal or a high style, *hurried* reveals a



middle or a more normal style, and *scram* colloquial, casual or a low style. All the three words form a set of synonyms, though they can be arranged on a scale of formality, from the formal and learned style to the colloquial or low style at the most informal level. Writers, since ancient times, have been conscious of the connotation of formality, i.e., they adapted their writing to the subject on hand or to the kind of literature they were writing. For example, they used the "high" for formal style for writing epics and tragedy and for formal speeches, and the "low" or colloquial style for writing farcical comedies and in their speech to ordinary people. The middle style was the basic language of satire and of expository prose. This kind of distinction is still useful for the study of functional style. Broadly, the casual and the informal could be clubbed to give a colloquial style while the formal and the frozen both imply a formal use of language style. Thus, it would not be out of place to divide synonymous expressions into three major stylistic levels. Let us look at some examples at different style levels (Table 1).

Formal/Learned style	Middle style	Colloquial style
hasten	hurry	scram
intrepid	courageous	plucky
valiant	brave	gutsy
pedagogue	instructor	teacher
peruse	study	grind
astutely	shrewdly	slickly
arduous	difficult	tough

**Table 1 : Three Major Stylistic Levels.**

**(Adapted from Newman 1989: 268).**

By being conscious of the different levels of style you can control much of the tone in your writing. Let us look at what more choices lead you to.

**a) The Formal Style**

A *formal* style is for special occasions. It is appropriate for some essays, answers to essay questions, formal reports, and research papers. It uses words and structures that rarely appear in conversation, and its sentences are often more elaborate and longer than those of informal writing. Since contractions and slang rarely appear in informal English, it is also commonly termed as "refined" language. It is generally marked by the use of jargon and Euphemisms.

*Jargon* is the specialized language of occupations and of the different subjects of inquiry. For example, to a car mechanic the words such as *differential*, *hoes* and *kingpin* have special meanings; for a literary scholar the words *synechdoche*, *metonymy*, *paradox* have specialised meanings, etc. For someone interested in computer science words such as *hardware*, *software*, *file*, *document*, etc. have subject-specific meanings.

When jargon or technical language is used in its own proper domain it makes communication very effective and precise, but if it is extended to other domains, it makes writing more difficult for the average reader to understand. For example, if someone says or writes to a non-specialist: "Your use of *synechdoche* is very effective". The sentence can be understood only by a person who is familiar with the term, otherwise the sentence can be at the border of incomprehensibility. Thus, specialised vocabulary should be used in writings for the people working in the particular area. Such terminology should be avoided in situations where readers are unlikely to be familiar with it.

Formal styles are also marked by euphemistic expressions. Euphemisms, in fact, try to soften by distorting a particular fact by using less specific expressions. For example, a "death" is termed as "passing away" or "sad demise", or taking no political decision on some issue could be expressed as "under consideration".

As a writer you should avoid euphemisms which distort the truth. However, there are many occasions when euphemisms are in order, e.g., if a child is 'horribly burnt and scarred' by fire you may instead use the term "disfigured". Euphemistic expressions born out of the sensitivity for the subject are very effective.



It may be said that formal style is a style for specific occasions using a specific kb of language which is somewhat uncommon. Let us consider the following letter (cit( from Gere 1985: 293) :

Dear Sir,

I wish to bring to your attention the fact that my performance has improved immeasurab in terms of increased contract production and unique customer generation. Therefor in the interest of fairness, I request an appropriate monetary reward.

faithfully  
Joe Humble.

The above letter is in a formal style. The elaborate expressions 'Performance hr improved immeasurably' in terms of increased contract production and unique custom( generation, 'in the interest of fairness' and 'appropriate monetary reward', reveal language used objectively in an office environment.

**b) Middle Style**

The middle or the informal style is what most educated people use for communicatin with people other than personal friends. It is the language of magazines, newspaper, most books, and business letters. It is, in fact, a style intended for general audience; The middle or informal style of English is less rigid in rules and forms than its forme counterpart. Some contracted forms and slang do appear in this style. Sentences ar generally complete, though they vary in length, and sound more conversational than th impersonal tone of formal writing. Consider the example below:

The full Moon and some dynamic aspects could make the 8th some sort of blockbuster day - and not all lollilops and roses, either! Most importantly, handle your close relationships with kid gloves, and don't allow wishful thinking or self deception to sway your judgement and plans.

(From *Leo : Your 1993 Horoscope*. Dell Purse Books).

The above passage reveals a middle or informal style of communication for a genera audience. The sentences here are complete, unlike as in the colloquial or casual style However, there are colloquial expressions in the passage also, such as "not all lollilop and roses" and "kidgloves", which are generally not found in formal styles.

Consider the letter below in the middle style (cited in Gere 1985 : 294), a counterpat of the formal letter discussed earlier:

Dear Mr. Jones:

I think I've done a good job during the past six months. I've filled more contracts that ever before, and I've brought more new customers to the company than anyone else it the division has. I would appreciate a raise.

Sincerely  
Joe Humble.

The above letter in the middle informal style has some peculiar features. First, like the formal style the sentences are complete. Second, the formal "Dear sir" has been replaced by the less formal "Dear Mr. Jones". The letter is more personal in tone than the formal one. While the formal letter was more elaborate in 'wishing' to capture the attention of the addressee to the writer's performance, and 'requesting' for an increase in salary, the middle is more direct with the writer expressing his own thoughts regarding his own performance and desiring ("I would appreciate") a raise in salary.

**c) Low, Colloquial or Casual Style**

Low, casual or colloquial style is a very personal style that is used amongst equals who are also friends, or near or dear ones. This style is marked by the use of slang expressions, frequent contractions and cliches. Casual writing

often becomes incomprehensible to someone who is not familiar with the context of writing. "In a minute" may make no sense to the general reader but is clear explanation to students when a teacher says so and leaves a tutorial group.

Slang and colloquial expressions are those which are often spoken in ordinary conversation but are not used in informal and formal writing. Such words when chosen in writing function to give a flavour of the colloquial style. For example, if a person writes "He ain't go in". This is the colloquial form of "He is not going" as used by some people.

Contractions involve shortening of word and/or sentence forms. In casual/colloquial speech questions and answers are generally not elaborate.

Example:

John : Coming ?  
Sam : No.

In the same words are also often contracted, e.g., *I'am* is used for *I am*, *You're* for *you are* and *you've* for *you have*, etc. Cliches are familiar phrases and dead metaphors that are often used in casual writing and speech. These are expressions which have been heard many times. See the following:

- a tempest in a teapot
- beat a hasty retreat
- a gala time
- cool as a cucumber
- beyond the shadow of a doubt
- from the frying pan into the fire, etc.

All the above expressions have common, fixed meanings.

Let us look at a written letter in the colloquial style, which is a counterpart of the letters mentioned earlier under the formal and informal styles (cited in Gere 1985:294)

Frank -

The way I figure it, I'm about the best you've got in this company. I'm hustling contracts and pulling in customers like crazy. How about crossing my palm with a little more coin next month?

Joe.

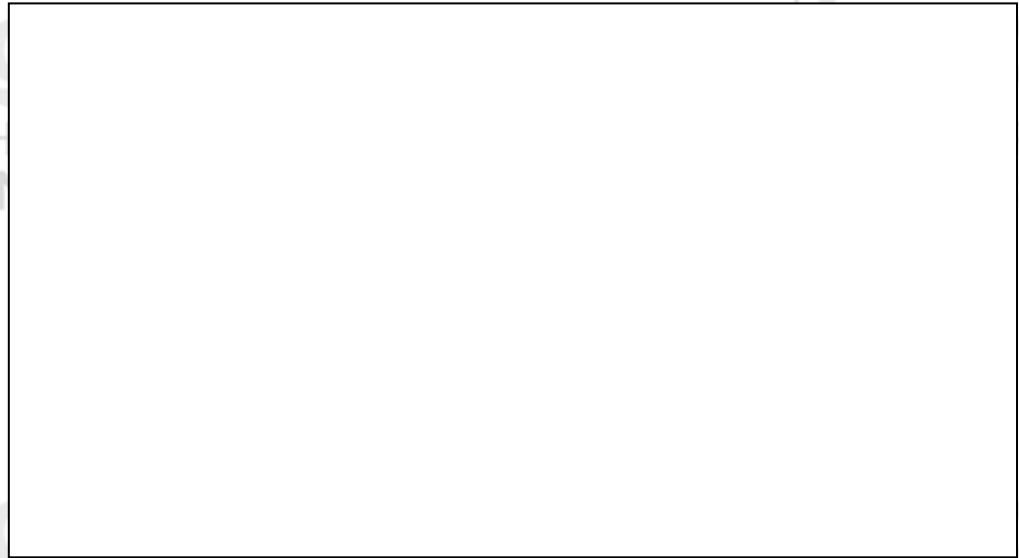
In the above example, the formal address like "Dear Sir" or "Dear Mr. Jones" is replaced just by a first name "Frank". First names are always used amongst familiar friends in common circumstances. Expressions like *hustling contracts*, *pulling in customers like crazy*, *crossing my palm*, and *little more coin* are usages of slang. The expression *The way I figure it* is a cliché, and the forms *I'm* and *You've* are cases of contraction. Finally, the word "sincerely" in the salutation has been dropped. This makes the letter appear absolutely colloquial and casual.

#### Self Check Exercise

6) Write down the importance of various levels to make the English language functional.

**Note:**

- i) Write your answer in the space given below.
- ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.



## 6.6 SUMMARY

In this Unit we have viewed Functional English Style particularly in relation to good and effective writing. We have seen that a writing process involves an understanding of the structure of a composition. This involves a knowledge of the sequence of

- selection and then delimitation of a topic,
- providing a thesis statement, and
- providing the opening, developmental, transitional and concluding paragraphs.

While writing paragraphs the sentences and arguments must be coherent and inter-related, and there are devices to achieve the same.

You have also learnt about different forms of writing, namely, expository, narrative, descriptive and argumentative. For making writings effective the unit has also focused attention on some aspects of

- sentence structure,
- word structure,
- expressive devices, and
- functional style.

## 6.7 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) The writing process involves the following steps such as (a) Selection of topic (b) Limiting the topic (c) Thesis statement (d) Developing the form of the Thesis.
- 2) The various forms which outline the composition of a selected topic are (1) Title (2) Introduction (3) Area I (4) Area II (5) Area III (6) Conclusion.
- 3) Paragraph is a way to divide continuous discourse into limits of convenient segments to make it meaningful and readable. Generally there are four kinds of paragraphs: introductory, developmental, transitional and concluding.
- 4) A well written developmental paragraph has the following characteristics:
  - i) Topic sentence
  - ii) Unity
  - iii) Coherence
  - iv) Logical organisation
  - v) Concluding statement
- 5) Expository discourse allows a writer to be concerned with setting forth facts whereas in narrative discourse he presents them in terms of temporal action and it is in terms of space is known as descriptive discourse. When the writer *intends* to resolve the conflict of facts is considered as argumentative discourse.



- 6) To make the English language functional there are various levels such as sentence structure, word structure, expressive devices and style. The importance of the sentence structure and word structure gives us an insight into the formal properties of the English language. Whereas the expressive devices and style provide us an insight into the texture of the language.

## 6.8 KEY WORDS

<b>Dialect</b>	:	A variety of a language, spoken in one part of a country, which is different in some words, grammar or pronunciation from other forms of the same language.
<b>Ethnic</b>	:	Related to a racial, national or tribal group.
<b>Euphemism</b>	:	The use of a pleasanter, less direct name for something thought to be unpleasant.
<b>Parallelism</b>	:	The state or quality of being parallel.
<b>Phythmic</b>	:	The quality of happening at regular periods of time.
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	:	A doctor trained in the study and treatment of diseases of the mind.
<b>Rhetoric</b>	:	The art of speaking or writing that sounds fine.
<b>Transparent</b>	:	Clear, easily understood, about which there is no doubt, certain.

## 6.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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