

**Block**

# 2

## **SKILLS NEEDED AT THE WORKPLACE-II**

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|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>UNIT 6</b>                               |           |
| <b>Meetings</b>                             | <b>5</b>  |
| <hr/>                                       |           |
| <b>UNIT 7</b>                               |           |
| <b>Taking Notes &amp; Preparing Minutes</b> | <b>26</b> |
| <hr/>                                       |           |
| <b>UNIT 8</b>                               |           |
| <b>Presentation Skills-I</b>                | <b>48</b> |
| <hr/>                                       |           |
| <b>UNIT 9</b>                               |           |
| <b>Presentation Skills-II</b>               | <b>59</b> |
| <hr/>                                       |           |
| <b>UNIT 10</b>                              |           |
| <b>Negotiation Skills</b>                   | <b>71</b> |

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## **BLOCK INTRODUCTION**

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In the previous Block we introduced you to basic Communicative and Business English skills that are essential whenever you are doing business. In this Block these skills will be further practiced and expanded in different business contexts.

In fact, in this Block we have provided you with a wide range of business settings and situations in which you can practice and improve your communication skills in English, so that you can become more confident, more fluent and more accurate.

The units in this Block are as follows:

- Unit 6: Meetings
- Unit 7: Taking Notes and Preparing Minutes
- Unit 8: Presentation Skills I
- Unit 9: Presentation Skills II
- Unit 10: Negotiation Skills

Each unit consists of integrated activities which include reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks, as well as study skills and grammar activities to inculcate accuracy. Please listen to the tape wherever indicated and practice the correct pronunciation, intonation and stress patterns.

We have given you a detailed Answer Key. Some of the answers are suggestive in nature – this means that variations are possible which are equally correct. Please do the exercises before you turn to the Answer Key.

Where the Speaking and Listening tasks are concerned which call for discussion, role play and simulation, it would be a good idea to practice with some friend who is good at English or at the Study Centre with fellow students.

We hope you find this course enjoyable and useful.

**Skills Needed at the  
Workplace-II**

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## UNIT 6 MEETINGS

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### Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Warm up
- 6.2 Reading: A Successful Meeting
- 6.3 Speaking: One to One Meetings
- 6.4 Language Focus: Opening, Middle and Close
- 6.5 Study Skills : Editing
- 6.6 Listening: Criteria for Successful Meetings
- 6.7 Vocabulary
- 6.8 Grammar: Reporting Verbs
- 6.9 Writing: Memos
- 6.10 Pronunciation: Stress According to Part of Speech
- 6.11 Summary
- 6.12 Suggested Readings
- 6.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 6.0 OBJECTIVES

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Conducting or participating in meetings is an important business skill. In this Unit you will learn

- about formal and informal meetings
- about the process of business meetings
- the role of the chairperson and participants
- how to express your ideas and views
- how to make suggestions,
- how to express agreement and disagreement
- how to write agendas, and follow up memos
- to practice the language of meetings

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### 6.1 WARM UP

---

Have a look at these pictures which suggest two kinds of meetings. What do you think are the major differences between the two kinds of meetings? Write down at least three possible differences.





### Check Your Progress 1

Match your points on the differences in the two kinds of meetings with the one's given below:

- Group meetings are generally more formal than one to one meetings.
- Group meetings are more structured and planned and generally last longer.
- They involve a large number of people and must be chaired by somebody.
- They also follow the procedure of agenda and minutes, which may not be the case with one to one meetings.
- However, one to one meetings are not chance conversations but meetings with a purpose where certain objectives need to be achieved. Hence some kind of planning also needs to be done for such meetings to ensure the desired outcome.
- The language of group meetings is also more formal than one to one meetings.

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## 6.2 READING: A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

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**The passage that follows tells you how to have meetings that are both effective and fruitful.**

Read the following passage and discuss the questions that follow.

### How can you make Meetings work for you?

Meetings are central to most organizations for people need to take decisions based on shared information and opinions. How well you present yourself and your ideas, and how well you work with other people is crucial to your career.

#### Conducting a Meeting

Call a meeting only when it is essential and be very clear about its purpose. Meetings called on a routine basis tend to lose their point. If you are sure you need to call a meeting, circulate a memo several days in advance, specifying the time, place and objectives, issues to be discussed, other participants and preparation expected.

Meetings should be short, not more than an hour. Six is the optimum number of participants for a good working meeting. Larger meetings can be productive as brainstorming sessions for ideas, provided participants can speak freely without feeling they will be judged.

A successful meeting always leads to action. Decisions should take up the bulk of the minutes of the meeting, including the name of the person delegated to each task, and a

deadline for its completion. Make sure you circulate the minutes after the meeting and then again before the next one.

Draw out quieter members of the group. Encouragement helps create a relaxed and productive atmosphere.

**Attending the Meeting**

Even if the meeting is informal, it is always advisable to prepare a few key points in note form to put across or discuss. Don't memorize notes or read them out like a sermon. This inhibits your natural gestures: the eye contact and body language is essential for effective communication. If you cannot answer a question don't be afraid to say you don't know.

Phrase your criticisms and proposals positively. Try to offer solutions rather than to complain.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1. Answer these questions on the basis of what you read in the passage. Write out your answers in your own words as far as possible. Check your answers with the Answer key.

i. Why are meetings necessary?

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

ii. What should you do when you decide that a meeting is necessary?

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

iii. Name five things that should be taken care of by the person who chairs the meeting.

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

iv. What should be done once a decision is taken?

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

v. Name three things that participants should keep in mind.

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

2. Here are some terms associated with formal meetings. You were introduced to most of these in the above passage. Complete the sentences that follow by inserting them.

|           |              |           |         |              |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| Minutes   | arrangements | agenda    | conduct | participants |
| circulate | items        | consensus | memo    | venue        |

i. The chairperson or his/her secretary sends a \_\_\_\_\_ to invite participants to a meeting.

ii. The \_\_\_\_\_ for the meeting is also mentioned in the memo.

iii. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the previous meeting are circulated to participants

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

- iv. The organizer or his/her staff makes all the \_\_\_\_\_ for the meeting.
- v. The chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ the meeting. \_\_\_\_\_ take part in the meeting.
- vi. The \_\_\_\_\_ is discussed \_\_\_\_\_ by item.
- vii. \_\_\_\_\_ is arrived at on issues under discussion
- viii. \_\_\_\_\_ of the meeting are jotted down during the meeting and then sent to all participants and concerned persons.

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### **6.3 SPEAKING: ONE TO ONE MEETINGS**

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#### **Arranging to Meet**

Listen to this conversation where two persons are making an arrangement for a meeting. Pay special attention to the underlined expressions which highlight the language used in such situations. Say them aloud for practice.

- A. How about meeting at The Moti Mahal?
- B. That should be fine. What time?
- A. What about after the conference?
- B. Would you like to meet for dinner?
- A. That would be great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan.
- B. Let's say 7 pm.
- A. Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye.
- B. Bye.

#### **Check Your Progress 3**

1. Here are prompts for 5 pairs of suggestions and responses. Write them out and then check your answers with the audio cassette. The tape script is given in the Answer Key.

- A How about / meeting / lunch / today?
- B Not convenient / tomorrow?
- .....
- .....

- A Would you / go / the electronics exhibition / Saturday?
- B Ok / 4 pm.
- .....
- .....

- A Could we / meet / a restaurant / Friday evening?
- B Yes / Mc Donald's, C P.
- .....
- .....

- A Would you / watch / the cricket match / on Sunday?
- B Yes / great.
- .....
- .....

- A Should we / a movie / this weekend?
- B Not possible / next weekend.
- .....
- .....



Step 3 : Present the agenda. Tell them in order what you are going to discuss.

On the agenda you'll see there are three items.  
Have you all seen a copy of the agenda?  
I suggest we take the next item on the agenda.

Step 4 : Get initial contributions. Ask someone to begin the discussion.

I'd like to ask Sunidhi to.....  
Can we hear from Mr Bakshi.....  
Can we have Ms Verma tell us about.....

**Check Your Progress 4**

Practice the expressions in the speech balloons by applying them to these situations. Assume the role of the chairperson.

You are meeting to discuss / decide about

- i. a welcome party for a new colleague  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- ii. a new product that your company is launching  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- iii. an important business visitor  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- iv. a trade fair in which your company is participating  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Now listen to one possible way of how a chairperson could open the meetings in these situations. You may refer to the tape script in the Answer Key.

Middle and close of a meeting

Here is a language checklist which you can use in a meeting:

It seems to me.....  
In my view.....  
I tend to think.....  
Its obvious that.....  
I believe.....  
Clearly.....

**Asking for an opinion**

Could we hear from.....  
What do you think about.....  
What's your view?  
Any comments?

**Interrupting**

Excuse me, may I ask for a  
clarification on this.....  
If I may interrupt.....  
Sorry to interrupt but.....

**Handling Interruptions**

Yes, go ahead.....  
Sorry, please let him finish.....  
Can I come to that later, please.....  
That's not really relevant at this stage.....

**Moving the discussion on**

Can we go on to think about.....  
Let's move on to the next point.....  
Now we come to the question of.....

**Closing the Meeting**

I think we've covered everything.....  
So we've decided.....  
I think we can close the meeting now.  
That's it then. The next meeting will be.....

**Check Your Progress 5**

**Which of the above expressions would you use in these situations?**

- i. Preventing someone from interrupting  
.....
- ii. Stating your opinion  
.....
- iii. Asking to interrupt  
.....
- iv. Closing the meeting  
.....
- v. Asking for a clarification  
.....
- vi. Inviting someone’s opinion  
.....
- vii. Asking for comments  
.....
- viii. Moving on to the next point on the agenda  
.....

**Expressing Agreement/Disagreement**

During meetings you often express **Agreement** or **Disagreement**. Here is language that could help you do so more appropriately.

| <b>Agreement</b>                 |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i><b>STRONG</b></i>             | NEUTRAL                     |
| <i>I'm in complete agreement</i> | <i>I agree</i>              |
| <i>I quite agree</i>             | <i>You're right there</i>   |
| <i>I couldn't agree more</i>     | <i>I think you're right</i> |
| <i>Yes definitely</i>            | <i>Yes and.....</i>         |
| <i>Exactly</i>                   | <i>That's true....</i>      |
| <i>Precisely</i>                 | <i>That's right.....</i>    |

| <b>Disagreement</b>                |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| STRONG                             | NEUTRAL                         |
| <i>I disagree completely.</i>      | <i>I don't agree.</i>           |
| <i>That's out of the question.</i> | <i>That's not how I see it.</i> |
| <i>I wouldn't say that at all.</i> | <i>I wouldn't say that.</i>     |
| <i>Of course not.</i>              | <i>I think you are wrong.</i>   |
| <i>That's ridiculous.</i>          | <i>I disagree.</i>              |

**Check Your Progress 6**

**Role Play**

Work with a friend or by yourself to complete these short dialogues. Take it in turns to read the first statement and to reply according to the instructions.

- i. I think the report is too long. (*disagree strongly*).
- ii. It's too late to make any changes. (*agree*).
- iii. I feel we all need to work together. (*agree strongly*)
- iv. In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. (*disagree*)
- v. We must wait till next year to start this project. (*disagree, state the opposite opinion*)

Listen to the tape script for model answers.

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## 6.5 STUDY SKILLS: EDITING

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Whenever you write a piece of text, it is always important to edit what you read. You may say of course we do that. But what do you think we must be careful about? We must be careful about mistakes of grammar, spelling, punctuation and so on. In the text below we have extrapolated some extra words in the text. Your knowledge of grammaticality should help you spot them.

The text below is about Meetings. There are 9 lines out of which six contain mistakes: an extra word in the line. Find the extra words. Cross them out and write them in the column on the right. Put a tick mark for the lines that have no extra words. The first two lines have been done for you as examples.

### Check Your Progress 7

- i. Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting meeting
- ii. this morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with ✓
- iii. everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking
- iv.                      that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing
- v.                      work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though
- vi.                      that we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce
- vii.                      takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't
- viii.                      be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a foodie lover,
- ix.                      so we'll probably go to a nice restaurant.
2. Find the meanings of these words in the dictionary. Some of these words are new and you might find them more easily on the web. If you still have problems, have a look at the answer key but only after you have been unsuccessful with the other resources.
- i. teleconference
- ii. hot-desking
- iii. outsourcing

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## 6.6 LISTENING CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

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You were taught to **read** and **write** in school. But did you ever have a listening comprehension class? Most of you would say 'no'. **Listening comprehension** has indeed been a neglected area in English language teaching. Teachers have imagined

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

that we just pick up ‘listening’ in the course of our student life. But don’t you think that you would have been better off if you had been trained? It is never too late! Let us practice the skill of listening. This would help us in our overall proficiency in the language.

Read the questions given below. Listen to the tape carefully and make notes as you read. Listen to it again and complete your notes. Spend some time completing your answers. Do they match with those given at the end of the unit?

**Check Your Progress 8**

Listen to this recording on Meetings and answer the following questions:

- i. Why does the speaker find meetings bothersome?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- ii. Why is it necessary to look at meetings as a means rather than an end?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- iii. How can a meeting achieve its desired result?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- iv. What do you understand by
- v. *Pet peeves* .....
- In the driver’s seat* .....
- To map possible routes* .....

You may now check your answers by comparing them with sample answers given in the key.

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**6.7 VOCABULARY**

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Confidence in a language is often a result of having a large vocabulary. And confidence leads to fluency. In each unit, we have given you several exercises in vocabulary development. Do complete them carefully, and use these words in real life.

**Check Your Progress 9**

- 1. Insert suitable words from the box to complete the following text on **Decision Making Meetings**. Check your answers with the Answer key.

|                 |                     |                     |                    |                |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>Needs</b>    | <b>organization</b> | <b>ideas</b>        | <b>effective</b>   | <b>support</b> |
| <b>decision</b> | <b>facilitate</b>   | <b>participants</b> | <b>team effort</b> | <b>design</b>  |
|                 |                     | <b>discuss</b>      | <b>key issues</b>  |                |

While \_\_\_\_\_ meetings are essential to any \_\_\_\_\_ and to getting work done, most meetings leave us still looking for a \_\_\_\_\_ and tired . A good meeting should \_\_\_\_\_ decision-making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the \_\_\_\_\_, and contribute to building \_\_\_\_\_ within the organization.

Successful meetings are ones where attention is paid to three areas; content, \_\_\_\_\_ and process. Selection of content is crucial. All too often meetings are called to \_\_\_\_\_ issues which would be better resolved with a couple of phone calls while at the same time core issues remain unmentioned. The key is to focus meetings around \_\_\_\_\_.

Secondly, the design of the meeting can hinder or \_\_\_\_\_ the decision making, problem solving or the informational task at hand. In designing, attention needs to be given to idea generation methods, decision processes, agenda, time frames, problem-solving steps, etc.

Third, and most often ignored, is making sure the individual and group \_\_\_\_\_ of the participants are met. Are people participating, included, feel that there is room for their \_\_\_\_\_? Are dysfunctional behaviors openly dealt with, is there positive energy in the group, are people committed to the task at hand and enthused about the way the group is working to complete the task?

2. Here is the beginning of a meeting. Can you complete the text by using suitable words from the box?

|                |                 |                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>improve</i> | <i>comments</i> | <i>begin</i>   | <i>agenda discuss</i> |
| <i>decline</i> | <i>meeting</i>  | <i>remarks</i> | <i>clear</i>          |

Chairperson: ‘Right then, I think we should \_\_\_\_\_ now, it’s ten o’clock. We’re here today to \_\_\_\_\_ some of the reasons for the \_\_\_\_\_ in profits which has affected the company. At the end of the \_\_\_\_\_ we should have a \_\_\_\_\_ idea of what measures we should take to \_\_\_\_\_ the situation. You’ve all seen the \_\_\_\_\_. I’d like to ask if anyone has any \_\_\_\_\_ on it before we start.’

Voices: ‘No / its fine / etc.’

Chairperson: Can I ask Ms Anand to start with his \_\_\_\_\_.

## 6.8 GRAMMAR : REPORTING VERBS

### 1. Reporting Verbs

**Reporting what was said**

When you write minutes of a meeting, it is useful to report the ideas, rather than every sentence. To do this, you need to use a variety of reporting verbs. Here is a list that you might find useful:

CA : ‘I think we should raise the budget.’

CA **suggested** raising the budget.

MB : ‘I assure you I will find out more.’

MB **promised** to find out more.

RJ : ‘It might be possible to arrange extra funds.’

R J **mentioned** the possibility of extra funds.

DM : ‘I am not so sure if there will be extra funding’.

DM **wondered** if there would be extra funding.

Here are some more examples of the use of reporting verbs while writing or speaking about a meeting.

Three issues were **discussed**.

It was **decided** to delay action until the next meeting.

Everyone **agreed** to the proposal.

The issue of salary was **brought up**.

The Sales Manager **reported** on the results of the trade fair.

Five strategies were **recommended**.

SB **explained** the reason for the delay.

### **Check Your Progress 10**

Can you report the following statements? You may invent the names of the speakers. The first one is done for you as an example.

- i. "The report will definitely be in by tomorrow."  
Ans: *Mr Singhal assured us that the report would be in by the next day.*
- ii. "What are the sales figures of last week?"
- iii. "You still haven't gathered the feedback from your department. Please do so by the end of the week."
- iv. "The delegation is expected to arrive next week."
- v. "Is it necessary to make the scheme compulsory for all employees?"
- vi. "I don't think the new flexi-timings are acceptable to all our employees."
- vii. "Why don't we ask an advertising agency to design our campaign?"
- viii. "Can someone give me an update on the progress of construction work at our new site?"
- ix. "I am not happy with the people coming late for the meeting."
- x. "Can I see the absentee record of the Sales department?"
- xi. "It is absolutely essential to dispatch the goods this weekend."
- xii. "We have gained two important clients through the Trade Fair."

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## **6.9 WRITING: MEMOS**

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A very important customer is going to visit your city for a weekend. You need to prepare for his visit. He is visiting your city for the first time. Imagine that a meeting has been held to discuss the issue on the basis of the agenda given below.

### **AGENDA**

#### **1 Hotels**

- Which hotel should you reserve? Why? Who should make the reservation? How can you make sure that his stay is comfortable?

#### **2 Airport**

- Who should meet the visitor at the airport?

#### **3 Lunches and dinners**

- Where should you take your visitor for lunch and dinner? Should you check first to see what kind of food he likes?

#### **4 Entertainment**

- Where should you take him in the evenings?

#### **5 Gift**

- What kind of gift should you buy him? When should you give it to him?

#### **6 Welcome letter**

- What advice would you give him about your city and visit by way of helping him to prepare for his visit.

#### **7 AOB – Any Other Business**

The Minutes of the Meeting are also given. We will discuss Minutes in detail in the next Unit.

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2003 to plan for Mr. Sampath's visit to the city**

The Following members were present:

Mr. Dinesh Mehra  
 Mr. Vikas Puri  
 Ms. Deepti Sinha  
 Ms. Harvinder Kaur  
 Mr. Joseph Stephen  
 Ms. Salma Sheikh  
 Ms. Shilpa Gupta  
 Mr. Sunil Rawat could not attend the meeting as he was on leave.

Mr. Sampath's visit was discussed in detail and the following decisions were taken.

**Hotel Reservation:** Mr. Vikas Puri will book accommodation for Mr. Sampath at the Park Royal hotel in Nehru Place.

**Airport:** Vikas will also receive the guest at the airport and bring him over to the hotel personally.

**Meals:** On 1<sup>st</sup> July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal and on 2<sup>nd</sup> July the GMs will have lunch with him at the Taj. We will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience. Ms. Deepti Sinha will take care of this

**Entertainment:** Since this is Mr. Sampath's first visit to Delhi, it was presumed that he might be interested in sightseeing and shopping. Deepti and Vikas will arrange for the tour and accompany him.

**Gift:** It was also decided that the visitor would be given a traditional painting by our MD as a gift.

**Welcome Letter:** To start on a warm welcoming note, Vikas will write out the welcome letter and get it approved by Mr. Rakesh Menon before dispatching it to Mr. Sampath.

## Check Your Progress 11

Now write a memo to your boss with your suggestions. After you have written the memo, compare it with the one provided as a sample memo in the Answer key.

### Writing Memo

Before you write the Memo, we will show you the format of the Memo, its functions and chief characteristics.

As the dictionary definition states, a memo is a message in writing sent by one person or department to another 'within the same business organization'. This is the reason why a memo is sometimes also described as an **inter-office memo**: a message sent from one office to another (of the same company).

## Skills Needed at the Workplace-II

Memos are used for a variety of purposes: from making a brief announcement to submitting or circulating an in-house (=within the organization) report. Among the main uses of the memo as a carrier of internal messages are the following:

- Making announcements, requests, policy statements, notices, reminders, suggestions, acknowledgements, congratulations, informal invitations, thank you's, etc.
- Confirming decisions arrived at (or points settled) face to face meetings or telephone conversations with colleagues, workers, etc.
- For submitting or circulating in-house reports, e.g., preliminary survey reports, progress reports, recommendation reports, investigation reports, evaluative reports, and so on. Such memos may run to several pages and use the convention of formal reports like headings, graphics, tables, appendices, etc.

These purposes, for which memos are mainly used, can be seen as falling into the following functional categories:

1. **To inform:** Announcements, policy statements, notices and reports fall in the category. No immediate response is required, but the receivers are expected to note the information and conform to its requirements in their future behaviour, wherever applicable.
2. **To elicit a quick and definite response:** Suitably drafted memos can help elicit quick and definite responses where requests or notices are involved.
3. **To confirm the decisions/conclusions** arrived at a face to face meeting, or in a telephone conversation, and to create a permanent record of the decisions/conclusions.

### Style of Memos

As one of the main instruments of communication at the workplace, workaday memos have gradually evolved a distinctive style. They are written by persons in a hurry for persons who are probably in a greater hurry. Hence, an ideal memo should reveal its message to the reader at one quick glance. What is even more important is that the **memo should have an appearance** which will tell the receiver that it can be read quickly. If, for example, the memo looks like several paragraphs of closely typed English prose, it is likely to be put aside to be read later or not read at all. So, if your memo is not a report, **make it brief** and **make it look brief**. Given below is the format of a memo.

#### MEMORANDUM

**Date: 19/5**

**From:** MD

**TO:** Managers (Sales, Prod, Fin, Exp., Q.C.)

**SUBJECT:** Export batch No. DO-9951 (To Indonesia)

Matra Importers, Jakarta, have informed us that the last batch of scooters exported to them has the following problems:

- No rear-view mirrors have been supplied though they were included in the order
- Base plates of 32 scooters were found to be loose
- 32 scooters have been supplied in sports grey colour though this colour was not included in the order
- 16 scooters had no tool kits.

Please come to my office at 11 am tomorrow to discuss the matter. I will expect the concerned managers to bring with them explanations as well as remedies.

## To Sum Up:

1. Get to your main message directly.
2. Cut out every sentence, in fact every word, that does not contribute to your message.
3. Make your sentences short and simple.
4. Always think of the reader's time
5. State your 'subject' very precisely
6. Itemize the points
7. Pay attention to the Layout

Now write the memo on the basis of the agenda given above—the answer is given in the answer key.

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## 6.10 PRONUNCIATION: STRESS ACCORDING TO PART OF SPEECH

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Look at the following words which can be used both as nouns and verbs. The stress falls on the first syllable if it is a noun and the second if it is a verb. Now listen to the audio cassette and countercheck your pronunciation.

For example

| <u>Noun</u> | <u>Verb</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
| Increase    | increase    |

Can you mark the stresses in the following words and read them out aloud:

| <u>Noun</u> | <u>Verb</u> |
|-------------|-------------|
| Present     | present     |
| Export      | export      |
| Record      | record      |
| Import      | import      |
| Desert      | desert      |
| Decrease    | decrease    |
| Progress    | progress    |
| Refund      | refund      |
| Process     | process     |

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## 6.11 SUMMARY

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In this unit, through various activities and exercises, we have guided you through the following aspects of meetings:

- the difference between formal and informal meetings
- the format of meetings
- the formulaic language which is required for opening, middle and closing of meetings
- criteria for a successful meeting (a listening activity)

In the Grammar section, we give you practice in **reporting verbs** which are required when you write minutes of meeting.

As a follow up to a meeting, we may have to write a memo to the staff. We have given you the format and style of a memo. We have also given you practice in writing a memo.

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## 6.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Jones, L and Alexander R, Comfort, J. 1996. *Effective Meetings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. New *International Business English*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Sweeney, S. *Communicating in Business*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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## 6.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 2

*Note: Answers to questions iii & v provide more points than the questions ask for. This is for the learner's benefit.*

1.
  - i. Why are meetings necessary?  
Meetings provide you with a platform where you can share your views and ideas with other people in the department / company and take decisions based on these shared ideas and opinions. Hence they are a necessary tool for communication and decision making.
  - ii. What should you do when you decide that a meeting is necessary?  
Once you decide to call a meeting, you must circulate a memo to all those who are expected to be present for the meeting, well in advance. The memo must state the time, place and venue of the meeting. It must also have information on the issues to be discussed, what will be expected by way of participation from those who are to attend the meeting as well as which members have been called for the meeting.
  - iii. Name five things that should be taken care of by the person who chairs the meeting.
    - call a meeting only when absolutely necessary
    - set clear objectives for the meeting
    - circulate a memo with necessary information well in advance
    - do not call more than six people unless necessary
    - keep the meeting short – not more than an hour
    - encourage all members to participate, especially the quieter ones
    - ensure that decisions are taken
    - circulate minutes of the meeting
  - iv. What should be done once a decision is taken?  
Once the chairperson of the meeting has taken a decision, s/he should assign responsibilities to the members and then set deadlines for the completion of the assigned work.
  - v. Name three things that participants should keep in mind.
    - prepare a few key points before the meeting and take them along to the meeting
    - don't memorize information – speak as naturally as possible
    - don't be afraid to admit if you do not know something that you are asked
    - be positive in your criticism
    - offer solutions
2.
  - i. The chairperson or his/her secretary sends a **memo** to invite participants to a meeting.
  - ii. The **venue** for the meeting is also mentioned in the memo.

- iii. The **minutes** of the previous meeting are circulated to participants
- iv. The organizer or his/her staff make all the **arrangements** for the meeting.
- v. The chairperson **conducts** the meeting.
- vi. **Participants** take part in the meeting.
- vii. The **agenda** is discussed **item** by item.
- viii. **Consensus** is arrived at on issues under discussion
- ix. **Minutes** of the meeting are jotted down during the meeting and then sent to all participants and concerned persons.

## Tape script

- A How about meeting at The Moti Mahal?  
 B That should be fine. What time?  
 A What about after the conference?  
 B Would you like to meet for dinner?  
 A That would be great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan.  
 B Let's say 7 pm.  
 A Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye.  
 B Bye.

**Check Your Progress 3**

## Tape script

- 
- A How about meeting for lunch today?  
 B I'm afraid it is not convenient for me today. Can we fix it for tomorrow, please?
- 
- A Would you like to go to the electronics exhibition on Saturday?  
 B That'll be OK with me. Should we say 4 pm?
- 
- A Could we meet at a restaurant on Friday evening?  
 B Yes, that would suit me. Shall we say Mc Donald's at C P?
- 
- A Would you like to watch the cricket match on Sunday?  
 B Yes, that would be great.
- 
- A Should we go for a movie this weekend?  
 B I'm afraid it won't be possible. Can we keep it for next weekend?
- 

## 2. Tape script (The correct order)

- Mr Bakshi : Gautam Bakshi speaking.  
 Ms Jain : Hello Mr Bakshi, this is Sunidhi Jain from Bhopal. How are you?  
 Mr Bakshi : Ms Jain! It is good to hear from you. I'm fine thanks, how are you?  
 Ms Jain : Fine, thank you. I'm coming over to Delhi in the first week of November for the Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan. Will you be in Delhi at that time?  
 Mr Bakshi: Yes sure. In fact we are participating in the Trade Fair this year.  
 Ms Jain : Oh good! How about a meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> evening at The Village?  
 Mr Bakshi : Just a minute, let me check my diary. ....OK, That should be fine.  
 Ms Jain : That's great. I suggest 7 o'clock in the restaurant.  
 Mr Bakshi : 6<sup>th</sup> November 7 o'clock then.  
 Ms Jain: Thanks a lot. See you then.  
 Mr Bakshi : Yes, looking forward to meeting you. Bye then.  
 Ms Jain : Goodbye.

**Check Your Progress 4**

## Tape script

- i. OK, shall we begin? We're here today to discuss about the arrangements for the welcome party for our new colleague Ms Sunanda Varma. I'd like to ask Sunil to begin by telling us what planning he has already done so far.

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

- ii. Thank you for coming. It is ten o'clock. Let's start. What we want to do today is reach a decision on the deadline for launching our new product. Have you all seen a copy of the agenda? Can we hear from Mr Bakshi about what he thinks would be the suitable date for launching the product?
- iii. Right then, can we get started? The purpose of this meeting is to plan in detail for the visit of our very important customer from Holland, Mr Tillman. Can we have Harvinder tell us what planning he has done so far?
- iv. Thank you for coming. It is two o'clock. Let's begin. Our aim is to ensure that we make proper arrangements for our participation in the Trade fair to be held next month in Delhi. On the agenda you will see there are three items. I'd like to ask Sunaina to say something about the first item that deals with the products that we will be displaying at the Fair this year.

**Check Your Progress 5**

- i. **Preventing someone from interrupting** – Sorry, please let him finish.
- ii. **Stating your opinion** – In my view.....I believe.....
- iii. **Asking to interrupt** – If I may interrupt..... Sorry to interrupt, but.....
- iv. **Closing the meeting** – I think we've covered everything. .... That's it then. The next meeting will be held on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> of June.
- v. **Asking for a clarification** – Excuse me, may I ask for a clarification on this?
- vi. **Inviting someone's opinion** – Could we hear from Puneet? ... What do you think about .....
- vii. **Asking for comments** – Any comments?
- viii. **Moving on to the next point on the agenda** – Let's move on to the next point..... Now we come to the question of.....

**Check Your Progress 6**

- 1. I think the report is too long. (disagree strongly).  
*I wouldn't say that at all.*
- 2. It's too late to make any changes. (agree).  
*I think you're right.*
- 1. I feel we all need to work together. (agree strongly)  
*I couldn't agree more.*
- 2. In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. (disagree)  
*That's not how I see it.*
- 3. We must wait till next year to start this project. (disagree, state the opposite opinion)  
*That's out of the question. On the contrary, we should begin working on it as soon as we can.*

**Check Your Progress 7**

- i. Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting meeting
- ii. this morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with √
- iii. everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking only
- iv. that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing be
- v. work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though, out
- vi. that we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce √
- vii. takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't along

- viii. be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a great food lover, *great*
- ix. so we'll probably go to a nice restaurant. ✓
2. teleconference - A conference held among people in different locations by means of telecommunications equipment, such as closed-circuit television.  
hot-desking - is a way of saving office space in which workers do not have their own desk and are only given a desk when they need it.  
outsourcing – subcontracting work to outside companies

## Listening

### Tape script

My two pet peeves are being stuck in mismanaged meetings and in traffic jams. Traffic jams are often unavoidable but ineffective meetings are particularly irksome since it is simple to plan and manage successful meetings. Using the tools for creating dynamic and inspirational meetings doesn't require a Ph.D. or months of training. Why then are these simple ideas and tools so often ignored?

Meetings are too often seen as an end unto themselves. I've attended more than my share of meetings where the object was to get to the meeting. Once there, we dutifully filled the time allotted while producing only a minimum of new ideas, plans and action.

Using meetings effectively starts with the understanding that meetings are not the destination but a vehicle for reaching strategic objectives or organizational destinations. With this in mind we can move meetings forward.

Thinking of meetings as vehicles, as the means to an end, clarifies objectives and itineraries. It enables us to get in the driver's seat and focus our attention on the results we want to achieve and the means of achieving them. This requires selecting the appropriate type and structure of meeting, picking a competent meeting leader and facilitator, determining the key participants, and identifying critical steps in order to make the best use of peoples' time and energy.

With a clear destination in mind and key waypoints noted, it is possible to map possible routes and determine when a bike, a bus, a plane, chariot or truck is the appropriate vehicle to get you there quickly. With clear objectives, we can determine how each part of the meeting should be structured and managed to achieve the desired results.

The success of meetings is limited only by our understanding of their purpose and our ability to plan and manage them.

## Check Your Progress 8

### Possible answers

- Why does the speaker find meetings bothersome?  
Meetings are often mismanaged & ineffective, although you don't need any special qualifications to be able to conduct successful and effective meetings.
- Why is it necessary to look at meetings as a means rather than an end?  
This will enable participants to achieve the objectives of the meeting better.
- How can a meeting achieve its desired result?
  - *by selecting the appropriate type and structure of meeting*
  - *picking a competent meeting leader and facilitator*
  - *determining the key participants*
  - *identifying critical steps in order to make the best use of peoples' time and energy*

- 1 What do you understand by  
*Pet peeves – what bothers, irritates or annoys me most*  
*In the driver's seat – in a position of authority or command*  
*To map possible routes – to find out possible ways of doing something*

### Check Your Progress 9

1. The missing words from the text are in bold.  
**Secrets of Better Decision Making Meetings**  
While **effective** meetings are essential to any **organization** and to getting work done, most meetings leave us still looking for a **decision** and tired. A good meeting should **facilitate** decision-making, assist people in taking responsibility, energize the **participants**, and contribute to building **team effort** within the organization.

Successful meetings are ones where attention is paid to three areas; content, **design** and process. Selection of content is crucial. All too often meetings are called to **discuss** issues which would be better resolved with a couple of phone calls while at the same time core issues remain unmentioned. The key is to focus meetings around **key issues**.

Secondly, the design of the meeting can hinder or **support** the decision- making, problem solving or the informational task at hand. In designing, attention needs to be given to idea generation methods, decision processes, agenda, time frames, problem-solving steps, etc.

Third, and most often ignored, is making sure the individual and group **needs** of the participants are met. Are people participating, included, feel that there is room for their **ideas**? Are dysfunctional behaviors openly dealt with, is there positive energy in the group, are people committed to the task at hand and enthused about the way the group is working to complete the task?

2. Chairperson: 'Right then, I think we should begin now, it's ten o'clock. We're here today to discuss some of the reasons for the decline in profits which has affected the company. At the end of the meeting we should have a clear idea of what measures we should take to improve the situation. You've all seen the agenda. I'd like to ask if anyone has any comments on it before we start.'

Voices: 'No / its fine / etc.'

Chairperson: Can I ask Mr Anand to start with his remarks.

### Check Your Progress 10

#### Reporting Verbs

Possible answers:

- i. He/she assured the members that the report would be in by the next day.
- ii. He enquired about the sales figures of the previous week.
- iii. She was reminded to gather the feedback from her department positively by the end of the week.
- iv. He informed the members that the delegation would arrive the next week.
- v. She questioned the necessity of making the scheme compulsory for all the employees.
- vi. She expressed her doubts about the acceptability of flexi-time.
- vii. He suggested that they should ask an advertising agency to design their campaign.
- viii. She asked for an update on the progress of construction work at their new site.

- ix. He expressed his unhappiness with latecomers.
- x. He asked to see the absentee record of the Sales department
- xi. She stressed/emphasized the need to dispatch the goods by the weekend.
- xii. She informed the members that they had gained two important clients through the Trade Fair

### Check Your Progress 11

Here is a sample of the Memo you could write to your boss:

#### Memo

To : Rakesh Menon (GM –Marketing)  
 From : Shilpa Gupta (HR Department)  
 Date : 21 June 2003  
 Subject: Details of Mr Sampath's visit to Delhi

At the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2003 we took these decisions regarding the arrangements for Mr Sampath's visit:

- Vikas will book a room for him at the Park Royal Hotel and also receive him at the airport
- We have made the following lunch arrangements for him and will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience  
 On 1<sup>st</sup> July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal  
 On 2<sup>nd</sup> July the GMs will have lunch with him at The Taj.
- Since this is his first visit to Delhi, the G M Marketing will take him on a sightseeing tour of Delhi on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> July. Vikas will take him out for shopping on Sunday if he wishes to shop.
- We have decided to gift him a traditional painting from Cottage Emporium.
- Vikas will also be drafting the welcome letter. He will get the letter approved by you before mailing it to him.

Please let us know whether you are satisfied with these arrangements. We look forward to your suggestions.

S/d

### Pronunciation

#### Noun

#### Verb

present

present

export

export

record

record

import

import

desert

desert

decrease

decrease

progress

progress

refund

refund

process

process

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## UNIT 7 TAKING NOTES & PREPARING MINUTES

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### Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Warm Up
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Taking Notes
  - 7.3.1 The Note-taking Skill: The Essential Components
  - 7.3.2 The Note-taking Skill: An Example
- 7.4 Preparing Minutes
  - 7.4.1 Format of Minutes
  - 7.4.2 Language and Style of Minutes
- 7.5 Grammar: Using the Passive Voice
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Suggested Readings
- 7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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Our objectives in this unit are that after you have worked through it you should be able to

- take notes at meetings where the subject matter is familiar to you, using active listening and correct note-taking techniques
- convert the notes into minutes, using the format, language and style proper to formal minutes

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### 7.1 WARM UP

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Get hold of two minutes of meetings, either from your own office or someone else's office. Read them carefully and

- a) write your impressions of the minutes in terms of format, coverage, language and style.
- b) make corrections wherever necessary.

It would be a good idea to work with a partner – either a friend or a colleague at the Study Centre.

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### 7.2 INTRODUCTION

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All formal Meetings require that a written record of the meetings – of the discussions held and decisions reached – be prepared and kept on record. This is obviously necessary since if no such record is available disputes can later arise about what exactly was said or decided at the meeting. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that certain meetings, like Annual General Meetings and meetings of Board of Directors of companies, are required by law to keep the minutes of their proceedings. Even non-formal meetings, like a face-to-face meeting of two officials of a company,

may find it necessary to keep at least an informal record of their decisions in the form of a memo. There are several good reasons for this. For example, failure to keep a record of a verbal warning to a subordinate may stall any future disciplinary action against him/her; failure to record which person was decided upon to take which action may make it impossible to fix responsibility in case of a future foul-up. Apart from such considerations, records of meetings also help other people, who need to know but are not required to be present at the meeting, to find out what went on at the meeting.

For these aims to be achieved, it is necessary that the report of the meeting be correct and factual not only in recording the decisions taken, resolutions passed, votes cast in favour or against a resolution, etc. but also in reporting the discussion wherever this is required. In fact, the reporter is less likely to get the factual data wrong than the emphases and biases manifested during the discussion, since there is more scope for disagreement in reporting the latter. To ensure that no inaccuracies in reporting go undetected, the minutes are always presented before the committee at its next meeting for its approval.

The person who records the minutes, therefore, has a serious responsibility. S/he is usually the secretary of the organization, but at informal meetings the Chairperson can request any member to record the minutes. Whoever records the minutes needs to possess the skill of note taking, for all that s/he can do at the meeting itself is to jot down notes on the proceedings. Later, s/he will convert these notes into proper minutes. This means expanding the notes into the language of minutes and putting the whole thing in the minute format. Both stages are equally important. If the notes are incorrect or inadequate, this will be reflected in the minutes, if the format or the language is faulty, again the minutes will be unacceptable.

That is why we have divided this unit into two parts: Note-taking and Preparing Minutes. We will take up note-taking first.

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## 7.3 TAKING NOTES

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When you are reading a textbook, or a reference book, especially when you are preparing for an exam, or are planning to write a paper, you make notes. You make notes because you later want to be able to recover the information without having to go back to the book again. The notes are in your own handwriting, and often in a coded form for your own use, and it is difficult for anyone else to recover the information from your notes. You use the code to jot down the important points in an abbreviated and compressed form to save time in copying the entire text. You also use coded symbols, like arrows of different sorts, numbers and letters, trees and rough diagrams, etc. to capture the information.

You have to do something similar when you are listening to various speakers at a meeting. The only difference is that here you make notes from something spoken, rather than from something written. This difference is often expressed by contrasting **note-taking** with **note-making**. You **make notes** from written texts (books, journals, etc.), but you **take notes** from a spoken text (like a speech). In recording the proceedings of a meeting, the skill we need is accordingly that of note-taking.

### 7.3.1 The Note-taking Skill: The Essential Components

**The first essential sub component of the note-taking skill is the listening ability.** Just as you cannot **make notes** unless you have the reading ability, you cannot **take notes** unless you have the listening ability. By listening ability we do not simply mean the ability to listen, just as by reading ability we do not mean simply the ability to read. A fifth class student can read, and a kindergarten child can listen, but, even with excellent writing skills, they cannot make or take notes. This is because for making or taking notes you need to be able not only to *understand* but also to

*interpret* what you read/hear. You must not only read and listen *attentively* to understand everything, you must also read and listen *actively* to be able to interpret it. By *active reading* and *active listening*, we mean the ability to grasp the points, to distinguish the main points from the supporting points, to make the implicit points explicit in your understanding and to place each point at its correct place in the entire structure of argument/discussion.

There is a difference between listening attentively and listening actively. Attentive listening is mostly passive. You simply imbibe the information you hear e.g., when you are listening to the news on the radio or TV as an average citizen. You tuck away the information in separate chunks in different corners of your mind, and piece them together in a master design only when you are required to do so, or not at all. In active listening, your brain is making a constant effort to see the overall design, to light up the connections between the disparate points, and to see the deeper implications of the things said. Obviously, an active listener also needs to be attentive, but s/he needs to be more than attentive: s/he needs to be thinking actively on what s/he is hearing. It is for this reason that a note-taker should not be burdened with any other duty at the meeting. At some meetings, the Chairperson decides to record the minutes him/herself. This should be avoided.

An important question that each note-taker at a meeting faces is *when* to start noting down what the speaker is saying. Different speakers have different styles. Some speakers start with an introduction and progress slowly to their main point; others start by demolishing the arguments of the previous speakers before coming to their own; for some others, speaking is a process of thinking aloud, and so on. If you wait till the main argument of a speaker becomes clear before you start taking down notes, you may find that you have waited too long and there isn't enough time to complete your notes as the speaker has concluded and another one has already started speaking. If you start taking down early what a speaker is saying, you might later discover that was just an introduction (and therefore not important), or that the speaker was only describing a position which s/he later went on to change. This is the essential difference between making and taking notes. When making notes from a book, you have the entire text before you: you can go back and forth at a leisurely pace, decide what the writer's main argument is, and then start making your notes. But when you are taking notes from a speech, the speech unfolds before you linearly in time, and what has been spoken is no longer available to you (except in your memory), so how do you make sure that you aren't too early or too late?

There are two ways in which this problem can be tackled, though eventually every note-taker has to find his/her own strategies to deal with it. First, the note-taker must, from the very start, listen for the speaker's main point. This is usually a well-formed position, or viewpoint, related to the problem at hand. So long as the speaker does not start making positive observations about the issue in a confident and assured manner, it is too early to start taking down anything: she may only be describing other people's positions, or thinking aloud. Once s/he starts making positive observations confidently, it means s/he has formulated her/his position, or argument. It would be recognizable as different from any other positions already taken, and as soon as this realization occurs, the note-taker can start jotting down the point. Sometimes the speaker also makes it clear that she is now going to state her/his position. After this point, it would still take the speaker some time to complete her/his presentation and the note-taker will have enough time to take full notes. But if s/he waits for the speaker to complete her/his presentation, and round off her/his position in its totality, the note-taker will find herself/himself caught between two speakers.

The second technique, which must supplement the first one, is the use of codes when jotting down the point. Trying to take down everything in longhand would simply take too long. So, use abbreviations, shortened and syncopated words, pictographs, symbols, arrows and the like to capture the sense as quickly as possible. (We shall illustrate some of these below.) This will help you to keep pace with the speaker. But

return to the notes as quickly as possible after the meeting for decoding, or you might forget what the codes stand for.

**The second essential of the note-taking skill** is that the note-taker should enjoy **thorough familiarity with the subject matter** under discussion. S/he should understand what is being talked about. Both the context and the content of the debates should be known to her/him fully. Only then can s/he take notes of the subject matter comfortably and intelligibly.

Finally, a note-taker needs to be able to jot down the points s/he decides are important in precise and compressed forms. This is essentially a question about **the ability to select key words and phrases to represent the meaning and to use coded symbols to represent relationships**.

Let us now try to illustrate the points we have made above with the help of an example so that you can understand how these principles work in practice. We must of course work within the limitation that the example cannot be a live meeting but must be a transcript of a meeting. While this does affect the utility of the example to some extent, you should at least be able to see what is meant and how to extend the principles to a live meeting when you face one. We have provided you with a tape script and it is better if you listen first and then read the extract of the meeting.

### **7.3.2 The Note-Taking Skill: An Example**

Given below is an extract from a meeting. The item under discussion relates to a proposal to increase the efficiency of the company by revamping its budgetary control system. We would like to see how the components of the note-taking skill we have described above will help us in taking notes of this extract. And to make sure that we 'take' notes and not 'make' notes, we will treat the extract as a linear one and will be guided only by the clues as they are produced and not all of them together. (Do listen to the tape which contains the extract) To do this task satisfactorily, we should be able to answer these questions.

1. What would active listening yield in this extract which mere attentive listening would not?
2. At what point should the note-taker start taking notes?
3. What advantage would someone who is familiar with the subject matter have over one who isn't?
4. What should be the language of the notes? What kind of codes or symbols could be used?

#### **THE EXTRACT**

**CHAIRPERSON** : The next item on the agenda is a proposal from the Finance Manager regarding budgetary control. Would you please introduce the item and tell us what it is all about, Mr. Malhotra?

**FM** : Yes, Mr. Chairperson. As the Board is aware, the Company had last year commissioned a study of our financial management by Financial Consultants Ltd. They submitted a report which was put before the Board earlier this year. The Board had then asked me to prepare a proposal based on its suggestions about budgetary control, while the other aspects of the report would be taken up for implementation later. The detailed proposal is already with you, and I shall only highlight its main features. What the proposal essentially suggests is that we should do the Company's accounts more frequently.

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

- MEMBER 1** : But we are already doing the accounts every quarter, aren't we?
- FM** : Yes, but quarterly accounts don't allow us to keep a close enough control. Should the company suddenly make a heavy loss we ought to be able to act quickly. If we don't, say the consultants, we will not be able to prevent the loss from getting larger still.
- Member 1** : But if the accounts show that we are making a loss, we immediately reduce inventory, that is, we cut down purchases, and, if possible, we reduce personnel.
- Chair** : I think it would be a good idea if we first let Mr. Malhotra complete his presentation. Members can then make their points.
- FM** : Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. What Mr. Shukla says is true, but in order to do the things he suggests, we need the information faster than we are getting it at the moment. If profitability goes down .....that is profits in relation to capital employed...it may be necessary to raise prices, cut costs and so on. But the right information must be quickly available.
- Chair** : Let's have the proposal, Mr. Malhotra.
- FM** : What the proposal suggests is that we break down the activities of the company into Cost Centres. Each Cost Centre would have its own finance manager of the rank of an assistant Finance manager. Each AFM would be required to forecast, well in advance, the income and expenditure of his centre. We would then put the budgets from all the centres together. After they have been approved, they become the annual budget of the company. If the actual income or expenditure of a Cost Centre varies a lot from the budgeted figure, then the AFM of that Centre would be responsible and would have to explain why his actual figures differed from his forecast, and take appropriate action. Each AFM would prepare monthly accounts and keep track of the income and the expenses. These would be monitored by the Central Finance Office (CFO). In case a decline in sales is noticed, the CFO would then be in a position to set the alarm bells ringing, and the counter measures could be initiated straightaway. In outline, this is the proposal. The details are given in the file that is already with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.
- Chair** : Thank you, Mr. Malhotra. The members can now make their comments. Yes, Mr. Shukla.....?

Let us now try to answer the questions that we posed above:

1. Active listening consists mainly in being able to establish links between the different points that the speaker has made and to figure out the structure of main and subordinate points in the argument. It would be clear to the note-taker at the very start that the main point in the item is the proposal and the minutes must record the main features of the FM's proposal, s/he would be able to see the initial

comments of the FM as providing the justification for the proposal, thus establishing a link between the two. There is a certain drawback in the existing system of budgetary control (“too slow”) which the proposed system seeks to remedy. When the note-taker records the main features of the proposal, s/he would also try to record how this drawback is sought to be removed in the proposed system (“monthly accounting”). This means that s/he will already have understood the relationship between quicker accounting and a faster response to a heavy loss situation: quicker accounting will provide the company with faster feedback and it will be able to respond to the situation with quicker counter-measures. This and similar connections between the points made will reveal to the minute-reader that the minute-taker has listened actively and not just attentively.

2. Since the note-taker will have identified the FM’s proposal as the main point of the item, his/her pen would start moving really fast only when the FM starts describing the proposal, that is, when the FM speaks for the last time. But s/he will already have noted down the reasons for change, which we have mentioned above. S/he will also have noted down already the item under discussion (FM’s proposal on Budgetary Control) and the fact that the FM was only going to present the main features of the proposal. But s/he will get his/her clue that s/he must now start moving quickly when the Chairperson asks the FM to skip the preliminaries and get down to the proposal. That’s when s/he must start writing furiously so that s/he can also finish writing when the FM stops speaking. Using code language, this should not be too difficult.
3. It should be obvious that a person who is familiar with the background to the matter under discussion would be in a better position to decide what is to be included in the minutes and what can be safely excluded. For example, a note-taker who knows that the members are aware of the present frequency of accounting would not have to be told about it in the minutes, even though it is mentioned at the meeting by a member. To take another kind of example, a person who didn’t know what budgetary control was, or had no idea of what inventory reduction was, would remain in doubt whether s/he was right in omitting one or the other from the minutes.
4. As we have said earlier, the language of the notes should be abbreviated, compressed and coded. The reason is simply that, unless one knows shorthand, trying to take notes in full language forms will only mean that you are unable to cover everything you want to cover. The following devices can be used:
  - i. Standard abbreviations (Jan., Feb., Co., etc.)
  - ii. Non-standard abbreviations: (prop. = proposal; CC: Cost Centre); b. = budget; inc. = income, etc.)
  - iii. Standard symbols, e.g., = : ‘is equal to’, < = ‘less than’, > = ‘greater than’, ∴ = ‘since’, ∴ = ‘therefore’, etc.
  - iv. Non-standard symbols e.g., → = ‘cause of’, ← = ‘result of’, ↓ = ‘falls, declines’, ↑ = ‘rises, grows’.
  - v. Syncopated words: y’ly – ‘yearly’, m’ly = ‘monthly’, edu’nl = ‘educational’
  - vi. Sentence fragments: e.g., ‘more frequent accounting’, ‘CFO to monitor’, etc.

We give below one possible set of notes which show how the symbols and abbreviations etc. could be used:

**Item:** *FM's prop on budg. Control*  
**FM:** *Main features only*  
**Ess:** *more frequent accounting*  
*qtrly acc. Not quick enough to start prev. meas. ICO heavy loss. Faster f.b.ess.*

**PROP.**

*Divide co. into CCs*  
*Each CC under an AFM*  
*AFM to forecast inc. & expend. of CC*  
*Aggreg. Of CC budgets = Co. budget*  
*AFM resp. ICO sharp variation from budg. Est.*  
*AFM to prepare m'ly acc.*  
*CFO to monitor*

This notetaker makes use of some abbreviations which possibly s/he alone can interpret, but this is no problem because normally no one else would be required to decode them, at least not without help from him/her. In fact, anyone who was present at the meeting would not have a serious problem interpreting them. Nevertheless, here are the explanations.

|                   |   |                             |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <i>ess.</i>       | : | <i>essential</i>            |
| <i>qtr'ly.</i>    | : | <i>quarterly</i>            |
| <i>acc.</i>       | : | <i>accounting, accounts</i> |
| <i>f.b.</i>       | : | <i>feedback</i>             |
| <i>CC</i>         | : | <i>Cost Centre</i>          |
| <i>inc.</i>       | : | <i>income</i>               |
| <i>expend</i>     | : | <i>expenditure</i>          |
| <i>aggreg.</i>    | : | <i>aggregate</i>            |
| <i>ICO</i>        | : | <i>in case of</i>           |
| <i>resp.</i>      | : | <i>responsible</i>          |
| <i>m'ly</i>       | : | <i>monthly</i>              |
| <i>prev.meas.</i> | : | <i>preventive measures</i>  |
| <i>budg.</i>      | : | <i>budget, budgetary</i>    |
| <i>est.</i>       | : | <i>estimate</i>             |

That the note-taker has listened actively is reflected in the notes. For example, his/her summary of the justification '*Quarterly accounting not quick enough to start preventive measures in case of heavy loss*' shows that s/he has understood the point well enough to express it in his/her own words. The use of the word '*feedback*' further confirms the point.

**Check Your Progress - 1**

1. Answer the following questions briefly:

i) Why is it necessary to keep minutes of meetings? Give at least three reasons.

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

ii) Who normally records the minutes?

.....  
.....

iii) What are the two stages in the preparation of minutes?

.....  
.....

iv) How is note-taking different from note-making?

.....  
.....

v) What are the components of the note-taking skill?

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

2. Read the following extract from the transcript of a meeting. Imagine that you are attending the meeting as its Secretary. Take notes of the meeting. Listen carefully to the cassette.

**Chair** : **Attention, Ladies and Gentlemen! It's 10 am and everyone is here. Let's begun with the first item – the confirmation of the previous minutes. We have received no written comments, but if anyone has anything to say now, they are most welcome..**

**ALL** : **No. They are fine.**

**Chair** : **OK. In that case let's move on to the next item – exports to South East Asian markets. Mr. Mahajan, Manager, Export Sales will introduce the item. Mr. Mahajan?**

**Mahajan** : **Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have already circulated my report to the members. I hope the members have had the time to go through it because I am really looking forward to their suggestions for improvement in what is at present a rather depressing picture. As the report says on the very first page, our exports to South East Asia have declined for the third year running. We have identified the reasons for this decline but are at the moment rather helpless, as the reasons seem to be beyond our control. We think there are three reasons for the decline: first, of course, is the growing competition from the local manufacturers. Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have all in recent years set up, or are in the process of setting up, their own polyester plants. If we have still been able to sell them our product for so long it is because of the price advantage we have enjoyed so far, and of course because these countries have open economies. However, the price advantage we have so far enjoyed is now being progressively eroded by the inflation at home and the constant rise in wages. That is the second reason. But it is the third reason which has proved to be the most crippling in recent years, and it is the steep rise in the domestic tax rates. Manufacturers of polyester yarn have been representing to the government without much success. Recently the finance minister has given an indication that the tax rate may be reduced in the next year's budget. If that happens, we can look forward to some relief, though I cannot promise that that alone would be sufficient to achieve a turnaround in our sales to South East Asia.**

**Bagchi** : **Can we afford to wait that long? The next budget is still five months away. Moreover, the quantum of relief may not be much. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know how serious the situation is and whether we have thought of any counter measures to prevent the situation from getting worse.**

**Mahajan :** Mr. Chairman, I quite agree with Mr. Bagchi. We cannot just sit and wait for February 29 for the Minister to announce a tax cut. Irrespective of what the government does, we have to take measures to arrest the declining trend in exports to these countries and to do that we must somehow or the other maintain our price advantage. The question is how to do it. Our technology is the best in the world, therefore there is not much we can hope to do there. The advantage provided by lower wages is being progressively neutralized, though we do still retain some advantage, as the comparative table on p.5 of the report shows. Then there are the high transportation costs. When the transportation costs are added to our wage costs, the wage-cost advantage is completely neutralized. Please see the chart on p.6. – the 80% tax comes on top of this. Compare this with the 15-25% tax in these countries. Is it surprising that we are losing our markets in these countries to the local manufacturers? In fact, if things continue to go the way they have been going, it is only a matter of time before we will have to withdraw from these markets completely. It may well happen three years from now by which time six more manufacturing plants will be going on stream in these countries. That is how serious the situation is, Mr. Chairman, and unless we take some urgent and drastic measures.....

**Rahman :** Yes, but what can we do? As you said, all the factors responsible for this situation seem to be beyond our control.

**Mahajan :** But neither can we just sit and watch our South East Asian markets being snatched away from us. They are our bread and butter. You know we don't export much to the west.

**Chair :** Well, gentlemen, you have heard the Export Manager. Are there any suggestions?

**Bagchi :** Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Export manager that none of the factors responsible for the present situation in the South East Asian markets is amenable to our control. In fact, I foresee a steep rise in inflationary pressures, and a further decline in the value of the rupee, both contributing to a rise in costs. Even if the tax rate is cut by the minister, it will never come down to anywhere near the low tax rates in these countries. In such a situation no half-hearted measures will show any results. We have to think bold, and be prepared to take risks, if we are going to survive.

**Chair :** What do you have in mind, Mr Bagchi?

**Bagchi :** We must be prepared to take full advantage of the competitive situation now obtaining in the South East Asian countries, of their open policies and the low tax rates. With our experience in this field, and our technology, I am sure we can do far better than the new units coming up in these countries, if, and it's a big 'if', we move one of our plants to Thailand or Singapore. I know the initial cost will be high, but it will still be less than what the new local plants cost, imported as they all are from the US. Moreover, the higher rated capacity of our plant will mean quicker recovery of the cost. I think we ought to give a lot of urgent thought to this idea, since it seems to be our only road to survival.

**Chair : It certainly is a bold proposal, Mr Bagchi. Let's hear what other members have to say about it.....**

**Taking Notes &  
Preparing Minutes**

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## **7.4 PREPARING MINUTES**

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In the second stage, the notes taken at the meeting are converted into proper minutes. The minutes are prepared in a definite format, therefore it would not do simply to write out the notes in full sentences to arrive at proper minutes. The secretary, or whoever is to prepare the minutes, ought to be familiar with the format, and s/he should have a copy of the agenda before her/him. This is because the minutes follow the agenda closely. Secondly, s/he should be familiar with the language used in the minutes, since there are certain conventions of language that formal minutes follow which are not followed in informal reports of meetings (e.g., newspaper reports of meetings). We shall discuss these two aspects of minute-writing: the **format of the minutes** and the **style and language** used in writing them.

### **7.4.1 The Format of Minutes**

When the minutes are put in their final form the following information appears first and constitutes the **HEADING** of the minutes:

- 1. Name of the body; nature of the meeting; day, date, time and place of the meeting.**

This information can occur in either of the following forms:

**Minutes of the First Meeting of the Board of Directors of PASHUPATI EXPORTS held on 12 January, 2004 at 5.00 pm in the Board Room**

**OR**

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FLEXTIME  
Minutes of meeting held on May 16, 2003 at 3.00 pm in Committee Room No.2**

The piece of information that is given next is the names of the people present with a specific mention of who chaired the meeting. This information is given in the following manner:

- 2. PRESENT :**  
Pashupati Shah (MD, Chairperson)  
Ram Malhotra (Manager, Exports)  
Govind Gaitonde (Manager, QC)  
Shalini Pande (Manager, Finance)  
Malavika Chauhan (Manager, Marketing)  
Bharat Mukherji (Manager, Domestic Sales)

In informal meetings, names alone suffice: designations can be dropped. But minutes of formal meetings, particularly those which have to be sent to other organizations and agencies, must include the designations.

Information about people present is not complete without a separate mention of those who are not regular members of the committee but are present in a special capacity, e.g., the secretary, or those who have been specially invited to the meeting to assist the committee by virtue of their special expertise, e.g., an architect, an auditor, or a solicitor. This information is presented as follows:

3. **In Attendance :** Rajguru Gopal (Secretary)  
**or**  
**Special Invitees** Mohan Bagga (Architect)  
Reshma Bajaj (Computer Consultant)

From this point onwards, the minutes will follow the agenda closely. The agenda has the following structure:

**Title, date and place of Meeting**  
**Apologies for Absence**  
**Minutes of Previous Meeting**  
**Matters Arising**  
**Items for Discussion**  
**Any Other Business with permission of the Chair**  
**Date, Time and Place of the Next Meeting**

The minutes pick up the agenda from the second item: Apologies for Absence, the first item having been already incorporated in the heading. Under this item the minute-taker reports any apologies for absence read out/announced at the meeting. The report takes the following form:

4. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from the following:

S. Bhatia  
P. Ahluwalia

The next item in the minutes is **Minutes of Previous Meeting**, which are formally presented for confirmation at the meeting. In actuality, they are often circulated in advance so that members can read them and point out any discrepancies they notice at the meeting. If no discrepancies are pointed out at the meeting, the minutes are approved and signed by the Chairperson. In this case, the minutes record the item as follows:

5. **Confirmation of Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting held on.....were confirmed and signed.

But if any amendments to the minutes are suggested and accepted, they are recorded as follows:

- 5a. **Confirmation of Minutes:** It was pointed out that Item 3 should read “.....a tax rate of 80%.....” in place of “.....a tax rate of 30%.....”

with this amendment the minutes were confirmed and signed.

The next item, **Matters Arising**, refers to any discussion, announcement, etc. that may have taken place at the meeting on a matter arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. The item is sometimes also utilized for reporting action on decisions taken at the previous meeting. The minutes record the matter in the following style:

6. **Matters Arising:**
- (i) Manager (Domestic Sales) reported that the sales figures for the first quarter had been delayed due to computer breakdown but would be made available within a week.

- (ii) Manager (Marketing) informed the members that M/s Media Advertisers had agreed to send a revised plan for the launch of the new line of polyproducts.

The matters so far covered by the minutes are format-related, though that does not reduce their importance. But the really important matters begin only when **Items for Discussion** are taken up. In our specification of the agenda, this represents a cover item, i.e. in an actual agenda, it may cover several different agenda items, each following the other with a different item number. The minutes for each item would appear separately following the order in which they appear in the agenda. For example, for the agenda of the meeting of the Board of Directors of PASHUPATI SCOOTERS which appears in 7.4.2, there will be four different items (Nos. 4,5,6,7) each to be minuted separately, as follows:

7. **(Item 4) Invitation from the Ministry of Industry for participation in the rescue bid for SCOOTERS INDIA LTD.**  
(Minutes)
8. **(Item 5) Proposal from Marketing for participation in AUTO EXPO 99 to be held in Milan in Jan.99.**  
(Minutes)
9. **(Item 6) Report of the subcommittee on exports to South East Asia**  
(Minutes)
10. **(Item 7) Review of product prices**  
(Minutes)

Discussion of some of the items at the meeting may end with some action being assigned to a particular member, or with a subcommittee being set up to do something. For example, in case of Item No.4, the meeting may decide to set up a subcommittee to draw up a set of conditions on which the company will join the rescue bid, or in case of Item No.5, it may assign to the Marketing manager the duty of inviting bids from some European marketing concerns for setting up a display of the company's products at the EXPO 99. *Whenever such an action is decided on with respect to a particular item, the minutes of the item end with a separate para highlighting the action to be taken.* Thus the entire minutes for Item No.4 may read as follows:

**(Item 4) Invitation from the Ministry of Industry for participation in the rescue bid for SCOOTERS INDIA LTD.**

The MD informed the Board that the Ministry of Industry, GOI, was interested in preparing a rescue bid for saving the public sector concern, SCOOTERS INDIA Ltd., and had invited the company to join the bid and submit its terms. The MD felt that though company policy had been against getting involved in such matters, the invitation might also offer an opportunity to acquire a large facility which could be converted into another production base for two and three wheelers with substantial production capacity, provided favourable terms could be negotiated.

After some discussion, the Board decided to accept the Ministry's invitation in principle, but the acceptance would be confirmed only after the terms of participation had been approved by the Board.

**Action:** A subcommittee consisting of MD (Convener), Manager (Finance), Manager (Production), Manager (QC), Mr. Rohit Desai and Ms. Prema Nath will prepare the terms of participation and submit them for the Board's consideration by 30<sup>th</sup> September. The subcommittee can employ the services of such experts as it deems fit.

We should however note the **ACTION** is added only when a specific action is recommended by the committee. Otherwise, a paragraph summarizing the discussion is sufficient. The summary of the discussion is of course based on the notes taken at the meeting and includes only the important points. If any proposals are presented at the meeting, their highlights are also included. Names of only those speakers are

included who make important suggestions or contributions. But in the **ACTION** part, names of persons responsible for the action, along with the dates by which the action is to be completed, should be stated clearly.

**11. AOB (Any Other Business).**

If any item is discussed under this heading, it is minuted in the usual way. The **ACTION** para is also added, if required.

In the case of those committees which meet at regular intervals, the last item is

**12. Date of the next meeting.**

The minutes record the decision of the meeting in this regard.

**7.4.2 Language and Style of Minutes**

When converting notes into minutes, it is necessary not only to conform to the format of the minutes, but also to use the specific language in which minutes, specially minutes of formal meetings, are written. This language tends to be rather formalized and may remind you of the language of law, though actually it is not as formalized. But it does use certain types of grammatical constructions more frequently than others and shows preference for certain expressions and vocabulary items, which gives to it its special character. In this section, we will describe these special features of the language of the minutes.

Let us first look at some examples of the language of minutes. By looking at these examples closely, we will be able to discover the special features of which we have spoken above.

- a) Manager (Exports) reported that sales to South East Asia had fallen for the third year running and there was urgent need to initiate measures to arrest this trend.
- b) The problem of office security was raised by Mr. Dayal. He suggested that all important papers should be kept in a locked filing cabinet. It was agreed that only three people would have the key: Mr Dayal, Ms. Rohatagi and Mr. Jairam.
- c) It was resolved that a subcommittee be set up to look into the causes of the decline in exports to S.E. Asia.
- d) The minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed and signed.
- e) It is resolved that the Secretary be authorized to draw up the terms of participation in the joint bid.
- f) The chairman referred to the sad demise of Mr. Sushobhan Sengupta and spoke of his services to the Company during its formative years.
- g) The updating of promotional literature to include the new models, PL 40 and PLS 30, was suggested by Mr. Jairam. He point out that many small changes had also been made to other models and these needed to be included in the promotional literature.
- h) **Action:** Mr. Jairam to update the promotional literature and to submit the drafts at he next meeting.

Before we discuss these examples, let us first state **what is required of the language of the minutes:**

- A. The minutes represent a reliable record of the important things said, the decisions taken and the things done at the meeting; the effort therefore should be to make the language **simple, transparent, free from ambiguity, and precise** so that everyone can understand the contents easily and in the same way.
- B. At meetings, the individual is less important than the collectivity. The decisions taken at meetings are collective decisions. Therefore **the language used should be such that it does not assign decisions to individuals**. Important suggestions and proposals can be ascribed to individual members, but the final decisions are always the collective responsibility.
- C. The minutes record the proceedings as briefly as possible. The language should therefore be **concise**.
- D. Finally, the minutes, being the official record of the meeting, are likely to be consulted and referred to by other agencies and institutions including the law courts in case of disputes. Their language therefore should conform to the standards of **formality and impersonality** that publicly used language generally requires.

Let us now see how the example quoted above, (a-h), show the qualities that are required by the language of minutes.

- i. You will notice that the language used in all the samples above is simple and transparent in the sense that it can be easily understood. It does not use a literary or philosophical style, high-flown words, or poetic flourishes. The words used are common ones (except 'demise') and one doesn't have to look up a dictionary to find out the meanings of any words. There are no double-meaning constructions or words, and the meaning comes through quite clearly. If there are some words that you don't know (like 'promotional'), that is an indication that some words common in the world of business are not yet known to you and you must learn them.
- ii. You must have noticed the frequency of verbs in the passive voice in the examples: **was raised, was agreed, was resolved, was suggested, were read**, and so on. As you may know, the passive form of the verb is used when we wish to avoid reference to the agent, either because the agent is not known, is indefinite, or simply because the individual agent is not important. The use of the passive form allows us to eliminate the agent. In writing the minutes, as we said above, reference to individual agents is minimized, since the responsibility is collective. The collective agent ('committee') does not need to be mentioned because it is so obvious. You will also notice that where the passive voice is used with an individual agent (as in 'was suggested by Mr Jairam') it would make no difference, in fact may even help to simplify the language, if the passive voice is replaced by the active.

The use of the passive voice without the agent also helps the writer to make the minutes impersonal and objective as required in **D** above.

- iii. The examples above show some constructions which are not very common outside the language of minutes. For example:
  - a) **It was resolved that a committee be set up to look into.....**
  - b) **Resolved that the Secretary is authorized to draw up the terms.....**
  - c) **Mr. Jairam to update the promotional literature and to.....**

The use of constructions such as these, which are not in common use at all but are specific to the language of the minutes, gives to the minutes their formal flavour. This formal flavour is further supported and intensified by the use of more 'dignified' and literary equivalents of words in day-to-day use like 'demise' for

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

‘death’. However, in keeping with the first requirement we placed on the language of the minutes, viz. that of simplicity, the current trend is against the use of such words and is in favour of using the day-to-day idiom as far as possible. But simplicity, it should be noted, does not conflict with the use of formalized constructions like the ones we have discussed above to report the proceedings in a precise and concise manner.

- iv. Conciseness in minutes is achieved mainly by including only the major points and leaving out everything else. What is recorded in the minutes is
  - a. the main points of the discussion
  - b. resolutions moved, names of the proposer and seconder
  - c. recommendations made and decisions reached
  - d. results of voting
  - e. tasks assigned to individuals, subcommittees, etc.

This information is then presented using a style and a language in which no unnecessary words or ornamentation are used. Consider, for example, the following version of (g) above:

(G) *Mr Jairam said that the promotional pamphlets, posters and brochures of the company had become out of date as they did not make any reference to the new models the company had brought out since 19..., viz PL 40 and PLS 30. The older models had also undergone modifications and changes which did not find a place in the pamphlets and brochures. Thus while the company was spending lot of energy and expense in updating its products, it was failing to communicate its achievements to the public. As a result, the increased research and development effort was not getting translated into increased sales of our products.*

The main point of this argument is that the promotional literature of the company needs to be updated to incorporate the new products and changes to the old ones, and this is stated quite concisely in (g). (G) states the same thing in a very elaborate manner, which is quite inappropriate to the style of minutes.

Conciseness in minutes is also achieved at times by abbreviating a structure, as we saw above. Thus, in resolutions, ‘**It is resolved that.....**’ is abbreviated to ‘**Resolved that .....**’ and, in the **Action** para, ‘**Mr. Jairam is (requested) to update the promotional literature.....**’ is abbreviated to ‘**Mr Jairam to update.....**’, so on.

Finally, minutes can also be made to **look** precise and well-organized by using some well known layout devices. Some of these which are applicable to minutes are the following:

- (a) Each section of the minutes (**Heading, Present, In Attendance, Minutes of Previous Meeting**, etc.) is presented as a separate paragraph and separated by blank double line space; section headings, including the headings of the agenda items to be given in bold letters.
- (b) In each section which has more than one item (e.g. **Matters Arising** may have three separate items), number the items and present each one as a separate paragraph.
- (c) Wherever there is an **ACTION** item, put it as a separate paragraph at the end of the relevant item with the heading **ACTION**.
- (d) In summarizing a discussion, try to itemise the contents. This helps to make the argument clear to you, while also helping the reader to see precisely what the points of the argument were. It also gives a systemized look to your minutes.

## Check Your Progress 2

1. Explain what information is to be provided in the following sections of the minutes:
  - a) Matters Arising
  - b) In Attendance
  - c) Apologies for Absence
  - d) AOB
2. Convert into minutes your notes of the (extract of the) meeting which appears in Ex. 2 of **Check Your Progress 1**. Use the following information to give a formal start to your minutes. Your minutes will of course remain incomplete, as the notes cover only one item of the agenda:

**Name of Company: PASHUPATI EXPORTS CORPORATION**

**Body meeting:** Board of Directors

**Nature of meeting:** First meeting for the year 96-97

**Day, date, time:** Monday, July 15, 11.00 am

**Place:** Board Room at the Registered Headquarters at Nehru place, New Delhi

**Present:** S. Bhogle (Chairperson)/R. Mahajan (manager, Exports)/S. Bagchi, V.Rahman, Shefali Ghosh, G.Ketkar, R. Prahlad (all directors)

**In attendance:** You as Secretary

**Apologies:** R. Mehta (Director)

3. Draft resolutions on the following subjects to be placed before a committee:
  - a) to appoint a subcommittee to suggest measures to reduce the air and water pollution by the Company's manufacturing plant at Renughat
  - b) to appoint Dr. Lekh Raj and Mrs S. Lamba to the Board of Directors of Mahima Plastics Ltd.
  - c) To authorize the Secretary to conduct negotiations with the Secretary of the workers union to withdraw the strike notice issued by it.
4. Given below are verbatim (exactly as spoken) extracts from some meetings. Write summaries of these discussion extracts, as they would appear in the minutes of these meetings:

a) Mrs Narain : I think the main reason why our sales have been going down in the north is that our agents in U.P., Rajasthan, Punjab and Bihar are ineffective. We need new agents there and I suggest our Sales Department find some quickly. We need to give top priority to this job.

Manager (Sales) : I'm afraid I can't agree with Ms. Narain. It would be very, very unwise to change our agents at this point of time. Our competitors are on a sharp lookout for established and experienced agents, and they'd immediately grab our agents. On the other hand, we would be very hard placed to find new agents, because good agents are hard to come by. Even in normal times changing agents is very risky. It disturbs the market. Finding new agents takes time, and even if you succeed in finding new agents, you can never be sure they'll be better than the old ones.

b) Chair : We must do something about our markets in the north. We are in danger of losing them completely.

Manager : I assure the Board that I am aware of the problem. We are right now in the process of reorganising our sales network in the northern states. Where this process has been completed, the results are already beginning to show. In Punjab and H.P., for example, our sales are showing a rise this year. I am quite confident that U.P., Bihar and Rajasthan will also follow suit as soon as we have revived our sales network there.

c) Two companies are negotiating a takeover. HL is the representative of the company which is to be taken over, OL of the company which wants to take over HL's company.)

HL: Before we can give our final consent to the takeover, we'd like to make sure of one more thing.

OL: And what is that?

HL: The interests of our loyal workers.

OL: Though we cannot commit ourselves at this moment, we can assure you we value the services of loyal workers very highly.

HL: Thank you for the assurance, Mr. Lal, but we'd like a more specific assurance. In short, we want a guarantee that no employee will lose his/her job as result of the takeover.

OL: I'm afraid it's impossible to give such a specific assurance, Mr. Lalvani. We are planning to reorganise and modernize the manufacturing units extensively, and it is quite likely that some staff will become redundant as a result.

HL: That, I'm afraid, jeopardizes the whole deal we have worked out. If the workers challenge the takeover in the court, we will be stuck for years.

OL: You needn't worry, Mr. Lal. We will work out a reasonable deal for the employees who are made redundant.

---

## **7.5 GRAMMAR: USING THE PASSIVE VOICE**

---

Read the following sentences.

1. In case a decline in sales is noticed .....
2. The details are given in the file that is already with you.
3. Sales targets are set every year.....

As you can see from the examples, we use the passive in English if we don't want to draw attention to the person who is responsible for a particular action or process. In fact, the passive is very useful when you want to emphasize the object to which the action or process is happening rather than the person carrying out the action. So the passive is **used to focus on the action**.

### Check Your Progress 3

Rewrite each sentence in the passive.

- i. We sent the goods last week, so you should receive them soon.  
The goods **were sent** last week, so you should receive them soon.
- ii. We would reduce costs if the workers come on time.
- iii. We can master the new software easily in a couple of days
- iv. The customer should receive the consignment by Monday.
- v. According to a recent report the group is making similar investments in the USA.
- vi. We enclose the payment together with our order.
- vii. We will produce the body of the car at our Rampur factory.
- viii. The space now seems adequate; they have enlarged the premises since my last visit.
- ix. Large companies dominate the economies in many countries.
- x. Using better-trained staff can increase productivity.

---

## 7.6 SUMMARY

---

The main points of this unit are as follows:

- Minutes are written records of the proceedings of a meeting. They are useful as records of decisions, major discussion points, assignment of responsibilities, and for general informative purposes.
- To ensure correctness of minutes, they are taken on record only after approved by the body at its next meeting.
- Minutes are prepared from notes taken at the meeting. Hence note-taking is an important skill for the minute writer.
- Note-taking is different from note-making.
- The first important component of the note-taking skill is active listening. Active listening consists in being able to figure out the structure of main and subordinate points in a speaker's presentation and to establish connections between the different points the speaker makes.
- Note-taking is confined only to major points. A good note-taker knows when to start taking notes so that s/he does not miss anything important and does not end up with a collection of only inessential points.
- A good note-taker makes use of abbreviations, symbols and coded language to keep pace with the speaker.
- Only a person thoroughly familiar with the subject matter of the discussions can make a good note-taker.
- In converting the notes into minutes the minute-taker has to keep in mind (a) the format of the minutes and (b) the language and style of the minutes.
- The format of the minutes includes: Heading; Member Present; Chairperson; In Attendance; Apologies for Absence; Confirmation of Previous Minutes; Matters

Arising; Items for discussion; Action Para; Any Other Business; Date of Next Meeting.

- The language of minutes is precise and free from ambiguity; it mostly uses constructions suitable for expression of collective rather than individual responsibility; it makes points in a concise fashion. The style is formal and impersonal.
- Among the grammatical features, which characterize the language of minutes, are the simple past tense, the passive voice and the subjunctive mood.
- The vocabulary of minutes tends to be formal, but now there is a general trend towards informality.
- Layout is also important in minutes. Itemizing and paragraphing increases the readability of minutes.

---

## **7.7 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Hodgson, P. & Hodgson, J. (1993) *Effective Meetings*, London: Century Business.
2. Mack, A. (1970/1989) *The Language of Business*, London: BBC.
3. Rai, U. & Rai, S.M. (1989/1992) *Business Communication*, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House.

---

## **7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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### **Check Your Progress - 1**

1. i. (a) In case of any future dispute about the decisions of the committee we can refer to the minutes.  
(b) If there arises any doubt about which action was assigned to whom, we can remove the doubt by referring to the minutes.  
(c) People who were not present at the meeting (including non-members) who need to know what went on at the meeting can refer to the minutes.
- ii. The secretary of the organization
- iii. The two stages are (1) Note-taking at the meeting and (2) Conversion of the notes into minutes afterwards.
- iv. We take notes of a speech; we make notes from a written text.
- v. There are three components: the active listening ability; familiarity with the subject matter; the ability to select key words and phrases and use informal codes and abbreviations.

2. The following notes are only suggestive. Since notes are personal to the note-taker, your notes may differ from these, but the minutes should not.

*Minutes confirmed*

*Item 1: Expts. To SE Asia  
M: fall 3<sup>rd</sup> Yr running  
Reasons beyond control: Loss of price adv. Due to*

- 1. Growing local comp.*
- 2. Rising wages at home*
- 3. Steep tax rate (may be cut in next budg.)*

*Urgent c-measures ne'ssary to retain price adv. (Re. Bagchi) vis-à-vis local units.*

- better tech.? No. Already the best.*
- Lower wage adv.? Neutral. By transpt. costs*
- Tax rate: 80% vs. 15-25% in SEA*
- 6 new units starting in SEA in 3 yrs*

*∴ expts. To SEA may stop then.*

*B: Relief at home not likely. ∴ Think bold  
Take adv of*

- SEA open policy*
- SEA low tax rate*

*SHIFT ONE PLANT TO SEA*

- initial cost comp. (local plants US imported)*
- higher rated capacity ∴ quicker rec. of cost*

## Check Your Progress 2

1. a. **Matters Arising:** This section, which occurs after the section on **Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**, provides information about any important comments, announcements or decisions made relating to matters contained in the minutes of the last meeting.
  - b. **In Attendance:** In this section, names of those persons attending the meeting are recorded who are not regular members of the body but who are present by invitation to give the body specialist assistance.
  - c. **Apologies for Absence:** In this section are recorded names of those members who were unable to attend the meeting and had sent in their apologies to the Secretary.
  - d. **AOB (Any other Business):** In this section, we record the minutes of any matter(s) discussed under the item of the same title in the agenda. Under this item of the agenda, the Chairperson can permit discussion on any matter not included in the agenda.
2. Only the minutes of the main item are given below:

### Item 1. Exports to South East Asia

Mr. Mahajan reported that sales to S.E. Asia had declined for the third year running. He identified three reasons for this decline:

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

1. Growing competition from local manufacturers
2. Rising wages at home
3. The high tax rate at home

Because of the last two factors the price advantage enjoyed by the company so far had been seriously eroded. All the three factors were beyond the company's control. Some relief could be expected in the next budget when the government is expected to cut the tax rate. Mr. Mahajan however agreed with Mr. Bagchi that the company could not wait for the budget and must initiate counter-measures urgently to retain the price advantage vis-à-vis local manufacturers. No measures were immediately apparent, as

1. there was no scope for improvement in technology since the best technology was already being used
2. the limited advantage of lower wages was neutralized by transportation costs
3. the home tax rate was 80% as against 15-25% local rate

Mr. Mahajan pointed out that six new plants were going to be commissioned in S.E. Asia in the next 3 years. When ready, our exports may stop completely.

Mr. Bagchi warned the Board not to expect any relief at home and think bold. He was in favour of taking advantage of the open policies and low tax rates of the South East Asian countries and shifting one of our plants there. He pointed out that the initial cost would be less than the US-imported local plants, and, because of the higher rated capacity of our plants, would be recovered more quickly. ....

3. (a) **Resolved** that a subcommittee be appointed to suggest measures.....
- (b) **Resolved** that Dr. Lekh Raj and Mrs. S. Lamba be appointed members of the Board of Directors of Mahima Plastics Ltd.
- (c) **Resolved** that the Secretary be authorized to conduct negotiations with.....
4. (a) Ms. Narain attributed the fall in sales in the northern states to ineffective agents and wanted them to be changed immediately. Manager (Sales) however disagreed and argued that
  - i. established agents were very hard to find
  - ii. changing agents disturbs the market
  - iii. there can be no guarantee that the new agents would be any better
- (b) The Chairperson stressed the need for urgent action in the north. The Manager pointed out that he was trying to re-organise the sales network in the north and expected good results when the reorganization work had been completed. In Punjab and H.P. This work had been completed and sales had already improved.
- (c) Before giving his final consent to the takeover, HL wanted a guarantee that no worker would be dismissed. OL said that such a guarantee could not be given as, following modernization of manufacturing, redundancies were bound to arise. On this, HL expressed the fear that court action by workers could stall the takeover, but OL assured that a reasonable deal would be worked out for workers who are made redundant.

**Check Your Progress 3**

- i) The costs **would be reduced** if the workers come on time.
- ii) The new software can be mastered easily in a couple of days.

- iii) The consignment is likely to be received by the customer by Monday.
- iv) Similar investments are being made in the USA according to a recent report.
- v) The payment along with our order is enclosed.
- vi) The body of our car will be produced at our Rampur factory.
- vii) The space now seems adequate since the premises have been enlarged since my last visit.
- viii) The economies are dominated by large companies in my countries.
- ix) Productivity can be increased by using better trained staff.

---

## UNIT 8 PRESENTATION SKILLS-I

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### Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Reading: Presentation Skills
- 8.3 Grammar: Verbs often Required in Presentations
- 8.4 Language Focus
- 8.5 Listening: Importance of Body Language in Presentations
- 8.6 Speaking: Preparing an Outline of a Presentation
- 8.7 Pronunciation
- 8.8 Summary
- 8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 8.0 INTRODUCTION

---

Presentations are frequently used in business organizations and educational institutions for communicating ideas and information to a group. In this Unit you will learn how to make effective presentations. You will learn

- how to prepare for presentations
- hints on effective delivery
- preparing outlines of presentations
- use of a variety of presentation verbs
- use of signaling, signposting and listing techniques
- the importance of body language in presentations

---

### 8.1 WARM UP

---

When you give a presentation, information is just as important as your **subject** well and knowing very important. But there are other some of them. What is your you add some more to the list?



**how** you deliver the **what** you say. Knowing your **audience** are both considerations. Here are opinion on these? Can

|               |        |          |                  |
|---------------|--------|----------|------------------|
| Body language | notes  | language | confidence voice |
| visual aids   | humour | length   | speed            |

---

### 8.2 READING: PRESENTATION SKILLS

---

Presentation skills are absolutely essential in almost all work areas. In the business world presentations are made to clients, prospective buyers, business associates,

seniors, colleagues and subordinates. These days presentations have also become part of the recruitment process. In order to be effective and impressive in your presentations you need to **prepare** the presentation before you actually **deliver** it. Even experts in communication need to plan and prepare their presentations in advance.

**Check Your Progress 1**

Look at these tips on Presentation skills and decide whether you would put them in **Preparation** or **Delivery**.

- i) If you are not enthusiastic about what you say you cannot expect to generate interest amongst the audience; Adapt to response – don’t stick to your plan necessarily. If you find that it is not working, alter it to adapt to the audience
- ii) Check room, seating, acoustics, OHT or Computer (depending on what you decide to use).
- iii) Vary your tone and pitch. Ensure proper modulation. Everything should not be said with equal amount of stress. Certain things need to be emphasized more than others.
- iv) Memorize your introduction. This will help you to sound confident and in control.
- v) Try to involve the audience and respond to their reactions
- vi) Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech
- vii) Never talk down or up to your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.
- viii) Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in.....before you move on.
- ix) Don’t put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead projector and read them out.
- x) When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in.
- xi) Welcome questions from your audience. When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.
- xii) Know the size and the knowledge level of your audience. You must not tell them what they already know.
- xiii) Be clear about the purpose of your presentation – is it to inform or to persuade.
- xiv) Key ideas should be emphasized – you must ensure that the importance of your key points is not lost because of over emphasis on sub points
- xv) Don’t cram – if you have a lot of information to give you could consider giving some of it through handouts rather than cram all of it into your presentation.
- xvi) You must present an outline in the beginning of your presentation so that your audience knows how your presentation is structured. This should be well prepared in advance.
- xvii) Rehearse your presentation in order to time it, and to become familiar with names and figures as well as any complex information you need to give to the audience.
- xviii) Pay attention to your body language: eye contact; gestures; posture; movement.

| <b>Preparation</b>           | <b>Delivery</b>    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| ii) Check room, seating etc. | i) Be enthusiastic |

Now check your chart with the Answer key.

---

## 8.3 GRAMMAR: VERBS OFTEN REQUIRED IN PRESENTATIONS

---

### Outlining Your Presentation

It is important to present an outline of your presentation at the very beginning. This helps the audience to understand how you have structured your presentation. A presentation will be much clearer to the audience if the structure is clearly signaled.

The use of a variety of **presentation verbs** can help you to present the outline clearly, specifically and effectively.

### Check Your Progress 2

Here are some verbs often required in presentations. Can you complete the outlines of the presentations below by inserting suitable verbs from the box? You may need to use some of these twice.

|         |           |         |         |         |       |
|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| talking | discuss   | outline | filling | sharing | bring |
|         | highlight | tell    | report  | start   |       |

i) Good morning everyone. I am Aditya Sen. This morning I am going to be \_\_\_\_\_ to you about the Adult Education project taken up by our Institution. So I'll begin by \_\_\_\_\_ you in on the background of the project and then \_\_\_\_\_ you up to date on the progress of the project. I'll go on to \_\_\_\_\_ what I see as the main achievements of the project.

Next I will \_\_\_\_\_ our plans for further extension of the project. In the end I will \_\_\_\_\_ you how you can become a part of this project. Please feel free to interrupt me anytime with any questions you might want to ask.

ii) Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am here to \_\_\_\_\_ on the results of the market study of our new product in the western zone. I will begin with Mumbai which is our main domestic market in the west. I will then go on to Jaipur and Ahemdabad in that order.

After \_\_\_\_\_ with you information on the data collected from these cities, I will \_\_\_\_\_ in depth the implications of this report. My presentation will be followed by an open discussion on our performance in the western zone.

**Here are some more ways of signaling the structure of your presentation. Pay particular attention to the verbs in bold.**

### *Introduction*

**Greeting**      Good morning ladies & gentlemen / everyone.....

**Topic**            I'd like to **talk** to you about.....  
                          I'd like to **say** a few words about.....  
                          I'm here to **make** a presentation on.....  
                          This morning I'm going to be **talking** to you about / telling you about / **showing** you / **reporting** / taking a look at.....

**Outline** I'll be **dealing** with three areas.

I've divided my talk into.....

So I'll start off by **filling** you in on the background to / **bringing** you up-to-date on / **giving** you an overview of/ **making** a few observations about / outlining..... And then I'll go on to **discuss** in more depth / **highlight** what I see as the main / **make** detailed recommendations regarding.....

**I will conclude** with..... / **I will end** my presentation with..... / At the end of my presentation I **will invite** you to ask me any questions that you may have.

**Check Your Progress 3**

**Join the words in A with the phrases in B to make complete sense:**

| A                  | B                      |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| i. reporting       | a. you in              |
| ii. filling        | b. you up to date      |
| iii. bringing      | c. in more depth       |
| iv. discuss        | d. the implications of |
| v. talking         | e. a look at           |
| vi. taking         | f. on the results of   |
| vii. understanding | g. you through         |

**8.4 LANGUAGE FOCUS**

**Signposting**

Signposts help to guide the audience through a presentation. Look at the phrases given below. These will help you to guide your audience through a presentation.

- |                      |                    |                        |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>to move on</i>    | <i>to go back</i>  | <i>to summarize</i>    |
| <i>to expand on</i>  | <i>to recap</i>    | <i>to turn to</i>      |
| <i>to digress</i>    | <i>to conclude</i> | <i>to elaborate on</i> |
| <i>to illustrate</i> |                    |                        |

**Check Your Progress 4**

Choose one of the **signpost** expressions from above for the following situations:

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| i. When you want to make your next point          | To..... |
| ii. When you want to change direction             | To..... |
| iii. When you want to refer to an earlier point   | To..... |
| iv. When you want to repeat the main points       | To..... |
| v. When you want to give a wider perspective      | To..... |
| vi. When you want to give an example              | To..... |
| vii. When you want to do a deeper analysis        | To..... |
| viii. When you just want to give the basic points | To..... |
| ix. When you want to deviate from your plan       | To..... |
| x. When you want to finish your talk              | To..... |

**More Signposting**

**Here are some more helpful signposts which you could use in the middle stage of your presentations.**

**Showing steps**      First of all let's look at.....  
Then.....  
Next.....  
Lastly.....

**Visuals too are included in the middle of a presentation. In the next section we discuss ways to present them:**

### Using Visuals

Visuals like bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, photographs, charts, PowerPoint slides are commonly used in presentations to present statistical information or to make comparisons. These will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

### Introducing a visual

I'd like to show you.....  
Have a look at this.....  
This graph shows / represents.....  
Here we can see.....  
Let's look at this.....  
As you can see in this graph / table.....

### Comparisons

This compares  $x$  with  $y$   
Let's compare the.....  
Here you see a comparison between.....

### Conclusion

And here is some language input for the end of your presentation.

### Closing

Finally, to sum up.....  
I'd like to sum up now.....  
That concludes my presentation.  
To conclude.....

### Questions / Discussion

At the end of a presentation you are required to invite the audience to ask any questions that they may like to ask. Alternatively you could also permit them to ask questions whenever they want in the course of your presentation. This has to be told to them in the very beginning.

### Inviting questions

Are there any questions?  
If there are any questions I'll be glad to try to answer them.  
I'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.  
Now we could have a discussion on.....

### Check Your Progress 5

Cross out the words in italics which are not suitable in these extracts from presentations:

- i) I would like to begin with *a preview / an introduction / an outline* of the main points of my talk.
- ii) The first thing I'll be *saying / telling / talking* about is why we need to change our pay policy.

- iii) I will then go on to *inform / share / confide* with you some of the viewpoints of our senior executives.
- iv) If we could just *draw / focus / attract* our attention on the major benefits of the scheme.
- v) I would like to *inform / state / assure* at the very beginning that this is just a proposal and not a decision.
- vi) But we do need to seriously *ask / address / answer* the question of how we are going to deal with the problem.
- vii) I will be glad to *call / answer / invite* any questions that you may have at the end of the presentation.
- viii) Please feel free to *interrupt / ask / enquire* me with any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.

---

## 8.5 LISTENING: IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN PRESENTATIONS

---

You will now hear some tips on the importance of Body Language in Presentations. Listen to the audio and match the two columns:

### Check Your Progress 6

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Slouching          | shows that you are friendly & approachable |
| eye contact        | helps you to be more clear and effective   |
| Smile              | make for better understanding              |
| Gestures           | shows disinterest                          |
| Posture            | enhances the comfort level of the audience |
| Proximity          | helps counter boredom                      |
| variation in voice | signals interest in others                 |

Can you explain what the speaker means by:

- i) smiling is contagious
- ii) invading other's space.

Consult the Answer Key and compare your answer.

- A. Listen to the beginning of a presentation on the introduction of a new course in Cinematics. Do you think it is a good introduction?
- B. Now listen to the beginning of another presentation on the same topic. Which one is better and why?

Compare your analysis with the one given in the Answer key.

---

## 8.6 SPEAKING: PREPARING AN OUTLINE OF A PRESENTATION

---

Now prepare an outline of a presentation on any one of these topics and present it before the mirror or before your friends. If possible you can record the presentation and then listen to it. You can now listen to the tape script and compare your outline with the sample tape script.

**Skills Needed at the  
Workplace-II**

1. Your town / city
2. Television as a source of information and entertainment
3. Your favourite book / magazine

Now have a look at two sample outlines given in the Answer key.

---

## **8.7 PRONUNCIATION**

---

Here are some words that are commonly used for presentations. Mark the stressed syllable in these words and speak them out aloud. The first is done for you as example. Now listen to the tape and check your pronunciation. You may also refer to a good dictionary for the correct stressed syllable.

1. presen'tation
2. recommendation
3. expansion
4. supervision
5. efficient
6. sufficient
7. strategic
8. systematic
9. analytical
10. economical
11. typical
12. experience
13. inconvenience
14. potential
15. commercial
16. individual
17. essential
18. gradual
19. actual
20. responsibility
21. incredible
22. impossible
23. diversify
24. obvious
25. spontaneous

---

## **8.8 SUMMING UP**

---

In this unit we have introduced you to Presentation Skills in terms of -

- how to prepare for presentations
- how to deliver effective presentations
- some linguistic skills for introducing a presentation, signposting, using visuals and concluding.

We have also dwelt on Body language, which is very important when making a Presentation. All these skills are discussed in greater detail in the next unit.

## 8.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

### Check Your Progress 1

#### Preparation

ii), iv), ix), xii), xiii), xv), xvi), xvii).

#### Delivery

i), iii), v), vi), vii), viii), x), xi), xiv), xviii)

### Check Your Progress 2

The answers are given in bold print.

1. Good morning everyone. I am Aditya Sen. This morning I am going to be **talking** to you about the Adult Education project taken up by our Institution. So I'll begin by **filling** you in on the background of the project and then I'll **bring** you up to date on the progress of the project. I'll go on to **highlight** what I see as the main achievements of the project.

Next I will **outline** our plans for further extension of the project. In the end I will **tell** you how you can become a part of this project. Please feel free to interrupt me anytime with any questions you might want to ask.

2. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am here to **report** on the results of the market study of our new product in the western zone. I will **begin** with Mumbai which is our main domestic market in the west. I will then go on to Jaipur and Ahmedabad in that order.

After **sharing** with you information on the data collected from these cities, I will **discuss** in depth the implications of this report. My presentation will be followed by an open discussion on our performance in the western zone.

### Check Your Progress 3

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| i. reporting       | f. on the results of   |
| ii. filling        | a. you in              |
| iii. bringing      | b. you up to date      |
| iv. discuss        | c. in more depth       |
| v. talking         | g. you through         |
| vi. taking         | e. a look at           |
| vii. understanding | d. the implications of |

### Check Your Progress 4

Signpost expressions:

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| i. When you want to make your next point                     | To move on to.  |
| ii. When you want to change direction                        | To turn to      |
| iii. When you want to refer to an earlier point              | To go back to   |
| iv. When you want to recall the main points                  | To recap        |
| v. When you want to give a wider perspective                 | To expand on    |
| vi. When you want to give an example                         | To illustrate   |
| vii. When you want to do a deeper analysis                   | To elaborate on |
| viii. When you just want to give the basic points once again | To summarize    |
| ix. When you want to deviate from your plan                  | To digress      |
| x. When you want to finish your talk                         | To conclude     |

## Check Your Progress 5

The suitable options are underlined for you.

- i. I would like to begin with a preview / an introduction / an outline of the main points of my talk.
- ii. The first thing I'll be saying / telling / talking about is why we need to change our pay policy.
- iii. I will then go on to inform / share / confide with you some of the viewpoints of our senior executives.
- iv. If we could just draw / focus / attract our attention on the major benefits of the scheme.
- v. I would like to inform / state / assure at the very beginning that this is just a proposal and not a decision.
- vi. But we do need to seriously ask / address / answer the question of how we are going to deal with the problem.
- vii. I will be glad to call / answer / invite any questions that you may have at the end of the presentation.
- viii. Please feel free to interrupt / ask / enquire me with any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.

### Listening Tape script

## The Body

Your body communicates different impressions to the audience. People not only listen to you, they also watch you. Slouching tells them you are indifferent or you do not care...even though you might care a great deal! On the other hand, displaying good posture tells your audience that you know what you are doing and you care deeply about it. Also, a good posture helps you to speak more clearly and effectively.

Now let us turn to eye contact. This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. Speakers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.

Facial expressions are equally important. Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So, if you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm, and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and others will react favorably. They will be more comfortable around you and will want to listen to you more.

If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring and stiff. A lively speaking style captures attention, makes the material more interesting, and facilitates understanding.

Attention to posture and body orientation are essential. You communicate numerous messages by the way you talk and move. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates that you are approachable, receptive, and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when you and your audience face each other. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.

Now what about the space we keep from the audience? Notions of proximity vary with cultures. Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading other's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and gaze aversion. Typically, in

large rooms, space invasion is not a problem. In most instances there is too much distance. To counteract this, move around the room to increase interaction with your audience. Increasing the proximity enables you to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for others to speak.

One of the major criticisms of speakers is that they speak in a monotone voice. Listeners perceive this type of speaker as boring and dull. People report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to those who have not learned to modulate their voices.

Adopted from Source: [www.nwlink.com](http://www.nwlink.com)

### Check Your Progress 6

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| slouching           | shows disinterest                          |
| eye contact         | interest in others                         |
| smile               | shows that you are friendly & approachable |
| gestures            | make for better understanding              |
| posture             | helps you to be more clear and effective   |
| the right proximity | enhances the comfort level of the audience |
| variation in voice  | helps counter boredom                      |

#### i. smiling is contagious

When you smile at somebody, chances are that he / she will smile back at you. A smile spreads happiness around you as it makes others smile in response.

#### ii. invading other's space

Getting so close to somebody that he /she becomes uncomfortable because of your nearness and feels that his / her privacy is being invaded.

### Tape scripts

A. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm glad you are here to listen to me. I'd like to talk to you about our new course in Cinematics. I'm sure you will find the course relevant and interesting. It is very much in demand these days and I'm here to tell you all about it – who can join it and what you can do after a course like this. There are lots of places you can work in after learning Cinematics, but of course I won't have time enough to tell you about all of them. You can also ask me questions about the course if you want.

B. Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being here. This morning I'm going to be talking to you about a new course we have launched in Cinematics.

I'll begin by explaining what Cinematics is. I will then go on to highlight the relevance and scope of Cinematics. Next I will outline the kind of skills that the course could help you to develop. I will conclude by filling you in on information about eligibility and requirements for the course.

You are free to ask me any questions you may have at the end of my presentation.

### Answer

The second outline is better because it has a clear structure. The speaker states exactly the order in which he / she will be dealing with the topic, making appropriate use of presentation verbs and connectives. He/she also states his/her policy on questions – the speaker would not like to be disturbed with questions during the course of the presentation and this is made clear at the very beginning.

## Speaking

### Television as a source of information and entertainment

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. This morning I'm here to talk about the importance of television as a source of information and entertainment. I will begin my talk with giving an overview of the popularity of television as a means of communication.

I will then go on to outline the areas in which it provides invaluable information. Next I will emphasize upon the importance of television as a popular and affordable source of entertainment for all age groups.

My presentation will last for 10 minutes. I will be glad to answer any questions that you may have at the end of my presentation.

### My Favourite Magazine

Hello friends. I'd like to say a few words about My Favourite Magazine. I've divided my talk into three parts. Firstly, I will begin by telling you which is my favourite magazine. Secondly, I will highlight the main features of the magazine. In the end I will tell you why I prefer this magazine to other magazines. I will invite you to ask me any questions you may have at the end of my talk.

*Note: The second outline is more informal than the first one. This may be used when you make a presentation before an audience where you do not need to be too formal.*

### Pronunciation – Tape Script

1. presen'tation
2. recommen'dation
3. ex'pansion
4. super'vision
5. e'fficient
6. su'fficient
7. stra'tegic
8. syste'matic
9. ana'lytical
10. eco'nomical
11. 'typical
12. ex'perience
13. incon'venience
14. po'tential
15. co'mmercial
16. indi'vidual
17. 'essential
18. 'gradual
19. 'actual
20. responsi'bility
21. in'credible

22. im'possible
23. di'versify
24. 'obvious
25. spon'taneous

---

## UNIT 9 PRESENTATION SKILLS-II

---

### Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Warm up
- 9.2 Reading: Structure of Presentation
- 9.3 Study Skills: Visual Aids
- 9.4 Ending the Presentation
- 9.5 Language Focus: Talking about Increase and Decrease
- 9.6 Grammar: Prepositions
- 9.7 Listening: Podium Panic
- 9.8 Speaking
- 9.9 Pronunciation: Emphasizing the Important Words in Context
- 9.10 Summary
- 9.11 Suggested Readings
- 9.12 Answer to Check Your Progress

---

### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

---

In the previous Unit the focus was on introductions and outlines. This unit takes you forward and introduces you to

- commonly used structures of presentations
- using visual aids
- language associated with visual aids
- summaries and conclusions
- question/answer sessions at the end of the presentations
- practicing presentations

---

### 9.1 WARM UP

---

**Engaging the interest of the audience is central to the success of a presentation. Read these statements about the audience. To what extent do you agree with them? Discuss with a friend or a colleague at the Study Centre.**

- Effective presenters recognize that communication is both intellectual and emotional. Organizing your ideas is part of the task. The other is to gain and maintain attention.



- Listeners listen only 25 to 50% of the time.
- The audience will forgive a lot if the speaker is enthusiastic. But don't confuse enthusiasm with loudness.
- Compose for the Ear, not for the Eye.

---

## 9.2 READING: STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

---

### Structures of Presentations

Once you know what you want to say, you need to consolidate the materials into a meaningful message. When organizing your ideas begin by placing your topic in context.

The commonly used structures in presentations are:

1. **Topical:** This is when you have several ideas to present and one idea seems naturally to precede the other. This is one of the most common types of patterns, and it is especially useful for informative presentations.
2. **Chronological:** This uses time sequence for a framework. This structure is useful in informative and persuasive presentations, both of which require background information.
3. **Classification:** Puts things into categories. For example you might want to talk about three aspects of a product- finance, marketing and production.
4. **Problem/Solution:** This is used mostly for persuasive presentations. The first part of the speech outlines a problem and the second part presents a solution.
5. **Cause/Effect** can be used for persuasive speeches. The first part describes the cause of a problem and the second describes its effect.

### Check Your Progress 1

The structure of a presentation is outlined at the outset. Here are three such outlines. Match them with the appropriate structures listed above. Check your answers with the Answer key.

- A. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I'm here to talk to you about lack of efficiency in the Marketing division. Firstly, I will spell out specific areas where there has been laxity. Secondly, I will share with you what I believe to be the reasons for low performance in this division. Thirdly, I will suggest solutions for tackling this problem. At the end of my presentation we will have a discussion where you can express your views about the problem.
- B. This morning I am going to talk to you about our new policy on personal loans. I will begin my presentation by outlining the main features of this policy. I will

then go on to highlight the major employee benefits of this new policy. Next I will talk you through the new procedure for availing these loans. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.

- C. I'm here to make a presentation on Netlinks Worldwide. I shall begin with a brief history of the company, after which I will present a brief profile of its present status. Next I'll go on to talk to you about our major products and services. I will then focus on specific products and services which could meet your needs and enhance your output. I will conclude my presentation with a 10 minute film on useful packages for your company. In all, my presentation will take 30 minutes.

---

### 9.3 STUDY SKILLS: VISUAL AIDS

---

#### Using Visual Aids



A variety of visual aids like flip charts, line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, tables, diagrams, photographs, etc. can be used for presentations. Visual aids are commonly used in presentations to present information which is complex or statistical in nature.

Visual aids can make a presentation more interesting and easier to understand. They also help you to cut down on the amount of talking you have to do.

However, you must ensure that your visuals are relevant, appropriate and clear. You must never overload them with information. Effective presenters introduce and highlight visual information briefly and clearly, making sure they allow their audience time to absorb the information.

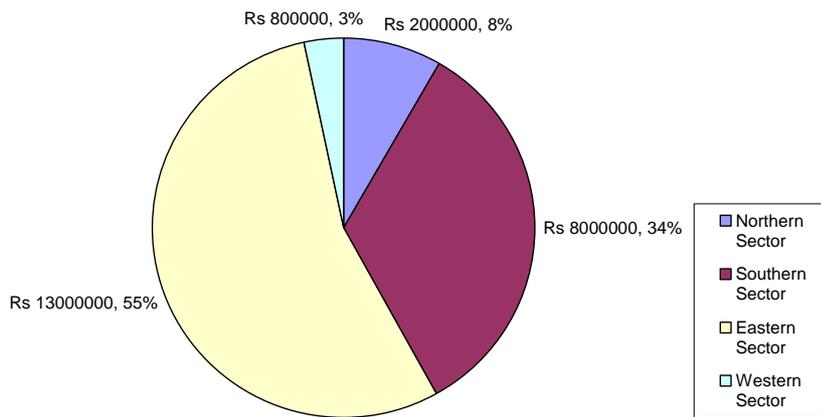
Use visuals to reinforce and clarify, and not to overwhelm the audience.

Here are three samples of visuals commonly used for presentations – a pie chart, a table and a bar graph. In order to be able to talk about them you need language which is specifically used to describe visuals.

Let us recap the useful expressions for introducing visuals which you learnt in the last unit and apply them to the given visuals. The expressions are highlighted in bold. In addition, you will also be introduced to some more formulaic language useful for describing visuals.

- I. **I'd like to show you** a pie chart that will give you a clear picture of our sales in the four sectors in the last quarter. **As you can see**.....

### Sectorwise Sales

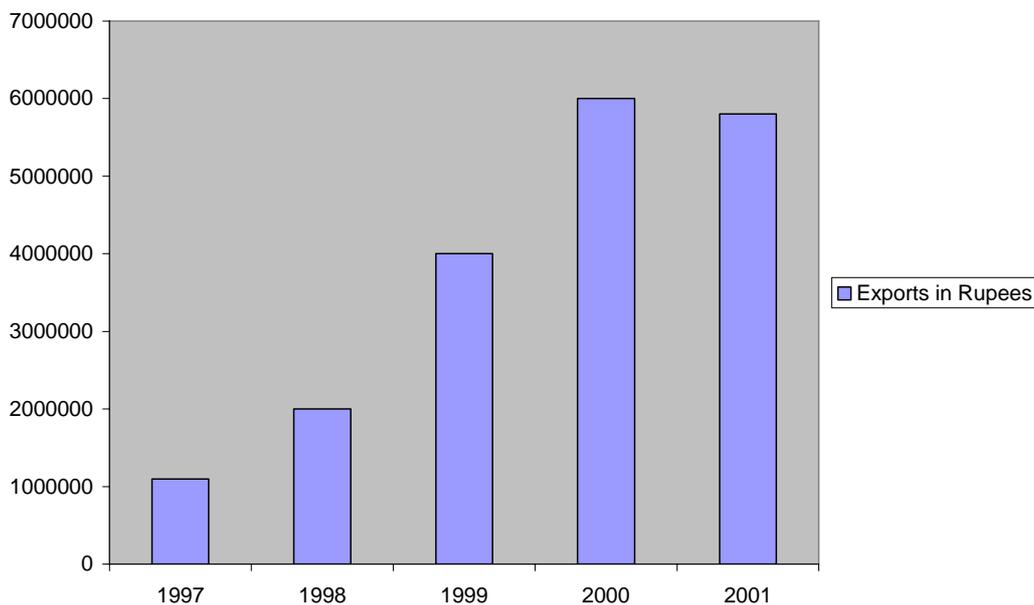


II. Have a look at this table. It shows the number of students enrolled for our different courses in the last five years. As you will notice the demand for our.....

| Courses                            | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| General English                    | 200  | 180  | 160  | 100  | 50   |
| Business English                   | 35   | 80   | 140  | 140  | 210  |
| English for Information Technology | 20   | 60   | 150  | 80   | 60   |
| English for the Hotel Industry     | 40   | 45   | 35   | 45   | 50   |

III. This bar graph shows / represents our exports in the last six years.

### Exports in Rupees



**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

1. **Here we can see**.....
2. **Let's look at this**.....
3. **As you can see in this bar graph**

**Check Your Progress 2**

How would you talk about the visuals given in exercises I, II and III? Practice and record your presentation. Now listen to the three sample tape scripts. Listen to the tape scripts again and write down the terms used to describe trends in the graph. Check these with the tape script given in the key where these have been underlined for you.

---

## **9.4 ENDING THE PRESENTATION**

---

### **Summaries and Conclusions**

Make sure you summarize.

A summary restates the main points and emphasizes what the audience must remember. It should be brief and must not contain any new information.

Create an Effective Conclusion.

Don't just present data or summarized results and leave the audience to draw its own conclusions.

You need to state the logical consequences of what you have said. The conclusion may often contain recommendations. However, the conclusion must also be brief.

Read the two texts that follow: 1 is the summary, and 2 is the conclusion. In the summary we highlight the salient points, while in the conclusions we give recommendations.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. I'd like to end by emphasizing the main points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contrary to our expectations our exports have not risen</li><li>• This is mainly due to our inability to handle foreign buyers</li><li>• Our Marketing and Sales division has faced various difficulties in overcoming cultural and communication barriers</li></ul> | <p>2. So what do we conclude from this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We must have specific training in communication skills for those who are dealing with our foreign customers</li><li>• We must also give them exposure to the culture of our foreign buyers by sending them to International Trade Fairs</li><li>• Encourage overseas visits for those who deal directly with the foreigners</li></ul> |
|---|---|

### **Questions? Discussion**



During a presentation you are required to give the audience a chance to ask questions. Your policy on questions must be stated right at the outset. While presenting the outline you should let the audience know whether they can interrupt you with questions in the course of the presentations or you would like

them to ask questions at the end of your presentation. Alternatively you can invite the audience to a discussion.

Remember that when members of the audience ask you questions, it means that they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat this as an opportunity to get your message across better.

Here are some helpful clues for handling questions:

- try to anticipate questions and prepare responses in advance
- rehearse answers to difficult questions
- listen very carefully – avoid the temptation to interrupt
- make sure you understand the question - paraphrase it if necessary; repeat it if needed
- give yourself time to think
- **be Honest:** if you can't answer the question, say so
- keep control over the audience and don't allow any chaos
- ensure that you entertain only relevant questions
- keep a lookout for time – don't allow the question /discussion session to linger interminably
- **be polite**
- don't forget to thank the audience at the end

### Check Your Progress 3

Here are possible ways of dealing with some of the situations mentioned in the clues above. Can you match these with the appropriate clues? Confirm your answers by looking at the Key.

- i. If I understood you correctly, you want to know whether this method of working has been used by any other organization. Is that correct?  
.....
- ii. I'm afraid I don't see the connection.  
.....
- iii. To be honest, I don't have that information with me.  
.....
- iv. Can we ensure that we speak one at a time please?  
.....
- v. I'm afraid that's all we have time for today.  
.....
- vi. Thank you for coming and for being such enthusiastic participants.  
.....

---

## 9.5 LANGUAGE FOCUS: TALKING ABOUT INCREASE AND DECREASE

---

Most visuals used for presentations represent some kind of change or trend – an increase or a decrease. Some of them make comparisons. Be clear about whether you need to talk about the quantum of increase / decrease or the speed at which the increase / decrease has taken place. This will help you to choose the right language.

## Skills Needed at the Workplace-II

Here is language that can help you to describe these accurately and appropriately.

When you wish to describe the quantum of increase or decrease you could use the following expressions:

1. There was a **marginal fall / rise** in sales or  
Sales **rose / fell marginally**.
2. There was a **nominal increase / decrease** in expenditure on overheads *or*  
Expenditure on overheads **increased / decreased nominally**
3. There was a **considerable improvement** in savings *or*  
Savings **improved considerably**.
4. There was a **significant rise** in production *or*  
Production **rose / went up significantly**.

Words like **slight, marked, dramatic** are also used to describe changes or differences.

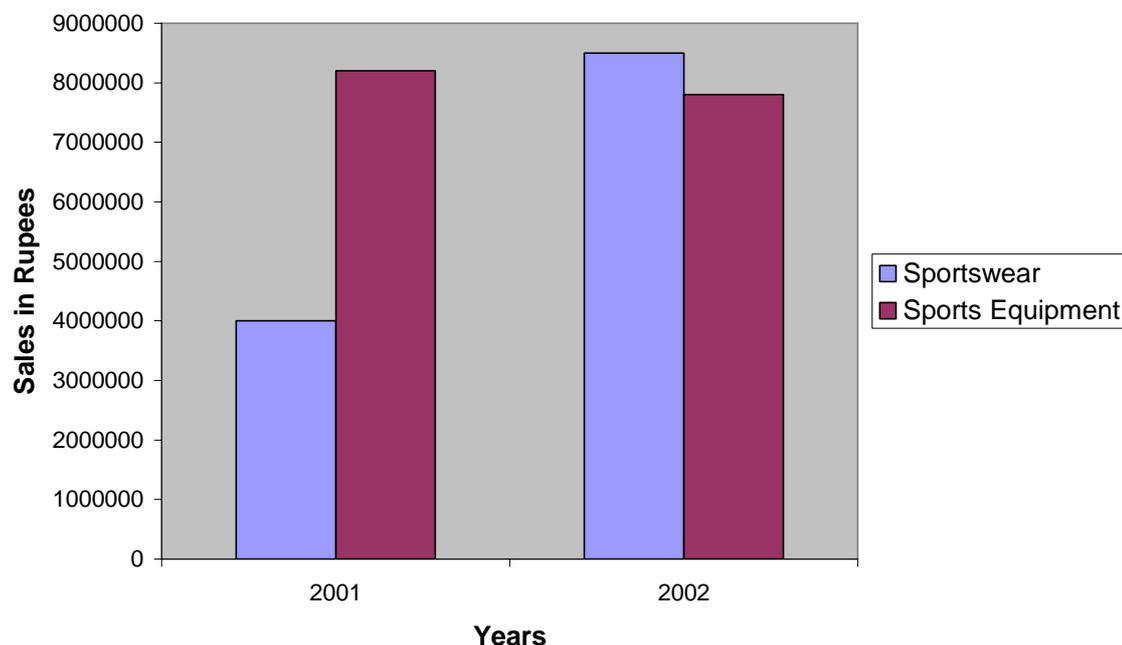
The speed of increase / decrease can be talked about with the help of these expressions:

1. There was a **slow increase** in the sale of televisions *or*  
The sale of televisions **increased slowly**.
2. There was a **gradual improvement** in the interest rates *or*  
The interest rates **improved gradually**.
3. There has been a **steady improvement** in the skilled labour situation over the last five years *or*  
The labour situation has **improved steadily** over the last five years.
4. There has been a **rapid rise** in the cell phone market *or*  
The cell phone market has **risen rapidly**.
5. There was a **quick decline** in the share market.  
The share market **declined / deteriorated / went down quickly**.

### Check Your Progress 4

Here is a visual on sales figures of sportswear and sports equipment in the last two years. Complete this write up on the visual making use of suitable words from above:

#### Sales Figures of Sportswear & Sports Equipment



The bar graph shows the comparative sales figures of Sportswear and sports equipment in the years 2001 and 2002. In the year 2001 our income from sale of sportswear was \_\_\_\_\_ of the income from sale of sports equipment. However, there was a \_\_\_\_\_ of more than 40000000 in the sale of sportswear in the year 2002. On the other hand, the sale of sports equipment \_\_\_\_\_ in 2002.

Check your answers with the key. Remember that a variety of expressions can be used to describe this graph. What is given in the key is one possible way of doing this.

---

## 9.6 GRAMMAR: PREPOSITIONS

---

Prepositions play an extremely important role in talking about visuals. If you say ‘*The sales rose to Rs. 300000*’ instead of saying ‘*The sales rose by Rs 300000*’, the entire meaning of your text will be changed. So it is very important to use the right prepositions.

### Check Your Progress 5

Complete this text by inserting the appropriate prepositions from the box. You may use some of the prepositions more than once:

|    |    |      |
|----|----|------|
| to | on | from |
| at | by | of   |

I’d like us to look \_\_\_\_\_ this part of the graph in more detail. As you will notice, we started this year \_\_\_\_\_ a weak note with sales at the \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. 51000 mark. However, as you can see, sales rose dramatically by the end of the first quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. 51000 \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. 100000, which means they rose \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. 490000 – an increase \_\_\_\_\_ almost 100%. I would also like to draw your attention \_\_\_\_\_ our performance in the second quarter where the sales have dropped marginally \_\_\_\_\_ Rs. 700000. If we don’t focus our attention \_\_\_\_\_ the northern sector, chances are that we may have a further decline in our sales.

---

## 9.7 LISTENING: PODIUM PANIC

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Before doing a listening task, you must take care of the following:

- See that your equipment is in order
- Read through the questions quickly
- Listen to the tape and answer the questions-as much as you can.
- Listen again, to complete answering as well as to check any mistakes.

### Check Your Progress 6

**Listen to this audio on podium panic and answer the questions that follow. Remember to choose your answers on the basis of the logic used by the speaker.**

- i. The speaker suggests that
  - a. almost all speakers suffer from fright

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

- b. few speakers suffer from fright
- c. fright can be totally overcome
- ii. The audience is forgiving when your mistakes are
  - a. because of inadequate preparation
  - b. out of nervousness
  - c. few
- iii. Sharing your fears with friends helps you to
  - a. speak better
  - b. relax and overcome your anxiety
  - c. find solutions to your problems
- iv. Learning your introduction helps you to
  - a. make a good first impression
  - b. to control the audience better
  - c. to feel more confident

---

## **9.8 SPEAKING**

---

Plan a complete presentation with outline, introduction, the body - which must include at least one visual, and the conclusion. Also don't forget the question /answer session. The topic could be one that is relevant to your company or interests. In case you can't decide about a topic on your own you may choose one of these:

1. Your Favourite sport
2. Holidays
3. Tourism
4. The Structure of your Company / Department
5. Training facilities in your company
6. Customer service
7. Overcoming job stress

Make the presentation before your friends / study partners and ask them to give you a feedback in the following areas:

1. Content
2. Structure
3. Rapport with audience
4. Body language
5. The quality and use of visual aids
6. Language – grammar & vocabulary

Alternatively, record your presentation. Listen to it and assess yourself on the basis of the above mentioned criteria. Take it to the Study Centre, play it to your colleagues for their comments.

---

## **9.9 PRONUNCIATION : EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANT WORDS IN CONTEXT**

---

Stressing the right words is an important aspect of Presentation Skills.

Can you underline the words that you think should be stressed more in the given sentences?

1. Sales have increased from last year. But the profits have hardly moved at all.
2. It's hard to enter the Middle East market. But its harder still to break into the European market.
3. There are three points I'd like to make. And all three are about our recent advertising campaign.
4. We haven't made big gains yet. But what we've achieved is quite significant.
5. We've made inroads into the East zone. But the North zone is still lagging behind.
6. Tourist facilities in the region have improved considerably. But we still have a long way to go.
7. Better training facilities are not just important. They are an absolute must.
8. Customers have a right to expect follow up. We are the ones who have failed them
9. The market may be growing. But our market share certainly isn't.
10. We need to give more paid leave to our employees. That's the only way to ensure they have adequate time to distress.

---

## 9.10 SUMMARY

---

In this unit, we further developed the ideas we had introduced in the previous unit on Presentations. In the Reading Section we introduced you to the most commonly used structure of Presentations.

In the middle of a Presentation, we often need to use visual aids, especially when the information is complex or statistical in nature. In the section on Study Skills, we give you language which helps you in introducing and talking through pie charts, tables and bar graphs. We also show you ways of ending a Presentation. This would include a recap of the salient points, some recommendations on given situations and the fielding of questions with politeness and honesty.

In the section: Language Focus and Grammar, we have again emphasized on language used in visual aids.

In the Listening section, we have turned to the psychological frame of mind of the Presenter. In the Speaking section, we encourage you to write and practice your own Presentation.

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## 9.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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1. Goodale, M. *Professional Presentations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Hollett, V. *Business Opportunities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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## 9.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Reading: Structure of Presentation

#### Check Your Progress 1

- A. 4 Problem - solution
- B. 1 Topical
- C. 2 Chronological

#### Study Skills: Visual Aids

## Using Visual Aids

### Check Your Progress 2

Tape scripts

- I. As you can see, the Eastern sector registered the highest sales amounting to Rs 13000000, which was followed by the Southern sector at Rs 8000000. These two alone account for 89% of our sales. The sales figures of the Western and Northern regions are extremely worrying. The western sector's sales figures were disappointing at Rs.2000000 while the Northern sector performed dismally with just 3% of total sales in the last quarter. This is a matter of serious concern and we.....(*fade out*).
- II. As you will notice the demand for our Business English courses has seen a quick and phenomenal rise in the five years. On the other hand, the registration for our General English course which was the most popular in 1999, has declined dramatically to 1/4<sup>th</sup> by 2003. The English for Information Technology which peaked at 140 in 2001, has declined surprisingly. This is amazing because the number of students enrolling for the IT courses is on the rise. We must see how we can promote this course more aggressively. The number of candidates for the Hotel Industry course has been fluctuating between 40 and 50 in the last five years. In keeping with these trends .....(*fade out*).
- III. As you can see in this bar graph, we've had a steady and fairly dramatic rise in our exports from just Rs 1100000 in 1997 to Rs 6000000 in 2000. However, there was a slight drop in 2001. We now need to ensure that.....(*fade out*)

### Questions / Discussion

#### Check Your Progress 3

- i. If I understood you correctly, you want to know whether this method of working has been used by any other organization. Is that correct?  
Answer: make sure you understand the question - paraphrase it if necessary; repeat it if needed
- ii. I'm afraid I don't see the connection.  
Answer: Ensure that you entertain only relevant questions
- iii. To be honest, I don't have that information with me.  
Answer: Be Honest: if you can't answer the question, say so
- iv. Can we ensure that we speak one at a time please?  
Answer: Keep control over the audience and don't allow any chaos
- v. I'm afraid that's all we have time for today.  
Answer: Keep a lookout for time – don't allow the question /discussion session to linger interminably
- vi. Thank you for coming and for being such enthusiastic participants.  
Answer : Don't forget to thank the audience at the end

### Language Focus: Talking about Increase or Decrease

#### Check Your Progress 4

The bar graph shows the comparative sales figures of Sportswear and sports equipment in the years 2001 and 2002. In the year 2001 our income from sale of sportswear was **half** of the income from sale of sports equipment. However, there was a **dramatic increase** of more than 40000000 in the sale of sportswear in the year 2002. On the other hand, the sale of sports equipment **fell marginally** in 2002.

## Grammar: Prepositions

### Check Your Progress 5

Complete this text by inserting the appropriate prepositions:

I'd like us to look **at** this part of the graph in more detail. As you will notice, we started this year **on** a weak note with sales at the Rs 51000 mark. However, as you can see, sales rose dramatically by the end of the first quarter **from** Rs 51000 **to** Rs 100000, which means they rose **by** Rs 490000 – an increase **of** almost 100%. I would also like to draw your attention **to** our performance in the second quarter where the sales have dropped marginally **to** Rs 700000. If we don't focus our attention **on** the northern sector, chances are that we may have a further decline in our sales.

### Listening: Podium Panic

#### Tape script

Everyone experiences stage fright, speech anxiety, or talking terror. Surveys show that fear of speaking in front of groups is one of the greatest fears people have. Some surveys find people actually claiming that the thought of giving a speech is more frightening than falling off a cliff, financial difficulties, snakes, and even death.

I'd like to share with you some techniques people use for coping with fright. Remember that your audience understands your nervousness; they know what you are feeling and will forgive it; similarly they will forgive honest mistakes.

Also nervousness is usually invisible; most will not notice the small changes in your voice or occasional mistakes; most speakers who describe themselves as nervous appear confident and calm to the audience.

All you need to do is be yourself; let the real you come through. Don't be afraid to hesitate when you speak, but just make sure you pause at the right places. A certain amount of hesitation is quite natural.

You can help yourself further by beginning in your comfort zone; practice with friends; share your fears with them.

Another way to counter fright is to begin with a slow, well-prepared introduction. Memorize your introduction, so that when you begin you will feel confident and in control. Also ensure that you have a confident and clear conclusion.

However, the most important thing is to be well prepared and practice.

### Check Your Progress - 6

- i. a
- ii. b
- iii. b
- iv. c

### 1.9 Pronunciation: Emphasizing the important words in context

1. Sales have increased from last year. But the profits have hardly moved at all.
2. It's hard to enter the Middle East market. But its harder still to break into the European market.
3. There are three points I'd like to make. And all three are about our recent advertising campaign.
4. We haven't made big gains yet. But what we've achieved is quite significant.

**Skills Needed at the  
Workplace-II**

5. We've made inroads into the East zone. But the North zone is still lagging behind.
6. Tourist facilities in the region have improved considerably. But we still have a long way to go.
7. Better training facilities are not just important. They are an absolute must.
8. Customers have a right to expect follow up. We are the ones who have failed them.
9. The market may be growing. But our market share certainly isn't.
10. We need to give more paid leave to our employees. That's the only way to ensure they have adequate time to distress.

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# UNIT 10 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

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## Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Warm up
- 10.2 Reading
- 10.3 Language Focus: Idiomatic Expressions
- 10.4 Study Skills: Process of Negotiations
- 10.5 Grammar: Phrasal Verbs
- 10.6 Listening: Effective Negotiations
- 10.7 Speaking
- 10.8 Writing
- 10.9 Summary
- 10.10 Suggested Readings
- 10.11 Answer to Check Your Progress

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## 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit you will learn -

- the essentials of successful negotiations
- the stages of negotiation
- how to negotiate successfully
- the language of negotiations
- how to follow up an oral negotiation with a letter

---

## 10.1 WARM UP

---



Negotiations can be a nightmare if they are not handled properly.

What do you think makes a good negotiator?

Discuss with a friend or a fellow student at the Study Centre.

---

## 10.2 READING

---

Although 'negotiation' may be intimidating, this is a skill we have already used to do, albeit unconsciously, and more times than we realize. How many times have you been in one of the following situations? You ask your boss for a salary increase; you want to convince a son or daughter to do something they may not



sound rather than a demand, which most of us probably do to some degree. How many times have you asked for a salary increase; you want to convince a son or daughter to do something they may not wish to do.



## 10.3 LANGUAGE FOCUS: IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Study the idiomatic expressions in the speech balloons and see if you can relate them to Negotiating situations.

I'm sorry but I don't see eye to eye with you!

I'm willing to come half way!

You are our most valued customer!  
Have it your way!

I'm afraid that's as far as we can go!

We'd be happy to accommodate you!

Aren't we splitting hair here?

### Check Your Progress 2

1. Match the meanings with the expressions in the balloons.

- i. We are willing to make part of the adjustments
- ii. We have already stated to what extent we can accommodate your point of view.
- iii. We are willing to do anything you want us to do.
- iv. Are we not being unnecessarily over critical.
- v. We will adjust with what you say gladly.
- vi. We have a totally different point of view about the matter.

2. Answer the following questions:

- i. Would these expressions occur more in some cultures than others?

.....  
.....

- ii. Do they represent attitudes that are too soft or too rigid? Which ones of these

suggest rigid attitudes?  
.....

iii. Would they be appropriate for a letter or for a phone conversation? Which of these would you use in a letter?  
.....

iv. Which ones of these could lead to good business relations, and which ones might backfire?  
.....

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## 10.4 STUDY SKILLS: PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

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There are four main phases in a negotiation:

1. **The preparation phase:** this is where you identify your purpose and set your priorities. You must also decide in advance what is the lowest deal or offer that you will be willing to accept. Have all information that you are likely to need available with you.
2. **The debating phase:** negotiation is a process of give and take where you give a little and get a little at the same time. Here you try to find out what the person or party you are negotiating with wants. During this phase you must state what you want but do not spell out all the conditions yet. Use open questions and be willing to listen to the other person too. Try to find out how much the other person is willing to move from his/her stand.
3. **The proposal stage:** This is where you suggest the concessions you are willing to make. Formulate your proposals with *if....., then.....*. Listen to the other side's proposals too. Build on common ground.
4. **The bargaining phase:** This is the part where you spell out what it is that you will actually trade. Accept and confirm details agreed upon by repeating them. Summarize the proposal in a few words. End positively by looking ahead.

### Check Your Progress 3

**Match the formulaic language on the right with the different phases of the negotiation on the left.**

|       |                    |   |   |
|-------|--------------------|---|---|
| i.    | Welcoming          | a | That seems acceptable                             |
| ii.   | Stating your aim   | b | We should meet again soon.                        |
| iii.  | Bargaining         | c | I don't think it would be possible for us to..... |
| iv.   | Making concessions | d | Can we run through the main points again?         |
| v.    | Accepting          | e | I'd like to begin with.....                       |
| vi.   | Rejecting          | f | I'd just like to check what we've said.....       |
| vii.  | Confirming         | g | I'm sure we will have a productive meeting.....   |
| viii. | Summarizing        | h | We can agree to that if.....                      |
| ix.   | Looking Ahead      | i | Would you be interested in                        |

**The correct answers are given in the Answer key**

Here are some more expressions that could be extremely helpful during negotiations:

**Welcoming:** Good to see you.  
I'm sure our meeting will be useful

**Stating your aim:** We'd like to let you know that.....

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
|                            | We want to clarify our position on.....   |
| <b>Making concessions:</b> | If you are willing to.....we could.....<br>We could offer you.....                |
| <b>Accepting:</b>          | That seems alright<br>We agree.   |
| <b>Rejecting:</b>          | I'm afraid we can't.....<br>Unfortunately this won't be possible.                 |
| <b>Confirming:</b>         | Let me just repeat what we've agreed upon.<br>Can we just run through that again? |
| <b>Summarizing:</b>        | Just to recap the main points.....<br>Let just summarize what we've agreed upon.  |
| <b>Looking ahead:</b>      | So the next step will be.....<br>So when do we meet next?                         |

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## 10.5 GRAMMAR: PHRASAL VERBS

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### Phrasal Verbs

There are some verbs and prepositions which have a special meaning when they are used together. In this way they function like idioms. These combinations have to be memorized like irregular verbs. When the phrases are spoken the stress falls on the preposition. These are called phrasal verbs.

#### Check Your Progress 4

Complete the sentences below by using the appropriate form of the given phrasal verbs. You will need to use one phrasal verb twice. You may check out the meanings and answers in the key.

|                             |                |                 |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>work (something) out</b> | <b>turn up</b> | <b>jot down</b> | <b>go with</b> |
| <b>catch on</b>             | <b>hold up</b> | <b>go over</b>  | <b>get on</b>  |
|                             |                |                 | <b>come up</b> |

- Sorry to keep you waiting. We got \_\_\_\_\_ in a traffic jam. That's why we are ten minutes late.
- Can we \_\_\_\_\_ with the meeting.
- Mr Mittal hasn't \_\_\_\_\_ yet.
- I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_ our main proposals.
- I'm sorry I didn't \_\_\_\_\_. What did you say?
- We cannot possibly \_\_\_\_\_ what you have proposed.
- If you can \_\_\_\_\_ with something that suits both parties, we don't mind.
- We must \_\_\_\_\_ something that is mutually acceptable.
- Can we \_\_\_\_\_ the main points again.
- Somebody should \_\_\_\_\_ whatever we have agreed upon.

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## 10.6 LISTENING: EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS

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#### Check Your Progress 5

**Listen to a talk on Effective Negotiations and complete the given text by inserting the missing words. Listen to it again in case you have missed out some words. Check your answers with the Key.**

Now read the completed text for some more information on effective negotiations.

Effective negotiation skills are an important 1 \_\_\_\_\_ in today's business environment. Therefore it is necessary to make proper 2 \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure that negotiations run 3 \_\_\_\_\_. First of all one must 4 \_\_\_\_\_ out the negotiation in detail. This can be done well only if you find out as much as possible about the 5 \_\_\_\_\_ and the 6 \_\_\_\_\_ with which the negotiation is to take place. Sometimes it's hard to create a 7 \_\_\_\_\_ situation in negotiations, in spite of good preparation.

The 8 \_\_\_\_\_ of the negotiation must be clearly defined at the outset. Also identify the 9 \_\_\_\_\_ that you can offer in the course of the negotiation. You must also keep in mind that you cannot hope to push your 10 \_\_\_\_\_ at the cost of the other party. Therefore decide in advance what you should state and to what extent you can 11 \_\_\_\_\_ your demands to accommodate the other party's interests.

Both parties must strive to create a 12 \_\_\_\_\_ atmosphere at the very start. Establishing a good rapport at the outset creates a 13 \_\_\_\_\_ environment of 14 \_\_\_\_\_ respect and trust for the negotiation. Clear communication, mutual respect, and trust can get things going in the right direction.

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## 10.7 SPEAKING

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### Check Your Progress 6

Practice one or both of these negotiations with one or more partners at your study centre. Refer to the Answer Key and tape script for a suggested version.

- i. Imagine a situation where you are a seller who is negotiating with a buyer. The buyer is asking you for a 10% discount whereas you have already agreed to give him a 5% discount.  
**Try to negotiate and settle for 7%. In return for this concession ask for the credit limit that you have given to your buyer to be reduced from 40% to 35%.**
- ii. You are making arrangements for a wedding to be held in your family. Negotiate with the caterers to reduce the cost of food per plate from Rs. 350 to Rs 300.

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## 10.8 WRITING

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### Check Your Progress 6

Refer to Task 1 of 10.7 You have successfully negotiated the deal with your buyer. Write a letter to him confirming the agreement reached at the end of the negotiation.

Compare your answer with the one provided in the key.

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## 10.9 SUMMARY

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In this unit, we have briefly touched upon the skill of Negotiation which we not only require in our business transactions but in our day to day life as well. While you may be an excellent negotiator in real life, we have given you some steps so that you are systematically aware of what you are doing. We have also provided you with tape scripts of actual negotiations. This will help you become even better at negotiations.

Phrasal Verbs are often used in negotiations, especially in ‘spoken’ English; we have therefore given you some practice in their use.

Finally, after a negotiated settlement, there is often a letter written to confirm the negotiation. We have given you practice in writing such a letter.

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## 10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Rodgers, D. *English for International Negotiations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sinha, K.K. *Business Communication*. Delhi: Galgotia Publishing Company.

Tull, G and Lannon, M. *Insights into Business*. London: Longman.

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## 10.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Reading

#### Check Your Progress 1

State whether these statements are True or False

- |      |  |              |
|------|--|--------------|
| i.   | We negotiate consciously all the time.                                 | <b>False</b> |
| ii.  | One often has to negotiate for a salary increase.                      | <b>True</b>  |
| iii. | Negotiation skills have to be formally learnt.                         | <b>False</b> |
| iv.  | Regardless of individual differences we all negotiate in the same way. | <b>False</b> |
2. The following two qualities are not desirable in negotiators.
- iii. Are firm about their stand – good negotiators need to be flexible and not rigid about their stand. They must be willing to make certain adjustments as it is in their interest to ensure that both parties are satisfied.
- vi. Look for immediate gains – good negotiators always keep the long term interest in mind. A long term association with customers and business associates is the need of every organization.

#### Check Your Progress 2

- i. We are willing to make part of the adjustments  
*I'm willing to come half way!*
- ii. We have already stated to what extent we can accommodate your point of view.  
*I'm afraid that's as far as we can go!*
- iii. We are willing to do anything you want us to do.  
*You are our most valued customer! Have it your way!*
- iv. Are we not being unnecessarily over critical.  
*Aren't we splitting hairs here?*

**Skills Needed at the Workplace-II**

- v. We will adjust with what you say gladly.  
*We'd be happy to accommodate you!*
- vi. We have a totally different point of view about the matter.  
*I'm sorry but I don't see eye to eye with you!*

**2.**

- i. Would these expressions occur more in some cultures than others?  
*Yes, that's true. In some cultures people need to be very careful about what they say. They cannot afford to be direct as they might annoy their customers.*
- ii. Do they represent attitudes that are too soft or too rigid? Which ones of these suggest rigid attitudes?  
*'C' and 'E' represent soft attitudes. 'A' shows rigidity.*
- iii. Would they be appropriate for a letter or for a phone conversation? Which of these would you use in a letter?  
*You could use 'B' and 'E' in letters.*
- iv. Which ones of these could lead to good business relations, and which ones might backfire?  
*'B', 'C', and 'E' could lead to good business relations whereas 'A', 'D' and 'F' could backfire.*

**Check Your Progress 3**

**Match the formulaic language on the right with the different phases of the negotiation on the left.**

**Answers:**

- i. g
- ii. e
- iii. h
- iv. i
- v. a
- vi. c
- vii. f
- viii. d
- ix. b

**Check Your Progress 4**

**Grammar**

**Complete the sentences with suitable phrasal verbs.**

**work (something) out** – find a solution or a way out

**turn up** – arrived

**jot down** – write down

**go with** – agree with

**catch on** – understand

**hold up** - delay

**go over** – look into, repeat

**get on** – go ahead

**come up** - suggest

- 1. Sorry to keep you waiting. We got **held up** in a traffic jam. That's why we are ten minutes late.
- 2. Can we **get on** with the meeting.
- 3. Mr Mittal hasn't **turned up** yet.
- 4. I'd like to **go over** our main proposals.
- 5. I'm sorry I didn't **catch on**. What did you say?
- 6. We cannot possibly **go with** what you have proposed.

7. If you can **come up** with something that suits both parties, we don't mind.
8. We must **work out** something that is mutually acceptable.
9. Can we **go over** the main points again.
10. Somebody should **jot down** whatever we have agreed upon.

### Listening Tape script

The answers are highlighted in bold.

### Check Your Progress 5

Effective negotiation skills are an **important** ingredient in today's business environment. Therefore it is necessary to make proper **preparation** to ensure that negotiations run **smoothly**. First of all one must **plan** out the negotiation in detail. This can be done well only if you find out as much as possible about the **people** and the **organization** with which the negotiation is to take place. Sometimes it's hard to create a **win-win** situation in negotiations, in spite of good preparation.

The **objectives** of the negotiation must be clearly defined at the outset. Also identify the **alternatives** that you can offer in the course of the negotiation. You must also keep in mind that you cannot hope to push your **interests** at the cost of the other party. Therefore decide in advance what you should state and to what extent you can **roll back** your demands to accommodate the other party's interests.

Both parties must strive to create a **harmonious** atmosphere at the very start. Establishing a good rapport at the outset creates a **conducive** environment of **mutual** respect and trust. for the negotiation. Clear communication, mutual respect, and trust can get things going in the right direction.

### Speaking

1. **Imagine a situation where you are a seller who is negotiating with a buyer. The buyer is asking you for a 10% discount whereas you have already agreed to give him a 5% discount.**

**Try to negotiate and settle for 7%. In return for this concession ask for the credit limit that you have given to your buyer to be reduced from 40% to 35%.**

Sample Answer:

The sample answer begins with small talk which must take place between the buyer and seller before they actually begin to negotiate the deal. Take note of the language used in negotiations. The formulaic language is underlined for your benefit.

Seller: It's so good to see you again.

Buyer: Yes, it's been a long time.

Seller: So, how are you?

Buyer: Very fine, thank you.

Seller: I hope you are happy with the last consignment of office equipment we sent you?

Buyer: Yes, it was quite all right.

Seller: I'm here to follow up on your interest in our new filing cabinets. They are better than anything you have seen before. And what's more, although they are very reasonably priced, we have made you an offer for a 5% introductory discount.

Buyer: Yes, I understand that, but if you could make that 10% we would consider the offer seriously.

Seller: Unfortunately, that's going to be not just difficult but impossible, considering that this is an introductory offer and so we have priced the cabinets very reasonably and the profit margins are already very low.

Buyer: Perhaps we could both come half way and settle for something that would be agreeable to both.

**Skills Needed at the  
Workplace-II**

Seller: In that case we could make it 7k%on the condition that you will accept a credit of 35% in place of 40%, which means you will make a down payment of 65% on receipt of goods.

Buyer: That seems acceptable.

Seller: Alright then, you can now work out the details of your order and send it over to us as soon as it is ready. We look forward to it.

Buyer: That's it Good Bye.

Seller: Good Bye.

**Writing**

**Check Your Progress 6**

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <b>ABS Industries</b><br>154 Govindpura Industrial Estate<br>Bhopal 462026 |
|  | 25 November 2003   |
| Mr J Wadhwa<br>Anant Textiles<br>267 Court Road<br>Meerut, UP  |  |
| Dear Mr Wadhwa   |  |
| This is a written confirmation of the agreement we reached on the supply of your Order Number 2198/03. We are glad to offer you 7% discount. |  |
| Your credit on the order will now be 35% in place of 40%. These details will also be included in your invoice.                               |  |
| You will receive the goods by 15 December, the agreed deadline. We hope you are satisfied with this agreement.                               |  |
| We look forward to serving you in the future.  |  |
| Yours Sincerely  |  |
| Mr R K Gupta   |  |