

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL REPORT

By Kevin Holm

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Introduction

This document describes how to write an effective technical report. Almost a marketing approach; successful reports are those carefully tuned to the genuine needs of the reader. Marketing build effective sales around specific user needs using a top-down approach.

The goal of writing a report is to have it read and its recommendations carried out. A report written for any other reason has little value. Achieving this goal needs change in the mind of the reader.

This approach, of more active technical writing, will get results by giving readers what they want by the writer learning how to anticipate the readers' needs and their responses. Most technical writers fail to understand the needs of their readers, and say too much and waste time supplying useless information. It appears safer and easier to write about everything rather than to analyse and discriminate.

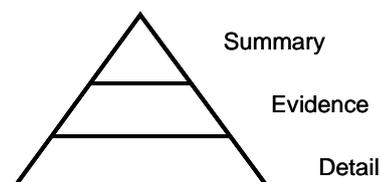
Technical readers want to get through their reading as efficiently and painlessly as possible. The first objective, no matter the subject, is to help them do just that. This means analysing, interpreting and writing what's important without forcing readers to wade through much data and technical jargon. Technical writers don't normally think consciously in these terms.

A technical report is not a novel; it does not need reading from beginning to end. Separate findings in a report may be of greater interest to certain groups. To aid the reader not become bogged down, the report should be laid out suitably.

Technical people, adopt a passive attitude about their work. "My business is knowledge, not manipulation." The truth is, it is impossible to avoid influencing others. Everything has an impact, if not well thought-out and planned, the response is likely to be random.

The aim of this work is to improve the legibility of reports with a recognisable document style and reduce the time and energy needed to produce reports. The work recommends a three-level pyramid approach:

- An executive **summary** to describe purpose, major findings and recommendations
- The supporting **evidence** for the major findings and implementation planning
- The **detail** and appendices are placed at the end of the document



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section captures the essence of the report in **a single page**. It should summarise the purpose of the project, the most important findings and the recommendations.

1.1 Project Purpose

Provide a brief outline of the purpose of the work in less than ten lines. Provide background to the project and recognise any prior work. Include a focusing question, an effective way of posing the challenge or purpose of the work.

Note: A focusing question has 7 elements, an opening, a purpose (why), an act (what), an agent (who), an agency (how), a scene (where) and a qualification (standard).

1.2 Outcome and Major Findings

State the overall outcome followed by the three or four major findings to this outcome in less than 15 lines. Indicate where the reader can find supporting evidence in the report for each major finding.

Draw the overall outcome based on the major findings, and in most cases, the answer to the focusing question. Give a brief description of the major findings the investigation revealed (maximum of four with four lines each).

Note: Refer to expansion of the findings in section two.

1.3 Major Recommendations and Benefits

State the important recommendations and link them to the major findings in less than ten lines. Add actions and the benefits of the recommendations in section two and refer the reader to them.

Note: To fit into a single page, the executive summary needs to be brief and only include the important information. Present thoughts in clear, non-technical language so all can follow the logic. Remember, a true summary is never more than a seventh of the material summarised.

Refer the reader to supporting information included in section 2 of the report.

For short reports, an executive summary may be enough, but the second section supports the executive summary statements and a third level captures all the fine detail.

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2. MAJOR FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This section provides supporting evidence for the major findings and an action plan for the recommendations in less than eight pages.

This is the heart of the document, designed to support everything in the executive summary. The size limit allows for enough important evidence for the executive summary without fine detail.

Note: Expand on the purpose or scope of the investigation and describe the approach used. Present the key evidence behind the overall outcome and major findings. Add actions to the recommendations and provide an implementation plan.

Like the executive summary it should be accessible to non-technical readers, so use diagrams, charts and tables to express complex points clearly.

2.1 Introduction

Describe briefly the scope of the project and the approach used in **less than a page**. Recognise all previous work.

Present the scope of work and remember to make it consistent with the project proposal. If there is a change from the original scope, point out any differences. Note the boundaries of the work and any areas excluded from the project.

Describe the general approach applied to the work but not the detailed method. Recognise previous contributions if suitable.

Note: The introduction should be no more than a page.

2.2 Methodology

The reader may wish to assess the technical or consulting method followed in the early part of the document. If so describe it here using flow charts or diagrams and lessen technical terminology. Avoid a wordy description of the work.

Note: Never allow the method description to extend beyond **a page** in this section of the document. Provide a detailed method description in Section 3 if needed.

2.3 Major Findings 1-n

This is a critical part of the report. Compose a heading to reflect the first major finding from the executive summary and then provide supporting evidence of about a page. Use graphs, tables and diagrams wherever possible as a visual presentation of the evidence as they are far easier to follow than lengthy text. Start **a new page for each major finding**.

The headings for each major finding should mirror the major findings presented in the executive summary. Anticipate questions the reader may have for each major finding and provide logical answers. Provide rock solid support in the form of well-reasoned and clearly presented evidence.

Note: For each major finding, use **no more than two pages**, although one page is usually enough.

2.4 Recommended Actions

This too is a critical part of the report. It presents the implementation plan, in a form of a checklist, for the recommendations.

Note: Use a table to present the actions that support each recommendation.

2.5 Potential Benefits

Expand on the benefits of the recommendations outlined in the executive summary if carried out.

Note: Recommendations and the actions should never be a surprise. Ideally develop them in collaboration to give them the best possible chance of success. Others will discredit the report or simply ignore the recommendations if they are not sensible. The potential benefits may be difficult to gain but are worth chasing.

Refer the reader to supporting information for major findings and recommended actions included in section 3 of the report.

3. SUPPORTING DETAILS

Section three is a record of all the detail associated with the investigations. Ask the client about the detail expected in this section. There may be a need for a format match for a consolidated document produced later.

This section is less prescriptive than the previous sections and may follow the path of the investigations. Note there is no size limit or limit to the number of appendices.

Where possible, present data as tables, charts and diagrams with text for clarification.

Consider binding section three separately to **show a clear separation between essential and nonessential reading**. For a single document make a clear division between section three and the rest of the report (for example a cardboard sheet with a tab).

Note: Explain all acronyms and technical terms. A table of acronyms and terms does not replace the need to define each one in the text at its first use. It takes much effort to write and edit lengthy text. Save time, and often communicate more clearly, by using word tables to record observations. Use appendices for detailed data or for information produced outside the project.

3.1 English Grammar Summary

Grammar is the structure and system of a language consisting of syntax and form. There are eight types of words used to make a sentence and the verb is the most important.

Figure 1: English Grammar Definitions

Word Type	Definition	Example
Verb	A verb is a word usually noting an action, an event, or a state of being.	<i>be, have, do, work</i> Food is something you eat .
Noun	Nouns are "things" and verbs are "actions".	<i>man, town, music</i> Food is something you eat.
Adjective	An adjective is a word that tells us more about a noun; it qualifies or modifies the noun.	<i>a, the, big</i> That's a big dog.
Adverb	An adverb is a word that tells us more about a verb. An adverb can qualify or modify a <i>verb</i> , an <u>adjective</u> or another <i>adverb</i> .	<i>loudly, well, often</i> The man <i>ran</i> quickly . Tara is really <u>beautiful</u> . It works very <i>well</i> .
Pronoun	Pronouns are small words that take the place of a <u>noun</u> . If not for pronouns, we would have to repeat many nouns.	<i>he, you, ours, some</i> Do you like the <u>president</u> ? I don't like him . He is too pompous.
Preposition	A preposition is a word governing, and usually coming in front of a <i>noun or pronoun</i> . It expresses a relation to another word (time or place).	<i>at, in, on, from</i> She left before <i>breakfast</i> <i>Where</i> did you come from ?
Conjunction	A conjunction is a word that "joins" two parts of a sentence. We can consider conjunctions from the aspects of form, role and position.	<i>and, but, though</i> Jack and Jill went up the hill. It was warm, but I did not go in.
Interjection	Interjection is a big name for a little word or exclamation with no real grammatical value. We use them often, usually more in speaking than in writing.	<i>ah, dear, um</i> Ah! There it is.

3.2 Style Summary

Adopt the following general writing guidelines to all reports:

- Be concise and use plain language.
- Start with a summary of the most important ideas or recommendations.
- Use headings that help the reader follow the story or argument.
- Review all important documents with an expert and a non-expert.

Construct clear paragraphs:

- Explore one idea per paragraph.
- Link paragraphs to interpret for the reader.
- Start each paragraph with a topic sentence to introduce the paragraph idea.
- Connect each new paragraph to the previous paragraph, so the reader knows where we have come from, and where we are going.

Use verb based sentences:

- Give preference to the active voice.
- Use strong verbs.
- Keep the subject, verb and object close together.
- Use 'I believe', rather than, 'it is believed'.
- Write 'we will explain', rather than, 'we will provide an explanation'.
- Use short sentences. These need to be linked using reference, 'these' or connecting words and phrases, 'despite...' or 'in addition to this'.

Choose precise words:

- Eliminate vague or long words.
- Avoid jargon and eliminate worn out metaphors.
- Use consistent terms.
- Eliminate long noun phrases.
- Use 'plant' rather than 'production facility', 'strike' rather than 'industrial disruption'.
- Eliminate business jargon along with 'giant leaps forward', 'tides turned', and 'good ideas floated'.
- Don't mix terms like 'study', 'project', and 'assignment', when they mean the same
- Don't use phrases like, 'The Burrows Mining Company sustainable development decision making process'

Edit well:

- Use a systematic approach to improve readability.
 - Use consistent structures for headings and dot points.
 - Use commas to improve clarity.
 - Ensure content, organisation, and language are targeted to the reader.
 - If the first heading is an assertion, each heading that follows should be an assertion.
 - If the first dot point starts with a verb, each dot point that follows should start with a verb.
 - Use commas to separate words, phrases, clauses, or places where we would pause if reading aloud.
-

3.3 Punctuation Summary

The rules of punctuation are conventions that have changed over the centuries. They vary across national boundaries and even from one writer to the next. Punctuation is not fool proof; the written word can never suggest all the subtleties of meaning the spoken language can. But surely good punctuation can help!

Figure 2: Punctuation Definitions

Punctuation Mark	Name	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation 		
.	full stop or period	I like English.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to mark the end of a sentence • to indicate abbreviated words • to punctuate numbers and dates 		
,	comma	I speak English, French and Thai.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separate information into readable units • ensure the correct reading of a sentence • to set off any string of words which is either a parenthesis or in contrast • a means of separating items in a list or to ensure clarity 		
;	semi-colon	I don't often go swimming; I prefer to play tennis.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separate two complete sentences that are closely linked • a second level of punctuation in a series of words or phrases 		
:	colon	You have two choices: finish the work today or lose the contract.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to indicate a list, quotation or summary is about to follow • to separate an first sentence, clause, etc. from a second, that supports the first 		
-	hyphen	This is a rather out-of-date book.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used to link two or more words not normally placed together, so they work as one idea 		
—	dash	In each town—London, Paris and Rome—we stayed in youth hostels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work like brackets to enclose extra information 		

?	question mark	Where is Shangri-La?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> placed at the end of a sentence which is a question 		
!	exclamation mark	"Help!" she cried. "I'm drowning!"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used at the end of a sentence to indicate surprise, anger, or alarm used sparingly and not often in academic writing 		
" "	double quotation marks	"I love you," she said.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used in pairs to set off a quotation or a piece of dialogue 		
' '	single quotation marks	'I love you,' she said.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used to enclose quotations within quotations 		
'	apostrophe	This is John's car.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used as a contraction of a shortened version of a word used to indicate ownership or possession (with nouns) 		
()	curved and square parentheses	I went to Bangkok (my favourite city) for two weeks.
[]		The hostages [most of them French] were released.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used to include extra or nonessential information 		
...	ellipsis mark	One customer wrote: "This is the best program...that I have ever seen."
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used to indicate that material has been left out of a quotation 		

3.4 Figures of Speech Summary

A figure of speech is the use of a word or words diverging from its usual meaning. Figures of speech often provide emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity. Clarity may also suffer from their use, as any figure of speech introduces an ambiguity between literal and figurative interpretation.

Figure 3: Figures of Speech Definitions

Types	Definition	Example
Metaphor	The substitution of a word for a word whose meaning is close to the original word. The greater the difference between the two things being compared, the better the metaphor.	Her eyes were like fireflies.
Metonymy	A noun is substituted for a noun in such a way that we substitute the cause of the thing of which we are speaking of for the thing itself. Substituting the inventor for his invention, an author for his work or the sign for the thing signified.	The White House will be announcing the decision around noon today.
Synecdoche	Substitution of part for whole, genus for species, or vice versa. A synecdoche may use part of something to represent the entire whole. It may use an entire whole to represent a part of it.	Coke
Irony	Expressing a meaning directly contrary to that suggested by the words.	A man who is a traffic officer gets his licence suspended for unpaid parking tickets.
Metalepsis	A double metonymy in which an effect is represented by a remote cause	Pallid death - The effect of death is to make the body pale. Ascribing this effect to death itself as an adjective here is an example of metalepsis.
Paradox	A seemingly self-contradictory statement, which yet is shown to be true	"What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young." - George Bernard Shaw
Oxymoron	A condensed paradox at the level of a phrase	"I can resist anything, except temptation." - Oscar Wilde
Anthimeria	The substitution of one part of speech for another; for instance, an adverb for a noun or a noun for an adverb	"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself". - Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural address in 1933:
Litotes	A deliberate understatement or denial of the contrary	Not bad, not bad at all.
Hyperbole	An exaggerated or extravagant statement used to make a strong impression, but not intended to be taken literally	I am so hungry I could eat a horse
Simile	A simile directly compares two different things, usually by employing the words "like" or "as".	She walks as gracefully as a cat or She walks like a cat.

Appendix A

Technical Writing

Technical Writing

This section describes how to write a good technical report; what to know before writing, the purpose of the report, and an overall approach to writing it.

Almost a marketing approach; successful reports are those carefully tuned to the genuine needs of the reader. Marketing build effective sales around specific user needs using a top-down approach. View the report with the needs at the top, supported by the findings and recommendations below.

The goal of writing a report is to have it read and its recommendations carried out. A report written for any other reason has little value. Achieving this goal needs change in the mind of the reader. The way to achieve this is to develop recommendations during the project and not present them as a "surprise package".

Ask basic questions about the intended audience and the effect the writing should have. It is important to ask what will get the right response. Break this down into problems and sub problems.

This approach, of more active technical writing, will get results by giving readers what they want. This means learning how to anticipate readers' needs and their responses. Because most technical writers fail to understand the needs of their readers, most say too much and waste time supplying useless information. It appears safer and easier to write about everything rather than to analyse and discriminate.

Technical readers want to get through their reading as efficiently and painlessly as possible. The first objective, no matter the subject, is to help do that. This means analysing, interpreting and writing what's important without forcing them to wade through much data and technical jargon. Normally authors don't think consciously in these terms.

The overall approach to the writing of the report is also top-down; roughly five stages of refinement:

- Section-level outline
- Subsection-level outline
- Paragraph-level outline
- Convert into a full report by writing out the flow in full sentences
- Refinement; review from others

During the paragraph-level outline, consider including figures, tables and graphs as part of the report. Simple figures and tables help better explain many ideas.

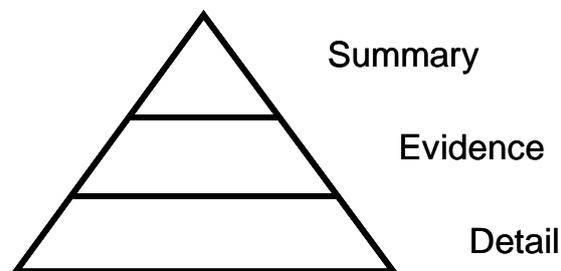
A technical report is not a novel; it does not need reading from beginning to end. Therefore lay it out a little differently. Separate findings in the report may be of greater interest to certain groups; structure the report suitably. Aid the reader so they do not become bogged down reading less important information.

No report is perfect, and not the first version. Well written reports go through much refinement. Either through self-reading and critical analysis or a more effective peer review. So start early; don't wait to complete the work before starting to write or to have sections reviewed.

Technical people, adopt a passive attitude about their work. "My business is knowledge, not manipulation." The truth is, it is impossible to avoid influencing others. Everything has an impact, if not well thought-out and planned, the response is likely to be random. A weak, noncommittal memo to the boss might cause him to see little conviction and ignore the idea.

Recommendation is for a three-level pyramid approach:

- An executive **summary** to describe purpose, major findings and recommendations
- Supporting **evidence** for the major findings and implementation planning
- Project **detail** and appendices, placed at the end of the document



The **executive summary** is the most-read part of a report and attracts attention to the report. The executive summary has four parts, a purpose, a focusing question, findings and recommendations. It should be concise; the essence of the report in a single page, based on which the reader decides whether to continue reading the report.

The purpose provides a brief outline of the need for the work. It should include a focusing question; an effective way of posing the challenge of the work. A focusing question has seven elements, an opening, a purpose (why), an act (what), an agent (who), an agency (how), a scene (where) and a qualification (standard).

State the major findings briefly and guided the reader where to find supporting evidence for each major finding later in the report. Draw the overall result from the major findings, usually the answer to the focusing question.

Link the recommendations to the major findings with the benefits. Present thoughts in a clear, non-technical language so all can follow the logic.

Divide the **supporting evidence** section of the report into sub sections; different sections to delve into the problem. Start with an introduction and cover the following:

- Setting the problem, the background.
- Stating the exact problem.
- The importance of the problem, the motivation.
- A statement about the past or related work and the challenge.
- The essence of the method used to solve the problem.
- The conditions under which the solution applies.
- Describe the lay out of the report.

If there is enough background and previous work expand on it so the reader may understand before examining the details of the work. Recognise any previous work and try to think of comparisons of the work with other work.

The reader may wish to assess the method followed in the work. Describe it early using flow charts or diagrams. Avoid a wordy description of the method.

The findings and recommendation sections are the crux of the work; use the following guidelines:

- For sections with subsections, outline the section suitably at its beginning. Ensure an easy flow from one subsection to the next, without any abrupt jumps.
- Spend time thinking about pictures and figures to use. Wherever necessary, explain all the figures, and do not leave the reader wondering about connections between figures and text.
- Define terms or symbols when first used and stick to common terminology throughout the report.
- Present the results as tables and graphs and explain them. Identify trends in the data and ensure the data proves them.
- State issues not considered and possibilities for further work.

The **detail and appendices** section is less prescriptive. It may follow the path of the investigation or a prescribed template. Many large mining companies have such templates to cover all work in mining studies. There is no size limit or limit to the number of appendices.

In **summary**, have a clear, specific reason for writing. If the decision is to write, make sure the goal is clearly understand.

Tune the writing to the audience by creating a logical package for the message. Design the package carefully to carry out the goal.

Alice: Will you tell me which way I ought to go from here?

Cheshire Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to go.

Alice: I don't much care...

Cheshire Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

Alice in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll

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Appendix B

English Grammar

English Grammar

Grammar is the structure and system of a language consisting of syntax and form. There are eight types of words used to make a sentence and the verb is the most important.

- **Verbs;** *be, have, do, work*
- **Nouns;** *man, town, music*
- **Adjectives;** *a, the, big*
- **Adverbs;** *loudly, well, often*
- **Pronouns;** *you, ours, some*
- **Prepositions;** *at, in, on, from*
- **Conjunctions;** *and, but, though*
- **Interjections;** *ah, dear, um*

Verbs

A verb is a word usually noting an action, an event, or a state of being. A verb varies in form for many reasons, including tense, aspect, mood and voice. It may also agree with person, gender, and argument.

- **Verb Forms** to sing, sing, sings, sang, singing
- **Tenses** I will sing, I am singing, I have sung
- **Phrasal Verbs** put out, look after, get on with
- **Conditionals** if I win, if I won, if I had won
- **Modal Verbs** can, shall, must

Nouns

In simple terms, **nouns** are "things" and verbs are "actions". **Food** is something you eat. **Happiness** is something you want. The simple definition of a noun is **a person, place or item**, but this does not explain why "love" is a noun and a verb.

Another more complicated way of recognising a noun, is by its ending, position or role.

There are certain word **endings** that show that a word is a noun (**nationality, appointment, happiness, relation, childhood**). But this is not always true (the noun "spoonful" ends in -ful, but so does the adjective "careful").

We can also recognise a noun by its **position** in the sentence. Nouns often come after a determiner (a determiner is a word like a, an, the, this, my, such, for example, a relief, an afternoon, the doctor, this word, my house, such stupidity). Nouns often come after one or more adjectives (a great relief, a peaceful afternoon, the tall doctor, this difficult word, such cross stupidity).

Nouns also have certain **roles** in a sentence:

- subject of verb - **Doctors** work hard,
 - object of verb - He likes **coffee**,
-

- subject and object of verb - **Teachers** teach **students**

But the subject or object of a sentence is not always a noun. It could be a pronoun or a phrase:

- "My doctor works hard", the noun is "doctor" but the subject is "My doctor"

Some nouns have no plural (countable and uncountable nouns):

- Dog/dogs, rice, hair(s)

Proper nouns (names):

- Shirley, Mr Smith, Thailand, April, Sony

The possessive noun, by adding ('s) or (')

- John's car, my parents' house

Adjectives

An **adjective** is a word that tells us more about a noun (including pronouns and noun phrases). An adjective "qualifies" or "modifies" a *noun* (a **big dog**). We use adjectives before a noun (I like **Chinese food**) or after certain verbs (It is **hard**). We can often use two or more adjectives together (a **beautiful young athletic** woman).

- **Adjectives** rich, exciting, to **Comparatives** richer, more exciting, to **Superlatives** the richest, the most exciting

Adverbs

An adverb is a word that tells us more about a verb. An **adverb** "qualifies" or "modifies" a *verb* (The man *ran* **quickly**). But adverbs can also modify *adjectives* (Tara is **really beautiful**), or even other *adverbs* (It works **very well**).

We call many different kinds of word adverbs. We can usually recognise an adverb by its **role, form** or **position**.

The principal **role** of an adverb is to modify (give more information about) verbs, adjectives and other adverbs:

- An **adverb** modifying a verb - John speaks **loudly**. (How John speaks) - Mary lives **locally**. (Where Mary lives) - She **never** smokes. (If she smokes)
 - An **adverb** modifying an adjective - He is **really** handsome.
 - An **adverb** modifying another adverb - She drives **incredibly** slowly.
 - An **adverb** modifying a whole sentence - **Obviously**, I can't know everything.
-

- An **adverb** modifying a prepositional phrase - It's **immediately** inside the door.

Many adverbs end in -ly. We **form** such adverbs by adding -ly to the adjective:

- quickly, softly, strongly, honestly, interestingly (not all words that end in -ly are adverbs, "Friendly" is an adjective)

Some adverbs have no particular form:

- well, fast, very, never, always, often, still

Adverbs have three main **positions** in the sentence.

- **Front** (before the subject) - **Now** we will study adverbs.
- **Middle** (between the subject and the main verb) - We **often** study adverbs.
- **End** (after the verb or object) - We study adverbs **carefully**.

Pronouns

Pronouns are small words that take the place of a noun. We can use a pronoun instead of a noun. Pronouns are words like: **he, you, ours, themselves, some** and **each**. If we didn't have pronouns, we would have to repeat many nouns.

We would have to say. Do you like the **president**? I don't like the **president**. The **president** is too pompous. With pronouns, we can say. Do you like the president? I don't like **him**. **He** is too pompous.

- **Personal Pronouns** - I, you, he, me, your, his.
- **Pronoun Case** - subjective, objective, possessive

Prepositions

A **preposition** is a word governing, and usually coming in front of a *noun or pronoun*. It expresses a relation to another word (She left **before** *breakfast* or *What* did you come **for**?).

- **Prepositions of place** - at the bus stop, in the box, on the wall
- **Prepositions of time** - at Christmas, in May, on Friday

Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word that "joins" two parts of a sentence. We can consider conjunctions from the aspects of form, role and position.

Conjunctions have three **forms**:

- **Single word**: and, but, because, although.
-

- **Compound** (often ending with as or that): provided that, as long as, in order that.
- **Correlative** (surrounding an adverb or adjective): so...that.

Conjunctions have two **roles**:

- **Coordinating conjunctions** join two parts of a sentence that are grammatically equal. The two parts may be single words or clauses (Jack **and** Jill went up the hill. The water was warm, **but** I didn't go swimming.).
- **Subordinating conjunctions** join a subordinate dependent clause to a main clause (I went swimming **although** it was cold.).

Conjunctions have two **positions**:

- **Coordinating conjunctions** always come between the words or clauses that they join.
- **Subordinating conjunctions** usually come at the beginning of the subordinate clause.

Interjections

Interjection is a big name for a little word. Interjections are short exclamations like **Oh! Um or Ah!** They have no real grammatical value or connection to the sentence, but we use them often, usually more in speaking than in writing. Sometimes an exclamation mark (!) follows an interjection when written.

Appendix C

Style

Style

A style guide is a set of standards for writing and designing documents, either for general or special (company) use. A style guide provides uniformity in style and formatting in a single document or across multiple documents. Companies call their set of standards "house style". Companies revise style guides periodically to adapt to changes in conventions and usage for what they believe to be fair and correct language treatment of their audiences.

Clarity of writing follows clarity of thought, so think about what needs to be said, and then say it as simply as possible. Keep in mind the elementary rules of style:

- Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech often seen in print.
- Never use a long word where a short one will do.
- If it is possible to cut out a word, cut it out.
- Use the active rather than the passive.
- Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if there is an everyday English equivalent.

1.0 Metaphors

Tired metaphors will tire the reader. Most are so exhausted and considered dead, and are therefore permissible. But use all metaphors, dead or alive, sparingly.

"A newly invented metaphor aids thought by evoking a visual image. On the other hand a metaphor which is technically 'dead' has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word without loss of vividness. But between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which people use because it saves them the trouble of inventing phrases." (George Orwell)

2.0 Short words

Use them as they are often Anglo-Saxon rather than Latin in origin. They are also easy to spell and easy to understand.

Use **about** to **approximately**, **after** to **following**, **let** to **permit**, **but** to **however**, **use** to **utilise**, **make** to **manufacture**, **plant** to **facility**, **take part** to **participate**, **set up** to **establish**, **enough** to **sufficient**, **show** to **demonstrate**.

"Short words are best and the old words when short are best of all." (Sir Winston Churchill)

3.0 Unnecessary words

Many words add nothing but length to prose. Use adjectives to make the meaning more precise and be cautious of those used to make it more emphatic. The word **very** is a case in point. If it occurs in a sentence written, try leaving it out and see whether meaning changes. **The omens were good** may have more force than **the omens were very good**.

In general, be concise in the account or argument. Similarly, try to be economical with words (**strike** for **strike action**, **cuts** for **cutbacks**, **record** for **track record**, **big** for **large-scale**, **this time around** just means **this time**).

"The best way to be boring is to leave nothing out." (Voltaire) "Run your pen through every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigour it will give to your style." (Sydney Smith) "Her journalism, like a diamond, will sparkle more when cut." (Raymond Mortimer commenting about Susan Sontag)

4.0 Active, not passive

Try to be direct, **Andrew hit Bill** describes the event more concisely than **Bill was hit by Andrew**.

5.0 Jargon

Try to avoid it. We may have to think harder if we are not to use jargon, but we can still be precise. Use technical terms in their proper context; do not use them out of it. Often simple words can do the job (**fast** for **exponential**, **contact** for **interface**).

If we use **affirmative action** or **corporate governance**, we will have to explain what it is; with luck, we will then not have to use the expression. Avoid jargon that tries to dignify nonsense with seriousness. Try not to use foreign words and phrases, unless there is no English word (**a year** not **per annum**, **a person** not **per capita**).

6.0 Tone

The reader has an interest in what we have to say, the way in which we say it may encourage them to read on or stop reading. Don't be stuffy and try to write in genuine familiar English, as anyone would speak who had a good command and choice of words, with ease, and force.

Use the language of everyday speech, not that of speakers, lawyers or bureaucrats (**let** for **permit**, **people** for **persons**, **buy** for **purchase**, **colleague** for **peer**, **way out** for **exit**, **present** for **gift**, **rich** for **wealthy** and **break** for **violate**).

Avoid, where possible, euphemisms and circumlocutions promoted by interest-groups (**deaf** for **hearing-impaired**, **girls** for **female teenagers** - not **women**, **underprivileged** or **disadvantaged** or just **poor**).

Be sparing with quotes. Use direct quotes only when either the speaker or what he said is surprising, or when the words he used are graphic, otherwise paraphrase.

Do not be arrogant, those who disagree with us are not necessarily stupid or insane, let the analyses prove this. Express opinions, do not assert; the aim is not to tell readers what we think, but rather to persuade them. We may succeed if we use arguments, reasoning and evidence. Do not boast about clever predictions, we are more likely to bore or irritate rather than impress.

Do not be didactic; readers will think they are reading a textbook if too many sentence begin **Compare, Consider, Expect, Imagine, or Note.**

7.0 Journalese and slang

Never be too free with slang, only use it occasionally for effect. Avoid expressions used only by journalists (**the thumbs up** or **the green light**). Avoid overused words and expressions (**the bottom line, high-profile, crisis, key, massive, meaningful, perceptions, prestigious** and **significant**).

Try not to be predictable, especially predictably jocular. In general, try to make the writing fresh. It will seem stale if it reads like journalese. A weakness is a love of the ready-made, much-used phrase - they make for stale writing.

8.0 Americanisms

Many American words and expressions have passed into the English language and have vigour, if used sparingly. Some are short and to the point (**lay off** for **make redundant**). Many are unnecessarily long (**add** for **additionally, car** for **automobile**). Americanisms are often euphemistic or obscure, so put adverbs after the verb and choose tenses according to English use.

9.0 Syntax

Try not to be sloppy in sentence and paragraph construction. The practice of never splitting an infinitive is easy so don't overuse **don't, isn't, can't, won't**; one an issue is usually enough. Avoid the false possessives such as **London's Heathrow Airport**.

Make sure that plural nouns have plural verbs:

- Kogalym today is one of the few Siberian oil towns which are [not is] almost habitable.
- What better evidence that snobbery and elitism still hold [not holds] back ordinary British people?

Take care with the genitive. It is fine to say a **friend of Bill's**, just as we would say a friend of mine, so we can also say **a friend of Bill's and Carol's**. But it is also fine to say a **friend of Bill**, or **a friend of Bill and Carol**. What we must not say is **Bill and Carol's friend**. If we wish to use that construction, we must say **Bill's and Carol's friend**, which is cumbersome.

Respect the gerund. Gerunds look like participles (**running, jumping** and **standing**) but are more noun-like, and so personal pronouns do not precede them. So the following are wrong:

- I was awoken by him snoring. He could not prevent them drowning. Please forgive me coming late. They should end as his snoring, their drowning, and my coming late. Use the possessive adjective rather than the personal pronoun.
-

Long paragraphs, like long sentences, can confuse the reader. The paragraph is a unit of thought, not of length; it must be homogeneous in subject matter and sequential in treatment. Only use a single sentence paragraph occasionally.

Clear-thinking is the key to clear writing. For every sentence, ask these six questions:

- What am I trying to say?
- What words will express it?
- What image or idiom will make it clearer?
- Is this image fresh enough to have an effect?
- Could I make it shorter?
- Have I said anything avoidably ugly?

If a word begins with a vowel, use **an** before the word (**an egg, an umbrella**). This also applies for a word that begins with a silent H (**an honorary degree**). But use **a European, a university, a U-turn, a hospital, a hotel** but **an historical** building.

10.0 Abbreviations

We use many familiar abbreviations or acronym more often than the full form (**BBC, CIA, FBI, HIV, IMF, NATO, OECD**). Occasionally the full form provides little illumination (**AWACS, DNA**). For these cases, write the words in full on first appearance (Trades Union Congress not **TUC**). If in doubt about its familiarity, explain what the organisation is or does.

After the first mention, try not to repeat the abbreviation too often (**the agency** for **the IAEA, the Union** for **the EU**), to avoid spattering the page with capital letters. There is no need to give the abbreviation if it is not referred to again.

If an abbreviation can be pronounced (**EFTA, NATO, UNESCO**) then it does not need the definition. Organisations, not companies, should be preceded by 'the' (**the BBC** and **the KGB**).

Abbreviations pronounced and comprised of bits of words rather than just initials should be spelt out in upper and lower-case (**Frelimo, Renamo, Unicef**). There is no need for more than one capital letter, unless it is a company or a trade name.

Do not use abbreviations and acronyms to cram more words in, we will irritate readers rather than inform them.

In body matter, all such abbreviations, whether pronounced as words or not (**GNP, GDP, FOB, CIF, A-levels, D-marks, T-shirts, X-rays**), set them in small capitals, with no points, unless they are currencies like **Nkr** or **SFr**, elements like **H** and **O** or degrees of temperature like **°F** and **°C**.

Use lower-case for **kg, km, lb, mph** and other measures, and for **ie, eg**, follow both with by commas. When used with figures, these abbreviations should follow immediately, with no space (**11am, 15kg**), as should **AD** and **BC** (**76AD, 55BC**).

Most scientific units, except those of temperature, named after individuals should be set in small capitals. Attachments showing multiples should go in lower-case (**watt** is **W**, whereas **kilowatt**, **milliwatt** and **megawatt**, are **kW**, **mW** and **MW**, standard international metric abbreviations).

Always spell out **page**, **pages**, **hectares**, **miles**; but **kilograms** to **kg**, **kilometres** to **km**, miles per hour to **mph** and kilometres per hour to **kph**.

11.0 Accents

On words now accepted as English, use accents only when they make a crucial difference to pronunciation (**cliché**, **café**, **communiqué** or **exposé** not for **chateau**, **decor** or **elite**). Give any foreign word in italics its proper accents.

12.0 Capitals

Achieve a balance between so many capitals the eyes dance or so few to distract the reader by style rather than substance. The general rule is to dignify organisations and institutions with capitals, but not people. If in doubt, or if it looks absurd, use lower case.

12.1 People

Use upper case for ranks and titles when written with a name, but lower-case when on their own:

- **President Bush**, but **the president**; **Queen Elizabeth**, but **the queen**.

Do not write **Prime Minister Blair** or **Defence Secretary Rumsfeld** rather:

- **the prime minister**, **Mr Blair**, and **the defence secretary**, **Mr Rumsfeld**

All office-holders when referred to by their office, not by their name, are lower-case:

- **the prime minister**, **the defence secretary**

Some titles serve as names, and therefore have first capitals, though they also serve as descriptions:

- **the Archbishop of Canterbury**, **the Shah of Iran**

If we want to describe the office rather than the individual, use lower-case:

- The next **archbishop of Canterbury** will be a woman.

12.2 Organisations and acts

Organisations, ministries, departments, treaties, acts, take upper case when using their full name:

- **Forestry Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, Department for Environment, Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, the Health and Safety at Work Act**

But organisations, committees, commissions, special groups, that are either, impermanent, local insignificant should be lower-case:

- **the international economic subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Market rural district council**

Use lower-case for rough descriptions. If not sure whether the English translation of a foreign name is exact or not, assume it is rough and use lower-case:

- **the safety act, the Australian health department, the Australian parliament**

The full name of political parties is upper case (**Labour Party, Peasants' Party**). People are **Democrats**; their parties, policies, committees, are **Democratic**.

When referring to a specific party, write **Labour** or **Liberal**; use lower-case for a loose reference to **liberals**. A political, economic or religious label formed from a proper name (**Christian, Buddhism**) should have a capital.

In finance and government there are particular exceptions to the general rule of first capitals for full names, lower-case for informal ones. Use capitals for the **World Bank** and the **Fed** (after first reference as the **Federal Reserve**). After first mention, the **World Bank** becomes the **Bank**.

Organisations with unusual names take upper case (**European Union** becomes **Union**). Most others take lower-case when referred to on second mention.

12.3 Places

Use upper case for definite geographical places, regions, areas and countries (**The Hague, Germany**), and for vague but recognised political or geographical areas (**the Middle East, South Atlantic** and **East Asia**).

Lower-case for **east, west, north, south** except when part of a name (**North Korea, South Africa**) or a thinking group (**the South**).

Europe's divisions are no longer neatly political or geographically precise (use lower-case for **central, eastern** and **western Europe**). Clearly defined areas are **North, Central** and **South America** and **Central, South, East** and **South-East Asia**.

Use capitals to avoid confusion, especially with no (and therefore yes). **In Bergen no votes predominated** suggests a stalemate, whereas **In Bergen No votes predominated** suggests a triumph of noes over yeses. In most contexts, though, yes and no should be lower-case ("The answer is no.").

12.4 e-expressions

Except at the start of a sentence, the **e-** is lower-case and hyphenated, **e-business**, **e-commerce** and **email**. Computer terms are also usually lower-case, **dot-com**, **laptop**, **online**, the **net** (and **Internet**), the **web**, **website** and **World Wide Web**. Cyber-terms are also lower-case, **cyber-attack**, **cyber-soccer**, **cybernetics**, **cyberspace**, **cyberwars**. Set **CD-ROM** in small capitals.

13.0 Figures

Never start a sentence with a figure; write the number in words instead.

Use figures for numerals from 11 upwards, and for all numerals that include a decimal point or a fraction (**4.25**, **4¼**). Use words for simple numerals from one to ten:

- in references to pages
- in percentages (**4%**)
- in sets of numerals, some of which are higher than ten (**14, 9 and 6**)

Hyphenate fractions (**one-half**, **three-quarters**), unless attached to whole numbers (**8½**, **29¾**). Spell the fractions out in words, even when the figures are higher than ten (**fifth**, **tenth**, **twentieth**, **thirtieth**).

Do not compare a fraction with a decimal (**the rate fell from 3¼% to 3.1%**). Fractions are more precise than decimals (**3.14** neglects an infinity of figures embraced by **22/7**). Use fractions for rough figures (**a hectare is 2½ acres**) and decimals for more exact ones (**retail price index is rising at an annual rate of 10.6%**). Treat all numbers with respect and resist precision of more than one decimal place.

Use **m** for **million**, but spell out **billion**, except in charts, where **bn** is permissible but not compulsory (**8m**, **£8m**, **8 billion**, **€8 billion**). Use **5,000-6,000**, **5-6%**, **5m-6m** (not **5-6m**) and **5 billion-6 billion**. But **sales rose from 5m to 6m** (not **5m-6m**); estimates ranged between **5m and 6m** (not **5m-6m**).

Do not use a hyphen in place of **to** except with figures: **15-20 years** but **three to four weeks**.

With figures, use **a person** or **per person**, **a year** or **per year**, not **per caput**, **per capita** or **per annum**.

Use the sign **%** instead of **per cent** (but **percentage**, not **%age**). A fall from 4% to 2% is a drop of two percentage points, or of 50%, but not of 2%.

14.0 Italics

Foreign words and phrases, such as *de jure*, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, should be in italics unless they are so familiar they have become anglicised and should be in roman (*ad hoc*, *apartheid*, *avant-garde*, *bona fide*, *café*, *coup d'état*, *de facto*, *elite*, *en masse*, *en route*, *in situ*, *post mortem*, *status quo*, *vice versa*).

Lawsuits, *Brown v Board of Education*, *Coatsworth v Johnson*. If shortened, shorten *versus* to *v*, with no point after it.

15.0 Singular or plural

For collective nouns, there is no firm rule about the number of verbs governed by a singular collective noun. It is best to go by the sense, when the collective noun stands for a single entity (**The staff is loyal**) or for its constituents (**The staff are at each other's throats**).

Do not give all singular collective nouns singular verbs (**The couple have a baby boy** is preferable to **the couple has a baby boy**). Treat both a **pair** and a **couple** as plural.

When used in an abstract sense, **majority** takes the singular; when used to show the elements making up the majority, it should be plural (**A two-thirds majority is needed to amend the constitution** but **A majority of the Senate were opposed**).

A rule for **number** (The number is. . ., A number are. . .).

A **government**, a **party**, a **company** and a **partnership** are all 'it' and take a singular verb. So does a **country**, even if its name looks plural. The **United Nations** is also singular. So are **acoustics**, **ballistics**, **dynamics**, **economics**, **kinetics**, **mathematics**, **mechanics**, **physics**, **politics** and **statics** in general use, without the definite article. All **-ics** words are plural when preceded by **the**, or **the** plus an adjective, or with a possessive (**The economics of publishing are uncertain**. **Antics**, **atmospherics**, **basics**, **graphics**, **histrionics**, **hysterics**, **tactics** and **statistics** are all plural). Do not use **specifics** use **details**. **Demographics** should be **demography**.

Brokers are singular, and remember that **Ford** is **a car company**, not **the car company**, and **Luciano Pavarotti** is **an opera singer**, not **the opera singer**. If it seems absurd to describe someone or something with the indefinite article, we can probably dispense with the description altogether.

16.0 Places

Use English forms when they are in common use, and English rather than American unless the place name is part of a company name. Follow local practice when a country expressly changes its name, or the names of rivers or towns within it.

Do not use the names of capital cities as synonyms for their governments. **Britain will send a gunboat** is fine, but **London will send a gunboat** suggests an action of the people of London alone. To write **Washington and Moscow now differ only in their approach to Havana** is absurd.

Although the place is **western** (or **eastern**) **Europe**, euphony dictates the people are **west** (or **east**) **Europeans**.

17.0 Titles

The overriding principle is to treat people with respect. That usually means giving them the title they themselves adopt. Some titles are ugly, some are misleading, and some are tiresomely long. Do not therefore indulge people's self-importance unless it would seem insulting not to.

Do not use Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms or Dr on first mention even in body matter. Plain George Bush, Tony Blair or other proper combination of first name and surname will do. But then precede the names of people with Mr, Mrs, Miss or some other title.

Titles are not necessary in headings or captions but surnames are. Dispense with titles if titles make them more ridiculous than dignified. On first mention use forename and surname; then drop forename (unless there are two people with the same surname).

Some titles serve as names, and therefore have first capitals, though they also serve as descriptions (**the Archbishop of Canterbury**). If describing the office rather than the individual, use lower-case (**The next archbishop of Canterbury will be a woman**). Use a lower-case if referring simply to **the archbishop**.

18.0 Miscellaneous

For countries and inhabitants, favour simplicity over precision. Use **Britain** rather than **Great Britain**, and **America** rather than the **United States**.

Sometimes it may be important to be precise (**Great Britain** consists of **England, Scotland** and **Wales**, which with **Northern Ireland** make up the **United Kingdom**).

For ethnic groups, the first concern is to avoid giving offence. Avoid euphemisms and terms that have not caught on despite promotion by pressure groups.

Appendix D

Sentence Structure

Sentence Structure

Sentence structure refers to the conventions governing sentence construction and may vary across languages and regions.

A sentence is a subject and a predicate working together to suggest meaning. Every sentence contains something (a person, place, item, or idea) and it must act in some way (even if the action merely exists).

Subject: noun that takes action in a clause or sentence.

Predicate: action that occurs in a clause or sentence.

Predicates are verbs, but "predicate" is the preferred terminology when discussing sentence structure.

Being able to **identify subjects and predicates** is essential to understanding sentence structure. This understanding enables us to use punctuation with confidence and to better understand how the English language works.

- Let's look at an example: Jimmy ran.

When examining the structure of a sentence, we should first ask, what is the action? In the example, "ran" is the action and, thus, the predicate. We can identify the subject by asking ourselves who or what takes the predicate? In this case, Jimmy ran. Since "Jimmy" takes the predicate, "Jimmy" is the subject.

- A predicate may also be a verb of being such as: Jimmy is mad.

The subject of the sentence is "Jimmy," but what is the predicate? It is not "mad," but rather "is." This is because one cannot mad, but one can be mad, and "is" is a form of being. Mad describes the way Jimmy exists.

As well as subjects and predicates, sentences may also contain objects.

Object: a noun in a sentence or clause that does not take a predicate.

- Let's look at an example: Jimmy threw a pencil at Eric.

Threw is the predicate. Once we have identified the predicate, we can locate the subject by asking: Who threw? Jimmy threw. Because Jimmy takes the predicate, he is the subject of the sentence. What about Eric? Well, Eric doesn't do anything in the sentence. Jimmy acts on "Eric" so "Eric" is an object.

Contrarily, in the sentence, "Eric gets hit by a pencil," Eric takes the predicate, "gets." Because he takes the predicate, Eric is the subject. So, to reiterate, subjects are nouns in a sentence or clause that take predicates, and objects are nouns that do not.

An **imperative sentence** is the one sentence that does not need a subject to be grammatically complete. Imperative sentences give commands and

instructions. The subject of an imperative sentence is always "you," and it is always implied.

- For example: Stop right there.

The first step in analysing a sentence is to find the predicate. "Stop" is the predicate in the example, but who should stop? Most speakers would understand the subject of the sentence is "you" and therefore, "you" should stop.

A sentence or clause must have at least one subject and one predicate, but it may have more. When two or more subjects act on the same predicate, that sentence has a **compound subject**. When a subject has two or more predicates, we say the sentence has a **compound predicate**.

- Example of a Compound Subject: Chris and I went to the party.

Went is the predicate. Who went? Chris and I went. Since two subjects act on the same predicate, this sentence has a compound subject.

- Example of a Compound Predicate: I went home and took a nap.

Went and took are the predicates? Who went and took? I. Since the subject "I" takes two predicates, went and took, the sentence has a compound predicate.

- Example of a Compound Subject and Compound Predicate: Shelly and I went home and took a nap.

It is possible for a sentence to have a compound subject and a compound predicate. Went and took are the predicates in the sentence? Who "went" and took"? Shelly and I went and took. Since the sentence has two subjects acting on the same two predicates, the sentence has a compound subject and compound predicate.

A clause is a subject or group of subjects and a predicate or group of predicates working together. A sentence can have as few as one clause, or it may have many clauses. Clauses are to sentences what rooms are to houses. A sentence may have only one clause like a studio may have only one room, or a sentence may have many clauses like a house may have many rooms. Clauses are the building blocks of a longer sentence.

An **independent clause** is a subject and a predicate working together to express a thought. An independent clause does not contain any subordinating or coordinating conjunctions, if removed from a larger sentence, it stands on its own as a grammatical unit.

As with every clause, a **dependent clause** has a subject and a predicate. Unlike an independent clause, a dependent clause does not express a thought by itself. Dependent clauses contain either a subordinating or coordinating conjunction joined to an independent clause. A dependent clause not joined with an independent clause is a sentence fragment.

- A Dependent Clause Joined with an Independent Clause: We should leave while the going is good.

This sentence contains two clauses. The first clause is independent and could stand by itself as a grammatical unit.

- Independent Clause: We should leave.

The predicate phrase is "should leave," and the subject is "we." Because this clause does not contain any conjunctions, it expresses a thought and, therefore, is independent.

Contrarily, the second clause in the example sentence is dependent, meaning it does not express a thought by itself.

- Dependent Clause: While the going is good.

Though the clause contains a subject and a predicate (going and is), the clause also contains a subordinating conjunction (while). Because of the subordinating conjunction "while," the clause is dependent on another clause to express a thought. We can remove the subordinating conjunction.

- Independent Clause: The going is good.

The clause is now independent as it expresses a thought and may form an independent grammatical unit.

Subordinating and coordinating conjunctions join clauses to make different sentence types.

Simple sentences have only one clause.

- Example of a Simple Sentence: Tom took his ball and went home.

Took and went are the predicates? Who took and went? Tom. So we have one subject taking two predicates, or a single subject and a group of predicates working together. Though this sentence has a compound predicate, it is still a single clause and thus a simple sentence.

Compound sentences have two or more clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction. The coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Use the acronym (F.A.N.B.O.Y.S.) to remember these. A new clause begins when the coordinator introduces the next subject.

- Example of a Compound Sentence: Janie cried but she didn't get her way.

The first clause has the subject, "Janie," crying. The coordinating conjunction "but" allows us to connect a second clause (which has the subject "she" not getting her way) without creating a run-on sentence. Because this sentence has two subjects and predicates independent of each other, this sentence has two clauses. Joining the two clauses with "but," a coordinating conjunction, this is a compound sentence.

A Complex Sentence is two or more clauses joined with a subordinating conjunction. Common subordinating conjunctions are: unless, before, after, during, because, since, although, and if. Subordinating conjunctions will turn independent clauses into dependent clauses. Joining these dependent clauses with independent clauses makes longer, more complex sentences.

- Example of a Complex Sentence: Although sentence structure can be confusing, she now understands it well.

In this sentence we have two clauses joined with a subordinating conjunction; therefore, this is a complex sentence.

- Example of a Dependent Clause: Although sentence structure can be confusing,

The predicate in the clause is a verb phrase: "can be." Once we have identified the predicate, we find the subject by asking ourselves, what can be? In this example it is "structure" or "sentence structure." Because it has a subject and a predicate, the example is a clause, but because of the subordinator, "Although," the clause is now dependent and needs an independent clause to express the idea. If we were to remove the subordinating conjunction, the clause would be independent.

- The same clause, now independent: Sentence structure can be confusing.

This is the power of conjunctions: they make clauses dependent thereby allowing us to build longer sentences without creating run-ons.

A run-on sentence is the joining of two independent clauses. It is a common misconception that run-on sentences have something to do with the sentence length when this is not the case. Whether a sentence is a run-on has to do with the structure of the sentence and not its length.

- A Short Run-On Sentence: I went home Mother was there.

The sentence has two clauses. The predicate of the first clause is "went" and the subject is "I." In the second clause the predicate is "was" and the subject is "Mother." Because there is no conjunction to coordinate or subordinate the two independent clauses, the sentence is a run-on.

The semicolon (;) is one-piece of punctuation with which we can join independent clauses. The semicolon's primary use is to combine independent clauses like a period or other end mark. The semicolon joins independent clauses whereas the other end marks separate them.

- Example of Semicolon usage: I went home; Mother was there.

The semicolon elaborates ideas and carries an implicit "furthermore" with each use. When using or checking for proper use of the semicolon, we substitute the word "furthermore" in its place. The semicolon is correct if the sentence still makes sense, and the semicolon joins two independent clauses.

Appendix E

Paragraph Structure

Paragraph Structure

The fundamental unit of composition is the paragraph. It consists of several grouped sentences that discuss one main subject. Paragraphs have three parts, the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and the closing sentence.

A topic sentence usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph and is the most general sentence in a paragraph. The topic sentence does not contain much detail and only introduces the subject of the paragraph. For example:

My hometown is famous for several amazing natural features. First, it is noted for the Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful. Also, on the other side of the town is Wheaton Hill, which is unusual because it is very steep.

The first sentence is the most general statement and is different from the two sentences that follow. The second and third sentences mention specific details about the town's geography which is not a general statement.

Below are three examples of poor topic sentences.

- My hometown is famous because it is located along Wheaton River, which is very wide, and because it is built near an unusually steep hill called Wheaton Hill.
- There are two reasons some people like to buy cars with automatic transmission and two reasons others like cars with manual transmission.
- Clouds are white.

Sentence one contains too many details. Sentence two is not suitable as a topic sentence because it mentions two topics. Paragraphs are usually about one main topic and so topic sentences should also be about one main topic. Sentence three is too general and boring.

We can rewrite sentence two as follows: There are two reasons some people like to buy cars with an automatic transmission.

And sentence three as follows: The shapes of clouds are determined by various factors.

When a reader reads the first or topic sentence in our example paragraph, a question should appear in the reader's mind. "What are the natural features that make Wheaton famous?" The reader expects the rest of the paragraph to answer the question.

We can see the second sentence in the paragraph indeed gives an answer to this question. That is, the second sentence explains why Wheaton is a famous town. Similarly, we can see the third sentence also explains why Wheaton is famous by giving another example of an "amazing natural feature," in this case, Wheaton Hill.

The second and third sentences are **supporting sentences** because they support, or explain, the idea expressed in the topic sentence. Some paragraphs

more often have more than two supporting ideas. The paragraph is short paragraph of three sentences. As a minimum, a paragraph should have at least five to seven sentences.

Supporting sentences; expand on the main point, define key terms, offer explanations, give examples or give more detail.

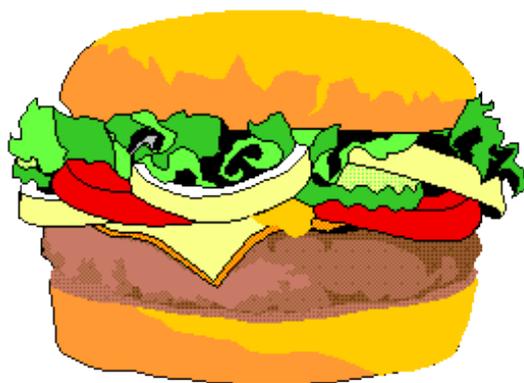
In formal paragraphs we sometimes see a sentence at the end of the paragraph which summarises the information; this is **the closing sentence**. Consider if we added the following closing sentence to the paragraph about Wheaton.

These two landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place.

Notice how the closing sentence summarises the information in the paragraph. The closing sentence is also similar to, but not the same as, the topic sentence. Not all paragraphs contain closing sentences, especially if it is short. However, if the paragraph is long, it is a good idea to use a closing sentence.

A closing sentence also helps create flow in our writing; by 'introducing' the topic of the next paragraph in the closing sentence.

Consider a hamburger bought at a fast food restaurant. It has a top bun, lettuce, onion, tomato, cheese, meat and a bottom bun. The top bun and the bottom bun are similar. The top bun is like a topic sentence, and the bottom bun is like the closing sentence. Much like the buns the topic sentence and closing sentence "hold" the supporting sentences in the paragraph.



- ▶ The top bun is your topic sentence.
- ▶ The sentences that come next are your supporting detail. They are like the lettuce, tomato and hamburger patty in the middle.
- ▶ Holding everything together is the bottom bun of the hamburger. It is a concluding sentence.

- Paragraphs are the basic structural unit of compositions.
 - A paragraph is a short piece of writing with related sentences.
 - The first sentence expresses the topic of the paragraph and all other sentences expand further on this topic.
 - The content of the paragraph therefore develops from a general statement to more specific statements.
 - A good length paragraph is about five to seven sentences.
 - The ability to write a well-structured paragraph makes a sound base for good writing.
-

The short paragraph in this lesson is complete, but it lacks detail. Including enough **detail in paragraphs** helps the reader understand more. The paragraph about Wheaton mentions two natural landmarks, without much more detail about them. For example, we could add a sentence or two about the Wheaton River, on how wide it is or why it is beautiful.

My hometown is famous for several amazing natural features. First, it is noted for the Wheaton River, which is very wide and beautiful. On either side of this river, which is 175 feet wide, are many willow trees which have long branches that move gracefully in the wind. In autumn the leaves of these trees fall and cover the riverbanks like golden snow. Also, on the other side of the town is Wheaton Hill, which is unusual because it is very steep. Even though it is steep, climbing this hill is not dangerous, because there are some firm rocks along the sides that can be used as stairs. There are no trees around this hill, so it stands clearly against the sky and can be seen from miles away. These two landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place.

Details are important, in the hamburger example, if the hamburger buns are the topic and closing details, without food between them, the hamburger would not be delicious! Similarly, without supporting details, the paragraph would not be interesting.

There are many different **types of paragraphs**:

- **A descriptive paragraph** describes something or someone. For example, we can write a descriptive paragraph describing our best friend, including what she likes and dislikes, where she lives, and what she wants for her birthday.
 - **An expository paragraph** explains an idea; it is an information paragraph. For example, we can write an expository paragraph explaining how to make chocolate chip cookies.
 - **A persuasive paragraph** tries to convince the reader of something. This paragraph may start with a phrase like: "I think that". The support section may include sentences that start with, "One reason is," or "For example". It may end with something like, "This is why I think that". For example, we can write a persuasive paragraph telling why people should vote for us for class president.
 - **A narrative paragraph** describes an event or tells a story, usually in chronological order. For example, we can write a narrative paragraph detailing what we did on our first day of school.
-

Appendix F

Punctuation

Punctuation

Like many of the so-called "laws" of grammar, the rules of punctuation are conventions that have changed over the centuries. They vary across national boundaries and even from one writer to the next.

Until the 18th century, punctuation applied to the spoken word, and interpreted the marks as pauses the speaker counted out. For example, in *An Essay on Elocution* (1748), John Mason suggested this sequence of pauses: "A Comma stops the Voice while we may privately tell one, a Semicolon two; a Colon three; and a Period four." This basis for punctuation gradually gave way to the approach used today.

Understanding the principles behind the common marks of punctuation strengthens our understanding of grammar and helps us use the marks consistently in our writing. As Paul Robinson notes in his essay "The Philosophy of Punctuation", "Punctuation has the primary responsibility of contributing to the plainness of one's meaning. It has the secondary responsibility of being as invisible as possible and not calling attention to itself."

With these goals in mind, we must correctly use the most common marks of punctuation: periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, apostrophes, and quotation marks.

Punctuation is not fool proof; the written word can never suggest all the subtleties of meaning the spoken language can. But surely good punctuation can help?

1.0 End punctuation: periods, question marks, and exclamation points

There are only three ways to end a sentence: with a period or full stop (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation point (!). As we state more than we question or exclaim, the period is the most popular. The purpose of end marks is to put the brakes on a sentence and suggest its tone.

Imagine you are busy presenting to a large audience. As you carefully explain your ideas, you see a note passed among the audience. One reads the note and nods their head, another frowns and a third grins broadly. As soon as the hearing ends, you ask to see the note.

Isn't this a good idea

At first, imagining an exclamation point at the end, you take the note as a compliment: somebody likes this idea! But then, as you reread the note with a question mark inserted, doubt sets in: what's wrong with this idea? And finally, your heart sinks as you mentally punctuate the note with a period. This is irony, you decide: they've heard this same idea a thousand times before.

Use a period at the end of a sentence that makes a statement. Use plenty of full stops, as they keep sentences short and this helps the reader. Do not use full stops in abbreviations.

Use a question mark after direct question. Except in sentences that include a question in inverted commas, question-marks always come at the end of the sentence.

Now and then use an exclamation point at the end of a sentence to express strong emotion.

2.0 Commas

The comma (,) is the most popular mark of punctuation, but also the least law-abiding. In English today a comma refers to the mark that sets off words, phrases, and clauses.

A comma is in some respects a question of personal writing style: some writers use commas liberally, while others prefer to use them sparingly. Most modern style guides recommend using fewer commas, so when faced with the choice, it may be wiser not to. Many writers choose to remove the comma before the "and" in a series, provided it is not misreading. Keep in mind, the guidelines for using commas effectively, are not unbreakable rules.

2.1 Use a comma before a coordinator (and, but, yet, or, nor, for, so) to link two main or independent clauses:

- The optimist thinks that this is the best of all possible worlds, and the pessimist knows it.
- You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try.

2.2 Do not use a comma before a coordinator to link two words or phrases; also unnecessary with short clauses:

- Jack and Diane sang and danced all night.
- She invited him to her party and he accepted.

2.3 Use a comma to separate words, phrases, or clauses that appear in a series of three or more (the comma appears before but not after the coordinator):

- You get injected, inspected, detected, infected, neglected, and selected.
- It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have three unspeakably precious things; freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them.

2.4 Use a comma after an introductory phrase or clause that precedes the subject of the sentence:

- When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.
- If at first you don't succeed, failure may be your style.

2.5 If there's no danger of confusion, omit the comma after the short introductory phrase:

- At first I thought the challenge was staying awake, so I guzzled twenty cappuccinos and a 20-ounce Mountain Dew.

2.6 Use a comma after an introductory adverb clause and after an introductory phrase (unless the phrase is short):

- After the hospital had completed its fund-raising campaign, an anonymous donor contributed an extra \$10,000. (After introductory adverb clause)
- From the east wall to the west, her cottage measures twenty feet. (After introductory prepositional phrase)
- In the bottom drawer you will find some pink spandex tights. (No comma with short, closely related phrase)

2.7 Use a pair of commas to set off words, phrases, or clauses that interrupts a sentence (non-restrictive modifier):

- Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind.
- Literature is all, or mostly, about sex.
- The people of Haiti, who for decades have lived with grinding poverty and mind-numbing violence, are unfamiliar with the workings of a true democracy.

A non-restrictive modifier is a phrase or clause that does not restrict or limit meaning, even though removing it would result in some loss of meaning, the sentence still makes sense without it.

2.8 Remember, commas can alter the sense or meaning of a sentence:

- To write Mozart's 40th symphony, in G minor, with commas suggests that this symphony was written in G minor.
- Without commas, Mozart's 40th symphony in G minor suggests he wrote 39 other symphonies in G minor.

2.9 Do not put a comma before and at the end of a sequence of items unless one of the items includes another and:

- The doctor suggested an aspirin, half a grapefruit and a cup of broth. But he ordered scrambled eggs, whisky and soda, and a selection from the trolley.

2.10 Do not put commas after question-marks, even when they would be separated by quotation marks:

- “May I have a second helping?” he asked.

2.11 Other general guidelines for using commas:

- Do not use commas to set off words that directly affect the essential meaning of the sentence.
- Use commas as an aid to understanding; too many in one sentence can be confusing.
- It is not always necessary to put a comma after a short phrase at the start of a sentence if no natural pause exists there.
- Use two commas or none at all, when inserting a clause in the middle of a sentence.
- If the clause ends with a bracket, the bracket should be followed by a comma.

2.12 Superfluous Commas; it is equally important to know when not to use commas:

- Do not use a comma to separate the subject from its predicate.
- Do not use a comma to separate a verb from its object or its subject complement, or a preposition from its object.
- Do not misuse a comma after a coordinating conjunction.
- Do not use commas to set off words and short phrases (especially introductory ones) that are not parenthetical or that are slightly so.
- Do not use commas to set off restrictive elements.
- Do not use a comma before the first item or after the last item of a series.

3.0 Semicolons

The semicolon (;) can be effective when used sparingly:

3.1 Use a semicolon to separate two main clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction:

- Those who write clearly have readers; those who write obscurely have commentators.

3.2 Use a semicolon to separate main clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb (such as *however, thus, otherwise, besides, nevertheless*):

- A great many people may think that they are thinking; however, most are merely rearranging their prejudices.

3.3 Use a semicolon (whether followed by a conjunctive adverb or not) to coordinate two or more main clauses:

- They agreed on only three points: the ceasefire should be immediate; it should be internationally supervised, preferably by the AU; and a peace conference should be held, either in Geneva or in Ouagadougou.

3.4 Semi-colons mark a pause longer than a comma and shorter than a full stop, but don't overdo them. Use them to distinguish phrases listed after a colon if commas do not do the job clearly.

4.0 Colons

The colon (:) is also effective when used sparingly:

4.1 Use a colon to set off a summary or a series after a main clause (a main clause does not have to follow the colon; however, it should precede it):

- It is time for the baby's birthday party: a white cake, strawberry-marshmallow ice cream, and a bottle of champagne saved from another party.

4.2 Use a colon for items described by the preceding word or words:

- They brought gifts: gold, frankincense and oil.

4.3 Use a colon before a whole quoted sentence, but not before a quotation that begins in mid-sentence:

- She said: "It will never work." He retorted that it had "always worked before".

4.4 Use a colon for antithesis or "gnomic contrasts":

- Man proposes: God disposes.

5.0 Dashes

Try use the dash (-) sparingly:

5.1 Use a dash to set off a short summary after a main clause:

- At the bottom of Pandora's Box lay the final gift - hope.

5.2 Use dashes in place of a pair of commas to set off words, phrases, or clauses that interrupt a sentence with extra - but not essential - information:

- In the great empires of antiquity - Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia - splendid though they were, freedom was unknown.

5.3 Other uses for dashes:

- Unlike parentheses (which does not stress the information contained between them), dashes are more emphatic than commas.
- Dashes are useful for setting off items separated by commas in a series.
- Use dashes in pairs for parenthesis, but not more than one pair per sentence, ideally not more than one pair per paragraph.
- Use a dash to introduce an explanation, amplification, paraphrase, particularisation or correction of what immediately precedes it.
- Use it to gather up the subject of a long sentence.
- Use it to introduce a paradoxical or whimsical ending to a sentence.

6.0 Apostrophes

The apostrophe (') is the simplest yet misused mark of punctuation. Introduced into English to mark the loss of letters, the use of the apostrophe to show possession is only recent. The following guidelines exist for using the apostrophe.

6.1 Use an apostrophe to show omission of letters in a contraction:

- I'm (I am), you're (you are), he's (he is), she's (she is)

6.2 Use an apostrophe with ('s) for possessives of singular nouns:

- Harold's crayon, my daughter's First Communion, Sylvia Plath's poetry

6.3 Use an apostrophe without -s for possessives of most plural nouns:

- The girls' swing set (the swing set belonging to the girls)
- The students' projects (the projects belonging to the students)

6.4 Use an apostrophe with -s when two or more nouns possess the same thing:

- When two or more nouns possess the same thing, add an apostrophe plus (s) to the last noun listed - Ben and Jerry's ice cream (The boys shared an ice cream).
- When two or more nouns separately possess something, add an apostrophe plus (s) to each noun listed - Tim's and Marty's ice cream (Each boy has his own ice cream.)

6.5 Be careful to place the apostrophe for an omitted letter or letters, which is not always the same place for joining two words.

6.6 Do not use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns because possessive pronouns already show ownership:

- yours, his, its, ours, theirs

6.7 It is correct to add an apostrophe plus (s) to form the possessive of some indefinite pronouns:

- anybody's guess, somebody's wallet

6.8 Don't confuse the contraction it's (meaning, "it is") with the possessive pronoun its:

- **It's** the first day of spring.
- Our bird has escaped from **its** cage.

6.9 Generally, do not use an apostrophe to form a plural:

- As a general rule, use only an (s or an es) without an apostrophe to form the plurals of nouns - including dates, acronyms, and family names - Markets were booming in the 1990s, The Johnsons have sold all of their CDs.
- To avoid confusion, we may occasionally need to use apostrophes to indicate the plural forms of certain letters and expressions that are not commonly found in the plural - Mind your p's and q's, Let's accept the proposal without any if's, and's, or but's.

6.10 Use the normal possessive ending in ('s) after singular words or names that end in (s):

- boss's, caucus's, St James's, Jones's, Shanks's

6.11 Use an apostrophe after plurals that do not end in s:

- children's, Frenchmen's, media's

6.12 Use the ending s' on plurals that end in s:

- Danes', bosses', Joneses'

This includes plural names that take a singular verb:

- Reuters', Barclays', Stewarts & Lloyds', Salomon Brothers'

6.13 Do not put apostrophes into decades:

- The 1990s.

7.0 Quotation Marks

We call quotation marks (" ") quotes or inverted commas sometimes. They are punctuation marks used in pairs to set off a quotation or a piece of dialogue; a recent invention. There are a number of guidelines for using quotation marks effectively.

7.1 Use double quotation marks (" ") to enclose a direct quotation:

- After telling an audience that young people today "think work is a four-letter word," Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton said she apologized to her daughter.
- "No good deed," wrote Clare Booth Luce "will go unpunished."

7.2 Direct quotations repeat a speaker's exact words, whereas indirect quotations are summaries or paraphrases of someone else's words. Do not use quotation marks around indirect quotations:

- Paul said, "I'm satisfied."
- Paul said that he was satisfied.

7.3 Double quotation marks enclose words or phrases to clarify their meaning or indicate their use is special:

- This was the border of what we often call "the West" or "the Free World."
- "The Windy City" is a name for Chicago.

7.4 Double quotation marks set off the translation of a foreign word or phrase:

- Die Grense, "the border."

7.5 Double quotation marks set off the titles of series of books, of articles or chapters in publications, of essays, of short stories and poems, of individual radio and television programs, and of songs and short musical pieces:

- "The Horizon Concise History" series; an article entitled "On Reflexive Verbs in English"; Chapter Nine, "The Prince and the Peasant"; Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades"; Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington"; "The Bob Hope Special"; Schubert's "Death and the Maiden."

7.6 Use single quotation marks to enclose quotations within quotations:

- "When I say 'immediately', I mean some time before April," said the spokesman.

7.7 Put commas and periods inside quotation marks; put semicolons and colons outside. Other punctuation, such as exclamation points and question marks, should be put inside the closing quotation marks only if part of the matter quoted.

- "Place it on the table."
- "I am home"; is a common greeting.
- "Ah!" he said.

7.8 If an extract ends with a full stop or question-mark, put the punctuation before the closing inverted commas:

- "What's the difference between a buffalo and a bison?"

7.9 If a complete sentence in quotes comes at the end of a larger sentence, the final stop should be inside the inverted commas:

- The answer was, "You can't wash your hands in a buffalo." She replied, "Your jokes are execrable."

7.10 If the quotation does not include any punctuation, the closing inverted commas should precede any punctuation marks that the sentence requires:

- She had already noticed that the "young man" looked about as young as the New Testament is new. Although he had been described as "fawnlike in his energy and playfulness", "a stripling with all the vigour and freshness of youth", and even as "every woman's dream toy boy", he struck his companion-to-be as the kind of old man warned of by her mother as "not safe in taxis". Where, now that she needed him, was "Mr Right"?

7.11 When a quotation is broken off and resumed after such words as he said, ask whether it would naturally have had any punctuation at the point where it is broken off. If the answer is yes, a comma is placed within the quotation marks:

- "If you'll let me see you home," he said, "I think I know where we can find a cab." (The comma after home belongs to the quotation and so comes within the inverted commas, as does the final full stop).
- But if the words to be quoted are continuous, without punctuation at the point where they are broken, the comma should be outside the inverted commas. Thus, "My bicycle", she assured him, "awaits me."

8.0 Brackets

8.1 Brackets enclose words or passages in quoted matter to indicate insertion of material written by someone other than the author:

- A tough but nervous, tenacious but restless race [the Yankees]; materially ambitious, yet prone to introspection. -Samuel Eliot Morison.

8.2 Enclose material inserted within matter already in parentheses:

- (Vancouver [B.C.] January 1, 1976)

8.3 If a whole sentence is within brackets, put the full stop inside. Square brackets should be used for interpolations in direct quotations:

- "Let them [the poor] eat cake." (To use ordinary brackets implies that the words inside them were part of the original quoted text).

9.0 Ellipses

9.1 Three spaced points to indicate that material has been left out of a quotation:

- Equipped by education to rule in the nineteenth century ... he lived and reigned in Russia in the twentieth century.—Robert K. Massie

9.2 Indicated by four spaced points to show omission of words at the end of a sentence:

- The timidity of bureaucrats when it comes to dealing with ... abuses is easy to explain.—New York

9.3 When extended the length of a line, to indicate omission of one or more lines of poetry:

- Roll on, thou deep and dark Blue Ocean—roll!
.....
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control.
Stops with the shore.—Lord Byron

10.0 Hyphen

“If you take hyphens seriously, you will surely go mad”. - Oxford University Press style manual

10.1 To link two or more words that normally would not be placed together, so they work as one idea. Indicates that part of a word of more than one syllable has been carried over from one line to the next:

- During the revolution, the nation was be-set with problems—looting, fighting, and famine

10.2 To join the elements of some compounds:

- great-grandparent, attorney-at-law, ne'er-do-well

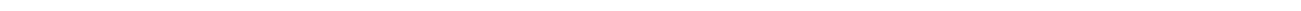
10.3 To join the elements of compound modifiers preceding nouns:

- high-school students, a fire-and-brimstone lecture, a two-hour meeting

10.4 To indicate two or more compounds share a single base:

- four- and six-volume sets, eight- and nine-year olds

10.5 To separate the prefix and root in some combinations:



- anti-Nazi, re-elect, co-author, re-form/reform, re-cover/recover, re-creation/recreation

10.6 To substitute for the word to between typewritten inclusive words or figures:

- pp. 145–155, the Boston–New York air shuttle.

10.7 To punctuate written-out compound numbers from 21 through 99:

- forty-six years of age, a person who is forty-six, and two-hundred and fifty-nine dollars

10.8 Use hyphens for fractions (whether nouns or adjectives):

- two-thirds, four-fifths, one-sixth

10.9 Use hyphens for most words that begin with anti, non and neo:

- anti-aircraft, anti-fascist, anti-submarine (but antibiotic, anticlimax, antidote, antiseptic, antitrust); non-combatant, non-existent, non-payment, non-violent (but nonaligned, nonconformist, nonplussed, nonstop); neo-conservative, neo-liberal (but neoclassicism or neologism)

10.10 Use hyphens for some words that become unmanageably long with the addition of a prefix:

- under-secretary and inter-governmental

10.11 A sum followed by the word worth also needs a hyphen:

- \$25m-worth of goods.

10.12 Use hyphens for some titles:

- vice-president, director-general, under-secretary, secretary-general, attorney-general, lieutenant-colonel, major-general, field-marshal (but not for general secretary, deputy secretary, deputy director, district attorney)

10.13 Use hyphens to avoid ambiguities:

- A little-used car or a little used-car, third-world war or third world war.

10.14 Use hyphens for adjectives formed from two or more words:

- right-wing groups, balance-of-payments difficulties, private-sector wages, public-sector borrowing requirement, a 70-year-old judge
-

10.15 Adverbs do not need to be linked to participles or adjectives by hyphens in simple constructions, but if the adverb is one of two words together being used adjectivally, a hyphen may be needed:

- The regiment was ill equipped for its task.
- The ill-equipped regiment was soon repulsed.

10.16 Less-common adverbs, including all those that end -ly, are less likely to need hyphens:

- Never employ an expensively educated journalist.

10.17 Do not overdo the literary device of hyphenating words that are not usually linked:

- the stringing-together-of-lots-and-lots-of-words-and-ideas tendency can be tiresome

10.18 Use hyphens for separating identical letters:

- book-keeping (but bookseller), coat-tails, co-operate, unco-operative, re-emerge, re-entry

10.19 Use hyphens for nouns formed from prepositional verbs:

- bail-out, build-up, call-up, get-together, lay-off, pay-off, round-up

10.20 Use hyphens for the quarters of the compass:

- north-east(ern), south-east(ern), south-west(ern), north-west(ern)

10.21 Use hyphens for hybrid ethnics:

- Greek-Cypriot, Irish-American, whether noun or adjective.

10.22 Use hyphens for a general rule for makers; if the prefix is of one or two syllables, attach it without a hyphen to form a single word, but if the prefix is of three or more syllables, introduce a hyphen:

- carmaker, chipmaker, peacemaker, troublemaker, but candlestick-maker, holiday-maker, tiramisu-maker, antimacassar-maker

10.23 Avoid:

- from 1947-50 (say in 1947-50 or from 1947 to 1950)
 - between 1961-65 (say in 1961-65, between 1961 and 1965 or from 1961 to 1965)
-

Appendix G

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech

A figure of speech is the use of a word or words diverging from its usual meaning. It can also be a special repetition, arrangement or omission of words with literal meaning, or a phrase with a specialised meaning not based on the literal meaning of the words in it. Figures of speech often provide emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity. However, clarity may also suffer from their use, as any figure of speech introduces an ambiguity between literal and figurative interpretation.

1.0 Metaphor

A metaphor is a comparison between two unlike, not using the word "like" or "as" to make the comparison. For example, if one were to say that "Football is baseball," that would not be a good metaphor, because football and baseball are both sports. However, if one were to say that "football is chess," that would be considered a better metaphor because there is a greater difference between football and chess than football and baseball.

The examples below are of Metaphors:

- The detective listened to her tales with a wooden face.
- She was certain that life was a fashion show.
- That woman is the cancer of my dreams and ambitions.
- His sweet words did not appeal to her taste.
- Kathy arrived at the grocery store with an army of children.
- Her eyes were fireflies.
- Lost in a sea of nameless faces.
- John's answer to the problem was just a Band-Aid, not a solution.

2.0 Metonymy

We use metonymies often in literature and in everyday speech. A metonymy is a word or phrase used to stand in for another word. Sometimes we choose a metonymy because it is a well-known characteristic of the word.

One famous example of metonymy is the saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword," which originally came from Edward Bulwer Lytton's play *Richelieu*. This sentence has two examples of metonymy. Understanding the context of a metonymy is important. For example, the word "pen" is not always standing in for the written word; often, it just refers to the physical object of a pen.

The examples below include both the metonymy and the possible words for which the metonymy would fill in:

- Crown - in place of a royal person
 - The White House - in place of the President or others who work there
 - The suits - in place of business people
 - Dish - for an entire plate of food
 - The Pentagon - to refer to the staff
 - The restaurant - to refer to the staff
-

While these word examples provide a good example of what a metonymy is and how it works, these sentences will further improve appreciation and understanding of metonymies.

- We must wait to hear from the crown until we make any further decisions.
- The White House will announce the decision around noon today.
- If we do not fill out the forms properly, the suits will be after us shortly.
- She's planning to serve the dish early in the evening.
- The Pentagon will reveal the decision later in the morning.
- The restaurant has been acting rude lately.

One of the main purposes of using a metonymy is to add flavour to the writing. Using a metonymy serves a double purpose. It can break up any awkwardness of repeating the same phrase and it changes the wording to make the sentence more interesting.

3.0 Synecdoche

There are several different forms of synecdoche examples including:

- A synecdoche may use part of something to represent the entire whole.
- It may use the entire whole to represent a part of it.
- It can use a word or phrase as a class that will express less or more than the word or phrase means.
- It may use a group to refer to a larger group or use a large group to refer to a smaller group.
- A synecdoche may also refer to an object by its material or refer to the contents in a container by the container.

3.1 It is common in our language to use for **part of something **to represent the whole**:**

- The word "bread" used to represent food in general or money.
- The word "sails" used to refer to a whole ship.
- The phrase "hired hands" used to refer to workers.
- The word "head" refers to cattle.
- The word "wheels" refers to a car.

3.2 Using the **whole to represent a part is also a common practice in speech today:**

- At the Olympics, you will hear the United States won a gold medal in an event. That means a team from the United States, not the country as a whole.
 - If "the world" is not treating you well, that would not be the entire world but just a part of it that you've faced.
 - The word "society" used to refer to high society or the social elite.
 - The word "police" used to represent only one or a few police officers.
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- The "Pentagon" can refer to a few decision-making generals.
- "Capitol Hill" refers to both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

3.3 A large group or **class** used **to represent** a portion of **a whole**:

- One example of this is referring to the United States as "America" when the "Americas" is many countries.
- "Milk" used to refer to cow's milk when, in reality there are many sources of milk.

3.4 **Something specific** used **to mean an entire class** or group:

- Asking someone to put their "John Hancock" on a document refers to anyone putting their signature there.
- It is common in the United States to refer to any carbonated drink as "Coke".
- Facial tissue referred to as "Kleenex"

3.5 The **material used** to make something now or in the past, used **to represent the entire object**:

- Calling silverware or dishes made of silver "silver" even if they aren't solid silver.
- The word "plastic" used to refer to credit cards.
- The word "ivories" used to mean piano keys, even though the keys are no longer made of ivory.
- When a golfer plays with their "woods" they are referring to their longest golf clubs.

3.6 Last, the name of a **container used to mean its contents**.

- One example is using the word "barrel" for a barrel of oil or beer.
- A "keg" used to refer to a keg of beer.

Synecdoche versus Metonymy

It is easy to confuse synecdoche and metonymy because they both use a word or phrase to represent something else. However:

- A synecdoche uses part for the whole or the whole for a part.
 - A metonymy is a substitution where a word or phrase used in place of another word or phrase. A good example is the phrase "The pen is mightier than the sword." The word "pen" substitutes for written work and the word "sword" substitutes for violence or warfare.
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4.0 Irony

Irony pervades present-day language. From its use in sarcasm, comedy and just everyday conversation, irony has long transcended from only being literary. We best define irony as that middle ground between said and meant, or others' understanding of said and meant. It can sometimes be a bit confusing, yet at the same time it can also be amusing.

We can sum irony in various categories.

4.1 **Situational irony** may occur when the result is different from the expected. It is often referred to as an "irony of events."

Examples of situational irony include a contradiction or sharp contrast.

- A person who claims to be a vegan and avoids meat but will eat a slice of pepperoni pizza because they are hungry. It may not make sense, but it is an illustration of irony.
- A man who is a traffic officer gets his licence suspended for unpaid parking tickets.
- An ambulance driver goes to a bike accident scene and runs over the accident victim because the victim has crawled to the centre of the road with their bike.

4.2 **Cosmic irony** can be credited to some misfortune. Usually cosmic irony is the result of fate or chance.

- If you are playing blackjack chances are you will be up for a while, and then just when you thought all was good, you lose it all.
- The Titanic was promoted as being 100% unsinkable. In 1912 the ship sank on its maiden voyage.
- At a ceremony celebrating rehabilitated seals after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, at an average cost of \$80,000 a seal. Two seals then released into the wild they were eaten within a minute by a killer whale.

Cosmic irony feeds on the notion that people cannot see the effects of their actions, and sometimes the result of a person's actions may be out of their control.

4.3 **Dramatic irony** occurs in a book, play or film and the audience is smarter than the characters. This is most often seen in horror films where we know by the actions of a character they are in trouble.

- As an audience member, you realise that if a character walks into an abandoned warehouse, chances are a killer is waiting. Because you are a member of the audience you cannot disclose the information to the character.
 - In Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, Romeo finds Juliet in a drugged state and he thinks she is dead and so kills himself. When Juliet wakes up she finds Romeo dead and kills herself.
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- In Macbeth by William Shakespeare, Macbeth appears loyal to Duncan but he is planning Duncan's murder. Duncan doesn't know Macbeth's plans but the audience knows what is going to happen.

4.4 Socratic irony is most relative and related to the Socratic teaching method. The Socratic teaching method encourages students to think and present opposing views while the teacher plays ignorant.

- Later in a lesson, the teacher embarrasses the student, by showing how their points were both foolish and ignorant.

Prestigious colleges and universities use the Socratic teaching method where minds are quick to ignore the obvious in exchange for coming up with a grand explanation to a not so grand problem.

- A person uses Socratic irony when they pretend to be ignorant of a topic to win an argument.
- A professor never answers questions and does not explain key ideas of the course; however he expects students to come to class after having read their assignment, ready to answer the professor's questions.
- A child asks his parents how the presents got under the Christmas tree to which the parents reply that they have no idea.

We use Socratic irony as a tactical strategy in getting what we want.

4.5 Sarcasm is yet another popular form of irony where the user intends to use wit to attack or make a derogatory statement about something or someone. Often we confuse sarcasm with irony instead of being a recognised form of irony.

- A beautiful, actress walked by a table of talent agents as one said "there goes a good-time that was had by all." The talent agent said the phrase referring to the young actress' extra-curricular relationship with fellow talent agents. It was a derogatory statement, yet created with wit.
- At a party a lady tells Winston Churchill he is drunk to which Churchill said "My dear, you are ugly...but tomorrow I shall be sober."
- In "The Canterbury Tales" Chaucer criticises the clergy who had become corrupt, by referring to the Friar as a "wanton and merry" person who takes bribes and seduces women.

Sarcasm can often be funny and witty yet simultaneously it can be hurtful and humiliating.

5.0 Metalepsis

Metalepsis is the reference to something by another, remotely related to it, either far-fetched, causal, or an implied substitution. Often used for comic

effect through its absurd exaggeration. A metonymic is a substitution of one word for another which is in itself figurative.

- Pallid death - The effect of death is to make the body pale. Ascribing this effect to death itself as an adjective here is an example of metalepsis.
- He is such a lead foot. - This means, "he drives fast" but only through an implied causal chain: Lead is heavy, a heavy foot would press the accelerator, and this would cause the car to speed.

6.0 Paradox

Paradox can prove to be revealing about human nature and the way we speak. If someone says "I'm a compulsive liar," do we believe them or not? That statement in itself is a paradox, because it is self-contradictory, which is precisely what a paradox is.

At the most basic level, a paradox is a statement that is self-contradictory because it often contains two statements that are both true, but in general, cannot both be true at the same time. Can someone be both a compulsive liar yet tell the truth at the same time?

Starting with some basic examples of paradox will lead to examining how and why we use paradox in literature. Below are some examples of paradox in simple form:

- You can save money by spending it.
- I'm nobody.
- "What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young." - George Bernard Shaw
- Wise fool
- Bittersweet
- "I can resist anything but temptation."-Oscar Wilde
- I'm a compulsive liar- am I lying when I say that?
- Nobody goes to that restaurant because it is too crowded.
- If you didn't get this message, call me.
- The beginning of the end.

There are some larger examples of paradox that appear in works of literature.

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the words "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others" are part of the cardinal rules. Clearly this statement does not make logical sense. However, the point of a paradox is to point out a truth, even if the statements contradict each other. Orwell is making a political statement, the government falsely claims that everyone is equal, or individuals have skewed views of what equal is. The interpretation is for the reader to decide.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the title character states "I must be cruel to be kind." On the surface this statement does not make much sense. Can an

individual suggest kindness through cruelty? Hamlet is speaking about his mother, and how he plans to slay Claudius to avenge his father's death. His mother and Claudius are married, so this will be a tragedy for her. However, he does not want his mother to be the lover of his father's murderer any longer, and so he believes the murder will be for her own good.

After examining the examples from works of literature, we see that a paradox is not just a witty or amusing statement. Paradoxes have serious implications in literature, because they make statements that often sum up the main ideas of the work.

What is the purpose of using such a statement then, instead of just forthrightly stating the work's intent? One reason is that to do so would be boring. It is much more interesting for a reader to carve out the meaning, than to have it fed to them.

7.0 Oxymoron

As with many other literary and rhetoric, we use oxymoron's for various purposes. Sometimes to create some drama for the reader or listener, and sometimes to make the person stop and think, whether it's to laugh or to ponder.

One famous oxymoron is the phrase "the same difference." This phrase qualifies as an oxymoron because the words "same" and "difference" have opposite meanings. Therefore, bringing them together into one phrase produces a puzzling, yet engaging, effect.

We use or hear oxymoron's in every-day life whether we know it or not.

Great Depression	Run slowly	Growing smaller
Clearly confused	Awfully good	Least favourite
Act naturally	Small crowd	True myth
Deafening silence	Open secret	Naturally strange
Pretty ugly	Passive aggressive	Unpopular celebrity
Only choice	Appear invisible	Liquid food
Random order	Awfully lucky	Heavy diet

There are some well-known sentences and quotations that make use of an oxymoron. Seeing oxymoron's used in context often helps to provide a better idea of how and why to use them.

- "I can resist anything, except temptation." - Oscar Wilde
 - "I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief." - Charles Lamb
 - "And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true." - Alfred Tennyson
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- "Modern dancing is so old fashioned." - Samuel Goldwyn
- "A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business." - Henry Ford
- "A little pain never hurt anyone." - Word Explorations
- "I am a deeply superficial person." - Andy Warhol
- "No one goes to that restaurant anymore - It's always too crowded." - Yogi Berra
- "We are not anticipating any emergencies." - Word Explorations
- "A joke is actually an extremely really serious issue." - Winston Churchill

The purpose of Oxymoron's is to present phrases that do not make any sense.

- **Dramatic Effect** - Saying that a picture or a scene is "painfully beautifully" calls attention to the speaker and the object of inquiry. Such a phrase shows that an object can have two different qualities at once, making it a subject for study and analysis.
- **Adding Flavour to Speech** - When someone says a phrase such as "naturally weird" or "unpopular celebrity," the speaker is finding a new way to describe that individual or object. Adding the adverb "naturally" to the first phrase makes it even clearer the subject of discussion is unusual, as opposed to simply the word "weird" would have.
- **For Entertainment** - Sometimes people are not trying to make a great declaration when they use an oxymoron. Instead, they want to be witty and to show they can use words to make people laugh. One example of this use of oxymoron is the example in which Oscar Wilde comically reflects that he cannot resist much at all.

8.0 Anthimeria

Using a word as no normal part of speech; therefore, altering its meaning. The uses of a word from one grammatical class as if it were a member of another class, usually the use of a noun as a verb ("verbing a noun").

As the English language has continued to evolve, once-denounced terms and usages gradually have gained acceptance. For example, not using of the word "contact" as a verb for many years, but approved now by most members of dictionary usage panels. The same is true of the gradual acceptance of the use of the noun "access" as a verb.

Toying with the language can result in creations of whimsical, even clever terms. Those who routinely apply nouns as verbs in defiance of convention defend it as a creative and time-saving practice. Many people who respect the conventions of the language still wince at such usages.

Have fun fiddling with the language in casual conversation or informal notes, but adhere to semantic and grammatical rules in business communication if you want people who admire and respect grammatical propriety to take you seriously.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural address in 1933: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself". "Fear" is used both as a verb and a noun.

9.0 Litotes

Litotes is rhetoric in which the speaker expresses an affirmative by using a negative to the contrary. Usually it is an understatement and pronounced: LIH-tuh-teez.

In rhetoric, litotes are an understatement rhetorical effect, principally by double negatives. Rather than saying that something is attractive, one might merely say it is "not unattractive".

Litotes is a form of understatement, always deliberate and intends emphasis. However, to interpret negation may depend on context, including cultural context. In speech, it may also depend on intonation and emphasis; for example, saying the phrase "not bad" in a way to mean anything from "mediocre" to "excellent". Also, it does not always need to use the word "not". It can simply be a negation in some way that shows the words are an understatement.

Not bad, not bad at all.

Litotes is in effect expressing an idea by a denial of its opposite, principally via double negatives. You want to say, "The weather is fine." The contrary of that would be, "The weather is bad." Using litotes, you say, "The weather is not bad."

For example, rather than saying that something is attractive, one might merely say it is "not unattractive." Someone too modest to say, "I'm happy," might say, "I'm not unhappy."

Here is a list of litotes with the interpretations:

Litotes:

"Not bad."

"That sword was not useless to the warrior now."

"He was not unfamiliar with the works of Dickens."

"She is not as young as she was."

"Not unlike..."

As a means of saying:

"Good."

"The warrior has a use for the sword now."

"He was acquainted with the works of Dickens."

"She's old."

"Like..."

Here are some examples of **litotes** in literature, movies, and television.

- Homer used litotes. In book of the Iliad, Zeus describes Achilles, as being "neither unthinking, nor unseeing", meaning that he is both wise and prudent.
 - The Scarlet Pimpernel was nothing, if not nonchalant. He had a blasé way of congratulating himself: "Not a bad day's work on the whole," he
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muttered, as he quietly took off his mask, and his pale, fox-like eyes glittered in the red glow of the fire. 'Not a bad day's work.' (Baroness Emmuska Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, 1905)

- One of the most famous litotes of French literature is in Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* (1636). The heroine, Chimène, says to her lover Rodrigue, who just killed her father: "Go, I hate you not," meaning "I love you."
- "Because though no beauty by fashion magazine standards, the ample-bodied Ms Klause, we agreed, was a not unclever, not unattractive young woman, not unpopular with her classmates both male and female." (John Barth, "The Bard Award," in *The Development: Nine Stories*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008)

10.0 Hyperboles

A hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration used to make a point. It is the opposite of "understatement" and is from a Greek word meaning "excess." Hyperboles are in literature and oral communication. They are not used in nonfiction works, like medical journals or research papers; but, they are perfect for fictional works, especially to add colour to a character or humour to the story.

Hyperboles are comparisons, like similes and metaphors, but are extravagant and even ridiculous. Hyperboles add excitement and fun. A boring story can come to life or become comical with the use of a hyperbole. Some examples of hyperboles include:

- "I've told you a million times"
- "It was so cold, I saw polar bears wearing jackets"
- I am so hungry I could eat a horse.
- I have a million things to do.
- He is as skinny as a toothpick.
- This car goes faster than the speed of light.
- He's got tons of money.
- You could have knocked me over with a feather.

If used properly in Media and Literature, a hyperbole can encourage consumers to buy products. Marketing research has shown that 75% of advertisements use at least one figure of speech.

A great example of hyperbole in literature comes from Paul Bunyan's opening remarks in the American folktale *Babe, the Blue Ox*:

- "Well now, one winter it was so cold that all the geese flew backward and all the fish moved south and even the snow turned blue. Late at night, it got so frigid that all spoken words froze solid afore they could be heard. People had to wait until sunup to find out what folks were talking about the night before."
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11.0 Similes

A simile directly compares two differences, usually by employing the words "like" or "as". A simile differs from a metaphor as the latter compares two differences by saying the one is the other. We use similes for their expressive nature:

- Curley was flopping like a fish on a line.
- The very mist on the Essex marshes was like a gauzy and radiant fabric.
- Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus.

A simile can exactly provide the basis of a comparison or leave this basis implicit. In the implicit case, characterised by 'like' to connect the two ideas, the simile leaves us to decide for ourselves which features of the target are being predicated: it is also a sentence that uses as or like to connect the words being compared it can be an idioms seldom expressed.

- She is like a candy so sweet.
- Her eyes twinkled like stars.
- He fights like a lion.
- He runs like a cheetah.
- Gwen is like a lion when she gets angry.

The use of 'as' makes the simile clear, by clearly stating the feature predicated of the target:

- She walks as gracefully as a cat.
- He was as hungry as a lion.
- He was as mean as a bull.

We can also use similes by not using the words 'like' or 'as'. This often occurs when making comparisons of differing values:

- "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate:" – William Shakespeare, Sonnet 18
 - "I'm happier than a tornado in a trailer park!" – Mater, Cars
-