

1 Deviant Usage and Common Errors

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Every language has a set of rules that specify how words change their forms and are combined into sentences. In UGRC 110, we examined the basic issues in English grammar and learnt that the following are important ingredients for a well-formed sentence: Sounds (consonants, vowels) and how they pattern in the language; How words form phrases, clauses, and sentences; The meaning of words; and appropriateness of words in the sentence to the discourse community in question.

The emphasis this semester is on deviant usage in English and common errors.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, the ability of students to do the following would be enhanced:

- i. Identify grammatical errors in sentences;
- ii. Identify the appropriateness of words and phrases to the particular discourse community;
- iii. Use the knowledge to construct well-formed sentences.

1.3 DEVIANT USAGE

In spite of the fact that our students have studied English for over ten years in the basic and senior secondary school, most of them still write ill-formed sentences. This means that one or more of our objectives has not been achieved. It is difficult to point to what is the real cause of this. My only guess is that enough practical work has not been done by the learner himself to internalise the skills of sentence construction learnt in the lecture room. As it stands students should be taken through some basic issues discussed in UGRC110 lesson 2 (Basic issues in English Grammar).

Exercise 1

Time allowed: 20 minutes

Read the passage below carefully and correct errors in spelling, grammar and usage. Insert missing punctuation marks.

In Akan taught, time is the most critical element that define an event; and there are two significant concern that arise in respect of time insofar as the events impart on human existence. These first is that the time of the occurrence of an event is unique. When events occurs, Akans inquire into the individuality of the

occurrence: Why did the event occur at this point in time and why at this or that particular place. The second concern is that the events impact on individuals for good or ill; and questions flow from the moral impact of the event. One issue is that an event occurring at a particular time might be good, but the same occurrence at that time might be bad. For example, a coconut dropping just ahead of me from a tall tree over head would be hailed as a refreshment and therefore good. But it would have kill me if it had fallen a moment later. If so, this might suggest that the moral properties of an event are dependent only on the differences in time of occurrence. However, time seems to be morally neutral when we look at a slightly different scenario. The very same falling of a tree brunch might be viewed as good by one who just left the place of the fall, while to another struck depend by the branch, it might be bad. In this case, the difference in moral quality of the event seems to depend wholly upon the individuals affected by it

Adapted from: Hagan, George (2003) *The Akan Concept of Time* In: **History and Philosophy of Science** Lauer, Helen Ibadan, Nigeria: Hope Publications.

Exercise 2

Time allowed: 20 minutes

Write on one of the topic sentences below:

- a. One key experience in primary school made me hate reading out loud in class.
- b. Books have taught me some things I never would have learned from friends and family.
- c. There are several reasons why I am not an efficient reader.
- d. The Academic Writing course has helped me build my self-esteem.

Note: The scripts should be marked by the lecturer. Selected scripts should be photocopied and given to students to edit. The students should be in pairs to discuss their own work. There should be a class discussion thereafter under the direction of the lecturer. Grammatical rules should be revised with the students over again.

Exercise 3

Correct the errors in the following sentences:

1. My heart sunk when she gave the news.
2. The budget is froze until next quarter.
3. If he was your manager, will you attend the conference?
4. George would have saw him the other day if he was there.
5. We don't give that information to no one.
6. She felt bad because he is not available to assist us.
7. John and me completed the project yesterday.
8. Barbara was more competent than him.
9. Between you and I, we have enough expertise.
10. We generally follow the rules unless you are told otherwise.
11. If a person is conscientious, they will do well in their jobs.
12. One does not look at new words as changes in the language; we look upon them as fads.
13. Neither of the trees lost their leaves.
14. Give the information to Doris about the revised plan.
15. The group would like to have lunch served at noon in Room 202.
16. You can pick up the proposal from the development office for new business today.
17. Following the account closely, a mistake was still made by the new sales representative.
18. To achieve the best results, a plan was developed by our team.
19. Leaving in frustration, the meeting was cancelled by our team leader.
20. I made a mistake, and the correction was made by Jerry.
21. Their recommendations were to improve employee benefits, making provision for internal advancement, and we should also change the sick-day policy.
22. Your assignment was to make cold calls and questions were to be answered.
23. If the bank does not correct the error, our business will be taken elsewhere.
24. The insurance policy covers damage due to storms and also covered are floods.

Assignment

i. Find out the meanings of the following words as well as the grammatical information provided about them in the dictionary. Construct at least two sentences with each of the words.

adjudge	presume	lamp	confer
censor	lump	drought	draught
avow	presume	scrape	scrap

ii. Study the meanings of the following words and use them in your own sentences.

sight	cite	site	flush
flash	guide	guard	heal
heel	lose	loose	resort
result	tend	turn	true

Bibliography and Further Reading

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2 Reading for Information

THIS SECTION HAS BEEN EXTRACTED FROM: LEWIS (2001) ACADEMIC LITERACY: READINGS AND STRATEGIES

2.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section you should be able to:

- i. Extract relevant information from a text
- ii. Identify information relationships in a text
- iii. Organize information relationships in a text

2.2 USING PATTERNS TO HELP YOU REMEMBER

You can use the knowledge you now have about the relationships between main ideas, paragraph patterns, and details, and about distinctions between major and minor details to help you create visual displays of the information you read. These displays, sometimes referred to as *graphic organizers*, are frameworks that illustrate the important conceptual relationships between ideas in text. They will help you organize and recall information, and they are valuable study aids. The process of creating them will give you an opportunity to verify that you have understood the connections between ideas.

There are different types of graphic organizers. We discuss several types in the following sections. The patterns used in the text direct you toward the type of organizer to create.

2.3 CONCEPT MAPS (FOR KEY VOCABULARY)

Recall that the definition/explanation pattern introduces new terms or concepts. Once you establish that the primary purpose of a section of the material you are reading is to define or explain a new term or concept, you can think about preparing a *concept map* for it. The basic layout for a concept map is shown in the figure. Notice that the term, or concept, is placed in the middle of the map. The broad definition for it appears at the top. On the right is space for indicating characteristics or properties of the term or concept. At the bottom is room for examples of it. On the left is space for writing another term or concept that is different from the one in the center but that will help you make comparisons with the new term.

Here is an example of material for which a concept map could be created. Read the material, and while you do so think about what such a map would look like for this selection. Then study the example map that follows.

Diagram

[INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE]

Example:

Optical Fibers

The revolution in ground-based communications has depended not only on the invention of the laser but also on the development of the *optical fiber*. An optical fiber is a hair-thin, flexible

thread of ultra clear glass one-tenth of a millimeter in diameter. Optical fibers also are known as *lightguides* because they serve as pipelines or conduits for laser light.

A glass optical fiber is made from silicon, the same material that is used to make microchips. Silicon is the main ingredient in sand, so it is very plentiful. An optical fiber has a glass inner *core* with an outer layer called the *cladding*.

The cladding is composed of a slightly different glass from the core. It acts like a mirror, totally reflecting the light beam traveling through the optical fiber back into the core of the fiber. The trapped light beam cannot escape from the optical fiber until it comes to the other end. For this reason, laser light traveling through an optical fiber does not lose its brightness.

Optical fibers have many advantages over copper wires for voice, information, or data transmission. Much more information can be sent by laser beam over a single optical fiber than by electricity over one copper wire. A single optical fiber can carry the same amount of information as a telephone cable containing 256 pairs of wires. A spool of optical fiber weighing only four and one-half pounds is capable of transmitting the same number of messages as 200 reels of copper wire weighing over eight tons!

Though an optical fiber looks fragile, it is stronger than steel and can withstand over 600,000 pounds of pulling force per square inch. Unlike ordinary glass, optical fibers are not brittle or easily broken. An optical fiber is flexible enough to be tied into a loose knot and still transmit laser light flawlessly.

The first commercial application of lasers and optical fibers to connect telephones in the United States was in 1978 at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Vista-United Telecommunications linked telephones throughout the thousands of acres of the park using fiber optic trunk lines. In addition, alarm systems and lighting systems in the park use optical fibers.

Adapted from Charlene Billings, *Lasers: The New Technology of Light*
(New York: Facts on File, 1992),34-39.

Diagram

[INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE]

2.4 SEMANTIC WEBBING

If you decide to create a *semantic web* from text, it means that you believe the author's purpose for the material you are diagramming is to give a considerable amount of information about an event, process, or situation. The semantic web is useful as a self-monitoring tool, particularly if you create your web immediately after reading the material and without referring to the text. The semantic web is especially useful when several patterns are evident or for the problem/solution pattern. Once you have drawn it, you can verify that your web contains the important points made in the selection and that the relationship between these points has been clearly drawn. To identify prior knowledge they have on a topic, students sometimes create semantic webs before reading new material. This is always a good idea.

Read the example text. Then study the web above it. Notice how the lines drawn on the web show how the ideas are connected.

Example diagram [INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE]

Plants are able to use hormones to regulate their rate and direction of growth, to control the time at which they produce flowers and drop leaves, and even to coordinate the functions associated with germination. A hormone does not necessarily affect every cell of an organism in the same way. In fact, many cells cannot respond to a hormone message at all. In order to respond to the message carried by a particular hormone, a cell must contain a *receptor* for that hormone. Receptors are molecules to which hormones bind, forming a *receptorhormone complex* that then affects cellular metabolism. Cells cannot respond to a hormone unless they contain the proper receptor. Those cells that do contain the receptor are known as *target cells*, and it is to such cells that the hormonal message is directed. The nature of the response depends on the amount of hormone that reaches the target cell, and it may also be influenced by the presence of other hormones that affect the same cell.

Joseph S. Levine and Kenneth Miller, *Biology*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994), 654.

Notice that the topic is in the middle of this map. Each important point (main idea) that is discussed and that is related to the topic is noted separately, and a line is drawn from it to the topic. The major details pertaining to each main idea have also been noted; lines extend between the detail and main idea. Minor details are drawn on lines that extend from the major details. Even someone who had not read the text would be able to see the relationship between the ideas on this web.

2.5 HIERARCHICAL ARRAY

When an author presents ideas in order of importance (one type of simple listing pattern), you can diagram these relationships on a *hierarchical array*. This type of visual display is illustrated in two figures. In the example text, on which both displays are based, signal words tell you to expect that some details will have greater importance than others. This should alert you to read actively and to try to visualize the hierarchy while you read so that you are prepared to create the array immediately afterward.

Example:

Death aboard Slave Ships

Death in the crossing was due to a variety of causes. The biggest killers were gastrointestinal disorders, which were often related to the quality of food and water available on the trip, and fevers. Bouts of dysentery were common and the "bloody flux," as it was called, could break out in epidemic proportions. The increasing exposure of the slaves to dysentery increased both the rates of contamination of supplies and the incidence of death. It was dysentery that accounted for the majority of deaths and was the most common disease experienced on all voyages. The astronomical rates of mortality reached on occasional voyages were due to outbreaks of smallpox, measles, or other highly communicable diseases that were not related to time at sea or the conditions of food and water supply, hygiene, and sanitation practices. It was this randomness of epidemic diseases that prevented even experienced and efficient captains from eliminating very high mortality rates on any given voyage.

Although time at sea was not usually correlated with mortality, there were some routes in which time was a factor. Simply because they were a third longer than any other routes, the East African slave trades that developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were noted for overall higher mortality than the West African routes, even though mortality per day at sea was the same or lower than on the shorter routes. Also, just the transporting together of slaves from different epidemiological zones in Africa guaranteed the transmission of a host of local endemic diseases to all those who were aboard. In turn, this guaranteed the spread of all major African diseases to America.

Herbert S. Klein, "profits and the Causes of Mortality," *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, ed. David Northrup (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994), 118.

In Model A, the hierarchy is noted by the size of the print as well as the order in which the items have been placed beneath the heading. In Model B, the distance of each item from the heading indicates its relative importance.

This type of diagram also works well for material that includes classifications. An essay about Indo-European languages, for instance, might result in your creation of a hierarchical array similar to the one shown here.

Diagram [INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE]

Diagram [INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE]

2.6 LINEAR ARRAY

A linear array, sometimes called a *flow chart*, may also be used to show a sequence of events as in the simple listing chronological pattern, or a process, as in the definition/explanation pattern when used to explain how something occurs. The example text discusses a process, and the linear array for the details appears beneath the text. Notice on the array that the connections between the parts of it are made clear by lines and arrows. It would be possible to understand the information on this visual without reading the text. When you create a visual such as this, be sure that you have included all the steps of the process.

Example:

Organizational communication is a complex system involving people's feelings, attitudes, relationships, and skills as well as the goals of management and the process of change, adaptation, and growth. Individuals can both send and receive information. Both the receiver and sender have their own personal frame of reference, developed over time. Each also uses his or her own communication skills, such as reading, writing, and listening abilities that either strengthen or lessen understanding.

In the communication process between a manager and another organizational member, the receiver accepts the message and transmits either verbal or nonverbal feedback, thereby becoming the sender. Verbal feedback is a written or spoken response. Nonverbal feedback is a body movement or actions. Noise is the interference or the barriers that may occur at any point in the process, distorting understanding. The organizational environment also affects sending,

receiving, and interpreting the message. The communication process is successful only when the sender and receiver understand the message to the same degree. Feedback permits clarification and repetition until the message is fully understood.

Adapted from Jerry Kinard, *Management* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1988),349.

2.7 VISUAL AIDS TO SHOW COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

You can also use visuals to illustrate comparison and contrast patterns. This will help you to determine whether you really know the comparisons or contrasts made. If you do not know them, you will not be able to complete all parts of the visual aid which would indicate that you need to reread the material. In this section we show two ways to prepare visuals for text that includes comparisons and contrasts.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST BOX. Read the example text to note the contrasts being discussed. Think about the specific points made and try to visualize how you might place this information inside a box. Then look at the model to see how it has been done.

Example:

Probably the basic disagreement on the causes of income inequality is between those who emphasize flaws in the economic system and those who emphasize flaws in those who are poor. Thus, many liberals, those on the political left, assert that the nation's economic system does not always create enough jobs, or the proper mix of jobs, so that all able-bodied individuals who want to work can find jobs at which they earn enough to provide adequately for those dependent upon them. On the other hand, many conservatives, those on the political right, tend to stress the disabilities that keep poor people from lifting themselves out of their poverty: low aspirations, low motivation, weak commitment to a conviction that one should work. They point to behaviors that make upward mobility impossible: dropping out of school, poor job performance, early parenthood, alcohol and drug abuse. They point out the obvious barrier created by lack of skills. Emphasizing the persistence of poverty despite more than twenty years of a war on poverty, some go so far as to argue that the very programs designed to reduce poverty had operated to perpetuate it.

Bertha Davis, *Poverty in America: What We Do about It* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1991),23.

Note that the information in the box is written in short phrases not everything has been written-just the most important points.

VENN DIAGRAMS. A second way to illustrate comparison and contrast information from text is by creating a diagram that illustrates both points of commonality and points of difference. This diagram, called a *Venn diagram*, is shown following the example text.

Example:

The one thing that all crystals have in common is that they are built up of repeated patterns. In other ways, crystals may differ widely.

Table [INSTRUCTOR TO PROVIDE]

Some shatter easily. Others do not. Some are very hard. Some crumble at a touch. These different properties of crystals are due to many causes. Let's look at some of them. The way the atoms are arranged in a crystal affects its properties. Two crystals may be made up of the same kind of atom and yet have very different properties. The difference is caused by the way the atoms are arranged in each crystal. The "lead" in a pencil is really a kind of crystalline material called graphite. Graphite is a form of the element carbon, so graphite crystals are made up entirely of carbon atoms. Diamond is another form of carbon. Diamond crystals are also made up entirely of carbon atoms. Diamond and graphite appear to be as different as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Or, as one scientist has put it, they are "beauty and the beast among crystals." Diamond is the hardest material known. This is another way of saying that diamond will scratch or cut through all other materials. Diamond drills and saws are used to cut through rock. Diamond dust is used to grind and shape metal tools. Diamond crystals when cut and polished make brilliant gems. Graphite is usually dull black in color and has a greasy feel. It is a very soft material. Like mica, graphite can be sliced easily into very thin sheets. The fact that thin sheets of graphite slide past each other very easily makes it useful for "oiling" moving parts in machines and makes it work in a pencil. The difference between graphite and a diamond is the result of one extra atom of carbon in the building block of the diamond. Let's take a look at the building block of graphite first.

Malcolm E. Weiss, *Why Glass Breaks, Rubber Bends, and Glue Sticks*
(New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974),24.

The center part of the Venn diagram shows how the two types of crystals are similar; hence, the circles overlap. The left and right parts list the differences. This diagram could not have been prepared unless the reader understood the material.

2.8 WORKING TOGETHER

With a partner, decide which type of visual aid would be best for each of the following passages. Then work together to create a visual aid for one of them.

1. DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES

There are two different schools of thought on the decision process *analytical* and *intuitive*. Analytic, or systematic, decision making (sometimes called *scientific decision making*) is based on the theory that problem solving can be reduced to a systematic selection process. Proponents insist that decision theory should construct an ideal procedure for rational choice—a step-by-step, logical sequence for picking the best alternative as a solution to a business problem.

Intuitive decision making is based on the belief that good decision making is an art, not a science. Proponents contend that sound problem solving is largely intuitive and unconscious. They argue that good problem diagnosis and decision making result from an esoteric blend of experience, imagination, intelligence, and feeling joined almost unconsciously.

Considerable evidence suggests that managers use both approaches in solving problems and in making decisions. The analytical approach is more orderly, logical, and systematic; the intuitive

approach is more prone to trial and error, or haphazard decisions. Studies reveal significant differences in how the two types of decision makers approach problems.

Adapted from Jerry Kinard, *Management* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1988, 142.)

Type of visual aid to create for this text: _____

2. HIV: WHERE WE ARE TODAY, WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING

Although people with HIV now have treatments that can prolong their lives, it is not an easy way of life. Protease inhibitors are now part of "the *AIDS* cocktail," a carefully balanced mix of several drugs, which fights HIV. Patients need to take as many as 30 pills a day, some with food, some without, and always on a strict time schedule. While protease inhibitors suppress the virus and allow the immune system to become strong again, they are not cures. For one thing, the body can become resistant to the drugs so that they no longer work. For another, doctors have found that HIV "hides" in various places in the body, such as the brain and eyes. "The virus is eliminated from the blood but it's still in the body, and it's still able to infect new cells," says Dr. [Lawrence] Friedman.

Will there ever be a cure for *AIDS*? Maybe, but it's not likely to happen soon.

Right now, researchers are looking at different methods of killing the virus that hides in the body. One method, for example, involves removing a few of a patient's killer T-cells (white blood cells that kill invading germs) and growing them in a laboratory. Massive numbers of the cells are then reinjected into the patient to destroy his or her infected blood cells. They do, but the effect is temporary.

Methods such as this are so expensive and complicated that they're not practical for use in the general population. To complicate things even more, HIV, like any microbe, has the amazing ability to mutate, or change. The medicines that help one person may not help another who has a slightly different strain of the virus.

For now, say doctors, the best protection against HIV is prevention. Avoid getting it in the first place.

Typically, a vaccine contains a weakened virus, or a protein from a virus. It's injected into a healthy person so that his or her body will produce the antibodies or killer immune system cells needed to fight that virus. If that person comes into contact with the virus in the future, the antibodies will be ready and waiting to destroy it.

That's the way a vaccine works. Now the big question: will there ever be a vaccine to protect people from *AIDS*? "Scientists are looking at more than two dozen different approaches to developing an *AIDS* vaccine," says Victor Zonana, vice-president of the International *AIDS* Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) in New York. "Right now, none is even close to being ready for use in the general population."

Finding a protein or antigen that looks as if it could be the basis for a vaccine is just the beginning, explains Jorge Flores, M.D., chief of the Clinical Development Branch of the *AIDS* Vaccine Prevention and Research Program at the National Institutes of Health. "From there, we

do a series of progressive studies, starting with testing the antigen on small animals and then monkeys. If the vaccine looks hopeful, it would then be ready to test on humans. These multiple studies take years to complete." Only one vaccine has reached the stage of being tested for efficacy (effectiveness) on volunteers.

Developing a vaccine is a long and tedious process, but that doesn't mean it won't happen. The way scientists are working, there just may be one available in your lifetime.

Nina Riccio, *Current Health* 2 26, no. 6 (February 2000), 21.

Type of visual aid to create for this text: _____

3. T'AI CHI

One of the best-known of the martial arts, t'ai chi is both a self-defense strategy and, more commonly in the West, a gentle exercise technique. In Chinese the words *t' ai chi chuan* mean "supreme ultimate fist," a reference, in part, to its lofty status among the martial arts.

T' ai chi consists of a series of postures performed in sequences. Known as forms, they vary in complexity, with some involving 18 postures and others more than 100. Students move from one posture to the next in a flowing motion that resembles dance. While not as physically demanding as karate and judo, t'ai chi takes a long time to master. Movements are learned slowly and carefully, creating a state of restful action in which the mind can concentrate on every motion. But the pace of class may quicken as students acquire proficiency and agility.

Tracing T'ai Chi's Roots. The origins of t'ai chi are obscure. There are reports that it was being practiced some 5,000 years ago, and ancient Chinese drawings depict monks performing movements that look similar to t'ai chi. Some accounts of its origins describe the founder as a monk and kung fu student at a monastery in China in the thirteenth century. After witnessing a fight between a bird and a snake, the man noticed that the snake managed to avoid the bird's attack using swift but subtle movements from these observations, he developed the art of t'ai chi. Newer theories credit a Chinese general who, in the seventeenth century, improvised t'ai chi by combining martial arts with theories of traditional Chinese medicine.

Like aikido, the Japanese martial art, t'ai chi was influenced by the idea of Tao, which means "the way" or "the path," described by the Chinese philosopher Lao-tze. His philosophy, known as Taoism, stresses that humankind must attain harmony with nature and the universe. When in perfect harmony, things function effortlessly and spontaneously, according to natural laws. So, too, the body operates by the same principles. "When people are alive," Lao wrote, "they are soft and supple. When a plant is alive, it is soft and tender." T'ai chi practitioners believe that the qualities of softness and suppleness can be developed by cultivating the life force, qi, that flows through the body. *Clarity through Contradiction.* Among the most intriguing aspects of t' ai chi are its various contradictions and seeming paradoxes. These are rooted in the Chinese notion of yin and yang, the law of complementary opposites. For instance, alert relaxation is essential to each movement. The body should remain supple and at ease, but not to the extent of going limp. Movement likewise entails opposition or contradiction. To move to the right, for example, you must first turn slightly leftward; to rise up, you must first sink slightly. The movement called push can be performed most effectively *without* the application of force: the arms and shoulders relax, the elbows hang loose, and the palms of the two partners meet without touching. All

movement in t'ai chi describes circles, spirals, or arches. To achieve this effect is sometimes termed "curved seeking straightness." This refers to the necessary curvature of limbs.

Al Guinness, *Family Guide to Natural Medicine* (Pleasantville: Reader's Digest, 1993), 230-231.

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3 Summary Writing

3.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

1. do close attentive reading,
2. distinguish between essential point and illustrative details,
3. write summaries of given texts,
4. integrate summed-up material in their essays.

3.2 ESSENTIAL REQUIRED SKILLS

1. ability to write an outline
2. paragraph writing skills

3.3 CONTENT

What is a summary?

A summary is a shortened version of a text.

What is involved in a summary?

When you summarize a text, you

1. Identify the key points of the text,
2. Restate,
3. Very briefly and concisely,
4. Using your own words in restating an original text.

3.4 THE SUMMARIZING PROCESS

1. Identify the key points made by the original author
 - a. Read the text very carefully
 - b. Put down the key points made by the author in an outline
2. Restate the key points made by the original author
 - a. Restating the key points of the original author means saying exactly what the original writer has said
 - b. Restating the points means making sure you do not pass your comments on what the original writer states
 - c. Someone who has read your summary of a text must get the same idea as he or she will get reading the original text, but in a briefer form.
3. Be brief and concise
 - a. Brevity in the summary can be achieved by concentrating on the gist;
 - b. Brevity can be enhanced if one is concise; that is when one goes straight to the point when one says what one has to say

4. Use your own words in a summary
 - a. When you summarize you show that you understand what the original writer has said;
 - b. If you really understand what the original writer has said, you can say it in your own words.

3.5 SENTENCE-LEVEL SUMMARY

When a sentence goes beyond the very simple, we are able to summarize it, or reduce it to its most essential point.

Read the following sentence and reduce it to its key point:

The Mississippi, the Ganges, and the Nile, those journeying atoms from the Rocky Mountains, the Himmaleh, and the Mountains of the Moon—have a kind of personal importance in the annals of the world.

What is the sentence about?

Answer: rivers

What does the sentence tell us about rivers?

Answer: they are important in the history of the world

My summary:

Rivers have a special place in world history.

You can say this in a number of ways.

Here is another example:

Precisely as the church clock struck five, Mr. Lewisham, with a punctuality that was indeed almost too prompt for a really earnest student, shut his Horace, took up his Shakespeare, and descended the narrow curved uncarpeted staircase that led from his garret to the living room in which he had his tea with his landlady, Mrs. Munday.

What is this sentence about?

Answer: Mr. Lewisham

What does the sentence tell us about Mr. Lewisham?

Answer: he took his tea with Mrs. Munday at about five o'clock promptly.

My summary:

Mr. Lewisham took his tea with Mrs. Munday at about five o'clock promptly.

Here are a few sentences to practise on:

1. There was no time to take off dresses, and amid the flying sparks, and in and about the burning buildings, could be seen clowns, knights in armour, Indian Chiefs, jugglers in tights and spangles, rope walkers in fleshing—in fact, all the characters of the fair in full dress, striving with might and main to combat the flames.
2. The one who runs and expects to win the race, the boxer who knocks out his opponents, the swimmer who breasts the tape first most of the time, the footballer who reaches the top of his professional career, and the tennis player whom we all admire for his/her artistry all have certain things in common: they keep working when others are relaxing or

sleeping, deny themselves certain pleasures and avoid certain caprices that the ordinary person will think nothing about and engage in.

3. Adverts make us feel the comfort in the things we see on the screen: the jingles tickle our ears and increase the desire for those things, we even seem to smell the sumptuous meals that are displayed on the billboards and long for a bite into them: adverts do not suggest to us for a moment to rationalize.
4. The man says that the leaves of the pawpaw are valuable for the cure of many kinds of fevers and the seeds are excellent worm expellers, the bark of the mahogany good as blood tonic, and malaria cannot stand the potion prepared from the leaves and root of the 'nim' tree: in fact, there is no ailment that there is no plant known or unknown cannot deal effectively with.
5. The mango, orange, pear, banana, pineapples, all have certain chemical substances that are essential for the growth of the human body.

3.6 PARAGRAPH-LEVEL SUMMARY

The first thing to identify is what the text is about. We shall ask the same questions we asked when we were dealing with the sentences here. One clue to identifying what a paragraph is about is the topic sentence (if there is one in the paragraph).

Read through the following paragraph quickly

So fierce was the Black Death that swept Europe in 1348 that people were driven to try some rather extraordinary remedies. Certain of these bizarre cures were aimed at ridding the air of its "badness." For example, towns would ring bells all day in the hope of scattering any plague gasses in the air. People would also douse the walls of their homes with scent, hoping to offset the foulness of the disease with the sweetness of perfume. Other unusual treatments involved animals. Smelling a pig, for instance, was thought to help a person suffering from the disease, and toads were considered useful for extracting the poison from plague boils. Perhaps the most curious of the remedies was that of writing the magical term "abracadabra" in exotic shapes on a card and hanging the card from a string worn around the neck. In spite of their imaginativeness, though, none of these remedies proved to be at all effective.

What is the paragraph about?

Answer: the Black Death of Europe (1348)

Read the paragraph again, this time more carefully. Take your eyes off the page. Now ask yourself the question:

What does the paragraph tell us about the Black Death?

Answer: people used very unusual kinds of treatment which did not help them

My summary:

During the time of the Black Death of Europe in 1348, people used unusual kinds of treatment for the plague. All of them failed.

Now, read the following short paragraphs and summarize them. Read the paragraph quickly the first time. Then ask yourself the question, *What is the paragraph about?* Read the paragraph again, this time more carefully. Take your eyes off the page and then ask yourself the second question, *What does the paragraph tell us about . . . ?*

The truth about pigs is that their reputation for being dull and dirty is undeserved. The pig is actually a curious and intelligent animal. For instance, a pig will not take anything for granted; it will poke, and prod something until it arrives at a conclusion. A pig's intelligence is so keen that the animal needs to do something only once – such as turn on an automatic drinking fountain – to know how to do it again. Furthermore, pigs are basically no dirtier than any other farm animal. Because pigs don't sweat, they seek out water in order to cool off. On a farm, the water that a pig finds is usually in a mud puddle. However, the pig would be just as happy splashing in a bathtub, since it is water, not dirt that pigs enjoy.

When surnames began appearing in Europe eight hundred years ago, a person's identity and occupation were often intertwined. A surname was a direct link between who a person was and what the person did. Taylor is the Old English spelling of tailor, and Clark is derived from clerk, an occupation of considerable status during the Middle Ages because it required literacy. The names Walker, Wright, Carter, Stewart, and Turner indicate occupations. A walker was someone who cleaned cloth; a wright was a carpenter or metalworker; a carter was someone who drove a cart; a steward was a person in charge of a farm or estate; and a turner worked a lathe. One of the few occupational surnames reflecting the work of women is Webster, which refers to a female weaver.

Share-cropping was a very slow way of building up one's own barn. After all the toil, one got only a third of the harvest. But for a young man whose father had no yams, there was no other way. And what made it worse in Okonkwo's case was that he had to support his mother and two sisters from his meagre harvest. And supporting his mother also meant supporting his father. She could not be expected to cook and eat while her husband starved. And so at a very early age when he was striving desperately to build a barn through share-cropping, Okonkwo was also fending for his father's house. It was like pouring grains of corn into a bag full of holes. His mother and sisters worked hard enough, but they grew women's crops, like cocoyams, beans and cassava. Yam, the king of crops, was a man's crop.

No one can behave like a gruff bear at home and then, when he wants to impress outsiders, suddenly become a charmer. This is as impossible as it would be for you to become a football star if you played only on odd Thursdays and on other days let your muscles go soft. Could you sit down at the piano and give a beautiful performance of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" if you

had not spent many hours on piano exercise? Every accomplishment must have a training ground, and home is the place to develop charm.

Numerous societies have recognized in their own way the fundamental nature of freedom of expression. A Kazakh law from the Steppes, dating as far back as the 15th century, stipulated that one could cut off a man's head, but not his tongue. The Akans of Ghana underscore the supremacy of freedom of speech when they say: "Tekyerema da m'anum nkoaa dee meka bi." [As long as I have a tongue, I will take part in the debate.] this philosophy of freedom of speech was perhaps not so far-removed from the distressing appeal of the English essayist who declared in 1721, that if a man cannot consider his tongue his property, what else can he consider his.

Summarizing the multiple-paragraph text

Here is the process to follow to summarize a multiple paragraph text:

1. Skim the text. (Read the text using your normal reading speed.)
2. Take your eyes off the text and ask the question: *What is this text about?* (This is the subject of the text.)
3. Write down your answer to begin your draft. (This answer could be a single word or a phrase.)
4. Read the text again. (This second reading should confirm for you what you stated as the subject of the text.)
5. Now, read the first paragraph carefully. [Remember, an introductory paragraph may state the writer's thesis]
6. After reading, take your eyes off the page.
7. Then, ask yourself the question: *What does this paragraph tell me about the subject?*
8. Answer the question. Do not try to lift the answer from the text.
9. If you are not sure about the answer, read the paragraph again. But then, take your eyes off the page when you answer the question: *What does this paragraph say about the subject?*
10. Write down your answer (preferably, in the form of an outline).
11. Do this for each one of the other paragraphs. [Remember, a paragraph develops one main idea. Your outline will therefore present these main ideas.]
12. Read the text again. This reading is to ensure that you did not leave out any relevant information. If you did, put it into in.
13. Now, develop the outline into one draft paragraph.
14. Read your draft again and put in transitions to ensure coherence.
15. Now, write your summary.

Here is an example:

Read the following passage carefully, then follow the steps given to summarize it.

When scientists first examined the human brain, they found it to be divided into two halves, or hemispheres, which are nearly identical in appearance, mirroring each other just as the two sides of the body do. When Roger Sperry examined patients whose connection between the two hemispheres—the corpus callosum—was severed, he found that the two sides of the brain seemed to have different functions. Many investigators have studied the differences between the

functions of the two hemispheres and found their relationship to be quite complex. Unfortunately, however, most people have tended to over-generalize. The left brain is supposed to be logical, rational, and analytical, whereas the right brain is supposed to be creative and emotional. The brain's hemispheres are not so simplistically split into two neat divisions. In fact, both halves of the brain participate in almost all our mental activity.

To begin with, both sides of the brain are in operation when we reason. The left brain seems to dominate in the kind of reasoning it takes to translate symbols, recognize abstract differences, and handle algebra and geometry problems. The left hemisphere may be dominant in these types of reasoning, but the right hemisphere also reasons. For example, the right half functions to integrate information and draw conclusions while the left hemisphere is dominant in recognizing abstract differences. Also, the right hemisphere tends to recognize sameness. For example, the right side is where we mediate facial recognition and recognize shapes.

In addition, the two hemispheres act as partners in language and communication. It appears that the left hemisphere is dominant when it comes to understanding grammar and syntax, but when it comes to interpreting emotions in communication, the right brain excels. Moreover, the right brain can interpret tone of voice and facial expressions. Thus, whenever we use language, both sides of the brain process the information.

Furthermore, the brain is not totally divided about music. Many people assume that music is mediated solely in the right brain. That is not so. It is true that the right brain recognizes chords and melodies and seems to mediate pure and slow tones. However, the left hemisphere is also involved in music. Fast music, such as bluegrass, requires its services. When words are involved, again the left brain dominates.

Finally, both halves of the brain are involved in our mental activities. The corpus callosum and other bridges between the two hemispheres obviously serve to integrate the functions of the two halves, which are in constant communication to make sense out of life.

1. *What is the passage about?*

The human brain

2. *What does the first paragraph tell me about the human brain?*

The brain is divided in two halves, and both halves take part when we engage in most mental activities.

3. *What does the second paragraph say about the two halves of the human brain?*

Both halves are active when we do reasoning.

4. *What does the third paragraph tell me about the two halves of the human brain?*

The two divisions are in action when we interact using language.

5. *What does the fourth paragraph tell me about the two halves of the human brain?*

The two halves of the brain contribute when we appreciate music.

6. *What does the fifth paragraph tell me about the two halves of the human brain?*

The activities of the two halves of the brain are coordinated to help us understand what goes on around us.

My outline will look like this:

1. The human brain
 - a. has two halves;

- b. each half contributes to most processes the brain engages in;
- c. each half plays a part when we reason;
- d. each half contributes when we interact using language;
- e. each half contributes when we listen to music;
- f. the activities of both halves are coordinated to help us understand .

My Draft

The Human Brain

The human brain has two divisions. Each division plays a part in most of the processes that the brain engages in. Each half contributes when we reason. Each half contributes to the process when we interact using language. Each half contributes when we listen to music. Activities of the two halves of the brain are coordinated and this enables us to understand things around us.

My final summary

The passage is about the human brain. According to the writer, the human brain is in two halves, each of which contribute to most of the processes involved when our activities involve using the brain. The two halves act together when we do reasoning, interact using language, and when we listen to music. In fact, the activities of the two halves of the brain are coordinated to enable us understand our environment.

Now, read the following passage carefully and summarize the writer's concerns.

Universities today face many serious challenges, not the least of which is filling classrooms with paying students. To do this, colleges have created a consumerist mentality in which the students are dictating the manner in which the material is presented, rather than the professor teaching the material in the way that is most conducive to learning. This has created an environment that is stifling personal creativity in all aspects of academia. In “On the uses of a liberal education” Mark Edmundson points out that students in today’s colleges lack a passion for learning and creativity. The consumer mentality has taken over to the point where students purchase a degree, that is, in essence, a certificate to enter the workforce. One of the reasons for this lack of expression is built into the academic institution itself. In the professional arts, which is the path that most students follow, there is very little room for personal expression. On the other end of the spectrum are the liberal arts, where personal expression and self-improvement are the main values. Students are affected in very different ways by this difference in the two curriculums, and George Houston fails to recognize this in “Bury the Liberal vs. Professional Arts Debate.” Students in the professional arts are working for the grade, in sharp contrast to students in the liberal arts who work for the sake of learning and knowledge itself. This major difference in attitudes is a reason that students do not display passion towards their studies.

The professional arts students, who are in majors such as business, engineering, and so on, take courses that directly apply to the jobs or careers they will be involved in after graduation. The material is useful on the job and helps them to become more ‘successful’ in their careers. The course material prepares the mind to think, reason, and analyze in the way that will benefit them in the workforce. The mind is being trained, but only insofar as to help in the workplace. This is in stark contrast to the liberal arts curriculum and philosophy. A liberal arts degree prepares the student for a lifetime of learning, where the professional arts degree is a

coupon to get a certain job that would be unattainable without the piece of paper. In the liberal arts environment, self-improvement and expression are the goal to which the students aspire.

Classroom material is presented and regarded in a much different way in the liberal vs. professional arts. Students studying the latter are given test in which the answers are predetermined, and all that is required is knowing the formula to find it. Fill in the bubble, run it through a grading machine, and a grade is spit out. The answers are known beforehand and grades are given according to which students can most closely match the results of the professor. In the liberal arts, the answer is not weighed as heavily as the process of thinking and analyzing. Also, there may not be a 'right' answer; each student may give a different view of the same subject, each correct in his or her own way. This climate not only asks for, but demands an amount of personal creativity and expression. This is a major difference in the professional and liberal arts.

Another significant difference is the way in which education is viewed. A liberal arts major will see their degree as a starting point in their education, to be continued throughout the rest of their lives. A professional arts major will see it as the end of their education because the degree is the goal, not the education and the learning that goes with it. George Houston does not take this into account in his essay. He argues that cultivating the mind is the goal of any education, and that 'how you acquire some of these characteristics is immaterial.' How the characteristics are gained may be immaterial, but the attitude towards the education is a crucial difference that Houston fails to recognize.

The current college behavioural standard is a cool, calm, and copacetic attitude, and this does not help to interest the students in their studies. Mark Edmundson points out in his essay a lack of passion for learning in today's students. A show of emotion is strictly forbidden, and to get excited is seen as unfashionable. He blames contemporary society and our consumer mentality for this: 'You're inhibited, except on ordained occasions, from showing emotion, stifled from trying to achieve anything original. You're made to feel that even the slightest departure from the reigning code will get you genially ostracized.' The image that is portrayed by television and the media in general is a cool, detached look. Students do not display a joy of learning or for expressing oneself. The personal creativity in today's academic environment has been severely stifled. There are many causes of this change. A major factor is the lack of passion, Edmundson points out. Students are so concerned with the norm, that to fall out of line and be seen as different would be a fate worse than death. With this fear of being different, expressing oneself becomes a huge risk instead of a joy.

Most students enrolling in college today are professional arts majors, and this is also a cause of the fading creative fire. In these types of curriculum, the answers are predetermined. When the answer is already known with no room for variation, where can personal style and expression be found? Students learn to expect a single, correct answer in their courses and work.

These students are concerned with the grade they will receive rather than expressing their own views and thoughts. The classroom environment has produced this mentality of 'one correct answer', with its Scan Tron sheets and percentage grades. When developing my idea for this essay, I asked myself the question of what the professor would think of my idea and the grade I might receive, and then I realized that this is the exact problem that Edmundson depicts. I was worrying about my grade rather than creating my personal view on the subject. This mentality is

fostered within professional arts curriculums, and is responsible for the fading of the expressing and creativity in today's college culture.

The current college environment has stifled personal creativity and expression in many ways. Consumerism has dictated that everybody conforms to a norm that does not allow for personal expression, and to not fall in line with this standard is seen as the end of the world. Another important factor in this problem is the way that a majority of curriculums offered are presented by the college itself. The professional curriculums are presented in a way that does not allow for expression or creativity, because the answers are predetermined and there is only one correct choice. The attitude regarding this type of education also hinders creativity because it is seen as a prelude to a job, not learning for the sake of learning. All of this adds up to a very bland environment in today's classes, and this is very unfortunate indeed.

Bibliography and Further Reading

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4 Evaluating evidence from sources

[THIS LESSON IS BASED ON EXTRACTS FROM RUGGIERO (2007) *BEYOND FEELINGS: A GUIDE TO CRITICAL THINKING* AND KELLY AND LAWTON (2006) *ODYSSEY: FROM PARAGRAPH TO ESSAY*.]

4.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

1. Explain what constitutes evidence;
2. Identify the kinds of evidence;
3. Evaluate evidence; and
4. Distinguish between strong/weak arguments, on one hand; and facts/opinions on the other.

4.2 WHAT IS EVIDENCE?

According to Ruggiero (2001: 57) to state an opinion is to tell others what we think about something; to present evidence is to *show* others that what we think makes sense. In other words, evidence is one or more reasons for believing that something is or is not true. It is important to check the quality and quantity of the evidence before forming an opinion. Also, note the distinction that Kelly and Lawton (2006: 159) draw between fact and opinion: A fact is a verifiable truth while an opinion is a belief.

4.3 KINDS OF EVIDENCE, AND HOW TO EVALUATE THEM

The most important kinds of evidence as listed by Ruggiero are:

1. Personal experience
2. Unpublished report
3. Published report
4. Eyewitness testimony
5. Expert opinion
6. Experiment
7. Statistics
8. Survey
9. Formal observation
10. Research review

Personal Experience: This is the one kind of evidence we don't have to go to the library or the Internet to get. We carry it with us in our minds. For this reason, it tends to exert a greater influence than other kinds of evidence. The individuals we have met, the situations we have been in, the things that have happened to us seem more authentic and meaningful than what we have merely heard or read. We are confident about our personal experience. Unfortunately, this confidence can cause us to attach greater significance and universality to particular events than they deserve. *To evaluate personal experience – your own or other people's – ask:* Are the events typical or unique? Are they sufficient in number and kind to support the conclusion?

Unpublished report: Unpublished reports are stories we hear from other people, often referred to as gossip or hearsay. The biggest problem with such reports is that it is difficult to confirm them. In many cases, we don't know whether the stories are secondhand or third-, fourth or fiftieth-hand. And stories have a way of changing as they are passed from person to person. The people who repeat them may not be dishonest; they may, in fact try to be accurate but then inadvertently leave out some words, add others, or change the details or order of events. *To evaluate an unpublished report, ask:* Where did the story originate? How can I confirm that the version I heard is accurate?

Published report: This kind of evidence is found in a wide variety of published or broadcast works, from scholarly books, professional journals, and encyclopedia articles, to magazine or newspaper articles, news broadcasts, and radio or television commentaries. In scholarly works the sources of the material are usually carefully documented in footnotes and the bibliographic citations. In non-scholarly works, the documentation may be informal, fragmentary, or in some cases, nonexistent. Even when the source is not cited, we can assess the author's and publisher's reliability. Facts and opinions are often mingled in contemporary publications, particularly non-scholarly ones, so careful reading may be necessary to reveal which statements constitute evidence and which themselves be supported with evidence. *To evaluate a published report, ask:* Does the report cite the sources of all important items of information? Does the author have a reputation for careful reporting? Does the publisher or broadcaster have a reputation for reliability? Which statements in the published report constitute evidence, and which should themselves be supported with evidence?

Eyewitness testimony: Because eyewitness testimony is commonly considered to be the most reliable kind of evidence, you may be surprised to find that it is sometimes badly flawed for any of several reasons. The external conditions may not have been optimal – for example, the incident may have occurred on a foggy night and the eyewitness may have been some distance away. The eyewitness may have been tired or under the influence of alcohol or drugs; his or her observation may also have been distorted by preconceptions or expectations. Finally, the person's memory of what occurred may have been confused by subsequent events. Such confusion can be a special problem when considerable time has elapsed between the event and

the testimony. ***To evaluate eyewitness testimony, ask:*** What circumstances surrounding the event, including the eyewitness' state of mind, could have distorted his or her perception?

Expert opinion: Expert opinion is generally more reliable than most of the varieties of evidence we have considered so far. However, it could also be unreliable. The most significant reason for unreliability is that knowledge in virtually every field is rapidly expanding. A century ago it was possible to gain expertise in more than one discipline. Today's scholars typically have expertise in a single narrow aspect of one discipline and may have difficulty keeping abreast of significant developments in that one. Unfortunately, some people can't resist the temptation to think of themselves as experts in everything. ***To evaluate expert opinion, ask:*** Does the person have, in addition to credentials in the broad field in question, specific expertise in the particular issue under discussion? This is not always easy to ascertain by those outside the field, but one good indication is that the person does not just state his or her opinion but also supports it with references to current research. Also ask whether the expert was paid. The acceptance of money does not necessarily taint expert opinion, but it may raise questions about the person's objectivity. Finally, ask whether other authorities agree or disagree with the expert's view.

Experiment: There are two broad types of experiment. The laboratory experiment enables researchers to vary the conditions and thereby identify causes and effects more precisely. One disadvantage of the laboratory experiment, however, is its artificiality. The field experiment has the advantage of occurring in a natural setting, but the presence of the researchers can influence the subjects and distort the findings. ***To evaluate experimental evidence, ask:*** For a laboratory experiment, has it been replicated by other researchers? For a field experiment, have other researchers independently confirmed the findings?

Statistics: In the broad sense, the term statistics applies to any information that can be quantified; for example, the changes in average temperature over a period of time to determine whether the phenomenon of global warming is occurring. The term statistics may also be used more narrowly about a group that is obtained by contacting, or otherwise accounting for, every individual in the group. ***When evaluating statistical information, ask:*** What is the source of the statistics? Is the source reliable? How old are the data? Have any important factors changed since the data were collected?

Survey: Surveys are among the most common tools used by professionals, particularly in the social sciences. Since the data obtained from surveys are quantifiable, surveys are often included under the broad heading of "statistics". However, we are considering them to highlight one distinguishing characteristic: surveys typically obtain data by contacting, not every individual in the group (known as population), but a representative sample of the group. The sampling may be random, systematic (for example, every tenth or hundredth person in a telephone directory), or stratified (the exact proportion of the component members of the group; for example, 51 percent women and 49 percent men). ***When evaluating a survey, ask:*** Was the sample truly representative? That is, did all the members of the total population surveyed have an equal

chance of being selected? Were the questions clear and ambiguous? Were they objectively phrased rather than slanted? Also, do other surveys corroborate the survey's findings?

Formal observation: There are two kinds of formal observation studies. In *detached* observation, the observer does not interact with the individuals being studied. A child psychologist, for example, might visit a school playground and watch how the children behave. In *participant* observation the researcher is involved in the activity being studied. An anthropologist who lived with a nomadic tribe for a period of months, sharing meals with them and taking part in their communal activities, would be a participant observer. When evaluating formal observation, ask: Is it likely the presence of the observer distorted the behaviour being observed? Was the observation of sufficient duration to permit the conclusions that were drawn? Do the conclusions overgeneralise?

Research review: This kind of study is undertaken when a considerable body of research has already been done on a subject. The reviewer examines all the scholarly studies that have been done on a subject, and then summarises and compares their findings. Often dozens or even hundreds of studies are examined. A thorough review of research reveals areas of agreement and disagreement and provides a valuable overview of the current state of knowledge on the subject. **When evaluating a research review, ask:** Do the reviewer's conclusions seem reasonable given the research covered in the review? Has the reviewer omitted any relevant research?

4.4 DISTINGUISHING STRONG FROM WEAK ARGUMENTS

What is an argument?

In your Critical Thinking and Practical Reasoning lessons you were taught that an argument is a set of statements with premises and one conclusion. That was for the purpose of your logical reasoning class. Do you know how the Advanced Learner's Dictionary define argument? It defines argument as disagreement, quarrell (perhaps heated); reasoned discussion; summary of the subject matter of book. Does this contradict what you learnt in your Critical Thinking and Practical Reasoning lessons? This tells you that a word may be defined in a particular way for a particular purpose. This does not mean that the above definition is wrong.

Argumentation is an attempt to prove how sound or valid your point of view is. Therefore, an argument is a point of view that competes with others for acceptance. In an argument or debate, there is the perception that there is an opposing force or view. Argumentation intends that one's views, and not those of the opposing camp, are accepted by the audience.

Argumentation cannot be separated from the other types of discourse. Our argument may be to establish one description, narration or exposition as against another by a real or perceived opposer. We need to employ description, narration and or exposition in order to be able to convince our audience.

Argumentation involves reasoning, using information to say why something should be this and not that or whether something should be done this way and not the other. Your reasoning generally, comes from three sources which give you three kinds of reasoning.

- Emotion – based reasoning
- Logic – based reasoning
- Authority – based reasoning

In emotion-based reasoning, we depend a lot on human emotions for our arguments. For instance, to argue that polygamy should be stopped because it degrades womanhood is an emotion-based argument.

Logic-based reasoning is also called deductive reasoning. You could for instance argue logically that “If the rank of Captain in the army is equivalent to that of Flight-Lieutenant in the air force, and if a Captain can keep his rank when he leaves active service, then a Flight-Lieutenant could also keep his.

In authority-based reasoning, you argue for a particular course of action or thought because you have the backing of some authority. This normally involves references to authoritative sources or documents.

4.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD ARGUMENT

Four characteristics of a good argument are identified and explained below.

1. An argument should be reasonable. This means that whatever points you use to support a given position must be relevant and adequate.
2. An argument should have consistency. A consistent argument is one in which the various points made support one another. There should not be internal contradictions in the argument.
3. An argument should have a clear definition. It is important to define clearly the key concepts in your argument. It is common to find two or three people who disagree on a point simply because each of them is using a key concept in the argument in a different sense.
4. An argument should be communicated effectively. You must employ all the techniques of good communication – like clear writing and correct vocabulary.

4.6 DISTINGUISHING STATEMENTS OF FACT FROM STATEMENTS OF OPINION

[SOURCE: LEWIS 2001] Text material and lectures contain both factual information and opinions. Statements of opinion in academic text and lectures are also sometimes referred to as *thesis statements*, *theories*, or *hypotheses*. Your knowledge of the distinctions between these and statements of fact will help you evaluate the ideas of others. As a critical reader and listener, you will recognize ideas that are accurate, logical, and worthy of serious consideration, as well as

those that you must question because they are unsupported, illogical, or seem inaccurate. Further, you will be more aware of whether the judgments you make about the ideas of others are grounded in fact or opinion or in a combination of these.

Factual statements are distinguished from statements of opinion in several ways:

- Facts can be proved to be true.
- Facts cannot be disputed. There is evidence to prove their truth.
- Facts are easily agreed-on ideas or are concepts that are held by everyone or that can easily be proved, such as, "The sun sets in the West" or "Maine is in the Northeastern part of the United States."
- Facts are based on direct evidence or actual observation. Examples, statistics, original documents, reports from research experiments, or eyewitness accounts are used to verify them.
- *Facts are things that have occurred. They are not predictions.*
- The truthfulness of facts can change over time. For instance, at one time it was thought that AIDS could be contracted only by homosexual males.
- Factual statements often begin with such expressions as, *The evidence for this is _____; _____ found; Statistical evidence for this appeared in a study by _____*

Opinions, on the other hand, are not clear cut or right or wrong, as are facts. Your academic reading and experiences in classrooms will expose you to many areas of controversy where opinions are voiced strongly. It is possible for people to disagree endlessly about an opinion and to never reach a conclusion. For instance, one person might say capital punishment is a good idea; another might say capital punishment should be abolished. Opinions are one person's view of the truth.

Frequently, there are opposing viewpoints or theories in academic writing. For example, there is disagreement over such issues as how the earth was first created and the seriousness of global warming. Psychologists and others have disagreed over the extent to which a person's genetic makeup influences his or her other personality and intelligence, compared to his or her environment. (These are called nature-nurture theories.) Critical readers recognize the possibility of such disagreements and will draw conclusions based on whatever evidence and facts they can find. Statements of opinion, then, have several features that will help you distinguish them from facts:

- Statements of opinion cannot be conclusively verified. Even if you agree with the author's opinion, it is still just an opinion although there may be good evidence for that opinion.
 - Statements of opinion are often an expression of someone's values, personal beliefs, attitudes, or feelings. These are often based on hunches, inferences, or guesses. It is when you agree with the author's point of view that it is more difficult to make the distinction between fact and opinion statements. Try to avoid letting your own opinions influence your ability to determine which is which.
- Statements of opinion are subjective. The language of opinion statements is often vague or persuasive. The words used to convey the opinion may be open to many interpretations, like *love, peace, beneficial, dangerous*.
 - Opinion statements often begin with such expressions as *I believe, It appears, It seems, All would agree, I think is true because, In my opinion. . .*

- It is possible for a single word to turn a statement of fact into a statement of opinion. For example, the phrase *sixteenth-century music* is a factual phrase. The descriptor, *sixteenth-century*, is factual because one could prove whether the music was of that period. However, the phrase *beautiful music* is a statement of opinion. Its descriptor, *beautiful*, is a matter of opinion to the listener.

ACTIVITY (A)

Creating Fact and Opinion Descriptors:

For each pair, write one descriptor that makes a phrase factual and one that makes it an opinion. An example is done for you. Be prepared to justify your answers.

Factual		Opinion	
<i>Sunday</i>	picnic	<i>enjoyable</i>	picnic
_____	damage	_____	damage
_____	country	_____	country
_____	parents	_____	parents
_____	law	_____	law
_____	highway	_____	highway

THINKING ABOUT YOUR READING AND WRITING

ACTIVITY (B). Evaluating What You Know

What are some features of facts and opinions that you think will be useful for you to remember as you listen to lectures and do your reading assignments?

ACTIVITY (C). Personal Facts and Opinions

In the space provided, write some factual and some opinion statements about yourself. As you do this, think about the criteria you are using to distinguish between fact and opinion.

Factual statements about you:

Opinion statements about you:

4.7 WORKING TOGETHER

Have a partner look at your personal factual and opinion statements in Activity E. Discuss whether they meet the criteria for each.

- **ACTIVITY (D) . Recognizing Statements of Fact and Opinion**

Read each sentence and determine whether it is a statement of fact (F) or opinion (O).

Mark your answer in the space provided. Be prepared to justify your answers.

1. Life on earth depends on two fundamental processes: matter cycling and the one-way flow of high-quality energy from the sun. _____
2. The work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, a physician, is often cited as having a major influence on American attitudes toward death and dying. _____
3. The tight end's personality changed for the worse when he made the varsity team.

4. The six-year-old girl was very mature for her age. _____
5. Smoking makes some people more sociable. _____
6. Smoking makes some people sick. _____
7. It is unreasonable for a department head to expect that employees will come to work willingly during a holiday weekend. _____
8. The score you achieve on some intelligence tests is called your IQ. _____

4.8 WORKING TOGETHER

Compare your answers to Activity D with those of a partner. If you disagree, try to reach agreement by reviewing the criteria for factual statements.

At this point, you are ready for some good news and some bad news. The good news is that by now you have developed some useful strategies for determining whether an idea is a statement of fact or opinion. The bad news is that many statements that appear in academic text are neither all fact nor all opinion. Very often a statement contains a portion of fact *and* a portion of opinion. This is a particularly useful technique for writing an argumentative or persuasive essay, one in which you are trying to convince the reader to accept a certain idea or viewpoint. The opinions are mingled with the facts, so the sentence sounds factual. But, in reality, only that portion that states a fact is verifiable. The rest of it must be considered opinion and open to disagreement.

For example, a sentence may read: *The World Trade Center in New York City, which was bombed recently, is very likely targeted for more attacks in the future.* The part of this sentence that is fact is *The World Trade Center in New York City, which was bombed recently.* The rest, which reads *is very likely targeted for more attacks in the future,* is the author's opinion.

Here's another example: *Although the Navajo have written many myths, none is as popular as that of the Big Fly, which has been part of the culture for centuries.* Which part is fact? You should have recognized that there are two factual parts in this sentence: *the Navajo have written many myths* is a fact. Further, the segment of the sentence that reads *which has been part of the culture for centuries* is a fact. One can check to see whether the Navajo have, indeed, written many myths and whether this particular myth has been part of the culture for so long. The rest of the sentence is definitely opinion. It would be hard to prove that one myth is more popular than another, and views on methods to use to judge popularity would vary.

Fact and opinion also can become intermingled when someone else's opinion is quoted. The quotation marks give the opinion the appearance of fact, and it is a fact that someone made the quoted statement, but often the idea within the quotation marks is an opinion. For example, consider the statement, *"The United States should consider a complete halt in nuclear power plant construction because of unresolved safety questions,"* an Atomic Energy Commission safety expert said on September 21, 1974. An individual made this statement when he resigned from the Atomic Energy Commission because he felt the Commission was ignoring questions of safety. It is a fact that the AEC safety expert made this statement, and perhaps one could argue that it is a fact that there were *unresolved safety questions* when the statement was made. But the solution recommended, *a complete halt in nuclear power plant construction*, is an opinion.

In Activity E, you will have a chance to identify those parts of sentences that are fact and those that are opinion.

ACTIVITY E. Recognizing Segments of Fact and Opinion in Sentences

In each sentence, underline those portions that you believe to be fact. Remember that you are claiming that what is not underlined is opinion. More than one part of a sentence may be factual. Be prepared to justify your answers.

1. Although everyone feels sad now and then, four to eight million Americans are treated yearly for clinical depression, and about 250,000 of these require hospitalization.
2. By 1885, fewer than one thousand buffalo were left on the Midwest plains, and clearly there was little concern that the once-numerous quadrupeds were facing an inevitable complete extermination.
3. Ten years ago, John Graves Fletcher, a distinguished painter, designed the colorful, modernistic murals in our student union building, which houses all clubs, fraternities, and sororities, as well as a number of auditoriums and conference rooms.
4. Apple Computer Corporation has an ambitious plan to develop software that will run on all types of computers, from microcomputers and laptops to mainframes.
5. Some scholars have spent decades studying the unplanned effects of social reform, and they have now reached the conclusion that everything has been tried, but nothing has worked.

4.9 DO AN INTERNET SEARCH ON THE FOLLOWING FALLACIES IN REASONING

- i. Argument ad hominem (Latin for "argument to the man")
- ii. Bandwagon approach
- iii. Circular reasoning
- iv. Creating a red herring
- v. Either/or reasoning
- vi. Hasty generalization/Sweeping generalization
- vii. Non sequitur (Latin for "it does not follow")
- viii. Oversimplification
- ix. Begging the question

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5 Writing from Multiple Sources

5.1 OBJECTIVES

- Use multiple sources to support an argument in a way that is relevant and logical.
- Explain and substantiate a short written argument
- Discover and research a persuasive argument

5.2 DEFINITION OF SOURCE

A **source** is any information providing person, book, article, document, or other form of communication.

- Text books
- Internet
- Journal articles, letters, government documents, surveys, lab reports, oral histories
- Magazines, newspaper articles, pamphlets
- Individuals with expertise in the field
- Dissertations/theses

Implication: It implies writing while reading from multiple sources. (Note: Reading strategies to be reviewed at this point). Students need to know their most effective reading time, understand factors that hinder concentration and how that can be overcome in order to maximize on the reading) Recommended text for reading strategies and concentration: **Learning and Communication by Sekyi-Baidoo.**

5.3 WHY WRITE FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES?

- Broadens the scope of the paper
- Enriches the content
- Offers contrasting ideas
- Signals one's sophistication as a writer
- Ensures objectivity

What type of essays qualify to be written from multiple sources? Answer: Argumentative type of essays.

5.4 GUIDELINES FOR WRITING FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

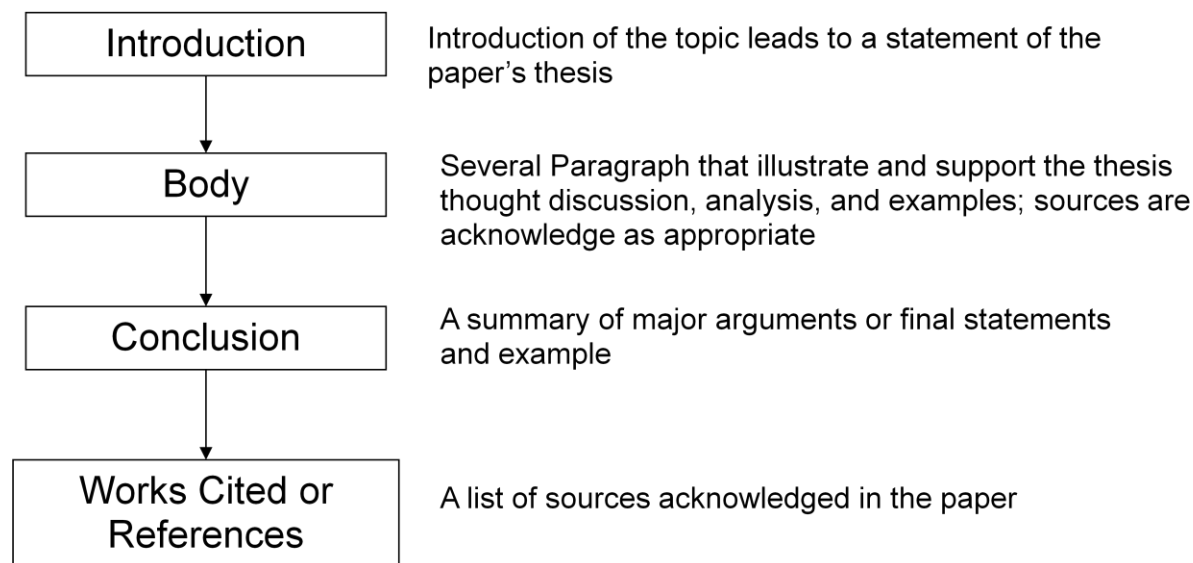
An essay written from multiple sources is basically a **research essay** as it demands reading and sourcing out for information from other sources. **What is a research essay?**

- A kind of extended argumentative essay, objective in style, based on investigation of sources and evidence. It presents your opinion about a subject by stating a thesis, or main idea and supporting it with your details and examples.
- Research essay focus is on the subject of the paper, and the objectively gathered evidence that supports the thesis. **Your own ideas** contribute to the success of the paper, however, the evidence you use for support comes from other sources-books, newspapers, magazines, journals, films, lab reports and personal interviews.
- You must acknowledge such sources, by citing them directly in the essay text and listing them at the end in a section called - **References**

How can your own ideas fit into a paper that requires research and incorporates materials from outside sources?

Keep in mind that at the heart of every effective research essay is the writer's own **understanding of the topic**. Your paper should analyze, compare, and evaluate information and sources to support **your position** and clarify **your thoughts** for the reader. Your presentation and interpretation of your facts, analysis and comparison of other writer's opinions, and your conclusions about this information constitute the heart of your research essay.

The parts of a research paper are represented in the chart below:



- Rather than searching for a quotation or something to paraphrase during the composition stage, you are encouraged to *examine a number of likely sources* and summarize each one for its central issue.
- Once you have a fairly complete set of summaries, you can chart them into categories, which in effect build or help to build the design of the paper. That is, several issues will emerge, and each will demand its share of space in your essay.
- In addition, you can copy and insert material from both your summaries and direct quotations that you have identified as vital to your paper.
- Other voices and opinions—blended effectively within your content—will reinforce your essay and even challenge you and your readers to confront new and perhaps unusual views of the topic.

Length of a research paper- This will be determined by the amount of discussion needed to support your main point. Select a topic that can be discussed in 10-12 pages (double spaced)-5000-6000 words-usual length for most college research essays. Other factors that determine length include but are not limited to:-topic, length of time you have for research, expectations of the instructor.

Organization of a research paper- Includes the following parts:- Title page (optional), Outline (optional), Text (introduction, body, conclusion), Notes (Optional), references, Appendix (optional). The contents of these sections will reflect the efforts of your research and thinking about the topic. For optional items, consult with the instructor to determine whether you need to include them. Different departments have different sets of guidelines for preparing research essays.

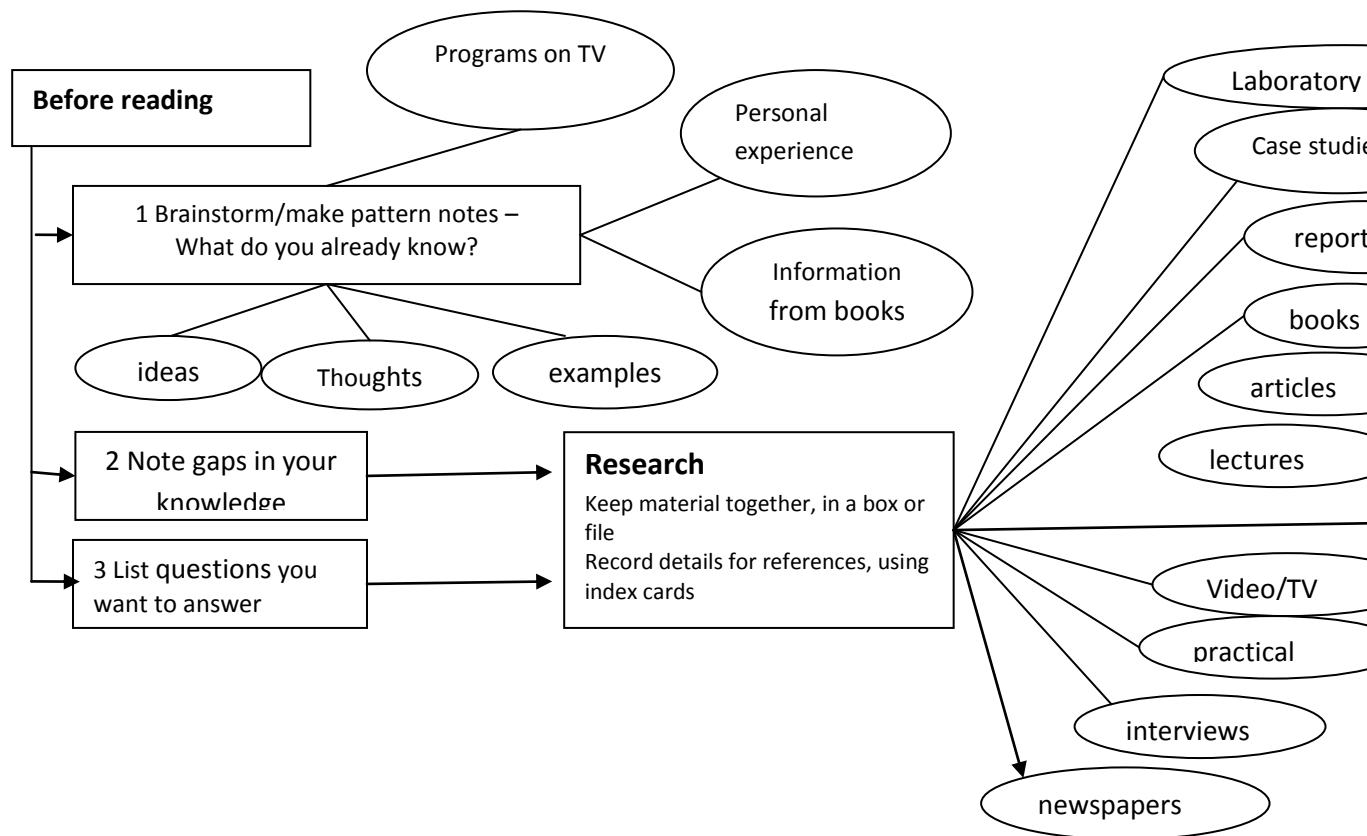
Sources for research must be evaluated. The following guidelines can be used.

- (1) Authoritative-check encyclopedias, text books, articles in academic journals, ask experts.
- (2) Reliable-check different sources, if the same information appears, the material is likely to be reliable.
- (3) Well supported- check that each source supports assertions or information with sufficient evidence. If the material expresses the source's point of view but offers little to back up that position, turn to another source.
- (4) Balanced tone-read the source critically. If the tone is unbiased and if the reasoning is logical, consider the source to be balanced.

(5) Current-check that the information is up to date. Sometimes long accepted information is replaced or modified by new research. Check indexes to journals or computerized databases to see if anything newer has come along.

Starting to compile a list of headings or key words-knowing how to locate headings and key words is central to the research process. Headings are subject categories in books and periodicals. Keywords identify subject categories in periodicals. Example the topic NUCLEAR ENERGY is identified with various headings or key words: energy, nuclear, atomic energy, nuclear power etc. Then determine your documentation style.

Recording and using information



(Source: Cottrell, 132)

Note

If the source is personal communication and/or through data collection techniques such as use of questionnaires, interviews, observation and focus group discussions, there is need for students to understand sampling techniques especially probability sampling that ensures objectivity as well as understand and be conversant with the data collection techniques.

[Students should be taught guidelines for topic selection and narrowing down the topic at this point if need be].

5.5 STUDENT ASSIGNMENT DIRECTIONS

- 1). Students to select an essay title that is cohesive, focused and well organized: It must be an argument paper and should be approved by the instructor. The title should not only make the topic clear, but your point of view on that topic.
- 2). Write an **outline** that will consist of a thesis statement and statements of reasons, arranged in a formal format.
- 3). The structure of the essay: to contain an introductory paragraph with a clear thesis statement, body paragraphs with support for at least three reasons, and a conclusion paragraph.
- 4). Must use at least **two sources**. You must use all your sources in your paper (whether direct quotes, paraphrases, or both) - this is "Works Cited." You may not use more source material than your own explanation!
- 5). **BE CAREFUL NOT TO PLAGIARIZE.** Highlight the passages you used from your source, holding them up next to where they are in the paper, and checking back and forth to see if you got it right.
- 6). If time permits student draft essays can be peer edited in class.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Have a clearly stated thesis statement in the introduction
- Have an introduction which leads smoothly into the body
- Have clearly stated reasons
- Have direct explanation of why those reasons prove that your argument makes sense
- Make good use of well-chosen, relevant academic sources, inserting them when needed.
- Have **all sources documented in the paper.**

- Have clear, logical organization and transitioning
- Be focused - everything must go towards proving your thesis!
- Have a **separate Works Cited page** that **lists your sources**

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6 Making Academic Presentations

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Making an academic presentation is an integral part of your life in the academic discourse community. An academic presentation gives you, the researcher, an opportunity to share your research ideas or findings. There are skills that you need to acquire in order to become a good presenter. It is also important to practise, because the more you practise, the better you should become at it. The basic ideas that will be discussed in this section will help you with your preparation and delivery. You will therefore have to consider them carefully.

6.2 TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- To teach students how to prepare material for an academic presentation
- To equip students with academic presentation/delivery skills.
- To help students to practise skills acquired in individual and group presentations.

6.3 EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOME

At the end of this module, students should be able to do the following:

- Prepare material for presentation using audio-visual aids
- Apply acquired skills to present a well-prepared paper to the class, individually and also in groups

6.4 SOME BASIC POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Know your material
- Be selective in what to present
- Organize your material
- Understand your audience
- Clarify your goal
- Rehearse your presentation
- Present within the time.

A. KNOW YOUR MATERIAL

A good knowledge of the subject material is important. In addition to the research findings or ideas you have prepared to share, you will have to read adequately on the subject matter. This will help you to be clear in your presentation. It will also help you to handle questions that the audience will ask intelligently.

B. BE SELECTIVE IN WHAT TO PRESENT

Do not present redundant information; the audience would want to hear something new. Do not forget that the essence of research is its contribution to knowledge. However, do not also take some ideas or information for granted. You will therefore have to make a **good assessment of your audience**.

You also need to select your material carefully with respect to the amount of time you have for delivery.

C. ORGANISE THE MATERIAL

Similar to the academic essay, the academic presentation also has the following sections:

- The Introduction
- The Body
- The Conclusion/Summary

1. The introduction

This section involves:

- Spelling out what you intend to do/ topic and aim of your presentation
- Providing a brief background
- Giving an outline of your presentation or
- Telling your audience about the order of your presentation

2. The Body

- The body constitutes the core of your presentation.
- Divide your content into main points
- Limit the number of main points
- Organize you points such that it is easy for the audience to follow.
- Provide data to support your argument.

3. Conclusion/Summary

The conclusion or summary entails the following:

- What new ideas arise out of your study?
- What more data do you need to confirm your initial observations?
- What contribution does your study make to our understanding of the subject?
- Any possible future directions?

D. Delivery methods

- Avoid reading a fully written out text.
- Use PowerPoint or Handout/Notes
- Use the slides/notes/handout as speaking aids

Types of audio-visuals

You may use any of the following:

- White board
- Flipchart
- Poster boards
- Transparencies
- Pictures
- Sound files
- Handouts
- PowerPoint

E. Audience connection

Maintain eye contact with audience.

Do not speak in a monotone.

Your voice must be clear, but do not shout.

Avoid pacing around the room to minimize distraction.

Minimize the use speech fillers e.g hmm; I mean; you see; now; eeh etc

F. Your body

Be careful with your gestures; remember that communication could be verbal/non-verbal. Have an idea about the culture of the place e.g use of left hand in Ghana.

Be mindful of your posture, avoid mannerisms like rubbing of eyes, yawning, nose-picking etc.

Dress decently, but do not overdress to cause distractions.

G. The Question time

- Questions should be expected at the end of your presentation
- Do not panic
- Anticipate some of the questions as you prepare material for presentation and find answers to them
- Listen attentively
- Do not interrupt the questioner
- Be courteous
- Be sincere
- Ask for clarification if question is unclear
- Answer directly
- Admit it if you don't know the answer, but promise to find out later

Consider the following also:

Managing Anxiety

- Use every opportunity to make presentations
- Presentation at international or national conferences must start from your class or department
- Know your subject thoroughly to boost your confidence
- Prepare sufficiently
- Rehearse your presentation
- Engage in relaxation exercises

Using PowerPoint

- Present one idea per slide.
- Don't overcrowd your slides
- Each slide should have not more than EIGHT lines.
- So don't copy and paste passages from WORD to PPT.
- Be conservative in the use of animation.

Technology Challenges

- If you plan to use PPT, be sure a projector will be available.
- Have a Plan B in case technology fails you.
- Have copies of your PPT slides ready.
- In a conference setting, be sure to load your files before it is your turn to present.
- If you are using your own laptop, pre-test with the projector.

Hardcopy handout

- Make a hardcopy handout.
- Put extra data in your handout (rather than in the PPT)
- Provide list of abbreviations if any
- Supply list of cited works/ Bibliography/References

The following expressions/phrases are helpful in making presentations:

Starting the presentation:

- Good morning/ good afternoon ladies and gentlemen
- The topic of my presentation is ...
- What I am going to talk about today is ...

Why you are giving this presentation:

- The purpose of this presentation is...
- This is important because...
- My objective is to ...

Stating the main points/ order of presentation:

- The main points I will be talking about are firstly...
secondly...
next, finally... we are going to look at...

Introducing the first point:

- Let's start/begin with...

Showing graphics, slides etc.

- I would like to illustrate this by showing you...

Moving on to the next point:

- Now let's move on to...

Giving more details:

- I would like to expand on this aspect/problem/point...
- Let me elaborate on that...
- Let me explain further...

Changing to a different topic:

- I would like to turn to something completely different...

Referring to something which is off the topic (not advisable, minimize this):

- I would like to digress here for a moment and just mention that...

Referring back to an earlier point:

- Let me go back to what I said earlier about...

Summarizing or repeating the main points:

- I would like to recap the main points of my presentation
 - first I covered
 - then we talked about
 - finally we looked at
- I would like to sum up the main points which were:

Conclusion:

- I am going to conclude by... saying that/inviting you/ quoting...
- In conclusion, let me...leave you with this thought/invite you to...

Questions:

- Finally, I will be happy to answer your questions
- Now I would like to invite any questions you may have
- Do you have any questions?

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