
UNIT 3 METHOD OF NOTES TAKING

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

Research methodology is a system of methods used for collecting data, information etc. for the solution of problems identified for research. The central idea of this unit is to bring out the importance of note taking in the process of research work. Although it is only one among the different methods while doing research it has enough significance since the accuracy in taking notes will help us to save a lot of time while preparing the final report, bibliography etc. The different methods of note taking are also dealt in this unit. The various types of note taking like summary, paraphrasing, précis, and quotation are also given importance here. The rules to be followed in each type of note taking are dealt in detail so that all methods of note taking and the errors to be avoided are clarified here. Hence by the end of this unit you will be able to

- have a basic understanding of note taking method;
- know about the different methods of note taking;
- understand different types of note taking;
- make out the rules to be followed in the different types of note taking;
- know about the errors to be avoided while taking notes.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is an inquiry carried out scientifically to discover truth, to draw new conclusion and to bring out new facts. It is the way to acquire knowledge. According to Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, Research is "an investigation undertaken in order to discover new facts, get additional information etc." Another definition of research is that it is "any organised inquiry designed and carried out to provide information for solving a problem". Thus it is any

activity which helps to gain fresh insight into something. It is a careful search or inquiry into any subject matter, which is an endeavour to discover or find out valuable facts which would be useful for further application or utilisation. The above mentioned definitions and explanations specify all the major aims of research i.e., discovery of new facts, verification and testing of old facts, analysis of interrelationships and causal explanations and development of new tools, concepts and theories. A research paper is that in which the conclusions and findings of such inquiry appear. It is through a research paper that we communicate our findings of research to others. When we have communicated to others, the ability to write clear is vital. In order to be meaningful and clear in communication we should first have a clear cut understanding of the research problem. Only then we will be able express our self while communicating it to others. Language used in the paper should always be concrete and it should be specific.

In order to begin a research work we have to consult relevant sources of information. The sources of information can be primary or secondary. The primary sources provide data gathered at first hand and from which the researcher directly collects data that have not been collected previously. The secondary sources are those from which data are got at second hand, that is, sets of data that taken from other people's original data. Whereas primary data are first hand information collected through various methods like observation, interviewing, mailing etc, secondary data are data which have collected and compiled for another purpose. Primary sources include journal articles, research reports, conference papers, thesis, project reports etc. Bibliographies, reference books, reviews, directories etc form secondary sources. The researcher should be capable of sorting out the reliable material useful for his research work advanced by these sources. After determining the reliability and usefulness of the sources, we will have to take notes on it. In this unit, we are making a detail study of the method of notes taking in the process of research.

3.2 METHOD OF NOTE-TAKING

The clarity in reporting a research work is influenced by the reader in view, how technical the problem is, the research's hold over his facts and techniques, his command over language and the form and fullness of notes, i.e., of the data and documentation. For keeping accurate records we need high quality notes and this shows the importance of note-taking in research. Thus notes taking is an important part while writing a research paper. This records the information of the sources that we will use while reporting our research work. Therefore, it is necessary that we should critically evaluate the texts or articles before we select them and then make necessary choices before taking notes on them. Otherwise, there is a chance to overload with information which will be time consuming.

To take effective notes, first of all, we should understand thoroughly the information contained in the sources. Then notes should be taken from it so as to develop knowledge and comprehension of the subject. Thus going through a source, making a decision about what is useful for a paper and writing notes on it should encourage the researcher to think more deeply and understand the relevance of the notes taken by him to the research topic. Again, he should also sort out the material he needs from other information surrounding it in the text, while taking notes on it. To make use of this information effectively in the research work, care should be

taken to record it in such a way that it can be easily sorted, reorganised and incorporated in the paper.

We should take notes in such a way that it briefly summarizes the most important points of each source. Main points has to be stressed in the notes and it should be clear and concise as possible. The details that are unnecessary to the research area should be avoided. It is not always necessary to write complete sentences or even complete words. We can use abbreviations which saves a lot of time. But it should be used in such a way that we can understand them in the notes when we consult it later. One important thing to be remembered during note taking is that we should always remember to be record the page number in the text or articles from which our note is taken. As far as possible, all bibliographical details has to be added for each source. If possible, we should also try to the review the chapter or article after note taking so as to make it sure that we have not missed any important points and also to see that our notes are accurate and complete. The notes has to be recorded in such a way that we can easily locate all the points related to a particular subject easily and readily identify the source from which a piece of information is taken. Thus the requirements of a good not taking system are as follows: It should facilitate ready location of the recorded information when required. It should allow flexible handling and organising of information and All notes related to a particular concept of a topic should be available together.

There are different methods in taking notes. Some researchers take notes by hand on index cards or in sheets of paper of a note book. Some others prefer using a computer to take notes as it will save their time as well as improve the accuracy in transcribing the material from the sources. While collecting data by taking notes we should set down first the authors full name and complete title of the source. By doing this we will be able to locate the same source easily while working for bibliography.

3.3 CARD STYLE

If we are taking notes on cards we should record each piece of information from a source in a separate card. For each source the completer bibliographical information has to be recorded in one card, which will be our bibliographical card. Thus this is not only helpful for accuracy and organisation but also, technically while compiling the bibliography. If we are taking notes on cards, we should mention the name of the author as usual and the name of the book is to be underlined. While taking down the matter, we should leave some margin on the left side of the card. The card possessing the material from an article from a book should first mention the name of the author and then the title of the article in inverted commas with the work cited in underline and the page no:. If there are two authors, we should mention the name of the first author and write the other or 'et al'. For e.g.: Kootz , Harold, et al, ' Management ' Mc Graw-Hill International Book Company, New Delhi, 1980. p. 120. If the publication is an edited one, we should use 'ed ' after the name.

For multiple notes from the same source, we should record a short form of the title and author's last name in the upper right hand corner of each card. We should always record the page umber from which our summaries, ideas, paraphrases or direct quotes have been taken in the lower right hand corner. Materials taken from journal should indicate the name of the author, title of the article within inverted commas and also the volume and details of journal along with the page

number. For e.g.:-Ananthu, T .S. “Hind Swaraj- Its Relevance Today.” Gandhi Marg. New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, Vol. 31. NO. 2, July- September 2009. Pg no. 192.

In order to facilitate organising and reorganising information subject or topic headings on the cards can be written in pencil. To make note taking on cards more convenient and easy sometimes two sets of cards are used. One is source cards and the second is known as note cards. Source cards are used for noting bibliographical information and the note cards are used for actual note taking. In the source cards bibliographic information should be recorded in the proper bibliographic format. ‘Author’s name, the title of the book, the publisher’s name, place and year. On the note cards information from a printed source is recorded. To make it more flexible , it is better to note a single fact or an idea on each card and to use only one side of the card. In the body of the card, first, the name of the author and the title of the book or article may be noted in order to avoid making any mistake in identifying the concerned source card. The page number of the source from which the idea or fact has been taken also is to be noted. Thus, the two sets of cards together will facilitate in arranging the notes appropriately for drafting the report.

3.4 NOTE BOOK STYLE

In this method, we should record all information on a single page or a series of pages in the note book. We should write all the bibliographical details including the author, title, place of publication, publisher and year of publication at the top of the page of each source. Notes should be recorded in the middle of the page leaving wide margins. In the right hand margin page numbers of the source from which we have made the notes has to be recorded. The specific topic to which each piece of information is related can be noted in the left hand margin . For each source we are consulting , a new page can be allotted. Notes can be listed according to topic also. But here care should be taken to list the page numbers because otherwise it will be very confusing.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Define Research. What is its importance.?

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2. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources of information.

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3.What is the importance of note taking in research?

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3.5 NOTE TAKING IN A COMPUTER

Notes can be entered in a computer and these notes will be handy. We can enter the notes into a word processor as separate files in one directory. Otherwise, we can enter all notes in a single file rendering new name or phrase for each new note. In the first method the needed notes can be moved to appropriate place in our draft by copying and pasting method. For a short paper, it is better to opt the computer method and if it is a longer which makes use of many sources, it is better to opt the cards system because card system is the most suitable method of note taking. It meets all the requirements of a good recording system. Cards are tougher and so can withstand handling. As they are compact, they can be handled easily and can be stored conveniently in boxes. Also the cards are most flexible while arranging, rearranging, grouping, and classifying information.

3.6 TYPES OF NOTE-TAKING

Different types of note-taking include –summary, paraphrase, quotation and précis.

Summary

If we want only the general idea of a large amounts of material, it is better to summarise it. This type of note taking describes and rewrites the source material without specific concern for style and expression. But it should be done with great care and in this type of note taking we should try to keep the material as short as possible. Quotation marks may be provided for key phrase that cannot be paraphrased. Name of the author and page number also has be mentioned in the note.

Paraphrase

It is restating the material in our own words. As we have to restate the thought, meaning and attitude of another person in our own words, paraphrase may be considered as the most difficult type of note taking. In order to be sound and perfect, in paraphrasing we should try to rewrite the original in about the same number of words as possible. In text citation may be provided to the source by mentioning the author and page number in the paraphrase. Care should be taken while paraphrasing exceptional words and phrases in the original. It is better to retain by enclosing them within quotation marks. We should always try to avoid word by word copying as far as possible in this type of note taking. Paraphrasing will help the researcher to understand the author's ideas rather than just mechanically copying them.

Quotation

Direct quotation may be used for documentation of a major argument where a foot note would not be sufficient and where paraphrasing the passage might cause misinterpretation. The exact words of an author or the exact words from an official publication must be quoted. Quotation notes are necessary because it will enable us to capture opinion of the experts on the subject. It will also help us to show that we have carried out research in that area carefully and also to show that there is an authoritative opinion on the topic we have discussed in the research area. Where a

few paragraphs or sentences are required to be quoted from a quotation which is very long, it is permissible to omit sections of an original passage by a procedure called ellipsis. To indicate ellipsis three spaced full stops(---) are inserted. An ellipsis can occur at the beginning or the end of a quotation. Use double quotation marks at the beginning and the end of quotation. We should never forget to acknowledge the quotations by way of a footnote or otherwise.

Other rules to be followed while taking quotation notes include –
 We should always try to quote from primary and secondary sources.
 The quoted material selected should be important and well phrased
 We should always use exact words of the source

If at all possible, we should quote key sentences and short passages instead of entire paragraphs. Quotation marks should be used in the notes so as to distinguish it from summary and paraphrase. If we are downloading a text and taking quotation from it into our paper, we should always remember to place quotation marks around the words taken from the source.

Précis

This is quick summary notes. It can be used to review an article or a book or create an abstract. The original source has to condensed here with precision and directness so that the tone of it is preserved. It is better to write the précis note in our own language but exceptional phrases from the original can be retained here by enclosing it in quotation marks. Documentation also should be provided.

3.7 NOTES FROM FIELD RESEARCH

In some instances we will be expected to conduct field research. This work will require different kinds of notes kept on charts, cards, notes pads, a research journal, or a computer. If we interview knowledgeable people, we should make careful notes during the interviews and transcribe those notes to our draft in a polished form. If we conduct a questionnaire, the results will become valuable data for developing notes, graphs and charts for our research paper. In summarising, paraphrasing, quoting or précis it is important to keep an accurate record of the pages and other numbered sections. Care should also be taken to be in a middle way between not taking too much of notes and not recording too little. We should try to be both thorough and concise. Accuracy has to be maintained not only in quotations but also in summarising and paraphrasing the original sources.

Good note taking will help us a lot in avoiding plagiarism which is the act of taking ideas , passages etc. from an author and presenting them as one's own. Writers plagiarise when they present the words or ideas of others without making it clear that these are not their own words or ideas. In order to make sure that we have not plagiarised, we should see that each of the phrase or ideas borrowed from other sources are credited to that source. Acknowledgement of the source is that which distinguishes a scholar from a plagiarist. In the MLA Hand book For Writers of Research Papers, Sr. Joseph Gibaldi has mentioned of different forms of plagiarism. According to him, "the most blatant form of plagiarism is to obtain and submit as your own a paper written by someone else. Other, less conspicuous form of plagiarism includes the failure to give appropriate acknowledgement when repeating or paraphrasing another's wording, when taking a

particular apt phrase, and when paraphrasing another's argument or presenting another's line of thinking". Thus plagiarism is a failure to acknowledge borrowed material.

In order to avoid plagiarism we should always make a list of all the writers and sources from which the viewpoints we have used in our research work and should acknowledge the same. Acknowledgement may be made in several ways-(1) in the bibliography (2) within the text, either by specific reference or parenthetical reference or (3) in a foot note which is the commonest form of acknowledgement.

3.8 ERRORS TO BE AVOIDED

The most common and serious error in taking notes is to copy the wording of the source directly, either word-for word or with minor changes. This not only prevents the researcher in processing the information fully into their mind, but also encourages plagiarism since the notes find their way directly into the paper. The best way to avoid this is not to look at your sources as you write your notes. In that way we will be sure to use our own words. Including too many details in notes will slow down our research work. If we are doing this, we are not distinguishing between significant and insignificant information. Notes are meant to be concise. Direct quotation should be used only when we have a special purpose. If we use a direct quotation we should copy it accurately. We should remember to include page number on notes. Otherwise, we will have to spend valuable time, returning to the sources to find page numbers. Note taking is thus an important phase in the process of research and it helps a lot in saving our time during the presentation of Research paper which is dealt in the next unit.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Explain the different methods of note taking.

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2. What are the requirements of a note taking system?

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3. Explain briefly plagiarism and describe how you can avoid it.

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3.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to give a detail study about the note taking method and its importance in the Research process. While taking notes for research, many methods can be adopted by researchers according to their convenience. It can be done either by writing down in papers or separate cards and arranging them in an order or by using a computer. The common types of note taking method include summarising, paraphrasing, précis and quotations which is also given due importance in this unit. Rules to be followed while taking notes are also explained here. As conclusion the importance in the accuracy in note taking to avoid plagiarism is mentioned.

3.10 KEY WORDS

- Paraphrase** : Expression of meaning of passage in other words.
Précis : Abstract or a summary.
Summary : Abridgement or statement of chief points.
Quote : Copy or repeat passages from.
Plagiarize : Take and use as one's own

FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Gordon Coggings: A Guide to Writing Essays and Research Papers, Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Limited, 1977.
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Dr.Krishna Swami. O.R and Dr. Ranganathan. M : Methodology of Research in social Sciences, Mumbai : Himalaya Publishing House, 2005.
Seech Zachary : Writing Philosophy Papers, Fourth ed. USA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2004
Sharma, R. D, : Research Methods in Social sciences, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers private Ltd., 1984.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing takes an original passage and uses different words or phrases to express the same meaning. Essentially, a paraphrase just rewrites the original text in its own way.

A paraphrase always uses unique wording, something you come up with that's different from the original source. Because they're unique, **paraphrases do not require [quotation marks](#)** as direct quotes do.

What is the purpose of paraphrasing?

Why bother paraphrasing when you can just quote the original source? With a variety of benefits, paraphrasing comes in handy in quite a few different situations. In particular, here are six common reasons to paraphrase:

1 Improve word choice

Sometimes you just want to rewrite the original text in your own words—maybe you want to fit it to your personal writing style, or perhaps you just prefer your own [word choice](#). In any case, paraphrasing gives you the chance to pick your own words or phrases while keeping the core of the message the same.

2 Change subject matter

Paraphrasing is very useful if you like the wording of the original passage but want to change the subject to apply to something else. For example, Will Rogers's famous quote, "I never met a man I didn't like," is often paraphrased, sometimes humorously, as in comedian Jim Gaffigan saying, "I never met a cheeseburger I didn't like."

3 Avoid plagiarizing

Rewriting someone's text *without* changing the words is plagiarism. If you want to repeat a sentiment or cite another person's research, you have to at least put it into your own words or quote it directly, but overusing quotes can also be problematic, as we see below.

4 Avoid overusing quotes

Quotations are great when the author said it best themselves, but use too many quotes and you're essentially just copying someone else's work. If you're constantly referencing others' works, it's best to switch between paraphrasing and direct quotes to make a piece of writing your own.

5 Avoid problematic language

Occasionally, the language in a direct quote won't fit what you're writing. Often this is a mechanical mistake, such as a partial quote with the wrong [subject-verb agreement](#) or gender pronoun.

Other times, it could be insensitive or outdated language. For example, the famous (albeit antiquated) line "a good man is hard to find" can be paraphrased more modernly as "a good partner is hard to find."

6 Shorten lengthy quotes

Last, paraphrasing works wonders when you need to condense a long, verbose quote to make it more digestible. Some writers get paid by the word, so to speak, but if you're writing something meant to be concise, you can paraphrase their original text more succinctly.

What is the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing?

Paraphrasing and summarizing are two similar and related ideas, so it makes sense that they're often confused with each other.

To tell them apart, think of them like this: Paraphrasing is putting an individual passage into your own words while summarizing is putting a text or passage's main idea, theme, or story into your own words.

Summarizing deals with the big picture, such as an entire body of work or a complete chapter, while paraphrasing deals with specific passages, from a few words to a few paragraphs, but nothing terribly lengthy. Summaries are always shorter than their original source, but paraphrases are typically around the same length as, if not slightly shorter than, their source.

Another distinction is that summaries tend to gloss over the details, as we mentioned when explaining [how to write a summary](#), whereas paraphrases can still incorporate everything, as

UNIT 14 PRECIS WRITING

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 What is a Precis?
- 14.3 Why Precis?
- 14.4 Characteristics of a Good Precis
- 14.5 Method of Writing a Precis
- 14.6 Problems in Writing a Precis
- 14.7 Some Illustrations
- 14.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.9 Key Words
- 14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 14.11 Terminal Questions

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of the term 'precis'
- outline the characteristics of a good precis
- identify the problems in writing a precis
- describe the method of writing a precis
- write a precis for a given passage.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 13 you learnt about the preparation of various types of reports. In this unit you will learn about another important secretarial function, precis writing, which involves an exercise in comprehension and condensation of an article, speech or correspondence.

14.2 WHAT IS A PRECIS?

'Precis' is a French word derived from the Latin word 'Praecissus', past participle of 'Praecidere' which means to cut off, to be brief, and is connected with the English word 'Precis'.

A precis is a summary or the gist of the main ideas of written matter. Thus, precis writing means summarising. It is an exercise in concentration, comprehension and condensation. In order to make a summary of an article, a speech or a story, one has to read it carefully and grasp its meaning. Precis-writing forces one to concentrate on the material which is to be summarised.

In summarising a passage, though the length of the summary is not fixed, it is generally expected that the summary would be one third the length of the passage. The summary is known as precis and precis writing means summarising. It involves preparing a statement concisely so as to convey the essential ideas contained in a longer passage or article. In other words, precis is the gist or substance of a lengthy passage. A precis is not a paraphrase. At the same time, the essential points of the main passage must be presented in the precis in such a manner that the reader may easily grasp the main ideas of the passage.

14.3 WHY PRECIS?

The primary object of precis writing is to present facts and information to spend time reading unnecessary details. The necessity of speedily reading documents mainly arises in business firms and government departments besides other fields of activity. Lawyers, journalists, students, and secretaries of business executives need to apply the art of precis writing regularly in their day to day activities. Lawyers have to summarise the main points of their cases, editors and reporters have to summarise news and speeches; students have to make notes from lectures and text-books. The importance of precis writing in business lies in the economical way of recording and presenting lengthy documents in compressed form. Busy executives and managers in large organisations can get in the precis all the essential points and thus can avoid the time-consuming process of going through long correspondence, reports, etc. An important duty of the secretary of every organisation is to prepare the precis of business documents including letters, reports and minutes of meetings.

14.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD PRECIS

The characteristics of a good precis may be outlined as follows:

- 1) A good precis is not merely a list of the main ideas of a passage. The ideas are to be organised and expressed in a logical sequence so that the precis reads like an original piece of composition.
- 2) A good precis should contain all the essential ideas in the original passage, omitting non-essential detail, examples, etc. The ideas should be, as far as possible, in the same order as in the original. We should remember that in a precis one should not add anything that the original passage does not contain. There is no need to comment on the original matter either.
- 3) The language of precis should be clear, brief and precis, maintaining at the same time the style and spirit of the original.
- 4) A precis should be written in indirect speech.
- 5) A good precis should, as far as possible, be in the writer's own words.
- 6) It should not exceed or fall short of the length prescribed by too large a margin. Usually, the limit set for a precis is one third in length of the original.

Check Your Progress A

- 1) Define the term 'Precis'

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- 2) Write the importance of writing a precis.

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3) List four characteristics of a good precis.

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14.5 METHOD OF WRITING A PRECIS

To write a good precis of a passage one needs to practice a lot. The major steps to be followed while writing a precis are:

- 1) First of all, one should read the passage two or three times carefully to understand clearly its general theme. In short, comprehension of the passage is the first step in precis-writing.
- 2) Secondly, it is necessary to write down the main points of the passage by picking out the essential ideas and leaving out the unimportant details. At this stage, compression or condensation of the passage takes place. Repetitions, illustrations and examples can be eliminated. Sentences and clauses may also be compressed into shorter by using, for instance, a word for a phrase, a phrase for a clause and so on. In compressing a passage, selection, rejection and generalisation are often useful. The words and sentences of the original passage should be avoided to the extent possible. But one has to make sure that the sentences are linked up properly to show the interrelationship of the ideas in the passage. While being a summary of the original, the precis should be a piece of self contained readable and continuous whole.
- 3) Next, write down a preliminary or a rough draft, keeping in mind the length of the precis.
- 4) If it is necessary to provide a title to the summary, a short title may be given which will express the ideas in the passage.
- 5) While making the final draft, one should make sure that all the main points are included in the precis. One should also check whether the precis reads well and is within the length prescribed. Give it a suitable heading.

If one is able to write a good precis, it is an indication of his or her ability to think clearly and to distinguish what is important and what is not.

14.6 PROBLEMS IN WRITING A PRECIS

In writing a precis, one usually faces the following problems.

Accuracy: The first problem in writing a precis is to get the facts straight. One should not make any statement without the support of facts. It is important to go through the precis carefully to make sure that whatever is stated is factually correct.

Using Own Words: The second problem is the difficulty using one's own words in the precis to convey ideas given in the original passage. The best way to overcome the problem is to read the passage carefully at least three to four times, and then writing the precis without looking at the original. In this way, one may be able to use one's own words, without the temptation of borrowing directly from the original. However, if some words and phrases have been used from the original from source, the same may be underlined. At the time of revision, own words may be used in place of the underlined words. If it is impossible to change some words, one may retain them from the passage.

Selecting Details: The third problem is deciding on the details to be included in the precis. One should try to pick out only those details that are important. For example, two people may go to a restaurant and order many dishes and engage in lengthy conversation. In a precis covering the above sentence, you do not need to mention each item of food and drink. If one of the character gets drunk, however, it may be noted that the observations made by

the person were under the influence of liquor. Similarly, one need not report the entire conversation; only the relevant part and important points need to be recorded. Certain things are more important than others, and one must choose details according to the scale of importance.

Avoiding Conclusions: Since a precis is a factual summary of a passage, one should avoid drawing conclusions based on one's own interpretation of the facts. Personal opinion has no place in a precis, so it is better to stick to details.

Avoiding Short Sentences: Although one may concentrate on essentials in the precis, short and choppy sentences should be avoided. Here is an example:

Mary is beginning to walk to the Church. She is old but cheerful. She walks with a cane. She has walked this way many times.

Here there are four sentences, all very short and beginning with the subject followed immediately by the verb. Sentences like these are jerky in style. A revision of such a passage should reduce the number of sentences but keep the same details as in the following:

Mary begins her familiar walk from her home to the Church. She is an old woman who needs a cane for support, but she is cheerful.

Check Your Progress B

1) Write three problems faced in writing a precis?

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2) State whether the following statements are True or False.

- i) A precis is an exercise in concentration, comprehension and condensation.
- ii) Comprehension of the passage of the original are to be retained in the precis.
- iii) The words and sentences of the original are to be retained in the precis.
- iv) A precis need not contain all the essential ideas in the original.
- v) A precis should be written in direct speech.
- vi) The title of the precis should be short and express the theme of the subject.
- vii) You cannot write a good precis unless you have carefully studied and understood the material you want to summarise.

14.7 SOME ILLUSTRATIONS

In earlier sections of this unit, you have learnt the meaning of precis its characteristic, the problems involved in writing a precis and the method of writing a precis. Now you are in a position to write a precis of any given passage. Let us do some exercises.

Exercise 1

The passage given below describes the Industrial Revolution of Europe and the improved conditions of the working class. It consists of 292 words. Let us write a precis of about 100 words and suggest a title. First, read the passage carefully.

One of the outstanding features of the century has been the improvement of living conditions of the working man, greater political power, more wealth and leisure, and better facilities for health, security and education.

In early civilisations, most communities were sharply divided into two classes, those who laboured and those who did not. The small number of rulers — kings, priests, military leaders — lived in great comfort, and did very little work. The vast majority of the population enjoyed very few comforts, did lot of work, and had scarcely any political power. In some societies, there was an even more wretched class, the slaves, who had no rights at all.

The Industrial Revolution of Europe led to the production of vast quantities of goods, and workers began to be dissatisfied with their poverty. The factory owners needed skilled workers, and gradually they realised that they must show goodwill to their workforce, in order to stay in business. As in many other reforms, some enlightened slowly spread that workers were entitled to some consideration. Since men were free to work for any master they chose, good master soon had the pick of the workers and old-fashioned employers found themselves with a factory full of lower-grade workforce. Such a situation soon led to an all-round improvement in standards, and good employers tried to raise working conditions still higher. These improvements were speeded up by the increased organisation of workers in Trade Union movements, particularly in low-standard factories, where the owner often had to deal with strike action by dissatisfied workers.

Now that the working classes are getting better and better working conditions, the need to strike has lessened considerably; and employers and workers alike have come to realise that they depend on each other for their livelihood. (292 words)

As discussed earlier, you are now required to read the passage two or three times carefully. After reading the passage, the main points are to be listed. Will you now try to note down the main points of the passage in the space given below?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

We think that the points you develop would be similar to the following points. Compare the points you listed with the points given below.

Main Points

- 1) Working classes enjoy better living conditions in the present century.
- 2) In earlier civilisations there was a big gap between the conditions of kings, etc. and those of the masses.
- 3) The effect of the Industrial Revolution on the lot of the working classes is significant.
- 4) The starting of the Trade Unions.

With the help of the points given below, we can attempt the rough draft of the precis.

First Draft

An important feature of this century is the improvement in the living conditions of the working classes, in the form of more power, wealth, leisure and security. At one time, kings, leaders, priests, etc., lived in comfort doing little or no work while the majority did all the work and enjoyed few comforts and rights. In some countries there were slaves who had no rights at all. During the Industrial Revolution of Europe, production increased and workers started feeling dissatisfied. Employers were induced to improve working conditions so as to improve production. Some even felt workers had a right to better conditions. Clever

employers selected the best workers. This led to competition and improvement of working conditions. Soon Trade Unions were organised to fight for 'rights' of workers or even to start strikes. Now employers and employees have come to realise their mutual dependence and strikes are disappearing. (148 words)

There are 148 words in the passage above. It is necessary for us to reduce the number to about 100 words so that it would be one-third of the original passage. We shall, therefore, reduce the passage further to make it a precis of about 100 words. Read the passage given below and note how we have condensed almost all the sentences to make it a good precis within 100 words.

Final Draft

An important feature of this century is the improvement of the lot of the workers. In earlier civilisations, kings, priests, etc., lived comfortably doing little, while the majority worked hard with few comforts and rights. Some societies had slaves too. During the Industrial Revolution, production increased and workers started feeling dissatisfied. Clever employers attracted the best workers by offering better conditions and thus led to improvement in production. Some employers thought that workers had a right to better conditions. Soon Trade unions were organised to fight for workers rights with strikes, if necessary. Now, there is increasing realisation of the mutual dependence of employers and their workers. (107 words)

The title we may suggest is:

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE WORKING CLASS

Exercise 2

Let us take up another passage and attempt writing a precis in about 85 words and also suggest a title. This passage is on advertising. Let us read the passage.

The chief object of the repetitive form of advertisement is to help people to remember the product. The general principle is similar to that followed by Bajaj Automotives Ltd: "You just can't beat a bajaj". The repetition of a phrase, the inclusion of a trade name or a trade mark in every advertisement, is intended to impress upon the mind of the reader/listener that name or phrase or picture. The response sought by the advertiser is achieved when a customer enters a shop for, say, toothpaste. To the shop-keeper's question, "Any particular brand, please?", the customer gives the reply that is in his mind, not necessarily because he has arrived at a decision by any process of reasoning, nor because some strong feeling has been aroused for some particular brand, but simply because he has repeatedly seen the name, and it is associated in his mind with the idea of a good toothpaste. Some trade names become so common that they displace the true name of the commodity itself, such as 'vaseline', the well-known trade name for 'petroleum jelly'. Advertisements which have relied on repetition have, in the past, proved very powerful, but with the increased variety of proprietary articles and products intended for the same purpose, this kind of advertising is losing some of its value because of the confusion of names that arise in a customer's mind when he wishes to buy, say, cigarettes, tobacco, soap, chocolates, tea and other goods which are widely used. (248 words)

Now prepare a brief outline of the main points as we have done in the earlier exercise.

Main Points

- 1) Simplest form of advertising is repetition; it helps people to remember.
- 2) A phrase or trade name or trade mark is used repeatedly to make an impression.
- 3) Customer asks for product, name of which is impressed on her/his mind.
- 4) Repetition advertising is becoming less effective now.

You can now make an attempt to write the final version of the precis and compare the same with the one given below.

Precis

The use of repetition is the simplest form of advertising. In advertisements, repeated use of a particular phrase or trade-mark aims to make such an impression on the customer that he will tend to buy that product. Indeed, some trade-names, 'vaseline' for example, have become so well known that they are used instead of the real name of the products. Owing to the large number of consumer articles and products now in the market, advertising by repetition is less effective than it was in the past. (87 words)

The title may be suggested as below:

ADVERTISING BY REPETITION

Check Your Progress C

Write a precis of the following passage in not more than 160 words and suggest a title for it. Before writing the final version of the precis, note down the main points of the passage.

In the last half of the nineteenth century 'capital' and 'labour' were enlarging and perfecting their rival organisations on modern lines. Many an old family firm was replaced by a limited liability company with salaried managers. The change met the technological requirements of the new age by engaging a large professional element; and prevented the decline in efficiency that marred the fortunes of family firms in the second and third generation after the energetic founder. It was, moreover, a step away from individual initiative, towards collectivism and municipal and stage-managed business. The railway companies, though still private concerns managed for the benefit of shareholders, were very unlike old family businesses. They existed by reasons of Acts of Parliament, that conferred on them power and privileges in return for state control. At the same time the great municipalities went into business to supply lighting, trams and other services to the ratepayers. The growth of the limited liability company and municipal trading had important consequences. Such large, impersonal manipulation of capital and industry greatly increased the number and importance shareholders as a class, an element in the national life representing irresponsible wealth detached from the land and the duties of the land-owner; and almost equally detached from the responsible management of business. All through the nineteenth century, America, Africa, India, Australia and parts of Europe were thus being developed largely by British capital, and British shareholders were thus being enriched by the world's movement towards industrialisation. Towns like Bournemouth and Eastbourne sprang up to house large 'comfortable' classes who had retired on their incomes, and who had no relation to the rest of the community except that of drawing dividends and occasionally attending a shareholders' meeting to bully the management. On the other hand, "shareholding" meant leisure and freedom which was used by many of the Victorians for the highest purposes of a great civilisation.

The "shareholder" as such had no knowledge of the lives, thoughts or needs of the workmen employed by the company in which he held shares, and his influence on the relations of capital and labour was not good. The paid manager acting for the company was in more direct relation with the men and their demands, but even he had seldom that familiar personal knowledge of the workmen which the employer had often had under the more patriarchal system of the old family business. Indeed the mere size of operations and the numbers of workmen involved rendered such personal relations impossible. Fortunately, however, the increasing power and organisation of the trade unions, at least in all skilled trades, enabled the workmen to meet on more equal terms with the managers of the companies who employed them. The harsh discipline of the strike and lockout taught the two parties to respect each other's strength and understand the value of fair negotiation (478 words).

Phrase: A group of words, containing neither subject nor predicate, which functions as a unit within a sentence.

14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

B) 2 (i) True (ii) False (iii) False (iv) False (v) False (vi) True (vii) True

C) The main points of the passage are:

- 1) In the second half of the 19th century, industry in Britain was reorganised on a larger and more impersonal basis:
 - family firms became limited liability companies; and
 - municipalities went into business
- 2) The class of shareholders
 - became numerous and more important; and
 - investment without having any responsibility.
- 3) Labour relations declined because of the:
 - the shareholder's irresponsibility;
 - the shareholder's ignorance of the conditions of the working class; and
 - the impersonality of large companies.

The developing status of the trade unions enabled work people to resist management.

The resulting disputes led to mutual respect and a desire for fair negotiation.
- 4) Industrial relations took on a new pattern.

The following is an acceptable version of the precis

Between 1850 and 1900 British industry became organised on a larger scale and so became impersonal. Old family firms gave place to limited liability companies, and municipalities became large-scale employers to provide services for the ratepayers. These developments led to a growth in the number and significance of shareholders, who with little effort, gained great wealth from Britain's world-wide trade and investment and had little or no responsibility for the way that the wealth was gained. The shareholders irresponsibility, their ignorance of how the poor lived, and the size of the companies which inhibited personal relations, led to ill-feeling between capital and labour. However, the growing influence and discipline of the trade unions enabled the work people to resist unfair management. Strikes and lockouts taught the two sides to respect each other and to negotiate on a fair basis. In this way industrial relations moved from the paternalism of the family business to the organisational pattern of today. (155 words)

The title we may suggest is:

NEW PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

14.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) State the characteristics of a good precis?
- 2) Discuss the various steps in writing a precis.
- 3) What are the problems you face in writing a precis?
- 4) Write a precis of the following passage in about 115 words. Your version should avoid as far as possible the words and phrases of the original. State the number of words you have used and suggest a title.

If a business activity does not require anything special to be done, it is not entrepreneurship. In fact a person cannot be called an entrepreneur unless he introduces something new, something different, in his venture. This is known as innovation, that is, doing something different from others. The entrepreneurs are constantly on the look out for something unique to fulfil the need or want of people. They may or may not be investors of new products or new methods of production, but they are able to foresee the possibility of making use of the invention for business. Others who come to know about the same invention are not capable of thinking about its practical usefulness in business. Or, they may not have the ambition or self-confidence to take advantage of it.

In a competitive market, an entrepreneur can succeed in his business only through innovation. An innovation need not necessarily be something big or dramatic. A simple adjustment to something old, or giving a service without extra charge or a colourful packaging or selling a product in packets of different weights, and such types of steps may be profitable innovations. Of course, if similar things are done by a number of producers and sellers, and entrepreneur has to think of other types of innovations. No wonder that imagination is something more important than knowledge for innovative thinking. An entrepreneur must have imagination and also the ability to think creatively.

Take the case of fruit juice. Now-a-days fruit juice is sold in small cartoons instead of bottles so that you can carry it and throw away the container after drinking the juice. This is an innovation. Let us take another example. You may have heard of Henry Ford who established the Ford Motor Company in the United States. He did not invent the automobile, but he applied new methods of mass production and turned out passenger cars at low cost so that many people could afford it. (338 words)

Note: These questions will help you to understand the unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answer to the university for assessment. These are for your practice only.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Ghosh & Ghosh; **Handbook of Secretarial Practice & Office Procedure**; Vidyodaya Library Private Ltd; 72, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Calcutta.

Rajendra Pal and J.S. Korlahalli; **Essentials of Business Communication**, Sultan Chand & Sons; New Delhi.

Y.P. Singh & B. Singh; **Office Management & Secretarial Practice**; Gian Publishing House, Delhi.

L. Gartside; **Modern Business Correspondence**; Pitman Publishing Limited; 128, Long Acre, London.

UNIT 1 WRITING PARAGRAPHS-1

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
Study Guide
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Topic Sentence
- 1.3 Developing the Topic
- 1.4 Coherence
Transitional Devices
- 1.5 Punctuation : The Full Stop
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Key Words
- 1.8 Books Suggested
- 1.9 Answers to Self-check Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to help you in a systematic manner to write good paragraphs. We shall introduce you to the elements that go into the organization of a good paragraph, such as

- i) the topic sentence,
- ii) the development of the topic,
- iii) connection between the sentences, and
- iv) the use of transitional devices.

We shall also set exercises in reading comprehension and the use of the full stop.

After you have completed this unit, you will be able to write well-organized paragraphs of your own.

STUDY GUIDE

To help you understand the paragraphs given as examples, we have provided a glossary at the end of each paragraph, as well as questions on reading comprehension and vocabulary. You should try to answer all these questions, as they will help you understand the paragraphs better.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Most pieces of writing require more than one paragraph. Mastering the art of writing a paragraph is essential to success in any form of writing, whether it is a letter, a report, or a newspaper article, since all longer pieces contain a series of related paragraphs. In these longer pieces of writing, paragraphs generally introduce new ideas to develop the central theme. The division into paragraphs also prevents boredom as it provides a physical break on the page.

In Units 1 and 2 we shall offer you some guidance in writing single paragraphs. In Unit 1 we shall discuss the organization of paragraphs and the elements that make a good paragraph. After you have developed your skills in paragraph writing, you will be able to use paragraphs successfully in order to write a longer composition.

1.2 THE TOPIC SENTENCE

You already know that any longer piece of writing is divided into a number of paragraphs. Have you ever considered what a paragraph is?

A paragraph is a piece of writing which is unified by a **central, controlling** idea or theme. This idea or theme is called the **topic** of the paragraph. It is sometimes expressed at some place in the paragraph by one sentence, which is usually called the **topic sentence**. This topic sentence may be a statement, a generalization, or a problem. This sentence is most frequently found at the **beginning** of the paragraph, but can sometimes come at the **end** or even in the **middle** of the paragraph. Very often there may not be a topic sentence at all, but it may be implied within the paragraph. However, at this stage, it may be useful for you to develop your paragraphs by writing out your topic sentence.

Example 1 (Topic sentence at the beginning)

The vast majority of people, wherever they live and whatever their occupation, come in contact with animals in one way or another and have to deal with them. It is obvious that the hunter has to know the ways of his quarry, that the farmer must be aware of the habits of his farmyard animals and of creatures that damage his crops; that the fisherman must know when and where to find his fish and how to outwit them. Even the modern city dweller meets animals. He may want to ward off the roaches in his kitchen or he may keep a dog or a bird and grow familiar with the way his pet behaves. All over the world, among primitive tribes as well as in modern society, there are those who delight in the observation of animals, and there is a growing awareness of the fact that sharing our world with our fellow creatures is like travelling together — we enjoy being surrounded by other beings who, like ourselves, are deeply absorbed in the adventure of living. There is a growing sense of marvel and also of affinity.

(from Niko Tinbergen (ed.) 'An infant science' in *Animal Behaviour*, Time-Life Books)

Glossary

- 'contact** (n.) : the condition of meeting or coming together
'quarry (n.) /'kwɔːri/: an animal or bird which is being hunted
out'wit : win by being cleverer
'city dweller : one who lives in the city
'roaches : informal word for 'cockroaches'
ab'sorbed : interested
'marvel (n.) : wonder
af'finity : close connection

Notes: 1 In English words of two or more syllables, at least one syllable stands out from the rest and we say it has greater stress. The mark ' is placed before the syllable that carries the main stress in the word.

2 n. = noun; v. = verb; adj. = adjective.

3 The pronunciation of some of the words is indicated by the use of phonetic symbols between slanted bars / /. The symbols used are the same as in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, and the form of pronunciation indicated is known as British Received Pronunciation.

Beginning a paragraph with a topic sentence helps both the writer and the reader. As a writer, you will have less difficulty in constructing a unified paragraph because you will relate every sentence to the topic sentence and the central idea it expresses. And your reader will know immediately what the paragraph is about because the opening sentence states the central idea.

Self-check Exercise 1

Reading Comprehension

Read Example 1 again and answer the following questions :

- 1 What title would you like to give this paragraph?
.....
- 2 Why does the hunter need to know 'the ways of his quarry' ?
.....
.....
- 3 a) Give two examples of how a modern city-dweller comes in contact with animals.
.....
.....
- b) Are animals always a source of pleasure for him? Which words tell you that sometimes they are not?
.....
.....

Self-check Exercise 2

Vocabulary

Read Example 1 again and answer the following questions :

- 1 Find two verbs meaning more or less the same as 'take pleasure (in)'.
.....
.....
- 2 Find an adjective which is equivalent to 'belonging to the earliest stage of development'.
.....
- 3 Find equivalents of the nouns
wonder
.....
relationship
.....

Example 2 (Topic sentence at the end)

In the year 1830 a French official unearthed, in the valley of the Somme, strange implements of flint now recognized as weapons with which the men of the old Stone Age made war. With these modest tools of death, it seems, Neanderthal men from what is now Germany, and Cro-Magnon men from what is now France, fought fifty thousand years ago for the mastery of the continent, and, after a day of lusty battle, left perhaps a score of dead on the field. Twenty years ago modern Germans and modern Frenchmen fought again, in that same valley, for that same prize, with magnificent tools of death that killed ten thousand men in a day. *One art alone has made indisputable progress in history and that is the art of war.*

(Adapted from Will Durant : 'Why Men Fight')

Glossary

un'earthed : dug up

'implements : tools

flint : very hard grey stone

'Stone Age : the earliest known time in the history of man, when only stone was used for making tools, weapons, etc.

'modest : simple

Ne'anderthal /ni'ændəθɔ:l/ **man** : a type of early human creature who lived in Europe during the early Stone Age

Cro-'Magnon man : prehistoric man, who lived in South-western Europe and used bone and stone implements

the'continent : (here) Europe

'lusty'battle : energetic fighting

score : twenty

mag'nificent : grand and powerful

indi'sputable (adj.) : which is too certain to be questioned

(The mark, ' is placed before a syllable that has secondary stress, which is weaker than the main stress.)

Placing the topic sentence at the end or in the middle is a more difficult skill. The advantage in having it at the end is that all the sentences build up to this topic sentence and the conclusion becomes more effective.

Self-check Exercise 3

1 a) In the context of Example 2, what are the points of similarity between the events that took place in ancient and modern times? Give two instances.

.....
.....

b) What are the points of difference? Give two instances.

	Ancient	Modern
i)
ii)

2 a) Was ancient man less violent than modern man?

.....
.....

b) Why is a modern battle more dangerous?

.....
.....

3 a) What does the phrase 'for that same prize' refer to?

.....
.....

b) Give some examples of what you think are 'modest tools of death' and 'magnificent tools of death'.

.....
.....
.....

Self-check Exercise 4

The topic sentence of the paragraph below is hidden somewhere within the paragraph. Find it and place it in the correct position. After you have completed the exercise, you should check your answer with that given by us at the end of the unit.

In Mother's Shadow

During its early weeks, it depends almost completely upon her, and she, in turn, fastens her attentions upon it, although from time to time she will allow the other females to hold and fondle it. Sheltered by its mother, the growing infant gradually widens its contact with the outside world. Though its first week is spent sleeping and nursing, by its second it is already stumbling about and being restrained by a yank of the tail or leg. Nothing could be more important to the development of an infant Indian langur than its relationship with its mother. At four weeks, on unsteady feet, it ventures forth and discovers the world or at least that part of it within a safe three or four feet of its mother.

[Adapted from Eimerl, S. and De Vors, I. (eds.) 'The Monkey's Success in the Trees' in *The Primates*, Time-Life Books.]

Glossary

'fastens her at'tentions upon it : fixes her mind on it by watching it or listening to it

'fondle (v.) : stroke lovingly

'nursing : sucking milk from the mother's breast

'stumbling : walking on unsteady feet

re'strained : held back

yank (n.) : a sudden, sharp pull

'infant : a very young creature

'ventures'forth : takes the risk of going forward

.....

.....

.....

.....

Self-check Exercise 5

Is there a topic sentence in the following paragraph? Underline it, if it is there. If you don't find a topic sentence, state the main idea of the paragraph in your own words.

Men have cleared away forests to make fields for growing crops. They have moved mountains to make room for roads and cities. They have built huge dams across rivers to turn valleys into lakes, and they have built dykes to push back the sea and create more dry land to live on. Once everyone cheered at the progress that man made in changing his environment like this, but now many people are worried by the problems that such changes can bring. When the Aswan Dam was built across the River Nile in Egypt, it was meant to help the farmers by giving them water when they needed it. Unfortunately, people did not realise that much of the nourishing food for plants in the river would be trapped by the dam, so the farmers' crops would suffer. Also, hundreds of kilometers away at the mouth of the River Nile, less fresh water pours into the Mediterranean Sea. This means that the sea will become more salty and fewer fish will be able to live in it. When this happens, people who catch fish for their living will suffer.

[From Govil, M. and Subramaniam V. (eds.) *Explorations*, Madhuban Educational Books.]

Glossary

dykes (n.) : thick banks or walls built to control water

'nourishing : causing to stay alive or grow

trapped/træpt/: held back, blocked

1.3 DEVELOPING THE TOPIC

In order to develop the central theme of a paragraph, you have to expand the idea contained in the topic sentence. This can be done by adding more information, explanation, examples, illustrations, etc. to the idea expressed in the topic sentence. (We shall discuss different ways of developing a paragraph in greater detail in Unit 2.)

If you read the paragraph given under Example 1 again, you will notice that this paragraph is developed mainly by adding examples.

Analysis of the paragraph :

- 1 **Topic sentence** : "The vast majority of people, wherever they live and whatever their occupation, come in contact with animals in one way or another and have to deal with them."
- 2 **Examples given to develop the paragraph** :
 - i) the hunter
 - ii) the farmer
 - iii) the fisherman
 - iv) the city-dweller
- 3 **Summing up** : This is done by stating that there is a common bond between man and other creatures.

Now read Example 3 below. You will notice that this paragraph is developed slightly differently.

Example 3

Two main circumstances govern the relationship of living things in the sea : the unbelievably lavish fruitfulness of marine life forms, and the utter ruthlessness with which the larger creatures eat the smaller ones. Somebody has calculated, for instance, that if all the eggs laid by codfish were hatched and grew to maturity, the Atlantic would be packed solid with codfish within six years. But nature does not let this happen. Only an infinitesimal fraction of all codfish eggs ever become full-sized cod, and wastage among other fish is as great. One sea creature in about 10 million escapes the usual violent death inside another sea creature.

[from Leonard Engels (ed.) 'The Great Pyramid of Life' in *The Sea*, Time-Life Books.]

Glossary

- 'circumstances : conditions; the state of affairs
- 'govern (v.) : control or guide
- 'lavish : plentiful
- 'fruitful : very productive; producing many young ones
- ma'rine : of the sea
- 'ruthlessness : cruelty, absence of pity
- 'codfish : a large sea fish found in the North Atlantic Sea
- hatched/hætʃt/ : broken, letting the young ones out
- ma'turity : the state of being fully grown or developed
- ,infini'tesimal : very small

Analysis of the paragraph :

- 1 **Topic Statement** : 'Two main circumstances govern the relationship of living things in the sea.'
- 2 **Elaboration** of the topic sentence : the fruitfulness of marine life and the ruthlessness with which the larger creatures eat the smaller ones.
- 3 **Illustration** : The example of the codfish.
- 4 **Summing Up** : Only one sea creature in about ten million survives.

When you write a paragraph of your own, choose the topic and write down all that you know about the topic. As you make your list, don't stop to question whether a detail fits or not; any that don't can be left out later. This will help you generate new ideas, and also give you something concrete to work on.

However, when you start writing, see that every sentence contributes to the central idea, which may be contained in the topic sentence. Only then will your paragraph have unity.

Self-check Exercise 6

Reading Comprehension

Read Example 3 again and answer the following questions. This exercise will help you understand the paragraph better.

1 What are the two circumstances that govern the relationship of living things in the sea?

.....
.....

2 a) Under what circumstances would the Atlantic be packed with codfish within six years?

.....
.....

b) How does nature prevent this from happening?

.....
.....

3 Suggest a title for this paragraph.

.....
.....

4 Find the opposites of

barrenness

terrestrial

very large

Self-check Exercise 7

In the following exercise we have given you a topic sentence, the title, as well as some notes which might help you develop a paragraph. As you develop your paragraph, use only those points which will support the topic sentence and leave out the rest. Your paragraph should not be more than 100 words.

The Secret of the Cockroach's Survival

Topic Sentence : The cockroach is one of the earth's oldest creatures, older than even the dinosaurs.

- survived because it can live anywhere
from coldest to warmest climate
city as well as forest
- cockroach is a clean insect
- can eat anything, including flowerbuds, paint, soap, wood
- some species are large, others are small
- can even live without food and water for months

- usually black or brown in colour
- keeps off predatory animals because of dirty smell from scent glands

1.4 COHERENCE

An effective paragraph requires more than a **topic sentence** and **supporting details**; it must also be coherent. In a coherent paragraph the writer takes the reader logically and smoothly from one idea to the next.

The reader must clearly recognize that one sentence logically leads to the next.

Self-check Exercise 8

The following sentences go together to form a complete paragraph, but they are in the wrong order. Keeping in mind the idea of **coherence**, put them in the right order. After you have done the exercise, you may check your answer with that given by us at the end of the unit.

- When the box is removed, the ant will not continue on its former course, but will start off rapidly in a new direction.
- This can easily be demonstrated by a simple experiment.
- Place a light-tight box over an ant carrying food back to its nest, and keep it imprisoned for a few hours.
- This new route will differ from the old by exactly the angle that the sun has shifted across the sky during the time the ant was imprisoned.
- Many insects rely upon the direction of the sun's rays as a sort of compass.

Glossary

'former : earlier; previous

'rapidly : very quickly

'light-tight : where light cannot enter

im'prison : shut up in prison

re'ly : depend

1.4.1. Transitional Devices

Another technique which brings about coherence in a paragraph is the use of **transitional devices** between sentences. These are words/phrases that help a writer move smoothly from one sentence to the next and show the logical relationship between sentences. We shall give you an example of what these transitional devices are and how they can be used. The transitional devices in Example 4 are printed in bold type.

Example 4

Man has been able to spread across the earth so widely for four main reasons. **First**, he is a terrestrial animal, not restricted to the forest. **Secondly**, he can cross any natural barriers, such as deserts, oceans and mountains. **Moreover**, he can live off a very wide variety of food. **Most important of all**, he has developed culture; he has learned to make clothes and build fires which allow him to live in climates where he would otherwise perish. **To a large extent**, he shares some of these advantages with the monkeys. They, **too**, can move over unforested land. They, **too**, can cross some natural barriers, as they have the ability to swim. **And they, too**, can digest many kinds of food. **Thus**, a single species of baboon has spread across Africa from Dakar in the west to Ethiopia in the east, and south all the way to the Cape of Good Hope. **Similarly**, Macaques have done at least as well. **One** species, the rhesus macaque, is equally at home in forest, in open cultivated fields, and inside heavily populated cities.

[from Eimerl, S. and De Vors, I. (eds.), 'The Monkey's Success in the Trees', in *The Primates*, Time-Life Books.]

Glossary

- terrestrial : living on land
- 'barrier : something placed in the way to prevent further movement
- 'perish : die; be completely destroyed
- species/'spi:ʃi:z/ : a group of plants or animals that are of the same kind
- ba'boon : a large dog-like monkey found in Africa and South Asia
- Macaque/mə'kɑ:k/ : a monkey of African origin found mainly in Asia.

As you have seen, transitional devices are like signposts in a paragraph. They enable us to follow the writer's line of thought by showing us how one sentence relates to another. In Example 4, the words/word phrases *First, Secondly, Moreover, Most important of all* indicate the four main reasons why man has been able to spread so widely across the earth. *Most important of all* also shows that some reasons are more important than others. *Too* indicates that monkeys also share man's characteristics. *Similarly* shows the relationship between the Macaques and the baboons.

The following list includes other words and phrases that function as transitional devices :

- To express result : *therefore, as a result, consequently, thus, hence*
- To give examples : *for example, for instance, specifically, as an illustration*
- To express comparison : *similarly, likewise*
- To express contrast : *but, yet, still, however, nevertheless, on the other hand*
- To express addition : *moreover, furthermore, also, too, besides, in addition*
- To indicate time : *now, later, meanwhile, since then, after that, before that time*
- To express sequence : *first, second, third, then, next, finally.*

Self-check Exercise 9

Read Example 4 again and answer the following questions :

1 What is the most important reason that man has been able to range so widely across the earth?

.....
.....

2 What are the three characteristics that the monkey shares with man?

.....
.....

3 Monkeys cross natural barriers like rivers by swimming. What are some of the devices that man uses to cross natural barriers?

4 In the context of this passage, find a word

i) with the same meaning as 'limited';

ii) which is the opposite of 'thrive'.

Self-check Exercise 10

In the following paragraph the transitional words and phrases are missing. Fill in the gaps by choosing the most appropriate words/phrases from the list given below :

despite

also

but

however

yet

in the future

Of all the sea's possibilities for man's future, the greatest may be its promise of an important increase in the world's food supply. Square mile for square mile, the sea is estimated to be more productive than the land. ... (i) ... at present the oceans supply only one or two per cent of man's food. ... (ii) ... all that he is learning about the sea, man's relationship to it is still primitive; he is a hunter rather than a harvester. ... (iii) ..., along some coasts oyster growers set out beds of oysters and fence out the oyster's enemies to increase the yield. ... (iv) ..., in the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan and China people already grow fish and prawns in freshwater ponds. ... (v) ... this is just a beginning. ... (vi) ..., to meet the great needs of a rapidly expanding world population, man will have to farm the sea as he has for so long farmed the land.

Glossary

pro'ductive (*adj.*) : that produces much

'primitive : at the earliest stage of development

'harvester : a person who gathers the crops

'oyster /'ɔɪstə/: a type of shell-fish

'fence out : keep out by putting a fence

prawn : any of various types of small 10-legged sea animals

'rapidly ex'panding : fast increasing

Transitional devices used to link sentences can also be effective for transition from one paragraph to another. You will study that in detail in later units.

1.5 PUNCTUATION : THE FULL STOP

Full Stop

You already know about the use of the full stop (.). As you read the paragraphs in this unit or elsewhere, you will find that the full stop is used to mark the end of a sentence, as is the question mark (?) or the exclamation mark (!). Now we shall take up another use of the full stop.

You will find that a full stop is also used at the end of the shortened form of a word.

For example,

R. Venkataraman, e.g. (*exempli gratia* = for example), p. (page), no. (number), vol. (volume), a.m. (*ante meridiem* = before midday), p.m. (*post meridiem* = after midday).

Note

It is quite common to omit full stops from capital initials such as BBC, UK, USA, TV.

Full stops are now generally omitted from contractions like Dr and Mrs.
(However, if you prefer to use the full stop, it is still perfectly acceptable.)

Self-check Exercise 11

Insert full stops in these sentences and use capital letters where necessary.

- 1 Mr and Mrs R N Khan, who live at A-79 Defence Colony, told P C Sahgal that they had been woken up at 5 a m by the sound of glass breaking, and had seen a man with a monkey running out of the house opposite, no 58
- 2 In april 1987, IGNOU premises were the venue of a meeting on Wild Life Preservation it was organized by Prof V K Kumar, Prof V R Gupta, and Dr S R Kapur the topics discussed were anti-poaching laws, cruelty towards animals, opening of sanctuaries, etc

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the elements that go into the organization of a good paragraph — the topic sentence, the development of the topic, connection between the sentences, and the use of transitional or linking devices.

1.7 KEY WORDS

co'herence : connection in thoughts or words

e,labo'ration : giving details

'full'stop (also called a period) : a point (.) marking the end of a sentence or a shortened form of a word

,illu'stration : giving examples

ob'jective : purpose

,punctu'ation : the system of dividing written matter into sentences, phrases, etc. by using certain marks

'topic : a subject for talk, writing, etc.

tran'sitional : relating to the movement from one sentence to another.

1.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- 1 *Animal Behaviour*, Time-Life Books.
- 2 *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*.

1.9 ANSWERS TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

Exercise 1

- 1 *Man's Contact with Animals*. (You may think of any other title.)
- 2 So that he is better able to catch or kill the animal he is hunting.
- 3 a) He wants to keep cockroaches away from his kitchen, and he may like to keep a dog or a bird as a pet.
b) No. 'He may want to ward off the roaches in his kitchen.'

Exercise 2

- 1 delight; enjoy
- 2 primitive
- 3 marvel; affinity.

Exercise 3

- 1 a) Both the battles took place in the valley of the Somme, and both groups fought to gain mastery over Europe.
b)

Ancient	Modern
simple weapons	deadly weapons
twenty people killed in a day	ten thousand people killed in a day
- 2 a) No; both are equally violent.
b) because their weapons today are more deadly.
- 3 a) mastery over Europe.
b) 'modest' tools : tools made of stone and bone, as were used by primitive men.
'magnificent' tools : modern weapons such as guns, tanks, bombers, etc.

Exercise 4

Nothing could be more important to the development of an infant Indian langur than its relationship with its mother. The correct position : at the beginning of the paragraph.

Exercise 5

There appears to be no topic sentence as such.

Main idea : By tampering with nature, man has created new problems for himself.

Exercise 6

- 1 The fruitfulness of marine life forms and the utter ruthlessness with which larger creatures eat smaller ones.
- 2 a) If all the eggs laid by the codfish were hatched and grew to maturity.
b) Very few eggs become full-sized cod; the others get destroyed or eaten up by other sea creatures.
- 3 Nature Maintains a Balance among Sea Creatures.
- 4 fruitfulness
marine
infinitesimal

Exercise 7

When you write your paragraph, omit the following points :

- cockroach is a clean insect
- some species are large, others are small
- usually black or brown in colour

Here is a specimen paragraph. Compare it with yours.

The Secret of the Cockroach's Survival

The Cockroach is one of the oldest creatures, older than even the dinosaurs. It has survived because it can live anywhere and in any climate, from the coldest to the warmest. It is found in cities as well as forests. Moreover, it can eat anything — flowerbuds, paint, soap, wood, and even shoe polish. When there is nothing available, it can live without food and water for months. Predatory animals keep away from it because its scent glands give out a dirty smell. Everything seems to favour the cockroach.

Exercise 8

e, b, c, a, d

Exercise 9

- 1 Man has developed culture and learned to make clothes and build fires. This allows him to live in all kinds of climates.
- 2 i) can move and live in unforested land
ii) can cross natural barriers
iii) can digest all kinds of food
- 3 cars, boats, ships, aeroplanes, etc.
- 4 restricted
perish

Exercise 10

- i) Yet
- ii) Despite
- iii) However
- iv) Also
- v) But
- vi) In the future

Exercise 11

- 1 Mr and Mrs R.N. Khan P.C. Sahgal 5 a.m.
..... no. 58.
- 2 In April 1987, Preservation. It was organized by Prof. V.K. Kumar, Prof. V.R. Gupta, and Dr S.R. Kapur. The topics discussed were opening of sanctuaries, etc.